

## GRAMBLING - UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Edward R. Jones, Mayor

Mrs. Thelma Smith Williams, Mrs. Pauline W. Lee, Ms. Phyllis Miller,  
Dr. Mildred Gallot, Ph.D., Dr. Sarah D. Dennis, Ph.D.,  
Dr. Douglas H. Thomas, Ph.D, Ms. Jon Moss

The City of Grambling is composed of land parcels ranging from single family residential, to commercial, and agricultural. The recorded land history dates from the establishment of the early parishes in the 1830's. There are more than a dozen churches and religious institutions in the area that are more than fifty years old. There is significant overlap in political, cultural, educational, religious, and civic histories between the neighboring towns of Arcadia (Beinville Parish) and Ruston (Lincoln Parish) dating from the early 1800's.

The City of Grambling and Grambling State University each have their own unique history and authentic direct legacies with Dr. Booker T. Washington, Dr. George Washington Carver, Tuskegee University (Institute) faculty/staff, Tuskegee students/graduates, Tuskegee trustees and their contemporaries. It is well documented that the North Louisiana Colored Agricultural Relief Association (NLCARA) requested assistance from Tuskegee Institute to establish a school in 1896. Dr. Booker T. Washington sent Charles P. Adams to organize and lead the school. Of course Mr. Adams used the Tuskegee model through several steps to develop what became Grambling State University. In addition, he promoted Tuskegee practices such as private land accumulation and truck gardening in the community. The Lincoln Parish area Black farmers participated in the original Tuskegee Negro Conference (1892) and derivative events such as "The Four States Negro Fair" (1917, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas). Previous study, documentation and interpretation of Black settlements has generally approached Grambling as an individual isolated community, with limited consideration of context and contribution to civic life and culture within, and beyond state boundaries. An opportunity exists to highlight the "Tuskegee kinship" between the City of Grambling, Grambling State University, and the surrounding church, primary school and extended families in the region. A series of strategies, learning activities and cultural tourism programs that significantly expand and explain the relationships between place (land, landscape, structures, sustainable environment), the civic virtues that formed the base of 19th and early twentieth century Black communities across America will be planned and produced.

# GRAMBLING - UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Edward R. Jones, Mayor

Mrs. Thelma Smith Williams, Mrs. Pauline W. Lee, Ms. Phyllis Miller,

Dr. Mildred Gallot, Ph.D., Dr. Sarah D. Dennis, Ph.D,

Dr. Douglas H. Thomas, Ph.D, Ms. Jon Moss

## Request for Assistance

The City of Grambling requests assistance with the following initiatives:

### 1. Civic Leaders and Community Genealogy

The North Louisiana Colored Agricultural Relief Association (NLCARA) was extremely instrumental in providing civic leadership in the Grambling area. The names and activities of some of the more prominent leaders of the organization have been documented. However, critical familial and cultural relationships between the majority of the association members has not been thoroughly researched, documented and interpreted. Many of these pioneers remained in the nearby parishes and played major roles in their evolution and very difficult struggles for survival. Oral history, church records, veterans records, and detailed census research are required in this phase of the project. The city needs in depth genealogical research on all of the civic members in order to reconstruct its human and physical history and prepare programs and exhibits for education and cultural tourism. The results of this research will also be used to provide content for the town website and interpretation of physical resources that may be considered for historic landmark and district designation.

### 2. Cemetery research, documentation and interpretation

Numerous early residents and descendants of the town and parish pioneers are buried in the area cemeteries. The second step in the genealogy process will be to cross reference the various cemetery rosters and nearby settlement genealogies with the NLCARA membership. Some of the city residents have compiled partial rosters of graves in various cemeteries. The data needs to be digitized for permanent recording and ready access. The results of this research will also be used to provide content for the town website and interpretation of physical resources that may be considered for historic landmark designation.

## GRAMBLING - UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Edward R. Jones, Mayor

Mrs. Thelma Smith Williams, Mrs. Pauline W. Lee, Ms. Phyllis Miller,

Dr. Mildred Gallot, Ph.D., Dr. Sarah D. Dennis, Ph.D,

Dr. Douglas H. Thomas, Ph.D, Ms. Jon Moss

### 3. National Register of Historic Places (NR)

As a step toward protecting the community, the City of Grambling would like to be nominated and listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a multiple resource district. The City needs assistance with the necessary historic research and interpretation to meet Federal Secretary of the Interior Standards and Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation criteria. More than ninety percent of the original town plat is extant within the current city limits of Grambling, yet very little of the city site is included in any local, state or NR historic district. Including the original 1800's settlement plat area in a NR district would document and interpret the important cultural legacies. The NR process should include identification all historic sites in the area (include an inventory of existing markers and sites on the National Register of Historic Places); set priorities for sites needing registration, markers or additional signage based on their importance to city, parish, university, state and national history. Based on the study and the priorities, apply for markers from state and national entities or begin local historic marker campaign for new markers or upgraded signage; This would also expand the knowledge and understanding of the variety of resources that are fundamental parts of Grambling's, and America's heritage.

### 4. Historic records, documents and artifacts curation and archival preservation

Public history

Develop a small museum in the old post office building or in the reconstructed train depot.

Create a program or curriculum to strengthen the role of local history in the GSU First Year Experience.

Develop additional GSU Founders Week programming, use a "SWAT team" approach to record a batch of oral histories at the Juneteenth and Founders Week tent during these events.

Curate small history displays in City Hall, somewhere on campus, in the new hotel at Legend Square.

Create a cell phone tour or walking tour of markers; create an online interactive map.

Partner with the college radio station to air history PSAs or a "History Minute" spot.

## GRAMBLING - UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Edward R. Jones, Mayor

Mrs. Thelma Smith Williams, Mrs. Pauline W. Lee, Ms. Phyllis Miller,  
Dr. Mildred Gallot, Ph.D., Dr. Sarah D. Dennis, Ph.D.,  
Dr. Douglas H. Thomas, Ph.D, Ms. Jon Moss

### 5. Archival preservation

Identify at risk archival collections and work with GSU library (and maybe other institutions) to gather and preserve them; or set priorities for materials that could be digitized at UNC Chapel Hill and returned to GSU; or identify collections where it may make sense to preserve them in the Southern Historical Collection.

Host public workshops for the community to discuss basic archival preservation of personal and family collections; provide scanning and oral history stations: (possible venue for these events - room at the Eddie Robinson Museum).

Apply for small grants or other funding to purchase equipment like audio recorders, scanning equipment for the town, churches, or GSU library.

Digitization of GSU materials (original early documents); digitization of some of Mrs. Williams' materials; digitize city directories / Sanborn maps / newspapers (The Gramblinite) / college yearbooks / lab school yearbooks / oral histories (from Williams, Gallot, GSU library, others);

NOTE: There are about 130 digitized items available online through the HBCU Library Alliance's CONTENTdm collection created to celebrate the founding of America's HBCUs.

Collaborate with Louisiana Tech on a Camp Ruston project (more digitization of their collection); additional work may be possible on the archaeological side.

Ask about the records of the lab schools especially since they may move and change to charter schools soon (they might be covered by public records law as the university operates these schools).

### 6. Youth engagement

Several Grambling organizations and churches that have ongoing youth programs are interested in participating in the historic preservation activities described above. Grambling and area youth would participate in a series of training, learning activities and cultural tourism programs that significantly expand and explain the relationships between place (land, landscape, structures, sustainable environment), the civic virtues that formed the base of 19th and early twentieth century Black communities across America will be planned and produced.

## GRAMBLING - UNC HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROSPECTUS

Edward R. Jones, Mayor

Mrs. Thelma Smith Williams, Mrs. Pauline W. Lee, Ms. Phyllis Miller,

Dr. Mildred Gallot, Ph.D., Dr. Sarah D. Dennis, Ph.D,

Dr. Douglas H. Thomas, Ph.D, Ms. Jon Moss

### 7. Investigation, Evaluation and Interpretation of the Charles P. Adams House

The Charles P. Adams House was built as the residence for Grambling's first head master. It is a prominent, and highly underutilized, resource that is in eminent danger of demolition by neglect. It is critical that the house be investigated and evaluated to determine the necessary steps for documentation (photographic and measured drawings) or physical preservation. Research of the construction history, including the builder/contractor, should be included. A great deal could be learned about construction materials, methods and techniques even if the house could be systematically demolished. It may be possible to salvage some materials for use in historical and educational exhibits.

### Timetable(s)

The City would like to produce a series of "sample" exhibits that could be displayed for its 2015 Juneteenth (June 19) activities. The planning and preparation of the exhibits can be used as educational training for the youth and community at large.