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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 16, 2024

**Georgia Archives and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS)
Metro Atlanta Chapter Present
African American Symposium 2024**

On Thursday, February 1 – Saturday, February 3, the Georgia Archives and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS) Metro Atlanta Chapter present our 2024 African American Symposium. The three-day event will focus on the topic of African Americans in Georgia, highlighting higher education, archives, and genealogy.

Thursday, February 1st will feature speakers discussing African American higher education in Georgia.

From 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Christina Lenore Davis, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Savannah State University, presents “Still Rising: The Legacy and Future of Savannah State University.” After the Civil War, definitions of freedom and American citizenship among black people in the South included landownership, access to electoral politics, family reunions among kinfolk, and institution building. Many black people considered formal education as necessary to survive in a region ruled by individuals determined to replace black southerners’ former status as forced laborers with a position that mirrored enslavement more than freedom. For a variety of reasons, teachers in southern black schools created more records of their work than any other group of educators of the day. In such sources as school reports, correspondences with governmental agencies, and letters to family and friends, teachers chronicled their work in and outside of the classroom as they navigated everyday life among black and white southerners. This presentation describes the ways scholars have used the archives to write the history of the South’s school system for African Americans. From humble beginnings, schools for black youth expanded into a system of publicly funded Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Exploring the history of Savannah State University (SSU), Georgia’s longest-standing public HBCU, reveals a rich 133-year legacy. It also allows for a discussion of SSU’s future in the face of governmental efforts to deemphasize the significant contributions of African Americans to the growth and development of the United States.

From 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Arthur Dunning, Retired President, Albany State University, and author of *Unreconciled: Race, History, and Higher Education in the Deep South*, will present “Reconciliation: Is It Possible?” He will discuss how race, history and culture in the deep south intersected with change, leadership, and decision-making through the consolidation of an historically Black college campus and an historically white college campus in Albany, Georgia. In this southwestern region of the state, lingering consequences of slavery, sharecropping, and plantation agriculture flourished well into the mid-20th century, and directly impacted the consolidation of these institutions of higher education in 2016. Dr. Dunning will reflect on key aspects of the process, including his own leadership role, and will lead an interactive discussion on questions of reconciliation and possibilities we have as a nation to address these issues as we move forward.

From 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Georgia Archives staff will host a tour of the Georgia Archives, including a behind-the-scenes look at the Archives and its holdings. Space is limited. Please use this link to register for the tour by January 29th, 2024: <https://forms.office.com/r/1uhuz0Z2Qk>.

From 2:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Independent Research

Friday, February 2nd will feature speakers discussing archives or archival collections that feature African Americans.

From 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tiffany Atwater Lee, Head of Research Services at Atlanta University Center (AUC), Robert W. Woodruff Library, will present “America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities Legacy & Archival Record.” This presentation will focus on the historical significance of America’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) by examining the vast information available via their archives and special collections. Particular emphasis will be placed on Atlanta’s HBCUs, which are part of the Atlanta University Center. This presentation is for anyone interested in researching the American Black experience, genealogical research, or understanding the structure and overall impact these higher education institutions have had on American History by viewing their archives.

From 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Derek T. Mosley, Archives Division Manager, Auburn Avenue Research Library, will present “Archival Resources from the Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History.” This presentation will highlight collections from the Archives Division of the Auburn Avenue Research Library, which holds over 200 collections. The Archives Division collects, preserves, and makes available for research purposes rare, unique, and primary materials that document the life experiences, history, and culture of people of African descent across the Diaspora, with a concentration in local Atlanta history. The Division's holdings include personal papers, records of organizations and institutions, photographs, prints, rare books, audio and visual resources, ephemera, and subject materials.

From 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tamika Strong, Reference Archivist at the Georgia Archives, will present “Knowing Where to Look: Researching African Americans in Georgia Archives Resources.” This presentation will focus on the resources at the Georgia Archives that include African Americans. Attendees will gain insights into efficient research preparation, explore essential databases, and receive firsthand examples of records from our extensive collection.

From 2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Joshua Kitchens, Director of Archival Services & Digital Initiatives for Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS), will present “Memories of Home: Georgia Public Library as Centers of Community Memory.” Georgia’s Public Libraries are a nexus of community activity. They provide programming, information, and places of gathering for our communities around the state. Georgia’s libraries can also be a center for documenting, preserving, and providing access to community stories and family history. This presentation will explain what has been done to document communities through public libraries, and resources available from Georgia Public Library Services, Archival Services and Digital Initiatives (ASDI). ASDI’s goal is to help communities document and tell their stories through digitization, documentation, archival processing and preservation, and technical support via our public libraries.

Saturday, February 3rd will feature a series of presentations divided into two tracks on African American genealogy in Georgia.

Track 1: African American Genealogy Basics

This day-long workshop is designed to introduce participants to the basic principles and methodology of African American genealogy and will cover the beginning steps, locating resources, documenting and evaluating records, and creating timelines. The last session of the workshop will offer attendees an opportunity to work one on one with members of AAHGS to receive hands-on assistance with their research. Space is limited. Please use this link to register for Track 1 by January 29th, 2024:

<https://forms.office.com/r/24qbhyaYjz>.

From 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Tammy Ozier, Family Historian and Genealogist, presents “Introduction to African American Genealogy Before 1870.” In this class, participants will be introduced to basic genealogical concepts to help individuals start their journey into African American family research. During this presentation attendees will explore ways beginners can document family trees and family group sheets; learn how to find valuable resources; review research examples that can spark an interest in digging into one’s own family history. We will review vital records, census records, and key online resources. This class focuses on records after the 1870 census, which is the first census that the formerly enslaved would have been enumerated by name.

From 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Tamika Strong, Reference Archivist at the Georgia Archives, presents “Finding Resources: African American Genealogy Basics.” This session will help attendees identify and locate family history resources from home sources. Tips and techniques in locating information in online databases and research institutions will be shared.

From 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Tamu Taylor, President AAHGS Metro Atlanta Chapter, presents “Analyzing Records and Evaluating the Evidence.” Now that you have found a record of your ancestor, do you stop there? Did that green leaf on Ancestry send you to a tree with the motherlode of information about an ancestor? Don't take that record at face value! Learn how to analyze documents and exhaust all possible clues for evidence before accepting the document as part of your research.

From 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. Attendees will enjoy a hands-on research session with experienced genealogical experts from the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS).

Track 2: African American Genealogy in Georgia

From 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Sheila McAlister and Russell Palmer will present “African American History and Genealogy Resources: Digital Library of Georgia & GALILEO Search.” The Digital Library of Georgia is a GALILEO initiative based at the University of Georgia Libraries that collaborates with Georgia's Libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions of education and culture to provide access to key information resources on Georgia history, culture, and life. During this session, Sheila McAllister will review key collections related to African American history and genealogy including: The Civil Rights Digital Library, African American Funeral Programs collections, Atlanta University Center materials, and Historic African American newspapers. GALILEO Search provides residents of Georgia with access to scholarly content, e-books, newspapers, and genealogy resources. GALILEO Search contains useful material about African American history, culture, and genealogy. Russell Palmer will review e-Book collections, History Reference Center, Current Newspapers, HeritageQuest, and Ancestry.

From 10:45 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. Dr. Alvin Jackson will present “If These Cemeteries Could Talk.” Discover the stories of the past in this compelling series of cemetery tours and discussions presented by Dr. Jackson of the Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center. Within the hallowed grounds of 38 known African American cemeteries in Bulloch County, Georgia, lies a rich tapestry of stories waiting to be told. This presentation highlights seven cemeteries, each a testament to the enduring spirit of the community. Explore the intricate burial customs, the rise of Black funeral homes, the art of casket making, and the poignant messages found in funeral programs. Delve deep into the lives of the formerly enslaved, valiant soldiers, dedicated teachers, and ministers of the gospel who rest here. Join us as we honor family groups and individuals whose stories paint a vivid picture of Black history and heritage in Bulloch County.

From 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Trelani Michelle, author of *Krak Teet: A Catalog of Black Savannah's Biographies*, will present “Grandmama’s Cultural Inheritances Along the Gullah Corridor.” The essence of the Gullah Geechee culture, deeply rooted in its matriarchal structure, faces a critical challenge due to widespread displacement. The erosion of connection to Grandmama’s house, the cherished epicenter of familial heritage, highlights an imminent loss. Trelani Michelle’s presentation will serve as a compelling demonstration, illustrating the vital importance of documenting and preserving Grandmama’s priceless treasures – cherished heirlooms that hold immense cultural significance beyond their financial value.

From 2:15 p.m. to 3:15 p.m. “Ask a Genealogist Panel” Delve into your family history with the guidance of seasoned experts from the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society (AAHGS). Whether you’re a seasoned researcher or just beginning your journey into genealogy, our panelists can help address your queries and offer insights into tracing African American lineage.

This event is in-person at the Georgia Archives in Morrow, GA. Sessions will be recorded and added to the Georgia Archives’ YouTube channel. It is free to attendees and is sponsored in large part by a grant from the Clayton County Tourism Authority.

The Georgia Archives is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. The Georgia Archives identifies, collects, manages, preserves, provides access to, and publicizes records and information of Georgia and its people, and assists state and local government agencies with their records management.

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