

The South Park-East Raleigh Neighborhood Association Preservation and Education Program

The South Park and East Raleigh Neighborhoods have formed a partnership with the Central Citizens Advisory Council, City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department, the Raleigh City Museum, Shaw University, North Carolina State University College of Design and School of Architecture, and the Richard B. Harrison Library to promote the preservation and awareness of the African - American influence in the City of Raleigh, primarily focusing on the historic South Park and East Raleigh Neighborhoods. The East Raleigh-South Park National Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1991 and represents one of the oldest African-American neighborhoods in the United States.

The major goals of the program are to develop the Archives Room in the John P. "Top" Greene Center into a museum that celebrates and affirms the contributions of African-Americans within the building, its landscape surroundings, throughout the downtown and outdoor areas with signage and recognition of historic structures, stories of events, people, and places that have made significant contributions to the city's development. Educational resources will be developed and used to support the participation in tours of the area, booklets, video documentaries, and programs to preserve the history and inform the public and the City for inclusion in all future plans and activities.

(SPERNA)

Contributions and donations of photographs, letters, and other relevant artifacts are welcomed.

For more information about this program please contact flonnetewms@bellsouth.net or call the South Park Archives at the John P. "Top" Greene Center, 410 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. 919 / 831-6527.

Correspondence may be sent to SPERNA, P.O. Box 25801, Raleigh NC 27611.

Thank you for your interest and support of this invaluable community program.

SPERNA Preservation and Education Program Committee

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He fought for American freedom in the Revolutionary War...

He became the first African American to receive a college education in the United States...

He established a school in Raleigh where he taught white and free African American children...

JOHN CHAVIS



John Chavis not only made history throughout his life, but his legacy in the city of Raleigh is ever-present.

In 1938, one hundred years after his death, the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources approved the design of a memorial marker honoring Chavis. Located on East Street in the heart of the Historic South Park neighborhood, Chavis' marker became the first in North Carolina dedicated to African American history.

Teacher

Preacher

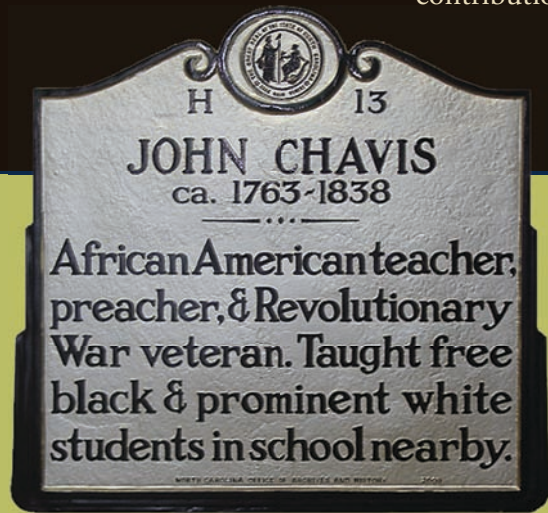
Patriot

Leader





As the original marker deteriorated over time, South Park residents also grew concerned with the sign's outdated vocabulary and requested the sign be replaced. In December 2008, the Department of Cultural Resources approved the erection of a new marker with an updated text. On July 11, 2009 the City of Raleigh, Central Citizens Advisory Committee, and South Park – East Raleigh Neighborhood Association unveiled the new memorial marker to the public on its East Street location, where it will remind future generations of John Chavis' remarkable life and contributions to the city of Raleigh.



John Chavis, born into freedom in 1763, lived a remarkable life uncommon to African Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By the age of sixteen Chavis fought for American freedom and proudly served his fledgling country during the Revolutionary War. Enlisting in 1778, Chavis served in the Fifth Regiment of Virginia under the leadership of Captain Mayo Carrington. He was honorably discharged after three years of service.

Following the Revolutionary War, Chavis studied to become a Presbyterian minister as

PREACHER

the private student of John Witherspoon, president of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University in 1792). Chavis completed his studies at what would later become Washington and Lee University and earned his preaching license around 1800. He became the first African American to receive a college education in the United States.

John Chavis preached to both African Americans and white citizens in the Lexington Presbytery in southern Virginia. He moved to Raleigh in the early 1800s and preached at the Orange Presbytery where he stayed the remainder of his religious career. After the Nat Turner Rebellion in 1831, the Orange Presbytery advised Chavis to discontinue preaching and teaching. In an effort to support himself financially and against the advice of his presbytery, Chavis published a sermon entitled, *An Essay on Atonement*. Eventually, the Orange Presbytery allotted him \$50 a year until his death in 1838.

RALEIGH REGISTER. NORTH CAROLINA GAZETTE.

John Chaves takes this method of informing his Employers, and the Citizens of Raleigh in general, that the present Quarter of his School will end the 15th of September, and the next will commence on the 19th. He will, at the same time, open an EVENING SCHOOL for the purpose of instructing Children of Colour, as he intends, for the accommodation of some of his Employers, to exclude all Children of Colour from his Day School.

The Evening School will commence at an hour by Sun. When the white children leave the House, those of colour will take their places, and continue until ten o'clock.

The terms of teaching the white children will be as usual, two and a half dollars per quarter; those of colour, one dollar and three quarters.

In both cases, the whole of the money to be paid in advance to Mr. Benjamin S. King. Those who produce Certificats from him of their having paid the money, will be admitted. Those who think proper to put their Children under his care, may rely upon the strictest attention being paid, not only to their Education but to their Morals, which he deems an important part of Education.

August 23, 1808

He hopes to have better School House by the commencement of the next quarter.

Adaptation of actual article.

TEACHER

Not only did Chavis preach to African Americans and white citizens, but he taught white and free African American children as well. When Chavis arrived in Raleigh, he immediately established a school for local children. He originally taught an integrated classroom, but he later separated the children at the white parents' insistence. Chavis taught white children by day and African American children by night. He charged \$2.50 for white students and \$1.75 for African American students per quarter to attend his school.

Local families held Chavis' teaching abilities in high esteem and many of his graduates went on to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Chavis' graduates included Archibald and John Henderson, sons of Chief Justice Leonard Henderson; Abraham Rencher, territorial governor of New Mexico; Charles Manly, North Carolina governor; and Willie Person Mangum, United States Senator. Chavis and Mangum formed an especially close bond and maintained a close correspondence throughout their lives.

LEADER

PATRIOT