

LIA at Work

Literacy InterActives, Inc.

a nonprofit organization www.literacyinteractives.org

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Literacy InterActives, Inc.

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www.parkersydnorhistoric.org

Galleria on the Lake
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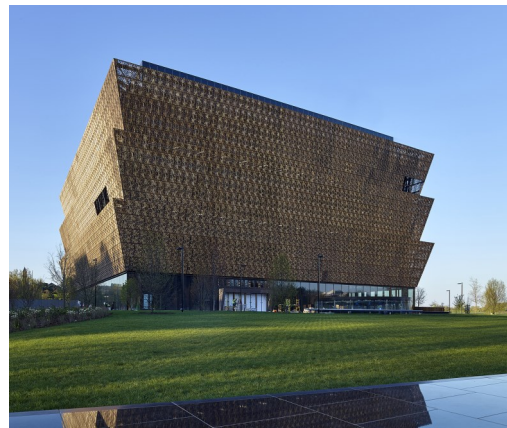
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National Museum of African American
History and Culture
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/>

Things in Common: National Museum of African American History & Culture, Parker Sydnor Historic Site, and Rosenwald Schools

The Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture celebrated its first anniversary in September 2017. Located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., the



Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture

Museum is an amazing historical, cultural, even spiritual place to visit. The Museum has already begun a remarkable journey. There have been over 2 million visitors. "The opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture was a 13-year journey

to foster a broader understanding of the black experience in a national and international context....This is America's story and this museum is for all Americans," said Lonnie G. Bunch III, the Museum's founding director. "It has truly become a place of healing, reconciliation, and celebration where people can embrace—not only African American history and culture, but—how that layered history has shaped America's identity."

People from all nationalities, racial backgrounds, ethnicities, and generations make their way to the Museum. On the day that I visited, there was excitement in the air and thousands of people who had waited patiently outside before entering with their timed entry passes, moved in unobtrusive slow motion throughout the galleries. Like a majestic humanity, they seemed to be in awe of the exhibits. There was also a general atmosphere of courtesy as strangers shared with each other about being there. Amidst the cell phone chatter, crowds of people, school children being fascinated with

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Updates for the Parker Sydnor Historic Site Full Steam Ahead with the Strategic Plan

Victor Vines, AIA, President + Principal and Jeff Schroeder, AIA, architects with Vines Architecture of Raleigh, North Carolina met with board members of Literacy InterActives, Inc. (LIA) at the 2016 annual board meeting that was held in Clarksville, Virginia. The Board's consultation with Mr. Vines is an outcome of two phases of the strategic plan for the rehabilitation and preservation of the Parker Sydnor historic site. Initially, the architectural design master plan for the historic site was conducted by the Virginia Tech Community Design Assistance Center (CDAC). CDAC completed the architectural master plan through civic engagement and ongoing

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“A while back, the marble yards charged so much that the colored people down in this part never had any stones in the graveyards at all. But I’ve brought ‘em in reach and now they’re puttin’ ‘em up, even for people been dead 50 years.”

Parker Sydnor
Friday, September 13, 1946
Richmond Times-Dispatch



2016-2017 Venues
Parker Sydnor Historic Log Cabin Project

Video Showcase: “Parker Sydnor Virginia Historical Highway Marker Dedication.” Virginia Forum. Jamestown Settlement and Colonial Williamsburg, VA

Literacy InterActives, Inc.
Sponsorship St. John Baptist Summer Camp 2017

“From the Virginia Forum to Visiting with “The Old Plantation.” www.parkersydnorhistoric.org

“Parker Sydnor Virginia Historical Highway Marker Dedication.” Trailer and Promotional Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm-X0AUBNA> 1:16

Emily Jones, “History Buffs have a Home in Mecklenburg County.” *The Mecklenburg Sun*. Summer Lake Edition. June 2016. 33-38. Print.

Updates, continued from page 1

consultation with enthusiastic stakeholders and county representatives. Through the dedication of LIA board members,



community involvement; and regional, corporate, and private grant funding the historic log cabin project is full steam ahead on the public history road map. The project has secured regional significance

and national integrity through impact in the field of historic preservation and education, state of Virginia public history recognitions, print publications, and a vibrant Internet presence through various social media platforms.

LIA board member, Dr. Peter V. Bergstrom, escorted the architects to the historic site. Mr. Vines expressed his enthusiasm for our conceptualizing video trailer that promotes the initiative with its multilayered sense of place. President of **Vines Architecture**, Victor Vines has been responsible for the management of a vast number of architectural projects in the region. Vines Architecture is a full service, design driven practice with a genuine commitment to the translation of ideas to built form. ❖

It's Not Too Late...

When I returned to the cabin site in 2015, after two rainy and colder than normal winters in southern Virginia, I was prepared to see more deterioration than the Sydnor log cabin has actually suffered. Nevertheless, we feel the urgency to begin stabilization and restoration of the Sydnor cabin. Visit LIA's Facebook page for updates on making your contribution to the LIA Building Fund Campaign!

Dr. Peter V. Bergstrom
Literacy InterActives, Inc.

Literacy InterActives, Inc.
Welcomes
Ann Garnett Miller
to the board of directors

❖

We thank
Billy Wells and Ummu Thomas
for their much appreciated
community service

Things in Common, continued from page 1

everything, good-natured talking and quiet celebration, I witnessed Mr. Bunch’s suggestion of reconciliation and appreciation in this extraordinary place.



One of the featured artifacts, beside Harriet Tubman’s shawl and Nat Turner’s Bible, is a weather-board clad cabin that

once housed enslaved African Americans. The slave cabin dates from the early 1800s and has many stories—some will remain hidden and some will be told, like the LIA sponsored Parker Sydnor historic log cabin project located in Mecklenburg County, Virginia.

The Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor log cabin is another representation of the history of African American families throughout the South. Parker Sydnor (1854-1950) was born in Halifax County and owned land and farmed in southern Virginia. The Sydnor log cabin was originally located within one of the outlying slave quarters of Prestwoud, the Skipwith family antebellum plantation. After Reconstruction, Virginia had the highest percentage of freed or First Generation African Americans who bought land and established new home places.

The Sydnor log cabin site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register; and the site has a distinguished Virginia historical highway marker. Aside from being a farmer, Parker Sydnor was one of Virginia’s few literate African American tombstone makers from that era. While Sydnor attended a local Freedmen’s Bureau School after Emancipation, later African American generations were enabled to attend Rosenwald schools. What was a Rosenwald School?

The famous educator Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) and Julius Rosenwald (1862-1932), philanthropist and president of Sears Roebuck, built state-of-the art schools for

African American children across the South from 1917 to 1932. The effort has been called the most important initiative to advance education for African Americans in the early 20th century.

More than 5,000 Rosenwald schools were built, with 31 in Mecklenburg and Halifax Counties, adding to a total of 367 in Virginia. The **National Trust for Historic Preservation** estimates that 10-12 percent of those built in the entire South remain standing today. When the 1954 Supreme Court ruling declared segregation in education unconstitutional, Rosenwald Schools became obsolete. Now, communities throughout the South are rehabilitating standing, but very old Rosenwald buildings as a tribute to education.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Parker Sydnor initiative, and the Rosenwald Schools all have remarkable African American histories, a strong identity with the impact of literacy and education, and the integrity of inclusive commemoration.

Angelita Reyes

In Memory of
Bernice Reyes-Akinbileje
1957-2017

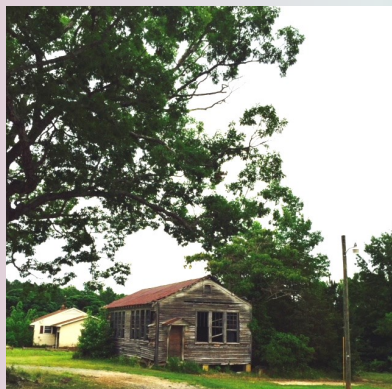


Literacy InterActives sadly announces the passing of Bernice Reyes-Akinbileje. Bernice’s passion and energy for LIA were the sources of countless ideas, relentless support, and exciting organizational concepts that enriched the mission and goals of LIA.

Bernice was a key figure throughout the years of strategic planning for the historic preservation of the Parker Sydnor historic log cabin project. As a consulting member of the LIA Advisory Council, Bernice provided extraordinary guidance to the organization from her expertise in management and community education issues.

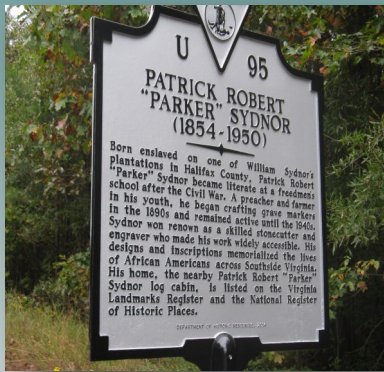
Fluent in Spanish and English, Bernice held an M.A. in Nutrition and Dietetics from New York University and a B.S. in Dietetics from the State University of New York at Oneonta. A scientific analyst in health policy at the Library of Congress, Bernice advanced many well-known health care policy issues throughout her remarkable thirty-year career. She also advanced policy issues on national rural health care. Bernice was an exceptionally kind person and always had

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A Rosenwald School in Mecklenburg County, Virginia

“Bridging Our Communities”



Interactive exhibit at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2017.



Literacy InterActives, Inc.



A Nonprofit Organization, 501(c)(3)

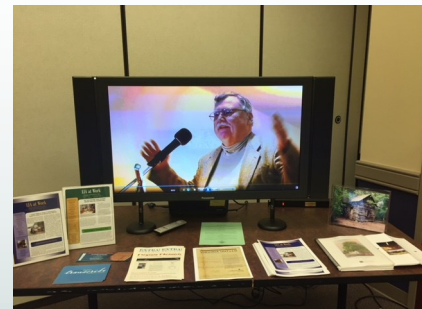
LIA serves as a resource organization using technology, culture, public history, and education to bridge communities. We promote and develop interactive and interpretative programming through use-inspired research and civic engagement.



Angelita Reyes and Susan L. Taylor, former editor-in-chief of *Essence* magazine at the National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2017.



Interacting with the *Negro Motorist Green Book*. National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2017.



Visit our YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiuCQvE3yho>

In Memory, continued from page 3

beautiful words of encouragement and prayer for those in need. Her exuberance and unrelenting faith brought about a true level of comfort. As a strong believer, her commitment to serving God resonated with sound advice and wisdom. She would bring vitality and comfort to every circumstance.

Her marriage to Steve O. Akinbileje produced two children, Abayomi S. Akinbileje and Oluwakemi G. Akinbileje. Her greatest earthly love was for her family. She grew up with four siblings, Dr. Angelita Reyes, Raimundo M. Reyes (deceased), Glenn E. Reyes, and Thurston G. Reyes. Our hearts go out to them and to all who were touched by her extraordinary gifts. More than

anything Bernice will be remembered for the constancy of her optimism, her encouragement of others, her strong faith, and her beautiful smile. Our beloved Nici will be missed greatly. Please view the full obituary here:

<http://adamsgreen.com/tribute/details/4379/Bernice-Reyes-Akinbileje/obituary.html>

Let us then employ properly this moment of time allotted us by fate, and leave the world contentedly; like a ripe olive dropping from its stalk, speaking well of the soil that produced it, and of the tree that bore it. —Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Bless the Lord, oh my soul and all that is within me; Bless his holy name. *Psalms 103: 1*