About the Billie Holiday Project

Founded in 2017, the mission of the Billie Holiday Project for Liberation Arts is to document and disseminate the unique history of African American life, letters, and art in Baltimore, Maryland, and to foster intellectual linkages between the Johns Hopkins Homewood campus and the historic “inner city” of Baltimore. We accomplish our objectives through four core programs:

+ Baltimore Africana Archives Initiative
+ Public Arts & Humanities
+ Fellowships for the Advanced Humanistic Study of Black Maryland
+ Hopkins Pathways, a college pipeline partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools

In addition to programming, the Billie Holiday Project promotes teaching and learning initiatives that support its mission through student-led humanities research and exhibitions, and innovative classroom teaching with Africana archives, artifacts, and digital resources.

About the Director, Lawrence Jackson

A Baltimore native, Lawrence Jackson is a writer, historian, and Johns Hopkins professor who specializes in the study of modern African American literature and culture. He is the award-winning author of four books and is currently writing a biography of Billie Holiday.

Africana Faculty Research

Africana Studies faculty at Johns Hopkins engage in a wide array of scholarly research projects, using archives and other research tools. Recent faculty books include:

- **KATRINA BELL-MCDONALD**
  Professor of Sociology
  "Marriage in Black"

- **NATHAN CONNOLLY**
  Associate Professor of History
  "A World More Concrete"

- **MARTHA S. JONES**
  Professor of History
  "Birthright Citizens"

- **CHRISTOPHER LEBRON**
  Associate Professor of Philosophy
  "The Making of Black Lives Matter"

- **NADIA NURHSSEIN**
  Associate Professor of English
  "Rhetorics of Literacy"

- **ROBBIE SHILLIAM**
  Professor of Political Science
  "The Black Pacific"

- **LESTER K. SPENCE**
  Associate Professor of Political Science
  "Knocking the Hustle"

- **MARK THOMPSON**
  Professor of English
  "Anti-Music: Jazz & Racial Blackness"

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By the year 2030, the Billie Holiday Project for Liberation Arts and The Sheridan Libraries hope to grow a collection of African American primary sources with a special emphasis on local history and culture that stands unprecedented in Maryland. In collaboration with donors, we will build collections that illuminate the region’s arts, politics, and history—helping to reestablish Baltimore’s central place in the growth and development of the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Baltimore Africana Archives Initiative is the first phase of this ambitious historic preservation plan.

Recent acquisitions include the John Clark Mayden Collection—100 of his important urban Baltimore photographs shot between 1974 and 2012—the Ethel Ennis and Earl Arnott Collection, and the William Worthy Papers. Other acquisitions in progress include the Helena Hicks Papers and Hoen Printing Company Collection.

Baltimore Africana Archives Initiative

Donating Your Materials

Primary source collections—housed in archives, historical societies, and special collections libraries—carefully preserve collections of written, visual, audio-visual, and electronic material created by organizations and private citizens, past and present. Such repositories ensure that these personal, family, and organizational records will be available for research by generations to come.

What We Collect & Preserve

Letters, diaries, photos, scrapbooks, posters, books, works of art, and other materials provide vital and unique information worthy of preservation. Generally, we prefer original items rather than copies, and we are especially eager to develop coherent collections that can help to fill in gaps in the historical record.

Why Donate?

Johns Hopkins’ Sheridan Libraries, in tandem with the Billie Holiday Project, have state-of-the-art facilities and expertise to ensure the preservation of materials, appropriate cataloging, public accessibility, and appreciation through classes, exhibitions, and programs.

If you have materials that document African American history and culture, please save them!

Have specific questions about your collections? Contact special collections curator Gabrielle Dean, PhD, gnodean@jhu.edu

A Sampling of Africana Archives at Johns Hopkins

- John Clark Mayden photograph collection
- Black Panther press photograph collection
- Paul Robeson collection
- Black Student Union records
- Sammy Davis, Jr. script collection
- Josephine Baker collection
- Twentieth-century American writers collection
- Johnny T. Hill album, 1930 - 1943
- African American photo postcard collection, 1905-1946
- Johnnie Newton letters collection
- Birney anti-slavery pamphlet collection, 1784-1909
- Free Negro newspaper clippings collection, 1848-1905

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