

AVERY

SUMMER 2013

MESSENGER



*The Color in
FREEDOM Experience*

CONFERENCE & SYMPOSIUM

UNLEASHING the BLACK EROTIC:

Gender & Sexuality—Passion, Power and Praxis

WHY *Unleash*
The Black Erotic?

THE UNIQUE ART OF JOURNALING ONE'S LIFE
EXPLORING THE FEDERICA DALY PAPERS

**Digging into
DEEP ROOTS**

ARCHIVE NEWS

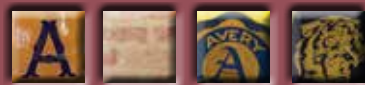
OUTREACH NEWS

Membership News

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Lois Simms & Cynthia McCottry-Smith

Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum



A Publication of the

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

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MESSAGE FROM DR. CONSEULA FRANCIS
JUNE 2013

Colleagues from around the country are constantly amazed at the African American Studies Program we are building here at the College of Charleston. A statue of John C. Calhoun is visible from our campus and the Confederate Flag isn't the rare sighting we'd like it to be. Yet, 2013-2014 promises to be the most exciting year yet for African American Studies at the College of Charleston.

This is due, in large part, to the ongoing collaborations between the African American Studies Program and the Avery Research Center. In September, we will co-host the "Unleashing the Black Erotic" conference, bringing together scholars from a wide variety of fields who are doing cutting-edge work at the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. We will also host scholars and artists working on race and comics in conjunction with the College Reads program. We will finalize the major in African American Studies, an academic program that will involve students interning on long-term projects at Avery Research Center as well.

In short, the variety of opportunities and experiences available to students, faculty, staff, and the community at Avery Research Center points to the increasingly central role African American Studies occupies in the intellectual life of the College of Charleston. It's an exciting time to be here. I hope you will join us.

Conseula Francis, PhD is director of the African American Studies Program and associate professor of English at the College of Charleston.

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On the Cover: *A Love Puzzle* by Artist Joyce Owens
30" x 40" acrylic & collage on canvas, 2010



AVERY RESEARCH CENTER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, PhD

Dear Friends:

I can hardly believe we are halfway through the year! What a wonderful first six months of 2013 we've had. We started the year partnering with two of our sister departments—English and History—to bring noted scholars Eric Foner and Francois Hamlin to campus, and we hosted black feminist scholars Farah Jasmine Griffin, Imani Perry, and Thadious Davis for a women's luncheon at Avery Research Center. As a sponsor for the 10th International Conference of the Collegium for African American Research (CAAR), "Dreams Deferred, Promises and Struggles: Perceptions and Interrogations of Empire, Nation, and Society by Peoples of African Descent", Avery Research Center contributed to CAAR's efforts to bring together a stellar lineup of scholars to discuss issues that included emancipation, civil rights, and the ongoing struggles for liberation throughout the diaspora. Avery Research Center sponsored the public lecture by

distinguished theater scholar and radical thinker, Dr. Frank Wilderson, professor of drama at University of California-Irvine. Our participation with the conference is just one of the ways we continue to bolster Avery Research Center's presence onto the international stage.

I am thrilled to report SunTrust Bank's continued support of the Avery Research Center. Its generosity allowed us to bring the renowned Fisk Jubilee Singers® to Charleston in April. The group's performance at Circular Congregational Church was a moving and rousing celebration of the timeless tradition of the Negro Spirituals. We are also appreciative of our newest partners and supporters, The Charleston Friends of the Spirituals, led, in part, by Ruth Rambo. Dr. and Mrs. Leonard Davis were also key supporters of our fundraising drive. Thank you!

Avery Research Center closed the first half of 2013 with a dynamic and pertinent exhibit regarding a dark time of this country's past. Last year, Ms. Stephany

Neal, an established museum consultant based in Maryland, contacted Avery Research Center about the acclaimed exhibit *Color in Freedom: Journey along the Underground Railroad*, a body of work developed by award-winning artist Joseph Holston, to see if there were any interest in partnering to bring this exhibit to Charleston. Of course, the answer was "yes." This year, Neal was awarded a coveted National Endowment for the Humanities grant to show this art in select venues throughout the country, and Avery Research Center was one of them. This dynamic and compelling exhibit opened April 10th and featured thought-provoking education workshops aimed at increasing student knowledge about the place of slavery and the struggle for freedom in the United States' narrative.

It has been a great six months. I look forward to the next!

Best,

pwl



AVERY INSTITUTE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CATHERINE BOAGS

Hello Everyone,

Another year has gone swiftly by as we prepare for our Annual Meeting, which will be held this year on Saturday, June 22, 2013. This year's program will highlight the work of the Avery Research Center's directors. It's time to let them know how much we appreciate the work they have done in making the Avery Research Center the institution it is today. Yes, there is more work to be done. That's where you come in. We want your continued time, presence, and support in bringing noteworthy collections and programs to Avery

Research Center. Please make an effort to come out on June 22nd to show your support for our Directors. Invite your friends also. At this time, we will also have our annual Avery Institute business meeting and election of board members.

We have had an upward trend in our membership this year. In the forthcoming year we will be working to continue this trend. We will continue to support the Avery Research Center in its goals to acquire remarkable collections and provide programs of interest to the Charleston community. How many of you came out to see the Fisk Jubilee Singers®? Weren't they fantastic? I have heard nothing but good things about the performance. Thank you to Dr. Patricia Lessane for her leadership

in bringing this program and others to Charleston during the past year.

Finally, a reminder of the Avery Research Center's annual conference on September 18-21, 2013 titled "Unleashing the Black Erotic: Gender and Sexuality—Passion, Power, and Praxis".

The Avery Institute Board does not normally meet in July or August. When the Board meets again in September, we will be working with the Avery Research Center to assist in bringing more exciting programs and exhibits for your viewing. In the interim, I want to wish everyone a very enjoyable summer!

ARCHIVE NEWS

by Aaron Spelbring & Ardra Whitney

ACQUISITIONS

This summer, the Avery Research Center is beginning an exciting collaboration with the "Somebody Had to Do It" Project. "Somebody Had to Do It" is a multidisciplinary study, led by Dr. Millicent Brown of Claflin University, to investigate, identify, locate, and acknowledge African-American "First Children", who desegregated schools in the United States, through video oral



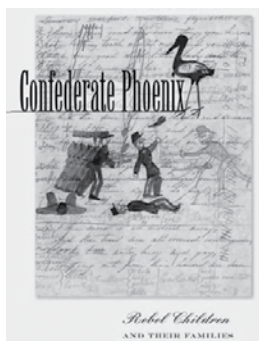
Dr. Millicent Brown (Claflin University)

histories. The project seeks to create a database of those "First Children" whose narratives are needed to adequately and accurately interpret the issues and results associated with the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) Supreme Court decision and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The Avery Research Center will house, preserve, transcribe, and make available these video oral histories through the College of Charleston's Lowcountry Digital Library. The University of South Carolina's Public History Program, headed by Dr. Bobby J. Donaldson, will provide

additional transcription service for several of the interviews. The "Somebody Had to Do It" Project is ongoing; for more information, please visit <http://somebody.claflin.edu> or contact the Manager of Archival Services, Aaron Spelbring at spelbringap@cofc.edu.

- Journalist Herb Frazier has donated additional materials to his collection that include local news publications as well as those from his travels in West Africa. Mr. Frazier's collection currently includes materials related to his personal and professional life.
- Dr. Edmund Lee Drago, Professor of History at the College of Charleston, has donated his extensive research and manuscript materials from his 2008 publication *Confederate Phoenix: Rebel Children and Their Families in South Carolina*, adding to his existing collection in the Avery Research Center archives. In this work, Dr. Drago contends children played a critical roll in the Civil War conflict. He uses letters, diaries, memoirs, organizational records, service records, church minutes, and

newspapers from throughout various districts in South Carolina to build his case. It is these



Cover of Dr. E. Lee Drago's book *Confederate Phoenix*

materials, mostly photocopies from the National Archives microfilm reels, that have been donated to the Avery Research Center.

- Two publications were acquired by the Avery Research Center library during this quarter. The first, a 2005 publication by Alene J. Smith, *Live, Labor, Love: The History of a Northern Family 1700-1900* chronicles a family history from Guinea, West Africa to Connecticut, Virginia, Georgia, and Charleston, South Carolina. The other, published in 1972 by poet, actress, culinary anthropologist, and writer, Verta Mae Smart Grosvenor titled *Thursdays & Every Other Sunday Off: A Domestic Rap*, captures the thoughts and moods of African-American domestics.

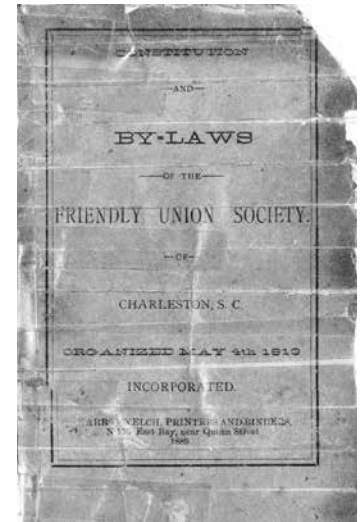


Entry from a journal of Frederica Daly August 19, 2009, in Volume 33, No. 3
See article on page 11

FRIENDLY UNION SOCIETY RECORDS

The Friendly Union Society was formed in Charleston in 1813 for the relief of orphans and widows and to provide for the general welfare of the community. This Charleston African-American burial society and social organization endured until 1981.

The collection consists of organizational and administrative records of the Friendly Union Society, including the Society's constitution and by-laws, meeting minutes, treasurer reports, and plot maps. Also, present within the collection are financial records/materials such as an arrears book and a ledger documenting lot holder accounts. The collection is 0.6 linear feet and is comprised of two archival boxes containing materials that date from 1889 to 1981.



Friendly Union Society Constitution
& By-Laws booklet c.1889

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH RECORDS

St. Mark's Episcopal Church was organized as an independent parish in 1865 by a group of prominent Black Episcopalians who were without a place to worship after most of the White Episcopalian churches evacuated Charleston as a result of the city's occupation by Union Forces. The church's first service was held on Easter Sunday, April 16, 1865. The congregation continued to grow and in 1870, a corner lot at Warren and Thomas Streets in historic Radcliffeborough was purchased for the erection of a permanent church building, which was designed by architect, Louis J. Barbot. The cornerstone of the building was laid on October 26, 1877, and the completed structure was consecrated on November 8, 1878. St. Mark's early membership included leaders and families from the community, business and professional persons, and skilled artisans who contributed to the building of the city.

The collection contains materials relating to the establishment, development, and operation of the St. Mark's Episcopal Church, including administrative records such as a register of church services, meeting minutes and proceedings, and a Sunday school roll book; financial records that include account books, ledgers, and treasurer reports; and items documenting church membership, such as parish registers. Also present in the collection are materials relating to the acquisition and maintenance of the church. The St. Mark's Episcopal Church Records is approximately 3.5 linear feet and comprises 10 archival boxes containing church records that date from 1862-2005, with bulk dates spanning the years 1965-1984.

ADDITIONAL NEWS

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER PARTNERS WITH
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE ON ITS ABOLITIONIST
MAP OF AMERICA PROJECT

In November 2012, Boston's WGBH producers of the television history series *American Experience* approached the Avery Research Center about a digital project/educational resource tool they were developing in conjunction with their three-part documentary film, *The Abolitionists*. As part of this project, *American Experience* worked with Historypin and a number of organizations from around the country (i.e., museums, public libraries, historical societies, universities, and civic organizations) to create a map that identified places in the U.S. that were significant to the abolitionist movement. In April 2013, IMLS Fellow Ardra Whitney spoke with Avery Research Center's Manager of Archival Services, Aaron Spelbring, to discuss his and Lowcountry Digital Library (LCDL) intern Lauren Hess's contribution to the Abolitionist Map of America project. For the full transcript of that interview, visit <http://avery.cofc.edu>.

Now online, FINDING AIDS for:

- Bernice Robinson Papers
http://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Robinson_Bernice.html
- Phillis Wheatley Literary Society
http://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Phillis_Wheatley_Literary.html
- Farr Family Papers
http://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Farr_Family.html
- Sterrett-Hodge Family Papers
<http://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Sterrett-Hodge.html>

The Avery Research Center is assisting with the Lowcountry Digital History Initiatives' online exhibition outlining the events of the Orangeburg Massacre.
<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/orangeburg-massacre>

CONFERENCE & SYMPOSIUM
UNLEASHING *the* **BLACK EROTIC:**
Gender and Sexuality—Passion, Power, and Praxis

September 18–21, 2013

BY EXTRACTING THE SALACIOUS, Lorde elevates the erotic from that which merely titillates the body to that which is essential, vital, and most paramount to our survival, our happiness, our fulfillment—our joy as humans. Lorde suggests our ability to fully understand, embrace, and harness the power, beauty, and essence of the erotic is the key to our positive evolution as people. The question remains, however: Can we unleash the erotic?

I believe in the erotic and I believe in it as an enlightening force within our lives as women. I have become clearer about the distinctions between the erotic and other apparently similar forces. We tend to think of the erotic as an easy, tantalizing sexual arousal. I speak of the erotic as the deepest life force, a force which moves us toward living in a fundamental way. And when I say living I mean it as that force which moves us toward what will accomplish real positive change.

-Audre Lorde

As a Black woman, lesbian, feminist, mother, writer, and artist, Lorde articulates the power, beauty, and strength of the feminine creative force, as well as the isolation, pain, and marginalization she often experienced due to her queerness and her blackness. Black scholars still wrestle with the ghosts of slavery, the mutilation of Black bodies, the dispensability of black life, and caricatures of black sexuality—from the grotesque, comical, to the hypersexualized—all the while confronting the politics of respectability that traps us with the binary opposition of our Blackness and the erotic. By challenging and dismantling these binaries and limiting narratives, we can awaken, honor, and harness the passion, power, and praxis of the erotic. We see this time and space as ripe for articulating the wide, varied, and expansive nature of gender and sexuality, and the performance of both.

THE CALL We invited proposals from across disciplines. We were most interested in proposals that addressed aspects of Black bodies in popular culture; Black sexuality in television, film and literature, Black women and the politics of respectability; Hip Hop and the hypersexuality of Black Women; alternative modes of Black love and family; the politics and economics of porn; iconic Black Queer motifs; the Black body and public health.

For conference registration information, visit: <http://avery.cofc.edu>.

KEYNOTE
SPEAKER



Joan Morgan
Journalist, Author

PERFORMANCE
ARTIST



E. Patrick Johnson
Ethnographer, Scholar
Northwestern University

STATE OF THE
FIELD PANELISTS

Marlon M. Bailey
Indiana University

Farah J. Griffin
Columbia University

Treva Lindsey
University of Missouri

Kaila Story
University of Louisville

WHY SHOULD WE UNLEASH THE BLACK EROTIC?

by Patricia Williams Lessane, PhD

This year's Avery Research Center conference, "Unleashing the Black Erotic: Gender and Sexuality—Passion, Power, and Praxis", will bring together scholars, activists, and artists for two days of lively intellectual exchanges of ideas and reflections on the state of Black gender and sexuality in the United States and throughout the African diaspora. When Conseula Francis and I began talking about the theme, we were initially faced with skepticism about the relevance of the topic and the potential backlash by the Charleston community. For us, the topic is not only relevant, but vital and timely. Just last fall, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* featured two articles on this very topic. In "Who's Afraid of Black Sexuality?", Stacy Patton quips that African-American scholars writing on this topic are traversing a new frontier—one that might give many inside and outside the academy pause—but is paramount to the discourse of Black identity and those social and cultural constructs that shape who we are. In describing where we find ourselves today, Patton writes the following in order to historicize these issues and provide current context at the same time:

Old tropes have continued to permeate popular culture and public commentary, whether a national furor over Janet Jackson's exposed breast, a recent blog post on PSYCHOLOGY TODAY's Web site (later retracted) to the effect that black women are less physically attractive than other women, or the barrage of news stories about a "marriage crisis" among black women who cannot find suitable mates. Witness remarks about the artists Beyoncé and Nicki Minaj, the tennis star Serena Williams, or Michelle Obama that harp on their ample backsides. Remember last year, when Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner, a Republican from Wisconsin, quipped about the first lady's "large posterior"? And this summer, when the Killers' drummer, Ronnie Vannucci, described how he accidentally found himself "grabbing her ass" during a hug?

The hyper-sexualization of Black women and men is nothing new, and neither is the tendency to de-feminize Black women and emasculate Black men in television, video, and film. To be sure, portrayals of Black gender and sexuality have become more nuanced over the years. Take for example, the character of Lafayette Reynolds, the charming "homo-thug" of Alan Ball's hit cable show, *True Blood*, whose outlandish cross-dressing and cross-gender sex appeal is both refreshing and complicated at the same time. While Ball attempts to do something new and courageous with his Black characters, Lafayette and his feisty cousin, Tara Mae Thornton, fall into the age-old tropes that dominated the nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature and social science, and twentieth-century television and film. Lafayette may be a twenty-first-century Black gay man, yet Ball often

depicts him as overly flirtatious and borderline lustful of the White female characters. In this manner, Lafayette mirrors the characteristics of the dangerous Black buck that dominated much of early American film, most notably in D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*.

Contemporary Black womanhood hasn't fared any better. As Patton has indicated, public dialogue about Black women's bodies and beauty really reflect the low value assigned to Black female identity. Many in the Black community were enraged when Halle Berry took home the coveted Oscar for her role as a wounded single-mother who seeks physical comfort with a White man from a racist family. The steamy sex scene between Berry and actor Billy Bob Thornton spoke to historical accounts of Black women being objectified and raped at the hands of White men, many of whom were their masters during slavery.

These same tropes go beyond scripted shows and feature-length films to reality television shows. Each week, millions of viewers from diverse backgrounds tune in to witness the tomfoolery of six Black women marketed as "real" Black life on *The Real Housewives of Atlanta* and to view Shonda Rhimes's latest, and most provocative television drama yet, *Scandal*.

While each of these shows provides entertainment, rather than enlightenment, they do speak to our preoccupation with the salacious. But this is nothing new. What is new is Black women and men seem to be playing active roles in the creation and marketing of contemporary Black sexual identity and models for Black life. Unfortunately, much of what we see, read, and hear in most mainstream media outlets does not reflect what actually occurs at the intersections of Blackness, gender, and class in work, school, and in the wider society. Nor do most American movies and television shows reflect the diversity of Black family units—many headed by single females, others by grandparents, and still others by same-sex individuals.

In 1994, hundreds of Black women gathered at MIT to attend a historic conference, "Black Women in the Academy—Defending Our Name". I was one of them! It was a watershed moment in which Black women scholars, faculty, and students came together to discuss, acknowledge, and celebrate our important and unique contribution to the academy. Presentations covered topics including African-American women in history and the professorate, to those topics germane exclusively to our position as Black women in higher education.

We envision this conference as being such a moment. Here in historic Charleston where Black folks continue to demand a seat at the table, Black scholars will convene to examine what it means to be Black, female, male, gay, straight, and various other, often intersecting, identities. In doing so, we acknowledge our agency and power, and collectively unleash the Black erotic.

THE COLOR IN FREEDOM EXPERIENCE

An Interactive Journey along the Underground Railroad

By Stephany B. Neal

The Avery Research Center recently hosted *The Color in Freedom Experience—An Interactive Journey along the Underground Railroad*, an exhibition and series of workshops focusing on the Underground Railroad. The project began at the Avery Research Center with workshops for parents and teachers led by Dr. Bernard Powers, professor in the History Department at the College of Charleston, and workshops for students from kindergarten to eighth grade conducted by renowned Underground Railroad scholar Dr. Spencer R. Crew, and Dr. Dwana Waugh, Avery Research Center's Visiting Scholar. Project Director Stephany B. Neal collaborated with Avery Research Center's Education Outreach Coordinator Shelia Harrell-Roye and Curtis J. Franks, Coordinator of Facilities and Public Programs to enlist the participation of several local schools.

The Color in Freedom Experience is centered around Maryland artist Joseph Holston's 50-piece art exhibition, titled *Color in Freedom—Journey along the Underground Railroad*, and an educational component of age-appropriate workshops, training modules, and lesson plans for parents, youth, and teachers to address the question: How do we, as families, talk to our youth about slavery in the twenty-first century? The project integrates the arts into an historical discussion of slavery and the Underground Railroad by using interactive tools that encourage students to deeply engage with the subject matter in a positive manner.

Three Charleston-area schools—Charleston Development Academy Public Charter School, C.E. Williams Middle School for Creative & Scientific Arts, and Sanders-Clyde Creative Arts School—participated in the workshops, which were designed to gauge any effect the exhibition had on participants' view of learning about the Underground Railroad and slavery. The workshops meet the Department of Education National Standards for the Visual Arts and Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects for grades K-8.

Data collected during the workshops will provide invaluable insight into audience needs and interests, and will assist in determining the overall success of the program. This prototype exhibit will serve as an integral step in the enhancement of *The Color in Freedom Experience*, which will ultimately travel to several cities across the country and expand to include a book, a Web site with interactive activities and teaching sessions, a smartphone application, and a children's eBook.

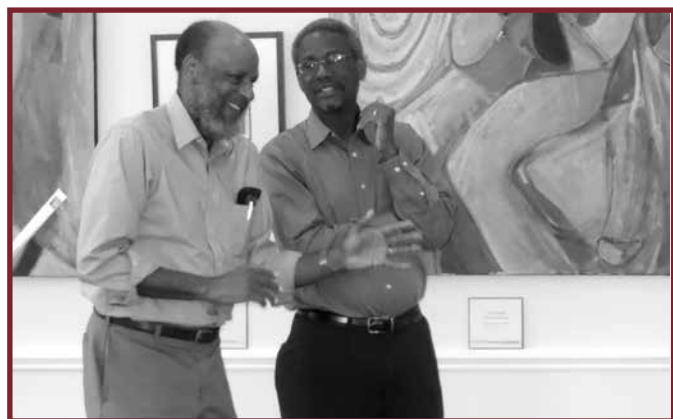
Stephany Neal is the Project Director of THE COLOR IN FREEDOM EXPERIENCE and CEO of S&D Consulting Services, a cultural exchange management firm.



Students from the Charleston Development Academy attend Color in Freedom Workshop



(l-r) Dr. Spencer Crew, Dr. Dwana Waugh, Shelia Harrell-Roye, Stephany Neal, Dr. Bernard Powers, Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane, Curtis Franks



(l-r) Dr. Bernard Powers (College of Charleston) and Dr. Spencer Crew (George Mason University)



FAREWELL AVERY:

A 2012–2013 IMLS FELLOWSHIP WRAP-UP

BY ARDRA WHITNEY

My time at Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture has come to an end, but—as I return home to New York—with me I take many exciting memories of my nine-month residency experience at one of Charleston's premier cultural institutions for the preservation of African-American history and culture in South Carolina. Since beginning my residency at Avery Research Center in September 2012, my archival processing duties have included arranging and describing the W. Melvin Brown, Jr. Papers, the Edwina Harleston Whitlock Papers, and the St. Mark's Episcopal Church Records; as well as creating finding aids for these collections in Encoded Archival Description (EAD).

I enjoy working with collections that deal with African-American history, as well as the African Diaspora. I feel it is

important to help provide access to this kind of material so people everywhere can more fully understand the value of African-American contributions to American culture. Moreover, I take pleasure in the process of finding aid creation because it gives me the opportunity to share this historically valuable information with others.

In addition to processing collections, I also collaborated with last year's Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Fellow, Aisha Haykal, to produce a digital photo archive component to her Black in the Lowcountry oral history project. The photo archive is intended as a source of outreach—one that aims to increase public awareness about the purpose and benefits of African-American archives—and to foster interest in the preservation and display of photographic images documenting

the African-American experience in South Carolina's Lowcountry.

It has truly been an honor to serve as an IMLS Fellow for the Avery Research Center and a tremendous learning experience both professionally and personally. From performing collections processing; to conducting oral history interviews and attending staff meetings and lectures; to regularly updating Avery Research Center's Twitter and Facebook pages with engaging and informative posts; to developing and implementing a digital outreach project; I have increased my proficiency in multitasking substantially and feel a great sense of pride in all I have been able to accomplish during my residency.

ENHANCING EDUCATION THROUGH OUTREACH

By Shelia Harrell-Royce



The Avery Research Center's Education and Outreach Department has developed and presented a number of programs during the Spring 2013. These have included fifteen educational programs and eight outreach programs. Among these were special presentations to Spelman College and the diversity committee of the National Weather Service.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK THIS QUARTER:

- Oral history program for North Charleston's R.B. Stall High School students
- Burke High School educational program, "Conflicts in Duality", focusing on the philosophical differences, yet similar vision, of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington for racial inclusion
- Brown Bag Lunch Presentation: Dr. Iain Whyte, "Send Back the Money: The Free Church of Scotland and American Slavery"
- *The Color in Freedom Experience Workshops*
- Partnered with the Carolina Lowcountry Atlantic World Program (CLAW) for the African Literature Association Conference, which hosted over four hundred attendees and participants. Avery Research Center held a reception, special tour, and presentation focusing on the conference's theme, "Literature, Liberation and the Law"
- Launched a high school volunteer program

Look to <http://avery.cofc.edu> or Avery Research Center's Facebook page for more information regarding our education outreach programming!

Miss Lois A. Simms and Mrs. Cynthia McCottry-Smith share a lot of similarities. Their lives exemplify the indelible and transformative power of education and religion. Both women graduated from Avery Institute—Miss Simms as the valedictorian in 1937 and Mrs. McCottry-Smith in 1940—with a resolve to educate youth. They chose to teach local students in the Lowcountry; they both had long and illustrious careers as educators starting at their alma mater, then spanning across the peninsula. Both women credit a strong family background rooted in a Christian moral upbringing for their quest to improve the lives of their communities.

Independently, much has been written about Miss Simms and Mrs. McCottry-Smith. Instead, we wanted to allow their words to speak for themselves. Taken from oral histories housed at the Avery Research Center, their recollections illustrate the impact African-American female educators had in shaping life and work in Charleston during the era of legal segregation.

IN THE WORDS OF LOIS A. SIMMS



In this interview excerpt, Miss Simms recalls learning about Black history and culture with a strong emphasis on educational excellence by her Avery Institute teacher, Mrs. Margaret R. Poinsette, and her mother, Mrs. Anna F. Simms. Both women served as powerful female role models, greatly influencing her future career path in educating Lowcountry youth.

I started my education at Wallingford Kindergarten, it was located on Meeting Street. The other years of my grammar school education were spent right across the street at Simonton. That's from the first to the fifth grade. Then I went to Burke High School for the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, so I entered Avery as a high school student and I spent four years there: ninth grade through twelfth.

While I was there, I had one outstanding English teacher—Margaret Rutland [later Poinsette]. She finished Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama.

Oh, she was a splendid teacher; I learned so much from her! She exposed us to so much, even as I would say, even because this is something that's being talked about nowadays as if it had never happened before, but even African-American History as such. Or Black History, as they called it. I became a teacher because my mother was, and because that was one of the occupations that was available to professional women

at that time. But, I became an English teacher, I'm sure, because I was so greatly influenced by Mrs. Poinsette. And language was one of the things I really liked. My whole family, I would say, is pretty good on language. We had the opportunity to read a whole lot when we were coming along. There were always books and whatnot around us. My history teacher, I kind of think influenced me a little bit because I got a double major, one in English and one in Social Studies, when I went to Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina.

INTERVIEW WITH LOIS A. SIMMS BY CHERISSE JONES, 27 JUNE 1995 (AMN 500.001.026), IN THE AVERY NORMAL INSTITUTE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, AVERY RESEARCH CENTER ARCHIVES.

IN THE WORDS OF CYNTHIA MCCOTTRY-SMITH



In a quiet act of defiance, Mrs. Cynthia McCottry-Smith refused to submit to Jim Crow racial customs during a job interview. Instead, as this interview passage demonstrates, Mrs. McCottry-Smith commands respect from her prospective employer, an attribute which would follow her throughout her long career as a teacher and community leader.

I decided to apply for a job at the public school and I was granted an interview with Mr.

[Andrew B.] Rhett [Superintendent of Schools]. When I went down there to have the interview, he asked me what school I went to. I told him I went to Bennett College. "... Where is that?" I said, "In Greensboro, North Carolina." "Well, why did you go there? Why didn't you go to school in South Carolina?" I said, "Well, South Carolina doesn't have A-rated colleges for Blacks, well we said Negroes at the time. He didn't like that. So then he said, "I want you to get a chest X-ray." I said, "allright." "Allright?! How do you expect to teach the children?" I said, "I've never been taught that to answer 'allright' to a statement such as you made is incorrect or discourteous." And he was mad with me and I was mad with him. He asked me something else and I said, "Allright" again just before I left. I told him the same thing again, "I still say it is not incorrect or discourteous—See, he wanted me to say, "Yes 'suh, or no 'suh." But I wouldn't do it. I wasn't rude. I was not rude at all. But I wouldn't say that. I know that is what he wanted me to say. I was so mad, I went home and I told my mother that I'm going to North Carolina because I can get a job in North Carolina. I felt that I could. And my sister was teaching there in North Carolina. But in the meantime, a lady told me, "Cinny you know I heard they've got a vacancy down at Avery." I said, "What!" I came right down here and put my application in and went on about my business. I was working at a summer camp in New York City in the state of New York. It was run by the Children's Aid Society of New York.

Continued on page 11

The Papers of **Master Blacksmith Philip Simmons** were acquired by the Avery Research Center in collaboration with the Philip Simmons Foundation and are being processed and digitized through a grant by the Donnelly Foundation. The Papers contain working sketches by Mr. Simmons.

For a tour of Philip Simmons's ironwork in the Charleston landscape, connect with licensed tour guide and local Charlestonian Sandra Campbell for "Hearts, Gates & Grills," a walking tour offered every fourth Saturday of the month. The tour begins and ends at St. John's Reformed Episcopal Church (91 Anson) in The Heart Garden with refreshments. For information visit: <http://www.philipsimmons.us/>

And I went on to summer camp. I got a letter from the American Missionary Association telling me that I had the job. In the meantime, I got a letter from Mr. Rhett that I had a job. And I wrote him a very nice letter. I thanked him for it and told him that I thought I had a job for which I thought I was better suited. [Laughs].

INTERVIEW WITH CYNTHIA MCCOTTRY-SMITH BY ANDRA WHITNEY, 14 FEBRUARY 2013, IN THE BLACKS IN THE LOWCOUNTRY PROJECT, AVERY RESEARCH CENTER ARCHIVES.

Not only are Lois A. Simms and Cynthia McCottry-Smith living history, but their memories of the past speak to their personal interest in preserving history. Both women have donated materials to the Avery Research Center's archives, which give a fuller portrait of African American women's lives in Charleston. In the words of Septima Clark, Miss Simms's and Mrs. McCottry-Smith's artifacts and oral histories "read [the past] clear."

Dwana Waugh, PhD is a visiting scholar at the Avery Research Center.

EXPLORING THE FREDERICA DALY PAPERS

The Unique Art of Journaling One's Life

by Georgette Mayo

One of the pleasures of my archivist position is to communicate with our many donors near and far.

During the past four years, my curiosity has been prompted by a woman who has written and donated an ongoing series of fascinating personal journals. Through email correspondence, I have had the opportunity to converse with Dr. Frederica Y. Daly (aka Dr. Freddie), who has candidly and creatively chronicled her daily life through word and art. The Avery Research Center is the fortunate repository of her voluminous writings.

Maintaining a diary or journal is a personal exercise that incorporates the mind and spirit. While the majority of us shy away from expressing ourselves in writing, Daly boldly goes where most will not tread for fear others will read their inner thoughts. A self-described "Beader, Dabbler, Diarist", the former practicing psychologist and scholar engages the art of journal writing with a fervent passion. Early travelogues dating from 1961 highlight Daly's international travels to London and Paris. Inspired by Beat Generation poet Allen Ginsberg's *Indian Journals*, Daly fully embraced descriptive journaling during her tour of the country in 1970-1971. Entitled "India" (AMN 30007, Box 5 Folder 62: December 1970 to January 1971), her chronicle is an intermixture of observational writings with crayon drawings detailing artwork she encountered; watercolor landscapes; dream recollections; spiritual reflections; travel brochures; menus and recipes of food eaten; photographs; itineraries; and an inventory of purchased souvenirs for gifts. Even her cursive handwriting possesses a calming beauty. Within these volumes, the reader will find a

narrative of Daly's intellectual and travel pursuits, infinite hope and wisdom, recorded dreams, and health challenges; along with her expressions of appreciation for her family, friends, and affirmation of life.

Throughout her life, Daly has shared her passion for journaling with adolescents, military veterans, and senior citizens. One of her favorite experiences entails taking a busload of veterans to the Vietnam Veterans National Memorial Center in Angel Fire, New Mexico. En route, Daly provided the veterans with stenographic pads and pens, and discussed the virtues of journal writing as a good memento of one's travels. Upon their arrival, several resisted taking the books with them; yet within thirty minutes, they asked to get their journals, which they "had forgotten" to bring. Thus close to the entire day was spent discussing the power of journaling. Daly relates, "it was a very emotional and for some a page turning day."¹

Celebrating her 88th year of life, Daly continues to write daily and travels when the opportunity arises. Daly selected the Avery Research Center as her repository of choice to pay homage to her South Carolina family connections. Avery Research Center currently holds Daly's journals from 1961 to 2009, in addition to her scholarly and creative writings. Her collection lends itself to a plethora of research topics including but not inclusive of: psychology, women/gender studies, sexuality, race, health and aging, Native-American culture, spirituality, and religious studies. The collection's finding aid is located online at: http://avery.cofc.edu/archives/Daly_Frederica.html.

¹(F.Y.Daly, personal communication, April 2, 2010)

Image of one of Daly's journal, page 4.

DIGGING *into* DEEP ROOTS

by Paul Garbarini

Dr. Ysaye Maria Barnwell, of the women's a cappella group Sweet Honey in the

Rock, has deep roots in Charleston; however, she didn't know how deep until two years ago. She grew up in New York City and has lived in Washington, DC for decades. She knew her father, violinist Irving Barnwell, was from here. She knew his parents' names, Lucia Parker and Robert Barnwell. Her father had a cousin here, too, Ethelyn Parker.

The initial search for her Charleston family history began with U.S. Census records, local property records, and city directories. Some of the puzzle began to fill in, starting with the first big piece of discovering the names of Irving's grandparents, William James (W.J.) and Anna Brown Parker.

The document trail for W.J. Parker is extraordinarily rich. He lived at 12 Tradd Street and 26 Morris Street. The Freedmen's Bank records reveal the names of his immediate family and that his parents were from Abbeville, South Carolina. But there was more to be discovered at the Avery Research Center.

Deborah Wright and Georgette Mayo from Avery Research Center's Archival staff figured prominently here. They guided me through the collections, seeming to be guided themselves by intuition, though I know now it's their intimate knowledge of Avery Research Center's holdings.

THE PROCESS

The first collection I surveyed was The Ethelyn Murray Parker Papers, and it didn't take long to note the twentieth-century family connections. The nineteenth-century sources yielded even more.

The Harleston Funeral Home records spoke of W.J. Parker's son, James Daniel, in business as an undertaker on Morris Street; The Central Baptist Church records disclosed W.J. Parker was a founding director in 1891; and The Avery School Memorabilia Collection named Parker's daughter, Annie, as a graduate in 1897.

Records from a past Avery Research Center exhibit, *The South Carolina and West Indian Exposition: The Negro Department Revisited, 1901-1902* held the most profound discovery of all. In the picture of the Exposition's Executive Committee, right next to Booker T. Washington, was a small portrait image of W.J. Parker. It is the only known image of a man nearly forgotten to history.



Dr. Ysaye Maria Barnwell

Parker, born into urban slavery, became a prosperous tinsmith, businessman, property owner, politician, banker, and church and civic leader. Dr. Barnwell has every reason to be proud of her father's grandfather and her Gullah roots. She is coming to Charleston in September; and when she arrives, she'll be treated to a customized tour depicting the life of THE TINSMITH OF TRADD STREET given by Uniquely Charleston Tours.



William J. Parker's tinsmith shop
at 12 Tradd Street

Courtesy: Preservation Society of Charleston, SC

Fitting genealogical puzzle pieces together is a process that comes together over time and requires patience, but I am happy to report that in the search for Dr. Ysaye Maria Barnwell's roots, tremendous progress has already been made.

Paul Garbarini is a tour guide and research specialist in Charleston, SC. His Web site is: <http://www.uniquelycharlestontours.com/>

THOUGHTS

Gratitude

... to the Estate of Janet D. Hicks
...to Dr. Harry Elam of Stanford University for the Avery/Stanford 2013 Summer Internship
... to all who attended the Fisk Jubilee Singers® Concert and to Circular Congregational Church for providing the venue.
...to SUGAR for the delicious goodies.
...to artist Joseph Holston for his powerful *Color in Freedom* series, and to project director Stephany Neal, Drs. Spencer Crew, Bernard Powers, & Dwana Waugh, Curtis Franks and Shelia Harrell-Royce for facilitating and implementing the *Color in Freedom* Workshops.
...to Elizabeth Lewine for contributing to the Avery Acquisition Fund
...to Monica Seeger for her support
...to Susan Spearman of Nelson Printing, always patient and understanding!
...to Carolyn & Hank of the SOPHIA Institute for being inclusive.
...to Todd Royce for always being there for us.
...to Cynthia McCottry-Smith for the treats.
...to the Avery Institute Board for its continued faith and support.

Jubilation

... at the magnificent Fisk Jubilee Concert performed by the 2012-2013 Fisk Jubilee Singers® and led by Dr. Paul Kwami.

Welcome

... Mary Battle, who joins the Avery Research Center in the position of Public Historian.

Parting Best Wishes

...to Dwana Waugh, PhD, our 2013 Visiting Scholar & Ardra Whitney, former IMLS Fellow

IN MEMORY OF

MR. HERBERT DeCOSTA, JR.
from Dr. Barbara Williams-Jenkins

MR. & MRS. JAMES HUGHES
from Loretta Hughes

MR. JOHN CARR
from Mildred Carr

JOHN L. DART & SUSAN D. BUTLER,
descendants Ernette Strickland
from Patrick and Annette Strickland

OGRETTA HOURAY
from Rosmond Whipper-Black

AVERY INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Tony Bell, Membership Chairman



Greetings!

It's been another eventful year at the Avery Research Center thus far. The Avery Research Center has presented a myriad of events ranging from the amazing visual art of Karole Turner Campbell's *Eternal Vigilantes* exhibit to the exuberant performance from the Fisk Jubilee Singers® at the Circular Congregational Church in April. None of these events would be possible without your involvement and support, so I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank each of you for both.

Our membership roster continues to grow every month and we hope to see all of you at our annual meeting on June 22, 2013. This year's meeting will focus on past and present Avery Research Center directors (visit our Web site at www.averyinstitute.us for more information). Remember it's your support that ensures Avery Research Center remains a community jewel and a national treasure.

Thank you.

THE LOWCOUNTRY RICE CULTURE FORUM



Charleston, South Carolina September 12–14, 2013

by Jonathan Green

From the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries, South Carolina led the nation's rice production. The crop's cultivation touched many aspects of life in the state's tidal region, and its impact continues. Why did it happen? How did it affect the land and people? Often,

research produced by professional historians, anthropologists, and others on the Lowcountry staple crop of rice and its impact on the region's population, built environment, and cultural customs has not adequately been disseminated to the general public, including teachers, community leaders, and the descendants of stake holders in the rice trade and agricultural system.

This September in Charleston, South Carolina, the Lowcountry Rice Culture Project will come together with our partners at Middleton Place and the College of Charleston to conduct a small forum to share information on Lowcountry rice production and culture with a broad audience. Participants will include scholars, teachers, community leaders, public historians, and docents and employees of local historic and cultural sites, as well as several representatives from our institutional partners in the Republic of Guinea (West Africa). Emphasis will be on giving solid information and teaching materials to individuals who are in a position to pass them along to a wider audience, including locals and visitors.

During the three-day Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum, participants will examine these issues with guidance from qualified humanists. "Day One" will open proceedings with evening demonstrations and tastings of rice products from the chefs of the Culinary Institute of Charleston (Palmer Campus); "Day Two" at the College of Charleston will focus on presentations by and discussions with scholars followed by a public lecture and discussion; "Day Three" at Middleton Place will provide hands-on experience and discussions of the annual rice harvest, African retentions and cultural elements related to rice production, and Lowcountry rice food ways.

Lowcountry Rice Culture Forum schedule and registration information will be available at: www.lowcountryriceculture.org

Jonathan Green, founder of the Lowcountry Rice Project, is a world renowned visual artist whose work chronicles the Southern experience.



Fanning Rice, Circa 1977

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Above: SunTrust Bank representatives presenting check to Avery Research Center's executive director Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane sponsoring the Fisk Jubilee Singers® Benefit Concert.

Below: 2012–2013 Fisk Jubilee Singers® relax after the concert with their director Dr. Paul Kwami (center) in Circular Congregational Church, April, 19, 2013.



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Tours of the museum galleries are conducted five times a day. Monday through Friday (10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m.) except on College of Charleston holidays and winter break. Group tours of 5 or more and Saturday tours by appointment only. 843.953.7609 **Admission** by donation.

The Phillis Wheatley Literary and Social Club Reading Room is open to the public year-round, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. except College of Charleston holidays and winter break. To contact the Reading Room call 843.953.7608.

The Avery Research Center is handicapped accessible. Limited parking is available in our parking lot.

Visit our Web site for more information: <http://avery.cofc.edu>

