

FREE FESTIVAL CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE AND HISTORY
Museum event features musical performances, art activities and history experiences

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Jan. 29, 2020 – Celebrate Charlotte’s African American history and culture on Saturday, Feb. 29, at The Charlotte Museum of History from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The annual African American Heritage Festival is free and made possible with support from Walmart, Wells Fargo, Watch Charlotte, Pride Magazine and a grant from the Arts & Science Council.

Visitors can explore the African roots of Southern foods; see the historic 1774 Rock House through the eyes of the enslaved people who lived and worked at the homesite; and experience stirring musical performances by Voices of Eden Gospel Choir and A Sign of the Times. Food will be available for purchase from Two Guys n A Kitchen food truck.

Activities and Experiences

Visitors of all ages can enjoy a full afternoon of free activities, including:

- **Foods of the African Diaspora.** *12-2 p.m.* Cooking demonstrations will highlight the role of the African diaspora in creating the foods we see in Charlotte today.
- **Opera Carolina Talk-Back.** *12 p.m.* Opera Carolina’s musical drama “I Dream” explores the last 36 hours of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s life through a fusion of musical expressions from jazz, R&B, gospel, Broadway and opera traditions. Museum trustee and journalist Fannie Flono will host a community discussion with Opera Carolina to explore the impact of Dr. King on Charlotte today. (This event is appropriate for third-grade audiences and above).
- **Voices of Eden Gospel Choir,** *Two performances, 11:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.* The Voices of Eden Gospel Choir will perform on the museum’s grand staircase.
- **Gospel singer Jett Edwards.** *1 p.m.* An interactive performance on “Origins of African American Music” by award-winning singer/songwriter Jett Edwards.

- **The Mecklenburg Kirkpatricks.** *2 p.m.* We invite you to be a part of a conversation about the relationships and struggles forged by the legacy of enslavement here in Charlotte. The conversation will feature Jimmie Kirkpatrick and De Kirkpatrick, subjects of a documentary currently in development. These two men – one black, one white – share the same last name and are connected by the legacy of slavery. By learning from each other, they hope to begin healing the deep wounds that many have never faced. This conversation is part of the Ron Hankins “History Talks” Lecture Series, sponsored by Wells Fargo.
- **Through the Eyes of Bet.** *2-4 p.m.* Hear from Bet, one of the enslaved people who lived and worked on this property during the Revolutionary War period. She will talk about her life and experiences. Bet is portrayed by her descendant, Queen Thompson.
- **A Sign of the Times.** *3 p.m.* A Sign of the Times of the Carolinas preserves the legacy of the African Diaspora through music, dance and the spoken word. A Sign of the Times’s first Black History Concert in Charlotte was held at The Charlotte Museum of History more than 20 years ago.
- **African Fashion Show.** *4 p.m.* Hosted by House of Africa, this fashion show features unique fashions from various African countries and explores their impact on American fashion. The show includes drummers, dance and celebration.
- **Explore the historic Alexander Homesite,** *12-4 p.m.*
See the historic 1774 Alexander Rock House, the oldest home in Mecklenburg County, and its homesite through the eyes of the people who were enslaved here in the late 18th and early 19th century, in a new nation that was ostensibly inspired by the idea of liberty.
- **Who’s your hero? Make & Take Activity.** *All day.* Create cards highlighting important African American figures in Queen City history. This activity is designed to encourage kids to think about how they can be forces of change in their own communities and become their own Queen City heroes.
- **Finding Your Family Story,** *All day.*
Join the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and the Olde Mecklenburg Genealogical Society to learn about genealogy resources for tracing your family’s history and tips and tricks for preserving your family stories.



How to Go

The *African-American Heritage Festival* is Saturday, Feb. 29, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. at The Charlotte Museum of History's eight-acre campus at 3500 Shamrock Drive.

About The Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History engages a broad audience in the history of the Charlotte region through the stories of its people, places and events to promote dialogue and historical perspective. The museum is the steward of the 1774 Alexander Rock House and homesite, a site listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the oldest home in Mecklenburg County. To learn more, visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on Facebook and Twitter (@CLThistory).

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