



Institutional Profile
Page 3



Announcements
Page 6

ARCHIVISTS AND ARCHIVES OF COLOR NEWS



Elzie Odom, right, celebrating with wife Ruby Odom after winning a city council election in Arlington, Texas by 16 votes to become the first African American city councilman in Arlington; 05/19/1990



Barrye Brown

Letter from the Senior Chair

Dear AAC community,

I hope you all are staying safe and healthy. I cannot tell you how many times I've started and stopped writing this letter. As a person who internalizes things, it's been hard for me to express my feelings on dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, police brutality/state-sanctioned violence, racism and anti-Black sentiment, and global white supremacy.

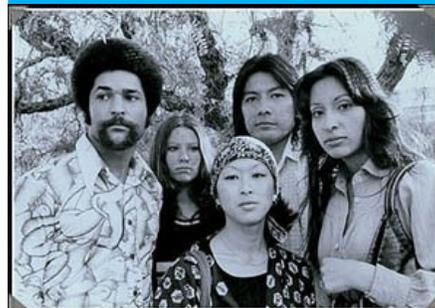
On most days and sleepless nights, I find myself vacillating between fear, grief, rage, exhaustion, and numbness. I'm sure many of you have felt the same. In spite of all of this, I have found some respite in the work that we are doing as archivists of color to document the current moment.

Over the past few weeks, I have attended numerous webinars that highlight the work that we as archivists of color are doing, such as *Collective Memory: Storytelling and Collaboration in the Writing of History* (hosted by the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum), *Reflections on Black Lives and Archives* (hosted by the Society of American Archivists), and *Archiving Protest Content While Protecting Activists: Documenting the Now in conversation with WITNESS, Blackivists, Texas After Violence Project, and Project STAND* (hosted by Documenting the Now). Also, if you have not already, I encourage you all to read and sign on to the [Call to Action: Archiving State-Sanctioned Violence Against Black People](#), drafted by Zakiya Collier. I am so very proud of and inspired by my colleagues.

I look forward to connecting with many of you virtually at the Archivists and Archives of Color Section meeting at SAA annual. Until then, I hope you all are being kind to yourselves and taking the time that you need to rest, recharge, and remain active in this fight. Please know that the Archivists and Archives of Color Section newsletter remains an outlet for you to discuss your thoughts, projects, or any other work you'd like to uplift. As always, I remain steadfast and hopeful for a better tomorrow.

Sincerely,
Barrye

About AAC



The Changing Face of California State University, circa 1970s. Public Affairs Photo Collection. Courtesy of the California State University Archive.

The Archivists and Archives of Color Section (AAC) is an interest group within the Society of American Archivists. SAA is the oldest and largest archival association in North America, serving the educational and informational needs of more than 5,500 individuals and institutional members. The AAC Section helps to identify concerns and promote the needs of archivists and archives of color.

Institutional Profile

In Service: The Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture

By Aaisha Haykal, Manager of Archival Services

Those who have no record of what their forebears have accomplished lose the inspiration which comes from the teaching of biography and history.
— Dr. Carter G. Woodson

On January 15, 2020 the College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture welcomed 150+ visitors back home. Since 2018, the Avery Research Center has been closed to undergo a needed renovation to install a new Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system, replace windows, and to do roof repairs. The cost for the project was approximately \$2.3 million dollars. The last time this type of work was done on the building was in 1994/95, which was four years after the Avery Research Center opened. Having a stable and constant environment is important in order to prevent damage and deterioration of the collections (approximately 4,000 linear feet). Furthermore, due to donations the Center was able to purchase new archival and museum shelving/cabinets and furniture for the reading room.



Open house visitors view exhibit on Gullah-Geechee culture.

The Avery Research Center's collections (artifact, manuscript, and library) document the unique history and culture of the African diaspora, with an emphasis on Charleston, the South Carolina Lowcountry, and beyond. During the renovation these collections were stored either off-site at an Iron Mountain storage unit or within Special Collections at Addestone Library. The staff were relocated to various locations within Addestone Library.

At the open house visitors were able to network and mingle with each other as they experienced the four new temporary exhibitions at the Center, seeing new items from our holdings in previously installed exhibitions, and two community organizations tabled.

All of the new exhibits are community curated and demonstrates the pivotal space that the Avery Research Center has in collaborating with the local community, giving space for these conversations, and depicting Black life in the Lowcountry and the African diaspora. Additionally, having the community curated exhibits opens the Avery Research Center to people who previously saw the Avery Research Center as not a space for them as well as open the conversation about donating collection items to the archives and museum.



Charleston resident, artist, and guest curator King David discussing the contributions of Africa to math and science.



George and Roberta Boatti standing in front of art work of DuBois and Carver painted by her mother, Edythe Scott. The paintings were donated in 2019 and are a part of an exhibit highlighting the work of Black artists on both sides of the Atlantic.

On the first floor the Avery Research Center has a new community curated gallery space, which was previously used in the past as a conference room and a gift shop. The first exhibition in this new space is “The African Origins of Mathematics”, which was curated by Charleston resident and artist Robert “King David” Ross. The exhibit highlights the direct impact Africa has had on modern mathematics and focuses on the first math instrument, the Ishango bone.

Our second floor changing gallery features an exhibition curated by hip-hop artist and activist Benny Starr titled “The Water Keeps Rising”. This exhibit highlights issues relating to civic engagement, racial disparities, and the environment through performance art/music. In the corridor we are exhibiting the art of local artist kolpeace, displaying a series of work under the title “Resilient”, which depicts the power of being resilient, recognizing African Americans who have shown strength through adversity such as local activists the late Muhiyidin D’baha and Cyntoia Brown, who faced life in prison after being convicted of homicide as a juvenile.



Image of the Resilient exhibition done by artist kolpeace.



(Left) Avery Research Center Facilities Coordinator, Mr. Daron Calhoun, II and guest curator and hip-hop artists, Mr. Benny Starr engage with visitors. (Right) Image from Benny Starr's exhibit, "The Water Keeps Rising".

The third floor is home to the Cox Gallery, which is named after Benjamin and Jeanette Cox, former principal of the Avery Normal Institute and his wife. In this space is "Since 1920: Zeta Phi Beta Centennial", which was curated by The Gamma Zeta chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated. The Zetas created an exhibit filled with material from their members that depict the rich history of the sorority in print and paraphernalia. Visitors can see the in-depth programming, philanthropy, and reach of Zeta Phi Betas during their 100 years.

Since being in service for researchers on January 6th and for tours since the 15th, the Avery Research Center has seen a constant stream of people coming in to do research and to view our permanent galleries. The February and March schedules for events and tours are already at capacity. The Avery Research Center's staff will continue our mission and live by the words of Dr. Woodson by keeping the records and teaching others about the stories within.

Come on out to see us at 125 Bull St. in downtown Charleston, SC and keep informed virtually by following us on social media and viewing our website.



Members of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. view and discuss their history at an exhibit honoring their centennial anniversary.

Announcements

New Collection: The Elzie and Ruby Odom Collection

Special Collections at the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries is pleased to announce the acquisition of the Elzie and Ruby Odom Collection. Elzie Delano Odom was born on May 10, 1929. He grew up in the Freedom Colony of Shankleville, Texas, a community that was established by his ancestors following emancipation. He married his wife, Ruby Truvillion, in 1947. Together, they forged a life and legacy that would open doors for generations to come. Elzie and Ruby hosted NAACP meetings at their home in Orange, Texas, in secret while the organization was criminalized in Texas, and their work for equity and equality have continued throughout their lives. Elzie Odom served on the Orange school district board as the first elected Black official and became one of the first Black Postal Inspectors in the State. He was elected to the Arlington City Council in 1990 and was the first Black councilman in the city. In 1997 he was elected as Mayor of Arlington and was Arlington's first Black Mayor. This collection consists of scrapbooks made by his daughter covering his Mayoral race and terms, family reunion materials, Church papers, newspaper clippings, and materials relating to his community service.

For more information on the collection and to schedule a visit, please email spcoref@uta.edu or call 817-272-3393.



Elzie Odom walking to the pulpit in front of the Mount Olive Baptist Church congregation, where he received a standing ovation for becoming the first African-American councilman in Arlington, Texas; 05/20/1990.

Announcements

Chicago Area Archivists' Archives and Archivists of Color Group Names Winner of 2020 Travel Fund Award

The Chicago Area Archivists' (<http://chicagoarchivists.org/>) Archives and Archivists of Color interest group named G'Jordan Williams as the winner of the 2020 Travel Fund Award. G'Jordan is a graduate student as well as Archives Associate and Education Programs Coordinator at DuSable Museum of African American History. In his winning essay he wrote, "I plan to apply all skills gained, and all relationships formed to aid my mission to assist Black communities in safeguarding culture by applying transformative information science. Further, I plan to use the professional network acquired to help secure funding and resources appropriated for those who will take on the privilege of culture curation." The Travel Fund Award was intended to support G'Jordan's attendance at Midwest Archives Conference 2020 but will now be used to send G'Jordan to the archives conference of his choice in the coming year.

New Publications Available

Hankins, Rebecca (2020). "Practicing Islam in the time of COVID-19," in eBook titled Religion in Quarantine: The Future of Religion in a Post-Pandemic World. Texas: Digital Religion Publications. Each essay considers what the future of religion might look like for different religious communities due to social changes brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. The PDF version of the eBook is available for FREE download at: <https://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/handle/1969.1/188004>

Aziz, Sahar, Cynthia Burrell, and Rebecca Hankins. Books Addressing Muslims or Islam in the United States (1965-2019) [Bibliography](#). Updates: March 23, 2020; March 21, 2019.

Your 2019-2020 AAC Steering Committee



Barrye Brown
Senior Chair



Tarienne Mitchell
Vice Chair



Jina DuVernay
*Steering Committee
Member*



Aisha Haykal
*Steering Committee
Member*



Brittany Newberry
*Steering Committee
Member and Social Media
Coordinator*



Kellee Warren
*Steering Committee
Member*



Sonia Yaco
Web Liaison



Amy C. Vo
Newsletter Editor