

# **AAEHC Annual Report**

**2013 – 2014**

*06 May 2014*

By

Joseph D. Thompson, Assistant Archivist for the AAEHC

Christopher Pote, Archivist

Mitzi J. Budde, Head Librarian & Professor

## **Introduction**

It is our pleasure to submit this report that documents a year of great progress, marked by significant milestones. We commemorated the tenth anniversary and the renewal of the AAEHC contract between the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church and the Virginia Theological Seminary. The collection staff administered the first round of research grants generously sponsored by HSEC, and this was accomplished without neglecting other areas, such as processing, outreach, and oral history. As you read this report, please note the very broad range of activities that the staff has accomplished to ensure that the collection is healthy and vibrant in every respect.

## **Tenth Anniversary Celebration**

- The official tenth anniversary of the contract between Virginia Theological Seminary and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church was November 3, 2013. To celebrate the anniversary and publicize the renewal of contract for a third term, VTS mailed a tenth anniversary gift to all individuals who have donated funds or collections since the establishment of the joint partnership.
- Working with several vendors and with assistance and input from Budde, Pote, and the VTS Office of Institutional Advancement, Thompson coordinated the creation, packaging, and mailing of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary gift. Approximately 225 packages were mailed to donors, containing a letter of gratitude from the AAEHC Steering Committee Co-Chairs and a colorful AAEHC sticky note cube.
- Other tenth anniversary publicity is detailed on page 7. The 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary press release is included in this report as Appendix I.

## **Travel Grant Program**

- Thompson administered the inaugural round of the AAEHC travel-to-collection research grant program, sponsored by HSEC. The application deadline was January 15, 2014. Three applications were received, and all were funded by the grants subcommittee (Dr. Gardiner Shattuck, Mrs. Susan Stonesifer, Budde, and Pote). A total of \$6200 has been allocated to the grant recipients for reimbursement after their visits.

- Budde, Pote, Thompson, and staff from the Office of Institutional Advancement collaborated to announce the grant recipients through a VTS Dean's Commentary and a press release. The press release, which includes the names and project titles of grant recipients, is attached as Appendix II of this report.
- The first research visit is scheduled for early May 2014, with the other visits scheduled for August 2014. Budde, Pote, Thompson, and the VTS Forum coordinator are working to arrange presentations by grant recipients while on campus.
- Thompson's administration of the grants has included the following phases:
  - spearheading the design of the application process.
  - announcing the grant in several waves of publicity in numerous venues (detailed on page 7, below).
  - fielding reference inquiries generated by the publicity.
  - receiving and organizing application materials for the review of the subcommittee.
  - evaluating the applications for pertinence to the AAEHC and for quality of scholarship to assist the grants subcommittee in the selection process.
  - collaborating with staff in the VTS business office to ensure compliance with the reimbursement process.
  - collaborating with Budde and Pote on the award notification process and on the arrangement of recipients' visits.

### **New Collection Development Initiatives**

- Thompson contacted the sister of an AAEHC donor who recommended getting in touch. She owns numerous materials that belonged to their grandfather, a prominent North Carolina Episcopalian. She initially expressed great interest in donating their grandfather's papers to the AAEHC, and Thompson has continued to follow up with her about this possibility.
- On the suggestion of VTS Professor Emeritus Richard Jones, Thompson attempted to track down further documentation of the ministry of the Rev. Solomon Jacobs. Several photocopied documents received from one of his former parishes were placed in the AAEHC Subject File – RG A50.
- Thompson reached out to a knowledgeable contact in a Midwestern diocese to inquire about the papers of a priest who passed away in 2013. Thompson continues to follow up with this contact and will chart an appropriate course as more information becomes available.
- Thompson contacted an AAEHC donor who is a friend of the family of a prominent Episcopalian who passed away in 2013. The donor connected Thompson with the surviving family members who are currently considering donating the deceased's papers to the AAEHC. Thompson will follow up as appropriate.
- Thompson continued conversations with a prominent Episcopalian who is very likely to donate his papers to the AAEHC.

- Thompson initiated conversations with a priest in the DC area who is about to retire. The individual indicated a strong interest in donating his papers to the AAEHC.

### **Acquisitions and Processing**

- On February 21, 2014, Budde, Pote, and Thompson gave a tour of the AAEHC to Dr. Linda A. Chisholm, her husband, the Rev. Dr. Allan Chisholm, and the Rev. Dr. Alfred Moss. The visit was arranged by the Rev. Dr. Moss. Dr. Linda Chisholm is the donor of the Allan Rohan Crite Collection – RG A24. During the visit, she donated several additional Crite pieces to the collection: a privately published inscribed work, two prints, and a book. Dr. Moss hosted a luncheon at Finn and Porter in honor of the Chisholms.
- Thompson completed the processing of the Diane Porter Papers – RG A45. Collection is housed according to archival standards. The finding aid is complete and published on the AAEHC website.
- Under Thompson’s supervision, student workers inventoried the Thomas Logan, Jr. Research Collection – RG A46 and re-housed it according to archival standards. Thompson created a finding aid which is complete and published on the AAEHC website.
- Significant progress was made in sorting and re-housing the Alfred A. Moss, Jr. Papers – RG A22. The Rev. Dr. Moss continues to add to his collection on a regular basis. The sorting and re-housing will ensure that the collection is manageable when the time comes to process it fully.
- Thompson continued the processing of the David Harris Papers – RG A25, which had been started by a previous archivist. Collection is housed according to archival standards. Thompson is drafting a finding aid.
- Under Thompson’s supervision, a student worker made important adjustments to the housing of the Thomas W. S. Logan, Sr. Papers – RG A16. Thompson subsequently updated the on-line finding aid.
- Thompson revised the finding aid for The Reginald Blaxton Papers – RG A06 in preparation for publication. The finding aid is now available on-line for the first time.
- New accessions:
  - H. Irving Mayson Papers – RG A57
  - Robert Hollins Hardin Scrapbook – RG A58 (separated from RG A39 for greater “discoverability”)
- Thompson accessioned new installments to the following pre-existing collections:
  - Alfred A. Moss, Jr. Papers – RG A22
  - Allan Rohan Crite Collection – RG A24
  - Harold T. Lewis Papers – RG A32
  - Union of Black Episcopalians Collection – RG A34

- John E. Harris, Jr. Collection of Union of Black Episcopalians Papers – RG A38
  - John Carleton Hayden Papers – RG A39
  - Delois Burney Ward Papers – RG A55
  - Janice M. Robinson Papers – RG A56
  - AAEHC Audiovisual Collection – RG A49
  - AAEHC Subject File – RG A50
- With monies from the Prichard Endowment Fund, Thompson successfully bid on the following booklet at auction: *The Story of Africaner* (New York: Protestant Episcopal Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Knowledge, 1856). It was incorporated intellectually in the AAEHC Subject File – RG A50 and is physically housed in the Rare Book Room of the Bishop Payne Library. The item is also discoverable in the Bishop Payne Library catalog.
  - Thompson and Pote significantly rearranged the AAEHC processing area to more effectively utilize space and to make the area more adaptable for different types of processing projects.
  - Thompson revised and updated the AAEHC status master document that is used to track the state of processing of all the collections. The status master is a crucial tool for setting processing priorities.

### **Exhibitions and Presentations**

- Thompson created the exhibit *Equipping Servant Leaders with Lessons from History: Urban Ministry in the Episcopal Church* for the annual Union of Black Episcopalians meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, June 30-July 3, 2013. The theme of the conference was *Equipping Servant Leaders for Urban Ministry*. At the exhibit table, Thompson introduced numerous participants to the AAEHC and networked with those who already knew of the collection. Thompson also gave a brief presentation about the AAEHC to the annual business meeting, which has a large attendance. Prior to the conference, Thompson and Pote consulted with Professor Donyelle McCray, Director of the Office of Multicultural Ministries. This consultation resulted in VTS sharing a large exhibit space with the AAEHC.
- Thompson and Pote were invited by the VTS Director of Multicultural Ministries, Professor Donyelle McCray, to make a presentation about the AAEHC during the annual Intercultural Competency Training for new students. In two separate sessions on January 30 and 31, 2014, they delivered a presentation entitled “Voices from the African American Episcopal Historical Collection.” It focused on excerpts from several oral histories in the collection, including those of Bishop Arthur Williams and Ms. Delois Burney Ward. In total, 24 students attended the presentations. Professor McCray later reported that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive.
- Pote consulted with VTS alumnus the Rev. Willis Foster, Rector of St. Stephen’s Church in Petersburg, Virginia, on the creation of an historical marker for the Bishop Payne Divinity School. On March 29, 2014, Pote and Thompson attended the dedication service for the marker at St. Stephen’s, and Pote spoke to those assembled about the history of BPDS, as

well as the need to continue documenting its legacy. Pote also provided assistance on a related BPDS exhibit in the parish hall and provided images for use in the commemorative booklet. Thompson and Pote also created an ad from the Bishop Payne Library that was published in the booklet. These contributions to the event drew upon the strong continuities between the AAEHC and the VTS Archives, in order to highlight the legacy of the BPDS.

- Pote created a slideshow of images from the papers of Bishop John T. Walker for the annual Walker Memorial Prayer Breakfast at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church (DC), March 29, 2014. A 1954 graduate of VTS, Bishop Walker was the seminary's first African American student, and VTS is proud to preserve the papers of this distinguished alumnus. As with the BPDS marker in the bullet point above, involvement in the breakfast drew upon the continuities between the AAEHC and the VTS archives. This is the second year that VTS has had a presence at the event.

### **Catalogue, Finding Aids, and Web Access**

- Under Thompson's supervision, a student worker updated the print and electronic resource [\*Prominent African American Episcopalians and Their Experience in the Episcopal Church 1746-2012: A Guide to African American Historical Resources in the Bishop Payne Library, Virginia Theological Seminary\*](#). This extensive 109-page guide contains bibliographies for 44 prominent black Episcopalians. Articles from the Thomas Logan, Jr. Research Collection – RG A46 were added to various sections of the bibliography. The revised version has been posted at the link above.
- Thompson revised the [finding aid for the Allan Rohan Crite Collection – RG A24](#) to reflect additional pieces donated by Dr. Linda A. Chisholm in February 2014.
- Thompson updated the guide [Allan Rohan Crite Materials in the Bishop Payne Library](#) in order to reflect the additional Crite pieces donated by Dr. Linda A. Chisholm in February 2014.
- Pote created detailed catalog records for the John Carleton Hayden Papers – RG A39 and the John E. Harris, Jr. Collection of Union of Black Episcopalians Papers – RG A38. Records for these collections will now be accessible in the Bishop Payne Library Catalog and the WorldCat database.
- Finding aids have been made available on-line for the following collections:
  - [Reginald Blaxton Papers – RG A06](#)
  - [John E. Harris, Jr. Collection of Union of Black Episcopalians Papers – RG A38](#)
  - [John Carleton Hayden Papers – RG A39](#)
  - [Diane Porter Papers – RG A45](#)
  - [Thomas W.S. Logan, Jr. Research Collection – RG A46](#)

### **Oral History**

- Thompson conducted an oral history interview with prominent laywoman Ms. Delois Burney Ward. The interview has been copied to compact disc and audiotape for preservation purposes. With monies from the Prichard Endowment Fund, the interview was transcribed and sent to Ms. Ward for review. The transcript will eventually be made available on-line. Ms. Ward has agreed to return to VTS for additional interviews, as there were too many topics to cover in a single interview.
- Thompson conducted an oral history interview with Bishop Nathan D. Baxter of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. With monies from the Prichard Endowment Fund, the interview was transcribed and sent to Bishop Baxter for review. The transcript will eventually be made available on-line. Bishop Baxter has agreed to additional interviews.
- Thompson had a transcript made of the Arthur B. Williams, Jr. Oral History – RG A54, which was conducted in October 2009. The transcript has been sent to Bishop Williams for review. It will eventually be made available on-line. The transcription was funded by the Prichard Endowment Fund.
- Thompson has had preliminary conversations with a collection donor and her sister about the possibility of conducting oral history interviews. They are from a prominent Episcopalian family and are considering donating their grandfather's papers to the AAEHC (see the first bullet of the "New Collection Development Initiatives" section of this report).
- Thompson and Pote researched and purchased a new recorder for the oral history program, as the old recorder had begun to malfunction and could not be repaired. The new recorder was purchased with monies from the Prichard Endowment Fund.

### **Collection Use**

- Ongoing reference assistance to multiple patrons provided by Thompson and Pote. Thompson has responded to 77 separate AAEHC reference inquiries. This number represents a 114% increase from last year's annual report and is most likely attributable to publicity for the research grants, as well as Thompson's informal outreach to the VTS community. Specific users included:
  - a local doctoral student writing a dissertation on black ecumenism.
  - a VTS M.A. student writing a paper on children's grief for the Contemporary Society course "Theological Reflection and Writing."
  - VTS communications staff seeking images to illustrate a sermon by Bishop Nathan Baxter published in *The Virginia Theological Seminary Journal*. See <http://www.vts.edu/ftpimages/95/download/Journal2013.pdf>, beginning on page 16.

### **Staff Development**

- Thompson successfully completed the continuing education course, "Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)," sponsored by the Society of American Archivists in Charlottesville, Virginia, October 15, 2013. DACS is a standard used to organize archival records, such as finding aids.

- Thompson successfully completed the continuing education course, “Introduction to EAD (Encoded Archival Description),” sponsored by the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 7, 2013. EAD is a standard that uses the XML markup language to markup archival records for use in digital and on-line environments.
- Thompson and Pote successfully completed the continuing education course, “Copyright: The Archivist and the Law,” sponsored by the Society of American Archivists in Richmond, Virginia, October 28-29, 2013.
- Thompson attended the inaugural meeting of the “Lone Arrangers” Working Group of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference in Washington, DC, January 28, 2014. The group is designed to provide professional development opportunities for archivists who work individually or as part of a small staff.
- Thompson attended the annual Archives Fair of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, which was held at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC, April 3, 2014.
- Thompson completed the following VTS courses as part of his on-going commitment to combine the vocations of ministry and theological librarianship and archives: “Faith in the Triune God” (Systematics) and the first quarter of “New Testament Interpretation.” He is currently enrolled in “The Council of Chalcedon” (Systematics) and the final semester of “New Testament Interpretation.”

### **Fundraising, Donor Relations, and Publicity**

- The annual AAEHC solicitation letter was mailed on July 8, 2013, signed by the Very Rev. Ian Markham, Dean and President of VTS, and the Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard, President of HSEC. Since that solicitation, 40 gifts have been made. There were twelve new donors.
- Tenth anniversary publicity included a VTS Dean’s daily commentary, a VTS press release, and articles in *News from the Hill* and in the monthly alumni e-mail newsletter. The press release is included in this report as Appendix I.
- During the fall of 2013, Thompson publicized the travel grant program in the following venues: *Anglican and Episcopal History*; the Union of Black Episcopalians website; H-Announce (the general announcement page for the H-Net listservs); the H-Net listservs for African American Studies, American Studies, and American Religious History; the website of the Association of African American Museums; the *e-Bulletin* of the American Academy of Religion; the *VTS Alumni E-News*; the Society of American Archivists email list for archivists and archives of color. An announcement also appeared on the joint email clearinghouse of the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists and the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church. The grant was mentioned in articles about the AAEHC in *News from the Hill* (a VTS periodical) and *The Historiographer*. Thompson individually informed

several researchers with an interest in pertinent topics, and he sent general announcements to his network of colleagues and friends in the fields of African American Studies and in the Episcopal Church. A VTS press release announced the creation of the grant program. After the selection of the travel grant recipients, their names and the titles of their projects were announced in a VTS press release, which is attached to this report as Appendix II.

### **Student Workers**

- Thompson and Pote supervised two part-time student workers on various AAEHC projects, such as updating the AAEHC shelf list and the major task of processing the Thomas Logan, Jr. Research Collection – RG A46. One of the student workers was a rising college freshman who had served briefly as an intern in the VTS Archives as part of a high school service learning project. The other student is a junior in the M.Div. program and brings considerable historical and archival knowledge to his duties. Both students were compensated from the Prichard Endowment Fund.
- In order to attract potential interns in the field of library and information science, Thompson and Pote organized an exhibit table for the AAEHC and the VTS Archives at the Internship Fair of the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies, April 3, 2014.

### **Related Work**

- Budde, Pote, and Thompson consulted with archival staff members of St. Paul's College as they decided on the disposition of their holdings in light of the college's imminent closure.
- Thompson and Pote monitored the Swan Galleries' auction of printed and manuscript African Americana, as well as the auction of African American fine art, in order to identify materials that might augment current AAEHC holdings. No such items were found within the range of funds currently available.
- Thompson served on the VTS Diversity Committee as the representative for the AAEHC.

### **Conclusion**

Over the past ten years of working together, the AAEHC Steering Committee and staff have shaped and gradually implemented a clear vision for the collection. With this history of growth and strength, the future of the AAEHC is auspicious indeed. May we continue to provide a steady hand of thoughtful and intentional stewardship in the coming years.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **The African American Episcopal Historical Collection Celebrates Ten Years**

11/4/2013

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Curtis Prather

Tel: 703-461-1782

Email: [cprather@vts.edu](mailto:cprather@vts.edu)

Alexandria, Va. - Yesterday, Nov. 3, 2013, marks the 10th anniversary of the African American Episcopal Historical Collection (AAEHC) as a joint project of the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church (HSEC) and Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS), which provides a home for the collection in the Bishop Payne Library. Founded to ensure that the vibrant history of African American Episcopalians would be told to future generations, the AAEHC, includes documents, institutional records, parish histories, oral histories, personal papers and photographs.

"We give thanks to those who have contributed items to the collection, to the African American Episcopal Historical Collection Steering Committee and to the generous donors who invest in the collection," **said the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.**, dean and president of Virginia Theological Seminary. "We are also grateful to the trusted caretakers of the collection. The archivist, Mr. Chris Pote, and the assistant archivist, Dr. Joseph Thompson, are fantastic resources."

The project began in the 1990s with a group of historians affiliated with HSEC who wanted to preserve the stories of African American Episcopalians. In 2003, the partnership with VTS began. The AAEHC aligned well with the Bishop Payne Library's mission to sustain the memory of the Bishop Payne Divinity School, a seminary for the education of African American Episcopalians that merged with VTS in 1953. The AAEHC broadens this mission to document the contributions of African Americans to the Episcopal Church, for both scholarly research and for the education of the wider church.

One of the AAEHC founders and current Steering Committee co-chair, the Rev. Dr. Alfred A. Moss, Jr., stresses the importance of remembering "those African Americans and non-African Americans whose actions helped to shape the history of race relations in the Episcopal Church. One of the most important ways we remember is to preserve the objects, documents and stories that tell that history."

Ten years into the partnership, the collection continues to grow—from acquisitions to the oral history program to outreach. HSEC and VTS have just renewed the joint AAEHC contract for another five-year term. Mitzi J. Budde, D.Min., VTS Professor and Head Librarian and co-chair of the AAEHC Steering Committee, says, "I'm proud of the work of our archivists to build the collection and grateful for the Nancy M. Prichard endowment for the collection. We're excited about the new research grants project, funded by the Historical Society, which should generate books, articles and online resources to make this collection more widely known."

Many individuals, such as the Rt. Rev. Walter Decoster Dennis, the Rev. Canon Thomas W. S. Logan Sr., and the lay theologian Verna Dozier, devoted significant portions of their lives to making the church more inclusive. Their ministries, and many others, can be researched in the AAEHC. For more information, please visit [www.vts.edu/aaehc](http://www.vts.edu/aaehc) or contact Dr. Joseph Downing Thompson, assistant archivist for the AAEHC, at [jthompson@vts.edu](mailto:jthompson@vts.edu) or 703-461-1732.

## APPENDIX II

### AAEHC Announces Award Winners

4/24/2014  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Curtis Prather  
Tel: 703-461-1782  
Email: cprather@vts.edu

Alexandria, Va. – In the fall of 2013, Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) **announced a new travel grant program** to support research in the African American Episcopal Historical Collection (AAEHC). Funded by the Historical Society of the Episcopal Church (HSEC), the program was developed to offset travel expenses for researchers using the collection that is curated at the seminary's Bishop Payne Library.

From the inquiries that were received, a sub-committee of the AAEHC Steering Committee carefully selected the following award winners, who will visit VTS over the next few months:

- Dr. Dan Royles (The University of Angers) – *“Don’t We Die Too?”: The Political Culture of African American AIDS Activism*
- The Rev. Dr. Robert Tobin (Oriental College, University of Oxford) – *From Princes to Prophets: Identity and Activism in the Episcopal Church, 1945-1979*
- Ms. Angela Hooks (Dutchess Community College) – *Private Writing Shapes Voices for Public Discourse*

“The research projects supported by the grants cover a broad range of topics, evincing the scope of the lives and ministries represented in the AAEHC,” **said the Very Rev. Ian S. Markham, Ph.D.**, dean and president of VTS. “We are honored to ensure that the heritage of black Episcopalians is remembered, celebrated, and studied.”

While the researchers are on campus, they will share their work with the VTS community in presentations hosted by the Bishop Payne Library.

The AAEHC was established at the Bishop Payne Library in 2003 as a joint project between VTS and the HSEC. The AAEHC Steering Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Mitzi Budde for VTS and the Rev. Dr. Alfred Moss, Jr. for the HSEC. Through documents, institutional records, oral histories, personal papers, and photographs, the collection documents the history, heritage, experience, and contributions of African American Episcopalians.

Highlights of the AAEHC include documentation pertaining to the Afro-Anglican conferences, black Episcopal parishes, networking and mentorship among black clergy, Union of Black Episcopalians, the Conference of Church Workers Among Colored People, the *Lift Every Voice and Sing* hymnal, the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity, and such individuals as the Rt. Rev. Walter Decoster Dennis, the Rev. Canon Thomas W.S. Logan, Sr., and author Verna Dozier.

The full program announcement and application may be found at [www.vts.edu/aaehc](http://www.vts.edu/aaehc). For further information or questions concerning the grant program, contact the Assistant Archivist for the AAEHC, Dr. Joseph Downing Thompson, at [jthompson@vts.edu](mailto:jthompson@vts.edu).