

PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

The museum is leading efforts, launched in 2017, to save and preserve the historic Siloam School, a school built by African Americans during the Jim Crow era to educate their children who were denied access to public schools. The restored school building will serve as an educational space for programs and exhibits that foster dialogue, particularly around racial cooperation and reconciliation. The building will be a permanent and tangible reminder of our nation's history of race-based injustice and a testament to the persistence and determination of African Americans in the face of this injustice. Working with community partners including Silver Star Inc., the museum has raised almost \$200,000 so far in contributions from the city, county and community to support the Save Siloam School Project. You can donate to support the project [here](#).

The museum houses permanent educational panels featuring two of Charlotte's historic black neighborhoods, Brooklyn and Biddleville. The city tore down Brooklyn during the "urban renewal" movement of the 1960s, while Biddleville suffered from gentrification that displaced many of its original residents.

In recent years, the museum has been working to uncover and better interpret the stories of Bet and the other 12 enslaved people who we know lived and worked at the historic Hezekiah Alexander homesite in the 1700s and 1800s, sharing their stories with visitors.

The museum regularly hosts programs on our campus and in the community that explore our nation's history of racially biased systems and policies and the ongoing fight against them.

- In May, the museum hosted a free virtual Lunch and Learn about the more than 5,000 Rosenwald schools in the Jim-Crow era South. Museum education specialist Angel Johnston and Committee Chair Fannie Flono shared how African Americans funded, built and staffed 800 of these schools in North Carolina alone.
- In February, the museum hosted a conversation about the legacy of enslavement in Charlotte. It featured a conversation with Jimmie Kirkpatrick and De Kirkpatrick, subjects of a documentary currently in development called "The Mecklenburg Kirkpatricks." These two men - one black, one white - share the same last name and are connected by the legacy of slavery. By learning from each other, they hope to begin healing the deep wounds that many have never faced.
- In October 2019, the museum hosted a "Hidden History" tour of Mecklenburg County's historic African American schools, giving people a chance to visit some of the region's Rosenwald Schools.

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- In August 2019, the museum honored the Second Ward High School National Alumni Foundation and Second Ward Gym with its Excellence in Preservation Award. The award recognized the group's work successfully advocating for the renovation and reuse of the circa-1949 Second Ward High School Gymnasium, all that remains of Second Ward High School. The City of Charlotte razed the school in the 1960s, along with most of the Brooklyn community, in the city's first wave of "urban renewal." That process displaced thousands of black residents and ultimately destroyed more than 1,480 structures. The gym is now a local historic landmark.
- In March 2018, the museum hosted author Dr. Stephanie E. Myers to speak about her book, "Invisible Queen," which tells the surprising story of Queen Charlotte, the city of Charlotte's monarch namesake, including her African ancestry and her lasting legacy as a supporter of the Abolitionist movement that ended the Atlantic slave trade.
- In February 2018, the museum hosted its first African American Heritage Festival. This free annual event now attracts a diverse audience of hundreds of people who come to celebrate and learn about African American heritage, culture and contributions.
- In November 2017, we hosted "Resist and Persist," a program that explored Charlotte's history of resisting authority. The 20-minute performance piece featured Emmy Award-winning spoken-word poet Bluz and other local spoken-word poets telling Charlotte's history, accompanied by Kojo Bey and Drums4Life. The performance highlighted Charlotte's revolutionary legacy, including how Mecklenburg residents jump-started the Revolutionary War with the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence and Resolves; how free black people in Charlotte led slave revolts in 1852; how North Carolina women suffragists held their first convention in Charlotte in 1913; and how Charlotte civil rights activists forced the desegregation of schools and other public facilities through protests at lunch counters, in the streets and in the courts in the 1960s.
- In October 2017, the museum hosted a program about the segregation and resegregation of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system that featured community historian Tom Hanchett; author and educator Marshall Washington-Cabiness Abuwi, the great-grandson of Dr. Booker T. Washington; and Stephanie Deutsch, author of "You Need a Schoolhouse: Booker T. Washington, Julius Rosenwald and the Building of Schools for the Segregated South."