

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

U.S. National Park Service Publications and  
Papers

National Park Service

---

Spring 2010

## Heritage Matters- Spring 2010

Brian D. Joyner

*National Park Service*, [brian\\_joyner@nps.gov](mailto:brian_joyner@nps.gov)

Jonathan B. Jarvis

*National Park Service*

Christine S. Lehnertz

*National Park Service*

Antoinette J. Lee

*National Park Service*, [Toni\\_Lee@nps.gov](mailto:Toni_Lee@nps.gov)

J. Paul Loether

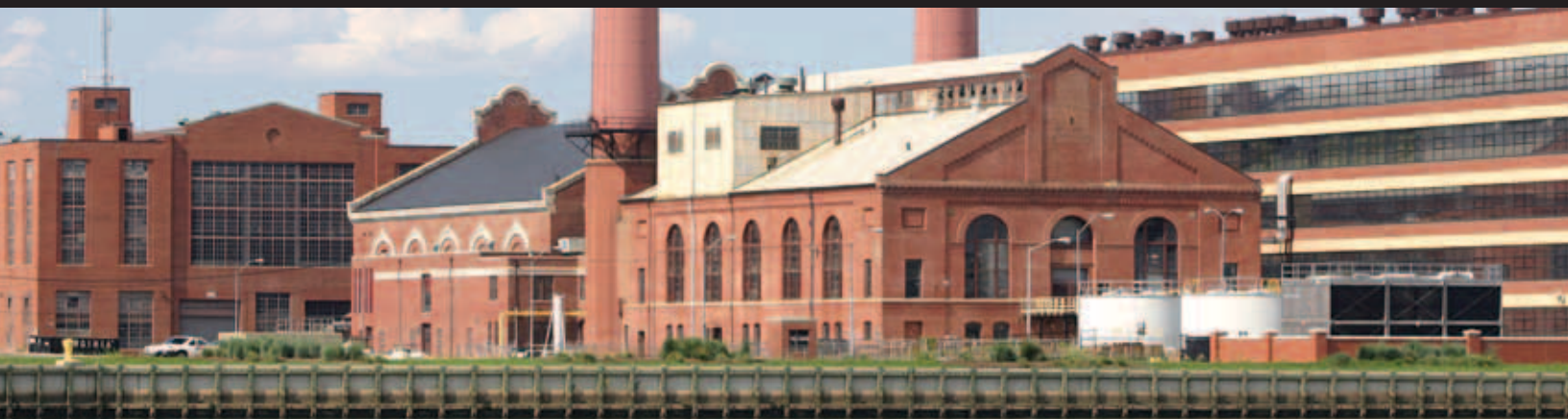
*National Park Service*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/natlpark>

---

Joyner, Brian D.; Jarvis, Jonathan B.; Lehnertz, Christine S.; Lee, Antoinette J.; and Loether, J. Paul,  
"Heritage Matters- Spring 2010" (2010). *U.S. National Park Service Publications and Papers*. 66.  
<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/natlpark/66>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the National Park Service at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in U.S. National Park Service Publications and Papers by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



# Heritage Matters

SPRING 2010

News of the Nation's Diverse Cultural Heritage

## this issue...

Connecting Preservation to Community: Washington, D.C.'s Community Heritage Project

A "big time woman" of the Piedmont: Unearthing the Story of a Community Matriarch

Rehabilitating Raleigh's "Black Main Street"

National Register Nominations

Recognizing and Preserving Racial Segregation in South Carolina

Two Enclaves form One New Historic District: The Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District

African American Descendants and Archeology

## Connecting Preservation to Community: Washington, D.C. Community Heritage Project

Bell Clement / George Washington University

Washington, D.C.'s Deanwood is the type of neighborhood often overlooked by preservationists and historians. Tucked into a corner of the city between the Anacostia River and the Maryland border, it is a quiet, residential community, built up by black, working-class Washingtonians in the early 20th century.

Yet over the past five years, Deanwood has become a hub of preservation and local history activity. Residents have published a book of community history, created a neighborhood heritage trail, and assisted in the landmark designations of several sites. How did this happen?

"The first time we came together as the Deanwood History Committee was when the Historic Preservation Office asked us to help with a survey of neighborhood architecture," says Kia Chatmon, a member of the Committee and its current chair. "We saw pretty quickly that we needed to assemble a neighborhood history, if the architectural survey was to have any context."

"One thing we've learned," says Patsy Fletcher, Community Outreach Coordinator for D.C.'s Historic Preservation Office, and the staffer who first approached Deanwood residents about updating their survey documentation, "is that there's no way to interest residents in historic preservation until they're engaged with neighborhood history." The result was an increase in historic research on the neighborhood.

Washington, D.C.'s effort to nurture that kind of engagement initiated the D.C. Community Heritage Project. Now entering its sixth year, the CHP is a collaborative of community historians supported by a partnership including the Humanities Council of Washington, D.C. (HCWDC), the city's Historic Preservation Office (HPO), and the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

## Mission of the National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and the values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service also cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

*Heritage Matters*, sponsored by the Cultural Resources Programs of the National Park Service, is published twice a year, and is free of charge. Readers are invited to submit short articles and notices for inclusion. (Limit submissions to fewer than 600 words and include author's name and affiliation. Photographs or digital images are welcome.) Please submit newsletter items in writing or electronically to: Brian D. Joyner, Editor, *Heritage Matters*, DOI/National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW (2280), Washington, DC 20240. Phone: 202.354.2276, e-mail: brian\_joyner@nps.gov.

This material is based upon work conducted under a cooperative agreement between the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. Views and conclusions in this material are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.

**Jonathan B. Jarvis**  
Director

**Christine S. Lehnertz**  
Acting Associate Director, Cultural Resources

**Antoinette J. Lee**  
Assistant Associate Director, Historic Documentation Programs

**J. Paul Loether**  
Chief, National Register of Historic Places & National Historic Landmarks Programs

**Brian D. Joyner**  
*Heritage Matters* Editor

Washington, D.C.'s Community Heritage Project  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Initiated in 2005, the DCCHP has assisted dozens of community heritage projects across the District's eight wards. A small group, including Fletcher and academic historians involved with D.C. neighborhoods, came together to look for ways to respond to the development taking place across the city that threatened the established heritage of the existing neighborhoods. They envisioned a framework that would support residents in telling their own stories of the communities in which they lived. The DCCHP supported the work of the Deanwood History.

The DCCHP's efforts in supporting Deanwood to preserve its heritage have had an impact. "We have produced a record of the history of the community here," says Chatmon. "Now, when people or businesses come to Deanwood, they know they aren't dealing with a blank slate, but with a place that has a specific past, a specific heritage." ❖

**"Now, when people or businesses come to Deanwood, they know they aren't dealing with a blank slate, but with a place that has a specific past, a specific heritage."**

KIA CHATMON



Members of the Deanwood History Committee (left to right, Barbara J. Moore, Alverna M. Miller, Deidre R. Gantt [standing], Elaine King Bowman, and Kia Chatmon) gather at the First Baptist Church of Deanwood to look at the Deanwood book, D.C.'s Deanwood.



# A “big time woman” of the Piedmont: Unearthing the Story of a Community Matriarch

Colette Carmouche / National Park Service

Prince William Forest Park, located 35 miles south of Washington D.C. in a small Virginia community called Triangle, is 15,000 acres of Piedmont forest interrupted only by streams, creeks, and the occasional road to transport visitors to campgrounds and hiking trails. The park has maintained its pristine landscape and served as a retreat for urban dwellers since it was constructed in 1936 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, a program borne out of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal plan. Before 1936, the land was home to small agricultural communities dating back to the 19th century. Batestown and Hickory Ridge were two African American and mixed race communities that developed around the mid-1800s.

Life in the Piedmont was simple—people grew their own food stock, bartered for goods and services, harvested and sold local resources, provided services, or worked at the local railroad and pyrite mine. This simple life ended with the birth of FDR’s “Recreational Demonstration Area” project in the 1930s. Seeking to create recreational use areas out of reclaimed, sub-marginal farm lands, the RDA project offered fair market value to occupants to resettle on other, more profitable land. As in many resettlement stories, this was a great opportunity for some, while others only reluctantly left their land. Generations of land-owning African Americans and others in the area lost their land, and for some time it seemed their stories disappeared, too.

A tributary of Quantico Creek was named “Mary Bird Branch” after an African American woman who lived along the creek. Few clues were left behind regarding her identity or why the branch was named after her. Many wondered, “Who was Mary Bird?”

Answers began to emerge in 2000, after the park contracted two Howard University professors to conduct oral histories with former residents of Hickory Ridge and Batestown to uncover information on the African American heritage of the park. Four years and 35 interviews later, the professors released the first round of oral history transcripts with many of the surviving residents of the communities. In 2008, the second edition of interviews was released. In the meantime, park staff had begun building relationships with local families. As a result, they have gained additional oral histories and donated objects, and they have strengthened relationships with these stakeholders. While the interviews centered around the general topic of life in the Piedmont up to the 1930s, the story of Mary Bird began to take shape. To close family she was known as Aunt May Byrd and was a well-known figure in the Hickory Ridge community during the early 1900s.



Mary Byrd of Hickory Ridge (pictured with her husband Charles) was considered a stalwart of the community during the early 20th century. Courtesy of Charlie Reid.

More detailed information was gradually unearthed from other interviewees. First, it became clear that her name was actually spelled Mary Byrd. She lived with her husband in the multiracial community of Hickory Ridge. Many remember her as a generous woman who always shared fruits and vegetables grown from her orchard or garden. Her home was a place for all to gather and feel welcomed. As Hilda Howard remembered, “Mary Byrd is the one who used to feed everybody.”

CONTINUED » PAGE 4



**“Many remember her as a generous woman who always shared fruits and vegetables grown from her orchard or garden. Her home was a place for all to gather and feel welcomed.”**

COLETTE CARMOUCHE

Born and raised in Virginia, Mary Byrd married Charles Byrd, a handsome “city slicker” from Pennsylvania who came to work at the local pyrite mine. Byrd purchased the land for Mary to have a farm. Mary proved to be a most successful business woman and community leader. She cut and sold wood and railroad ties to make money. Mary Byrd also made and sold her own wine. In addition, she served as a midwife in the community and often raised or took in the children of relatives and neighbors. As one woman reported:

“There’s a lot of that where people would help raise other people’s kids. Circumstances were the same as now. The parents couldn’t afford to take care of them. Usually family members took them. Aunt Mary Byrd did that. She took Sadie Martin’s boy. He was a little fellow. I’ll never forget. She bought him a new suit. She would never let him wear it because she was going to save that to bury him in.”

A recent interview completed in 2009 with one of Mary Byrd’s surviving nephews revealed more detailed information about her life. According to Warren Williams, “See, Aunt Mary was what I would call a big boss. See, she had her own land, she paid her own helper, made her own wine, and the sheriff knowed her and would never bother her. So, I call her a big time woman. Aunt Mary knew who to associate with and who not to.”

The interviews also showed Mary Byrd’s resistance to moving from the land in the 1930s. “A lot of people sold their land, and I think the ones that had pretty good land and didn’t want to start over, they condemned the land. I think she was one of the ones they condemned. I understand she resisted. A lot of people did...” said another nephew, Charlie Reid.

The information about Mary Byrd and the Hickory Ridge and Batestown communities gained through oral histories has enriched the understanding of Prince William Forest Park’s history. The oral histories have not only unearthed information about who existed here and why, but they’ve exposed the stories that were missing for so long. ♦

# Rehabilitating Raleigh's "Black Main Street"

Jenny Parker / Technical Preservation Services, NPS

Like many early 20th-century American cities and towns, Raleigh, North Carolina, became an increasingly segregated city. Ordinances and housing covenants created de facto segregated areas in many cities across the nation. After 1900, businesses serving Raleigh's black community were slowly displaced from more prominent downtown locations along Fayetteville and Wilmington Streets. During these decades, however, black entrepreneurship thrived in a small enclave along East Hargett Street, the only location that welcomed black businesses. This section of town was so successful that it became known as "Black Main Street" and it served as the hub of the black community until the 1960s.

During its heyday in the 1920s, the area was home to grocery stores, clothing companies, drug stores, insurance companies, fraternal orders, a popular hotel, a printing company that served the entire state, a bank, and a real estate company, all located along the 100 block of East Hargett Street or nearby. So successful were these enterprises that the Raleigh Times stated in an article in 1925, "Whatever the Raleigh of tomorrow may be, the Negroes

will play a part in its making." Unfortunately, the Raleigh of tomorrow included a period of sharp decline for this important commercial district. Following the exodus of the black population to the suburbs in the 1960s, this district languished with a mix of moderately successful businesses and vacant properties.

Beginning in the 1980s, individual rehabilitation projects began to slowly revitalize this area using the Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program, which provides a tax credit equal to 20% of the cost of the project to historic commercial property owners. In combination with the federal credit, rehabilitations also qualify for a 20% North Carolina state tax credit. Since 2002, investment in this neighborhood has dramatically increased as five of the buildings along the north side of Raleigh's Black Main Street were rehabilitated by Empire Properties, a development company that specializes in the rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings.

One of the premier projects was the rehabilitation of the 1913 Odd Fellows Building located at 115-117 East Hargett. Historically, the upper floors of the building housed the

CONTINUED » PAGE 6



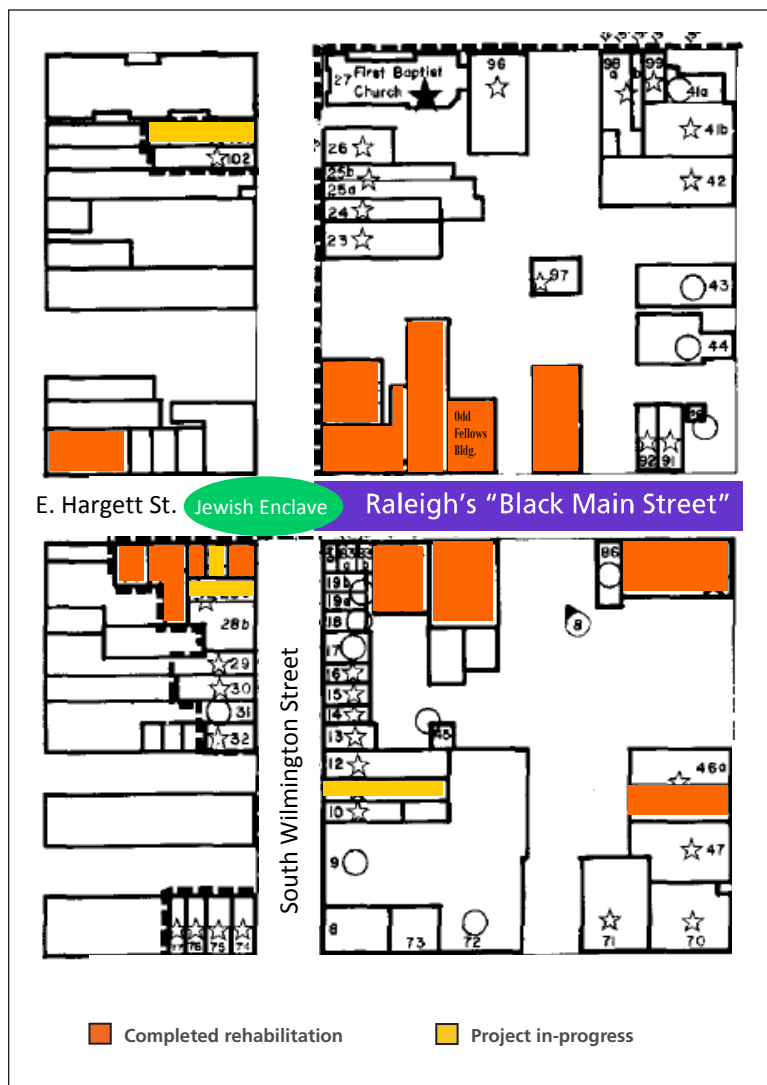
Many of the buildings along the Black Main Street in Raleigh have been rehabilitated, breathing new life and economic growth into this part of North Carolina's capitol city. Courtesy of North Carolina Historic Preservation Office.

Not only were historic features preserved, such as original board ceilings and a vintage barber chair and sink, but the developers also retained the Capitol Barber Shop, one of the anchors of the community, as a tenant.



The rehabilitation of the historic Odd Fellows Building included the retention of the Capitol Barber Shop. Even the vintage barber chair and sink remain. Courtesy of NPS Tax Act Program.





Since 2002, investment in this neighborhood has dramatically increased as five of the buildings along the north side of Raleigh's Black Main Street were rehabilitated by Empire Properties, a development company that specializes in the rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings.

**“Since 2002, investment in this neighborhood has dramatically increased as five of the buildings along the north side of Raleigh’s Black Main Street were rehabilitated by Empire Properties, a development company that specializes in the rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings.”**

JENNY PARKER

Rehabilitating Raleigh’s “Black Main Street”  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

local chapter of the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows, which was an African American fraternal organization founded both to pay for the proper burials of servicemen who fell during World War I and to care for their widows and children. The commercial spaces in this building served the black community of Raleigh as beauty salons and office space for law practices. One of the most prominent long-time tenants was Fred Carnage, a well-respected attorney who served as a member of Raleigh’s school board during desegregation.

In rehabilitating this building, not only were historic features preserved, such as original board ceilings and a vintage barber chair and sink, but the developers also retained the Capitol Barber Shop, one of the anchors of the community, as a tenant. The business has served generations of Raleigh’s black community and provided a gathering place that survived the neighborhood’s decline. The financial assistance provided by the Federal and state tax credits has been one of the primary factors in the success of these projects. According to Jenny Harper of Empire Properties, “There is absolutely no question that these projects would not have happened without the tax credits. The credits have not only made the retention of these historic resources possible, but have also allowed us to subsidize rents where possible.”

In subsidizing the rent in order to keep businesses like the Capitol Barber Shop in their historic location, Empire Properties demonstrates how preservation (and tax credit programs in particular) can make real impacts in stimulating local economies while maintaining a community’s identity. In this case, the building and its connection to the historic African American community are preserved and provide valuable services to the community. The incentive of the state and federal tax credits has translated to \$16.5 million in investment in this neighborhood over the years.

The Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program is jointly administered by State Historic Preservation Offices, the National Park Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. ❖

**i** For more information about this program, please visit [www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax](http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax).

# National Register Nominations

Rustin Quaide / National Park Service / Caridad de la Vega / National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

## 1 Snoqualmie Falls

Snoqualmie Falls, a 268-foot waterfall located in eastern King County, Washington, figures prominently in the Snoqualmie Indians origin myth. In this story, Moon the Transformer created the falls from a fishing weir (a fish trap which allows water to run through) and shaped the natural environment and the Indian people. Snoqualmie Falls has also been identified by some contemporary tribal members as the location of both a powerful waterfall spirit and a traditional venue for acquiring spirit power. Although the site of a hydroelectric facility for nearly a century, the Falls retain significant integrity of physical character and associative values, as an important place in the cultural continuation of the Snoqualmie people.

Snoqualmie Falls lies within the historic territory of two Snoqualmie Indians groups. The upper and lower bands of Snoqualmie people conferred land use privileges from one to the other: Upper Snoqualmie people (who lived on the prairies above



Snoqualmie Falls represents the power of both the prairie and valley spirits, both sacred to the Upper and Lower Snoqualmie Indians. Courtesy of Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

the Falls) received salmon fishing privileges from the Lower Snoqualmie people, who received prairie resources such as deer in return. According to several tribal elders, the Falls divides the spirits of the Snoqualmie into prairie and valley spirits, which meet at the Falls making Snoqualmie Falls a site of special spiritual power. Snoqualmie Falls was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 2, 2009.

## 2 Meadowbrook Country Club

Country Club, located outside the city limits of Garner, North Carolina, near Raleigh, was founded and developed in 1959 for African Americans who were unable to gain membership to white country clubs due to segregation laws. The property consists of a nine-hole golf course, lake, picnic grounds, clubhouse, swimming pool, tennis courts, and a miniature golf course. It extends 120 acres and is buffeted on all sides by woods and residential lots.

Meadowbrook Created by the local black business community with 45 charter members, Meadowbrook Country Club was a center of social life and a place of pride for the local African American community. From 1959 to 1971, membership grew from 45 to 186. The 1960s were the heyday for Meadowbrook. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, once racially-exclusive private clubs opened to African Americans and membership in Meadowbrook declined. In 2007 the remaining members and officers sold the club to St. Augustine's College so that its legacy as a traditionally black country club would be preserved. The Meadowbrook Country Club was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 16, 2009.

The Meadowbrook Country Club offered a recreational and social meeting place for Raleigh's African American community for nearly 50 years. Courtesy of Sybil H. Argintar, North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.





### 3 Ocean Parkway Jewish Center

The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center in Brooklyn, New York, was built in 1924-1926. The Jewish community in Brooklyn was established in the mid 19th century and grew through a wave of eastern European Jewish immigration during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The congregation of Ocean Parkway was founded in 1907 by Harry Falk and a small group. It grew rapidly from the original location at 205 Dennis Avenue. The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center was designed by architects Samuel Lewis Malkind and Martyn N. Weinstein. They used a neo-classical design embellished with Judaic symbols. Built as a three-story-and-attic building (with a two-story addition to the south), the original building is faced in Indiana limestone, granite and marble, with the second and third stories organized as a temple front. The central area, directly above the three arched entranceways, is organized as three bays by six fluted Ionic pilasters-supporting an entablature and triangular pediment rising into the attic level.

Combining facilities for both religious and general community needs, the building has classrooms, meeting rooms, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool. The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center offered adult education classes, as well as forums and lectures, making it a place of intellectual development in the community. Over the years the Jewish population of

the neighborhood became more traditional in its religious observance and the Jewish Center, originally affiliated with the Conservative movement, is now Modern Orthodox. The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 12, 2009.

The Ocean Parkway Jewish Center has served Long Island since 1924. Courtesy of Tony Robins, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.



### 4 Winston-Salem Tobacco Historic District

The Winston-Salem Tobacco Historic District in downtown Winston-Salem, North Carolina, boasts the area's largest extant industrial section. It was once a prominent area for the production of tobacco, and the remaining buildings are from an African American and wholesale commercial business district that served the R. J. Reynolds Company and its employees. The tobacco factories employees were almost exclusively African American. R. J. Reynolds produced Camel cigarettes, the first recognizably American cigarette brand.

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 5, 2009, the district consists of factory buildings, storage warehouses, power stations, railroad bridges, and railroad right of ways. The R. J. Reynolds buildings are a few of

the surviving industrial buildings that once stood within the eastern section of downtown Winston-Salem during the early part of the twentieth century. Most notable among the district's buildings are the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, the S. J. Nissen Building, and the Piedmont Leaf Tobacco Company. The district encompasses 20 buildings, with 13 historically associated with the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company.

The S. J. Nissen Company manufactured and repaired wagons and served as a carriage repository supporting the need for transporting leaf tobacco from the auction sale houses to the manufacturing plants. Courtesy of Jennifer F. Hembree.



## 5 Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm

The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 9, 2009. It was one of the oldest permanent Japanese settlements in the United States. Located in El Dorado County, California, the farm was originally purchased by agent John Henry Schnell on behalf of Matsudaira Katamori, and included a house, barn, and fields. Twenty-two Japanese immigrants planted mulberry trees, cultivated 140,000 tea plants, and built a pond for the breeding of fish. The mulberry trees and tea leaves were from Japan. Tea and oil plants and silk cocoons from their colony experiment were displayed at the 1869 California State Agricultural Fair in Sacramento.

The Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm experienced limited success in its time (1869-1871). A drought in 1871, along with competition for water, poor management, and the loss of financial support from Katamori, contributed to the rapid demise of the colony.

The colonists at the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm had tea leaves sent to them from Japan for cultivation at their newly established farm in 1869. Courtesy of R. Allen.



The German community of Munichberg Historic District in Jefferson City, MO, dates back to the late 19th century. Courtesy of Missouri State Historic Preservation Office.

## 6 Munichburg Commercial Historic District

The Munichburg Commercial Historic District in Jefferson City, Missouri, developed by German immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and includes nine properties located around the intersection of East Dunklin and Madison Streets. Settled by German Protestants, the original local name for the neighborhood was Muenchberg, after the village in Germany of the same name. The German immigrants developed their own shopping district, fire department, churches, and hotels and the neighborhood was soon known as Munichburg. In the post-World War I years, possibly due to anti-German sentiment, the area adopted the name of Southside.

Eight of the nine buildings in the district were built by German Americans. The oldest building in the district, the John Nieghorn House, dates to 1892. The Busch family operated a business in Munichburg for over a hundred years. The Milo Walz family operated a new and used furniture shop in a building built in 1923, which was expanded and reached a peak employment of 125 people in the 1970s. In recent years, the Old Munichburg Association has promoted and preserved Munichburg and its German heritage. The Association holds an annual Oktoberfest, which has raised thousands of dollars over the years to improve streetscapes and encourage economic development. The Munichburg Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 1, 2009.

CONTINUED » PAGE 10



## 7 Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery

Located in Camden County, New Jersey, the Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery was listed in the National Register of Historic Place on July 29, 2009. The cemetery has been serving the African American community since 1902 and stands as the largest non-sectarian African American cemetery in the state of New Jersey. The cemetery is also the final resting place of 108 African American Civil War soldiers, most notably John Lawson, who received the Medal of Honor for his valiant service in the U.S. Navy during the Battle of Mobile Bay in August 1864. Other notable internments are located on the slope of Snow Hill, which is also the former name of the unincorporated historic African American community. These include 15 Spanish-American War veterans, and approximately 104 World War I veterans and 30 World War II veterans.

The grave markers vary in type and include homemade concrete markers, hand-inscribed headstones, plot enclosures, ornate granite stones, and marble obelisks. This still-active cemetery covers a little less than twelve acres; the total number of burials is unknown.

---

The Mount Peace Cemetery and Funeral Directing Company Cemetery is the largest non-sectarian African American cemetery in New Jersey. Courtesy of Paul W. Schopp.



## 8 Komensky School

The Komensky School, constructed in 1912, served a prominently Czech farm community in McLeod County, Minnesota. It was a center of community life, from 1912 to 1959, when the rural district consolidated with Hutchinson Township and the building was sold to the Lodge Lumir. Czechs from Central Europe began arriving in Minnesota in the 1850s, and by 1858 a significant number had settled in McLeod County as farmers. Like other ethnic groups, Czech farmers settling northeast of Hutchinson, joined together in forming societies and clubs, and in 1876 local residents formed the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society, or Cesky Cternársky Vzdělanecké Spolek. The society sought to increase educational opportunities for the community and their children while retaining the culture and folklore of their ancestors.

The Bohemian Reading and Educational Society group became the nucleus of the Komensky School. The school was named after Jan Komensky (1592-1670), a noted Czech teacher, philosopher, and writer and one of the earliest champions of universal education. Influenced by former student, teacher, and physics professor at the University of Minnesota, Anthony Zeleny and built by local builder/architect Paul Magdanz, Komensky School taught students from grades 1 to 8. From 1912 to 1959, more than 150 pupils graduated from Komensky School. The school's

well-preserved exterior displays a one-story rectangular building, including a basement. The Komensky School, located on a half-acre parcel of land, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on August 20, 2009 for ethnic heritage and education.

---

The Komensky School was an off-shoot of the Bohemian Reading and Educational Society, formed for children of the Czech immigrants in McLeod County, Minnesota. Courtesy of Donald J. Hosington and the Minnesota SHPO.





## 9 Berkley Square

The Berkley Square subdivision, which is located in the Las Vegas area historically known as Westside, consists of 148 Contemporary Ranch-style homes designed by internationally-known African American architect Paul R. Williams of Los Angeles (1894-1980) between 1954 and 1955. This was the first minority (African American) built subdivision in Nevada. Berkley Square, bounded by Byrnes Ave, D Street, Leonard Ave and G Street, was built to provide adequate housing for a growing African American community before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The development was financed in part by Thomas L. Berkley, a prominent African American attorney, media owner, developer, and civil rights advocate in Oakland, California.

Prior to the 1930s, racism was not a problem in Las Vegas simply because there were so few African American residents, but as the African American presence grew, segregation set in. Housing conditions on the Westside, where the African American population was located, were substandard, but planning between the City of Las Vegas and the Federal Housing Authority (FHA) began to build a community of affordable modern housing in 1947, which resulted in the creation of Berkley Square. The houses of Berkley Square are contemporary Ranch-style houses—one-story houses with low-pitched, gabled, or hipped roofs and wide eaves.

The project architect Paul R. Williams was the first African American to become a member of the American Institute of Architects; he had studied at the Los Angeles School of Art and the Los Angeles Beaux-Arts Institute of Design and the engineering school at the University of Southern California. Williams designed homes in California for movie industry leaders and movie stars. In Las Vegas, he designed the Royal Nevada (1951), remodeled the Flamingo Hotel (1959), and, among other projects, designed the Las Vegas Hotel Casino & Shopping Center (1957). He was the author of two books: *The Small House of Tomorrow* published in 1945 and *New Houses for Today* published in 1946.

Berkley Square represents the strides made by the African-American community in the period of activism leading up to the Civil Rights Act. It provided quality housing and services to Las Vegas' historically neglected Westside. It is still a predominately African American community, and many homes have been kept within the families that originally purchased them when they were constructed in the 1950s. Berkley Square was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 23, 2009.



An African American community designed by Paul R. Williams, Berkley Square was the first planned community designed by a minority architect in the state of Nevada. Courtesy of Diana Painter, Nevada SHPO.

**i** For more information about the National Register visit <http://www.nps.gov/nr>



## Recognizing and Preserving Racial Segregation in South Carolina

Rebekah Dobrasko / South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office

Students in the Introduction to Historic Preservation class in the University of South Carolina's graduate-level Public History program embarked on a three-year project to research and identify sites associated with racial segregation in Columbia, South Carolina. This project resulted in the "Segregation in Columbia, SC 1880-1960" Multiple Property Submission (MPS) to the National Register of Historic Places, the listing of six properties in the National Register, a spin-off Multiple Property Submission, and increased awareness and recognition of segregation-related sites in the capitol city.

The students, led by Dr. Robert Weyeneth, Director of the Public History program, conducted extensive archival research and oral history interviews to develop the MPS. The historic context focuses on two "snapshots" of Columbia: segregation in 1919 and the early 1950s. Using city directories that segregated residences and businesses by race, students created a list of properties that could meet the criteria for listing in the National Register. Properties would fit into four categories that defined segregated space: an exclusive space, a partitioned space, a duplicative space, or an alternative space. Exclusive spaces reflect those that were dedicated to one race or the other; partitioned spaces had some sort of partition to separate the races, such as railroad passenger stations; duplicative spaces represented a system of double building to maintain segregation, such as black and white schools; while alternative spaces represented African American responses to white-only spaces.

After the acceptance of the "Segregation in Columbia" MPS and initial listing of six properties, more buildings in Columbia were nominated as part of the MPS. The African American community became aware of the National Register as a way to acknowledge segregation-related sites, and Historic Columbia Foundation began an intensive effort to place historical markers at African American related sites across the city. Additional research into another segregated property in Columbia, the Florence Benson Elementary School, led to the development of another MPS that examined a different aspect of duplicative segregated places in South Carolina's public school system.

In 1950, African American parents in Clarendon County, sued the local school district for the desegregation of its public schools. This case, *Briggs v. Elliott*, eventually made its way to the United States Supreme Court and was decided along with three other cases that struck down racial segregation in public schools, in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In response to the suit, the South Carolina government decided to demonstrate that its black schools were "equal" to its white schools. The General Assembly passed the state's first sales tax of 3% and dedicated the money to black school construction. Over the next four years, South Carolina spent almost \$125 million to build close to 775 schools.

All schools constructed under this "equalization" program were architect-designed and reflected Modern architecture and modern building materials. These schools have flat or low-pitched roofs, banks of windows, covered walkways, articulated entrances, brick veneer or concrete block walls, and classrooms that opened to the outside. Only two other states, Georgia and Mississippi, had a similar statewide school equalization building program. South Carolina is the first state to develop a historic context on these schools for the National Register. Mississippi and Georgia are beginning to recognize and list their equalization schools.

The MPS, "South Carolina's Equalization School Program, 1951-1960" was accepted by the National Park Service in 2009. These documents were prepared by Rebekah Dobrasko of the State Historic Preservation Office as a result of research conducted for her master's thesis. As historians, politicians, educators, and the press become more aware of the "hidden" history of segregation in South Carolina's historic buildings, it is the SHPO's hope that more discussion, research, and recognition of sites associated with segregation will be documented in the state. ♦



# African American Descendants and Archeology

Kristin M. Montaperto / Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

**N**orthampton Slave Quarters and Archaeological Park is a half-acre, open-air park containing the foundations of two former slave quarters. It is located in the middle of a townhouse community outside the eastern border of Washington, D.C., in Prince George's County, Maryland. Owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), the park is managed by its Archaeology Program and open year round with self guided tours.

In 1673, Charles Calvert, the third Lord Baltimore of Maryland, granted the 1,000-acre plot of land to Thomas Sprigg who named the property Northampton. It was a prominent plantation home to the Sprigg family and their enslaved African Americans and servants for nearly 200 years. Today, six clans link their families to a common ancestor, Elizabeth Hawkins, who lived at Northampton during the 1800s. Elizabeth and other members of the Hawkins family are recorded in the 1870 U.S. Census as living at Northampton.

Interpretative signage guides the public through the history of slavery in Prince George's County, Maryland, by discussing the plantation owners, slaves seeking freedom, tenant farming, archeology, and the important role of descendants. For example, some enslaved African American residents sought emancipation through escape. In 2008, Northampton was accepted into the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program. Contemporary newspaper accounts cite multiple Northampton residents as runaways between 1800 and 1836.

The site also features the reconstructed foundations of the two slave quarters. The smaller of the two structures (25 feet by 27 feet) was wooden framed and stood on a stone foundation in the late 1790s. Divided by a wall and chimney, the house provided living space for two families. Descendants of the enslaved resided there until the 1930s. Through historic documents, archeologists have been able to compare the dimensions of the excavated wooden frame quarters with a list of buildings in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax. Osborn Sprigg, Jr.'s (the fourth owner), Federal Direct Tax lists "...1 Overseers House 20 by 16, one Negro House 26 by 24, Corn House 40 by 12, with 10 foot Shed on each Side, Barn & Stable 60 by 30, Three [Tobacco] Houses 60 by 24 each..." MNCPPC believes the "Negro House 26 by 24" may be the structure uncovered during excavations.

The second structure was constructed in the 1840s and also housed two families. It was built entirely of brick (22 feet by 40 feet) and divided into two living areas by a central wall



Northampton Slave Quarters and Archaeological Park, Courtesy of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Archaeology Program.



Reconstructed Wooden Frame and Brick Quarters Foundations, Courtesy of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Archaeology Program

CONTINUED » PAGE 14





## Two Enclaves form One New Historic District: The Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District

Brian Joyner / National Park Service

In every large urban area, immigrant enclaves tend to bump up against one another, with sliding boundaries. Sometimes the neighborhoods change hands—for example, in Los Angeles, Little Tokyo became Bronzeville, an African American neighborhood, due to relocation, to and then became Little Tokyo again. Often, groups move on to other areas or the enclaves become incorporated into the larger society. But in New York City, two famous neighborhoods, Chinatown and Little Italy, have become one historic district. On September 15, 2009 the New York State Historic Preservation Office designated the Chinatown and Little Italy Historic District at the state level. The new district was listed in the National Register on February 12, 2010.

Both communities were established in Lower Manhattan in the mid-1800s, and overlap within a 45-block area. However development pressures in recent years threatened the continued existence of both neighborhoods. The Two Bridges Neighborhood Council, a non-profit low-income housing developer, worked with the two communities to develop the historic district nomination. Meetings with representatives from both communities identified goals and sought to avoid the superficial development that has occurred in other neighborhoods around the city and the nation. Victor Papa, president of Two Bridges, said that the council sought the designation to provide protection for the tenement architecture.

Along with the new historic district, Two Bridges helped plan the Marco Polo Day celebration that took place on October 18, 2009. The celebration embodies the spirit of the district and the shared histories of the two groups, dating back 700 years to the arrival of the Venetian merchant at the court of Kubla Khan. The celebration further emphasized how the two communities could work together in preserving their heritages. The communities plan to make Marco Polo Day an annual event.

Information for this article came from The Villager and Downtown Express newspapers.

African American Descendants and Archeology  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

and chimney. There was a door and fire place for each side with a loft above the main floor reached by ladder. Later, a shed was added to the side of the building. Susie Smith, daughter of Elizabeth Hawkins, lived in the brick quarters in the 1920s and 1930s. Smith's grandchildren remember visiting her on the property and have shared their experiences and through oral histories, which have helped archeologists learn more about life at Northampton during the 1900s.

In addition to providing oral histories on life at Northampton, Hawkins descendants participated in excavations at the slave quarters during Hawkins' Family Dig Days. The family worked alongside archeologists and other volunteers, digging and sifting through the past of their ancestors. A familiar object would spark a memory and stories were told of its significance. Memories were passed from great-grandparent to great-grandchild. Archeology continues to provide descendants with more information about their ancestors, while descendants provide archeologists with insight into their history and memory.

The archeology and accompanying oral histories, combined with documentary research provide preservation efforts at Northampton Plantation with valuable information on African American home life during and following slavery. ♦



Family Memorial Service, Courtesy of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Archaeology Program

# Conferences, Events, and Announcements

## Conferences

### April 2010

#### Society of Architectural Historians, Chicago, IL

The 63rd Annual Meeting of the Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) will be held in Chicago on April 21-25, 2010. Sweet Home Chicago celebrates the society's 70th anniversary in the city known as "Rome for Americanists." Featured sessions include a day-long Landscape History Symposium, organized by Susan Herrington and Thaisa Way; the annual Historic Preservation Colloquium, organized by James Peters; and a round-table session entitled "In Between: Histories Informed by Contemporary Art and Architecture," organized by Sharon Irish.

For more information and registration details of the SAH's Annual Meeting, visit the 2010 Meeting website, <http://www.sah.org/index.php?src=gendocs&ref=AnnualMeetingChicago&category=AnnualMeetingChicago>.

### May 2010

#### American Association of Museums, Los Angeles, CA

The American Association of Museums will host its annual conference, Museums Without Borders, on May 23-27. Los Angeles was the first and largest "majority-minority" city in the United States, and a leader in technology, entertainment and innovative response to environmental issues. The host city and the conference will have over 170 sessions, with a 10-session international track on global issues affecting the museum field.

For more information, visit AAM Conference webpage, <http://www.aam-us.org/am10/theme.cfm>.

### June 2010

#### National Asian Pacific Islander American Historic Preservation Forum, San Francisco, CA

"Preserving Asian Pacific Islander America: Mobilizing our Communities" is an initial meeting for Asian Pacific Islander communities to come together with preservation organizations. The conference will take place at the Hotel Kabuki in San Francisco, CA on June 24 to 26, 2010. Featured speakers include Dr. Sue Fawn Chung of University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

For registration information, visit the Forum's website, <http://www.apinhpforum.org/register-online.html>.

### October 2010

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation, Austin, TX

The theme of the National Trust's National Preservation Conference in 2010 is The Next American City, The Next American Landscape. The conference will take place in Austin, Texas. Sessions will focus on Smart Growth and Diversity.

For more information, visit the National Trust's conference website, <http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/training/npc/>.

## Events

Asian American/Pacific Islander Heritage Month / April

Historic Preservation Month / May

Hispanic Heritage Month / September/October

## Announcements

### New CRDP Publication, *Hispanic Reflections on the American Landscape*

The history of North America is tied to the Spanish settlement of the Western Hemisphere. The melding of Spanish, European, indigenous American, and African cultures are at the root of Hispanic heritage throughout the region. This heritage influences aspects of American culture from our architectural lexicon, to food to music and dance.



The National Park Service has published *Hispanic Reflections on the American Landscape: Identifying and Interpreting Hispanic Heritage*, the third in the series of guides to the diverse heritage of the nation. This guide uses properties documented by NPS cultural resource programs to provide examples of how to identify and interpret Hispanic heritage within American culture for preservationists, interpreters, and the general public.

*Hispanic Reflections*, published as a single volume in English and Spanish, is available to the public through NPS. For copies, please contact [WASO\\_CRDP\\_INFO@nps.gov](mailto:WASO_CRDP_INFO@nps.gov).

*Hispanic Reflections on the American Landscape* provides preservationists and interpreters with a guide to understanding Hispanic heritage within American culture. Courtesy of National Park Service.



National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240



SPRING 2010

# Heritage Matters

News of the Nation's Diverse Cultural Heritage

Connecting Preservation  
to Community:  
Washington, D.C.'s  
Community Heritage  
Project

A "big time woman" of  
the Piedmont: Unearthing  
the Story of a Community  
Matriarch

Rehabilitating Raleigh's  
"Black Main Street"

National Register  
Nominations

Recognizing and  
Preserving Racial  
Segregation in South  
Carolina

Two Enclaves form One  
New Historic District: The  
Chinatown and Little  
Italy Historic District

African American  
Descendants and  
Archeology



## About Heritage Matters

*Heritage Matters*, sponsored by the Cultural Resources Programs of the National Park Service, is published twice a year, and is free of charge. Readers are invited to submit short articles and notices for inclusion. (Limit submissions to fewer than 600 words and include author's name and affiliation. Photographs or slides are welcome.) Please submit newsletter items in writing or electronically to:

**Brian D. Joyner**, Editor, *Heritage Matters*  
DOI/National Park Service, 1849 C Street  
NW (2280), Washington, DC 20240

phone: 202.354.2276

e-mail: [brian\\_joyner@nps.gov](mailto:brian_joyner@nps.gov)