



GULLAH GEECHEE CHAMBER
FOUNDATION

Celebrating Our Heritage. Creating Our Future.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRESS RELEASE: UNESCO MIDDLE PASSAGE PORT MARKER SLATED FOR
GEORGETOWN, SC**

Georgetown, SC, May 1, 2026 – Georgetown, SC will become a designated site of UNESCO Routes of Enslaved People with the unveiling of a Middle Passage Port Marker in Georgetown County, SC on October 24, 2026. The installation ceremony and related educational workshops, programs, and presentations will coincide with the 500-year anniversary of enslaved Africans arriving with Spanish explorers at Winyah Bay in 1526. The event theme is “Remembering and Honoring.”

The Georgetown Port Marker will join 22 other designated sites, including two in SC, two others in the United States, and sites in Africa, Canada, Haiti, Mexico, the Netherlands, and South America. UNESCO Routes of Enslaved Peoples project, begun in 1994, breaks the silence surrounding the transatlantic, Indian Ocean, and Mediterranean slave trades. It focuses on mapping memory sites, promoting the history of enslaved peoples' resistance, and examining the legacies of racism and cultural contributions of the African diaspora.

Georgetown events are being coordinated by a Steering Committee of community members led by co-chairs Ron Daise, cultural interpreter, author, and performer; and Beatrice Rodrigues, historian at the Gullah Museum. “In tandem with the recent United Nations resolution that recognizes the transatlantic slave trade as the ‘gravest crime against humanity,’” said Daise, “this event will honor the lives of enslaved Africans whose lives were lost as sea and those who were brought to Georgetown and never recognized or acknowledged for their contributions to our state’s and country’s economic success and cultural heritage.” Rodrigues added, “The marker will stand on sacred ground near the waterway on which Africans arrived. It will honor those who endured, remember those who did not, and memorialize the cultural legacy of Gullah Geechee people”

The port marker will cite five documented vessels that arrived in Georgetown with a combined total of 214 captives: *Warwick*, 1737; *Endeavor*, 1738, *Susanna*, 1767, *Peggy*, 1770 and *Betsy*, 1784. Said Rodrigues, “Hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans produced Carolina Gold Rice on the 45,000 acres of rice fields in Georgetown County. Their food ways, speech, crafts, music, and spiritual beliefs and practices forged Gullah Geechee culture and continue to impact American heritage.”

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Funding for the marker installation and ceremonies has been granted from the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Markers Project (MPCPMP), a nonprofit organization founded in 2011 to honor the two million Africans who perished during the trans-Atlantic crossing and the 10 million who survived to help build the Americas, and Georgetown County Accommodations Tax.

“Community participation and fundraising are vital to this event’s success,” said Daise. “With assistance, our collective efforts will recognize Georgetown County history, healing, and unity.”

Tax-deductible donations may be made to Gullah Geechee Chamber Foundation with the For listing: Middle Passage Historic Port Marker - Georgetown, SC For more information, contact the Gullah Museum at 843-527-1851 or gullahmuseumsc@gmail.com or visit www.middlepassage.com.

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MEDIA - Co-chairs Ron Daise, cultural interpreter, author, and performer; and Beatrice Rodrigues, historian at the Gullah Museum are available for interviews and additional information. Contact Beatrice Rodriguez, the Gullah Museum at 843-527-1851, gullahmuseumsc@gmail.com; or Ron Daise at 843-812-2381; rondaise09@gmail.com.