

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24

GULLAH-GEECHEE CULTURAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR:
SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HEARINGS

REPORTED BY: MARY ANN RIDENOUR, RPR, CLR
Registered Professional Reporter,
Certified LiveNote Reporter
and Notary Public

25
00002

POST OFFICE BOX 21784
CHARLESTON, SC 29413-1784

I N D E X

1
2

June 23, 2009 - Colleton County Public Library -
Walterboro.....137

00137

1 (The proceeding commenced at 6:30 P.M.)
2 QUEEN QUET: Good evening, everyone. We
3 thank you for joining us for this Gullah-Geechee
4 Cultural Heritage Corridor meeting. We would ask if
5 everyone would please stand and Reverend Drain would
6 come forth and provide our invocation.
7 (Invocation.)
8 QUEEN QUET: Thank you, Reverend Drain. I am
9 Queen Quet, Marquette Goodwine. I am one of the expert
10 commissioners for South Carolina for our federal
11 commission, which is the Gullah-Geechee Cultural
12 Heritage Corridor Commission. And I'm joined this
13 evening by another one of our expert commissioners and
14 our chairman of the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage
15 Corridor, Mr. Emory Campbell, who will now bring
16 greetings on behalf of our entire 15-member Commission.
17 MR. CAMPBELL: Thank you very much.
18 Good evening. On behalf of our 15-member
19 commission of the Gullah-Geechee Heritage Cultural
20 Corridor, Cultural Heritage Corridor, I'd like to
21 welcome each and every one of you tonight for your
22 public input into this management plan for the

23 corridor.

24 Now, Marquetta Goodwine and Michael Allen will be
25 conducting the hearing, but I want to say that we don't
00138

1 want you to be bashful. Whatever you think that should
2 be included in the record regarding this corridor, we
3 want you to do so.

4 And I want to encourage Walterboro to talk about
5 your rice. You have a rice motel. You have a rice
6 festival. And so Gullah and rice go together, as you
7 will hear later on. So please do us -- I mean, just do
8 us a favor by giving frank comments, please.

9 Thank you.

10 QUEEN QUET: Thank you, Chairman Campbell.

11 Chairman Campbell mentioned one our partners that
12 is here tonight. And he's going to also be coming up
13 for this next portion of our overview, and that is who
14 I like to call Ranger Mike, Michael Allen, who is our
15 Gullah-Geechee coordinator from the National Park
16 Service.

17 Now, many times, when people have read about the
18 Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, you may have
19 also read National Heritage Area, NHA. You may have
20 read another abbreviation, DSC. And you get this
21 whole, as some people call it, alphabet soup. So we're
22 here tonight to help you extract what that is, so you
23 really know how come you came out tonight.

24 You see, the Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage
25 Corridor extends, as you saw on your way in the door,
00139

1 all the way from the Cape Fear area, North Carolina,
2 all the way southward to roughly Jacksonville, Florida,
3 encompassing Walterboro, is right in there, right in
4 the mix. And so you have a four-state federal
5 corridor, which is a National Heritage Area.

6 It came into existence in 2006, when the
7 Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Act Bill was signed
8 into law by then-president George W. Bush. That then
9 created a 15-member corridor commission with ten
10 alternates that serve for all four of the states.

11 So in our capacity as commissioners, we were then
12 charged with creating what is called a General
13 Management Plan, or you'll hear us sometimes say GMP.
14 This General Management Plan will then direct where the
15 funding that has been legislated -- now, notice the key
16 word there, legislated -- by the Gullah-Geechee
17 Cultural Heritage Act would go toward, when funds are
18 appropriated, okay? Because funds have not yet been
19 appropriated to the corridor. But once the General
20 Management Plan is complete, then it will say these are
21 the things that funding should go to within this
22 corridor area.

23 What is unique about this particular National
24 Heritage Area is that it's the only one of now 50 of
25 them -- unless Mike got a new e-mail again this week?
00140

1 MR. ALLEN: No, ma'am.

2 QUEEN QUET: Okay. Because when we came in,
3 there were 37. Then it became 40. The last meeting we
4 had, there are now 50. There are 50 National Heritage
5 Areas. But this is the only one that deals with a
6 culture of people of African descent. So that is
7 unprecedented. And that's why it is so vitally
8 important that Walterboro, your community, you as

9 individuals, the various organizations that are here,
10 are a part of this historic process. Because what you
11 tell us -- and as you notice, we have a court
12 stenographer here. We also have a professional
13 videographer there. What you tell us is being
14 recorded, transcribed, and will become a part of the
15 process of creating the General Management Plan that
16 directs what the funding will go to when it's
17 appropriated.

18 So we didn't just draw you to come out just, as we
19 say, dry long. So we want you to be here, to be active
20 in this process, so that we know what is important to
21 you, both the things that are tangible and intangible.
22 So, yes, Mr. Campbell pointed out rice fields, right?
23 But you also may have particular songs that went with
24 the work in the rice field. So the rice field is
25 tangible, because you could touch it. You could go in

00141

1 there. But the intangible would be the things you
2 can't -- you can't grab it in the air and put it in
3 something, that song, you see? So anything that comes
4 to mind in relation to Gullah-Geechee culture, that you
5 think is of vital importance, that's what we definitely
6 need to hear from you.

7 We also need to hear from you what things you
8 might think are hindering some of the things from being
9 done right now. Anything you consider to be a threat,
10 even to the culture, you can mention that as well.

11 All of these things will go into this public
12 record. And then one of the groups, one of the
13 divisions that work with us on the General Management
14 Plan is the one that I mentioned a while ago, DSC. It
15 stands for Denver Service Center. If you notice on
16 your seats, you have an agenda and then you have a card
17 there. And you might wonder why the card might have a
18 Denver address since we're in South Carolina. Well,
19 that's why. That card would end up going back to the
20 Denver Service Center and they will extract your
21 written comments.

22 If you decide that you want to take that card with
23 you tonight and then fill it out later, in more detail,
24 you are welcome to do that. If you decide that you
25 want to go on electronically and see our first

00142

1 newsletter from which many of these images that you see
2 here have been extracted, you can go onto the Web site
3 that's written -- if you look where it stays Comment
4 Card, on the front of there, and go to the sentence
5 right before the last, you will see our Web site. And
6 it's also on your agenda. You are welcome to give out
7 that Web site to anybody, any one of the citizens in
8 the U.S. They can provide input.

9 Because we are also a unique NHA because we're a
10 federal one. Some National Heritage Areas are not
11 federal commissions; they are actually nonprofit
12 organizations that are the local coordinating entity.

13 In this case, us, as a body, are your local
14 coordinating entity for this particular corridor. So
15 our job is to take in what you say, extract it out, put
16 it into a format for the federal government. It gets
17 submitted to the Secretary of the Department of
18 Interior, which is who we fall under as one federal
19 commission, and who Michael knows that the NPS also
20 fall under, as another -- as an agency. And we work

21 together like this, in order to create what we have to
22 present. God willing, the secretary approves it, signs
23 it, comes back, southeastern regional director signs
24 it, and then we get one other signature, and then that
25 becomes the management plan for this entire corridor.

00143

1 Now, you'll notice some of these boards. I know a
2 few of you took some time and you came up front to look
3 at them. This one gives you an idea of more of what
4 I'm saying about the Commission, who we are and about
5 the Management Plan. This gives you our vision, our
6 mission, and our purpose as a Commission. And this one
7 here gives you our planning schedule.

8 So for anyone who already got a newsletter in the
9 mail -- and we did one of the largest mailings. We
10 broke a record for the National Park Service by sending
11 out 6,000 newsletters.

12 You'll see that this first phase of public input
13 is what we're into right now. And so within the next
14 two weeks, we expect to have all the information in
15 that will then be reformatted. And in the fall, you'll
16 hear about us having meetings all through the corridor,
17 all over again, so that people can now see what has
18 been created from what statements have been made. So
19 you'll see the rest of the time line. And then, by
20 2010, we are expecting to turn in a General Management
21 Plan, somehow formatted already.

22 Now, this one, that's just a blowup of the same
23 comment card that I mentioned to you already.

24 And so I am going to ask Ranger Mike, who we've
25 been tag-teaming like this for about 20 years almost,

00144

1 it seems, to come up and explain the role of not only
2 the National Park Service, but the other aspects of
3 this federal process to you. And then it's going to be
4 your turn. All right.

5 MR. ALLEN: Again, I just want to echo what
6 Chairman Campbell said and what Commissioner Goodwine
7 said, is that first we are happy to be here.

8 A few of you all, I think, traveled with us when
9 we were doing the Special Resource Study in early 2000,
10 2005. And I have to acknowledge that we went to some
11 places, but not everywhere. So when the decision was
12 made that we should begin this journey with public
13 engagement meetings, we knew it was important that we
14 be here, in Colleton County and Walterboro, which is a
15 part of the story and flavor of what we're trying to
16 preserve. So we honor you, by being in your home
17 tonight. Thank you for allowing us to be here with
18 you.

19 Again, the National Park Service gladly joins this
20 endeavor, you know, with the corridor and with the
21 Commission. The National Park Service is giving its
22 more than 100 percent to make sure that this endeavor
23 turns out successful. And we have other eyes that are
24 watching over us, to ensure that we're successful.
25 One, Congressman James E. Clyburn, who was the

00145

1 architect of the bill that created us as an entity in
2 this endeavor here. So he has given his 100 percent
3 support to this initiative. Also, within the
4 Department of the Interior's office -- in fact, this
5 morning I received a call from the Assistant Secretary
6 of the Interior, Bob Stanton's office, who wanted to

7 know what we were doing and how we were doing it and
8 where we were going and doing it. And so his eyes are
9 on this process as well. And we have also the good
10 fortune that our first lady, first lady Michelle Obama,
11 her lineage is out of this corridor and this gathering.
12 And so we have those eyes that are on here as well.
13 And so what I want to let you know, that the National
14 Park Service stands shoulder-to-shoulder with this
15 endeavor.

16 And as you begin to share with us, we ask,
17 besides, as she said, the tangible and intangible,
18 we're also looking at the natural, we're looking at the
19 cultural, we're looking above ground, we're looking
20 below ground. We realize that this endeavor is unlike
21 any endeavor that's been undertaken by the National
22 Park Service. We realize that very clearly. And so
23 we're going into places we're never been before, doing
24 things perhaps have never been done in this agency.
25 And this may be a challenge. But don't allow anything

00146

1 that you desire to bring to our table and your table
2 today not to be brought forth. That's why we're here,
3 to listen. And that's why we're taking that
4 opportunity to be here again.

5 So, again, I thank you all for your patience. And
6 I would say in advance, when you all leave here to go
7 home today, you all now have become disciples of the
8 Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, that you can
9 go and also share what you heard here, and what you
10 experienced here. And for those who may have missed,
11 they can also go online or contact one of us to make
12 comments. And so that's the breadth and scope that the
13 corridor is moving. And that's the support that the
14 Park Service is bringing to this endeavor.

15 Thank you.

16 QUEEN QUET: Thank you very much.

17 So now we open the floor to questions, as well as
18 comments. We can bring the mic to you or you can come
19 up. You want them to stay up here, like you did the
20 last time? Yeah, if you'd come up, we'd appreciate it.
21 That way, we can see your face on the video camera. No
22 one wants to be first, I know. You can come right
23 here, okay. And, please, make sure that when you come
24 up, that you state your name for the record. And while
25 you're seated, please make sure your cell phones are

00147

1 turned off and your other PDAs. Oh, she's -- yes,
2 because it will be yours that will end up ringing, as
3 soon as you start talking. Thanks.

4 MS. COOPER: Okay. Hello. How are you all
5 today? My name is Vera Youngblood Cooper. I am
6 originally from Walterboro, born and raised here. And
7 always tried to stay away from Walterboro, and ended up
8 kept coming back. And now I'm realizing the reason
9 why. And it's because it's God's will that I be here
10 for a time such as this.

11 Back in 1996, God blessed me with some deeds from
12 1899. And through that original deed, it involved 126
13 islands from, I think, from Charleston throughout to
14 Florida, which involves cultural lands. And if you
15 ride the rural routes, you will see that there are a
16 lot of stores and businesses that just remain sitting
17 there because we -- no one has a title to them. From
18 the time the Lord blessed me with these deeds until

19 this particular day, I have -- I have discovered, up
20 until this day, that in my area, this -- this little
21 island runs right in the midst of my house. A lot of
22 people in the area didn't know it, but I tried to share
23 it with everyone. Because on the area called
24 Springwood Drive, especially, is a wide section of this
25 lake. And the people's houses, when they step out

00148

1 their back door, it's like they're going down. So then
2 I realized that this lake is back there.

3 Now, I'm a member of the revitalization committee
4 here. I was appointed to that committee here, which
5 consists of four people. And in that committee, I
6 think it's called a renaissance -- a renaissance
7 project, called a renaissance. But it's supposed to be
8 doing something new and building up the area and
9 preparing it for growth. And I still had -- well, the
10 Lord assured me that what it's supposed to be is to
11 clear out the lakes and connect with the other culture
12 of people and let us have a life, a life of connection
13 with our cultures, our quality of life be lifted up,
14 and for the people and -- excuse me. I get excited
15 when I talk about it.

16 So, right now, the revitalization committee is
17 really concentrated on removing abandoned houses or
18 houses that cannot be repaired. And in right in my
19 area, which I'm at the -- I'm furthest to the right to
20 the flood zone, which, to me, is the river or the lake.
21 And they've cleared off a dead-end portion of that, to
22 get it out of the way of the flood zone. They did
23 not -- they are not -- they're not -- they're not
24 saying this the way it is supposed to be said. When I
25 look at that picture, I know all about that and what

00149

1 it -- how we're supposed to be living in our area. So
2 I just tried to inform the people that they need to be
3 to the meetings, so that they can better understand,
4 you know, what they're trying to do.

5 Right now, we have a -- we have a -- let me see
6 what I can call it. It's a Great Swamps -- Great Swamp
7 Sanctuary. We have Great Swamp Sanctuary, which I
8 always thought should come across, over across the main
9 street and come on down where it's supposed to go. But
10 it gets to a certain point and it stops there. So then
11 all the woods and weeds and everything grows up in our
12 community. And we like to be able, just like everybody
13 else around here -- so this is the best that I can
14 share with you right now.

15 I do -- I can get a copy of an 1899 deed, which
16 includes everything. I can get that for you, if you
17 need it.

18 And I have a lots of other information concerning
19 these islands and the way that we're supposed to be
20 living. But this is the most recent picture that I
21 have.

22 Only other thing I can say, if you need any
23 information, I can try to get it for you. And I keep
24 trying to talk to the people and encourage them to come
25 out to the meetings.

00150

1 I think that as far as the committee, I think that
2 I'm waiting to hear them say, Job well done, when they
3 talk about doing this. I don't know if that's going to
4 happen, but I'm praying that it will happen. Because I

5 love home and I want to be home. I don't want to have
6 to keep leaving home to have a life. It doesn't -- it
7 doesn't work. The Lord wants me here, to see that
8 these things are done. And I'm willing to put a
9 hundred percent of my time and my life into it, that it
10 gets done.

11 So I hope that I said something that you all can
12 pick up something.

13 (Applause.)

14 QUEEN QUET: Thank you.

15 Anyone else, comments or questions? Yes. Yes.

16 MR. DRAIN: Hi. I'm Danny Drain and I run
17 and operate the Slave Relics Museum, here in
18 Walterboro.

19 Actually, I have two questions. How is
20 this corridor going to, I guess, connect with the
21 national South Carolina Heritage Corridor? I mean, how
22 does that --

23 MR. ALLEN: I'll tell you that.

24 MR. DRAIN: Okay. Second question is that we
25 have a population up in Smoaks. A lot of people up

00151

1 there are from my family called the Drains up in
2 Smoaks. A lot of them are actual Gullah. And it's
3 like the whole community has been preserved through, I
4 mean, 50 or 60 years. And is there any way that y'all
5 have resources to go into those communities, to try to
6 get some research done regarding the culture up there?

7 MR. ALLEN: Let me -- you brought up a good
8 point.

9 Michael Allen with the National Park Service.

10 In 1996, the South Carolina National Heritage
11 Corridor was created. And the South Carolina National
12 Heritage Corridor operates from Charleston, South
13 Carolina, Charleston County, through Berkeley,
14 Dorchester, Colleton, up to Oconee County. So to
15 answer your question, you brought it to the table, yes,
16 in Georgetown County, Charleston County, Berkeley
17 County and Colleton County, the two corridors overlap.
18 Now, I'm here to tell you that we have a positive
19 relationship and association with Michelle McCullum,
20 who is the executive director of the existing National
21 Heritage Area. So all of us, the three of us, to go on
22 record to say, that there is no animosity or issues --

23 QUEEN QUET: Absolutely.

24 MR. ALLEN: -- that exist between this
25 corridor and the one that she's managing. In many

00152

1 places, she said, we have a shared experience. In
2 other places, we may have one way, she may have another
3 different path. But I want to go on the record to say
4 on their behalf here tonight, that is not a problem.
5 And because of it, we are learning some things that
6 they have experienced or things they may have gone
7 through, that we don't want to have to repeat. So
8 she's been very helpful to us.

9 MR. CAMPBELL: Distinguish the difference
10 between the two. We concentrate on the Gullah culture.
11 And then answer his second question.

12 MR. ALLEN: Okay. And as the chairman said,
13 the key difference is in the creation, always in the
14 birth. The existing South Carolina National Heritage
15 Area, created in 1996, was to celebrate the culture and
16 the history and legacy of people that lived in -- from

17 Charleston County to Oconee County. The Gullah-Geechee
18 Cultural Heritage Corridor, created in 2006, its charge
19 is to celebrate the life and legacy and history of
20 Gullah-Geechee people, from Wilmington, North Carolina,
21 to Jacksonville, Florida. So that's the difference.

22 Now, to your financial picture. It's -- to be
23 honest, I can't really answer that at this very point.
24 Because our meeting here and listening to you will then
25 be brought, as Commissioner Goodwine said, into the

00153

1 picture in developing the management plan. So, in
2 effect, the question that you asked of us, that's on
3 the public record, now becomes part of the dialogue of
4 a need that should be moved forward, when that day
5 comes.

6 What I've told people -- some folks have come to
7 me on the phone, say a whole bunch of things to me.
8 And I say, But until you say it in a public arena,
9 that's captured and is a part of the dialogue, it's
10 just two conversations.

11 So now, by you asking me a question about support,
12 finances, opportunity, partnerships, research, now
13 that's in the public. That's a part of the dialogue.
14 That can go into the final document. And when the
15 chairman or whoever else says, Well, we should do this
16 in Smoaks, or wherever we should do it, we can say,
17 Well, you know, in Walterboro someone brought that to
18 our attention, that we should look at. So by you
19 bringing it to our attention, it allows it to be moved
20 forward as a part of the consideration.

21 Hope I answered your question.

22 MR. DRAIN: Yes, you did. You did.

23 MR. ALLEN: At the present time, we can't do
24 that. But by you saying it --

25 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: You need to say what you

00154

1 want to see done.

2 MR. DRAIN: Right. Right. Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: The mic is yours.

4 MR. ALLEN: Now, you go to the next level,
5 because I gave you an answer.

6 MR. DRAIN: Actually, you know, I want to try
7 to tie the Gullah-Geechee culture to all the historical
8 places here in Walterboro. Because a lot of time, you
9 know, when tours come in, because we get a lot of tours
10 from up North, you know, it seems like when they come
11 to Walterboro or come to Charleston, they miss out on
12 so much stuff because there's no cohesiveness. You
13 know, so that's why we're -- you know, I believe that
14 if the organization can pull these different, you know,
15 communities together, different programs together, I
16 think it can work. Because this is something that
17 people want to see, you know.

18 And, I mean, I don't get paid for doing this. I
19 mean, me and my wife do this for free because this is
20 our love, this is my culture.

21 And what I've been seeing over the years is a
22 strong interest in the young people, even in the
23 schools, the teachers, they want to know what happened
24 to those Gullah-Geechee people. You know, What
25 happened? What's their story?

00155

1 So I believe, you know, we are on something very
2 fantastic, something very strong. I believe that if we

3 can just pull all the resources together, and don't
4 leave out the small, little communities that really,
5 you know, make the difference, you know, and then also
6 that, that preserve the history of the Gullah-Geechee
7 people, you know, I think it will be very powerful.
8 Because if we leave out those little, small, little
9 settlements, you know, it's going to -- it's not going
10 to be right. It's going to be bad. So I hope that,
11 you know, you really pull this thing together and make
12 it work. I know it can work.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a question.

16 MR. ALLEN: Come up to the mic, ma'am.

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is it -- is it possible
18 that you all can come into our area and clean our river
19 up or, you know, to connect with you?

20 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Say what you would like
21 to see done.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I would like to see -- I
23 would like to see the -- I call it the river, the flood
24 zone that runs in our area, I would like to see it
25 cleaned up and --

00156

1 MR. ALLEN: Look like the picture?

2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Look like the picture. And
3 be a place where we can sit out, you know, on the park
4 and have a walking path and fishing and do those
5 things. Is it possible that that can happen?

6 MR. ALLEN: Well, I'll answer you, ma'am, as
7 I answered Mr. Drain. By you saying it, now it becomes
8 part of the conversation.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

10 Now, the other thing is, with the revitalization
11 committee meetings, I'm not sure that there are more
12 than two or three people that actually knows what's
13 going on there. It's said that one can come in and
14 maybe voice your opinions, but not vote. So I'm asking
15 if one of you all can come and represent me in that
16 meeting? Because I find myself -- I really get
17 frustrated sometimes when somebody don't understand
18 what I'm talking about. So if one of you that knows
19 all about this, if you can come in on July the 6th at 5
20 o'clock --

21 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- to the city hall, on the
23 second floor, and represent me as I represent the
24 community, I would appreciate it.

25 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

00157

1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: May I ask a question, just
2 to clarify where you're talking about? Springwood
3 Drive, are you talking about Ivanhoe Creek and that
4 flood zone, up into the upper part of Ivanhoe Creek?

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It runs -- it runs straight
6 through, straight through the middle of my community.
7 Almost -- my house is almost on top of it.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Right. I just wanted --

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It runs all the way out,
10 across Robertson, right on through. I think it
11 connects with the Edisto River on that end.

12 MR. ALLEN: Can I -- let me add two points.

13 QUEEN QUET: I wanted to add something to
14 what she said.

15 MR. ALLEN: We're at an -- Mike Allen. We're
16 at an important place. Partnership is so critical. As
17 the Commission is walking this walk, they are to walk
18 not only with you as community folks, or Brother Danny
19 as a proprietor of a museum, but also elected
20 officials, whether that's county, city, municipal,
21 whatever. And so we realize, to your question, ma'am,
22 that along the corridor some counties may have done
23 better than others. Some cities may have done better
24 than others. And so a part of this journey, and the
25 level that we're going in, is to bring awareness. You

00158

1 know, as she shared with you earlier, from Wilmington
2 to Jacksonville is the area that we're responsible for.
3 We would be derelict in our responsibilities and in our
4 duties, if we don't do all that we can, as the mission
5 and the vision and as the purpose says, not to make
6 Colleton County aware, Walterboro aware, or any county
7 from one end to the other end. And we realize -- we're
8 not being naive. That's a part of the challenge that
9 we will face.

10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you.

11 QUEEN QUET: This is Queen Quet, for the
12 record.

13 I just wanted you to know that all of your city
14 hall members were provided with the complete details
15 that you see on these boards and a comment card. So
16 they do have the entire newsletter for this corridor
17 already. They've had it for a couple of weeks. And
18 another packet was left for the new mayor, because you
19 were having a runoff when it was first being brought
20 here. So they are -- they have been apprised and they
21 were aware that we were having this meeting tonight.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I know they have a time
23 line.

24 QUEEN QUET: Yes. Yes. They have all this
25 material.

00159

1 MS. DOGGETTE: Hi. My name's Gale Doggette.
2 I'm the executive director of South Carolina Artisans
3 Center. And I was the executive director of the
4 Colleton County Historical Preservation Society. My
5 question is more on the historical society of it.

6 In our community, our county celebrated its 300th
7 anniversary about two years ago. So we're extremely
8 rich in heritage here. And we have more plantations
9 here than any other county in the State of South
10 Carolina. I was wondering how you thought you might go
11 about researching what those plantations have to offer?
12 We have 27 -- well, actually, have 29 plantations in --
13 just in Colleton County alone. And it has to be rich
14 in Gullah-Geechee history. And are you planning to try
15 to contact historical societies and see what they have,
16 in fact, gathered in their information? I know ours
17 has a historian. I don't know if she was invited this
18 evening. But we do have a historian for Colleton
19 County. And at least 27 of the plantations in Colleton
20 County have someone at them almost always, and still
21 have slave quarters, and all kind of areas and things.
22 I would love to see you include some of that or at
23 least contact them for what they have for records.

24 My other question on the arts side of it is, do
25 you have a plan for how you plan to gather, preserve,

00160

1 recognize the arts of the Gullah-Geechee, for the
2 Gullah-Geechee?

3 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: We have to listen to you.
4 Tell us what you would like to see us do.

5 MS. DOGGETTE: Well, I would, myself, as
6 the --

7 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Because we don't have the
8 answers.

9 MR. ALLEN: That's why we're gathered.

10 MS. DOGGETTE: I would love to see all of the
11 arts that you can find be preserved and be offered for
12 display at places like the Artisan Center, for a period
13 of time, or at the museum -- we have the museum
14 director here, too -- so that people can get a feel for
15 what the arts were during that period of time.

16 But, again, I also would like for you to visit the
17 plantations and get that history also.

18 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

19 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Wonderful. Great.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. CAMPBELL: Rebecca Campbell.

22 My interest is working with the educational part,
23 the schools and the young people getting a knowledge of
24 knowing what Gullah-Geechee is all about. Like today,
25 Queen Quet was here at the library. She said it was

00161

1 just full. About eight years ago, I told Sheila about
2 her. And, since then, she's been coming and coming.
3 So they're having an interest in Gullah-Geechee, so our
4 schools become in partnership with the educational
5 department here, so that the young people at the
6 school, the teachers, the students will understand what
7 Gullah-Geechee is, and what the trail is all about,
8 what the Gullah-Geechee corridor -- where it starts,
9 how many states are involved, who was responsible for
10 the Act, and the president that put it into action was
11 our former president, George Bush. There's so much to
12 learn.

13 And, also, this is the Rice Festival town. And
14 there are rice plantations. And I was told by Gene
15 Wetzell (ph) that in the Green Pond area is a big rice
16 field there. And I'm sure that he would have an
17 interest in also opening up and tell us more about
18 rice, giving us more education, educate us about the
19 rice fields, how our ancestors worked in the rice
20 fields, and what they did and all the songs that they
21 sung while they were there, and the type of clothing
22 that they wore, and how the rice was shipped, the gold
23 rice was shipped away, and where it went to from
24 Carolina.

25 And these are the things, the history, is also

00162

1 important. These are the things that I would like to
2 present to this commission.

3 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. BRIGHTWELL: I'm Gary Wrightwell,
6 director of the Colleton Museum. Glad to see Danny
7 here.

8 A suggestion, just to get it to kind of out there
9 and on the record, would be, I'm very interested in
10 oral histories preservation in Colleton County. I
11 think that's something that the Slave Relic Museum and
12 perhaps the Colleton Museum could do collaboratively,

13 along with some other agencies in the area who would be
14 interested in doing that.

15 I know we just had a storytelling festival,
16 sponsored by the University of South Carolina
17 Leadership Institute recently in town. We got off to a
18 small start. But it's a seed of an idea there. And I
19 think the education process is very important.

20 And we have access to county council chambers for
21 museum activities sometimes.

22 And I am as guilty of being undereducated as far
23 as Colleton County's part in the Gullah-Geechee culture
24 is concerned, other than, to me, obvious plantation
25 links, that I need, even as a museum director, to be

00163

1 educated about Colleton County's role in that culture.
2 And I think to have some speakers come in and more of
3 this type thing, and hopefully gathering some more
4 people, would be very important for a collaborative
5 effort with various entities in the county to
6 understand and better promote this corridor.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. HARGOOD: My name is Jean Hargood. I'm
9 associate director of the USC Salkehatchie Leadership
10 Institute. We were very involved in Salkehatchie Stew,
11 that Gary just referred to, which was really a
12 celebration of stories that involved, you know, art and
13 authors and storytelling and lots of different
14 initiatives from around the five-county area that the
15 Institute governs.

16 And one of the things that the Leadership
17 Institute is always interested in is tourism numbers.
18 You know, how does this Gullah-Geechee corridor, and
19 the heritage corridor, especially where they intersect,
20 how do these things impact tourism? And what are some
21 numbers that y'all might be able to gather in the
22 future, to see what -- who comes in to learn more about
23 this? Dollars, you know. It's all about economic
24 development.

25 QUEEN QUET: I see one person who didn't come

00164

1 up. I don't know if she's reporting. Do you have
2 anything to share? No? Anybody else?

3 MR. ALLEN: I would ask -- I have to commend
4 you all for the challenges you brought to these
5 people's gray hair tonight.

6 But, also, if you don't mind maybe sharing with us
7 places and sites, buildings, whatever that you think
8 are significant, that, that should be protected, should
9 be preserved, should have a historic marker, should be
10 on the National Register, should be whatever type
11 status. Because this journey also is about sites and
12 buildings and places and landscaping. And you all have
13 done a good broad brush in terms of education, in terms
14 of partnerships and --

15 QUEEN QUET: Arts.

16 MR. ALLEN: -- arts and economics and crafts,
17 which we can appreciate. But can you come and turn the
18 conversation and talk about historic sites and places?
19 We won't put nothing in your mouth. You come tell us.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'll speak for the city of
21 Walterboro, my district. The school that I went to is
22 Colleton -- was Colleton High School. It's now
23 Colleton Campus A, Colleton Junior High School, Campus
24 A. So while we're going through this process, they are

25 building a new school because they want to get rid of
00165
1 my school, Colleton Campus A. And we need that school.
2 It's a historical school. And we need it for
3 recreation, for the children, we need it for our social
4 events, for the community. And we -- we just need to
5 keep that school. I think, right now, they're not
6 exactly sure what they're going to do with it. So if
7 there is any way possible that we can keep that
8 historical school.

9 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Tell us when it was
10 built.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm not sure when it was
12 built. Miss Rebecca?

13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't know. I'm a
14 transplant to Colleton. I was born and raised in
15 Charleston, but I moved here in '72. But I think it's
16 been built somewhere around the fifties or forties.
17 It's about 50 years plus.

18 MR. ALLEN: Okay. That's good.

19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's about 50 years plus.

20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's got to be more than 56
21 or 57 years ago.

22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: From what I can recollect,
23 from some of the people I knew that attended that
24 school.

25 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The school is in repairable
00166
1 condition. And if we can keep that...

2 MR. ALLEN: Okay.

3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't know of any other
4 historical things right there in the area.

5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's very hard to
6 pinpoint.

7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Because they tore down a
8 lot of historic history. Thank you.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's all right. I'll be
10 real fast. I've only got two that I can -- besides the
11 plantations that I've already mentioned, which most of
12 them area preserved, but I do think Langston and Slave
13 Row should have an historic, national historic
14 monument.

15 MR. ALLEN: Where is it located, please,
16 ma'am?

17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's in Colleton County.
18 It's on -- off Bennetts Point Road, Langston
19 Plantation. And they do have what they call a Slave
20 Row. And they have preserved those houses. It should
21 definitely have an historic monument. Also, I can't
22 think of the name of it, but at Catholic Hill there --

23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: A church.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There's a cemetery there,
25 too.

00167
1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: And there's a whole lot
2 more. Two came to mind. And I've got to run.

3 MR. DRAIN: Hi again. Drain again.

4 I'd like to see the Commission to work with the --
5 well, not plantation, but the owners of the plantations
6 that we have here in Colleton County. A lot of them
7 right now are closed to the public. If y'all can, I
8 guess, you know, work with them, to try to, you know,
9 give access to them. You know what I'm saying?

10 Then also, outside of Cottageville, there's an old

11 structure, pre-Civil War. It's -- I mean, it's falling
12 down. The owners are not taking care of it. But I
13 don't know exactly what street it's on. But, I mean, I
14 can take you there, you know.

15 Lot of things out there, here in Colleton County,
16 needs to be preserved. So maybe, you know, one day you
17 come back out and take a ride to the woods, check it
18 out.

19 MR. ALLEN: All right. We'll do that.

20 QUEEN QUET: Any others?

21 MR. ALLEN: I just want to add one thing. I
22 guess when we were preparing to come on our journey of
23 public meetings -- and I think we did inform the
24 Congressman that we were planning to be here in
25 Colleton County and Walterboro. Through his staff, it
00168

1 was communicated to us that we should, you know, bring
2 some recognition or remembrance or conversation about
3 the air field and its association with the Tuskegee
4 fliers. I know right now there is a monument or such
5 there, because I was at the dedication years ago. I am
6 not sure the area has a historic marker from the state.
7 I'm not sure off the top of my head on that. And I'm
8 not sure the area is on the National Register. I'm not
9 sure about that. But I'm just saying what was said to
10 me, since you didn't say it, that that's important.
11 And that's something that is near and dear to his
12 heart. And, in fact, when I was telling someone today
13 that I was coming here, I said, By the way, those
14 Tuskegee fliers, you know, they trained here. They
15 said, What? We didn't know that. So, again, you all
16 have a jewel in your community that ties into the
17 culture. Even though those guys may have been from
18 Alabama, other parts of the country -- and some of them
19 are Gullah-Geechee people, too. They ate among you
20 all. They danced and partied among you all. And they
21 lived among you all. And so that cultural icon, that
22 cultural link, also is important to the journey. I
23 just want to go on the record, to bring that to you.

24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There's another one. Just
25 didn't think about St. Peters AME Church. It's a
00169

1 historical church. It's over 100 years old. And it's
2 right there on Wichman.

3 MR. ALLEN: Right here in Walterboro?

4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, right here in
5 Walterboro. Well-kept, historical.

6 But the problem with Colleton County, they are not
7 opening up these buildings and these sites to the
8 tourists to come into the county. You know, when the
9 tourists come here, there is no -- there are no places
10 to go. Here's the Tuskegee Air Field. It's seldom
11 mentioned. But the markers are up on the highway. But
12 no one talks about it. And it's not listed. And,
13 like, you go to Charleston Visitors Center, you know,
14 we're -- when we do have this corridor coming through
15 here, Charleston will have to do that also. Because
16 Gullah-Geechee is not mentioned in a lot of their
17 directories. And we mentioned that at a hearing in
18 Charleston. Because I'm always in these areas, in
19 Charleston, because of the Burr House (ph) that we
20 operate there. And I know what's going on in the
21 Charleston area. But they're getting real powerful on
22 them. When the Gullah-Geechee corridor comes through,

23 Charleston will have all of their Gullah-Geechee sites
24 listed. And I hope that Colleton County would go on
25 the record that all Gullah-Geechee sites should be
00170

1 listed. We need to now inventory. We need to now
2 start our directory, to present, or we send comment
3 cards and recommend Colleton County for our future to
4 look like.

5 Oh, Willow Street? That's a small --
6 Mr. Johnson, Ray Johnson, that was one of the earlier
7 high schools in Colleton County. But they made these
8 buildings so inferior. They had, like, concrete block
9 type buildings rather than brick, you know. And it
10 just looks like no age is there. But you got to go
11 back to when it was established or when it was built.
12 But looking at it, you say this is not an old building.
13 This is not a building that's 50 years old. But, you
14 know, working with old buildings, I know the age shows
15 up right away.

16 But we will have to work on this in Colleton
17 County. Because I just couldn't even think about any
18 of the historical places here. And I think that's real
19 sad. I'm sorry about it.

20 MR. DRAIN: Actually, we have the Colleton
21 Museum. I'm sorry.

22 QUEEN QUET: It's all right. It's all right.

23 MR. ALLEN: That's why we're here, sir.

24 MR. DRAIN: When tourists come here, you
25 know, to the Slave Relics Museum, first they see a
00171

1 collection of artifacts that was made by the enslaved
2 Africans from the late 1600s to the mid 1800s. We have
3 a pre-Civil War plantation home that houses our
4 collection. Then we also recommend to groups to go to
5 the Colleton Museum, the Artisan Center. We encourage
6 them to stay here in Colleton County, also to have
7 lunch, then go on back down to Charleston, to do other
8 tours. You see? There's enough wealth of education,
9 enough wealth of history here in South Carolina, that
10 everybody can, you know, have a part in it, you know.
11 So let's try to really pull Colleton County together.
12 I hope this meeting will be the first step, you know,
13 to document this thing here.

14 Thank you.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm not going to --

16 MR. ALLEN: Oh, no. That's all right, ma'am.
17 You're paying for this.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have mentioned to her
19 about a group that came in from Seattle, Washington.
20 We were in a conference in Seattle and met this group
21 of people. And they said to us, You're from the
22 Carolinas and you're from Colleton County? There
23 are -- there are members of the Heyward family down on
24 the plantation. Said, Well, we'll be there in April.
25 We didn't believe them. They came, wanted to see it.

00172

1 After they got in there, they were so excited. They
2 opened up to them. And they met one of the old
3 caretakers. And he was 93 years old. And two weeks
4 after they left, he died. They had already interviewed
5 him, had pictures of him. And his family now have a
6 record --

7 MR. ALLEN: Of his presence?

8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: -- of this gentleman that

9 died, 93 years old.
10 Just think what we can do to capitalize on things
11 that are happening in Colleton County.
12 And, like, Philip Simmons, today he died at 97.
13 Historian, great person in Charleston, blacksmith. So
14 let's work with these plantations. The history is
15 there.
16 These praise houses is one of the other things
17 that we didn't mention on the plantations. You know,
18 African-Americans, they prayed 24 hours a day.

19 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Still do.
20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sundown to sun up. How we
21 got over, all the songs that we sung, that they sung
22 during their time, they passed on over to me as a
23 descendent.
24 My ancestors came from Drayton Hall. And we are
25 now doing the genealogy study. Bless God that a grant
00173

1 was presented to Toni Carrier, who did the genealogy
2 for Michelle Obama. And we are using the same person.
3 We had her first and Michelle done after. So we thank
4 God that, you know, it can happen also in Colleton
5 County.
6 The history is there, in the White Hall section,
7 plantation after plantation. Heyward Plantation is a
8 great plantation. A lot went on there. I have been
9 over through the praise houses, the Musca (ph) family
10 have a great history. We could name people right off
11 those plantations. So let's get involved also in
12 trying to open up these plantations to tourists, not
13 only to tourists, to our children, starting with the
14 children. Because the generation that's coming,
15 they're going to need it.
16 And I'm so happy that my generation, my ancestors,
17 my grandfather, my great-grandparents, they passed it
18 on to us. And today I can discuss it. I can go
19 places. I can talk about it freely. I don't get angry
20 about it. I went to different anger management
21 training for hatred. We need to be trained that we can
22 love each other, we can get along.
23 I went to Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Paid
24 expense, just packed my suitcase and take off.
25 Kellogg -- the Kellogg Foundation paid for it, because

00174
1 I was involved with Drayton Hall.
2 MR. ALLEN: That's true.
3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: See? There is a lot that's
4 coming through the involvement, involved with Drayton
5 Hall. I said, Yes, I'll go. I went. We were on a
6 retreat. Then, afterwards, they e-mailed me again,
7 came back, We want you to come to Seattle, Washington.
8 We flew there. Pack your suitcase. Everything free,
9 limos, everything, because I was involved in Drayton
10 Hall.
11 The Heritage Corridor, South Carolina Heritage
12 Corridor, said, Okay, we're going to contribute to
13 Drayton Hall. The DVD, landscaping, that you can carry
14 the DVD along, and it tells you about this plantation.
15 I was invited to be one of the persons to go on the DVD
16 that they sent the director, the photographer, and they
17 shoot. I went shoots and shoots and shoots and shoots.
18 Drayton Hall did that for me and my sisters. So we
19 have -- we have a DVD now that we're on, that they sell
20 at the gift store.

21 And so many things that comes to play. We're now
22 doing -- for Mr. Boyd, Richmond Boyd's 100 years. We
23 just did his, December which is -- my ancestors we're
24 doing. Philip Simmons, he just drew the photos for us
25 before he died. We have that. And it's so much that I

00175

1 can tell you.

2 When you work with plantations, not only with
3 plantations, any of these Gullah-Geechee programs and
4 corridors, there's a lot of rich enrichment that you
5 can get out of it. So, please, let's push it. It's
6 just not for African-Americans alone. We want all
7 ethnic groups involved in this. It's a cultural thing.
8 And we want to show our love and bring our Colleton
9 County as a great county for the State of South
10 Carolina and the nation.

11 CHAIRMAN CAMPBELL: Amen.

12 (Applause.)

13 QUEEN QUET: I think that's the perfect
14 wrap-up for the evening. I think you found the
15 cheerleader that you need for Colleton County. And I'm
16 not -- I'm not shocked at all, that she would be the
17 cheerleader.

18 I want to thank everyone for coming out tonight.
19 For me, Walterboro is a home away from home, especially
20 every summer I be right here. So I'm always glad to be
21 here. So I'm very pleased that I had the opportunity
22 to share this first Gullah-Geechee Cultural Heritage
23 Corridor meeting here in Colleton County, and at this
24 memorial library. Because this is a place where I feel
25 like I'm on a shelf a lot of times, like another book.

00176

1 Okay. So they let me be the living book here all the
2 time. So I thank the staff here at the library because
3 they did a very outstanding job to make sure that we
4 had all that we needed. They opened the doors right
5 away when I called them. I especially want to thank
6 librarian, Sheila Martin, who is not here tonight,
7 because she's also the secretary, and something else
8 and something else at vacation bible school, otherwise
9 she would be here this evening and definitely would
10 thank all of you.

11 And the Spirit has led me all evening to say I'd
12 like to close this meeting with a few moments of
13 silence for Philip Simmons, and if we could all do
14 that.

15 Amen. Pleasetravel safety. Thank you for
16 coming.

17 (The proceeding concluded at 7:18 P.M.)

18

19

20

21

22

23

24