

AAHMSNJ NEWSLETTER

AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

Our founder, Ralph E. Hunter, Sr., is recuperating from a recent surgery. He remains strong and in good spirits and sends his appreciation to the many friends and supporters who have sent him their prayers. We wish him a full and speedy recovery.

Ralph Peterson Exhibit Held Over



The July 19th reception at the Museum included a poetry reading by R.E.B. Manning and brief comments from artists Donnetta Irvis and Rosalyn Wooding. (See pictures on page 3)

The highlight of the afternoon was Ralph Peterson's recollections of his long and significant career. He spoke of lessons he learned while boxing at Laomi Byrd's Pleasantville gym. His character was built in the formative years of his youth and he fondly remembered sparring with some of the great boxers of his time. That experience led him to form a group of youths called Pete's Boys for whom he served as mentor and role model. The former mayor described the challenges and triumphs he faced as a boxer, policeman and chief of police. He also touched upon his experiences as a musician blessed with a natural ear for music. He referenced inclusion and the realities of race in those bygone days as he talked about the many people, black and white, who supported him as Mayor of Pleasantville.

Due to the continuing interest in this exhibit, it will be held over until December 30.

THREE NEW ART EXHIBITS - RECEPTION SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1:00-4:00 P.M.

Show runs from October 1 to December 30, 2009 at the Martin Luther King Center in Newtonville

QUENTIN GREENE

Artist Quentin Greene paints in an expressive style that could be classified in the category of outsider art. He paints what is in his heart splashing it on his canvas in bright colors. Greene is a Minister at CCU Missionary Baptist Church in Sicklerville, NJ, serving with fellow artist, Deacon Burns Rose. A self taught painter, he enjoys the opportunity to express himself artistically and has exhibited at several venues in New Jersey and in the New England area.

BURNS ROSE

Burns Allen Rose, III, grew up in Woodbury and presently resides in Williamstown, NJ. The Air Force veteran studied at the Montgomery County Community College in Bluebell, PA and Temple and Rowan Universities. Before retirement, he taught high school for 25 years. He has traveled widely and transcribes his visual memories in compositions suffused with vivid colors. Burns studied with Terri Williams of Sicklerville who exposed him to various mediums, however, he works mostly in watercolor and enjoys the challenges of the medium. He is a Deacon at CCU Missionary Baptist Church in Sicklerville.

KEVIN GRANT

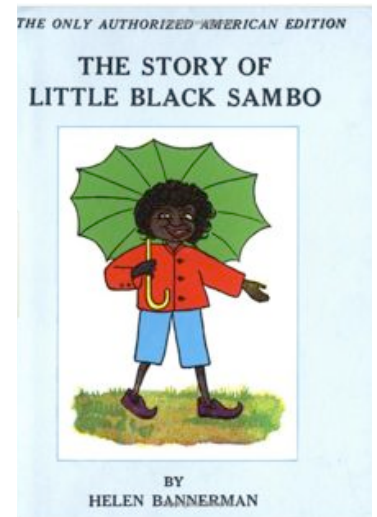
Before an injury ended his livelihood and interrupted his blossoming career as a photographer, Kevin Grant spent lots of time photographing jazz musicians. He liked to listen to their music but he also enjoyed capturing their artistic energy on film. His photographs reveal the earnest dedication of the musician to the art of music. Similarly, his landscape photography translates the syncopation of nature's rhythms into a visual poetry that requires no words.

A Little Bit about Little Black Sambo

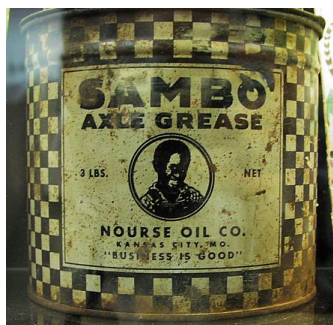
Little Black Sambo was written in 1899 by Helen Bannerman and became a childhood classic. Some maintain she wrote the book to tell the tale of a “clever Indian boy who outsmarted his enemies” and that only later was it rewritten with racist overtones and set in the American South and Africa. However, it must be noted that the word “Sambo” had been commonly used as a demeaning nickname for black servants and laborers in the colonialist system for many years before Bannerman’s book was published, therefore, the use of a racial slur for the main character’s name challenges that assertion. Certainly, the author was reflecting prevailing attitudes toward blacks at the time and may not have considered her book to be offensive from her point of view.



Depictions of sambos, mammies and pickaninnies in films and cartoons perpetuated the myth of the lazy, shiftless, childlike Negro. (*The Colored cartoon: Black representation in American animated short films*, Christopher P. Lehman, pps. 89-90). Bannerman’s book was one among several that caused the NAACP to mount a campaign against negative stereotyping of blacks. The organization’s publication of *The Brownies Book* (1920-21) sought to counteract the effect of a plethora of imagery that assailed the self esteem of black children with positive images and stories about the achievements of Black Americans. The series introduced authors such as Langston Hughes, who began his writing career with this publication.



In 1946 Ub Iwerks’ 1935 cartoon *Little Black Sambo* was reprised by Castle Films. The NAACP successfully campaigned against distribution of the film charging that it was a grossly offensive caricature of Negroes. The campaign helped to make Sambo characterizations unprofitable at a time when returning black WWII veterans were standing up for their rights in America.



Importantly, *Little Black Sambo* is also the book that inspired the collection of objects and artifacts that comprise the permanent collection of the African American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey. When Ralph Hunter, the museum’s founder, saw a copy of the controversial children’s book in an antiques store he bought it to remove it from circulation later realizing that shining a light on its very existence would help to tell the story of blacks in America. The children’s book became the first piece in Hunter’s extensive collection.

We invite you to come in and take a little time to learn about Sambo and see the other interesting items on display.

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - Saturday
10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Admission is free
 Donations encouraged

Groups interested in
 visiting the Museum should
 call to arrange a docent led
 tour.

We are located in the
 MLK Center at
 661 Jackson Rd.,
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SOME PHOTOS FROM THE JULY RECEPTION



Clockwise from top left: Buena Vista Twp. Deputy Mayor, Teresa Kelly, and Mayor Chuck Chiarello flank Ralph Peterson; Ralph Peterson addresses the group; Lillian Joan Hill, Linda Spriggs and Joanne Armstead attended the event; Donnetta Irvis, Painter; Rosalyn Wooding, Artisan; and R.E.B. Manning aka Re' Banfield, Poet/Photographer



In Appreciation

The museum relies upon the donations of gifts, money and time that we receive from the community to continue to carry out our mission.

This summer we have been privileged to have the assistance of Ms. **Linda Dilworth Diego**, a Stockton student who volunteered her time and experience to create a catalog of the contents of our permanent collection. She has diligently researched the facts about the artifacts on exhibit and printed labels that identify each piece.

Mr. **Murphy Knight** painted the walls of the rear gallery and labored conscientiously to complete the job prior to our July reception.

Dr. **James Johnson**, historian, lecturer and author, provided assistance with a video tour of the collection featuring Ralph Hunter.

We received several boxes of books from the estate of Mrs. **Lorraine Y. Winstead** of Philadelphia, Pa. from her sister Mrs. **Clara Brown** of Newtonville, NJ and are currently cataloging the contents of the donation.

We are also appreciative of the daily assistance of Mrs. **Paulean Merriwether** and Rev. **Milton White**, whose efforts to serve our members and the public are invaluable. Rev. White is currently recovering from surgery. He is in our prayers.

AAHMSNJ Board Members: Ralph E. Hunter, Sr., President; Brian Jackson, Vice President; Patricia King, Treasurer; Anne Glapion, Secretary; Elwood Davis, David Greenspun, Jeffrey Light, Anthony Mack, David Pinto, Stacy Hunter Withers, Rev. David Mallory, Ellis Peoples, Braxton Plummer, and Honorable Jesse Tweedle, Sr.