

Archivists & Archives of Color Newsletter

Newsletter of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

Vol.14 No. 1

Summer 2000

GREETINGS AND FAREWELL FROM THE CHAIR

By Kathryn M. Neal

It seems as if I am just saying hello, yet here I am also bidding farewell as my term as Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable chair draws to an end. The year passed quickly, though as many of you are already aware, not without incident. The allegations of racial discrimination against the Adam's Mark Hotel chain cast a temporary pall over the prospect of holding our annual meeting at the Adam's Mark in Denver. SAA Council deliberated on and acted swiftly to respond to the situation and the various issues it raised. Although the hotel chain settled the lawsuits out of court in March, I hope that the challenge provided food for thought to the organization as a whole. As I mentioned in the statement I prepared on behalf of the roundtable, it is situations such as these that truly test SAA's dedication to diversity. Yet care must also be taken not to lose sight of smaller but no less significant ways in which attention to racial and ethnic diversity should be paid, from the selection of workshop instructors to program session speakers and topics.

A positive development to arise from the controversy is that it mobilized SAA to invite a speaker on diversity issues to address the membership during a plenary session. Mr. Maurice Banks, a diversity advocate in the Department of Transportation (DOT) in Washington, DC, will deliver his presentation on Saturday, September 2, 9:45 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. In his current position, Mr. Banks advises DOT senior officials and managers both in the department headquarters and in the field on the concepts and applications of managing diversity in the workplace. Please try not to miss what promises to be a highly enlightening and dynamic presentation. A committee of three, Council members Karen Jefferson and Wilda Logan Willis and myself, were selected to identify a speaker. I would like to send special thanks to our AAC Roundtable colleagues Karen and Wilda for their creativity and insights.

The AAC Roundtable keeps going strong, and it is because of the dedication and talents of its members through the years. Thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to serve and to represent you in SAA. I consider it a great honor, and I hope that I have given something back in thanks for the support that you have given me since I entered the profession. See you in Denver!

SAA Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado

The 64th Annual Meeting of SAA offers attendees a full and diverse program. Following are some sessions and activities that relate to our roundtable's mission to promote the concerns of archivists of African, Asian, Hispanic and Native American descent.

Thursday, August 31

1:30p.m. - 3:00p.m.

10. Documenting Diasporas: The Complex Archival World of Human Dispersal and Exile

11. Common Ground: Archival Exchanges in a Global Professional Community

5:15p.m. - 6:45p.m.

Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Meeting

Friday, September 01

10:30a.m. - 12:00p.m.

24. Finding the Sand Creek Massacre Site

33. The ICA: 2000 and Beyond

1:30p.m. - 3:00p.m.

43. The Stuff of History: Material Culture in the Archives

3:00p.m. - 5:15p.m.

Black American West Museum and Heritage Center Tour

7:00p.m. - 8:00p.m.

Awards Ceremony and Reception

Saturday, September 02

9:45a.m. - 10:45a.m.

Diversity Plenary Session

11:00a.m. - 12:30p.m.

51. Tribal Archives at the Millennium

4:00p.m. - 5:30p.m.

57. The Low-Down Beat of Documenting Jazz

continued on page 2

SAA Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado (continued)

As always, we would like to encourage AAC Roundtable members to be active in SAA and to make their voices heard. If possible, please volunteer for committees and roundtables. At the meeting, there are many opportunities to participate in the Society such as:

SAA Membership Forum (Wednesday, August 30, 4:00p.m.) - discuss issues affecting the membership of the Society, including efforts to encourage and foster diversity.

Mentor/Mentee Coffee Talk (Friday, September 01, 10:00a.m.) - offer to guide someone new to the profession. Personal support from colleagues can make all the difference in the world!

SAA Annual Business Meeting (Friday, September 01, 5:15p.m.) - as active members we need to be aware of the Society's budget process and vote on new resolutions that affect us all.

SALE OF KING PAPERS STALLED IN CONGRESS

The proposed \$20 million Library of Congress purchase of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers screeched to a halt as members of Congress are hearing opposing viewpoints on the value of the papers. According to David Garrow, King's Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer, the collection has little research value, let alone enough to justify making it the most expensive purchase ever for the Library of Congress. Early in May, the library dispatched a group to Atlanta to re-examine the papers. King's early papers are at Boston University, while most of the post-1960 documents are housed at Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change. It's these papers that Congress is seeking to acquire. Garrow contends that most of the items there have autograph value at best. The papers at Boston became the focus of an eight-year custody battle between Mrs. King and the university that ended in 1995. Mrs. King argued unsuccessfully that her husband gave them to the university for temporary housing, not ownership.

Garrow's views have been strongly rebutted by Willis Van Devanter, who appraised the papers for the Library of Congress, called it "absolutely stupendous material", and concluded that the asking price was fair. The New York auction house, Sotheby's, appraised the papers at \$30 million.

In the meantime, lawmakers have called off negotiations for the time being. Many involved, however, agree on one point: the archives of history's most famous civil rights leader deserve to be in one place, not scattered at auction. VanDevanter has been quoted as saying, "If those papers are broken up, it's going to be the worst act of vandalism in 20th century cultural history."

Officials at the Library of Congress have been interested in acquiring the King Papers since before his assassination in 1968. The collection consists of drafts of speeches, correspondence and notes generated by Dr. King in the last six years of his life. Negotiations became active last summer when Librarian of Congress James Billington reminded Rep. James Clyburn (D-S.C.), the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, of the library's eagerness to acquire the documents. Clyburn arranged a meeting in Atlanta with Dexter Scott King, head of the King Center, and Coretta Scott King. Last fall, Clyburn introduced legislation authorizing the purchase of the papers.

DEBORAH WILLIS, SMITHSONIAN CURATOR, AWARDED MACARTHUR "GENIUS" GRANT

Deborah Willis, curator of exhibitions at the Smithsonian's Center for African-American History and Culture and the Anacostia Museum, was one of 25 Americans to receive awards this year from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Fellows Program awards unrestricted fellowships to talented individuals who have shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits, as well as a marked capacity for self-direction. Commonly known as the "Genius" Award, the fellowships of \$500,000 are "no strings attached" stipends in support of people, not projects. Recipients of the awards are free to spend the money in any way they want.

The Philadelphia-born Willis, 52, is a historian of photography, a curator and a photographer. She has spent a quarter century documenting the black experience in photography. Her pioneering work ensures that future histories will include the contributions of African American photographers. Ms. Willis conducted the research for the Smithsonian's 300-photo exhibit of 160 years of black photography, currently exhibited in the Arts and Industries Building. She is also the author of several books and articles on black photography.

Congratulations to Deborah Willis from old and new colleagues and friends!

continued on page 3

Co-Editors

Joellen ElBashir
Cathy Lynn Mundale

Layout and Design

Robin Van Fleet

The Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Newsletter is published twice a year. It is financially supported by the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center and the Society of American Archivists.

Correspondence

Address all correspondence to:
Joellen ElBashir
Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Howard University
Washington, D.C. 20059
(202) 806-7480
Fax: (202) 806-6405
E-mail: jelbashir@howard.edu

Or

Cathy Lynn Mundale
Atlanta University Center
Robert W. Woodruff Library
111 James P. Brawley Dr., SW
Atlanta, G.A. 30314
(404) 522-8980 x1218
Fax: (404) 978-2109
E-mail: cmundale@auctr.edu

THOMAS C. BATTLE JOINS SAA COUNCIL

Thomas C. Battle was recently elected to SAA Council, beginning his three-year term in August following the conclusion of the 64th annual meeting in Denver. He succeeds outgoing Council member, Karen Jefferson, also of the AAC Roundtable. Dr. Battle is the director of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. He has served SAA in several capacities: chair of the Task Force on Minorities; chair of the Nominating Committee; Awards Committee co-chair; Committee on Goals and

Priorities; co-chair of AAC Roundtable; and member of the Publications Board. He is the author of numerous articles and presenter of lectures and papers on archival development, and is currently editor-in-chief of HUArchivesNet, an electronic journal.

In his candidate statement in which he was asked to address his hopes for the archival profession by 2005, Dr. Battle noted that "Early archival development focused on the historical and intellectual value of documents and involved librarians and historians...Technical discussions now dominate our work instead of discussions about the content of our collections...In addition to improving the preparation of

archivists and developing sound archival education guidelines and programs, I would hope to see a return to the discussion of research value and the utilization of collections."

Congratulations to Dr. Battle on his election to that estimable body.

**KATHRYN M. NEAL TO SERVE ON SAA
NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Kathryn M. Neal has been elected to serve on the 2001 Nominating Committee. The committee is responsible for identifying and selecting next year's slate of candidates as well as drafting questions posed to candidates. Ms. Neal is the curator of the Givens Collection of African American Literature, Special Collections & Rare Books at the University of Minnesota Libraries. A 1994 recipient of the SAA Minority Student Award, she currently chairs the AAC Roundtable.

Congratulations to you, Kathy!

1999 PINKETT MINORITY STUDENT AWARD

The Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award recognizes minority undergraduate and graduate students, such as those of African, Asian, Hispanic, or Native American descent, who, through scholastic and personal achievement manifest an interest in becoming professional archivists and active members of SAA. The award, named in honor of an archival pioneer and SAA fellow, provides complementary registration to the SAA annual meeting and related expenses. Jointly funded by SAA and the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable, the generosity of Dr. Pinkett has allowed the committee to present two awards last year to Teresa Maria Mora of New Your University and Tywana Marie Whorley of the University of Pittsburgh. Regrettably, there is no award recipient for this year's meeting.

CAREER MOVES

Cathy Lynn Mundale became the Reference Archivist at the Atlanta University Center as of March 01, 2000. Cathy was formerly archivist at Virginia Union University in Richmond.

Mr. Paul K. Baker, previously archivist at Fayetteville State University (NC), is now Records Retention & Information Specialist at Duke Energy in Charlotte, NC.

Ida E. Jones, formerly at the Archives Center, Smithsonian Institution, is now Manuscript Librarian at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

continued on page 4

AAC Roundtable Members Contribute Service to SAA

The end of the 1990s and the year 2000 illustrates what is becoming a long-standing tradition: AAC Roundtable members volunteering their time and skills in elected offices, committees, sections, and roundtables within SAA. Interested in lending your own talents to the organization for the coming year? Contact SAA Vice President Steven Hensen c/o The Society of American Archivists, 527 S. Wells St., 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607. A select list of volunteers follows:

Council

Karen Jefferson
Wilda Logan Willis

2000 Program Committee

Karen Jean Hunt

2000 Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award Committee

(No applicants for 2000)
Kathryn Neal, Chair
Sheree Bonaparte
Sushan Chin

2000 Philip M. Hamer and Elizabeth Hamer-Kegan Award for Increasing Public Awareness of Documentary Materials

Gloria Meraz, Chair

Colonial Dames Scholarship Award Committee

Deborra Richardson, Chair

Committee on Education and Professional Development

Danna Bell-Russel, Chair

Membership Committee

Lynda DeLoach

Publications Board

Thomas Battle

Manuscript Repositories Section

Kathryn Neal, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Newsletter Editor

Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

Kathryn Neal, Co-Chair
Thomas Battle, Co-Chair
Joellen ElBashir, Co-Editor
Cathy Lynn Mundale, Co-Editor

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES COLLECTIONS

by Nancy Richard

Northeastern University Libraries Archives, and Special Collections has received two consecutive grants from NHPRC to support the collection, processing, and description of a number of collections of interest to researchers of African American and Latino history. The collections include Freedom House Records (M16) and the papers of its founders, Muriel and Otto Snowden (M17). The records (1949-1996) document the role of the organization in Boston's urban renewal efforts in Roxbury, MA, and in the community's response to the court order of 1974 to desegregate the Boston Public Schools. The Elma Lewis Papers (M38), and the records of Elma Lewis School of Fine Arts (M43), National Center of Afro-American Artists (M42), Museum of the National Center of Afro-American Artists (M44) and the most recently described collection of La Alianza Hispana (M55), a Latino multi-service organization serving the Dorchester/Roxbury communities of Boston.

These descriptions are available at
www.lib.neu.edu/archives/index.htm

Other recent additions to the Northeastern holdings include: Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO), a community non-profit that formed to eliminate racial imbalance for Boston students of color by providing educational opportunities in participating suburban towns (1966-1999); Coalition on Women's Safety formed to force police and community action on ending a series of murders of women in Roxbury and Dorchester (1979-1980); and Men of All Colors Together-Boston branch (formerly Black and White Men Together), an interracial social and political group of gay men (1980-1999).

The Archives is compiling information about collections related to Boston history in out-of-state repositories to share with our researchers and our donors. We would appreciate your comments.

Please send e-mail to: n.richard@nunet.neu.edu

Continuing Education Focus of NFACE Conference

Like most professional associations, continuing education is one of the primary concerns of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Association. In fact, it has been a central concern of the archival profession as a whole for decades. Nearly every strategic plan, action agenda, and needs assessment undertaken by archival organizations and associations in the last 20-30 years has named education among its top goals and priorities.

Many have worked hard to meet the demand. Today, dozens of associations, government agencies, and other organizations

continued on page 5

Continuing Education Focus (continued)

have active continuing education programs and offer hundreds of educational opportunities each year. But significant gaps remain. We know that there are under-served geographic regions, ethnic communities requiring specially tailored programs, seasoned professionals who are grappling with the changing nature of records, and a constant influx of new practitioners, both professional and nonprofessional, who must be taught the basics. No one association is equipped to address all of these concerns or deliver services to the wide variety of people who care for our nation's records.

The National Forum on Archival Continuing Education (NFACE), held April 27-29, 2000, in Decatur, Georgia, was the opening effort to bring the providers of continuing education for historical record keepers together so that they could begin to develop collaborative solutions and share resources. The NFACE project was developed by the Council of State Historical Records Coordinators (COSHRC) in partnership with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). Funding to support the project came from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

NFACE was an invitational conference whose participants represented more than 45 professional associations and 43 state historical records advisory boards. Their constituents include professional archivists; allied professionals like librarians, records managers, and museum curators; and the volunteers who serve in community-based organizations.

The conference was an unprecedented opportunity for leaders from national, regional, and state-level organizations to exchange ideas and identify areas of common concern. The organizers emphasized the need for practical solutions and pushed the participants to make solid commitments to pursue specific projects together. By the end of the intense 2-day event, NFACE had produced a draft of a 12-point Action Agenda (see below) that consolidates more than 90 detailed recommendations generated during the conference's Incubator Sessions. Participants also made 50 specific commitments to undertake follow-up activities, both small and large.

The NFACE organizers are now preparing a full report on the conference and its recommendations. The report will be made available on the NFACE Web site <www.coshrc.org/nface> as soon as possible.

You may also contact Kathleen Roe, NFACE Program Chair, New York State Archives and Records Administration, Room 9C71 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230, telephone 518-474-6926, email kroe@mail.nysed.gov; or

Vicki Walsh, NFACE Project Coordinator, 65 N Westminster St, Iowa City, IA 52245, telephone 319/338-6650, email vwalch@coshrc.org.

The Amistad Research Center Awarded Prestigious IMLS Grant

Thanks to a \$186,000 grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University will produce "The American Missionary Association and the Promise of a Multi-cultural America: 1839-1954." In collaboration with the Louisiana State University Digital Library, Amistad will digitize 5000 rare documents and images relating to the historic Amistad Event, and chronicle the work of the American Missionary Association (AMA). The AMA was one of the nation's largest and most influential missionary movements of the 19th and 20th centuries. Archival guides will be prepared in a web-accessible format and linked to digital images of photographs, documents and publications. Curriculum specialists will prepare teacher guides based on the scanned materials, and a special CD ROM version of the project will be disseminated to schools, libraries and AMA - affiliated institutions. "Digital projects," Donald E. DeVore, executive director of the Amistad Research Center, stated, "enable Amistad to bring its collections to a wider audience. The project reflects Amistad's commitment in the new millennium to use information technology to expand knowledge of the arts and humanities. We are pleased that our project received funding from IMLS and for the opportunity to work with the LSU Digital Library."

The Amistad Research Center maintains an incomparable collection of primary source materials on the history and culture of African Americans and minority groups. In addition to over ten million documents, period journals, newspaper clippings and photographs, Amistad also features an extensive collection of African and African-American art. Beverly Sheppard, Acting Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services, noted that: "Libraries and museums are more important than ever in this age of information, helping Americans navigate information resources and find meaning in an increasingly complex world. We are proud of these forward-thinking National Leadership projects that will increase access to information and help libraries and museums better serve the public."

National Leadership Grants provide opportunities for libraries to address pressing needs in education, research and preservation, and for libraries and museums to work together to address community needs, expand audiences, and implement the use of the most efficient and appropriate technologies. National Leadership grant projects provide creative solutions to issues of national importance and provide leadership for other organizations.

continued on page 6

"To Conserve a Legacy: American Art from Historically Black Colleges and Universities"

Visiting Atlanta this summer? If so, make plans to see "To Conserve a Legacy", a stunning exhibition of paintings, sculptures and photographs from the art collections of six HBCUs. Featured are more than 200 works of American art from the 19th and 20th centuries from the permanent collections of Clark Atlanta, Fisk, Hampton, Howard, North Carolina Central and Tuskegee universities. This major consortium project encompasses a touring exhibition, conservation of the works included in the exhibition, and a scholarly catalogue. The exhibition highlights African American art from each HBCU collection and places this work within the full historical context and stylistic range for American art and culture.

The show, which opened at The Studio Museum in Harlem, a conservation training program for minority students, is at the Clark Atlanta University Art Galleries and High Museum of Art in Atlanta through September 24, 2000. It will then travel to: Durham, North Carolina (NC Central and Duke Universities), October 15 - December 01, 2000; Nashville, Tennessee (Fisk University with Tennessee State Museum), January 02 - March 31, 2001; Hampton and Norfolk, Virginia (Hampton University and Chrysler Museum), April 22 - July 29, 2001.

Margaret Walker Alexander Papers Open for Research

By Karen Jefferson

Honoring the birthday of Margaret Walker Alexander, A National Symposium and Poetry Festival was held July 6-8, 2000 at Jackson State University, Jackson, Mississippi. The celebration included the formal opening of the Margaret Alexander Walker Papers that were recently processed through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Speakers at the symposium included Christina Wolf and Patricia Gallion, Archivists at the Margaret Walker Alexander Center; Karen Jefferson, Head of Archives and Special Collections, Atlanta University Center; and Diana Lachatanere, Curator of the Manuscript Archives and Rare Books Division, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Margaret Walker Alexander (1915-1998) was a poet, author, and dedicated educator who taught at Jackson State University for 30 years. She was a prolific writer who received international acclaim for her poem, *For My People*, her novel, *Jubilee*, and her critical work, *Richard Wright: Daemonic Genius*. In 1968 Dr. Alexander founded and directed for eleven years the Institute for the Study of the History, Life, and Culture of Black People. The Institute was renamed in 1989 the Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center for the Study of the 20th Century African American. The Alexander Papers are housed at the Research Center which is located in the newly renovated historic Ayer Hall, the oldest building on campus of Jackson State University. For more information about the Center and access to the papers contact: Dr. Alferdteen Harrison Director, or Ms. Patricia Gallion, Archivist at (601) 979-2055.

Preservation Workshop Held for HBCU Archives

By Karen Jefferson

March 4-8, 2000 a SOLINET (Southeastern Library Network, Inc.) sponsored preservation workshop was held on the campus of the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia. The NEH-funded workshop provided for archival staff from 20 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to receive an orientation to archival management and basic training in preservation techniques. Workshop instructors were Karen Jefferson, Atlanta University Center, and Brenda Banks and Hilary Kaplan, Georgia Department of Archives and History.

MCI WORLD COM

HUArchivesNet

The Electronic Journal
MSRC - Howard University

NOVEMBER 2000 ISSUE
ON WASHINGTON, DC

www.huarchivesnet.howard.edu

email: huarchivesnet@howard.edu

HUArchivesNet is published quarterly by the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University, Washington, DC 20059. The electronic journal serves to link Howard University and *MCI WorldCom* in an informative partnership which creates new ways to access one of the finest repositories of African and African American resources through the communications technology of *MCI WorldCom's* global networks.



ABOUT THE JOURNAL

“ . . . Moorland-Spingarn can now be shared around the globe, bringing history and hope via the Internet to all who access this cutting-edge electronic journal, *HUArchivesNet* . . . ”

H. Patrick Swygert, President, Howard University.

“ . . . The presentation of these resources affirms the often unheralded and little known contributions of African Americans to our nation. Drawing from this wellspring of materials, *HUArchivesNet* will provide not only materials for the recovery of the past, but also give a new perspective for the future . . . ”

Antoine M. Garibaldi, Ph.D., Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Howard University

“ . . . *HUArchivesNet* is presented as an antidote to the deficiencies of our collective knowledge base of the Black presence in the world. Weaving historical tapestries, social patterns and cultural products around the globe, tracks of race and culture criss-cross each other in myriad ways. Howard University is a world-class repository of materials documenting the Black experience. *HUArchivesNet* places this repository at your fingertips . . . ”

Dr. Russell Adams, Chair, Afro-American Studies, Howard University.