

Minutes of the

# WeGOJA Foundation Meeting of the Board of Directors

Held virtually, January 23, 2024

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The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m.

**Board members in attendance** were Chairman Larry Watson, Vice Chairman Rick Devoe, Rev. Robert China, Jessica Boyd, Cory France, and Meg Hunt. **Also attending were staff members** Dawn Dawson-House (Executive Director,) Kate Schoen (Project Leader, Preservation Toolkit,) and Timika Wilson (Project Leader Rosenwald Schools Study, and Administrator, Preservation Toolkit.) Also joining was **Joshua Simms of Palmetto Philanthropy.**

Rev. China moved and Vice Chair DeVoe seconded that the agenda be adopted. It was adopted by unanimous vote.

The minutes were reviewed. Motion was made by Vice Chair Devoe to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Rev. China. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Every project is now being presented in the financial report, unlike the QuickBooks statement of activity, which is structured for IRS compliance.

Dawn reviewed our beginning balance for the 2023 calendar year of \$46,412.32, and our income of \$761,540.49, much of which came from a Mellon grant in March 2023. With expenses totaling \$455,506.05, the closing balance for the calendar year was \$352,446.76.

Dawn also reviewed what we've spent so far this year on individual projects. See attached budget recap.

## MELLON GRANT

The WeGOJA Foundation kept expenses to a minimum and saved about \$37,000 from the first year's allocation of the Mellon grant. Dawn submitted an interim report to Mellon seeking permission to use some of the money for bonuses for superior staff performance and to serve as deposits for expenses related to a formal unveiling of the toolkit in February 2025. Vice Chairman Devoe recommended some of the money pay for operations costs.

## JOSH SIMS – Palmetto Philanthropy

Josh is now a month in to his examination of WeGOJA and will provide a final assessment and recommendations going forward at the April 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **NEWSLETTER – Lift Every Voice**

Board member France designed the template for WeGOJA's new e-newsletter Lift Every Voice. The newsletter will be distributed one week after every quarterly board meeting. A copy of the January Lift Every Voice is attached.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

### **SC Arts Commission**

The first phase of the Arts Commission project helped 14 5<sup>th</sup>-grade social studies teachers discover more about incorporating art into classroom instruction. Their students created Bloom Balls, a story-board of sorts that expresses what they've learned in the classroom. Phase two of the program targets 8<sup>th</sup>-grade civics and social studies teachers, and will be held in February and March. The project ends with a field study to Charles Towne Landing and the International African American Museum on June 11.

### **Rosenwald Trail Study**

Timika reported on the recent Rosenwald School Steering Committee meeting that focused on the professionals hired and contracted to execute on the strategy to create a physical and digital Rosenwald Schools Trail. There are six extant Rosenwald properties designated for the study, but the project team is open to studying additional places. The goal of the study is to provide recommendations to the South Carolina State Park Service on adding a Rosenwald Trail to their historic sites inventory.

Presentations about the project will be delivered at the Landmark Conference in March hosted by the Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies and the Annual Preservation Conference in April hosted by the State Preservation Office.

### **Preservation Toolkit**

The toolkit team hosted 16 listening sessions across the state and four virtual in the fall of 2023 to gather information on community preservation needs. People who signed up for a toolkit newsletter will continue to receive updates as they develop. The project continues to remain on its timeline. Content development will take place in the spring and summer, and a soft launch will take place in the fall of 2024.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Publicity Committee**

The Publicity Committee led by Board Member Cory France designed the Lift Every Voice e-newsletter template and the new [membership webpage](#) for the WeGOJA Foundation.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

The WeGOJA Foundation is working with Historic Charleston Foundation and other funders to provide oral history support to Taveau Church in Cordesville (Berkeley County.) Oral history is considered an emergency project because there are only a few surviving members of the church.

***The next board meeting will be Tuesday, April 16, in person. It will be an all-day meeting, maybe 10-2 or 3.***

Respectfully submitted,

Marc Rapport  
WeGOJA Foundation Secretary

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Budget Recap
- B. Rosenwald Schools Trail Study update
- C. Preservation Toolkit update
- D. Lift Every Voice enewsletter



A.

# WeGOJA Foundation Financial Statement

## for the calendar year 2023

Beginning bank balance \$ 46,412.32

### Revenue/ income

Individual Donations	\$5,927.10	
Government Grants	\$142,046.98	
Private Foundations and Organizations	\$609,775.44	
Proceeds from Sales	\$3,790.97	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>\$761,540.49</b>

### Expenses

operations / administration	(\$22,857.96)	
debt	(\$11,518.00)	
<b>Total Admin</b>		<b>(\$34,375.96)</b>

### PROJECTS

#### MELLON

Staffing	(\$137,457.16)	
Fundraising	(\$5,775.00)	
Region Ambassadors	(\$50,000.00)	
Listening Sessions	(\$20,631.39)	
Tech Team	(\$38,885.00)	
<b>TOTAL MELLON</b>		<b>(\$252,748.55)</b>

#### SC Arts Commission

Arts Educator	(\$83,338.00)	
Lecturers / Consultants	(\$19,250.00)	
Material and supplies	(\$4,458.97)	
Field Trip	(\$1,158.14)	
<b>TOTAL SC ARTS COMMISSION</b>		<b>(\$108,205.11)</b>

#### Gullah Geechee Seafood Trail

Project Leader	(\$11,250.00)	
Project Coordinators / Oral History	(\$7,850.00)	
Stipends	(\$1,625.00)	
Transcriptions and tech (Zoom, DocuSign)	(\$5,346.20)	
Short Film	(\$12,800.00)	
<b>TOTAL GULLAH GEECHEE SEADOOD TRAIL</b>		<b>(\$38,871.20)</b>

#### Rosenwald Schools Trail Study

Project Leader	(\$13,312.00)	
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Operations	(\$3,304.54)	
<b>TOTAL ROSENWALD SCHOOLS TRAIL STUDY</b>		<b>(\$16,616.54)</b>

**Union County Community Remembrance Project -- UCCRP**

Insurance and Security	(\$1,392.46)	
Supplies and Support	(\$1,096.23)	
Entertainment	(\$2,200.00)	
		<b>(\$4,688.69)</b>

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>(\$455,506.05)</b>
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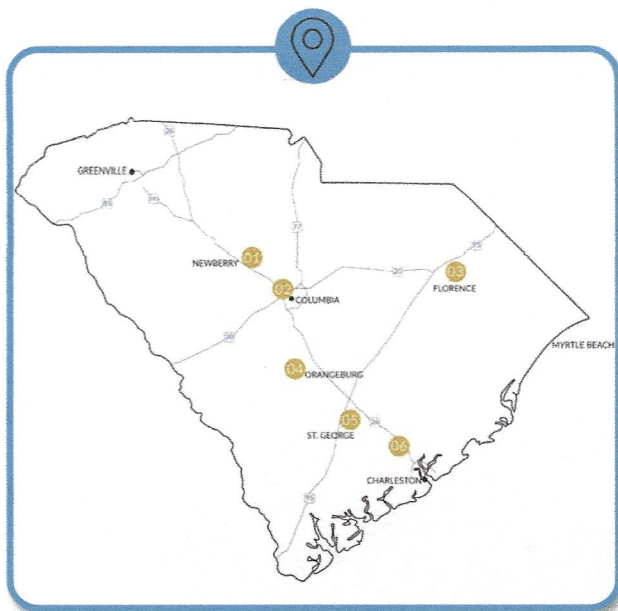
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>\$352,446.76</b>
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B.

# SC Rosenwald Schools Trail Study (RSTS) – WeGOJA Board Update – Jan 10, 2024

Project Leader – Timika M. Wilson [timika@wegoja.org](mailto:timika@wegoja.org)

The history of Rosenwald Schools in South Carolina is captured in over 400 schools that were built to serve rural African American children in the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. While a little over 40 schools remain standing in some form, their impact resonates today. WeGOJA Foundation in collaboration with the Conservation Voters of South Carolina, the South Carolina Department



- 1. Pomaria Hope School in Newberry County
- 2. Pine Grove Rosenwald School in Richland County
- 3. Mt. Zion Rosenwald School in Florence County
- 4. Orangeburg Teacherage in Orangeburg County
- 5. St George Rosenwald School in Dorchester County
- 6. Lincolnville Rosenwald School in Charleston County

*Image from Rosenwald School Trail Master Plan Earth Design Proposal*

of Parks, Recreation & Tourism, the SC Department of Archives and History, and Rosenwald preservation organizations across the state have embarked on a collaborative study to determine whether a set of extant sites, could become South Carolina’s first state park focused on African American and Jewish history. With an eye towards including other Rosenwald Schools sites in the future, WeGOJA Foundation’s Project Leader, Timika M. Wilson, is working with Earth Design, Inc., experienced in delivering physical and material interpretations of historic sites for public use and a soon to be selected Oral Historian to establish a Master Plan that engages with alumni and community stakeholders, assessing site integrity, and designing a plan that shares this important history with the public.

With oversight from the Rosenwald Schools Trail Study (RSTS) Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders committed to supporting this initiative, our team will establish a dedicated and interactive website, an RSTS Bulletin update for legislators and conference presentations, conduct site visits, and interview students and entities with ties to the Rosenwald Schools. WeGOJA Foundation thanks the legislators and the dedicated professionals who continue to contribute to promoting African American history through the lens of the SC Rosenwald Schools.

### Key Milestones

Event	2023
Master Planner contracted – Earth Design, Inc.	Dec 19, 2023
Master Calendar Input/Schedule – WeGOJA and Earth Design, Inc.	Dec
	<b>2024</b>
Oral Historian Selection Panel	Jan 12
RSTS Kickoff Meeting (All meetings are on Zoom)	Jan 17



## SC Rosenwald Schools Trail Study (RSTS) – WeGOJA Board Update – Jan 10, 2024

Project Leader – Timika M. Wilson [timika@wegoja.org](mailto:timika@wegoja.org)

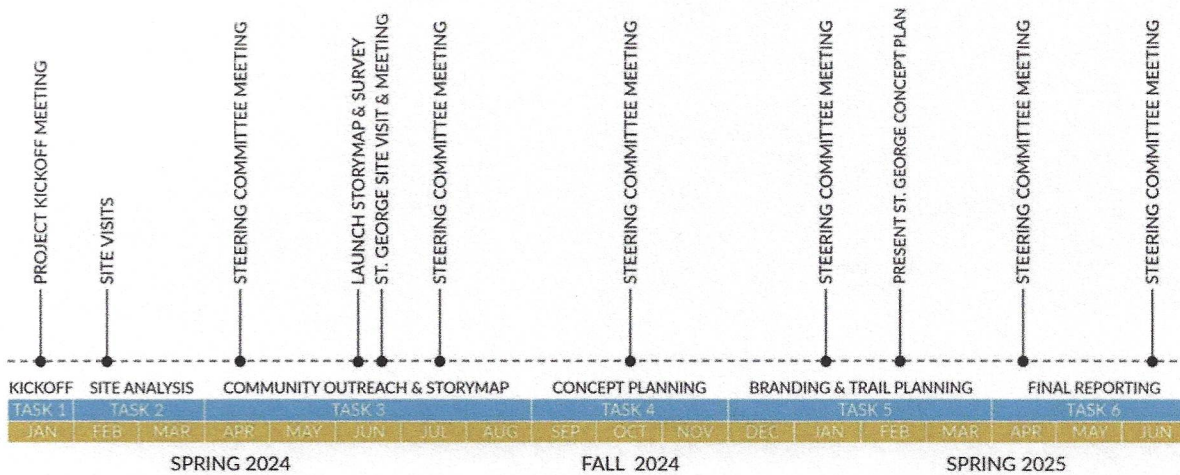
RSTS Bulletin – presented to Legislators on <a href="#">Rosenwald Schools Day</a>	Feb 28
<b>RSTS Steering Committee Quarterly Meetings</b>	<b>Apr 17, Jul 17, Oct 16</b>

### Key Milestones Continued

RSTS Site Visits (6 sites)	Feb 20 - Mar 1
RSTS Presentation Session at <a href="#">SCDAH HPC 2024</a>	Apr 26, 2024
RSTS Public Meeting at <a href="#">St. George Rosenwald School</a>	Jun 18
RSTS Story Map Launch – digital map of sites with background information on each location depicting a virtual “trail”	Jun 19
	<b>2025</b>
<b>RSTS Steering Committee Quarterly Meetings</b>	<b>Jan 14, Apr 16, Jun 18</b>
<b>Final Report - Final deliverables - report with Steering Committee &amp; Oral Historian Report –</b>	<b>Jun 18</b>

**Earth Design, Inc.** Overall Project Timeline from their initial proposal will be further refined based on deliverables and RSTS Steering Committee guidance.

### PROJECT TIMELINE



Additional information and Project Leader data management is housed at the WeGOJA Google Workspace [Rosenwald Schools Trail Study](#).

<b>PRT:</b> Al Hester <a href="mailto:ahester@scprt.com">ahester@scprt.com</a> ; Rachel Snuggs <a href="mailto:rsnuggs@scprt.com">rsnuggs@scprt.com</a>	<b>SCDAH:</b> Brad Sauls <a href="mailto:bsauls@scdah.sc.gov">bsauls@scdah.sc.gov</a>	<b>St. George:</b> Ralph James <a href="mailto:rjames31@hotmail.com">rjames31@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Pine Grove:</b> Sunshine Eskew (Richland County Rec Commission) <a href="mailto:erika.eskew@rcrc.state.sc.us">erika.eskew@rcrc.state.sc.us</a> , Brenda McGriff <a href="mailto:brendamcgriff@hotmail.com">brendamcgriff@hotmail.com</a>	<b>Orangeburg:</b> Rosa Kennerly <a href="mailto:rosakennerly@yahoo.com">rosakennerly@yahoo.com</a>	<b>Hope School:</b> Tenetha Hall <a href="mailto:pomaria11@gmail.com">pomaria11@gmail.com</a>
<b>Lincolnvilleville:</b> Perness Seele <a href="mailto:pcseele@lincolnvillesc.org">pcseele@lincolnvillesc.org</a>	<b>Mt. Zion:</b> Terry James <a href="mailto:james955@twc.com">james955@twc.com</a>	<b>USC:</b> Val Littlefield <a href="mailto:littlefvw@mailbox.sc.edu">littlefvw@mailbox.sc.edu</a>
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**SC Rosenwald Schools Trail Study (RSTS) – WeGOJA Board Update – Jan 10, 2024**

Project Leader – Timika M. Wilson [timika@wegoja.org](mailto:timika@wegoja.org)  
*SC Rosenwald Schools Trail Study Steering Committee*

The Mellon grant project, South Carolina Preservation Toolkit, has completed its first phase - community input and feedback. Our final listening session was held Monday, January 15 in Greenville, with the rest of the in person and virtual listening sessions held throughout the fall of 2023.

Throughout the fall, our attendance at listening sessions picked up as word spread about the project, and we are satisfied that we have reached most corners of the state. Community members gave us a wide variety of feedback about their preservation challenges and what they wished to see in the Toolkit.

While there were some regional differences, a broad consensus emerged about the state of African American historic preservation. When asked what their number one most challenging barrier was, community members answered "resistance to preserving Black history." We had thought that folks would mention funding as the top priority, but in fact communities across the state consistently said that resistance was their primary concern. We think this is extremely important feedback and tells us a great deal about the state of Black history right now. Attendees also mentioned that lack of support, both from within their own communities and externally, was a top concern. Funding and lack of accessible resources/tools were concerns mentioned after the resistance and lack of support. Another concern is that the majority of current African American preservation advocates are older, so there is a need to get youth involved.

Finally, something to note is the way that African American communities think of and define historic preservation. In comparison to a "traditional" or more white understanding of historic preservation that sees preservation as preserving buildings, Black communities see preservation more holistically - as buildings and spaces, yes, but also broader memory, meaning, and culture.

We have now moved into the second phase of the project - development, structure, and content building with the tech team, Period Three. In early December we held a very successful workshop with Period Three to go over listening session input and develop initial ideas for how to structure the Toolkit. Period Three has used these ideas to develop initial wireframes and site maps for the website. So far, we have two ways for people to access the resources of the Toolkit. One lets people see resources by the type of building or type of project they want to preserve - this is more for beginners who don't know where to start. The second lets people select the individual tool or resource (such as the Professionals Database) - this is for more seasoned advocates that want to go directly to the resource.

Our next steps will be continuing to progress on the sitemap and wireframes, then moving into design of the website. As we do that, we are continuing to build content for each of the tools. We are also building a monthly Toolkit newsletter to keep our communities/audience engaged.

D.

## Message from the Chairman of the Board

Welcome to the quarterly newsletter of the WeGOJA Foundation, a statewide nonprofit that advocates for the protection, preservation, and promotion of African American history across South Carolina. We will use this space to amplify voices that work toward those goals and open dialogue for collaboration and the sharing of best practices.

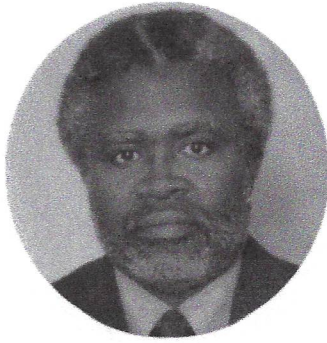
In this inaugural issue, you will find updates on WeGOJA projects, links to foundation board meeting minutes, a listing of several key events during Black History month, and a call for donations and membership.

Future newsletters might include other features as well.

We always welcome your input! If you know of conferences, lectures, festivals, and other events from April to December 2024, let us know and we'll add it to the next quarter's newsletter. If you have suggestions for improving this newsletter, forward those ideas as well. You can write to us at [info@WeGOJA.org](mailto:info@WeGOJA.org).

We are looking forward to hearing from you and working together toward African American historic preservation!





Larry Watson

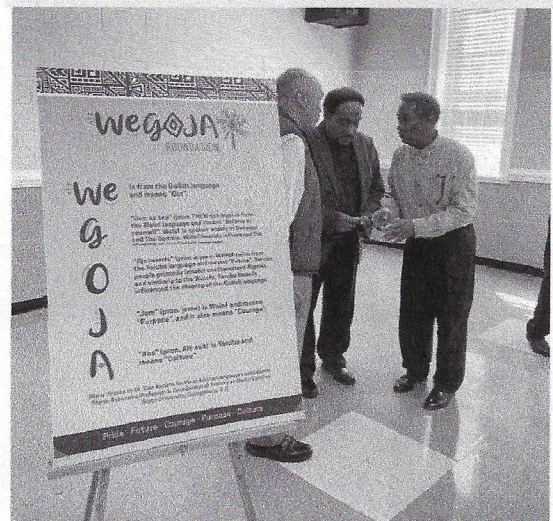
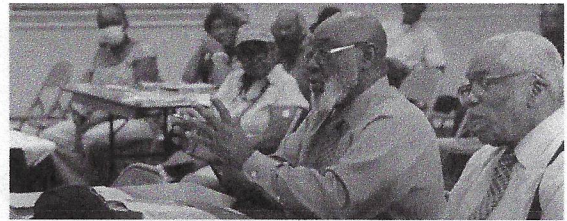
Board Chairman, WeGOJA Foundation

Professor of History, SC State University

Associate Professor of History, University of South Carolina

## Preservation Toolkit Enters Second Phase

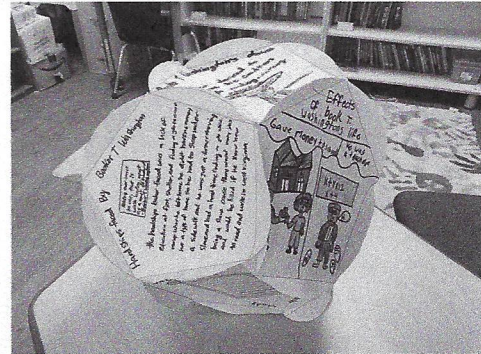
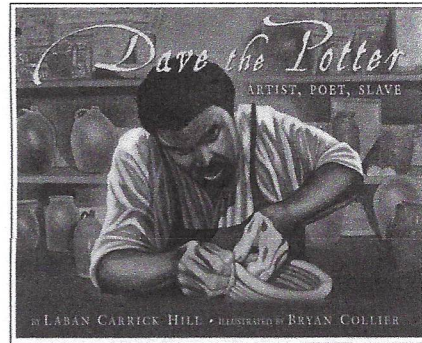
Since March 2023, the WeGOJA Foundation has been spearheading a new project - the ***South Carolina Preservation Toolkit***, funded by a two-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The toolkit will be a one-stop shop of resources and tools to help African American communities preserve their historic spaces and places. Our goal is to bolster African American historic preservation in the state, equip and empower local communities, and increase accessibility and engagement with Black history. [More.](#)





## WeGOJA Encourages Teachers to Add More Art in Classroom Instruction through History

With a grant from the SC Arts Commission, the WeGOJA Foundation is hosting professional development webinars for South Carolina educators that help them incorporate more art into classroom instruction through African American history. [More.](#)

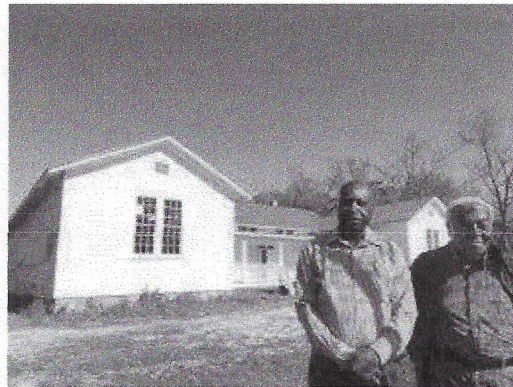


Bloom ball created by 6th-grade students in Florence School District 3 who were studying Booker T. Washington.

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## Rosenwald School Study Underway

The WeGOJA Foundation, in partnership with the Conservation Voters of South Carolina and other organizations, has launched a study of extant Rosenwald School structures across the state to determine the feasibility of a historic trail for the State Park Service. [More.](#)



## Black History Month in South Carolina

Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for



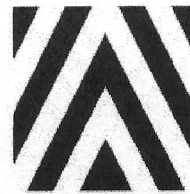
recognizing their critical and central role in the history of the United States. Events and celebrations are happening across South Carolina throughout the month of February. The list below is not all-inclusive.

The WeGOJA Foundation is currently accepting events, including conferences, celebrations, and festivals, scheduled for April-December 2024 for its next quarterly newsletter. Send information, photos, and logos to [info@wegoja.org](mailto:info@wegoja.org).

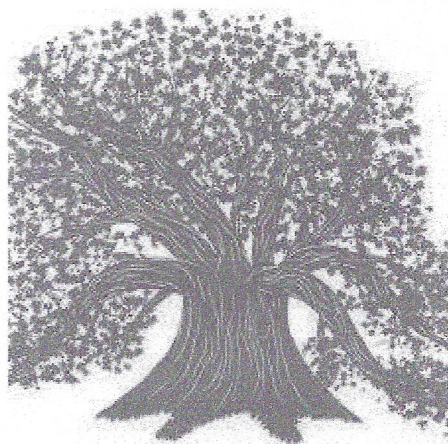
## **From Revolution to Valor: The Legacy of African Americans Military Service for the USA**

*February 3rd*

To commemorate Black History Month, the Center For Family History at the International African American Museum in Charleston presents a webinar on African Americans in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. **More.**



**INTERNATIONAL  
AFRICAN AMERICAN  
MUSEUM**



## ***Speaking with an Unbroken Tongue: the International Gullah Geechee and African Diaspora Conference***

*February 22-24*

Presented by the Charles Joyner Institute at Coastal Carolina University, the fourth annual conference will present the theme – ***Speaking with an Unbroken Tongue: Exploring and Celebrating the Language and Culture of Gullah Geechee People and the African Diaspora.*** Through sessions, workshops, and performances, the conference will focus on the use of Gullah Geechee oral and cultural



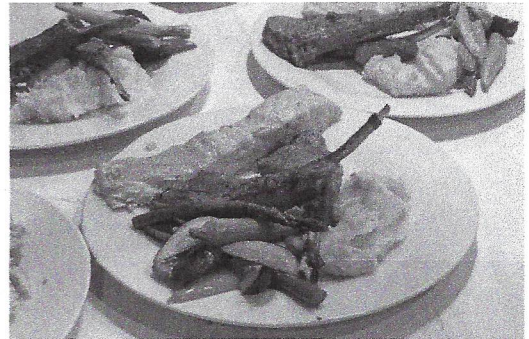
language today and its influence on American society throughout history. [More](#)

## **Black History Month Events presented by African American Settlement Community Historic Commission**

*Month of February*

The African American Settlement Community Historic Commission is presenting events throughout the month of February at Boone Hall Plantation in Mount Pleasant. A Speaker's Series will be held every weekend in February featuring historians and public leaders. Also scheduled are a Taste of Gullah on Feb. 10 and Feb. 18, and a Settlement Community Conversation on Feb. 3.

Black History Month events are included with admission to Boone Hall Plantation. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the 1904 Long Point High School restoration project. [More](#).



## **26th Annual Robert Smalls Lecture featuring Bree Newsome**

*April 18, 7 p.m. Location TBD*

Bree Newsome is an artist who drew national attention in 2015 when she climbed the flagpole in front of the South Carolina Capitol building and removed a Confederate battle flag. [More about Bree Newsome](#). The Robert Smalls Lecture is hosted by the Department of African American Studies at the University of South Carolina.





## Historic Taveau Church Receives Grant from National Trust

Historic Taveau Church in Berkeley County is one of 31 faith institutions receiving grant funding from the National Trust's [African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund](#).

Taveau is a rare surviving rural, wood-frame antebellum structure, with its exterior marked by a modest cornice and a simple Doric portico. Funding will support a plan to restore the building's structural integrity and engage the community and congregation in long-term sustainability efforts. **[More](#)**.

## Become A Member of the WeGOJA Foundation

The WeGOJA Foundation invites you to become a part of our mission to identify, document, and promote African American heritage in South Carolina. Membership is more than just a subscription – it is an annual pledge to safeguard cultural and natural treasures for generations to come.

Join Us



## Take Action

In addition to membership, you can support the WeGOJA Foundation by making a one-time or recurring donation through the PayPal Giving Fund.

[PayPal Giving Fund](#)

**Thank you for supporting the  
WeGOJA Foundation!**

## Board Meeting Minutes

WeGOJA Foundation Board Meetings are held once every quarter. Click button below to see minutes of these meetings.

[Board Meeting Minutes](#)

We have earned a Candid Gold Seal of Transparency! Check out our [nonprofit profile](#) to keep up to date with our impact.

Keep this link handy. We want to make sure you always have the information you need to support our work with trust and confidence





## Discover History With the Green Book of South Carolina

The state's first mobile  
travel guide to African American cultural sites

[Learn More](#)