

SANDHILLS SANKOFA NEWS



Official Newsletter of Sandhills Family Heritage Association



Honoring Sandhills' Unsung Sheros

It is with great pleasure that we commemorate Women this month. Though women continue achieving goals and setting new ones, setting aside time to remember their work is totally appropriate.

When celebrating the contributions of women, we may often think of the women whose names we have heard often in recent decades. We've read about Mary McLeod Bethune, Sojourner Truth, Wilma Rudolph, Barbara Jordan, Shirley Chisholm, Angela Davis and many others.

And, we will never grow weary of reading about others who have made tremendous contributions to the betterment of this world. However, it would be wonderful for us to stop and think about the accomplishments of women more than during Women's History Month, Mother's Day and birthdays. You see for every famous woman we can identify, there are hundreds of thousands other women, who regarded by the measures of fame, would be deemed ordinary. Their contributions to their families, churches and communities produce extraordinary and enduring impact that ripples throughout other communities, families and churches for decades to come.

This issue of the Sandhills Family Heritage Association Newsletter is dedicated to some of these EXTRAORDINARY women. They have made contributions for decades in the Sandhills, particularly the Harnett, Lee, Moore and Cumberland County areas. They have dedicated so much of their precious, loving time to community organizations, community development endeavors, racial justice, family strengthening, child and youth development. Though we are unable to predict the future, we believe we would be safe to say the ripples of impact are likely to continue for decades to come.

The Strength of the Black Woman

By Mildred Juanita Hart



"The Black woman's strength didn't begin with these women nor has it or will it end with them."

The strength of the Black woman has manifested itself on many avenues, through many venues and on many levels: mother, sister, daughter, friend, family matriarch, next door neighbor.

She is the Community Activist, Church Mother and Teacher; the Pastor, Mayor of small Townships as well as large, Metropolitan Cities and/or Districts.

Women like: Mrs. Rosa Parks, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, Mrs. Barbara Jordan, Mrs. Shirley Chisholm, Ms. Dorothy Height, Ms. Stacy Abrams, Former First Lady, Mrs. Michelle Obama, Vice President Mrs. Kamala Harris, the young, Poet Miss Amanda Gorman; just to name a few, have really made a difference.

The Black woman's strength didn't begin with these women nor has it or will it end with them. She has been strong from the beginning, mostly because she had to be.

It seemed to be determined long before she knew that it would become a necessity for her to roll up her sleeves and keep it moving regardless of difficult circumstances, a tired back and/or aching feet. She learned to do what she had to do, seldom putting her own needs first. She has worked alongside her man and raised her children. She fried chicken, baked cakes and carried boxes to the Church House.

She has been a nursemaid, a quilt maker and a bottle washer. She has served her Country in the various Branches of Service; fought in wars and gave her all.

The Black woman taught her children about the importance of an education and being independent. She bent her back and rubbed her knees on the linoleum of other people's floors so her children could eat.

Our Sheroes are not only the Black women we have or will read about in the history books, but our Sheroes are also the women who may only be esteemed by us, their individual families who respect and value their good deeds and recognize their tremendous sacrifices.

Even through tears, with pursed lips, folded arms, a bruised back or with her hands on her hips, she marched on anyhow.

For her, the price of giving up has always been too costly.

The Black woman pressed forward for the whole, with unselfishness, she toiled.

She paid dearly; without any private agenda, she gave.

She has poured out that which God poured into her.

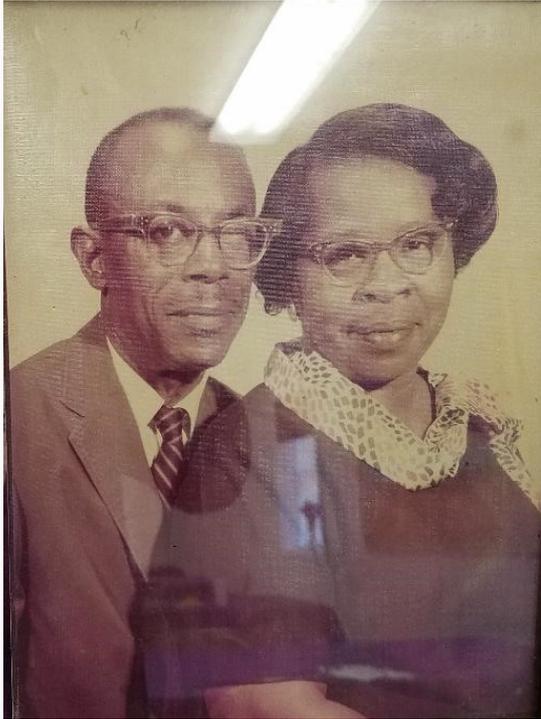
Whether it be a sound piece of advice, a bowl of beans and a biscuit, a warm coat or shelter from the rain, a few coins tied in a handkerchief, a prayer or a good talking to, the strength of the Black woman is indeed a gift that gives and gives and gives!

Hands of our servant Sheros



Rosa Lee Leach Brower

A Legacy of Service



Wife, mother, homemaker, caregiver, seamstress, teacher, civil rights leader and Christian worker are a few of the identifiers that can be associated with Rosa Lee Leach Brower.

“Aunt Rosa” or Ms. Rosa” had such a strong presence working tirelessly to show God’s love through her service to others. In the Spout Springs Presbyterian and Covenant Christian Churches she taught Sunday school, VBS, participated in prayer and Bible Study, sang on the choir, planned and rehearsed programs with youths. Rosa would often make the costumes for the participants. She and her husband, Eugene Brower transported youth to and from church activities when a ride was needed. Christian service reached beyond her community to leadership in the United Order of Tents, Guardian Mother for the Juvenile Tent, and President of the Women’s Auxillary in the Johnsonville AME Zion and St. John Pentecostal Church Communities .

Other community involvement included President of Harnett County Branch of the NAACP. Ro-sa knew it was important to get youth involved in the Civil Rights Movement. Several community youths remember going to county meetings and on marches with her. President of Harnett County Home Extension Organization, Chairperson of the Harnett County Beautification Committee were other community activities that interested Rosa. Organizer can be added to her titles as Rosa was founder and president of the chartered Spout Springs-Community Development Organization which provided assistance to improve the lives and environments of citizens in the Spout Springs-Johnsonville Community.

Rosa received training and later employment with Social Services of Harnett County as an instructor for the blind. She loved her work which included teaching craftmaking to her clients. Rosa remained there until she retired in 1978.

Rosa believed and demonstrated that one should always be concerned for one’s fellow man and be of service wherever you live. This legacy of caring for others was obviously passed on to her daughter, Dorothy Washington Green, who was always involved in activities aimed at help-ing the less fortunate. Dorothy was an integral part of her community, always willing to assist her family members, friends and anyone that she could be of assistance to in any way. She was a volunteer for a number of years with the Harnett County Buddy Back Pack Program and an active member of the Harnett County Extension and Community Association (ECA). CONCLUDES ON PAGE 5.

Rosa Lee Leach Brower

A Legacy of Service Cont.



Dorothy later assumed leadership in the very club that her mother founded working tirelessly as president. Under her leadership members of the organization along with citizens in the Spout Springs-Johnsonville Community cleaned and restored the unattended lower section of the Cameron Hill Presbyterian Church cemetery where African Americans are buried. Memorial Day Observance at the cemetery also began under Dorothy's leadership.



Dorothy was a member of the Spout Springs Presbyterian Church where she was a dedicated elder, a Sunday school teacher, choir member and church pianist. The service and humanity of this mother daughter pair will long be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to observe and learn from them.



Mavis Brower Fleming

Matriarch and Quilter



Mavis Brower Fleming was born November, 23, 1926 the eighth child of James Madison and Annie Beatrice Brower. Mavis was born in Robbins, NC and grew up in the Spout Springs community of Harnett County with her siblings Eugene, Wilbur, Algia, Flora, Henry, Kermit, Marie, Jackson and Joseph. Family is very important to Mavis and she was very close to all her siblings. Upon graduating from Johnsonville High School in 1944 Mavis moved to Wilmington NC to help take care of her sister, Flora, while she was ill. While living with Flora in Wilmington she met and fell in love with John Fleming of South Carolina.

On February 4, 1945 Mavis and John were married and remained in Wilmington for several years before returning to live in the Spout Springs Community. John and Mavis raised eight children (John Alfred, Bobbie Jean, Sharon, Algiareen, Brent, Sadie, LaVerne and Isaac).

John's employment (constructing major highways) kept him away from home. Therefore, Mavis was tasked with raising her children as a single parent. For several years Mavis worked on Ft Bragg as a "day worker" doing household domestic work for the Officers of the Armed Forces. Once her children were married and started their own families Mavis spent countless years tending to grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews and other children in the community while their parents worked. Lots of learning took place during those years from learning the ABC's, practicing speeches, shelling peas and learning what times were like in the "old days". Her grandchildren often laugh and reminisce about how resourceful she was turning a jar lid tied by a shoestring to the baby walker making it a teething ring.

Mavis raised her children in church, faithfully attending Spout Springs Presbyterian Church where she is the oldest living member. She has served in many capacities to include being an active member of Presbyterian Women Organization, Elder, Deacon, Secretary of Sunday School, Senior Choir Member and working with the youth. She is a faithful member of the Johnsonville/ Spout Springs Community Development Organization.

Once John became ill, Mavis devoted her time to tending to his every need. John was wheelchair bound and with nothing to do in her spare time Mavis started quilting. Mavis admits that she does not know how to thread a sewing machine and takes pride that all of her quilts are sewn by hand. In the early years of quilt making newspapers cut into different shapes acted as her guide to sewing fabric together. The topic of the great grandchildren at many family gatherings is how they miss "Granny" saving the task of tearing the newspaper off the squares for them to do. **CONCLUDES ON PAGE 7.**

Mavis Brower Fleming

Matriarch and Quilter Cont.

Sewing is truly her passion. At 94 she is still hand sewing quilts this very day. A true testament to the years of quilt sewing is her string of metal thimbles that have holes in them. From graduating school, getting married, to having a baby, you know you are LOVED when you receive a hand sewn quilt by Mavis.

Prior to the Pandemic summer evenings were full of laughter and fun with family on "Granny's Porch". Mavis continues to live in the Spout Springs area surrounded by her family and is thank-ful the Lord has blessed her to see 5 generations.



Doris Hicks Lucas

Educator, Community Activist and Historic Reenactor



Doris Lucas was born Doris Ann Hicks on February 18, 1947, in Bunnlevel, North Carolina (Harnett County) to Betty Elizabeth and James Lewis Hicks. Her parents were sharecroppers, and during the off season, her father was a carpenter and brick mason throughout the community. Doris was the ninth child of thirteen children and was no stranger to hard work and a very disciplined life on the farm.

After attending South Harnett Elementary School, Doris went on to Shawtown High School in Lillington, North Carolina. Schools were segregated at the time and black children were bused from Bunnlevel to Lillington, NC. Upon graduating from high school, she attended North Carolina Central University (NCCU) where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in

Health and Physical Education. While attending North Carolina Central, Doris was involved in a number of activities, but her most memorable and proud was participating in the Civil Rights Movement under the local leadership of activist Floyd McKissick. She participated in protests opposing the murder, injustice, and inhumane acts against black men and women, including the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Her direct involvement and first-hand experience inspired Doris to become a member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) which she continues to be a member of today.

While in college, Doris met Robert Leon Lucas, and after a loving courtship, they married in 1969. They moved to Spring Lake, NC where they attended Bethel A.M.E. Zion Church and would go on to raise three daughters, Kimberly, Nichele, and Krystel. In 1970, Doris began her career as a Health and Physical Education teacher at Pine Forest Senior High School in Fayetteville, NC. She broke barriers as the first female and first black person to teach in the Health and Physical Education department. Throughout the years, she also taught a variety of classes which included Modern Dance, Gymnastics, World History and Earth Science. As her quest for equality continued, she was a clear example of breaking the "glass ceiling" when she became the first black coach of both the Women's Volleyball and Women's Track & Field teams. This was particularly important since the United States was in the process of considering Title IX which is a federal civil rights law in America. It was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972 and prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or other education program that receives federal money.

In the midst of building her career, Doris was never satisfied with just the status quo – she strived for excellence and continued to look for ways to better herself and make an impact on the lives of those around her. So, while working a full-time teaching job, coaching, and raising a family, Doris decided to pursue a graduate degree. In 1987, she received a Master's degree in Health and Physical Education from Gardner-Webb University. For a year, Doris made time to be a Staff Development Instructor who facilitated behavioral and classroom skills workshops for teachers in Cumberland County. **CONCLUDES ON PAGE 9.**

Doris Hicks Lucas

**Educator, Community Activist and Historic Reenactor
Cont.**

Soon, she served as liaison and Co-Operative teacher for student-teachers from Fayetteville State University and Methodist College to do their practice teaching in Health and Physical Education at Pine Forest. Over the years, Doris solidified her tenure at Pine Forest and her reputation alone garnered respect from colleagues and students alike. Everyone knew that her students came first, and in addition to their education, she ensured there was a focus on their health and wellbeing - physically, socially, and emotionally. Later in her career, she added another accomplishment to her vocation and became the Sports Medicine Trainer for all of the school's athletic teams working alongside the school physician. By this time, Doris had already been appointed the Head of the Health and Physical Education department at Pine Forest – the very same department she integrated in the 1970s.



Doris proudly worked at Pine Forest Senior High for her entire career. After three decades of service in the school system, she retired in the summer of 2000. Doris remains an active member of Bethel church, and in retirement, became President of both the Health & Wellness Ministry and the Stewardess Board at Bethel. Through the Health & Wellness Ministry, she helps provide oversight for many programs and workshops including blood drives with the Red Cross and a mobile Dental Clinic that offers free dental care for uninsured patrons. She later joined the Sandhill Family Heritage Association as a member of the Board of Directors and chairperson of their Health Wise Program which sponsored a walking club and workshops on food and nutrition. Doris and Bethel church work in partnership with the Sandhill Family Heritage Association and the Cumberland County Health Department for many of these programs.



In addition to her many committee duties, Doris is a member of the Sankofa Players where participants reenact historical and slave narratives in churches and venues around the community for special events, festivals and during Black History month. She is passionate about reading books, consuming various forms of art and staying engaged with news and current events. Doris loves her family, friends and community, and her greatest joy is spending time with her beloved grandchildren.



Algia Evelyn Brower Dockery.

Community Activist



Algia Evelyn Dockery, daughter of James Madison and Annie Beatrice Brower, was born March 11, 1917 in Robbins, NC where she spent her early childhood. Her family moved to Harnett County where she later married and resided with her husband, James Thomas Dockery and their four sons. Algia became an active member of the Spout Springs United Presbyterian Church and remained there for many years before joining New Town Church of God. Being in service to the King, and seeing souls brought to Christ were her greatest actions and desires at both churches.

As an enthusiastic participant in the community, she was active with the Johnsonville Home Extension Club, The Spout Springs Johnsonville Community Development Organization, and The United Order of Tents, Pride of Pineview No. 534, Assistant Leader of the Juvenile Tents, Chalmers Jewels No. 793.

Understanding the importance of a good education and the necessity for a voice that represented Black students, Algia served on the Board of Education for Harnett County Schools and the Johnsonville School P.T.A. for several years. Active participation as a longtime member of Harnett County Branch of the N.A.A.C.P., she was an advisor to youth as well as a delegate to both state and national conventions.

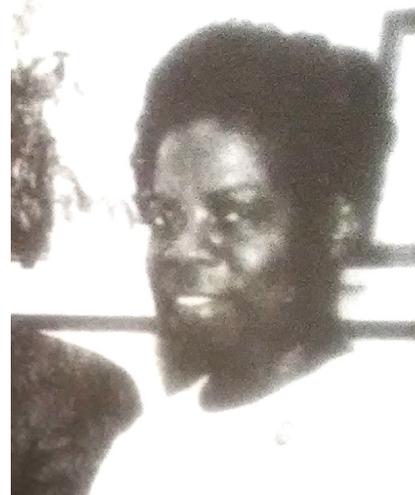
A love for God's wonderful creation and the sons she was so blessed to mother, inspired Algia to express her appreciation through poetry. This is an excerpt from one of her poems.

OF THE TREES BOYS AND ME

The trees that grace the corner of our yard
Have grown from saplings to steady pines.
As God would have it be, so too our boys
Are steady men at last so strong and fine.

The trees great limbs a hungry ladder spread
A place for little feet that had to climb.
While from my window I'd watch and pray
O God please hold those little boys of mine.

Fit me O God to play a mother's role
And how to fully trust in thee O God...



Algia's family continues to honor her legacy and keep her memory alive. The Algia E. Dockery Academy of Success Home School is named for her as well as family musical groups, "Sons of Faith" and "Sisters of Faith". The tireless interest in her community will long be remembered as well as her infectious smile that showed the beauty of Jesus in her life.

Annie Bernice Simpson

A Gift of Giving



Annie Bernice Simpson is the second eldest daughter of the late Wilbur and Resa Brower. Delivered by a midwife, she grew up in the Johnsonville/Spout Springs Community on the family farm and received her education there as well.

God equipped Annie with an extraordinary spirit of loving and giving to others, especially the elderly. Her small frame overflows with special talents and gifts. Prior to the pandemic, Annie spent much of her time at assistant living facilities in the Sanford area. Reading the Bible to them, singing hymns and sharing encouraging words created special bonds for Annie and her husband, Brother Al Simpson that have lasted for years.

As a self-taught seamstress, Annie made clothing for her six children including three-piece suits for each one at Easter. She also taught herself to crochet over 60 years ago and continues to engage in this love today. She has crocheted countless hats, scarves, and afghan blankets for family members, friends and residents of nursing facilities. During the pandemic she crocheted lap blankets which she believed would bring comfort to many individuals.

Annie is also known for her gardening skills. She loves plants and has the unique ability to revive ailing plants and flowers. Countless flowers have thrived after being repotted in coffee mugs then gifted to patients, family and friends. Hanging baskets and flowers of many varieties adorn her home inside and out.

As a wife, mother of six, grandmother of 23, and great-grandmother of 15, Annie certainly has had to learn her way around the kitchen. She is a great cook who is always willing to provide one of her special dishes for church, family and special community events such as the SFHA Annual Heritage Food Tasting. Year after year participants especially look forward to sampling her delicious pinto beans!

Annie loves her church, Spout Springs Presbyterian Church, where she serves as President of the Usher Board, a Ruling Elder and a member of (PW) Presbyterian Women. Her love for Christ is evident by her love for others.



Margaret Harrington Speed

Social Worker and Compassionate Giver



Margaret Harrington Speed was born August 27th 1930 to Fred and Rosa Bell Harrington in Harnett County. She is a 1949 graduate of Johnsonville High School. She completed one year of study at North Carolina Central University. She was married to Lee T. Speed for 51 years and has one son, Haywood Harrington. She traveled with her husband in Europe while he served in the United States Army. When living in Europe, she played on the MuhaMamas softball team in Mainz, Germany and helped her team make it to the regional championship game. She also worked at the ACS, Army Community Service Center, which provided items for families who were in need as they were arriving at various duty stations.

Margaret has been a stalwart member of the Johnsonville Community for many years. As a charter member of the Spouts Springs-Johnsonville Community Development Club, many projects have been carried out to benefit citizens in need.

These included preparing food baskets during the holidays, financially assisting with utility bills and visiting the sick. This club also organized clean-up and restoration of the back portion of Cameron Hill Presbyterian Church Cemetery where many of Black ancestors are buried. Memorial Day service memorializing those buried in the cemetery as well as fallen Armed Forces members has grown into an annual community event.

Margaret worked tirelessly as a social worker for the Department of Social Services in Harnett County for 20 years and retired in 1997 assisting with in-home aid for adults to make sure bills were paid, doctor appointments were kept, food and personal care needs were filled. This work was in the field and could be very trying requiring much patience and a heart for people who could not care for themselves or manage their resources. Her experience was rewarding and very eye-opening to daily living situations across Harnett County.

Other county and community affiliations include board member of the Extension and Community Association (ECA) and the County Council. Johnsonville Nutrition Program is a county funded program that provides food for senior citizens. Meals are delivered to the Golden Adventurers Senior Center for distribution to those who come to the center and meals for those who may be homebound. Golden Adventurers Senior Citizens Club participants meet socially and engage in crafts, go on trips and build lasting friendships. **CONCLUDES ON PAGE 13.**

Margaret Harrington Speed

Social Worker and Compassionate Giver
Cont.



As an active member of the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP), Margaret and others are always ready to lend a helping hand to seniors and agencies in the community. She has participated in various activities including Senior Citizens Olympics.

Margaret has served her community in a variety of areas. She is a lifetime member of the Harnett County Chapter of the NAACP and was its treasurer for many years. When asked to serve on the Advisory Board of Another Choice Black Adoption Agency she was hesitant and did not feel that she could offer anything to this body. Little did she know how valuable her experiences and wisdom would be in the adoption of African American children into their forever homes.

Margaret has attended Johnsonville AME Zion Church and Holy Mission Holiness Church respectively participating in both congregations as a praise and worship leader. She describes her spiritual life as a born again Christian, following the leading of Jesus Christ, by being a servant to all; this includes helping to raise her nieces and nephews.

Margaret has dedicated her life to helping others. Her life of service gives us an example of how we should all work towards loving our neighbors as ourselves. This shifts our focus to others, as Margaret's life of service has been freely chosen. She has experienced many of God's blessings because of her generosity and selflessness, which included celebrating her 90th birthday with family and friends in August of 2020.

The Herb Ladies

Contributors to Healing From The Land Book



Mrs. Shirley Smith
 "What really helped me was that mullein tea my grandmother used to make. It grows wild down in the woods by the branches."



Mrs. Athena Belton
 "I had asthma from a baby up. My mother would use rabbit tobacco because we weren't able to go to doctors as they do today."



Mrs. Vada Prince
 "I grew up in Harnett County in the Broadway community. I learned about medicinal plants and home remedies from my mother, father and grandmother."



Mattie Jordan Williams
 Mattie's mother had a simple, effective, and easy remedy for headaches—the leaf from the canna lily plant located a few steps from her front door.

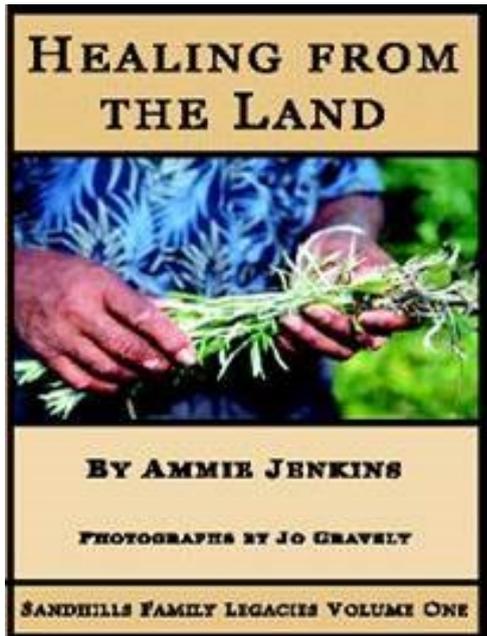


Mrs. Marjorie Ray
 "My mother or grandmother had certain days before wintertime, before the leaves dried up so she would know what she was getting. She would go into the woods to gather up different herbs."



Sisters Ruth "Talley" Dantzler and Rebecca Dantzler Jones
 "I break up yellow root in small pieces to fit in the pot. Then I wash it, boil it, strain it, and put it in a jug. I take a teaspoonful of it when my sugar goes up. My sister Talley is diabetic too. She uses it all the time."

Publications

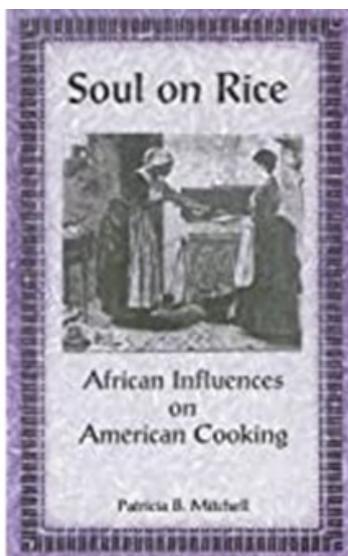
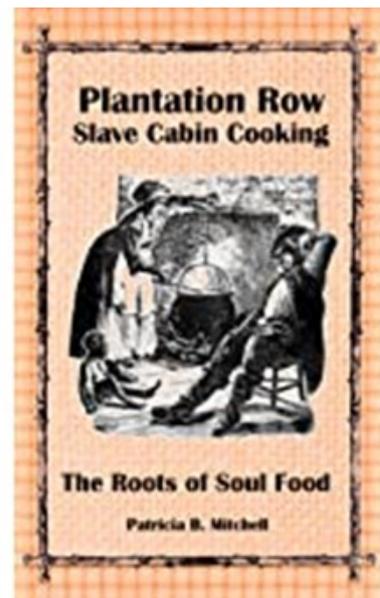


Healing from the Land

This book documents the land based cultural traditions of rural African American families in the Sandhills of North Carolina. The book is based on oral history stories told at community events, festivals, reunions, tour visits, and more. The stories weave a colorful tapestry of connection with the land, soil, plants, water and the natural healing and sustenance derived from the Sandhills. Throughout the book, various individuals recount the use of natural herbal remedies and healing products from the land.

Plantation Row

Former slaves' first-hand accounts, many collected as part of the Federal Writers Project during the late 1930's, provide the foundation for a discussion of foods from slavery days. In "Plantation Row Slave Cabin Cooking" Patricia B. Mitchell explores the topic of slave food on Southern plantations. She also touches on the overall lifestyle of slaves, briefly discussing housing, amusements, religion, and clothing. The book contains 23 recipes.



Soul on Rice

A concise and comprehensive overview of African-American food history, Soul on Rice contains quotations from primary sources, descriptions of foods utilized in Africa, accounts of slave life and diet, and 33 recipes illustrative of food eaten by early Black Americans and their descendants.

HONORING SANDHILLS UNSUNG

Sheros!



**We honor our
seniors by
preserving their
legacies for
current and
future generations.**

Thank you!

