

**Developing the Legacy of Isaac Scott Hathaway
as a Community Development Resource for Macon County, Alabama**

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Final Report Narrative

Name of Project: Developing the Legacy of Isaac Scott Hathaway

Grant Period: February 1, 2012 – June 30, 2013

Grantee Name: Auburn University Project Director: Mark Wilson

Description of Project:

Macon County, Alabama is one of five ARC distressed counties in Alabama. The Tuskegee Human and Civil Rights Multicultural Center, a small non-profit organization located nineteen miles from Auburn University, is a community asset that benefits from collaborations that help build its capacity as a learning center and visitor destination. The Center (with one full-time employee) is embarking on a project related to artist Isaac Scott Hathaway, and our project sought to research and develop resources that will aid the Center in assessment of Hathaway materials in its collection; increase public knowledge of Hathaway's importance and interest in the period in which he lived and worked in Macon County; documentation of memories by local, living people who knew Hathaway as teacher and friend. We sought to develop instruments for the public and school children to learn about Hathaway, tools that the Center and we can use to create an appetite of interest in Hathaway, the arts, and the humanities.

Activities:

We held **two community advisory group meetings** during the semester at the Multicultural Center. Local citizens interested in the project attended the meetings, as well as board members and other partners of the Center. At the first meeting on September 11, 2013, we had the opportunity to meet Leslie Williams, a local citizen whose mother worked with our subject at Tuskegee University and performed the lettering on the coins that Hathaway designed for the U.S. Mint. Students enjoyed meeting her, hearing stories about Hathaway passed down to her, and seeing firsthand the statues of Frederick Douglass, George Washington Carver, and Booker T. Washington that she had in her possession. At the conclusion of the meeting, the group adjourned to Greenwood Cemetery to find the gravesite of Isaac Scott Hathaway, a very memorable adventure between local citizens and Auburn students. Near the end of the semester, shortly before the Washington, D.C. symposium, the advisory group met again with students on November 12 to hear about their work and view some of the products that had been created.

During the semester, we took **numerous trips to Notasulga and Tuskegee** to interview citizens on camera regarding the work of Hathaway (Leslie Williams in her home; Lonice Middleton in her home; Ronald McDowell at the Multicultural Center). We made **three visits** to the Tuskegee Senior Center (once to meet the staff; once to participate in bingo, so the student could see how a Hathaway Bingo game might work; once to execute the Hathaway Bingo project). We made several visits to Notasulga School to test Hathaway kits with young people (**three visits** to kindergarten class; **one visit** to fourth grade class; **two visits** to eleventh grade class). On **October 4** and **November 1**, the student team presented on the Life

and Work of Isaac Scott Hathaway at the AU-Macon County mentoring program, a community group that meetings every other week. These visits allowed teenagers to execute art projects related to Hathaway. Following the D.C. Symposium, during finals week, students presented on the project on **December 6** to the Macon County Commission during their work session, which allowed students to meet elected officials, who were all very appreciative of the project. Following the course, on **January 22**, one student went with the director to present the project to the Kiwanis Club.

Despite the fact that our partnering community is nineteen miles away from campus, students enjoyed numerous visits to the community, met a variety of citizens in Macon County, and understood the work of a local museum as a result of the project. I am attaching to this report numerous photographs that illustrate the interaction of students and community members.

The project resulted in a Web site that we will use in future work on Hathaway: www.isaacscotthathaway.wordpress.com. The site includes a brief introductory video, podcast re-creating a 1937 interview with Hathaway, photographs, and a downloadable pamphlet on Hathaway.

Project Outcomes:

In addition to the required project outcomes (poster, symposium presentation, community presentation), the following outcomes were achieved:

- 1) Students created kindergarten, fourth grade, high school, and senior citizen "kits" to introduce audiences to the life and work of Isaac Scott Hathaway. The kits need further refining and alignment to school curricula, but the basic parts have been designed and tested.
- 2) The project deepened the working relationship between our college and the Multicultural Center and further clarified the assets each have for community development in Macon County. Because of this project, we were able to link additional program opportunities together. For example, the Center received a grant during the project period for archival processing of Hathaway materials, and we were able to help several teenagers involved in our mentoring program become archival assistants, earn a stipend, and help develop a community asset.
- 3) In a spring course that I teach related Appalachian community development, a student from that course assisted me with a Black History Month presentation at a church in rural Macon County. The materials created and designed by students allowed a ready-made program presentation and art encounter for young people.
- 4) We have been accepted to present on the project at the Federation of State Humanities Councils national meeting in November 2013 in Birmingham, Alabama.
- 5) The project was featured on the Auburn University home page during the month of February, which receives an average of 120,000 to 150,000 hits per day. The article is archived at <http://wireeagle.auburn.edu/news/4955>.

Problems Encountered:

Our ATP projects are always a whirlwind of activity due to the nature of our partnership (19 miles away) and the fact that we seek to develop community assets into building blocks for community development. We return to Macon County each year because it is an ARC distressed county and allows students to venture outside of Auburn, Alabama into a rural county with great potential for having high quality of life indicators. The problems we encounter in our work with community collaboration are not unlike what other institutions face (sometimes people don't hurry to call back; meetings get canceled; good leads for information turn into dead ends). Citizens and institutions in distressed counties have a hard time believing that we want to do anything other than study them and report on their failings as a city, county, or community. Building cooperative, productive relationships takes time, and while I had hoped we would have made more progress in the classrooms, I was pleased that students had the opportunity to make presentations to three different age groups at one local school. The student assigned to the kindergarten was able to make a total of three visits, and the second and third visits revealed that students retained more information on the subject than we anticipated.

Program Continuation and Sustainability:

I am pleased to report that our 2011-12 ATP project related to oral histories on the integration of public schools in Tuskegee has flourished into a symposium on the 50th anniversary of the events and will be held in Tuskegee in August 2013. Several of the people we identified for oral histories will be in attendance, along with humanities scholars.

Our next ATP project will further develop the Center's assets for community development through both civil rights materials and the story of Isaac Scott Hathaway.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

The ATP catalyzes schools and communities into a working relationship that yields a significant amount of return on investment when it works well. In our case, the ATP gives our project the kind of branding needed to leverage university resources (budget money for travel; staff time, in addition to project director) for the project. I believe in the ATP model, and I think the designers of this model have developed a unique approach to governmental – higher ed – community partnerships, one that will last and is replicable to other agencies and organizations.

Attachments (in PDF format):

- 1) Photos from meetings and community/students
- 2) Published pamphlet
- 3) AU Homepage screenshot
- 4) AU Homepage feature story