

## **\$200K for the Humanities in 2023**

So far in 2023, AHA has funded 29 humanities-rich public projects statewide.

*Birmingham / September 1, 2023* — Through the first half of 2023, the Alabama Humanities Alliance has awarded **29 grants, contributing \$206,996** in funding to humanities-rich public projects. Grantee programs cover the state — from a *Kudzu Soliloquy* series of conversations at Dothan’s Wiregrass Museum of Art to an exploration of Asian American culture at the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library.

Through June 2023, AHA’s statewide support includes: **12 Mini Grants** (up to \$2,500 each); **11 Major Grants** (up to \$10,000 each); and **6 Media Grants** (up to \$15,000).

The Alabama Humanities Alliance is the primary source of grants for public humanities projects in the state. AHA offers monthly Mini Grants; quarterly Major Grants; and annual Media Grants for documentaries, podcasts, and other digital projects.

[In 2022, AHA awarded 51 grants in total](#), contributing **\$301,320** for humanities-rich public programming statewide. Those projects — steeped in history, literature, civics, culture, and more — reached nearly **214,000 Alabamians**. Programming included festivals, book talks, teacher workshops, oral history projects, storytelling events, art panels, podcast series, and much more.

Support for AHA’s grants comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Learn more about current offerings and guidelines: [alabamahumanities.org/grants](http://alabamahumanities.org/grants). Remaining grant deadlines for 2023 include:

- **October 1:** Mini Grant proposals due (up to \$2,500)
- **November 1:** Mini Grant proposals due (up to \$2,500)
- **November 15:** Major Grant fall application prelim deadline (up to \$10,000)
- **December 15:** Major Grant fall application final deadline (up to \$10,000)
- **December 1:** Mini Grant proposals due (up to \$2,500)

### **About the Alabama Humanities Alliance**

Founded in 1974, the nonprofit Alabama Humanities Alliance serves as a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Through our grantmaking and public programming, we connect Alabamians to impactful storytelling, lifelong learning, and civic engagement. We believe the humanities can bring our communities together and help us all see each other as fully human. Learn more at [alabamahumanities.org](http://alabamahumanities.org).

## Alabama Public Humanities Grants

Awarded January–June 2023

### MINI GRANTS

*Southern Studies Conference 2023*

**Auburn University at Montgomery**

Montgomery (Montgomery)

The Southern Studies Conference is an annual, interdisciplinary gathering of scholars of the American South. It features works on the South's politics, history, literature, art, and more. As part of this conference, keynote lecturers deliver plenary addresses to conference attendees regarding a topic of their expertise. For this year's conference, the organizers seek funding to provide an honorarium for Montgomery artist-activist Michelle Browder to deliver a keynote conference lecture.

*Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month*

**Florence-Lauderdale Public Library**

Florence (Lauderdale)

During the month of May 2023, the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library will host a series of lecture and discussion programs to explore various aspects of Asian American culture, including art, history, and music. This programming series will be supplemented by a display of educational posters taken from the Smithsonian exhibit, "I want the Wide American Earth: An Asian Pacific American Story."

*Higher Ground Society Podcast -- Season 3*

**Higher Ground Society**

Auburn (Lee)

Capitalizing on the success of its two previous seasons, the Higher Ground Society Podcast will continue its engaging conversations with Alabama creatives and thinkers who contribute to Alabama's social and cultural development.

*'Kudzu Soliloquy' Public Programs*

**Wiregrass Museum of Art**

Dothan (Houston)

Wiregrass Museum of Art will present four programs that explore art history and context, folklore, history, and heritage relating to themes of Southern Identity, with an emphasis on aesthetic elements of the Southern Gothic nature of the American South. These programs will provide humanities-based conversations to correspond with the exhibition 'Kudzu Soliloquy', on view April 20 – June 24, 2023.

*'Spider Martin - Selma to Montgomery March Panel Discussion*

**Friends of the Birmingham Public Library, Inc.** Birmingham (Jefferson)

In conjunction with the exhibition, "Spider Martin - Selma to Montgomery," the Birmingham Public Library will host a panel discussion featuring University of Alabama historian Stacy Morgan in conversation with Brown Chapel AME Church historian Joyce O'Neal and fellow Selma foot soldier Dianne Harris on April 29, 2023. The event will be free and open to the public as well as live-streamed and professionally recorded and edited for future viewers to stream free online.

*2023 Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageantry Program*

**The Maynard 4 Foundation** Daphne (Baldwin)

This program is a unique experience for young ladies nationwide between the ages of 13-18, which aims to deepen the understanding of African and Black/African American history and culture. As we reflect on the meaning of Juneteenth, many do not know that Mobile is the home of the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*. Participants will learn about its discovery and the development of Africatown. They will also engage in a series of workshops over the course of four days.

*Legacies of Slavery with Myra Davis-Branic, Frye Gaillard, and Kern Jackson*

**University of South Alabama** Mobile (Mobile)

This project brings together three important figures considering the shared racial history of the South for two public conversations about race and place with an audience; these filmed conversations will take place in significant buildings in Mobile. In addition, we will film short commentaries on place and provide transcripts and other relevant materials on a public website maintained by the McCall Library at the University of South Alabama and promote access in the community.

*A comparative interpretation of Robin Hood folktales in English and Korean*

**A-KEEP** Montgomery (Montgomery)

A-KEEP will present to Montgomery County students and residents a comparative literature presentation of folktales with very similar themes: Robin Hood vs. Hong Gil-dong. Robin Hood has proven to be one of the popular culture's most enduring folk heroes and is often used to describe a heroic outlaw or rebel against tyranny. Each storyline carries a very different cultural perspective that describes and explains why the protagonist becomes a 'community hero.'

## **ALABAMA HUMANITIES ALLIANCE**

*Asa Mendelsohn: considering power, place, and what it takes to change*

### **Vinegar**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

This twofold project (community workshop and panel discussion) address themes of place-based organizing and political coalition-building across social issues addressed in a film, *Pasture*, by artist Asa Mendelsohn, that considers power, place, and what it takes to change. The panel will feature Mendelsohn alongside local experts and advocates. The workshop, led by Mendelsohn, will take place at Vinegar.

*Lamplight Speaker Series*

### **Sand Mountain Cooperative Education Center**

Guntersville (Marshall)

Sand Mountain Cooperative Education Center, also known as Lamplight, was founded in 2017 by a group of teachers and organizers from across the country. Its mission is to develop institutions for popular education and community development in North Alabama. In partnership with community members, Lamplight organized a free civics and leadership summer program for local teens and a year-round community nonprofit thrift store. The organization is led by worker-owners that are youth at local schools.

*Summer 2023 Archaeology Camp at The Ridge*

### **The Ridge Macon County Archaeology Project**

Warrior Stand (Macon)

The Ridge Project's 3-day summer camp for 8th graders from Tuskegee Institute Middle School will focus on history & archaeology. It will offer opportunities to practice basic archaeological excavation & interpretation methods. It will also offer activities focused on our area's indigenous inhabitants and each of the two cultural groups who migrated to our area during Alabama Fever. The goal is to convey that artifacts can tell stories to illuminate the history of past inhabitants & the region.

*The Westward Expansion & the Buffalo Soldiers*

### **Tri-State Expo Juneteenth Affairs**

Dothan (Houston)

The Westward Expansion & the Buffalo Soldiers is a panel composed of a knowledgeable and scholarly experts in the Field of History as it pertains to African American studies and historical events of the 1860s in the United States. The panel will provide documented evidence of how/why Congress commissioned the 9th & 10th Cavalry Regiments to journey to the uncharted Western territory to develop trails for early settlers and homesteaders of the 1860s.

## **MAJOR GRANTS**

*History of LGBTQ Art in the Birmingham Community*

**Birmingham AIDS Outreach, Inc.**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

Birmingham AIDS Outreach, Inc. will hold an art exhibition, reception and panel about art created by or for the LGBTQ community in Birmingham. The event is open to the public and admission is free. Subjects of the photographic essays will be invited to stand by the work they are featured in to offer their thoughts about what the project meant to them and how it was to work with the artist. Each collection and many individual pieces will have interpretive, informational signage.

*Let's Talk about Racial Reconciliation 2023*

**Building Bridges Institute for Racial Reconciliation**

Tuscaloosa (Tuscaloosa)

A symposium will be held regarding Racial Reconciliation. We will have a humanities scholar as a keynote speaker, a panel discussion by five humanities scholars, a question-and-answer session and an open conversation with refreshments. The focus of the event is to further promote an inclusive dialogue and to build an understanding of this complex world in terms of liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The ultimate goal is to build empathy towards diverse perspectives and experiences.

*Birmingham LGBTQ History Bus*

**Invisible Histories Project**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

The Invisible Histories Project is partnering with Central Alabama Pride to celebrate 45 years of Pride festivals with a day of bus tours highlighting Birmingham's LGBTQ history. The tour will occur during Pride's two-week June calendar on Saturday, June 3, 2023. The tour will be about two hours long and will consist of 14 historical stops.

*Book Readings and Discussions with the author of "The Watsons Go to Birmingham-1963"*

**Sixteenth Street Baptist Church**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

The Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument; Birmingham Civil Rights Institute; 16th Street Baptist Church; The Historic Bethel Baptist Church; St. Paul United Methodist Church and the University of Illinois Center for Children's Books are collaborating on bringing Christopher Paul Curtis, author of the Newberry Honor-winning book, *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, to Birmingham in honor of the 60th commemoration of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church.

## **ALABAMA HUMANITIES ALLIANCE**

*Fitz Tales: The Writings of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald*

**Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum Association, Inc.** Montgomery (Montgomery)  
Fitz Tales: The Writings of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald will be the third installment of the Fitz Tales series and will feature the writings of both Scott and Zelda from the early 1920s. In addition to writing short stories, both Scott and Zelda were popular magazine writers, and this series will be a mix of both their short stories, but also some of the humorous essays they wrote together and separately dispensing Jazz Age wisdom on such topics as marriage, travel, writing, and even cooking.

*Spanish Beowulf in Graphic Novels*

**Troy University**

Troy (Pike)

A public humanities event aimed at improving the level of engagement with medieval poem *Beowulf*, and exploring issues regarding translation into modern languages such as Spanish, as well as translations into other media such as graphic novels. The event will be a panel discussion involving award-winning graphic novelist Santiago García, medieval scholar Richard Scott Nokes, and Spanish-language scholars Kelly Suero and Johanna Alberich. The panel discussion will be publicly available.

*The Last Slave Ship Voices: A presentation by its author, Dr. Hannah Durkins*

**Clotilda Descendants Association**

Mobile (Mobile)

The Clotilda Descendants Association will host author Hannah Durkin, independent researcher, and former lecturer at Newcastle University in the UK, for a discussion of her book, *The Survivors of the Clotilda: The Lost Stories of the Last Captives of the American Slave Trade*. Unique to this publication are the stories of survivors who have never been identified as *Clotilda* survivors. This event is a part of the Spirit of Our Ancestors Festival and is free and open to the public.

*There IS A Balm In Gilead: Healing From the Events of 1963*

**The Historic Bethel Baptist Church Community Restoration Fund**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

This year, the City of Birmingham commemorates sixty years since the Birmingham campaign for civil and human rights. As a part of the events, The Historic Bethel Baptist Church of Birmingham, Alabama, is pleased to announce: "There IS A Balm in Gilead: Healing From The Events of 1963." The conference will be hosted at the Sheraton Hotel September 12-14, 2023. The conference kicks off with a field study of key sites of memory followed by two powerful days of interactive sessions.

*Engaging Educators and Our Storytellers in Improving Local Teaching of Civil Rights History*

**Kids in Birmingham 1963**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

Kids in Birmingham 1963 will again engage three teachers to create and pilot lessons that teach civil rights history in a variety of subjects, such as music, science, math. Each lesson will use Kids stories, lending humanities scholars' voices to interpret the history. To share the lessons widely, we will film the teachers describing the history conveyed in their lessons; and will create a web-based sorting feature that facilitates educators' efforts to identify the most relevant lessons.

*The Scottsboro Boys Museum's Traveling Exhibition*

**Scottsboro Multicultural Foundation, LLC**

Scottsboro (Jackson)

This project intends to bring The Scottsboro Museum to the rest of Alabama. In November 2022, The Scottsboro Boys Museum reopened with a renovated and reimagined interior. As part of our mission to educate the public on this seminal civil rights case, we intend to display our exhibits on portable banner stands along with original artwork recently acquired by the museum in Huntsville, Birmingham, and Montgomery.

*Oral Histories Filming*

**The Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. Institute**

Montgomery (Montgomery)

The Judge Frank M. Johnson, Jr. Institute Oral History Project captures stories, memories, and accounts of events from people who knew, worked with, or were affected by the rulings of Judge Frank Johnson in order to preserve these stories for future historical and educational use. The objective is to preserve on video for future generations stories from history as a resource on the life and times of Judge Frank Johnson and the Civil Rights cases that changed the course of America.

**MEDIA GRANTS**

*Big Mama Thornton: Queen of the Blues*

**Alabama Educational Television Foundation Authority** Birmingham (Jefferson)

*Big Mama Thornton: Queen of the Blues* is a documentary about the life of Willie Mae Thornton, a legendary singer who overcame hardships to become a star of rhythm and blues. The film follows her rise to fame with hits like "Hound Dog," her struggles during the decline of her career, and her lasting influence on popular musicians. Through rare archival footage and contemporary interviews, the documentary tells the story of Thornton's remarkable journey and efforts to honor her legacy.

*Honoring the Selma Bloody Sunday Foot Soldiers*

**Auburn University**

Auburn (Lee)

The Selma Bloody Sunday Foot Soldiers project seeks to share the full history of that event through the development of a dynamic and interactive web-based portal that features oral histories, access to never-before shared historic photographs, and a virtual tour of the conflict site adjacent to the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The goal is to share a full picture of Bloody Sunday and inspire the public with the heroism and dedication of the marchers in promoting fundamental civil liberties.

*The Voice of the Coosa*

**Coosa Riverkeeper, Inc.**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

The Coosa River has a story dating back to 85+ million years ago. Over time, she has faced unprecedented challenges — from the first hydroelectric dam in Alabama that led to the greatest modern mass extinction in North American history, to the first graphite mine in North America in present times. She has also withstood the waves of human civilization, from the Muscogee Creek Native Americans, to the steamboat era, to lake life recreation. Her story has never been told in full...until now.

*Birmingham's Living Room: Cities, Greenspaces, and the Story of Railroad Park*

**Railroad Park Foundation**

Birmingham (Jefferson)

"Every city has something really essential hiding in plain sight waiting to be valued and revealed by those who know it well and those who never saw it before." This is how Tom Leader describes the vision required to bring Birmingham's Railroad Park to life. The transformation of a district of gravel lots, warehouses, and train car storage into a vibrant park epitomizes the history of the city parks in American life. This film is about the power of greenspace to transform industrial-age cities.



*“Meet Me at Dale’s”*

**Troy University**

Troy (Pike)

The project includes support for reporting, editing, and production of a podcast series exploring the historic 1967 Dale’s Penthouse Fire. A community event will be held at the Davis Theatre to preview the podcast; hold panel discussions with historians and survivors, along with an audience member discussion on the fire’s impact. A multimedia presentation including historic audio and video, archival still images, and current comparative photography and video are also planned.

*We Are Here: Digital Story Mapping African American Communities on the Eastern Shore*

**University of South Alabama**

Mobile (Mobile)

“We Are Here” will create a Digital Story Map of African American historical places on the Eastern Shore for a broad public audience. The Map will embed short narratives and images on five geo-located sites, layered with audio excerpts from five to seven oral histories. USA McCall Library and Fairhope Public Library will preserve interviews and other research artifacts for public access. Free events will invite community participation into the project and will foster open discussion of the past.