

NORTHEAST GEORGIA BLACK PRESBYTERIAN CAUCUS

(NEGA-BPC)

MAY 2018



BLACK PRESBYTERIAN CAUCUS

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CONTACT

Elder Robert Patten,
Northeast Georgia
Black Presbyterian Caucus
2473 Golden Camp Road
Augusta, Ga. 30906

Email:
bobpatten69@gmail.com
Mobile: 706-830-3557

Let Us Pray



From the president:



Robert Patten

This question actually jarred me! And, it succeeded in causing me to reflect on just what makes the Black Caucus relevant.

My conclusion is that racism has been practiced so very long that it has become "normalized" in the minds of many, both Black and White. Only those Blacks and Whites who realize this truth, and who care to erase this blem-

ish on humanity will speak this truth to the power that an evil politicization of race has created. Much of what is suffered in the Black community goes unnoticed by those not having a direct link to it. The Black Caucus gives voice to those who would otherwise be neglected.

This is one of the reasons that I see this Newsletter as a possible means of communicating concerns to a wider audience. Much is needed to be done within the Black Community itself. But, just as Blacks could not alone rid themselves of slavery in the Americas; neither can racism be uprooted by Blacks themselves. Alliances that promote agape

love-- that is that kind of love Jesus demonstrated in His parable of the Good Samaritan-- puts flesh on that Love-Spirit and demonstrates a manifestation of God's will in real time, here on earth! (Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven...)

Our first featured article is about a school started by the Presbytery, a school -- a planted seed-- that was borne from the Love-Spirit. That seed grew and bore fruit; but, because of hard financial times its leaf did wither, however, it did not die; it is now being watered by the community in which it was planted... God will produce its growth.



BOGGS ACADEMY/ RURAL LIFE CENTER

By: Rev. Otis Smith



Boggs Academy was founded in 1906 by the Reverend John L. Phelps, the Presbyterian Church, and local Black farmers (who donated their land) to create an institution to educate local Black students beyond the eighth grades. Burke County did not provide education for Blacks beyond the 8th grade. Boggs Academy provided an excellent secondary education from 1906 to 1986.

Soon after the school closed the Board of National

Missions, (UPC, USA) put the campus and it's additional 1,200 acres up for sale for 3 million dollars. Local Presbyterians in the John I. Blackburn and Westminster congregations, Black citizens in Keyville and Waynesboro, Ga petitioned the Board of National Missions to remain in at the site. Their petition was at first ignored and then denied.

Local Presbyterians in the John I Blackburn and Westminster congregations joined with Black citizens in Keyville and Waynesboro, GA. sought to buy the campus, but the price was too

high. They petitioned the NEGA Presbytery and the Board of National Mission to remain in mission at the site. That to was denied

Desperate to be heard, Black Presbyterians and local citizens led by Pastor Otis A. Smith, Elders G. Samuel & Mrs. Stone, Michel Searles, Mayor Emma Gresham of Keyville, and Concern Citizens of Waynesboro, GA. drove over night to Louisville, KY to picket the National Headquarters. They were prepared to stay until the General Council agreed to hear their case.

Continued on next page

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

BOGGS

Continued from front page

The Council agreed that very day to hear the case immediately after the evening meal. Members of the Council had not heard the group's request for the church to "remain in Mission". The Council establish a facts-finding- committee to travel to Burke county to ascertain the group's claims. After that visit the Council recommended its approval.

In 1991 the National Church, NEGA Presbytery NEGA NBPC, and local leaders joined together to transition the Boggs Academy into the Boggs Rural Life Center. Creators visioned the Center to be a non-profit institution to help

address the needs and issues in rural Burke and surrounding counties.

Recently, January 27, 2018, a 1900 square feet multi-purpose building was dedicated as the "EMMA GRESHAM AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH LIBRARY AND CULTURAL CENTER."



Emma Gresham at Boggs
"As I remember it happening"
OTIS ARTIS SMITH-2/26/2018

Special Recognition



The Late
Mayor Emma Gresham

Boggs Rural Life Center, board was very pleased to be able to honor the late Emma Gresham before she passed away on Friday, March 2, 2018 at age 92.

On January 27th, 2018 Emma Gresham was present and very honored to cut the ribbon, at the Emma Gresham African American Research Library & Cultural Center. The last year of her life was dedicated to developing ideas and programs she wanted to see in the Library.

Mayor Emma Gresham was known for her dedication as a leader, educator, board member and becoming the second Black woman to be elected as Mayor in Georgia. She was responsible for the reactivation of Keyville, GA in 1985. Mrs. Gresham remained mayor of Keyville, GA

until 2005. During her 20 years as Mayor Gresham provided leadership to secure federal, state, and county funding for a fully functioning water and sewer service; street lights; fire department; library; post office; recreation park, wastewater treatment plant; adult literacy and after-school program and municipal building.



Information & Photos provided by Jacqueline Bosby



Little known: "Black History Fact"

By: Robert Patten

MAY 2018

AFRICANS WERE IN AMERICA WHEN CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS GOT HERE!

Dr. Ivan Van Sertima, in his book, *They Came Before Columbus*, [ISBN: 0-8129-6817-4] documents Christopher Columbus' own account of Africans who had already been traveling to the Americas and trading with those whom Columbus sought to trade. More recent evidences of the African presence in the Americas have shown Africans to had been here hundreds, if not thousands, of years before Columbus made his "discovery".

What's Happening At...



Boggs Rural Life Center

Summer Camp Activities
Special Tours & Movie Days
Scheduled Tours
Reservations are Required. You can go to
Eventbrite to register

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/boggs-summer-activities-tours-tickets-46023462415>

or visit the website at www.boggsresearchlibrary.com
(706) 554-9656 or Email jdbosby@gmail.com