

Indiana Archives

African American History

JOHN M. GLEN, STEPHEN G. MCSHANE,
BRENDA NELSON-STRAUSS, PAUL C. HEYDE,
AND WILMA L. GIBBS

Half a century after the landmark Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), and four decades since the passage of the momentous Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Indiana Archives series assesses some of the state's archival holdings in African American history. These featured collections document the variegated record of black experiences in Indiana, a record that contains remarkable and precedent-setting achievements as well as innumerable instances of discrimination and resistance.

During much of the first half of the twentieth century, black Indianans commonly faced discrimination at restaurants, hotels, hospitals, theaters, and public schools and beaches. And while the Great Migration brought increasing numbers of blacks to the state, whites sometimes reacted vehemently, as in the case of the prolonged strike at Gary's Froebel High School in 1945 demanding the removal of black students. Public schools—at the

John M. Glen, general editor of the Indiana Archives series, is professor of history, Ball State University, Muncie. Contributors to this installment of the series are Stephen G. McShane, librarian, archivist/curator, Calumet Regional Archives, and interim library director, Indiana University Northwest Library, Gary; Brenda Nelson-Strauss, head of collections, Archives of African American Music and Culture, Indiana University, Bloomington; Paul C. Heyde, archivist and head of public and technology services, Black Film Center/Archive, Indiana University, Bloomington; and Wilma L. Gibbs, archivist, African American history, Indiana Historical Society.

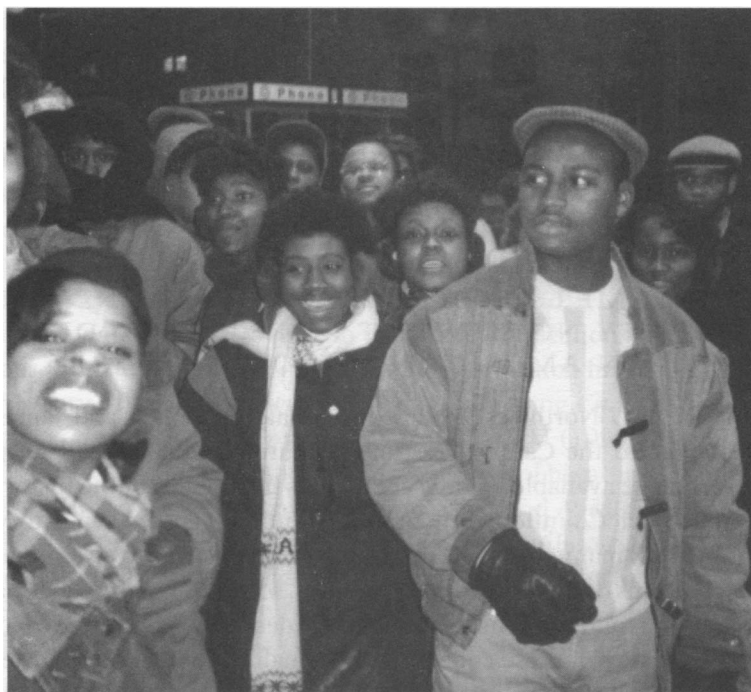
INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY, 100 (December 2004). © 2004, Trustees of Indiana University.

primary, secondary, and university levels—reacted slowly to the Indiana General Assembly's 1949 legislation abolishing public school segregation. Some positive changes occurred in the 1950s—more jobs became available to African Americans in the post-war era, and the state basketball championships won by the all-black teams at Crispus Attucks High School in 1955 and 1956 helped influence subsequent school desegregation—yet exclusion from public accommodations and discrimination in housing and employment persisted.

The General Assembly enacted a series of civil rights measures in the early 1960s that were in some cases more extensive than federal laws of that decade, yet the state's African Americans confronted new challenges. Shifting residential patterns and official inaction made genuine school desegregation difficult, prompting the Indianapolis chapter of the NAACP to file a lawsuit against the city's public school system. The suit sparked a prolonged legal battle that ultimately resulted in the large-scale busing of students within most of the city beginning in 1980, a solution that was never fully satisfactory and was already being phased out at the end of the twentieth century. Court orders and school reorganization plans also settled desegregation suits in a number of other Indiana communities. Meanwhile, a growing number of black voters and the rising prominence of racial issues helped elect Richard Hatcher mayor of Gary in 1967—one of the first African American mayors of a major American city. Hatcher and his successors, however, struggled to offset the long-term economic decline of the Calumet region. In 1972, Gary took center stage in the initiative to broaden black political power when it hosted the National Black Caucus, and increasing black migration to urban industrial centers throughout the state continued to heighten the political visibility of African Americans. Nevertheless, black protest in Indiana remained largely moderate, nonviolent, and well within conventional political channels.

The new century finds Indiana, like the rest of the nation, with two black populations: one, the steadily growing number of entrepreneurs, professionals, college students, and middle-class homeowners (epitomized by the rise to prominence within the state and nation of the three-and-one-half-decade-old Indiana Black Expo in Indianapolis); another, comprising poorer households, often headed by a single parent, still trapped in deteriorating older neighborhoods, confronting crime and rocky relations with local law enforcement, and faced with inadequate educational and employment opportunities and an array of attendant social problems.

In short, African American communities in Indiana have become increasingly diverse in the fifty years since the *Brown* ruling, and the con-



An excited crowd awaits the premiere of *The Color Purple* at the Indiana (now Buskirk-Chumley) Theater in Bloomington, 1985.
 Courtesy Black Film Center/Archive, Indiana University, Bloomington

tributors to this year's Indiana Archives series suggest some of the resources available to explore this often dramatic story, as well as the cultural trends that informed it. Stephen G. McShane surveys the range of collections at the Calumet Regional Archives, particularly those accessioned in the past ten years, that help document the educational challenges faced by African Americans in Gary as well as the rise of black power in local labor and political arenas, the latter trend mirrored by the establishment of various cultural organizations in the city. The next two essays offer alternative avenues for exploring African American culture. Brenda Nelson-Strauss, introducing the musical materials found at the Archives of African American Music and Culture at Indiana University, sets the origins of the movement to collect African Americana in the context of the civil rights events of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Paul C. Heyde makes a similar case for the use of the films and related collections at the university's Black Film Center/Archive. Finally, Wilma L. Gibbs considers the Indiana

Historical Society's archival holdings in African American history, highlights some records that have attracted the greatest attention over the years, and identifies those areas of the state's African American presence still in need of documentation. Together these essayists clearly articulate the need—and the opportunity—to complement Indiana's civil rights history by tracing the more subtle and far-reaching economic, musical, cinematic, and athletic accomplishments taking place around it.

THE CALUMET REGIONAL ARCHIVES, INDIANA UNIVERSITY NORTHWEST LIBRARY: HOLDINGS IN AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

In 1973, IU Northwest Professors Ronald D. Cohen and James B. Lane established the Calumet Regional Archives (CRA) to collect, preserve, and make available records and papers documenting the history of Lake and Porter Counties.¹ Primarily a twentieth-century repository in scope, the CRA maintains over four hundred distinct archival and manuscript collections of correspondence, minutes, scrapbooks, programs, pamphlets, reports, photographs, maps, films, videotapes, and sound recordings. While many of these collections are small (one linear foot or less), virtually all of them possess some form of finding aid, from detailed inventories to hand-written abstracts. About one-half of them are described online.² The holdings of the Calumet Regional Archives are particularly well-suited to the study of African American history, education, labor, civil rights and black power, and the arts—especially in the predominantly black city of Gary.

Education, 1920s–1940s. Among the CRA's collections dealing with the history of Gary's school system, a few document the African American experience. A small collection of personal files from long-time teacher Ida B. King (CRA 326) provides some data on African American education,

¹The Calumet Regional Archives, IU Northwest Library is located at 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408. For more information call (219) 980-6628; contact archivist Stephen McShane (smcshane@iun.edu); or visit the website, <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/crahome.htm>. The 1995 Indiana Archives article included an essay describing the Calumet Regional Archives' holdings on Indiana history since 1945. That article—as well as all of the archive series, including pieces on regional, Civil War, and oral history holdings—can be accessed at http://www.indiana.edu/~imaghist/classic_articles.html.

²See IU's online catalog IUCAT, <http://www.iucat.iu.edu>; or consult a librarian for assistance with the OCLC and RLIN bibliographic utilities. In addition, about one-half of the Archives' collection inventories are available on the CRA website.

particularly at the segregated Roosevelt High School, built in response to the Emerson School Strike of 1927, when hundreds of white students walked out after administrators transferred black students to the school.³ A file labeled “Froebel Strike” in Director of Industrial Education Guy Wulfing’s papers (CRA 107) contains memoranda, petitions, and other documents related to the Froebel Strike of 1945, when white students boycotted classes in protest of Froebel’s being the only mixed-race school in the city. This episode drew national attention, including a visit by singer Frank Sinatra urging students to halt the strike.

Fortunately, the archives also retain a few collections from local historians. Ronald D. Cohen donated extensive research files on the history of the Gary school system gathered while preparing *Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906–1960* (1990). His personal papers, including his correspondence and copies of his articles, are housed in the CRA’s University Archives section. Raymond A. Mohl also donated many of his research files compiled for his book, authored along with Neil Betten, *Steel City: Urban and Ethnic Patterns in Gary, Indiana, 1906–1950* (1986), and this collection (CRA 242)⁴ contains some papers related to the black experience in the Gary schools.

Labor, 1940s–1960s. Industrial unionism has been a major theme in the history of northwest Indiana. After World War II, the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) rose rapidly to power in the Calumet region. The Calumet Regional Archives hold thirty collections of records from local USWA labor leaders and a few collections from other local unions. Several of these collections document the emergence of black union members seeking the ear of white USWA local and international leadership. The most complete collection—the records of USWA Local 1010, Inland Steel, East Chicago (CRA 115)⁵—offer particularly strong coverage of the period 1940–1965 and detail African American positions regarding wages, hours, and working conditions. In addition, a series of strike fliers offers useful data on several major strikes during the era, particularly the 116-day steel strike of 1959. Minute books dating from the 1940s to the 1960s offer useful information on the actions by African Americans to secure a greater presence in the steelworkers’ unions. Labor historian Ruth

³View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra326.htm>.

⁴View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra242.htm>.

⁵View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra115.htm>.

Needleman used information from several collections in her recent book, *Black Freedom Fighters in Steel: The Struggle for Democratic Unionism* (2003).⁶

Civil Rights and Black Political Power, 1940s–1970s. The struggle for civil rights in northwest Indiana mirrored national events. Early civil rights events in the 1940s and 1950s included the desegregation of Miller Beach along Lake Michigan and the employment of African Americans in Gary's downtown department stores. The Clifford E. Minton Papers (CRA 160)⁷ chronicle those episodes and many others during Minton's tenure as head of the Gary Urban League from 1949 to 1965. The Jeanette Strong Papers (CRA 79) contain a brief record of the Gary NAACP activities, including photographs of an open housing march down Broadway in 1963.

The 1967 election in Gary of Richard Gordon Hatcher as one of the first black mayors of a major American city is often identified with the rise of local black political power. While the archives do not contain Hatcher's papers, various small collections provide information on the Hatcher era, spanning the years 1967–1987. For example, the CRA has begun a Richard Hatcher Collection (CRA 86), a grouping of discrete items about the mayor, such as campaign materials and photographs. The Henry Coleman Papers (CRA 277)⁸ retain various reports and news articles about the Hatcher elections in 1967 and 1971 and the city controller's office in the early 1970s. Correspondence, memoranda, speeches, programs, and campaign materials in the Charlene Crowell Papers (CRA 321)⁹ furnish information on the later years of the Hatcher administration. Finally, a few materials about the Gary Human Relations Commission and various Hatcher city programs are housed in the Leonard Dreyfus Papers (CRA 268).¹⁰

In the past few years, the archives accessioned several additional collections dealing with the African American experience in Gary. Former Gary Mayor Thomas V. Barnes, who succeeded Hatcher in 1988, donated

⁶For example, the USWA Local 1011 Records, LTV Steel, East Chicago (CRA 121), <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra121.htm>; the John Howard Papers on USS Subdistrict 1 and Local 1014 (CRA 141), <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra141.htm>; the Kelsie Heard Papers on Local 1066 (CRA 318), <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra318.htm>; and the John Oglesby Papers on Local 1066 at Gary Sheet and Tin (CRA 119).

⁷View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra160.htm>.

⁸View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra277.htm>.

⁹View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra321.htm>.

¹⁰View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra268.htm>.



Mayor Richard Hatcher of Gary, n.d. Hatcher was one of the first black mayors of a large American city.
Courtesy Calumet Regional Archives

over eighty boxes of files documenting his mayoralty (CRA 276). Among the topics covered are the arrival of casino gambling in Gary and the development of the Gary/Chicago airport. Correspondence files from the mayor's office, along with a run of documents from the Gary Office of Public Affairs, furnish insight into the city's efforts to reverse its declines of the 1970s and 1980s.¹¹

Other related files on Gary civic affairs are also available. Thomas J. Crump has been involved in Gary politics for several decades, including

¹¹The Barnes collection has not been processed fully; contact the Archives for more information.

several terms on the Gary City Council, service as Calumet Township Trustee, and a mayoral candidacy in 1983. His collection (CRA 413)¹² spans the period from 1969 to the present, containing several files of personal correspondence and information on local politics, the Gary/Chicago Airport, the Gary Educational Development Foundation, Images of Hope, Ivy Tech State College, and the Gary Runnin' Rebels. The Dozier T. Allen Papers (CRA 435), comprising several very large scrapbooks, document Allen's career in Lake County politics, from his post as Calumet Township Trustee to his mayoral campaigns opposing Hatcher.

The Arts, 1950s–1990s. The CRA has acquired several interesting collections in the area of African American arts and culture. Alger Boswell—an actor, teacher, director, and writer in Gary—donated his collection of local theater programs and pamphlets to the archives in 1996 (CRA 394).¹³ The materials encompass productions sponsored by groups ranging from the Gary Community School Corporation and IU Northwest to such community theater groups as the Gary Music Theater and The Company Players; they also include programs from numerous local organizations and events, including the Miss Gary and Miss Black America pageants. The Morning Bishop Papers (CRA 218)¹⁴ contain correspondence, playbills, press releases, photographs, and other materials which trace the Morning Bishop Theater Playhouse from its founding in 1983 to the mid-1990s. Area black-owned media companies are represented in part by the Vivian Carter Papers (CRA 217) which, although very small, provide some data on the history of Vee-Jay Records. Established in Gary in 1953, the Vee-Jay label—the name taken from the first initials of Vivian and her husband James Bracken—signed recording contracts with some early doo-wop acts, including the Spaniels (“Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight”) and the Magnificents, along with some well-known groups such as the Four Seasons. In addition, Vee-Jay signed a little-known group from Liverpool to its first recording contract in the United States. Unfortunately, the company lost the Beatles’ American recording contract to Capitol Records in 1963.

¹²View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra413.htm>.

¹³View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra394.htm>.

¹⁴View a collection inventory at <http://www.iun.edu/~lib/cra218.htm>.

THE ARCHIVES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC AND CULTURE, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON

The Archives of African American Music and Culture (AAAMC) is a repository of materials documenting various black musical idioms and cultural expressions—including popular, religious, and classical music and black radio—dating primarily from the post-World War II era.¹⁵ The diverse collections include oral histories, photographs, musical and print manuscripts, audio and video recordings, scores and sheet music, books and serials, posters, and other artifacts and ephemera. Holdings are divided between the general collection, consisting of published materials (books, recordings, and videos) that may be circulated for teaching purposes, and special collections, consisting of unpublished and/or unique materials subject to various levels of restricted access. Though national in scope, the AAAMC's holdings reflect artists and styles that have had a significant impact upon the musical and cultural heritage of the Midwest through mass media as well as through the constant ebb and flow of African American musicians passing from the deep South through Nashville, Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, and Gary to Chicago and other northern cities.

Academic repositories devoted to black music, especially popular music, are a fairly recent phenomenon. Following the emergence of African American Studies departments during the 1970s, a few academic libraries and archives took steps to accession black music. The predominant focus, however, was typically on compositions by African American classical composers, and the collecting of popular genres was usually restricted to jazz or blues.¹⁶ The IU School of Music, for example, formed a Black Music Committee following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968 and, by 1970, had established a Black Music Collection through a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. At present, the Black Music Collection at the Cook Music Library includes

¹⁵The Archives of African American Music and Culture, IU Bloomington, is located at Smith Research Center, Suites 180–181, 2805 E. Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408-2601. For more information call (812) 855-8547, or visit the website, <http://www.indiana.edu/~aaamc>.

¹⁶Suzanne Flandreau states that the term “black music” continues to be associated almost exclusively with blues and jazz, “Black Music in the Academy: The Center for Black Music Research,” *Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association*, 55 (September 1998), 26.

over three thousand books, scores, and commercial recordings covering all aspects of black musical expression. Most of the scores and recordings fall into the classical and jazz idioms, supporting the IU School of Music curriculum, though many of the books encompass popular music topics.¹⁷

As scholars subsequently began to take a broader view of social and cultural issues, the role of music in African American culture was recognized as an integral part of daily life, resulting in a greater scholarly emphasis on popular and religious genres such as blues, gospel, soul, and, more recently, hip-hop. Over the past two decades, a number of institutions and museums have been formed to preserve the historical record of these traditions, from the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi to the Motown Historical Museum in Detroit and the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago.¹⁸ Founded in 1991 as part of this growing movement to study and document black popular music, the AAAMC is a relative newcomer, yet it remains one of the only academic institutions with an emphasis on post-World War II African American popular music genres. The AAAMC holdings are supplemented by other collections on the Bloomington campus, including those at the Cook Music Library as well as the extensive jazz and early African American field recording collections at the Archives of Traditional Music.¹⁹ The combination of these three research collections has established the IU Bloomington campus as a major research center for the study of black music.

Since popular music is most frequently documented and studied through recorded sound, commercial recordings—ranging from 45s to LPs and CDs—form the core of the AAAMC's general collection. Though many sound archives focus on collecting original issues of recordings, a resurgence of interest in earlier forms of black popular music—particularly among deejays, hip-hop artists, and European collectors—has resulted in extremely high prices for many blues, rhythm and blues (R&B), and soul recordings on 78s and LPs. Consequently, due to both budget and space constraints, the AAAMC primarily collects CDs, including both

¹⁷The William and Gayle Cook Music Library, <http://www.music.indiana.edu/muslib.html>, is located in the Simon Music Center.

¹⁸Online information is available for the Blues Archive at the University of Mississippi, http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/files/archives/blues; the Motown Historical Museum, <http://www.motownmuseum.com>; and the Center for Black Music Research in Chicago, <http://www.cbmr.org>.

¹⁹The Archives of Traditional Music, <http://www.indiana.edu/~libarchm/>, is located in Morrison Hall.



In 1968, the Gary-based Steeltown record label released the first recording by Indiana's legendary Jackson Five: "Big Boy" and "You've Changed."

Courtesy IU Archives of African American Music and Culture

new releases and reissues, but gratefully accepts donations of other formats. A wide range of musical styles and artists are represented, covering both sacred and secular traditions, from pre-World War II blues and gospel to post-World War II R&B and contemporary hip-hop. Each of these genres can be associated with a specific historical period, social context, and function, and the song lyrics can be used to examine the experiences and responses of African Americans to their position as a marginalized group in society.²⁰ For example, the soul music of the sixties and seventies paralleled the emergence of the civil rights and black power movements, and songs such as Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come" and James

²⁰Portia K. Maultsby and Isaac Kalumbu, "African-American Studies," in *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music of the World*, vol. 1, *Media, Industry and Society*, eds. John Shepherd, David Horn, David Laing, Paul Oliver, and Peter Wicke (New York, 2003), 47–54.

Brown's "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud" both reflected the goals of the movements and went on to exert a profound impact on an entire generation of African Americans. These soul anthems are frequently requested for classroom lectures, while other soul and R&B recordings are regularly used for programming purposes by IU's Soul Revue ensemble, bringing the music to the attention of a younger generation. An extensive hip-hop collection has also been compiled to support a popular survey course that examines hip-hop as an artistic, historical, and sociocultural phenomenon. Efforts are currently underway to increase the documentation of Indiana recording artists such as the Jackson Five, soul and gospel singer Deniece Williams, R&B artist Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, and the 1940s vocal group The Ink Spots, as well as Indiana-based record labels such as Lamp, Steeltown, and Knap Town.

More than four hundred commercial videos and DVDs supplement the recorded sound collection. Approximately half are music videos by hip-hop and contemporary R&B artists such as Janet Jackson, rapper Ice T, and hip-hop pioneer Afrika Bambaata, that were distributed by record companies as promotional vehicles during the 1980s and early 1990s. As it has become increasingly difficult to obtain publicity materials from the major labels, promotional videos produced during the past decade are, unfortunately, not represented. The other half of the moving image collection consists of documentaries and television programs on various black music and history topics, in addition to movies with soundtracks featuring African American artists. A number of classroom lectures and interviews with visiting artists and scholars have also been filmed for research purposes. Reference books, magazines, posters, and published sheet music round out the general collection.

The most distinctive materials in the AAAMC are to be found in the more than one hundred special collections, including the personal papers of several individuals and organizations. A number of important special collections focus on popular music. The largest is the collection of Karen Shearer, who began her career as a publicist for Capitol Records before moving to the Westwood One Radio Network around 1980, where, for the next decade, she worked as a producer for *Special Edition*, a weekly program featuring the music of popular black recording artists. Researchers have access to cassette copies of the original radio programs, interview and program transcripts, and over two thousand publicity photos and press releases collected by Shearer during the course of her career. The personal papers of prominent author Phyl Garland, a former colum-

nist for *Stereo Review* and the Chicago-based *Ebony* magazine, are similar in scope, with over nine hundred publicity photographs, biographies, and press releases from record companies covering various artists and genres from R&B to reggae. Motown, the music spawned in the “Motor City,” is documented through the research of Charles Sykes, who currently teaches a course on the history of Motown at IU and serves as director of the university’s African American Arts Institute. In addition, a recent donation by noted author Nelson George includes extensive primary and secondary source materials collected during the course of his research for *Where Did Our Love Go?: The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound* (1985). Several collections contribute to the understanding of rap, the dominant form of African American popular music over the past twenty years, including a donation of lectures and interviews by hip-hop activist Harry Allen. A number of small collections also focus on particular genres or artists: the Charles Connor Collection, documenting the career of Little Richard’s original drummer; the Susan Oehler Collection of interviews with Indiana and Chicago blues musicians; and the Patrice Rushen Collection, highlighting the work of the renowned singer, songwriter, producer, and AAAMC board member.

Interviews and oral histories form the basis of several additional popular music collections. Michael Lydon, author of *Ray Charles: Man & Music* (1998), recently donated ninety original audiocassette recordings of interviews conducted between 1994 and 1997 with Charles and his family, friends, and associates. These unique conversations serve as important primary source materials for anyone wishing to delve further into the life of the legendary R&B singer, whose first number one pop hit was “Georgia on My Mind” (written by Bloomington native Hoagy Carmichael) and whose music contributed significantly to the breakdown of the rigid racial divide of the 1950s and 1960s. The Rhythm and Blues Foundation, based in Washington, D.C., selected the AAAMC as the repository for research materials compiled during the production of the syndicated National Public Radio program *Let the Good Times Roll*, the first major, multi-part documentary series devoted to telling the often forgotten or overlooked stories of the pioneers of R&B—the music that became rock and roll. Over seventy-five in-depth interviews detail the history of R&B music from 1940 to 1960, while also addressing issues of race, segregation, and representation through a variety of topics: how R&B crossed over from an almost exclusively African American audience to a white audience through artists such as Chuck Berry and Fats Domino; the general

treatment of artists while touring and performing in the South; the migration of southern artists to northern cities; and the refusal of record companies to place images of African Americans on album covers.

Two additional collections are of particular regional interest. *Record Row: Cradle of Rhythm & Blues* contains interviews with many legendary artists collected during the production of a 1997 WTTW television documentary about Chicago's R&B industry and the Chess, Chance, Vee-Jay, and Brunswick record companies. *Something in the Water: The Sweet Sound of Dayton Street Funk* consists of photographs and interviews compiled for an exhibit at the National Afro-American Museum and Cultural Center in Wilberforce, Ohio. Conversations with musicians, teachers, record store owners, deejays, politicians, historians, and sociologists in and around Dayton, Ohio—the home of the largest number of successful funk bands in the country—relate the little-known history of Ohio's contributions to the funk movement. Beginning with the street funk sounds of the Ohio Players and evolving into the party-funk and electro-funk styles as performed by the bands Dayton, Slave, and Lakeside, the music, lyrics, theatrical productions, and marketing methods of these Dayton groups had a significant impact upon popular culture during the 1970s and 1980s. Various Indianapolis-based funk groups of the mid-1970s are also profiled in a collection recently deposited by historian Jeff Kollath.

Gospel music, rooted in African traditions and spirituals and referencing the social injustices endured during slavery and the subsequent years of segregation, is one of the most significant and enduring African American music genres. Yet in terms of the systematic collection, preservation, and analysis of the music, gospel has not enjoyed the same degree of scholarly attention given to other idioms such as jazz or blues.²¹ Though the AAAMC has made efforts to chronicle gospel's performers and traditions more fully, its holdings in this area are still modest. Most notable are the personal papers of Arizona Juanita Dranes—a blind female sanctified singer and pianist from Texas—that document her 1926–1928 Chicago recording sessions for Okeh Records. As contracts and correspondence detailing financial arrangements between early black recording artists and record companies are very rare, the Dranes collection is extremely significant. Holdings of a more contemporary nature include the Bobby

²¹Daniel Walker, "The Gospel Music History Project," project proposal, email to author, February 16, 2004.

Jones Gospel Music Collection, which sheds light on the remarkable career of the Kentucky native and executive producer/host of *Bobby Jones Gospel*, the first and only nationally syndicated black gospel television show. Debbie May, a gospel producer formerly based in Bloomington, donated a large number of commercial videos and recordings of gospel music performances, including several by Indianapolis-based Tyscot Records, one of the nation's oldest African American-owned-and -operated gospel record labels. IU professor Mellonee Burnim, who teaches several courses on black religious music, deposited over one hundred hours of audio and video field recordings and interviews documenting worship services, funerals, and gospel music concerts, many within the state of Indiana. Educators may be particularly interested in a complete set of cassettes and curriculum guides from the twenty-six-part radio series *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions*. Produced in 1993 by National Public Radio and the Smithsonian Institution, the series provides an overview of two centuries of sacred music, from spirituals to contemporary gospel.

Though the AAAMC's primary focus is on popular music, several past initiatives have led to the development of four unique classical music collections. The Undine Smith Moore Collection contains several of Moore's compositions, in addition to a selection of music manuscripts from some of the leading black composers of the twentieth century. Similar in nature is the Black Composers Collection, encompassing published scores and recordings. Complementing the musical scores are cassette recordings for *Landscapes in Color*, a series of interviews with prominent African American composers conducted by former IU professor William Banfield; and *The Black Composer Speaks*, featuring interviews conducted by David N. Baker (IU's distinguished jazz professor), Herman C. Hudson (founder of IU's Department of Afro-American Studies), and Lida M. Belt during research for a 1978 publication of the same name.

One of the chief non-musical strengths of the AAAMC is the extensive documentation of black radio, a topic that has received an increasing amount of scholarly attention in recent years. In 1996, AAAMC Director Portia K. Maultsby served as a consultant for the Peabody Award-winning program *Black Radio: Telling It Like It Was* (1996), produced by Radio Smithsonian. The groundbreaking thirteen-part series, covering the period from the 1920s to the present, addresses the role of radio in transforming the African American community. The collaborative relationship between the AAAMC and Radio Smithsonian led to the deposit of over four hundred hours of interviews as well as substantial production files,

photographs, articles, newspaper clippings, historical radio air checks, and contemporary radio programs. Of particular regional interest are profiles of black radio stations and personalities in Chicago, Gary, Detroit, Nashville, and Memphis. Also included are rare interviews with over one hundred fifty well-known disc jockeys, radio professionals, record company executives, journalists, and scholars. Interviewees include Chicago deejays Al Benson, Jack Cooper, and Richard Stamz; soul singer James Brown, who once owned three radio stations; recording artists and former deejays B. B. King and Ike Turner; radio personalities Eddie O'Jay, Tom Joyner, and Wolfman Jack; and pioneering female deejays Martha Jean "The Queen" Steinberg and "Chattie Hattie" Leeper. The interviews touch on a very broad range of topics, including the rhyming style of black deejays and other oral traditions; payola and the record industry; the history of black radio stations and deejays and their role during the civil rights movement; racism, segregation, and cultural crossover; and the impact of *Amos 'n' Andy* and other "blackface" programs.

In addition to the documentary production materials, an extensive collection of original radio shows provides an opportunity to assess the personalities and vocal styles of deejays during an era when radio announcers exerted significant influence in the black community. Johnny Otis, the R&B pioneer whose multiple talents include bandleader, record producer, television host, and disc jockey, donated over eight hundred hours of *The Johnny Otis Show*. These radio programs highlighting blues, R&B, and jazz music are interspersed with interviews of the performers including Little Esther Phillips, Mary Wells, the Coasters, and Etta James. The Lee Bailey Collection contains over five hundred radio programs from the weekly series *Radioscope* and *Hip Hop Countdown*, featuring black popular music from the 1980s and 1990s. Several additional collections document radio personalities and historians through personal papers and photographs: "Jockey Jack" Gibson, the popular Atlanta disc jockey; Douglass "Jocko" Henderson, the nation's first "rappin' deejay"; Vy Higginsen, the first woman to have a primetime black radio slot in New York; Houston deejays Skipper Lee Frazier, Travis Gardner, Rick Roberts, and George Nelson; black radio pioneer Eddie Castleberry; and William Barlow, former professor of communications at Howard University and author of one of the foremost books on the history of black radio.²²

The AAAMC also offers a wide range of programs that showcase se-

²²William Barlow, *Voice Over: The Making of Black Radio* (Philadelphia, 1999).

lected collections and disseminate information about the musical and cultural history of African Americans. Over the past five years, the AAAMC has worked with IU's Teaching and Learning Technologies Centers to construct three multimedia instructional web sites for use in future interactive workshops for teachers, high school students, scholars, and international visitors. Soon to be accessible throughout the IU campuses, these websites—on hip-hop music and culture, black American popular music, and a general survey of African American music—will provide participants with a virtual visit to the Archives. The AAAMC has also sponsored lectures and workshops on the Bloomington campus by renowned scholars, journalists, performing artists, and radio personalities. Because the AAAMC operates as a unit independent of the library system and is not currently a participant in IU's online library catalog, the public is often not aware of the Archives' significant holdings. Several initiatives are currently underway that should greatly improve the AAAMC's website and increase access to information about its collections, including finding aids and possibly an online catalog. In these and various other ways, the AAAMC continues to move forward with its mission of collecting, preserving, and making materials on African American music and culture available to students, scholars, performers, and the general public.

THE BLACK FILM CENTER/ARCHIVE, INDIANA UNIVERSITY, BLOOMINGTON: PRESERVING THE LEGACY OF BLACK CULTURE

While black filmmakers and actors have contributed to the film industry throughout the twentieth century—from Oscar Micheaux, the South Dakota homesteader and film pioneer who began his career with the 1919 silent film *The Homesteaders*, to the two-time Academy Award-winning actor, Denzel Washington—they went largely overlooked before the 1970s. Founded in 1981 through the collaborative efforts of the Afro-American Studies Department and Phyllis R. Klotman, the Black Film Center/Archive (BFC/A) collects and preserves films and related materials (such as interviews, screenplays, photographs, and posters) created by and about African Americans and the entire African diaspora.²³ The BFC/A also recog-

²³The Black Film Center/Archive is located at Smith Research Center, Suite 180, 2805 E. Tenth Street, Bloomington, IN 47408. For more information call (812) 855-6041, or visit the website, <http://www.indiana.edu/~bfca>. In order to maintain a comprehensive research archive, the BFC/A does not distribute any part of its collection. However, the archive is open to the public Monday through Friday, and researchers can make an appointment by phone or email (bfca@indiana.edu).

nizes that many films, produced in virtual obscurity by independent black filmmakers, portray an alternative—and often more positive and accurate—view of black culture than that which is produced in Hollywood. In light of these trends, the overall goals of the BFC/A are to introduce black films to diverse audiences with the intention of realizing a greater multicultural understanding and encouraging the study of black film as part of a humanities education.

The first and most basic element of our mission is to collect and preserve black films. To this end, the BFC/A regularly identifies and purchases commercially produced films to add to the general film collection, which contains over 1,100 individual titles in several formats including VHS (over 700 tapes), 16mm (over 300 individual titles), DVD, 3/4" U-Matic videocassettes, 8mm, 35mm, and one laserdisc (D. W. Griffith's infamous 1915 epic, *The Birth of a Nation*). The majority of these films were produced from the 1970s to the present, though more than four hundred date from the period 1900–1960, including many race films—motion pictures produced in the 1930s and 1940s that featured all-black casts and were often written, directed, and produced by blacks. Films of specific interest to the state of Indiana at the BFC/A include William Greaves's *Nationtime, Gary* (1972)—a documentary chronicling the first National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, which features a rousing speech by Richard G. Hatcher—and Indianapolis filmmaker Shari Lynn Himes's award-winning short film *A Song for Jade* (2001).

In addition to films, the BFC/A also maintains a large collection of photographic prints, negatives, and slides solicited from studios and black film personalities. With the help of the IU Digital Library Program, we initiated a project in early 2004 to digitize the entire collection for enhanced access and preservation, and more than half of the nearly 1,500 items in our collection have been scanned. Other collections at the BFC/A include black film posters; interviews with black filmmakers, actors, actresses, and film scholars; screenplays; subject files; and a library of periodicals and monographs on black films.

Several special collections donated by filmmakers and film collectors include films and other materials that document the filmmaking process. The largest collection, the Peter Davis Collection, includes everything from film footage and photograph stills to research materials such as newspaper articles that went into the South African documentary filmmaker's work.

Perhaps the most historically significant collection is that of filmmaker Richard E. Norman, donated by his son in 1985. Norman began making

movies with all-white actors in the early 1910s, although he soon recognized the potential of making all-black-cast films for the relatively untapped market of the African American community. He began by remaking one of his earlier films, *The Green Eyed Monster* (1919), and produced a sequel, *The Love Bug* (1919), both of which were popular with audiences and even prompted unsolicited letters from black actors and actresses eager to star in Norman Studios' next production. Encouraged by this success, Norman continued producing his own—including *The Bull Dogger* (1921), *Regeneration* (1923), and one of his most successful and well-known productions, *The Flying Ace* (1926)—as well as distributing films by black filmmakers such as Micheaux. Among the materials in the Norman Collection are distribution and other business records, correspondence, publicity materials (including posters, lobby cards, press sheets, and photographs), and other ephemera, such as Norman Studios movie tickets and a pair of handcuffs used in *The Flying Ace*. A complementary collection with similar materials resides at the Lilly Library at IU.²⁴ The BFC/A also houses copies of all of Norman's extant films.²⁵

The most recent major acquisition is the William Greaves Collection. Greaves started his career in film as an actor in the late 1940s and began directing and producing films documentaries about African Americans in the following decade. Throughout his prolific career as a filmmaker, Greaves has made over two hundred films and won numerous awards, including an Emmy for his effort on the first black-produced network television series, *Black Journal* (1968–1970). Greaves screened his most recent film, *Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey* (2001), in Bloomington in October 2003 as part of a BFC/A-sponsored film series and deposited the beginnings of the collection devoted to documenting his celebrated accomplishments in film. His collection currently contains articles, film reviews, publicity materials, and fifteen films on VHS and 16mm formats.

Developing outreach programs for the university community and general public is another vital part of the BFC/A's mission. In 2003 the center collaborated with the IU Art Museum to present "Imaging Blackness, 1915–2002: Film Posters from the Black Film Center/Archive," an exhibition of more than fifty of the center's vintage black film posters,

²⁴The Lilly Library, <http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly>, is located at 1200 E. Seventh Street in Bloomington.

²⁵The Library of Congress preserves the extant original copies of Norman's films.



Film poster for *The Bronze Venus*, Toddy Pictures Company, 1937.
Courtesy Black Film Center/Archive, Indiana University, Bloomington

including a 41-by-81-inch three-sheet from the 1937 musical *The Bronze Venus* (a.k.a. *The Duke is Tops*), featuring Lena Horne. "Imaging Blackness" and associated events were so well received that the BFC/A is now working towards publishing a booklet celebrating the exhibit that will include full-color images of many of the posters.

A final part of the BFC/A mission seeks to carry out, facilitate, and encourage research into the history, significance, and aesthetics of black film. Since 1985, the center has published *Black Camera*, a biannual microjournal containing reviews of contemporary and historical films and books, interviews with filmmakers and film scholars, articles based upon scholarly research, editorials on the state of black film, and information about recent acquisitions and upcoming programs at the center.

The BFC/A anticipates that the upcoming months and years will be full of activity. The staff has compiled the Black Filmography Database, an electronic catalog of all black films, and will soon publish *Frame by Frame III*, the third in a series of indexes of black films published by Indiana University Press containing an alphabetical listing of black films, along with cast, crews, and technical data, from 1994 through the present.²⁶ The staff is also at work on an anthology of essays on the career of Richard Pryor based on our 2001 film retrospective, "Is He Crazy?: The Humor and Genius of Richard Pryor," featuring screenings of several of Pryor's films and a keynote lecture by Pulitzer Prize-winning author James Alan McPherson. Furthermore, we are actively seeking a new, more accessible location within the university in the hopes of acquiring more space to hold our expanding collections.

INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY: AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY COLLECTIONS

Anniversaries provide us with a good time to reflect and sometimes to celebrate. This year quite a bit of attention has been paid to the fiftieth anniversary of the Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*.²⁷ The

²⁶Phyllis Rauch Klotman, *Frame by Frame: A Black Filmography* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997); Klotman and Gloria J. Gibson, *Frame by Frame II: A Filmography of the African American Image, 1978–1994* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997).

²⁷In 2001 George W. Bush established a presidential commission to commemorate the occasion. Since that time, numerous websites, essay contests, discussions, awards, town hall meetings, and publications have marked the milestone anniversary. Notable Indiana events offered in commemoration of *Brown* included Purdue University's "Fifty Years after *Brown*," a presentation by plaintiff Oliver Brown's daughters Linda Brown Thompson and Cheryl Brown Henderson. At IU, the law school hosted a workshop and panel discussion.

year 2004 also marks the fortieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, the most far-reaching civil rights legislation in the nation's history, signed into law by Lyndon Baines Johnson on July 2, 1964.

Still another milestone this year may go unremarked at a national level, though it is important to me (for personal and professional reasons) and, I hope, to all students of Indiana's African American history. This year is the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Black History News & Notes*, the quarterly newsletter of the Black History Program at the Indiana Historical Society. I have edited the publication for eighteen of those years in my role as archivist of African American history at the IHS. *Black History News & Notes* draws on and publicizes the IHS's many collections in this area. The society's African American archives include personal papers of attorneys, doctors, educators, entrepreneurs, ministers, and journalists, as well as institutional records for churches, clubs, businesses, government entities, and community. These collections speak to issues of slavery, race relations, and public accommodations.²⁸

A selection of three specific sources offers a glimpse of the IHS's African American holdings. Ten letters written by black female students attending Indianapolis Public School #17 to Sergeant Irven Armstrong while he was stationed in France during World War I commend his war service, express homefront support for American soldiers, comment on the effects of the 1918 influenza epidemic, thank him for keeping America safe for democracy, and bid him a safe return. The letters contain the signatures and addresses of the students, all of whom lived within blocks of the near-westside school (M 0745). A funeral program found in the George P. Stewart Papers provides a rare visual image of C. I. Taylor, coach of the Indianapolis ABCs, a National Negro League baseball team (M 0556). The emancipation record of Mathew Becks—freed from slavery in Rockingham County, Virginia, on February 18, 1851, later a resident of Weaver Settlement in Grant County, Indiana—provides a physical description of Becks and states that he was freed by the last will and testament of St. Clair Kirtley (SC 1750).

One of the most used collections at the society is the Madam C. J. Walker Papers (M 0399). The collection contains the records and correspondence of her company's principal officers, the company's business

²⁸Access an online guide to the society's African American manuscript and visual collections at http://www.indianahistory.org/library/manuscripts/collection_guides/African-American_mss.html.

records, and the records of associated businesses. Walker has been a perennial favorite for History Day projects, and graduate students working on theses and dissertations have utilized various portions of her collection. Publishers regularly seek permission to use some item from the collection in their publications, ranging from math textbooks to novels set in the Progressive Era.

The collection's attraction to researchers stems in part from Walker's engaging personality. She was active in the Indianapolis community, providing space for the early meetings of the Phyllis Wheatley YWCA and riding around the city in her locally manufactured Waverly automobile. In 1915, as she prepared to relocate to Villa Lewaro, a mansion designed and built for her in New York by the African American architect Vertner Tandy, the Senate Avenue YMCA drafted a resolution requesting her to remain in Indianapolis. That same year, Walker brought suit against the Central Amusement Company alleging that personnel at the Isis, an Indianapolis movie theater, charged her twenty-five cents when the customary fees were five or ten cents. She refused to pay.

In addition to being an astute businesswoman and philanthropist, Sarah Breedlove Walker was a political activist. She visited the White House in 1917 to protest lynching, and it was her hope that her sales agents would use their economic clout to rally public support against racial injustice. At their 1918 convention, Walker's agents sent a telegram to President Woodrow Wilson protesting the treatment of African American soldiers. Later that summer, Walker hosted a reception at Villa Lewaro for Emmett J. Scott, the special assistant to the Secretary of War for Negro Affairs (documentation found in the George P. Stewart Papers, M 0556).

The records of the National Black Political Convention have also been a popular collection at the society. On March 10–12, 1972, several thousand African Americans—Republicans, Democrats, nationalists, Socialists, and independents—gathered in Gary, Indiana, to develop a unified political strategy for African Americans from 1972 forward. The records in the collection document the event; of particular note are a conference program and agenda, a fact sheet describing the history of the organization, an outline of the delegate selection process in Indiana, and a transcript of a speech attributed to Carl B. Stokes, former mayor of Cleveland (SC 2643).

Photographic researchers will find the following Indianapolis-related collections useful: O. James Fox (P 0266), Harris Brothers (P 0154), Senate Avenue YMCA (P 0394), Duncan Scheidt (P 0257), and the *Indianapolis Recorder* (P 0303). The latter includes the photographic archives of the



O. James Fox photographed children reading in Indianapolis, c. 1945–1960.
O. James Fox Collection. Courtesy Indiana Historical Society

third longest-running African American newspaper in the country. The collection contains black-and-white and color photographs, printed material, manuscripts, and ink, pencil, and mechanically reproduced drawings dating from around 1900 to 1987.

The Indiana Historical Society is committed to an ongoing effort to respond to the growing interest in Indiana's African American past. For example, next year someone will likely want to celebrate and document the fiftieth anniversary of Crispus Attucks High School's victory in the

Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) boys' basketball championship. Opened as a high school for African American students in 1927, Attucks was banned from playing in the segregated IHSAA state basketball tournament until 1943. Twelve years later, in 1955, Attucks, led by Oscar Robertson, became the first Indianapolis school to win the state basketball championship; it repeated the honor the following year. Coached by Ray Crowe, the team had won forty-five consecutive games when it was crowned IHSAA champion in 1956. There are several printed items that help shed light on the era and the championships, including Randy Roberts, *"But They Can't Beat Us": Oscar Robertson and the Crispus Attucks Tigers* (1999); *Hoosiers: The Fabulous Basketball Life of Indiana* (1995) by Phillip Hoose; and Oscar Robertson's *The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game* (2003). A biography of Bill Garrett—star of the 1947 Shelbyville championship team and voted Mr. Basketball that year, the first African American to play in the Big Ten Conference (for IU), and coach of the 1959 Attucks championship team—is scheduled to appear soon. The *Indianapolis Recorder* Collection also documents the 1955–1956 state champion teams, while the Crispus Attucks High School Scrapbook (BV 3469) chronicles the 1950–1951 basketball season, with newspaper articles from the *Indianapolis Recorder*, *Indianapolis Times*, *Indianapolis News*, and *Indianapolis Star*. The scrapbook also contains various news clippings and tickets, programs, scorecards, and cheerleading yells from other basketball seasons—namely 1951–1952, 1954–1955, 1955–1956, and 1958–1959.

While the Indiana Historical Society maintains many collections on African American history, these records would be bolstered by more collections that reflect the history of African Americans in geographical locations throughout the state, especially rural communities; materials that document the history of black Indianans since World War II; military materials, such as a Civil War diary written by a soldier from the 28th United States Colored Troops; primary sources that document the rich history of Indiana Avenue in Indianapolis; and additional personal papers from the many individuals whose experiences have contributed to the state's rich African American history.