

African-American and
Third World Archivists Roundtable

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3, No. 1

March, 1989

Roundtable Chooses New Name

Karen L. Jefferson

In Atlanta at the September 1988 meeting of the Society of American Archivists (SAA), a vote for a new name was taken by those attending the business meeting of the then called "Third World Archivists Roundtable." A list of suggested names was offered and after two votes the name chosen was "African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable."

The search for a name reflects the effort of the group to define itself. The concerns of the Roundtable were somewhat simpler to define (see the statement of purpose on the back page of this newsletter). However, arriving at a succinct name encompassing these concerns proves to be a more difficult task.

The name "Minority Roundtable" was inherited from the "Minority Task Force" (the committee sanctioned by SAA to advise the SAA Council about the status of minority participation in the profession). This term "minority" met with much discussion in light of the need to define the parameters of the Roundtable's concerns. "Minority" was perceived to have too broad an interpretation that could include not only racial groups, but also disabled,

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Highlights of the Business Meeting and the Open House

Donna Wells

The African-American and Third World Archivist (AATWAR) Business meeting was held September 29th during the SAA annual conference. Co-chair, Carol Rudisell has been selected to serve on the 1989 SAA Program Committee. She requested ideas for sessions. Suggestions included: recruitment strategies to attract people of color into the archival profession; documenting current social movements; Black migration, and managing an archives on a small budget.

Co-chair Donna Wells read a section from the minutes of the 1987 meeting of the SAA Council as was reported in the SAA Newsletter. The minutes stated that outgoing SAA President William Joyce had appointed three SAA representatives to the Planning Committee for the National Center of Afro-American History and Culture in Ohio. The appointed representatives were all white, although it had been suggested during the discussion that minorities be considered for the committee. Carol Rudisell pointed out that neither the [AATWA] Roundtable as a unit nor individual members had been informed about the appointments. Diana Lachatanere suggested that a proposal or resolution be drafted and submitted to

SAA Council voicing the Roundtable's concerns. The statement should request that the Roundtable be consulted about similar appointments in the future. Volunteers were solicited to draft the statement.

In the past Roundtable Newsletter, Carol Rudisell solicited suggestions for a new name for the Roundtable. Only two suggestions were received. These two names were added to the list of names from the 1987 meeting. By a majority vote of members present at the Business meeting, the name selected was "African-American and Third World Archivist Roundtable."

Volunteers for sub-committees of the Roundtable were chosen as follows:

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FROM THE EDITORS

The Roundtable Newsletter has now begun its third year of publication. This year we will only issue two newsletters instead of the usual three. Thanks to Dr. Ruth E. Hill who served as co-editor last year. Welcome Ms. Joellen El Bashir who has accepted the co-editorship with Ms. Karen L. Jefferson for 1989. A special thanks to the Moorland-Spingarn staff, particularly Mr. Alex Rapheal and Ms. Gladys Toney; and Mr. Clarence Lusane of Afro-Info Computer Service. We could not produce such a fine newsletter without you. We apologize for the delay in distributing this current issue of the newsletter. Much of our energy for the year's end was focused on program proposals for participation in the 1989 SAA conference to be held in St. Louis, October 23-29. Thereafter job responsibilities took priority and added delays. As always we invite your contributions to the newsletter. The next issue (with a little help from our friends) will be distributed in September. We look forward to hearing from you, our readers. Let us know what you think and share some information about your work and institution.

The **AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE NEWSLETTER** is published twice a year. Questions? Contributions? Contact co-editors: Karen L. Jefferson and Joellen ElBashir Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, D C 20059 (202) 636-7480.

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- Dorothy Fields will assist Roundtable members on the SAA Membership Committee.
- Janet Davis will assist Carol Rudisell in compiling an AAT-WAR membership directory.
- Karen Jefferson, Charlene LaPointe, Beth Pessek, Carol Rudisell, Wilda Willis, Clarence Davis, and Donna Wells agreed to prepare and submit program proposals to the 1989 Program Committee on behalf of the Roundtable.
- Beth Pessek and Walter Hill agreed to prepare suggestions to the SAA 1989 Local Arrangements Committee.

Carol Rudisell announced that because she is now serving on the 1989 Program Committee she would not be able to also serve as co-chair of the Roundtable. Wilda Willis volunteered to serve as co-chair for 1989. It was suggested by Donna Wells that a policy be drafted governing the election of co-chairs. Karen Jefferson commented that this would enable more people to become involved in the Roundtable and encourage new members to become active.

Before closing the meeting, announcements were made. Brenda Banks, SAA Program Committee member for 1988 and upcoming Program Chair for 1990, thanked the Roundtable members for their efforts in helping to increase the number of minority participants in this year's SAA program. Brenda Banks was acknowledged as being instrumental in supporting the proposals submitted by the Roundtable. Carol Rudisell announced that the Religious Archives Section had invited Roundtable members to their meeting to hear Sherry Depree's presentation on "Ef-

forts to Document the Black Pentecostal Movement in the U.S."

The Open House was held October 1st. The discussion of that meeting focused on the issue of certification of archivists.

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gay and lesbian, and other groups who find themselves without a voice in SAA. All such groups should have a voice in SAA, however, to combine the groups under one roundtable is likely to result in the groups competing over priorities and cluttering issues in an effort to represent the concerns of all the various groups. In addition some archivists find the term "minority" a negative portrayal with its implications of being less than, thereby not equal to, thereby inferior.

The resulting compromise in 1988 of the name "Third World Archivists" also met with some question because of the general association to peoples from countries other than the United States. However, the term "Third World" was chosen as a term to link the archivists of color to their ancestry in Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Asia.

The newly selected name highlights African-Americans, the largest group within the Roundtable. Recognizing one group above the others may discourage participation, particularly from Native Americans who would hardly consider their ancestry outside the United States.

In all likelihood the debate on a name will and should continue. But for this coming year, at least, the name is "African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable."

AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE

After several years of participating in the Society of American Archivists (SAA) annual meetings, I began to notice with some wonder at the relative youthful age of the African-American archivists in attendance. Most, I estimate, range in age from the mid-twenties to the mid-forties. As my curiosity led me further into the politics of SAA and how it functions I also began to wonder, "Where is our old boy network?" Secure in my training as a librarian, I found comfort in knowing of the many African-American librarians who opened the doors for our participation in the profession:

the legendary Dorothy Porter Wesley of the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center and Jean Blackwell Hutson of the Schomburg Center. But as I talked with other African-American archivists, many who entered the profession through other routes and have little or no connection to librarianship, it became clear that there is a history here that many were unfamiliar. Yes, this generation of archivists was ready to fight the good fight, to make our mark on the profession, but we also need grounding in our roots to know of those who helped blaze the trail we now seek to pave.

So begins this brief trek into the past of our forerunners. For those who do not know them, hopefully these small sketches whet the appetite to know more. Space and time do not permit extensive articles in this newsletter.

Hopefully these tidbits will encourage longer articles in other publications. These first sketches represent only the participation of African-Americans in the archival profession. Information from other racial and national groups is welcome so that we may all learn and broaden our knowledge.

Dr. Harold T. Pinkett: First Black Archivist at the National Archives

Karen L. Jefferson

As one walks the corridors rushing to sessions at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists, there begins a subtle awareness of a presence. In the meeting rooms, on the elevator, in the hallway, one may note this soft-spoken, dignified older Black man with a face that seems familiar and mannerisms and voice that speak of southern roots. Should one ask, that man is revealed to be Dr. Harold T. Pinkett.

Dr. Pinkett began his career as archivist at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Upon passing the U.S. civil service examination in 1940, he received an offer for an appointment as archivist in 1942. At the time he had no particular interest in the archival profession. In the midst of completing a doctoral program in history at Columbia University, it was his intention to continue in the teaching profession. However, the archival appointment offered an attractive salary and

tenure benefits worth considering, and he subsequently resigned his teaching position at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina. By accepting the position Harold T. Pinkett became the first African-American professional employee at the National Archives, and possibly the first African-American archivist in a major American archival agency.

There were few formal training programs for archivists at this time. Dr. Pinkett credits much of his understanding of archival principles and techniques to his first divisional supervisor, Theodore R. Schellenburg, the eminent archival theorist and writer; and Ernst Posner, the noted German archivist and educator. Dr. Pinkett also continued his graduate studies at American University and earned a doctorate in history in 1953. The combined training in archival administration and the study of history were the key elements in Dr. Pinkett's distinguished

career.

At the National Archives, Dr. Pinkett's achievements include Deputy Director of the Records Appraisal Division (1968-1971), and Chief of the Legislative and Natural Resources Branch (1971-1979). In recognition of his outstanding performance, he received the National Archives' Commendable Service Award in 1964 and 1970; and in 1979 the Exceptional Service Award.

Dr. Pinkett is very active with numerous professional associations. He was appointed a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) in 1962, served as editor of the *American Archivist* from 1968-1971, and was elected to the SAA Council from 1971-1972. He was elected to the governing councils of the Forest History Society, the Agricultural History Society, and the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. He was subsequently elected president of the first two societies. He has also served on

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JOBS

Archives Administrator/Plan, supervise, direct services, program, and staff of manuscripts-archives department/ Graduate degree, formal archival training/ \$22,500-\$24,500/ National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center, P.O. Box 578, Wilberforce, OH 45384, 1-800-BLK-HIST.

Oral History Librarian/Coordinate and develop Oral History Dept/ **Manuscript Librarian/** Process collections, assist in reference service and acquisitions/ **MLS/ \$22,850/ Moorland-Spingarn Research Center,** Howard University, Washington D.C. 20059, Ms. Karen L. Jefferson, Curator, (202) 636-7480.

Archivist/ Direct and administer programs, perform outreach services, formulate policies and procedures, process and prepare guides to collections/advanced degree in history with specialization in Afro-American or women's history, or closely related field; two years administrative exp. (one year of two in archival administration or related function); professional archival training and exp. in arrangement & description of organizational records/ salary competitive/ send resume, writing sample, and list of three references/ Bethune Museum & Archives, 1318 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington D.C. 20005, Dr. Bettye Collier-Thomas, Director.

Archivist I/ Process collections, periodic supervision of reading room/ relevant gradu-

ate degree, formal archival training or comparable experience/ 12 month appointment, \$15,700/ **Archivist III/ Coordinate** processing of collections, review finding aids, prepare grant proposals and various publications, supervise transitions to automation/ relevant graduate degree, formal archival training, five years archival experience/ minimum salary, \$22,040/ **Walter P. Reuther Library,** Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202, (313) 577-8377, Mr. Warner W. Pflug.

National Archives Seeks Applicants for Career Training Program

Mary E. Rephlo

The Office of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Washington D.C. is seeking qualified applicants for positions in its archivist career training program. This professional development program uses two years of on-the-job training assignments and formal coursework to provide career NARA archivists with a well-rounded orientation to archival work in the National Archives. Qualified minority candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. The salary starts at a GS-7 (\$19,494) and successful completion of the program leads to the GS-11 (\$28,852). For details on qualifications, responsibilities and how to apply: contact Mary Rephlo or Thomas Brown, (202) 523-3089; or write NARA, Personnel Operations Branch (NAPO), 9700 Page Blvd., Room 2002, St. Louis, MO 63132.

EXHIBITIONS

Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Rise of Black Churches in Eastern American Cities, 1740-1877 will be on exhibit at the Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum, January 15 - June 30, 1989. For more information, contact the Museum at 7th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 574-0380.

Jim Crow: Racism and Reaction in the New South is currently on exhibit at the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia. This show is the fourth in a series of exhibitions exploring the history of Richmond's African-American community. It traces the origins and development of segregation and discrimination of African-Americans in education, housing, public accommodations, voting and health care from the close of the Civil War to 1940. The exhibit continues through August 21, 1989. For more information, including tours, portable exhibits, and video-tapes, contact the museum at 1015 East Clay Street, Richmond, VA 23219, (804) 649-0711.

Women of Courage, is a traveling exhibit that features photographs and biographical sketches on participants in the the Schlesinger Library's Black Women Oral History Project It is scheduled through 1990. During 1989, the exhibit will appear in Dayton, OH; Pontiac, MI; Cheney, WA; Newark, DE; Phoenix, AZ; and Tucson, AZ. For more

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AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND THIRD WORLD ARCHIVISTS ROUNDTABLE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Lynda J. DeLoach, Archivist at the George Meany Memorial Archives in Silver Spring, MD, is a candidate for the Society of American Archivists Nominating Committee. Good Luck!

Women refugees from Cambodia is the focus of the current oral history project at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. Six of the ten planned oral histories, conducted in Khmer, have been completed. For further information, contact the library at 10 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-8647.

On April 2nd, the **Black History Resource Center** at 638 N. Alfred St., Alexandria, VA will re-open in its renovated facilities. The open house will be held from 1 pm-4 pm and features a display of artifacts, photographs, walking tours, and lectures on the history and accomplishments of African-Americans in Alexandria. Volunteer workers and donations of artifacts are needed. For more information, contact: Eugene Thompson, Curator, (703) 838-4356.

On April 13, 1989, the Inaugural Lecture of the annual **Dorothy Porter Wesley Lecture Se-**

ries will be held on the campus of Howard University. Sponsored by the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, in recognition of the Center's 75th anniversary, this event honors the outstanding career of Dr. Porter Wesley. She was Curator at Moorland for 43 years. She is presently a Visiting Senior Scholar at Harvard University's W.E.B. DuBois Institute for African-American Research. The keynote speaker will be Dean Robert Wedgeworth, Columbia University School of Library Science. For more details, contact: Mrs. Nell McDaniel, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington D.C. 20059, (202) 636-7239.

The Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa has completed its project on **Blacks in Hawai'i**. The interviews with ten older Black residents of O'ahu cover a wide variety of topics including social and cultural life in the Black community, race prejudice and discrimination, World War II experiences, and local relations and adjustments to island life. The transcribed interviews will be available through the University of Hawai'i library system and state regional libraries later this year. Contact: Center for Oral History, 2424 Maile Way, Porteus Hall 724, Honolulu, HI 96822, (808) 948-6259.

In celebration of Black History Month, the **Afro-American History Society of the National Archives** in Washington D.C. presented a series of lectures and book signings. Included were Arnold Ramperasad, **The Life of Langston Hughes, Vol. II** (Feb. 2); Margaret Walker, **Richard Wright: Daemonic Genius**, (Feb. 8); and David Garrow, **Bearing the Cross** (Feb. 17). For information about these and other lectures and films contact: Donald Roe, (202)523-3062.

Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge MA, has launched a research project on the experiences of **African-Americans, Native Americans, and Irish-Americans in rural New England during the period 1790-1850**. The project is seeking printed materials, graphics, and manuscripts documenting these groups. Initially, the information will be incorporated into an annotated bibliography of source materials for future research. A more focused research effort utilizing some of the identified materials will begin later in the year. Information regarding specific collections and their contents should be sent to Myron O. Stachiw, Research Dept., Old Sturbridge Village, 1 Old Sturbridge Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566, (508) 347-3362.

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details contact the Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, 10 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-8647.

Profiles of Black Chicagoans: Selections from Four Collections portrays the lives of Louise Overall Weaver, gospel musician; Irene

McCoy Gaines, community leader; Earl B. Dickerson, civil rights advocate; and explores the Chicago Division of the Sleeping Car Porters, the nation's first and foremost Black trade union. The exhibit is on display in the Chicago Historical Society Researchers' Gallery from February 1 to July 9. For more information, contact: the Chicago Historical Society, Clark St. and North Ave., Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 642-4600.

NHPRC Records Program Seeks Reviewers and Consultants

Nancy Sahli

Have you ever wondered how decisions are made about funding for grant applications? Would you like to participate in the process and possibly share your experience and skills with other institutions throughout the country? If so, the Records Program of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) invites you to join its pool of grant reviewers and consultants.

The Records Program supports projects that preserve and make available for use those records that further an understanding and appreciation of American history. In addition to supporting projects relating directly to a body of records, the Commission also supports projects to advance the state of the art, to promote cooperative efforts among institutions and organizations, and to improve

the knowledge, performance, and professional skills of those who work with historical records.

All applications for nationally and regionally oriented proposals, as well as many from individual institutions, are assessed by outside specialist reviewers. Applications are also reviewed by a network of State Historical Records Advisory Boards and the Commission and its staff. Depending on the need within each funding cycle, specialist reviewers are sent one or two proposals to read and prepare written comments. In addition, from time to time, projects in need of experienced consultants call upon the Commission staff to suggest a pool of qualified individuals from whom they may draw. Both needs require the Commission to maintain up-to-date lists of active profes-

sionals in the field who are interested in such assignments.

The Records Program is especially interested in increasing its pool of minority reviewers and consultants. While financial reimbursement cannot be given for reviews, consultant positions offer paid compensation for services rendered. Either situation presents an opportunity for professional service and public spiritedness to ensure that applicants receive a fair hearing and that institutions in need of consulting services receive the best possible advice.

If you are interested in being added to the roster, please send your vita to Dr. Nancy Sahli, Director, Records Program, NHPRC, National Archives (NPR), Washington, D.C. 20408. The Records Program looks forward to hearing from you.

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the editorial boards of the *Journal of Negro History* and *Prologue, Journal of the National Archives*.

In addition to his archival work, Dr. Pinkett continued to teach. He has served as lecturer at Howard University and American University, both in Washington D.C. He is author of numerous articles, and of two books: *Gifford Pinchot, Private and Public Forester* (1970); and *Research in the Administration of Public Policy* (1975) [co-edited with Dr. Frank Evans]. The Council on Library Resources awarded him a fellowship in 1972 for a comparative study of the acces-

sioning of public records in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain.

Since his retirement from the National Archives in 1979, Dr. Pinkett has continued to work in the profession as a consultant. Among his clients are Howard University, the National Business League, Cheyney University, The Links Inc, and the NAACP. He remains active in the professional associations and is often on the roster of program participants.

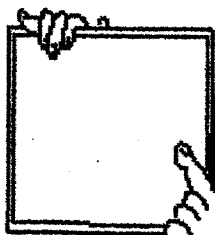
Dr. Pinkett says of his career, "Whatever success as an archivist that I have achieved has resulted, I believe, from a few basic circumstances. My professional development was stimulated by a good academic and intellectual foundation. It

has been advanced and sustained by specialized training, job experience, scholarly effort, and public contacts. My achievement has been determined frequently by alertness in seeing and using opportunities for self-improvement. With diligence I have often been able, in a paraphrase of Samuel Johnson, 'to improve the golden moment of opportunity and catch the good' within my reach."

[This brief bio-sketch was liberally extracted from "Reflections on an Archival Career" by Dr. Harold T. Pinkett.]

Certification of Archivists Begin

Wilda Logan Willis



The official certification of archivists began on October 1, 1988 during the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) annual meeting. The African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable (AATWAR) wants all interested individuals, especially those on AATWAR mailing list and others who are not members of SAA to be aware of key certification information.

The following concepts briefly outline SAA's purpose for certification: 1) that a profession should be willing to set standards and maintain the performance standards of its practitioners through formal procedures controlled by the professional peer group and, 2) that certification can offer the professional a credential and demonstrate to the public that the individual has mastered a defined body of knowledge and skills necessary for successful archival practice. (see *SAA Newsletter* Jul., 1977; Jan. 1978; Jul., 1985; and Aug., 1986 for historical background on certification.)

The Interim Board for Certification (IBC), established under the auspices of SAA, currently certifies archivists. The IBC has developed a two-part certification program: petition (grandfathering) and examination. The petition allows an individual to apply for certification by a formal petition form which requires documentation of individual education (BA/MA de-

grees) and professional archival experience (minimum of 5 years). During this limited start-up period, the IBC reviews applications, submitted with a \$25 non-refundable application fee, and notifies each petitioner of action taken. Once certification is approved, an additional \$250 is due before certification is granted. Certification by petition will be available from October 1, 1988 through September 30, 1989. After the petition period ends, individuals must take the exam to become certified.

From the first group of certified archivists, an independent Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) will be created and IBC will be dissolved. Initial certification will last eight years. Certification is available to all qualifying individuals. Membership in SAA or other professional organizations is not required.

The certification examination is currently being developed by a professional testing company working with IBC member James B. Rhoads and other archivists selected to define archival practice and theory. The IBC reports that the process of developing a test instrument for certification by examination is a rigorous exploration of the theoretical, methodological, and practical bases for current archival practice. Thus far seven professional areas have been identified as test areas: selection, arrangement and description, reference and access, preservation and protection, promotion and outreach, program assessment and enhancement, and professional,

ethical, and legal issues. Twenty-four major tasks associated with the seven areas have also been identified as skills and knowledge required for certification. When developed, the proposed half-day standardized exam will consist of 100-250 multiple-choice questions.

Prior to the first exam, scheduled to be ready by October 1989, a candidate handbook will be prepared and provision for registration of the individual candidates will be made. It is proposed that subsequent exams will be held once a year during the SAA annual meeting. The examination fee will be the same as the petition fee. (see *SAA Newsletter* Jan., Sept., and Nov., 1988 and Jan. 1989.)

A certification packet, which includes the petition form and a special question and answer brochure on certification, can be requested from: SAA, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-0140.

AATWAR hopes this information will assist you in investigating certification and its potential impact on your career.

(Thanks to Frank Evans for use of his SAA Newsletter library, and Edie Hedlin for permission to extract from certification publications.)