

The Fairfield County Museum announces a special program to be presented February 1 through 28 with local historical researcher Kadena Woodard. The project, Finding your Fairfield County African American Family Roots, is an assisted introduction to family research, and will involve helping first-time genealogy researchers to find out about the information that Mrs. Woodard has uncovered in her ongoing work on black cemeteries and collected funeral programs and obituaries. She is hopeful that the exchange of information will bring in additional family histories and death information to include in an addendum to her books.

A special research area will be set up in the museum's ground floor parlor during this project. The Fairfield Genealogical Chapter will assist and provide Wi-Fi laptop connection to genealogy websites. On Thursday, February 21, Mrs. Woodard will present a stage program on local history at 11 AM in the Christ Central Community Center Theater next door to the museum at 205 S. Congress St.

An ongoing project at the museum is to publish a book of the Federal Works Progress Administration collection of interviews of living elders in the 1930s who had been born into slavery. These typescript manuscripts are available online on the American Memories collection at the Library of Congress. As many of these have been copied in the museum files, a ringed notebook of these printouts will be on hand for research. Nearly 75 of these interviews were made in Fairfield County and much genealogical information is included in them, for both black and white families.

Kadena Robinson Woodard was born in Fairfield County, raised in Blair, and attended church at Hassion Hill Baptist, now being a member at Gethsemane Baptist Church. She attended McCrorey Liston High School and York Technical College in Rock Hill where she studied the programs in dental assistance. She is married to Danny Woodard and has two sons and seven grandchildren, all living in Fairfield. She is related to many historical families in the county and has always been interested in discovering more about African American contributions to our community history.

Kadena began visiting cemeteries and collecting printed funeral programs in 2003. The book quickly expanded to cover 15 spiral-bound volumes with obituaries listed alphabetically and the church cemeteries listed separately. An updated version is projected in the next few months and will cover funeral programs dated from June of 2007, in addition to any new materials discovered in coming weeks.

The museum is open Tuesdays through Fridays from 10 AM until 5 PM. It is advisable to call before coming to check on availability. There will be some days set aside for school programs, scheduling to be announced later. Call 803-635-9811 or write fairfieldmus@truvista.net for information.