

POPULAR FESTIVAL CELEBRATES AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

Ninth African American Heritage Festival explores Black military service and national legacy

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Jan. 23, 2026— Get free admission to the Charlotte Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate, and celebrate Charlotte’s Black history and culture on **Saturday, Feb. 28, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.**, at the museum’s **ninth African American Heritage Festival**.

The theme of this year’s festival is **“Red, White, Blue, and Black,”** which explores the legacy, service and contributions of African Americans in the U.S. military from the nation’s founding to the present day. The theme aligns with the upcoming **250th anniversary of the United States**, offering an opportunity to reflect on patriotism, sacrifice and the often-overlooked role of Black Americans in defending the nation.

“This year’s African American Heritage Festival invites our community to honor the courage, resilience and lasting contributions of African Americans who have served our country,” said Terri L. White, president & CEO of the Charlotte Museum of History. “As we approach the nation’s 250th anniversary, “Red, White, Blue, and Black” encourages meaningful reflection on our history while celebrating the individuals whose service helped move our country forward.”

The festival will feature a full day of educational programming, performances, speakers, interactive experiences and community engagement opportunities designed for all ages. Local artists, vendors and community organizations will have tables at the event.

Highlights of this year’s festival include:

- **Keynote Address from Secretary Jocelyn Mitnaul Mallette, North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.**
- **"Marching Home: Housing, Hostility & Hope" panel discussion** featuring “Lost Soldiers” podcast co-hosts Ché Abdullah and Tom Hanchett; Vietnam veteran, Historic West End and Beatties Ford community leader and three-time Purple Heart recipient Reuben "Rock" Flax; and Fred Dodson of DreamKey Partners. The “Lost Soldiers” podcast shares the wartime stories of veterans that rest in Charlotte's once-abandoned Cedar Grove Cemetery.
- **“Marching Home: Housing, Hostility & Hope” pop-up exhibit** featuring photos and ephemera from the archive collection of Johnson C Smith University, presented by JCSU’s Duke Library.

- **Watercolor reflection workshop, “The Power of the Warrior’s Heart: Black Hands in Service Then and Now,”** led by Melvin Nix. This session combines storytelling, reflection and a guided watercolor painting experience for attendees. [Space for this workshop is limited and pre-registration is required.](#)
- **“From Records to Remembrance: Black Military Service and Family History” panel discussion** featuring Solomon Titus, descendant of enslaved America Revolution veteran Ishmael Titus, moderated by Dr. Gregory Mixon.
- **Live Revolutionary-era cooking demonstration** in historic kitchen

How to Go

The African American Heritage Festival is free and open to the public. More information is at charlottemuseum.org/events.

About the Charlotte Museum of History

The Charlotte Museum of History, a Smithsonian Affiliate, exists to save and share the Charlotte region’s history, helping create a better understanding of the past and inspiring dialogue about the future. The museum is the steward of the oldest home in Mecklenburg County, the [1774 Hezekiah Alexander Rock House and homesite](#), as well as the [historic Siloam School](#), both of which are on the National Register of Historic Places. Visit charlottemuseum.org and follow the museum on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). The museum is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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