

Spring 2020

# HISTORY MATTERS



*Camellia 'Olguita'*

ATLANTA  
**HISTORY**  
CENTER

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*Camellia* ‘Olguita’ is the Atlanta History Center’s first plant introduction, named in honor of Olga C. de Goizueta. Each 3-inch fragrant flower bears raspberry pink and white petals, with a central boss of golden stamens. While Goizueta Gardens staff were seeking mature camellias to be planted in Olguita’s Garden, they found this previously unnamed

hybrid camellia at Green’s Nursery in Fairhope, Alabama. Bobby Green, owner of the nursery, graciously agreed to allow the plant to be named in honor of Mrs. Goizueta. The one-of-a-kind plant is officially registered with the American Camellia Society, and is located in Olguita’s Garden beside the terrace.



Photo taken in January 2020

MESSAGE  
FROM THE  
CHAIR & CEO

Jocelyn Hunter

*Chair, Board of Trustees*

Sheffield Hale

*President & CEO*

We are living in a significant historic moment. Years later, we will look back on the coronavirus pandemic and its effects as a moment of nationwide, monumental challenge, reckoning, and behavioral change.

During this time, we at Atlanta History Center are working to fulfill our mission to connect people, history, and culture. As our staff works remotely, we are capturing history as it happens through our Corona Collective collecting effort, creating new digital learning content for students and parents, offering virtual Author Talks, digitizing archival collections, distributing Quarantine Care Package emails with a selection of books, podcasts, playlists, and historical tidbits, and so much more. Already, we received scores of submissions to Corona Collective, and national media recognition of our effort. We look forward to continuing to explore how we can document and preserve this historic moment for our community.

As we prepare to share our campus with you once more, we look forward to welcoming you first to Goizueta Gardens: 33 acres of artfully and intentionally curated landscapes. At a time when social distance is *de rigueur* and we could all use some walks in nature, what better place to be together while apart than our gardens?

Goizueta Gardens are essential to our mission of conveying the history of Atlanta and the surrounding area. Through the presentation of diverse landscapes with a range of native species, ornamental traditions, and new and old gardening techniques, we tell the history of our land through the land itself.

The newest addition to Goizueta Gardens is currently rooting, growing, and blooming at this very moment. The new Entrance Gardens span the length of all pedestrian and vehicle entrances to Atlanta History Center. Crafted in the New Perennial Movement style with a selection of native and non-native plant species, this garden represents an environmentally conscious way of gardening for the South. We cannot wait to share it with you fully once our gardens are open to the public once more. In the meantime, if you find yourself getting some exercise along West Paces Ferry Road, we invite you to take a stroll through the portion of these gardens accessible from the sidewalk at Veterans Park beside the Rollins Gallery and *Texas* locomotive.

We hope that this edition of *History Matters* provides you with a respite, and a reminder that even during difficult times, history can provide us with inspiration and stories of resiliency.

We offer the sincerest gratitude to all members and supporters for your invaluable dedication during all times, but particularly as we waded through these uncharted waters together.

*Jocelyn J. Hunter*      *Sheffield Hale*

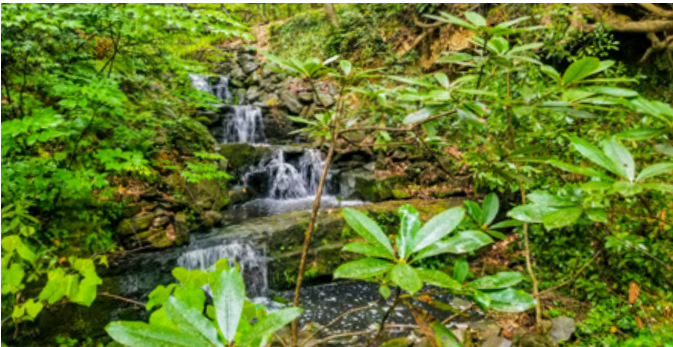


Goizueta Gardens at Atlanta History Center is a 33-acre landscape encompassing a variety of cultivated gardens and preserved woodland, including diverse plant collections and heritage-breed animals. Comprising Goizueta Gardens are:



Entrance Gardens

The newest garden on campus, these gardens span 8 acres across all entrances to Atlanta History Center. Inspired by the New Perennial Movement and a drive to create sustainable landscapes, this series of garden spaces features sweeps of perennials and pollinator-attracting plants with special emphasis on native plants and grasses. Clipped evergreen shrubs provide a sculptural quality and unify the landscape. The Tree Table, a 60-foot-long functional work of art, is ensconced within the hedges of the garden, adjacent to Veterans Park.



Mary Howard Gilbert Memorial Quarry Garden

This sanctuary for Georgia’s native plants and birds was transformed from a 25-foot-deep former rock quarry. A waterfall cuts through the high walls surrounding the garden, down to a stream and nearby pond below. The towering canopy shades plants once used for medicinal, spiritual, and practical purposes by the Muscogee (Creek) Indians and early settlers. This garden is home to the state champion *Franklinia alatamaha*—the “Lost Camellia,” which is now extinct in the wild.



Olguita’s Garden

This ornamental garden is in bloom throughout the year, with a rich tapestry of flowering and foliage plants selected for color, fragrance, texture, and an English garden aesthetic. The garden spans the entire rear façade of the Atlanta History Museum, encompassing an amphitheater for seating. Double borders lead to Neel Reid-designed columns, encircling a reflective water feature. This garden celebrates the life of Goizueta Gardens honoree Olga “Olguita” C. de Goizueta.



Smith Farm

The farm accurately represents a working slaveholding farm of the Atlanta area in the 1860s with historic buildings moved here for preservation. The landscape represents the era, with historic varieties of crops in the fields, the enslaved people’s garden, a kitchen garden, and a swept yard by the house planted with heirloom flowers. Surrounding the farm’s outbuildings are naturalistic, native plantings. Heritage-breed sheep, goats, chickens, and turkeys also live on the farm.



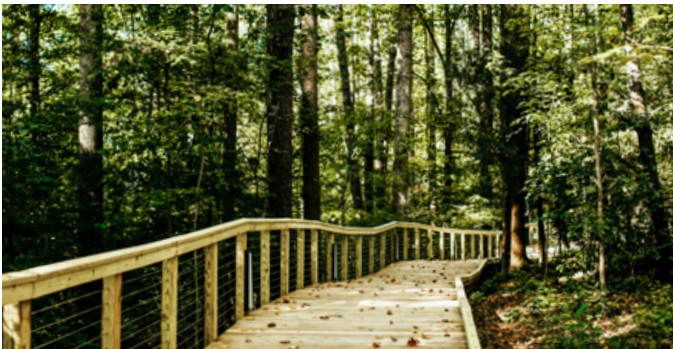
Swan House Gardens

This famous Country Place Era stately home and garden designed by Philip Trammell Shutze has been preserved as it was in the 1930s. Reminiscent of great Italian gardens, it is perched on a hill with a cascading fountain, terraced lawns, roses tumbling over stone walls, and clipped hedges. An intimate boxwood garden and formal motor court complete the landscape, making this one of Atlanta’s best-known and photographed sites.



Frank A. Smith Memorial Rhododendron Garden

A gazebo designed by Atlanta architect James Means overlooks the center of this vibrant woodland garden. An intimate pond and a dry streambed are bordered by an abundance of rhododendrons (*Rhododendron spp. & cvs.*), small flowering trees, and eclectic ground covers. Structural evergreens and winter-blooming shrubs begin the year, giving way to the blaze of azaleas in spring and the luxuriant blossoms of hydrangeas in summer.



Swan Woods

This 10-acre, peaceful native woodland is a preserved secondary-growth forest that sprang from cotton fields abandoned long ago. Deep in the woods, a forest opening is the setting for a log cabin surrounded by a meadow of native grasses and wildflowers. Thriving honeybee hives are in the lower meadow surrounded by an experimental American chestnut orchard.



Sims Asian Garden

Covered by a high canopy, a brook runs through the Asian plant collections. Satsuki azaleas peak in spring while hydrangeas adorn the garden in summer, and Japanese maples glow with fall color. A variety of rare Asian plants thrive in this serene, sheltered garden.

Veterans Park

This park is a place for reflection, personal connections to veterans, small gatherings, and the annual Veterans Day program that honors the people who served and continue to serve the United States. Fountains flank the entrance along West Paces Ferry Road and the seals of all five military branches are embedded in a broad path. Sacred soil from global battlefields is buried beneath the Seal of the United States. Panels with QR codes, coupled with free Wi-Fi and seating, allow visitors to access files of veterans sharing their personal stories, memories, tragedies, and triumphs during their service. Construction of Veterans Park was made possible by the Home Depot Foundation.





# A MODERN LANDSCAPE FOR ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER

BY SARAH ROBERTS  
OLGA C. DE GOIZUETA VICE  
PRESIDENT OF GOIZUETA GARDENS  
AND LIVING COLLECTIONS

**OPPOSITE PAGE 1** *The Entrance Gardens extends across all vehicle and pedestrian entrances to Atlanta History Center, including McElreath Hall.* **2** *An Iris virginica blooms* **3** *A pale coneflower (Echinacea pallida) blooms* **4** *Pictured in April 2020, new plant growth is sprouting and blooming, including a variety of native and non-native species.*

A dramatically different landscape is being installed across all vehicle and pedestrian entrances to Atlanta History Center.

Visitors to our campus during the past two years have seen cover crops growing in planting beds across from the Lloyd and Mary Ann Whitaker Cyclorama Building, Rollins Gallery, and café space. While those crops improved soil structure and fertility in locations compacted by years of residential construction, other areas were being renovated and planted in line with a new vision for Atlanta History Center’s entrance landscape— the Entrance Gardens.

The design of this new garden was inspired by the New Perennial Movement, an evolution of the Dutch Wave and the New American Garden. Famous examples in the U.S. include the High Line of New York City and the Lurie Garden in Chicago’s Millennium Park. Dutch plantsman Piet Oudolf, a pioneer of the movement, created planting schemes for both of those gardens.

Despite its name, this style is not particularly new, but has been successfully moving across Europe and the U.S., primarily in the northern and western regions. This new installation helps bring the movement to the South, on the front porch of Atlanta History Center.

This series of garden spaces is designed to immerse visitors in a thoughtfully curated environment from the minute they enter the property. The Goizueta Gardens experience begins by reconnecting people to nature, with a naturalistic and amplified version of nature, attuned to the ecology of local conditions.

The plant selection and management of this style of garden is rooted in responsible stewardship of the environment. This garden benefits wildlife from the all-important soil microbes to pollinators to birds and mammals seeking shelter and sustenance. Compost created by Goizueta Gardens staff was used to amend the soil. The plants selected do not require extra fertilization or other chemical inputs because they are carefully matched to the variety of soil and light conditions presented in these gardens.

New Perennial Movement gardens also present a different perspective of beauty, contrasting with more traditional Atlanta styles including classic boxwood and shade perennials, annual color displays, or mixed border aesthetics.

This style of garden features mass plantings of perennials (plants that return year after year), with emphasis on grasses, stemming

from the look of American prairies. Large sweeps of plants weave in and out of each other, intermingling, while others are scattered throughout. Strongly defined clipped evergreen shrubs or deciduous trees are placed next to the swathes of perennials across the entire stretch of the gardens. Plant placement reflects naturally occurring distribution patterns. Given the close proximity of plants to each other, understanding plant “sociability” is important, because as with people, not all plants make good neighbors. As the garden grows over the next few years, there will be no bare ground to be seen, reducing growth of unwanted weeds.

Unlike our usual American habit of tidying up gardens, the Entrance Gardens will not be universally cut back in fall. Instead, plants will be left standing all winter as they would in the wild — a good idea for any garden, since this helps provide cover for the soil, retains moisture, prevents erosion, and provides habitat for wildlife.

The garden has other distinctive traits—it is a New Perennial Movement garden designed for the South. To accommodate the South’s bewildering assault of intense drought, heavy downpours, wildly fluctuating temperatures, and preponderance of clay soil, the typical New Perennial plant selections had to be refined. Over half of the 10,000 plants that have been placed in the Entrance Gardens so far are native to Georgia, including uncommon species that deserve wider recognition and use in gardens.

Plants that support high numbers of pollinators were researched and used in large quantities to combat the worldwide rapid reduction in pollinator populations. This garden will be buzzing with pollinators—which also means it will attract birds who eat insects and rely on insect larvae for their young. Keep an eye on our website for guided tours by our partners in the Atlanta Audubon Society.

As with all our gardening endeavors, the plants within the Entrance Gardens are being accessioned, tagged, and recorded in our Living Collections database. Informative display labels will be provided for each of the species in this landscape.

The next time you visit Atlanta History Center, we hope you slow down as you move through the Entrance Gardens on your way into our campus. You deserve to take a moment to look around and reconnect with nature in the midst of bustling Buckhead.



# TREE TABLE

In approximately 1880, a white oak tree sprouted about 200 feet from what would become Andrews Drive and West Paces Ferry Road on the property of Atlanta History Center. After more than a century of growth, this mighty oak began to slowly decline. Goizueta Gardens staff had the tree assessed, and after careful consideration, decided to remove the tree from the History Center’s Living Collections to prevent injury or damage to property.

Sarah Roberts, Olga C. de Goizueta Vice President of Goizueta Gardens and Living Collections, proposed using the lumber from the oak to give the tree a new life in the form of a large-scale table. The table would be created in the tree’s shape, as if it were sliced lengthwise down the middle from branch tips to base, and laid out horizontally.

The tree was taken down in 8-foot-long sections, milled into 3-inch slabs, and air-dried for 2 years to allow the moisture content to decrease to an optimal level for construction.

Woodworker Kirk McAlpin III spent seven months on the project, artfully crafting each raw piece of lumber into finished oak slabs for the tabletops and benches. A three-pronged goal of making the table beautiful, functional, and durable was achieved using only hand-held electric and traditional tools. Seven layers of protective marine-grade epoxy and varnish were applied to prepare the table for life outdoors in the Entrance Gardens.

The overall Tree Table is comprised of 15 smaller, unique tables joined together for a combined length of 60 feet spreading to 30 feet wide. Each piece gives clues to the tree’s life history, from the boring of tiny beetles throughout to the widest slab, which carries the primary split in the branches. Even the decay that led to its ultimate removal is apparent, evident by darker coloration in softer wood.

Custom bases were designed to support each unique tabletop, keeping accessibility for all guests at the forefront, and retaining simplicity in appearance. The combined weight of wood and steel for each segment ranges from 400-700 pounds.

Completed and installed in the spring, the Tree Table is located in the new Entrance Gardens, in the shade of the tall oaks and pines adjacent to Veterans Park. Visitors are invited to come and enjoy the table on a lunch break or during a walk, and appreciate the beauty of the newest addition to Goizueta Gardens.



**ABOVE 1** Bowties, as seen here, are also known as butterfly joints or Nakashima joints. These were hand-crafted and inlaid into the tabletops and benches to reinforce cracks in the wood that formed in the drying process. **2** Kirk McAlpin spent seven months working on the Tree Table. His experience includes custom-made furniture in the live-edge style, and he uses a variety of unique pieces of native hardwoods to showcase his work. “Working on the Tree Table for the Atlanta History Center was an amazing and challenging opportunity to bring together many things that I’m passionate about,” said Kirk.



**THIS PAGE 3&5** Atlanta History Center staff enjoy the nearly-completed Tree Table in February 2020. **4** The Tree Table is pictured here mid-installation, prior to the permanent benches being installed.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO GUNNISON TREE SPECIALISTS FOR IN-KIND DONATION OF TREE REMOVAL**





# CONNOR'S KID QUEST

BY SARAH ROBERTS  
OLGA C. DE GOIZUETA VICE  
PRESIDENT OF GOIZUETA GARDENS  
AND LIVING COLLECTIONS

What do sheep, a ukulele, a forest,  
and a diner all have in common?

They are all part of Connor’s Kid Quest, a series of fun activities across 33 acres of Atlanta History Center’s Goizueta Gardens, exhibitions, and historic houses. The Quest was inspired by and named in memory of a local boy, Connor Brown, who loved to come to our campus to play for hours on end.

The Quest is comprised of child-friendly “fun hubs” waiting to be discovered. All hubs relate to Atlanta History Center’s extensive collections, but this Quest is not about learning specific educational objectives. The Quest is all about having fun.

Children (and children at heart!) can hop on an old-fashioned spring rider outside a vintage playhouse, play barbershop in *Gatheround*, find the secret garden near Swan House, discover a Tiny Door™ modeled after a famous façade, or explore the life-sized model mules and wagon in Quarry Garden, to mention just a few of the dozens of hubs.

In a competitive society, playtime is decreasing. Children are signed up for all the other things that will make them a well-rounded person—music



lessons, sports, and other structured extracurriculars. There is the seemingly endless burden of homework and the ever-present lure of screen time. As a result there is less and less time to play. We often seem to treat it like a luxury, or at worst, a waste of time.

However, an increasing body of research emphasizes the importance of free play, for children and adults. Play is what creates happy, smart, resilient human beings.

The fun hubs throughout Goizueta Gardens serve as prompts for imaginative play, such as the story throne, carved from an old tree stump, or looking for native wildlife in Swan Woods. Children will also be running around, active, and getting fresh air.

While outside seeking the fun hubs, the whole world of gardens and nature also awaits discovery. Children can learn to associate this joy of play and family time with nature. As prominent neuropsychologist Donald Hebb put it, “neurons that fire together, wire together.” A person who experienced joy playing in the woods as a child will forever smile when experiencing familiar smells and sights of the forest, perhaps one day becoming an advocate for nature. Play invigorates us, sparks imaginations, and reduces stress. Playful children become creative thinkers, changemakers, and innovators.



The Quest will change over time, as new ideas spring up, and new exhibitions open with their own unique fun hubs. The hubs can be visited in any order, all in one day or over many days.

We invite you to bring your little ones to Atlanta History Center to play. Through using our campus to create opportunities for fun family time, we seek to serve all of our audience needs, even if that need is simply a well-kept lawn for turning cartwheels.

**LEFT TO RIGHT 1** A child examines the fragrant flowers of woodland phlox (Phlox divaricata ‘Blue Moon’). **2** Children discover the Wood Cabin in a clearing in the forest of Swan Woods. **3** While exploring our campus, be sure to keep an eye out for wildlife, one of the activities encouraged by Connor’s Kid Quest. You never know what you might find, like this fox.



# ORIGINAL SOUTHERN PEANUT GROWN ON SMITH FARM

BY EMILY ROBERTS  
DIRECTOR OF URBAN AGRICULTURE



One of the most interesting parts of farming at Atlanta History Center is researching and growing historic plants available in Georgia in the 1860s. I’m often asked, “What is the coolest thing you grow?” There is no easy answer, but one of the best plant stories I have (supported by resources at our own Cherokee Garden Library) is the Carolina African runner peanut.

Peanuts (*Arachis hypogaea*), like many foods associated with the South, came to the United States via the transatlantic slave trade. Though peanuts originated in South America, the Portuguese and Spanish carried it to West Africa. There, peanuts are called “groundnuts” because their stalks grow “pegs” under the flowers, pushing seed pods into the ground. The slave trade brought the transplanted peanuts to the Caribbean and North America in the 17th-century. Many 18th-century writers observed peanut cultivation in Jamaica. Sir Hans Sloane, an Irish physician, naturalist, and collector, wrote that peanuts were used to feed enslaved people on the horrific journey across the Atlantic Ocean. Henry Barham, an English writer and physician in Jamaica, noted that an enslaved person’s garden was the first place he saw peanuts and that enslaved people called them “gub-a-gubs” or “ground nuts.”

The first and only peanut in the earliest years of our country was the Carolina African runner, a variety with spreading vines and small seed pods. Peanuts do best in warm soil and require a long growing season. As a result, they were easily cultivated throughout the South. In Southern kitchens, many run by enslaved people, peanuts were boiled, ground into meal for fritters, candied, mashed and decocted into hot beverages, roasted, or pressed into oil.

For many reasons, including their size, productivity, and disease resistance, the familiar Virginia peanut became more popular than Carolina African runners during the Civil War. The last Carolina African runners were grown commercially in the 1920s. By the 1950s, the variety was thought to be extinct.

In 2013, Dr. David Shields of the Carolina Gold Rice Foundation found 40 seeds of this variety in a North Carolina State University seed bank. The university sent 20 seeds to Dr. Brian Ward, an organic agriculture research scientist at Clemson Coastal Research and Education Center. 12 seeds germinated, and he and Dr. Shields compared the mature plants to a photo from the Sloane Collection at the Natural History Museum in London for confirmation.

From those 12 plants, they harvested approximately 1,200 seeds in 2013—becoming 60,000 in 2014; one million in 2015; 15 million in 2016. Now, seeds are available commercially again. Goizueta Gardens started growing Carolina African runners on Smith Farm in 2017. Each summer since, we plant a few rows alongside heirloom crops. From grasses in the meadow to fruit trees in the orchard to peanuts in the field, Living Collections at the farm are supported by research materials from Cherokee Garden Library.

I hope you will come visit us with new appreciation and excitement for historic plant varieties, including (but not limited to) peanuts.

**LEFT** A harvest of Carolina African runner peanuts are dried in the stairwell of the Ben Sims Gardens Building on Atlanta History Center’s campus in 2017.



# CHEROKEE GARDEN LIBRARY CELEBRATES 45 YEARS

BY STACI L. CATRON  
CHEROKEE GARDEN LIBRARY DIRECTOR

“If you have a garden and a library,  
you have everything you need.”  
MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO

This year, Cherokee Garden Library celebrates its 45th anniversary. Founded by Cherokee Garden Club in Atlanta under the leadership of Anne Coppedge Carr, Cherokee Garden Library is one of the special collections of Kenan Research Center. With a focus on the Southeast, collection holdings date from 1586 and include over 32,000 objects documenting gardening, landscape design, garden history, horticulture, botanical art, cultural landscapes, natural landscapes, and plant ecology. In addition to serving researchers Tuesday through Saturday, the Garden Library supports Goizueta Gardens staff research. The Garden Library also offers a year-round calendar of lectures, exhibitions, tours, and collaborations with partner agencies.

Three special gems from the Cherokee Garden Library collections:

**1** *BOUQUET OF CAMELLIAS, JANE WELLS LOUDON’S THE LADIES’ FLOWER-GARDEN OF ORNAMENTAL GREENHOUSE PLANTS. LONDON: WILLIAM SMITH, 1848*

Jane Loudon was a successful writer and magazine editor in England. Her books were immensely popular, and her writing influenced a generation of Victorian gardeners, including those in the United States. A self-taught artist, Loudon illustrated her books using new techniques that enabled fast print production. The botanical plates were drawn on zinc from nature and then colored by hand with watercolor. Through her books, Loudon made gardening accessible to the burgeoning middle class interested in gardening as a form of recreation and pleasure.

**2** *HASTINGS’ SEEDS, CATALOGUE NO. 44, FALL 1912*

In 1889 in Interlachen, Florida, Harry George Hastings established H.G. Hastings and Company, a mail-order business specializing in garden and field seeds and nursery stock to supply Southern farmers and home gardeners. In 1899, the company moved to Atlanta, where the family business continued until it was sold in 1976. Hastings’ seed catalogs are beautiful and unique examples of commercial art, valuable resources for horticulturists to study cultivars from the past, and touchstones for historic preservationists who wish to re-create gardens with plants from history.

**3** *MARIE HULL, CHEROKEE ROSES, OIL ON CANVAS, CIRCA 1930*

Cherokee Garden Club member Sally Nunnally recently donated an oil on canvas of Cherokee roses by American artist, Marie Hull. The Cherokee rose (*Rosa laevigata*) was named the state floral emblem of Georgia in 1916. The Cherokee Garden Club derived its name from the flower in 1928 and the library followed suit in 1975. Hull earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in music in 1909 in Mississippi and attended art schools in Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Europe. Her paintings were exhibited in the Southeastern United States, San Francisco, New York City, and Paris, as well as in books and documentaries.



# THE DREAM LIVES

## Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration

BY CLAIRE HALEY, SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE CEO

At the heart of this day is not only a celebration of the man himself, but a celebration of the ideas for which he fought and the extension of those ideas into today’s world.

Every year, Atlanta History Center welcomes thousands of people to our campus for a free community celebration honoring the life and legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

MLK Day programs at Atlanta History Center encompass a wide variety of visitor experiences. These include interactive activities, such as making cause buttons and protest posters, Meet the Past museum theatre performances, a full-length production of the play *Walking Through the Valley*, and screenings of Dr. King’s speech, “I Have a Dream.”

“When we’re planning our programming for any community day, but particularly for MLK Day, we always ask the question: how do we create immersive experiences that give people tools for change, using historical perspective,” said Joanna Arrieta Potter, Director of Programming. Reflecting on the process for designing programs and experiences for the special day, she added, “Through this celebration, we celebrate not only Martin Luther King Jr., but also the everyday people who were involved in the long struggle for civil rights.”

The play *Walking Through the Valley*, a highlight of this year’s celebration that took place on January 20, 2020, dramatizes the long struggle for civil rights, drawing the continuum from pre-Civil War abolitionist movements through Reconstruction and leading to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Atlanta History Center Director of Performance-Based Interpretation, Addae Moon, wrote and directed *Walking Through the Valley*. In the play, a young Civil Rights activist is asked by organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom to tone down a fiery speech. Guided by figures from the past who unexpectedly visit, this activist considers how to be the most effective freedom fighter he can be.



1 A visitor looked at a series of banners describing African American activism in Atlanta in the traveling exhibition *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*. 2 Laurie Roach as John Lewis, Kate Kovach as Sarah Grimké, and Cynthia Barker as Ida B. Wells performed in *Walking Through the Valley*. 3 Children created posters at craft stations in Allen Atrium. 4 The Allen Atrium was the center of a variety of activities throughout the day.



Over the course of the play, audience members meet actors portraying John Lewis, U.S. Congressman and civil rights activist; John Brown, leader of the abolitionist raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859; Ida B. Wells, educator, journalist, and a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); Sarah Grimké, Quaker abolitionist, writer, and orator; and A. Philip Randolph, labor unionist, March organizer, and civil rights activist. These historical figures all fought for civil rights and inclusion during different time periods in United States history. Through a drama infused with humor, poignancy, and reverence, these historical figures are humanized, and their lessons and stories shown as applicable to today.

This continuum of the civil rights struggle is further explored in the Atlanta installment of the traveling exhibition *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow*, which opened to the public on January 18 and is on view until February 28, 2021. The exhibition, which was organized by the New-York Historical Society and enhanced with Atlanta-centric additions by Atlanta History Center staff, chronicles the fight for full citizenship rights from the immediate post-Civil War period through the 1920s. MLK Day guests could also learn more about the Civil Rights Movement by participating in a Freedom Ride simulation,



or learn about the Civil War through the eyes of African American U.S. troops by participating in the African American Soldier Experience. Museum theatre performances also occurred throughout the day. One of these performances featured the story of Rosalyn Walton, a member of the group of students who integrated Atlanta Public Schools in 1961. After the performance, which focuses on the pressures of being placed in this high profile position during her vulnerable teenage years of life, Cameryn Richardson, the actor portraying Walton, spoke to the audience to help place Walton’s story in the context of the Civil Rights Movement. In closing, she said: “This story helps show that no matter what a person’s status is, what position they have, or what age they are, everyone can make change.”

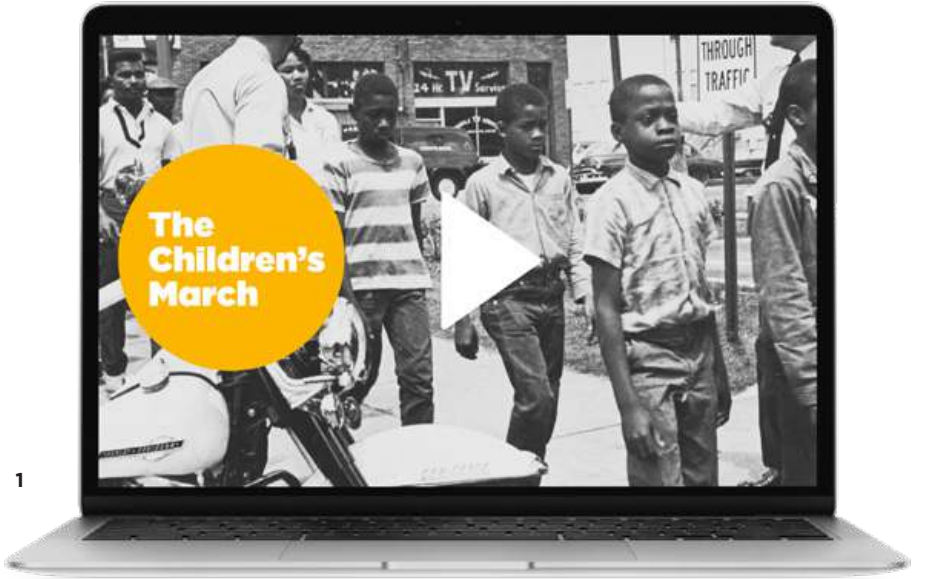
Rosalyn Walton did exactly that, almost 60 years ago. Today, Martin Luther King Jr. programming inspires today’s citizens to do the same.

**MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY PROGRAMMING WAS GENEROUSLY SPONSORED BY THE CHICK-FIL-A FOUNDATION.**



# ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER AT HOME

Through a set of online resources, Atlanta History Center seeks to expand access to our archival and exhibition materials, create opportunities to chronicle the present moment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and offer educational opportunities that can be completed from any classroom—even if that is a living room right now. Here are a few of the many assets that can be found on our website.



## Corona Collective

To help capture the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on everyday life in Atlanta, Atlanta History Center launched Corona Collective. This online platform provides a place for interested participants to upload images, journal entries, video, social media posts, or any other digital content that helps tell the story of how the pandemic affects our lives. Contributions will be considered for future inclusion in Atlanta History Center's permanent collections.

## Virtual Author Talks

Though our spring Author Talks lineup was entirely canceled or postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Atlanta History Center worked with select publishers and authors to host virtual author talks. Virtual author talks are free to the public, presented via Zoom, and feature Georgia Public Broadcasting's Virginia Prescott as host. Local independent bookstore A Cappella Books is the official bookseller and mails purchased books directly to buyers' homes. To see a full lineup of the virtual talks, please visit the Author Talks section of our website.

## Education

From Civil War interactive platforms to a Civil Rights toolkit that includes video and instructions for hands-on activities, Atlanta History Center digital educational resources offer opportunities to enhance existing lessons, or create activities from scratch.

Our Field Trip Friday collection, which can be found on our Blog, includes activities and ideas for using our online resources in the classroom or the home. Staff created these bite-sized programs as part of the ATL Museums at Home collaboration, an effort by a broad array of Atlanta cultural attractions to provide digital experiences every Friday at 10am.

## Online Exhibitions and Archives

Online exhibitions feature artifacts, images, and video footage, and can be visited from any computer or mobile device. The popular exhibition *Atlanta in 50 Objects*, created by Atlanta History Center from ideas submitted by Atlantans, explores the rich history of Atlanta stories through 50 objects representative of big moments in history, technology, music, food, and more. *More Than Self: Living the Vietnam War* draws from the extensive oral history collections included in the Veterans History Project, using the words of veterans to tell their stories of this complex time in history. *Voices Across the Color Line* also makes use of oral history, using the reflections of those involved in the Atlanta Student Movement to revisit the Civil Rights Movement in Atlanta.

Archival resources are also available on Atlanta History Center's website, including visual collections resources and hundreds of hours of oral history interviews. Digitized maps, photographs, architectural drawings, publications, and interviews are housed on the online resource *Album*. New assets are uploaded frequently.

Other items from our exhibitions are digitized and available online, including *The Civil War in Georgia, 1864-1865* map showing troop movements and battle lines, and other interactive technology from *Cyclorama: The Big Picture*. Be sure to explore our website for more.



**1** As part of Field Trip Friday, Atlanta History Center's Education staff created a Civil Rights toolkit exploring the Children's March in Birmingham. **2** A member of the public submitted this photo of the Fox Theatre to the Corona Collective, showcasing this moment in time as the normally busy venue is temporarily closed. **3** Atlanta From the Ashes, bronze model, James Siegler (designer), Gamba Quirino (sculptor), 1967. The sculpture model depicts the mythical phoenix, the symbol of Atlanta's spirit of resilience. Featured in Atlanta in 50 Objects courtesy of Katherine Rich Niehaus, a full-scale replica of this artist's model has been funded by the Rich Foundation and will be featured in the new Atlanta '96: Shaping an Olympic and Paralympic City.



# SPOTLIGHT ON EDUCATION

BY CLAIRE HALEY  
SPECIAL ADVISOR  
TO THE CEO

Through school tours, educational outreach programming, innovative digital offerings, and more, school-aged children are one of the largest constituencies served by Atlanta History Center.

Recognizing that inspiring curious, thoughtful, and empathetic young people is essential in building a shared future that is worth having, Atlanta History Center’s educational programming strives to encompass all of those characteristics.

School tours at Atlanta History Center are among our most popular offerings and each year over 20,000 school children are served. Of these, more than 9,000 attend school tours through free tours offered to Title I schools thanks to the generosity of The Zeist Foundation and The Connolly Family Foundation. Tours are customizable in a variety of ways to account for English as Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), accessibility, and other needs.

Atlanta History Center school tours are immersive and designed to invite curiosity and participation. This year, we unveiled our new tour on Cherokee Indian history *We Are Still Here: An Exploration of Cherokee Life and Culture*. Throughout the tour, students participate in simulations, listen to Cherokee voices, use primary sources, and travel throughout spaces on campus that encourage immersion. An integral part of this tour is Wood Cabin, an 1840s log cabin that is used to talk about the Land Lottery system; both from the perspective of the indigenous people who were removed from their land to enable that system, as well as the white settlers who gained land. Students access the cabin by walking along the new Swan Woods Boardwalk—itsself a site of storytelling. The Boardwalk provides an accessible path through woodlands leading to native plant meadows surrounding the cabin, making this an experience immersed in the land, culture, and history.

Atlanta History Center staff members sought guidance from the Museum of the Cherokee Indian in Cherokee, North Carolina while developing the tour. Staff members visited the museum to use their archives for research, in addition to viewing exhibitions, listening to storytelling, and experiencing living history demonstrations. Members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians also offered authentic perspectives on Cherokee history and culture.

By using this in-depth research and collections, Atlanta History Center staff crafted a tour on our campus that connects the history and culture of the Cherokee people from pre-removal to the present day. Through this tour, educational staff ask students: What does it mean to be Cherokee? How did Cherokee identity become shaped by the land on which they lived before their 1830s removal? How do Cherokee carry their identity today? Culture is used as a focal point to explore these topics.



“We noticed that students were able to get more out of the experience when we approached them with culture as a connection point. When we talked about music, food, crafts, clothing, language, and other factors that make up culture, students really connected with that. We saw that they were much more engaged and receptive to learning about history,” says Felicia Wheeler, Interpreter and museum educator.

Museum of the Cherokee Indian staff visited Atlanta History Center on December 3, 2019, to experience the tour, while seeking advice from Atlanta History Center staff on how to use new educational techniques in their own interpretation work. In this way, Atlanta History Center is forging important cross-institutional relationships that offer opportunities for improving both organizations.







Other on-campus offerings include Magic Mondays and Homeschool Days. Magic Mondays are geared toward toddlers, offering opportunities inspired by the unique environments and resources available at Atlanta History Center for young children to play, explore, and discover. Homeschool Days offer a variety of age-appropriate experiences designed to be inclusive of children K-12. These programs are centered around a certain topic in history, inspiring students and parents to work together to discover how to tell their own stories.

“Digital and distance learning is going to continue to be an important part of the educational landscape and is an area where museums play a vital role. Through storytelling, interactive activities, performances, and project-based learning, students can connect with the past and understand how they can be good history-makers.”

SHATAVIA ELDER, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

While on-campus programs provide valuable experiences for encouraging conversations about history, educational outreach programming seeks to bring resources to students in their classrooms. Emily Cobb, Outreach Programs Manager, regularly traverses Georgia, visiting classrooms of all ages to present Characters in the Classroom presentations. Presentations cover topics including Native American history, Colonial America, Civil War, World War II, and the Civil Rights Movement. Traveling Trunks are also available for monthly rental and are filled to the brim with tools for teachers to use when creating lesson plans. A teacher’s guide is included with each trunk, along with books, posters, documentaries, music from the time period, and both reproduction and real, deaccessioned artifacts. For example, students can see authentic 1920s clothing or currency from various time periods. In total, there are 35 trunks available for travel across Georgia. During the 2018-2019 school year, Emily Cobb traveled over 3,316 miles and served students from 36 Georgia counties.

Atlanta History Center also serves as the state coordinator of Georgia’s Poetry Out Loud program, a national poetry recitation competition presented in partnership with the Georgia Council for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Poetry Foundation. In the past seven years, the state of Georgia has had a national placement in five of those years. During the preparation process Atlanta History Center coordinates regional competitions in metro Atlanta, Ellijay, and McRae, as well as organizing two workshops in metro Atlanta and South Georgia available to any Poetry Out Loud participant. Poetry Out Loud provides valuable appreciation for a diverse range of poetry, as well as encouraging students to build confidence in public speaking. This year, Georgia hosted its state competition virtually.

As Atlanta History Center moves forward, continuous improvements will be made to the educational curriculum, programs, and offerings in order to use our resources effectively. The heart of a museum’s mission is education, and Atlanta History Center is no different. With the increasing shift to online learning, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, our education team has adapted and created online content and curriculum to meet the needs of a variety of students. It is a great opportunity to take our on-campus offerings and align that content with instructional practices that produce authentic digital content for the purposes of bringing history to life. Even if our offerings look a little different next year, mobilizing our resources to assist the next generation in learning about their shared history is a vital part of our work—and a vital part of creating a better community for everyone.

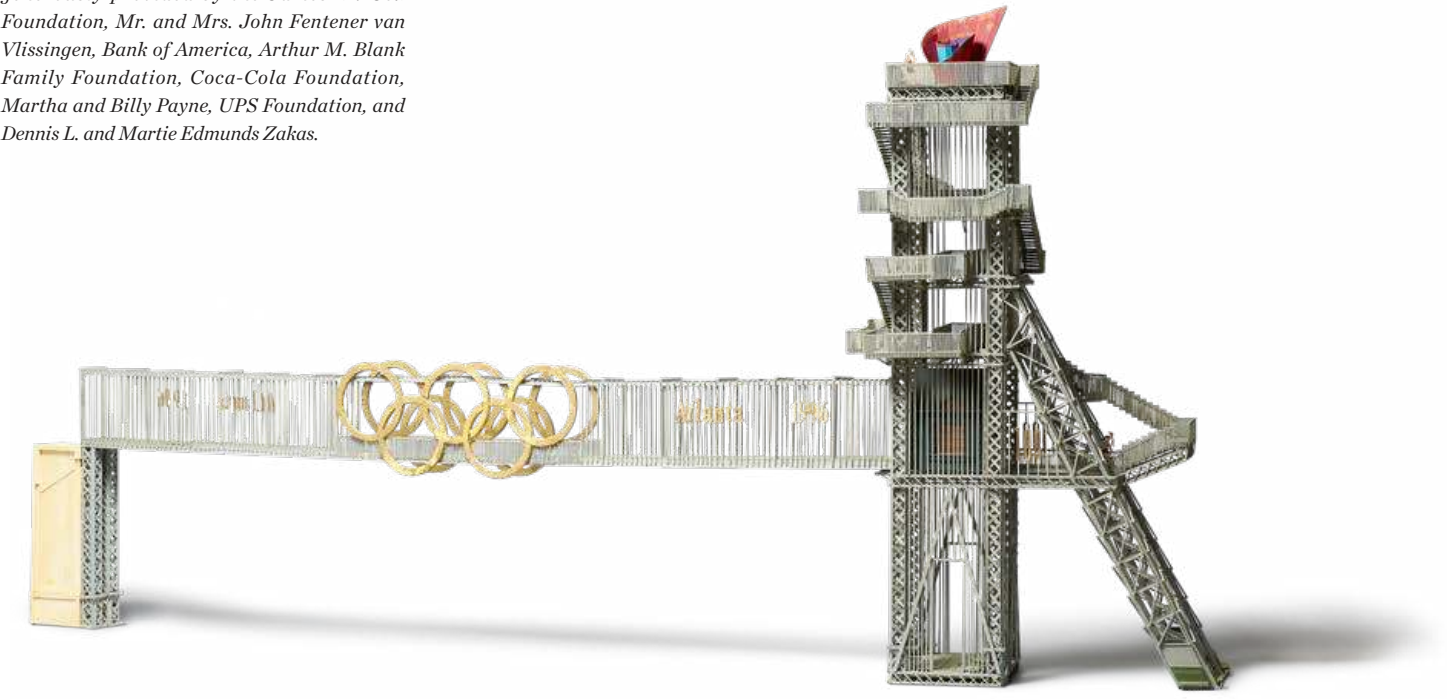


# ATLANTA ‘96: SHAPING AN OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC CITY

BY SARAH DYLLA  
OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC  
EXHIBITION CURATOR

Opens  
September 19, 2020

Major support of this exhibition has been generously provided by the James M. Cox Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. John Fentener van Vlissingen, Bank of America, Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, Coca-Cola Foundation, Martha and Billy Payne, UPS Foundation, and Dennis L. and Martie Edmunds Zakas.



## About the Exhibition

More than 20 years after the 1996 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Atlanta History Center is preparing to open a new signature exhibition that examines what it means to be a host city. Looking beyond the day-by-day stories of the Games, athletes, medal counts, and memorable moments, the exhibition places the project of bidding for and staging the Games in a longer context of the history of Atlanta and fellow host cities, past and future.

Hosting the Games is one of many efforts Atlanta has undertaken to reinvent itself for the pursuit of national and international prominence. Government and business leaders viewed the Games as an opportunity for economic growth and urban revitalization. For engaged citizens from across the region, the Games were a backdrop for social change or a driver of dream projects.

Atlanta’s Games built on growing trends in Olympic and Paralympic history, impacting Games after 1996 as well as the city they inhabited. They strove to be the best ever, expanding size, scale, and complexity of the preparations from Games before them. Organizers considered post- Games uses for new facilities, increased the focus on arts and culture alongside sport, and built on new funding models.

The story of the 1996 Games is the story of a massive community project, with ripple effects that are still present today. The new exhibition draws on the collections of Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games, individual donors, and peer institutions to spark nostalgia for those who remember the Games and create relevance for those unfamiliar with the story. It seeks to expand on common memories of an event to prompt visitors to think about how we can change the places we live.



## The Path to Paralympic Parity

To many, the story of the 1996 Paralympic Games remains lesser known than its Olympic counterpart. Nonetheless, the Paralympic Games marked a milestone for disability rights and left their mark on the city of Atlanta.

The Paralympic Games were born out of the Stoke Mandeville Games, competitions held in the United Kingdom for injured World War II veterans. The first official Paralympic Games were held in coordination with the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. By 1988, the Games in Seoul launched an unofficial movement to hold both Games in the same city. In 1992, Barcelona continued this practice. Yet, without a formalized mandate, Atlanta’s Olympic committee originally focused on securing and preparing for the Olympic Games alone.

Shortly after Atlanta won the bid, disability rights activists, past Paralympians, and leaders of the Shepherd Center assembled to ensure that the 1996 Games built on the momentum for unity between the Olympic and Paralympic committees. A major presence in spinal injury healthcare and disability sport, the Shepherd Center and co-founder Alana Shepherd used their platform to negotiate with the Olympic organizers for partnerships and facilities, and to identify funding. As a result, the 1996 Paralympic Games leapt past the scale of previous Games, attracted the first global sponsorships of any Paralympic Games, and gained fans with the colorful mascot, Blaze.

Atlanta’s Paralympic success was not without struggle. The 1996 Games were the first hosted in the U.S. after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the construction of large-scale facilities compliant with new accessibility standards resulted in legal battles and learning curves. Atlanta’s Paralympic organizers situated themselves in these larger conversations, increasing the accessibility of local transit and directing the third Paralympic Congress to cover economic and political advancement for the disability community.

Since 1996, the Paralympic Games have continued to fight for equality for athletes with disabilities. Just after the Sydney Games in 2000, Olympic and Paralympic officials signed an agreement to guarantee the two Games take place in the same city. In the summer of 2019, the United States Olympic Committee changed its name to United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee.

THIS PAGE (CLOCKWISE)  
*Shepherd and Samaranch shaking hands*  
L to R: Alana Shepherd, Harald Hansen, Andy Fleming, Juan Antonio Samaranch. Unidentified photographer, circa 1996; Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation Collection, Kenan Research Center at Atlanta History Center

*Blaze the Phoenix*  
Dakin & Co., Woodland Hills, CA, circa 1996  
Gift of Dr. David Apple, 2019

As we look back at the history of the 1996 Games, Atlanta History Center seeks to tell a fuller story of the city’s time as host. Preparations for the new exhibition have included collecting initiatives to acquire objects and records that help tell the story of the Paralympic Games.



OPPOSITE PAGE (CLOCKWISE)  
*Torch, 1996 Olympic Games*  
Malcolm Gear Designers, designer; Sam V. Shelton, Georgia Tech, engineer; Hillerich & Bradsky Co. and Erie Plating Company, manufacturers. Aluminum, Georgia pecan wood. Gift of Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation, 2002  
*Model of Centennial Olympic Cauldron*  
Siah Armajani, 1994, Balsa wood, paint, gold leaf. Gift of Georgia Amateur Athletic Foundation, 2002



# FROM THE COLLECTIONS

BY MICHAEL ROSE  
CHIEF MISSION OFFICER

The collections of Atlanta History Center include tens of thousands of artifacts, manuscripts, heirlooms plants and animals, and more. Here are three of our most interesting objects.



## Land Deed: District 17, Land Lot 231

**SURVEYED SEPTEMBER 21, 1821, STATE OF GEORGIA DEED TO ALSTON HUNTER GREEN, MARCH 6, 1833 (PICTURED ON THIS PAGE)**

Standing Peachtree, *Pakanahuli*, was a Native American settlement and trading center at the confluence of the Chattahoochee River and Peachtree Creek. Artifacts discovered at the site date from the Archaic period around 8000 BCE. During the War of 1812, the state of Georgia built Fort Peachtree at the site to survey activity of the Creeks, who were aligned with the British.

Between 1805 and 1833, state-run land lotteries redistributed property formerly inhabited by Creek and Cherokee people. Typically, those approved to draw in the lottery were white men over 18, widows, and orphans. The fourth land lottery distributed lands gained from the Creek people through the First Treaty of Indian Springs of 1821 and included the site of present-day Atlanta.

In December 1827, the state legislature authorized sale of territory reserved for the use of the state and not included in the 1821 lottery. This included the partial Lot 231 comprised of 183 acres.

Surveyed in September 1821, Alston Hunter Green purchased the lot in March 1833, for \$4.50. Green already owned extensive property along the Chattahoochee River nearby. A street named in his honor was Green Street, then Hunter Street, and now Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. Also named for him is Greensferry Avenue, which runs between Spelman College and the campuses of Clark Atlanta University and Morehouse College.

Of all the historic sites in the Atlanta area, the location of Standing Peachtree remains the most iconic. From here come the names of 71 city streets with some variation of Peachtree – or Peach Tree as it appears on the original 1821 survey.

*Greene-Hopkins-Wadkins Land Grants Collection, Gift of Virlyn B. Moore Jr.*

## United States Colored Troops ID Badge of Benjamin Hannan

(PICTURED RIGHT)

Atlanta History Center is making a special effort to collect artifacts relating to African American soldiers in the Civil War. We recently acquired a very rare identification badge belonging to a soldier in the 97th U.S. Colored Troops (USCT).

Benjamin George Hannan was one of 21,000 formerly enslaved residents or a free person of color of Louisiana who joined the U.S. Army as it fought its way up the Mississippi River in 1863. Because armies did not issue dog tags in the Civil War, soldiers often purchased their own identification badges. As a point of pride, Hannan had his badge marked not only with his name and regiment, but also with six battles or sieges in which he participated.

When Hannan reached U.S. lines, he enlisted in the 3rd Corps d’Afrique Engineers. Thirty Corps d’Afrique regiments organized in Louisiana in 1863. It is interesting to note that Hannan’s badge includes May 1863 as his enlistment date, three months before the corps was organized. The regimental designation changed to 97th United States Colored Troops, April 4, 1864.

Following the war, Hannan saw service in Mobile and at various points in the Department of the Gulf. He was mustered out of service, April 6, 1866.

*Purchase with funds from Massey Charitable Trust*



## Franklinia alataamaha

**PLANTED 1982  
MARY HOWARD GILBERT MEMORIAL QUARRY GARDEN,  
GOIZUETA GARDENS  
(PICTURED ABOVE)**

Commonly called the Franklin Tree, the *Franklinia alataamaha* is believed to have been native only to Georgia. The last specimen seen in the wild was recorded in 1803, making it one of the world’s rarest trees.

The famous botanist and horticulturist John Bartram of Philadelphia discovered the tree in 1765. Traveling through the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida, the tree was growing along the Altamaha River near Darien along the Georgia coast.

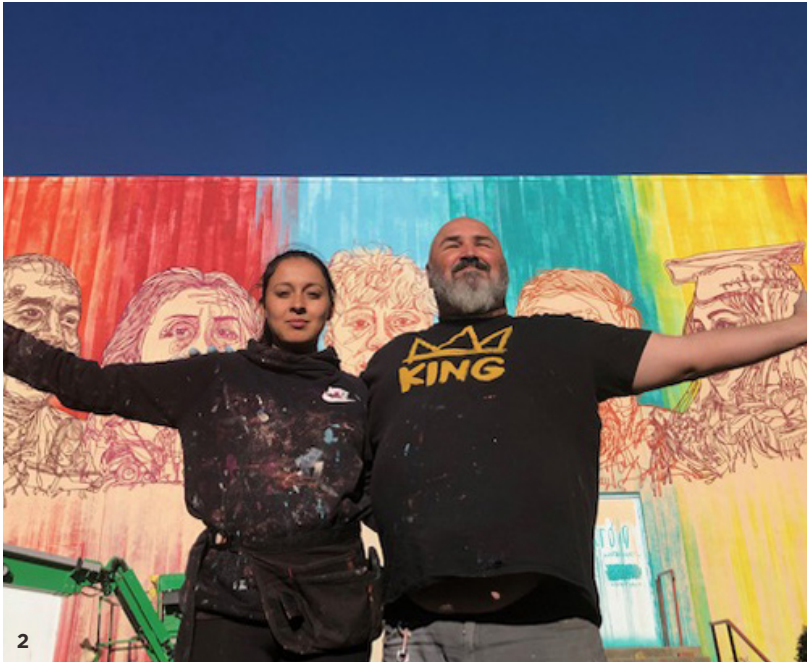
In his diary, Bartram described it as a “beautiful shrub” and named it in honor of his friend Benjamin Franklin as well as the river along which it grew [the species name, *alataamaha*, is Bartram’s [mis]spelling of *Altamaha*]. Bartram and his son returned to their nursery in Philadelphia with specimens and seeds of the *Franklinia*.

William Bartram later returned to Georgia and noted seeing more specimens in 1773. He recorded, however, that in all his travels he had only seen the tree growing in a three-acre area along the Altamaha River. Today, all existing Franklin trees are descendants of specimens that the Bartrams cultivated in the 1760s.

In 1982, Atlanta History Center planted a *Franklinia alataamaha* in the Gilbert Quarry Garden in celebration of Georgia’s semiquincentennial. Appropriately, the garden is the site for one of the state’s largest collections of native plant materials. Today, the Goizueta Gardens’ Franklin tree is the state champion—an honor bestowed based on a combination of height, trunk circumference, and crown spread.







BY CLAIRE HALEY  
SPECIAL ADVISOR  
TO THE CEO

At Atlanta History Center, our goal is to be a community resource and connector. We define community as our broad metropolitan Atlanta region as well as the smaller communities and neighborhoods that make up our vibrant city.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We all contribute to the places that we call home, the people with whom we share space, strangers whose lives we touch. In these ways, every single one of us plays a role in the events that become history. To understand that impact, Atlanta History Center is developing partnerships with the many communities that make up our city, sharing varied experiences and perspectives that Atlantans might not otherwise ever know. Through these relationships, we hope to build understanding and appreciation for how the complex web of different people, experiences, and stories work together to create one Atlanta. Together, we reach broader audiences and strengthen each other’s efforts to preserve local history.

Through initiatives such as the Neighborhood Initiative, and projects that are based around partnerships in exhibitions, and programs, we seek to amplify stories, craft new experiences that feel relevant and personal, and build community capacity to continue this work independently. This crucial work, led by Vice President of Historical Interpretation and Community Engagement, Calinda Lee, and Vice President of Author Programs and Community Engagement, Kate Whitman, expands Atlanta History Center’s content expertise and allows us to share what we have learned both on and off campus.

Making Change: *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow* Programs

The traveling exhibition *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow* began its showing at Atlanta History Center on January 18, 2020 and will be on view until February 28, 2021. While the exhibition focuses on the fight for full citizenship by African Americans from Reconstruction until the end of the First World War, community partnerships and programming work to stimulate important discussions centered around themes explored throughout the exhibition. Atlanta History Center developed new and regionally-specific content and programming with the help of partners, including Spelman College and the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library. In addition to this work, other cultural institutions, notably the High Museum of Art, Georgia Museum of Art, and the Clark Atlanta University Museum of Art, shared objects for this special show.

Community events hosted in conjunction with *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow* included a Community Dinner where guests visited the exhibition and then reflected on their personal experiences inspired by the exhibition content and facilitated prompts. On March 1, 2020, along with our partners Spelman College and AUC’s Woodruff Library, we hosted an afternoon exploring *Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow* and African Americans’ struggles for racial equality and full rights from 1865 to today. This talk featured Dr. Carol Anderson, Charles Howard Candler Professor and Chair of African American Studies at Emory University, in conversation with Dr. Samuel Livingston, Associate Professor and Director of the African American Studies Program at Morehouse College. The discussion focused on Dr. Anderson’s most recent critically acclaimed book, *One Person, No Vote: How Voter Suppression is Destroying Our Democracy* and was held at Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library.

Neighborhood Initiative: Catalyzing Action

Through the Neighborhood Initiative, Atlanta History Center works with local stakeholders within Atlanta neighborhoods to create exhibition components that are included in the signature exhibition *Gatheround: Stories of Atlanta*. In addition to this presence on our campus, the exhibition content also travels out to the local community in a reimagined form, developed jointly by Atlanta History Center and local community partners.

**1** After working with Atlanta History Center on an installment within *Gatheround*, neighbors in Inman Park decided to engage our institution in facilitating an oral history project. Together with Lifelong Inman Park, the Inman Park Neighborhood Association and Atlanta History Center are conducting oral history workshops. Oral histories created through this project will be archived at Kenan Research Center. **2** Artists Yehimi Cambrón and Joseph Dreher completed a mural representing the contributions and history of the Latinx community in Atlanta. This mural, located in Northeast Plaza on Buford Highway, was the result of collaboration between Atlanta History Center, Northeast Plaza, the Latino Community Fund, the Latin American Association, and Freedom University. **3** In Oakland City and Bush Mountain, an application for mobile devices is being developed in partnership with the Emory Center for Digital Scholarship and two neighborhood associations. This app will offer a tour of both neighborhoods, with photos, video, oral histories, and text available for important sites.



Through this work, we use our collections, expertise, and other resources to co-curate accurate, inclusive Atlanta stories with our neighbors.



Atlanta History Center views the process of forming and working in partnership with communities to engage in co-curatorial practices as a key outcome. Therefore, rather than simply focusing on on-site exhibitions and events, we work collaboratively to discover local history and share it in creative ways in the places where it happened. We are documenting this process to share our learning with community partners and other cultural institutions. In every instance, we want to build capacity for historical interpretation in our region, to ensure that this work continues with or without Atlanta History Center’s direct involvement.

History on the BeltLine Trail: Atlanta History Center Works in Partnership to Share Local History

Atlanta History Center worked in partnership with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., Georgia State University, and Georgia Humanities Council to create “Once Divided, Reunited,” a project funded with a National Endowment for the Humanities Historic Places Planning Grant. Over the past two years, Atlanta History Center and partners have collaborated with Westview community residents to create a history exhibition on the Westside Trail. The goal of this grant is to enhance public spaces with historical context, contemporarily relevant information, and aesthetically-interesting images. Through a variety of public meetings and feedback sessions, community members shared areas of particular current and historical interest and offered their own stories and archival materials to enrich the project. Understanding that there was a desire to learn more about topics that have shaped Westview over the last century, the outdoor panels focus on issues ranging from housing to sustainable greenspace to business development and transportation. Due to current social distancing mandates, the project has been paused but we anticipate its completion and public launch before the end of 2020.

As we at Atlanta History Center move forward with our work around community engagement, we hope to continue to learn, grow, and be responsive to our community partners as we all work together to create new ways of making history.

4 Westview community members share their input about the “Once Divided, Reunited” project during a public input session.

Donor Profile

BY CHERI SNYDER  
VICE PRESIDENT OF  
DEVELOPMENT

Gloria Mallet and her daughter, Dr. Andrea Mallet-Reece, rarely miss an Atlanta History Center member event. Members since 2007 and Insiders since 2011, they have experienced almost every major exhibition and program in the years since. Vice President of Development Cheri Snyder talked to the mother-daughter duo to learn more about the path that led them to Atlanta History Center and what they value most about the institution.



GLORIA MALLET & ANDREA MALLET-REECE

CS Like me, you are not Atlanta natives. What first led you to the History Center? What keeps you coming back?

ANDREA Actually, a road sign on I-75 first drew us to the AHC. We had just moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles and were anxious to explore the city and its history—the History Center seemed like a good place to start. From our very first visit to the present, we have been delighted by the fascinating permanent and visiting exhibits, the educational and entertaining historical programs and interpretations, the great author programs and the beautiful grounds. We also thoroughly enjoy stepping back into Christmas past every year during Candlelight Nights. The staff is always friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable.

CS Why do you think organizations like the History Center are important to building community? What role can the History Center play in connecting communities?

GLORIA Organizations like the AHC are important to communities because they provide a vital link with the past, which can improve understanding and cooperation through education. We can learn through history that we have much more in common than we think. It is important to understand how institutions, events, and landmarks evolved, and the roles that historical figures played in that evolution. The facts are often surprising.

As African Americans, we have always been very appreciative of how the AHC features African American history so prominently and qualitatively. Inclusiveness and diversity in the telling of the history of the greater community goes a long way in bridging facets of the community together and the AHC does an excellent job. I think the outreach to school children through various programs is another key to connecting communities. Hopefully, the kids will learn from a young age what a great, fun, and important place the AHC is to visit, and will keep coming as they grow up and pass it on to the next generation.

CS If you had to choose a favorite exhibit and/or program you’ve experienced over the course of your years as a member, what would it/they be and why?

ANDREA There have been so many awesome exhibits and programs over the years, so it is very difficult to name one, but if we have to choose, it would be exhibit of the Martin Luther King Jr. papers in 2007. The exhibit of the collection was so well done and treated by the AHC as the treasure it is. However, we cannot sign-off without mentioning the Cyclorama. We developed a heightened interest in Civil War history a few years ago through the Ken Burns series. We visited the Cyclorama in Grant Park many times and were very sad at the rapid deterioration of the painting. We were so happy when the painting was acquired and restored by the AHC. We were also very happy and proud about the acquisition and display of the USCT 127th Regimental flag. We could go on and on. Thanks, Atlanta History Center!





**LEFT** *A youth volunteer shows children how to dye fabric during a family program.*

Though our adult volunteer involvement is certainly integral to our mission of connecting Atlantans with history and culture, our youth offerings serve as unique opportunities for education through outreach. We provide programming that attracts outgoing and eager high school students looking to educate their peers and model active citizenship. Both of our extracurricular options require participants to attend monthly meetings and accrue at least 50 hours of volunteer service over the course of the academic year, either on our Buckhead campus or out in the Atlanta community.

The Youth Ambassador program allows Atlanta-area public and private high school students to experience tours of and volunteer opportunities in our historic houses, member services department, curation and exhibition design divisions, public history initiatives, and more.

Meanwhile, the Junior Interpreter program features an increased age range to include Atlanta-area homeschool students as well as a seasonal schedule to encourage dynamic skills acquisition and application. From May to September, students spend two days per month assisting with the living history interpretation and related activities during daily operations and programs at Swan House and Smith Farm.

Junior Interpreters are more than docents; they are trained and supervised by interpretation staff members to demonstrate period-appropriate foodways, animal husbandry, blacksmithing, and other skills that help ensure that each guest’s experience is both immersive and meaningful.

Then, from October to May, Junior Interpreters scale back to one day per month working at our historic houses to devote time to a research project on a historical topic of their choice, using resources furnished by Kenan Research Center and aided by peer editing workshops. Topics in the 2019-2020 school year spanned a wide range, including the heroism of Harriet Jacobs, the birth of the Georgia peach industry, and the evolution of Atlanta’s Latin American music scene.

As the Junior Interpreter program shows, Atlanta History Center has many areas available for youth volunteers to work with the public or behind-the-scenes, and our students are committed to facilitating personal experiences of Atlanta history one visitor at a time.

YOUTH  
VOLUNTEERS

BY MIA WILLIS  
VOLUNTEER AND INTERN  
SERVICES ASSOCIATE

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