

African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable

NEWSLETTER

AATWAR Election Procedures

Wilda Logan Willis

The African-American and Third World Archivists Roundtable Co-chairs have voluntarily served overlapping consecutive two year terms. This year an election to select a Vice Chair will be held at the annual Society of American Archivists meeting. Lynda DeLoach will stay on as Chair, thus completing her two-year tenure.

The election will conform to the SAA Guidelines for All Sections and Roundtables, which states: "Sections and Roundtables must have elected leadership to consist, at a minimum, of a chair and vice chair. These offices may be filled for CONSECUTIVE (the vice chair succeeds the chair), OVERLAPPING (each office is elected for two year terms, but only one office is filled each year), or CONCURRENT (both offices are elected at the same time for terms of identical length) terms."

The proposed election procedures are as follows:

1. A Nominations Committee consisting of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, and the immediate past Chair are responsible for maintaining the elections of new officers according to the AATWAR Election Procedures.

2. The duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair are to prepare all information and reports required by SAA; prepare the agenda and chair the annual AATWAR meeting held during the annual SAA meeting; meet with SAA Council's Sub-committee on Sections and Roundtables at the SAA annual meeting; serve as the primary representative for AATWAR concerns and activities; work closely with the Editors for the publication of the AATWAR newsletter; and coordinate and encourage the development and submission of program proposals for the SAA annual meetings.

3. The terms of the Chair and Vice Chair will be consecutive, where the Vice Chair succeeds the Chair after a one year term.

(See Elections - page 5)

AATWAR in St. Louis: Highlights

J. El Bashir, D. Wells and W. Willis

AATWAR Meeting:

The African American and Third World Archivists Roundtable (AATWAR) met on October 26th during the 53rd Annual Meeting of Society of American Archivists (SAA) in St. Louis, MO. Approximately 25 people were in attendance including in-coming SAA President John Fleckner. Highlights of the meeting are as follows:

Donna Wells completed two years service as co-chair of AATWAR. Lynda DeLoach, Archivist, George Meany Memorial Archives agreed to serve as co-chair for 1989-91. Wilda Willis continues her second year of service for 1989-90.

The AATWAR newsletter continues to receive numerous compliments and the mailing list has grown to 280. There have been several requests for copies of the mailing list and members discussed the possibility of charging for this service.

Members of AATWAR serving on the SAA Membership Committee include Carol Rudisell, Diana Lachatanere and Wilda Willis. Their report focused on the resolution to increase SAA dues for institutional members.

An update on the status of the certification process was given. At the time of the meeting, more that 800 petitions had

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From The Editors

1990's Push To Participate



Do you want to see new faces in positions of leadership in the Society of American Archivists and the African American and Third World Archivists Roundtable? Do you want to read your name and the name of your repository in the SAA and AATWAR publications? Do you want to hear new voices as panel chairs and presenters at the SAA Annual Meeting? If you answer yes to these questions let 1990 and the coming decade signal the beginning of your PUSH TO PARTICIPATE at all levels of SAA. We, the AATWAR membership, must PUSH TO PARTICIPATE as members on standing committees, in the Academy of Certified Archivists, on the editorial board of the SAA Journal, as panelists at the SAA Annual meeting, in every aspect of the organization to which we can contribute. You can begin your PUSH TO PARTICIPATE at the ROUNDTABLE level. AATWAR has recently devised a more democratic process for nominating and electing future co-chairs of AATWAR. As a co-chair you have an opportunity to show your leadership skills and network with the other leaders in the archival profession. Your participation in AATWAR can open doors of opportunity for you in the profession and open doors for others as well. The AATWAR Nomination Form is enclosed, join AATWAR in the 1990 PUSH TO PARTICIPATE!

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been received, 500 had passed certification and 350 were paid in full. Several AATWAR members have been certified and are encouraged to volunteer to serve on the Academy of Certified Archivists committees.

Thanks to Karen Jefferson, Wilda Willis, Donna Wells, and Clarence Davis (D.C. Archives) for developing session proposals for the 1989 meeting. The St. Louis meeting was reported to have had the highest minority representation ever.

The 1990 SAA meeting in Seattle will not have a theme. Instead, it will focus on the Committee on Goals and Priorities (CGAP) report. (AATWAR members met informally on Friday

sessions or a program for the 1991 meeting in Philadelphia to address that issue.

Program Sessions:

All the sessions which featured minority panelists and/or focused on minority-related archival issues were well-received at the annual meeting. The Special Focus session on "Preserving History: A Shared Responsibility between Archives and the Community" was filled to overflowing, and generated lively discussion. "The Legacy of Black Photographers" resulted in a session accepted by the 1990 Program Committee whose focus will be a dialogue among black photographers on crucial issues in the profession. It was recommended that the session, "Documenting Contemporary Social Protest

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October 27th to discuss ideas for program proposals.)

All SAA divisions were asked to submit a plan outlining the objective and activities for the next three years. Members were queried for ideas in developing strategies for increased minority participation at all levels of SAA. Other suggestions included taking a look at the current status of collection development as it relates to African American materials and developing several

Movements" be developed into an SAA Task Force. The session on "Minority Recruitment" was informative, although the number of non-AATWAR attendees was disappointing considering the amount of interest in the subject as revealed by inquiries to AATWAR. "Documenting Black Women's History" was educative, concluding with Brother Blue performing a poetic tribute to the courage of Black women.

Dorothy Porter Wesley, Curator Extraordinaire

Karen L. Jefferson

To many who research Black history, Dorothy Porter Wesley is a name that evokes gratitude and admiration. In 1973, Dr. Benjamin Quarles, legendary historian noted, "without exaggeration, there hasn't been a major Black history book in the last 30 years in which the author hasn't acknowledged Mrs. Porter's help". As Supervisor of the Moorland-Spingarn Collection for 43 years, Mrs. Dorothy Porter developed a small special collection into a world renowned research library on Black history and culture.

Mrs. Porter's illustrious career began much by chance. In 1923 she

Ironically, Mrs. Porter's exposure to Black history began not at Howard University, but rather at the New York Public Library 135th Street Branch. This Library, known today as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, was to become the rival collection to the Moorland-Spingarn Collection Mrs. Porter would develop. During the summers Dorothy worked in the evenings at the 135th Street Branch Library. Having grown up in a predominantly white environment in Montclair, NJ, her awareness of Black history was

spent weeding through the library collection pulling together the scattered resources on Black history. The nucleus of this special collection was the Jesse E. Moorland gift, donated to the University in 1914. Dr. Moorland, an alumnus and Board of Trustee member of the University, had collected a distinguished collection on the Negro and slavery totalling 3,000 items. The significance of his gift was acknowledged by the Board of Trustees in the establishment of the Moorland Foundation, A Library of Negro Life. To this collection, Mrs. Porter added various other gifts and purchases from the University Library's holdings.

Mrs. Porter early on recognized the importance of collecting manuscripts. Some of her earliest acquisitions included the papers of Francis Grimke, Gregoria Goins, Frederick Douglass, John W. Cromwell, and Anna J. Cooper. Her exploits in gathering manuscript materials from attics, basements, closets and boxes which the untrained eye labelled for trash, earned her the affectionate title of "bag lady". Her most noted acquisition was the purchase of the Arthur Spingarn Collection. Mr. Spingarn, civil rights attorney, and President of the NAACP (1940-65), had assembled a unique collection of Negro authors totalling 30,000 books, pamphlets, manuscripts and sheet music. The acquisition of this gift was of such significance that the library was renamed The Moorland-Spingarn Collection.

Formal training for archivists was rather limited during this period, but Dorothy Porter was fortunate to learn from the first hand experience of some of the most noted bibliophiles of her day, Arthur Schomburg, Arthur Spingarn, and Henry Proctor Slaughter. Visiting when possible, but more often through a continuous stream of corre-

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completed her studies at Miner Normal College in Washington, D.C. Ms. Lula Allan, Librarian at the College, knowing of Dorothy's love of books, encouraged her to attend Columbia University's summer session in library science. Ms. Allan subsequently went on leave for the upcoming year and Dorothy was left in charge of the College Library. This began what Mrs. Porter describes as her "first underpaid library job". Soon thereafter, she decided to enroll as a full time student at Howard University, where she received an A.B. degree in 1928. She continued her summer studies in library science at Columbia, receiving her B.A. in 1931. Completing her M.A. in 1932, she became one of the first two African American women to receive a master's degree in library science. Her master's thesis, "Imprints by American Negro Writer's 1760-1835", was the start of a long list of bibliographies she was to prepare throughout her outstanding career.

limited to the few volumes of Black books among her family's home library. Under the tutelage of Howard University Professor Edward Christopher Williams, who also worked at the 135th Street Branch during the summer, Dorothy learned of the numerous Negro authors and the long tradition of Black literature. When nearing completion of her studies at Columbia, Dorothy was offered a position at the 135th Branch. Williams, learning of the offer, beseeched her to take a position at Howard University instead. Swayed in part by her blooming friendship with James A. Porter, who had been appointed as an instructor in the Art Department at Howard University (and whom she would later marry), she accepted the offer and returned to Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Porter joined the staff of the Howard University Library in 1928, and in 1930 was appointed Librarian in charge of the Negro Collection. The first two years of her appointment she

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Announcements ... Announcements ... Announcements ... Announcements

The 32nd Annual Seminar for Historical Administration at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia will be held October 28 - November 17, 1990. During this three-week residency seminar, participants meet with and learn from prominent historical administration practitioners who provide case studies, workshops, issues forums, panel discussions and site visits which focus on trends in historical scholarship, preservation and interpretation. The Seminar is sponsored by the American Association of Museums, the American Association for State and Local History, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There is no tuition. Lodging and meals can amount to approximately \$700 for the three-week period. Financial assistance is available for minority historical professionals this year. For more information contact Ms. Peggy Howells, Manager, Museums Studies, The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Drawer C, Williamsburg, VA 23187, (804) 220-7211. Applications are due May 18, 1990.

AT&T Library Network is sponsoring its Summer Mentoring Program for Informational Professionals in Black Colleges/Universities. The program, which is intended for experienced librarians who have a desire to expand their skills in using modern methods of information storage and retrieval, is designed for professionals in four major areas: reference, archives, cataloging and documents. Participants must be presently working in a Black college/university library, have a gradu-

ate degree in library science and have three or more years professional experience. The program will run during the summer months for 8 weeks in Northern New Jersey at one or more AT&T Bell Laboratories locations. Persons chosen for the program will be assigned to work in a unit of the Library Network as an information professional under the guidance of a staff mentor. They will work on requests for information on scientific, technical or business subjects submitted by AT&T employees. In the course of this work they will learn how the latest computerized sources of information are used in this environment and will be given an opportunity to sharpen their skills in using commercial and internal online databases. Interested persons should contact the Special Projects Manager, Libraries and Information Systems, AT&T Bell Laboratories, Room 6B-336, Murray Hill, NJ 07974-2070.


The Afro-American Newspaper Archives and Research Center has received a grant from the Ford Foundation to preserve on microfilm and index select samples of 1.2 million photographic images from the morgue of the Afro-American Newspapers chain, which was established in 1892. For more information contact Frederic Stielow, School of Library and Information Science, Catholic University, Washington DC 20064, (202) 635-5085.

The Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College has received a grant from the

Ford Foundation to create a guide to all unpublished holdings of the Library and the Radcliffe College Archives that include information on Black history. The guide will describe collections of papers of African American women, and will identify portions of other collections written by or about African American men and women. The grant also funds the processing of several manuscript collections important to the study of the history of African American women. For further information contact Susan von Salis at the Library, 10 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, (617) 495-8647.

The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture has launched its Preservation of the Black Religious Heritage Project. Partially funded through a grant from the Lily Endowment, the Project will undertake the identification, preservation and acquisition of primary research materials important for the study of African American religious life. The Project seeks to create a more comprehensive collection of African American religion resources at the Schomburg Center and in cooperation with other research repositories nationwide, hopes to assure the preservation of and access to a comprehensive body of records documenting the spiritual dimensions of the religious heritage, as well as aid in defining the role of the Black church in African American economic, political and social life. Contact Victor Smythe, Project Archivist, Schomburg Center, 515 Malcolm X Blvd., New York, NY 10037-1801, (212) 491-2226.

People

 **IDILIO GRACIA-PENA** was recently appointed by newly elected Mayor David Dinkins, Commissioner of the New York Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS). Formerly the Director of Municipal Archives, one of the three divisions of DORIS, Gracia-Pena, as Commissioner, now oversees the Archives, the Records Management Division, and the Municipal Reference and Research Center. Congratulations!

KAREN L. JEFFERSON, Curator, Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, has been selected as a candidate for the SAA 1990 Nominations Committee.

BRENDA BANKS, Assistant Director of the Georgia Department of Archives and History, and 1990 SAA Program Committee Chair, is a candidate for SAA Council.

Congratulations to **DONNA WELLS**, **CHARLES ST. VIL**, **CLIFFORD MUSE**, **PAULA WILLIAMS**, **IDILIO GRACIA-PENA**, **DANIEL WILLIAMS**, **WILDA WILLIS**, **KAREN JEFFERSON**, **JOELLEN EL BASHIR**, and **THOMAS BATTLE**. They have all been certified by the Academy of Certified Archivists.



(Election - from page 1)

4. All candidates for positions of Chair and Vice-Chair must be members of the SAA, and members of AATWAR. Only persons having membership in both SAA and AATWAR are eligible to vote in the elections of Chair and Vice-Chair.



5. All nominees will be requested to write a brief statement to be submitted to the Nominations Committee for publication in the AATWAR Newsletter.

6. The election will be held during the annual AATWAR meeting. Qualified members who wish to vote but cannot

attend the annual AATWAR meeting may vote by mail ballot. Sealed mail ballots must be received by the Nominations Committee before the annual meeting, and will be opened and counted at said meeting.

7. If no nominations are forwarded, request for volunteers to serve in the position of Vice Chair will be solicited at the AATWAR annual meeting.

Any comments about these procedures may be forwarded to the AATWAR Co-chairs. If no substantial changes are suggested the proposed election procedure will be accepted as approved. SAA membership forms and Guidelines for All Sections and Roundtables may be obtained from the SAA office (see address on last page of the newsletter).

Jobs

Manuscript Librarian (3 positions)/ Process collections, assist in reference service and acquisitions/ M.A. in Library Science/ Moorland-Spangarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington D.C. 20059, Karen L. Jefferson, Curator, (202) 636-7480.

Archivist/ Acquire, arrange, describe, and provide reference service for a newly created African American Collection of Western Pennsylvania/ M.L.S. or M.A. in history, familiarity with African American history and culture preferred/ \$17,500-\$20,000 plus benefits/ Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, Donald Haggerty, Assistant Director for Library and Archives, 4338 Bigelow Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

Archivist (2 positions)/ Appraise textual and non-textual records; prepare records disposition schedules and file classification systems for agencies; develop manuals; handbooks and guidelines relating to records management programs; conduct training in records disposition and files maintenance/ B.A. degree; must have 18 semester hours in American history, political science or government; one year professional archival experience equal to GS-9 level/ \$29,891/ Open until qualified applicants found/ National Archives & Records Administration, NAP/DEU, 7th & Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington D.C. 20408, Director of Records Administration (202) 724-1457.

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spondence, she established a strong rapport with collectors, bookdealers, publishers, bibliographers, historians and authors, forming fast and lifetime friendships with many of them. In developing her skills, Mrs. Porter held memberships in numerous professional associations, including the Bibliographical Society of America, the Society of American Archivists, Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, African Studies Association, and the American

James A. Porter (1905-1970), and Charles H. Wesley (1891-1897). Both marriages joined two hearts, but also like minds, strongly committed to scholarship and the preservation of Black history. Dr. James A. Porter, an internationally recognized painter, and art historian, wrote *Modern Negro Art*. Published in 1943, it is considered today a standard reference work of American Negro art. Married in 1929, the Porters travelled extensively, where they lectured, attended conferences, researched in libraries and archives, toured muse-

items in 1914 had grown to over 150,000 items in 1973.

Retirement was hardly an ending to Mrs. Porter's career, but rather, offered the opportunity for her to pursue more fully her own research interest. She is constantly called upon to speak, write articles, and serve on editorial and advisory boards. In 1989 she completed a year as Visiting Research Scholar at the DuBois Institute For Afro-American Research, Harvard University. She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards including two honorary doctorate degrees from University of Susquehanna, Pennsylvania (1971), and Syracuse University, New York (1989). In 1973 Moorland-Spingarn dedicated the Dorothy B. Porter Room, which now houses the Howard University Museum. In 1989, during the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the MSRC, the Dorothy Porter Wesley Lecture Series was initiated. Perpetually on the go, it is not uncommon to find Dorothy Porter Wesley rummaging through a bookstore, attending a conference, speaking on a program, or researching in a library. Those who have had the honor to share her company know they have been in the presence of someone special, someone extraordinary, and they cherish the memory.

Complementing her successful professional career has been her marriages to two most distinguished gentlemen, James A. Porter and Charles H. Wesley."

Antiquarian Society. She further developed her skills by visiting libraries and archives throughout the United States and abroad.

Mrs. Porter is the author of numerous articles and book reviews, but she is most noted for her bibliographies. She has compiled hundreds of bibliographies from brief listings to assist researchers, and annotated bibliographic articles for magazines, to comprehensive reference sources. Among her published works are: *Afro-Braziliana, A Working Bibliography* (1978); *The Negro in the United States, A Selected Bibliography* (1970); *Negro Protest Pamphlets* (1969); *Catalogue of the African Collection at Howard University* (1958); and *North American Negro Poets, A Bibliographical Checklist of their Writings, 1760-1944* (1945). She also wrote ten biographies in the *Dictionary of American Negro Biography*, edited by Rayford Logan and Michael R. Winston (1982.)

Complementing her successful professional career has been her marriages to two most distinguished gentlemen,

ums and galleries, and browsed through bookstores. In 1979 Mrs. Porter surprised many when she married her long time friend and associate, Dr. Charles H. Wesley. Dr. Wesley, a noted historian, author and educator, served as President of Wilberforce University (1942-47), and Central State University (1947-65). He also served as President of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History (1950-65), and Executive Director (1965-72).

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In 1973 Mrs. Porter retired from Howard University and her beloved Moorland - Spingarn. With her encouragement the University agreed to separate the Moorland - Spingarn Collection from the University Library and establish an autonomous Moorland-Spingarn Research Center. A collection of 3,000

*Sources for this article included: Porter, Dorothy. "Fifty Years of Collecting". In *Black Access: A Bibliography of Afro-American Bibliography*, by Richard Newman, 1984.*

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 AAT-
WAR, George Meany Memorial Archives, 10000 New Hampshire Ave., Silver
Spring, MD 20903. Deadline for submission is July 1, 1990.