

History Museum of Mobile
111 South Royal Street

Phoenix Fire Museum
203 South Claiborne Street

Historic Site at Fort Condé
150 South Royal Street



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HISTORY MUSEUM OF MOBILE CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

The History Museum of Mobile is celebrating African American History Month with several exciting events. For local schools, the museum hosted the second annual African American Music Festival on February 6, 2015. The museum's community gallery now features a month-long exhibit on the Deep South interpretations of West African art, and the February Learning Lunch will feature a civil rights pioneer from the Selma campaign.

The History Museum received a grant from the Alabama State Council on the Arts to fund the African American Music Festival. This special program was developed for Title 1 schools in Mobile County.

Approximately 650 students attended this free event. Students at this year's festival learned about three genres of music developed by African Americans – Spirituals, Blues, and Jazz – and their connections to Mobile history.

Students were treated to musical performances by artists who specialize in each genre. The vocal group Voices Unlimited, which includes: Dr. Terry Hazzard, Dean of Students at Bishop State Community College, Yvonne Matthews, and Sonia Daniels of the gospel group Nu Image sang spirituals; Members of the Excelsior Band, and guitarist Dennis "Finger Roll" Nelson.

The African American Music Festival at the History Museum of Mobile is a time of celebration, an examination of history through forms of music filled with possibility, promise, and pain. "Based on the successful response to the program, next year's festival will be expanded into a two-day event, and will include a free concert open to the public," said Howard McPhail, the museum's curator of minority history."

"There is obviously an intimate, emotional connection between history and the arts," said Dr. David E. Alsobrook, Director of the History Museum of Mobile. "The story of the evolution of various musical genres such as spirituals, the blues, and jazz in Mobile and elsewhere is a vital ingredient in understanding and appreciating our diverse history. And this kind of learning experience can't be confined to the pages of a book--It must be heard and savored as interpreted by the talented musicians who were here today at the History Museum of Mobile. Based on the students' enthusiastic response and participation today, we're very pleased that we sponsored this program and look forward to future events that will connect the arts with history."

History is our mission ... to illuminate and preserve.

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The West African art of Israel Lewis, III, a direct descendant of Cudjoe Lewis, is featured in the month-long community gallery exhibit, *Preserving a Culture: West African Art in the Deep South*. Approximately 30 ancestors of the 110 African slaves who were on the slave ship *Clotilda* in 1860 settled in Plateau, north of Mobile, Alabama. They were quiet makers, preservers, and teachers of the art of Ghana, West Africa. Israel Lewis, Sr. was one of many responsible for selecting and teaching ancestral drawings, paintings, and carvings to first borns. He taught his grandson, Israel Lewis, III, the “who, what, when, where, how, and why of the Tarkar Tribal art.” The art in the gallery is paired with West African artifacts from the History Museum’s collection.

For Learning Lunch on Wednesday, February 11 at Noon, Dr. Bernard Lafayette will discuss his experiences as a cofounder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a leader in the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins, a Freedom Rider, an associate of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the national coordinator of the Poor People’s Campaign. At the young age of twenty-two, he assumed the directorship of the Alabama Voter Registration Project in Selma—a city that had previously been removed from the organization’s list due to the dangers of operating there.

Dr. Lafayette is the [Distinguished Senior Scholar-in-Residence](#) at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, and the Chair of the National Board of the (SCLC). His published book will be for sale following the presentation: [*In Peace and Freedom: My Journey in Selma*](#) - \$30

Thank you to our Learning Lunch sponsors *MH3 Printing* and the *Friends of the Museum!*

For more information about these programs, contact the museum at (251) 208-7652 or e-mail museumrelations@cityofmobile.org.

Located in the Old City Hall/ Southern Market at 111 S. Royal Street in downtown Mobile, the History Museum of Mobile documents the 300-year history of Mobile and the surrounding region. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. Admission to the museum is now FREE.

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