

EDUCATION  
WORKSHOP

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Raising the  
Volume  
Episode XXVIII

*Michael Allen  
shares National Park  
Service and African  
American experiences*

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**Middle School and Up**

# RAISING THE VOLUME

with Michael Allen



# CORE SUBJECTS AND 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY THEMES

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Mastery of core subjects and twenty-first century themes is essential for all students in the twenty-first century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts; world languages; arts; mathematics; economics; science; geography; history; and government and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving twenty-first century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

## **Global Awareness**

1. Use twenty-first century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

## **Civic Literacy**

1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

## **Work Creatively with Others**

1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work; understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.

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## OVERVIEW

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**Everyone has a story. It's our place to take a moment to listen.** Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

"Raising the Volume" is a series of Black stories. These are stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. These are stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard's Artists-in-Residence Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, "Raising the Volume" gives a platform to Black community members whose lives matter.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, "To break down racial barriers, start where you are." So, let's start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

***Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode XXVIII, please email Sterling deVries at [sdevries@gaillardcenter.org](mailto:sdevries@gaillardcenter.org). Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode XXVIII.***

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## EPISODE XXVIII

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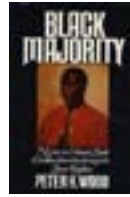
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(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE XXVIII)

# LESSONS

Michael Allen talks about the *Black Majority* by Peter H. Wood. It became his guiding text during college. The text focuses on the first African Americans of the Deep South and their contributions to early American history.



“Peter Wood demonstrates that the role of these early southerners was active, not passive: that their familiarity with rice culture made them an attractive, skilled labor force; that the sickle-cell trait may have been a positive influence in the warding-off of malaria, while a variety of acquired immunities served as protection from other diseases; that their African experiences enabled them to cope, often more effectively than Europeans, with the demands of the New World.”<sup>2</sup> [Read more here.](#)

**Based on your previous knowledge, what do you know of the contributions of the first African Americans in the Deep South? What cultural practices did they pass down to future generations? Research this topic and list two new facts in your notebook that you learned from your search.**

The National Parks Service is a federal agency that was established in August 1916. The mission is to preserve and protect important features, landscapes, buildings, and structures of our American experience.

In the Charleston area, there are four physical spaces that the National Parks Service manages: Fort Sumter, Fort Moultrie, Charles Pinckney Historic Site, and Liberty Square. Since 2006, Michael Allen has contributed to the Gullah Geechee Culture Heritage Corridor, which is a National Parks Project that spreads from Wilmington, North Carolina, to St. Augustine, Florida.



**Fort Sumter**



**Fort Moultrie**

Photo: NPS/N. Boyd from <https://www.nps.gov/fosu/index.htm>

[Watch the video “Much More than Brick and Mortar” from the NPS/National Park Network.](#)



**Charles Pinckney National Historic Site**  
[Learn More](#)

**“The purpose of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor NHA is to preserve, share and interpret the history, traditional cultural practices, heritage sites, and natural resources associated with Gullah Geechee people of coastal North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.”<sup>3</sup> What do you know about the Gullah Geechee people?**

<sup>2</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> “About,” Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, accessed January 14, 2023, [gullahgeecheecorridor.org](http://gullahgeecheecorridor.org).

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# LESSONS

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[Watch WIKITONGUES: Caroline speaking Gullah and English.](#)



[Watch A Story told in the Traditional Gullah Language at African American Heritage Day.](#)



Michael Allen discusses the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic and how African Americans were impacted more than other races due to lack of medical care and discrimination. There is almost no documentation of the African American experience during this time. He helped create Black Carolinians Speak: Portraits of a Pandemic, which lends the opportunity for African Americans to share and preserve their stories of their experiences during a public health crisis. [Click here to learn more.](#)

**How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your personal life, family, education, or community? What feelings did you experience? Did you learn anything or have advice for others who might face a similar crisis?**

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## ABOUT MICHAEL ALLEN

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Allen has been a community activist for most of his professional life. He has a deep-seeded interest in our nation's spiritual growth as it relates to our history and culture. He played a major role in the National Park Service Gullah Geechee Special Resource Study, which examined the feasibility and suitability of establishing educational centers and determining ways to increase interpretation and preservation of this valuable culture. The study began in 2000, and the final report was presented to Congress in 2005.

Due to the efforts of Allen and Congressman James E. Clyburn, the U.S. Congress passed the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Act, which established the first and only African American National Heritage Area in the country in 2006. In 2007, Allen was instrumental in the establishment of the Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Commission, which included twenty-five grassroots members from all four states of the corridor. Allen's primary responsibility was to ensure that this new National Heritage Area became a reality in an effort to provide hope, opportunity, and support to grassroot organizations and the wider Gullah Geechee Community. In 2009, he was formally elevated to the director's position for the corridor and developed a management plan to guide the operations of the corridor for the future.

In 2014, Allen was assigned by the National Park Service to participate as a lead team member on the NPS Special Resource Landmark Study exploring the history and legacy of the Reconstruction Era in American history. Because of this groundbreaking effort, a new National Park Service site, the Reconstruction Era National Monument, was established by Presidential proclamation on January 12, 2017.

Throughout his career, Allen has been involved in designing exhibits and presenting interpretive programs that involve local communities and history. These programs were designed to attract non-traditional audiences to the National Park Service and other historic sites. In 1999, he was instrumental in erecting the "African Importation Historic Marker" on Sullivan's Island. In 2008, he assisted the Toni Morrison Society and the College of Charleston in erecting a "Bench by the Road" commemorative bench at Fort Moultrie to memorialize the island's participation in the African slave trade. Finally, in 2009, he helped in unveiling "African Passages," an exhibit that highlights the African arrival, presence, and contributions to Gullah Geechee culture and American society. The exhibit looks through the eyes of Africans and African Americans who passed through Sullivan's Island on their way to be enslaved in Charleston and beyond.

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An additional focus of his career has been the inclusion of the socio-economic and political influences that brought the country to the Civil War. He was appointed to the South Carolina Civil War Sesquicentennial Committee that oversaw the observance of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War as well as the events of Reconstruction.

Allen also has been involved in a number of other innovative projects designed to engage new audiences in understanding and appreciating African and American history. He was a founding board member of the International African American Museum, which is slated to open in January 2023 in Charleston, South Carolina. It will offer a glimpse of Africans and African Americans' contributions in the making of the modern world. In 1993, he was a founding member and former vice president of the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission. He was the past treasurer for the South Carolina Council for African American studies. He also served as a board member for a number of local and statewide organizations, including the African American Historical Alliance, Habitat for Humanity East Cooper, the Sweetgrass Cultural Arts Festival Association, and the Long Point Road Historic School Association.

His efforts have brought him much acclaim over his career. On June 11, 2013, Allen received the 2013 Historic Preservation Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award from the Governor's Office.<sup>1</sup> On March 2, 2014, he was presented with the South Carolina State University Distinguished Alumnus Award during Founder's Day weekend. In September 2014, Allen was recognized for his exemplary leadership in environmental issues at the George B. Hertzog Jr. Awards Luncheon, an annual event hosted by the Institute for Parks at Clemson University. He received the Robert G. Stanton Award, which recognizes recipients for sustained and innovative achievements in promoting racial or ethnic diversity in the management of North America's natural, historic, and cultural heritage. In 2015, the South Carolina African American Heritage Commission recognized Allen by presenting him with the Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2016, Allen received the Williamsburg County School District Hall of Fame Award as an outstanding graduate of the Williamsburg County school system. In April 2019, Governor Henry McMaster recognized Allen with the Order of the Palmetto. This is the highest civilian award to be given to citizens of South Carolina by the governor of South Carolina.

In addition to these awards, Allen has received a number of other awards from fraternal, civic, governmental, and community organizations. In January 2021, he received the Martin Luther King Portrait Awards, which recognizes people who emulate the spirit of community service portrayed by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. On October 21, 2021, he received the Governor's Award in Humanities, which recognizes outstanding achievement in helping communities in South Carolina better understand their cultural heritage.

<sup>1</sup> 2013 South Carolina Historic Preservation Awards," South Carolina Department of Archives and History, accessed January 14, 2023, [https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/30851/DAH\\_SC\\_Historic\\_Preservation\\_Awards\\_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://dc.statelibrary.sc.gov/bitstream/handle/10827/30851/DAH_SC_Historic_Preservation_Awards_2013.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

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## ABOUT MICHAEL ALLEN

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Since his retirement, he is still active in preserving the life, legacy, contributions, and heritage of African Americans in the context of South Carolina and U.S. history. He was instrumental in assisting the Historic Charleston Foundation in the management of the Mosquito Beach Civil Rights Project from 2018 to 2020. This NPS-funded project on James Island resulted in the nomination and inclusion of this Historic Civil Rights landscape to the NPS National Register of Historic Places in 2019. In February 2020, a website was launched to capture the humanitarian spirit of this valuable resource. A South Carolina State Historic Marker and interpretative panels will soon be placed near the entrance to Mosquito Beach and along the historic corridor of this site.

In August 2019, Allen partnered with Reconstruction Beaufort, a community and nationwide effort to highlight the history and legacy of the Reconstruction Period. He served as the Chair of the Advisory Board for this organization. This effort was developed to enhance the capacity of the Reconstruction Era National Historic Site as well as to assist with enhancing educational awareness of this challenging period in American history.

Allen currently serves as Community Preservation Specialist at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. He is supporting the university in managing a HBCU grant from the National Park Service, which will fund the restoration and rehabilitation of Wilkinson Hall, one of the oldest structures on the campus. His tenure with the National Park Service makes him a strong liaison between SCSU and the National Park Service.

Allen's professional and personal career has been filled with accomplishment after accomplishment. Throughout it all, his kindness, compassion, and empathy have led him to bridge community gaps and help community leaders understand each other in a more meaningful way.

Michael Allen's motto is: "To understand the present and move toward the future, you must first know and accept your past."

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## ABOUT CHARLTON SINGLETON

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A native of Awendaw, SC, Charlton Singleton began his musical studies at the age of three on the piano. He would then go on to study the organ, violin, cello, and the trumpet throughout elementary, middle, and high school. In 1994, he received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from South Carolina State University. Since that time, he has taught music at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as being an adjunct faculty member at the College of Charleston. In 2008 he co-founded and became the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra; an 18-piece jazz ensemble of some of the finest professional musicians in the Southeast and the resident big band in Charleston, SC. Mr. Singleton is also the organist and choir director at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Charleston, SC. In November of 2016 he was named the inaugural Artist in Residence at the recently renovated Gaillard Center in downtown Charleston. He remained in this position until July 2019; at that point he was named Artist in Residence Emeritus. In this position he continues to lead the Summer Youth Jazz Orchestra Camp as well as lead the “Jazz Through the Ages” assembly, which attracts a capacity crowd of students at the Gaillard Center.

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