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African-American Chautauqua



FEBRUARY 16, 1992

BUTLER LITTLE THEATRE

FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

2:00 P.M.

Funding provided by:

- *North Carolina Humanities Council*
- *Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County, the local distributing agency for the North Carolina Arts Council*

Welcome to the "**African-American Chautauqua**"! Originating at Chautauqua, New York, in 1874, Chautauquas combine education with entertainment in a variety of programs. This Chautauqua presents actors and actresses portraying African-Americans who were born or lived in North Carolina and who made contributions to American society during different time periods. They are Henry Evans, preacher; David Walker, abolitionist; Charlotte Hawkins Brown, educator; and Minnie Jones Evans, artist.

Chautauqua Planning Committee

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Fayetteville State University

Dr. Harmon Watson
Fayetteville State University

AFRICAN-AMERICAN CHAUTAUQUA

FEBRUARY 16, 1992

2:00 P.M.

BUTLER LITTLE THEATRE

Narrator Dr. Phillip McGuire

Henry Evans Issac Milton

David Walker Stanley Owens

Charlotte Hawkins

Brown Ernestine W. Smith

Minnie Evans Michelle Robinson

Directed by Dr. Edward Fisher

**The planning committee thanks the
following for their support and assistance:**

North Carolina Humanities Council

Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County

Fayetteville State University

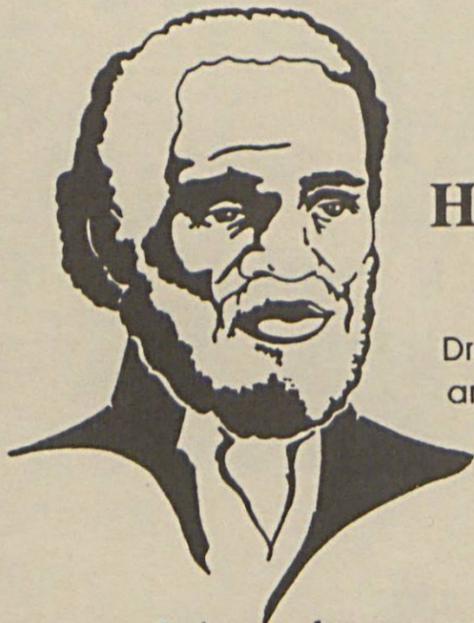
Cumberland County Schools

Cape Fear Museum

St. John's Museum of Art

Historic Sites Section

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources



Henry Evans

?-1810

Drawing based on
artist's conception

It is not known when Henry Evans was born, but it is known that he was born in Virginia, a free man. Although Evans was a cobbler, or shoemaker by trade, he was one of the first blacks in Virginia to be licensed to preach.

Evans left Virginia in 1775, headed for Charleston when he stopped in Fayetteville. While in Fayetteville, he observed that people of his race constantly expressed themselves in an unchristian manner. They had never heard preaching by any denomination. It was then that Henry Evans decided to stay and bring Christianity to these individuals.

However, the Fayetteville Town Council became alarmed, fearing that Henry Evans would influence slaves to rebel against slave owners. They ordered him not to preach; but he continued to do so, holding services in the woods and changing locations each time to escape mobs sent to stop him.

Eventually slave owners noticed a change in their slaves. Evans' preaching had not affected them in the way slave owners thought it would; he had only made Christians of these people. In fact, his preaching was so powerful that white people came to hear him, and soon, whites and blacks worshiped together.

Henry Evans died in 1810 and is buried under the chancel of Evans Metropolitan AME Zion Church in Fayetteville, where today he is known as the Father of Methodism.



David Walker

1785-1830

Drawing based on
artist's conception

Proslavery and antislavery groups argued over America's "peculiar institution" for years before the Civil War. Those supporting slavery claimed that enslaved African-Americans were innately inferior to their masters.

Antislavery groups prior to the 1830s had called for the emancipation of slaves but had not been very forceful. Then, in late 1829, David Walker published his *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*. It was the first incendiary publication from the antislavery movement; it directly incited slaves to free themselves through acts of violence.

David Walker was born of a free mother and a slave father in Wilmington in 1785. Little is known of his early life except that he somehow received an education. He traveled widely in the United States, and in the 1820s settled in Boston. Walker supported himself by running a second-hand clothing store.

He became increasingly involved in the abolition movement and became the Boston agent for *Freedom's Journal*, a weekly, abolitionist paper. But Walker wanted his message to be heard by slaves themselves. He wrote his pamphlet, paid for the printing, and sent copies to Southern ports by hiding them in clothes he sold to seamen. On June 28, 1830, David Walker was found dead. The cause of his death has never been determined. The speech presented in the Chautauqua contains David Walker's words as written in the *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*.



**Charlotte
Hawkins
Brown**
1883-1961

In a manuscript entitled "A Biography," Charlotte Hawkins Brown wrote, "To me the place in which I was born matters little when I am concerned about the direction in which I am going, but as we are all influenced somehow by the environment of our early childhood it might not be out of place to give a few facts that must have had their influence on my life and career." Charlotte Hawkins Brown was born Lottie Hawkins in Henderson, North Carolina, in 1883. She moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she was educated at Cambridge English High School and Salem State Normal School.

In 1901 she accepted a position offered to her by the American Missionary Association to teach in a one-room school—Bethany Congregational Church in Sedalia, North Carolina. One year later, due to a lack of funds, the American Missionary Association closed down all of its one-room schools, including Bethany. In 1902, Charlotte Hawkins, with encouragement from the community, decided to open her own school—Palmer Memorial Institute.

Palmer began as a school for manual training and the industrial arts. Eventually the school opened a junior college department and was accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Brown served as Palmer's president for fifty years, succeeding at her life's mission—a mission to educate people of her race in the rural south. Charlotte Hawkins Brown died in 1961. Ten years after Brown's death the school closed.



**Minnie
Jones
Evans**
1892-1987

For some, artistic achievement is a lifetime goal; for others, a sudden discovery. For Minnie Evans, art was a manifestation. Minnie Evans was a unique artist, an artist with a vision—a religious vision. She drew for herself and for God.

Born in Pender County, North Carolina, in 1892, Minnie Evans was the granddaughter of slaves. Her family was of modest means, and she left school after five or six years. This is not the background from which you would expect a prominent American artist to have come. Yet, Evans was indeed an artist and one of southeastern North Carolina's most widely known artists. Her works have been shown at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City; the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution; the North Carolina Museum of Art; and St. John's Museum of Art in Wilmington, North Carolina.

From 1948 until her retirement at age 82 in 1974, Evans was gatekeeper at Airlie Gardens in Wilmington. Deeply inspired by the beauty of the gardens and the bounty of nature, she portrayed these themes in many of her works. Minnie Evans drew for her own fulfillment. She did not promote her work and often gave it away. Evans died in December, 1987, at the age of 95. The monologue given at the Chautauqua is based on a film documentary and radio and newspaper interviews with Minnie Evans.

Museum of the Cape Fear
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