



History in the making....

***"From a Gullah  
Slave Cabin to the  
White House"***

**Penn Center will show  
the historic family  
quilt for the first time  
since the Presidential  
Inauguration on  
Heritage Days**

## **MICHELLE OBAMA'S FAMILY QUILT**

### **COMES TO PENN CENTER ON NOV. 13-14**

**Excerpt from an article in the Georgetown Times (Written by [Clayton Stairs](#), Nov. 26, 2008)**

"A story quilt created by local artisans will be part of a very special inaugural exhibit in Washington, D.C., in January.

Inspired by the family history of Michelle Obama, the next first lady of the United States of America -- including her Gullah roots in Georgetown County -- this quilt will be one of several entries in the "Quilts for Obama" exhibit at the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.

Led by Vermelle "Bunny" Rodrigues, members of The Quilting Circle from the Committee of African American History Observances (CAAHO) stitched this historic quilt in 10 days with help from the community. Rodrigues is the owner of the Gullah O'man Museum and Gift Shop in Pawleys Island.

With the theme, "From a Gullah Slave Cabin to the White House," the quilt includes 10 squares of scenes from Michelle Obama's family history surrounding a large block featuring Michelle Obama graduating from Princeton University and Harvard University Law School.

Rodrigues, who came up with the plan for the story quilt, says it was difficult to choose just the right scenes to represent the evolution of a family.

She says the people who came together to take on this tremendous challenge definitely enjoyed themselves.

"We had different people come in to help and we tried to include everybody," Rodrigues said. "Everyone had so much fun, even if some people were just threading needles."

The Quilting Circle, which had not met for more than a year before completing the Obama quilt, includes: Rodrigues, Mabell Smith,, Ruthena Alston, Flo Pinckney, Evelyn Wragg and James Wragg. Community members who helped out include: The Rubies, Jeanette B. Anderson, Shirley Britton, Gerry Nelson, Alex Gore, Dermain Nelson Lillian Jean Johnson, Thelma Spears, Ann Potterfield, Andrew Rodrigues, Thelma Shubrick, Joann Thompson, Iris Johnson, Margaret Williams, Dorothea Simmons and Frank Lathe, who photographed the whole process.

"When the call was sent out that this quilt was going to be made, we were overjoyed and eager to participate," Rodrigues said. "We looked forward to the fellowship and the opportunity to be working together again to sew this important quilt in honor of Michelle Obama's family's historical journey."

The Circle

She explains that The Quilting Circle is not a quilting guild or a perfect quilting club.

"We are a group of old Gullah-Geechee people who quilt by adding pieces on fabric to tell a story about 'We People.'" Rodrigues said. "We do almost all of the applique free-hand like our ancestors did, cutting out patterns and sewing them on the quilt. Accordingly, some seams and stitches are not even, but that is called quilting with love from the heart." "



## **Michelle Obama Family Quilt Exhibition**

**at the York W. Bailey Museum**

**November 13-14, 2009**

**Heritage Days Celebration**

**Admission: \$4/Adults; \$2/Youth**

**Penn Center, Inc.**

**16 Penn Center Circle West**

**St. Helena Island, SC 29920**

**Call (843) 838-2474 for Group Reservations**

**Exhibit Closes January 30, 2009**