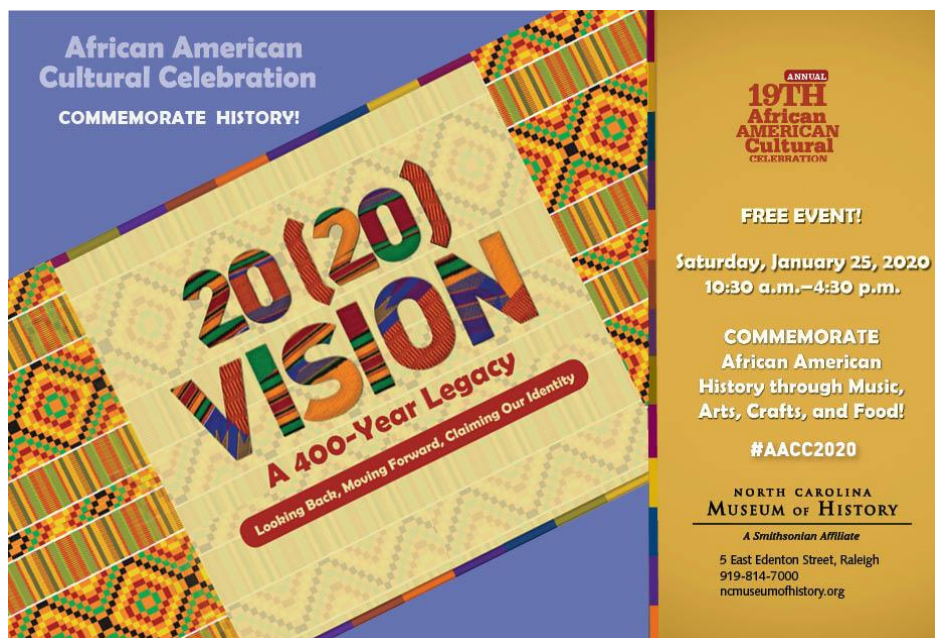


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## Kick Off Black History Month at the NC Museum of History's 19th Annual African American Cultural Celebration



**RALEIGH, N.C.** — Join the **North Carolina Museum of History** for its [19th annual African American Cultural Celebration \(AACC\)](#), the state's official kickoff for Black History Month. This year's theme: "20(20) Vision: A 400-Year Legacy." This jubilant and educational event for all ages will take place **Saturday, January 25, 2020, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.** at the Museum of History in downtown Raleigh. Named a **Top 20 Event by the Southeast Tourism Society**, the festival features more than 75 musicians, storytellers, dancers, chefs, historians, playwrights, authors, artists, reenactors, and more.

*Admission and parking are **FREE**.*

The past is interwoven with the present during the opening procession, as reenactors with the United States Colored Troops carry in the colors. This will be followed by the [Tryon Palace Jonkonnu Drummers](#), who reenact an African American celebration with roots that can be traced back to Jamaica and West Africa, and by first-time performers [Superior Sound Marching Band and Drumline](#) from Saint Augustine's University.

Angela Thorpe, director of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission (NCAAHC) and Dr. Valerie Ann Johnson, NCAAHC chair, will then welcome everyone, and [Lynette Barber](#), actor, singer, musician, and teacher, will perform “Lift Every Voice and Sing” to officially start the festival. (Be sure to attend the afternoon session with Kelly Starling Lyons, author of *Sing a Song*: a book that celebrates the Black National Anthem and shows how this song inspired five generations of a family.)

Excitement builds throughout the day as dancers, singers, storytellers, and other presenters fill exhibit galleries and other spaces throughout the museum building. Among the highlights are:

- baseball legend [Clifford Layton](#), who spent four years in the Negro leagues playing with and against such other legends as Hank Aaron, who went on to hold the record for most home runs in a career, and Satchel Paige, one of the greatest pitchers of all time;
- a range of black entrepreneurs, including Eric Hurdle, who returned to his passion of 30 years and side hustle, [Eric’s Cheesecakes](#), after being laid off his IT job several years ago; [Teli Shabu](#), who started, with his wife, The Magic of African Rhythms (TMOAR), a walking tour company that focuses on historic sites of importance to Durham’s African American community, in particular, but the overall community, in general; as well as “black beauty” dermatologist [Lisa Harewood](#) and wardrobe stylist [Sheon Wilson](#); and
- an amazing assortment of storytellers and spoken word artists, including several vignettes by artists with the North Carolina Association of Black Storytellers; the award winning [Donna Washington](#), who performs on the international stage to entertain, educate, and inspire audiences to bring folklore, literary tales, and personal narratives to life; and author [Jerry Gershenhorn](#), who will discuss Louis Austin, an influential leader and publisher, who came of age during Jim Crow.

Children can stay busy with hands-on activities that include a head-wrapping demonstration, cowrie-shell necklace-making, taking a spin with the Wheel of History to test their knowledge, and exploring with our passport activity hunt through the galleries. Children can also:

- Engage with organizations, like Black Jedi Zulu, which focuses on fostering hip-hop culture and the arts, and introduce yourself to Miss Black North Carolina.
- Let off some STEAM with Lollipop and Mop Top, the Hip-Hop Scientist, or meet and play alongside the Jonkonnu Drummers of Tryon Palace.
- Check out the race car and talk with members of the Eugene Coard drag-racing team about their experiences on and off the track, then take the seatbelt challenge!

Food will be available at the museum restaurant, [Sweet Tea and Cornbread](#) (operated in the legacy of Mama Dip by her granddaughter, Tonya Council), so enjoy lunch or a snack and plan to stay awhile. Additional outdoor produce vendors and a farmers’ market will provide other shopping options, along with the Museum Shop—on your way out!

During the day, take advantage of even more firsthand opportunities to learn about the state’s African American culture, past and present. **Here’s a random sampling:**

- Follow roaming performers [Dwight Hawkins](#), making music with a saw, some bones, and a guitar, and [Freddy Greene](#) on saxophone; then, be sure to enjoy the [Majestic Angels](#)—a senior citizen dance troupe!
- Learn about genealogy methods and techniques from [Nadia K. Orton](#), a professional genealogist and family historian, and [Desi Campbell](#), who uses his experience in researching wills, probate records, and

deeds, as well as AncestryDNA, 23andMe, FamilyTreeDNA, and GEDmatch DNA to connect African Americans in North and South Carolina to relatives in their past, pre-1870.

- Meet some of his students to discover how teacher and farmer Kamal Bell uses the 12 acres of [Sankofa Farms](#) to plant confidence in young black men by teaching them to grow food, raise bees, and chase responsibility.
- See two African American potters, New Bern's [Ben Watford](#) and Black Mountain's [Jim McDowell](#), at work, demonstrating their amazing craft alongside dozens of other crafters.

So, mark your calendars and plan to attend the **19th annual African American Cultural Celebration**. For a **full schedule** of all **performances** and **presentations**, visit <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/aacc-2020> or call 919-814-7900. For images of last year's event, visit: <https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/aacc-2019/photographs>.

This year's AACC 2020 will also introduce some new accessibility options to visitors. View the "[Pre-Visit Accessibility Guide](#)." These will include "reserved" parking spaces (for vehicles with a handicapped placard or license plate; as available, while they last) along Edenton Street that will have easy access to the museum's main entrance ramp; a drop-off space on Jones Street that will have access to the museum's Fletcher Garden entrance, which has elevator access to the lobby level; and a "cool-down room" in the museum's main chronology exhibit (*The Story of North Carolina*). In addition, sign-language interpreters will translate some of the storytelling activities in the museum's Demonstration Gallery from 12:40 to 2:25 p.m. Large-print programs, wheelchairs, and cool-down kits and/or headphones will also be available at information desks on the lobby level.

***The event's official hashtag is #AACC2020!***

*This event is sponsored, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes a great nation deserves great art—to find out more about how NEA grants impact individuals and communities, visit [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov); the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission; the City of Raleigh, based on recommendation of the Raleigh Arts Commission; United Arts Council of Raleigh and Wake County; Wells Fargo; Jack and Jill of America Inc.; CarMax; North Carolina Writers' Network; Courtney Crowder Consulting; North Carolina Black Alliance; and MOHA, the Museum of History Associates. Come to the festival and join the museum today to get your MOHA membership for half-price. For information, visit [NCMOH-programs.com](https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org/programs) or call 919-814-7039.*

[CLICK HERE](#) FOR IMAGES

**For information about the NC Museum of History**, a Smithsonian Affiliate museum, call 919-814-7000 or access [ncmuseumofhistory.org](https://www.ncmuseumofhistory.org) or follow the museum on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or [YouTube](#).

**About the N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian affiliate**

The N.C. Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 400,000 people visit the museum to see

some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

**About the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the nation's first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit [www.ncdcr.gov](http://www.ncdcr.gov).

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