



# AFAM News

A Publication of the Institute for African American Studies

Fall 2013

## “Where I Come From . . .” Descendants of the *Wanderer* Enslaved Speak at IAAS-Georgia Museum of Art Symposium



On November 28, 1858 the luxury yacht *Wanderer* arrived at Jekyll Island Georgia with 487 Kongolesse Africans, illegally imported and enslaved, who became known as the Wanderers. On May 17, 2013 the Institute for African American Studies honored their legacy by hosting a symposium “*Where I Come From . . .*” - *The Wanderer Enslaved and Their Descendants*. The symposium included a gallery talk as participants viewed the Georgia Museum of art exhibition *Face Jugs: Art and Ritual in 19th Century South Carolina*.

(Details of the symposium and additional photographs appear on page 6.)

### Inside

Greetings from the Director	2
An Interview with Dr. Freda Scott Giles	3
Student Word	5
The <i>Wanderer</i> Symposium	6
Faculty and Staff Notes	9
Do You Know Your History? (quiz)	10
Apero Lecture Series Schedule	11

## Greetings from the director . . .

*Once again the Institute for African American Studies has had an exciting and productive year. Our faculty continue their achievements of excellence, and the Institute continues to contribute to enriching the larger cultural life of the University of Georgia and its surrounding community. Of particular note in this issue is the remarkable symposium we sponsored on the Wanderer yacht and the descendants of the illegally enslaved Kongolese it brought to Jekyll Island Georgia. We also had a tremendously successful Aperó series. Our speakers included Michael Thurmond, interim DeKalb*



*County School Superintendent and former Georgia Secretary of Labor, who spoke of his efforts to help residents of Sapelo Island's Hog Hammock Community preserve their property ownership rights, and J. Marshall Shepherd, President of the American Meteorological Society, who spoke on the disproportionate impact of climate change on racially marginalized groups. Our film festival focused on Black independent filmmakers, and Barry Jenkins, writer-director of Medicine for Melancholy joined us for a viewing and conversation at Ciné. As always we welcome your support in whatever fashion is possible for you, and we look forward to meeting you at one of our events.*



Be sure to access the link to our student journal *Mandala's* latest issue, *Shelter*.

<http://mandala.uga.edu>

## On *The Darker Face of the Earth*, an Interview With Dr. Freda Scott Giles



(IAAS Graduate Assistant Amber Yarnell interviewed Dr. Freda Scott Giles on directing Rita Dove's *The Darker Face of the Earth*, a play exploring the incestuous relationship between a plantation mistress and a slave she does not know is her son.)

*What do you think about as you decide what play to produce?*

When deciding to produce a play it is not a process you do on your own. Each season there is a selection committee that consists of various faculty members in the department who take a look at the suggestions offered by the directors, students and other outside sources. Normally, an average of forty to fifty suggestions come, including the classics, so depending on the types of pieces that are coming in, that's

how the theme is developed. This in turn determines the season.

*What are the steps in organizing a production?*

Putting a production together is not an easy task; simply put it is like the child's toy the Rubik's cube. The production is a process of a multitude of teams that must work together to ensure that the performance runs smoothly. First, there is the design team whose responsibilities consist of set-up, costumes, sound, and lighting. The performance team is the cast. Finally, the technology team ensures that the set is built and well put together so that when scenes change there are no issues. The director of the production makes certain that all the teams are on the same page as well as that the lines of communication are open.

*Is a production for a college campus different than for an independent theatre?*

A production on a college campus is different from that of an independent theatre. One, the production has the help and support of the faculty. Two, the department head is the producer of the performances. There is a network of people that are able to help whereas in an independent theatre the network may not exist. It is also different in the sense that in the academic world each cast member, faculty, or design team also has academic priorities that they must attend to. On the other hand, at the University of Georgia and at an independent theatre the process by which things get done to manufacture a production is the same.

## An Interview With Dr. Freda Scott Giles (cont'd)

This is also a great experience for the students because it is giving the students many opportunities to practice the skills that they will need when they actually work with an independent theatre. We are preparing them for professional work and are able to prepare them better for the work force.

*What did you hope audiences would take away from this production?*

I wanted the audience to walk away with many things however most importantly I wanted them to have learned something new. I feel it is important in every production that when the audience leaves they are left with something to think about. I think that this play presents itself in such a way that it is important to understand the importance of knowing and acknowledging our history. The overarching theme of this specific production is that the past is the present which makes a great statement concerning racial oppression. It demonstrates that something in the past can come back and wreck havoc in the future, history does repeat itself. On the other hand, I wanted the audience to walk away with the appreciation of Rita Dove's poetry as well as the play's construction.



*What was it like knowing that Rita Dove was in the audience?*

I was nervous in a good way and excited to know that Rita Dove was in the audience. I also, found it to be a little stressful because I wanted her to like the production. At the end of the performance she was very gracious, and she met and spoke to everyone on the cast and crew.

*Any final thoughts?*

This was a great experience for everyone involved because we all worked very hard to put this together and make sure that it was executed smoothly. We also tried to incorporate music into the production as much as possible to give the audience a sense of movement. This also allows the audience to gain and experience the full effect of the play that music can bring. We did various musical tactics such as singing spirituals and using a drummer to create rhythm. In turn, using these methods it allowed the audience to have a more authentic experience of what actually occurred in that time period. We also wanted to explore and musically demonstrate the parallels of the Greek mythology that come into play through music and dance since that was the starting point of Rita Dove's inspiration.



“Where I Come From . . .”

## The *Wanderer* Enslaved and Their Descendants

*A Symposium, May 17, 2013, M. Smith Griffith Auditorium, Georgia Museum of Art*

### The Wanderers:



“Where I come from you can see the water just drippin’ out o’ the sun.”

Tom Johnson née Zow Uncola



Katie Noble née Manchuella left a child behind.

“One year ago it was revealed to me to go home back to Africa and I have been praying to know it if was God’s will and the more I pray the more it presses on me to go . . .”

Ward Lee née Cilucängy

Lucy Lanham arrived as a young adolescent.



Based on the historical research of photographer-genealogist April L. Hynes and archaeologist Dr. Mark Newell, and in conjunction with the Georgia Museum of Art exhibition, *Face Jugs: Art and Ritual in 19th Century South Carolina*, the Institute for African American Studies hosted an all-day symposium “*Where I Come From . . .*” - *The Wanderer Enslaved and Their Descendants*. Prior published research on the *Wanderer* has dealt mainly with the history of the ship—its sailing under the flag of the New York Yacht Club, its landing on Jekyll Island—but little has been done to document the lives of the 487 Kongolese Africans, illegally imported and enslaved, who became known as the Wanderers. Ms. Hynes and Dr. Mark Newell have recovered an impressive amount of information on the lives of many of the *Wanderer* survivors, from their capture in Congo riverside villages and barracoons, to their personal accounts of transit through the middle passage, to their life on southern plantations and the challenges they faced once no longer enslaved.

The face jugs they made, some found in Edgefield, SC, are the markers to their histories. Some were used for carrying water to the fields to stave off thirst while laboring; some given during life to hold molasses or beans marked graves at death because the enslaved were not often allowed grave markers; and some were made “ugly” enough to scare off evil and allow for transcendence, much like nkisi power figures. Now these jugs are treasured by sons, daughters, grandsons, granddaughters, great-great grandsons, and great-great grand daughters. One was even brought into a voting booth so ancestors could be present at the election of the first black president of the United States, Barack Obama.

For information on this history see, [www.thewandererproject.com](http://www.thewandererproject.com)

## *Symposium Participants*

**Reverend Fredrick Morton** is a descendant of Yango Lanham. At his death, Yango Lanham was believed to have been the last of the *Wanderer* captives.

**Ocea Barns** is Ward Lee's granddaughter. Ward Lee recalled the name of his home as Cowany in the mountainous region behind the Congo River.

**Wayde Brown** is Associate Professor in the College of Environment and Design, teaching primarily in the historic preservation program.

**John Hunter** is Director of Historic Resources at Jekyll Island Authority. He was instrumental in bringing about the Wanderer Memorial on St. Andrew's Picnic Area on the island's south end, close to where the yacht is believed to have landed.

**April L. Hynes** is a professional archival and genealogical researcher with a specific interest in the African American diaspora. She was introduced to the Edgefield stoneware tradition when she discovered a face jug that had been unearthed in Philadelphia by her grandfather in 1950.

**Mark Newell** is the Chairman of the Archaeology Committee of the American Canal Society. He has also been engaged in research into the stoneware potteries of the Old Edgefield District of South Carolina. Highlights of this work included the discovery of the first evidence of Kongolese African conjure jug or face jug production in the area.

## *Symposium Highlights*

- ❖ “Edgefield Face Jugs: Origins Revealed.” Dr. Mark Newell
- ❖ Lecture and Facilitated Discussion with Descendants of the Wanderers, Ms. April Hynes
- ❖ Mr. John Hunter, “The Wanderer: The Story that Has Not Been Told”
- ❖ Dr. Wayde Brown, “Claiming Home: The Role of Place and Object at Africville, Nova Scotia.”
- ❖ *Gallery Talk:* “Face Jugs: Art and Ritual in 19<sup>th</sup> Century South Carolina,” Dale L. Couch Curator of Decorative Arts, Georgia Museum of Art



*From Left: Reverend Fredrick Morton; Ocea Barns; April L. Hynes; Valerie Babb, Mark Newell*

## Diaspora Film Festival Focuses on Independent Black Cinema

### ***Medicine for Melancholy.***

A Screening with  
Filmmaker  
**Barry Jenkins**



Thursday  
March 28, 2013  
7pm  
Ciné

Dr. Lesley Feracho Again coordinated this year's African Diaspora Film Festival with a focus on Independent black filmmakers. The festival opened with Barry Jenkins's *Medicine for Melancholy*, characterized in *The New York Times* as a film where there are "no simple answers or obvious conclusions to be gleaned . . . , which, like its soundtrack, is both sad and vibrant, meandering and formally sure-footed. It is an exciting debut, and a film that, without exaggeration or false modesty, finds interest and feeling in the world just as it is." Following the viewing Mr. Jenkins addressed the audience about his vision, and larger questions of black cinema. Our other feature of note was *Middle of Nowhere*, Winner of the Best Director Award at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival.





## Faculty and Staff Notes

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- ❖ Dr. Lesley Feracho received funding for research at Federal University of Bahia to further her work on her upcoming study, “Eu Sou a Força Dessa raça : Black Brazilian Women and The Cultural Politics of Power.”



Dr. R. Baxter Miller was the recipient of the 2013 Albert Christ-Janer Creative Research Award in recognition of “an outstanding body of nationally and internationally recognized scholarly or creative activities.”

- ❖ Caroline Jones Medine was selected to receive the 2013 Excellence in Teaching Award from the American Academy of Religion.
- ❖ Dr. Kecia Thomas was named Interim Associate Dean for Franklin College. Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology also awarded Dr. Thomas the Graduate Teaching Award. An interview with Dr. Thomas discussing networking and career development on Minnesota Public Radio can be accessed at <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2013/03/13/daily-circuit-networking-young-minorities>
- ❖ Dr. Freda Scott Giles received the Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award.



Dr. Diane Batts Morrow joined the Friends of the Athens-Clarke County Library in a commemorative reading of Martin Luther King’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” The event was part of a world-wide celebration marking the fiftieth anniversary of this historical document.

- ❖ College of Education Professor Billy Hawkins was elected to the board of directors of the National Collegiate Athletic Association Forum for the Scholarly Study of Intercollegiate Athletics in Higher Education.
- ❖ Tina Harris, Meigs Professor in the Department of Communication Studies received the International Diversity Award jointly conferred by the Office of International Education and the Office of Institutional Diversity.
- ❖ Kendra Freeman, IAAS Administrative specialist, was selected to receive a 2013 Franklin College Diversity Leadership Staff Award.

## Do You Know Your History?

- ¶ Who said "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere"?
- ¶ Whose writing career began with what many regarded as a parody of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*?
- ¶ What American colony was the first to recognize slavery as legal?
- ¶ What was Georgia's first four-year African American high school?\*

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### *Support AFAM*

Gifts help us to fulfill our mission. We have diverse ways of giving and welcome your ideas for ways to contribute. The Foundation Fund provides AFAM the flexibility it needs to offer cutting edge programs on campus and in the community. The Lee Roy B. Giles Encouragement Endowment will help us offer scholarships to support student research and study abroad. With your energy, enthusiasm, and financial assistance, we will continue to grow the Institute into a premier entity in the field of African American Studies. If you are considering including IAAS in your legacy you may do so through Planned Giving (including Bequests & Trusts). We encourage you to consider a recurring payment schedule for your gifts so that you establish ongoing participation in the life of the Institute.

If you would like to discuss your gifts and the programs they support, please do not hesitate to contact the IAAS office to schedule an appointment with the director. Please see the following link for details on giving: <http://afam.uga.edu/support/>. We thank you for your sponsorship!

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\**Answers: 1) Martin Luther King, Jr. 2) Ishmael Reed. 3) Massachusetts 4) Athens High and Industrial School established in 1913.*

# APERO

Lecture Series

Fall 2013



August 28: David Olali, T’Ofori-Atta Institute for the Study of the Religious Heritage of the African World, Atlanta: “Unscripted Anxiety, Amnesia, and the Complex Duplications of Black Identity”

September 11: Dr. Bettina L. Love, Department of Educational Theory and Practice: “Hip Hop Education for Social Justice”

September 25: Mr. Cedric Miller, Contracts and Grants Department: “Creating a New Africa Without Fixing Old Problems”

October 9: Dr. Brian N. Williams, Department of Public Administration and Policy: “The Evolution of the Co-Production of Public Safety and Public Order: Local Applications and Resulting Implications for Public Management”

October 23: Dr. Elizabeth King, Odum School of Ecology: “African Pastoralism in Transition: Linked Social and Ecological Dimensions of Sustainability”

November 6: Dr. Dainess Maganda, Department of Comparative Literature: “Language Ideology: Prison and Key to the Revitalization of the African Mind”

November 20: Dr. John Lowe, Department of English: “From Harlem to Haiti: Mutual Influences of Langston Hughes and Jaques Roumain”

*All lectures held  
Wednesdays  
12:15 -1:15  
Tate Center  
Room 481*

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