

Archivists & Archives of Color Newsletter

Newsletter of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable

Vol. 11 No. 1

Spring 1997

From the Co-chair

by Deborah Saito



It was great to see so many familiar faces at the AAC Roundtable business meeting last August! Our momentum continues

as we examine where we have been and as we plan where we want to go. Learning from our past, a task force (consisting of Deborah Dandridge and Clifford Muse) has been formed to research the AAC Roundtable history and to develop records management guidelines for incoming co-chairs. The roundtable has agreed to co-sponsor a proposal to promote a special American Archivist issue devoted to diversity. Those on the Diversity Special Issue Project steering committee are Donna Wells, Deborah Richardson, and Daniel Williams.

A brochure about the AAC Roundtable is in the works (anyone interested in this project, please contact me). Our presence in SAA is being felt more and more, as evidenced by the growing number of minority and diversity sessions in the 1997 program.

To our many new members, a hearty welcome! Please contact either roundtable co-chair Cynthia Lewis or me if you would like to become more involved in the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable. We look forward to working with you as this is *your* roundtable!

Cynthia Lewis is New Co-chair!



Cynthia P. Lewis, Director of Archives at the King Library and Archives, Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Atlanta, Georgia, is the unanimous choice

for AAC's new co-chair. She replaces the outgoing co-chair, Danny Williams of Tuskegee University. Ms. Lewis has been Director of Archives since 1993. Prior to that, she served as Archivist at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi (1989-1993); and Field Archivist (1990-92) at the Margaret Walker Research Center, also at Jackson State. She earned the M.S.L.S and M.S. in African and Afro-American History from Atlanta University; and the B.A. from Spelman College. Ms. Lewis is a member of SAA, the Society of Mississippi Archivists, Society of Georgia Archivists and the Southern Archives Conference. She is the recipient of numerous awards for her outstanding work in the development of African American resources.

John Hope Franklin Portrait at Duke University

By Karen Jefferson

A portrait of renowned historian, educator, and author John Hope Franklin was unveiled in a ceremony attended by 200 people at Duke University on March

3, 1997. The portrait shows Franklin standing, holding a copy of his landmark work "From Slavery to Freedom," the Presidential Medal of Freedom pinned on his lapel, a photograph of his beloved wife, Aurelia, and the John Hope Franklin orchid, "Phalaenopsis" in the background. Franklin is the James B. Duke professor emeritus of history and is recognized as one of the university's most prestigious faculty members. The portrait hangs in the Gothic Reading Room in Perkins Library, along with paintings of other Duke leaders and benefactors. It is the first time a faculty member of any color (other than some who were also president of the university) has been so honored.

A portrait of Black architect, Julian Abele, designer of Duke's Gothic West Campus, hangs in the university's administration building. Franklin's portrait was painted by Simmie Knox, an African American artist from Washington, D.C. The John Hope Franklin Research Center for African and African American Documentation was established at Duke University in 1995.

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NEXT ISSUE:

AAC 10th Anniversary Special!

Please send snapshots and photos of AAC individual members and activities. After publication, the photos will become part of the AAC Archives at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center



Portraits of Community: The Texas African- American Photography Archive

by John H. Slate, Project Archivist

Wedding. Funerals. Dances. Baby photos. Graduation. These subjects and others characterize the holdings of the Texas African-American Photography Archive, a new research collection devoted to the preservation of the photography of African-American Texans, from the Reconstruction era to the present. Located in East Dallas at the 5501 Columbia Art Center, the archive is a part of Documentary Arts, Inc., a non-profit corporation established by author

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and folklorist Alan Govenar.

Govenar observed the dearth of visual materials relating to African Americans in state and regional repositories and started collecting them in 1985 to support his own research. A larger mission developed as he saw entire studios being discarded with the trash and negatives being sold for their silver content. In 1994 a facility was built to house Govenar's collection of African-American photographs. The Texas African-American Photography Archive formally opened in November 1995 with a talk by Eston Naef, curator of photography at the Getty Museum. The facility includes a vault with compact shelving and temperature and humidity controls, as well as a public research area. The archive now houses 30,000 prints and negatives representing more than 15 Black Texas photographers. Many aspects of Black life and culture are shown, such as more than 60 years of academic life at Texas College in Tyler, Texas, and Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas.

The archive received a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in 1996 to rehouse, arrange, and catalog 16,000 images and place selected examples on microfiche. After a national search, John Slate was hired as a project archivist. His goals include not only processing the collection, but coordinating a paid internship program for African-American students at historically Black colleges and universities in Texas who are studying in the areas of libraries/archives, history, sociology, and photography.

Selected collections are now open for research; more will be opened as they are processed. Tours of the archive are available by appointment. A web site, which includes selected images and information about the archive, has been created. The archive's holdings and the photographers who created them are also featured in the recent publications, *Portraits of Community: African-American Photography in Texas* (Texas State Historical Association, 1996). For more information about the Texas African-American Photography Archive, contact John Slate.

AAC Holds 9th Annual Business Meeting

San Diego was the site of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable's Ninth Annual Business Meeting, which took place on Friday, August 30, 1996, during the SAA Annual Meeting. Senior co-chair **Deborah Saito** presided over the proceedings. In her opening remarks, Saito stated the mission of the roundtable and encouraged members new and old to participate in its operation. **La Nina Clayton Foulks** served as the minutes recorder.

The agenda items commenced with the discussion of pre-existing business. **Ida Jones**, the 1995 recipient of the SAA Minority Student Award, introduced the 1996 winner, **Letha E. Johnson**. A senior in the history program at Washburn University in Kansas, Johnson is also the president of the student chapter of the honorary history fraternity, Phi Alpha Theta. Johnson thanked the membership for its support and expressed her gratitude for having received the award.

Saito provided an update relating to the Minority Student Award. At the 1995 AAC business meeting, members voted in support of appealing to SAA Council to increase the award's stipend. In June 1996, Council members passed a resolution to increase the award to a maximum of \$750. Saito explained that this award will now cover not only the student registration fee and costs of special meals, but also help to defray travel and overall conference expenses.

Outgoing SAA President **Brenda Banks** stopped by to encourage AAC members to continue to participate fully in SAA. Those members interested in becoming involved should contact SAA Executive Director **Susan Fox** or **Lori Hefner**, who is the roundtable's liaison on SAA Council.

During the first in a series of committee and special reports, **Kathryn Neal**, co-editor of the roundtable newsletter, described the typical content of the publication. She added that future editions might include more feature

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People, Places, Projects and Events

Letha Johnson Named 1996 SAA Minority Student Award Winner

As early as eighth grade, the study of history fascinated Letha Johnson. Little did she know that nearly a decade later, she would make SAA history by becoming the third recipient of the organization's Minority Student Award. Established in 1993, this annual award is offered jointly by SAA and the AAC Roundtable. It acknowledges the academic and personal accomplishments of students of color who demonstrate interest in pursuing careers in the archival profession, while encouraging them to become active members of SAA. Among the prizes Ms. Johnson received as honoree are a certificate and complimentary student registration.

A native of Kansas, Ms. Johnson is currently completing her senior year in the history program at Washburn University in Topeka. She plans to graduate in May 1997. Ms. Johnson also serves as president of her university's chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, an honorary history fraternity. While she has devoted her studies to the history of the United States, she has taken several courses in European history as well.

With the initial spark generated while she was in junior high school, Ms. Johnson continued to develop a passion for history in the years that followed. She knew in high school that she wanted to embark on a career that involved the subject but did not care to teach. By chance, she happened to be working as an aide in the school's counseling office. This position gave her an opportunity to look through books on careers, which is how she discovered the archival profession.

Ms. Johnson went on to obtain an internship at the Smoky Hill Museum in Salina, Kansas, where she spent part of her school day cataloging a photograph collection and reading archival literature. Her curiosity about the profession "kind of snowballed from there," she said. During this same year, Ms. Johnson gained additional experience by work-

ing one day a week at the local public library. There she continued to catalog photographs and also encapsulated maps.

In the summer of 1994, Ms. Johnson became the first recipient of the Kansas City Area Archivists Minority Internship. She served as an intern at the Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS), where she was given a basic overview of archival practice and had the opportunity to work in all of the profession's subfields. "I got a little bit of experience in everything," Ms. Johnson said. She particularly enjoyed the processing work since it afforded her a chance to handle the historical documents. Yet records management also caught her fancy.

The following summer, Ms. Johnson was invited to continue her internship in KSHS's new Facility. She has worked there ever since. Currently, she processes several record collections from state agencies, prepares finding aids, and participates in data management. After graduation, Ms. Johnson plans to carry on with her work at KSHS, while taking a year off to consider various graduate programs. She ultimately envisions herself working hands-on with historical materials and is also exploring the area of records management.

Although she is no stranger to awards and achievement, Ms. Johnson said that she was quite surprised to have won the SAA Minority Student Award, especially since she is still an undergraduate. yet she expressed her appreciation for receiving it, as well as for having had opportunities to gain internship experience locally. "I feel real fortunate that things have clicked into place so far," she said. Letha Johnson receives well wishes from the AAC that her good fortune will continue.

Dorothy Porter Wesley Day at the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center

In celebration of National Library Week, April 13-19, 1997, the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard

University will hold its ninth annual Dorothy Porter Wesley Forum and Lecture on Friday, April 18, 1997, in the University's Blackburn Center.

The theme for this year is "Libraries and Congress." Legislative activity, Congressional funding, lobbying and the national digital library are among the topics to be discussed.

At the morning Forum, 10 a.m. - 12 noon, the participants will include representatives of the American Library Association's District of Columbia office and staff of the Library of Congress's digital library project. The Dorothy Porter Wesley Lecture, at 2:00 p.m., will feature The Honorable Major R. Owens, U.S. Representative. Mr. Owens is the first and only professional librarian elected to Congress to date. The title of his lecture is "The Political Need to Set Vital Priorities for African American Historical Research." For more information contact Jean Church at 202-806-7240.

Digital Scriptorium at Duke University

The Digital Scriptorium of the Duke University Special Collections Library has recently added new online archival collections to the library's web site. The "African-American Women" web pages, developed in collaboration with Ginny Daley, the Women's Studies Archivist and Bibliographer, feature scanned images of manuscript pages and full text of the writings of African-American women. Here is a description of one of the 3 collections currently available:

Elizabeth Johnson Harris: Life Story - Elizabeth Johnson Harris was born in Augusta, Georgia, in 1867, to parents who had been slaves. Her 85-page handwritten memoir provides glimpses into her early childhood, race relations, her own ambivalence about her place as an African American in this country, and the importance of religion and education in her life. This online collection includes full text of her memoirs as well as several of her poems

and vignettes that were published in newspapers during her lifetime.

This and other online collections in the Special Collections Library can be found at

<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/>

Karen Jefferson, African-American Studies Archivist/Bibliographer, Special Collections Library, invites us to visit Duke's growing array of online resources.

Midwest Archives Conference Solicits Scholarship Applications

The Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) is soliciting applications for the annual MAC Scholarship for Minority Students in Archival Administration. The scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to minority students pursuing graduate education in archival administration and encourage ethnic diversification of the membership of MAC and of the archival profession as a whole.

To be eligible for a scholarship, applicants must be a student of African, Asian, Hispanic, Native American, or Pacific Islander descent, currently enrolled in, or accepted into, a graduate, multi-course program in archival administration listed in the *SAA Directory of Archival Education*, and must have a grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in their academic program. Applicants are *not* required to be a resident of or attend school in the Midwest.

Applications are available from the Minority Scholarship Committee:

Beverly Cook, Assist. Curator
Chicago Public Library
400 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 747-4883

Applications must be postmarked by April 15, 1997. Awards will be announced no later than June 1, 1997.

Lela Sewall Appointed Coordinator/Archivist for South Carolina State University Historical Collection

Ms. Lela Johnson Sewall was

recently appointed Coordinator/Archivist for the South Carolina State University Historical Collection in Orangeburg, SC.

Models for Establishing an Archival Program Session

Karen L. Jefferson (Duke University), Carter B. Cue (Winston-Salem State University), F. Keith Bingham (University of Maryland Eastern Shore) and Tommy L. Bogger (Norfolk State University) will serve as panelists for a session entitled, "Models for Establishing an Archival Program" at the upcoming Third National Conference of African American Librarians. The conference is sponsored by the Black Caucus of the American Library Association (BCALA) and will be held in Winston-Salem, NC, July 31-August 3, 1997. The conference coincides with the National Black Theatre Festival in Winston-Salem from August 4-9. For more information about the conference or the festival contact Sylvia Sprinkle-Hamlin (President, BCALA) 910-727-2556; s_hamlin@forsyth.lib.nc.us

Business Mtg., Cont. from page 2

stories that emphasize broader archival concerns and their relevance to the AAC membership, as well as issues that affect archivists and archives of color particularly. Neal put forth a plea for members to submit articles. The deadline for the spring newsletter is February 1 and mid-June (no later than July 1) for the fall edition.

Karen Jefferson announced that the Archivists of Color Directory has been published, thanks to **David Moltke-Hansen** from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whose institution financed its printing and publishing. Moltke-Hansen agreed to be responsible for distributing the guide. A few copies were to be available at the business meeting. SAA was going to be asked to finance the distribution of the directory to all persons whose entries are included and to handle future requests for the directory, including the shipping and handling costs. Saito asked for a volunteer to supervise the next edition of

the directory. **Brenda Square** agreed to undertake the effort.

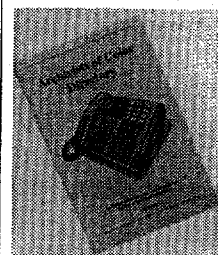
Representing the 1997 Program Committee, Jefferson addressed the membership with a call for session proposals for the 1997 SAA Annual Meeting. The meeting will take place in Chicago from August 25 to August 31, 1997. Its theme is "Transformation of Archives in the Information Age."

Members were informed about the Angel Project, which involves archivists from the National Archives who are volunteering two hours each Saturday to process the publications backlog of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (ASALH). After completing this inventory, the archivists will survey the ASALH archives. To volunteer or to gain more information, contact **Walter Hill** or **Wilda Logan Willis**.

Next, Saito offered comments on the 1996 SAA program. She noted that AAC members contributed substantially to the development of the program. Issues of race and ethnicity were successfully addressed within the several diversity sessions on the program. Saito also reported that, after some discussion, the official acronym of the roundtable is to be AAC.

Taronda Spencer, an archivist involved with the Cooperative HBCU Archival Survey Project (CHASP), reported that the first phase of the survey of the archives of historically Black colleges and universities has been completed. The survey encompasses thirty-three institutions in locales from South Carolina to Pennsylvania. A new proposal for funding of the second phase of the survey has been submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

As the first item of newer business, the nominees for AAC co-chair, **Dennis Scott** and **Cynthia Lewis** were an-



AAC Directory Available

Call
Bernice Brack
312-922-0140

nounced. Lewis won the election and will serve as co-chair for the 1996-1998 term. She is archivist at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in Atlanta.

Sushan Chin discussed the possibility of the roundtable's sponsoring an issue of the *American Archivist*, which would focus on racial and ethnic diversity. As a result of a motion that was raised and seconded, the AAC will endorse and co-sponsor this special issue. **Donna Wells, Deborra Richardson, and Daniel Williams** will serve as the committee liaisons on the project.

Saito recommended that the AAC create a brochure. It was decided that a description sheet of the roundtable be made available for posting and distribution at the annual meetings.

Major policy changes rendered by SAA, which could affect the roundtable were announced by Saito. Roundtables will be dropped from SAA's roster if they fail to respond to requests for information regarding their leadership and membership within ten days of the end of the annual meeting. Therefore, contact information must be provided by the roundtable to SAA.

According to a fund-raising policy adopted by the SAA Executive Committee, SAA must be notified before any financial transaction are made. Roundtables and sections are not to solicit money on behalf of themselves or SAA. The AAC co-chairs will confer with Susan Fox to discuss the roundtable's status pertaining to the contributions made by Howard University for production and distribution costs of the roundtable newsletter, David Moltke-Hansen for the *Archivists of Color Directory*, and **R. Steven Norman**, who designs and publishes the newsletter. Saito and Lewis agreed to confer with SAA to discuss AAC's status with regard to in-kind contributions already made.

Various members made additional announcements before the close of the meeting:

- To begin to commemorate the AAC's tenth year, Donna Wells solicited articles from AAC members who have participated in the roundtable since its

Participation in SAA & ACA Grows Steadily

Archivists of color continue to volunteer their time and talents to the Society of American Archivists and the Academy of Certified Archivists. Here is a list of some of those who are currently participating. If you are interested in becoming more active in SAA or ACA, contact SAA President Nicholas Burckel at (414)288-7214.



Program Committee 1997
Karen L. Jefferson

Public Information Committee
LaNina Clayton Foulks

Awards Sub-Committee
SAA Minority Scholarship Committee
Deborah Saito
Tammy Lau
Letha Johnson



Committee for Institutional Evaluation & Development
Wilda Logan Willis

Committee on the Status of Women
Taronda Spencer

Steering Committee
Deborah Dandridge

Publications Board
Cecilia Aros Hunter



Committee on Legal and Legislative Issues
Donna Wells

Membership Committee
Beverly Cook
Deborah Saito

Manuscripts Repositories Section
Kathryn Neal

Committee on Education and Professional Development
Danna Bell-Russel

Archivists & Archives of Color Roundtable Co-Chairs
Deborah Saito
Cynthia P. Lewis

AAC Roundtable Newsletter Co-Editors
Joellen ElBashir
Kathryn Neal

beginning.

- **Thomas Battle** pointed out that though **Archie Motley** was one of the twelve candidates nominated, he was not selected to become an SAA fellow. Battle suggested that the AAC endorse Motley's nomination and encouraged individual members to write letters of recommendation. Subsequently, David Moltke-Hansen nominated Motley for a second time. The attending roundtable members granted the co-chairs authority to draft a resolution in support of Motley's nomination. Battle and Moltke-Hansen agreed to work with the co-chairs to write a draft of this resolution.

- Past issues of the AAC newsletter and early Minorities Task Force [the precursor to the AAC] records are available at Moorland-Spangarn Re-

search Center at Howard University. In the upcoming newsletter, the names of former AAC co-chairs and those of the roundtable's former incarnations will be published. **Deborah Dandridge** and **Clifford Muse** volunteered to serve on a task force to preserve the history of AAC. Their responsibilities will include conducting research on the roundtable's history, as well as developing record-management criteria for archival administration of the roundtable's records

After the announcements, the meeting was adjourned. During the course of the proceedings, members in attendance were encouraged to donate financial gifts to the Minority Student Award Scholarship Fund. Two hundred and fifty dollars were collected for submission to the SAA administrative office.