

**IT'S AMAZING
(GOD'S AMAZING GRACE)
40 ACRES & A MULE
Royal Homecoming 2014**

**Presented by: Community of Royal, Inc.
Collaborator: Young Performing Artists (YPAs), Inc.**

Whitany: Good Morning, I am Whitany Lewis, lifelong resident of Royal, a senior at University of Central Florida and a member of Ebenezer AME Church, Royal.

Tiffany Massey: Hello my name is Tiffany Massey; I am, also, a lifelong resident of Royal and a member of Second Bethel Baptist Church, Royal.

Roshawn Sesler: Hello my name is Roshawn Sesler; I am, also, a lifelong resident of Royal and a member of New Life Center Ministries, Inc., Royal.

Ms. Connie: Hello my name is Etta Johnson Huff, a lifelong resident of Royal, a Board member with the Community Of Royal, Inc., a Trustee of Ebenezer AME Church, Royal and I'm standing in for my sister, Constance Johnson, who is a lifelong resident of Royal and an officer of the Pentecostal Church of Love, Royal.

Ms. Desiree: Hello my name is Desiree Everett; I am, also, a lifelong resident of Royal and an officer of Bible Church Of God, Royal. We ask that you hold all applause until the end of this presentation.

Whitany: First, as it states in Romans 1: 7- 9th verse- To all that be in Rome (Royal), beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Tiffany Massey: First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.

Roshawn Sesler: For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;

Ms. Connie: Also, we give honor and thanks to the Pastors at all of the Community Of Royal's churches for continuing to show us how to live with peace, harmony and grace while demonstrating unity and love towards one another.

Ms. Desiree: Yes, we recognize Pastor Goldsmith of New Life Center Ministries, Inc.; Pastor Robert 'Tom' Dixon of Ebenezer AME Church-Royal; Pastor Lorenzo Robinson of Second Bethel Baptist Church-Royal; Elder Eddie Erving of Bible Church of God and Pastor James Williams of Pentecostal Church of Love.

Whitany: **IT'S AMAZING:** We stand before you to share one of our amazing stories from Royal's rich heritage: the '40 Acres and A Mule Experience'.

Tiffany Massey: **IT'S AMAZING:** That most of us, who reside in Royal or are Royal descendants, have never heard of the 40 Acres and A Mule Experience and how it relates to African Americans or ourselves.

Roshawn Sesler: **IT'S AMAZING:** That most African Americans, across this country, haven't heard of the 40 Acres and A Mule Experience which was established by Lieutenant General William T. Sherman, Special Field Orders, No. 15, Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, In the Field, Savannah, Georgia, January 16, 1865 at the conclusion of the Civil War.

Ms. Connie: Yes, **IT'S AMAZING:** That Sherman's Special Field Orders, #15 had to exist for the freed man (slaves) to receive a dignified way of new life and it reads as such: "The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice-field along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the St. John's River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of (Civil) war and the proclamation of the President of the United States.

Ms. Desiree: Yes, **IT'S AMAZING:** That Special Field Order #15 continues with: By the laws of (Civil) war, and orders of the President of the United States, the Negro is free, and must be dealt with as such..... He will be free to select their own work and residence, but the young and able-bodied Negroes must be encouraged to enlist as soldiers in the service of the United States, to contribute their share toward maintaining their own freedom, and securing their rights as citizens of the United States.

Whitany: Yes, **IT'S AMAZING:** That this Special Order #15 continues with: Whenever three respectable negroes, heads of families, shall desire to settle on land, and shall have selected for that purpose an island or a locality clearly defined within the limits above designated, the Inspector of Settlements and Plantations will himself, or by such subordinate officer as he may appoint, give them a license to settle such island or district and such others as may choose to settle near them, so that each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground.....

Tiffany Massey: Yes, **IT'S AMAZING:** That our people were enslaved for 246 years and it took a (Civil) War Between the States to abolish slavery and guarantee rights to the freed slaves by which Special Field Order #15 by granted 40 Acres and an Army Mule to work the land to each freed slave in order to provide a fresh start.

Roshawn Sesler: **WHAT'S MORE AMAZING:** That After President Lincoln was assassinated this Special Field Order #15 was rescinded by President Johnson, and only some of the freed slaves got to keep their 40 Acres and a Mule. To this day, there are not many known African American across this United States of America who has 40 Acres.

Ms. Connie: **EVEN MORE AMAZING:** That noted historians can rarely pin point any that still have their 40 Acres. Yet, when you look around -Royal; God has smiled on us. Not only do we still have our 40 Acres but there are approximately 20 families who still have their 40 acres homesteads and

approximately 10 families who have 80 acres homesteads.

Ms. Desiree: **DEFINITELY MORE AMAZING:** Is that as it reads in Genesis 6: 5-8: And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Whitany: **YES, YES, YES..IT'S OUTSTANDINGLY AMAZING:** That just like Noah; our beautiful, God-fearing Community Of Royal, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Let's all say: **THANK YOU, JESUS FOR YOUR AMAZING GRACE.**

Tiffany Massey: Now, we ask Cliff Hughes, Chairman of Community Of Royal, Inc. to come forth.

Cliff: Thank you and Good morning. I say unto you as Paul said to the Romans 1: 3-13: Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name... Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ: Making request...that I might ... by the will of God to come unto you. I stand before you to ask your prayers for our Community- Royal. I, especially, stand to ask that as you come back home that you will re-familiarize yourselves with the great works of the ones who live here. Have you noticed that our Masonic Hall and Masons are back in force? Are you aware that there is a new 501 c) 3) corporation called Community Of Royal, Inc. whose mission is to preserve the Community of Royal's rich history as well as to create and continue cultural experiences that will enrich the lives of the community's families for future generations? I stand just to admonish you to not just come back home but to come, rededicate and reconnect. Also, I ask the ones who live here, if you have not rededicated or reconnected, please do so. We need your help. As in Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Thank you.

Roshawn Sesler: Thank you, Mr. Hughes. Now, we turn the service back into the hands of the MC.

Ms. Connie: ***Sound Tech***, please play Amazing Grace by Rev. Donnie McClurkin (3:18) as our dancer take us to the throne. **For IT'S AMAZING AND GOD'S AMAZING GRACE** that has kept us and continue to keep us; Hallelujah for our rich heritage!!!