

Alabama Public Humanities Grants: 2023 Grants Awarded

The Alabama Humanities Alliance serves as the primary source of grants for public humanities projects statewide. AHA offers monthly **Mini Grants** (up to \$2,500), triannual **Major Grants** (up to \$10,000), and annual **Media Grants** (up to \$15,000).

In 2023, AHA awarded **55** grants totaling more than **\$342,000** to support public humanities programs across the state. Collectively, this funding helps to promote a greater appreciation and understanding of our history, literature, philosophy, culture, civics, and more — and makes Alabama a more vibrant place to live.

Learn more about our grants:

Web: alabamahumanities.org/grants

Email: grust@alabamahumanities.org

Schedule a call: calendly.com/alabamahumanities

Overview: 2023 Grants Awarded

Mini Grants awarded: 25 | \$57,315.76

Designed for flexibility, Mini Grants feature a simplified and quicker application process to support a broad range of projects. Mini Grants do not require cost share matches.

Major Grants awarded: 24 | \$197,391.92

Major Grants are offered three times a year, and support a broad range of projects statewide. Major Grants require a 1:1 cost share match, including cash and in-kind contributions.

Media Grants awarded: 6 | \$87,783.50

Media grants provide support for documentary films, television and radio programs, podcasts, and other digital or web-based projects. Media grants require a 2:1 cost share match, including cash and in-kind contributions.

Total 2023 funding awarded: 55 grants | \$342,491.18

MINI GRANTS — 2023

Southern Studies Conference 2023

Auburn University at 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. Lecturers deliver plenary addresses regarding a topic of their expertise. Montgomery artist Michelle Browder delivers a keynote conference lecture.

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Florence-Lauderdale Public Library | Florence

During the month of May 2023, the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library hosts a series of lecture and programs to explore various aspects of Asian American culture, including art, history, and music. This programming series is supplemented by educational posters 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

Capitalizing on the success of its two previous seasons, the Higher Ground Society Podcast continues 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

Wiregrass Museum of Art presents 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 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 | Birmingham

In conjunction with the exhibition, "Spider Martin – Selma to Montgomery," the library hosts 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. Open to the public, live-streamed, and professionally recorded for future viewers.

2023 Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageantry Program

The Maynard 4 Foundation | Daphne

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 don't that Mobile is the home of the last slave ship, the *Clotilda*. Participants learn about its discovery and the development of Africatown. They 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

This project brings together three important figures to consider the shared racial history of the South in public conversations about race and place. These filmed conversations take place in significant buildings in Mobile. Short commentaries on place are also filmed, with transcripts and resources provided online by the McCall Library at the University of South Alabama.

Comparative Interpretation of Robin Hood Folktales in English and Korean

A-KEEP | Montgomery

A-KEEP offers Montgomery County students and residents a comparative literature presentation of folktales with very similar themes: Robin Hood vs. Hong Gil-dong. Robin Hood is one of 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.'

Asa Mendelsohn: Considering Power, Place, and What it Takes to Change

Vinegar | Birmingham

This twofold project (community workshop and panel discussion) address themes of place-based organizing and coalition-building across social issues. These issues are addressed in a film, *Pasture*, by artist Asa Mendelsohn, that considers power, place, and what it takes to change. The panel features Mendelsohn alongside local experts and scholars.

Lamplight Speaker Series

Sand Mountain Cooperative Education Center | Guntersville

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 has organized a free civics and leadership summer program for local teens. The organization is led by worker-owners who are youth at local schools.

Summer 2023: Archaeology Camp at The Ridge

The Ridge Macon County Archaeology Project | Warrior Stand

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

Westward Expansion & the Buffalo Soldiers

Tri-State Expo Juneteenth Affairs | Dothan

Westward Expansion & the Buffalo Soldiers is a panel composed of 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 discusses documented evidence of how and why Congress commissioned the 9th & 10th Calvary Regiments to journey to the uncharted Western territory and develop trails for early settlers and homesteaders of the 1860s.

Exploring Our Linguistic Identities

Auburn Public Library | Auburn

“Exploring Our Linguistic Identities” brings the local community together to engage in exploration, reflection, and dialogue about language, culture, and identity. Participants discover new ways of understanding their linguistic identities, make connections with other community members, and situate themselves in the larger global linguistic and cultural context. The event is led by humanities scholars who use their expertise and experience to guide the audience through an engaging time of exploration.

Amal Walks Across America: Birmingham

Create Birmingham | Birmingham

Create Birmingham and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute partner on a public art and participatory educational event for schools and the community at large as part of Amal Walks Across America — a national tour centered around the journey of Amal, a 12-foot puppet of a 10-year-old Syrian refugee searching for her mother. The youth-led event at BCRI draws parallels between her story and Birmingham’s history, shining a light on the role of children in the struggle for human rights.

Flow Tuscaloosa

Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa County | Tuscaloosa

Flow Tuscaloosa is an interdisciplinary and environmental humanities and public art project that centers the history & ecology of the region through the story of Hurricane Creek, a historic and ecologically important tributary of the Black Warrior River.

Laws of Life Essay Competition 2023-2024

BBB Educational Foundation | Mobile

The Laws of Life essay competition is an academic activity that encourages dialogue among high school students, teachers, humanities scholars, and business leaders to advance positive, ethical principles such as transparency, humility, honesty, equity, and proactivity. These values are life-affirming, and support positive citizenship. Through this project, students also talk to a business or community leader, utilizing skills and knowledge gained from interactions with humanities scholars.

More-Than-Human World

Samford University | Birmingham

“More-Than-Human World,” an exhibition currently on view at the Samford Art Gallery, features the work of 30 adult artists on the autism spectrum who are affiliated with the local arts nonprofit, Studio By The Tracks. Authors and scholars are brought to the show to engage with the exhibition, the featured artists, Samford, and the wider community about the importance of supporting, listening to, and learning from neurodivergent perspectives.

Nekola Public Lecture on Observing Elections Around the World

Troy University | Troy

Czech political scientist Martin Nekola speaks to students and the Troy community about his experiences observing eight national elections in Europe and Asia for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

AfricanAmericanArtHistory.com

Alabama State University | Montgomery

Under the guidance of a humanities scholar, this digital humanities project engages HBCU student-scholars in research on African American art history and connects their research to the broader community through a public, scholar-led symposium, “African American Artists of Alabama and the Nation.” The resulting research is featured in an online resource, AfricanAmericanArtHistory.com, which is accessible globally to anyone interested in learning more about African American art history.

Men of Change Talk with Shaun Leonardo and Stacy Morgan

Friends Foundation of the Birmingham Public Library | Birmingham

In conjunction with the traveling Smithsonian exhibition *Men of Change*, jointly presented at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute and Birmingham Public Library, the library will host an online discussion between artist Shaun Leonardo and University of Alabama professor Stacy Morgan — focusing on the history of Black public figures as introduced in the exhibition and how portrayals of those individuals and others in art and literature shape our perception of ourselves and others.

Gullah Geechee: History

Tri-State Expo Juneteenth Affairs | Dothan

This project helps to educate the public on the culture, contributions, and experiences of the Southeast’s Gullah Geechee community. The project also addresses the racial violence directed toward, and the tactical dehumanization of, West Africans.

Deeply Placed Art Exhibition Guest Scholars

Samford University | Birmingham

This exhibition asks the viewer to contemplate what it means to be present when the life we live moves untethered between a physical and digital universe. The featured artists observe and draw these two parts of our lives, tracing the footprints we leave. Using digital tools like video, laser cutters, and 3D scanners and printers, these artists extend the art of mark making. Guest scholars provide interdisciplinary insights.

On A Nearby Hill

United Federation for Artistic Minds | Huntsville

This is a community event commemorating the U.S. 10th Cavalry Unit, otherwise known as the Buffalo Soldiers. After the Civil War, the 10th U.S. Cavalry was ordered to New York, then to Camp Albert G. Forse in Huntsville, Alabama. From October 18, 1898, until January 28, 1899, the Black Buffalo Soldiers were not allowed to camp with the White soldiers — so they camped on a hill nearby, now known as Cavalry Hill. This three-day event includes a keynote speaker, history tours, visual displays, and a Cavalry Hill military camp reenactment, all in Huntsville.

2024 Alabama Authors Day

History Blakeley Authority | Spanish Fort

A yearly event celebrating the literary arts, Alabama Authors Day showcases the work of accomplished writers throughout the state and provides a forum for discussion of the topics they have investigated. The program particularly emphasizes projects associated with Gulf Coast cultural and natural heritage.

The Booker T. Washington Effect: Audrey's Story

The Penny Foundation | Birmingham

Audrey Bacon Byrd captured what it meant to be a Black American in the 20th century. Likely the granddaughter of formerly enslaved persons, Audrey's life spanned her childhood in San Antonio, college days at Tuskegee, many years teaching in Chicago, and finally settling in Northern California, where she would eventually reunite with a lost love. The Penny Foundation is creating a comprehensive documentary film series chronicling Audrey's fascinating life and highlighting her ancestors and descendants.

MAJOR GRANTS

History of LGBTQ Art in the Birmingham Community

Birmingham AIDS Outreach | Birmingham

Birmingham AIDS Outreach presents an art exhibition, reception, and panel about art created by, or for, the LGBTQ community in Birmingham. Subjects of the photographic essays are invited to stand by the work they're featured in — to offer their thoughts about what the project means to them and what it was like to work with the artist. The exhibit also includes interpretive, informational signage.

Let's Talk about Racial Reconciliation 2023

Building Bridges Institute for Racial Reconciliation | Tuscaloosa

A symposium on racial reconciliation, featuring 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 invite 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

The Invisible Histories Project partners with Central Alabama Pride to celebrate 45 years of Pride festivals with a day of bus tours highlighting Birmingham's LGBTQ history. The tour takes place during Pride's two-week June calendar and consists of 14 historical stops around the city.

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

Sixteenth Street Baptist Church | Birmingham

A collaboration between the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, 16th Street Baptist Church, Historic Bethel Baptist Church, St. Paul United Methodist Church, and the University of Illinois Center for Children's Books. This collective effort brings Christopher Paul Curtis, author of the Newberry Honor-winning book, *The Watsons Go To Birmingham-1963*, to Birmingham as part of 60th anniversary commemorations of the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing.

Fitz Tales: The Writings of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald

Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald Museum Association | Montgomery

Fitz Tales: The Writings of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald is the third installment of the Fitz Tales series and features 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 offers a mix of their short stories and 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

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 features a public panel discussion involving award-winning graphic novelist Santiago García, medieval scholar Richard Scott Nokes, and Spanish-language scholars Kelly Suero and Johanna Alberich.

The Last Slave Ship Voices

Clotilda Descendants Association | Mobile

The Clotilda Descendants Association hosts 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 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

Historic Bethel Baptist Church Community Restoration Fund | Birmingham

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 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

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

The Scottsboro Boys Museum’s Traveling Exhibition

Scottsboro Multicultural Foundation | Scottsboro

This project brings 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 the museum’s mission to educate the public on this seminal civil rights case, a display of traveling exhibits on portable banners stand alongside original artwork recently acquired by the museum from Huntsville, Birmingham, and Montgomery.

Oral Histories Filming

The Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. Institute | 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. The objective is to preserve these stories for future historical and educational use, as resources on the life and times of Judge Frank Johnson and the civil rights cases that changed the course of America.

Humanity in the Space of Prison

Auburn University | Auburn

Alabama Prison Arts + Education continues its mission of providing educational opportunities for people who are incarcerated across the state of Alabama. With this specific project, AHA’s funding supports three semester-length classes in the humanities, including subjects ranging from music history and indigenous peoples’ histories to philosophy. These classes create pathways to lifelong learning.

2024 Food for Thought and Programming

Friends of the Alabama Archives | Montgomery

Food for Thought is a monthly Alabama history lecture series held on the third Thursday at noon in the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Food for Thought presentations feature humanities scholars discussing a wide variety of topics relating to the state of Alabama. Similar to Food for Thought, the quarterly Book Talk series focuses on publications about Alabama history, culture, or archival work. A Juneteenth program commemorates the holiday and focuses on Black history.

Southern Jewish Voices

Levite Jewish Community Center | Birmingham

Southern Jewish Voices provides a platform that unites and educates the Birmingham community through the act of storytelling and the sharing of oral history. The program creates opportunities for both telling and documenting first-hand stories related to the unique experience of being someone who is Jewish and living in the South. By videoing each session, each participant's story is shared in a wide-reaching way.

Project Threadways Oral Histories

Project Threadways | Florence

Project Threadways is growing its oral history program by adding new interviews that represent the diversity of textile workers; preparing the collection for archive; and sharing these important stories with the public, through an in-person event and a digital storytelling initiative. It is essential that these stories be accessible to a broad public to facilitate understanding of manufacturing processes, labor forces, race and class dynamics, small-town economics, and artisan craft.

Alabama Folk Podcast, Season Three: 6 Episodes to Elevate Alabama Folklife

Alabama Folklife Association | Mobile

Season Three (6 episodes) of the Alabama Folk podcast elevates under-documented cultures and traditions, engage statewide audiences in Alabama folklife, and highlight emerging Alabama makers. The podcast is intended for general audiences and features interviews with Alabama traditional artists who carry on traditions passed down through the generations. Diverse in background, community, and art form, artists represent rural and urban experience and Indigenous and immigrant voices.

Flow Tuscaloosa 2024

Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa | Tuscaloosa

Flow Tuscaloosa is an interdisciplinary environmental humanities and public art project that centers the history and ecology of our region through the story of Hurricane Creek, a historic and ecologically important tributary of the Black Warrior River. This project implements humanities research previously conducted thanks to an AHA Mini Grant — to aid in our humanities and art-based community programming in the spring of 2024, including history talks and a lantern parade along Hurricane Creek.

Birmingham Jewish Merchants in the Civil Rights Movement Audio Story

Congregation Beth-El | Birmingham

The Beth El Civil Rights Experience explores the intersections of Birmingham's Jewish and civil rights histories. Participants can engage with this project through public programming, and both audio and in-person tours. We're creating an audio documentary, with history interns, focusing on the interaction between Jewish merchants and Birmingham's civil rights movement. This is part of a broader initiative to increase online-accessible materials and present them at a public event.

Emancipation and the Struggle to Make Home: Public Lecture, Panel and Exhibit

Wallace Center for Arts and Reconciliation | Harpersville

The Wallace Center is creating a historical exhibit "Emancipation and the Struggle to Make Home" based on the period 1865-1890 at the Wallace House in Harpersville Alabama. Programming includes a public lecture by Dr. Elijah Gaddis at the Datcher History House in Harpersville focuses on this period in Harpersville; a panel discussion "The Origins of Alabama's Black Freedom Struggle, 1865-1890" in Birmingham; and three guided tours of the exhibit during its three-month exhibition period.

Go Tell it on Red Mountain — Continued

Red Mountain Park Foundation | Birmingham

This oral history project involves scholar-led conversations discussing Birmingham's industrial history, various elements of Red Mountain, and company town life. Each conversation features a scholar who has extensive knowledge of industrial history, paired with a moderator who is a humanities professional and complements the respective scholar's research.

Do Right: The Stallings Standard — Immersive Website

The University of Alabama | Tuscaloosa

This immersive website accompanies a new documentary and details Gene Stallings' legacy as a national championship coach and his advocacy for the special needs community. The website and numerous video stories solidify the fact that one Alabamian can make the world a better place by treating everyone fairly, no matter their physical or mental abilities. It will serve as a resource for families of parents who have children with special needs and anyone needing resources for advocating for individuals with special needs.

Popular Arts Conference

University of Alabama at Birmingham | Birmingham

UAB hosts a public two-day humanities and arts event that aims to engage with popular arts and media from a scholarly position. This symposium will address questions of relevance to both scholarly and popular audiences, including: What can we learn about society by studying popular arts? How are popular arts making relevant connections to the issues of today? How can popular arts be used to communicate and connect through shared experiences?

Supporting Humanities Education in the Restorative Justice Lab

University of North Alabama | Florence

The Restorative Justice Lab at the University of North Alabama is enhancing the humanities components of its restorative justice program, which are delivered at Limestone Correctional Facility. Restorative justice is often referred to as the “science of human relationships” and we’re enhancing this program through new humanities-based coursework and extracurricular programming with AHA’s support.

2024 Durr Lecture Weekend

Virginia Durr Lecture Series | Montgomery

The Durr Lecture Weekend is an annual lecture series focusing on history, social justice, and democracy, inspired by the legacy of Clifford and Virginia Durr. The 2024 program features Barbara Phillips, a longtime voting rights lawyer and educator, and Hasan Jeffries, a leading historian of the civil rights movement. Ms. Phillips speaks about the 1965 Voting Rights Act and its current challenges. Dr. Jeffries speaks on the contemporary relevance of the civil rights movement

MEDIA GRANTS

Big Mama Thornton: Queen of the Blues

Alabama Educational Television Foundation Authority | Birmingham

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

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 | Birmingham

The Coosa River has a story dating back 85-plus 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 waves of human civilization, from the Muscogee Creeks to the steamboat era and 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

“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

The project includes support for reporting, editing, and production of a podcast series exploring the historic 1967 Dale’s Penthouse Fire. A community event at the Davis Theatre previews the podcast and includes 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

“We Are Here” creates a Digital Story Map of African American historical places on the Eastern Shore for a broad public audience. The Map embeds 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 invite community participation into the project and foster open discussion of the past.