

**21th Annual  
Storytelling Festival  
"Honoring Family,  
Celebrating Community"**



**Mable House  
Cultural Arts Center**

**October 2, 1999**

# Schedule of Storytelling

10:30 – 11:30am &  
1:00 - 2:00pm

Family Recollections – told by Mattie Lou  
Clower & Willie Watkins @ the Potato House

10:30 - 11:00am &  
3:00 – 3:30pm

*Sweet Sara and the Freedom Quilt* – by Deborah  
Hopkinson – told by Nancy Sims @ the Cultural  
Center

10:30 – 11:00am &  
12:30 – 1:00pm

*Two Voices of Slavery: Dawn to Dusk - Ida Mable;*  
*Dusk to Dawn – Celia* - written & told by Josie Bailey  
@ the Kitchen House Steps

11:00 – 11:30am &  
3:00 – 3:30pm

*The Robert Mable I Knew: A Perspective* – written by  
Carolyn Celeste Miller; told by Sibley Fleming @ the  
Cultural Center

11:00am - 12:30pm

Family Recollections – told by “Thea” Welch @ the  
Kitchen House

11:00 – 11:30am &  
3:00 – 3:30pm

*Almeda Mable during the Civil War* – interpreted by  
Angie Brown @ the bottom of the stairs in the Mable  
House

11:30am – 12:00pm &  
1:30- 2:00pm

*Alex Mable: War, Andersonville & Beyond* – written &  
told by Jimmie Jacobs @ Mable House Front Porch

12:00- 12:30pm &  
1:00 - 1:30pm

*The Feather Bed: Miss Ruth Mable* – written by  
Daria K. Willson, contributions by Thea Welch; told by  
Nancy Sims @ downstairs Bedroom

12:30 – 1:00pm &  
4:00 – 4:30pm

*Bits & Pieces: Tales of Mable House People* – written &  
told by Daria K. Willson @ the Parlor

1:00 – 1:30pm &  
3:00 – 3:30pm

Loyal Helpers: Ike and Drew - written & told by Bev  
Center & LaDoris Bias-Davis @ the Kitchen House

4:00 – 4:30pm

Recollections – Willie Freeman and Junior  
Jones @ the Potato House

4:30 – 5:00pm

Recollections - told by Mrs. “Miss Lucy” Barnes &  
Benson Barnes @ the Potato House

# Schedule of Events

Don Stewart – Master of Ceremonies\*

<b>10:00 – 10:30 am</b>	Harmony Leland Elementary Honor Chorus on Stage
<b>10:30 – 11:30 am</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Army Band - on Stage
<b>11:30 am – 12:00 pm</b>	Spiritual Aires of Smyrna - on Stage
<b>12:00 pm – 12:30 pm</b>	Willie Freeman and The Inspirational's behind the Potato House
<b>12:30 pm – 12:45 pm</b>	Tabernacle Church of God in Christ Drill Team on Stage
<b>12:45 pm – 1:00 pm</b>	Lion of Judah Dance Group - on Stage
<b>1:00 pm – 1:30 pm</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Army Band - on Front Lawn
<b>2:00 pm – 3:00 pm</b>	Dedication Program - on Stage
<b>3:15 pm – 3:45 pm</b>	Spiritual Aires of Smyrna - behind the Potato House
<b>3:15 pm – 3:45 pm</b>	Step Exhibition -Phi Beta Sigma-Southern Polytechnic Univ. - on Stage
<b>4:30 pm – 5:00 pm</b>	Mableton 5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Chorus - on Stage

\***Don Stewart** is the Dean of Professional Voices in the Atlanta area. A former anchor on WSB-TV Channel 2; for many years he was an announcer on WPCB radio. Don performs with several senior citizens entertainment groups and is the primary singer for his nineteen piece Big Band, The Modernaires. Hearing him sing is a pleasure and his witticism as a Master of Ceremonies are – well – unique.

# The Events of the Day

## Historical Demonstrations:

**Wood Working** – Fishburn – Outside Blacksmith Shop

**Blacksmithing** – outside Blacksmith Shop

**Gold Panning** – David Bell & Steve Kemp (Gold Miner Interpreter)

**'27 Nash – Photographs** – Next to Smoke House

**Union Soldier Encampment** – Behind Potato House

**Confederate Soldier Encampment** – Front Lawn Under Trees

**Tapestry/Handweaving Guild** – Cultural Center

Demo of cloth making in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century / add your own touch to our tapestry! Be apart of the Permanent Art Collection at The Mable House

**Quilting Exhibition – Friendship Quilting Guild** – Ellouise Buchanan & Brenda Carroll – Cultural Center

Decorate a quilt square with your own art and name! See it sewn in place on a treadle sewing machine. Become an artist. Be a part of the Festival '99 Quilt

## Other Sites to See:

**Popcorn & Balloons** – Next to Smoke House

**Food Tent** – Pebble Brook H.S. Booster Club

**Petting Zoo: “Party Animals”** – Chris Hudson

**Children’s – Party-in-a-Box** – Kim Williams - Outside Cultural Center

**Children’s Stories & Books** – Sibley Fleming - Cultural Center

**Mable House Family Cut - Out** – Dona Aaron - Arbor Outside Cultural Center - Design a memory of the Festival '99 to take home and enjoy.

**\*Please Check Site Map For Event Revisions and Exact Locations**

# Dedication Program

2:00pm to 3:00pm

Don Stewart - Master of Ceremonies

Procession to stage

Cannonade

Musical tribute

## **Introductions and Presentations:**

Welcome - - Ann Tewelow, Coordinator of the Mable House Cultural Center - Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

Dedication of Plaque - Congressman John Lewis

South Cobb Arts Alliance - Sheila Giddens, Vice President

“Honoring Family, Celebrating Community,” – Mable House Cemetery Storytelling Project - Introduction of Advisory Committee and Project Manager

Presentation of Art - Elizabeth Whitlock, Cultural Affairs Manager, Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

“Living Treasures” Presentation - Woody Thompson – Cobb County Commissioner

Special Presentation – Representative Don Wix



The Grassroots Program is sponsored in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through an appropriation of the Georgia General Assembly and administered through Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department.



THIS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE GEORGIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL AND THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES AND THROUGH APPROPRIATIONS FROM THE GEORGIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

# Mable House History

In May of this year, the members of the research committee for the “Honoring Family, Celebrating Community” Storytelling project embarked on a most formidable task of trying to identify many of the nine unmarked graves of former slaves in the Robert Mable family cemetery. The second task was to locate any living descendents. We also included two other men in our search, Ike Mathis and Drew Mathis who are not buried in the cemetery. Through legal records and oral histories, we learned that they had been slaves of Robert Mable and were very special people to the Mable family.

The past six months have been challenging because information about African-Americans before the Civil War is sparse or nonexistent. Therefore, it is so rewarding to the researcher when a link is made with the past. We estimate approximately one thousand hours have been spent by the committee including almost fifty hours of taped interviews and video.

Traditional sources were used for the genealogical research. Along with the Robert Mable family Bible, and the memories of many members of the Mableton community, both black and white, names of eleven Mable slaves were located. From those eleven names, we successfully identified three buried in the cemetery. They are Celia Mable, Thacker or Thack Mable and his wife, Sook.

The search committee discovered the birth of Celia Mable in 1824. Celia was a slave of Pheriby Lane Aycock, who came to Cobb County, Georgia when Pheriby married Robert Mable. The story concludes when Celia’s great-great grandson, Lamar (Bunny) Watkins, visited the Mable House for a taped interview about his childhood memories and stories from Celia’s daughter, Ida Mable, his great grandmother.

We have also located and, in many instances, have taped interviews with over one hundred living descendents of Ike Mathis, Celia and Thack Mable. While we do not yet know the names of the remaining six African-American graves, we do know that these people were vital to the establishment of Mableton and that their contributions to this community are immeasurable. It has been an honor for all of us on the committee to be a part of telling their story and unlocking their spirit.

The antebellum home and property of Robert Mable has been associated with the South Cobb Arts Alliance for the past 18 years, providing office and gallery space and a place to stage arts events for the community. As the Mable House has been our “home,” so has the Mable family seemed “our family.” Now on lease from the Mable family to Cobb County Government, the Mable House will soon undergo restoration to become a living history museum. The opening of the new Mable House Cultural Center earlier this year by Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs has provided a new home for the arts; the current exhibit in the Mable House, “Mable House Homecoming,” will be the last exhibit there. The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Storytelling Festival, with its theme of “Honoring Family, Celebrating Community” and its focus on Mable history anticipates the new use of the Mable House and prepares us for its transition from art gallery to history museum.

The “Honoring Family, Celebrating Community” project sprung from the curiosity of a few South Cobb Arts Alliance Board members about the identity of the individuals buried in the unmarked graves in the Mable Family Cemetery behind the Mable House. Along with this curiosity was an urge to mark and honor those graves. The desire to honor graves seems to arise from a sense of the importance of family history, of learning it and passing it on, for we as individuals of the community forge our identities as we learn about our ancestors. And our identities are uplifted as we learn about the contributions to history made by our ancestors, as we share in the honor accorded them.

“Honoring Family, Celebrating Community,” was conceived to be a gift of history to the community from the South Cobb Arts Alliance.

To gather the history and supplement document research, what better way to learn history than through the telling of family stories? And to present it, what better way than through the art of storytellers, writers, musicians, dramatists and visual artists? The descendants of Robert Mable, the descendants of his slaves, and many others, have honored us with the sharing of their memories. Their openheartedness has generated the admiration of our researchers. Their stories have fired the imaginations of our writers and storytellers. We are very grateful to all who have provided information and support, to family and community members who have shared their art, to the Georgia Humanities Council and the Grassroots Arts Program for embracing our vision, to the Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department for their partnership, to the Cobb County Community Development Department for essential research, and the generosity of our community sponsors who made the project possible.



Photo – D. K. Willson

# Storytellers & Writers

**Nancy Sims** is not what she seems! When she performs as her character, “Grannie Goodheart” she creates a delightfully funny lady of age with a gift for making the stories she tells enchanting and lively. Between Nancy and her “Grannie Goodheart,” they bring tales to life for the pure enjoyment of their listeners. As an educator / entertainer, Nancy is in steady demand for her “healing, reaching, culturing” storytelling style.

**Daria K. Willson** is a writer and freelance editor – among other things. A former therapist and college instructor, she can tell stories as well as author them. Her experiences as a video producer and scriptwriter came in handy as she Chaired this year’s *Mable House Cemetery / Storytelling Festival*.

**Jimmie Jacobs** has an extensive knowledge of Civil War history, an excellent feel for the time and its people and a writing career with books, multiple articles and stories to his credit. He researches, writes and tells his Festival '99 story in authentic dress. He is the Editor of *Georgia Sportsman Magazine*.

**Margaret “Thea” McDevitt Welch** is a great – granddaughter of Robert Mable, builder of the Mable House. Her love and respect of family and community, combined with her gifts of writing recollections and storytelling, allow her to bring an unusual perspective of past lives and events to her listeners.

**Mrs. Harlan “Willie” Watkins** is a great – granddaughter of Robert Mable, builder of the Mable House. Her whip – quick mind and quirky storytelling ways make Willie a natural performer. Her adventuresome times on the Mable property as a child and as an adult are entertaining and plain fun. Wait until you hear about the real Civil War era treasure she dug up!

# Storytelling Today

The original stories you will enjoy hearing and seeing today are based on historical research, both factual and oral. From these sources, historical fiction stories are being told by storytellers and interpreted by Living History Dramatists.

Historical fiction uses facts based on public documents and authoritative reference books and/or spoken (first person) memories or recollections of others concerning experiences related to the event. This information becomes a skeleton for the story. The remainder of the tale is "filled – in" by the writer/storyteller/interpreter using general knowledge of the period and creative license to make the tale come alive for the audience.

## Storytellers & Writers

**Angie Brown** is a Living History Interpreter, research historian and genealogist. She works with a group of talented women who share her curiosity of the past. They seek, through period dress and their study of customs and historical events, to bring in times, people and places past.

**LaDoris Bias-Davis** is a most professional storyteller and teacher of the art of storytelling. She entwines her history and heritage to encourage reading and remembering as ways of motivating her listeners. She is an oral preservationist, having collected numerous Gullah tales and other stories of historical importance. Her skills of bridging the past with the future through storytelling make for a unique listening experience.

**Josie Bailey** is a natural storyteller, gifted with a rich voice and compelling manner, which pulls the listener into her tales. Storytelling found her when people listening to the stories she volunteered to read to her son's schoolmates asked for more. A Georgia State graduate, she became a professional storyteller seven years ago. Josie internalizes a story and lets it lead her in the telling. She becomes a part of the people she is speaking about and enjoys watching her audience join her within the experience of a story well told.



# Storytellers & Writers

**Carolyn Miller** describes herself as a life - time reader and writer. Beginning at age four, encouraged and supported by her working class family, she learned to think for herself, hold to her strong Christian background and excel at whatever she chose. College educated with a Master's in Social Services Administration, she retired from that field and moved to Georgia to write her "memories...of an amazing period of history." Primarily a non-fiction author, she believes in not explaining everything to the reader, but guiding, so they discover the important points for themselves.

**Sibley Fleming** is nationally acclaimed children's book author, storyteller and educator. Her book, "How to Rock Your Baby", received the Family Channel Seal of Quality. She teaches writing at Georgia State University and is a guest instructor of publishing. Descriptions of her storytelling include "spellbound," "delightful adventure," "a sense of musical rhythm and rhyme that reverberates so clearly in her work today." It is an honor to have her tell historical festival and personal stories for everyone's enjoyment.

**Mattie Lou Bennett Clower** educated multiple generations of Mableton students. She embraces life with enthusiasm and energy. Mattie continues to share her life adventure stories. At the soon to be age of 94, she recently baked 10 homemade pies for her church bizarre. Mattie Lou weaves words of wisdom and joy of life into memorable stories. Two of Mrs. Mattie Lou's students, Willie Freeman and Junior Jones, will share their personal stories about Mableton and the Barnes family.

**Bev Center's** gentle voice pulls the listener into her stories so easily they almost forget where they are and are aware only of what a wonderful adventure she is piloting them through. She began her love for and collecting of stories in front of her grandparents' fireplace. She uses her professional training in the visual arts to interact activity and storytelling. We are most pleased to have this experienced and delightful artist with our Festival.

**Steve Kemp** is a Georgia native from Marietta who began telling stories semi-professionally a decade ago. A friend interested him in this activity and he began working with children, who are still one of his favorite audiences. He especially enjoys the company of his listeners and watching his audiences enjoy the unfolding of each story in its telling. Isn't he a "rich" goldminer!

# Artists

**Ann Cockerill**

*Mable House  
Austell Presbyterian Church  
Concord Bridge  
Lost Mountain Store  
Marietta Square  
Perkerson Mill  
Concord Road Covered Bridge  
Honoring Family, Celebrating*

**Annie Greene**

**Shirley Gore**

*Community  
Barnes Hardware  
Mable House*

**Paul Beswick**

*Concord Cabin  
Barnes Barn  
Historic Mable House  
Barnes House  
Solitary Tree*

**Susan K. Smith**

**Raymond Williams**

**Leon Moss**

**Susan Gardner**

*Ruff's Mill  
Concord Covered Bridges  
Haggard House  
Sunrise at the Mable House  
Palms Restaurant  
Mableton Morning  
The Mable House  
Bob Thompson Conoco  
Barnes Hardware  
Harold Glore Home  
Coxes District Court House  
Mableton Rail Road Station*

**Vicki Lansdell**

*Barnes Store  
Rev. Bob Baxter  
Nickajack Creek*

**Carol Kirby**

**Ray Byram**

*Autumn  
Morning Light  
The Light*

**Karchiek Sims**

*Memory Jars*

# Committee Members

**Mary Anderson**, retired principal, teacher, writer; former Mable Project Manager

**Chris Brooks**, administrator, Tulley - Smith Historical House and Farm, Atlanta History Center, Advisory Committee

**Clarence Brown, Jr.**, Archivist - Researcher

**Jean Burgess**, retired teacher - Artifacts Committee

**Mary Ward Cater**, community leader - Researcher, Liaison

**Lyric Cosby**, Kennesaw State student liaison

**Dr. Jeff Drobney**, History Professor, Kennesaw State University - Advisory Committee

**Susan Gore Gardner**, artist - Exhibit Organizer

**Mary Williams Green**, community liaison, Artifacts Committee

**Barbara Hollis**, retired school principal - Project Secretary

**Jane Lavender**, artist - researcher and Exhibit Organizer

**Carol Morrison**, writer and researcher - Chair of Research

**Kathy Scott**, document expert, historic preservationist - Research Trainer and Support Consultant

**Dr. Tom Scott**, History Professor, Kennesaw State University; Center for Local and Regional History - Advisory Committee

**Althena Singletary**, school principal - Advisory Committee

**Susan Knight Smith**, artist - current Project Manager

**Ann Tewelow**, Coordinator of the Mable House Cultural Center - Advisory Committee

**Daria K. Willson**, writer, Events Organizer - Festival Chair

• Presented by The South Cobb Arts Alliance and Cobb County Parks, Recreation And Cultural Affairs Department



FOR GODNESS SAKE



Bisse Bell Creameries, L.P.  
West Atlanta Branch