International African American Museum Taking Shape In Charleston

February 23, 2021

In our continuing series focusing on Black History Month, Rosen Hagood highlights the upcoming International African American Museum (IAAM) here in Charleston. Located on what was once a major entryway for the transatlantic slave trade, construction is already well underway with a scheduled opening in 2022.

IAAM's stated goal is to present the largely untold and undertold experiences of Americans of African descent. It will capture a journey that began in Africa centuries ago, and still continues today in Charleston and throughout America. The museum will prominently feature stories of the ingenuity, resistance, and hard labor that Africans and their descendants have shown in their struggle for freedom.

Charleston was a main North American port in the transatlantic slave trade and enslaved West Africans played a large role in developing the region into an agricultural powerhouse. As the country grew into the Civil Rights era, black Charlestonians faced the same problems that others had throughout America: gentrification, political disenfranchisement, discrimination. Charleston had its own role in the Civil Rights movement with legal and social activism that paved the way for much of the change that would later take place.

But many of the leaders from that time didn't wait for change to come down from the highest courts or lawmakers. They forged ahead and created their own path for themselves and others who shared their experiences and heritage. For example, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins established freedom schools, pushed voter registration efforts, and voiced support for local black workers.

These and other stories will form the backdrop of what the IAAM plans to showcase. According to museum officials, one of the themes will be "connections across the African diaspora, the spread of African American culture and influence, and the movements for justice and equality." Another exhibit will allow visitors to trace their African American lineage.

Rosen Hagood is proud to be a part of the Charleston community and to witness for ourselves this historic chapter in our city's history. We applaud the IAAM for this initiative and look forward to its opening in 2022.

©2026 Rosen Hagood All Rights Reserved |