



HISTORY HAPPENS

Official Newsletter of the Alabama Historical Commission

FEBRUARY 2024

A Word from Lisa

The Alabama Historical Commission is recognizing the importance of Black History Month by continuing to interpret and preserve African American history in Alabama. To assist with this, in 1984 the Alabama Historical Commission created the Black Heritage Council (BHC) to advocate for and advise the Commission on the preservation of African-American historic places in Alabama. At the time of its founding, the BHC was the first African-American advisory council of a state historic preservation office created in the country. Since then, the BHC has assisted communities throughout the state.

Our new staff member and African American Heritage Coordinator, Jada Jones, has been actively working with the National Park Service on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom project with the mission of identifying sites with a connection to the Underground Railroad and as well as the Reconstruction Era National Historical Park to identify sites and programs that are affiliated with the Reconstruction Era. This is a nationwide effort, and we are proud to head this project in Alabama and provide future generations the opportunity to connect with these stories.

This month AHC archaeologists will be monitoring the ongoing efforts made at one of our historic sites, Bottle Creek Indian Mound, for the preservation of the mound trails. To ensure safety and long-term management of the mound trails, AHC is working with multiple partners to preserve this archaeological site from further erosion. This work is being funded by a Save America's Treasures grant under the National Park Service.

As we focus this month on the incredible contributions made by African Americans in Alabama's history, the AHC will continue to research and identify the historic places that will best tell these stories. I encourage you to visit our website and learn more about historic sites and preservation efforts made across the state to protect, preserve, and interpret all of Alabama's rich history.

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 17
Living History
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson

February 17
War of 1812 Living History
Fort Morgan

February 29
Raymond Arsenault Book Signing
Freedom Rides Museum

March 14
Heritage Days
Gaineswood

March 16
Living History
Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson

REMINDER:
ETF Grant
Applications
due March 29!

[Click here for more information!](#)

One of Selma's historic churches receives National Trust grant

Tabernacle Baptist Church in Selma will be receiving some help renovating after last year's devastating tornado.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation announced the church would be one of 31 total historic Black churches to receive part of a \$4 million grant from their African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. The \$150,000 allocated funding will help the church replace their lead-coated copper dome roof, which was damaged in the January 2023 tornado.

With over \$95 million in funding, the Action Fund is the largest U.S. resource dedicated to preserving historic African American places. Since launching Preserving Black Churches in 2022, the Action Fund has provided \$8.7 million in grants to more than 70 historic churches.

Tabernacle Baptist Church is the only church in Alabama to be included in the grant. It was originally built in 1922. The church was listed in 1996 on the Alabama Register of Historic Places and was also listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. An Alabama Historical Commission historical marker is placed out front so visitors can read and understand the importance of this church in the community.



Tabernacle Baptist Church, Selma, Dallas County

Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson kicks off annual living history programs



Fort Toulouse-Fort Jackson Park is preparing for the upcoming living history programs for 2024.

Make plans to visit the park on Saturday, February 17th from 9 am- 3 pm for living history demonstrators and experience frontier life. Demonstrations include military musket drill, traditional dying, and historical food ways, and more! Tickets are \$2 for adults and \$1 for children.

For more information on living history events and more, please call 334-567-3002.

2024 Living History Dates

- February 17
- March 16
- May 18
- September 21
- October 19

AHC IS HIRING!

Alabama Historical Commission

- Cultural Resources Coordinator
- Cultural Resources Coordinator, Senior

Fort Morgan

- Gift Shop/Ticket Booth Operator
(Email Heather.Tassin1@ahc.alabama.gov for this listing.)

The Alabama Historical Commission is looking for qualified candidates for the jobs listed above. For information regarding the AHC job listings, please click [here](#).

GRANT OPPORTUNITY!

The National Park Service has opened the Semiquincentennial Grant program now through March 5, 2024!
Click [here](#) for more info!

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Check out the new faces at AHC!



Kayla Daniels
Freedom Rides Museum



Becky Jackson
Finance



Jada Jones
Preservation



Jeffrey Parker
Maintenance



Chad Stinson
Finance

JOIN US FOR A
BOOK SIGNING EVENT!

FEBRUARY 29
4:00 PM
FREEDOM RIDES MUSEUM

Dr. Raymond O. Arsenault

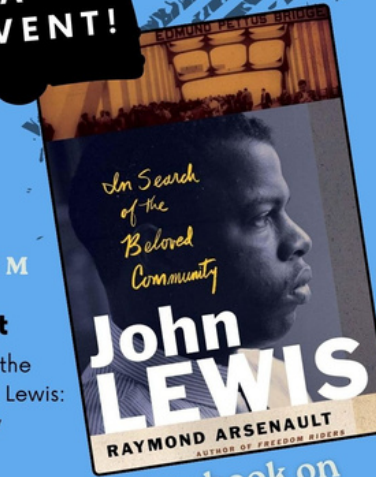
Author of Freedom Riders: 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice and John Lewis: In Search of the Beloved Community

Dr. Bernard LaFayette Jr.

Freedom Rider, civil rights leader, founder of the Center for Nonviolence and Peace Studies, and author of In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma

The Lewis Family

Family members of Freedom Rider, SNCC Chairman, and Georgia Congressman, the late Representative John R. Lewis.



New book on
John Lewis!



RSVP Today!

210 S. Court Street, Montgomery, AL

334-414-8647

ahc.alabama.gov

Friends of the
Freedom Rides
Museum

JRL
JOHN R. LEWIS LEGACY INSTITUTE

Freedom
Rides
Museum

ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION
ahc



A view of the excavation site.

Staff archaeologists visit Redstone Arsenal

AHC archaeologists Eric Sipes and William Lowe traveled to Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville to visit recent excavations at the Oakendale Plantation Site. This early 19th to mid 20th century plantation site is remarkably intact and promises to provide new insights into the lives of both the plantation owners and the enslaved. Archaeologists noted the intensive excavation of a former well shaft in the enslaved housing area with intact wooden pipes still in place. These excavations were undertaken as part of the Section 106 mitigation process, and intended to recover important archaeological data from the site.

AHC recognizes Redstone Arsenal's commitment to protecting Alabama's history and increasing our archaeological knowledge of the region.