Making Connections with Barbados

From October 22 – 26, 2008, the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor (SCNHC) sponsored a public trip to Barbados to explore the long-standing historical and cultural connection between it and the Lowcountry. Dating back to the birth of the Carolina colony in 1670, South Carolina and Barbados have shared culture, arts, food, architecture, language, agriculture, government, and African American heritage. This trip was the culminating event jointly sponsored by the SCNHC and the Barbados Ministry of Tourism of a traveling art and history exhibit, entitled The Connection, comprising more than 70 pieces from South Carolinian and Barbadian artists. The official opening of the exhibit featured a cultural prelude by Ilie’s Moko Jumbies; remarks by William Gollop, President of Barbados National Trust, Joy Young, SC Arts Commission, Rhoda Green, Barbados Honorary Consul to SC, Honorable Steven Blackett, MP, Minister of Community Development and Culture, James Goggin, Charges D’Affaires, US Embassy, and Andrew Cox, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism; and a steelpan solo performance by John Cole. We were surprised and delighted by an impromptu performance by Anita “Aunt Pearlie Sue” Prather Singleton.

The trip included tours, speakers, traveling workshops, and the rich local cuisine. During the International Heritage Symposium hosted by the Ministry of Tourism at the Sherbourne Conference Centre we were treated to remarks by Dr. Karl Watson, Chairman of the Barbados Carolina Connection Committee and Professor of History at University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, as well as the Minister of Tourism. Honorable Richard L. Sealy, MP I chose the architecture tour and had the opportunity to visit places not open to the public such as Brighton Plantation, Drax Hall Plantation, as well as Tyrol Cot Heritage Village, home to a number of attractive Chattel Houses, each of which displays the work of traditional craftsmen and artists. As a group, we visited George Washington’s House, the Barbados Museum, St. James’s Parish, the Gallery of Caribbean Art, Arlington House, St. Nicholas Abbey, and the Andromeda Botanic Gardens.

Message from the Director

As the new director of the CLAW program I intend to continue the high standards set by my predecessors. To maintain and expand on its mission, CLAW is exploring ways to develop our endowment and will propose some opportunities for you to participate more directly in our efforts. We have always believed that Charleston was one of the most important hubs in the Atlantic World. Using the technological base here at the College of Charleston, we are in the initial planning stages of establishing the Charleston Project, a scholarly resource for academics, students, and the general public on the Carolina Lowcountry. This internet resource along with our book series at the University of South Carolina Press will be very important assets to all those interested in understanding the Lowcountry’s place in the wider world.

This Spring we will continue our “Regulated Wild” series with lectures on indigo, grapes, fish, and longleaf pine which will lead into the African ethno-botany conference in June. We are very fortunate to have our executive director O. Vernon Burton who will speak on his new book on Abraham Lincoln in February. We will also have four faculty seminars and Brian Kelly from Queens University, Belfast will be giving a talk on Lowcountry African Americans in Reconstructions politics. We continue to support other projects such as the Beehive Collective artists, the Center for the Documentary film on Cuban Confederate Ambrosio Gonzales, the African American Archaeology Conference, and the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission. Our work for the TST project continues.

The program lost a few friends through retirement. Mohammed Alpha Bah, Peter McCandless, and Rosemary Brana-Shute retired from the history department at CoC, while Marvin Dulaney of the Avery Research Center took up a new position at the University of Texas at Arlington. We wish them well. Rosemary was one of CLAW’s founders and will be particularly missed by us, although we will continue to call on her expertise and experience for our current and future projects. Finally, I would like to thank Simon Lewis for all the good work he has done for CLAW. In particular, his efforts for the Ambiguous Anniversary conference on the banning of the international slave trade made it a very important event that will continue to resonate locally, nationally, and internationally for years to come. On a personal note, as many others will also attest, Simon has been a pleasure to work with and I am glad to announce that he will stay on as an associate director of the program.

David T. Gleeson
Director
Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World
Associate Professor of History
HIGHLIGHTS FROM FALL 2008

“ROOTS AND BRANCHES” AFRICAN-AMERICAN GENEALOGY WORKSHOP SERIES

Supported by a major grant from the Humanities Council SC and by a grant from the Post and Courier Foundation, the “Roots and Branches” African-American Genealogy Workshop Series completed its series of six free bi-monthly workshops. Led by Post and Courier features writer and genealogy columnist Wevonneda Minis, the workshops set out to develop a network of family historians in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties, SC who have expertise in researching African-American ancestors that they can share within their communities. The workshops took place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second Saturday of alternate months, beginning in January 2008. Special thanks go to the series mastermind Wevonneda Minis, her two co-presenters Elwood Stith and Giselle White-Perry, and to the staff of the Family History Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1519 Sam Rittenberg Blvd., Charleston.

In addition to continuing to write her weekly column on genealogy for the Post and Courier, Wevonneda Minis has arranged with FHS to meet one on one, Thursday nights, bi-monthly with Roots and Branches participants. For full details, see http://www.gullahroots.com/home.

WACHOVIA DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES:

February 19, 2009, 7:30 pm, The Age of Lincoln: Was Lincoln a Southerner - Alumni Hall, Randolph Hall, College of Charleston

On the centenary of Lincoln’s birth our executive director Dr. O. Vernon Burton, Barbourghs Distinguished Professor of Southern History at Coastal Carolina University, will give a lecture on our 16th President. His recent book The Age of Lincoln won the 2007 Heartland Prize for Non-Fiction and is earning rave reviews, typified by this opening paragraph by John David Smith for bookpage.com: “If the Civil War era was America’s Iliad, then historian Orville Vernon Burton is our latest Homer. Burton is best known for his widely acclaimed In My Father’s House Are Many Mansions (1985), a brilliantly nuanced social history of Edgefield County, South Carolina. With The Age of Lincoln, Burton has significantly widened his lens, ratcheted up his analysis and produced a magisterial narrative history of American social and intellectual life from the age of slavery up to the era of Jim Crow. New details, fresh insights and sparkling interpretations punctuate nearly every page of Burton’s fast-paced and elegantly written new book.”

T. J. Desch-Obi, winner of the 2007 Hines Prize, will also give a lecture in this year’s series. Including 45 illustrations, Dr. Desch-Obi’s Fighting for Honor sets out the rich history of the arrival and dissemination of African martial arts in the Atlantic world and furthers our understanding of the powerful influence of enslaved populations on our general culture. Grounded in historical and cultural anthropological method, Desch-Obi traces the influence of well-delineated African traditions on long-observed but misunderstood African and African American cultural activities in North America, Brazil, and the Caribbean. He links the Brazilian martial art capoeira to reports of slave activities recorded in colonial and antebellum North America, and images of kalenda African stick-fighting techniques to the Haitian Revolution. Location TBA

2008-2009 WACHOVIA DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

Regulated Wild:
The Impact of Human & Natural Forces on the Lowcountry Landscape

In place of a conference this year, we opted to run a series of thematically linked lectures and presentations exploring the mutual impact of human and natural forces on the Lowcountry landscape. The series has plainly struck a chord with the current upsurge in interest in environmental issues both in public policy and in academia, and we have found ourselves in company with numerous other eco-oriented lectures and events. The series opened with a lecture by Professor Daniel Littlefield in which he firmly reiterated his findings that Carolina planters consciously targeted the rice coast of West Africa to enslave men and women with skill and experience in cultivating rice.

Professor Richard Porcher, Professor Emeritus at the Citadel, provided an illustrated (and animated!) lecture on rice-growing's ecological impact on the Lowcountry in the third event of the series. In between the two rice events, the Avery Research Center hosted a joint meeting of the CLAW program and the Sierra Club on the topic of sweetgrass. An uplifting panel discussion involving two botanists (Dr. Danny Gustafson and Karl Ohlrandt), a historian (Dr. Dale Rosengarten), an artist (Nakia Wigfall), and a local politician (Thomasesa Stokes-Marshall) left the audience feeling that the future of this unique lowcountry art form is in very good, thoughtful, and committed hands.

Coming up this semester we have presentations on indigo (Arianne King-Comer), grapes (Dr. David Shields), longleaf pines (Dr. Jean Everett), and fish (Edwin Gardner). All events this semester will be at the Avery Research Center, but please do check our website for any possible alterations of time, date and venue. Given the environmental focus of the series, we are pleased that the series will have a relatively small carbon footprint as it takes advantage of the extraordinary range of local expertise available to us here in South Carolina—apart from Professors Littlefield and Shields, who both teach at the University of South Carolina, all our guests are Lowcountry-based.

Confirmed dates:

January 15 Indigo, Arianne King-Comer, 7:30 pm, Avery Research Center
February 5 Grapes, Dr. David Shields, 7:30 pm, Avery Research Center
March 12 Fish, Edwin Gardner, 7:30 pm, Avery Research Center
April 2 Longleaf Pines, Dr. Jean Everett, 6:00 pm, Avery Research Center

Additionally we are working on a capstone event, tentatively scheduled for May 7, 2009, on the subject of development. The lecture series also dovetails very neatly with the annual conference of the Society for Economic Botany on African Ethno-Botany in the Americas that will take place in Charleston in June 2009.

(For full details on these events, see our website at http://www.cofc.edu/atlanticworld)
Faculty Seminar Series Spring 2008

January 30: Lisa B. Randle, UNESCO TST Site Coordinator, College of Charleston – “(Over)looking the African American Landscape along the East Branch of the Cooper River, Berkeley County, South Carolina,” Levin Library, Jewish Studies Center, 3:15 pm.

February 20: Dr. O. Vernon Burton, Burroughs Distinguished Professor of Southern History and Culture, Coastal Carolina University – “The Age of Lincoln: Was Lincoln a Southerner?” Blacklock House, 18 Bull Street, 3:15 pm.

March 20: Dr. John P. Walsh, III, College of Charleston – “Toussaint’s Correspondence: A Revolution Hidden in the Archives,” Blacklock House, 18 Bull Street, 3:15 pm.

April 17: Dr. T.J. Desch-Obi, Baruch College – Title to be announced, Blacklock House, 18 Bull Street, 3:15 pm.

Mark your calendar!

Other Programs on Campus

Spice Lee Film Series

January 22: Do the Right Thing
February 19: Bamboozled
March 26: Get on the Bus
April 9: Malcolm X

African American Studies Program (http://cocaast.edublogs.org/)

January 17: Civil Rights Film Series – Avery Research Center

January 26: Lecture & Book Signing: Kimberla Lawson Roby – 1:00 pm, Avery Research Center

February 6 - 7: Lincoln and the Civil War in Contemporary America - Avery Research Center. For more information, go to http://www.cas.sc.edu/hist/lindcin/main.html

February 10: African American Read-In – African American Studies Program

March 10, 2009, 6:00 pm: Beehive Collective - Mesoamérica Resiste is the third in a trilogy about corporate globalization in the western hemisphere. Admissions Auditorium, Robert Scott Small Building (old library), College of Charleston. For more information on the Bees, go to http://www.beehivecollective.org/

March 11: Lecture, Professor Akinyele Umoro, “Negroes with Guns” – African American Studies Program

June 1 - 5, 2009: “African Ethno-Botany in the Americas” Symposium, Charleston. The 2009 50th Anniversary Annual Meeting of the Society for Economic Botany symposium by the College of Charleston is dedicated to African Ethnobotany in the Americas. This year’s symposium considers the impact of migration on people/plant relations, especially the extraordinary movement of people and plants that was an essential part of the making of our present world system. In celebration of our 50th Anniversary, this year’s SEB meeting is timed to occur in conjunction with Charleston’s 31st annual Spoleto Festival USA (May 22 - June 7, 2009) and the Annual Sweetgrass Festival (June 6, 2009). The ethnobotany of Sweetgrass basket-making (including several outstanding documentary films) will be part of the 2009 SEB meeting.

Other Programs Off Campus

January 22 - 23, 2009: “Preserving Our Places in History, The Barbados Link.” South Carolina African American Heritage Commission, Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet, West Columbia, SC. Contact Janice Harriott, 843 332 3589. Professional@jnh@aol.com

Feb. 27 - 28, 2009: “The Archaeology of the Recent American Past Conference.” SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of South Carolina. www.cas.sc.edu/SCIAA/postdoc.conf.html Contact: Jodi Barnes JBarnes@mailbox.sc.edu

March 24, 2009, 7:00 pm: Brian Kelly, Queens University Belfast, “A Storm Beyond Control: Freed Slaves and Political Mobilization in Reconstruction South Carolina.” Charleston Museum

Future CLAW Conferences:

Religion of the Sea – March 2010
Women of the Spanish Atlantic – February 2010
US Civil War as International Conflict – Spring 2011

The CLAW program is always open to suggestions and offers of assistance. Please feel free to contact any of the directors of the program if you would like to comment on our activities or contribute to them in any way.

The Hines Prize 2009

The Hines Prize is awarded biennially for the best first book manuscript on a Carolina Lowcountry and/or Atlantic World topic. The deadline for the next Hines Prize is May 1st, 2009. If you have a first manuscript in hand or in preparation relating to any aspect of the Carolina Lowcountry and/or the Atlantic World or if you know others who do, please consider entering it for the 2009 competition. The prize carries a cash award of $1,000 and preferential consideration by the University of South Carolina Press for the Program’s book series.
In 2011, the United States will observe the 150th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War. The Program in the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World (CLAW) at the College of Charleston will host an international conference to mark this important anniversary. In keeping with the ethos of CLAW we will examine this event by looking at it in an international context. The conference will focus on the effects and implications of the Civil War on the Atlantic and wider world. Some of the questions to be addressed include: How did the Union and Confederacy operate foreign diplomacy? How did nations in the rest of the world view this conflict? What did Americans, particularly South Carolinians, think of international attitudes toward the United and Confederate States? What did Americans living abroad think of the conflict? What impact did Confederate exiles/colonies have on their host countries? What impact did American Emancipation have on slavery in Latin America, Africa etc.? How did the Civil War influence World views of the U.S., particularly the South, and how did Unionists/Confederates see themselves in the world?

---

"The Carolina Lowcountry and the Atlantic World" Book Series

For full details of the 12 titles already in print in the program’s USC Press Book Series visit http://cofc.edu/atlanticworld/publishing.html or http://www.sc.edu/uscpress/series.html