

THE AFRICAN HERITAGE CULTURAL CLUB
General Meeting
February 3, 2026

The African Heritage Cultural Club held its general meeting on February 3, 2026. Vice-President Prentiss Gates called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

HISTORIAN – Bobby Vance

He introduced the meeting with quotes of famous black persons: Maya Angelo, Malcom X, Dr. Martin Luther King, Beyonce, Mohammed Ali and Oprah Winfrey.

Historian Bobby Vance presented "A Century of Black History Commemorations," discussing the origins of Black history dating back to the 1500s. He outlined the sequence of Black history and the global distribution of Black people in the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America, and the United States. The presentation emphasized the significance of the Global African Diaspora and reinforced the message that Black History is American History. The importance of preserving Black History as an integral part of American History was proclaimed once again.

Carrie Vance was introduced and read the proclamation of Black history, highlighting the celebration of Black people worldwide.

Attendees viewed several short videos featuring notable Black individuals who have shaped both the history of the United States and Black History overall. Featured figures included Harriet Tubman, Karsonya Wise Whitehead, Walt Whitman, Carter G. Woodson, Nelson Mandela, R.H. Boyd, Benjamin Montgomery, Benjamin Bradley, Ned, Lonnie Johnson, Madam C.J. Walker, Oprah Winfrey, AHCC member Ed Smith, and Emmanuel Savary, a young achiever in music, fine arts, and sports.

The presentation noted the remarkable achievements of Black people of African descent in America, even under the constraints of bondage, highlighting their enduring intellect and contributions.

The meeting also recognized the upcoming 250th anniversary of America on July 4, 2026, reflecting on the role African Americans have played in holding the nation accountable to its founding ideals.

A fun fact was shared: the Statue of Liberty originally held broken chains in her hands, signifying freedom. These shackles were later moved to her feet, partially concealed by her robes. Dr. Joy DeGruy, an American author, researcher, and educator, is known for educating audiences about the hidden chains and shackles at the Statue of Liberty's feet.

The Washington Post published a report in May 2019 detailing the conception of the Statue of Liberty as a monument celebrating freedom, particularly Black people's freedom. The erasure of these chains is seen as erasing Black people's history.

Bobby concluded that the February 2026 presentation was intended not to be political but to reveal truths, thanks to activists. There was discussion about the banning of Black history from national museums and the removal of grants for these institutions.

The meeting emphasized the importance of fighting for truth and raising voices, asserting that victory comes when people stand up for their rights. The group reflected on the saying, "Those who cannot remember the past will repeat it," highlighting the necessity of bringing their backgrounds to the forefront. They noted that the fight for rights is ongoing and stressed the importance of action, drawing inspiration from historical events such as Selma.

Reports

- **Treasurer** – Sheila Samuels
Opening balance \$ 7292.11
Total Revenue - \$8,933.70
Expense - \$8343.81
Closing balance \$7882.00

- **Membership Update:** March 3rd is the final date for membership dues. Members were informed that dues will continue to be accepted after this meeting.

- **Program Updates:** Marva apologized for issues with the social committee and discussed Mardi Gras. She requested more home-baked goods for the event and clarified that members will not be reimbursed for their donations. Additional volunteers are needed for setup and teardown

- **President - Ellie Graham:** spoke about the lack of Jambalaya.

- **Outreach:** Denise Johnson thanked the serving Brothers and the baking Sisters, and acknowledged Sharon, who is stepping down. Brenda King will be taking her position. Sabrina and Tia presented the Towel Drive, running from March through May 20th, with samples available at the meeting. Members were encouraged to Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 3, 2026, at 10:30 a.m. in the Starlite Ballroom.