



# Reflections

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## **PRESERVING A HISTORIC HAVEN: THE WALKER HOME**

*Corey Rogers, Chief Historian  
Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History, Augusta  
with introduction by Melissa Jest, African American Programs Coordinator, HPD*

The modest two-story frame house that served as the home of Reverend Charles Thomas (C.T.) Walker stands quietly on the bustling boulevard that bears his name near downtown Augusta. One could imagine it was a quiet respite for the preacher who drew crowds and became known as the Black Spurgeon for his dynamic oratory.

Although the home long ago passed out of the ownership of the Walker family, Historic Augusta Foundation, Inc. (HAF) worked with heirs of a later owner for several years to prepare the property for preservation.

Last fall, HAF purchased the home. It will move forward to rehabilitate the house and to help stabilize the neighborhood. Located at 1011 Laney-Walker Boulevard, the Walker home is a contributing structure within the Laney-Walker North National Register Historic District. Rev. C.T. Walker lived here from about 1905 until his death in 1921 when the street was known as Gwinnett Street. His widow, Mrs. Violet Q. Franklin Walker, remained there until her death in 1928.

This home joins many local tributes to Walker such as the first African American Legion in Augusta, C.T. Walker Elementary School; Gwinnett Street renamed Laney-Walker Boulevard in 1976.

Rev. C.T. Walker was born on February 5, 1858, near Hephzibah, Georgia to Thomas and Hannah Walker.



*The Walker home on Laney-Walker Blvd  
Courtesy of The Georgia Trust*

Although his father died the day before he was born, Walker was surrounded by an extended family that not only assisted in his upbringing, but also served as role models that would inspire his spiritual and professional life.

On October 1, 1877, at the age of 19, he was called to pastor Franklin Covenant Baptist Church in Hephzibah. Between 1877 and 1885, Reverend Walker would lead no less than

seven different congregations. In 1883 he accepted the call to Central African Baptist Church in Augusta. Many of the members were impressed with the young, charismatic minister who was, "quiet of demeanor and graceful in movement;

*Continued on Page 6*

## GORDON COUNTY'S GIFT TO THE WORLD: REMEMBERING ROLAND HAYES

Chris Hillyard, *The Daily Citizen*, Dalton, GA



(Public Domain)

Roland Hayes  
Courtesy of  
New Georgia Encyclopedia

From humble beginnings as the son of a former slave in Curryville, Georgia to performing on some of the world's most famous stages as the world's first internationally renowned African-American concert singer, Roland Hayes never stopping persevering.

The lyric tenor rose to fame early in the 20th century and eventually became the highest paid singer in the world in the 1920s. Hayes has been memorialized in many ways, including an induction into the Georgia

Music Hall of Fame in 1991. The Roland Hayes Museum at the Harris Arts Center in Calhoun also stands as a tribute to his life.

Despite all his success, he never forgot his roots in Gordon County. And though many who live here now may not know of him or his accomplishments, to those that do, he is a marvel. "I think Roland Hayes is such treasure for Calhoun and Gordon County," Harris Arts Center's Executive Director, Toni Molleson, said. "His life is so inspirational. I think so many people do not know who he is, and you probably wouldn't if you don't have a music or a historical background. He had such humble beginnings and he persevered his whole life to follow his dreams."

Those that do know Hayes' story likely remember him because of his skills as a performer. Others simply remember him as a loving uncle who would come visit every summer.

"He was a great person to know," his nephew, Robert Hayes, said. "Each year he would come down when he had his summer place (in Curryville). We would see this big black car coming up the driveway and knew it was him. We would all go running out to see him. But whatever we were doing around the farm, he would jump right in and start helping us."

Hayes was born in Curryville in 1887 to Fanny and

William Hayes and lived there on the plantation where his mother had once been a slave. Roland's father was a music teacher and was an accomplished hunter with a propensity for mimicking animal sounds. Molleson believes that talent was passed down to Hayes and was something that helped him learn to sing in seven different languages later in his career.

"That's my personal favorite story about Roland," Molleson said. "I think that must have helped him have his wonderful ear for languages. It's a small thing but I like that fact."

Robert Hayes remembers fondly the first time he heard his uncle perform. "The first time I heard him sing was at Calhoun High School," he said. "I was six-years-old and he sang in the auditorium there. I thought it was so wonderful. I thought it was one of the greatest things I had ever heard."

Hayes' father passed away when he was 11, and his mother moved the family to Chattanooga. He began receiving singing lessons and would go on to study music at Fisk University in Nashville, despite the fact he only had sixth grade education.

Hayes then pursued a career in Boston where he received further instruction and eventually began to arrange his own music and perform in the northeast.

However, despite sold out venues and financial success, Hayes' reputation was prevented from flourishing because of race relations in the United States. Looking for a way to build his

success, he traveled to Europe in 1920. For the next three years he traveled from country to country and even received a summons from King George V to perform at Buckingham Palace in London.

Once he received acclaim overseas, Hayes was more well received in the United States.

But another of Molleson's favorite



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

Photograph Not Available

Fanny Hayes, called "Angel Mo" by Hayes  
Courtesy of Harris Arts Center

stories about Hayes occurred in Germany in 1924 when Hayes encountered a hostile audience.

“One concert in Germany he was booed for a very long time, almost 10 minutes,” Molleson said. “But he was so

brave and did not move until the crowd hushed. They changed the order of his program and he sang his first song in perfect German. They were astonished and gave him a standing ovation and he had them from



Georgia African American  
Historic Preservation Network

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*Roland Hayes at Royal Albert Hall, London  
Another Nickel In The Machine.com*  
then on.”

Hayes never abandoned his roots and would often incorporate spirituals he was taught as a child into his concerts. These songs helped him gain popularity as a significant portion of his audiences, which were usually segregated, had never heard them. But it also kept him tied to his humble beginnings.

As he became the highest paid musician in the world, Hayes bought the 623 acre farm in Curryville where he had lived as a child in 1927. Robert remembers the place fondly.

Unfortunately, even being a performer and aristocrat of Hayes’ status, he wasn’t immune to the time period. Robert was alive and remembers one such incident in 1942.

“He and his wife went to this shoe store in Rome and she wanted to sit down under a fan,” Robert Hayes said. “But they didn’t want her to sit there because people of color wasn’t allowed to sit there. They called the police and put her and (Roland) in jail. The word got out and the governor made sure they was released. I was about eight when that happened.”

In addition to being arrested, Hayes was beaten by police while in custody. Soon after, he sold his property in Curryville.

Hayes continued to teach and work in Boston, but sparsely performed from the 1940s through the 1970s. Instead,

he gave freely of his time and knowledge in order to mentor younger musicians and to raise funds for different foundations. He performed for the final time in Cambridge, Mass. in 1973 and died January 1, 1977.

Hayes was posthumously inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in 1991 and is remembered as one of the greatest African-American concert performers ever. To have gone so far in his career and in his life was remarkable considering where he came from. That’s what resonates the most with his nephew, who still lives near that quiet place in Curryville.

“He grew up less than an eighth of a mile from where I live right now,” Robert Hayes said. “To grow up in a farm like that and to get to the place where he was, that’s wonderful. That shows that perseverance and hard work will get you a long way if you don’t give up.”



Georgia African American  
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Photograph  
Not  
Available

*Hayes with wife Helen Alzada Mann and daughter Afrika  
Detroit Public Library Digital Collection*

Hayes is the first African American classical singer to have a career on the international concert stage. His remarkable story is featured in the Roland Hayes museum at the Harris Arts Center in Calhoun. Admission is free. Guided tours available with a reservation; please contact the Harris Arts Center at [cgarts1@bellsouth.net](mailto:cgarts1@bellsouth.net). ■

*This article was originally published in Jan/Feb 2017 issue of  
Calhoun Magazine, a bimonthly publication of the North Georgia  
Magazine, a locally operated part of Community Newspapers  
Holdings, Inc.*

## DESTINATION: EQUALITY -- INTEGRATING ST. ANDREWS SOUND ON JEKYLL ISLAND

Kayla Morris, African American Programs Assistant  
Historic Preservation Division

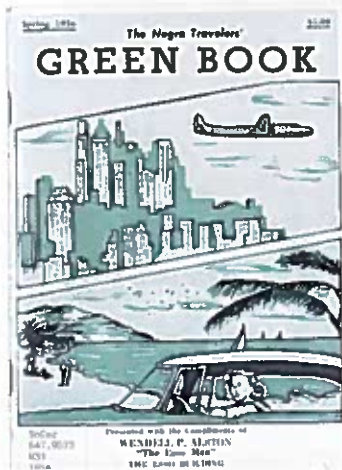
*“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one’s lifetime.”*

--Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad/ Roughing It*

Vacationing at the beach or taking a family on a road trip free of violence and harassment was a rarity for African Americans in the 1940s and the 1950s. African Americans who wanted to enjoy a vacation with their families often had to utilize word of mouth to find accommodations that would be available to them.

This led an African American U.S. postal worker, Victor Hugo Green, from Harlem, New York, to create travel guides, known as “The Negro Motorist Green Book” or just “Green Book” for short.<sup>1</sup>

Green was able to gather information on travel



1956 Green Book

(Public Domain)

Source: University of South Carolina/  
South Caroliniana Library

to identify “sundown towns,” areas that were typically all white and that used violence and intimidation to enforce segregation.<sup>2</sup>

There were Georgia businesses listed in the Green

<sup>1</sup> To learn more visit: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/the-green-book/#/?tab=about>

<sup>2</sup> To learn more visit: <http://sundown.tougaloo.edu/sundown-towns.php>

conditions in various states from other African American postal workers nationwide.

These postal workers would identify businesses that were either owned and operated by African Americans or accepted African American patrons. Green got the idea for a travel guide from seeing Jewish travel books. Green books helped



Georgia African American  
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*The Dolphin Motor Hotel, c. 1950s  
Tyler Bagwell/ Jekyll Island History.com*

Book, one in particular was the Dolphin Club and Motor Hotel located on Jekyll Island.

In 1956 African American residents from coastal Georgia created the St. Andrews Beach Corporation to develop the hotel and club after learning of inadequate facilities for blacks on the island. The corporation included successful African American investors from the mainland, and by 1959 the hotel was open to visitors.

The hotel offered 58 rooms for \$8.50 a night. The resort offered a club and restaurant that consisted of two private dining areas, a kitchen, dining room, and a night club.

Jekyll Island still lacked adequate accommodations for African American visitors. In an effort to force the Jekyll Island Authority to provide convention space, an African American dentist of Brunswick, Dr. J. Clinton Wilkes, invited the Black Dental Association of Georgia to meet in 1960.

Prior to this planned conference, the island did not have a meeting space designated for African Americans.



Georgia African American  
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**Photograph Not Available**

*Dr. James Clinton Wilkes  
Savannah Morning News*

In about one month, the Jekyll Island Authority built a one-room tin structure called the St. Andrews Auditorium.

The creation of the Dolphin resort and the St. Andrews Auditorium brought along the development of an African American neighborhood in this area now known as historic St. Andrews Beach. The neighborhood contained vacation rentals and personal homes of African Americans in the area who wished to combat 'Jim Crow' segregation by living on the island. Dr. Wilkes built a home in the St. Andrews subdivision in 1964.

The Dolphin Club and Lounge provided entertainment to African Americans who visited Jekyll. As part of the Chitlin' Circuit, the club held performances by B.B. King, Millie Jackson, Clarence Carter, and Percy Sledge. The Chitlin' Circuit is the collective name for nightclubs and venues in the eastern, southern, and upper Midwest America that allowed black performers during legalized segregation.

In 1960 the Dolphin was taken over by Dave Jackson of Adel, GA, who ran the business with his family. Though the resort was popular, the Dolphin Club and Motor Hotel began to lose visitors once integration occurred. It eventually closed in 1966.



**Photograph  
Not  
Available**

*Annabelle Robinson and Dave Jackson  
(courtesy of Judge Isaac and Vernice  
Jenrette) Jekyll Island History.com*

say 409 of 490 captives survived the journey and were

<sup>3</sup> Historic Information on Historic St. Andrews, Jekyll Island from Benjamin Allen's "Black Series: Glynn County, Georgia" and Tyler E. Bagwell's "Triumphs and Challenges: The Segregation Years of Jekyll Island"

The location of the Dolphin Club and Motor Hotel is now used as an extension site of the University of Georgia, and as Camp Jekyll for the 4-H Club. Some of the structures on the campus are still standing, and have been recently renovated, to house visitors of UGA and Camp Jekyll.<sup>3</sup>

St. Andrews Beach is also the site of the 1858 landing of the illegal slaveship, *The Wanderer*. Reports



*Educational panels stand throughout the former Dolphin site.  
Melissa Jest/Historic Preservation Division*

disembarked at St. Andrews Beach. There is a monument to the African captives, and the survivors that were sold into slavery.

Upright information panels, in the shape of boat sails, include photographs of survivors whose children went onto settle in nearby communities such as St. Simons Island and Savannah.

Today, as many more discover Jekyll Island, the hope is that the Jekyll Island Authority will continue to identify its African American resources like the site of the Dolphin Club and Hotel, St. Andrews Auditorium that tell a more full history of Jekyll Island.

St. Andrews holds important stories of both the Africans brought to Jekyll Island, and of their descendants who continued the fight for freedom. ■



*The Wanderer Memorial was installed in 2008  
Melissa Jest/ Historic Preservation Division*

## PRESERVING A HISTORIC HAVEN: THE WALKER HOME

Corey Rogers, continued from page 1



Rev. Charles Thomas Walker  
Courtesy of Lucy Craft Laney  
Museum

with a sweet, clear orotund voice, enunciating every word distinctly." His popularity and scholarly background however put him at odds with members of the church that favored a preacher with a more "old school" delivery in the pulpit. This attitude of some members, along with other internal issues at the church, led to a division where half the church chose to follow Reverend Walker and leave Central African Church.

On August 21, 1885, he and several members formally of Central African Baptist Church met in the fellowship hall of Union Baptist Church and organized Bulah Baptist Church, later changed to Tabernacle Baptist Church. In December of that year the church family moved into their first permanent location, with ministers from all over the state coming to Augusta to take part in the inaugural festivities. One of the three ministers that preached on the first day the church opened its doors was Reverend Emmanuel K. Love, pastor of First African Baptist Church in Savannah and a good friend and classmate of Reverend Walker at the Augusta Baptist Institute.

Reverend Walker created an excitement throughout the city. People from all over the Augusta would venture to the church every Sunday to hear his dynamic oratory and Biblical understanding. Soon speaking engagements poured in from around the city, region, state, and country. After the speaking engagements came offers from churches for Reverend Walker to leave Tabernacle and lead their church. Reverend Walker stood firm in his pursuit to grow Tabernacle and declined all of the offers early on.

In 1891 Reverend Walker decided to take a three month leave and travel to Jerusalem. During his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Walker made a lengthy stay in London, England and connected with well known 19<sup>th</sup> century theologian Charles Spurgeon. After the meeting with Reverend Spurgeon many on this side of the pond began referring to Walker as the "Black Spurgeon."

In 1898 Reverend Walker, appointed by President William

McKinley, served as a Chaplain in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. Upon his return from Cuba thousands of Augustans packed the church and many more stood outside to hear of Walker's exploits in a foreign land.

In 1899 Walker welcomed his good friend Booker T. Washington to Augusta. When Walker introduced Washington he referred to Mr. Washington as the "Moses of the Colored Race." That same year Walker opted for a change and announced his resignation from Tabernacle to become pastor of Mount Olivet Baptist Church in New York City. Rising up to become Reverend Walker's successor was his business partner and dear friend Reverend Silas Xavier Floyd. Reverend Floyd was pastor of Tabernacle until Reverend Walker's return in 1902.

During his tenure at Mount Olivet Reverend Walker became just as popular as he was in Augusta. He became acquainted with John D. Rockefeller while in New York. Mr. Rockefeller would visit Reverend Walker at Tabernacle thrice between 1907 and 1908. Walker also established the first colored YMCA in Harlem during his time in New York. While in New York Reverend Walker



made frequent trips to Augusta for various reasons. One in particular was to raise money for the Tabernacle Colored Old Folks Home, a home he set up for the comfort of elderly

former slaves (pictured above). *Photo by Melissa Jest*

Reverend Walker would permanently return to Augusta in 1902. His second stint at Tabernacle was just as productive as his first. He served as moderator of the region-wide Walker Baptist Association for many years. Through the auspices of the Walker Baptist Association, he spearheaded the founding of the private boarding school Walker Baptist Institute, which spawned numerous pioneering leaders in education, religious ministry, journalism, politics, medicine, social work, and business. Walker also was a general manager for the Pilgrim Health and Life Insurance Company. ■

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Morgan County Exhibit Open Through April

The 2017 exhibit "In Plain View: African American Women Entrepreneurs of Morgan County" honors Jessie Andrews and Anna Charleston and the legacy of Black land ownership.

MCAAM presents this compilation of photographs, memorabilia and artifacts in honor of these ancestors, descendants of the Lowe, Charleston and Andrew families and the Plainview Community.

**Morgan County African American Museum**  
156 Academy Street | Madison, Georgia 30650  
706-342-9191 | <http://mcaam.org>

Photo credit: MCAAM



### Beulah Rucker Living History Play April 30



Actor Jonathan S.E. Perkins portrays exemplar Dr. Emmitt Ethridge Butler in a one-man play on April 30, 2017 in The Burd Ctr/ The Hosch Theatre of the Brenau University.

The Beulah Rucker Museum and the Northeast Georgia History Center bring this history to the stage in Gainesville. For tickets, contact Mr. Rojene Bailey at [brmuseum1@gmail.com](mailto:brmuseum1@gmail.com) or 404-401-6589

**The Beulah Rucker Museum**  
2101 Athens Highway | Gainesville, GA 30507  
404-401-6589 | [www.beulahruckermuseum.org](http://www.beulahruckermuseum.org)

Photo credit: Waymarking.com

### State WWI Centennial Seeks Missing Names



Georgia's WWI Memorial Book of 1921 contained names of about 1,200 Georgia military personnel that died serving in World War I. However, African American soldiers are missing.

To commemorate WWI, the Georgia WWI Centennial Commission seeks names and data for an expanded Memorial Book. Please contact Lamar Veatch at [lamar.veatch@usg.edu](mailto:lamar.veatch@usg.edu) and visit their searchable database at [ww1cc.org/ga](http://ww1cc.org/ga).

**Georgia WWI Centennial Commission**  
University System of Georgia | 4270 Washington St.S.W.  
Atlanta, GA 30334 | 770-274-5117

Photo credit: HPD/ Melissa Jest

### SAVE THE DATE : Statewide Historic Preservation Conference May 18th - 20th

Calling all preservation advocates and colleagues to the 2017 Georgia Historic Preservation Conference in Madison.

Georgia HPD and its partners plan two days of informative sessions, interactive tours, and useful networking opportunities at the James Madison Inn & Conference Center. Please visit <http://www.georgiashpo.org/StatewideConference>



**Georgia Historic Preservation Division**  
2610 Georgia Highway 155 SW  
Stockbridge, GA 31792 | 770-389-7844

Photo credit: HPD/Melissa Jest

## ABOUT REFLECTIONS

Since its first issue appeared in December 2000, *Reflections* has documented hundreds of Georgia's African American historic resources. Now all of these articles are available on the Historic Preservation Division website [www.georgiashpo.org](http://www.georgiashpo.org). Search for links to your topic by categories: cemeteries, churches, districts, farms, lodges, medical, people, places, schools, and theatres. You can now subscribe to *Reflections* from the homepage. *Reflections* is a recipient of a *Leadership in History Award* from the American Association for State and Local History.



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## ABOUT GAAHPN



Georgia African American  
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The Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network (GAAHPN) was established in January 1989. It is composed of representatives from neighborhood organizations and preservation groups. GAAHPN was formed in response to a growing interest in preserving the cultural and built diversity of Georgia's African American heritage. This interest has translated into a number of efforts which emphasize greater recognition of African American culture and contributions to Georgia's history. The GAAHPN Steering Committee plans and implements ways to develop programs that will foster heritage education, neighborhood revitalization, and support community and economic development.

The Network is an informal group of over 3,000 people who have an interest in preservation. Members are briefed on the status of current and planned projects and are encouraged to offer ideas, comments and suggestions. The meetings provide an opportunity to share and learn from the preservation experience of others and to receive technical information through workshops. Members receive a newsletter, *Reflections*, produced by the Network. Visit the Historic Preservation Division website at [www.georgiashpo.org](http://www.georgiashpo.org). Preservation information and previous issues of *Reflections* are available online. Membership in the Network is free and open to all.

## Reflections

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