



# Using the Archives: A Guide for Researchers

## **Archives vs. Libraries**

First-time archives users are often unfamiliar with the policies and procedures of using special collections materials. Most often the expectation of what archives should be is based on what they have been taught about using the library. Though the two are frequently connected, there are significant differences between them.

The differences between archives and libraries are based primarily on the fact that the material collected by archives is fundamentally different from that found in libraries. Libraries collect published material, also known as secondary sources. The holdings of one library may be duplicated in whole or in part by the holdings of another. If a book is lost or stolen it probably can be replaced.

Archives collect original unpublished material, or primary sources. The records held by archives are typically unique and irreplaceable. The rare and special nature of archival material has led archives to develop stringent security procedures. Researchers cannot browse through the stacks in archives as they do in a library. Archival material can only be consulted in supervised reading rooms.

## **Step 1 - What is an Archives?**

An archives is a repository for unique records of enduring value. Records housed in archives are often one of a kind or at least are very difficult to replace if lost, stolen, or destroyed. It is not necessarily the age of the records that give them their value; rather, it is the content and research potential of the documents that warrant their preservation in an archive. Archives are designed to provide users with access to the records while maintaining a stable environment for their protection.

Records are kept in collections, which are groupings of related material that are most often created by a single individual or organization. Documents from two or more collections on similar subjects are never mixed. Collections can range in size from a single sheet of paper to thousands of boxes. The media and formats of the records also vary and may include paper, magnetic tape, videotape, audiotape, maps, and textiles.

## **Step 2 - Planning Your Research**

As most archives do not loan their materials and some do not have extended hours, the time a researcher needs to locate and study records can be constrained. Successful use of archives depends on a carefully plotted research strategy. Your strategy should allow adequate time for background research, establish which archives hold relevant collections, and include a work schedule which takes into account the extent of the material to be consulted.

The library should always be the first stop on the way to the archives. Your success in using archival material will depend on your grasp of the secondary material available for your subject. Through the use of secondary sources such as bibliographies, books, journal articles, theses and dissertations, a wider knowledge and greater focus on the subject can be attained. Important information such as names, places, dates and events can serve as appropriate leads in archival collections. With this background, you can enter an archives with specific questions and details that will help the archivist find the records you need without using up your precious time. An archivist may also be able to direct you to other materials related to your topic that you may not be aware of if they are provided with enough information.

## **Step 3 - Contacting the Archives**

Bibliographies and internet searches will usually identify repositories that hold material related to your area of interest or study. Most archives have websites that list holdings, hours of operation and procedures for using collections. Some will even have copies of research guides, catalogs and finding aids on the website to assist the researcher in deciding what they want to see.

It is wise to contact an archives before making your first visit. Some archives are open to the public only at specific times and days or by appointment. Contacting the archives will save you time in the long run and will give you an opportunity to find out if the archives can realistically help you with your research or give you an estimate of how much time will be required to complete your research.

You should first contact the archives by typed letter, telephone, or e-mail. Most archivists prefer requests in writing, as letters and e-mail tend to explain requests in a clearer manner which lessens the need to contact the researcher numerous times.

Reserve telephone messages for simple reference questions and inquiries about the archive's holdings or hours of operation. When you write, be sure to describe your research as succinctly as you can.

## **Step 4 - Visiting the Spelman Archives**

The Spelman Archives is open Monday through Friday, 10:00am until 4:30pm. Research in the Archives is scheduled by appointment only. Appointments must be made with the Holly Smith (College Archivist) or Cassandra Ware (Archives Assistant) by calling 404-270-5533 or 404-270-5535, via email at [hsmith12@spelman.edu](mailto:hsmith12@spelman.edu) or [kware@spelman.edu](mailto:kware@spelman.edu) or by visiting the archives in person on the second floor in the Cosby Academic Center, second floor (Room 200).

## **Registration**

When you arrive at the Archives to conduct research, you will be asked to fill out a registration form. The registration form helps the archivists keep statistics of the numbers of visitors to the archives and the subjects that are most often requested. The registration form also ensures that researchers are familiar with the archives policies on using the collections in the search room, copyright, restrictions, and photocopying.

## **Spelman Archives Holdings**

The Archives serves faculty, staff, students, alumnae, the Atlanta University Center consortium, external scholars and researchers and the general public. As the official repository of the College, the greater part of the Spelman Archives collection consists of administrative records, departmental and program records, publications, photographs and other material relating to the history and administration of the College from its founding to the present. The Archives also contains manuscript collections from Spelman alumnae, faculty, staff and affiliates. As a component of the Women's Research and Resource Center, the Archives also documents women of the African Diaspora involved in civil rights and social justice issues. Collections in the Spelman Archives include:

## Special Collections

### Diaries of Sophia Packard and Harriet Giles; 2 linear feet

Sophia B. Packard Diaries, 1859-1890

The collection contains 11 diaries and 128 loose diary pages that record the day to day activities of Sophia B. Packard while a school teacher in Massachusetts (1859-1864), doing mission work with the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society in Boston (1879-1880), and as co-founder, with Harriet Giles, and first president of Spelman Seminary, (1882-1890).

Harriet E. Giles Diaries, 1859-1909

The diary collection of Harriet E. Giles consists of 34 diaries and journals that detail Giles' life as well as her work as a teacher at the Connecticut Literary Institution and Oread Collegiate Institute and as co-founder, with Sophia Packard, and second president of Spelman Seminary.

### Willis Laurence James - 1929 -1966; 36 linear feet

Professor of Music, Director of the Spelman College Glee Club, Dr. Willis Laurence James was a nationally recognized scholar, musician and musicologist. The papers reflect his activities as composer, choral director, and music professor.

### Toni Cade Bambara – 1939-1996; 45 linear feet

The collection reflects Bambara's work as a writer, teacher, filmmaker and active commentator on issues related to community activism, human rights, feminism, racial and social justice.

### Johnnetta Betsch Cole Papers – 1949-2004; 70 linear feet

The collection documents Johnnetta Cole's long career as professor of anthropology, women's studies, African American, African, Latin American and Caribbean studies, her work as a college administrator and as a president, and her service on the boards of corporations and non-profit organizations.

### Audre Lorde Collection – 1964-2002; 40 linear feet

The collection contains the most comprehensive documentation of Lorde's life and work as a Black lesbian and feminist writer and poet, the significance of Lorde's work within the canon of American literature, her social advocacy for human rights and the rights of lesbians and gays, and her life as a writer/ activist.

### Audrey Forbes Manley – 1970-2002; 25 linear feet

Collection chronicles the life and 30-year medical career of Audrey Manley. Most of the material in the collection relates to her work in the United States Public Health Service. Additionally, the material covers her tenure on the faculty of the Abraham Lincoln School of Medicine of the University of Illinois, Pritzker School of Medicine at the University of Chicago, and Emory University School of Medicine.

Josephine Harreld Love – 1935-2003; 75 linear feet

Josephine Harreld Love was a graduate of Spelman High School in 1929 and of the College in 1933. Love enjoyed a long and successful career in the arts as a performer, teacher, writer, collector and museum curator. The collection documents Love's career as a concert pianist and as co-founder and director of Your Heritage House a fine arts museum for children in Detroit Michigan.

**Selected List of Publications and Productions Using Spelman Archival Sources**

**Publications**

Catron-Sullivan, Staci and Susan Neill. *Women in Atlanta*. Charleston, NC: Acadia Publishing, 2005

DeVeaux, Alexis. *Warrior Poet A Biography of Audre Lorde*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004

Dorsey, Allison. *To Build Our Lives Together: Community Formation in Black Atlanta, 1875-1906*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2005

Dumas, Carrie M. *Benjamin Elijah Mayes: A Pictorial Life and Times*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006

Gordon, Sarah. *Make it Yourself: Home Sewing, Gender and Culture, 1890-1930*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007

Jordan, Dianne. *Sisters in Science: Conversations with Black Women Scientist about Race, Gender, and Their Passion for Science*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2006

Kelley, Robin D.G. and Earl Lewis. *To Make Our World Anew*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005

Lefever, Harry G. *Undaunted by the Fight: Spelman College and the Civil Rights Movement, 1957-1967*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005

Lowe, Margaret A. *Looking Good: College Women and Body Image, 1875-1930*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003

Miller-Bernal, Leslie and Susan L. Poulson. *Challenged by Coeducation: Women's Colleges Since the 1960s*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2006

Tillery, Carolyn Quick. *Southern Homecoming Traditions: Recipes and Remembrances*. New York: Kensington Publishing Corp., 2006

Watson, Yolanda L. and Shelia T. Gregory. *Daring to Educate: The Legacy of the Early Spelman College Presidents*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, 2005

Williams, Juan and Dwayne Ashley. *I'll Find A Way or Make One: A Tribute to Historically Black Colleges and Universities*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004

### **Theses & Dissertations**

Alishahi, Michele, "For Peace and Civic Righteousness: Blanche Armwood and the Struggle for Freedom and Racial Equality in Tampa, Florida, 1890-1939" MA thesis, University of South Florida, 2003

Avery, Vida L., "A Fateful Hour in Black Higher Educations: The Creation of the Atlanta University System" PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2003

Lansley, Renee N., "College Women or College Girls? Gender, Sexuality, and in Loco Parentis on Campus" PhD dissertation, The Ohio State University, 2004

Scriven, Olivia A., "The Politics of Particularism: HBCUs, Spelman College and the Struggle to Educate Black Women in Science, 1950-1997" PhD dissertation, Georgia Institute of Technology, 2006

Watson-Moore, Yolanda, "Training the Head and the Heart: The Evolution of the Academic Curriculum of Spelman College, 1881-1953" PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2005

## **ATLANTA AREA ARCHIVES**

### **Atlanta University Center**

Robert W. Woodruff Library  
Archives & Special Collections (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor)  
111 James P. Brawley Dr., SW  
Atlanta, GA 30314  
404-978-2052  
aucr.edu/arch

### **Emory University**

Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library  
Robert W. Woodruff Library (10<sup>th</sup> Floor)  
540 Asbury Circle  
Atlanta, GA 30322  
404-727-6887  
www.marbl@emory.edu

### **Georgia State University**

Georgia State University Library  
Special Collections & Archives  
Library South 8  
100 Decatur Street, SE  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3202  
(404) 413-2880  
Archives@GSU.EDU

### **Auburn Avenue Research Library**

101 Auburn Avenue NE  
Atlanta GA 30303-2503  
404.730.4001  
**Archives Division**  
404.730.4001 ext. 300  
aarl.archives@fultoncountyga.gov

### **Atlanta History Center**

Kenan Research Center  
130 W Paces Ferry Rd  
Atlanta, GA 30305-1380  
(404) 814-4000  
atlantahistorycenter.com