

FINAL TRIP REPORT

Boule' /NAACP Collaboration



SIGMA PI PHI
ΣΠΦ
FRATERNITY

Accra, Ghana (August 2019)



Archon Loren R. Douglass
CHAIRMAN, GRAND BOULE' INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE



FINAL TRIP REPORT: SIGMA PI PHI/NAACP (ACCRA, GHANA)

Mission: Establish the International Presence of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity

Introduction:

The below is a daily account of our participation with the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in its recent pilgrimage to Jamestown, Ghana. This program which commemorates the 400th Anniversary of the start of the transatlantic slave trade had the following components:

- Pilgrimage to Jamestown, Virginia: site of the first documented slave landing
- Business & Investment Summit
- Historical Site Visits
 - Cape Coast Castle and African Ancestry Reveal
 - Assin Manso Last Bath Slave River: last stop before being herded into the slave dungeons
 - WEB DuBois Centre for Pan-Africanism
 - Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Park
- **Various Cultural Gatherings**
 - Kumasi Akwasidae Festival

Over 250 travelers from across the country made the pilgrimage as part of the commemoration. The delegation, including actor Danny Glover who traveled with us every stage of the journey, was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm and flourish befitting of returning dignitaries. NAACP CEO Derrick Johnson, CEO of the NAACP, members of his executive team, and NAACP board members were all part of the delegation. The Boule´ had a strong showing as 15 Archons and Archousai from across the US and from as far as London attended the pilgrimage. The Boule´ delegation was led by Grand Sire Archon Vincent with assistance from Archon Royce West, Chairman of the Public Policy Committee, and Loren Douglass, Chairman of the International Committee. The Grand Boule´ International Committee has been assisting GSA Vincent in discussions with the NAACP regarding Boule´ participation in the restoration of the WEB Dubois Center to a status befitting his significance to both the NAACP and Boule´. Additionally, both sides see great potential in leveraging our partnership to facilitate relationship building within and among descendants of the African Diaspora.

The below report is a daily account of the pilgrimage.

Day 1 (Jamestown, VA): Paying Homage

The delegation started the journey with a prayer service at the landing point of the first documented slaves in the fledgling United States, Jamestown, Virginia. It was a solemn occasion as our ancestors were remembered with dignity and reverence. A burnt offering of prayers and other remembrances were offered up by the delegation (see pictures below)

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Day 2 (Washington, DC): Day of Departure

The morning was dedicated to those who have not previously visited the National Museum of African American History. The museum is a Smithsonian institution and is located on the National Mall in Washington DC. Archon Lonnie Bunch, founding director of the museum, was recently elevated to become the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian. He assumed this role on June 16, 2019. As Secretary, he oversees 19 museums, 21 libraries, the National Zoo, numerous research centers, and several education units and centers. The museum visit provided wonderful context regarding the majesty of African American resilience and the indelible contribution that we've made to America and the world. The delegation embarked on the Return to Ghana after a half day visit to the museum.

On a separate visit after returning from Ghana, Grand Sire Archon Vincent and Archon Chairman Douglass met with Reps Gregory Meeks (D-NY) and Karen Bass (D-CA) regarding leveraging public and private relationships in restoration of the WEB DuBois Memorial Center (in Accra) and for adding scale to implementation of the fraternity's international strategy. Specifically, we intend to consult Archon Bunch as we develop the DuBois Memorial restoration plan in collaboration with the NAACP. Additionally, Reps Meeks and Bass offered to host the Economic Summit with stakeholders from Senegal, Ghana, South Africa, and Europe as to discuss approaches to facilitating business development among African Diaspora constituencies. More on this later in this report.



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Day 3 (Accra Ghana): Day of Arrival

Upon leaving the airport terminal at Accra Kotoka International Airport, we were greeted by an enthusiastic welcome complete with drummers and dancers in traditional garb who serenaded our arrival with songs and traditional dances. Directly from the airport we were taken to the President's Mansion (Pictured below) and onto the Accra Tourist Information Center for a welcome ceremony and brunch. Representatives of the Ghanaian Government and the US Embassy expressed their gratitude for our journey to commemorate the occasion.



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Our first engagement with locals was filled with celebration of our arrival and marked the significance of the occasion. After hotel check-in, we departed for the Jamestown Durbar and Program. A Durbar is traditional Ghanaian Ceremony and celebration that may be held for a number of reasons including installing new elected officials, annual rituals, royalty weddings or a grand welcoming of an important person or delegation is visiting. It is when the chiefs and traditional council of the area display their culture, power and influence with ceremonial drumming, dancing, rituals, adornments and the best showcase of culture to mark the occasion. In this case, the Durbar was held to honor and welcome the NAACP and its large delegation celebrating the Year of Return. After a long receiving line consisting of chiefs, wives, and elders, we wool our places as guests of the President of Ghana.

The Durbar was held at the very spot where the first slaves destined for America were loaded onto the ships never to return the homeland. Jamestown; in Accra, Ghana;

President Nana Akufo-Addo was in attendance and personally greeted us and expressed a desire to pose for a picture with the entire delegation. With tight security on hand, President Akudo-Addo graciously posed for as many pictures as possible with our enthusiastic and grateful delegation.



Days 4 & 5 (Accra, Ghana): Business & Investment Summit

Days 4 and 5 were dedicated to facilitating business and economic ties between Ghanaians and African Americans. The 2 Day summit featured several speakers who made presentations on the following topics:

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- Investment Priorities
- Trans Balance Issues
- Infrastructure
- Tourism
- Immediate and longer-term needs
- Media, Real Estate, and Tech Investment Opportunities



In the evening after the summit, the delegation was hosted by Archbishop Duncan Williams and Lady Rosa Whitaker, former USTR in the Obama administration, at the Action Chapel (8,000 members) for a worship service followed by a lavish dinner complete with entertainment and a very warm welcome from Archbishop and First Lady Williams. A recurring theme in their remarks was the efficacy of African Americans seeking out and building bridges to our African roots in formation of a global African community.



While the delegation attending the dinner at the Action Chapel, Grand Sire Archon Vincent, NAACP CEO Johnson, Actor Danny Glover and other dignitaries were hosted for a private dinner with President **Nana Akufo-Addo**. An in-depth discussion ensued regarding how African Americans can engage with Ghana for mutual benefit. President Akufo-Addo cites two top priorities that African American can assist Ghana.

- Access Investment Capital
- Access to Expertise of all kinds



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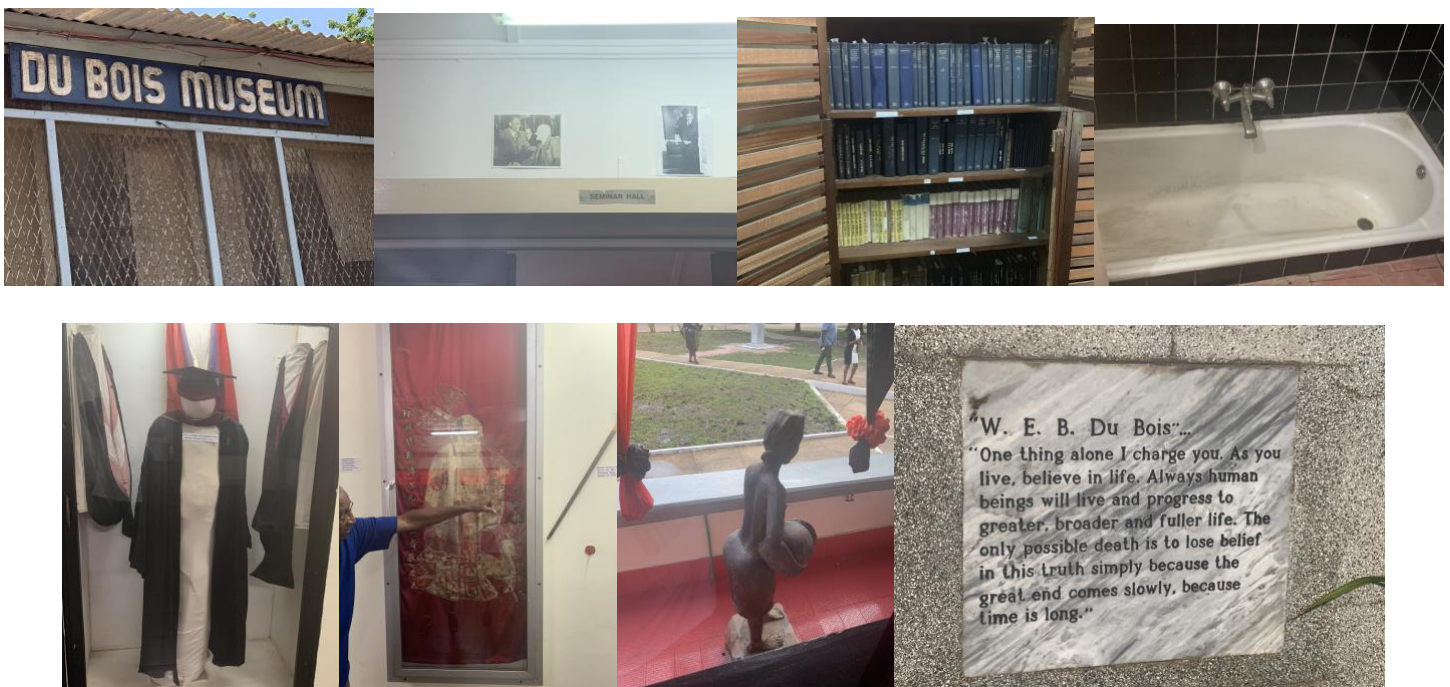
The Boulé is well positioned to assist in each of the above with its broad and deep inventory of professional, academic, and corporate expertise of our Archons and Archousai. Perhaps, Grand Sire Vincent could convene a series of task forces lead by high profile Archons that address specific needs/priorities as expressed by Ghana. A jointly built opportunity screen would assist in narrowing initiatives to a few high impact/low effort projects that would spur momentum. Task forces assisted by a certified Six Sigma Master Black Belt would assist in developing Initiative Selection, Program Charters, mentoring the DMAIC lifecycle, and overall program governance.

Day 5 (Accra, Ghana): WEB Dubois Advance Tour

Archon Chairmen Douglass (International Committee) and West (Social Action) secured a Private tour, apart from the tour group, of the Nkruma Memorial on our way to the Dubois Residence and Museum so that we could focus on Boulé activities and post-trip next steps. In preparation for the official visit by Grand Sire Vincent and NAACP CEO Johnson, Archons Douglass and West took an advance tour of the memorial to get a sense of the current state of the memorial and to where to direct GSA Vincent's attention once he arrives with NAACP CEO Derrick Johnson.

Upon close inspection of the site and discussion with one of the lead tour guides, we recommend the following:

- Complete a comprehensive phased site plan envisioning the center as a premier destination on the continent
- Enhance the external esthetics of the site
- Improve conservation of Dubois artifacts, papers, and relics
- Restore and digitize library volumes and original manuscripts
- Restore physical internal infrastructure of the site
- Modernize exhibits with multimedia technology and other tech enhancements
- Improve memorial roofing and physical plant
- Improve surrounding roads, exchanges and parking



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After the group tours, a Black Tie Gala marked the last night on Accra before venturing into the Ghanaian countryside, the following morning, to visit the memorials and experience Ghanaian culture,



Day 6 (Cape Coast, Ghana): Cape Coast Castle and African Ancestry Reveal

After a several hour scenic drive into the countryside, we stopped for lunch at Mabel's Table, a restaurant owned and operated by an African American proprietor from New York City. His restaurant located by the sea with panoramic views of Cape Coast Castle and the adjacent shoreline offered an opportunity for reflection, prayer, and emotional preparation for the intensity of the experience that was to come.



Our arrival at Cape Coast Castle was nothing short of nothing short of triumphant. We arrived to celebratory beat of a drum chorus and had an audience with a local chief who greeted everyone individually. After a short presentation by CEO Johnson and Danny Glover, we proceeded on an approximately 2 block walk to Cape Coast Castle, one of two slave dungeons.



Separated into several smaller groups, had in-depth tours of the slave dungeons. What was apparent for the very start was the brutality and dehumanization of the slaves that were brought there. They were forced to exist in almost unspeakably torturous conditions where men, women, and children were separated and kept in almost total darkness for months, on end. There were imprisoned in overwhelmingly crowded cells knee-deep in their own urine and feces, barely fed and bathed, and in near total darkness. These inhumane conditions would not be tolerated for an animal, yet were deemed suitable for

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millions of slaves that passed through its dungeons. The irony of a church residing above the male holding cell offered no solace or reassurance that the oppressor's brutality had been mitigated in any way, shape, or form. In fact, it spoke of the hypocrisy of the corrupt European Christians who used the Christian religion to either justify their actions or absolves themselves of the obvious evil taking place below their place of worship. It is estimated that roughly half of the slaves entering into the casket died before being loaded into the ships. Of that amount, only 40-50% of those remaining actually made it to America. Some shipping manifests allegedly show that all of the slaves died before reaching the shores of America.



Finally, the group was treated to the Ancestry Reveal for those that submitted DNA samples to African Ancestry.com. Results were read and interpreted by the CEO of African Ancestry.com. It was truly enlightening for everyone to hear the ancestral origins of the participants, there were a few surprises as it was determined that several of the travelers were closely related.

Needless to say, the range of emotions felt during this part of the journey helped crystallize that while we were learning about our tragic beginnings in the journey to America, our presence there was a manifestation of a stunning and unbelievable victory. The “weeding out” of the less physically and psychologically fit slaves resulted in the “strongest of the strong” having successfully made the journey to America. We are the descendants of those incredible human beings. Our resilience and strength, clearly inherited from our successful ancestors and manifested in the world changing US civil rights movement, is a source of pride and a badge of honor that should be universally celebrated by the black community. To mark the victory, Grand Sire Archon Vincent accompanied by Archon Chairmen Douglass and West, and Archon Levy (Epsilon Xi: London) took a photo at the newly named, “Door of the Return.” Our ancestors left Cape Coast as slaves but we returned as highly educated Bankers, Lawyers, Public Servants, Engineers, Judges, Physicists, and leaders within the Talented Tenth.



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There is a lesson to be learned in observing the reverence and high regard with which the African Museums portray 20th century African American history. To those that believe that the African and African American do not share a heritage are woefully misinformed and are missing out on the majesty and beauty of our ubiquitous spiritual connection to our brethren in the Diaspora.

Day 7 (Assin Manso, Ghana): Last Bath Slave River

After an intense day at Cape Coast Slave Castle, Day 7 included a trip to Assin Manso, the burial site of the remains of two former slaves exhumed from New York’s Wall Street and reinterred on Emancipation Day 1998. Also, it is the site of the “Slave River” which was the last rest stop for slaves on their one-way trek to the coast for shipment into slavery. Tour guides delivered a comprehensive history of the site which included almost 20 portraits of important African American historical figures from the abolitionist and civil rights eras. At the grave site, we saw evidence of the visit by the Congressional Black Caucus of the US Congress which occurred a week before our visit.



At riverside, we witnessed the spot where slaves took their last bath before heading to what awaited them at Cape Coast Castle. We gathered at the very spot where they entered the river in solemn reflection. When directed to experience the riverside in single file, a spontaneous chorus of “Wade in the Water,” led by one of the travelers in solemn chorus. The voices filled the air with a mix of joy, sadness, and pride as we celebrated the victory that we represent. We weren’t expected to return, but we did in triumphant fashion.

After an outdoor buffet lunch at a local restaurant, we embarked into Kumasi, in the Gold rich Ashanti Region. Where we rested for the evening.

Day 8 (Kumasi, Ghana): Akwasidae Festival

The morning of Day 8, we journeyed into the heart of Kumasi to attend the Akwasidae Festival. The Ashanti people, chiefs in Ashanti and the Ashanti diaspora celebrate the Akwasidae Festival. The festival is celebrated on a Sunday, once every 42 days. The Akwasidae Festival is next only in importance to The National Day celebrations. The rites on this day relate to honoring personal and community ancestors. It is a colorful and joyful event where people from far and near, in traditional costumes, come bearing gifts and pay homage to their king as he sits in state at Manhyia Palace.

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Day 9 (Kamasi, Ghana): Tour of the Ashanti homeland

Before heading back to Accra, we had a tour of and through the Ashanti Region. The Ashanti Region is located in south Ghana and is third largest of 16 administrative regions, occupying a 9,417 sq mi which represents 10.2 per cent of the total land area of Ghana. It is the most populated region with a population of 4,780,380 (2011 census) accounting for 19.4% of Ghana's total population. The Ashanti Region is known for its major gold bar and cocoa production. Kamasi is the largest city and regional capital.

As part of the tour, we visited the following attractions:

- Bonfire Kente Cloth Village
- Ntonso Adrinka Textiles
- Ahwiaa – The Woodcarver's Village

Travelers had the opportunity to interact with the merchants in pursuit of art works and textiles as souvenirs. The rest of the afternoon consisted of lunch and bus travel back to Accra.



Day 10 (Accra, Ghana): Tour of the memorials

On Day 10, Grand Sire Archon Vincent and Archon Chairman Douglass accompanied NAACP CEO Derrick Johnson and Danny Glover on a private tour of WEB DuBois House, guided by Ambassador Erieka Bennett who is Founder and Head of Mission of the (AU) African Diaspora Forum which is the first and only diplomatic embassy in the world dealing specifically with the Diaspora issues. The role of the Mission is to link Diaspora Africans and their talents to support the development of Africa. Grand Sire Archon Vincent, having been previously briefed by Archon Chairman Douglass with input from Archon Chairman West, got to see firsthand the need for conservation expertise, facilities refurbishment, and exhibit modernization. After touring the DuBois Center grounds and the D.A.F. offices, we had a brief meeting with Ambassador Bennett regarding potential redevelopment models and approaches to the Dubois Center in partnership with the D.A.F. as local agent. CEO Johnson explained his vision of the DuBois Center being a multi-use destination (research facilities, learning center, shopping, etc) for the entire African continent, an intriguing vision given the space availability, the prominence of DuBois, and the support of the Ghanaian Government. That being said, CEO Johnson clearly and explicitly informed Ambassador Bennet that we would seek guidance from the Ghanaian government regarding the most appropriate way to proceed and would not seek to partner with anyone until proper guidance was received. Later that evening, Grand Sire Archon Vincent and Chairman Douglass had dinner with Ambassador Bennet, and several other guests where we discussed Ghanaian economy, culture, and her experience as a native born American in Africa.

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Day 11 (Accra, Ghana): Prepare for the Return and next steps

Although a free day, Grand Sire Archon Vincent and I met with Professor Esi Sutherland-Addy from the University of Ghana. Professor Sutherland-Addy chaired the committee that turned the DuBois House into This meeting was arranged by Sire Archon Ian Greenstreet who has deep family roots in Ghana.



We discussed the history of the DuBois Memorial Center and the efforts undertaken to establish the center. Additionally, she advised us as to how best to proceed with our restoration efforts using the expertise and resources of the University of Ghana and that of the Ghanaian government.

Conclusion:

The Year of Return pilgrimage in partnership with the NAACP proved to be a rich and worthwhile undertaking. We managed to connect with various constituencies (i.e. the President's office prominent clergy, current and former US officials, cultural and historical institutions, and more. Most importantly, we connected with the Ghanaian people in ways probably unanticipated by the delegation. Visiting the slave memorials, experiencing the warmth and hospitality of our Ghanaian host, and seeing evidence of the esteem with which African Americans are held, in Ghana, helped to bridge the physical and historian gap. Many commented that the connection was in many ways, "spiritual." All travel outside of Accra was via bus. Likewise, we managed to get a broad view of the infrastructure and the conditions under which those residing in the country-side live. We noticed a great need for enhanced sanitation and bathroom facilities, outside of Accra. Even accounting for our having "American sensibilities and expectations," the conditions of the bathrooms were below acceptable standards by most accounts. In additional to assisting with restoration of the DuBois Center, the Boule´ may want to consider targeted projects designed to help lift the sanitation standards in select parts of Ghana. In any case, through this trip we established a useful foundation with our NAACP partners for future joint projects. With the visibility brought by Danny Glover's collaboration with the NAACP, our presence in Ghana and in Africa, in general, will be enhanced greatly as consistent with the Grand Boule´ strategic plan.