

NEGRO HERITAGE TRAIL *

A HISTORIC TOUR OF OLD SAVANNAH FROM A BLACK PERSPECTIVE

sponsored by the Savannah-Yamacraw Branch, Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History

I The Riverfront

- Ⓐ Blacks entered the port of Savannah, first 1749 from Carolina then Virginia, the West Indies and finally, West Africa
- Ⓑ Mulberry Plantation was 11 miles up the river. Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin there.
- Ⓒ Brampton Plantation was 3 miles up the river. There the Rev. George Liele, the 1st Black Baptist missionary, preached ~~and~~ during the 1770's and in 1782 he baptized Andrew Bryan before leaving for Jamaica.
- Ⓓ 1790 the ancestor of Roland Hayes, the great Negro tenor of early jazz was bought from Africa and sold into slavery.
- Ⓔ In 1847 Herman Sengstacke, a white German merchant, bought a black slave girl from Africa, Tama. Married her and had children. This family is now the John Sengstacke family owners of the largest chain of Black newspapers in America. They began in a slave sale here in 1847.
- Ⓕ The last ships taking Black "Back to Africa" left from this port in the 1890's under the leadership of Bishop Henry M. Turner.

II U. S. Custom House

- Ⓐ Scene of the trial of Charles Lamarr, owner of the yacht "Wanderer", the last slave ship to bring Blacks from Africa.
- Ⓑ During Reconstruction, some of the first government appointments were made in this building as custom officers, postal clerks and

letter carriers. Col. John H. De Veaux was made the Collector of Customs (the top position) by President William McKinley and remained until his death in 1909.

III First African Baptist Church

The oldest Negro Baptist Church in America began at Brampton Plantation, 3 miles up the river. The church seats 1,600 people. The first brick building erected by Blacks in Georgia. The church was completed several years before Emancipation.

IV Slave Mart

418 West Bryan, now the Fish market, was once a slave mart and when freedom came, was one of the early schools for Blacks.

V The West Broad Grammar School

The Scarborough house, 1819, became the first public school for Blacks in the 1870's when purchased and deeded to the school board by a wealthy white named George DeHenne as a school "for persons of African descent". John Wesley Dobbs, father of the opera singer Matilda Dobbs and grandfather of Maynard Jackson, former mayor of Atlanta, attended school in that building when his mother lived in Savannah.

VI Yamacraw

@ First an Indian village, afterwards for many years a famous Black community. During the American Revolution, it was a haven for runaway slaves. ~~For~~ In Ante-bellum days, many "free persons of color" lived in this area. From the area, 1782 went forth Black preachers to establish Baptist Churches in Nova Scotia, Jamaica, and Sierra Leone, West Africa.

James Weldon Johnson in his "Seven Negro Sermons in Poetic form" - the sermon on Death gives reference to Savannah and to Yamacraw (an early center of religion among Blacks).

(b) Andrew Bryan, the first Black Baptist pastor in America, purchased the 1st Bryan Baptist Church site in 1793 for 15 pounds of sterling and erected a church here the following year, 1794. This is probably the oldest parcel of property owned by Blacks in the South or even the nation.

(Read marker in front of Church)

(c) Monument in front of Church, an early memorial to George Hiele, the first Negro Baptist missionary.

VII Slave built rail road bridges, between 1830's - 1850's, bridge copied by Historic Williamsburg, Virginia.

VIII Siege of Savannah, Oct 9, 1779

More Blacks fought here in the American Revolution than anywhere else during the war, except perhaps the Battle of Rhode Island. Blacks fought with the British. Americans gave guns to their Black slaves to fight the British. The French arrived with two Regiments of mulattos and Blacks from Santa Domingo - among them was Henri Christophe, who got the idea of freed the Blacks in Santa Domingo and creating Haiti.

IX Home of Justice James Moore Wayne

A member of the US Supreme Court when Dred Scott's case was heard by the high court. Justice Wayne remained on the Supreme Court when Georgia seceded from the Union.

X

Gen. James Edward Oglethorpe statue in Chippewa Square.

- (a) He did not permit slavery in Georgia when he founded the colony of Georgia in 1733. The statue was designed by the same man who designed the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.
- (b) Chippewa Square - one of two largest squares of the 22 in the historic downtown. Scene of Black political rallies during Reconstruction.

XI

Francis Sorrell House

A black slave woman saved the white baby Francis in 1793 during the massacre of all whites in the West Indies. Francis Sorrell owed his life to a ^{humanist} Black slave woman. This house stands as a monument to them, both.

XII

Sherman's Headquarters

Gen. Wm T. Sherman ended his march from Atlant. to the Sea here. From this house, he wired President Abraham Lincoln presenting to him the City of Savannah as a Christmas present on Dec. 22, 1864 - along with 25,000 bails of cotton, 150 cannons and plenty of ammuni-

In January 1865, Sherman and Secretary of War Stanton met the leaders of the newly freed Blacks in this house. Afterwards, Sherman issued Field Order #15 setting aside the Sea Islands from Charleston to the St. John River and the rice fields thirty miles inland, all to be partitioned on the basis of "40 acres and a mule".

XIII

St. John Episcopal Church

The wealthiest church in Savannah, where NAACP youth staged "knee-ins" on Sunday morning during the '60's to bring about church integration.

XIV

Andrew Low House

Miss Mosianna Milledge - Juliette Gordon Low James Cook is credited with having introduced Southern cooking to British aristocracy in the early 1890's,

XV

This is the home Walter Charlton Hartbridge II. Please note this house is located on Charlton Street, this was his ancestors home. This is the only Savannah house built in what is known as the Charleston style.

XVI

The Richard Richardson house

He owned a slave named Andrew Marshall, once owned by Sen. Joseph Clay, whom he served as coachman. While in Washington with Sen. Clay, he met Gen. George Washington who asked that Marshall become his body servant when the Father of the Country visited Savannah in the 1790's.

Robert Bolton, the ~~best~~ brother-in-law of Richardson and his business partner, loaned the slave Marshall enough money to buy his freedom and later when Marshall got in trouble for buying ~~some~~ bricks from slaves, Bolton again befriended him by accompanying Marshall into the public square on the day he was to be punished, to make certain they did not bloody the back of Marshall, who went to become a wealthy Black man and perhaps the town's most famous preacher.

XVII

Levy's

where the first NAACP youth arrested during the sit-ins on March 16, 1961. Black Savannah boycotted downtown for 16 long months until the stores agreed to desegregate, address Blacks with courtesy titles and to hire Black salesmen and women,

XVIII

~~Jane~~ John Mungin House

Plantation owner on Daufuskie Island

XIX

Jane DeVeaux House

a secret school for black from 1847 until Emancipation. Miss DeVeaux was a free colored woman, educated in the North, and was never caught during slavery while teaching Blacks to read and write.

XX

Odingell House

a white man who gave his Black son Warsaw Island and slaves. A river is named for this Black man, Odingell.

XXI

Simon Mirault House

A mulatto Negro who came to Savannah from ~~Santa Domingo~~ the West Indies during the slave uprising of the 1790's. This is one of Savannah's oldest free colored families.

XXII

1807 Thomas Francis Williams House

XXIII

Margaret Francis, 1885

a Black resident for nearly a hundred years.
A young Black couple now lives in this house who are distant relatives of the original owners.

XXIV

Law offices of Downs and Bell, black legal firm

House built in 1850's by "free person of color"

XXV

Catherine DeVeaux

~~built~~ a free colored woman built this house in 1853, related to Jane DeVeaux and Col John DeVeaux.

XXVI

Briellan Hannibal

a slave purchased this house in 1820 for \$200.

XXVII

William and Charlotte Wall's House

Free colored persons who built this house in 1818.

XXVIII

Second Baptist Church

organized December 1802. Sherman and Stanton meet in a mass meeting ~~here~~ with the newly freed Blacks in this church in January 1865 and the field order which promised "forty acres and a mule."

~~XXIX~~ Henry C Cunningham's House

a free colored man and pastor of Second Bapt. Church built this house in 1810.

XXX Beach Institute

The first school built to educate Blacks, 1865, by the Yankee teachers. Became a public school in 1909. Its most distinguished graduate was Robert Denegstake Abbott, founder of the Chicago Defender.

XXXI Ponce Street Row

This row of restored houses was purchased by the Beach Institute Historic Neighborhood to prevent the displacement of the Blacks who live here.

XXXII King-Tisdell Cottage, 1896

a Black heritage museum, named for its Black owners, Eugene King and Robert Tisdell. This is a museum of Black Savannah and the Sea Islands, sponsored by the local Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History.

End of Tour

* This is an abbreviated tour of the Negro Heritage Trail — a tour one and half to two hours. When we host a family reunion we attempt to include fifteen minutes in the Old Cemetery, Laurel Grove, (South).