

AVERY

WINTER 2013

MESSENGER

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD
HIGHLIGHTING AVERY RESEARCH CENTER'S
AFRICAN LITERATURE COLLECTION

BLACK POWER
CONFERENCE:
A REFLECTION

Shared Public History
and *Voices of Charleston*

Between the Tracks at Twenty-Five:
Celebrating the History and Heritage
of Charleston's Eastside

CAROLINA LOWCOUNTRY and
ATLANTIC WORLD NEWS

MEMBERSHIP NEWS and more

A PUBLICATION FOR

**AVERY RESEARCH CENTER
FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE**

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MESSAGE FROM DR. JOHN WHITE

DECEMBER 2012

One of the pleasures of serving as Interim Dean of Libraries during the 2012–2013 academic year has been that my duties include working with the talented faculty and staff at the Avery Research Center. Avery Research Center is not only a unique cultural heritage institution, it is also home to some of the most exciting public programming, research initiatives, and experiential learning opportunities in the region. In the past year alone, Avery Research Center has hosted a number of internationally renowned scholars, such as Ronald Butchart, and hosted important local events, such as the MOJA Arts Festival. In January 2012, Avery Research Center exhibited “Word Shout Song: Lorenzo Dow Turner Connecting Communities Through Language”, an installation developed by the Smithsonian Institution’s Anacostia Community Museum; and, in September, it held “The Fire Every Time: Reframing

Black Power across the Twentieth Century and Beyond”, a public history and community gathering featuring scholars, activists, and members of our local community. This successful conference garnered national attention and was featured in *USA Today*.

That Avery Research Center is already the premier research center for the study of African-American history and culture in the region speaks well of the institution, but the fact its archivists, historians, and staff continually strive to do more and refuse to rest on their laurels is something to really be commended. I have no doubt the best is yet to come. Dr. Lessane and the Avery Research Center staff are hard at work organizing next year’s conference, meeting with donors to grow its permanent collections, and planning an assortment of public programming and digital exhibits that will build on the already impressive body of work. The future is very bright at Avery Research Center.

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Cover Photo: Handmade bookcase from Avery Research Center Collection 19th Century classroom exhibit. Photo by Tony Bell.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PATRICIA WILLIAMS LESSANE, PHD

Dear Friends:

What a year we have had! Last January, we opened our 2012 programs with "Word, Shout, Song: Lorenzo Dow Turner Connecting Communities Through Language", a world-class exhibit developed by The Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Community Museum. This collaborative effort between the Avery Research Center, the City of Charleston's International African American Museum, and the National Park Service was supported by the generous benefactors in the Lowcountry including the Charleston Area Visitors' Bureau, the Town of Mount Pleasant, the National Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, The Boeing Company, Meadwestvaco, Medical University of South Carolina, the Office of the President at the College of Charleston, The City of Charleston, the Avery Institute for Afro-American History and Culture, and The Friends of the Library. Ms. Camille Akeju, director of the Anacostia Community Museum, was our keynote speaker, along with special guests Congressman James Clyburn and the Honorable Mayor Joseph P. Riley.

Bringing the exhibit to Charleston was a labor of love for the Avery Research Center staff and for a few of our most beloved friends and supporters. The opening and three-month run of the exhibit really set the stage for the caliber of programs we showcased throughout 2012.

We have had so many esteemed guests and speakers come through Avery Research Center this past year, from Dr. Johnnetta Cole, to award-winning filmmakers Julie Dash and Mary Morten, and our very own Lowcountry treasure, Vertamae Grovesnor.

Our most engaging, enthralling, and exciting event of the year was our annual conference—"The Fire Every Time: Reframing Black Power across the Twentieth Century and Beyond"! This gathering of scholars, students, and community members occurred at a pivotal time in our nation's history. Taking the opportunity to remember, celebrate, and interrogate one of African-American history's most misunderstood movements was a galvanizing experience. If our forebearers could wrest their liberation from the hands of their subjugators to create their own social, cultural, and political agendas for agency and self-determination, then surely

those of us laboring in the twenty-first century can and must do the same and much more. Our ability to convene such an impressive slate of local, national, and international scholars and activists is a testament to the importance and timeliness of the topic. Truly, the 2008 election and 2012 re-election of our 44th president—President Barack Obama—speak to the place of Black Power in the American narrative. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of this undertaken hearkens to the grassroots and community organizing that led to the successes of the Black Power conference. To quote our sister supporter, filmmaker Julie Dash, "the past is prologue."

We have many, many programs and projects planned for the year ahead, all of which are made possible through your generous support of the Avery Institute of Afro-American History and Culture and the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture.

As always, thank you.

pwl



AVERY INSTITUTE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

CATHERINE BOAGS

Hello Everyone,

I hope you have had a very enjoyable holiday season.

Our annual meeting was held on June 23, 2012. The program focused on excellence in Black nursing. The following nurses were recognized for their contributions to Charleston's Black community: Anna DeCosta Banks, Eugenia Broughton, Maude Callen, Alvena Cooke, Ida Mae Richardson, and Alice Rouse Simmons. I want to recognize Board member Emma

Williams and the Avery Research Center staff for their efforts in coordinating this program. Also, the Ernest E. Just Prize was awarded to Dr. Fatimah Jackson at the annual meeting. Dr. Jackson, an African-American biologist and anthropologist, is a professor and Distinguished Scholar Teacher at the University of Maryland.

Hopefully, you were able to attend the conference sponsored by the Avery Research Center on September 21–22, 2012: "The Fire Every Time: Reframing Black Power across the Twentieth Century and Beyond". The speakers were dynamic. It was a very informative conference.

We welcome four new members to our Board this year. They are Barbara V. Nelson, Julia-Ellen C. Davis, Vanessa Richardson, and Minerva Brown King. I want to thank departing Board member Leila Potts-Campbell for her several years of service on the Board and her leadership as a past Board President.

Officers of the Board have been elected and will remain the same as last year. They are:

President—Catherine Boags; Vice-President—Benjamin Anderson; Treasurer—John Buncum; Secretary—Angel Payton-Harmon and Board member Tony Bell will be our new Membership Chairperson. Tony Bell has been a diligent worker on the Membership Committee and I want to thank him for accepting this position.

We at the Avery Institute have already begun planning our activities for this fiscal year in support of the Avery Research Center. Work continues on providing timely information to our members concerning ongoing activities at the Avery Research Center. We have also begun planning our fundraiser for this year. I will be providing you with additional details in the near future.

Thank you for your continued support of the Avery Institute and the Avery Research Center.

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER ARCHIVE NEWS

RECENTLY PROCESSED COLLECTIONS

by Ardra Whitney & Georgette Mayo



WILLIAM MELVIN BROWN, JR. PAPERS

The W. Melvin Brown, Jr. (1934–1994) Papers is a collection

of personal, financial, and legal documents; correspondence; literary productions; and printed, photographic, and scrapbook materials relating to Brown, his family, and his professional and civic endeavors. The collection is 5.55 linear feet and contains materials that date from the early 1950s until 2005, with bulk dates spanning the years 1975–1994.

Brown graduated from Immaculate Conception High School and received a BS in Science from South Carolina State College, a Master of Science from Atlanta University, a MBA from Webster College, and an Advanced Studies degree from Boston University. In 1972, Brown formed the American Development Corporation (ADCOR), a defense manufacturing firm based in North Charleston. ADCOR was one of the largest African-American-owned firms of its kind and first appeared on *Black Enterprise Magazine's* "Top 100 Black Businesses in the U.S." list in 1978 and remained there until Brown's death in 1994.

Significant in the collection are speeches Brown wrote that address such topics as entrepreneurship, African-American leadership, racial equality, and the importance of education for economic advancement.

EDWINA HARLESTON WHITLOCK PAPERS

Edwina Augusta Harleston Whitlock was born Gussie Louise Harleston on September 28, 1916 in Charleston, South Carolina to Robert Othello

Harleston and his wife Marie Isabelle Forrest. She was raised by her uncle, Edwin Augustus "Teddy" Harleston and his wife Elise Forrest. Whitlock attended the Avery Normal Institute in Charleston, South Carolina and Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama, graduating from there in 1939. She worked as a reporter and editor for the *Pittsburgh Courier*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Negro Digest*. When she retired, Whitlock returned to Charleston where she founded a chapter of the League of Allied Arts and volunteered as an editor of Avery Institute's newsletter, *The Avery Bulletin*. Her collection contains personal papers, correspondence, photographs, and clippings relating to herself and her family. Also included are materials documenting her education, as well as her professional, civic and research endeavors. The collection is less than a half linear foot and contains materials dating from 1918–2006. Highlights from the collection include letters from her uncle Edwin Augustus Harleston and cousin Edward Crum Mickey to W.E.B. Du Bois, and a reply letter from Du Bois.

Whitlock died in 2002 at the age of eighty-seven.



ACQUISITIONS

1. Genealogical materials, including photographs and documents, regard-

ing the families of Ferrette, Mitchell, King, Farrell, Howard, Trescott, Cole, Wheeler, Steadman, MacBeth, Barre, Marshall, and the Charles Smith Family donated by Charline Therese Smith Anderson, Chandler, AZ

2. An artistic mixed media rendering of a 1769 Charleston Broadside announcing the sale of Negroes created and donated to Avery Research Center by Bernice Mitchell Tate and Andy Tate, Bluffton, SC
3. Three Immaculate Conception School newsletters—April 2010, January 2011, October 2012—and one group graduation photograph featuring the Class of 1962 donated by Nathaniel A. Williams, Charleston, SC
4. Additional materials for the DeCosta Family Papers, including manuscript biography of Eugenia N. DeCosta Higgins and book *Black Memphis Landmarks* by Miriam DeCosta-Willis donated by Miriam DeCosta-Willis, Memphis, TN
5. Journals and pamphlets, including *Black History and the Class Struggle*, No. 1–22, 1986–2012 and *Spartacist South Africa*, Winter 2012 donated by Prometheus Research Library, New York, NY
6. CD recording, "Fired Up, Ready to Go: The Obama Song" by Ike Thompson donated by Anthony McKnight, Charleston, SC
7. Manuscript, "Assorted Notes on the Life of Dr. Amos William Farnham, Educator" written and donated by Rev. Robert Harvey Calvert
8. Artifacts of items used during the Atlantic Slave Trade: a shackle key and metal coil (manila) used as currency donated by Leila Potts-Campbell, Charleston, SC

BETWEEN THE TRACKS AT TWENTY-FIVE: Celebrating the History and Heritage of Charleston's Eastside

by Ardra Whitney

This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Between the Tracks: Charleston's East Side during the Nineteenth Century*. *Between the Tracks* was published by the Charleston Museum and Avery Research Center in 1987 and was designed to encourage a variety of activities related to the history and heritage of Charleston's Eastside community, including archaeological research, preservation, construction, public education, and community programs. The publication began as a study, with a matching Historic Preservation Grant from the South Carolina Department of Archives and History to the Charleston Museum, to conduct archival, archaeological, and oral history research on the Eastside. *Between the Tracks* documents the origin and early history of the Eastside community, focusing on the African-American population, and provides a detailed examination of land use in the neighborhood, with an eye to prospective archaeological research. The

project was intended to increase public knowledge of the community's heritage by making interviews of neighborhood residents accessible in booklet form.

On October 23, 2012, scholars, historians, community leaders, and community members came together to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Between the Tracks* with a symposium hosted at Trident Technical College's Palmer Campus. The symposium invited participants to celebrate Charleston's Eastside community by engaging in a discussion about the new and innovative ways to look at the community's history and heritage. Though perhaps most significantly, the anniversary symposium brought together many of the booklet's contributors, including Martha Zierden of the Charleston Museum, who spoke about how *Between the Tracks* was born, and Dr. Dale Rosengarten of the College of Charleston's Adlestone Library, who discussed using *Between the Tracks* as a text in the College of Charleston's "The City as a Classroom"



Shelia Harrell-Roye spoke on the Eastside as a community of families. She grew up on the east side and still has strong family ties and connections.

program. Elizabeth Alston, member of the International African American Museum and chairperson of Charleston Tourism Commission was also present at the event to discuss The House of the Future, a project initiated by artist David Hammons. She pointed to the exhibition site's importance of being located on the corner of America and Reid Streets in Charleston's Eastside.



PRESENTING

BROTHER OUTSIDER

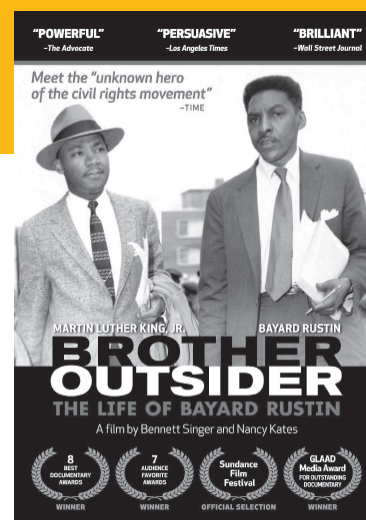
by Jenna Lyles

On October 13, 2012, Southerners On New Ground (SONG), the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC), and the Avery Research Center joined together to screen the historic documentary *Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin* and present a panel talk on Rustin's legacy. The panel consisted of Mandy Carter (NBJC and SONG), Kim Odom (John L. Dart Library), and Pastor Reverend Robert Arrington (Unity Fellowship Church of Charleston).

The event aimed to celebrate and educate folks about the legacy of great organizer Bayard Rustin, which is often toned down or forgotten altogether because of Rustin's life as an openly gay man. SONG believes LGBTQ people play crucial roles in social justice movements

all over the world, and that Rustin's life and work exemplify just how important LGBTQ organizers and visionaries have always been in social justice movements. SONG believes people who love freedom must ask—"Is it about Justice, or Just Us?" This is why SONG, NBJC, and Avery Research Center lift the legacy of Bayard Rustin; he fought his whole life for the dignity and humanity of all people, and SONG in particular seeks to continue that work today here in South Carolina.

Southerners On New Ground (SONG) was founded in 1993 in order to advance Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual multi-racial, multi-issued education and organizing capable of combating



the Right's strategies of fragmentation and division. SONG integrates work against racism, sexism, and economic injustice into LGBTQIA organizing and anti-homophobia work into other freedom struggles in the South.

SONG's Web site is southernersonnewground.org and its South Carolina Field Organizer, Jenna Lyles, can be reached at (864) 275-3633 or jenna@southernersonnewground.org

THE FIRE EVERY TIME: *REFRAMING BLACK POWER ACROSS THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND*

BLACK POWER CONFERENCE: A REFLECTION

by Robert Chase, PhD



Professor Hasan Jeffries

In his reflection on the “State of the Field” for Black Power Studies, Professor Hasan Jeffries aptly declared: “When the President of the United States delivers his State of the Union, he tells the audience that it is strong. Similarly, the state of Black Studies is equally strong.” With this declaration, the Avery Research Center created a space for scholars to present three decades worth of scholarship that has reframed the Black Power Movement from popular misconceptions of urban violence, misogyny, and destructiveness to a more profound and far-reaching historical movement grounded in the African-American freedom struggle that embraced economic self-sufficiency, arts and culture, anti-colonialism and national liberation movements, political enfranchisement and empowerment, education and Black studies, gender inclusion and a space for women activists, and the struggle for social justice.

“It’s particularly appropriate we are having this conference in Charleston and in the South,” Professor Donna Murch observed in her plenary remarks, “given how central the South was to the movement. Not only to Black Power in the South, but the Southern migrants and Southern cultures’ contributions to Black Power throughout the country.”

Held in the city that was once the nation’s largest port of entry for the slave trade and one of slavery’s gateways to North America, this conference offered a bold declaration that Charleston must reflect as much on the twentieth-century struggle for Black empowerment, cultural identity, and social justice as it does on the nineteenth century’s struggle over slavery and freedom. In his plenary talk, Professor Jeffries stressed his concern that slavery and the struggle for freedom beyond slavery is too often replaced by an overemphasis on civil rights and citizenship the government grants, which obscures the deeper struggle for basic human rights.

Also, as Professor Yohuru Williams reminded the audience, the plenary “State of the Field” session occurred “on the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation[’s signing, September 22], and again that anniversary along with yesterday’s one-year anniversary of the execution of Troy Davis, speaks to the importance of this conference and its message.”

This conference held September 21-22, 2012 reframed the ways in which



Prof. Yohuru Williams,

conventional wisdom and more traditional academic scholarship has addressed civil rights and Black Power as opposing ideologies and movements. All too often, Black Power is presented by the media, historians, and the general public as an aberration of the Civil Rights Movement and the reason for its demise. A new generation of scholars, however, has challenged this declension theory by showing the ways in which Black Power drew on Southern roots, communitarian values, notions of economic self-sufficiency, collective community, and political empowerment built on the long African-American freedom struggle that stretches



“What African Americans are fighting for from 1865 forward are what I call not just civil rights—and certainly they are fighting for civil rights, those rights granted by the government—but they are also fighting for basic human rights. And one of the things that is often left off of civil rights scholarship, and one that Black Power scholarship has certainly keyed in on, is this notion of human rights struggle. But we really have to combine the two and that’s why I think that discussing this in the context of freedom and freedom rights—because that’s how local folk, that’s how African Americans one foot in slavery one foot in freedom—identified those basic goals and objectives that they wanted.”

~Professor Hasan Jeffries

Notably, Professor Jeffries offered this provocative admonition that freezing Black Power in the mid-to-late 1960s threatens to castigate it as a violent and momentary disruption of the Civil Rights tradition:

“Rather than seeing Black Power, that moment that emerges in the mid-1960s, as a disruption on the African-American Freedom Struggle, as a radical break, we ought to be looking at that moment as a time when African-American activists and organizers returned to traditions that have been deeply rooted in the African-American community... Black folk in Lowndes County, Alabama tried to organize for decent housing in 1901 to get out of sharecropper shacks. We have to connect that moment in 1901 to what African Americans were doing in Chicago, Detroit, and New York in the late 1960s and early 1970s. That’s the continuum.”

~Professor Hasan Jeffries

The conference featured two plenary panels, two roundtable panels, and fourteen paper presentation panels on such topics as policing, incarceration, higher education, Black arts and cultural institutions, the military, self-defense, images and iconography of the Black Panther Party, interracial alliances and “Rainbow” coalitions, religion, nationalism, trans-nationalism and global impact of Black Power, and film and documentary filmmaking. Over sixty scholars from across the nation came to the Avery Research Center to present their work to the community, other academics, the media, and students. The conference even featured the work of Sir Hilary Beckles, President of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, who came all the way from Barbados to present his work on the ways in which Black Power influenced cricket and struggles over racial identity and politics in the Caribbean. Media



Activists Panel: (l-r) Dr. H. Blake, Dr. C. Sellers, Osei Chandler, James Campbell, Dr. M. Brown

covered this conference, and stories on Black Power and the conference were featured in local and national media,

including: *USA Today*, *AP News Wire*, *The Charleston Post and Courier*, *The Charleston City Paper*, *The Charleston Chronicle*, and on South Carolina Public Radio’s statewide show *Your Day*.

The conference’s other plenary panel, “Activists Then and Now”, included those who struggled so hard to bring Black Power and Civil Rights to the forefront of the national, regional, and local agenda. The speakers for this session included such luminaries and longtime activists and educators as Dr. Herman Blake, Mr. James Campbell, Dr. Cleveland Sellers, Dr.



Dr. Millicent Brown

Millicent Brown, and Mr. Osei Chandler. These esteemed scholars and community members collectively reminded the audience that lifelong activism

and scholarly pursuits “can and ought to be linked,” as Dr. Blake stated. Furthermore, dedicating one’s life to social justice means drawing on one’s family and community. Dr. Brown, daughter of Charleston civil rights leader J. Arthur Brown, and one of the named plaintiffs in the *Brown v. Board* case, revealed, “I grew up in an NAACP home, at the hem of Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins, and I played under the steps of the Avery Institute. So please remember that what you show your children is very important because I come from a family that is about our commitment to human rights that was always circulating in the household.

Somehow, you adopt a presence in this world from an early childhood initiation that says you don’t operate out of fear.”

The Black Power narrative was brought closer to home during a special roundtable on the “*Orangeburg Massacre of 1968*”, an event in which three African-American students were killed by state police in Orangeburg during a civil rights protest of a segregated bowling alley. This event was quite similar to the Kent State shooting of 1971, and it yet received little national media attention. We rectified this oversight by bringing together Dr. Cleveland Sellers, a protest organizer and now president of Voorhees College; noted



Filmmaker Judy Richardson, Dr. Sellers

authors on the incident, Jack Bass and Dr. Jack Shuler; and documentary filmmaker and former SNCC organizer Judy Richardson, who showed her film *Scarred Justice: The Orangeburg Massacre 1968*.

Though the conference topics were varied, they could not possibly be comprehensive in a field of study that is so vibrant and always growing. As conference attendees made clear, more work needs to be done in other areas, including gender and women’s roles, the relationship of electoral politics



and movement politics, the sweeping powers of state repression to counter Black Power, and incarceration and policing.

Shared Public History and Voices of Charleston

THE AVERY RESEARCH CENTER AND STORYCORPS

by Robert Chase, PhD
Public Historian



As part of our continuing community outreach and public history effort, the Avery Research Center partnered with National Public Radio (NPR) and the nonprofit organization StoryCorps. Since 2003, StoryCorps has become one of the nation's largest oral history projects as it has now collected and archived more than 40,000 interviews from nearly 80,000 participants. StoryCorps records the conversations, shares them with the participants, and preserves them by making them publicly available at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. Some of these conversations are heard by millions of radio listeners on weekly broadcasts on NPR's *Morning Edition* program.

Beyond the long reach of its national listening audience, what makes StoryCorps so unique is its approach to collecting oral histories. StoryCorps offers the rare opportunity for two people who have a common past to interview one another, which allows for a mutually shared dialogue between people with personal, intellectual, and professional connections that stretch across time. By doing so, this valuable organization has adopted an approach to collecting oral histories public historians refer to as a "shared history", where listening and mutual dialogue create two-way conversations about the past and common experiences.

This "shared history" approach to collecting and sharing oral histories complements the Avery Research

Center's public history program. When StoryCorps approached us this past summer, we gladly became what they call a "community partner" in a joint endeavor to create, document, and share the public history and stories of Charlestonians, the Lowcountry, and surrounding Sea Islands.

From its mobile listening booth at Ansonborough Field, StoryCorps recorded these historical stories from October 25–November 17, 2012.

As a community partner with NPR, we reached out to members of the community to arrange a number of reserved interviews. Each of these interviews will now be included in our oral history archives, and we will make those interviews publicly available to the community, scholars, and students.

All told, the Avery Research Center has over 150 oral history interviews in our collection and these new oral histories add more interpretative riches to Charleston's community and its past. These StoryCorps interviews discuss the Sea Island community and African-American history and culture, particularly the struggle for sanitation on the Sea Islands; the work of the Penn Center; the work and

history of the Avery Research Center; Black education in the Sea Islands; foodways and food culture; civil rights and Black Power; and Black feminism and the experience of professional Black women on the Sea Islands.

We arranged and will receive a copy of nine sets of paired interviews, which means eighteen new interviewees added to our collection. Furthermore, we worked with NPR to select two people to join Mayor Riley as the city's "VIP" interview. Because of their important work in civil rights and education, we chose and NPR agreed to have Dr. Millicent Brown and Minerva T. King as the second "VIP" interview alongside Mayor Riley. In addition to this interview, the Avery Research Center will the following interviews available to the public:

AS STORYCORPS TELLS ITS LISTENERS:

"We do this to remind one another of our shared humanity, strengthen and build the connections between people, teach the value of listening, and weave into the fabric of our culture the understanding that every life matters..."

"...At the same time, we will create an invaluable archive of American voices and wisdom for future generations."

REFLECTIONS ON STORYCORPS

by Patricia Williams Lessane



My mother, Annie Ruth Williams

As an avid National Public Radio junkie, I have followed StoryCorps since its inception in 2003. I was a graduate student at University of Illinois at Chicago, a wife, and a mother of a toddler with a baby on the way. I was also working full time at The Field Museum in Chicago. An anthropologist in training, I was doing multi-site fieldwork—in Chicago

and Salvador do Bahia, Brazil—and was fully ensconced in the world of ethnography and oral history.

And my mother was dying.

When StoryCorps came to town, I reveled in the stories of love, heartache, new adventures, and second chances. I dreamed about the conversation I would have with my mother if given the opportunity. I longed to tell our story, of mother and daughter; but by the time StoryCorps arrived, my mother had stopped talking. Ravaged by lung cancer and a stroke during her illness, my mother retreated inward to a world of memories and loved ones long gone. It was too late for us.

I think about that time in my life each time I hear a StoryCorps recording. What would my mother and I have talked about? Her late-in-life pregnancy with me? Her life in the Mississippi Delta? How she met my father? What it was like for her to witness the birth of my son?

Recently, StoryCorps came to Charleston. As a community partner, Avery Research Center was given several slots for recordings. We invited conversations between some of our favorite Avery Research Center supporters, and the staff signed me up to converse with Dr. Karen Chandler. Ironically, as two people who love to talk, we found it difficult to find what we thought was a relevant topic for discussion.

The StoryCorps staff informed us this was typical, but that things generally flow naturally once the conversation begins. Truer words had never been spoken! Dr. Chandler and I covered topics, including our childhood, our parents, our career paths, and, last but not least, Avery Research Center

It was a great experience and before we knew it, our time was up. I may have not gotten a chance to do StoryCorps with my mom, but I am thankful I was able to share my memories of her with a great colleague, sorority sister, and friend!

“VIP INTERVIEW”: Dr. Millicent Brown (Claflin University) and Minerva T. King (Educator).
SUBJECTS COVERED: Their father, civil rights Leader J. Arthur Brown, and civil rights in Charleston, as well as their relationship as “sisters in the struggle”.

Dr. Herman Blake (Medical University of SC) (MUSC) and Dr. Emily Moore (MUSC).
SUBJECTS COVERED: Blake’s scholarship in the Black Power Movement and his four-decade long effort to collect oral histories on the Sea Islands.

Dr. Herman Blake (MUSC) and Mr. Emory Campbell (Former Director, Penn Center).
SUBJECTS COVERED: Campbell’s work on sanitation in the Sea Islands during the 1970s, Sea Island culture, and his twenty-year directorship of the Penn Center.

Osei Chandler (Community Activist) and Aziwike Chandler (Student).
SUBJECTS COVERED: On Uhuru Sasa Shule

school in New York City, Black education, and their father-son relationship and shared love of education and liberation for African-American communities.

Robert Barber (Bowen’s Island Restaurant) and Sam Backman (Backman’s Seafood):
SUBJECTS COVERED: The Sea Island fishing community and seafood business in the era of Jim Crow and beyond, particularly Bowen’s Island Restaurant and its historical relationship to the Backmans—a Black-owned seafood distributor.

Dr. Patricia Williams Lessane (College of Charleston) and Dr. Karen Chandler (College of Charleston).

SUBJECTS COVERED: The recent history and directorship of the Avery Research Center, Black feminist scholarship and intellectual pursuits, and interpersonal relationship as current and former directors of the Avery Research Center.

Cynthia “Cinny” Smith (Retired Educator) and Dr. Emily Moore (MUSC).
SUBJECTS COVERED: Black education

at Avery Normal Institute and their professional lives as groundbreaking women educators.

Leila Potts-Campbell, Julia-Ellen Davis and Bernard Fielding (Community Members)
Subjects Covered: The Herbert DeCosta Family.

Mary Miller (Retired Librarian) and Lois Simms (Former Educator).
Subjects Covered: Local community and family history.

Although StoryCorps has now concluded its visit to Charleston, we aim to build on the energy and excitement that National Public Radio generated to continue the pursuit of oral histories in Charleston and to add to the growing collection here at the Avery Research Center. We look forward to having you, someone in your family, or circle of friends contact us to arrange a future oral history to hear your story and share it with the Lowcountry community.

Please help us to build on this momentum and keep this important

NEWS FROM

CAROLINA LOWCOUNTRY and ATLANTIC WORLD

by Simon Lewis, PhD

The Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World program at the College of Charleston, better known as CLAW, is an interdisciplinary outfit that examines the movement of people, things, and ideas around the Atlantic world, with Charleston and the South Carolina Lowcountry as its focal point. As such, one of our most important areas of inquiry has always been African-American history and the African contribution locally, regionally, and nationally. We have partnered with the Avery Research Center on numerous occasions in the past, and some of our most noteworthy conferences, symposia, and lectures have been held there. The McKinley Washington Auditorium has witnessed outstanding presentations on everything from rice culture, to the Haitian Revolution, to post-Emancipation education. This coming spring, CLAW is coordinating the Jubilee Project, a state-wide commemoration of twin anniversaries: the 150th of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the 50th of the desegregation of Charleston County schools—by Avery Institute's own Millicent Brown, among others—Clemson University, and the University of South Carolina. The coincidence of the two

anniversaries prompts critical questions about both historical moments and the hundred years that separate them, and our aim is to promote vigorous and well-informed discussion of the meaning of emancipation and educational access in South Carolina—both then and now. We are actively seeking community involvement in the Jubilee Project, so please contact us if you are interested in participating in any way. As the CLAW program's chief contribution to the Project, we will be hosting the 39th annual African Literature Association Conference in Charleston from March 20–24, 2013. Keynote lectures by Emory Campbell and Cleveland Sellers, along with a ceremony on the Ashley River conducted in conjunction with the Committee of the Ancestors in honor of the dead of the Middle Passage, will emphasize the "Africanness" of Charleston and stress the close ties between Charleston and West Africa. With additional keynote speakers and performers from Cameroon, South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania, as well as presenters from all over the African continent, the conference promises to be both the biggest and liveliest CLAW has ever hosted.



For further details on the conference,

The College of Charleston's
Avery Research Center and the African American Studies Program
2013 CONFERENCE AND SYMPOSIUM

SEPTEMBER
18-21, 2013

Unleashing the Black Erotic: Gender and Sexuality-Passion, Power, and Praxis

I believe in the erotic and I believe in it as an enlightening force within our lives as women. I have become clearer about the distinctions between the erotic and other apparently similar forces. We tend to think of the erotic as an easy, tantalizing sexual arousal. I speak of the erotic as the deepest life force, a force which moves us toward living in a fundamental way. And when I say living I mean it as that force which moves us toward what will accomplish real positive change. ~Audre Lorde

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD

Highlighting Avery Research Center's African Literature Collection

by Georgette Mayo

Celebrating its fiftieth year, the African Writers Series (AWS) by London-based publisher Heinemann has introduced and popularized numerous post-independence African writers to an international audience. The series coincided with Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Algeria, Burundi, and Rwanda liberation from colonial rule. Kenya's, Malawi's, and Zambia's independence would soon follow. The AWS provided an essential forum for African novelists, poets, and political writers to authenticate their lives in their own words, style, and vision.

The AWS produced close to three hundred (300) works inclusive of fiction, poetry, plays, and nonfiction, including reprints and original work by such notable African literary authors, as Chinua Achebe (who advised the project for its first ten years), Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Ayi Kwei Armah, Nadine Gordimer, and Buchi Emecheta. Designed for classroom education, the books were published in paperback versions, thus making them affordable for African students.

Several titles in Avery Research Center's holdings, particularly Achebe's classic *Things Fall Apart* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, hold the distinction of being included on the "Africa's 100 Best Books of the 20th Century" list. This initiative established by the Zimbabwe International Book Fair "to celebrate the achievements of African writers over the last century; to stimulate debate, discussion, reading, criticism and analysis of African writing", actively promotes the tradition of diverse voices.

The James Campbell Collection holds a small sampling of writers from this groundbreaking book series. Avery Research Center's library also features numerous African writers published by various printing houses.

AFRICAN WRITERS SERIES BOOKS, JAMES CAMPBELL COLLECTION

- Abrahams, Peter
Mine Boy, 1963
- Achebe, Chinua
Things Fall Apart, 1962
No Longer at Ease, 1963
- Armah, Ayi Kwei
The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born, 1969
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o
Weep Not, Child, 1964
The River Between, 1965 (includes "Study Guide")
A Grain of Wheat, 1967
Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture, and Politics, 1972
Petals of Blood, 1977
The Trial of Dedan Kimathi, 1977, (with Micere Githae Mugo)
I Will Marry When I Want, 1982, (with Ngugiwa Miri)
- Okigbo, Christopher
Labyrinths: With Path of Thunder, 1971
- Ousmane, Sembène
God's Bits of Wood, 1970
The Money-Order; with White Genesis, 1972
Tribal Scars and Other Stories, 1974
- Peters, Lenrie
The Second Round, 1966
- Sellassie, B.M. Sahle
The Afersata, 1969
- Zwelonke, D.M.
Robben Island, 1973
- Achebe, Chinua
A Man of the People, 1967

ADDITIONAL TITLES FROM VARIOUS PUBLISHERS

- Allen, C. William
The African Interior Mission, 1992
- Armah, Ayi Kwei
Fragments, 1974 (Campbell Collection)
- Clark, John Pepper
A Reed in the Tide, 1965 (Campbell Collection)
- Fugard, Athol, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona
Statements: Three Plays, 1974 (Campbell Collection)
- Makouta-Mboukou, J.P.
Black African Literature, 1973
- Mazrui, Ali A.
The Trial of Christopher Okigbo, 1971
- Mbise, Ismael R.
Blood on Our Land, 1974 (Campbell Collection)
- Okola, Lennard
Drum Beat: East African Poems, 1967 (Campbell Collection)
- p'Bitek, Okot
Song of Lawino: A Lament, 1968
Song of Ocol, 1970
- Serote, Mongane Wally
A Tough Tale, 1987
- Soyinka, Wole
Three Short Plays, 1969
Akè: The Years of Childhood, 1983
- Trask, Willard R. editor
Classic Black African Poems, 1971
- Tutuola, Amos
The Palm-Wine Drinkard, 1953
My Life in the Bush of Ghosts, 1954
The Brave African Huntress, 1958

For additional information about the African Writers Series:

"The African Writers Series" by Allan Hill in *Research in African Literatures*. Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring, 1971), pp. 18-20, published by Indiana University Press.

"Exploding the Cano: On the African Writers Series" by Anna Clark. *Los Angeles Review of Books*. 16 Oct 2012.

Staff Profiles

AARON SPELBRING is excited to join the Avery Research Center as the new Manager of Archival Services and to work with staff to make the archives an institutional leader in the South Carolina Lowcountry and beyond. His undergraduate studies in History at Indiana State University, where he was able to conduct research in the Eugene V. Debs Collection, and working at his local hometown library in Brazil, Indiana cultivated his interest in archives. He earned a Master of Science in Information Systems (MSIS) from the University of Texas at Austin School of Information and has over eight years of vast and varied archival experience at institutions such as the Museum of Northern Arizona, the Frank Lloyd Wright Preservation Trust, Columbus Indiana Architectural Archives, and Radford University Archives. His professional interests include copyright issues in archives and digital collections.

While at the Avery Research Center, Aaron plans to increase the online presence of the archives with digitized materials, grow Avery Research Center's holdings, continue moving towards the adoption of archival descriptive standards, and to assist in increasing scholars, the College of Charleston community, and the general public's awareness of the variety and depth of the Avery Research Center's collections.

SHELIA HARRELL-ROYE began her tenure at the Avery Research Center as an undergraduate intern under Dr. Marvin Dulaney, and continued her affiliation as a part-time employee and then, as a history graduate assistant. She is now the Education Outreach Coordinator and plans to partner with students, faculty, and Avery Research Center staff to broaden

outreach initiatives with other organizations and institutions in the community and beyond.

Shelia's other work experience includes management at Drayton Hall, a National Trust Historic Site, where she developed programs centered on interpretation of history, education, and interactive activities for visitors. She is also a 2008 recipient of the National Trust Diversity Scholarship.

SAVANNAH FRIERSON began her tenure as Avery Research Center's administrative assistant in 2009. She was raised in Blythewood, South Carolina, and graduated from Harvard College in 2005 with a degree in English and African-American Studies. Afterwards, she worked as a proofreader for an academic publisher in Boston, Massachusetts before moving to the Charleston area in 2009. Additionally, Savannah is an author with a focus on Black women's fiction and multicultural romance with several works already published.

ARDRA WHITNEY was selected as a 2012–2013 Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Fellow with the Avery Research Center by the Increasing African-American Diversity in Archives: The HistoryMakers Fellowship, Mentoring, Training, and Placement Institute. Ardra received her Master of Library Science and Certificate in Archives from Queens College, City University of New York, in 2009.

Ardra looks forward to using her archival training at the Avery Research Center Archives to preserve and provide access to collections that document African-American experiences in South Carolina and beyond. She also looks

forward to helping launch programs that will enable the public to appreciate the breadth and depth of Avery Research Center's collections, as well as continue to reinforce Avery Research Center's role in serving as a source of community outreach on African-American issues.

ELIZABETH WILKINS is a new resident to Charleston after graduating from the University of Sussex in England in 2012. She is currently working on her Master's degree in History at the College of Charleston. She looks forward to increasing her knowledge of African-American history through her work at Avery Research Center.

AZIKIWE T. CHANDLER is in the College of Charleston's Teacher Education department at the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance, earning his Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education. He plans to hone his understanding and skills teaching at local under-resourced schools as he develops a curriculum to run an independent school focused primarily on eradicating the high dropout rate of African-American boys in Charleston.

DARON-LEE CALHOUN II is a first-year graduate student pursuing a Master of Arts in History at the College of Charleston. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, he graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia with a Bachelor of Arts degree in African-American Studies. Daron-Lee's focus is on the history of African-American higher education, particularly on the founding of historically Black colleges and universities.

AVERY RESEARCH CENTER HIGHLIGHTS

Many esteemed guests and speakers visited the Avery Research Center in 2012, including Dr. Cathy Cohen, Drs. Harry and Michele Elam, Dr. Johnnetta Cole, Dr. Henry "Skip" Louis Gates, Dr. Darlene Clark Hine, Dr. Fatimah Jackson, Dr. Deborah Gray White, Dr. Cleveland Sellers, Dr. Ronald Butchart, award-winning filmmakers Julie Dash and Mary Morten, and our very own Lowcountry treasure, Vertamae Grovesnor. We closed the year by celebrating our successes, analyzing our challenges and gearing up for 2013.

- Deborah Wright has been promoted to the position of Associate Director of The Avery Research Center. Deborah has been a long-standing member of the Avery Research Center team who has served under four directors. Having worn many hats, and using her professional experiences from the African Burial Ground in New York City. Deborah currently manages the new Avery Research Center Web site and the re-branded [Avery Messenger](#). In her new role, Deborah will work closely with the Executive Director to ensure

optimal execution of public programs and internal administrative protocols.

- Not only does Curtis Franks engage in reconnaissance missions for incoming exhibitions such as "Word, Shout, Song," but he has been working to build the Avery Research Center's material culture collection, traveling to various locations assessing prospective acquisitions.
- Through her presentations at archival and scholarly conferences in Georgia, California, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Washington

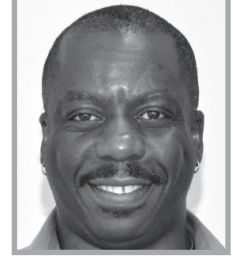
State, Georgette Mayo has kept the Avery Research Center's visibility high. In March, 2013, she will present at The Collegium for African American Research (CARR), focusing on the Avery Research Center's collections. Dr. Lessane serves on the board of CARR.

- Dr. Robert Chase left the Avery Research Center at the end of 2012. We wish him well and thank him for his hard work and while serving as our Public Historian.
- We welcome visiting



EVERY INSTITUTE MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Tony Bell, Membership Chairman



Greetings.

I am the new Membership Committee Chair for the Avery Institute Board of Directors, and I look forward to serving you over the next year. I also look forward to seeing you at many of the Avery Research Center's wonderful programs in 2013. Let me also take this opportunity to remind you to renew your membership if you haven't already, and consider giving a membership as a gift this year. It's a good idea to renew your membership by the end of the year, so you can take the deduction on your taxes for that calendar year. In addition to

supporting the Avery Institute and helping us to meet our objectives, your membership will also guarantee you remain current on our list, so you don't miss any essential programming.

I am also excited to announce that the Avery Institute has a new Web site. The URL is simply www.averyinstitute.us. In addition to giving us an online presence, this foray into the digital age will make maintaining memberships easier, and also offer a secure method to make donations online. The Web site will be an indispensable resource for information

and historical perspectives, and it will also feature member profiles, event photo galleries, and video interviews.

It is the charge of the Avery Institute Board of Directors to support the Avery Research Center and all of its endeavors. This includes all the amazing programs, insightful symposia, priceless collections, and so much more. We would not be able to execute our mission without your unwavering support. Thank you for helping us to ensure that Avery Research Center remains a community jewel and a national treasure. We

MUSEUM NEWS

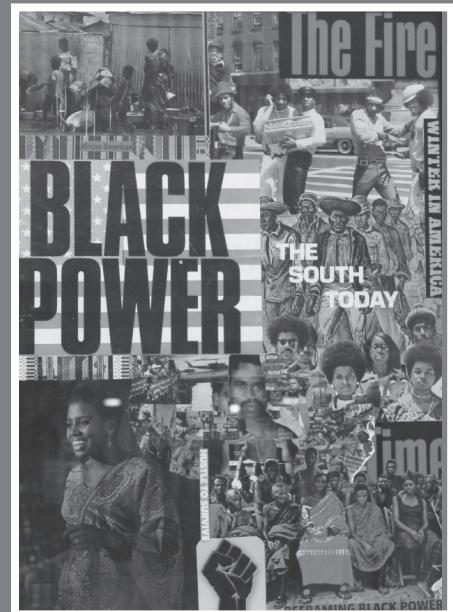
VARIED VOICES: CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS OF A REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

co-curated by Imam Hakim Abdul-Ali and Curtis J. Franks

The exhibition, a collection of Black Power era ephemera and other materials from the collection of Imam Abdul-Ali, opened in conjunction with the Avery Research Center's Black Power Conference. After a successful run, the exhibition closed on December 31, 2012.

ETERNAL VIGILANTES: THE ART OF KAROLE TURNER CAMPBELL

Local artist Karole Turner Campbell seeks to enliven the images that flow through her onto her canvases, letting her art engage the viewer in open-ended conversations. Turner Campbell's media materials are diverse, combining colors and incorporating objects on a surface, and she uses layering to add texture and dimension. Turner's work will be on view in the McKinley Washington Auditorium from January 17, 2013–March 31, 2013. (See back inside cover)



Black Power collage by Imam Hakim Abdul-Ali

Memorials

IN MEMORY OF:

- Mr. & Mrs. Calvin B. Matthews, Mr. & Mrs. C. T. Holloway, Dr. C.T. Holloway, from Mrs. Lillie M. Sheffield
- Edith Elizabeth Hill Haile from Debby and Scott Denny, Mrs. Katherine Armstrong, Joanne Sanders, Margaret M. Kaminski, Sherry Suttles, and Mrs. Diane Chechik.
- Robert F. Morrison from Phyllis Morrison
- Kim Byrd from Barbara Braithwaite
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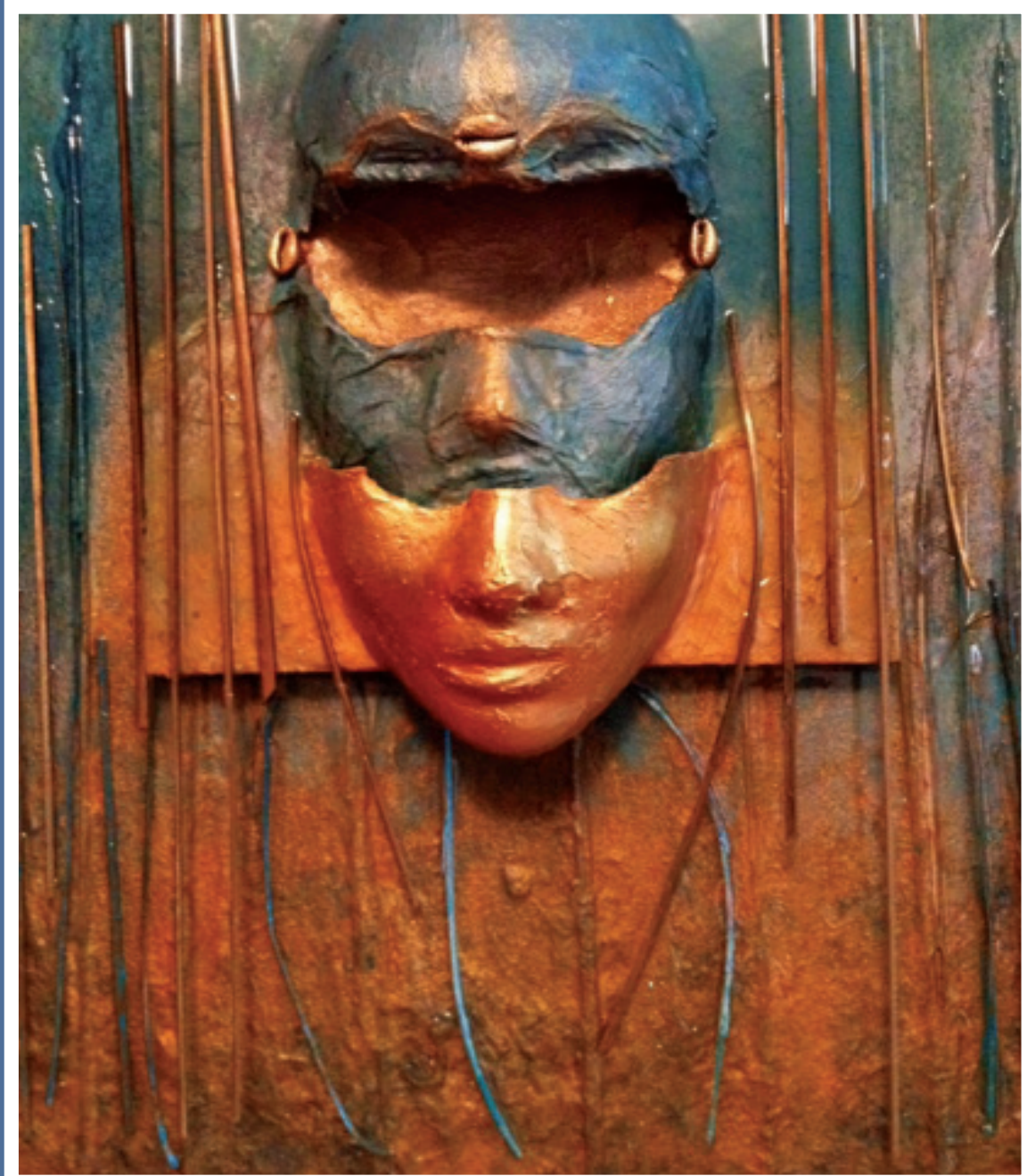
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