



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Division of Preservation and Access application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/divisions/preservation> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

**Project Title:** Documenting Our Stories: Preserving the Archival Collections of Spelman College

**Institution:** Spelman College

**Project Director:** Holly Smith

**Grant Program:** Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions

An NEH Preservation Assistance Grant would provide funding for necessary expert advice and appropriate training to assist with the goal of long-term preservation planning for the Spelman College Archives. The consultant will spend several days assessing our diverse collections, which will inform a thorough assessment and development of feasible strategies for preservation and access planning. This consultation is a crucial step for the Spelman Archives to determine preservation priorities. The Archives staff will also participate in workshops to build experience critical to carrying out the consultant's recommendations.

Spelman College, founded in 1881, is one of two existing higher educational institutions historically created to educate black women. Since its founding, thousands of women have graduated from Spelman College, ranked first among historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the 2015 U.S. News & World Report. Notable alumnae include civil rights attorney Marian Wright Edelman, Director of Spelman's Women's Research & Resource Center Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall, and renowned author Alice Walker. Containing approximately 5,000 linear feet of collections, The Archives serves as the official repository of the College and collects administrative and departmental records, publications, photographs and other material relating to the history of the Spelman. The Archives also collects the personal papers of individuals and organization as it relates to the history of the college. These manuscript collections span the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present. In addition, the Archives collects materials related to feminism and social justice, particularly related to women of the African Diaspora. The Archives also includes more than 500 volumes of campus publications include yearbooks, student newspapers, annual reports, and course catalogs. A particular highlight is the official college magazine, The Spelman Messenger. The Messenger, established in 1885, is still currently being printed. It features articles written by faculty, students, and staff, on various topics – alumnae news, campus visitors, health and wellness, history, and religion – and often includes photographs and local business advertisements. There are approximately 200 books from the Quarles Library, the former library at Spelman College that opened in 1891. Other special collections, such as the papers of Glee Club director Willis Laurence James, have small collections of books as well. The Spelman Photographic Collection contains over 30,000 images that depict life at Spelman and beyond over the course of the college's 135 year history. The formats include photographic prints, glass plate negatives, slides, scrapbooks, and panoramas. A number of these unique photographs are examples of 19<sup>th</sup> century photographic processes, such as albumen prints and daguerreotypes. The images are rich and diverse in content- early campus architecture, Spelman alumnae and their families; missionary schools established by alumnae in the Congo; the black community in Atlanta; noted campus guests such as Langston Hughes, Shirley Chisholm and Hillary Clinton; student organizations; Commencement; and myriad other subjects.

As a component of the Women's Resource & Research Center, the Archives also collects records related to women of the African Diaspora, particularly in the areas of social justice and civil rights activism, LGBTQ advocacy, and feminism. The two most heavily used special collections are the papers of lesbian feminist activist Audre Lorde and filmmaker, writer and feminist Toni Cade Bambara. The Audre Lorde Papers, consisting of 40 linear feet ranging from 1955 to 2002, chronicles the personal life, professional journey and artistic evolution of the self-proclaimed "'black, lesbian, feminist, mother, poet warrior'". The papers include correspondence, photographs, poetry and essay drafts, course teaching materials, textiles, and more than forty journals. The Toni Cade Bambara papers highlight the life of one of the preeminent black woman authors and cultural workers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The collection is 30 linear feet and comprises correspondence, publications, photographs, essays, novels drafts, rough cuts of Bambara's diverse film catalog as well as footage of her many speaking engagements. Overall, Spelman's institutional records and special collections provide a critical archive that documents black women in

higher education and the complex relationships on the campus, in the surrounding African American communities of Atlanta, and across the nation. The study of black women in a variety of areas is still a much needed area of research in the humanities, as historically black women have been underrepresented in the archival collections. The Spelman archival collections are a unique and valuable resource for any scholar researching black women in the African Diaspora broadly. It would benefit scholars and the general public to facilitate broader access and ensure the long term preservation of Spelman's collections.

In 2015, the Spelman Archives served over 100 patrons in the reading room and remotely, including Spelman faculty, staff, and students, graduate students and professors from other institutions, genealogists, alumnae, and community members. Photographs and excerpts from Spelman student newspaper and yearbooks were used in an exhibition entitled *Start Something: Activism and the Atlanta Student Movement*, featured at the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library from October 2015 to May 2016. The exhibition highlights the activism of college students at Morehouse College, Spelman, and other schools in the Atlanta University Center, primarily in the 1960s. The Archives contributed early historical images to the film *Tell Them We Are Rising: The Story of Historically Colleges and Universities*, noted filmmaker Stanley Nelson's forthcoming documentary highlighting the heritage and continuing significance of historically black colleges and universities. The Archives also regularly contribute materials to various campus departments for Spelman hosted events, most recently including inaugural events for the new president, Dr. Mary Schmidt Campbell.

The archival collections have increasingly become a part of the curriculum for various courses. In the spring 2016 semester, the Archives staff worked with five different courses in various departments, from Anthropology to Art to History. Additionally, for the past four years, the Archives has worked with Prof. Opal Moore and Dr. Jerry Wever, who teach a course entitled "Archives of a Free Thinking Woman: The Radical Genius of Audre Lorde". The course, which has been offered as an upper level seminar and a first year student colloquia, introduces students to the work of Audre Lorde. In addition to reading selections of *Zami*, *The Cancer Journals*, and other seminal texts by Lorde, the students select a topic for their final projects and conduct research in the Audre Lorde papers throughout the semester. The students often come up with innovative ways of analyzing the myriad materials in Lorde's collections. Sarah Brokenborough, a graduating Comparative Women's Studies Major at Spelman, took the course in her sophomore year. Ms. Brokenborough researched Audre Lorde's transnational influence in Spelman's Archives, and received funding her junior year to study abroad and research the Audre Lorde holdings in the Free University of Berlin, as well as archives in South Africa. She completed her senior thesis in May 2016 on the topic "Audre Lorde's Transnational Feminism, Activism, and Teachings: South Africa & Germany", under the direction of Dr. Beverly Guy-Sheftall.

The Archives has also been privileged to host a number of scholars researching collections in new and innovative ways. These scholars include:

**Kira Thurman** Dr. Thurman is an assistant professor of German and history at the University of Michigan. She earned her PhD in history from the University of Rochester in 2013 and is currently writing her first book, *Singing Like Germans: Black Musicians in the Land of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms*. Dr. Thurman's publications include "Singing the Civilizing Mission in the Land of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms: The Fisk Jubilee Singers in 1870s Germany" in *Journal of World History* (Special Issue: "Preaching the Civilizing Mission"), Volume 27, No. 2 (Summer 2016). Dr. Thurman kindly shared the following sentiments about her time here in the archives in the summer of 2015: "...I couldn't believe the amount of material I found. I would like to thank Holly Smith and Cassandra Ware especially for using their expert knowledge to direct me to materials I hadn't even considered. By pointing me to the Josephine Harreld Love

*collection, Ms. Ware opened up a whole world of primary sources to me. These were some of the best finds of my career... My book project (forthcoming) has been made better by my time at Spelman College's archives."*

**Robert Cohen** Dr. Robert Cohen is a professor of history and social studies in NYU's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Dr. Cohen received his MA and PhD at the University of California at Berkeley, and his recent books include *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*. Dr. Cohen visited the Archives in March for research relating to his upcoming book, an edited version of iconic professor Howard Zinn's diary from his last semester (spring 1963) of teaching at Spelman. Dr. Cohen was seeking to gather as much information as possible on Spelman in 1963 to place Professor Zinn's diary into historical context. The Archives staff worked with Dr. Cohen to pull items from a variety of collections, including President Albert Manley's papers and the student newspaper, *The Spelman Spotlight*. Dr. Cohen shared the following kind remarks about his time here: *"My thanks to all of you for your generous help in my Spelman historical research... And it was a great pleasure to work this week in the Spelman archives with Holly Smith and Cassandra Ware, whose skill and expertise enabled me to do a month's work of archival research in a week."*

The primary mission of the Spelman College Archives is to collect, preserve, and promote archival collections related to the institutional history of the College, its alumnae, and individuals or institutions associated with Spelman. As a component of the Women's Research and Resource Center, the Archives also focuses on building special collections to facilitate and support research by and about women of the African Diaspora, with a particular interest in the areas of feminism, activism, and social justice. The Archives is housed in the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby Academic Center, built in 1996. The Cosby Center is a 92,000 square foot facility that houses, classrooms, departmental and faculty offices in the humanities and interdisciplinary programs as well as the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art. The Archives comprises 3,180 square feet of workspace, including a reading room to accommodate researchers, offices for Archives staff, a processing room, where collections are prepared before storage, and the Archives stacks area. The stacks are 2,500 square feet in diameter with the majority of the footage occupied by two compact shelving units holding the archives collection. There is also a smaller storage room for the photograph collection. The Archives is a department within Spelman College, whose operational costs are covered through the College's annual budget. The Archive's operational budget for the 2015-2016 Fiscal Year is \$107,452.00. The Spelman Archives are open Monday through Friday from 10:00am to 4:30pm. The Archives are open year round with the exception of college recognized holidays. The Archives serves Spelman faculty, staff, students, alumnae, the Atlanta University Center consortium, as well as external scholars, researchers and the general public. The Archives has two full time staff members, the College Archivist and the Archives Assistant, who work 35 hours a week. Two undergraduate student from Spelman College work in the Archives for up to 10 hours per week during the Academic year, and since the Fall 2013 semester there has been a graduate student intern, typically from a library science or archival management masters program. A History PhD student is completing a yearlong practicum working in the Archives during the 2016 Fall and Spring semesters, typically for 30 hours a week. The Archives is also fortunate to occasionally have volunteers to assist with special projects as needed.

A comprehensive consultation or assessment has not occurred at Spelman thus far. The Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library (AUC-RWWL) was awarded \$133,600 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through LYRASIS to support a collaborative photograph preservation project with Spelman College from April 2008 to November, 2009, with an extension grant from November 2009 to February 2010. In Phase II of the HBCU Photograph Preservation Project, AUC-RWWL was awarded

grant funding in the amount of \$58,642.52 between April 2012 and September 30, 2013. Prior to the start of Round II, Rachel Wetzel of the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) visited the Woodruff Library Archives and Spelman College Archives in January 2012 to conduct an assessment of the collections proposed for preservation and processing. Ms. Wetzel returned to the AUC-RWWL and Spelman Archives to conduct a two day on-site training in July 2012. Archives staff members and student assistants from both institutions participated in surface cleaning of photographs. In February 2012, James Reilly of the Image Permanence Institute (IPI) visited the Woodruff Library and Spelman College Archives to discuss environmental controls and monitoring with staff. During Phase I, 7,562 photographs in the Spelman Archives were sleeved, housed into file cabinets in the photo room and descriptions placed in an Excel database. In Round II of this project, approximately 6,500 photographs rehoused and identified. Ms. Taronda Spencer, College Archivist, was the Project Director at Spelman before her untimely passing in May 2013. If awarded, this grant would provide preservation advice and planning for all the other formats present in the collection including, but not limited to manuscripts, paper records, artwork, artifacts, and audio visual materials.

Preserving the institutional records and special collections and providing access to these materials are paramount to preserving Spelman's identity and history. The Archives' current environment speaks to the institutional commitment to maintain archival standards and invest in updated techniques to ensure long-term preservation. All the Spelman archival collections are currently on site. The majority of the collections (paper based, audio visual, artifacts, etc.) are stored in the compact shelving units in the stacks. The Archives contains two Preservation Environmental Monitors, one in the stacks area and one in the photograph room, to monitor the temperature and humidity. Even within this relatively stable environment, there are still concerns about the collections and how their current storage will affect their long term preservation. Approximately 20,000 images still need to be processed and placed in appropriate archival storage. Unboxed artifacts and documents in the stacks are in danger of being damaged. In addition, there are oversize materials in an older, slightly damaged map case that will need to be transferred to more suitable storage. A comprehensive assessment by preservation professional will allow the Archives staff to be aware of and address any pressing preservation needs, and will provide recommendations for establishing long term priorities. The Archives staff will be able to utilize these recommendations when seeking institutional or external funding support for supplies, storage, training, and other resources. Upon completion of the preservation assessment and final report, the College Archivist will share with the findings and recommendations with the Director of the Women's Resource and Research Center (the College Archivists' direct supervisor), the Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and President of the College. This will ensure key administrative leadership remains aware of the Archive's preservation priorities and keep them in the conversation regarding long term, sustainable support for these initiatives. The Archives Staff will also attend two webinars sponsored by the Northeast Document Conservation Center, "Writing Your Disaster Plan" and "Moving and Renovating: Collection Concerns." The Moving and Renovating webinar will advise the Archives Staff how to successfully create a sustainable digitization program at a small institution. The Disaster Plan webinar will assist the staff in updating the current plan, which has not been updated since 2000. As the current Disaster Planning workshop is scheduled for November 2016 and in the event it is not scheduled for 2017, the NEDCC Preservation Services staff has stated they can transfer the funds for the course to apply to a related course.

The staff that will conduct the preservation assessment or provide support are as follows:

**Tina Seetoo, Archives & Donor Relations Associate, Delta Air Lines Archives [Preservation Consultant]**  
Tina Mason Seetoo, the Archives & Donor Relations Associate at the Delta Air Lines Archives at the Delta Flight Museum, will conduct the preservation assessment. With the Archives Staff, she is responsible for

the preservation of and access to the archives and museum collections. In addition, she lectures and consults on a wide range of preservation topics including collections care and repair, environmental management, disaster preparedness and recovery, and preservation management. Since 2010 she has been a Part-time Instructor of the Preservation of Archives course in the Masters of Archival Studies program at Clayton State University. She is the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Heritage Emergency Response Alliance (HERA), a Metro Atlanta area disaster network. She received an MLIS and a Certificate of Advanced Study in Conservation from the University of Texas at Austin which included a year-long internship in the Book Conservation Lab of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries.

**Holly Smith, College Archivist, Spelman College [Project Director].** Holly A. Smith is currently the College Archivist at Spelman College. Ms. Smith will serve as the Project Director for the grant. She received her B.A. in History and Black Studies from The College of William and Mary, an M.A. in History from Yale University, and her M.S. in Library and Information Science, with concentration in Archival Management, from Simmons College. Ms. Smith is a member of the Society of American Archivists' Archives and Archivists of Color Roundtable, co vice chair of the Women's Collections Roundtable, Vice Chair for the Diversity Committee, and incoming chair of the Nominating Committee.

**Kassandra Ware, Archives Assistant, Spelman College Archives.** Kassandra Ware serves as the Archives Assistant at Spelman College. Ms. Ware will assist the Preservation Consultant and College Archivist with the assessment, and contribute to the conversations and discussion about Archives priorities and future plans. Ms. Ware's duties include processing collections and researching reference requests for external researchers, faculty, staff, and students. She is a recent graduate of the Georgia Archives Institute 2015 where she interned at Emory University Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives & Rare Book Library where she began the processing of the William A. Emerson, Jr. Papers. She has been a member of the Society of American Archivists member since 2014 and the Society of Georgia Archivists since 2007.

*Outline of the Work Plan:*

**January 2017:** Upon notification of receipt of the grant, Holly Smith (the Project Director and Spelman College Archivist) will contact the Tina Seetoo (Preservation Consultant) to schedule the 1.5 on site visit to the Archives.

**March 2017:** Tina Seetoo will meet with Holly Smith and Kassandra Ware (Spelman Archives Assistant) between March 6th – 16th and conduct the preservation assessment, which will also include a meeting to discuss preservation priorities. Holly Smith and Kassandra Ware will attend the NEDCC webinar "Moving and Renovating: Collections Care" on March 28th, 2017

**April 2017:** Ms. Seetoo will complete the research and final assessment report. The final report will include recommendations for archival storage, sustainable preservation practices, and an outline for long term preservation planning and priorities.

**April – October 2017:** Holly Smith and Kassandra Ware will attend the second NEDCC workshop on Writing Your Disaster Plan, or another related topic (should that course not be offered). Staff will purchase supplies based on the recommendations of the consultant during this period.

**November:** Holly Smith will submit the final report to NEH, signaling completion of the project.