



Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC Grant Update

Success stories from Action Pathways, Inc. & Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina

BY Abby Cavanaugh at ACTION PATHWAYS Sandhills Family Heritage Association, based in Spring Lake, is dedicated to serving rural African-American communities in the Sandhills of North Carolina. That includes a food pantry, operated out of Johnsonville AME Zion Church in the small town of Cameron, in Harnett County.

That pantry was a recent recipient of a grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, administered through Action Pathways, Inc. and Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast North Carolina.

"On behalf of Sandhills Family Heritage Association, I want to thank Second Harvest Food Bank and the generous donor who made it possible for our organization to get a commercial freezer for our food pantry in Harnett County," said executive director Ammie Jenkins. "This act of generosity has increased our capacity to add meats and frozen foods to help people in need of food assistance. Because of this gift, we are able to provide frozen foods to seniors, children, and families of all races who are hurting during the pandemic."

"This gift has increased our food distribution tremendously," added Patricia Moore, a member of the food distribution team at the church. "Before we got this freezer, we had to really limit the perishable foods we gave out. We even had to turn some donors away."

The partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and Action Pathways has also allowed the pantry to offer non-food items, such as clothing, toys, toiletries and hygiene items. "We are so grateful to Second Harvest for opening us up to non-food items as well," Moore said.

Pamela Marks, food bank coordinator for Sandhills Family Heritage Association, said that grant funding has also helped the organization expand its pantry reach. "We've partnered with the AME Zion district, and are expanding to 12 new pantries, after they're all able to go through the appropriate training. So, after that, we will have 13."



Patricia Moore, food distribution member of Johnsonville AME Zion Church in Cameron, and Pamela Marks, food distribution coordinator with Sandhills Family Heritage Association, work together with members of the church to help feed the needy in Harnett County. In addition to its food pantry, operated through Sandhills Family Heritage Association, the church is able to provide a diaper bank for both infants and adults.



Neil "Cooper Tom" Cameron

1847-1927

Neil's granddaughter Louise Cameron Ferguson remembered her grandfather making wooden water buckets, barrels, butter molds, churns, and wooden bowls. He would hitch his 2 red mules to the old wagon and take his goods to the Fayetteville market house to sell.

According to an article in the Sanford Herald Newspaper December 1947, Neil Cameron was the grandson of Cooley-1 who was brought from Africa on a slave ship to the Old Hill Plantation House in Cameron.

Neil was considered a valuable slave to plantation owner, Hugh Archie Cameron, because he was a skilled cooper (one who makes wooden barrels). The barrels were used in the turpentine industry which was thriving in the Spout Springs area at the time.

North Carolina led the world in the production of naval stores (tar, pitch, turpentine, and rosin) from 1720-1870.

Almost all articles used in the turpentine industry in the Sandhills area were stored, hauled and shipped in wooden containers, such as barrels, hogsheads and casks. Many black coopers were in great demand because the industry depended on their barrel-making skills.

Neil built his own home in the Spout Springs area which later became the home of his grandson, Abraham Cameron and his wife Ruby Gillis-Cameron and their family. There are remnants of the old house still standing today.

Neil's name is mentioned in two books: *The History of Fayetteville* and *They Passed This Way* by Malcolm Fouler. The books describe the friendship that developed between Cooper Tom and Hugh Archie Cameron.

Louise's fondest memories of her grandfather were those of her hanging around his workshop where he made the wooden products.

Neil was eventually sold to the aristocratic Murchison Plantation to pay off a debt owed by Hugh Archie Cameron. Neil is buried in the slave section of the Old Cameron Hill Cemetery.

"Neil Cameron was the grandson of Cooley-1 who was brought from Africa on a slave ship to the Old Hill Plantation House in Cameron"



SFHA Virtual Genealogy Workshop



Do you have unanswered questions about who you are or who's in your family? Sandhills Family Heritage Association hosted/sponsored its first virtual genealogy workshop on January 28th to provide information and resources for individuals who have asked themselves these questions.

Progenealogist, Desi Campbell led the workshop and shared his rich knowledge and research experiences with participants on resources to use when doing family research. These include family bibles where births, marriages and deaths were often recorded many years ago. Other physical resources that can be checked are grave markers, headstones, obituaries and recorded or written family histories. Documents showing sales, ownership and inheritance of slaves were shared with the group also. Participants received steps for building a family tree to 7th and 8th generations using modern technology and the science of gene mapping. There are programs such as Ancestry.com that trace family lineage across the Atlantic to Africa using only a few drops of blood.

Individuals joined the platform from VA, MD, FL, PA, NC to name a few. Participants shared their personal research experiences and others asked questions to guide them as they started their family research journey. All could agree that gathering family history is both challenging and exciting because you may be surprised to learn who's in your family. Desi cautioned guests about family surprises and other shocking information that is sometimes revealed through searches. Deciding whether or not to share certain information is a very important decision. Research can begin in one direction but along the way a variety of pathways are taken.

SFHA is grateful to everyone who had the opportunity to take part in this workshop. For more information and assistance with genealogy research visit Desi's website: africanamericanexperience.org. Make an appointment to visit The HC African American Resource Room where research tools and equipment are available for your use.



SFHA RECEIVES AWARD FOR PRESERVATION PROJECT

Sandhills Family Heritage Association (SFHA) is truly grateful for the Stedman Incentive Grant Award of \$10,000 presented by the Historic Preservation Foundation of NC. The Award funds will be used for repair of Spring Lake Civic Center windows and doors to help stabilize the building and *prevent further damage from wind and rain.*

You may check our website to learn more about the building project.

<https://www.sandhillsfamilyheritage.org/>

Servant
Heart



Sandhills Family Heritage Association



**Johnsonville AME
Zion Church**

18719 NC Hwy 27 West
Cameron, North Carolina 28326

**2nd & 4th Thursday
11am-12pm**

**If you are in need of food
contact Coordinators
910-670-6747 or 910-309-2198**

**Community
Food Pantry
& Diaper Bank**

2020

figures



65,010 LBS OF FOOD

DISTRIBUTED

54,175 MEALS PROVIDED

926 HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

1,444 INDIVIDUALS

SERVED

