
Archivists & Archives of Color Newsletter

Newsletter of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

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Fall 2000

Rosalye Settles Elected New Co-Chair

Rosalye Settles was elected AAOC Roundtable co-chair at the 13th annual business meeting. She will replace Kathryn M. Neal of the University of Minnesota who has completed her two-year term. Ms. Settles is the Archivist for the Office of the Architect of the U. S. Capitol. Prior to this position, she was an archivist with the National Archives and Records Administration, Life Cycle Management Division where she was responsible for appraisal and records disposition activities for eleven U.S. Dept of Agriculture agencies. Prior to the National Archives and Records Administration, she worked as a Reference Librarian at the CBS News Reference Library, NYC Dept of Environmental Protection, NYC Department of Records and Information Services, and the Studio Museum in Harlem. She earned her B.A. in English from Pace University, a Masters degree in American History from New York University, and a second Masters in Library Science with a focus on preservation from Columbia University. Ms. Settles served as Regent for Examination Development, for the Academy of Certified Archivists from 1998-2000 and her professional memberships include SAA, ACA and MARAC.

Taronda Spencer Also Elected New Co-Chair

During the 2000 SAA Annual Meeting Thomas Battle was elected to Council, thus leaving his second year as AAOC Roundtable co-chair vacant. Taronda Spencer was elected to fill this position at the AAOC business meeting. Since 1998, Taronda Spencer has been the Archivist of Spelman College. Prior to returning to Spelman, her alma mater, Ms. Spencer worked at the Historic New Orleans Collection in New Orleans and at the Walter P. Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University in Detroit. While at Wayne State, she also worked as Project Archivist for the Cooperative HBCU Archival Survey Project (CHASP). Funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, CHASP is a bibliographic survey of the archives and manuscript collections housed in the archives of historically black colleges and universities. In 1997, CHASP moved from Wayne State to Spelman College, Ms. Spencer moved to Spelman with the Project continuing that work until appointed archivist of the College. As a second-generation archivist, Ms. Spencer arrived at her decision to become an archivist as a teenager. She grew up in the Amistad Research Center in

New Orleans where she learned from her mother, Mrs. Emanuella Spencer, an archivist at the Center, the importance of preserving original material.

Greetings from the Co-chairs by Taronda Spencer and Rosalye Settles

The existence of the Roundtable is important to the archival community, oftentimes the voice ringing out for our profession to both acknowledge and address concerns of archivists of color. This was evidenced clearly when allegations of discrimination arose against the Adam's Mark Hotel chain. In this instance the Roundtable became an agent of change due to the actions of Karen Jefferson, Wilda Logan Willis and former chair Kathryn M. Neal. The issue of racial discrimination, always a potentially explosive topic, became an opportunity to educate the broader archival community on issues of diversity. Once again, the Roundtable was a reminder that what affects one component of the archival profession affects us all.

As SAA continues its efforts to become a more inclusive body so must the AAOC Roundtable. While we must be diligent in our efforts to support and enhance our current membership, we must also reach out more to minority archivists and institutions, particularly the historically Black, Hispanic and Tribal Colleges and Universities. A clarion call must go out to the minority archivists in government and industry, as well as those working in the historical societies, museums, and other private enterprises to encourage their participation in SAA and the Roundtable. Perhaps most important of all, we as members of the Roundtable must make a concerted effort to increase the interest of minority students in the archival profession. The continued strength of the archival professional, the Society of American Archivists, and this Roundtable will depend on a constant influx of new vision and talent to keep them strong and vibrant.

During the upcoming year, we will complete the project to update the Membership Directory. This will be a valuable tool

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Greetings from the Co-chairs (continued)

in our efforts to locate one another and our various areas of expertise. We will also investigate the creation of a Web site. Suggestions and volunteers knowledgeable in this area would be most appreciated. With your assistance we will help a deserving student attend the SAA Annual Meeting in Washington, DC with the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award. The deadline for nominations is February 28, 2001. The Roundtable exists for all of us, its members. Our hope this year is to be of service. How can we best serve your needs? Toward this end, please let us know how we can work with you to facilitate and address your desires. While we may not be able to accomplish a multitude of projects due to our various obligations, we believe it is possible for the Roundtable to complete one or two projects. How will this come about? By members making a commitment to work with us to turn transform ideas into realities. So, if you have an idea for a project and would like to help make it happen, please contact us.

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you. Remember it's your Roundtable!

Hey, folks. Below is general information about a Black Gay and Lesbian archive that I started last year. I want you all to consider donating materials (and any cash donations would be good too!) to this archive, and to spread the word about it. I am looking for books, magazines, articles, programs, newsletters, audio, film and video created by or featuring black gay/lesbian/SGL, et al., folks. Read below for a more detailed description of the types of items I am looking to collect.

The Black Gay and Lesbian Archive by Steven G. Fullwood, Project Director

The Black Gay and Lesbian Archive was developed for the expressed purpose of documenting black gay and lesbian culture. The archive project is divided into two phases. The first phase of this project is to gather materials for a period of three to five years (2000-2005) in order to create a collection of materials, which spans the gamut of documented black and lesbian history. The second phase of this venture is to place the collected materials in a repository to preserve and house the materials for the expressed purpose of making them available for research.

I am an African-American who works at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture as a Manuscripts Librarian. I am also a freelance writer and one of the founders of ONE Step Further, a sexual education and advocacy company located in New York. In 1998, while researching a grant to preserve the Gay Men of African Descent's (GMAD) records, I found that there were virtually no institutions or repositories that actively collected materials on black gay and lesbian culture.

In response to this lack of information, I decided to start an archive that would primarily feature magazines, books, photos, moving image materials, and other ephemera (posters, programs, and flyers). The scope of collecting would start with historical materials (i.e., Fire!!, a Harlem periodical which featured what is considered to be the first black gay short story) to now. Much of what has been collected thus far is a wide range of contemporary magazines (VENUS Magazine, The Mailbox, Kick Magazine, Whazzup! Magazine, SBC Magazine, Blacklight Online, BLK, Women in the Life, Clikque Magazine, and about a dozen or so books. Recently the Archive acquired rare issues of what is considered the first Black gay and lesbian newspaper Moja. Alan Bell, founder of BLK recently donated his entire catalog to the archive, and there has been a steady flow of materials coming since last year. The Archive also boasts a variety of newsletters from NYC, Ohio, North Carolina, and Georgia.

(NOTE: The Archives relies exclusively on donations of materials to build up its archival holdings. It reserves the right to decide what materials to keep in all areas in which it collects.)

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The Atlanta University Center Archives would like to announce its new and improved Web page. For the first time, brief descriptions of our collections are available online. The AUC Archives is renowned for its southern civil rights and race relations collections such as the Southern Regional Council, the Commission on Interracial Cooperation, and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. We also house the records of the AUC schools as well as papers of important figures in the African American community such as John Hope, Hoyt Fuller, and C. Eric Lincoln. Please visit our Web site at <http://www.auctr.edu/arch.htm>

The Special Collections and Archives at Virginia Commonwealth University, in collaboration with the Valentine Museum, the Museum of the Life and History of Richmond, has mounted an on-line exhibit entitled *Through the Lens of Time: Images of African Americans from the Cook Collection*.

VCU has digitized and indexed over 200 compelling images from the George and Huestis Cook Photograph Collection at the Valentine Museum/Richmond History Center. The Cook Collection consists of over 10,000 negatives taken from the 1860s to the 1930s in Virginia and the Carolinas. The

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Special Collections and Archives at Virginia
Commonwealth University (continued)

photographs of African Americans in this collection provide an interesting combination of examples of African American life and the white photographers' perceptions of that life, often tinged by stereotypes.

It is an interesting exercise to attempt to determine which photographs were taken in a completely spontaneous manner and which ones were posed or staged by the Cooks.

The fact that this collection documents a population traditionally "under-represented" in archives makes the photographs of George and Huestis Cook and efforts such as this joint project between VCU Libraries and the Valentine Museum/Richmond History Center so important. These 200 photographs of African American life in turn-of-the-century Central Virginia are valuable both as conveyers of unique historical information and as examples of the nascent art of photography. Their preservation by the Valentine Museum/Richmond History Center and their digitization by VCU allows everyone from historical researchers to school children to access and learn from this fine and rare resource. *Through the Lens of Time* can be found at <http://www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/speccoll/cook/>

(Article excerpted from VCU Libraries Web site)

Career Moves

Sule Greg Wilson has been recently hired as the first archivist for the Mesa Room of the Mesa Public Library. The Mesa Room is a resource center for statistics, government and history of Mesa, AZ. Holdings include aerial photographs, maps, City of Mesa documents, Mayor's papers, and records of the Better Community Council, 1953-1968, which documents the efforts to desegregate restaurants, swimming pools, and theaters, to get the Washington community paved, and other concerns. The Mesa Room also holds some documentation of the Hispanic, Japanese- and Chinese-American portions of Mesa's population, and some on Arizona's Native peoples. Mr. Wilson has worked as an archivist at the NY Stock Exchange, the World Bank, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, the Smithsonian, and the Pueblo Grande Museum and Cultural Park. He is also the author of two recent books, published by Rosen Publishers of New York: "Kwanzaa! Africa Lives in a New World Festival" and "African American Quilting: The Warmth of Tradition".

Julia Randle is the new archivist at the Bishop Payne Library at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria.

13TH Annual AAOC Business Meeting Minutes August 31, 2000 Denver, Colorado

Chair: Kathryn Neal
Co-Chair: Thomas Battle

Kathryn Neal called the meeting to order at 5:15p.m. and welcomed members.

Tom Hickerson, SAA President, discussed the past year's issues concerning racism (as a result of the discrimination allegations against the Adam's Mark hotel chain). He thanked Roundtable and SAA Council members Karen Jefferson and Wilda Logan Willis for their leadership and help in enlightening Council about discrimination. He also thanked Kathryn Neal for her astute comments and perspective towards the situation. He encouraged the Roundtable to be more active voices in the Society.

Council Liaison Report

Wilda Logan Willis stated there was much discussion of the Adam's Mark situation at the January Council meeting. Two changes came about from the discussion: 1) the hotel contract language was changed and 2) SAA added a diversity speaker to the Annual Meeting schedule.

Committee and Project Reports

Directory - Brenda Square circulated a draft copy of the directory and asked for members to make corrections. The Archivists of Color Directory will be printed in 2000.

AAC Roundtable Web Site - Ms. Square is still gathering information for the Web site which will be hosted by the Amistad Center/Tulane University and will be linked to SAA's Web page.

Harold T. Pinkett Award - Ms. Neal announced there were no applicants this year so the award will not be given. She is addressing the issue with SAA.

AAC Roundtable Archives - Clifford Muse is working on the finding aid and series descriptions of our archives. He asked for any past documentation of the Roundtable members may have.

CHASP - Taronda Spencer reported the NEH-funded survey of HBCU archival holdings is in its third phase. So far 50 schools have been surveyed with a projected total of 78 schools. The final phase will be to catalog the holdings in RLIN and OCLC.

Angel Project - Ms. Neal reported for Walter Hill of the National Archives that the Angel Project (African American archivists in NARA in Washington, D.C. offering their expertise to area organizations) has placed a book contract with the Smithsonian Institution Press for a work focusing on 20th- century images of African Americans that are housed in the collections of the National Archives.

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13TH Annual AAOC Business Meeting Minutes (continued)

Native American Archives Coalition

Richard Pearce-Moses commented that his idea to use the Web to involve Native American archives and archivists through a Web site and Listserv has not been as successful as hoped. He will continue to maintain the Web site but would like to encourage our Native American colleagues to participate.

NFACE and CEPD Updates

Danna Bell-Russel informed us that they are discussing a re-accreditation process separate from ALA. Roundtable members should comment on MAS guidelines. NFACE met in Georgia recently to discuss education cooperation between archival organizations, a national clearing house, education west of the Mississippi, and diversity.

Diversity Issues and SAA

Ms. Neal and Karen Jefferson led a spirited discussion about diversity issues affecting the Roundtable and its members. Ms. Jefferson suggested a committee be formed to discuss these issues and report back next year. Committee volunteers: Diane Bird, LaNina Clayton, Minneola Dixon, Ann Massmann, Joseph Thompson. It was decided that Roundtable members need to make an effort to reach students eligible for the Pinkett Award whether through Listservs, the Archival Educators Roundtable, or posting a flyer where students will see it in libraries, history departments, etc.

Annual Collection for the Pinkett Award
The amount raised this year was \$214.00.

Election of Chair and Co-Chair

Ms. Neal thanked Ms. Jefferson and Ms. Willis for their work on SAA Council. She also thanked Thomas Battle for his work as co-chair and congratulated him on his election to Council. Taronda Spencer was elected to fill the last year of Dr. Battle's service. Rosalye Settles was elected to a two-year term as Roundtable chair.

Announcements

Ms. Jefferson announced that the NEH has granted an archives institute at Spelman College.

John C. Wright distributed information about the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (www.archivenet.gov.au/archives/parbica/parbica_main.htm).

Ms. Neal is the new chair of the SAA nominating committee. She encouraged Roundtable members to please nominate themselves or others.

Ms. Square announced that Clarence Hunter, the former archivist at Tougaloo and now at Amistad, has concerns regarding archives of color. He would like to meet in February 2001 in Jackson, Mississippi to address the issues.

**Some editing was done for publication. Full meeting minutes are placed in the AAOC Archives, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University.*

The Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award

Please make an effort to encourage a student to apply! According to the following requirements (from SAA), the student can be in any major, not just History or Library Science. **Nominations for this annual award must be postmarked by February 28, 2001.** Nomination forms, as well as more information, can be found at: <http://www.archivists.org/recognition/index.html>

The Pinkett Award recognizes minority 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.

This award supports the following objectives of SAA and SAA's Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable:

- 1) identifying minority students enrolled in postsecondary educational institutions;
- 2) encouraging minority students to consider careers in the archival profession; and
- 3) promoting increased minority participation in SAA by exposing minority students to the experience of attending national meetings and encouraging them to join the organization.

To be eligible, minority students, with preference given to full-time students, must possess a minimum scholastic grade point average of 3.0 (B) while enrolled in postsecondary institutions during the academic year preceding the date the award is given.

The award consists of a certificate and a cash prize supporting full registration and related expenses of hotel and travel for attending the SAA annual meeting.

Requests for additional information should be addressed to:

Society of American Archivists
527 S. Wells, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60607
(312) 922-0140
(312) 347-1452 fax

Spelman College to Launch National Initiative to Bolster Archival Education and Training for Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Spelman College has been awarded a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent

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Spelman College to Launch National Initiative (continued)

federal agency, to implement a groundbreaking project titled *Archival Education and Training Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)*.

Funded at more than \$261,000, the project will provide education, training and mentoring to 25 staff representing public and private HBCUs from across the nation. Spelman has also recruited a team of nationally known archivists with a

combination of experience in HBCU, state and university archives programs to serve as faculty in the training initiative. A new Internet site and Listserv will also facilitate program activities. In offering such a comprehensive archival education and training program, Spelman is working to ensure that HBCUs become part of the mainstream research community, and that archival staff have the opportunity to receive training to better prepare them for the challenge.

"By virtue of the mission of HBCUs, and the continued need of our institutions by so many young men and women in what is now a global economy and marketplace, we must be the ultimate guardians of our records and our history," says Spelman College President Dr. Audrey Forbes Manley. "By ensuring that more staff acquire the skills needed to manage these growing collections and support scholarly research, we become as we should, the ultimate spokespersons and caretakers of our experiences."

Says Brenda Banks, one of the project co-coordinators, "As researchers become more aware of the existence of the holdings of HBCU archives, staff will need to acquire the skills necessary to manage their collections. This will be the first effort to offer comprehensive archival training to staff in HBCUs."

The program will be implemented through the Women's Research and Resource Center at Spelman College, under the direction of Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. Co-coordinators are Brenda S. Banks, Assistant Director of the Georgia Department of Archives and History and Spelman College Archivist Taronda Spencer, both of whom have worked with HBCU archival training and survey projects for the past eight years. *Colleges and Universities*, contact Ms. Brenda Banks at (404) 651-6547.

For more information on Spelman College's *Archival Education and Training Program for Historically Black Colleges and Universities*, contact Ms. Brenda Banks at (404) 651-6547.

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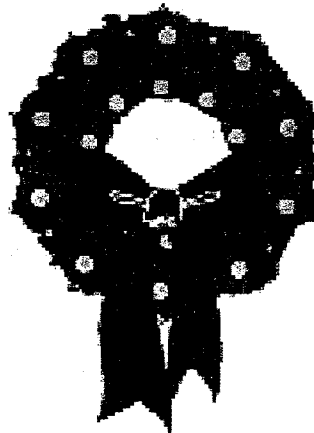
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Happy Holidays!