

BBAAGHS NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2007

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Welcome to the Black Belt African American Genealogical & Historical Society

Greetings from the Board of Directors!

The Black Belt African American Genealogical & Historical Society ("BBAAGHS") has been envisioned and discussed for a while and has finally become a reality. We held our first organizing meeting in July 2006 and our first public meeting in September.

Our mission is the discovery, collection, organization and protection of the genealogy and history of African Americans in the traditional twelve counties of Alabama's Black Belt Region—Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Wilcox.



Six generations of a Selma, Alabama family c. 1893. R.W. Harrison, photographer. Photo credit: Library of Congress, www.loc.gov.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in the study and exchange of information and ideas about African American genealogy, family history and historic preservation in the Alabama Black Belt.

We hold monthly meetings, workshops and seminars and present speakers on a wide range of topics of interest to our membership and to the general public. For further information: www.bbaaghs.org.

FIND YOUR ROOTS.

JOIN BBAAGHS TODAY!

Black Belt
African American
Genealogical &
Historical Society, Inc.

PO Box 1228
Selma, AL 36702

334-877-4846

bbaaghs@bbaaghs.org

www.bbaaghs.org

1st Annual Black Belt Genealogy Conference and Family History Fair February 16-18, 2007

Mark your calendar!

BBAAGHS will hold the first ever African American genealogy conference and family history fair during Black History Month 2007.

The tentative dates for the weekend event are February 16-18, 2007 in Selma, Alabama, in the heart of Alabama's Black Belt Region.

Scheduled workshops and

seminars include beginning genealogy, slave records research, family reunion planning, DNA testing, researching military records and cemetery research and preservation. **Stay tuned!**

Avery Research Center's W. Marvin Dulaney Speaks at October Meeting on Black Belt-South Carolina Connection

Dr. W. Marvin Dulaney, Executive Director of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, SC and Associate Professor of History at the College of Charleston was the guest speaker at BBAAGHS' regular meeting in October.

Dr. Dulaney, one of the country's pre-eminent African American historians, addressed the group on the subject of *African American Records in South Carolina Plantation Records and Documents*.



"Seventy percent of African Americans who are descended from Black Belt slaves can trace their roots to South Carolina," said Dr. Dulaney.

Dr. Dulaney also gave a slide presentation about the Avery Research Center, its mission and holdings. There was a Q&A session following his talk.

For further information about the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and Dr. Dulaney, see the Center's website: www.cofc.edu/avery/.

BBAAGHS Sponsors Alabama Black Belt DNA Project

The Black Belt of Alabama DNA Project is a new tool for African Americans researching their central Alabama roots. Anyone who can trace their ancestry to Alabama's Black Belt Region from about 1840 through 1880 is welcome to participate.

Surname projects are often meaningless for African Americans whose family bonds may have been broken during the Enslavement Period or whose families experienced one or more name changes

after Emancipation. In addition, many African Americans—as many as 30% by some estimates—have European Y-DNA but have not been able to find the progenitors of their European lines. In these cases, researchers may have been able to trace their ancestry by traditional means back to the first census after Emancipation in which their ancestors were identified by surnames and then hit the proverbial "1870 Brick Wall". The DNA Project is designed to help them to scale that

barrier.

The Project was started in September 2006 and currently has 36 members. To join, visit the website: www.familytreedna.com/public/BlackBeltDNA

The Black Belt DNA project is co-sponsored by the Black Belt African American Genealogical and Historical Society (www.bbaaghs.org) and AfriGeneas (www.afrigeneas.com), the premier African American genealogy website.

Faunsdale Connection Holding 2007 Reunion at Somerset

The annual reunion of the descendants of the 81 slaves brought to the Faunsdale Plantation in Marengo County by Dr. Thomas and Louisa Harrison in 1843, will be held at their original home at Somerset Place Plantation, Creswell, NC

(www.ah.dcr.state.nc.us/sections/hs/

somerset/somerset.htm) on July 12, 15, 2007.

The cost for the event is \$80.00 per person which includes a banquet, picnic, and workshops. Participants are responsible for their own transportation.

A block of rooms has been reserved

at Holiday Inn in Plymouth, NC on a first come-first served basis.

Please contact organizer Mary Jones-Fitts for further information. Phone: 334-627-3772. Email: mljonesv@aim.com.

Reservation deadline: April 15, 2007.

Black Belt African American Genealogical & Historical Society

1st Annual Genealogy Conference and Family History Fair

~ Preserving Our History and Creating Family Legacies ~

February 16-18, 2007

Historic Selma, Alabama . . . the heart of Alabama's Black Belt

Venues: Striplin Performing Arts Center, 1000 Selma Ave. and Divine Life CDC, 905 Water Ave.

Costs: Conference/Fair \$20.00 per person; Banquet \$20.00 per person

Info: 334-877-4846 or www.bbaaghs.org

SCHEDULE

Friday, February 16, 2007

4:30 pm — 6:00 pm Early Registration
7:00 pm — 10:00 pm Banquet / Awards Presentations

Saturday, February 17, 2007

8:00 am — 5:00 pm Vendors / Exhibitors Hall Open
8:00 am — 12:00 noon Registration
Workshops / Lectures
8:45 am Opening Session: B.J. Smothers, President
9:30 am — 10:30 am I. Genealogy Case Study: Gwen Holland
II. Cemetery Preservation: TBA
10:30 am — 11:00 am Visit the Exhibitors
11:00 am — 12:00 noon III. Beginning Genealogy: Mary Jones-Fitts
IV. Researching School Records: Lovie Warren
12:00 noon — 2:00 pm Lunch on your own
Films
Visit the Exhibitors
2:00 pm — 3:00 pm V. Introduction to Slave Research: Mary Jones-Fitts
VI. Researching Military Records: Bennie J. McRae, Jr.
3:00 pm — 3:30 pm Visit the Exhibitors
3:30 pm — 4:30 pm VII: Planning Your Family Reunion: TBA
VIII: Using the Internet: B.J. Smothers
4:30 pm — 5:00 pm Visit the Exhibitors
5:00 pm Closing Session: B.J. Smothers, President

Sunday, February 18, 2007

10:00 am — 2:00 pm Vendors / Exhibitors Hall Open
2:00 pm Annual Meeting of Members
Luncheon

Chicago Lineage Society Makes Annual Trip to Alabama

In July 2006, Freedom Walk-America (FWA) sponsored its 3rd Annual Summer Youth Tour to Alabama for students, teachers and parents. They visited sites in Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery and Snow Hill in Wilcox County.

Freedom Walk-America, headquartered in Chicago, is a national lineage society that documents and preserves African American family his-

tory and culture.

FWA undertook a six-year research project that recovered 19th and early 20th century historical manuscripts including midwife records, plantation diaries, slave cemeteries, freedman marriage licenses, and normal-industrial school and one-room schoolhouse census records.

Their work eventually developed into the Southern Lineage Recovery

Collection (SLRC) with holdings from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Eventually these records will be accessible via the SLRC Digital Library and the open stack collections of genealogical societies throughout the U.S.

For further information about FWA and the SLRC contact Gwen Holland, afreewalk@aol.com or 773-744-1933.

Volunteers Needed to Preserve African American Cemeteries in the Black Belt

The Alabama Cemetery Preservation Alliance (ACPA) has been working since 2003 to increase public awareness and legislation in preserving, protecting and restoring cemeteries throughout Alabama especially those that are endangered, forgotten and neglected.

ACPA provides information on cemetery preservation techniques, the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register through workshops and on its website, www.alabama-cemetery-preservation.com.

ACPA achieves its goals through a network of county representatives, dedicated volunteers who are physically located in each of Alabama's 67 counties. They give their times, talent and energy to achieving

stones, organized Scout cemetery cleanups, mapped and read cemeteries, and encouraged organizations and family groups to care for their cemeteries.



ACPA's goals and are the local face of the organization. ACPA's County Reps have organized dedication ceremonies, recovered lost head-

Many counties still need a volunteer ACPA County Rep. If you live within one of the counties, please consider signing on. See the website for how to register.

See ACPA's website for further information and how to join, volunteer or become a supporter, benefactor or corporate sponsor.

Uniontown Library to Hold Monthly Genealogy Workshops

Uniontown Library in Perry County recently received a Black Belt Community Foundation grant to establish an African American genealogical collection at the library and to conduct monthly workshops. A schedule of upcoming workshops is as follows:

- February 7, 2007
Introduction to African American Research
- March 7, 2007
Census Records
- April 4, 2007
County Records

Workshops are held at the Uniontown Library, 108 Water Ave. from 4:30-6:00PM. Fees are \$5.00 per class. For more information, contact Mary Jones at 334-627-3772 or email: mljonesv@aim.com or call Uniontown Library at 334-628-6681.



**Black Belt
African American
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PO Box 1228
Selma, AL 36702
334-877-4846

The BBAAGHS Newsletter is published monthly. The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the prior month.

Feb issue — Jan 15th
Mar issue — Feb 15th
Apr issue — Mar 15th

Send articles, shorts, announcements, book reviews, photos, letters and queries to:
editor@bbaaghs.org.

Meeting & Events Calendar

January 20, 2007	10:00 AM— 12:00 Noon	Regular Monthly Meeting Divine Life Community Development Corp. 905 Water Ave, Selma, AL 36701 Info: www.bbaaghs.org
January 30, 2007	12:00 Noon— 3:00 PM	Cemetery Workshop National Park Service @ George Washington Carver Museum in Tuskegee Info: Shirley Baxter with NPS 334-727-3200
February 7, 2007	4:30 PM— 6:00 PM	Genealogy Workshop Uniontown Library Info: Mary Jones-Fitts, 334-627-3772 or email: mljonesv@aim.com
February 12, 2007	11:00 AM— 3:00 PM	Genealogy Fair Birmingham African American Genealogy Study Group Birmingham Public Library Info: Josephine Martin, 205-510-2670 or 205-901-6387
February 16-18, 2007	See Schedule	Genealogy Conference & Family History Fair Info: www.bbaaghs.org
February 18, 2007	See Schedule	Annual Meeting of Members Info: www.bbaaghs.org