

PROJECT SUMMARY: JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION AT THE HARRIET BARBER HOUSE  
DATE: JUNE 22, 2024

The Juneteenth Celebration at the historic Harriet Barber House is a project designed to promote knowledge and understanding of the history, stories and culture of African Americans in rural Richland County. Exhibits, performances, guided tours and opportunities for public participation in discussions before and after the Juneteenth Celebration gave visitors insight into the lives of the formerly enslaved families who lived on the property, the Harriet Barber House and grounds and throughout the state. A major focus was placed on the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network, sponsored by the National Park Service, where the Harriet Barber House is among several other historic sites in our state recognized for its significance during this era. Sites such as the Harriet Barber House provide the public with education, historical interpretation and research related to the period from 1861 to 1900. This designation offers an opportunity to tell a more accurate and complete story of American heritage.

The 2024 Juneteenth Celebration was a successful public observance of the national holiday with special emphasis on the Harriet Barber House built on property purchased by freed slaves, Sam and Harriet Barber, in 1872 during the Reconstruction Era. The Rev. Dr. John U. Kirkland, the great great grandson of the Barbers, opened the program with prayer and remarks. Dr. Herbert Moore of the Midlands Chapters 9 & 10 (Horse) Calvary Buffalo Soldiers read and discussed the importance of the historic Juneteenth Proclamation. Performances by the following groups and individuals included: Harriet Barber Presentation by Ursula Robinson and Company, SC State University  
St. John Baptist Church Line Dancers  
Margo Stewart and God's Chosen, Spoken Word artist and dancers  
NAMU Drum Company, Michael Canty, drummers and dancers  
LIL CO, performer from Charlotte, NC  
Brandon Waller, vocal performer  
Dante Lewis, Saxophone player from Columbia  
Camm Wess, recording artist and producer who was finalist on NBC's The Voice  
Quan Howell, recording artist and vocalist from the Sounds of Blackness

Ongoing activities included: Tours of the Harriet Barber House, tours of the Congaree National Park via COMET shuttle, Youth Art Camp, Storytelling, Set in Stone Farm Animal Exhibit, local authors exhibits and other exhibits and displays.