African Americans

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African Americans

1. Typescript & photocopy of a Letter from a Slave, circa 1850s
2. Collection of Scanned 1929 Articles
3. Collection of Scanned 1929 Articles pt. 2
4. Collection of Scanned 1929 Articles pt. 3
5. Collection of Scanned 1929 Articles pt. 4
6. Negro Leaders Plan County-Wide Meeting, February 25, 1943
7. Banquet honors Negro leaders, November 30, 1961

This is a paraphrasing of a letter from a slave to a former owner, describing her journey to her present location in Bullock co. Georgia. Dated 23 August 1857. Found at Duke University Library, Durham, NC, in their manuscript collection under the name of Joseph Allred. It was one letter in 37 different items some of several pages and some with accompanying envelope. I had the file photocopied and it was all stamped that it could not be reproduced or incorporated into the holdings of another repository. I am much impressed with the content, the lady is a diplomat with beautiful handwriting, and I know any descendent would be proud to have a copy for their family.

My loving Miss Patsy I have long wished to unfold my scene and feelings since I was constrained to leave my home and friends, knowing I can’t return. I am well and healthy. When I left Randolph co. NC I went to Rockingham, NC and stayed there 5 weeks and then I left there and went to Richmond, VA to be sold and I stayed there 3 days and was bought by Mr. Groover, a trader, and brought to GA and after 9 months sold to Mr. Rimes and then sold again to Mr. Lester who has owned me for 4 years and says he will keep me ‘til death separates us’ or some of my North Carolina friends want to buy me. I cannot tell how bad I wish to see you and Old Boss and Miss Rahol (this could be Rachel) and Mother. Never before did I know what it was to want to see a parent and could not. Give my love to Old Boss Miss Rahol (Rachel?) and bailum (this name was not capitalized but I feel sure its the name of another slave) and give my love to Mother Brother and Sister and please tell them to write to me. Write to me and tell me all the news, whether Old Boss is still living or not and all the rest of them and I want to know whether Bailum is married or not. I wish to know what has become of my precious little girl. I left her in Goldsborough (NC?) with Mr. Walker and I have not heard from her since. He said he was taking her to Rockingham and give her to his sister and I want to know whether he did or not. I wish to see her very much and Boss says he wishes to know whether he will sell her or not and the least that can buy her. My Boss is a man of reason and feeling and wishes to grant my troubled breast the gratification of knowing if he will sell her or not as soon as possible. I must close by escribing myself your long loved and well wishing play mate as a servant until death (Artot? (I’m sorry I’m not sure of the name) Lester of Georgia to Miss Patsy Radison? of North Caroliner.

My Boss’s name is James B. Lester and if you should write me which I beg the favor of you as a servant, direct your letter to Millnasy Bullock co. Georgia. Please write to me. So Fare Fare You Well in Love

* Excerpting my black style language and well

writing style makes as a servant until death. Lester

of Georgia.

My Befoile Name be James W. Lester and it now onwards

I am a master of me. Not right me which if she then the

print of you as a servant. direct your letter to Millnasy

Bullock co. County. Georgia. Please to right me let.

Love your name well in love.

Would it be Violot Lester?
HUBERT COLORED SCHOOL
Hubert, Ga., Jan. 14, 1929.
Editor of the Bulloch Times:
Will you please allow me space in your good paper to report the doings of the P.-T. A., and trustees of the Hubert colored school. The P.-T. A. bought a special chair, cost $4.75, and a set of desks for $30.00; 640 feet of flooring, $22.40; and five six, lock and keys for $73c. All of the above-mentioned are put in and all paid for. 'And yet we are not done repairing.' Rev. R. I. Hagans is manager.

E. W. HOLT.
Report and trustee of the Hubert school and member P.-T. A.

STATESBORO, GA., THURSDAY, JAN. 24, 1929

RESPECTED NEGRESS DIES ON VISIT TO NEW JERSEY

"Aunt Creecie" Moore, colored, wife of Cornelius Moore, died last Wednesday at the home of her daughter, the wife of Jim Joyce, in New Jersey, with whom she had been visiting for several months. The body was brought home for interment which was at the colored church near Warnock school Sunday.

"Aunt Creecie" was one of the respected members of her race. She was about 80 years of age, and was a native of Bulloch county. Her marriage to Neelus Moore occurred fifty years ago last month. Their golden wedding would have been celebrated by them in fitting manner except for her absence on a visit to her daughter. Neelus, who was expecting her return almost daily, mentioned the anniversary to a number of his white friends and received many gifts at their hands as tokens of appreciation. She was delayed in her return home because of sickness and it was planned to celebrate the anniversary upon her return. She grew worse and her death came last Wednesday. Unfortunately at the time of the burial her husband was confined to his bed with flu and was unable to attend the funeral. He is still confined to his bed.

STATESBORO, GA., THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 1929

Did Robin Johnson Die From Beating?

Robin Johnson, well known colored man, died Wednesday at the colored sanitarium, where he had been since Thursday of last week:

A second sitting of a coroner’s jury is being held today to inquire into the cause of his death. The belief is expressed that the verdict will name certain parties as having brought about his death through personal assault in a dispute over the division of fish at the Bailey pond fishing last Thursday.

Johnson was among the party who engaged in the fishing of the pond. Returning from there he went direct to the negro sanitarium. It was permitted to be understood that he was suffering from fever. Wednesday morning he died. After that the information was given out by the attending physician that his body was badly bruised and showed signs of severe punishment when he entered the hospital. It then developed that he had been attacked by certain white men whose names have not yet been made public. A coroner’s jury Wednesday afternoon ascribed his death to injuries inflicted at the hands of persons unknown. Later developments disclosed to the coroner the names of those persons, whereupon he has ordered the reconvening of the jury to hear further evidence.

The verdict will be awaited with interest.
OLD SCHEME SEPARATES NEGRESS FROM SAVINGS

"SLEETIE" MOORE PARTS WITH $572 SAVINGS IN EFFORT TO MAKE SOME EASY MONEY.

"Sleetie" Moore, negro woman living in the Hagan district, was separated from her life savings of $572 by a couple of colored sharpers in Statesboro Saturday afternoon.

It was the old scheme they worked on "Sleetie," and about which she had never heard before. The negroes approached her on the streets and displayed a roll of currency which they said they had found and which was said to be more than $1,000. This sum they agreed to divide equally with "Sleetie" if she could assure them she could keep her mouth shut about the find. "Sleetie" was sure she could, but the negroes wanted more than her word—they wanted her to show them some money as a guarantee of good faith. All they required was to be shown. "Sleetie" thought this was an easy way to make $500, so she fell for their scheme. Part of her money was at her home eight miles in the country. They were willing to carry her out there to get it. She uncovered there $172 in hoardings. Returning to Statesboro she drew $400 from the savings department of the Sea Island Bank. This amount seemed to guarantee her ability to keep her tongue, but the young negro must first show this amount to his "boss," who he said was employed on a back street near the center of the city. He must carry "Sleetie's" money to this "boss" and get his consent to turn over to her the $500 he had promised "Sleetie" for keeping her mouth shut.

For two hours "Sleetie" waited at the intersection of Vine and South Main street opposite the postoffice. The longer she waited, the more the negroes didn't come back. Finally she told the police and the county officers.

Sheriff Tillman began to do some sleuthing. The result was that by mid-afternoon Sunday he had two negroes in jail who are believed at least to be implicated in the robbery. They were picked up in Savannah by Sheriff Tillman in company with members of the Savannah detective force early Sunday afternoon. Other arrests will be made later.

ARLINGTON GRAVE FOR AGED NEGRO
FORMER SLAVE OF GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE IS GIVEN HONORED RESTING PLACE.

Washington, Aug. 23.—The war department lifted the ban against civilian burials in Arlington cemetery long enough today to permit "Uncle Jim" Parks to begin his long sleep of death in that reservation, where he spent his life as a negro slave boy, a freed slave, an aging worker and guide.

A slave of George Washington Parke Custis, the adopted son of George Washington and father-in-law of Robert E. Lee, he saw the battle tides of the Civil War roll over the wooded hillsides and fields where he played as a boy; saw the coffins "stacked like cordwood" after Manassas. Then, puzzled and aging, his sad old eyes watched the ever-increasing wave of white headstones roll farther and farther through the lanes and glades of Arlington "Estate" as the nation buried its heroes of that and later wars.

For almost 90 years the place was home to him. He was born there, played and toiled and was married there in the crinoline days of his half-forgotten past. He was "fussed at" by Major Curtis, ran errands for "Miss Mary," and bowed low to the stately figure of her husband, General Robert E. Lee.

The guns of war spoke soon after he, with the rest of some 500 slaves, had been freed by the will of their master. Blue-clad soldiers came to the plantation, and the spurred boots of their officers rang discord through the quiet house that had been Lee's home.

The blue soldiers marched south and soon bewildered Parks was aiding in the first military burials at Arlington. He helped build Fort Whipple, the Civil War fortification where Fort Myer now is. Time quieted the cannons and peace returned to the old plantation but never again the old order.

Time brought progress and more wars and more changes, but "Uncle Jim" stayed on. Lately physical incapacity had kept him from the places he loved best, but he has dreamed more poignantly than ever of the proud days of lace and lavender, forgetting, perhaps, at times the changes personified in the children of his children, five of whom served with the A. E. F. during the World War.
Negroes of Georgia Making Progress

Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 14.—That the negroes of Georgia are making decided progress educationally and economically was evident to the thousands who visited the colored exhibit at the Southeastern Fair in this city last week. Covering 2,000 square feet of floor space in the agricultural building, it offered a striking evidence of ambition in the face of discouragement, achievement against odds, and effort to use to the best advantage every opportunity for progress. Cooperating in putting on the exhibit were the negro home and farm demonstration agents, the "Smith-Hughes" agricultural teachers, the "Jeanes" supervising teachers, and the various schools.

The negro farm demonstration agents, of whom there are fourteen now employed for work in nineteen counties, were responsible for a remarkable display of farm products of every character, including 8,000 ears of excellent corn and hundreds of pieces of bacon scientifically cured and perfectly preserved. Through agricultural institutes, farm and livestock demonstrations, club work, etc., these agents, who are employed jointly by the counties, the state and the government, are teaching negro farmers to be more intelligent, efficient and prosperous. They reached directly last year no less than 7,638 persons and doubtless many times that number indirectly.

The negro home demonstration agents, of whom there are twenty-one at work in the state, are well-trained women who are teaching thousands of colored women and girls the arts of making their homes more attractive, efficient and wholesome. In the 4-H clubs alone these agents have enlisted more than 5,000 girls in a four-year course in cooking, canning, sewing, nursing and other home-making arts. Hundreds of cans of fruits and vegetables, perfectly packed and preserved, and thousands of pieces of artistic needlework testified to the effectiveness of this part of the extension program. In a sentence it may be said that the purpose of the farm demonstration agent is to teach negro farmers how "to make a living" on the farm, while that of the home demonstration agent is to teach negro farm women and girls how "to make a living."
Negro Leaders Plan County-Wide Meeting

Friday afternoon at the Statesboro High and Industrial School a group of the principals, supervisors, and home economics teachers of the junior high schools met with the vocational teachers of the county and together they planned a meeting for all negro farmers of Bulloch county to be held at the Statesboro High and Industrial School. A very interesting program has been planned around the general theme, "Producing To Win."

Point rationing, why food and meats are being rationed, and other rationed articles will be explained in detail by a group of representatives from the Office of Price Administration. The date of this meeting has been set for Saturday, March 6, at 11:00 a.m.

Every colored farmer in Bulloch county is urged to be present at this meeting in order that he might better understand his role in "Producing To Win."

Any farmer may bring his exhibits to the high school Thursday, Friday, or Saturday morning, March 4, 5 and 6, before 11:00 a.m. Some persons will be on hand to place the exhibits during this time. Housewives are urged to be present with their exhibits also. The exhibits will be judged by a committee. Another special feature of this meeting is to organize the negro farmers of the county into one functioning organization with a competent leader that is ready, willing and able to direct this group through this war to a victorious future.

Many noted agricultural leaders will appear on this program, and every farmer is requested to be on time at the conference.

All the ministers of Bulloch county are urged to attend this meeting, for in a large measure, they will be called upon to preach "Victory Gardens," better and more livestock and poultry.

The entire program of this meeting will be published in next week's issue of this paper.
A "Leaders' Banquet," honoring outstanding Bulloch county voluntary Negro leaders in Agricultural Extension was given Friday night in the Wm. James High School Cafetorium, having as guest speaker Mr. P. H. Stone, retired State Supervisor of Agricultural Extension in Georgia, and for the past several years has served as assistant to the Administrator of Agricultural Extension in Washington, D. C. Mr. Stone is largely responsible for the development of Extension work with Negro people in Georgia; he spent thirty-five years in it and gave appointment to the negro workers in all of the various counties.

Attending this banquet and hearing Mr. Stone's address were one hundred twelve leaders, teachers as well as farmers, who have been and who are at present working with the Agricultural Extension Program, serving as voluntary un-salaried and un-paid leaders, giving their services in the promotion of "Farm, Home and Community Development." Clarifying the term: "Farm, Home and Community Development," in its broad sense, it points to the progressive state of affairs, the welfare and the economic status of the people and of Bulloch County as a whole. It does not simply mean the production of farm crops, livestock, and financial gains; its primary meaning is the development of children... this we believe to be the greatest crop that America can produce.

The leaders in whose honor this banquet was given have "done a wonderful job." They have served up to twenty-five years and have received little recognition.

Of the one-hundred twelve in attendance at the banquet; sixty-eight have served from one to nine years; thirty served ten years; twelve served fifteen years; and two served more than twenty years.

Those who served ten years and up were awarded "Certificates of Honor" from the Georgia Agricultural Extension Service and the United States Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

The Ten Year Certificates had Gold color 4-Leaf Clovers printed on them; the Fifteen Year Certificates had Pearl Clovers; and the Twenty Year Certificates had diamond color clovers.

These certificates were awarded by M. C. Little, State 4-H leader. The Negro people of Bulloch county should take their hats off to these leaders. And they should take them off twice for E. L. Cone, Mrs. Julia P. Bryant, Garfield "Man" Hall, Mrs. Ruth Hall, Eddie Wilson, and Mrs. Mary Jane Jackson.

E. L. Cone was the first 4-H Club project leader; and Mrs. Bryant organized the first 4-H Club for Negroes in Bulloch county. The other leaders have likewise rendered outstanding service.

Other leaders at the banquet are those directly concerned with increasing production of farm crops. Thirteen farmers carried "Result Demonstrations;" eleven of which were in tobacco, seven in cotton, six in peanuts, and six in corn. The farmers carrying these demonstrations are H. L. McCray Jr., C. P. Parks, Willie D. Frink, R. L. Lee, Reggie Flannel, George Sabb Sr., R. F. DeLoach, Pete Slater, George McCray, James Presley, Harvey Wilson, and awarded these farmers "Certificates of Honor."

A Thanksgiving dinner, composed of turkey with all the trimmings, which had been prepared by the Wm. James High School cafeteria staff, was served at the banquet.

OPEN HOUSE HELD AT GOLD MEDALLION HOME ON COLLEGE RD

Mrs. E. J. Graham of Statesboro recently held "open house" for the showing of an all-electric Gold Medallion home located on College road, one mile south of Georgia Southern College.

This modern home consists of three bedrooms, two ceramic baths, combination living room and dining room, a family room and kitchen, carport and utility room.

This all-electric Gold Medallion home is served by the Excelsion EMC.
Bulloch's black farmers stand to trend

Black farmers in Bulloch

A small number of free blacks in the South were owners of large estates on which there was considerable agricultural production; yet, a few others were engaged in various occupations independent of southern slave holding. With these few exceptions, the black populace was found on large white owned plantations engaged in performing the domestic and laborous activities required to carry on the daily and seasonal farm operations.

The living and working conditions for the slaves varied according to the humanitarian qualities of the plantation owner and overseers. The general rule was long work days and extremely insufficient living conditions. Despite the physical and mental depression caused by the rigors of the slavery society, the black

dious industrial boom in the U.S., leading to an even sharper drop in the number of black farmers. Most of them sought factory work in the cities. Also, the boll weevil scourge all but crippled the cotton crop, causing further financial losses. Many black owners were once again forced into tenancy, a system which became more prevalent than during the post-Civil War years.

On the eve of the Great Depression in 1930, 15 percent of all black farmers owned their land. The average size black owned and-or operated farm was 15 acres. The average size white farm during this period was 176 acres.

The Depression of the 1930s only made matters worse for both black and white landowners. In an attempt to assist farm owners and laborers, the total they owned in 1910). Nation­wide, black farmers lose approx­imately 1,000 acres of farmland a day.

In addition, results of the U.S. Census revealed the number of black farm operators declined from 87,393 in 1969 to 33,250 in 1982, a 62 percent drop. Blacks represent only four percent of the U.S.’s six million farm residents. Blacks comprise only 5.6 percent of southern farmers, yet nearly 85 percent of all black farmers live in the South. The average commercial black operated farm in the South has 128 acres.

The decline of black farmers has been most obvious in the southern states. There are various reasons for the decline, including the modernization of farm equipment; erosion and exhaustion of many older
1996 BLACK IMAGE AWARDS
Area African-Americans honored for their service

HEZEKIAH CAMPBELL JR.  
PERSON OF THE YEAR

“Mr. Campbell has distinguished himself in the area of spiritual outreach, education, political action and community service. He is the lead Sunday school teacher at Tremont Temple Missionary Baptist Church where he has dedicated himself to service educating young blacks about the Bible. Mr. Campbell worked extensively with the voters rights and registration project to get blacks registered to vote throughout the state of Georgia. Around the Candler County community he is called upon when someone is having problems with their job or some legal problem.”

DIANE WELCH HOLLAND  
EDUCATION

“Diane W. Holland is principal at Claxton Middle School and has worked in the field of education for 15 years. She was chosen Teacher of the Year at Claxton Elementary School. She organized and coordinated a summer tutorial program at Hagan Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. She is adult Sunday School teacher at Hagan Chapel Missionary Baptist Church. She is secretary of Sweet Evening Breeze #269 Eastern Star Chapter and holds memberships in the Evans County Afro-American Society, the personnel board of Family Connections and Hagan Chapel Missionary Baptist Church.”

CHARLES L. BAILEY  
COMMUNITY SERVICE

“He is a charter member of the NAACP and was one of the plaintiffs in the suit brought against the Evans County Board of Education for the ability grouping of students. Mr. Bailey is one of the founders and charter members of Gladiators, Inc., a men’s civic organization. He is also the founder and a charter member of the Evans County Afro-American Society. He is on the steering committee for the Martin Luther King observance activities and in 1995 he served as the Martin Luther King Jr. parade marshal. He serves as a trustee of the St. John Missionary Baptist Church and is an active participant in the Tatnall Missionary Baptist Association.”
Honorees focus of gala evening

Members of the community gathered recently for a gala evening honoring this year’s Black Image Award winners. This is the fifth year that African-American citizens received awards.

The evening’s theme was “Amazing Grace: A Harvest of Spiritual Fruit.” The theme was carried out through an anthology of the African-American spiritual experience in America set to music, song, dance and drama.

The awards ceremony was chaired by Curtis Woody. Following the announcement of each winner, area performers either sang, read essays or acted out pieces of black history.

Margie Byrd works for the Candler County Sheriff’s Dept. as a jailer and dispatcher. The jail is 80 percent black and ages of the inmates range from 17 to 24.

“I know each one,” said Byrd. “I talk to them and show them how to control their tempers and their mouths and counsel them so they won’t be returning to jail.”

Byrd also works as a substitute teacher in Candler County. She works with young girls in the county teaching them that they have the right to say no to drugs and sex.

Mrs. Byrd has two sons, Tyrone, 22, and Corey, 20, who is stationed with the U.S. Air Force in Japan.
REV. PERVIS HASSEN JR.
SPIRITUAL OUTREACH

“He is a very spiritual man and one who believes in helping the community. He has become a strong black leader in the community, devoting most of his time to our black youth. He is the founder of Statesboro Outreach Ministries, a program established to help our black youth develop self-esteem and a strong positive image of themselves. He is a member of the local chapter of the NAACP. He started the 100 man march to bring together all African-Americans in our community to talk about our problems and what we can do to solve them.”

ISADORE A. SWINT JR
ATHLETICS

“He strives to involve as many young boys in all sports as he can. He believes if they are busy playing sports they will stay out of trouble. He plays both recreation softball and basketball as a way of showing the youth of our community that they, too, can play without violence and profanity. Mr. Swint also referees high school basketball and softball and church and recreation basketball and softball. When churches or the Youth Fellowship Celebrating Christ sponsor athletic events, Mr. Swint lends his expertise. Mr. Swint is always there to serve and mentor our young African-American boys and girls.”

RODERICK LEWIS CAMPBELL SR.
POLITICAL ACTION

“Mr. Campbell has always been active in his community. He is a member of the Burgess Landrum Alumni Association and Steering Committee that helped to organize and sponsors the annual class reunions and the Jenkins County Band Boosters Club treasurer. He currently serves as a sponsor for Career Day for Jenkins County Middle School students and has served as a judge for VOCA public speaking contests. He was elected to the Jenkins County Board of Education in November 1993 as the first black board member in the history of the county. Mr. Campbell was instrumental in assisting the first black loan and finance company to obtain a business license in Millen.”
Newest investigator makes history
Cone first African-American, first female promoted to position with Sheriff's Office

By HOLLI DEAL SAXON
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Bulloch County sheriff's Cpl. Prethenia Cone made history last week when she became both the county's first female and first African-American to be promoted to the position of investigator, said Bulloch County Sheriff Noel Brown.

He said he had been eyeing Cone for a possible promotion since he started campaigning for the sheriff's seat last May. Her compassion and attention to detail when it comes to helping others is one of the main reasons he promoted her, he said.

Cone was humble in talking about her promotion, but her excitement was evident. She said she is ready to jump in with both feet.

The Booklet native and 1993 graduate of Southeast Bulloch High School worked as a corrections officer in Florida for several years, then returned to Bulloch County to work as a probation officer. In January 2007, she joined the Bulloch County Sheriff's Office as a courthouse deputy and six months later became a road patrol deputy.

Her real interest, however, was in becoming more involved in law enforcement as an investigator.

"There was an opening (for investigator) three or four years ago, and I applied for it," she said. "I've always wanted to go further and more in depth" when it came to cases she handled.

Bulloch County Sheriff's Investigator Prethenia Cone, left, talks about a case with criminal investigator administrative assistant Amy Lienhard on Friday. After spending 10 years on patrol, Cone has finished up her first week of work as an investigator.
Witty, classy, outspoken, knowledgeable, well-traveled, polite with a splash of Southern charm coupled with a thick layer of New York temerity all tempered with a goodly dose of genuine sensitivity. Blend it all together and you have Mical Whitaker, the well-known producer and director of “The Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee Story Hour,” a retired assistant professor of theater at Georgia Southern University, and the founder and past director of the Statesboro Youth Theatre at the Averitt Center for the Arts.

Whitaker still teaches and directs African-American Theatre at GSU and acts as the artistic director of The Arts at Willow Hill. Recently, he directed his annual “Behold Here Cometh the Dreamer” production, celebrating MLK Day. And in Statesboro and Bulloch County, Mical Whitaker is an icon for black theater — indeed, all theater.

He is distinctive, not only in intellect but also in talent. Therefore, it is not a wonder that this theatrical guru is both unusual and traditional at the same time, preferring a pot of Southern cooked neck bones, which he cooks himself, to lobster tail or prime rib.

The daisy-chaining of his life proves interesting as each episode connects prophetically to the next. An adopted 9-month-old baby boy, Whitaker has been staged in many roles from Metter to New Jersey to Washington, D.C., to New York and back home again. In fact, his upcoming biography is to be written by Derrick Bailey.

“The dots will connect themselves,” Whitaker’s grandmother said.

Born Feb. 10, 1941, Mical made his debut as the adopted son of Ellis and Alma Whitaker, both educators. From the beginning, Mical was immersed in education.

“I always went to school,” he said. And he adored English. His father fostered Mical’s love for public speaking. In fact, with his father’s help, Mical won several elementary oratorical contests. However, he said: “Although I enjoyed my moments in the limelight, it wasn’t until I was a freshman at Howard University that I even considered the possibility of a career on the stage.”

Whitaker became totally engrossed with the Howard Players, the university’s premiere drama group. Mical said he saw them “creating real, honest-to-God theater.”

At Howard, he earned roles in plays by Owen Dodson, a Yale MFA graduate. In 1961, Mical became aware that he could pursue the dream of working in theater. Therefore, he left Washington, D.C., and headed to New York City.

Meeting Harlem’s esteemed Rev. Eugene Adair and his wife, Dr. Thelma Adair, Mical became acquainted with New York’s children. Later, while attending acting school, he worked for the East River Houses Children’s Center, where he directed Harlem’s children in Greek dramas.

Twelve years later, those same actors became his esteemed East River Players, established in 1964. Then, Edith Issacs gave him the directorship over the newly built Theater Arts Center. And Mical Whitaker, the successful New York director — 1961-1981 — was born.

Tragically, he buried three family matriarchs from 1975-1976 — and with an aging father, Mical returned home, jobless. However, he received an adjunct professorship teaching theater at Georgia Southern, and the rest is local black history.

In 2003, he directed “Statesboro Bluefront,” a documentary of the early black businesses on front street. Also, many know Whitaker for his annual “Tales from the Tomb” appearances as the ghost of educator William James, the founder of a local school and a good friend of Marvin Pittman, GSU laboratory school’s founder. As James, Mical brings a part of local black history back to life.


In fact, Whitaker has directed and/or acted in more than 50 campus productions. In 2015, GSU honored him with the Mical Whitaker African-American Scholarship for his 30-year theatrical legacy.

Accolades follow him like actors crossing a stage: the Seattle-area Emmy, a CEEBA Award, an AUDELCO award, Chicago’s Joseph Jefferson Award and the Kennedy Center ACTF Meritorious Achievement Award in Directing.

His words to the wise are to recite the 23rd Psalm while walking the streets of Harlem and to always “follow your heart.”
McCollar makes history

Statesboro elects first African-American mayor; ESPLOST passes

By AL HACKLE
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Around the time the outcome became certain, cheers from Jonathan McCollar’s watch party, turned victory party, at Luetta Moore Park could be heard back at the election office in the County Annex off North Main Street.

For the second time in four years, a candidate secured a place in local history through being elected mayor of Statesboro. McCollar, who captured almost 53 percent of the votes Tuesday, will be Statesboro’s first...