

African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 5, No. 2

August 1991

PROJECTS

The New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) in conjunction with the American Indian Law Alliance, the Chinatown History Museum and the Caribbean Cultural Center are in search of materials for a photographic exhibition entitled "...And Then Columbus." The exhibit will document the history and culture of the indigenous people of North and South America and the Caribbean before the arrival of the Spanish. It will also explore the impact of the fateful encounter upon the native cultures that were in full bloom at the time, as well as the subsequent introduction of slavery. The exhibition will further ex-

plore the contributions of Africans and Asians in the creation of American culture. DORIS welcomes donations of photographic reproductions of records and/or artifacts for inclusion in the exhibit. "...And Then Columbus" is scheduled to open October 18, 1991 in New York City. For more information, call Jeanette Martinez at 212-566-0598.

Ken Burns and Florentine Films, makers of the acclaimed PBS documentary series "The Civil War", are preparing a multi-part film history of baseball. The producers are looking for evocative images of baseball from the 1840s through the 1950s and would like to hear from persons with lithographs, daguerrotypes, or photographs of any aspect of baseball. They are also seeking home movies from 1900 to 1959. If you have such material, contact Bruce Alfred, Florentine Films, c/o Cinergy, 321 West 44th Street, Suite 602, New York, NY 10036; 212-757-5434.

SAA MEETS IN PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia, PA is the site of the Society of American Archivist's 55th Annual Meeting, September 23-29, 1991. The city poses a special delight to archivists, who are certain to be rewarded by the richest historical tradition of any U.S. city. Perhaps inspired by the cultural diversity of Philadelphia, the 1991 Program Committee has put together a program of diverse offerings. Among the many topics to be addressed at the conference are; the archivist as scholar, access, appraisal, management concerns, preservation, and use of descriptive archival standards. Some sessions that may be of particular interest to AATWAR members include:

- (2) Et tu Brute: My Mother the Genealogist
- (14) The Business of Moving Image Archives
- (19) Take the "A" Train: Documenting the Life of Duke Ellington

(See Meet - page 5)

INSIDE...

Acquisitions	2
Announcements	2
Charles Blockson	3
Jobs	5
Publications	5
Nomination Form	7

Acquisitions

The Center for the Study of the History of Nursing, School of Nursing, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia has acquired records of the **Mercy-Douglass Hospital School of Nurses, 1896-1983** (15 lin. ft). The collection offers an illuminating perspective on the condition of African American women in the nursing profession, the rise and decline of segregated training facilities, and the factors that kept African-American nurses from practicing outside Black-managed hospitals. The materials include items documenting the schools affiliated with the two hospitals serving a predominantly African American population in Philadelphia: the Frederick Douglass Memorial Hospital and Training School, founded in 1895, and Mercy Hospital and School for Nurses, established in 1907. In 1948 the two hospitals merged to form the combined Mercy-Douglass Hospital and School of Nursing, which closed in 1973.

Among the documentation are correspondence, reports, administrative files, and photographs.

The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC recently acquired the papers of **Sara Dunlap Jackson**, noted archivist at the National Archives from 1944 to 1990. The material includes correspondence with colleagues and proteges spanning a number of years; writings, photographs and honors and awards. MSRC also acquired the **Anthony M. Platt Collection on E. Franklin Frazier** which consists primarily of the FBI files on Franklin which Platt obtained for the writing of his book, *E. Franklin Frazier Reconsidered*, published by Rutgers University Press, 1991. The collection also includes the transcript of Frazier's 1955 testimony before the Senate Subcommittee regarding Communist Penetration of Education.

Announcements

Margaret Jerrido, formerly Associate Archivist and Director of the Black Women Physicians Project at The Medical College of Pennsylvania, assumed her duties as Archivist and Head of Urban Archives at Temple University, Philadelphia, PA in September of 1990. The Urban Archives houses organizational and personal papers documenting the social, economic and physical development of the Philadelphia Metropolitan area since the mid-19th century. It also includes books, pamphlets, maps, atlases, photographs, and oral history tapes concerning the locality. Documentation of the history of Blacks in Philadelphia can be found in the Archives' records of local Black organizations and in its extensive photograph collection. The Archives is open Monday-Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. Send inquiries to Urban Archives, Paley Library, 13th and Berks Mall, Philadelphia, PA 19122 or call (215)787-8257.

Sara Dunlap Jackson, archivist at the National Archives from 1944 to 1990, died on April 19, 1991 at her home in Washington, D.C. Over the years, she worked in the Archives' military records division and on numerous projects for the Archives' National Historical

(See Announcements - page 6)

The AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER is published twice a year. Questions? Contributions? Contact co-editors: Karen L. Jefferson and Joellen El Bashir, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D.C. 20059, (202) 806-7480/FAX (202) 806-6405.

The AATWAR Newsletter is produced by Afro-Info Inc., 254 Madison St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20011, (202) 726-5003; and financially supported by the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center and Society of American Archivists.

CHARLES L. BLOCKSON, PHILADELPHIA'S CELEBRATED COLLECTOR

Joellen ElBashir

Charles L. Blockson, historian and author, has spent more than 40 years amassing one of the largest privately-owned collection of books, manuscripts, prints and drawings, artifacts, sheet music and other items documenting Black history and culture. In 1984, he donated his collection, which now includes more than 80,000 items, to Temple University and became the curator of the Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection, a unit of the University Libraries' Special Collections.

A Norristown, Pennsylvania native, Mr. Blockson starred in football, shotput, and the discus in high school, then received offers of athletic scholarships from 60 colleges. He chose Penn State and roomed with teammates Rosey Grier and Lenny Moore. He later passed up a pro career with the New York Giants to pursue his passion for Black history.

Before accepting his post at Temple, Mr. Blockson was human relations adviser for the Norristown Area School District for many years, teaching ethnic and local history and conducting seminars and workshops for teachers and other school personnel. He is the author of numerous articles and five books, including *One Hun-*

dred and One Books, By and About People of African Descent, published in 1988. *The Underground Railroad, First Person Narratives of Escapes to Freedom in the North*, published in 1987 was a Book-of-the-Month Club alternate selection. In 1981 he authored *The Underground Railroad in Pennsylvania*. Mr. Blockson's second book, *Black Genealogy*, a guide for tracing Black ancestry, was published in 1977 before Haley's *Roots* became popular. *Pennsylvania's Black*

Lincoln Universities. He is former president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society; has served as a director of the state Historical and Record Advisory Board and its Black History Advisory Board; and is now the Afro-American commissioner on the Governor's Heritage Affairs Commission. He has also served on Penn State's Alumni Council (his daughter, Noelle, is a 1987 graduate of the University.)

Pennsylvania's Black History, [Blockson's] first book published in 1975, is considered by many to be the best work available on the subject to this day.

History, his first book published in 1975, is considered by many to be the best work available on the subject to this day.

In addition to collecting, writing, and serving as Curator of his collection, Mr. Blockson organizes African-American study programs, arranges exhibits, and makes television and radio appearances. He lectures to schoolchildren and organizations in the U.S. as well as the Caribbean, South America and Denmark.

Mr. Blockson holds honorary doctorates from Villanova and

Recognizing the need for historical markers in Pennsylvania, particularly in the City of Philadelphia, Mr. Blockson, launched a project designed to identify historical locations relevant to the accomplishments of African-Americans. Funded by the William Penn Foundation, the goal of the Blockson Collection's Historical Marker Project is to have 74 official blue and gold state historical markers erected on the sidewalks of Philadelphia.

Among the people and institutions distinguished thus far
(continued on next page)

are: James Forten, a wealthy sailmaker and an influential spokesman for the Abolition Movement; African Zoar United Methodist Church, one of the first churches established by Blacks in America and noted for having the oldest continuous Black congregation in the history of Methodism; John W. Coltrane, a pioneering African-American jazz musician, composer, and saxophonist; Prince

The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection is comprised of four major units: Rare Books, Manuscripts and Archives, Special Collections, and General Research and Reference Collections. The rare book section, with some 3,500 volumes, is extensive in first edition Afro-American and Caribbean holdings dating back to the the sixteenth century.

Dr. R.R. Wright, Sam Holmes and William Still, a collection of Paul Robeson memorabilia and records of the Alpha Boule of the Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. The Caribbean Collection contains many primary source documents, including the *Haitian Presidential Papers*, the *Jamaica Almanack* and Christophe manuscripts.

The Special Collections consist of the Slave Narrative Collection, numbering over 100 and the Underground Railroad Collection, with over 1000 items of documentation as well as historical pamphlets, broadsides and memoirs.

The General Research and Reference Collection totals over 25,000 volumes on Black life and culture.

Hall Grand Lodge, a Masonic lodge named for the Reverend Prince Hall, founder of Freemasonry among African-Americans; and the home of Henry Ossawa Tanner, a painter of biblical, landscape, and other subjects. The project is in keeping with the overall purpose of the Blockson Collection: to assemble and preserve historical data and artifacts about the contributions African-Americans have made in Philadelphia, the nation, and the world.

Blockson started collecting books as a young boy. What began as a childhood hobby developed into one of the nation's most dynamic research collections on Black history.

Among the highly prized works in the Rare Book Collection are the complete first edition copies of writings by Phyllis Wheatley, George Washington Williams, Charles Chesnut, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Langston Hughes and works as *Alexandri Sardi* (1557); *Corippus' Africani Grammatici* (1581); and William Wells Brown's *Clotel* (1853).

The General Research and Reference Collection totals over 25,000 volumes on Black life and culture.

The primary source materials of the Manuscripts and Archives section include the papers of prominent Black Philadelphians and organizations, including the papers of

The Prints and Photographs Collection includes rare slavery broadsides, African and Caribbean maps, and photographs depicting the social and political lives of Pennsylvania's African-Americans. The Raymond Trent Oral History Collection, consists of thousands of taped proceedings and radio programs on Afro-American history and culture.

The Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection is a legacy of truth for generations to come. As primary custodian of this outstanding collection, Charles Blockson continues the magnificent tradition of Black bibliophiles in preserving the past for the future.

et - from page 1)

- (23) Archival Turnaround: New Directions for Old Archival Programs
- (30) Rescuing Histories: Blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York State
- (43) Strength in Numbers: Membership Development in Archival Organizations
- (58) The Challenge of Documenting Native American Cultures
- (59) Preservation of Black Religious Heritage
- (62) Legislating Longevity
- (80) Records and Objects, Archivists and Curators: Part of a Common Agenda
- (82) Southern Exposure: Isolated Cultures in the American Southeast

In addition to the program sessions is an exciting package of tours to enjoy. Two that may be of interest are the Walking Tour of Afro-American Philadelphia and the Riding Tour of Philadelphia's Ethnic Communities (both on September 25th).

Kudos to the Program Committee and special thanks to AATWAR member Diana Lachatanere for an enticing selection of activities and presentations for this year's conference.

Jobs

Archives Conservator, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University/ Manage fully equipped and furnished conservation laboratory; make conservation decisions and complete preservation and conservation treatments as needed/ Graduate degree in relevant discipline; completion of formal conservation program/ Tenure-track, \$28,594 min./ Warner W. Pflug, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202/ 313-577-4024

Archivist, Bethune Memorial Museum and National Archives for Black Women's History, Washington, DC./ Direct and administer programs of the Archives; formulate policies and procedures; process collections; perform outreach services promoting the Archives/ Advanced degree in history with specialization in Black women's history; professional archival training and experience; 2 years administrative experience/ Bethune Museum and Archives, 1318 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005/ 202-332-1233

NOMINATION OF AATWAR 1992 VICE-CHAIR

It's time once again to consider nominations for the AATWAR Vice-Chair. The position becomes vacant as Deborra Richardson, presently Vice-Chair, succeeds Lynda DeLoach as Chair. The AATWAR Nomination Form is appended to this newsletter. Deadline for submission of nominees is September 13, 1991. If no nominations are received, a volunteer will be selected to serve as Vice-Chair at the AATWAR Business Meeting in Philadelphia, September 27, 1991.

Publications

The North Carolina African American Archives Group published the first issue of its *NCAAAG BULLETIN* in March 1991. It provides periodic news about projects and people related to the documentation and preservation of African American culture in North Carolina. For more information contact Linda Simmons-Henry, St. Augustine's College, 106 Smokehouse Lane, Cary, NC 27513

(Announcements - from page 2)

Publications and Records Commission. Dr. Jackson was a native of Columbia, S.C., and a 1943 graduate of Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina. The recipient of many honors and awards in her lifetime, she was particularly proud to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of Toledo in 1976 in recognition of her many years of assistance to researchers at the National Archives. Dr. Jackson also made notable contributions to the study of history in her chosen fields: Southern history, military history, Western history, and Black history.

Barbara Lewis Burger, archivist in the Still Picture Branch of the National Archives, is the editor of the "Guide to the Holdings of the Still Picture Branch of the National Archives," published early this spring. This 176-page resource provides summary information about some six million photographic prints, negatives, transparencies, posters, and other visual images in the Still Picture Branch. The Guide is available in the National Archives Museum Shop or by mail order.

Elinor DesVerney Sinnette, former Chief Librarian and Oral History Librarian at the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, and author of the biography,

Arthur Alfonso Schomburg, ended her 40-plus year career in the field when she retired at the end of June 1991. During her retirement Dr. Sinnette plans to continue to research and write, and provide consultations and interviewing for oral history projects.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture celebrated 65 years of service with the Grand Opening of its expanded complex from April 5 to 14, 1991. The celebration included a national forum on the topic, "Preserving the African and African Diasporan Heritage for the 21st Century", in which scholars and professionals in nationally significant archives, museums, and libraries and other organizations were convened to "determine how best to continue the efforts to insure the preservation of a comprehensive record of the achievements and travails of African peoples everywhere."

A joyous program of tributes and performances in the Riverside Church preceded the two-day symposium, "New Frontiers of Africana Scholarship." The Celebration culminated with a benefit concert at the Apollo Theater. The Center's expansion increases its space for research services and public programs by 50 percent. The newly renovated building on West 135th Street where the Center began in the mid-1920s,

ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND THE SAA MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA?

IF SO, JOIN US AT THE AATWAR BUSINESS MEETING

Date: Friday, September 27, 1991

Time: 10:30 am - 12:30 pm

Place: Adam's Mark Hotel in Philadelphia

In addition to the annual business meeting, in which members will elect a vice-chair for the 1991-1992 year, guest lecturer, Margaret Jerrido, will describe selected African American resources in the Philadelphia area. AATWAR members and non-members are invited to attend.

houses the refurbished American Negro Theater, a new exhibition hall and a gift shop. The Photograph and Prints Division and the 360-seat Langston Hughes Auditorium occupies the new building which links the Center's current facility to the original building. Rounding out the complex is the Countee Cullen Regional Branch Library, adjacent to the Center on West 136th Street. For further information, contact the Schomburg Center, 515 Malcolm X Boulevard, NY, NY 10037-1801.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE

AATWAR NOMINATION FORM

Nominee's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No.: _____

Institutional Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

SAA Member: Yes___ No___

The candidate listed on this form has agreed to run for the position of Vice Chair: Yes___ No___

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH (Please include position title, date position assumed, academic degrees and awarding institutions, professional training, employment history, professional activities and offices held, publications, and awards received. (Add an additional sheet if necessary.)

Nomination submitted by: _____

(You may submit your own name as a nominee.)

Send completed Nominations Form to Ms. Lynda DeLoach, Co-Chair
AATWAR, George Meany Memorial Archives, 10000 New Hampshire Ave.,
Silver Spring, MD 20903. Deadline for submission is September 13, 1991.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE

The **AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE** (formerly Minorities Roundtable) approved by the SAA Council in 1987, is an outgrowth of the Minorities Task Force established in 1981. The Roundtable's purpose is to: 1) identify and address the concerns of African, Asian, Hispanic, and Native American descent, 2) promote wider participation of said archivists in the archival professional, and 3) promote the preservation of archival materials that pertain to people of color. Co-Chairs: Lynda DeLoach, Archivist, George Meany Memorial Archives, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20903, (301) 434-6404; and Deborra Richardson, Archives Center, C340 National Museum of American History, Washington, D.C. 20560, (202) 357-3270.

The **Society of American Archivists (SAA)**, founded in 1936, is a professional association of individuals and institutions interested in the preservation and use of archives. Its membership includes individuals serving government, academic institutions, businesses, churches, libraries, historical societies, museums, and professional associations in more than sixty countries. Through its publications, annual meetings, workshops, and other programs, SAA provides a means for contact, communication, and cooperation among archivists and archival institutions. Society of American Archivists, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-0140.

Moorland-Spingarn Research Center
Howard University
Washington, D.C. 20059