

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

LEE COUNTY BLACK HISTORY SOCIETY, INC.  
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## MISSION STATEMENT

To preserve and commemorate the cultural and educational contributions by both locally and nationally known Black people.

## VISION STATEMENT

The Lee County Black History Society, Inc. is a unifying organization which instills in all generations hope and pride in Black culture.



*Lee County Black  
History Society, Inc.  
Presents  
Williams Academy  
Black History Museum*

admission  
ADULTS \$15  
CHILDREN \$5

hours of operation  
WED. - FRI. | 11AM - 4PM  
SATURDAY - By Appointment Only

<http://leecountyblackhistorysociety.org>



## LEE COUNTY BLACK HISTORY SOCIETY, INC.

[blackhistory@leecountyblackhistorysociety.org](mailto:blackhistory@leecountyblackhistorysociety.org)  
[www.leecountyblackhistorysociety.org](http://www.leecountyblackhistorysociety.org)

The Lee County Black History Society, Inc. (LCBHS) evolved from Attorney and Educator, Janice Cass's desire to commemorate Black History Month on a countywide basis.

In 1990, a group of like-minded community members reorganized into the Fort Myers Chapter of the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Alumni Association (The Black Film Society). The group realized that to make the organization relevant to the community, the new organization would need to focus on local black history and culture. The Black Film Society would need to collect memorabilia as well as oral histories and find a place to locate the organization. The organization chose to become a 'history' rather than 'historical' society because the group wanted their organization to be living, breathing and growing, not staid or in the past. The group incorporated as The Lee County Black History Society, Inc. (LCBHS) became a 501(c) (3) non-profit corporation in November 1994. During this period, research on the Black community revealed that the building which was to become the Williams Academy Black History Museum was the 1942 addition to the Williams Academy school building.

By February, 1995, LCBHS, with community support, raised \$15,000.00 to move the Williams Academy building to Roberto Clemente Park. Once the building was set up in the park, LCBHS with the help of City and County Planning offices, was able to acquire a Historic Preservation Grant In-Aid from the Florida Department of State to help restore the Williams Academy building. The restoration plan was developed by Barger & Dean Architects, Inc.

LCBHS continues to collect local histories and memorabilia throughout the community. It is building its' archives for research availability to the public. The archives will serve as a resource base for citizens seeking historical information pertaining to Lee County Black citizens and their histories. LCBHS annually sponsors traditional, cultural and historic activities during Black History Month.

## WILLIAMS ACADEMY BLACK HISTORY MUSEUM

The Williams Academy Black History Museum was opened in January 2001. The structure which is now a museum is the 1942 addition to the original building. It is one of the few early twentieth century wood frame school houses still standing in Lee County. The original Williams Academy built in 1912 was Lee County's first government funded school for black ('colored') students. The school was named after J. S. Williams, Supervisor of the Colored Schools. The Black students throughout Lee County and Punta Gorda attended school at the academy.

The 1942 addition was moved onto the Dunbar High School campus on Blount Street from its Cranford and Lemon Street original location sometime between 1935 and 1937.

Over the years the building was used for chorus, music and band classes; a Day Care Center; Migrant Health Clinic and a storage facility. In November 1993, the Lee County School Board had slated the building for demolition. Having learned the old library in Clemente Park on Henderson Street was also slated to be demolished; Ms Cass met with John Yarbrough, Director, Lee County Parks and Recreation to discuss acquiring the property for use as offices for LCBHS and to house a black history museum. LCBHS entered a lease agreement with the Lee County Commission because the property (at the time) was County owned property within the City of Fort Myers, Florida.

LCBHS maintains and administers the Williams Academy Black History Museum. The museum was restored following state and national preservation and restoration standards. The building is divided into two rooms. One room displays historical memorabilia of local black citizens and the history and culture of the black community.

The other room is an interactive classroom staged as a 1940's segregated southern classroom for 'colored' students. It provided a visual contrast to facilities provided to white students. One of the chief purposes of the Williams Academy Black History Museum is to provide educational opportunities to citizens of Lee County and surrounding areas.



### Membership Application

CONTACT INFORMATION

↑ Name

↑ Mailing Address

↑ City/State

↑ Zip

↑ Email Address

↑ Phone

↑ Fax

#### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

##### \$50/year - Benefits for Community Supporter

- 10% Discount on Events
- Free Admission to Museum
- Access to Social Media Platforms
- Online Access to Digitized Museum Archives

##### \$200/year - Benefits for Community Booster

- Supporter Benefits Plus:
- 15% Discount on Events
- Use of Multi purpose room & Equipment
- High-speed internet access to (Florida Lambda Gig forthcoming)

##### \$1,000/year - Benefits for Community Champion

- Booster Benefits Plus:
- Invitation to our Private Events
- Opportunity to meet Event Speakers
- Sponsor on LCBHS Website
- Souvenir