

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FIRST EVER AFRICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGY CONFERENCE AND FAMILY HISTORY FAIR TO BE HELD IN HISTORIC SELMA, AL

Talk on the Legacy of William Wilberforce marks the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the British slave trade and the release of the film Amazing Grace

SELMA, AL – February 12, 2007 –The Black Belt African American Genealogical and Historical Society, Inc. (BBAAGHS) is holding the first ever Black Belt African American Genealogy Conference & Family History Fair in historic Selma, AL on February 17, 2007. The conference includes guest speakers, exhibits, vendors, films and other events at two locations, the Larry D. Striplin Performing Arts Center, 1000 Selma Ave, and the Divine Life Community Development Corporation, 905 Water Ave.

Workshops include *Beginning Genealogy* and *Researching Slave Records* with Mary Jones Fitts and *Family Reunion Planning* with Melvin J. Collier. Ms. Jones Fitts is a professional genealogist and expert on the slave records of Marengo County and Faunsdale Plantation. Mr. Collier is a long-time family reunion organizer and is the Family Reunion Forum Manager at AfriGeneas.com. He was also recently named its 2006 Volunteer of the Year.

Two presenters with ties to the Black Belt are traveling from Chicago to participate. Gwen M. Holland will present a case history of *The McArthurs of Wilcox County* and Lovie Warren will examine the wealth of information found in the school enumeration census records from Nanafalia in Marengo County and selected schools in Wilcox County.

In honor of Black History Month and coinciding with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery by Great Britain and the opening of the film *Amazing Grace*, BBAAGHS is pleased to present Regis Marshall Nicoll who will speak on *The Legacy of William Wilberforce*. Regis is a Centurion of the Wilberforce Forum, a Christian think tank of Prison Fellowship Ministries promoting justice, freedom of religion, and the sanctity of life. He is also a columnist for Chuck Colson's *BreakPoint* and a contributing editor for *Salvo Magazine*. His writings on faith and culture regularly appear on *Crosswalk* and the *Crux Project* among other places.

The conference fee is \$20.00 for a full day of workshops from 8 AM - 5 PM and \$20.00 for the banquet from 7 - 10 PM.

While everyone is invited to attend, this event should be of particular interest to those living in, or with ancestry in, the twelve counties of Alabama's Black Belt Region - Bullock, Choctaw, Dallas, Greene, Hale, Lowndes, Macon, Marengo, Perry, Pickens, Sumter and Wilcox.

To register and for more information about the conference and speakers, please consult BBAAGHS' website: www.bbaaghs.org or call BBAAGHS President B.J. Smothers at 334-877-4846. For more information about BBAAGHS, see the website.

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