

Archivists & Archives of Color Newsletter

Newsletter of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

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Summer 1996

SAA Celebrates 60 in San Diego

From The Chair

Join SAA President and fellow AAC Roundtable member **Brenda Banks** to hear her remarks, and witness the recognition of **Letha E. Johnson**, the 1996 Minority Student Award recipient. The Opening Banquet and Awards Ceremony will be on Thursday, August 28, 6:30-9:00 p.m. The speaking portion of the program will begin at approximately 7:45 p.m. You need not attend the banquet to sit in on this segment.

The Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable annual meeting takes place Friday, August 20, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. in Harbor Island I (Check your on-site pocket program to verify the room assignment). Please plan to attend. Agenda topics include the increase of funds for the Minority Student Award and the election of a new co-chair. Members interested in serving as nominees for roundtable co-chair or adding items to the agenda should contact roundtable co-chair Deb Saito.

Deb Saito
2619 Hanover Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526
(970)282-8762 or e-mail:
dsaito@delphi.com.

California, here we come!



Sand, surf, and stimulating sessions will greet attendees of the Society of American Archivists' 60th Annual Meeting, which takes place from August 28 to September 1, 1996, in San Diego, California. The Program Committee has assembled a mix of sessions designed to appeal to archivists from a variety of backgrounds. Sessions gracing the lineup include those devoted to archival education and management; legal and ethical issues; administration of record types, such as oral history, electronic records, and audiovisual materials; and various archival functions, such as documentation, preservation, and access.

SAA further marks its 60th anniversary by featuring a special tract of sessions, which will explore the relationship between the country's

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AAC Roundtable Directory Completed

At last . . . the directory has come along. The more than 90 archivists whose entries make up the National Archivists of Color Directory can each expect to receive a copy in their mailboxes this month. A small number of copies will be available at the AAC Roundtable's annual business meeting, slated to take place Friday, August 30 from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Special thanks go to **Karen Jefferson** for spearheading the effort to bring the updated directory to fruition; **Beverly A. Cook**, **Deborra Richardson**, and **Dennis Scott** who served on the planning and production committee; **David Moltke-Hansen** for offering the printing services of his institution, the University of South Carolina at Chapel Hill; and finally, **R. Steven Norman, III** who has applied his graphic design talents to the directory as well as to the roundtable's newsletter.

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Processing Begins on Former L.A. Mayor's Administrative Files

by Chuck Wilson

UCLA Library, Special Projects

Tom Bradley is the only African American so far to serve as mayor of the nation's second largest city, Los Angeles. He held an elective office in city government for three decades, beginning with his election to City Council in 1963. His tenure in local government spanned the years that included the Watts riots, the highly successful Olympic games, improvements in transportation, and community rebuilding efforts after the Los Angeles riots.

Bradley spent twenty years as mayor, a record unlikely to be repeated in this era of terms limits. During that time, his administration dealt with myriad municipal problems,

concerns, and everyday activities. It is the record of these administrative duties that forms the basis of the Mayor Tom Bradley Administrative Papers currently being processed by staff members of the Special Collections Division, University Research Library, at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

The collection documents the activities of the working administrators who were part of the Bradley team, many of them for fifteen or twenty years. They answered the routine questions and responded to the daily concerns of the people of Los Angeles for two decades. They also served as liaisons with various ethnic segments of the electorate, contacts with city departments, and representatives of the mayor throughout the far reaches of the 463-square-mile city.

Bradley's diverse staff included many African Americans and women in positions of importance. Their papers constitute the core of the Mayor Tom Bradley Administrative Papers. The collection totals more than 1800 cubic feet; approximately half of the material has been processed.

Arrangement and description is being completed at the file-folder level, with information on subject content, staff, dates, and physical condition of the records being entered into a database. Public access to the records will commence when the collection is fully processed. It is anticipated that the entire collection will be processed by June 1998.

For more information about the Mayor Tom Bradley Administrative Papers, contact archivist Chuck Wilson.

Chuck Wilson
Archivist
UCLA Library, Special Projects
10850 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1125
Los Angeles, CA 90024
(310) 794-8579
E-mail: ecz5chk@mvs.oac.ucla.edu

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increasing ethnic diversity and the archival profession. To kick off this track and the annual meeting, Spelman College president and anthropologist **Dr. Jhonetta B. Cole** will deliver the opening keynote address on Thursday, August 29, from 9:00 to 10:00a.m. Dr. Cole will discuss diversity in the 21st-century workplace. That afternoon, from 1:30 to 3:30, **Patricia Galeana** and **Governor John W. Carlin** will talk about the state of archives in their respective countries during the session entitled "Vision, Mission, and Values: Perspectives of the National Archivists of Mexico and the United States."

Listed below are the sessions that make up the diversity track:

- #2 "Race? Ethnicity? Diversity? What Exactly Are We Talking About?"
- #13 "Issues from the Islands: Documenting African Caribbean Culture in America"
- #14 "Shattering Stereotypes: Archives and the Countering of Minority Stereotypical Images"
- #24 "Courting the User: Identifying and Serving Ethnic and Culturally Diverse Researchers"
- #35 "Challenge of the Present, Challenge of the Future: Diversifying the Profession"
- #36 "A Class Apart: Free People of Color"
- #46 "Looking Right to Left: Documenting Asians in America"
- #47 "Crossing Borders: Archives in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands"
- #57 "Not Just Jazz: The Undiscovered Legacy of African American Music"
- #58 "Documenting the Mexican American and Puerto Rican Experience in the United States"
- #70SF "Backward Glance: Forward March?: Documenting the Jim Crow Era"
- #78 "Research, Rights, and Respect (Opening the Record): Access to Native Documentation"

Co-Editors

Joellen EIBashir
Kathryn M. Neal

Layout and Design

R. Steven Norman, III

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Correspondence

Address all correspondence to:
Joellen EIBashir
Moorland Spangarn Research Center
Howard University
Washington, D.C. 20059
(202) 806-7480
Fax: (202) 806-6405

or

Kathryn M. Neal
Iowa Women's Archives
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa
(319) 335-5068
Fax: (319) 335-5900

Midwest Archives Conference Names 1996 Minority Scholarship Winners

by Mark A. Greene
Minnesota Historical Society

In the third year of the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) Minority Scholarship program, two individuals have been selected to receive awards from a record number of applicants. This year's award recipients are **Maria del Rosario Estorino** and **Michele Lee**.

Ms. Estorino graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in history from Loyola University in New Orleans in May 1995; she has been accepted into three archival and public history graduate programs for the coming fall. For her honors thesis at Loyola, she conducted research in the photograph collection of the Historic New Orleans Collection and created an exhibit on movie theaters in New Orleans. During the summer of 1994, Ms. Estorino was an intern at the Smithsonian Institution Archives, where she researched the Smithsonian's relations with Latin America. According to her MAC scholarship application statement, she hopes to focus her graduate studies on the history of "the dynamic relationship between the U.S. city and the immigrant," and on the archival issue of "how present day display[s] of historical photographs influence today's public and understanding of the times the photos represent."

Ms. Lee is currently enrolled in a dual degree (M.L.S. and M.A.) program in archives management at Simmons College, where she is very active in the SAA student chapter. She graduated in 1993 magna cum laude from Suffolk University in Boston, with a double major in English and

history. She has been a student assistant for both the Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections Department and the Harvard University Botany Library. Currently she is working on a research project about the archival exhibits sponsored by public institutions, prompted by the recent controversies over the Smithsonian's Enola Gay exhibit and the Library of Congress's slavery exhibit. "What is the role of public cultural institutions? ... What is the purpose of exhibitions? ... How can institutions prepare themselves for public reactions towards an exhibition with a sensitive theme? ...," Ms. Lee asks in her MAC scholarship application statement. She plans to explore these questions in her research.

Questions about the scholarships can be directed to and applications received from Beverly Cook, Assistant Curator, Chicago Public Library, 400 South State Street, Chicago, IL 60605. The MAC Minority Scholarship Program is sustained by interest from the organization's invested reserve, which funds one award. A second award will become annual once an \$8000 endowment (currently at \$4750) is completed. Corporate donors are being solicited to complete the endowment, but additional contributions can be sent to MAC treasurer Chuck Elston, Marquette University, Memorial Library, 1415 West Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53233.

MAC remains committed to taking a leading role in fostering diversity in the archival profession. Suggestions for other programs or actions toward this end would be welcome: Send them to MAC president Mark Greene.

Mark Greene
Minnesota Historical Society
345 Kellogg Boulevard West
St. Paul, MN 55102.

Northern Kentucky African-American Heritage Task Force

With plans in the works for a second annual meeting this fall, the Northern Kentucky African-American Heritage Task Force (NKAHTF) continues its efforts to document the experiences of African Americans in the Bluegrass State. The group's short but rather complex history dates back to 1992. That year Governor Brereton C. Jones issued an Executive Order to establish the Kentucky African-American Task Force as an offshoot of a larger preservation agency called the Kentucky Heritage Council. The purpose of the task force was to document the contributions of African Americans within the state. Two years later, the governor dissolved this group, replacing it with the Kentucky African-American Commission. With statewide documentation coverage as the goal, this new organization was divided into regional task forces, according to the state's congressional districts. These task forces serve as the commission's activity arms. Thirteen counties compose the NKAHTF, which is one of the state's two active task forces (Louisville is the other). NKAHTF members are currently working with Roger C. Adams, curator of Special Collections and Archives at Northern Kentucky University in Highland Heights, Kentucky, to develop an archival program whereby the university will function as a repository for the group's acquisitions. According to Adams, his institution and Kentucky State University in Frankfort, Kentucky, are the only state universities actively collecting African-American manuscripts. In September 1995, the NKAHTF held its first annual meeting at Northern Kentucky University. For more

information about this project, contact:

Mary Northington
Northern Kentucky African-American
Heritage Task Force
824 Greenup Street, Room 205
P.O. Box 2329
Covington, KY 41012-2329
606-431-5502

Iowa Women's Archives Project Takes Root

by Kathryn M. Neal
Iowa Women's Archives

Summing up the value of her own Black Women in the Middle West documentation project, historian **Darlene Clark Hine** said, "There is an urgent need to discover and collect more primary source materials pertaining to the lives and experiences of ordinary middle western Black women in both rural and urban communities." The Iowa Women's Archives (IWA) at the University of Iowa Libraries has heeded this call by embarking on its own project to collect the personal papers and organizational records of African-American women throughout Iowa. In August 1995, assistant archivist Kathryn M. Neal began a two-year appointment to lead this effort. Launched officially in December with a program and reception, this corporate- and foundation-sponsored project continues to blossom.

Dr. Hine's project focused on women in Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. Iowa has traditionally had a smaller African-American population than those states; even today, African Americans make up only approximately two percent of the state's overall population. Community size notwithstanding, the presence of African Americans in Iowa predates the establishment of statehood in 1846. Iowa's African-American women

share a particularly rich collective history that has been documented all too little.

IWA's collection relating to African-American women in Iowa are steadily growing in number. Most of the collections acquired so far document women who have played a public role in Iowa's history. Holdings of the archives include the papers of Davenport civil rights activist Cecile Cooper and Maude White, who established the Des Moines Tutoring Center by opening her home to neighborhood students in need of academic help. Among collections received in recent months are the papers of Des Moines natives Catherine Williams, who went from dancing in the movies with the likes of Bill "Bojangles" Robinson and Cab Calloway to a lengthy career in the Iowa Department of Social Services, and Mary Elizabeth Wood, who was the first African-American woman in the country appointed to serve as executive director of a metropolitan YWCA.

While IWA welcomes the papers of these prominent women, the staff also seeks to celebrate women from all walks of life. The accomplishments of some women may be known only within their own families. For example, featured among the repository's holdings is a video that documents the experiences of Maxine and Creola Griggs, two sisters who reminisce about their lives in the small town of Clarinda, Iowa.

Family papers also have a home in IWA. For instance, the collection of the Harper family, whose roots in Iowa reach back several generations, is expanding. IWA holds the papers of Virginia Harper, current president of the Fort Madison, Iowa, NAACP, and those of her sister Lois Eichacker, who just ended her term as president of the University of Iowa's Alumni Association Board. The University of Iowa Special Collections department houses the papers of the women's father, Dr. Harry Harper.

Organizations have played a key

role in the lives and history of Black women, and Iowa's African-American women are certainly no exception. Currently, the archives houses scrapbooks, photographs, and other items of the Blue Triangle, the early segregated branch of the YWCA of Greater Des Moines. Two donor collections include records of the traditionally African-American sorority, Delta Sigma Theta. Neal hopes to further document the history of local sorority chapters, clubs, and other Black women's organizations as the project progresses.

The Louise Noun - Mary Louise Smith Iowa Women's Archives was established in 1992 at the University of Iowa Libraries to identify, collect, preserve, and make accessible primary source material that chronicles the history of Iowa women and their organizations. For additional information about the archives or the project, contact Kathryn Neal.

Kathryn Neal
Iowa Women's Archives
University of Iowa
100 Main Library
Iowa City, IA 52242-1420
(319) 335-5068
E-mail: kathryn-neal@uiowa.edu

Roundtable Election

It's not too late to throw your hat into the ring! Nominations are being solicited for the two-year position of co-chair of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable. The election will take place during the Roundtable's annual business meeting at the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting in San Diego, Friday, August 30, from 4:00 to 6:00. Interested in running?

Contact Deb Saito
2619 Hanover Drive
Fort Collins, CO 80526
(970)282-8762 or E-mail:
dsaito@delphi.com.

Paving the Way in Preservation, Part Two

Kathryn M. Neal

In the first article of this two-part series, three AAC Roundtable members discussed their careers in preservation. Fewer than ten person's of color work exclusively in this field. What follows are the stories of two more AAC members, **Martha H. Jackson** and **Theresa Jacobs Montgomery**, who share their professional experiences.

A 22-year veteran of the field, Martha Jackson credits her interest in art and book repair for leading her into conservation. "Having a personal interest in visual art, and having seen the creative side (book art, bookcraft, etc.) of book binding, I saw an avenue for channeling my artistic skills into something I could enjoy," she says. Jackson launched her career with an apprenticeship in book and paper conservation at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University from 1975 to 1980. She went on to assume the positions of bindery assistant and bindery supervisor. Currently, Jackson serves as book and paper conservator at the Milton S. Eisenhower Library of Johns Hopkins, where she provides treatment for the library's paper-based materials. She also conducts collection surveys and consultations, maintains written and photographic documentation for the materials, responds to disaster-related matters as necessary, and fulfills administrative responsibilities, among other duties.

Theresa Jacobs Montgomery's entrance into the field of preservation was a bit less direct than Jackson's. After receiving the B.A. in social work in 1972 from Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina, Montgomery briefly did volunteer work in her area of study. That same year, however, she began what has become a lengthy tenure at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in Columbia. Her first position was that of records analyst in the records manage-

ment section of the repository's local records division. In 1981, a reorganization of archives led Montgomery to be named a processing archivist in the agency's arrangement and description branch. She served as an accessions archivist for approximately for one year.

Since September 1989, when she was asked to serve as interim supervisor of the conservation services unit, Montgomery has concentrated on preservation. She was promoted to supervisor of the unit in January 1990, a position she continues to hold. As head of the conservation lab, Montgomery manages two full-time conservators, administers a modest fee-based conservation treatment service for the general public, and provides technical consultations and training, among other duties. "I became interested in preservation basically because it was an opportunity for a promotion within my agency," Montgomery says. "Now it is difficult imagining myself doing much else."

Despite their love for preservation, both Jackson and Montgomery admit that their positions can present challenges. Jackson sometimes finds herself having to convince the administrative staff that governs the preservation activities at her institution that conservation treatments can require great amounts of time. For Montgomery, keeping abreast of advances in basic preservation and recordkeeping practices and applying them to their clientele's conservation problems can be a challenging task. "Getting all parties concerned to understand that preservation should be a joint concern of many professionals working toward a common goal - prolonging the useful life of the records," is an ongoing challenge, she notes. In the past two years, Montgomery has been engaged in another joint concern: She has worked with other professionals to plan the design of the conservation lab and collections-storage space of her institution's new history center, the construction of which is slated to be completed in 1998.

Both Montgomery and Jackson have had lengthy tenures at their respective repositories, but do they have any role models? Montgomery says that she admires several professionals within the field. Jackson, on the other hand, attributes part of her professional development to one mentor, John F. Dean, who is head of preservation at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. "Throughout my 22 years in preservation, Mr. Dean has been the person to inspire, train, and guide me through the different levels of my career," Jackson explains. "Whenever I have a preservation/conservation concern that I cannot resolve, Mr. Dean has the answer."

Those who hope to enter the area of conservation or preservation should "Start early," Montgomery warns. "I was not aware that I could build a career in preservation until I had completed college. It is difficult to go back to school once you have to juggle family and a full-time job," she says. Jackson's advice blends theoretical and practical concerns. Aspiring conservators should broaden their knowledge of the field to include general studies of the humanities and the sciences, preservation theory, the materials' technical make-up, and hands-on training. As a result, "one would better understand the effects the treatment has on the objects/materials, . . . have an appreciation for the historical value of the work and works, . . . be more rounded in [the] job [market]," she says.

Indeed Jackson has not rested on her own laurels. She has continued to develop her professional skills in preservation practice. In 1991, she spent a year further enhancing her technical skills as a Library of Congress intern. Likewise, Montgomery has completed SAA's three-week preservation management training program and has earned credits toward a master's degree in information and library science.