

# 2025 KEYNOTE & FEATURED SPEAKERS

Third Annual Spring Symposium - Institute for the Study of the Reconstruction Era



**HERMINA GLASS-HILL, MHP** is an award-winning public historian, museum curator, environmental activist, and ocean conservationist. She is the premier scholar on the life and legacy of America's heroine of freedom, Susie King Taylor - a freedom seeker, Civil War laundress, teacher, healer and nurse, Reconstruction-era educator and entrepreneur, and an early social justice activist in Boston, Massachusetts. She is the founder and executive director of the [Susie King Taylor Women's Institute and Ecology Center](#) and the Susie King Taylor Gullah Geechee Museum in Taylor's hometown in Liberty County, GA.

**NATHAN BETCHER** oversees the protection of all cultural and natural resources at [Reconstruction Era National Historical Park](#). In addition, he is the supervisory historian for the park and for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network which has 126 sites in 28 states, all telling the vast and complex story of Reconstruction.



**SAMANTHA MISCHKE** is a recent graduate of the University of South Carolina Beaufort, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. She joined the National Park Service at the [Reconstruction Era National Historical Park](#) in Beaufort, South Carolina as a Pathways Park Ranger in 2023, and this past year, she became Reconstruction Era NHP's first permanent Education Technician.



**JENNIFER MARLER** is a PhD Candidate in History at the [University of South Carolina](#). She is also a licensed K-12 educator who, before pursuing her doctoral degree, taught AP US History, AP Psychology, and Government to high school juniors and seniors. Her dissertation, "Make Yourselves Free": The Revolutionary Black Experience in New York, 1783-1790" is scheduled for defense in May 2025.

**ELIZABETH LANEY** is a Research Associate with the [Institute for the Study of the Reconstruction Era](#). She is currently engaged in forward-ing ISRE's research initiatives, working with students and professors at USC Beaufort to enrich curriculum and working with communities around South Carolina to expand knowledge of the Reconstruction Era and the state's US Colored Troop regiments.





**Stacey Bell BA, MPA** is the President of the [Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society](#) (AAGHS), Jean Sampson Scott Greater New York Chapter. A dedicated investigator with a passion for uncovering and preserving African American heritage, she began her genealogy journey as a ten year old sitting on the porch of her maternal great grandparents in the South Carolina Low Country. Stacey descends from two USCT soldiers Daniel Grayson and Robert Goodwin both of the USCT 33rd Regiment and is collaterally related to four others.

**Jane Ball Groom** is a dedicated human services worker and community development advocate with more than 40+ years in cross functional and results-oriented program development. Her core strengths of visionary thinking, strategic planning, and effective collaborating are embedded in her philosophy of “purpose culminating into positive community impact.” She is an accomplished grants writer, motivational speaker, civil rights advocate, and author. Jane is descended from 1st SCVAD Sgt. Julius Shemetella & wife Susan.



**Julia Marie Groom** is the Program Coordinator for Wake Invests in Women (WIIW) at Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, North Carolina. Prior to joining WIIW, she managed two high school STEM career academies for the Wake County Public Schools System and was a Technology and Science teacher. Julia has a passion for motivating and helping others which was a catalyst to co-develop an empowerment | employment training program called EMERGE (Empowerment, Mentoring, Resources, to Gain Employment) which she co-developed with her mother Emily. Julia is descended from 1st SCVAD Sgt. Julius Shemetella & his wife Susan.

# THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPEAKERS & PANELISTS!

# 2025 BREAKOUT SESSION PANELISTS

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## EDUCATION IN BEAUFORT FROM THE PORT ROYAL EXPERIMENT TO PRESENT

**Dr. Robert L. Adams**, Executive Director, Historic Penn Center

**Alvesta Roberson**, Mather School Alumnus

**Bradley Tarrance**, Principal, Robert Smalls Leadership Academy

**Donna Kimelman**, Retired DoD Teacher

## SUPPORTING THE LEGACY OF THE 1ST SOUTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEERS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

**James Morrall**, Edward Wallace Camp #21 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

**Linda Robinson**, Fred Washington, Sr. Woman's Relief Corps of SC #1

**Dr. James Shinn**, Professor of History, USC Beaufort

## HONORING THE SERVICE OF THE MEN & WOMEN OF THE 1ST SC VOLUNTEERS OF AFRICAN DESCENT

**LTG Ben Hodges**, US Army Retired

**LTC Rory McGovern**, US Army, Department of History, West Point

**Jennifer Marler**, Ph.D. Candidate, University of South Carolina

**Dr. Najmah Thomas**, Professor - African American Studies, USC Beaufort

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