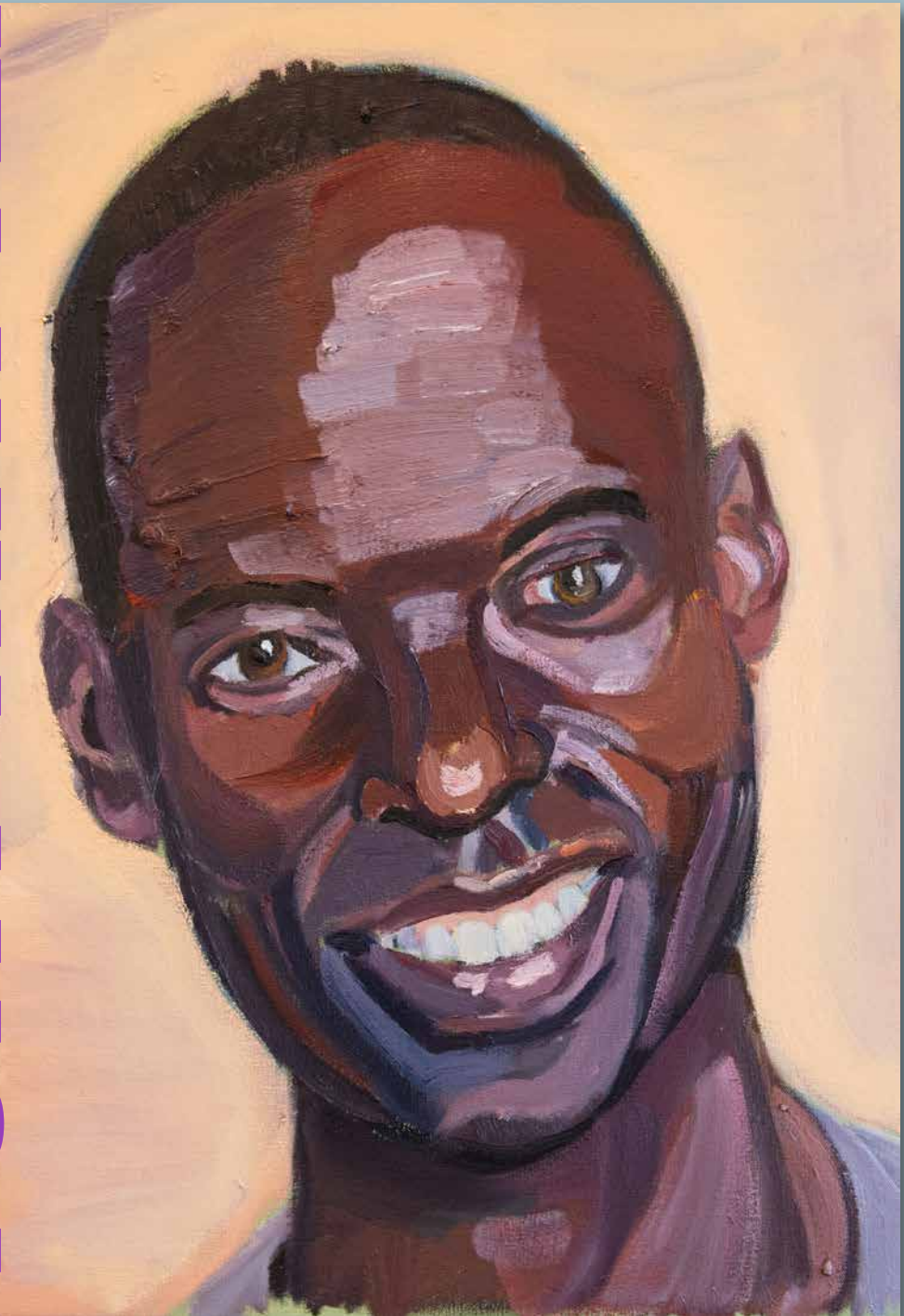


Spring 2022

HISTORY MATTERS



Gilbert Tuhabonye, Burundi. George W. Bush. Oil on stretched canvas, 18"x24"

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*Out of Many, One: Portraits of
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This portrait is one of 43 on display in the traveling exhibition *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants*. For more information on the exhibit, please see page 18.

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MESSAGE
FROM THE
CHAIR & CEO

Howard D. Palefsky
Board Chair

Sheffield Hale
President & CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters of
Atlanta History Center:

After a long two years grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are excited to present to you the new Strategic Plan for Atlanta History Center, which will carry the institution through its 100th anniversary in 2026. As an auspicious coincidence, that year also marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—a fitting moment to frame our strategic commitment to strengthening our democratic system.

In the next few pages, you will find an abbreviated version of our new strategic plan along with several articles detailing Atlanta History Center's new Democracy Initiative. Through this work, we hope to identify ways that history can be a catalyst for solutions and work alongside other organizations and our community to create a better Atlanta and stronger democracy.

Of course, we also continue to bring in new exhibitions, programs, and digital stories. We invite you to visit our newest temporary exhibition, *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants* painted by former President George W. Bush, on view until July 4th. We're also honored to be the host of the national kick-off event for the 2022 Civic Season, a new civic tradition entering its second year with a goal of engaging young Americans (and young-at-heart Americans) in historically-informed civic engagement.

None of this work would be possible without the support of our member and donor community, and we are grateful as always for your continued vote of confidence. We hope that you are as enthusiastic as we are about the institution's new strategic focus, and that you will visit online or onsite soon. We look forward to your feedback as we embark on this race to 2026 together.

Sincerely,

Sheffield Hale *Howard D. Palefsky*



A NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

As Atlanta History Center approaches the 100th anniversary of our founding in 2026, we are taking the opportunity to reflect on our institutional evolution and past strategic goals to plan for our next 100 years.

Nearly a century of existence offers us the opportunity to gain new perspective on our own institutional history, and the ways in which we have grown, the gaps in our collections and content that remain, and how we want to use these lessons to create an even stronger and more resilient institution for the future.

In December 2021, Atlanta History Center adopted a new strategic plan that aligns with our purpose to use history to bring people together to explore new and different perspectives with the goal of strengthening our shared commitment to, and engagement in, our democratic system. Below is a synopsis of the plan. A full detailed version of our Guiding Principles and Strategic Plan are available on [our website](#).

OUR PURPOSE

Use history to bring people together to explore new and different perspectives with the goal of strengthening our shared commitment to, and engagement in, our democratic system.

OUR MISSION

Connect people, culture, and history to cultivate understanding of our shared history.

OUR METHODS

We believe that by increasing the perspective each of us has on our shared history, more people will better understand what has worked, what has not, and how our history continues to influence the present. We will strive to present a more complete understanding of our history that will enable people to be more informed and inspired to engage in the democratic process.

WE WILL DO THIS BY:

- Communicating with our audiences in thoughtful, evidence-based, and creative ways in accordance with our Guiding Principles
- Sharing intriguing, surprising stories from multiple perspectives while amplifying untold and untold history to encourage understanding and recognition of different experiences.
- Using digital platforms to share stories that emphasize areas supported by our expertise, including the cause of and various narratives created to explain the Civil War and Reconstruction, Atlanta history, and how the city has changed over time.
- Working with communities to preserve, document and share stories of Atlanta that inform exhibition and program development
- Using a variety of mediums, including digital products, virtual programs, new and updated exhibitions, and in-person experiences to share stories credibly and compellingly
- Creating experiences (e.g., Community Free Days and Party with the Past programs) and content that is relevant and engaging to all our stakeholders and audiences, including people of color, people under the age of 50, and people throughout metro Atlanta.
- Recruiting, retaining, and developing Board members, staff, and volunteers reflective of the demographics of Metro Atlanta residents



OUR MEDIUMS

In-Person: Our two campuses serve as the repositories for our collections, exhibition galleries, historic houses and buildings, Kenan Research Center, and Goizueta Gardens. These facilities provide space to host educational, public, and family programming. Community-oriented experiences also occur at other sites throughout Atlanta.

Digital: Our digital experience will offer creative, meaningful, and substantive engagement well beyond our physical facilities. In an emerging world of virtual museum audiences and researchers, our brand must become synonymous with excellence in historical research, collecting, and interpretation.

Learn more



IF WE AREN'T FOCUSED ON DEMOCRACY, WHAT ARE WE DOING?



BY SHEFFIELD HALE
President & CEO

I’m hearing that we have a democracy problem in this country, and not only our country, but the entire world. We see evidence internationally in a European war, and here at home through deepening polarization on all sides of the political divide, fragmented responses to crises, and a rising cynicism and distrust of government.

Though the positioning of government as separate from the people is common, in a democratic republic like we have, government is created by and for the people. So if many people don’t trust it, that likely means that they don’t trust that “we the people” made a trustworthy decision. Evidence of this lies in the pendulum effect of politics that has become the norm, when one party gets in power and quickly sets to work undoing the previous party’s actions, or in mistrust of election results or a belief that the system will be destroyed if the other side wins.

Anecdotally, I have heard from many people that they feel hopeless or even resentful of others in their state and country. I do understand that tendency. In our Atlanta community in the past two years alone, I’ve seen evidence of fragmentation through the Buckhead City movement, the pandemic response, and the counting and recounting of ballots from the 2020 election. Many people don’t trust our system to adequately administer elections, the very foundation of democracy. The criminal justice system is seen as incapable of fairly administering justice. Many also don’t trust public health officials to guide us through a crisis unseen in the last hundred years. And, increasingly, we don’t seem to trust our fellow Atlantans to work constructively together to make a better city. Strong medicine.

“Fortunately, I am hopeful.”

When Atlanta History Center started considering our new strategic plan, we asked ourselves what our focus should be. Why is history important? What can it do for our Atlanta community? It soon became clear that the answer was democracy.

Though an amorphous concept, democracy is, at its heart, a local enterprise. Sure, we have national elections and focus on big issues in the news cycle, but the things that affect our day to day lives happen close to home in places like Neighborhood Planning Units, school boards, city halls, and community oversight boards. When these institutions are strong, we are in a better position to advocate for our communities on a larger scale.

Strong local institutions just don’t happen, and they need to be tended to with constant attention and care. That’s where history comes in. As a history organization, we go beyond the who, what, where, and when, though those are important, and seek to find the why. We search for the threads that bring our city together throughout its history, and the things that pull us apart.

This historical perspective is just that—a perspective that can help us better understand where our neighbor’s concerns originate, and why they believe or fear what they do. Connection to our history also shows us examples of ownership of our local communities, and how ordinary people over the years have done much to successfully shape their communities for the better.

RIGHT Four veterans of the United States Armed Forces, including two World War II veterans, pose for a photo at the 2021 Veterans Day program.



We seek to present this history in ways that give our guests time and room for consideration. Not all history is difficult to contemplate, but a lot of it is, especially if the evidence contradicts deeply and sincerely held beliefs. Our role as a history organization is not to berate our audiences and follow them out of the museum into the parking lot to make sure they learned something, but to create opportunities for hearing new or different perspectives. Whether that’s through a traditional museum function like an exhibition or a newer approach like a documentary, we’re trying to meet our guests—all of you—where you are. Understanding or trying to understand is not endorsement, but a tool to help us all learn how to work better together.

Staying in a place where we as an institution can relate to as wide a swathe of Atlanta as possible despite our larger culture of echo chambers and resentment is extremely difficult, and we do not always succeed. Our commitment to all of our guests though is to strive to do just that, and to show our work. It can be hard to discern which sources are trustworthy or legitimate, but our historical documents, photographs, and artifacts can help show the way.

As an institution, we’re enthusiastic about the prospects of a brighter future and the tiny but positive role we might be able to play in it. Furthermore, we’re humbled to have the opportunity to try. Given all these issues, as I said in one of our early strategic plan conversations, “If we aren’t focused on democracy, what are we doing?”

A COMMON THREAD: DEMOCRACY AT ATLANTA HISTORY CENTER



What does democracy look like at a history institution? Explore the below projects, events, and exhibitions to find out. Looking for more? Visit atlantahistorycenter.com to find more ways to get involved.



FEATURE SECTION: DEMOCRACY

AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: A GREAT LEAP OF FAITH

Though this traveling exhibition completed its Atlanta showing on March 23, 2022, *American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith* kicked off the democracy initiative at Atlanta History Center with a 5-month stop. The exhibition encouraged guests to explore the origins of our democratic system, the changes to it over time, and the ways to participate through voting, petitioning, protesting, and lobbying.

American Democracy: A Great Leap of Faith was developed by the National Museum of American History, adapted for travel by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, and funded locally by The Rich Foundation.

OUT OF MANY, ONE

Most of the people who live in the United States of America have family or ancestors who originated from another part of the world. In this exhibition containing watercolors painted by former President George W. Bush, learn about people who have made their way to the United States from countries around the globe. First person accounts accompany each portrait, giving visitors the chance to hear from people who have immigrated at all stages of their lives. See why the United States has developed into one of the most diverse constitutional democracies in the world—and how bonds of family and community hold us all together no matter our background.

On view until July 4, 2022. Out of Many, One: Portraits of America’s Immigrants at Atlanta History Center is presented by Invesco with special thanks to Southern Methodist University and is on loan from the Ambassador and Mrs. George L. Argyros Collection of Presidential Art at the George W. Bush Presidential Center, a nonprofit organization which houses the George W. Bush Institute. The Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative combines the public policy expertise of the George W. Bush Institute and the academic expertise of SMU. The joint initiative is committed to putting forth sound and viable immigration solutions. Additional support for Atlanta History Center showing is provided by Waffle House and the Connolly Family Foundation.

DEMOCRACY ON THE SMALLEST SCREEN

Authors and scholars from many different disciplines are also tackling the hard questions of what makes a democracy tick. Revisit our virtual programs from your phone, tablet, or computer on our comprehensive Author Talk YouTube playlist.

- In his book *The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure*, political scientist Yascha Mounk explores the origins of diverse democracies, the challenges they face, and possible solutions for creating more vibrant and participatory states. *Program recorded in May 2022.*
- If you’re interested in delving into the holiday that marks the promise of freedom fulfilled for Black Americans, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Annette Gordon-Reed delivers an elegant meditation in her book *On Juneteenth*. Part history and part analysis of her home state of Texas, where the holiday emerged, Gordon-Reed’s volume delivers insightful commentary on how history is made. *Program recorded in June 2021.*

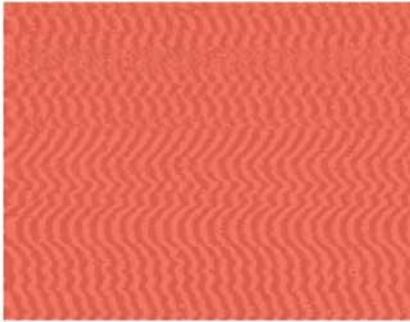


- If a first-person exploration of complicated American society is what you seek, Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher-Murray’s *The Personal Librarian* delivers. A fictionalized and deeply-researched novel focusing on the real-life Belle da Costa Greene, a Black woman who passed for white and worked as J.P. Morgan’s personal librarian, the book delves into the issues of class and race at the beginning of the twentieth century, the effects of which are still felt today. *Program recorded in June 2021.*
- If you want to better understand local community and why it is essential in holding together our larger country, look no further than Sam Quinones’s book *The Least of Us*. Tracing the evolution of the opioid crisis into a new crisis of fentanyl and meth addiction, Quinones details stories of community decay and repair in towns across the country and why this repair is key to a functioning democracy. *Program recorded in January 2022.*

SHARING STORIES

Though many of us will not be names in future history books, we all play a role in making history. Through oral history and contemporary collecting initiatives, digital storytelling projects, and our partnership with StoryCorps Atlanta, Atlanta History Center is dedicated to studying, preserving, and highlighting the voices of everyday people who make our democracy work. In our Veterans History Project, hear from more than 800 local veterans who defended democracy at home and abroad. In our digital stories, learn about the numerous ways ordinary people affected democracy, whether that be the impact of thousands of Black men who took up arms voluntarily as part of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War or the mom and pop restaurants who provided much-needed fuel and gathering places for Civil Rights activists in the 1950s and 1960s. Finally, make sure your own story and that of your family is preserved through StoryCorps, either by visiting the recording booth or using their mobile app.

History is only as good as our records—help us make future historians able to tell our stories.



A NEW KIND OF TRADITION: CIVIC SEASON 2022

BY CLAIRE HALEY
Vice President of PR & Programs

In 1776, many of the men who would go on to be recognized as Founding Fathers were young, earnest, and idealistic, and yet, their idea shaped the oldest surviving constitutional democracy and the world at large. At the same time, their ideas that “all men are created equal” did not extend to many people living in the fledgling democracy. To this day, since the US uses a system of amendments rather than adopting a new constitution when changed, the document still includes language describing enslaved individuals counting as 3/5 of human beings for population purposes to enable white people to have greater representation in Congress (Black men were not guaranteed the right to vote until 1870, Black women technically 1920, and neither fully able to vote consistently until the 1960s). This is but one example of the tension central to the founding of the United States—a country that cherishes liberty and justice but that simultaneously is still striving to ensure these ideas apply to everyone.

How then should we mark the important date of July 4, 2026? How can we recognize the complexity of the United States’s history while charting a new course forward that empowers every American?

Civic Season is a new tradition that seeks to engage young adults in exactly this challenge. Taking place between Juneteenth and July 4th, the story these two holidays illustrate provides space to take on the larger challenges and opportunities inherent in American Democracy. The Civic Season enters its second year with the goal of encouraging historically-informed civic engagement through honest discussion, community involvement, and shared joy.



Civic Season is the signature initiative of the Made By Us coalition, a consortium of more than 90 history and civics organizations across the country all dedicated to engaging young Americans through history. The online home of the initiative, thecivicseason.org, includes hundreds of events from across the country that encourage participation in a variety of ways, whether that be attending a local block party to better know neighbors, writing a member of Congress, or participating in a facilitated dialogue. Though the meaning often gets simplified to voting alone, democratic participation is not one singular action. Voting is important, but it’s just one way to get involved. Deeper engagement in community creates lasting change by inspiring members to show up and participate. That’s one of the many functions that history can serve—by learning about where we came from and what made the communities we have, perhaps we can all be more invested in what the future will look like.

As one of the Steering Committee organizations of the Made By Us initiative, Atlanta History Center is thrilled to host the national kick-off event for the Civic Season at Atlanta History Center Midtown on June 12, 2022. Though the initiative is geared towards younger Americans, all are invited and welcome to attend as we chart a course forward together. Come to hear speakers, meet neighbors, and watch events from around the country happening simultaneously.

Though the Civic Season is only two weeks long, engagement does not have to end there. Instead, the season is intended to be the welcome center for year-round participation in our Democratic Republic. The work will never be finished. But what an opportunity that is—to always be building, creating, and connecting with the 330 million Americans who share responsibility for moving us all forward. In our democratic republic, there is no room for spectators: it truly takes everyone.

Support for the 2022 Civic Season is generously provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Coca-Cola Company and AMERICAN HERITAGE® Chocolate. The Steering Committee of Made By Us includes Atlanta History Center, Smithsonian National Museum of American History, First Americans Museum, the National Archives Foundation, Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, the New-York Historical Society, the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, HistoryMiami, the Senator John Heinz History Center, and the Missouri Historical Society.



GOIZUETA GARDENS

GOIZUETA GARDENS: A WALK THROUGH OLGUITA’S GARDEN

BY **MONIQUE ROJAS**
Communications Coordinator

Olguita’s Garden honors the life of Goizueta Gardens’ namesake Olga “Olguita” C. de Goizueta. The garden inspired by English and Italian formal gardens is encircled by cream, weathered stucco walls with a path formed by crushed rock. Flanked on either side are a myriad of plants of many colors and varieties. Olguita’s Garden provides a beautiful backdrop for elopements, photoshoots, or snapping a quick picture for social media. Visitors can enjoy the garden year-round as our Gardens team rotates out plants to sustain an evergreen atmosphere.

The garden features spring favorites such as daffodils, tulips, and ornamental onions. Olguita’s Garden also includes a diverse palette of colors throughout the year that allows it to serve as a beautiful backdrop in the heart of Buckhead. In preparation for the summer, our gardens team will plant a series of tropical and subtropical plants to provide vibrant color to the garden for the next two upcoming seasons.

Towards the far end sits a circular water fountain shaded by greenery propped upon four pillars. When the weather warms up, dragonflies drag their legs across the water’s surface.

The garden is a must-see for garden enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

Olguita’s Garden is located next to the museum terraces and the entrance to Smith Farm.

SMITH FARM: 50 YEARS OF PRESERVATION, EDUCATION, AND HISTORY

BY CLAIRE HALEY
Vice President of PR & Programs



Driving down a side neighborhood street called Slaton Drive in the Buckhead community of Atlanta, Georgia, one might notice a relatively small white house, cabin, and rows of planted crops peeking through the trees. Located across from townhomes and adjacent to some of the grandest homes in Atlanta, that seemingly out-of-place feature on the Buckhead landscape is Smith Farm.

Smith Farm was not always located in Buckhead—in fact, for over 100 years, it was located on what is now North Druid Hills Road in DeKalb County, east of Interstate-85, roughly four miles from its current location. The farm itself is many things: historical time machine to discussing Georgia before, during, and after the Civil War for people both enslaved and free, a story of historic preservation and women’s volunteer efforts, and most of all, an educational cornerstone of the Southeast’s largest history museum.

Smith Farm marked 50 years of being a site of public education on April 10, 2022. Atlanta in 1972 was a much different place than Atlanta today, but the farm nonetheless continues to serve an educational role. Its fate of preservation, though, was not always so certain.

WHO WERE THE SMITHS?

Before diving into the story of how Smith Farm ended up in Buckhead in the first place, the first question must be: who were the Smiths? Robert Hiram Smith, his wife Elizabeth Smith, and their children lived in the Smith farmhouse now located at Atlanta History Center. Prior to emancipation, between eleven and nineteen enslaved people also lived and worked on the farm at any one time, their labor integral to farming such a large plot of land. The enslaved people worked the 600-acre farm, producing cotton, butter, honey, and oats along with hogs, cattle and sheep. The Smiths would be considered equivalent to upper middle class for their time and location within the state.

The house itself is a common style of Southern 19th-century vernacular architecture, though few examples exist today. The house has a two-story front and a one-story rear, doors and glazed windows aligned to provide light and ventilation, and chimneys and fireplaces made of brick (reconstructed on site). The detached kitchen located behind the house was constructed around the same time as the house itself.

After the Civil War and emancipation, Robert and Elizabeth Smith retained ownership of the farm until 1875, when Robert died and Elizabeth moved away. A portion of the original acreage, including the farmhouse and kitchen, was purchased by William Berry Smith (Robert Hiram Smith’s grandson) and his wife Mary Ella in 1881. Their daughter, Tullie Vilenah Smith, would go on to live in the house until her death in 1967.

- 1** Moving ca. 1845 Tullie Smith House to Atlanta Historical Society, 1969. The upper floor of the house was completely disassembled, while the lower floor was moved largely intact.
- 2** *Atlanta Journal* and *Constitution Magazine* ran a feature on the opening of the Tullie Smith House, Sunday, April 2, 1972. Pictured in various photographs are Minnette Boesel (formerly Bickel), Bettijo Trawick, Sally Hawkins, and Florence Griffin.
- 3** The Tullie Smith House in place at its Druid Hills location prior to its move to Atlanta History Center.



A HOME AND A HIGHWAY

As Atlanta grew following World War II, the Smith House, which had by now become known as the Tullie Smith House given Tullie Smith’s standing in the community, quickly became surrounded by development that threatened its survival. The construction of expressways, office parks, and other expansion was driven by the post-war boom. It also fueled the destruction of historic properties to make way for new development. As highways crept closer to the Tullie Smith House, the fate of the property was uncertain. Though its ailing owner wanted to preserve her historic home, Mrs. Smith did not make provisions before her death.

In 1969, the family of Tullie Smith gave the home to Atlanta History Center (AHC) following Mrs. Smith’s death in the house on July 27, 1967. The family contacted Mills B. Lane, well-known in business and political circles and passionate about historic preservation. Lane was president of Citizens & Southern National Bank (C&S) and a close friend of Mayor Ivan Allen Jr. Eventually, C&S Bank (now Bank of America) provided funds to move the house. Allen’s wife Louise Richardson Allen was highly involved with AHC.

Relocating the structures were no small task, especially the Tullie Smith House itself. The house could not be moved intact since it was too tall to clear power lines, trees, and traffic lights between its original location and its new Buckhead home. Hercules House Movers, working under general contractor Marvin M. Black, separated the first floor of the house from the second and moved the house in two large pieces. The house was stitched back together when it arrived at the Historical Society, after it was placed on a site which had been selected by landscape architects Edward Daugherty and Dan Franklin.

Once the Tullie Smith House and detached kitchen arrived at Atlanta History Center, the responsibility for the house fell to a passionate group of women volunteers. Recalling the day that the charismatic Mrs. Louise Allen asked her to chair a committee on the Tullie Smith House, Bettijo Cook Trawick recalled saying, “I don’t know anything about the 19th century,” given her expertise with 18th century antiques and history. Undeterred, Mrs. Allen informed her, “Well you can learn.”

Eventually, Mrs. Trawick agreed to chair the Tullie Smith House Restoration Committee. Fifty years later, recalling the state of the house, she remembered it being covered in mud and her friends teasing her for taking on such a project. Another volunteer, Sally Hawkins, soon became involved in the project as well after agreeing to conduct research on the house through her involvement in the Junior League of Atlanta. The two were soon joined by Florence Griffin, a former teacher and weather analyst who took on numerous volunteer projects related to antiques, history, and horticulture. “There wasn’t anything that Florence [and her husband] didn’t know,” Mrs. Hawkins remarked when remembering her friend, who died in 2008. Together, the three women tackled getting the house set in context with outbuildings, furnished, landscaped, and ready to open to the public. In a time when developers demolished historical buildings at a rapid clip, both preserving and enhancing such a structure was basically unheard of in Atlanta.

TRANSFORMING TULLIE SMITH HOUSE

Following two years of research, (and the listing of the house in the National Register of Historic Places in November 1970), the Tullie Smith House Restoration committee met January 27, 1971, and approved the restoration recommendations of cultural historian and historic preservationist William R. Mitchell, Jr. Shortly afterward, contractor W. Adrian Leavell was hired to complete the restoration work. That restoration work began in March 1971.



To furnish the house and complete the landscape, Mrs. Hawkins, Mrs. Trawick, and Mrs. Griffin traversed the state looking for suitable buildings, furnishings, and heirloom flowers and other plants for the surrounding landscape. The first outbuildings moved to accompany the house included the barn, originally built near Cartersville circa 1850. The volunteers then located a cabin, also dating from about 1850, and moved it onsite to allow for interpretation of enslaved life on a mid-19th Georgia Piedmont farm. Originally located in the Cliftondale area of Atlanta, the cabin’s architectural style was common in housing for enslaved individuals prior to the Civil War. The cabin briefly served as a craft shop at Smith Farm before that function was moved to the newly-built McElreath Hall. Over the years, the cabin has served as a vital component to supporting an accurate and complete depiction of the time period.

Gearing up for opening the farmhouse to the public, the institution and Mrs. Trawick hired Minnette Bickel (later Boesel) to serve as the first paid staff member to work at the farm. Mrs. Boesel got the job at Atlanta History Center right after completing her undergraduate degree in art history. She busied herself writing a detailed docent manual, learning crafts and trades for demonstrations that would take place on the farm, and developing educational tours for elementary school children (a key part of our visitors to the farm even today). Other volunteers and organizations pitched into the massive project, including notably the Poppy Garden Club, which Mrs. Boesel recalled providing high-quality costumes for the docents and Mrs. Trawick remembered also providing fresh plant material for holiday décor.

Mrs. Hawkins, Mrs. Trawick, and Mrs. Griffin also took on the furnishing of the farmhouse with 1840s furniture and led the creation and planting of a swept yard with heirloom flowers. At the end of a long day, the three women occasionally relaxed on the porch of the Tullie Smith House and enjoyed a glass of wine.

On April 10, 1972, Smith Farm opened to the public in a highly publicized event during Atlanta’s Dogwood Festival. A unique project, especially in its time, Smith Farm attracted widespread media attention in both local and national press.

Looking back at the massive undertaking and rapid speed of the Smith Farm project, President & CEO Sheffield Hale notes matter-of-factly, “Of course they did it in a few years. It was all led by women.”

After the Smith Farm opening, volunteers and staff members gradually began to move on to the next project. Mrs. Boesel pursued a master’s degree in historic preservation at Columbia University, later serving as the first Executive Director of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and beginning a long career in historic preservation. Mrs. Trawick became deeply involved in the Fox Theatre preservation campaign, while Mrs. Hawkins and Mrs. Griffin assisted in creating the landmark *Neat Pieces* exhibition at Atlanta History Center. Even in 2022, though Mrs. Griffin, Mrs. Allen, and many others are gone, the remaining women who united behind the effort to move, preserve, and create the first iteration of Smith Farm’s interpretation still keep in close touch—a friendship now also celebrating 50 years.



50 YEARS LATER

Today, Smith Farm continues to serve as a centerpiece of education on Atlanta History Center’s campus. The landscape now features live animals—heirloom breeds of Gulf Coast sheep, Angora goats, standard bronze turkeys, and Rhode Island red hens—as well as carefully curated gardens and landscapes, including the swept yard, kitchen garden, field, and enslaved people’s garden. That garden, located outside of the enslaved people’s cabin, features crops and planting styles reflective of those some enslaved individuals were allowed to plant to supplement their food rations. In a 2021 *Garden & Gun* article about that garden and its importance to telling the full story of farms, such as Smith Farm, James Beard Award-winning author and culinary educator Michael Twitty remarked, “It’s one of the most fantastic botanical landscapes, curated landscapes, in the South. ... This is a shared history, and the way the Center tells these stories is revolutionary.”

As for the farmhouse and other outbuildings, Atlanta History Center staff continue to maintain and make appropriate changes to best preserve the structures and reflect the most historically accurate architecture, decoration, and construction, in both large and small ways. Most recently, a new fence installed in April 2022 more accurately depicts a similar type of fencing to what the Smith’s would have been able to afford, while replacement of rotting roof timber and similar maintenance continues on a regular basis.

Even as the structures stay the same, interpretation and education continue to evolve on the farm, as well as at the entire institution. Fifty years provides a natural reflection point as Smith Farm—the first addition to the original Swan House property—enters a new era at a time when history is equal parts contested, questioned, and commemorated.

Recognizing the importance of the farm and its outbuildings—as well as its ongoing role in educating Atlanta residents and visitors to our city—on December 30, 2021, the Atlanta Urban Design Commission designated the Smith Farm as a City of Atlanta Historic Building Site.

When the Smith House was built 180 years ago, Atlanta was a dot on a map, enslavement of humans was the law of the land, and the country was careening toward a bloody and violent Civil War. Fifty years ago, when the historic house opened, Atlanta was grappling with the recent assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., growing at a rapid pace and losing its historic structures in the process, and in the midst of a bloody, controversial war in Vietnam. These contexts for Smith Farm’s notable moments are a poignant reminder of all that our historic structures have seen, but also all that Atlantans have witnessed.

Place-based history has a role to play in ongoing deliberations over our history and future. Through educational school tours, thoughtful curation of plants and animals, and continuous research through which new evidence is uncovered and new understandings are reached. As a result, we consistently update the interpretation of Smith Farm, allowing the landscape to serve as an immersive historical resource for people of all ages. The landscape also reminds us of how active and engaged community members can make a difference through a project, such as historic preservation. Historic preservation and studying the full, complex, sometimes



OUT OF MANY, ONE: PORTRAITS OF AMERICA'S IMMIGRANTS

In the Nicholson Gallery, large oil paintings of composed faces greet guests. Each face is distinctly different, telling a story without any words. Contemporary art living on the walls of a historical institution seems highly unlikely; however, these portraits invite a narrative that is important to the history of the United States: stories of immigration. Their source is even more unlikely. These pieces made their way from the home and hand of 43rd President George W. Bush in Texas to Atlanta History Center.

Former president and newfound artist President Bush spent his years after the White House learning oil painting techniques from private instructors. During this time, he developed a series of paintings representing the voices of people across a variety of circumstances, which he painted from photographs. After reading former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s essay “Painting as a Pastime,” Bush found solace in oil painting.

The Great Seal of the United States, which has served as an emblem for the nation for centuries, inspired the exhibition’s title and corresponding book. E PLURIBUS UNUM—“out of many, one”—aids as a reminder of the United States’ ability to unite individuals from all backgrounds and cultures as one nation.

Despite differing opinions on immigration policies, the actual experiences of the people immigrating to the country are often left out of the conversation. This exhibition provides a glimpse into the intricate stories of 43 people who found themselves calling the United States their home.

The paintings and stories are of people who hail from countries worldwide.

Testimonies of immigration include those like Zunita Cummins, who found her way to the states from Panama as an international college student, along with Tony George Bush, who served as a translator for American soldiers in Iraq. He later immigrated to the United States and named himself after Bush following his naturalization ceremony.

“Everyone’s immigration story is unique, but together they provide a snapshot of a common experience,” said President & CEO of Atlanta History Center, Sheffield Hale, “These paintings are powerful and provide a distinctive perspective on what it means to be an American. As we consider how to create a more functional and fair democracy for everyone who lives in our country, understanding the immigrant experience is a crucial component.”

Out of Many, One will be on display at Atlanta History Center from April 12th to July 4th, 2022.

Out of Many, One: Portraits of America’s Immigrants at Atlanta History Center is presented by Invesco with special thanks to Southern Methodist University and is on loan from the Ambassador and Mrs. George L. Argyros Collection of Presidential Art at the George W. Bush Presidential Center, a nonprofit organization which houses the George W. Bush Institute. The Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative combines the public policy expertise of the George W. Bush Institute and the academic expertise of SMU. The joint initiative is committed to putting forth sound and viable immigration solutions. Additional support for Atlanta History Center showing is provided by Waffle House and the Connolly Family Foundation.

BY MONIQUE ROJAS
Communications Coordinator

SWAN HOUSE BALL



In 1986, Atlanta Historical Society, now Atlanta History Center, recognized a need to raise funds for increased programming, growing staff, and a proposed museum. They wanted the fundraiser to be fun, elegant, and meaningful. Louise Allen, wife of former Atlanta mayor Ivan Allen, was vice chairwoman of the Historical Society and was active in every aspect of its affairs. She was instrumental in convincing the Historical Society to purchase Swan House when her aunt, Emily Inman, died in 1965. Mrs. Allen teamed up with Society members Lorraine Williams and Barbara Smith, and consulted Terry Brown, the wife of George Brown IV of the Ritz-Carlton hotel chain. Brown was well-known in Atlanta for her success with coordinating other prominent galas. Together these women took it upon themselves to get the ball rolling. Because Swan House was built in 1928, the ball committee members decided they wanted the first gala to have the feel of a 1920s party—and they delivered.

In the spirit of the original Swan House owner, Emily Inman, the Swan House Ball is now an Atlanta tradition steeped in elegance and community. For nearly four decades, some of Atlanta’s greatest business, social, and community leaders have come together each year for a night of fun, fashion, fellowship, and philanthropy. While the look, feel, and themes of the ball have dramatically changed over time, the mission remains the same—to raise funds to support the annual operations of Atlanta History Center and its educational programs while honoring those who have given not just to the History Center, but to the city of Atlanta.

After several postponements due to the pandemic, Swan House Ball returned in October 2021 to honor Lovette Twyman Russell, followed quickly by the April 2022 Ball honoring Thomas Fanning.

The 35th Swan House Ball honoring Lovette Twyman Russell was one to remember. Chaired by Roz Brewer, Vicki Palmer, and Jack Sawyer, the Ball celebrated Lovette, a pillar of the philanthropic community in Atlanta. Lovette’s resiliency and determination carried her through a devastating diagnosis that eventually led to a double lung transplant in 2019. Lovette never let the illness or surgery slow her down, continuing her philanthropic endeavors throughout and even completing the Peachtree Road Race in 2021—two years after the transplant.

- 1 Dancing at the 35th Annual Swan House Ball
- 2 36th Annual Swan House Ball Chairs Sloane Drake and Victoria Palefsky
- 3 36th Annual Swan House Ball Honoree Thomas Fanning and Sarah Fanning
- 4 Mayor Andre Dickens, Nicole Evans, Sheffield Hale
- 5 John Brewer, Event Chair Roz Brewer, Michael Russel Sr., 35th Annual Swan House Ball Honoree Lovette Twyman Russell, Event Chair Vicki Palmer, John Palmer, Bill Torres, and Event Chair Jack Sawyer

Lead sponsors for the 35th Annual Swan House Ball included:

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The 36th Annual Swan House Ball took place on Saturday, April 23, 2022. Honoring Thomas Fanning, Chairman, President and CEO of Southern Company, the Ball was chaired by Sloane Drake and Victoria Palefsky. Guests enjoyed an elegant evening celebrating the community leadership of Fanning, who has worked at Southern Company for more than 35 years. A graduate of Georgia Tech, Fanning has been deeply involved in the Atlanta community for decades, while also leading nationally on issues related to energy security, nuclear power, and energy innovation, among others.

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Swan House Ball remains an integral part of community support for Atlanta History Center’s educational programming. The institution is deeply grateful to the many people over the past 36 years who have supported the Ball and looks forward to many more to come.

JUNETEENTH 2022

BY MONIQUE ROJAS
Communications Coordinator

On June 19, 1865, a group of Union troops stopped in Galveston, Texas, to inform enslaved people and those who enslaved them that the Civil War was over, the Confederacy was defeated, and that enslaved people in the state of Texas were free. Although President Abraham Lincoln, freed enslaved people held in the Confederate States in his Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, many slaveholders in Texas refused to comply. Every year after has been observed as the holiday Juneteenth, a celebration of that fateful day in Galveston. Juneteenth stands today as a holiday to reflect on our nation’s history, celebrate emancipation, and look towards the impact of Black culture and community in the future.



President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law, making Juneteenth a federal holiday for the very first time in 2021. The holiday will now be observed nationally on June 19. This is a stride to recognize and celebrate the Black American experience throughout history and envision what the Black American experience could look like in the future.

What does Juneteenth mean to Atlanta History Center? This year the History Center will celebrate Juneteenth in a new way. From this point forward, we will be looking toward the future of Black liberation while also acknowledging the historical context of progress in the Black community that allowed people from the community to hold political office, receive a college education, participate in the entertainment industry, and much more.

Music, foodways, and education play a significant part in Black culture in the United States, most informed by historical events that significantly impacted other enslaved people and their descendants. Leading up to the holiday, Atlanta History Center will be hosting a series of Author Talks and digital content centered around a history of continuous progress. In observance of the holiday, the History Center will activate the entire campus with music, activities, food, museum theater, and more.

In a nation founded on principles of liberty and justice for all, Juneteenth is a powerful reminder of how far we still must go to achieve those ideals. We invite you to join us to celebrate this holiday and all it represents to American democracy.

HISTORY AFTER HOURS IS BACK

BY MONIQUE ROJAS
Communications Coordinator



What do 1920s lawn parties, larger-than-life Civil War paintings, and secret gardens all have in common?

These and more are being featured in Atlanta History Center’s program series History After Hours.

Buckhead has not seen a date night opportunity quite like this, with exclusive access to Atlanta History Center after hours, historic cocktails, and hidden treasures all waiting to be discovered. Back for its first full year after the onset of the pandemic, History After Hours will occur on the third Thursday of the month, except for May 2022. Guests enjoyed a 1920s party on the Swan House lawn in April 2022 complete with live music and cocktail recipes from the era, and can look forward to garden parties, discos, winter holiday walks, and more. We recommend a stop at one of Buckhead’s tasty restaurants before heading over to the event, where guests will enjoy complimentary desserts and fun for all.

Tickets to each program are available at our website or at the admission desk. Day-of availability is not guaranteed, so advance purchase is recommended. Non-member tickets are \$20, member tickets are \$15, and these events are free for Insiders.

PARTY WITH THE PAST AROUND ATLANTA



BY MONIQUE ROJAS
Communications Coordinator

Imagine an immersive, fun (and brief) history lesson with a cold beer. You can expect that at Party with the Past, a favorite event hosted by Atlanta History Center and back for the first time since the start of the pandemic as a summer series. Each event celebrates the city’s rich history through food, drink, and entertainment.

This year Atlanta History Center is bringing the program back in June and will continue hosting around Atlanta throughout the summer for four weeks. Atlantans are encouraged to attend open-air events at some of the city’s most exciting and hidden historical locations.

The program made its debut in the fall of 2012. Since its inception, Party with the Past has been a connection point between local history and a new demographic of history enthusiasts. Attendees can explore various historical sites around Atlanta, learn about the city’s rich history, enjoy live entertainment, and connect with others with similar interests. In previous years, the History Center held this event at Sweet Auburn Curb Market, Fox Theater, Best End Brewing, and more. This year’s event will feature a variety of new and exciting locations and previous sites.

Party with the Past is a can’t-miss event for anyone who loves history and wants to see Atlanta in a new light.

So, mark your calendars and get ready to Party with the Past again!



Scan QR code for more information and to RSVP to this free event.

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