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Uncrowned Queens Archives

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The collection was assembled and digitally scanned by student assistants in the Monroe Fordham Regional History Center – Lhencia Lambre and Danielle Matthews under the supervision of Christopher Root. The material of this project was acquired by Dr. Jean Richardson, Associate Professor, History and Social Studies Education Department.
Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women

http://www.uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com

Founded in 1999 by Dr. Barbara A. Seals Nevergold and Dr. Peggy Brooks-Bertram, the Institute aims to collect, disseminate, and archive the histories of previously unheralded African Americans, as well as vulnerable documentation of African American local communities.

The Institute’s Mission Statement:

*To conduct research on the issues affecting women of color, to use this research to develop educational programs that will enhance the quality of life for women and their communities, to promote the collection and dissemination of the individual histories of women, women’s organizations and women’s collective history, and to teach and educate women on the use of technology to preserve and disseminate their histories.*

Initially, the project was established prior to the 2001 centennial of the Pan American Exposition in order to commemorate the involvement of African American women and the local African American community in the 1901 international Exposition. The magnitude of the project quickly grew to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of specific African American women during the turn of the century period and in the century since the fair. The project transformed into a major documentation of regional African American history requiring a sustainable organizational framework.

The Uncrowned Queens Institute was incorporated in 2002 and was designated a 501 (c) 3 organization in 2003. It has an 11 member Board of Directors and receives funding through individual and corporate donations and grants.

Nevergold and Brooks-Bertram created their *Uncrowned Queens* model of historical documentation and preservation to focus on the incorporation of histories of lesser-known or unheralded individuals who proved to be “community builders.” The stories of these women and, more recently, men are collected through the mediums of oral histories, biographical accounts, photos, and other supporting data. Web and digital technologies, as well as print publications, are incorporated to archive, preserve, and present the collection of personal histories and supporting documentation.

Personal memories are the principal source of this compelling historical record; thus the Institute serves a crucial role in the investigation, generation, and presentation of a community’s history through the voices of its formative “builders.”

The Institute’s name, *Uncrowned Queens*, was derived from the 1917 poem, “America’s Uncrowned Queens,” by Oklahoma pioneer and poet, Drusilla Dunjee Houston. The poem
celebrates “a group of tireless, self-sacrificing black women who worked for the betterment of family and community.”

The Uncrowned Queens Web site first appeared in 2001 and has grown to a dynamic online archive, or “techno-pedia,” a term coined by Nevergold, comprised of hundreds of biographies, oral histories, photographs, community documents, and historical vignettes.

The following are only a few examples of the projects and initiatives contributing to the Institute’s comprehensive programming and services:

- **Uncrowned Community Builders Web site.** The award-winning Web site (“techno-pedia”) is a digital repository for the historical assets of the African American communities of Western New York and Oklahoma. The Web site also includes an innovative “Biography Tool” that allows individuals to submit new biographies and photos directly to the website or edit existing biographies. The website is a valuable archive and tool for research, training, and teaching in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary educational institutions, as well as in community-based computer literacy training programs. The Institute’s “techno-pedia” is updated frequently: [http://www.uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com](http://www.uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com)

- **Uncrowned Community Builders Digital Literacy Project.** The project offers innovative, free-access web software enabling a variety of format and content beyond conventional texts in the application and discourse of public history. Community historians will be taught to create historical content employing both traditional and new media narrative devices such as digital audio-files, video files, and scanned memorabilia/documents. With membership in the Institute’s program, community historians will be able to not only generate new content but to edit existing online content as well.

- **Uncrowned Kings.** In 2007, in response to years of inquiries and requests from the community, the Institute developed an Uncrowned Kings companion project. It identifies African American men who were crucial to the development of their communities. While the Uncrowned Kings initiative will also have a national focus, it began with African American men in Buffalo and Western New York.

- **Uncrowned Queens and Kings in the Wings.** This Web-based initiative recognizes young people who have already engaged in community-building activities.

- **Culture Keeper Award.** With this award, established in 2002, the Institute recognizes, supports, and promotes the activities of individuals and organizations to preserve cultural and historical assets of the African American community.
Uncrowned Queens Archives Program. Through collaboration with the University at Buffalo’s University Archives, the Institute established a program to find and secure the personal papers, photos, awards, and other memorabilia of local African American Uncrowned Queens. The first collection to be secured and donated to the University Archives is that of Eva Noles, the first African American to graduate from a Buffalo school of nursing, the Edward J. Meyer Memorial Hospital Training School for Nurses.

Educational Curricula. The Institute’s co-founders, both educators, have developed curriculum and workshop presentations related to their research on local African American history, African-American women’s history, family history research, lessons learned from the development of the project itself, and more.

Illuminations: Uncrowned Queens Community Builders. The half-hour weekly access television program was produced and hosted by the Institute’s co-founders, Drs. Nevergold and Brooks-Bertram. It spotlighted the activities and accomplishments of Uncrowned Queens and Kings. Gregory Barber served as the director and videographer.

Uncrowned Queens Oral History Interviews. The Institute received funding from the Educational Technology Center (now Digital Library Center) of the University at Buffalo to conduct a pilot oral history project. This project established the foundation for a more extensive program, which included the provision of instruction in oral history research.

Uncrowned Queens Health Network. The Institute developed a broad network of partnerships with women’s organizations, in addition to individual women, that provides a basis for research and education on health issues relevant to women of color. The UQ Health Network is a means of raising awareness, increasing interest in participating in health care clinical trials, and in conducting participatory research related to health issues disproportionately affecting women of color, e.g. lupus, colon cancer, breast cancer, and others.

Uncrowned Queens Publishing and SUNY Press Book Publications


Uncrowned Queens Archive Inventory (see below)

1990-2001
2002
2003—no inventory
2004—no inventory
2005—no inventory
2006-2010
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1990’s

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Xi Epsilon Omega Chapter Founders’ Day Awards Luncheon
“Atlanta library head to exit amid tension”
Thank — You Card

2001

Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, Conference
“Uncrowned Queens” World Wide Web Site reception

‘Uncrowned Queens: African American Community Builders’, Buffalo Criterion
News Release of Uncrowned Queens Project
State of New York Legislature of Erie County Certificate
Uncrowned Queens Signature Pin
City of Buffalo Common Council resolution
Uncrowned Queens: Call for Papers
  - History
  - 100th year celebration of the Pan American Exposition project
  - Nominations
  - Events
  - Co-Chair: Brooks-Bertram, Peggy
  - Co-Chair: Nevergold, Barbara Ann Seals
  - Biography: Gibson, Rosa
  - Biography: Godfrey, Wilhelmina M.
  - Biography: Hill, Dorothy Elizabeth
  - Biography: Jackson-Lee, Florence Randolph
  - Biography: Thomas, Sharon A.
  - Biography: Wallace, Sherri Leronda

“‘Uncrowned Queens’ debut on Web”, UB Reporter
“Through a Clouded Mirror, a new Pan-American preview exhibit”, The Challenger
‘Uncrowned Queens’ celebration of the 26th Annual Buffalo Juneteenth Festival and Rev.
Willie B. Seals Photographic Exhibit

“UB libraries offer exhibits on Pan-Am”, Buffalo News
Official Daily Program of University at Buffalo Pan-American Exposition Celebration
“Uncrowned Queens: African-American Women Community Builders”, Buffalo Museum of Science

Uncrowned Queens’ brochures
“Parley to honor African-American gains”, Buffalo News

Lifting at They Climbed: A Century of Community Building 1901-2001
  - Gallant, Michelle Ryan and Clement, Rita
  - Co-Chair: Brooks-Bertram, Peggy
  - Co-Chair: Nevergold, Barbara Ann Seals
  - Biography: Dickson, Gloria Harper
  - Doyle, Eva M.
  - Fletcher, Patricia Louise
  - Hill, Dorothy Elizabeth
  - Peoples, Crystal Davis
  - Wallace, Sherri Leronda
  - Williams, Lillian Serece
  - Mini-Conference Brochures

“African-American women celebrate victory of 1900”, Buffalo News
Uncrowned Queens’ celebration of the Phyllis Wheatley Club Protest
Uncrowned Queen Bookmark
“Recalling a historic legacy”, Buffalo News

women’s Pavilion Pan Am Magazine
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2002

Uncrowned Queens, African American Women Community Builders of Western New York, *Bookmarks*

State of New York Legislature of Erie County, *Certificate*

Mary B. Talbert Club’s 28th Annual Awards Banquet, *Local News*

Mary B. Talbert Civic and Cultural Club, 28th Anniversary (1974-2002), *Brochure*

Modern Day Griots: Celebrating African American Authors/Writers of WNY, *Flyer*

Seals Ebony Studio Exhibit, *Flyer*

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, *Advertisement Flyer for Book*

Books About Buffalo, *Magazine*

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, *Advertisement Flyer of Book*

Uncrowned Queens: Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, *Flyer of Book*

Uncrowned Queens of the Buffalo Chapter of Girl Friends, Inc., *Flyer*

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, *Article*

Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc.: About the Authors, *Article*

Uncrowned Queens at Tops, *The Buffalo News*

City of Buffalo Common Council, *Certificate*

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for March

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for April19

Mary B. Talbert Club, Federated Women’s Clubs Plan Community Events, *The Challenger*

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for:

- June
- July
- August
- September
Ghana, West Africa Trip, The Challenger

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for October

Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc., Flyer

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, Advertisement Flyer for Book

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, Flyer

Uncrowned Queens Launches First Book in Series Recognizing African-American Women Who Helped Shape WNY Community, Article

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for November

Urban League Gala Will Mark Milestone, The Buffalo News

Buffalo Urban League 2002 Gala, Program Booklet

Urban League Braces for New Challenges, The Buffalo News

Conference Will Celebrate Legacy of Black Women, News Staff Reporter

Conference Will Celebrate Legacy of Black Women, News Staff Reporter

Uncrowned Queens: African American Women Community Builders of WNY, Conference Flyer

Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc., Conference Evaluation

Uncrowned Queens Institute for Research and Education on Women, Inc., Conference Evaluation Continues

Uncrowned Queens Conference Looks to Accomplishments in U.S., Worldwide, New Staff Reporter

Uncrowned Queens News Letter for December
Archives 2006-2010

2006-07

- UB Reporter, “Women’s Vision Preserves Stories”
- Buffalo News, “Recognizing the accomplishments of Western New Yorkers”
- Letter from Black Liberated Arts Center
- Buffalo News, “The people’s historians”
- Uncrowned Kings African American Community Builders Celebration
- Uncrowned Queens June 2007 Newsletter
- Letter from Southern Heights Heritage Center and Museum
- Letter from Red River Heritage Association Inc.

2008

- African American Legends and History Makers in WNY Luncheon
- Letter from American Association of University Women
- Letter from Bar Association of Eerie County
- Award of Achievement from AAUW to Dr. Nevergold
- Uncrowned Queens in Their Hats Performance
- Alumnae News, “Alverno alum contributes to historic book for First Lady”
- The Challenger, “Dear Michelle”
- Interview with Dr. Brooks and Dr. Nevergold on Uncrowned Queens
- Press Release for Uncrowned Crowned Queens Project

2009

- UB Reporter, “Michelle” earns spotlight
- Visions, “Woman to Woman”
- Uncrowned Community Builders March 2009 Newsletter
- BlogSpot, “Go, Tell Michelle, Harlem Book Signing”
- Email on Program for the Sixth Annual CityLit Festival
- Flyer Advertising CityLit Festival
- Grassroots, Inc. 14th Annual Awards Dinner, Keynote Address Flyer
- Thank you Card to Dr. Nevergold
- Invitation email to Annual Legislative Conference Author Pavilion
- BAN Talk Show Invitation and Confirmation
- UBToday, “Alumni Profile on Dr.Bertram and Dr. Nevergold”
- A Summit of Sisters Program Itinerary
- Uncrowned Community Builders October 2008 Newsletter
- Barnes and Nobles Book Signing for Go, Tell Michelle
- Amina Cover, “Va, Parle A Michelle”