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Preserving A Historic Legacy: THe HBCU Library Alliance

Loretta O'Brien Parham

Hampton University, Loretta.Parham@hamptonu.edu

Janice R. Franklin Ph. D.

Alabama State University, jfranklin@asunet.alasu.edu

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Against the Grain

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TM

FEBRUARY 2004

Against the Grain

"Linking Publishers, Vendors and Librarians"

Preserving A Historic Legacy: The HBCU Library Alliance

by **Loretta O'Brien Parham** (Director of University Libraries, Hampton University) <Loretta.Parham@hamptonu.edu> and **Janice R. Franklin, Ph. D.** (Director of University Libraries, Alabama State University) <jfrankin@asunet.alasu.edu>

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) evolved from a segregated south with a mission to educate newly freed slaves that had been emancipated after the Civil War with the promise of equal opportunity under the law as Americans. In spite of struggles to survive, historically black colleges and universities have flourished, educating thousands of professionals that have made outstanding contributions to the growth and prosperity of their country. HBCUs, and the libraries that serve their community of scholars, are today considered American treasures. The Higher Education Act of 1965 defined HBCU, and by Executive Order in 1980, the White House Initiative on HBCUs bestowed special national recognition to these 105 institutions for their value in American society. The libraries of HBCUs have supported the mission and preserved the legacy of black

achievement through wealth of priceless collections that now reside within their walls. Realizing this rich heritage and the need to work together to strengthen and integrate libraries into teaching and learning activities on the campuses of their historic institutions, 96 librarians representing 101 HBCUs met in Atlanta, October 28 and 29, 2002 to answer a call for cooperation at a historic **HBCU Library Initiative** conference. The intent of the conference was to explore opportunities for collaboration and to strategize about ways in which more advocacy can be generated for HBCU libraries.

The Cry for Unity

The idea for the initiative grew out of a meeting in 2001 of the **Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET)** Board of Directors. SOLINET is a membership network of 2,575+ libraries and other

information organizations, working in collaboration with many partners, local to international, to provide leadership for cooperative action, improve access to information, and enable its members to effectively anticipate and address the region's needs for education, economic development, and improved quality of life. The region includes ten U.S. States, and the Caribbean.

Serving on the nine member Board were directors of two HBCU libraries, **Loretta O'Brien Parham** of Hampton University and **Janice R. Franklin** of Alabama State University. Parham and Franklin were able to observe the work of SOLINET member libraries belonging to the **Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL)**, and spoke about the need to develop a

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If Rumors Were Horses

Lyman and **Evy Newlin's son Fred Matheny Newlin, II**, was elected decisively to the position of **Supervisor, Town of Lewiston, New York**, as of January 1, 2004. Fred has wanted to be in politics since he was a little tike. **Lyman** says he used to take Fred around on his trips to publishers' offices so some of us may remember him. Anyway, **Lyman** is obviously the power behind the throne here (or else he thinks he is). Congratulations to **Fred** and the whole **Newlin** family!

Lyman also sends word that **Oliver Sitea** (018 SW Alice Street, Portland, Oregon 97219; 503-245-6069) has pretty much retired as a bookseller. Pull out your old *Against the Grain's* — this is a great history of our industry for sixteen years! There is so much that I have forgotten. Anyway, **Oliver Sitea** was a rare bookseller in Portland Oregon, who ran **Oliver's Books**. **Oliver** used to work at

Pickwick Book Store in Hollywood and for twenty years was the chief book selector for the academic approval plans of **Richard Abel** and his successor, **B.H. Blackwell**. *ATG*, v.2, #2 (April, 1990, p.15) and many subsequent issues, sport an ad from **Oliver's Books**.

And more news from people from the past. **Dick Rowe** of **Faxon**, **Rowecom** and **Divine** fame has vacated the position of **Director of Internet and Information Services** for the **Dean for America Campaign**. (Rowe had joined the campaign for a salary of \$1 a year.) According to the **Boston Globe** ("Tech 'negativity bubble' begins to deflate" by **Scott Kirsner**, 1/12/2004, Rowe "is trying to devise a way to distribute the software tools used by the **Dean** campaign for fund-raising and organizing to other Democratic campaigns."

http://www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2004/01/12/tech_negativity_bubble_begins_to_deflate/

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ready, ready, for this baby to come! I always said if pregnancy was just seven months, it might be bearable.

One of the **key missions of libraries** is the collection and preservation of the historic record for future generations. Read this article about the **Smithsonian Institution's** undertaking with content services provider **Innodata Isogen** to digitally preserve the "complete record of the **U.S. Exploring Expedition (USEE) of 1838-1842**, under the command of **Charles Wilkes**, the first federally funded mission of exploration in American history." — "**Let's hear it for 'humanities computing'**" by **Hugh d of KMWorld Magazine**, Jan 14.

http://www.kmworld.com/resources/feature_articles/index.cfm?action=readfeature&Feature_ID=403

Speaking of which, on March 17 at the **Linnaean Society**, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, **ALPSP/FST** will have a Seminar on **Preserving the Knowledge-Base of Science**. **John Marsden**, Director, Linnaean Society is chair of the Seminar. This afternoon seminar will describe how we currently preserve the archives of science, focusing on the collections of national libraries and other great repositories in the UK, and then move on to describe the challenges of the future: the trend towards retro-digitisation of print, new developments in the archiving of electronic material, and the particular problems of archiving huge amounts of data. Are we taking the right steps towards creating secure electronic archiving systems that will preserve the knowledge-base of science, in the same way that print (and to a certain extent microfilm) has done in the past? What is the role of the learned society? What is the role of the publisher? Does the move towards Open Access publishing models present an opportunity or a challenge to the permanent preservation of knowledge? **ALPSP/FST** members: £85.00; Academic: £100.00; **SFEP** freelance members: £135.00. Non-members: £170.00. To register online: <http://www.alpssp.org/events/s170304.htm>

Posted on **Liblicence** February 3 — "**Project MUSE** is halfway through the process of creating new pricing models for the 2005 calendar year. We have already received valuable feedback and thank all who have commented. Our thinking continues to evolve and we are seeking additional input through a Web-based survey on factors being considered for the new pricing model. We are sending invitations to **Project MUSE** subscriber contacts, but also want to invite prospective customers and current customers who may not be the designated subscriber contact to respond. Please share this invitation with interested colleagues. Completing the survey should take 20 to 30 minutes, depending on how many comments you

choose to make. Please enter the survey here: <http://www.informedstrategies.com/projectmuse>.

A fascinating read. From **Frontline** (volume 21, issue 02, January 17-30, 2004 — "We have to be able to recover our costs," interview with **Prof. Martin Blume**, Editor-in-Chief, **American Physical Society**. Blume discusses the movement toward **open access publishing**, page charges for authors versus the subscription model, the **Ginsparg** e-print archive, the **Budapest Open Access Initiative** among other models.

<http://www.flonnet.com/jf12102/stories/20040130001308200.htm>

Was reading through **HR 2613** on the **Library of Congress Thomas Website**. The bill is called: **Public Access to Science Act** (Introduced in House) and proposes to amend title 17, United States Code, to exclude from copyright protection works resulting from scientific research substantially funded by the Federal Government.

<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>

Was talking to **Paul Bazin** <pbazin@providence.edu> the other day about a grisly subscription problem and was reminded of his and **Janice Schuster's** great presentation in Charleston on "Periodicals Collection Management: Organizing, Creating, and Implementing a System."

Did you see the GREAT review that the **2001 Charleston Conference proceedings** got in **College and Research Libraries**, January 2004, v.65#1, p.81-82. The review is by **Shelley Arlen**

(University of Florida). Only problem is that my name is listed as the editor of the book. I am the general editor, but **ROSANN BAZIRJIAN** (Penn State) and **VICKY SPECK** (ABC-CLIO) are the **REAL** editors and deserve **ALL** the credit for the excellent review. Thank you, **Vicky** and **Rosann**, for your untiring work to make the proceedings happen. **Vicky** and **Rosann** are now working on the 2003 proceedings even as we speak. And I haven't seen the 2002 proceedings, but I believe that they are out. Will check and get back to y'all. In the meantime, we will post information on the **Charleston Conference Website** about the proceedings.

<http://www.katina.info/conference/>

Ran into the sensational **Michael Cooper** <info@buscainc.com> of **BUSCA** fame (**BUSCA** means "search" in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.). Anyway, **Busca, Inc.** is located in the heart of the **Finger Lakes** region. Although **Busca's** headquarters is in Ithaca, NY, their primary facility located in Hector, NY sports a spectacular view of **Seneca Lake** and the countryside. Did you see **Jack Montgomery's** interview with Michael in the November 2003 **ATG** (v.15#5, p.54, 58. Well, **Garrison Keillor**, host of **A Prairie Home Companion**, read one of Michael's authors' **Victor W. Pearn's** poems on the **Writer's Almanac** program of November 11, 2003, Veteran's Day. The featured poem "Receiving" was from **Devil Dogs & Jarheads** by **Victor W. Pearn** (0-9666196-3-3, \$14.95). **Devil Dogs and Jarheads** is based on Pearn's training in

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similar model to address issues pertinent to **HBCU** libraries. Further exploration revealed that the **HBCU** library directors and deans had never met as a body, had never convened to share ideas, talk, and network or laugh together, and were without a platform for advocacy. No existing organization or committee offered an agenda or venue on behalf of the libraries of the designated **White House HBCU Initiative**; not in the **American Library Association (ALA)**, not in the **Black Caucus of the ALA (BCALA)**, not in the **National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher**

Education (NAFEO), and not in the **United Negro College Fund (UNCF)**. (The one exception is the "**Association of 1890 Library Deans and Directors**," representing 18 land-grant **HBCU** institutions.)

Upon closer examination, it was noted that better than 70% of the **HBCUs** are within the geographic region served by **SOLINET**. This reality was discussed during a retreat of the **SOLINET Board**. The **SOLINET Board** and **Kate Nevins**, executive director, embraced the idea with enthusiasm. What started out as an airing of mutual concerns took on a different focus that became a strategic goal of the **SOLINET Board** to foster cooperation among libraries with diverse populations in **HBCUs** and the Caribbean. **SOLINET** provided services, assigned staff to work on the project, and is hosting the **HBCU Library Director** electronic discussion forum (edf). This dialogue, begun November of 2001, served to engage the library directors and the executive director of the **Council on Libraries and Information Resources (CLIR)**, who along with **SOLINET**, provided financial support. With funding and the development of a steering committee, planning began for the first meeting of **HBCU Library directors**. Eleven months later, the **HBCU Library Initiative** was formally born on Monday morning, October 28, 2002.

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Answering the Call

The goal to develop an action plan for collaboration led to the establishment of a steering committee that included **HBCU** librarians, and **SOLINET** staff under the visionary leadership of the executive director, **Kate Nevins**. In addition to **Nevins**, **Parham** and **Franklin**, other steering members included, **Elsie Weatherington** of **Virginia State University**, **Emma Perry** of **Southern University A&M**, **Tommy Holton** of **Dillard College**, and **Jennifer Bliss**, **HBCU** Project Director at **SOLINET**. **Sandy Nyberg**, and **Sandra Phoenix**, **SOLINET** Grant Writer and Executive Assistant respectively, provided invaluable support. The decision was made to convene a meeting of directors from **HBCUs** in order to determine common opportunities and challenges that could be addressed jointly. The committee enlisted the aid of **Merryl Penson**, Executive Director for Library Services, Board of Regents of the **University System of Georgia**, to facilitate the meeting activities. **SOLINET** staff assisted in arrangements and logistics with additional assistance solicited from **Dean Gunn** of the **Clark Atlanta Library School**, **Brenda Banks** of the **Georgia Department of Archives and History**, and **Althea Jenkins**, Library Director, **Florida State University**. Letters of announcement were sent to college and university presidents informing them of the meeting opportunity.

A position paper that would set the stage for conference discussions and outcomes was developed. The final paper submitted by **Janice Franklin**, *A Call for Cooperation Among HBCU Libraries: Opportunities for Consideration* (<http://www.hbculibraries.org/Cooperation.htm>) provided the foundation for gathering input and consensus at the meeting after approximately eighteen months of dialogue amongst the **HBCU** librarians over the electronic list and during **SOLINET Annual Membership Meetings**. Four potential areas for cooperation were identified: 1) preservation and digitization of cultural materials, 2) information and advocacy, 3) human resources for shared expertise, recruitment and staff development, and 4) strategies for better access to collections and facilities.

Appropriately, Atlanta was selected for the meeting location. The efforts of the steering committee and the individual passion for the project resulted in 105 libraries receiving invitations to attend. A resounding outcry for collaboration was heard with the overwhelming attendance of directors representing 103 White House designated **HBCU** libraries answering the call.

Meeting Outcome

The meeting began with a statement of vision and charge presented by the Chair of the Steering Committee, **Loretta Parham**, who told the audience, "...I hope that we can work toward a vision for an entity that can represent and present the **HBCU** library with reliable authority. An entity that can promote our inter-

ests, position us for collaborative development of virtual and print collections, and place the **HBCU** library in a position to reinvent for the most strategic disbursements and benefits..."

A stirring and emotional roll call followed [as] each library institution verbally responded in order of founding dates as early as 1837, to the rhythmic and pulsating cadence of the Atlanta based group, *Giwaya Mata African Dance and Drum Ensemble*. African drums and dance thus signaled the start of the meeting. For one and a half days, break out sessions and discussions about the **HBCU** libraries were conducted. Participants were vocal and eager to share, mentor on the spot and offer ideas about a possible future.

The Executive Director of the **Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)**, **Deanna B. Marcum**, and **Susan Perry**, Senior Advisor for the **Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**, provided luncheon remarks. An arousing and thought-provoking dinner keynote address was delivered by **Dianne Boardley Suber**, the President of **Saint Augustine's College** in Raleigh NC. **Dr. Suber's** comments challenged the attendees to think and act "outside of the box" in planning for the future of libraries for African-American students.

By the closing day of the meeting, a spirit of cooperation and a strong breeze of commitment were felt by all as they united to determine ways of strengthening library programs and services at **HBCUs**. Participants sensed a new and historic undertaking of extreme importance at a time of scarce resources and heightened expectations.

From Here

The steering committee is now continuing its work at the request of the conference attendees who empowered this group to plan for the new consortium. The initiative now has a name, the **HBCU Library Alliance**, the organizational bylaws are in place, the Website is active and hosted by **Howard University** (www.hbculibraries.org), committees are working, and a planning grant funded by the **Mellon Foundation** is underway. It has been no small feat to garner the unanimous commitment of the **HBCU** libraries. However, the decision was made on October 29, 2002, to move forward and do the work that is needed for the success of an organization whose purpose is to collaborate for greater strength and productivity of its membership and their constituency. The October meeting identified specific areas for cooperation that are now in motion, including a statistics committee that is providing original documentation to lay the foundation for future library initiatives. Other grant opportunities and partnerships will be identified to promote and educate on behalf of the **HBCU** libraries and the organizational initiatives that will emerge. The population of libraries that comprises the membership is not homogeneous. The membership includes institutions that are racially diverse and either public, private, church affiliated, small, large, federal and state assisted, two year, four year, and university level doctoral degree granting educational centers. For this reason, the need for a more accurate pic-

ture of the membership has prompted efforts to build portals of information and compile data that has never before been made available. Such information has value not only to **HBCUs** but also to majority institutions and agencies that may be unaware of the impact of **HBCUs** and their library collections. The possibilities appear limitless as the work of the initiative now takes shape.

In year 2000, the same year that **Franklin** and **Parham** began their tenure on the **SOLINET Board**, **President Clinton** proclaimed September 17 through September 23, 2000 as **National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week**. In a press release issued by the White House Office of the Press Secretary on September 14, 2000, **President Clinton** made the following statements:

"Rooted in the segregated South of more than a century ago, **Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)** for decades were the sole source of higher education for African Americans. Generations of African American educators, physicians, lawyers, scientists, and other professionals found at **HBCUs** the knowledge, experience, and encouragement they needed to reach their full potential...The faculty and staff of **HBCUs** have created a nurturing environment for their students, set high academic standards and expectations, and served as inspiring role models for the young people around them...In addition to educating many of our Nation's most distinguished African American professionals, **HBCUs** reach out to improve the quality of life in surrounding communities...For well over a century, **HBCUs** have made their mark as vital institutions of higher learning. They have educated millions of young people, and today they maintain their lead role in preparing African Americans and students of all races for the challenge and opportunities of this new century."

These words ring hollow without the work of the many African-American librarians that have worked tirelessly to insure high quality resources and services in the libraries of these great institutions, for it is a personal privilege and a significant responsibility to work at an **HBCU** on behalf of its constituency. The libraries of **HBCU** institutions have been symbols of democracy in providing access to information for the decedents of slaves who believed that education would lift them up from slavery into a promised land of equality. As culture keepers for this great people, librarians of **HBCUs** continue their quest to serve well their institutions with the conviction and faith that they must preserve this glorious legacy. It is with this purpose in mind that the call for cooperation was answered among libraries of historically black colleges and universities by uniting to form a consortium that will represent the diverse, multitype, **HBCU** libraries, libraries with a common history and a common purpose that is rich in contribution to the American story and the African-American experience.