

Florida A&M University
1998-99 Facts and Statistics



Black
Archives

BLACK ARCHIVES CENTER

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Since its founding in 1976, the Black Archives Research Center and Museum continues to render academic support to the University, State of Florida, and Nation. In the past years, the Black Archives has embarked on cooperative ventures, which have helped the center reach new educational and community service heights.

The purpose of the Black Archives, Research Center and Museum was set forth in an act of the Florida legislature in 1971 which mandated the establishment of a repository to “serve the state by collecting and preserving source material on or about black Americans from the earliest beginnings to the present”. With grants from the Florida Bicentennial Commission, the Winn Dixie Foundation, and the state legislature, the Archives was formally dedicated and officially opened in 1977. Professor James N. Eaton was the founder and currently serves as the center’s director.

In 2001, the Black Archives celebrated its 25th Anniversary and commenced on a \$7.6 million expansion program. The Black Archives was recently declared a Regional Center by the U.S. Congress to service the Southeast.

Facilities

The Black Archives is located in Carnegie Library, the oldest building on the Florida A&M University campus. The library was completed in 1908 with the assistance of a \$10,000 grant from the Andrew Carnegie. The building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The ninety-year-old Library underwent exterior renovations in 1992 and interior renovations in 1997 through 1998.

Services

The Black Archives’ primary educational mission is to assist the research needs of the University, State of Florida, Nation and any other persons or groups involved in the study of African American culture and history. Over the years, the center has gained the reputation of being the “Schaumburg of the South.” Presently the Black Archives is one of the largest repositories relating to African American history and education in the Southeast. Its holdings include more than 500,000 archival records and hundreds of museum artifacts. More than 100,000 people visit the center or are educated through the Archives’ outreach programs. Although designated as a state-wide facility, the Black Archives has evolved into an important regional, national and international research center.

Archival Holdings

Large portions of the Black Archives’ archival holdings are collections that contain rare materials and resources that are not available at other research facilities. Many of the archival collections were donated by, or belonged to local educators, business persons, civic, religious, social, and/or community organizations. Many of the archival collections comprise information about African American institutions and organizations. Other archival collections consist of private papers and regalia of past and present FAMU.

BLACK ARCHIVES CENTER HISTORICAL OVERVIEW (CONT.)

Archival Holdings (Cont.)

presidents, administrators, faculty, staff members, and students. The Black Archives' archival holding also includes an impressive collection of rare, original editions and reprints of books, magazines, maps, newspapers, and pamphlets. Some of the resources date back to the 17th century, and many of the books in the "rare book repository" are autographed by the author.

Museum Holdings

It has been the museum component of the Black Archives that has given the Black Archives its greatest fame. Three fourths of the Carnegie Library facility is designated as exhibition area. The museum features informative displays on different people, groups, and subjects important to African American history and culture. The time span of the exhibits ranges from ancient Africa to the present. Some displays are permanent, while others are temporary and rotating exhibitions.

Two special and permanent museum areas are the "Famuana Room," which is used to exhibit artifacts relating to the history of Florida A&M University. Memorabilia displayed in this room depicts almost every century of educational and social life at FAMU. Because of the importance and prominence of religion and the Black Church in African American history, the Black Archives has a museum area called the "Alexander/Steele Memorial Religious Room," also known as the "Upper Room". The memorabilia in this small, quiet retreat commemorates the history, influence, and contributions of the African American church in Florida and throughout America.

Co-Operative Ventures

Cooperative endeavors that the Black Archives has been involved in include the annual Florida A&M University Summer Teacher Training Institute, a joint project between FAMU and the Florida Department of Education. In 1994, the Black Archives' director assisted the Florida Legislature in writing the African American History bill, which mandated the infusion of African American history in all public schools in Florida in grades kindergarten through 12. Furthermore, he was appointed by the Commissioner of Education to serve as the Chairman of the African American History and Culture Education Task Force. As chairman of the newly created task force, Professor Eaton has been instrumental in securing a special state grant in the amount of \$75,000 to assist in executing the mandate.

Another project the Black Archives participated in involved working with the FAMU School of Architecture to secure a grant to conduct a feasibility study to determine the suitability of transforming "Sunshine Manor", the historic President's home on FAMU's campus, into a presidential museum. In 1996, a \$17,000 grant was secured to conduct the study. The survey was completed in 1998.

BLACK ARCHIVES

MAJOR MUSEUM THEMES

African Artifacts

American Slavery

Black Businesses and Organizations

Black Education

Black Military Experience

Black Religion

Racism and Discrimination

SPECIAL HOLDINGS

Benjamin French Spanish-American War Collection

Neil C. Mooney African Art Collection

Cannonball Adderley Music Collection

Don Hill African Artifacts Collection

Sarah Eaton and Alice Brickler Antiques and Rare Books Collection

KKK (Komics, Koon and Klan) Collection

Slavery in the Old South Collection

Blacks in the Military Collection (Civil War-Present)

Frank E. Pinder African Artifacts Collection

Lamar E. Fort African Artifacts Collection

Fannye A. Ponder Black Women in America Collection

Source: Black Archives

LaSalle and Martha Leffal Rural Black Family Collection

BLACK ARCHIVES

MAJOR ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

History of Florida A&M University
Black Education
Black Religion

SPECIAL HOLDINGS

- History of Florida A&M University (HOF) Presidential Papers
- S. Randolph Edmonds Theatrical Collection
- Johnnie V. Lee History of FAMU Collection
- Jake Gaither Black College Football Papers and Film Collection
- Jesse McCrary, Secretary of State, Papers
- Black Archives Rare Book, Maps and Newspapers Collection
- Floy Britt 4-H Collection
- National Negro Home Demonstration Agent Association Papers
- Black Archives Rare Sheet Music Collection
- Frank Pinder Agricultural Extension Service Papers
- Martha Leffal Black Family Collection
- Gilbert Porter Florida State Teachers' Association Collection
- Dorothy Holmes Jeanes Supervisor Collection
- Benjamin Homes Black Education Collection
- Benjamin and Dorothy Holmes Black Church Collection
- Leedell W. Neyland Florida Inter-Scholastic Athletic Association Collection

- Genevieve J. Wheeler Black Home Economics Collection
- George W. Conoly FAMU/National Alumni Association Collection
- Rosewood, Florida (Case Files)