

AACR

Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Newsletter



Autumn 2014

Volume 29, Issue 1

Letter from the Senior Co-Chair

Greetings Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Members,

I am so honored to serve over the next year as chair of the roundtable. I am looking forward to continuing the overall success the roundtable has achieved over the last 27 years.

Over the next year, I hope to strengthen the roundtable by highlighting the accomplishments and activities of members through the inaugural "Member Spotlight" section which will be featured in every issue over the next year. The roundtable leadership will take a more targeted approach to engaging the membership on issues that matter most to you via Twitter and Facebook. The task forces will continue to research and write the history of the roundtable, participate in advocacy opportunities, and nominate AACR members and institutions for awards through the Society of American Archivists.

As I mentioned at the annual business meeting in Washington, I will be focusing on strategic planning and the first step will be to update the mission statement and to craft new vision and core values statements for the roundtable. A draft will be sent to the membership for comment and review in March, revised in May and adopted at the annual business meeting in Cleveland.

I would like to welcome Aisha Haykal (Chicago State University) as Junior Co-Chair, Amber Moore (Emory University) as the newsletter editor and Sonia Yaco (University of Illinois at Chicago) as webmaster to the roundtable leadership.

If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding the roundtable, send me a note at gabrielle.dudley@emory.

Best,
Gabrielle

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Pinkett Award Winner reports on SAA 2014, Washington D.C.

By Jason Sarmiento, 2014-2015 Pinkett Award Winner



This past August, I was honored as one of the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award recipients at Washington D.C. I was truly surprised that I received the award, as I am not in a MLIS program, rather in a Public History M.A. program with an archives and manuscripts emphasis. Receiving the award was an unforgettable experience, and showed that public historians can also be successful in the archives field.

I interned at several Sacramento-based institutions and I am currently the project archivist at the Welga! Filipino-American Labor Archives, held at the University of California, Davis' George Kagiwada Reserves Library. I got the position out of pure happenstance. While researching Filipino-American farmworker history, I noticed the lack of primary resources available on the subject. I decided to get the information straight from the source and conducted several oral history interviews of current and former Filipino-American activists. At the conclusion of one such interview, I was asked if I knew anything about archives. After mentioning that I was the SAA Sacramento State chapter president and a California State Archives intern, I was immediately referred to the WELGA! (The word for 'strike' in Tagalog) Project, headed by Dr. Robyn Rodriguez. After a series of interviews and two grant applications, I was appointed as project archivist for the Welga! Archives. The Welga! Archives is scheduled to debut on September 2015, on the 50th anniversary of the 1965 Delano Grape Strike.

Attending the conference opened my eyes on the vast and diverse nature of the archives profession. I've attended a few public history conferences in the past, but always felt out of place amongst the museum curators and cultural resource managers. It was invigorating to be amongst like-minded individuals, and the sessions and connections I made expanded my understanding of the field. It seemed like every session I attended and every person I met always had great insights on how to move forward with the Welga! Archives. Attending the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable Business Meeting was a truly memorable experience. I was greatly inspired during the meeting, as I was surrounded by successful archivists of color from around the country. My attendance at the SAA annual meeting at D.C. could not of been made possible if it not for the AACR and the Harold Pinkett Minority Student Award Committee. I am greatly thankful for receiving the award, and I look forward to attending future SAA annual meetings in the years to come.



The Harold T. Pinkett Minority Student Award was established in 1993, to recognize and acknowledge minority graduate students, such as those of African, Asian, Latino or Native American descent, who, through scholastic and personal achievement, manifest an interest in becoming professional archivists and active members of the Society of American Archivists.

To find out more information, please visit: <http://www2.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-pinkett>

Member Spotlight

The Annual Business Meeting should not be your only opportunity to get to know members of the Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable! A new "Member Spotlight" will appear in each issue of AACR Newsletter and monthly via social media sites.

Name: Natalia Fernández



Position Title & Institution: Curator of the Oregon Multicultural Archives at Oregon State University

Hometown: Tucson, AZ

Current City: Corvallis, OR

In your own words, describe what you do:

My mission for directing the Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA) is to assist in preserving the histories and sharing the stories that document Oregon's African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American communities. I develop OMA collections by building relationships with cultural and ethnic organizations as well as community members across the state. I lead a variety of activities to showcase OMA collections including the curation of physical and online exhibits. As an Oregon State University (OSU) assistant professor, I teach primary source literary skills often in collaboration with professors to develop projects featuring OMA collections. I am also the liaison to OSU's cultural resource centers and strive to document the university's multicultural histories.

How do you work with communities of color:

It's my entire job! I see my role as a co-steward of a community's or individual's histories who works to empower traditionally underrepresented groups to document their stories and if they choose, to make them accessible and preserve them through the OMA.

What are you listening to and/or reading:

I am re-reading *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P.D. James in anticipation of PBS's adaptation of the novel.

What is something that you are most excited about in the archives profession:

I am especially excited about the profession's growing commitment to diversity and inclusion both in theory and in practice. It was wonderful to add the books *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada* and *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion* to my archives-related reading list; both books offered great models to potentially adapt for the OMA.

(Continued on page 4)

Member Spotlight continued...

What professional organizations, besides SAA are you a member of?

I am a member of Northwest Archivists (NWA), the American Theatre Archive Project, and REFORMA. And, I regularly attend the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, & Museums (ATALM) conferences.

Do you have any hobbies or special talents or skills?

As an undergrad I studied art history and wanted to be a curator for a museum of art. I love designing exhibits, both physical and digital, and I always look forward to designing promotional materials for the OMA and posters for conferences. Luckily, those design skills are very applicable in my work through the OMA.

Why did you choose the to become an archivist?

I had my “aha” moment when I was first introduced to archives as an undergraduate. While writing my honors thesis I conducted research at the Special Collections at the University of Arizona Libraries and found myself even more fascinated by the “behind the scenes” of the materials I was using. I wanted to learn the story of the materials themselves, how they arrived at the archives as well as how they were organized and preserved – and of course, who was responsible for all that work. I soon learned that the U of A had an Information Resources and Library Sciences program and knew it was meant to be. And, it was the U of A’s Knowledge River program, which focuses the theory and practice of cultural competence education to work in collaboration with Latino/a and tribal communities, that gave me an excellent foundation to serve in my role as the curator of the Oregon Multicultural Archives.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else as the “Member Spotlight” please email gabrielle.dudley@emory.edu



"Knowledge Alliance Recruiters Hannah Lee, Deena Smith, Holly Smith, and Steven Booth present at SAA 2014



Gabrielle M. Dudley, Andrea Jackson, and Amber L. Moore pose at SAA 2014.

Exhibition Reveals the Role of Fannie Lou Hamer and Clair Collins Harvey in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement

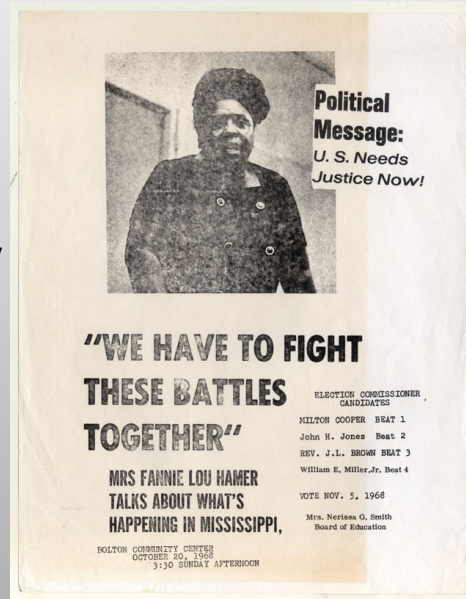
By Chianta Dorsey, Reference Archivist, Amistad Research Center



In honor of the contributions women have made to expanding civil rights in America, the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University will host an exhibition titled, "Empowered Women: Fannie Lou Hamer, Claire Collins Harvey and the Mississippi Freedom Movement."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Mississippi Summer Project, also known as Freedom Summer. Within this campaign was the sizeable participation of women who, until recently, have been largely ignored from the written record of the Civil Rights Movement. Their contributions were obscured by male charismatic leaders who dominated the discourse and media attention on civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s.

Fannie Lou Hamer and Claire Collins Harvey, two extraordinary women from two different strata of society, used their leadership and influence to guide the civil rights movement in Mississippi. Harvey, a wealthy and highly-educated businesswoman and Hamer, a determined sharecropper and frontline activist, led Mississippians on a path of economic, social and political equality. By viewing and analyzing the correspondence, photographs, political ephemera, and organizational documents of Hamer and Harvey, we can understand the class, gender, and racial dynamics that influenced the trajectories of their activism.



The materials of Hamer and Harvey display the local religious and civil rights organizations of Mississippi that operated to fight racism, segregation, and economic inequality. Documents in the Hamer papers include the records of the Freedom Farm Corporation (FFC), the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP), and the Delta Ministry. Documents in the Harvey papers include the records of Womanpower Unlimited, Church Women United, and the Mississippi Small Business Development Center.

The exhibition will be available for viewing during Amistad's public hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30) and will be free of charge. More information on the exhibition is available by calling (504) 862-3222 or emailing the Center at info@amistadresearchcenter.org. Documents from both the Fannie Lou Hamer papers and the Claire Collins Harvey papers can also be found in Amistad's digital collection entitled, "[Print Culture of the Civil Rights Movement, 1950-1980](#)".

Isaac R. Clark Memorial Collection Open for Research

By Sarah Tanner, Processing Archivist, Atlanta University Center



Isaac R. Clark conducting a lecture at ITC, undated Interdenominational Theological Center (Costen) Archives Photograph Collection. Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library.

The Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library's Archives Research Center has opened the *Isaac R. Clark Memorial Collection* for research. Dr. Isaac R. Clark was a professor of homiletics at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia and a pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The manuscript collection provides a unique look at the development of Clark's distinct homiletical methodology and career as a professor. The materials in Clark's collection complement other holdings of the Archives Research Center, on similar topics such as African American religion and African American higher education. It enhances related collections, including the *ITC Photographs Collections*, the *C. Eric Lincoln Collection*, and other A.M.E. materials, such as the *African Methodist Episcopal Annual Conference Minutes Collection*.

Isaac Rufus Clark was born in 1925 in New Castle, Pennsylvania. After graduating from the New Castle public schools in 1943, he served in the U.S. Navy until 1946. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Wilberforce University in 1951 and his Bachelor of Divinity degree from Payne Theological Seminary in 1952. Clark earned his Ph.D. in Theology from Boston University in 1958. Clark was a lifelong member of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and served pastorates in Milford, Ohio, and in Lynn and New Bedford, Massachusetts. Before moving to Atlanta in 1962, Clark taught as a professor of Systematic Theology at Payne Theological Seminary, and served as Dean of Religion and Philosophy at Paul Quinn College in Waco, Texas. Both Clark and his wife Dr. Betty J. Clark worked as educators in Atlanta for the remainder of their careers. In recognition of his contributions as an educator and scholar, he was chosen to be the first Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Homiletics at ITC in 1975, a professorship he held until his death.

The *Isaac R. Clark Memorial Collection* spans the years from 1946 to 1990, with the bulk of the materials covering the years 1960 to 1989, and are comprised of course material, handwritten class outlines, correspondence, photographs, and other audio-visual holdings. The majority of the materials are related to his teaching career and the development of his rhetorical strategies for creating and delivering sermons. Beyond his individual classroom style, documents in the collection also provide a look at African American religious education and the administrative duties of Clark as an involved faculty member and administrator. During his twenty-eight year tenure as a professor at ITC, Clark also served as registrar and director of the summer program. The collection includes correspondence, committee work, reports, and other items related to those administrative duties. Within Clark's papers, of particular note, are reel to reel audio tapes which contain a record of lectures, ITC conferences, notable speakers, ITC chapel services, religious music, and class lectures.

For more information on the *Isaac R. Clark Memorial Collection*, contact archives@auctr.edu or 404-978-2052.

Realism, Symbolism, and Identity: The John Biggers Papers

By Laura Starratt and Michael Camp, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University



John Biggers working on sketches for murals

The John Biggers papers are now available to researchers at the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL) at Emory University. These papers, covering Biggers' life from 1924-2001, document the long career of the painter, sculptor, educator, and art activist. John Thomas Biggers was born on April 13, 1924 to Paul and Cora Biggers in Gastonia, North Carolina, the youngest of seven children. He attended Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) in Hampton, Virginia, and started taking art classes under the tutelage of Viktor Lowenfeld, a Jew who had fled his native Austria in the late 1930s. In 1943, Biggers was featured in his first exhibit, *Young Negro Art*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Biggers followed Lowenfeld to Pennsylvania State University (State College, Pennsylvania) in mid-1946 to study in the art department there, receiving a Bachelor of Science in January 1948 and a Master of Science in September 1948.

He received a doctoral degree in 1954 from Pennsylvania State University with a thesis entitled *The Negro Woman in American Life and Education*.

In 1949 Biggers moved to Houston, Texas, in August to establish and serve as department head of the Art Department at Texas State University for Negroes (later Texas Southern University), where he spent over thirty years of his career, retiring from teaching in 1983.

Biggers' work embodied a number of different influences. His early career produced work that cleaved closely to European styles of realism. His service in the United States Navy during World War II inspired a few paintings that were striking in their depiction of wartime chaos. His first major works were the egg tempera paintings *Dying Soldier* (1942), *Community Preacher* (1943), and *U.S. Navy Mural* (1945). The current locations of the first two works are unknown, and *U.S. Navy Mural* is currently disassembled. Biggers followed these works in the late 1940s with the murals, *Burial*, *Sharecroppers*, *Baptism*, *Day of the Harvest*, and *Night of the Poor*. The next phase in Biggers' career came with his move to Houston. In the 1950s, Biggers produced *Harvesters and Gleaners* (1952), *Contribution of Negro Women to American Life and Education* (1953), *History of Education in Morris County, Texas* (1955), and *History of the International Longshoremen's Local 872* (1957).

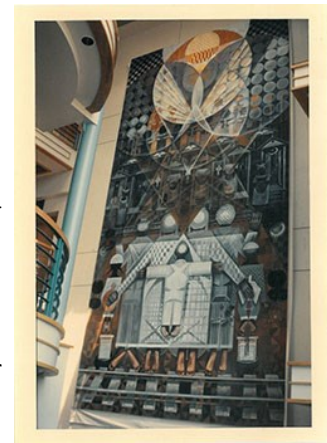
In 1957, John and Hazel spent six months on a United Nations fellowship traveling in Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, and Dahomey. He published *Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa*, a book based on these travels, in 1962. A Danforth award in 1969 allowed John and Hazel to spend six months in Egypt, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ghana. In 1980, Biggers visited Haiti along with other Texas Southern faculty and also visited Amsterdam and Kenya in 1987, and attended the National Conference of Artists meetings in Dakar, Senegal (1984) and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1988). As the artist's career progressed and he spent more time traveling, Biggers began incorporating a number of more abstract and symbolic themes into his paintings, ranging from maternal iconography drawn from African sculpture to the quilts and triangular-roofed "shotgun houses" familiar from his childhood, starting with the transitional works *Web of Life* (1960), *Red Barn Farm* (1960), and *Birth from the Sea* (1966).

(Continued on page 8)

Realism, Symbolism, and Identity: The John Biggers Papers continued...

Biggers undertook a number of major mural projects throughout his career, but his work reached its most mature form with four murals painted in the early 1990s: two in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and two in Hampton, Virginia. He completed *Ascension* and *Origins* at the Winston-Salem State University library in North Carolina in 1991, and painted *House of the Turtle* and *Tree House* at Hampton University that same year. One of the Hampton murals, *House of the Turtle*, includes large figures of a Native American and an African American, representing Hampton University's origin as a school for Native Americans and freed former slaves.

The John Biggers papers consists of correspondence, photographs, printed material, professional materials, subject files, printed material, writings, and audiovisual material and document his entire professional career, starting with his work at Hampton Institute, but the bulk of the material relates to his work at Texas Southern University. There is correspondence with friends, colleagues, and former students, but of particular note are letters documenting his relationship with mentor, Viktor Lowenfeld (1903-1960); his work as founder and dean of the Art Department at Texas Southern University; and his work as a muralist. An extensive collection of photographs depicts not only Biggers' finished paintings and drawings, but also documents his painting process as well as the African sculptural styles that inspired much of his imagery. There are writings both by John Biggers and by others including Olive Theisen, author of *The Murals of John Thomas Biggers: American Muralist, African-American Artist*, an extensive collection and analysis of Biggers' murals. Writings by Biggers consist of notes and typescript corrections of two of Biggers' books, *Ananse: The Web of Life in Africa* (1979) and *Black Art in Houston: The Texas Southern University Experience* (1978) as well as lectures, abstracts, and eulogies. Writings by others consist of longer works written about Biggers and his artwork, as well as unpublished essays and typescripts collected and read by Biggers.



John Biggers' mural, "Ascension", circa 1992, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

In 1994, Biggers drew the illustrations for Maya Angelou's poem "Our Grandmothers," and according to Angelou, Biggers' art, in attempting to address the complex identities of African Americans, ultimately "leads us... into the discovery of ourselves at our most intimate level." The John Biggers papers are a valuable resource for scholars interested African American art and culture and join collections of Biggers' contemporaries also held at MARBL, including those of [Samella Lewis](#) and [Mildred Thompson](#).

Accolades



Phyllis Lynn Earles, Archivist, received the Prairie View Interscholastic League Coaches Association Meritorious Award. As PVAMU Archivist and Head of the Special Collections/Archives Department, Ms. Earles went beyond the call of duty, retrieving former Prairie View Interscholastic League (PVIL) records and documents from the PVAMU archives pertaining to the Baytown G. W. Carver High School, its coaches, athletes and others which have helped their Society.

Spelman College Archives hosts program focused on Shirley Chisholm's legacy

By Holly Smith, Archivist, Spelman College

On Thursday April 10, the Spelman College Archives hosted their inaugural "Archives Speak" program in the Women's Research and Resource Center. The "Archives Speak" series will feature a lecture or discussion each semester focused on topics relating to documenting the experiences of women of the African Diaspora, particularly as these areas connect with different Spelman College archival collections.

As the official repository of the College, the Spelman College Archives consist of administrative records, departmental and program records, publications, photographs and other material relating to the history and administration of the College. The Archives is a component of the Women's Research and Resource Center, an academic unit of Spelman focusing on curriculum development in Comparative Women's Studies, research by and about women of African descent, and community outreach. This unique positioning in a campus research center has expanded the Spelman Archive's collecting focus in order to support the research and scholarship of women of the African Diaspora, and to actively document the lives and work of women of color involved in social justice and activism nationally and internationally.

The inaugural program featured Dr. Barbara Winslow, project director of the Shirley Chisholm Project of Brooklyn Women's Activism. The project, based out of CUNY Brooklyn College, collects documents related to pioneering politician Shirley Chisholm as well as oral histories of contemporaries of Chisholm as well as other women involved in social and political grassroots activism in Brooklyn from 1945 to the present. Dr. Winslow is also the author of a new biography entitled "Shirley Chisholm: Catalyst for Change".

During the discussion, Dr. Winslow focused on her research for her latest publication as well as the origins and development of the Shirley Chisholm Project. Shirley Chisholm had a long connection to Spelman College. She spoke at the 1983 Convocation and was a visiting scholar in 1985. The Spelman Archives holds various documents related to Chisholm's time on the campus, including photographs, articles published in campus publication the Spelman Messenger, and a 19 inch doll of Shirley Chisholm that is part of a collection donated by noted author and Spelman alumna Sue Bailey Thurman. A small display featuring these materials was included during the Archives Speak program, and provided a visual representation of Dr. Winslow's discussion about the importance of preserving and providing access to archival collections in her collection and beyond.

Please visit <http://www.spelman.edu/about-us/archives> to learn more about the Spelman College Archives and its holdings.



Staff from the Spelman College Archives and Women's Center with Dr. Barbara Winslow (3rd from left)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: AACR is having a Twitter Banner Contest!

We need a new header for our Twitter page.

We are looking for images that:

1. Tell a story
2. Highlight archivists, archives and people of color
3. Demonstrate the value of archives of color

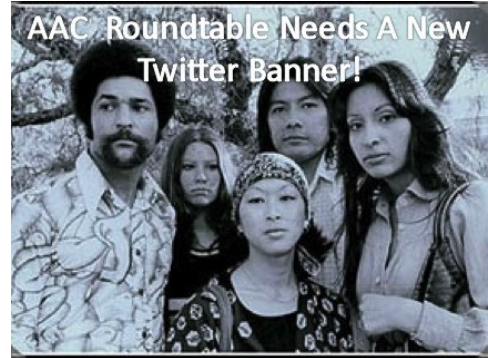


Image requirements: Photos can be in any of the following formats: JPG, GIF, or PNG. (Twitter does not support animated GIFs for profile or header images.) Recommended dimensions for header photos are 1500x500 pixels.

Please submit images via e-mail to our Social Media Coordinator, Ardra Whitney at awhitney43@hotmail.com by Nov. 10th 2014 at 9PM. Additionally, please provide a brief explanation (50 to 100 words) of why you selected the image and how it relates to AACR's mission and objectives: <http://www2.archivists.org/groups/archivists-and-archives-of-color-roundtable/mission>. Be sure to include your name and mailing address, as well as the name of the repository/collection the image is from.

Judging criteria: Entries will be judged by a panel of AACR's leadership and invited guest judges based on historical relevance, creativity and theme communication. The three winners will be announced on Nov. 20th 2014.

Prizes: The first place winner will receive two tickets, for them and a guest (cost of tickets not to exceed \$50), to a museum or archives exhibit of their choice via GiftRocket. The second place winner will receive a copy of *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion*, courtesy of SAA. The third place winner will receive a #thinklikeanarchivist t-shirt and ChicoBag, courtesy of SAA.

Thanks for reading— See you in the Spring!

The deadline for the Spring Newsletter is March 1, 2015

