

**THE GULLAH/GEECHEE  
CULTURAL HERITAGE  
COMMISSION MEETING**

Tuesday, April 7th, 2009  
7:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.

The GULLAH/GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE  
COMMISSION MEETING, taken on the 7th day of April,  
2009 at the Howard Auditorium, located at 1610 Hawkins  
Street, Georgetown, South Carolina 29440.

**CP-26 REPORTING**

Melissa M. Decker, Court Reporter  
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**APPEARANCES:**

**COMMISSION MEMBERS:**

Commissioner Veronica D. Gerald  
Commissioner Nichole Green  
Commissioner Michael Allen

**ATTENDEE SPEAKERS:**

Ms. Vermelle “Bunny” Rodrigues  
421 Petigru Drive, Pawleys Island, South Carolina 29585

Ms. Zelma Fraser Carr  
204 South Merriman Street, Georgetown, South Carolina 29440

Mr. James Wragg  
81 Boykin Street, Georgetown, South Carolina 29440

Mr. Andrew Rodrigues  
2281-D Andover Drive, Surfside Beach, South Carolina 29575

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pryor

Ms. Lilly Jean Johnson

Ms. Zenobia Washington

Mr. David Drayton

Mr. Louis Ventors, Francis Marion University

Mr. Ray Funnye

Ms. Charlena B. Johnson  
100 Arcadia Road, Pawleys Island, South Carolina 29585

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Sunny Fry, Videographer

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SPEAKER.***

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**INTRODUCTION**

COMMISSIONER GERALD: Good evening. You know it is just so good to be in this historic building. And I heard you as you come in feel a kinship to it. And we're just so happy to be able to meet with the Georgetown community in the old Howard High School Auditorium. My name is Veronica Gerald and I'm one of the Commissioners with the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor, and want to say: welcome. What we're doing here is: bringing everyone together in various communities across what we call Gullah Country. Gullah Country is located between the two Jacksonvilles: Jacksonville, North Carolina and Jacksonville, Florida. And anyone living along that Coastal Region or being a descendant of that region and 30 miles inland are considered to be part of this wonderful culture. So what we're doing today is having a get-together, a meeting, to bring the public in as part of our partnership, as we try

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1 to develop a management plan that will  
2 implement, spotlight, highlight,  
3 preserve, recognize our culture. And we  
4 think the community is very important  
5 because you, more than anyone, can tell  
6 us what it is that you feel is important  
7 as your community, around your  
8 community, and in your families, your  
9 churches; where you live, where you used  
10 to live. Where your mother grew up,  
11 your uncles, your aunts and that kind of  
12 thing, so this is a public engagement  
13 meeting and we're not going to hold you  
14 long; we're simply going to let you know  
15 what we're doing to keep you abreast of  
16 what we're doing so that you will be a  
17 full partner in this endeavor. There  
18 are three of us, three Commissioners  
19 here tonight and they will introduce  
20 themselves as they come forward. But we  
21 want to move now to bringing in, and I  
22 have to put on my glasses. Did you know  
23 that one of the features of Gullah  
24 culture is Presbyopia? After you turn  
25 40 most Gullah speakers move to glasses.

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1 COURT REPORTER'S

2 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: At any rate, we're  
4 going to begin the program by calling  
5 forth one of your community members. I  
6 call her Bunny, but I think you all know  
7 her by several names: The Gullah Uhman  
8 (phonetically spelled) is one, and  
9 Vermelle is another. We're going to ask  
10 her some questions as part of your  
11 community just to kick things off. And  
12 I'm going to ask Nichole Green, who is a  
13 Commissioner as well; Nicole is the  
14 director of the Charleston Slave Market  
15 Museum. People who are members of this  
16 committee come from all spectrums of the  
17 Gullah world, and we all at some point  
18 have worked in the field to preserve and  
19 to highlight this culture. And Nichole  
20 is one of our northern members. She's  
21 from McClellanville, and we're going to  
22 ask her to come up and engage Bunny  
23 Rodrigues in her questions.

24 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Good evening.

25 AUDIENCE: Good evening.

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1 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Tell me, Ms. Rodrigues:  
2 Do you want to stand and do this; do you  
3 want to sit; how should we do this?  
4 DR. GERALD: Well, she's going to  
5 need a mic.  
6 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay.  
7 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Because we want to make  
8 sure that she's heard.  
9 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay. I'll use this  
10 mic over here.  
11 COMMISSIONER GERALD: That's Ms. Rodrigues  
12 here.  
13 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay, just a couple of  
14 technical difficulties. Good evening,  
15 again. Ms. Rodrigues, it's a pleasure  
16 meeting you in-person. I've heard so  
17 much about you so it's finally nice to  
18 meet you face-to-face. So I just wanted  
19 to ask you a couple of questions here.  
20 Is it okay if I'm sitting; is that okay?  
21 MS. RODRIGUES: Sure; that's the Gullah  
22 way.  
23 COMMISSIONER GREEN: That's the Gullah way.  
24 I wanted to get close to you. Now, my  
25 first question is: As a community

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1           organizer you've worked tirelessly in  
2           this community and especially in the  
3           early stages of the Gullah/Geechee  
4           Special Resource Study, especially with  
5           Michael Allen and National Park Service.  
6           And one of the first things I want to  
7           ask you is: Seeing the group gathered  
8           here today and you think back on all the  
9           work you put in on the Special Resource  
10          Study; what are you feeling today  
11          looking at this crowd and seeing how far  
12          ---

13       MS. RODRIGUES:           Well, it isn't ---

14       COMMISSIONER GREEN:      It's a good group.

15       MS. RODRIGUES:           Yeah, and I'd like to  
16           thank the Commission for being here.  
17           And I'd like to thank everybody who came  
18           out today, tonight. And do you really  
19           want to know how I feel? I even worked  
20           before the resource committee; I have  
21           always been Gullah/Geechee. And on the  
22           19th of this month I'll be 71-years old,  
23           so I've been Gullah/Geechee all my life.  
24           When I left Georgetown I always told  
25           people that I was a saltwater Geechee

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1 Gal. Always proud of who I was and my  
2 culture, and knew my culture very, very  
3 well. And when I came back in the 80s,  
4 or the early 90s, they had a meeting at  
5 Brookgreen Garden, and like usually,  
6 most of the people in Georgetown did not  
7 know. And I called Michael Allen and  
8 that's how I got involved. And at that  
9 time it was not the Resource Study; it  
10 was the Gullah Consortium and I was  
11 involved with an awful lot. And as I  
12 was away from home I was always involved  
13 in talking about my culture. So it's  
14 easy for me to come back home and to  
15 really get involved in anything that had  
16 anything to do with preserving the  
17 Gullah/Geechee Culture. And my husband  
18 and I, and a lot of times we'd take Mr.  
19 Drayton with us, over here, the  
20 Georgetown community worked tirelessly.  
21 I mean we worked for this, the one day  
22 we would have a Commission. And I want  
23 to tell you a surprise thing about it.  
24 You know the Commission is representing  
25 four states and in South Carolina that's

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1           when you got on the Commission. And I  
2           realize that Georgetown, because we were  
3           always, I was always preaching about  
4           Georgetown. One day someone said that  
5           they weren't coming into Georgetown. I  
6           got on that telephone; I called Michael  
7           Allen. In two minutes he had Cynthia  
8           Forshee calling me and she was up here.

9       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Okay.

10       MS. RODRIGUES:           And I think sometime we  
11           forget the people are here and the  
12           Gullah culture, whether in Wilmington,  
13           all of us are Gullah/Geechee, you know.

14       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Right.

15       MS. RODRIGUES:           If you're a descendant  
16           of Gullah/Geechee people. And to me the  
17           Georgetown culture is just as important  
18           as the one in McClellanville, Awendaw,  
19           Charleston, Beaufort, but sometime we  
20           feel as though we're being left out.  
21           And I'm quite sure that the people in  
22           Georgetown must have felt it when they  
23           organized the Commission and it's really  
24           split us right up. Because you know  
25           they say, oh, they not even low country

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1 up here in Georgetown. And one person  
2 called me all the way from Beaufort, and  
3 they said, you know, Bunny, she said  
4 they, this lady was bragging; said they  
5 had five Commissioners out of the  
6 Beaufort area; that's the first thing.  
7 And I think the people in Georgetown  
8 felt it because we worked hard. We,  
9 some of us we worked hard so that we  
10 could be part of this Commission. And  
11 I'm still working hard and even though  
12 we're not on the Commission but we are  
13 still working, and we have so many  
14 things that you'd really be surprised  
15 that we have in Georgetown.

16 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Now, tell me a little  
17 bit about what your definition of  
18 Gullah/Geechee Culture is, and do you  
19 think it's something, a culture of the  
20 past, or do you see that culture here  
21 and present; do you think it will ---

22 MS. RODRIGUES: When I was in  
23 elementary school I had my first  
24 geography class.

25 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Uh-huh (affirmative

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1                   response).

2       MS. RODRIGUES:                   And you have to study

3                   the past ---

4       COMMISSIONER GREEN:       Right.

5       MS. RODRIGUES:                   --- to move over into

6                   the future.

7       COMMISSIONER GREEN:       Right.

8       MS. RODRIGUES:                   And to me, Gullah is

9                   both.

10      COMMISSIONER GREEN:       It's the past ---

11      MS. RODRIGUES:                   The present and the

12                   future.

13      COMMISSIONER GREEN:       --- the present and the

14                   future.

15      MS. RODRIGUES:                   In order to move on, we

16                   have to study the past. We have to

17                   study the Gullah people. We have to

18                   find out that in Georgetown County we

19                   produce two-thirds of the rice so that

20                   meant that we had more fatter baskets

21                   than anybody else.

22      COMMISSIONER GREEN:       And one of the last

23                   things I want you to do is: Is speak

24                   about if there are any particular people

25                   or events or places, or things that make

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1           this term, "Gullah/Geechee" real to you;  
2           any places in Georgetown, any things,  
3           any particular people that really bring  
4           this culture to life for you?

5       MS. RODRIGUES:           Do you know that my  
6           father used to say, we used to go from  
7           this building over across the street,  
8           Butts Street, the street that I grew up  
9           on, and it was nothing but water. And  
10          daddy would say, "Ain't nothing but a  
11          old rice field." They never really  
12          explained it. Like a lot of times, you  
13          know if he was doing oyster shells and  
14          he never explained. He just said, "Move  
15          away from there because those oyster  
16          shells gonna hit you in your eyes." And  
17          I think the beauty of it, when I got,  
18          and, but he would use the, you know, on  
19          his garden. But he didn't tell us he  
20          was using it for fertilizer. And then  
21          when I got grown I found out how we, you  
22          know, we used it and that's how we got  
23          the tabbys, used it in the tabby and  
24          whatnot. So this whole area ---

25       COMMISSIONER GREEN:    Uh-huh (affirmative

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1 response).

2 MS. RODRIGUES: --- to me, it was  
3 always something different about  
4 Georgetown and just the low country.  
5 You know I went away from home and I  
6 just couldn't get, wait to get back here  
7 ---

8 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Uh-huh (affirmative  
9 response).

10 MS. RODRIGUES: --- you know. And it's  
11 so much history here.

12 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Right.

13 MS. RODRIGUES: Can make your head  
14 turn.

15 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Now one of the last  
16 things I want you to do is ---

17 MS. RODRIGUES: So you're, we're on  
18 holy ground. This is a rice field.

19 COMMISSIONER GREEN: A rice field?

20 MS. RODRIGUES: A rice field. See  
21 that, Sampit River is ---

22 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Uh-huh (affirmative  
23 response). And isn't this landfill; did  
24 they just sort of fill it in a little  
25 bit ---

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1 MS. RODRIGUES: I don't know. It's  
2 still watery.  
3 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Is it?  
4 MS. RODRIGUES: Yes.  
5 COMMISSIONER GREEN: When it rains does it  
6 flood?  
7 MS. RODRIGUES: Yes.  
8 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay.  
9 MS. RODRIGUES: Right.  
10 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay. Now, one of the  
11 last things I want you to do is: To wet  
12 our appetites a little bit about what to  
13 expect this weekend; what's coming up on  
14 April 10th and 11th?  
15 MS. RODRIGUES: We're having a  
16 Gullah/Geechee Rice Festival.  
17 COMMISSIONER GREEN: A Gullah/Geechee Rice  
18 Festival?  
19 MS. RODRIGUES: That's right. Because  
20 that's why we came here because of the  
21 rice.  
22 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Right.  
23 MS. RODRIGUES: Right. And we having,  
24 we having very good entertainment, and  
25 it just isn't entertainment; it's

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1           learning about the Gullah Culture and  
2           teaching our children, and teaching  
3           adults so they can teach their children.  
4           And see, this is our problem: We, the,  
5           the, the parents don't know who they  
6           are, because they made us all these  
7           years ashamed of being Gullah/Geechee,  
8           the first language that our ancestors  
9           had to use to communicate to help each  
10          other. So now we have to make them feel  
11          proud, and they are beginning to feel  
12          proud. When I go to schools I never  
13          says: May I have your attention, please.  
14          Everybody, whether they're white, blue,  
15          black or green, they are listening to  
16          learn about this beautiful culture,  
17          about the people who built, really built  
18          America.

19       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Now tell me: Where is  
20                                   it going to be held?

21       MS. RODRIGUES:           It's going to be held,  
22                                   Friday we having a down home fish fry at  
23                                   the Gullah Museum on 421 Petigru Drive.  
24                                   And then on Saturday we have a parade  
25                                   with horses. And you know, and this

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1           year we explained to the children what  
2           the, how the word, "cowboy," came about;  
3           cowboys, because they didn't call  
4           anybody else, and how we, how we were  
5           always the Fellany (phonetically  
6           spelled) Tribe, the great horsemen's and  
7           whatnot. And then we have other things:  
8           the parade. The parade will end up in  
9           the park when we have great  
10          entertainment. We'll be making grass  
11          dolls; that is an art form that we  
12          brought here. You know everybody's  
13          calling everything Gullah Dolls. No, we  
14          only brought one. It was the Dan doll.  
15          I have one that I had for 30 years. And  
16          then my husband is going to be doing a  
17          seminar on rice. And he's studied rice,  
18          and he's doing a book. And we having  
19          Gullah foods, because a lot of times I  
20          go to some of these affairs and you know  
21          they got fish and French fries.

22       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     You going to have white  
23                                    rice?

24       MS. RODRIGUES:           We've got to have the  
25                                    rice. Now the African believe the rice

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1 is the foundation of life, and this is  
2 why we throw rice when we have a  
3 wedding. And then the Africans always  
4 said: If that love maybe get a little  
5 slow, marriage get a little slow, add a  
6 little hot pepper. Now you know we like  
7 hot pepper. (Chuckling.) Okay.  
8 Because you know you could get married  
9 to a Geechee man and he says, "Sister,  
10 well, I had macaroni and cheese and I  
11 had potato salad, some pasta salad and  
12 he had the nerve to tell me: Where  
13 rice?" (Chuckling.)

14 COURT REPORTER'S

15 NOTE: (AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.)

16 MS. RODRIGUES: Rice is the foundation  
17 of life.

18 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Yes; that's true. Well  
19 thank you so much. I'm going to turn --

20 MS. RODRIGUES: Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER GREEN: --- everything back  
22 over to Commissioner Gerald. Thank you  
23 so much.

24 MS. RODRIGUES: Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER GERALD: That's wonderful,

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1           wonderful. You know, I do feel so very  
2           closely to what Bunny was saying because  
3           I come from the Brookgreen people.  
4           Broogreen Plantation; it's down in  
5           Murrells Inlet and was one of the  
6           biggest rice plantations furnishing 40  
7           percent of the world's rice supply back  
8           in the eve of the Civil War. So our  
9           people, you know, we feel like we were  
10          kind of, everybody was thinking that  
11          Gullah/Geechee people had to live in  
12          Charleston or on the Sea Island, but  
13          that's only because people were talking  
14          about us from the outside. And so now  
15          what we're trying to do today is: to  
16          engage an inside perspective of our  
17          people. And we thank Ms. Rodrigues for  
18          setting the pace. And the reason why  
19          I'm calling her name is because we're  
20          needing to document who said what, when  
21          and where. And that's all a part of  
22          history. So that's Vermelle ---

23       MS. RODRIGUES:                Yes. May I ask you  
24                                        something?

25       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    --- Bunny Rodrigues.

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1 MS. RODRIGUES: May I say something?  
2 You know, I thought this Commission was  
3 going to be like a pot of gumbo soup.  
4 When you have everything in there: the  
5 okra, the corn, and the tomato, and you  
6 know being a community action person on  
7 that Commission, I don't see Aunt  
8 Sookie, because that's where all of  
9 these years that we got our inspiration  
10 from. And she knows more about the  
11 Gullah/Geechee than all of these,  
12 everybody else.

13 COMMISSIONER GERALD: The doctors?

14 MS. RODRIGUES: Huh?

15 COMMISSIONER GERALD: The doctors and lawyers  
16 and ---

17 MS. RODRIGUES: Dr. Sookie, right. And  
18 then you know the sweetgrass people have  
19 held us up all of these years, and  
20 there's no sweetgrass lady on that  
21 Commission. So we need to put some of  
22 the other flavor into that pot of gumbo  
23 soup in order to make it taste good.

24 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And that's a good  
25 scenario and you're looking at gumbo

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COURT REPORTER'S

MS. RODRIGUES: And Dan Disher.

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1 Michael Allen.

2 MR. ALLEN: Where's the spoon?

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Oh, he's

4 Gullah/Geechee, too: Kingstree.

5 MS. RODRIGUES: When I met him he

6 didn't know he was Gullah/Geechee. I

7 said, "He's from Kingstree. Sometime I

8 don't even understand what they're

9 talking about."

10 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Thank you, Veronica ---

11 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Uh-huh (affirmative

12 response).

13 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: --- for stirring up the

14 pot. Thank you, Bunny, for putting the

15 fire under the pot. And now I have to

16 manage the pot.

17 MS. RODRIGUES: Yes.

18 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: As I was driving up

19 here today, I realized I had an awesome

20 task to come and talk to you. Some of

21 you I've been knowing for the last

22 decade and longer than that. And some

23 of you I just met the other day, but

24 it's an honor to be a part of this

25 endeavor, to be a part of this journey.

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1           And some folks say: Well, how did you  
2           get into this pot to become the glue and  
3           to become the paste, and to become the  
4           okra and to become the shrimp and the  
5           corn of the Gullah/Geechee Cultural  
6           Heritage Corridor? Let me let you know  
7           as you sit here tonight in this  
8           auditorium: In this country today there  
9           are approximately 50 national heritage  
10          areas, 50. In fact, we got, you got 10  
11          brothers and sisters about two weeks  
12          ago, okay, because two weeks ago there  
13          was only 40 but now there's 50. But of  
14          the 50 national heritage areas across  
15          the entire United States, the one that  
16          you're sitting in tonight is the only  
17          one that's dedicated to the African-  
18          American experience, lifeways, history,  
19          culture and contributions, so I think  
20          that's important for why we're here  
21          tonight. A lot of folks: Well, how did  
22          you all get to be a part of the 50? And  
23          Sister Bunny talked a little bit about  
24          that and Veronica and Nichole, about  
25          what we did to get to this point. In

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1           2000, our good congressman, Congressman  
2           James E. Clyburn, tasked the National  
3           Park Service to do what we call the  
4           Special Resource Study. And what that  
5           really was, was an opportunity for the  
6           National Park Service to leave the  
7           office; get away from the computer; put  
8           the telephone down and to come out and  
9           talk with people like yourself. And to  
10          ask very basic questions as Bunny  
11          answered tonight: What is Gullah; what  
12          is Geechee? What's the history? What  
13          are the opportunities; what are the  
14          threats, if there are threats? What  
15          does the future look like? What type of  
16          partnership can be brought to ensure the  
17          blessings that I see here tonight can be  
18          continued off into the future? So we  
19          began this journey in 2000 and we called  
20          it Exploring the Soul of Gullah/Geechee  
21          History and Gullah Culture. And today I  
22          was flipping through the Special  
23          Resource Book and I realized that in  
24          2000 and in 2002, we were in Georgetown.  
25          The first time we came we asked those

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1 questions I just said to you. And some  
2 of you all I see here today were there  
3 back in 2000, and you gave us your  
4 thoughts, your desires, your hopes, your  
5 dreams, your aspirations. And we took  
6 notes, like we're doing here tonight, to  
7 be historic. But we knew this was  
8 different. We didn't want to follow the  
9 same old script, so we kind of put  
10 together what we thought we heard you  
11 said and then we came back in 2002 and  
12 said: We were here two years ago. We  
13 thought we heard you said this, but we  
14 want to make sure this is what you truly  
15 said. Can you check what we're showing  
16 to you tonight? And so you walk out and  
17 said, you know, I didn't say it like  
18 this or I did said it like this or you  
19 got it; you don't have it. So we went  
20 back and re-tuned that. And by 2005 we  
21 took all the comments and all the  
22 suggestions from five years of  
23 conversations, and wrapped it into a  
24 package that was called the Low Country  
25 Special Resource Study Guide Book,

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1           because the president said that we have  
2           to return something to the Secretary of  
3           Interiors' Desk in a period of time.  
4           Thank you, ma'am. (Speaking to Ms.  
5           Rodrigues, who passed a copy of the  
6           Resource Study to Commissioner Allen.)  
7           So this came out of our journey and our  
8           conversation. In fact some of y'all are  
9           on the front cover. Now, we gave an  
10          advance copy of this to the architect,  
11          Congressman Clyburn. So he was pleased  
12          which is great, and he was satisfied,  
13          which is even better. He was excited,  
14          which was even the best; that he took  
15          the elements of what's in here and he  
16          introduced in 2005: The Gullah/Geechee  
17          National Heritage Act, which codified  
18          everything that you all had said to us  
19          out in the open. And what that did was  
20          ask Congress to establish the  
21          Gullah/Geechee National Heritage  
22          Corridor, which was stretched from  
23          Wilmington, North Carolina all the way  
24          down to Jacksonville, Florida, as you  
25          see on that map off to my right,

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1 encompassing our conversation with you.  
2 Why transition from being a community  
3 organizer to a congressional act, and a  
4 congressional page, working with  
5 Democrats, Republicans all over this  
6 country to help lobby the passage of the  
7 Gullah/Geechee National Heritage Act?  
8 And in 2006 it was passed making where  
9 you sit here tonight the first national  
10 heritage area in our nation, dedicated  
11 to the African-American experience and  
12 the way of life. But you know sometime  
13 you've got to read the fine print  
14 because that was just the beginning of  
15 the journey. Because inside of the fine  
16 print gave the boundaries, but it also  
17 said that there must be a commission of  
18 individuals made up of individuals from  
19 up and down the coast. And so, again, I  
20 think in 2006 I went and I began talking  
21 and sharing, encouraging people to put  
22 their name in a hat. And by 2007 that  
23 hat was clear that we renew the  
24 Commissioners, as you see two of them  
25 sitting here tonight. But there was

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1 still more fine print in the legislation  
2 because it says within a defined period  
3 of time these two women here must put on  
4 the Secretary of Interior's desk, a  
5 codified plan like the Bible says,  
6 "right division." So you have to  
7 provide division to the Secretary of how  
8 Gullah/Geechee history and culture would  
9 survive; because it will survive; it is  
10 surviving. So staying itself, partner  
11 with others, and move forward and  
12 educate, too. So the key to us here  
13 tonight is in the fine print. So while  
14 I'm engaging here tonight, you can see  
15 very clearly, as our new president tells  
16 us: that we are transparent. From the  
17 background to the Special Resource  
18 Study, what is the national heritage  
19 area? How is it different from the  
20 National Park Service? At this point  
21 what the Commission says is: Their  
22 vision, their mission and their purpose,  
23 and also now that we have this  
24 Commission, it's incumbent upon you to  
25 participate; that's why these panels are

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1           here. And the one on the far to end  
2           there, basically was their initial  
3           attempt to identify important  
4           Gullah/Geechee sites along the coast of  
5           South Carolina. But they are  
6           transparent enough to tell you that they  
7           knew that they didn't identify every  
8           place. They're being open and honest.  
9           So a part of us here tonight is to  
10          engage you to let us know places that we  
11          feel we left off. Places Veronica and  
12          Nichole might not have even thought  
13          about; places that you know that you  
14          want to share. So at the end of the day  
15          when this is all wrapped back up and  
16          placed on the desk of the Secretary of  
17          the Interior, I'll be able to say well  
18          done. These two women will be able to  
19          say well done, but you all will be able  
20          to say that we listened and we took in  
21          what you said. So as I share with two  
22          ladies here tonight, this is history.  
23          The same way we look back to the W.P.A.  
24          project in the 1930s and what we've  
25          learned and what we've gained from those

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1 narratives. And we're going to that  
2 step tonight, through the court  
3 reporter, and through the videographer.  
4 50 years from now, 100 years from now  
5 people will look and see what you said  
6 here tonight and they will be able to  
7 pass on to their kids. So as the glue,  
8 as the referee, sometime as the go-  
9 between; that's my job. And I take it  
10 personal, professional and spiritual  
11 because of this gift that God has given  
12 me to be a part of this endeavor. I  
13 didn't realize 29 years ago when I  
14 started working for the National Park  
15 Service that I would be responsible for  
16 this; didn't know 29 years ago that I  
17 would work hand in glove with the  
18 highest ranking African-American in our  
19 United States Congress. I didn't know,  
20 I didn't know I would meet Bunny 29  
21 years ago, but that's the path He's put  
22 me on. That's the path that these folks  
23 have been made to walk in, and that's  
24 why we're here tonight, to listen.  
25 Thank you.

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1 COURT REPORTER'S

2 NOTE: (Audience applause.)

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Michael didn't tell you  
4 that he's also a reverend, so I wouldn't  
5 mind going to his church. That was  
6 good, wasn't it? Anyway, we're going to  
7 move on and let you have a say. You  
8 know we don't believe in coincidences in  
9 this culture, do we? Now, some people  
10 say that's a coincidence that I met  
11 Bunny or I met Nichole on the train, or  
12 what have you. We always say that  
13 there's something behind that; there's a  
14 reason. So while we don't have an  
15 auditorium full of people tonight,  
16 there's a reason that you are here. And  
17 I tell my students all the time: History  
18 is being made right now. Because what  
19 has happened is at this point we are all  
20 together in this auditorium. The only  
21 reason that, that won't be viewed as  
22 history is because somebody might not  
23 put it in the McMillan school book and  
24 students may not study it. But we are  
25 here together. Nowhere else in the

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1 world is this happening right now, so  
2 we're going to use this opportunity to  
3 make it work; make it happen. We're  
4 going to start with asking you a general  
5 open-ended question, and we have set up  
6 a mic here. And the reason we need you  
7 to speak in the mic is because we are  
8 recording this; making it history. So,  
9 now, is anyone here who doesn't feel  
10 like coming up to the mic; I think this  
11 one is long enough where I can bring it  
12 out to you? But we're going to start  
13 with an open-ended question: What is it  
14 that you feel is important in your  
15 community that should be a lifetime  
16 monument that becomes history; what is  
17 it that's historical to you in your  
18 community that you would like to have to  
19 be a part of this corridor? Give you a  
20 minute to think. And while you're  
21 thinking, I'll tell you: I asked my  
22 mother that today. She's from Murrells  
23 Inlet. She said in Murrells Inlet there  
24 was a place where they had designated  
25 you to dump your clam shells. And over

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1           the years that dump became so popular  
2           that it became a site. You know, you  
3           might want to meet your boyfriend; meet  
4           me at the clam bank. It became a part  
5           of the community. So and so, when he  
6           got killed, somebody killed him and they  
7           dumped him down at the clam bank. So  
8           something as minute to us is historical.  
9           Because when this one particular guy,  
10          named Jaelin, got killed and dumped by  
11          the clam bank, it blossomed into a two-  
12          hour story my mother told me. He left  
13          home and his momma ain't know where he  
14          did go. And then he come back and he  
15          look all funny in the eye. And then  
16          they take him and at some point he put  
17          him in the car. And I mean that story  
18          went on and on until I had a history  
19          list just because of the clam bank. So,  
20          anybody want to start?

21       COURT REPORTER'S

22       NOTE:                               (Audience member  
23               responds.)

24       COMMISSIONER GERALD: You want to come up?  
25               And we need you to give your name.

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1           Barack Obama has a Gullah wife, so it  
2           won't make it to the White House.

3       MS. CARR:                       Well, that has  
4           something to do with what I want to say.

5       COMMISSIONER GEARLD:   Oh, see, I told you:  
6           no coincidence.

7       MS. CARR:                       Okay. My name is Zelma  
8           Fraser Carr. I was born right here in  
9           Georgetown on the corner of Merriman  
10          Road and Winyah Street; just two blocks  
11          up the street.

12      MS. RODRIGUES:               Taylor Street.

13      MS. CARR:                       Beg your pardon?

14      MS. RODRIGUES:               Taylor Street.

15      MS. CARR:                       It used to be Taylor  
16          Street; that's right. It was called  
17          Taylor Street at that time. But when I  
18          heard about this meeting, and I told my  
19          daughter: Oh, I have something that I  
20          want to share. Back in the early 70s,  
21          and since we have our new president,  
22          President Obama and his wife, who's  
23          really roots is South Carolina; it's  
24          Georgetown. Well in the early 70s her  
25          grandfather lived in the house right

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1 next door to us. His name was Fraser  
2 Robinson. He lived right, we rented.  
3 He was renting. He had moved down from  
4 Chicago and lived in the house. And I  
5 remember the grandmother often talking  
6 about Michelle; how smart she was. And  
7 I said well, maybe we need to have a  
8 plaque. Maybe we need to have a plaque  
9 on this house to say that Michelle  
10 Obama's grandfather and grandmother  
11 lived in this house. I was also a  
12 classmate of her aunt, her great aunt.  
13 We graduated high school together. My  
14 mother was a classmate of her  
15 grandfather. They graduated. So we  
16 have a little connection there; that's  
17 what I wanted to share. Thank you.

18 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Great; great. That's  
19 what we're talking about. That's what  
20 we're talking about because ---

21 MS. RODRIGUES: Well everybody tell me  
22 where when grandfather came back,  
23 grandfather lived on every street in  
24 Georgetown.

25 MS. CARR: Well he lived in that

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1 house for many years.

2 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And what's the  
3 address?

4 MS. CARR: 206 South Merriman  
5 Road.

6 COMMISSIONER GERALD: 206 South Merriman  
7 Road.

8 MS. CARR: Georgetown.

9 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And we appreciate that  
10 because these are things that are lost  
11 in generation. I attended a funeral  
12 today of a woman who lived to be 107 in  
13 Conway, and never before have I realized  
14 the saying that every time an elder dies  
15 a library closes. And when I saw Ms.  
16 Ella today and just so blessed that I  
17 was allowed to go over and talk to her,  
18 just be a part of her, you know of  
19 recording her history. Anybody else got  
20 a -- Yes, Mr. Wragg, W-R-A-G-G.

21 MS. RODRIGUES: My babysitter.

22 MR. WRAGG: Going to tell you a  
23 story.

24 COMMISSIONER GERALD: He's got a different  
25 story.

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1 COURT REPORTER'S

2 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

3 MR. WRAGG: Good evening. My name  
4 is James Wragg. I was born right here  
5 in Georgetown, South Carolina, the next  
6 street behind me. I just want to say,  
7 this is a wonderful school. I hope the  
8 City of Georgetown never try to tear it  
9 down because we have a lot of smart  
10 people come out of this school,  
11 especially the class I came out of in  
12 1952.

13 COURT REPORTER'S

14 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

15 MR. WRAGG: The smartest class that  
16 ever came out of Howard. I was going to  
17 tell y'all was the dumbest class, but  
18 I'm going to leave that alone. But,  
19 anyway, I was thinking, I don't know if  
20 the other part of the story has anything  
21 to do with this part, but the other part  
22 of the story is this: Winyah High School  
23 and Howard High School, when I was in  
24 New York I brought my three daughters  
25 down here. We come down for the summer.

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1 And we was coming down Highmarket Street  
2 and I said, "See, that's the white  
3 school." They said, what daddy? I  
4 said, "Yeah, that's the white school."  
5 I said, "Now, come on; let me show you  
6 where the black school is." So I  
7 brought her up over here and showed her  
8 Howard. And they, they, they couldn't  
9 believe it. Another part of the story  
10 is: We had the lady in our church, after  
11 they built this, they built Howard, all  
12 right? The lady thought that this  
13 school had a swimming pool underneath  
14 the building. And she didn't know  
15 because everybody thought Howard school,  
16 you know. And she, she says, because  
17 I'm saying, if you have to stop and  
18 think, they wasn't going to put a  
19 swimming pool in Howard and don't have  
20 one in Winyah, you know, just stop and  
21 think about it.

22 MS. RODRIGUES: My yard has a swimming  
23 pool.

24 MR. WRAGG: Huh?

25 MS. RODRIGUES: In the yard there was a

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1 swimming pool.

2 MR. WRAGG: Yard, there's a  
3 swimming pool. Bunny, you're not,  
4 you're older than any 71 if you can  
5 remember all that.

6 COURT REPORTER'S

7 NOTE: (Audience laughter.

8 MR. WRAGG: You know, we, we raised  
9 up on the same street. Like I said, she  
10 is two years older than me because her  
11 father had a whole other children.

12 COURT REPORTER'S

13 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

14 MR. WRAGG: But this school, see,  
15 when I went to this school we didn't  
16 have no, it was -- You, also, Zelma.  
17 When you went here they didn't have no -  
18 --

19 MS. CARR: Auditorium.

20 MR. WRAGG: --- auditorium.

21 MS. CARR: Not yet.

22 MR. WRAGG: We, wasn't even like a  
23 gym or nothing.

24 MS. CARR: --- house. (Speaking  
25 same time as Mr. Wragg.

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1 Unintelligible.)

2 MR. WRAGG: Right. See, I remember  
3 this school was built in 1940--, they  
4 start building this school in 47; I  
5 think, and they opened up in '49. And  
6 my brother was the first, they only had  
7 11th grade at that time. And they put,  
8 they added the 12th grade on and my  
9 brother was the first classmate came out  
10 of that school in 1949. They had to go  
11 a extra year and everybody was mad.  
12 Because I know my cousin been, put the  
13 gun on the police when, on the principal  
14 and say you're going to give me my  
15 diploma because I'm going to New York.

16 COURT REPORTER'S

17 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

18 MR. WRAGG: But Smith was the  
19 principal at that time, not you, you  
20 were, you were still in school.

21 COMMISSIONER GREEN: So where was the old  
22 Howard?

23 MR. WRAGG: The old Howard, way  
24 downtown on King and Highmarket, King  
25 and Duke.

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1 MS. RODRIGUES: No, we still have a  
2 part of the old Howard High School.  
3 MR. WRAGG: Yes.  
4 MS. RODRIGUES: Right up there.  
5 MR. WRAGG: Right.  
6 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Tell me where ---  
7 MR. WRAGG: But that one's too  
8 small up there. She want to know the  
9 school itself, Bunny ---  
10 MS. RODRIGUES: No, but this is ---  
11 MR. WRAGG: --- not the little  
12 part.  
13 MS. RODRIGUES: --- this is part of the  
14 old Howard School.  
15 MR. WRAGG: Yeah.  
16 MS. RODRIGUES: Right up there at, you  
17 go over to the next ---  
18 MR. WRAGG: Block.  
19 MS. RODRIGUES: --- block. And it's a  
20 white building.  
21 MR. WRAGG: White building.  
22 MS. RODRIGUES: And it's right there.  
23 It's on the ground. And this has always  
24 bothered me. I don't know why they  
25 decided to move that school from where

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1           it was and brought it all the way over  
2           here and it's now an administration  
3           building.  
4       MR. WRAGG:                       Building.  
5       MS. RODRIGUES:                 But it's on the same,  
6           all of this is part of Howard School.  
7       MR. WRAGG:                       All, yeah.  
8       COURT REPORTER'S  
9       NOTE:                             (Chatter amongst  
10           audience.)  
11       MR. WRAGG:                      You know when -- Go  
12           ahead.  
13       MS. RODRIGUES:                 No, no. We're talking  
14           about Duke and King.  
15       MR. WRAGG:                      Yeah, Duke and King.  
16           Uh-huh (affirmative response). And they  
17           opened up that school in 19 what: 1909?  
18           I remember 1909; you would remember  
19           1909.  
20       COMMISSIONER GREEN:           (Shaking her head.)  
21       COURT REPORTER'S  
22       NOTE:                             (Audience chatter.)  
23       MR. WRAGG:                      There wasn't much of us  
24           around at the time then. Okay. But it  
25           was, it, it, it was nice. And that's

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1           one thing I hope the city will know  
2           this: Do not touch this school, please,  
3           and don't touch Winyah because it's  
4           something I would like to tell my  
5           grandkids about. This is the school  
6           that I went to. You see, I don't want  
7           it to be like a shell, like on King and  
8           Duke. Now they do have a signature  
9           there that, you know when the school was  
10          put up and stuff and whatnot. I would  
11          like to see this stay right here so I  
12          can tell the kids. And I'd like to see  
13          Winyah stay there so I can tell the kids  
14          this was the white school and this was  
15          the black school. Okay. Thank you.

16       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Thank you.

17       MR. WRAGG:               And I was born right  
18                                  back there, Butts Street. This is  
19                                  Hawkins.

20       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     How do you spell  
21                                  that Street?

22       MR. WRAGG:               Butts Street, B-U-T-T-  
23                                  S.

24       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Butts Street?

25       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    Oh, B-U-T-T-S.

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1 MR. WRAGG: Yes. Not no English  
2 name, now, old, old fashioned country  
3 name. Maybe I can't speak too good, you  
4 know. I'm an old fashioned Geechee,  
5 like Bunny, here.

6 COURT REPORTER'S

7 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

8 COMMISSIONER GERALD: That's right, now, Mr.  
9 Wragg. We're just trying to make sure,  
10 and you know that's another thing that  
11 we have to remember: sometimes a street  
12 can be historic. What happened to us is  
13 when we learned history, a European  
14 approach to history, we began to think  
15 of things as being history only. So we  
16 have to kind of recondition ourselves to  
17 think; it's like the clam bank story.  
18 Just like Butts Street or that there  
19 needs to be the black high school and  
20 the white high school for it to make  
21 sense in history. So go back deep in  
22 the mind and think: Was there a  
23 particular pastor who came to  
24 Georgetown, who changed the community?  
25 Were there campfires where they had

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1 church in a field? Was there a field  
2 where they always had the big revivals?  
3 MR. WRAGG: Uh-huh (affirmative  
4 response).  
5 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah.  
6 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Or baptismal spots.  
7 COMMISSIONER GERALD: These are the things  
8 that we need to know. Huh?  
9 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Baptismal spots.  
10 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah, baptismal spots.  
11 Where did they baptize in Georgetown?  
12 When they went and baptized in the  
13 water, where was that done?  
14 MS. RODRIGUES: I know Georgetown is  
15 full of A.M.E. churches. (Chuckling.)  
16 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Now ---  
17 MS. RODRIGUES: But they used to, I  
18 know where they used to baptize.  
19 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah. Where was that?  
20 See, these are things that we're trying  
21 to do because ---  
22 MS. RODRIGUES: At the, one of my old  
23 friends told me that they were baptized  
24 at the end of Highmarket Street.  
25 COMMISSIONER GERALD: At the end?

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1 MS. RODRIGUES: In the back, by that,  
2 they call it Back Landing.  
3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Back Landing?  
4 MS. RODRIGUES: Yes. Yes.  
5 COMMISSIONER GERALD: So all churches went --  
6 Now, I'm A.M.E. Now we do have total  
7 emerging if you want to.  
8 MS. RODRIGUES: Yes. But I'm talking  
9 about we weren't ---  
10 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah, they were trying  
11 to be all that way at the time as my  
12 daughter says. So Back Landing was  
13 where all of the churches went to  
14 baptize. And did the whole community  
15 go; what did they wear? What did people  
16 wear to baptisms; was there a dress  
17 code? These are things we got to start  
18 thinking about because someone may want  
19 to draw a picture of it to seal it in  
20 stone in a textbook because the people  
21 are no longer here. What was the first  
22 church here?  
23 MS. RODRIGUES: The first church ---  
24 MR. WRAGG: Bethel.  
25 MS. RODRIGUES: --- in Georgetown

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1 County and it was put up and it's still  
2 ---

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Little Bethel.

4 MS. RODRIGUES: --- Little Bethel on  
5 the Santee River Road. And the  
6 congregation was established in 1859.  
7 And they had a congregation of 1700.

8 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Before ---

9 MS. RODRIGUES: Because, see, on  
10 Santee Road you have all of these  
11 plantations there that connected to the  
12 Canal, and that was the first church in  
13 Georgetown County. Bethel A.M.E. Church  
14 on Broad Street was the first free  
15 church in Georgetown city.

16 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Now would Santee Street  
17 be a street where lots of historical  
18 things happen; is that what you're  
19 saying?

20 MS. RODRIGUES: Well, the church, the  
21 building is still there. The only thing  
22 from the original building, because it  
23 used to be two-story, is, is the  
24 steeple. And they still have the  
25 original furniture on the inside. They

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1           have not used the church for, for, for a  
2           while. And you've got about 11  
3           plantations on the Santee River Road.  
4           You have a canal there that they  
5           advertise for Negro winches to help dig  
6           that canal.

7       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   That's just what we're  
8           talking about.

9       MR. WRAGG:               Yeah.

10      COMMISSIONER GERALD:   That's what we're  
11           talking about. Santee River Road then  
12           is important to the history of the  
13           Gullah heritage.

14      MR. WRAGG:               But, see, that area  
15           where she's talking about, they got  
16           about, they got about 11 plantation.  
17           They got about 11 plantation in that  
18           area, in the Santee area.

19      COMMISSIONER GERALD:   And ---

20      MR. WRAGG:               Between there, that's  
21           North Santee. See, you got two type of  
22           Santee on this one 17: north and south.  
23           This would be in the south, the North  
24           Santee area, where they got about 11  
25           plantation right in that area.

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1 MS. RODRIGUES: Plus, the next thing  
2 here, and since we're in the Santee  
3 area, that's where the blacks owned  
4 plantations, rice plantation, and had  
5 some slaves' advocate. I mean they had  
6 slaves there, you know, was part of it.  
7 They were the Bellatis family. They  
8 were the Harris and ---

9 MR. DRAYTON: The Collins.

10 MS. RODRIGUES: --- and the Collins,  
11 the Mitchell. And, you know, we have a  
12 place down at Harris Landing. And some  
13 of the, some of those families from the  
14 Collins family still lives there in that  
15 area.

16 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Now, are these biracial  
17 people?

18 MS. RODRIGUES: Well, what do you mean  
19 biracial?

20 COURT REPORTER'S

21 NOTE: (Audience chatter.)

22 COMMISSIONER GREEN: I think they identify  
23 as African-American. The Collins I know  
24 from the North Santee.

25 MR. WRAGG: Yeah. Uh-huh

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1 (affirmative response).

2 MS. RODRIGUES: Yeah.

3 COMMISSIONER GREEN: But, you know, there  
4 are so many people of African descent --  
5 -

6 MS. RODRIGUES: They were, I mean even  
7 then they were black ---

8 COMMISSIONER GERALD: There's European and --  
9 -

10 MS. RODRIGUES: --- but I mean you know  
11 biracial is a new term.

12 MR. RODRIGUES: (Inaudible. Speaking  
13 while approaching front of auditorium.)  
14 There's three families. The Holden  
15 family was one of the families. He was  
16 a slave trader when the Constitution was  
17 written and slavery was to be abolished  
18 in 1808. He had either a white, a black  
19 wife or a black concubine, and he had  
20 four children: two males and two  
21 females. And he brought them here to  
22 South Carolina to establish them on a  
23 plantation of their own. With the  
24 Mitchell family, they were the Mullatto  
25 children of a slave planter in the

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1 Charleston area who established them  
2 with a plantation, and the same thing  
3 basically with the Collins. So they  
4 were that first generation with biracial  
5 children. I don't know what you'd call  
6 it, a quadroon, a octoroon and all that  
7 other foolishness.

8 MS. RODRIGUES: They were black.

9 MR. RODRIGUES: But they were, in  
10 effect, according to the rules set forth  
11 in this country, they were Negros.

12 VIDEOGRAPHER: Sir, could you say your  
13 name, please?

14 MR. RODRIGUES: Oh, I'm sorry. My name  
15 is Andrew Rodrigues and Vermelle  
16 Rodrigues is my domestic leader.

17 COURT REPORTER'S

18 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

19 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: You got that?

20 (Speaking to court reporter.)

21 COMMISSIONER GERALD: I hope so.

22 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Now that we've  
23 travelled, this is like going out of the  
24 Parks. Now that we've travelled to this  
25 sensitive area, it's important that we

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1 bring the record out as Andrew said very  
2 clearly of the lineage. My question to  
3 you all, you can think before you  
4 answer: Are there descendants of these  
5 families that you described here living  
6 in the Georgetown area today; there's  
7 some areas you described, but are  
8 descendants still living here?

9 MS. RODRIGUES: The Collins.

10 MR. DRAYTON: Yeah, the Collins.

11 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: The Collins' are here?

12 MS. RODRIGUES: Uh-huh (affirmative  
13 response).

14 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Now here's my historian  
15 cap. You all have put them out there  
16 through your description of their  
17 genealogy, haven't you? Now, could we  
18 engage them in a conversation of their  
19 history, or if not, we're just talking  
20 in this auditorium because ---

21 MR. WRAGG: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: --- a lot of us, our  
23 journey is to bring things out that  
24 people were embarrassed, didn't want to  
25 talk about, or secrets. So now that

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1           you've put them on tape, you blast them  
2           out. As a historian, my step, my next  
3           thoughts is: We want to be able to  
4           engage these individuals because there  
5           may be deeper things that you all don't  
6           know, which you didn't say tonight, that  
7           they may have, that needs to be added to  
8           the picture. So I just want to put that  
9           out there; that's a part of history.

10       MS. RODRIGUES:            You know sometimes  
11           when I talk to you and I talk to Ron,  
12           you said you were bringing it here, to  
13           Georgetown, and I said, yes, there's  
14           some history in Georgetown. But a lot  
15           of our history is in the rural area.  
16           And I suggest having a meeting -- Bunny,  
17           Vermelle, Bunny Rodrigues; I suggest  
18           having a meeting in those areas: your  
19           Santee, your Andrews area, that's where  
20           we had the Andrews. And I says  
21           Williamsburg, that's where we had the  
22           Indigo and whatnot. Because all of us,  
23           even though sometime this is they 30  
24           miles from the ocean. And you know  
25           Kingstree and Williamsburg County is a

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1           little more than 30 miles from the  
2           ocean. And all of us, you know, it's  
3           important to bring this puzzle together.  
4           In order to bring the puzzle together we  
5           need all of these communities, and I'm  
6           quite sure we have a meeting. And I  
7           suggest bring them in on buses or  
8           whatever. It's kind of, it's kind of  
9           difficult but it can be done because  
10          it's very important for us to do it the  
11          right way. And as long as I'm around  
12          and I'm an elder, and I'm going to make  
13          sure that everybody who is  
14          Gullah/Geechee is included, and no one  
15          person is an expert on the Gullah  
16          Culture.

17       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Anyone else?

18       MS. PRYOR:                Yeah. I'm probably  
19           loud enough that you can hear me.

20       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     But identify yourself,  
21           ma'am.

22       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Just identify yourself.

23       MS. PRYOR:                Oh. Alisha Smith  
24           Pryor, and my husband is Charles Pryor.  
25           We are not from the city limits of

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1           Georgetown. We are from the Choppee  
2           area ---  
3       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:       Uh-huh (affirmative  
4           response).  
5       MS. PRYOR:                --- and he's from Leeds  
6           Creek. And I think you're right,  
7           there's a lot of heritage out there.  
8       MS. RODRIGUES:           That's very true.  
9       MS. PRYOR:                We're a little bit  
10          younger so we wouldn't know a lot of it.  
11          But stories, my dad is only 65, 66. The  
12          stories that he has told us about being  
13          baptized in Black River; I was told  
14          there's a lot of heritage out in that  
15          area. A lot of it I can't talk on, you  
16          know, but there's just a lot of heritage  
17          out in that rural area, like you said.  
18       MS. RODRIGUES:           There sure is.  
19       MS. PRYOR:                And a lot of older  
20          people out there that, you know, would  
21          probably be willing to give account and  
22          stories about what they know. I think  
23          that Choppee High should be a really  
24          historic place. It's a, it's a former  
25          school that's now closed down, but at

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1           one time that was a all black school and  
2           there wasn't too many of them left.  
3           They have now integrated. It's not all  
4           black anymore but, and it's a different  
5           name. Do you have anything you want to  
6           add? (Speaking to her husband, Charles  
7           Pryor.) His dad's a preacher so he  
8           might know a lot more than I do.

9       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Identify yourself  
10           before you speak.

11       MR. PRYOR:               My name is Charles  
12           Pryor, Jr. And just to reiterate what  
13           my wife said, probably like she said,  
14           the Black River is like the only like  
15           place that I know. But like my  
16           grandmother is still alive. I'll give  
17           you her phone number. She could tell  
18           you a lot more than I can. But down in  
19           that area: Dunbar, Leeds Creek, Oakland,  
20           the Brown's Ferry area, areas of that  
21           nature ---

22       MS. RODRIGUES:           That's right.

23       MR. PRYOR:               --- there were black  
24           beaches.

25       MS. RODRIGUES:           Deep history.

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1 MR. PRYOR: I remember they used to  
2 do a lot of tobacco. I cropped tobacco  
3 when I was younger and stuff of that  
4 nature. But as far as like the real  
5 history, I don't know. I just came to  
6 like to get more information on it, but  
7 in that area a lot, there's a lot more  
8 heritage, also. So I'll give the  
9 information to them. You'll probably  
10 have to go to them because they probably  
11 can't travel and stuff like that so  
12 that's where a lot of them are at.

13 MS. RODRIGUES: You have to take it to  
14 them. That's our culture ---

15 MR. WRAGG: Yeah.

16 MS. RODRIGUES: Take it to them.

17 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Give it to Lilly.

18 MS. JOHNSON: I am Lilly Jean Johnson  
19 and I do live here in the city of  
20 Georgetown. I think I would just like  
21 to skip around and maybe add a point or  
22 two. Going back to Little Bethel, even  
23 though the church is not active anymore,  
24 families are still being buried out  
25 there. The cemetery is still there.

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1 COMMISSIONER GREEN: And that's the one on  
2 North Santee River Road?  
3 MS. RODRIGUES: North ---  
4 MS. JOHNSON: Yes.  
5 MS. RODRIGUES: --- Santee River Road.  
6 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, it is. It's the  
7 same church that they spoke about  
8 earlier. On my end of town there is a  
9 building that was originally called The  
10 Hall. It was built by an organization  
11 called The Christian Friendly Aide  
12 Society. And that was a meeting place  
13 for the people in the community. The  
14 people who built that structure came  
15 from Weehaw. They moved. Weehaw is off  
16 701; what we call the Conway Highway.  
17 And when they moved to town they built  
18 that structure and the purpose of them  
19 forming themselves as an organization  
20 was to be a support for the community.  
21 If someone was sick in the community and  
22 they needed someone to come and clean  
23 the house or sit with the person or take  
24 care of that individual, then those  
25 members were there, or if someone died.

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1 It was really a support organization for  
2 that area where I live in. At one point  
3 it was a school. In fact, I went to  
4 school there for maybe about two or  
5 three years before I went to old Howard  
6 on the corner of King and Duke. The  
7 structure is still there and it's right  
8 now being rented out by a church. The  
9 organization, Christian Friendly Aide  
10 Society, is not active because the older  
11 members are dying out and I guess I may  
12 have joined it maybe 10 or 15 years ago.  
13 Well, my sister now has a deep interest  
14 in it and she's been on my back for  
15 maybe a year or two because at one point  
16 the organization had talked about  
17 disbanding and sharing out the little  
18 bit of money that's there. And then  
19 there is a family who is interested in  
20 purchasing the property to build a house  
21 but we were able to convince the members  
22 not to do anything until we have done  
23 some research and see what kind of funds  
24 are out there so that building can be  
25 restored and used for not only the

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1           benefit of the mixed community, but all  
2           of Georgetown County. So we certainly  
3           would like to see that building that's  
4           still standing be a part of this  
5           heritage group.

6       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   Lilly, how do you, it's  
7           Weehaw; W-E ---

8       MS. JOHNSON:                You know, I'm not sure.  
9           I think W-E-E-H-A-W, Weehaw.

10      MS. WASHINGTON:           Hey, everybody. My  
11       name is Zenobia Washington, and I wasn't  
12       born here but all my people are from  
13       here. My mother's, mother's mother and  
14       my father's mother's father and all of  
15       that, and I was raised here every  
16       summer. We moved here when I was eight  
17       years old so we are from this community.  
18       There are several things that I really  
19       think that are important, not so much in  
20       the form of a building but I really and  
21       truly would like to see some type of a  
22       curriculum that directly connects rice  
23       cultivation to the knowledge that the  
24       Africans had, not just to the labor part  
25       of it. So I would love to see somewhere

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1 where we can truly discuss how  
2 architecture played a part. The  
3 knowledge that Africans had about  
4 architecture, engineering, astrology,  
5 astronomy, and all these things, and put  
6 it together, and not just talk about the  
7 laborious part of the rice, of the rice  
8 culture. I also think that there needs  
9 to be more done about getting  
10 information to our young people about  
11 who Joseph Rainey really was; his impact  
12 into the whole country. And that he  
13 was, he's from here, you know, so, and I  
14 don't think that people really realize  
15 that. They don't know how important  
16 that is. I don't think that we pay  
17 enough attention to the whole area,  
18 political area of reconstruction and how  
19 much, you know of a part that played in.  
20 You know people think of the Voting  
21 Rights Act as being something that  
22 happened in, within many of our  
23 lifetimes. But, you know, what happened  
24 during reconstruction played a big part  
25 in, you know, how the United States goes

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1           around, and there was Florida. And Mr.  
2           Drayton did some wonderful work with  
3           that at Coastal Carolina University.  
4           But to see those things kind of expanded  
5           on a broader scale. What is, what is  
6           Slab Town; what is Fanny Village? I  
7           hear of all these black places that were  
8           all over Georgetown; really, what is the  
9           West End? I mean we hear about the West  
10          End, but what did the West End look like  
11          and feel like, you know, before we were  
12          around? What about McKenzie Beach and  
13          Myrtle Beach; is McKenzie Beach and  
14          Bernie Beach and Magnolia Beach all the  
15          same beach or were they different  
16          beaches?

17       MS. RODRIGUES:           The same beach.

18       MR. WRAGG:               The same beach.

19       MS. WASHINGTON:          All the same beach?

20       MS. RODRIGUES:           The same beach.

21       MS. WASHINGTON:          But for people my age,  
22                                   and I'm 42, some people say Magnolia  
23                                   Beach is across this way and Bernie  
24                                   Beach was across that way, but we really  
25                                   rarely hear about entertainment and how

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1 African-Americans found a way to  
2 entertain each other and entertain  
3 themselves and to find some sense of  
4 relief unless we're talking about the  
5 church. We always talk about what  
6 African-Americans did in terms of  
7 release in terms of church, but not what  
8 we did, you know, socially, right; that  
9 type of stuff. And the political light  
10 of people in Georgetown. I have always  
11 been told that people out where you're  
12 from and where your husband's from were  
13 much more politically bent and motivated  
14 than people who lived in the city, so is  
15 that true, you know? How were we all  
16 connected politically? So those are  
17 some of the things. And death and  
18 burial practices on a wider scale. I  
19 mean we took part as young people on  
20 the, you know, it was an honor to take  
21 the last breath of a dying person. Why  
22 do people cover burials and pick them  
23 up? You know what I mean? And put this  
24 in a respectful content, not necessarily  
25 a hoodoo, voodoo kind of witchcraft, but

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1           why do people really do those things?  
2           And to show that they are connected to a  
3           heritage that is much deeper than just  
4           right here. So, thank you so much.

5       MS. RODRIGUES:           I'd like to say  
6           something. We are, we did mention  
7           McKenzie Beach in the Resource Study and  
8           the day we went there, there was a young  
9           man digging clams. And he was digging  
10          clams with his hands. I know that some  
11          of us do not know but we did an awful  
12          lot of different places. As a matter of  
13          fact, some of the places that some of us  
14          have mentioned, and then when I'm doing  
15          a tour. Mr. Drayton did a fantastic  
16          tour on historical Georgetown; that's in  
17          the historical district. But when I  
18          take people on tours, I do the  
19          historical district. I also do the  
20          district in the West End of Georgetown  
21          and I do out in the rural area. When  
22          you are coming off of those two bridges  
23          in Georgetown or going out of  
24          Georgetown, people don't know those are  
25          rice fields, you know. And you can

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1 actually see the canals. And then we  
2 talk about tabby and we brought that  
3 process here. When I was a little girl  
4 I used to laugh at that little tabby  
5 house, or the oyster house that I called  
6 on our street. And then when we, this  
7 building here is historical, but so is  
8 Hawkins Street. At the end of Hawkins  
9 Street you have a slave cemetery which  
10 is called Muckle Grove; it was on the  
11 Myrtle Grove Plantation. We move in, we  
12 move into Butts Street. Grandma  
13 Williams was the only person, enslaved  
14 person that I've ever talked to. And we  
15 have, on Butts Street, we do have her  
16 wash pot and we do have her pestle that  
17 she used to use in the rice field. And  
18 she was out of Kingsfield Plantation.  
19 And on Butts Street we also have a house  
20 that, now we had stated, and she used to  
21 get this, oh, she used to get a pension  
22 check. Guess what, that check was from  
23 the Confederate. Her husband died in  
24 the Confederate Army and that was her  
25 pension money. And then I had an

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1 opportunity, I lived on Butts Street so  
2 I have an opportunity to have spent many  
3 days playing with Ernest Evans, that's  
4 Chubby Checker. And I have, I do have a  
5 picture. And the house, the foundation,  
6 the house is gone but the foundation is  
7 still here. Chubby came out of  
8 Georgetown County, Spring Gulley; moved  
9 on Butts Street. And from Butts Street  
10 he moved into Philadelphia. When we go  
11 up to the next street over we have  
12 CAAHO. We used to call it the center.  
13 That was also a school. We do not have  
14 a historical marker there and hopefully  
15 one day that we will get one there. It  
16 had been many things and people always  
17 say well it's the Band Room. It was  
18 been, it has been many things, but I had  
19 my second grade classes there. Then, on  
20 that same street, at, across from the  
21 CAAHO, the last black person that left  
22 the House of Representatives, Mr. John  
23 P., I think, P. Bolts. He lived there  
24 and that, he was the last one; that was  
25 in 1902. As we go further down the

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1 street, and each one of those streets in  
2 that West End of Georgetown, I can give  
3 you some history. And I don't want to  
4 take up any time, but I'll be more than  
5 glad to share whatever I have with the  
6 community because I think that  
7 Georgetown is very important. And the  
8 other thing is: You need someone on this  
9 committee, need to contact Joyce Cox.  
10 She's been working on a book and she  
11 connects everybody in Georgetown County.

12 MR. DRAYTON: You talk about Joseph  
13 Rainey, one blessed thing is we have a  
14 picture of Joseph Rainey, so we know  
15 what Joseph Rainey looks like. We've  
16 got a picture of John Bolts. We've got  
17 a picture of a lot of the black, early  
18 black politicians. One black  
19 politician we don't have a picture of,  
20 he was Superintendent of Education in  
21 Georgetown for 22 years, from 1880 to  
22 1908. I can't find a picture of him  
23 anywhere, but I know he was a black man.  
24 And those are some of the folk we have  
25 that some people, who we can tell you

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1           their names, but we don't have a picture  
2           or anything of them.

3       VIDEOGRAPHER:           Please tell me your  
4           name.

5       MS. RODRIGUES:           He said it was David  
6           Drayton.

7       MR. DRAYTON:           David Drayton.

8       MR. RODRIGUES:           Andrew Rodrigues. When  
9           you keep talking about the North Santee  
10          Road and you talk about the Santee River  
11          you need to think about the fact that  
12          when they were building the Santee  
13          Canal, the general who came from Harlem  
14          to build it could not find any  
15          engineers, but yet they said that the  
16          European settlers and planters were the  
17          engineers who either quickly learned  
18          engineering to be able to lay out all  
19          those rice fields and whatnot. So when  
20          we look at these things we see just the  
21          opposite of what the history books say.  
22          If he couldn't find any engineers, if he  
23          had to rely on slaves to pretty much do  
24          the engineering or at least do the job  
25          they knew how to do, which is what

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1           happened during the early, 'specially  
2           the Colonial period, when they were  
3           introducing all their ideas. Now some  
4           have mentioned something about the  
5           history books. We've got to get to the  
6           point where we stop protecting the  
7           reputation of certain historians in this  
8           state. By protecting their reputations  
9           we do not tell the true story because  
10          they have created a series of myths, and  
11          you can't destroy those myths without  
12          accusing them of either being a  
13          plagiarist or being intellectually  
14          dishonest. So we need, that needs to  
15          happen so that then they can write the  
16          true history. And once they write the  
17          true history then you can merge that  
18          true history into the history books that  
19          they use. But right now what they claim  
20          to be the history of the Gullah people,  
21          the African-Americans in South Carolina  
22          in the history books that are used is a  
23          lot of misinformation. And think, what  
24          another thing is: That in this county we  
25          do not have one monument, not one, that

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1 talks about the contribution made by  
2 enslaved Africans and Gullahs in the  
3 creation of the rice culture and the  
4 Indigo culture; it wasn't Europeans.  
5 Believe me, it was enslaved Africans and  
6 African red rice that created the rice  
7 culture here. And I'll get into my  
8 arguments with certain professional  
9 historians, but they never say I'm  
10 wrong; they only say certain people  
11 didn't have access to certain  
12 information or you need to write about  
13 the laws of slavery because that's  
14 something you might have a better  
15 interest in. And the point is: They  
16 don't disagree with me so by implication  
17 or by inference they agree with me but  
18 don't want to say so. So, what we need  
19 to do is: Get the real history into the  
20 history books. And this is part of the  
21 responsibility here. And the other  
22 thing is: To have a monument in the  
23 county. I don't care where you put it  
24 in the county, but there needs to be one  
25 monument in here to show what the Gullah

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1 people have contributed. Because South  
2 Carolina never would have had an  
3 agricultural economy, which was their  
4 only economy during the Colonial period,  
5 but for the knowledge of enslaved  
6 Africans with respect to rights in  
7 Indigo. So, give some thought to that.

8 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Thank you, sir.

9 Anybody else?

10 MS. RODRIGUES: I would like to suggest  
11 that you have a meeting at CAAHO. We  
12 have a lot of history. Mr. Drayton,  
13 Lilly Jean and Thelma, and there's some  
14 other people that worked very hard. And  
15 you ask the Commission to just get a lot  
16 of information about just going into  
17 that building. We have the information  
18 packets right there and I think that we  
19 need to do that.

20 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: I want to also add,  
21 too, that you all talked about cultural,  
22 we talked about historic; we talked  
23 about preservation. We talked about the  
24 buildings; we talked about sites. We  
25 talked about monuments. We talked about

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1 historic markers and you also talked  
2 about the natural environment. So I  
3 just want you to know that you all are  
4 tasked to everything we wanted to ask of  
5 you because we want to hear information  
6 about all those pieces. Because some  
7 time we leave some of them out. But  
8 through you all's conversation today,  
9 you all hit all of the buttons. And  
10 it's important that we talk about the  
11 natural aspect of it all because that's  
12 where the change is occurring. When you  
13 all talked about places that you used to  
14 have baptisms but now there may be a  
15 house there. It could be the 18th green  
16 for some places in the corridor. There  
17 could be a bridge there, condominium  
18 there, shopping center there, school  
19 there. So it's important that as we  
20 journey and have these conversations  
21 that you pull out what you remember  
22 seeing in the natural environment  
23 because I think that's where the  
24 challenge is, in preserving and  
25 protecting the natural environment.

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1           Because the natural environment gave  
2           light to everything else you all  
3           described here. So I just want to  
4           commend you all that in your dialogue  
5           you all talked about the natural  
6           environment. Because that's, that's  
7           where really the battlefield is, is in  
8           that natural world in terms of the  
9           things that shape and mold you all. The  
10          place that you raise children; the place  
11          that you enjoy; the places you went to  
12          bury individuals; the places that you  
13          went for various things. And so I just  
14          wanted to be very clear that anything  
15          involving the natural environment is  
16          important. And I would also add, too:  
17          Being transparent and a part of our  
18          responsibility is not only to engage you  
19          all as the general public, but also  
20          anyone sitting here today that's an  
21          elected official representing the city,  
22          county, federal, state and local  
23          government, because at the end of the  
24          day we want to be able to tell the  
25          Secretary that we talked to everybody,

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1 but we're doing in a way that we're  
2 listening, but city and county and state  
3 government officials, we can't leave  
4 them out because a lot of time that's  
5 the, that's the second battlefield as to  
6 the issues that you all described here  
7 tonight. So I need to be very  
8 transparent and very open that a part of  
9 our journey is also engaging officials.  
10 And one of the things that we're going  
11 to really want is making sure we have  
12 good conversations. Now, you all are  
13 journeying through a process now of the  
14 tragic event that happened on Sandy  
15 Island a couple weeks ago. Those are  
16 Gullah/Geechee people. I made it my  
17 business to talk to some folks within  
18 the county structure to make them aware  
19 that we're concerned how that's going to  
20 shake out. So at the end of the day  
21 this Commission, or our involvement,  
22 well we didn't worry about that. We  
23 wouldn't be doing our job if we were not  
24 concerned about it. And so I just  
25 wanted you all to know that as we move

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1 from this place to other places along  
2 the coast, these are the buttons that we  
3 have to hit. Remember I said it: You  
4 all are one of 50, but you're unique.  
5 But in my travels I know that there are  
6 other communities around the country  
7 that desire to have the opportunity that  
8 you all have here tonight. Many times  
9 Veronica and I, or Nichole and I, we're  
10 traveling on this path without a map.  
11 I'm a mapmaker. We're charting it out  
12 as we go along and these ladies here are  
13 documenting our trip.

14 COURT REPORTER'S

15 NOTE: (Referring to  
16 videographer and court reporter.)

17 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: So when future  
18 generations or other areas around the  
19 country, I know right now there are two  
20 other major African-American groups  
21 around the country desire what you have  
22 here tonight. In Alabama, the black  
23 belt, Central part of Alabama, they're  
24 looking to move to where you all are  
25 tonight. I traveled to Chicago last

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1 summer, to Blondesville, which is in the  
2 south part of Chicago. They're looking  
3 to travel where you all are tonight.  
4 Both of them have threats because of the  
5 opportunities of the future. The folks  
6 in Blondesville now may be wiped out by  
7 the 2016 Olympics. The Olympic  
8 Commission is in Chicago right now as we  
9 speak looking at the city. Now if you  
10 travel to Atlanta and see where places  
11 are being used, we lived there before  
12 the Olympics got there. But they didn't  
13 have the opportunity to have this  
14 dialogue that you're having here  
15 tonight. And so, again, I'm just adding  
16 more understanding to why this is so  
17 important.

18 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Thank you so much, and  
19 thank all of you. Now, we have homework  
20 for you. Did you get this comment card  
21 as you came in?

22 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: It's inside the  
23 newsletter.

24 COMMISSIONER GERALD: It's in the newsletter.  
25 If you will, I don't know, we should

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1           have some extra.

2       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Inside the newsletter  
3           there's a comment card.

4       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   Yeah. If they ---

5       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     There's a bunch in the  
6           back.

7       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   I want them to take  
8           some. The gentleman mentioned a  
9           grandmother or aunt ---

10      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     I'll get some in the  
11          back.

12      COMMISSIONER GERALD:   --- or other people, if  
13          you will take some with you to those  
14          people and engage them as we have  
15          engaged you. We need a kitchen meeting  
16          in each of your houses after dinner on  
17          Sunday; you know that's what we do  
18          anyway. And get these, let's blossom  
19          out from this meeting more and ask them  
20          some of the same questions that we asked  
21          you. And then get that information back  
22          to us. So even though there are 25 of  
23          us here tonight, there could be 200, if  
24          we use the old grapevine method. So  
25          that's the homework. So if you'll get

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COURT REPORTER'S

COMMISSIONER GERALD: Ed know who went to the juke joint. And I didn't hear anybody mention, maybe when you went out. The juke joints are very important because that was so much a part of our community. I grew up across from one and it always amazes people why I knew how to do all the dances. I can dance, whatever. How did you learn to dance? I lived across from the juke joint. I couldn't go but I could sit on my porch and look because most of those juke joints were small, and you had to come outside. So the party, after-party was in the yard. So anyway, what happened to those places? Are those sites still available to be listed as the place like Punk's Patio in Atlantic Beach, as the

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1 place where Shaggy was born, and those  
2 kinds of things? So we got to think out  
3 of the box if we're going to capitalize  
4 on what is being done here. We are a  
5 unique corridor that is attempting to  
6 interpret a way of life of a people.  
7 You know some of the heritage areas are  
8 like, what is -- Name one that's like a,  
9 just a place, Yellowstone Park or  
10 something.

11 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Well, there's steel.  
12 This whole industry of steel.

13 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah, see that, steel,  
14 that's a thing, but we are a people, a  
15 living people. This is amazing what's  
16 happening to our culture. And I applaud  
17 Zenobia because she's taking it a step  
18 further. Because her stuff that she's  
19 talking about is going to end up in  
20 curriculum, so it's not just a  
21 conversation that we're having in  
22 Georgetown in old part Howard High. So  
23 get some more of these. Take them;  
24 let's make this 25, 200, and get it back  
25 to us so that as we put these pieces

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1           together and make this gumbo soup that  
2           it will be even better.

3       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     I just want to add:  
4           Being transparent, is anyone here  
5           representing any county, city or state  
6           government; I need to ask that, or any  
7           organizations or groups?

8       MS. JOHNSON:            I'm here but I'm not  
9           representing anybody ---

10      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Okay.

11      MS. JOHNSON:            --- but Lilly Jean  
12           Johnson.

13      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Okay.

14      MS. JOHNSON:            I serve on County  
15           Council.

16      COMMISSIONER GERALD:    We can separate it.

17      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Okay. It's in your  
18           blood so you count it.

19      MS. JOHNSON:            (Inaudible.)

20      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     So I need to say that  
21           because that's important because a part  
22           of my journey and my report will be, not  
23           only become public, but also an elected  
24           official -- Part of this process, too.  
25           Yes, sir.

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1 MR. VENTORS: I'm not an elected  
2 official but I'm a professor of history  
3 at Francis Marion University.  
4 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Okay.  
5 MR. VENTORS: And I work for the  
6 Francis Marion Trail Commission.  
7 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Okay. All right.  
8 MR. WRAGG: I'm surprised that  
9 Bunny didn't mention this but Francis  
10 Marion, Francis Williams, we had a  
11 nursing home on King Street before they  
12 built the hospital for the, for the,  
13 anybody, white or black, long as you was  
14 poor. And getting back to you, you  
15 mentioned the juke joint; we had 25 juke  
16 joint from Hawkins Street to Highmarket  
17 Street, and the main one was Hop Alley.  
18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Sticks.  
19 MR. WRAGG: Huh?  
20 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: When I was there it  
21 was Sticks.  
22 MR. WRAGG: Six, okay.  
23 COMMISSIONER GERALD: You got to think out  
24 of the box. You got, those places are a  
25 part of the history.

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1 MR. WRAGG: History. I understand  
2 Hop Alley a part of our history.

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And how many people had  
4 events happen in those places?

5 MR. WRAGG: Oh, yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER GERALD: You know that. So one  
7 story, history is real, you've got to  
8 think out of the box with it. It's not  
9 the traditional kind of thing you  
10 learned that the Louisiana Purchase was  
11 1803, and Columbus, none of that. But  
12 what grew out of Sticks? How many  
13 people did this man educate? How many  
14 children of his went on to become  
15 lawmakers and politicians and it's just,  
16 the story has to be well thought out,  
17 not just in a meeting.

18 MS. RODRIGUES: Can I trust the  
19 National Park Service because you know  
20 because sometime they says, well, you  
21 know, might sound nice to us and then  
22 when you all get to Washington you get  
23 those charts and whatnot and you said  
24 this doesn't mean anything. Because you  
25 know when I look at this resource book -

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1                   --

2       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Uh-huh (affirmative

3                   response).

4       MS. RODRIGUES:           --- and I do this all

5                   the time. And I see where you got most

6                   of your information from because you're

7                   dealing, or you're just, you know,

8                   thinking about just that particular area

9                   ---

10      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Uh-huh (affirmative

11                   response).

12      MS. RODRIGUES:           --- you know?

13      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Uh-huh (affirmative

14                   response).

15      MS. RODRIGUES:           Okay. So I hope that

16                   it does not happen this time.

17      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Let me speak to it.

18                   She asked a good question.

19      MS. RODRIGUES:           Because that's a

20                   political ---

21      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Yes.

22      MS. RODRIGUES:           --- thing.

23      COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     Yeah. Remember I said

24                   we're traveling on a road that we're

25                   charting the course; I didn't mention

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1           tonight but we have engaged the services  
2           of a part of the Park Service called  
3           Denver Service Center. They're part of  
4           our agency that does management  
5           planning, and they're the ones that  
6           usually help craft us. Traditionally,  
7           when they're a part of this journey,  
8           they would be the one up here talking.  
9           They're in Denver. So whatever we pull  
10          together and submit to Denver, whatever  
11          you send to Denver is utilized in the  
12          scope and the scale that we set in  
13          place. Because I've worked with the  
14          agency long enough, and have connected  
15          with it long enough, folks of authority  
16          know that this is going to be a  
17          challenge to the system. I don't have a  
18          problem with it being on the tape  
19          because I told the folks in D.C. that  
20          very clearly, in Atlanta and in Denver.  
21          In the agreement that's between the  
22          Commission in Denver, we said very  
23          clearly: This engagement of the public  
24          of Gullah/Geechee history and culture is  
25          unlike any public engagement that's ever

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1           been undertaken by the National Park  
2           Service. That said, we even went to the  
3           point into how we capture the data; how  
4           it's going to be analyzed. The very  
5           terminologies, am I right, ma'am?

6       COMMISSIONER GREEN:       (Moving head up and  
7           down.)

8       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:       That we are using is  
9           beyond what they're accustomed to. So  
10          that's why we need your help. We've  
11          already laid the foundation that we are  
12          different; we're handling this  
13          different. This is not the same normal  
14          ballgame. And so that's why we're being  
15          open to capture what you have so we can  
16          set things in place, so those who come  
17          behind us won't have to travel as we're  
18          traveling here today. I asked, as I  
19          asked you in 2000, to trust me. I  
20          asked, as I asked you in 2000, am I  
21          right, Bunny, to pray for me, I'm being  
22          honest.

23       MS. RODRIGUES:           And you know I will  
24           call you.

25       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:       And to call me, too.

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1           And so that's why we are at the place  
2           that we are at tonight, to engage you  
3           all in this endeavor, because we see  
4           this as historic. We see this as  
5           groundbreaking. And we see this as an  
6           opportunity to put some things in place  
7           that have not been put in place before.

8       MS. WASHINGTON:           I'd like to say just  
9           one other thing and I'll make it very  
10          brief.

11       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:    That's all right.

12       MS. WASHINGTON:           I want to, I think that  
13           this is a wonderful opportunity and I  
14           think that it can be like the  
15           cornerstone. But I would love to see  
16           other things shoot out from this and not  
17           for everybody to just wait to see how  
18           this one particular entity is going to  
19           perform. I mean there should be all  
20           kinds of other initiatives that come  
21           directly from the community, funded by  
22           the community, created by the community  
23           that don't necessarily have anything to  
24           do with this, but could all tie in  
25           together and support it. So it's not

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1           like we're just waiting for this to come  
2           and support it.

3       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    A good kitchen meeting.

4       MS. WASHINGTON:           Exactly.   And so there  
5           can be buildings and museums and  
6           monuments and all those things that we  
7           are eventually going to be creating, and  
8           then we could learn from you guys and  
9           tap you guys and rack your brains to  
10          figure out how we can do ---

11       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   That's what we want.

12       MS. WASHINGTON:           Exactly, all these  
13           things, too, so I would love to be able  
14           to see that and be a part of it and get  
15           a lot of the young people involved in  
16           it, too.   One of the reasons why I think  
17           that things like these are important is  
18           because if the young people, which I'm  
19           not anymore, 20 and 19 and 9, if they  
20           know that it really means something  
21           other than a history lesson that they  
22           know that they can take it to do  
23           something tomorrow or the next day, then  
24           it will always, you won't always have to  
25           keep jumpstarting it.

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1 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah. You can go up to  
2 Walmart, and I went to Walmart in  
3 Georgetown before I came to this meeting  
4 and Gullah/Geechee people all over the  
5 store. Challenge Walmart to give you  
6 500 digital cameras and put it in the  
7 hands of young people and send them out  
8 to be, to the Aide Society Building to  
9 where Sticks used to be; have them take  
10 pictures of these sites. Give them  
11 something to do.

12 MS. WASHINGTON: That lady right over  
13 there, Ms. Dorothy, she has a son who  
14 lives in Texas, who has an organization  
15 called Preservation LINK. And that's  
16 what he does: puts the cameras, puts  
17 cameras in the hands of young people  
18 and, and, and encourages them to be  
19 sociologists through that realm.

20 COMMISSIONER GERALD: These kids know how to  
21 do those things.

22 MS. WASHINGTON: You've got experience  
23 all over this ---

24 COMMISSIONER GERALD: That's good.

25 MS. RODRIGUES: And he's done that

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1 from, through CAAHO.

2 MS. WASHINGTON: He's wonderful.

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Well from what you are  
4 saying in this short meeting and usually  
5 from our experience, this meeting only  
6 tipped, was just a tip of the iceberg.  
7 So from what we've heard, you need 500  
8 cameras again. And these young people  
9 know what to do with that stuff. Now  
10 you might be thinking you're old and  
11 standing still and they know what to do.  
12 They know how to, my daughter was  
13 telling me, and this is totally  
14 ignorance on my part. She said that you  
15 can send a text message across the  
16 world.

17 COMMISSIONER GREEN: You didn't know that?

18 COMMISSIONER GERALD: No. I don't even text.  
19 I can't see.

20 COURT REPORTER'S

21 NOTE: (Audience chatter.)

22 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah, I do it on the  
23 T.V. I mean on the computer. But my  
24 point is: These young kids know these  
25 things. They can take this project to

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1 another level. And I agree with you.  
2 They can carry it to places where the  
3 National Park Service Commissioners  
4 never thought.

5 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: That's true.

6 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And so those kitchen  
7 meetings that we're challenging you to  
8 have and those, engaging young people  
9 and just getting a breath of energy from  
10 this meeting is what we're trying to do.  
11 Because you know 25 people cannot record  
12 the Gullah/Geechee Heritage Corridor;  
13 that doesn't even make sense. It didn't  
14 make sense when they said we needed a  
15 25-member Commission. I'm like, huh?  
16 My culture has boiled down to 25 people,  
17 so you know it needs more. But I'm  
18 going to let Nichole give you some  
19 announcements and then I'll tell you a  
20 message from Ron.

21 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay. Before I give  
22 these announcements, I don't know if  
23 Commissioner Gerald or Michael Allen  
24 mentioned what the newsletter has  
25 inside, but there's comment cards inside

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1           those newsletters that you picked up on  
2           the tables outside with some questions  
3           on it. You can fill those questions out  
4           and just throw it in the mail, postage  
5           free. You don't have to pay any  
6           anything.

7       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     You already paid for  
8           it.

9       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     You already paid for  
10           it. So just throw it in the mailbox and  
11           we'll get that. Also, there's a ---

12       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:     You can go online, too.

13       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     You can go online and  
14           our, the website address is on that  
15           newsletter. You can go to the  
16           Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage  
17           Corridor Commission's website and also  
18           answer those questions on our website.  
19           And we get that information.

20       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    If you don't do online,  
21           Michael's number is there.

22       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Yes.

23       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    Call Michael ---

24       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     Call Michael.

25       COMMISSIONER GERALD:    He can tell you what to

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1 do.

2 MS. JOHNSON: A comment. I just  
3 wanted to let you know I dutifully  
4 filled out the newsletter that I  
5 received in the mail and I hope it's not  
6 going to be thrown aside.

7 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Oh, no.

8 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: It won't be.

9 MS. JOHNSON: And I am so happy that  
10 Bunny brought up the point: verify,  
11 clarify and documenting and not rushing  
12 through this process. Thank you.

13 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Can I add? You brought  
14 up the fact of the newsletter. 7,000  
15 newsletters were sent out from  
16 Wilmington, North Carolina to  
17 Jacksonville, Florida. The Park Service  
18 has never sent out 7,000 newsletters for  
19 anything, and they've been around for  
20 almost 80, 90 years.

21 MS. RODRIGUES: We are different.

22 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: That's how far I've  
23 pushed. That's how far I've pushed this  
24 process. Because people tell me, say:  
25 Well when you gone stop sending me your

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1 address? I said when people stop  
2 sending me, I'll stop sending you. Send  
3 the 7,000. Yeah, and some came back,  
4 yes, we had a bad address; some people  
5 were dead. That's a reality. I have a  
6 bag of them, a box of them. And some  
7 came back; that's a reality. But the  
8 bottom line now, ma'am, is: 7,000 went  
9 out.

10 MR. FUNNYE: Just quickly ---

11 COMMISSIONER ALLEN: Identify yourself.

12 MR. FUNNYE: My name is Ray Funnye  
13 and I'm from the country, Plantersville.

14 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Plantersville.

15 COURT REPORTER'S

16 NOTE: (Audience speaking same  
17 time as Mr. Funney. Inaudible.)

18 MR. FUNNYE: And actually there's a  
19 meeting scheduled for May for the folks  
20 from Plantersville and Dunbar and other  
21 places in the rural areas, and I just  
22 wanted to come tonight to see what was  
23 happening so I could better prepare my  
24 people to come to our meetings ---

25 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: (Unintelligible.)

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1 MR. FUNNYE: Yeah, okay. And to see  
2 what kind of questions were raised and  
3 responses were given and shared. But I  
4 think this is a great opportunity for us  
5 to get together and collaborate. I'm  
6 really interested in some of the details  
7 my mom used to tell me from the  
8 plantation. She'd walk from the  
9 plantation all the way to her school,  
10 which is some three, four miles every  
11 morning and every afternoon. And there  
12 was things that I think we should be  
13 reminded of: the trails they had to walk  
14 from plantations. And I'm a young guy.  
15 My mom is 81-years old but she had those  
16 memories. And, yeah, I think the  
17 plantations are really monumental in my  
18 community, because what developed from  
19 the plantations; we had the villages.  
20 We have villages now that we live in and  
21 I think all of those could be really  
22 something that we need to identify it in  
23 the study, to identify those villages  
24 and how we came from the agricultural  
25 era to the industrial era. And what led

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1 from the families when we didn't have  
2 farms no more. I think when we had  
3 farms we had kids busy, being busy and  
4 doing other things. Now the kids are  
5 not doing anything and it really has had  
6 some major impact on our community. And  
7 so I just think this is great and I'm  
8 looking forward to bringing other people  
9 on May 7th to Bethel.

10 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Thank you, sir.

11 MS. CHARLENA JOHNSON: Hello, I'm Charlena B.  
12 Johnson, Brave Johnson, and actually I  
13 am just so excited to be here at this  
14 forum tonight because truly it has  
15 brought back so many memories, because I  
16 can stand before you and say that I am  
17 blessed to be an heir of an individual.  
18 My grandfather was a rice grower. I  
19 grew up off of South Island Road here in  
20 Georgetown. We're called the Brave  
21 Family; yes, the Brave Family Homestead.  
22 There I know about rice. I know about  
23 the growing of the rice. I know how it  
24 is to help to gather that rice; store it  
25 in the barn for the drying out process.

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1           How to use, I always called it, and I  
2           think I told Bunny this: It was like it  
3           was a huge log that was hollowed out on  
4           the inside where you put the rice in  
5           there and you took the pedal and you had  
6           to beat ---

7       MS. RODRIGUES:                   Pestle.

8       MS. JOHNSON:                   --- the pestle and beat  
9           it out of the hut. And once you went  
10          through that process you scooped it out,  
11          then you put it on the fanner. And you  
12          had to do this so all of the husk would  
13          come to the top. So it just really  
14          brought back so many memories for me  
15          tonight of my grandfather. My dad, who  
16          after my grandfather passed, daddy, for  
17          a period of time, continued to grow.  
18          We, he didn't grow rice to sell it. He  
19          grew it because I'm from a family of 13  
20          children ---

21      MR. WRAGG:                    Yeah.

22      MS. JOHNSON:                   --- and of course I  
23          grew up at a time where whatever we grew  
24          it wasn't necessarily to be sold. But  
25          we gave it away throughout the community

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1                    ---

2       MS. RODRIGUES:                    That's right.

3       MS. JOHNSON:                    --- to help other

4                    families.

5       MS. RODRIGUES:                    Always.

6       MS. JOHNSON:                    So I am just so happy

7                    to be here tonight and I will certainly

8                    be passing the word about the forum

9                    because I think several years ago,

10                  Bunny, I think you started with these

11                  forums. But I certainly will pass the

12                  word along, and thanks for bringing back

13                  the memory of the rice wine, too.

14       COURT REPORTER'S

15       NOTE:                                (Audience laughter and

16                    chatter.)

17       MS. RODRIGUES:                    Always had that.

18       COMMISSIONER GREEN:              That's going to be

19                    Friday or Saturday?

20       MS. RODRIGUES:                    Saturday.

21       COURT REPORTER'S

22       NOTE:                                (Audience laughter and

23                    chatter.)

24       MS. RODRIGUES:                    Mind you, it's a dry

25                    wine.

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1 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay.

2 MS. RODRIGUES: Actually, I'm glad that

3 people are coming in and they're talking

4 because a lot of times you think of all

5 the history -- We have let people say

6 all of the history is in the Beaufort,

7 or all the history is on the island and

8 you know like Mr. Drayton told me a long

9 time ago, only 10 percent of the Gullah

10 people lived on the Sea Island, okay?

11 And I hope the Commission learned

12 something tonight. And we, you talk

13 about information, this place has never

14 been touched because you're always

15 running down there to the other place.

16 COURT REPORTER'S

17 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

18 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Okay. I just wanted

19 to bring your attention to four more

20 meetings we're having in Horry and

21 Georgetown Counties, and also northern

22 Charleston County, because our next

23 meeting is in my hometown, the little

24 village of McClellanville. And when we

25 were getting these ---

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1 MR. WRAGG: It's on the map?  
2 COURT REPORTER'S  
3 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)  
4 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Yes. It's on the map  
5 now. And when we were organizing these  
6 meetings, Commissioner Gerald,  
7 Commissioner Daise, Horry and Georgetown  
8 Counties now, and thinking about that  
9 area, but I wanted to include  
10 McClellanville because growing up there  
11 we came here when we needed to go  
12 shopping or get anything. So ---  
13 MS. RODRIGUES: Walmart.  
14 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Exactly. Because my  
15 mom was still in Walmart one night; I  
16 think last week sometime I called her,  
17 and she's still in McClellanville. I'm  
18 in Charleston now. So I was trying to  
19 reach her and didn't; she wasn't picking  
20 up the phone. So I called Walmart and  
21 asked them to say her name over the  
22 intercom. 11:00 at night; still at  
23 Super Walmart. So she came; she said  
24 and "What you want?" And I just said,  
25 "I was trying to reach you." So ---

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1 COURT REPORTER'S

2 NOTE: (Audience chatter.)

3 COMMISSIONER GREEN: So, and as we were  
4 talking tonight and many people  
5 mentioned these communities along the  
6 North Santee River. Well where I come  
7 from, my ancestors were from plantations  
8 along the South Santee River and there  
9 was a lot of mingling back and forth.  
10 But Harietta, Hampton Plantation ---

11 MR. WRAGG: Seewee.

12 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Yes, that area. All  
13 of those plantations, they migrated  
14 into, you know, the South Santee and  
15 then into McClellanville. So that,  
16 those are the places where my ancestors  
17 came from.

18 MS. RODRIGUES: A lot of them came to  
19 the Bethel A.M.E. Church. I had a  
20 girlfriend that her grandfather, out of  
21 Hampton, they had to take the ferry and  
22 then walk all the way down.

23 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Uh-huh (affirmative  
24 response). Yes. Yes. Definitely. So  
25 that, our next meeting is going to be on

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1 Monday, April 27th, from 7 to 8:30 and  
2 that's going to be at Bethel A.M.E.  
3 Church, McClellanville, on Society Road.  
4 We also have a meeting Tuesday, April  
5 28th, that next night; that's going to  
6 be at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Conway;  
7 again, still 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Then May  
8 5th, Tuesday, May 5th, 7 to 8:30 we're  
9 holding a public input meeting at  
10 Atlantic Beach Community Center on 32nd  
11 Avenue South in Atlantic Beach. And  
12 then coming back together in Georgetown  
13 on May 14th, Thursday, May 14th, 6:30  
14 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Bethel A.M.E. Church  
15 here on Broad Street in Georgetown. And  
16 that's, we're really reaching out. And  
17 I want to see all of you who came  
18 tonight there again, and also reaching  
19 out to those community members from  
20 Choppee and Sampit and Plantersville and  
21 Andrews and all of these other  
22 communities that we heard about tonight.

23 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And wanted to make  
24 sure that you know that the meeting on  
25 the 14th is going to, all the

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1           Commissioners are going to be here for  
2           that meeting, all 25. So you can come  
3           and get to meet everybody and make your  
4           points so everybody hears them, not just  
5           ---

6       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:       Then the next day  
7           you're at a business meeting and  
8           everybody is welcome.

9       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   And then the next day  
10          we have a business meeting and the  
11          public is welcome to come into the  
12          business meeting that we're having. So  
13          we're trying to be ---

14       COMMISSIONER ALLEN:       Transparent.

15       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   --- transparent so that  
16          everyone knows what we're doing. Well  
17          we're getting ready to close. I just  
18          wanted to invite you to our reception.

19       UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE:   What time is the  
20          meeting at the ---

21       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   All of them are 7 to  
22          8:30.

23       Unidentified female:    Okay.

24       COMMISSIONER GERALD:   Keep it simple and ---

25       COMMISSIONER GREEN:     The last one at Bethel

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1 is 6:30, 6:30 to 8.

2 COURT REPORTER'S

3 NOTE: (Audience chatter.)

4 COMMISSIONER GREEN: Our meeting on  
5 Thursday, May 14th at Bethel; that's  
6 going to be 6:30 to 8, so we're starting  
7 a little bit, 30 minutes earlier.

8 MR. WRAGG: Get me my glasses on.

9 COMMISSIONER GERALD: I got to have them.  
10 That's another thing: your mind start  
11 going bad. Our reception, I must  
12 announce, is sponsored by the Georgetown  
13 Chamber of Commerce ---

14 MR. WRAGG: Wow.

15 COMMISSIONER GERALD: --- has spread for the  
16 reception tonight. And also Ron Daise,  
17 who worked so much with getting this  
18 meeting together, his father-in-law  
19 passed on Tuesday morning. And so he  
20 had to be with his wife and his kids.  
21 And he wanted, he must have said it four  
22 times, "Be sure to tell them I'm sorry."  
23 And so he wants to send, let you know  
24 that he's not here for that reason. And  
25 I know you send him your prayers and

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1 strength for that. Want to say that  
2 after you get your reception, go through  
3 the reception, you can come in and just  
4 take a quick, a more closer look at the  
5 panels. Really you need to know as you  
6 go out to spread the word, you kind of  
7 need to know the terms: heritage area,  
8 corridor. As a matter of fact, our logo  
9 is the actual corridor itself, so  
10 whenever you get your publications and  
11 you see the logo for the Commission, it  
12 is the corridor. Just kind of look at  
13 where Gullah/Geechee people lived, and  
14 30 miles inland. And really it's more  
15 than 30 miles inland. It goes on up to  
16 Sumter. Sumter has the largest Gullah  
17 community I've ever seen. Eat more rice  
18 than the law allow and then they'll come  
19 to your presentations and who are the  
20 Gullah people? You.

21 COURT REPORTER'S

22 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

23 COMMISSIONER GERALD: What was your point?

24 MS. RODRIGUES: The Gullah is far as  
25 Erngeberg. (Phonetically spelled.)

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1 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Erngeberg.  
2 (Phonetically spelled.)  
3 COURT REPORTER'S  
4 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)  
5 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Good, gracious. So the  
6 Gullah/Geechee Culture goes wherever its  
7 bearers take it. Mr. Wragg, you grew up  
8 in New York; you've met plenty of  
9 Gullah/Geechee people. I mean you've  
10 lived in New York for a long time. You  
11 grew up with Bunny on Butts Street; I'm  
12 sorry.  
13 MR. WRAGG: Yeah. She can't get me  
14 into it.  
15 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah. Anyway, is there  
16 anything else you want to bring before  
17 we dismiss?  
18 MS. CARR: I want to ask a  
19 question.  
20 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yes, ma'am.  
21 MS. CARR: When you say Santee  
22 Road, is it still called Santee Road,  
23 because I don't know.  
24 MS. RODRIGUES: Santee, North Santee  
25 River Road.

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1 MS. CARR: Huh?

2 MR. WRAGG: Come by my house and

3 I'll take you there.

4 MS. RODRIGUES: North Santee River

5 Road.

6 MS. CARR: Okay. Because I don't

7 know, I don't know very much about that

8 ---

9 MS. RODRIGUES: It's right off, it's

10 right off of 17. It's the last, before

11 ---

12 MR. DRAYTON: Before you get to the

13 bridge.

14 MS. RODRIGUES: Before you get to the

15 bridge.

16 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And that might be

17 something, you might want to take

18 Bunny's tour. And actually, it wouldn't

19 hurt to go on the tour ---

20 MS. CARR: I'd just love to go ---

21 COMMISSIONER GERALD: --- because what

22 happens when you go on the tour is your

23 mind starts to moving. So that wouldn't

24 hurt at all. Any other comments for the

25 good of the order?

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1 MS. CARR: I just want to thank  
2 you for this opportunity because I  
3 remember when I was a girl we didn't, we  
4 thought that Gullah was a bad language,  
5 bad English. You didn't want to say  
6 Gullah/Geechee. I'm no Geechee.

7 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah.

8 MS. CARR: Everyone that used to  
9 call us; they say well you from down  
10 there where they eat gator tails and  
11 rice.

12 MS. RODRIGUES: And gator tail is good,  
13 too.

14 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Yeah. That's why you  
15 still look 50 and in the same class.  
16 That's why ---

17 COURT REPORTER'S

18 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

19 Ms. RODRIGUES: But they made us  
20 ashamed.

21 MR. WRAGG: I used to thought  
22 Gullah people was, in reality I thought  
23 it was on the Atlantic Ocean, you know.  
24 When you go to Sumter, I didn't think  
25 they was no Geechee.

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1 COMMISSIONER GERALD: They don't think so  
2 either.

3 MR. WRAGG: Yeah, but I'm thinking,  
4 look, when they brought them slave over  
5 there from Africa, where the first place  
6 they brought them at? To Charleston.

7 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Charleston.

8 MR. WRAGG: And then they, they  
9 come back and people coming by and they  
10 take them, take them, put all of them  
11 right on this Atlantic coastline ---

12 COMMISSIONER GERALD: You go up there ---

13 MR. WRAGG: --- right on up by  
14 Wilmington.

15 COMMISSIONER GERALD: You go up there and you  
16 see more split in the front tooth than  
17 the law allow.

18 COURT REPORTER'S

19 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

20 COMMISSIONER GERALD: Anyway, on behalf of  
21 Michael Allen and the National Park  
22 Service and Nichole Green, my fellow  
23 Commissioner and myself, we certainly  
24 appreciate it. And we challenge you  
25 again to help spread what we're doing

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1           here so we can get a real good picture.  
2           Because we're tired of looking, you  
3           know, Gullah Culture is located in  
4           tourism areas. And you've got to be  
5           careful with tourism areas because what  
6           they're going to do is: Tap into your  
7           culture and draw those things out that  
8           sell.

9       MS. RODRIGUES:           That's right.

10      COMMISSIONER GERALD:    So if you want to be  
11           sold ---

12      MS. RODRIGUES:           That's what they're  
13           doing now.

14      COMMISSIONER GERALD:    If you want to be sold,  
15           you keep these meetings real small like  
16           this where nobody goes but two or three  
17           people. But if you want to interpret  
18           your own culture, you pack an auditorium  
19           like this. You go and tell them: Get  
20           there; we need you because they're  
21           selling us down the river. They're,  
22           every brochure that comes out of this  
23           state has one of our baskets on it, but  
24           we're still poor and unemployed. But  
25           that's another meeting, isn't it?

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1 COURT REPORTER'S

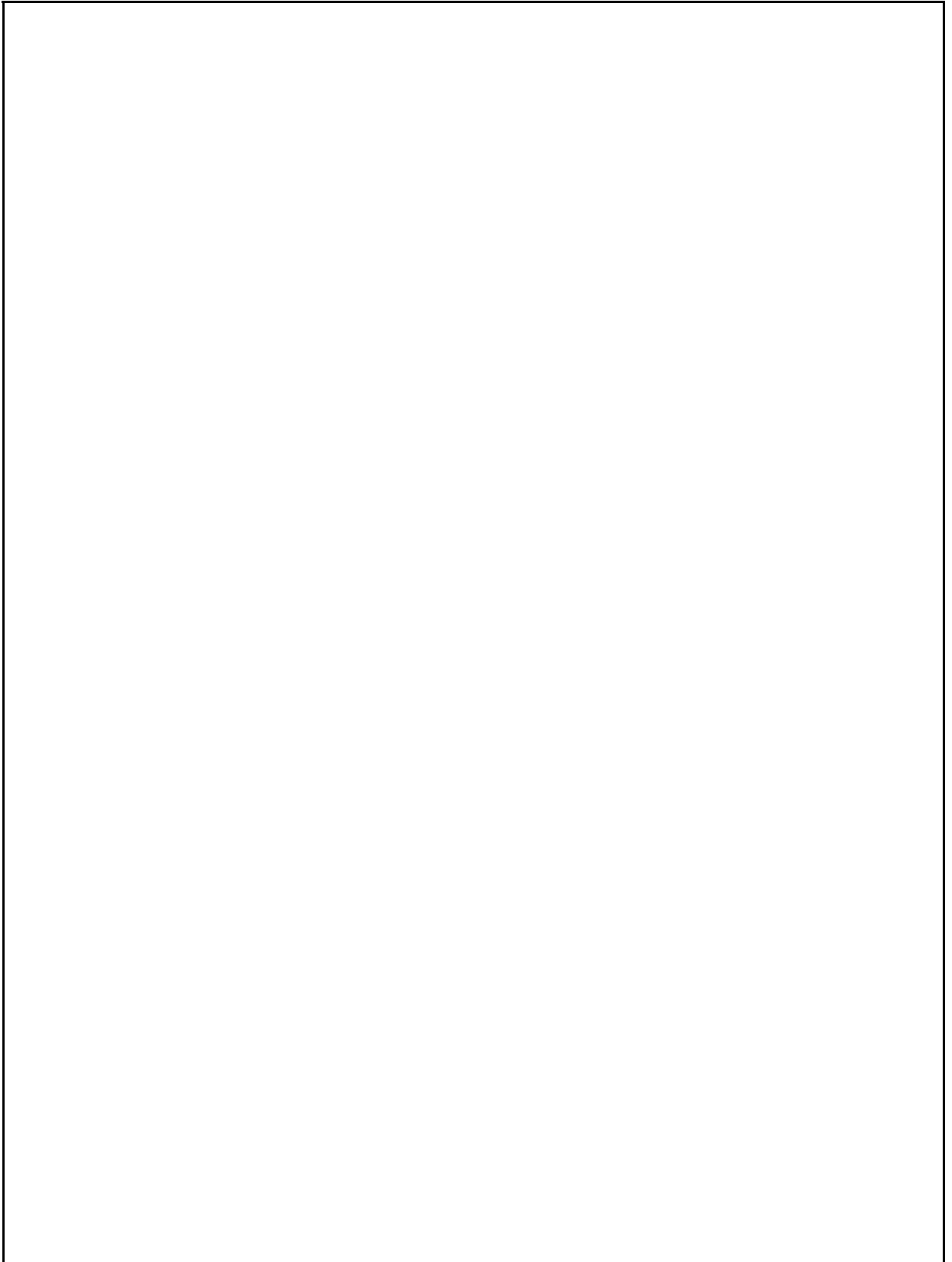
2 NOTE: (Audience laughter.)

3 COMMISSIONER GERALD: And anyway, thank you  
4 so much and we invite you to partake in  
5 the refreshments that we have for you  
6 and please come back in and talk more to  
7 each other and look at the panels, or go  
8 home.

9 (The meeting concluded at 8:45 p.m.)  
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