

Florida Museum of Black History Task Force: Nassau County Museum Location Criteria Request

Introduction

Nassau County, Florida, is submitting the following information to assist the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force in providing recommendations for the planning, construction, operation, and administration of a Florida Museum of Black History, per CS/CS/HB 1441 (Chapter 2023-72, Laws of Florida). The African American history of Nassau County, Florida, is deeply intertwined with the broader narrative of the region's development. From the era of slavery through the Civil Rights Movement and into the present day, African Americans have played pivotal roles in shaping the county's social, cultural, and economic landscape. Descendants of enslaved individuals who worked on plantations in the area, many African American families have deep roots in Nassau County, contributing to its rich heritage. Despite facing segregation and systemic discrimination, African Americans have demonstrated resilience and perseverance, establishing vibrant communities, churches, and businesses.

Criteria 1: Historical Significance of Proposed Community or Region

Nassau County has a rich African American heritage with a long history of contributions by Black individuals to the local community, the state of Florida, and beyond. As a gateway to Florida when the U.S. was still a foundling country, the museum could highlight this local heritage, setting the stage for the larger experience and celebrating the achievements, struggles, and resilience of not just Nassau's Black community, but of communities throughout the state. The museum would also serve as a focal point for preserving and sharing these local historical narratives, including:

As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach on Amelia Island was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the **Middle Passage**¹ in the early 19th century. The Middle Passage was a stage in the route slave ships took from Africa to America, forcibly transporting millions of Africans to the New World. Descendants of these Africans recognize Fernandina Beach as the southernmost island in the Gullah Geechee Cultural



¹ <https://www.middlepassageproject.org/fernandina-beach-fl/>

Heritage corridor. A Middle Passage port marker in Old Town Fernandina commemorates those who died in the crossing and the legacy of those who survived.

In **1798, Kingsley Plantation²** was built and named for early owner Zephaniah Kingsley. Kingsley's wife, Anna Madgigine Jai, was purchased from Senegal, West Africa. Zephaniah and Anna would later become the great-grandparents of Mary Francis Sammis, A.L. Lewis's wife, and co-founder of American Beach on Amelia Island. Located on Fort George Island, just across the Amelia River in Duval County, Kingsley Plantation is managed by the U.S. National Park Service and is one of the only examples of a plantation system in Florida today. Visitors can explore the slave quarters, kitchen house, interpretive gardens, and more during guided tours of the cotton plantation.

The Williams House³, named for Marcellus A. Williams, was built in **1856** and now operates as an award-winning Bed & Breakfast in historic downtown Fernandina Beach. During the Civil War when Union troops occupied Fernandina and took over his residence, Williams and his family fled until it was safe to return, at which time he became active in the Underground Railroad.

Nassau County is home to **Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church**, built in 1870, which was a gathering site for free Blacks, Indians, Spanish Indians, and Mulattoes. Historic Downtown Fernandina Beach features more than 400 historic structures on the **National Register of Historic Places**, including:

- **New Zion Missionary Baptist Church** was the second oldest and largest Black Baptist Church on Amelia Island founded in 1870.
- **Macedonia AME Church** was founded in 1872 by Samuel Irving.
- **Trinity United Methodist Church** was built in 1891 and served the African American population of Amelia Island during the time of segregation in the South.

American Beach was co-founded in **1935** by African American businessman and Florida's first black self-made millionaire, Abraham Lincoln Lewis. A.L. Lewis, as President of the Afro-American Life Insurance Company's Pension Bureau, purchased and opened 33 acres of oceanfront property on Amelia Island and named it American Beach. The initial property was subdivided and sold to company



² <https://www.nps.gov/timu/learn/historyculture/kp.htm>

³ <https://www.ameliaisland.com/itineraries/african-american-heritage/>

executives, shareholders, and community leaders as a place to rest and relax with dignity. In 1937, American Beach expanded by another 100 acres and offered them to the wider Black community for purchase. For the next 30 years, American Beach was a paradise for vacationing African Americans. Home to several restaurants, hotels, and shops, American Beach drew thousands of visitors every year.

Evans' Rendezvous⁴, an oceanfront dining and entertainment establishment, and community gathering place, attracted celebrities and artists like Ray Charles, Cab Callaway, Louis Armstrong, and James Brown during its heyday.



Today, the **A. L. Lewis Museum⁵** tells the story of American Beach and the African Americans who found triumph over segregation and disenfranchisement. The museum also brings conservationist MaVynee Oshun Betsch's vision to life. Betsch spent her formative years on American Beach but graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio. In 1955, she embarked on a remarkable journey through Europe, where she pursued a career as an opera singer. Betsch eventually came back to American Beach and made it her life's work to protect the environment, dunes, beaches, and livelihood of her grandfather's legacy and her beloved hometown. She became well known as "**The Beach Lady**" and fought south island development to protect the NaNa dunes, named after the Twi word, "NaNa", which means "grandmother" in the West African language.

⁴ <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=144780>

⁵ <https://allewismuseum.org/>

NaNa Dunes, a 60-foot dune system, is the largest in Florida and is now protected as part of the Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve by providing a vital habitat for a diverse array of native wildlife and plant species. Through “the Beach Lady’s” tireless efforts, American Beach was listed as a historic site on the **National Register of Historic Places** in 2001.



Nassau County’s Fernandina Beach is home to the former Peck High School, originally known as Colored School No. 1. Opened in 1885 through the Rosenwald Foundation school-building program, the school was later named for Howard University graduate Professor William H. Peck, teacher and principal of the school. The original school building is one of many historic sites on Nassau’s Amelia Island.

Criteria 2: Appropriateness of Proposed Location

Nassau County’s strategic location makes it accessible to a wide audience. Situated in the northeast corner of Florida, Nassau County shares its northern and western borders with Georgia and is home to one of the state’s five **official Welcome Centers on bustling I-95**. Nassau County is also home to **Amelia Island**, the southernmost of the Sea Islands along the Atlantic coast, presenting multi-state opportunities for museum visitation from South Carolina (less than 2 hours) and all of Georgia. A Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would serve as a “gateway” to the state’s rich African American heritage, promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness for residents and millions of visitors as they arrive in Florida via I-95 and the Jacksonville International Airport. As Florida’s first attraction heading into the state, the museum would also make an ideal starting point for the **Florida Black Heritage Trail** connecting Florida’s many African American museums, sites, and attractions. At the intersection of I-95 and A1A, Nassau County is home to the award-winning Wildlight community comprised of over 4,000 acres

of land that is currently undergoing a master plan of business and residential development. With an estimated 40 million visitors traveling on I-95 annually, proximity to I-95 and A1A, and with its proposed road network, Wildlight is enhancing accessibility to key regional destinations, and providing ready access to new schools, public recreational amenities, cultural opportunities, and businesses. With more than a thousand acres set aside for conservation, new parks, and community facilities, Wildlight could be an ideal setting for a world-class Museum of Black History in fast-growing Nassau County. In addition, landowners in American Beach have reached out to begin the conversation of offering land for the proposed location.

Criteria 3: Regional Economy

Tourism is Nassau County's main economic driver, responsible for 26% of total county employment and 29% of county GDP, with over **1.2 million visitors** creating a direct economic impact of nearly **\$1 billion (2022)**. The destination has been cherished by generations of travelers for its natural beauty, pristine beaches, small-town southern charm, and historic and cultural treasures. Most of this tourism revenue is generated on Amelia Island on the county's eastern/Atlantic shoreline.

The addition of a world-class attraction such as the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would contribute to the overall strength of its most critical industry by attracting more visitors interested in cultural and historical experiences. It would also have positive economic implications by creating new business and employment opportunities and fostering growth. This would be consistent with a focus on the western part of the county detailed in the recently announced [Destination and Community Enhancement Strategy](#).⁶ The strategy is designed to promote the sustainability of the destination while ensuring a balance between visitor management and the life of residents. As a major local attraction, the museum would benefit greatly from the [award-winning tourism](#)⁷ marketing efforts of the **Amelia Island Convention & Visitors Bureau (AICVB)**, which executes the county's tourism programs by promoting the destination's appeal to a global audience.

Additionally, Nassau County has a strong presence in agriculture, particularly in timber production and farming, contributing to its rural economy. With a natural deepwater port, the maritime industry also thrives, with ports facilitating shipping activities and supporting related businesses. Furthermore, the county's real estate market experiences steady growth, driven by a mix of residential and commercial development. Our residents enjoy the ultimate work-life balance, enjoying our relatively low cost of living and coastal lifestyle.

⁶ <https://ameliaislandtdc.com/home/destination-strategic-plan>

⁷ <https://www.ameliaisland.com/about/>

Nassau County, Florida, is home to **98,433** residents and lies within the Jacksonville MSA with 760,000+ working-age adults and over 1.6 million residents. Nassau County’s population continues to grow as the **7th fastest-growing county in Florida**.

Residents of Nassau County enjoy access to pristine beaches, picturesque landscapes, and abundant outdoor recreational opportunities, including hiking, boating and fishing. The county’s charming small towns and historic districts foster a strong sense of community, while its proximity to urban centers like Jacksonville ensures convenient access to a wider variety of needs. The county recently passed a referendum focused on preserving natural resources and sustainable development to contribute to the overall well-being and satisfaction of its residents.

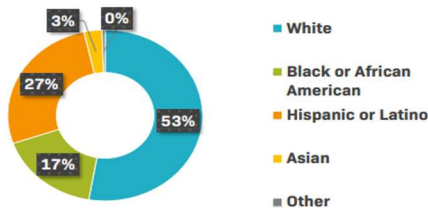
Criteria 4: Regional Demographics⁸

Nassau County, Florida, exhibits a diverse and evolving regional demographic landscape shaped by various factors. Consisting of 726 square miles of natural beauty located in the northeast corner of Florida along the Atlantic Ocean and Interstate 95, Nassau borders Duval County (Jacksonville) and is less than 10 miles from the **Jacksonville International Airport**. The county-wide population is just shy of 100,000 full-time residents and is part of the Jacksonville MSA which boasts a regional population of over 1.6 million. The latest population estimates from the US Census Bureau revealed that Nassau’s population expanded by 7.02% from 2020 to 2022. This extraordinary growth rate ranks Nassau as the **65th fastest-growing county out of 3,145 counties in the United States**. In addition, according to Lightcast's Talent Attraction Scorecard, from 2016-2020, Nassau County ranked as the **#1 small county (<100,000 pop) in the Nation for Net Migration and Talent Attraction**. While the majority of residents are White, there is a notable African American population, along with growing Hispanic and Latino communities, contributing to the cultural richness of the region.

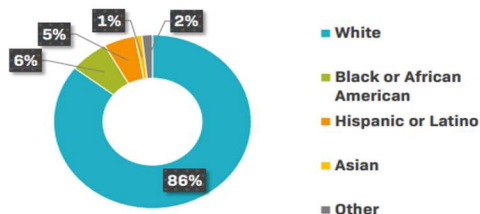
2022 ANNUAL POPULATION
3.01% INCREASE (BEBR)³

Based on data from the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR), Nassau County saw an annual population percentage change of 3.01%.

GRAPH 5: RACE IN FLORIDA 2022¹



GRAPH 6: RACE IN NASSAU COUNTY 2022¹



⁸ <https://www.nassaucountyfl.com/DocumentCenter/View/24647/2023-Growth-Trends-Report>

The population is spread across different age groups, with a significant proportion of retirees drawn to the area's natural beauty and recreational amenities. Family households dominate, reflecting a community-oriented environment, while an increasing number of young professionals are drawn to the area for its economic opportunities and quality of life. In 2022, there were **1,564 new businesses**, with an income migration of \$328.87 million. The poverty rate is currently 9.9% with a median income of \$70,010⁹.

The Nassau County School District ranked **second statewide** in overall performance by the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) and earned the highest percentage of “A” school grades statewide.¹⁰ With a student population of almost 13,000 students, 17 schools, and almost 800 teachers, Nassau County School District’s graduation rate for the 2022-23 school year is 91%, with a 95% goal by 2023, which ranks second highest in the state. More than 41% of adults in Nassau County have an AA degree with 32% having a Bachelor’s degree or more. The unemployment rate in Nassau County is currently 3.2% with an estimated 830 new jobs needed in the next year.

Criteria 5: Transportation Infrastructure

Nassau County’s strategic location makes it accessible to a wide audience. Situated in the northeast corner of Florida, Nassau County shares its northern and western borders with Georgia and is home to one of the state’s five official Welcome Centers on bustling I-95. **An estimated 40 million visitors arrive in Florida via I-95 every year as a major artery into Florida**¹¹. This interstate access puts the county just 20 minutes from Jacksonville, Florida’s largest city, and Jacksonville International Airport (JAX), with more than 7.5 million annual passengers from around the world. Nassau County is also home to Amelia Island, on State Road A1A, the southernmost of the Sea Islands along the Atlantic coast, presenting multi-state opportunities for museum visitation from South Carolina (less than 2 hours) and all of Georgia, with millions of visitors within a 5-hour drive radius. A Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County would serve as a “gateway” to the state’s rich African American heritage, promoting inclusivity and cultural awareness for residents and millions of visitors as they arrive in Florida via I-95 and JAX. As Florida’s first attraction heading into the state, the museum would also make an ideal starting point for the Florida Black Heritage Trail connecting Florida’s many African American museums, sites, and attractions.

⁹ <https://thefloridascorecard.org/pillar&c=45&pillar=6>

¹⁰ <https://www.fldoe.org/ahpsd/>

¹¹<https://www.fdot.gov/>

Nassau County Planning Department has recently partnered with the Jacksonville Transportation Authority to identify areas of growth and opportunities to expand the existing transit system to move residents and visitors around Nassau County. In the coming months, the report will be available for review and implementation.

Existing Highway System:

- **I-95** - serves the East Coast of the United States and terminates at the Houlton–Woodstock Border Crossing at the Canada-United States border
- **I-295** - located 8 miles south of Nassau County provides access to the Port of Jacksonville and I-10, which runs from Jacksonville to Los Angeles, California.
- **I-10** - runs east to west across the southern United States and terminates in Santa Monica, California
- **US 1** - runs from Fort Kent, Maine at the Canadian border south to Key West, Florida, making it the longest north-south road in the United States
- **US 17** - also known as the Coastal Highway, it is a north–south artery that spans the Southeastern United States. It runs south to Punta Gorda, Florida, and its northern terminus point is in downtown Winchester, Virginia. US 17 runs parallel to I-95 for much of its extent
- **US 301** - runs from Sarasota, Florida, to Glasgow, Delaware
- **I-75** - less than one hour from the western part of the county, serves the Southeast and Midwest and terminates in Sault Ste. Marie in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

Criteria 6: Local Funding and Other Support

With the development of a state-of-the-art venue, the museum would act as the crown jewel and gateway to the Black history of Florida. In addition to the obvious educational, tourism, and economic benefits to Nassau County, the museum would serve as a community focal point and become a preferred venue and revenue source for hosting events, lectures, and exhibitions that promote understanding, tolerance, and unity among the fast-growing and increasingly diverse population of Nassau County with potential for future expansions to become a performing arts center to support the goals and objectives of telling the Black story throughout the southeast. With over \$12 million in Tourism Development Bed Tax dollars committed to a global marketing plan, the destination can strategically support promoting the museum to the world. The rapid population growth and firmly established philanthropic nature of the community would present an incredible opportunity for generating support for a museum of this caliber. Corporate sponsors throughout Florida, funding from grants and local organizations, and additional state

resources could provide the seed money for this venture. In addition, the American Beach community has a long and established history of supporting efforts to promote and protect the African American history of Nassau County.

Criteria 7: Educational Resources

Placing a state Museum of Black History in Nassau County would provide unique educational opportunities for schools, colleges, and universities in the region. Students and educators would have easy access to a wealth of resources that enhance curriculum and deepen understanding of Florida's African American heritage. If located along I-95 in Nassau County, the museum would be an easy drive from **Flagler College**, the **University of North Florida**, and the **University of Florida**, and just minutes away from **Jacksonville University**, **Florida State College**, Florida's first HBCU **Edward Waters University**, and several other educational institutions. The **Florida State College at Jacksonville (FSCJ)** - Nassau campus is part of FSCJ's system of five campuses located throughout Duval and Nassau County within short commuting distances from each other. FSCJ offers baccalaureate degrees as well as a wide array of college transfer A.A. degrees, over 80 A.S. degrees, numerous work certification programs, and specialized industry training.

Florida State College at Jacksonville and the Nassau County School District partnered to build the Lewis "Red" Bean Technical Center located on the FSCJ Betty P. Cook Nassau Center campus. The 90,000 sq.ft. facility is home to state-of-the-art computer and technology labs and classrooms and is utilized for high school dual enrollment, career certification courses, and continuing education programs.

As previously mentioned, Nassau County's local school system, the No. 2 rated district in the state, would benefit as well, providing unprecedented access and insights to students of all ages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, locating the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County, Florida, aligns with the region's statewide historical significance, promotes cultural awareness, provides educational and economic benefits, and open accessibility to a broad audience. It would serve as a testament to the diverse and impactful contributions of the African American community in Nassau County, and the broader state of Florida. The museum's "gateway" status as Florida's first attraction on I-95 and as the port of entry for many enslaved Africans would also make a resounding statement

about the state’s commitment to sharing and honoring its rich African American heritage.





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Florida Department of Historical Resources
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To Whom It May Concern:

At their meeting on March 11, 2024, the Board of County Commissioners, of Nassau County, Florida, voted to send a letter of support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. The Board applauds this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

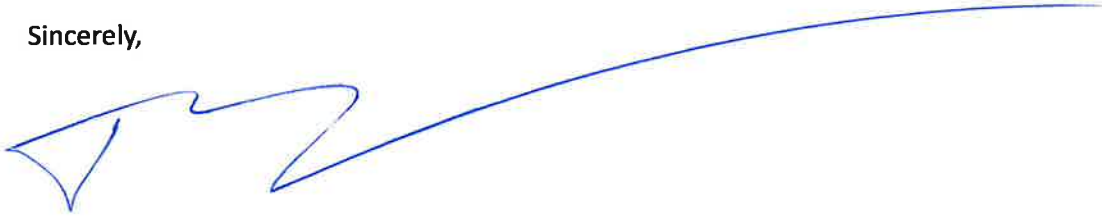
The economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

The Florida Museum of Black History would serve as an educational center, providing resources and programming for our A+-rated schools, universities in the Northeast Florida region, and community organizations. By offering exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs, the museum would foster an understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture among residents and visitors alike.

On behalf of the Board of County Commissioners, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized initial 'T' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves slightly upwards at the end.

Taco E. Pope, AICP
County Manager



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🌐 www.nefrc.org
✉ info@nefrc.org

Bringing Communities Together

March 11, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the Region.

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On behalf of the Northeast Florida Regional Council, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Payne, AICP
Chief Executive Officer

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



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March 11, 2024

Senator Geraldine Thompson
Black History Museum Task Force
R.A. Gray Building
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Senator Thompson,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

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On behalf of the Nassau County Chamber of Commerce, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Regina Duncan
President



14 MARCH 2024,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. I applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

I am a returning son of Fernandina. My family has been on Amelia Island since the 1850s. I am a Roberts, a Traeye, and a Delaney. Many of my descendants left the Fernandina area in the early 1900s to move up north for greater opportunities and to escape the stifling and degrading effects of the Jim Crow south. I am part of the mass migration of the descendants of those individuals who moved north who are now moving back south. We are proudly reclaiming our rich heritage and telling our own story.

I moved back to Fernandina in 2014 and I started doing Black history tours and lectures with my company - Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC. As a West Point Graduate, I am also fascinated by all the Civil War history in the area and the fact that so many US Colored Troops served here, stayed here, and built this great community from the ground up. Additionally, I am currently the Worshipful Master of Silver Square #703, one of two historic Prince Hall Masonic lodges in Nassau County. Local area Prince Hall Masons such as A.L. Lewis, John R. Scott, Thomas Sterling Delaney, Sollie Michell, A. Phillip Randolph and Elmo V. Myers helped shape the culture and dynamics here in Nassau County and made it the culturally rich location it is today.

This is why I believe Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

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On behalf of my company Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By



engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Kegler

Michael A. Kegler

Golden Gullah Geechee, LLC

XENOPHON6@AOL.COM

(678) 523-7943



Re: Florida Museum of Black History

To Whom It May Concern,

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Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

As the Director of the Fernandina Beach Main Street program, I recognize that the economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

On behalf of Fernandina Beach Main Street, I encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Finkelstein", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lisa Finkelstein, Executive Director

A M E L I A I S L A N D
MUSEUM OF HISTORY



Alissa Slade Lotane
Director, Division of Historical Resources &
State Historic Preservation Officer
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Ms. Lotane,

I am writing to express my support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History as it seeks to celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

The economic impact of such a museum is invaluable. Museums are not only cultural institutions but also drivers of tourism and economic development. Visitors from across the state and the greater Southeast United States would be drawn to Nassau County to explore the exhibits, attend events, and engage with the local community. The impact would stimulate growth for local businesses and create job opportunities in related sectors such as hospitality and retail.

The Florida Museum of Black History would serve as an educational center, providing resources and programming for our A+-rated schools, universities in the Northeast Florida region, and community organizations. By offering exhibitions, workshops, and outreach programs, the museum would foster an understanding and appreciation of African American history and culture among residents and visitors alike.

The Amelia Island Museum of History for 47 years has been a place of opportunity and boasts a membership of over 500 people who are concerned with preserving and celebrating our area's rich history. It is in this capacity that we are lending our support to this important initiative which will showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phyllis E. Davis".

Phyllis E. Davis, Executive Director

phyllis@ameliamuseum.org, 904.261.7378, x. 101



1510 Persimmon Cir N.
Fernandina Beach FL 32034-5280

To whom this may concern,

We are writing to express our support for Nassau County, Florida, as the future site of the Florida Museum of Black History. We applaud this effort to showcase Nassau County, not only in preserving the cultural heritage of the African American community but also in contributing to the economic growth and educational enrichment of the region.

Nassau County boasts a rich history that aligns with the mission of the Florida Museum of Black History. As a port city on the border between Spanish Florida and the U.S., Fernandina Beach was a strategic location for trading enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage. Along with historic American Beach, the Williams House, and the A.L. Lewis Museum, Nassau County's narrative connects with the African American experience in Florida. Establishing the museum here would provide a direct link to this heritage and offer a platform for storytelling, education, and reflection.

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On behalf of **Coast One Tours LLC**, we encourage the Florida Museum of Black History Task Force to consider the benefits of hosting the Florida Museum of Black History in Nassau County. By engaging in this effort, Nassau County can celebrate its rich heritage, stimulate economic growth, and become a center of cultural instruction for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you require any further information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Ron & Avis Miller Owners