

Gov. Perdue Declares February as Black History Month

Gov. Bev Perdue has proclaimed February as Black History Month in North Carolina and urges citizens to honor the heritage of African-Americans and their contributions to our state and nation. Several state museums and historic sites will offer special programs and exhibits to mark the month.

“Celebrating Black History Month this year is even more relevant as we honor the inauguration of the nation’s first African-American president,” Perdue said. “I encourage all North Carolinians to take advantage of the many opportunities throughout the month to learn more about black history and celebrate the contributions that have helped build our country and our state.”

The N.C. Department of Cultural Resources has a special podcast on its website featuring an interview with photographer Chris Sims, who is helping tell North Carolina’s civil rights story. The “Telling Our Stories Photography Exhibit” will travel around the state this year. More information about the exhibit and a schedule of locations is available online at: www.ncculture.com/TOS_2008/TOS_home.asp. Also, the podcast features a discussion with Jeffrey Crow, deputy secretary of the Department of Cultural Resources for Archives and History, who is co-author of “A History of African- Americans in North Carolina.” You can listen to the podcast on line at: news.ncdcr.gov/2009/01/16/nc-photo-stories-civil-rights-history.

The department has also scheduled a series of events and programs throughout the month and there are exhibits and programs at other museums and historic sites around the state. Below are some highlights:

- **N.C. Museum of History**, Raleigh: The Eighth Annual African-American History Celebration, Saturday, Jan. 31, from 11 a.m.-4 p.m., featuring Piedmont Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green, the Gospel Jubilators, the colorfully costumed Jonkonnu dancers and crafts and other activities. There is no charge.
- **N.C. Museum of History**, Raleigh: “Bearing Witness: the Civil Rights Photographs of Alexander Rivera” is a free exhibit, through March 1.
- **Town Creek Indian Mound**, Mount Gilead: Screening of “Black Indians: An American Story” narrated by James Earl Jones on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 4 p.m.

- **State Capitol**, Raleigh: African-American Read-In, Saturday, Feb. 7, from 1-5 p.m., featuring local celebrities reading their favorite black authors.
- **Historic Bath**, Bath: Program on slave ship archaeology, Saturday, Feb. 7, at 10 a.m., comparing the English slaver *Henrietta Marie* to the French slave ship turned into Blackbeard's flagship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*.
- **Tryon Palace**, New Bern: Storyteller Antonia Parker will relate the story of Amelia Green and her efforts to free herself and her family from slavery on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m.
- **Historic Bath**, Bath: Screening of "A Raisin in the Sun" starring Sidney Poitier, on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 7 p.m.
- **Roanoke Island Festival Park**, Manteo: Freedman's Jazz Concert, Friday, Feb. 20, 8 p.m., featuring legendary blues guitarists Hubert Sumlin, guitarist for Howlin' Wolf and Bob Margolin who played for Muddy Waters.
- **N.C. Transportation Museum**, Spencer: "North Carolina Lining Bar Gangs" exhibit opening Tuesday, Feb. 24, examines the work and music of lining bar workers, known as "gandy dancers", who toiled as railroad track maintenance workers from the mid 1800s to the mid 20th century.
- **Museum of the Cape Fear**, Fayetteville: The Arsenal Roundtable "Red, White, Blue and Black: A History of Black Americans in the U.S. Military," Thursday, Feb. 26, at 7 p.m. with Professor Charles Anderson examining African-American military involvement from colonial times to the Civil War.

In addition, Somerset Place in Creswell is one of the state historic sites steeped in African-American history. It interprets the lives of the Collins family and the nearly 300 slaves who worked the 100,000-acre plantation. Historic Stagville in Durham was the Bennehan-Cameron plantation of 30,000 acres and nearly 900 slaves, where atypical apartment style slave houses built by enslaved Africans still stand. Historic Edenton features a display and tours about Harriet Jacobs, who escaped slavery to become an abolitionist after seven years hiding in her grandmother's attic. The Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum in Sedalia was a preeminent prep school for African-Americans in the first half of the 20th century.

Visit www.nchistoricsites.org and click on the individual site or the calendar on the right side of the screen for additional information.