Annual Report
2021
Presented by the Friends of Lincolnville, Inc
Board of Directors
Welcome from the President

Floyd Phillips
Friends of Lincolnville
Board President
Welcome from the Treasurer

Loren Darden
Friends of Lincolnville
Treasurer
Executive Director's Report

Regina Gayle Phillips
Executive Director
Mission Statement

The purpose of the Friends of Lincolnville is to **preserve, promote, and perpetuate the heritage of African Americans in Lincolnville and Northeast Florida**. The board of directors will provide **guidance, resources, and governance** for the Friends of Lincolnville to advance its vision, mission and objectives.
History

**1925-1968**
School No. 2 opens as the first public high school for Black students in St. Johns County. After a series of name changes, the school became Excelsior Colored High and Graded School in 1929. The school operated until it was closed in 1968.

**1969-2004**
The Excelsior School building is alternately occupied by St. Johns County offices and private programs. When the building was abandoned, it was saved from demolition by a community effort.

**2004**
The Excelsior School building becomes the home of the Excelsior Museum and Cultural Center with former Excelsior graduate Otis Mason as president.

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**2012**
The Excelsior Museum's name changes to the Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center to encompass the broader community. Friends of Excelsior becomes Friends of Lincolnville, Inc. (FOLI)

**2015**
Otis Mason retired from the board and Floyd Phillips was elected as new board president.

**2017**
LMCC began a daily opening schedule with the help of board members and volunteers. Former board member Regina Gayle Phillips becomes acting director and introduces new programs and grant funding.
The Doug Carn Jazz Series begins, which eventually becomes Lincolnville Presents: Jazz at the Excelsior. Community programs like Sunday Afternoon in Lincolnville and Living Legends enjoy strong community support.

2017

Florida Humanities Council sponsors the first Emancipation Day reenactment, which was attended by over 300 people, and a walking tour app.

A capacity building grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services allowed for the hiring of the first full time employees: an Executive Director, an Assistant Director and a Communications Coordinator.

2018

A new exhibit, Lincolnville Lifeways, transforms the museum’s first floor exhibit hall with the interpretive story of the people and places of Lincolnville. A new event, the Holiday Soiree was introduced as the kickoff to the jazz series. An Excelsior School preservation grant of $500,000 was awarded from the National Park Service.
History

2020

Jazz series sees record attendance for the first two and a half months but is forced to end when a pandemic struck killing millions of people throughout the world. The museum closed and staff pivoted to virtual programming. The Frank Butler virtual tour was the first virtual program fully researched, produced and filmed by LMCC staff.

2021

The year begins with live programs still on hold. New virtual opportunities and challenges for programming stretched the still small staff. Volunteers were reluctant to return. Alternative ways to connect became the norm.

By the conclusion of the year, the museum holds reduced-capacity in-person events and plans for a scaled back Jazz 2022 season.
About the LMCC

The LMCC began with a board made up of former educators and community leaders who set out to preserve the stories and history of the Excelsior school and surrounding communities.

A call to share photographs and memorabilia formed the foundations of the museum’s collection. The museum continues to build its collection that includes oral histories and artifacts that help tell the 450 year heritage of the people of African descent who lived in Northeast Florida.
2021 At A Glance

- **531** Virtual program attendees
- **3,023** Total visitors and participants
- **2,387** Museum Visitors
- **14** Group tours
Annual Programs

Lincolnville Presents: Jazz at the Excelsior

This annual jazz series brings live performances to the Lincolnville Historic District.

Jazz at the Excelsior was cancelled for the 2021 season and returned in January 2022.

Living Legends

Living Legends honors those who have made contributions to the St. Augustine community and the world.
The virtual Civil War to Civil Rights Series kicked off virtually in January. This series covers 100 years of African American history from the 1860s through the 1960s.
January to March

For the first of our Florida Talks series, supported by the Florida Humanities Council, Dr. Martha Bireda presented on the women who provided essential medical care for enslaved populations.

Resilience: Black Heritage in St. Augustine, a community based collaboration launched in 2021. Over the course of the year, over 14 organizations in Northeast Florida presented programming on St. Augustine's Black history and culture.
Lincolnville Youth Arts Series

This partnership introduced members of the Boys and Girls Club to African and African American artists and art traditions from Romare Bearden’s collages to the textiles of West Africa.

This project was made possible through a grant from the St. Johns Cultural Council, the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and the State of Florida State of the Arts License Plate Grant Program.
Visitation

In 2021, guests came from all over to learn about St. Augustine's Black heritage.

73% of visitors were from outside of St. Johns County!

Our farthest visitors came from the UK.
Visitors came from 42 states!
Our second Florida Talks lecture, supported by the Florida Humanities Council, featured Dr. Sharon Austin's presentation on Black women's political participation in Florida.

LMCC Director Gayle Phillips presented at Flagler College Archive's virtual Meet the Collections and Curators program, sharing some gems from the museum's collection.
April to June

Our first digital kiosk exhibit, Women Who Made A Difference, explored the lives of five pioneering women who represent excellence.

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation co-hosted three fundraisers that benefited the upcoming Green Book exhibit. Pictured is a civil rights walking tour in Lincolnville.
We partnered with Governor's House Library, UF Libraries and the Florida Museum to explore the past, present and future of historical and archaeological research at Fort Mose. 300 viewers watched live and the two recordings have been viewed almost 800 times on YouTube!
July to September

Lennette Pembleton, Charles Ellis and Douglass Swilley were honored as the 2021 Living Legends.

Exec. Director Gayle Phillips presented on St. Johns County's Black history for the county's 200th anniversary symposium.
October to December

High on the Hog, a pop-up dinner hosted by Chefs Tyrone Bennett, Ariel Berrios and Dustin Bailey, offered a taste of soul food and latin fusion.

Theresa Segal gestures to some of her pieces in *Lincolnville Thru Time*, an exhibit supported by the Community Foundation of Northeast Florida.
October to December

The museum participated and co-sponsored an event during the annual Historic Lincolville Festival in November.

We ended the year with the Holiday Soiree, looking forward to the 2022 jazz season.
FOLI Board Members

President - Floyd Phillips
Vice President - Mary Stroman
Treasurer- Loren Darden
Secretary- Judith Liphardt
Ronald Bailey
Dr. Dorothy Headley Israel
Kenneth McClain
Chris Moser
Sandra Parks
David Stroman
Viola White
Henry White
Membership Profile

In 2021 we grew by 77 annual members and 11 lifetime members to a total of 239! Thank you for your support of the Friends of Lincolnville, Inc and the LMCC.
Excelsior Preservation

Construction began thanks to a National Park Service historic preservation grant which included creating a watertight seal to the exterior and reorganizing interior spaces.

Phase I: National Park Service Grant

Newly renovated spaces include: the Archive room, the Sitiki multipurpose room and a media center plus four new bathrooms and electrical upgrades on the second floor. $500,000 Deteriorating office spaces were restored and repurposed. New flooring and fresh paint has given the area a fresh look.
Excelsior Preservation

A $1 million grant was secured for the Phase 2 preservation of the historic Excelsior building, which was funded by the Florida Department of State.

**Phase II: Excelsior Restoration**

This grant was funded under the Department of State's African American Cultural and Historical Grant, which will provide $1 million to help restore the historic Excelsior building.

$1,000,000

This grant required a match which through your donations, helped us to raise the $250,000 needed. Renovations will include a new roof, elevator, HVAC system and theater room.
Join the Advisory Committee!

Members can help the Friends of Lincolnville Inc., with community relations, marketing, planning, events and much more!

Email lmccstaug@gmail.com to get more information on joining the advisory committee.
A Look Ahead

The future of the LMCC is promising. New programs, lectures, exhibits and collaborations and the return of old favorites like jazz and Living Legends. Look for innovative approaches to those programs as well as we expand our audiences and offerings.

An exhibit on the Green Book is scheduled to debut in fall 2022. It will highlight the Black businesses that once thrived in St. Augustine at a time when segregation prohibited access to white establishments. The Green Book was a directory of businesses that were Black owned or accepted Black patronage.

Operations continue to improve, attendance is growing and community recognition is expanding. The future includes fundraising plans to establish an endowment for long term success of the museum.
Excelsior 100

June 2024 will kick off a year of events leading to the 100th anniversary of the Excelsior School Building. Look out for more details as the anniversary nears.
See you next year!