Buffalo African American Funeral Program & Obituary Collection
[1948-2007]

Descriptive Summary:

**Title:** Buffalo African American Funeral Program & Obituary Collection
**Date Span:** 1948-2007
**Acquisition Number:** N/A
**Creator:** Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD)
**Donor:** Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD)
**Date of Acquisition:** 2002, 2007
**Extent:** 5 reels of microfilm; physical collection located at the Frank E. Merriweather Public Library
**Language:** English
**Location:** Monroe Fordham Regional History Center, Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State
**Processed:** Reprocessed, Mat Crissey, 2017

Information on Use:

**Access:** Collection is open for research.

**Reproduction of Materials:**
See Archivist for information on reproducing materials from this collection, including photocopies, digital camera images, or digital scans, as well as copyright restrictions that may pertain to these materials.

Even though all reasonable and customary best-practices have been pursued, this collection may contain materials with confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in this collection without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the
SUNY Buffalo State assumes no responsibility.

Preferred Citation:
[Description and dates], Box/folder/microfilm number, NAME OF COLLECTION. The Monroe Fordham Regional History Center, Archives & Special Collections Department, E. H. Butler Library, SUNY Buffalo State.

Collection Summary:
A collection of funeral service programs, occasionally with accompanying newspaper obituary. Programs include: photographs of the deceased with date of birth and death, a poem and/or Bible passage, names of the pall-bearers, a ‘thank you’ section, location of the funeral, an obituary, date and time of the service, and location of the interred.


Volume I Introduction:

The Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD) was founded in Buffalo, NY in 1997 by Sonia L. Walker and Robert N. Davis, Jr. It was incorporated in the state of New York under New York Education Law in 1999.

The focus of the organization has been that of an educational entity, encouraging and promoting the use of genealogy/family history as a tool for understanding the socio-historical context of people of African descent in the U.S.A.

The purpose of the collection is to preserve the biographical and historical information that is found in printed funeral programs from the African-American community. The project evolved from a discussion about the photographic and biographical information that is generally found in the program that is distributed during funeral proceedings. The information holds great research potential for those involved in investigating and preserving family history and genealogical connections locally and nationwide.

Discussion with representatives from other genealogical organizations (from numerous ethnic groups and religious denominations) revealed that preserving individual and family history in this form is a tradition that is unique among American ethnic groups. We concluded that the evidence of this tradition should be preserved. The insights that were gained from assembling Volume 1 will guide us as we move forward. The project is open-ended with future plans being developed that include placing the original materials on permanent loan at a public institution and developing a web-based searchable index.
The main sources of material for Volume I of the project were individual contributions, with special thanks to Mr. Winfred Williams of Fast Press for the donation of his time and materials. Contributions were made by various members of the organization in the form of time and effort in the solicitation, sorting, packaging, review and storage of the materials. This also included donated materials from their own collections. Without the ongoing effort of the membership, the successful continuation of this project would not be possible. -Robert Davis, Jr., 2002

Volume II Introduction:

The Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD) is extremely pleased to expand its collaboration with the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library by submitting Volume 2 of its Buffalo African American Funeral Program Collection. The original materials for Volume I are already on permanent loan in the William A. Miles Center for African and African American Studies at the Frank E. Merriweather Jr. Branch of the library system. BGSAD was incorporated under New York State Education Law in 1999, and it focuses on promoting genealogical research methods. Rooted in African American tradition, printed funeral programs preserve biographical and historical information, provide insight on African American experiences, and serve as genealogical source material.

We are grateful to the Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier for recognizing the value of this collection and for providing genealogical supplies and for microfilming volume I and volume 2. Special thanks to Dr. Monroe Fordham, for his guidance, and to Dr. Fordham and Mrs. Freddie Fordham for preparing an index for the collection. The main sources of material for Volume 2 of this project, completed in 2007, were individual contributions, with special thanks to Mrs. Ruth Brown, for the donation of materials. The microfilming was done by Lynn Lombardo working under Buffalo State College's Center for Regional History. As members of BGSAD we hope that this effort will assist the public in researching genealogy and family history.

In the human experience the only thing that is constant, is change. As an organization, BGSAD continues to provide assistance to persons with an interest in genealogy. Since the assembly of Volume 1 in 2002, we have lost two of our most devoted members with the deaths of Mrs. Brontie Mostiller and our co-founder, Robert N. Davis, Jr. We dedicate this volume to their memory. -Sonia Walker, President, 2007

Scope and Contents: funeral service programs; newspaper obituaries; photographs; and census information.

Arrangement: Names listed alphabetically (last name, first name.)

Inventory: Please see separate inventory for name listings.