

# AACR

## Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Newsletter



Spring 2016/Summer 2016

Volume 30, Issue 2

### Letter from Senior Co-Chair

I hope that you and your institutions are doing well.

At the 2016 Midwest Archivist Conference in Milwaukee, WI, I was honored to participate in a session called "'A Festivus for the Rest of Us:' Perspectives on Diversity in the Midwest" that was moderated by Harrison Inefuku, AACR Junior Co-Chair, and I was joined by Sasha Griffin (Denison University) and Harvey Long (Ph.D. Student at UW-Madison). This program was dedicated to discussing the experiences of archivists of color in the Midwest. We had a packed room full of people ready to engage with this subject matter. The slides are [here](#), and search Twitter under the hashtag #mac16 and #s103. I was not sure how people would react to our stories, but I think that we cannot shy away from our experiences; we have to embrace them and tell our truths. I suggest that at regional and annual conferences there needs to be space for people to really share their lived experiences either formally or informally, so that we can learn from each other and see where we need to grow. People appreciated the personalization of this session and what I think made our session standout is that it was about

the people, and recognizing the humanity behind the people who work with the collections. Archivists of color often carry a lot of invisible baggage that comes with being "otherized" in the world, and this does not disappear once we walk into our workplace. Thus, getting people to acknowledge and understand these issues; and then by working to break down these barriers we can become a better profession and people.

The attendees were ready for the discussion after SAA President Dennis Meissner spoke during the plenary about SAA's efforts to promote cultural competency in the profession. He gave kudos to Helen Wong Smith, a member of SAA Council who has been leading this charge. (Recently, she presented as a part of the AACR webinar, which can be viewed [here](#).) Meissner covered the levels of cultural competency and why we as a profession should care about it. In a nutshell, becoming culturally competent will help with engagement, advocacy, collection development, recruitment, and retention. One person commented on Twitter that underrepresented groups have an easier time with cultural competency because we have to live with it on a daily basis, but others commented ([Continued on page 2](#))

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that yes in some cases this is true, but a part of this is realizing that we all have room to grow and end our biases.

Overall from what I saw on Twitter and from speaking with people afterwards, we are ready for this discussion and to take action, but will require organizational, institutional, and personal changes, as well as make people confront their biases head on, which can be challenging for some. It is

important to note that in tandem with cultural competency cultural institutions and organizations need to hire and recruit diverse people and voices in order to combat the issues brought up during the #Archivessowhite discussion (thank you Jarrett Drake (@jddrake)). Institutions should no longer collect

“ethnic” or “diverse” collections, and then have a lack of diversity in the workplace.

I look forward to continuing this discussion in many forums (online and in person), including at SAA 2016 and then in 2017, where there will be a track devoted to cultural competency. At SAA 2016, Harrison and I have submitted a pop-up entitled “Uncovering Our Roots: The Information Profession and Going Beyond Our Worldview,” where we will have an opportunity to discuss these issues, so [vote](#) by June 20th. If you have any suggestions, comments, questions, or resources on these matters, please feel free to send them to me.



Best Regards,

Aaisha

**On April 22 and 23, 2016 Rutgers University hosted**  
**[Digital Blackness Conference](#)**

“Digital Blackness which [brought] together scholars, students, activists, and artists from a range of fields and disciplines to interrogate the many new modes, customs, and arrangements of racial identity as they are mediated through digital technologies.”

**View videos from the conference from [Day 1](#) and [Day 2](#)**

**Announcement: Call for Comments on Proposed Changes**  
**in Member Affinity Groups**



SAA Council seeks member comments on a revised set of recommendations for changes to the structure and requirements for SAA sections and roundtables. **Read the full proposal—including background, guiding principles, and suggested changes—[here](#).**

The Council seeks member comment on the proposed changes in SAA Member Affinity Groups. Share your comments on any aspect of the proposal at [saahq@archivists.org](mailto:saahq@archivists.org) or <http://www2.archivists.org/news/2016/council-seeks-comment-on-proposed-changes-in-member-affinity-groups> by **Wednesday, July 6**. The Council will take action based on member feedback at its August 1 meeting in Atlanta.

**On May 19-21, 2016 the National Museum of African American History and Culture hosted [The Future of the African American Past](#) Conference**

“The Future of the African American Past” conference will provide an opportunity for historians to share research and ideas, take stock of recent trends, and set an agenda to guide future inquiry. We intend to do this in a way that captures the imagination of public audiences as well as the interest of historians.”

View the [conference program](#) and click on each session to access full recordings of the conference, including the accompanying [papers](#) and [blogposts](#).

### **Institutional Profile: Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church Museum and Archives**

The Mother Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church resides on a parcel of land located on the corner of Sixth and Lombard Streets, in Philadelphia, PA, that was purchased in 1791 by Richard Allen. The first structure was an old blacksmith shop which was converted into a place of worship and dedicated in 1794. In 1805, a second larger structure and additional land were needed to accommodate the growing membership. By 1841, the third church was built of bricks and stone. The fourth church, a finer structure, was dedicated in October 1890 and was finally opened in 1899. Over time four structures were built on the same site, which makes this plot of land the oldest continuously owned by African Americans. More than two centuries and four buildings later, Mother Bethel continues to serve the African American community and others who pass through the church doors by providing the spiritual, educational, social and civic needs of the people.

As early as 1876, the church began a systematic effort to organize its materials and in 1912 established a Historical Commission for the purpose of collecting, preserving and cataloging its holdings. As part of these efforts, the Richard Allen Museum was established and includes over one hundred items on display and receives thousands of visitors annually. Tours of the church and museum are provided, by appointment, to individuals or groups Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and after



Rev. Tyler works with archivist, Ms. Margaret Jerrido  
<https://www.motherbethel.org/arc.php>

service on Sunday.

In the early 1990s, attention was given to the historical documents and space was made available to house the materials. Some of the major holdings include minutes of the Board of Trustees, Board of Stewards and various organized ministries of the church; printed materials from The Annual and General conferences of the African Methodist Episcopal Church; funeral programs; information about prominent leaders of the Mother Bethel AME church Bishops of the AME denomination; photographs; scrap books; the Christian Recorder; Bibles; and books. The bulk of the collection covers the time period 1820s through the 1990s. The early period is sparse and includes a limited amount of original documents. However, the strength of the collection is the photograph series that has images of many of the AME leaders, historical images of the Mother Bethel AME church when it was known as the “Bethel Church” and a funeral program series that is good for descendants

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## BMRC - Archie Motley Archival Internship Program

By Camille Ann Brewer

The Archie Motley Archival Internship Program is a new program of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC). Founded in 2006, the BMRC is an unincorporated Chicago-based membership association of libraries, universities, museums and other archival institutions. The University of Chicago serves as the host institution for the BMRC. The mission of the BMRC is to make broadly accessible its members' holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic history, with a specific focus on materials relating to the City of Chicago and its environs.

The mission of the Archie Motley Archival Internship Program is to develop and create meaningful and education internship opportunities for college-level students of color in the field of cultural heritage management.

The vision for the Archie Motley Archival Internship Program is three-fold: 1) Enhance student learning as well as personal and professional development; 2) Expose students to career options available in libraries, archives, and special collections; and 3) Diversify the applicant pool for positions in cultural heritage management.

The program's namesake is Mr. Archie Motley (1935-2002), who was a gentle crusader whose collection of off-beat papers and manuscripts enabled the Chicago Historical Society to build an extraordinary collection of document about the lives of black people, labor leaders and social workers.

Alex (Alexandra) McGhee and Kellee Warren are the Archie Motley Interns for spring 2016. Alex McGee is currently in the process of completing a Bachelors of Art in History and minor in Art History at DePaul University. Previously, she has worked as a Digital Archive Intern at the Button Museum, a Library and Archive Intern at the National Hellenic Museum, and an Archival Intern at the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews. Through these experiences, she discovered that she wanted to pursue a degree and subsequent career in the archival profession. We are looking forward to the enthusiasm and skills that Ms. McGee will bring to this internship program.

Kellee Warren has a Masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. Previously, she has worked as the Archives and Records Intern for the Chicago Community Trust and as a Senior Library Specialist for the IDEA Commons at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Richard J. Daley Library. She is interested in teaching the importance of primary documents and documentation on underrepresented groups. We are excited to have Ms. Warren as an intern and look forward to her insights on the collection.



Left to right: Kellee Warren and Alex McGhee

The spring 2016 interns are processing the records of Provident Hospital housed at the Chicago State University Archives and Special Collections. With Aisha Haykal's support, the interns hope to have the processing completed by June 1, 2016.

Founded in 1891 on 29th and Dearborn Streets in Chicago, Provident Hospital was created to provide services to African Americans who were denied treatment at other Chicago area hospitals, and also provided

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## 2016 Black Metropolis Research Consortium Summer Short-Term Fellow Final Presentations

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium in Chicago will be having one of several Summer Short-Term Fellows Presentations on June 27, 2016. The first one will be held at the International Museum of Surgical Science and will feature two Fellows, Dr. Naa Oyo A. Kwate and Nathan A. Kuehn, who are conducting research on the history of health of Black communities in the US.

Please join us for an evening of research & refreshments. Through an international competition, the BMRC offers 1-month residential fellowships in the City of Chicago for its Summer Short-Term Fellowship Program. Generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation since 2009, the Summer Short-Term Fellowship Program has engaged scholars, artists, writers, and public historians from all around the world to better formulate new historical narratives of Chicago's past. The new, original research and art developed through this program is significant as it illuminates the national and international importance of Chicago's African American community.



June 27, 2016, 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

International Museum of Surgical Science  
1524 N. Lake Shore Drive  
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Register here: [tinyurl.com/bmrcimsspres](http://tinyurl.com/bmrcimsspres)

Free and open to the public.

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### Mother Bethel A.M.E Church Museum and Archives

of the church, genealogists in general, researchers looking for information about social interaction, politics of the church and the history of the AME Church. Detailed information about the history of the church and a finding aid can be found at Mother Bethel's African Methodist Episcopal Church website [www.motherbethel.com](http://www.motherbethel.com)

Margaret Jerrido retired archivist, was hired in 2008, to be the archivist on a part time basis. The Archives is open, by appointment, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 11:00 to 2:00. Researchers and all those interested in the history of the Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, the African Methodist Episcopal Church denomination and its leaders may call the church office at 215/925-0616 or email [info@motherbethel.org](mailto:info@motherbethel.org)

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### BMRC - Archie Motley Archival Internship Program

post-graduate training for African American doctors and nurses. Some of the individuals involved in creating the institution were Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, Emma Reynolds, Reverend Louis Reynolds, and Reverend Jenkins Jones.

The collection consists of photographs, correspondence, birth registers, student records, financial and administrative records, and newspaper clippings. From what we have seen the approximate date range of the

collection is 1910-1980s, with the bulk being from 1940-1986. There are also records from The Provident Foundation administration.

The collection includes 750 photos of events and activities that took place at the hospital and that the nurses partook in, photos of the hospital and the nursing school, and of the fundraisers for the hospital, which feature the likeness of the Harlem Globetrotters, Duke Ellington, and Harold Washington. This archival collection is unique in that it crosses many disciplines and audiences.

## “New Podcast Series at the Schomburg Center Brings Collections to Life”

By Alexandra M. Mitchell

The text to the right is an excerpt from a letter so eloquently written by Arturo Alfonso Schomburg to Langston Hughes regarding collection acquisitions collected by Hughes during a trip to Russia. This letter is just one of the many Schomburg Center treasures highlighted in our new podcast series, **Live from the Reading Room: Correspondence!** The podcast series aims to share interesting and engaging letters written by or to key historical figures from the African Diaspora. Each episode highlights a letter from popular collections housed in the **Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture**, New York Public Library.

The podcast series stands at the creative intersections of sound, text, and visual tropes that allow listeners to navigate the work and correspondence of our intellectual and artistic foremothers and forefathers, free of secondary (and tertiary) interrogations via various interpretations of primary source documents found within our collections. In turn, listeners are able to engage a multifaceted view of Black genius, creativity, ingenuity, and the personal lives (of some) of the twentieth and twenty-first century's leading figures of the African Diaspora.

Through the use of web 2.0 technology via blogging and podcasting, the letters featured not only cross the boundaries of diaspora, but also space, time, and memory, while activating the archive. Past episodes have featured letters from Arturo Schomburg, C.L.R. James, Philippa Schuyler, Josephine Baker, Nella Larson, Zora Neale Hurston, Aaron Douglass, Nathan Woodard to Alice Childress, and Claude McKay. Love letters, adventurous travel tales throughout the African Diaspora, strategic planning for political advocacy, and moments of frustration are all candidly discussed within the correspondence, allowing visitors to our ‘virtual reading room’ the chance to view some of history’s most important figures through a rarely seen personal lens. Want to learn more about the podcast series?

Visit <http://www.nypl.org/locations/divisions/manuscripts-archives-and-rare-books-division>, to view past blog entries, and <https://soundcloud.com/schomburg-collections/sets> to listen to past and upcoming episodes. We’d love to have you in the reading room!

February 16, 1933

Please keep abreast of anything that should be in our collection of Negro material[.] The Poushkin statue is a marvelous object of beauty, Downs when he was Moscou wrote me about it, but nothing materialized from it, you have brought it onward, I have put in under glass for the fellows who come this way may be able to admire the beauty of it. Is this the statue done in black marble, give us some news of the statute, make it talk in your own way. Is the person who owns the Ira Aldridge in the book with the plays of Shakespeare willing to have the people of the U.S.A of Negro descent enjoy this picture? Or if not, can a copy be had?

Go ahead Langston Hughes, let me put your name on the walls of the Library with “Weary Blues” in your handwriting that hangs here where every beholder can see your handwriting. Now I want to carry forward, by saying that Langston Hughes did not forget the Negro collection when In Russian, he has remembered us by deeds of love and human kindness. So good luck to your work and new poems, let us have one for our collection, where the black masses can read and follow your footsteps.

If there should be anything you want me to prosecute while you are on yonder fields, just let me know, or any commission that require tact silence, I am here at your services.

Ever and Ever

Arthur Schomburg

Arthur A. Schomburg Papers, Box 8, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, New York Public Library

## Accolades

*There is much to be celebrate among our community, please join us in celebrating the following people:*

- ♦ **Harrison Inefuku** (Iowa State University), AACR Junior Co-Chair has been elected to the Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) Council and the appointed for the MAC Program Committee Chair for the 2017 Conference in Omaha.
- ♦ **Aaisha Haykal** (Chicago State University), AACR Senior Co- Chair, will be joining Harrison on the Program Committee for the 2017 Midwest Archives Conference.
- ♦ **Petrina Jackson** (Iowa State University) has become the Head of the Special Collections and Archives at Iowa State University.
- ♦ Former AACR President, **Courtney Chartier** (Emory University) was elected to SAA Council.
- ♦ **Holly Smith** (Spelman College) was elected to SAA Nominating Committee and will serve as the Chair.
- ♦ **T-Kay Sangwand** (University of California, Los Angeles) was elected to SAA Nominating Committee.
- ♦ **Tanya Zanish-Belcher** (Wake Forest University) became SAA Vice-President/ President- Elect.
- ♦ **Stacie Williams** (University of Kentucky) was chosen as the keynote speaker for the 2016 DLF Forum in Milwaukee, WI.
- ♦ **Bergis Jules** (University of California Riverside) was chosen as the keynote for NDSA's Digital Preservation 2016 in Milwaukee, WI.
- ♦ **Rebecca Hankins** (Texas A&M University) and Helen Wong Smith (Kaua'i Historical Society) were selected as SAA Fellow for 2016.
- ♦ **Gailyn Bopp** and **Karen Li-Luan Hwang** were selected as the 2016 recipient of the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award
- ♦ **Desiree Alaniz** was selected as the 2016 recipient of the Josephine Forman Scholarship.
- ♦ **Jimmy Zavala** was selected as the 2016 recipient of the Society of American Archivists' Mosaic Scholarship.
- ♦ In the fall **Joyce Gabiola** will begin their Ph.D. studies in Library and Information Science at University of California, Los Angeles.
- ♦ In the fall, **Harvey Long** will begin his Ph.D. studies in Library and Information Science at University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## Accolades Continued

**Ida Jones** has joined the Morgan State University Library as the University Archivist and Director of Special Collections. Ida is no stranger to SAA, she was awarded the second Harold T. Pinkett award while in graduate school. In 2005, she was on an SAA panel that examined the benefits of the Pinkett award which sought innovative measure to attract, train and employ people of color as archivists. Her career traveled the circuit of federal government agencies, the J.F.K assassination project at NARA, the Archives Center at the American History Museum, Smithsonian and the NPS's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors project. Her longest employment until 2014 was at the Moorland Spingarn Research Center at Howard University. It is said, parting is sweet sorrow however the pioneering opportunity at Morgan was an attractive career move. At Morgan, Ida is establishing and innovating the special collections department and university archives from materials traditionally deposited in the University Library. Her office is in the Beulah M. Davis Room within the Earl S. Richardson Library. A "special" moment struck Ida when she realized that Beulah M. Davis, a Morgan alum, who grew the library from 7,000 volumes in 1926 to over 100,000 in 1965 when she retired. Moreover, Morgan will celebrate its sesquicentennial in 2017 and Ida is the first archivist employed by the university. Kismet! In reflecting about her new position, she stated:

"I am still learning the campus culture there is always a learning curve. The upside is the reception has been great and donors are excited to share their materials, personal papers, organizational records and photographs with Morgan. Everyday is a new experience and history lesson, public relations campaign and archives [outreach opportunity] of course."

## AACR Upcoming Events-Save the Dates

Every Fourth Tuesday we are hosting Twitter chats. Join us @aacr\_roundtable

### June 28th

Candidates for AACR Leadership

12PM CT (1PM ET) #AACRelections

To read candidate bios and statements go [here](#) , voting begins in early July

### July 26th

Funding and Advocacy with a brief preview of SAA 2016 in Atlanta, GA

12PM CT (1PM ET)

Presenters: Andrea Jackson, AUC Robert W. Woodruff Library and Samip Mallick, Executive Director of South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA)

### August 3rd (In person)

AACR Meeting at SAA

6 PM ET

Auburn Avenue Research Library (101 Auburn Ave NE, Atlanta, GA 30303)

*Thanks for Reading!*