

AACR Newsletter

Archives and Archivists of Color Roundtable

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Washington State University processes Hirahira photo collection documenting Japanese-American internment

By Steven Bingo, Washington State University

A toddler in a sailor suit stands next to a chest in the living room; a woman reads a letter over lowered sunglasses; a young man in a white T-shirt and rolled up jeans turns an insouciant glare toward the camera.

In many ways, these photos might be commonplace in 1940s America if not for certain contextual details that can be gleaned from the backdrop: the ikebana display that extends above the toddler, the tar paper barracks behind the young men.

Each of these photographs is part of the George and Frank C. Hirahara Collection, which

consists of over 2,000 images taken at Heart Mountain Relocation Center in northwest Wyoming. The collection was donated to Washington State University's Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections, (MASC) in 2010 by Patti Hirahara, Frank's daughter. It provides insight into the lives of those incarcerated at one of 10 relocation camps run from 1942-1946.

In the months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government imprisoned roughly 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent without providing due process. Three generations of Hiraharas were sent to Heart Mountain, including George Hirahara, who immigrated to the

American community.

Today, little remains of the incarceration camps save those maintained by the National Park Service and other organizations interested in preserving the memory of the camps. Yet, the desire to maintain an active memory of the event is evident in several physical

and online exhibits dedicated to incarceration and the myriad annual Day of Remembrance events sponsored by Japanese-American community organizations nationwide.

As the living memory of the camps diminishes with the passing of those who experienced incarceration, documents such as oral histories, correspondence, and



An internment camp prisoner, Mr. Yamamoto, stands facing toward the Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming. Photo courtesy of Washington State University. Date unknown.

U.S. in 1910 at age four and his son Frank, who was 16 by the time he reached the camp.

This action, known as "internment," disrupted the lives of those incarcerated and serves as a powerful, albeit traumatic, touchstone for the Japanese-

photographs have been vital in maintaining the collective memory of the camps into the future.

Funded by a Japanese American Confinement Sites grant, MASC processed the collection of photographs, manuscripts, and realia, digitized 2,307 photographic

Hirahira, continued on p. 4

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Save the Date

March 16, 2013-January 5, 2014
Inspiring Beauty: 50 Years of Ebony Fashion Fair, Chicago (IL) History Museum

Exhibit with Johnson Publishing Co. at the Chicago History Museum featuring curated couture garments and other ephemera from former Fashion Fair Director Eunice Walker Johnson.

June 30, 2013
Call for papers, Library Trends, social justice issues

Winter 2015 issue will discuss social justice in library and information science services. For more information, contact editor Bharat Mehra, at 865-974-5917.

August 11-17, 2013
Council of State Archivists and Society of American Archivists Annual Joint Conference, New Orleans, LA

Conference will be held at the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. For more information on the conference, see www2.archivists.org/conference/2013/new-orleans.

August 27-November 11, 2013
Facing History and Ourselves, Chicago (IL) Public Library

The “Choosing to Participate” multimedia installation will be opening at Chicago Public Library’s Harold Washington branch. For more information on the exhibit, see choosingtoparticipate.org.

Rolling Deadline
Scholarships to study in Istanbul, Bahçeşehir University

Scholarships for students of color to study abroad. Funds cover tuition and housing assistance. For more information, contact Zeynep Guven at zguven@tc-america.org.



Co-chair’s letter: Transitions and looking beyond August

By Steven Booth, National Archives and Records Administration

The loss of a colleague and friend is never an easy thing to process. The untimely passing of Taronda Spencer, College Archivist and Historian at Spelman College, has shocked the entire archives community, especially members of AAC Roundtable.

I first met Taronda at the 2008 SAA annual meeting in San Francisco. We immediately established a bond because of our undergraduate ties to Spelman and Morehouse Colleges, often referred to as “SpelHouse.” Ever since then I have always looked forward to seeing her dazzling smile and receiving a heartfelt hug at annual meeting. Although we won’t see her in August, I find comfort in knowing that Taronda served her alma mater and the profession well until the very end. She will be deeply missed.

The leadership team of AAC continues to move forward with several projects building partnerships in and outside SAA. Thanks to the Special Projects Team, led by Vice Chair Derek Mosley and LaToya Deverzin, a

tour of the Historic New Orleans Collection has been arranged for Wednesday, August 14, 2013, from 12:30-1:30 p.m. If you’re interested in attending, contact Derek at dmosley@louisiana.edu. Use the subject line: AAC Tour HNOC. Space is limited.

Kudos to the Awards and Nominations Team for successfully submitting seven nominations for SAA awards recognizing those within the AAC community that have contributed to the organization and profession as outlined in the guidelines. More information will be shared as the team receives notification from the various committees.

I am excited to announce that AAC and the Diversity Community will co-sponsor a diversity forum during the annual meeting featuring Dr. Abdul Alkalimat from the iSchool at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He will speak from the topic “Memory and Power: How Diversifying the Archives Can Help Us Welcome the Future” on Thursday, August 15, 2013, from 12:00-1:00 p.m.

I look forward to seeing each and every one of you in New Orleans! ■

Hoover Institution archive receives Leab Award for catalog

Stanford University's Hoover Institution Library and Archives exhibition catalog was recently selected by the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Rare Books and Manuscripts Section to receive the Katharine Kyes Leab and Daniel J. Leab American Book Prices Current Award.

The award, given for *A Century of Change: China 1911-2011*, is for "outstanding exhibition catalogs issued by American or Canadian institutions in conjunction with library exhibitions." The exhibition marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese republic and included

photos, letters, and audiovisual materials, among other memorabilia.

AAC member Lisa Nguyen (Stanford University), archivist and curator of the Asia Collections at Hoover, helped curate this particular catalog. RBMS committee chair Cherry Williams said that the catalog "appeals to a broad constituency of visitors by providing an enticing glimpse into the rich holdings of the Hoover."

The catalog received a Division II (Moderately Expensive) award. The award will be presented June 30, 2013, during the ALA annual conference in Chicago. ■

HistoryMakers Fellows 2012-2013

Amanda Carter, Franklin Library Fisk University: Archival Fellow
Amanda Carter arrived in Nashville to process a collection of one of the first architectural and engineering firms in Tennessee and the oldest minority-owned in the United States. In 1905, Moses McKissack III began building homes in Nashville and was later joined by his brother, Calvin, to form McKissack & McKissack Architects and Engineers, Inc., in 1922.

Carter obtained her B.A. in English Literature and minor in Women's Studies from Tennessee State University in 2010. She finished her M.S.I.S. degree at the University of Tennessee in 2012.

Ardra Whitney, Avery Research Center, Charleston, S.C.: Since beginning her residency at Avery in September of 2012, Whitney has processed the W. Melvin Brown, Jr. Papers, the Edwina Harleston Whitlock Papers, St. Mark's Episcopal Church Records and the Friendly Union Society Records.

Whitney received her MLS degree and Certificate in Archives, Preservation and Records Management from Queens College Library School in 2009.

Chaitra Powell, Mamie Clayton Library & Museum, Culver City, Calif.: As the current Archival Fellow, Powell has processed 161 linear feet of materials from the Dr. Clayton's personal papers and also helped curate a Black Power Exhibit.

Powell earned a B.A. in sociology and her master's in information resources and library science from the University of Arizona in 2007 and 2010, respectively.

See the August 2013 newsletter for more bios from the HistoryMakers' archives fellows. The two-year fellowships are sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services to increase diversity in archives profession. ■

Spelman College Archivist, historian, and SAA member Taronda Spencer (1958-2013), right, shown at the school's archives, date unknown. Spencer, a Spelman graduate (Class of 1980), passed away suddenly on May 19, 2013. Funeral service will be held, Saturday, June 1, at Elizabeth Baptist Church in Atlanta. Photo courtesy Spelman College.



The Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable is currently seeking submissions for its quarterly newsletter. We welcome:

- Articles about current news and trends
- Op-ed and perspective pieces on topical issues
- Excerpts from developing or recently completed research projects and scholarly writings
- Book reviews
- Scholarships, grants and recent acquisitions

Articles that explore real world application are strongly encouraged. Examples of this might be local cultural preservation efforts in a particular city, grassroots efforts or even personal essays. Please contact Newsletter Editor Stacie Williams (smariwilliams1979@gmail.com) for more information.

The Finding Aid: Black Women Archivists, featured at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center on May 21, 2013, was a unique program exploring community archives and experimental art practices. Visual artist Kameelah Janan Rasheed featured an excerpt from *No Instructions for Assembly* that used orphaned photographs found at garage sales, eBay, and water-damaged images salvaged during her family's 10-year experience with displacement and homelessness, material objects, and original photography to reconstitute the personal archive. ■

No Filter



Photo courtesy of Kameelah Janan Rasheed

Hirahara, from p. 1

images, and posted 1,000 images to CONTENTdm. Not only did this project provide a rich source of documentation for researchers interested in internment, but the sizable digitization presented an opportunity for MASC to strengthen its support of digital collections.

The Hirahara collection arrived to MASC after spending four decades in George Hirahara's attic in Yakima, Wash. Fortunately, the materials were in excellent condition considering that summertime highs in Yakima can reach triple digits.

The decision was made early to digitize each image. In order to match each negative to its digital counterpart, some amount of item-level treatment was necessary. A metadata spreadsheet, much of which was uploaded to MASC's digital collections website, created access to the photos.

The process of scanning and physical processing took roughly one year. In many instances, an anomalous blue streak appearing along the border of some of the negatives created a faded scan. These needed to be removed.

Jacki Tyler, a graduate research assistant, created the initial metadata using information from the Heart Mountain High School yearbook, the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, and information written on original envelopes by George and Frank Hirahara to gather descriptive metadata.

My primary role with the Hirahara collection was to revise the metadata to make the titles, which had grown over the process of metadata collection, shorter and more browsable, and strengthen descriptions where needed, which often meant adding details.

As of May 2013, the Hirahara

digital collection is open to the public. Currently, the collection receives traffic from researchers and classes interested in both photography and the history of Japanese-American incarceration. In addition, posters created from the photographs were exhibited at an event in nearby Spokane, Wash., where members of the community commemorated the incarceration and reflected upon its impact on the lives of friends, family, and neighbors.

According Trevor Bond, who heads MASC, the collection "is a valuable gift. ... To have so many photographs taken by Japanese internees, and showing scenes of daily life as well as special events like parties and funerals, is unique."

The online collection of the George and Frank C. Hirahara Photographs is at libraries.wsu.edu/hirahara. ■