Spelman College is one of the most prestigious undergraduate liberal arts colleges for women in the nation. Established for African American women 125 years ago, Spelman College has focused on academic excellence and leadership development in virtually every field. In 2002, the Getty Foundation awarded a grant to Spelman to study its campus heritage. The goals of the study were to retain and protect the distinguishing characteristics of the historic buildings and landscapes on the campus, establish renovation standards and strengthen the Spelman College Archives and Special Collections. Clement & Wynn Program Managers assembled a team of architects, archivists, researchers and landscape architects to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the college’s development history, focusing on 14 historic buildings that were constructed between 1886-1952. The Campus Heritage Plan provides a blueprint for the early development of the campus. It includes a historic building analysis, architectural drawings and a photographic history that connects the buildings to the founders and benefactors who developed the college.

Sophia B. Packard and Harriet E. Giles co-founded Spelman College. At the close of Reconstruction, Packard and Giles were part of a growing wave of northern missionaries who came to the south to educate freedmen and women. Both women were from New Salem, Massachusetts, where they attended local schools and the New Salem Academy. Miss Packard, who was older, first met Miss Giles while they were students at the New Salem Academy. Miss Packard taught at the Academy in 1854, and Miss Giles graduated in 1856.

The two women began teaching in small towns in Massachusetts and opened the Rollstone School. They eventually accepted teaching positions at the Connecticut Literary Institution in the fall of 1859. This academy was known for emphasis in liberal Baptist principles and high academic standards. Both women remained in Connecticut until 1864, when they joined the faculty of the Oread Collegiate Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts. Oread was one of the first academic institutions in the nation to admit women for a college education. While at Oread, Miss Packard began to hone her administrative abilities, and eventually accepted a managerial position at the Empire Insurance Company in Boston. In 1870, Dr. George C. Lormier offered her a position as the pastor’s assistant at Shawmut Avenue Baptist Church. When he left for a position as pastor of Tremont Temple, Miss Packard was his assistant. This position exposed Miss Packard to Christian reform movements.

In 1877, Miss Packard and Miss Giles organized the Woman’s American Baptist Home Mission Society (WABHMS). This organization of 200 women was an auxiliary to the American Baptist Home Missionary Society (ABHMS) and supported women missionaries who educated Native and African Americans. Miss Packard was first elected treasurer, and when

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she later became corresponding secretary, she worked to establish women’s groups in churches throughout New England. In 1880, WABHMS sent Miss Packard to the South, where she visited homes, schools and churches in Richmond, Nashville and New Orleans. When Miss Giles joined her in New Orleans, they concluded that the most pressing need was educational opportunities, especially for African American women.

When the two women presented their findings to the WABHMS, they asked for financial support to establish a new school for women and girls. The Society did not have the capital for this venture, and believed Miss Packard and Miss Giles, who were then 56 and 48 years old respectively, were too old to implement this plan. The women began to raise funds with local churches for their travel expenses and salaries. They targeted Georgia as the best locale for the school because it had the largest African American Baptist population, even though there were no provisions for the education of women and girls. By 1881, the Atlanta Baptist Seminary (presently Morehouse College) had moved to Atlanta, and ABHMS could offer a supportive environment. With these developments, WABHMS reversed their position, and commissioned Miss Packard and Miss Giles to open a school in Atlanta. With the support of Reverend Frank Quarles, pastor of Friendship Baptist Church, the women accepted his offer to use the basement of the church for a school, and opened the Atlanta Baptist Female Seminary with 11 students on April 11, 1881.

At first, instruction at the Seminary focused on the alphabet and children’s bible studies. From this modest beginning, news of their success spread rapidly in the African American community, and by the end of the school’s first year, enrollment had increased to 175 women. The WABHMS commissioned Sarah Champney and Caroline Grover to join Packard and Giles as teachers, but help was needed from the ABHMS to locate a building with adequate classrooms and living quarters for the faculty. The Society secured an option on nine acres and five frame buildings that were used by the Union Army for barracks during the Civil War, but ABHMS wanted the seminary to merge with the Atlanta Baptist Seminary as a “Girls Department.” This proposal for a merger was unacceptable to Packard and Giles.

In 1882, Reverend George O. King invited them to speak at the Wilson Avenue Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. Miss Packard delivered an eloquent speech to the congregation. John D. Rockefeller, who was in the audience, contributed all the money in his pockets and promised $250.00 for the building fund. The following day, they were invited to the Rockefeller’s home, where Miss Packard set forth her vision for the school. She appealed to Rockefeller to visit the campus, and on April 11, 1884, on the third anniversary, John and Laura Rockefeller, her mother and sister arrived on campus. At the end of their visit, Rockefeller contributed $5,000 for the remaining debt on the property. This was the first contribution to Negro education by the Rockefeller family. With gratitude, Packard asked Rockefeller to name the school in his honor, but he suggested that the school be called the Spelman Seminary for Women and Girls to honor Mrs. Rockefeller’s parents, Harvey Buel and Lucy Henry Spelman. The Spelmans were abolitionists in Ohio and were activists in the Underground Railroad.

When the seminary moved to the barracks, a boarding department was established. Soon the faculty increased to 16 and the student body to 600. By the fall of 1884, an elementary school opened. Mr. Rockefeller again contributed to the expansion by providing funds for a brick building. Rockefeller Hall was constructed in 1886 as a multipurpose building and is the oldest building on the Campus Oval. The building’s historic use included the academic and grammar departments and was the location of the Howe Memorial Chapel with a seating capacity of 400. It is currently undergoing renovations that will provide space for the college’s administrative offices.
As Spelman Seminary completed its first decade, it was granted a state charter, a Board of Trustees was organized and Sophia Packard became the institution’s first president. When she died in 1891, Harriet E. Giles was appointed as the second president of Spelman Seminary.

One of the significant accomplishments under Miss Giles’ administration was the expansion of teacher training for elementary grades. A Missionary Training Department was established to prepare students for work in the south as well as Africa. The Slater Fund increased their grant to Spelman Seminary and John D. Rockefeller once again contributed funds for the institution’s third building. He requested that it be named Giles Hall, and it was dedicated in 1893.

The new building was the home of the normal (teaching) school, and housed the primary and intermediate departments. It became the Georgia Colored Teachers’ Training School by an agreement with the State of Georgia in 1897. The building was home to the seminary’s library that was named in honor of Reverend Frank Quarles.

In 1901, the first college class graduation exercises were held in the Howe Memorial Chapel. Jane Anna Granderson and Claudia White were awarded their baccalaureate degrees. This signaled the need for more facilities, and President Giles directed further development until her death in 1909.

John D. Rockefeller was a major benefactor for Spelman Seminary during its first 20 years. When Miss Giles approached him to fund construction of four new buildings for the growing campus, he responded with a $200,000 donation. The president’s home was named the Mary C. Reynolds Cottage in honor of the corresponding secretary of the WABHMS.

In 1910, Lucy Hale Tapley became the third president of Spelman Seminary. She was born and educated in Maine, and came to Spelman in 1890. Miss Tapley led the institution for 17 years until her retirement in 1927. During her tenure, she successfully brought the institution out of debt and transferred financial control

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PRESERVING A SENSE OF PLACE: THE SPELMAN COLLEGE CAMPUS HERITAGE PLAN

Jeanne Cyriaque, continued from page 3

In 1916, the General Education Board that was created by John D. Rockefeller awarded Spelman $85,000 to build a nurses home and a home economics building. Hentz, Reid & Adler was contracted as the architectural firm and W.T. Courtney, an African American graduate of Hampton Institute, was the construction superintendent. Bessie Strong Hall, the former nurses home, was dedicated in 1917 and is still used as a dormitory today. Laura Spelman Rockefeller Hall, the Home Economics building, was dedicated in 1918. In 1930, the Spelman Nursery School was housed in this building, the first in the nation at a historically black college. Courtney with an appropriation of $140,000. Today, the building provides offices for the mathematics and science department and health careers.

Sisters Chapel reflects the continued philanthropy of the Rockefeller family in providing a place to meet the spiritual needs of Spelman students. Mr. and Mrs. Rockefeller, Jr. attended the dedication of the building that honored his mother and aunt on May 19, 1927. Sisters Chapel had a seating capacity of 1,050 and the first commencement exercises were held there in 1927. Because Sisters Chapel had the largest seating capacity among the Atlanta black colleges, it became the site for the annual Spelman-Morehouse Christmas Carol Concert. In 1928, this was the only facility in Atlanta where seating for blacks and whites was not segregated. The body of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid in state at Sisters Chapel while Dr. Joyce Johnson played the new Grand Holtkamp organ for the first time on April 6, 1968. The building today still serves as an auditorium for concerts, convocations, lectures and special events. The architectural firm of Surber Barber Choate and Hertlein received numerous awards for their renovation of Sisters Chapel.

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In June 1927, Florence Matilda Read succeeded Miss Tapley as the fourth president of Spelman College. She accepted the position on one condition: that the Board establishes an endowment fund for the college. Miss Read immediately set in motion a plan to dedicate all of the institution’s resources for development as a liberal arts college. She was a partner in the “Agreement of Affiliation” between Morehouse and Spelman colleges and Atlanta University that formed the core schools for today’s Atlanta University Center (AUC). Florence Read was the first secretary of the United Negro College Fund and was the author of The Story of Spelman College.

Two buildings on the campus were constructed during the Read presidency. Read Hall was named in her honor. It was dedicated in 1951. In 1952, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall was dedicated as a new dormitory for 100 students. It was named in honor of the wife of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The Masons of Georgia laid the cornerstone. The Grandmaster of the Masons of Georgia, John Wesley Dobbs, had six daughters who were Spelman graduates.

On April 11, 2006 Spelman College celebrated its first 125 years as a liberal arts college for women of African descent. As the campus expands into the next century, the Spelman College Campus Heritage Plan will be an invaluable tool for its future development.
History’s Enduring Voices was the theme of the 2006 annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Over 700 participants attended the annual conference of historians, writers, museum professionals and volunteers who interpret state and local history throughout the nation. The annual meeting offered 81 workshops and plenary sessions, tours to Arizona historic sites and an exhibit hall featuring 42 displays. The highlight of the annual meeting was the 2006 Awards Banquet. AASLH has sponsored the awards program since 1945, and in this 61st year the program was renamed the Leadership in History Awards. “This year AASLH is proud to confer 85 national awards honoring people, projects, exhibits, books and organizations,” said Terry L. Davis, president and CEO. Among this year’s awardees was one to a Georgia project: Reflections, the quarterly publication of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN).

To achieve this Award of Merit in the publication category, the nomination for Reflections was submitted to the AASLH state chair for Georgia, Laura T. McCarty, vice president of the Georgia Humanities Council. McCarty said, “Reflections is providing a lot of ‘bang for its buck.’ It is an important historical resource in our state, both in terms of documenting stories and in inspiring other groups to document the stories of their community.” McCarty then submitted her review to the regional chair, Carole King, historic properties curator of the Landmarks Foundation of Montgomery, Alabama. Following her assessment of the nomination, King then presented it to the national awards committee for a final determination. The awards committee commented that Reflections made “wide use of preservation to include culture as well as structure,” was “very impressive” and a “role model for other preservation organizations.” In addition, it was to be “considered in the top 10 (out of 149) nominated projects.”

The award nomination for Reflections included critical assessments from peer reviewers. Helen Aikman, president of Friends of Historic Downtown Louisville, said “Reflections is essential reading for anyone who is concerned with Georgia history... it is a unique voice with an undeniably important message.” Cynthia Ashby, director of state schools for the Georgia Department of Education, especially appreciated the Reflections article about the Gordon campus of the Georgia School for the Deaf. The article was distributed to every student on the campus and became an important addition to the campus library. The research about its African American principal will be used for a historic marker that will be erected at the site of the former segregated dormitory.

“Since its inception in 2000, Reflections has been the definitive source in Georgia for raising awareness among preservationists, historians and the general public of the importance of African American history and the preservation of the tangible links to that past,” said Richard Laub, director of Georgia State University’s Heritage Preservation Program. Audrey Brown, who recently retired from the National Park Service as acting chief ethnographer, commented, “this kind of information about local heritage and historic preservation activities is unique in the literature. The articles are descriptive, in depth, and cover African American preservation projects in the gamut of locales in Georgia. The images in Reflections with their accompanying explanations and testimonies of local people about their significance reinforce our philosophy of the need for flexible historic designation standards. Reflections makes it clear that historic sites and structures encompass places and edifices of significance to ordinary everyday people as well as those that celebrate our national heroes, heroines and historic events.”

Both Tracy Hayes of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Leola Hubbard of the Camilla and Zack Hubert Foundation commented that they thought Reflections was a unique information tool that could be duplicated in other states. Meeting Tours International, who sponsors cultural history tours, said Reflections highlighted the importance of the Gullah/Geechee cultural history and African American farmers. One World Archives commented that “it is accessible and interesting to a general audience while often revealing to scholars overlooked pieces of research.” Althea Sumpter noted, “an important factor is that Reflections is available on-line. It is a place that I send others to take note of a certain topic.”

Carlton E. Brown, president of Savannah State University, “was enormously pleased with the issue which traced the university’s humble beginnings from the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act and highlighted Hill Hall. Because the issue was a thorough historical account, we have often shared the publication with key decision-makers so that they, too, will appreciate all that Hill Hall symbolizes as we seek to restore it as a central element of our student-centered campus.”

GAAHPN thanks our reviewers and members of the network who provide oral history, photographs and documents that assist us in researching Georgia’s African American past. We salute your valuable input to ensure that African American built and cultural resources are a continuing part of History’s Enduring Voices.
The neighborhood of Pittsburgh began as an African American settlement in Atlanta during the 1880s. In 1883, the East Tennessee, Virginia and Georgia Railroad built a series of shops along the southwestern edge of the city. The area surrounding these shops was similar to communities around the steel mills in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Consequently, this area became known as Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh attracted a large number of African Americans who were employed as laborers and domestic servants for the railroad. By 1890, Pittsburgh developed into a predominately African American working-class community with a population of 684. The community’s growing population led to the building of small, single family homes. Electric streetcar lines ran through Pittsburgh by 1902, allowing residents to have easy access to downtown Atlanta.

With the railroad providing a constant source of employment and the continuance of segregation, many African American institutions, including businesses, churches and schools, developed throughout Pittsburgh. Shortly after Pittsburgh was settled, residents began holding Sunday School and Bible Study classes in their homes. These classes eventually led to the founding of Ariel Bowen (United Methodist) Church and Iconium Baptist Church.

Ariel Bowen is the oldest church in Pittsburgh. While the church was founded around the turn of the century, the current building was built in 1939. Ariel Bowen also served as the site of the community’s first school, where classes of the Pittsburgh Grammar School were held in the basement. While a growing number of students and inadequate conditions led to numerous relocations, a new two-story building was built in 1909.

Another school was not built in Pittsburgh until 1922 when the Pittsburgh Grammar School was closed due to inadequate facilities. Clark College, the Freedom Aide Society and the Atlanta Board of Education donated land for the new school. The 19-classroom school was designed by prominent Atlanta architect, A. Ten Eyck Brown and named the William H. Crogman School in honor of the first African American president of Clark College. The Crogman School quickly grew and became one of the best public schools for African Americans in Atlanta until it closed in 1979, due to declining enrollment. The Crogman School was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on July 14, 2005. It was a certified tax incentives project that rehabilitated the old school for adaptive use as loft apartments.

By 1960, Pittsburgh contained over 9,000 residents. However, the population as well as housing began to decrease due to transportation and urban renewal projects. During the 1950s, in order to provide easier access to Atlanta’s business district, a new expressway system was proposed and designed. This new design not only affected Pittsburgh, but many of Atlanta’s African American neighborhoods. While the impact in other neighborhoods was not as severe in Pittsburgh, a number of houses were destroyed as well as the commercial district.

Housing was further destroyed by Atlanta’s urban renewal plan that called for the demolition and replacement of deteriorated housing. Funding to replace these homes was not made available until 1968 after most of Pittsburgh’s middle-class residents had moved to other areas.

Pittsburgh has 792 historic buildings. Among these buildings can be found excellent examples of 19th-early 20th century house types, such as shotgun houses and bungalows as well as commercial and religious buildings. The Pittsburgh Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 14, 2006.
SAVE THE DATE:

**WHAT’S NEW IN THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD?**

Augusta, like many Georgia cities and other locales, is experiencing change in the built landscape of historic African American communities. During segregation, many of these communities were considered undesirable, but due to their in-town locations, today these neighborhoods are often the communities that are most likely to be revitalized. Rebuilding historic neighborhoods while achieving balance among existing historic houses, schools, churches and commercial structures requires innovative approaches and partnerships. Thus, the 2007 annual meeting of the Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) will focus on the topic: *What’s New In the Old Neighborhood?*

The GAAHPN annual meeting will be held February 8-10 in two Augusta African American historic districts: Bethlehem and Laney-Walker, where participants will experience both educational sessions in these communities while exploring field sessions to address neighborhood preservation. The opening reception will be held on the campus of the Lucy Craft Laney High School, where today the Haines Alumni Association are stewards of the Cauley-Wheeler building on the campus. Educational sessions and the luncheon will be held on Friday, February 9 at the Beulah Grove Building of Opportunity, a faith-based initiative that was implemented by the Beulah Grove Baptist Church in the Bethlehem Historic District. Following the educational sessions, participants will move to Springfield Village Park to see how public art is incorporated into community design, with a presentation by sculptor Richard Hunt, who will discuss the newest element in the park, *And They Went Down Into the Water*. Friday sessions will conclude with a reception hosted by Springfield Baptist Church.

The annual meeting will conclude on Saturday, February 10 with a field session and end with lunch at the Julian Smith Barbeque Pit. The registration fee is $50, and includes educational/field sessions, and two lunches. GAAHPN’s principal partners are the African American Preservation Alliance (AAPA), the Central Savannah River Area Regional Development Center, Historic Augusta, Inc., the Historic Preservation Division (GASHPO), the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee are statewide networks of AAPA who exist to preserve African American history and culture and build diversity in preservation.

Ample lodging is available for annual meeting participants at the Quality and Comfort Inns, or if you prefer a historic hotel, the Partridge Inn is one of the National Trust’s designated hotels. For a complete conference brochure, hotel and other information, please contact Jeanne Cyriaque (see below) by telephone, fax or email.

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- Velmon Allen
- Karl Webster Barnes
- C. Donald Beall
- Linda Cooks
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The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and ethnic diversity of Georgia’s African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia’s history. The GAAHPN Steering Committee meets regularly to plan and implement ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 2,200 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, Reflections, produced by the Network. Visit the Historic Preservation Division website at www.gashpo.org. Preservation information and previous issues of Reflections are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.