

Supporting awareness of youth and adults in the involvement of African Americans in the Civil War and the Reconstruction period in South Carolina



"Men of Honor" painting by SC artist John W. Jones

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www.aahasc.org



AFRICAN AMERICAN
HISTORICAL ALLIANCE

Swails Monument Dedicated

After an evening of severe weather, cloudy skies broke into a beautiful fall day to witness the stirring dedication of a monument to Lt. Stephen A. Swails at the Humane and Friendly Cemetery on the outskirts of Charleston. The ceremony began with a procession of Citadel Cadets and 54th Massachusetts reenactors including three drummers from the Military Magnet School in North Charleston. The national colors were posted and the assembly joined in the pledge of allegiance.

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Photos of October 28, 2006 Swails Commemoration
from top to bottom and left to right: Citadel Students; your Alliance support at work erecting the Stephen Atkins Swails Memorial in Charleston, SC; Dr. Frank Smith, director and founder of the African American Civil War Memorial, with drummer reenactors.





Lewis Burke New Alliance Board Member

W. Lewis Burke, Professor of Law in the Department of Clinical Legal Studies at the University of South Carolina School of Law, has accepted a position on our board.

“The Mythology of Reconstruction Corruption in South Carolina,” written in 2005; “Post Reconstruction Justice,” written in 2002; “One of South Carolina’s First Black Lawyers”, written in 2001; and “The Radical Law School: the University of South Carolina School of Law and Its African American Graduates, 1873-1877,” written in 2000; begin to describe a body of work which makes him an ideal Board Member to lead our 2007 undertaking to commemorate the African American Lawyers of South Carolina’s Reconstruction in Columbia this fall.

Alliance Honors Reconstruction Lawyers in 2007

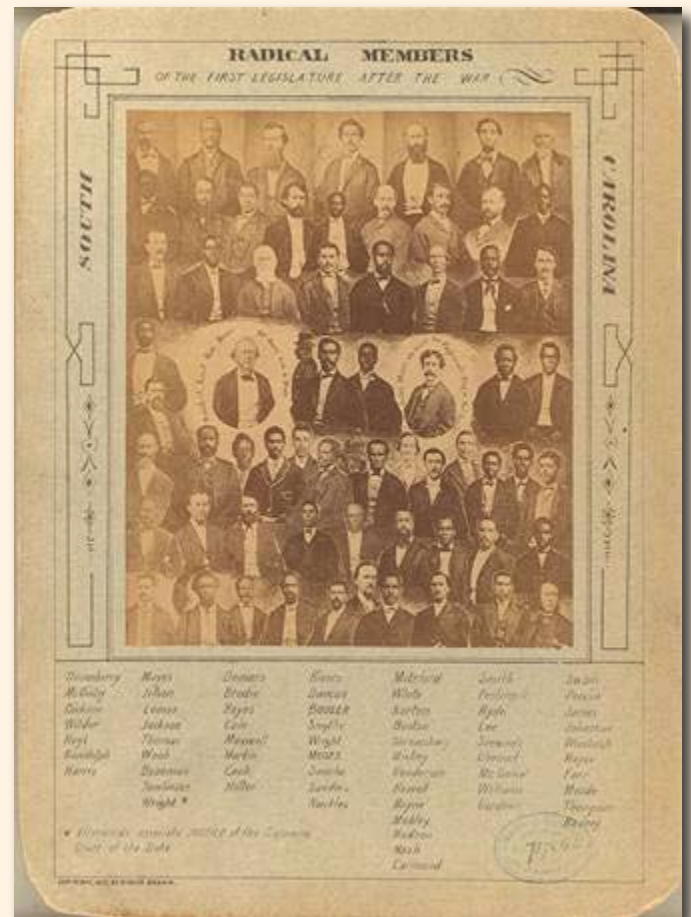
Columbia, SC — The African American Historical Alliance of South Carolina is planning their second Legacy of Freedom Celebration on Friday, November 9, 2007 to honor Reconstruction Era lawyers of African descent. The celebration will include an afternoon symposium and black-tie gala event in the evening.

Under the leadership of W. Lewis Burke, the Alliance seeks to rescue from obscurity the identities, images, and long-term contributions of African American lawyers who helped to rebuild and reform South Carolina after the Civil War. The Alliance is organizing a thoughtful exploration of the role of African Americans in government and law during the Reconstruction in the Palmetto State. Bringing into focus a legacy not fully recognized, the Legacy of Freedom Celebration will spill over into recognizing living blood descendants as well as the leading practitioners of law in the state today of African descent who build upon this foundational work done almost 150 years ago.

This event will make the words of William J. Whipper from the 1895 South Carolina Constitutional Convention ring out anew in our Capitol:

“It is a duty I owe to myself and this convention that I tell you this—not in a threatening spirit, however. We go to you now and ask for justice. God is just and justice cannot sleep forever. I have spoken to you in the kindest of spirit.”

For additional information about the Alliance or the weekend celebration, membership and sponsorship opportunities, visit the Alliance’s Web site at www.aahasc.org or call (843) 216-0442.



Alliance Sesquicentennial Preparations Begin

The AAHA believes that the fast approaching Sesquicentennial celebrations in South Carolina will provide the best near-term forum to champion South Carolina's common heritage and shared legacy.

We believe a meaningful connection with the following people and events that played a central role not just in the history of South Carolina, but the evolution of our society as well, will remind us of how important it is to step back on this occasion and craft a more inclusive history that honors all who championed America's ideals and how the founding principles that we hold so dear were brought closer to fruition.
E Pluribus Unum, out of many one.

April 1862: Penn Center

May 1862: Beginnings of the SC 1st

May 1862: Robert Smalls – Planter

January 1863: Emancipation Day
Beaufort

April 1863: Robert Smalls Keokuk
Attack on Ft. Sumter

June 1863: Harriet Tubman Raid

July 1863: 54th Mass. James Island;
Battery Wagner

July 1864: Mr. Rivers and Mr. Smalls
Republican Delegates; 54th Mass on
James Island

November 1864: Battle of Honey
Hill

January 1865: Stephen Swails Muster
Date

February 1865: Charleston's Slaves
Liberated

The State Links Swails Commemoration to Alliance

Article published in *The State* newspaper on Oct. 21, 2006:

Group honors forgotten black Americans

Last year, it was Isaac Sawyer. This year, it's Stephen Swails.

Both were black Civil War veterans of distinction. Both were buried in unmarked graves in Charleston, little more than historical footnotes despite their accomplishments.

After Sawyer was honored with a ceremony in November, history buffs from across the state decided there were too many Sawyers and Swailses. They formed the African American Historical Alliance to bring attention and honor to those who have been largely forgotten.

The group ... is organizing this week's ceremony for Swails...

"We're not going to run out of people to honor," said Marcus Cox, founding director of the African-American studies program at The Citadel and an alliance board member. "We need to know more—not so we can present it as African-American history. It's American history."



The Associated Press Breaks Alliance Story October 20th

Headstone to mark grave of one of the first black Army officers

CHARLESTON, S.C. -- In an unmarked grave in a grassy corner of small cemetery lie the remains of Lt. Stephen Swails, one of the first black commissioned officers in the U.S. Army. Although almost a forgotten footnote in history, Swails served with the 54th Massachusetts in the black regiment's desperate attack on Confederate Battery Wagner in 1863—an attack recalled in the movie "Glory."

Swails would survive the Civil War to become a state senator, a lawyer, University of South Carolina trustee and mayor of Kingstree.

And next week, re-enactors portraying members of the 54th Massachusetts will join historians and public officials to dedicate a stone marker at Swails' grave more than a century after his death.

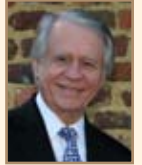
The Oct. 28 ceremony caps a two-day commemoration of Swails' life sponsored by the new African-American Historical Alliance, a group working to increase the awareness of the involvement of blacks in the Civil War and Reconstruction in South Carolina.

"The new African-American Historical Alliance is working to increase the awareness of the involvement of blacks in the Civil War and Reconstruction in South Carolina"

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

To the Members, Sponsors and Friends of the Alliance:

This has been a remarkable year for our Alliance. With your generous support and the hard work and dedication of our Board we have been able to reach all of our goals. We are pleased to report that we have met all of our financial obligations and are well positioned to move forward with our mission in the coming years. The challenges we faced as a start-up organization were significant but we all knew that our mission of educating the people of South Carolina as to the contributions of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction period to our common history and shared legacy was worthy of our efforts.



Billy Jenkinson

Our Board is most proud of the impact that our organization has made on changing perceptions about South Carolina. The visitors and family members who attended our Stephen Swails commemoration weekend were touched by the warm reception they received and the all of our efforts to recognize the contributions of a true American hero. The attention that the national press gave to our events is further recognition that we are engaged in a worthy cause.



Jannie Harriot

We are encouraged by our successes and are looking forward to new challenges for 2007 and beyond. The sesquicentennial of the Civil War and Reconstruction will provide numerous opportunities for the Alliance to be recognized as a leading resource for celebrating and commemorating long forgotten men and women who struggled to create a South Carolina with liberty and justice for all.

We look forward to the 2007 Legacy of Freedom Celebration and your continued support.
Billy Jenkinson and Jannie Harriot
Co-chairs for the African American Historical Alliance



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