

Lucy Craft Laney Museum unveils new photo exhibit

By [Summer Moore](#)

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When Christine Miller-Betts, the Lucy Craft Laney Museum of Black History's executive director, asked David Leigh to take photos for the museum's annual photography exhibition, she told him she did not want to see any of the pictures until they were all completed.

When she had the collection of pictures of historical buildings in the Laney-Walker neighborhood in front of her, she noticed Leigh had not taken a single photo of an entire building, but rather had picked closer details to feature.

"He showed the special parts of the buildings," she said. "The best parts."

Thus the name of the exhibit, "Architecture Accents of the African American Community," was born.

On Sunday afternoon, the museum unveiled the exhibit, which will be featured until the end of July. Leigh's pictures include the dome of Tabernacle Church, the clock on the Pilgrim Health & Life Insurance Co. Building and the palmettos in front of Dr. Latimer Blount's dentist office.

This marks Leigh's second exhibit at the museum. His first was in 2009.

Leigh said when he visited the museum for the first time to see the space, he panicked.

"I saw the size of the room and I thought, are you kidding me?" he said.

The full-time Columbia County Wells Fargo financial adviser was not sure his hobby would fill the four blank walls in the museum's front room. But after some guidelines from Miller-Betts, Leigh realized how much architecture there was to shoot in the Laney-Walker neighborhood.

"Lots of buildings are being refurbished," he said. "The neighborhood is feeling more alive."

The self-described "photo enthusiast," said the more time he spent in the Laney-Walker district, the more appreciation he began to have of its history.

"I just love this stuff," he said. "I have so much fun doing it. These buildings are beautiful."

Ferrell Jenkins, of North Augusta, visited the opening Sunday to support Leigh, his co-worker, and to admire his work.

"(Leigh) has a tremendous eye for depth," he said. "It's fantastic."

Leigh said he would donate the photos to the museum, which Miller-Betts said she was very excited about.

Speaking at the opening, Miller-Betts expressed her hope that those in attendance would take a second look when passing through the area after seeing Leigh's work. "We hope as you drive down Laney-Walker, you will look at the buildings differently," she said. "We hope you see its parts."