



SERVING THE SANDHILLS SINCE 2001

SEPTEMBER 2023

# SANDHILLS SANKOFA NEWS

The Official Newsletter of Sandhills Family Heritage Association

## A BUILDING OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE RENOVATE RESTORE REOPEN



### Thank you Town of Spring Lake!

Spring Lake Mayor Kia Anthony and Ammie McRae Jenkins show architectural rendering for renovation of Spring Lake Civic Center.

Mayor Anthony presented a proclamation on behalf of the Town of Spring Lake declaring the Spring Lake Civic Center "A building of Historical Significance."

Janet Brower Penn and Jenkins accepted the proclamation on behalf of Sandhills Family Heritage Association.





# SFHA RECEIVES PROCLAMATION FROM TOWN OF SPRING LAKE



## Building of Historical Significance

A Proclamation by the Mayor of the Town of Spring Lake

**WHEREAS**, the old Spring Lake Civic Center building located on Chapel Hill Road is over 70 years old and is part of a community development project that will serve as "A Model for Neighborhood Revitalization" and "Place-Based Economic Development"; and

**WHEREAS**, the building has historical and cultural value to the Town of Spring Lake, NC, and Cumberland County; and

**WHEREAS**, the building was constructed by African-American residents of Manchester and Spring Lake and used as a hub for social and civic activities during the Civil Rights Movement era; and

**WHEREAS**, the building was the place for voter registration classes and civil rights meetings that led to the desegregation of schools, restaurants, and theaters in Cumberland County; and

**WHEREAS**, the building was renovated and is planned to house a museum, community kitchen, meeting rooms, and office space for Sandhills Family Heritage Association; and

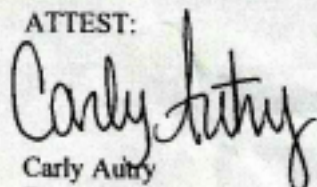
**WHEREAS**, the building will be a community resource center and heritage tourism site opened to the general public, visitors, and tourists from across the county; and

**WHEREAS**, the renovated building will be a center for social, environmental, and economic education as it relates to building sustainable communities in the Sandhills region of North Carolina.

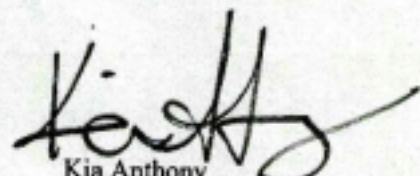
**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Kia Anthony, Mayor of the Town of Spring Lake, North Carolina, on behalf of the Spring Lake Board of Aldermen do hereby proclaim the old Spring Lake Civic Center a Building of Historical Significance.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused this seal of the Town of Spring Lake to be affixed this 28<sup>th</sup> day of September 2023.

ATTEST:

  
Carly Autry  
Town Clerk



  
Kia Anthony  
Mayor





# THE SPRING LAKE CIVIC CENTER

## Historically Speaking

A Community Hub for African-American Social and Civic Activities Teen Dances, Birthday parties, Civil Rights Meetings, VFW meetings, Fashion Shows, Boy Scout Meetings, Family Reunions, and more.





# 2023 SANDHILLS RURAL HERITAGE FOOD CELEBRATION



## Family, Friends, Food, Fellowship

By Janet Brower Penn

The words above were chosen as the theme for this year's annual gathering of the Sandhills Family Heritage Association's 2023 Rural Heritage FOOD Celebration! Family and friends came for the delicious home-cooked dishes, and the opportunity for one-of-a-kind fellowship at the Spring Lake Civic Center on Chapel Hill Road.

The title above could easily read "Getting Ready" because this story will attempt to give readers a glimpse of what happens in advance of the celebration. Planning between SFHA Staff and Board often takes place during farmer's market hours. Various advertisements are created, contacts are made, invitations and tickets sales all begin early to promote this exciting celebration! Arrangements are even made to borrow some much-needed items like extra chairs from Bethel AME Zion Church and extra tables from Spout Springs Presbyterian Church. We are very, very grateful for the support both churches have given to SFHA for years.

Volunteer commitments from SFHA Board, Staff and other individuals ensure all tasks are covered before, during and after the event. There are volunteers that you never see, but their help year after year is important and necessary. Cooks are approached well in advance of the celebration for commitments to prepare food.







Solicitation for donated foods and food supplies are made. Board members, friends and family wanted to do their part to help make this event successful, so they gave in a big way. There are hours spent shopping before the preparation begins.

Returning attendees look forward to experiencing certain foods prepared by returning cooks. Hats off to Doris Lucas (chitlins & desserts), Annie Simpson (pinto beans), Glodean Robinson (pig feet), Senorita King (fried fatback), Tee Arnold (chicken & fish), Vernetta Pratt (hoecakes), Regina Evans (potato salad), Marquya Crawford (green beans) and Janet Brower Penn (collards & desserts). We welcomed new cook, Diedre Jennings (cabbage) whom we expect to become a returning cook. We hope no one was disappointed with the meal.

Our eager youth and their parents did not hesitate to assist other volunteers with setup nor decorating on September 30th. Once tables and chairs were unloaded, and set up, tablecloths on tables, tents set up, the market shelter was transformed. It was adorned with natural greenery intertwined with not so natural florals. Table centerpieces were completed with potted plants provided by Annie Bernice Simpson, a longtime supporter of SFHA. After music and mics were set up by board member, Leon Dockery, all participants in place, tables decorated and the food ready to serve, the celebration began!

Know how thankful and appreciative SFHA is for the support given in various ways. Join us and let's keep growing to achieve more together in the Sandhills.





# 2023 SANDHILLS RURAL HERITAGE FOOD CELEBRATION

## A Glorious Day!

By Priscilla Burton

What a glorious day at the Sandhills Farmer's Market! This was the annual Heritage Food Celebration. The food, fellowship, entertainment and weather could not have been better. The weather was cool and comfortable, which really helped us all be able to enjoy.

Members of the Board participated throughout the day, with our Board Chair, Janet Brower Penn welcoming all and providing introductions and Rev. Larry Dobbins serving as the MC. Doris Lucas was busy contributing with getting the youth involved in making new swatches for the Sandhills Community Quilts.



**"These swatches were designed and drawn by the Sandhills youth volunteers and other local community members. The swatches will be added to the Sandhills Community Quilt as an effort to show unity of the community. The completed quilt will be displayed in the newly renovated Civic Center."**  
**Doris Lucas**



The entertainment included a beautiful solo from Retired First Sergeant, Vincent McNeill from Seale, Alabama.

Entertainment from the Harvin family included a martial arts demonstration with five of the children performing requirements at their level of expertise. One daughter, Cecelia, played a keyboard rendition of Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Ragtime, and they provided acapella solos.







# 2023 SANDHILLS RURAL HERITAGE FOOD CELEBRATION

Myron Jones along with two volunteers, Ronnie Chalmers and Trey (John Mosby, III) were busy with keeping parking safe and well directed. It was amazing how many people and their cars were moved safely in and out. Myron also arranged for some pictures to be taken by Darius Moore, grandson of NC House of Rep. Marvin Lucas. The pictures are a great contribution to capturing the activities of the day. Rev. Leon Dockery provided the sound system and banner for Our Music Heritage.



Our Executive Director, Ammie Jenkins, provided information about the SFHA books and heritage tours. The sale of books was vigorous throughout the day, including the most recent publication, *Manchester*, in both book and DVD versions. *Healing From the Land* book is still very popular as well.

Thank you Desi Campbell for producing *MANCHESTER The African American Experience* DVDs and books.



Later in the program updates were provided by SFHA Veterans History Project Coordinator, Myron Jones. Rev. Larry Dobbins gave an update on the Civic Center Project. It was so rewarding to have the Spring Lake Mayor, Kia Anthony, to present a Proclamation to SFHA with our Executive Director, Ammie Jenkins, accepting on behalf of the Association. The Proclamation declares the Spring Lake Civic Center a "Building of Historical Significance".

In addition to Mayor Anthony, Town Clerk Carly Autry, Alderwoman Adriana Thompson and Mayor Pro Tem Robin Chadwick, attended as well.





# 2023 SANDHILLS HERITAGE FOOD CELEBRATION



We were delighted to have members and supporters who have been unable to be with us due to health and family challenges for a while, including Josephine Robisch, and Mary Shirley Smith and her son, Vonn, and her daughter Maggie. Mr. Alexander Lucas and Lonell Smith were able to attend. It was rewarding to have our farmers' market vendors attend, including Dark Swarm, Green Thumb (with their whole group attending) and Bob Wholey.

Annie Simpson, a Friend of SFHA, provided plants for centerpieces for our tables and for guests to take home, for which some gave donations. It was so good to see Donna Pratt and her sister, Vernetta, present. The cornbread hoe cakes she provided were so delicious and complimented the great menu from the rest of the volunteer cooks, who can COOK!



Glodean Robinson, a special Friend of SFHA, traveled from Ohio for the third year to prepare food for this event. She supports the work of SFHA so much that she also invited one of the Rockefeller descendants to come as well. The menu included all the foods the doctors warn us about, but most of us are saving our one day per year to eat them in honor of our ancestors for the Heritage Food Celebration. The menu included chitlins, pig feet, fried fish, fried chicken, baked chicken, green beans, collard greens, rice, beans, and potato salad and the hoe cakes. Dessert and drinks were provided as part of the meal as well. What a variety and a treat!







## FEEDBACK FROM EVENT ATTENDEE

### The Drive was Worth It

By Rita Clark

I would like to thank Sandhills Family Heritage Association for hosting such an awesome family history event last Saturday (September 30, 2023) at the Spring Lake Civic Center. There are not enough words to describe all the positive and heartfelt emotions experienced in having the opportunity to connect with so many cousins, friends and community. The travel from Detroit, Michigan, where my mother, Doris Clark and my sister, Sharon Clark and I, reside with our families was worth the drive.



The food was delicious! But learning so much more about my roots in the Cumberland County area was awesome. I especially enjoyed reading about my great-great grandmother Rosetta McLean who exhibited a strong work ethic for many years as one of the chief cooks at the Overhills Croatian Rockefeller estate for Isabelle Lincoln Elder, and hearing first hand from cousin Mary Alice Jones about her wonderful experience cooking for the family too. Just hearing these stories as a young girl growing up in Detroit made a difference in my life.

But more importantly learning even more about the legacy of my great-grandfather Sam McArthur's entrepreneurial spirit. One that I credit today along with my grandmother Charlotte McArthur as probably the sole reason that I have founded my own niche as a business owner with a soon to be launched alternative skincare laundry fabric softener under my Refresh Essentials brand.

Thank you for your tireless efforts of digging, researching and putting our history in print because it takes a special team like yours to do so! God bless!

Written by Rita Clark, granddaughter of the beloved late James Lenis and Charlotte McArthur  
Photos by Doris McArthur Clark, daughter of Lenis and Charlotte McArthur







# SFHA SUSTAINING SUPPORTER

**Retired First Sergeant, Vincent McNeill**

**From Seale, Alabama to SFHA Heritage Food Celebration**

**"Great event, Food was on point and Harvin Family Children touched my Spirit."**



Vincent McNeill entered the military in October of 1983 after graduating from high school in Southern Pines, NC.

He completed One Stationed Unit Training (OSUT) at Ft. Benning, GA. He served as an Infantry Mortar Man during his career and has served both overseas and stateside. He has served in positions ranging from squad leader to First Sergeant. He retired from the US Army in 2008.

He currently serves as the Training Technician for Bravo Company 2nd Battalion 29th Infantry Regiment, Fort Moore, Georgia.

Thank you for service to your country and your community!

Vincent, thank you for the beautiful solo and for sharing fond memories of your Mother, Susie McNeill. Your performance was inspiring and reminded others of their childhood growing up in the rural Sandhills.

SFHA appreciates your generous financial support and donation of photos and video recordings of the 2023 Sandhills Heritage Food Celebration, especially the Harvin children's performances. Also, your donation of five children's books is greatly appreciated. The book "Where's My Daddy?", was written by Vincent's, niece Karen M. Johnson, a military veteran who lives in Florida.

## **Kary (Kate) Hailey**

"I had the immense pleasure of attending the 2023 Sandhills Heritage Food Celebration. My nephew, Vincent McNeil had planned to arrive early to benefit fully from the entire event. We were so inspired by the entire experience.

The food was delicious and so in-line with our heritage as a people who cultivated and worked hard to grow a productive and fruitful crop.

Soooo looking forward to next year's celebration!"







# FEEDBACK FROM EVENT ATTENDEE

## A Trip Down Memory Lane: How Spring Lake Rejuvenated My Soul

By Sharon Clark

Spring Lake, NC is more than just a place for me. It is where I come from, where I belong, and where I always return to. It is my point of reference in my journey through life, and it never fails to remind me of who I am and where I came from.

I recently visited Spring Lake for the Sandhills Heritage Food Celebration, an annual event that celebrates the history and culture of rural African Americans in the Sandhills region of North Carolina. The event was held at the old civic center, a familiar landmark that evoked many childhood memories. As I walked into the venue, I was greeted by the sweet smell of pine trees, a scent that instantly rejuvenated my mind, body and soul from the concrete walls and pavement of the city.

The Celebration was like an old family reunion. I saw many familiar faces, some of whom I had not seen in years. They welcomed me with warm hugs, kind words, and genuine smiles. We shared stories of our past, present and future, and laughed at our joys and sorrows. We also enjoyed the music, food, and crafts that showcased the rich and diverse heritage of the Sandhills. It was a wonderful experience that filled me with gratitude and happiness. I am thankful that I was reared around good people, good morals and values and passion. People that believe in me.

Spring Lake gave me my first radio talk show. It had faith in me. It is a place where people expect to hear good things about you. If you fail at something they expect for you to get back up on feet, and try again. Spring Lake has always been my home, even though we are miles apart. It has shaped me into the person I am today, and it will always have a special place in my heart. I look forward to seeing my hometown and its people again next year, when we will celebrate our roots and our bonds once more.







## Preserving the stories of US Military Veterans

Sandhills Family Heritage Association has been an Official Partner of the Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center at the US Library of Congress since 2009. The Library of Congress's Veterans History Project is committed to honoring veterans and collecting and preserving their stories.

The Veterans History Project is moving forward with interviews. Please contact Myron Jones at [mjones539@gmail.com](mailto:mjones539@gmail.com) or cell phone at 910-850-5418 for more information or to schedule an appointment for your interview. You may also review the link below to familiarize yourself with the possible questions you will be asked and to complete the necessary paperwork for us to interview you. Please keep in mind that the questions are not a complete list of questions as your initial response may dictate that we ask follow-up questions.

Link to the questionnaire and forms

<https://d.docs.live.net/585eb51be6948846/Desktop/VHP%20Final%20Documents.docx>

**Myron Jones** is a retiree who served 25-years in the US Air Force. For more than 19 years, Myron was employed with the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau as Director of Sales. He has worked closely with Sandhills Family Heritage Association promoting African American heritage tours in the Sandhills.



**Photo by Myron Jones**

Myron is an SFHA board member and resource person for SFHA's Veterans History Project and Deerfield Cemetery Project.

Myron holds a Master of Arts Degree in Organizational Management. His home church is Spring Lake Memorial Missionary Baptist Church in Spring Lake where he is an usher.



# SFHA IS A SANDHILLS COMMUNITY EDUCATION RESOURCE

## *Planting Seeds of HOPE*

H History and Heritage

O Outreach and Education

P Preservation of Land

E Economic Self-Sufficiency

You are invited to join SFHA to improve quality of  
life in the under-served Sandhills Community.

Schedule tours for your group

Sponsor SFHA fundraising events

Support our local farmers market

Give donations to support our work

Volunteer to give back to community

Rent space for your special event

Become a member of SFHA

Share your knowledge, wisdom and experience

Sell hand-made home-grown products at SFHA farmers market

Contact Information

SFHA

P. O. Box 754

Spring Lake, NC 28390

910-309-2198 or 919-888-0389

Email: sandhillsfamily@yahoo.com

Sandhillsfamilyheritage.org





*Thank you!*

**Grantors, Sponsors & Individual Donors for supporting SFHA Programs of H.O.P.E.!**

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**Marion Stedman Covington Foundation**

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**Thank You! Community Elders, Local Farmers, SFHA Project Partners, Servant Heart Volunteers, Sustaining Donors, Friends of SFHA & Sankofa Youth!**

**SEPTEMBER FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

LOVE GROVE AME ZION CHURCH FOOD PANTRY



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SERVED**

**301**



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