

AAEHC Annual Report

2015-2016

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By
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Introduction

This has been another busy and fruitful year for the staff of the African American Episcopal Historical Collection. In addition to steady progress in collection development, processing, and the travel grant and oral history programs, more people have been exposed to the AAEHC through presentations and displays than ever before.

Collection Development

- Thompson was contacted by a rector in the Diocese of Southern Virginia whose church owns the register book for a nineteenth-century African American congregation. The vestry has voted to donate the book to the AAEHC.
- Thompson contacted a Civil Rights Movement activist about possibly donating her papers and received a positive initial response.
- Thompson was in conversation with a priest in the DC area about receiving a donation of photographs that belonged to his father, who was also a priest.
- Thompson was approached by a California priest who is in close contact with an influential family of African American Episcopalians. The priest is encouraging them to donate their family papers to the AAEHC.
- Thompson continued conversations with a recently retired, prominent Episcopalian who plans to donate his papers in due course.
- Thompson continued conversations with a priest who has additional materials to donate to the AAEHC.
- Thompson continued conversations with the family of a recently deceased Episcopalian about the disposition of his papers. The family plans to donate them upon completion of an article about their father.
- Pote reviewed the Swann Galleries African American Fine Art and African Americana auction catalogs but found no items relevant to the AAEHC.

Acquisitions and Processing

- Several new artworks were added to the Allan Rohan Crite Collection – RG A24, donated by the Rev. Dr. Robert Wright and by the Rev. and Mrs. John L. Zachritz. Father Zachritz was encouraged to donate by his cousin, Dr. Linda A. Chisholm, a supporter of the AAEHC. Also, the Rev. Dr. J. Barney Hawkins, IV, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, was instrumental in identifying and successfully bidding on two volumes of linoleum cut prints at auction. Official accession of the volumes is pending.
- Thompson completed processing of all interviews in the Nathan D. Baxter Oral History – RG A60 and the Harold T. Lewis Oral History – RG A51 to date. Finding aids and transcripts are complete and published on the AAEHC website. All elements of the collections, including transcripts, audiocassettes, memory cards, and compact discs, are housed according to archival standards.
- Thompson continued processing the Frederick Boyd Williams Papers – RG A28.
- Physical processing (e.g. removal of metal paper clips and photocopying of newsprint) of the Alfred A. Moss, Jr. Papers – RG A22 received to date was completed.
- Thompson began processing 36 audiocassettes of sermons by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry during his tenure as Rector of St. James, Baltimore, donated by the Rev. Randy K. Callendar. They will be included in the AAEHC Audiovisual Collection – RG A49.
- Thompson continued to work with Bishop Arthur Williams in reviewing the transcript of his approximately eight-hour oral history, conducted in 2009.
- New accession:
 - John Edwin Culmer Collection – RG A67
- Thompson accessioned new installments to the following existing collections:
 - Alfred A. Moss, Jr. Papers – RG A22
 - Verna J. Dozier Papers – RG A23
 - Allan Rohan Crite Collection – RG A24
 - Union of Black Episcopalians Collection – RG A34
 - AAEHC Audiovisual Collection – RG A49
 - AAEHC Subject File – RG A50
 - Delois Burney Ward Oral History – RG A59 (supplementary materials)
 - Bernie Jones Papers – RG A64
 - Kenyon C. Burke Oral History – RG A68 (supplementary materials)

Oral History

- In consultation with Mr. Charles Wynder, the Episcopal Church's Missioner for Social Justice and Advocacy Engagement, Thompson arranged for an oral history interview with

Dr. Kenyon C. Burke, who was for many years a high ranking official with the National Council of Churches, in charge of the organization's social justice efforts. The interview was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Tyrone Pitts, one of Dr. Burke's dear friends and a former member of his staff, on March 8, 2016. Expenses for Dr. Burke's visit to VTS were paid from the Nancy M. Prichard Endowment Fund. Thompson has begun initial processing of the interview.

- Thompson conducted the third interview with prominent laywoman, Ms. Delois Burney Ward, October 30, 2015. Initial processing of the interview has begun.
- Thompson interviewed Mrs. Gladys Lewis, a prominent laywoman in the Diocese of Virginia, at her home in Richmond, September 16, 2015. Initial processing of the interview has begun.

Travel Grants

- Thompson administered the AAEHC travel-to-collection research grant program, sponsored by HSEC. The application deadline for the 2016 round of grants was January 15, 2016. Two applications were received, and two were funded by the grants subcommittee (Dr. Gardiner Shattuck, Mrs. Susan Stonesifer, Budde, and Pote). A total of \$3117 has been allocated to this year's cohort for reimbursement after their visits. As soon as the recipients have returned their acceptance forms (due April 30, 2016), Budde, Pote, and Thompson will collaborate to announce the grant recipients and their projects through a VTS Dean's Commentary and a press release.
- Three award recipients conducted their research at the AAEHC, completing the research visits for the 2015 cohort:
 - Dr. Heather White, March 14-18, 2016
 - Dr. Jontyle Robinson, September 28-October 2, 2015
 - Ms. Jennifer Boyle, August 25-28, 2015
- Thompson publicized and organized recipients' presentations to the seminary community about their research projects:
 - Dr. Heather White, "Gay Liberation at the Church of the Holy Apostles, 1969-1975," March 17, 2106, 16 persons in attendance.
 - Dr. Jontyle Robinson, "'But if God got us, then we gon' be alright': Spirituality and Universality in the Work of Allan Rohan Crite, Kendrick Lamar, and Archibald Motley," October 1, 2015, 20 persons in attendance.
 - Ms. Jennifer Boyle, "Outreach and Activism at St. Philip's, Harlem, 1950-2000," August 27, 2015, 24 persons in attendance.
 - Audio recordings were made for all of these presentations, and with the help of Mr. Timothy Dang of the VTS IT Department, video recordings were made of Dr. Robinson's and Dr. White's presentations.

- Thompson’s administration of the grants has included the following phases:
 - updating the grant announcement and application in preparation for the 2016 cycle. Thompson and Pote revised the grant section of the AAEHC website accordingly.
 - announcing the grant in several waves of publicity in numerous venues and in his professional networks. Ms. Carol Kyber, Assistant Director of Communications for VTS, designed excellent advertisements for several of the venues.
 - fielding multiple 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 Ms. Olivine Pilling, VTS Comptroller, to ensure compliance with the reimbursement process.
 - processing receipts and paperwork for the reimbursements.
 - collaborating with Budde and Pote on the award notification process, on the arrangement of recipients’ visits, and on the organization and promotion of the research presentations.

Exhibitions, Presentations, Publication, and Conferences

- Ms. Peggy Parker, Adjunct Professor of Visual Arts, has collaborated with Budde, Pote, and Thompson to frame several Allan Rohan Crite pieces in the AAEHC holdings and to display them prominently in Aspinwall Hall. Planning included consultation with a professional conservator to ensure the proper care of the works. The project was initiated and partially funded by the office of Ms. Heather Zdancewicz, Vice President for Administration and Finance. The framing process is currently underway.
- Thompson gave a presentation entitled “Voices from the African American Episcopal Historical Collection” to members of the VTS Board of Trustees, February 23, 2016. Nine persons were present.
- In collaboration with the Center for Anglican Communion Studies (CACS), Thompson gave a presentation entitled “An Introduction to the African American Episcopal Historical Collection” to a delegation from the Diocese of Christ the King in South Africa, led by Bishop Peter Lee, January 15, 2016. Nine persons were present.
- On the invitation of Dr. Donyelle McCray, Thompson gave a presentation on the AAEHC to a five-member research team studying the topic of “Race and Theological Practices,” December 7, 2015.
- Thompson gave a presentation entitled “An Introduction to the African American Episcopal Historical Collection” to an adult forum at Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, November 8, 2015. 25 persons were in attendance.

- On the request of the chapel team of Dr. Donyelle McCray, Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Director of Multicultural Ministries, Thompson secured permission for the use of Allan Rohan Crite’s *The Subway Train* on the service leaflet for Morning Prayer, September 17, 2015.
- Thompson introduced the AAEHC to students in CTS 410, *The Art of Learning*, a course taught by Associate Dean of Students, the Rev. Dr. Justin Lewis-Anthony, August 26, 2015. The course is taken by most incoming seminarians. Approximately 40 students were in attendance.
- Thompson and Pote created a display entitled “From the Church Workers to the UBE: Activism and Advocacy among Black Episcopalians” that was used both for General Convention and the Union of Black Episcopalians annual conference (see below).
- Thompson and Pote attended the annual conference of the Union of Black Episcopalians in Linthicum Heights, MD, July 26-29, 2015:
 - Prior to the conference, Thompson and Pote collaborated with Director of Multicultural Ministries, Dr. Donyelle McCray, and Director of Admissions, Ms. Jan Sienkiewicz, to maximize the VTS presence at the conference. Thompson, McCray, and Sienkiewicz spoke as representatives of the seminary at UBE’s annual business meeting, which takes place at the conference.
 - The AAEHC display included information about two publications from the National Episcopal Historians and Archivists: *Archives for Congregations: A Practical Guide to Developing A Church Archives* and *Writing a Congregational History* by Laurence D. Fish.
 - Ms. Carol Kyber of the VTS Communications Department created an ad for the conference book.
- Student worker John Musser enthusiastically represented the AAEHC for several days at the Historical Society’s booth at General Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, June 26-July 3, 2015. Jon also utilized Twitter and Facebook to promote the AAEHC presence at the booth.
- Upon the invitation of a senior scholar of the history of black Episcopalians, Thompson contributed to the writing of an article on the life of a recently-deceased bishop. The piece has been submitted to *Anglican and Episcopal History*.
- For the seminary’s Employee Development Day, Thompson gave a presentation entitled “An Introduction to the African American Episcopal Historical Collection,” May 27, 2015. 13 faculty and staff attended the session, including Dean and President Ian S. Markham.

Student Workers

- Thompson and Pote supervised part-time student workers Jon Musser and then Rapiell Ashford on various projects, including adding numerous items to the AAEHC Subject File – RG A50 and significant processing of collections. As the primary supervisor of the student workers, Thompson spent significant time learning how to use the seminary’s new Empower software that is used to track employee hours. We are grateful to the Nancy M. Prichard Endowment Fund, which provides the funding for our part-time student assistant.
- As a result of a presentation given by Thompson for the VTS Employee Development Day in May 2015, Dean and President Ian S. Markham funded a student worker to transcribe a sizable unpublished novel manuscript in the Verna J. Dozier Collection – RG A23, her only known work of fiction. Seminarian Annie Hall was hired and has transcribed approximately 75% of the manuscript.

Access

- Finding aids and transcripts have been made available on-line for the following collections:
 - [Nathan D. Baxter Oral History—RG A60](#)
 - [Interview Transcript](#)
 - [Harold T. Lewis Oral History—RG A51](#)
 - [Interview #1](#)
 - [Interview #2](#)
 - [Interview #3](#)
- In response to a budget proposal by Pote, the VTS administration has agreed to fund collection management software for the VTS Archives, including the AAEHC, with implementation planned for 2016. This software will be a major technological advance in the daily operations of the AAEHC.
- Pote and Thompson engaged in preliminary discussions with the Adam Matthew company, which is interested in digitizing some of the AAEHC’s holdings for an on-line collection of African American religious history. The general concept of the on-line collection was approved by the Adam Matthew board so, over the next one to two years, the editors will determine with which institutions they would like to collaborate.

Fundraising and Publicity

- The annual appeal letter from Dean Markham and the Rev. Dr. Robert Prichard was mailed July 17, 2015.
- As of February 1, 2016, \$6125 in gifts had been received from 46 donors in fiscal year 2016. By way of comparison, at roughly the same time in 2015, 36 donors had contributed \$5865, and in 2014, 36 donors had contributed \$7555.

- In collaboration with Ms. Carol Kyber from the VTS Communications Department, the redesign of new brochures was completed. They were mailed with the 2015 annual appeal letter.
- Budde, Pote, and Thompson have met several times with Ms. Linda Dienno, VTS Director of Development, in order to discuss possible funding proposals to various foundations.

Collection Use

- Ongoing reference assistance to multiple patrons provided by Thompson and Pote. Thompson responded to 130 separate AAEHC reference inquiries from May 1, 2015 to March 29, 2016.
- Anecdotally, Thompson has noticed an uptick in the number of seminarians who have used, or are interested in using, AAEHC holdings for Church History papers.

Staff Development and Service

- Thompson completed the on-line course “Creating Your Individual Development Plan,” offered by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources, February 8, 2016. The training was sponsored by the VTS Office of Human Resources.
- Thompson attended the “Real World Reference” workshop at Georgetown University, sponsored by the Society of American Archivists, December 3-4, 2015.
- Thompson attended the Cultural Heritage Information Management (CHIM) Forum sponsored by the Catholic University of America Department of Library and Information Science, June 5, 2015. The theme was “Cultural Heritage Collections: Content and Access in the Digital Era.”
- Thompson was a member of the Multicultural Ministries Committee, which has met frequently, and has sponsored various activities, to address racial incidents that occurred early in academic year 2015-2016. Thompson was also invited to join a new Multicultural Task Force formed by the Chair of the Board of Trustees, the Rt. Rev. James J. Shand.
- As part of his commitment to integrate the vocations of ministry and theological librarianship and archives, Thompson continued taking courses towards the Master in Divinity degree.

Conclusion

With the many activities described in this report as a background, the future is bright for the AAEHC. The staff continue in their commitment to strengthening the collections and attracting a variety of new users and supporters.