



## Newly-Digitized Community Resource Unveiled at the Merriweather Library

*African-American Funeral Programs Collection  
Offers Opportunities to Learn Family History*

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Buffalo, NY, September 13, 2023: Today the recently-digitized ***Funeral Programs Collection*** was unveiled at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library, 1324 Jefferson Avenue in Buffalo.

The *Funeral Programs Collection* project was started by members of the Buffalo Genealogical Society of the African Diaspora (BGSAD) in the late 1990's. The group recognized that funeral programs and obituaries contain rich sources of biographical and family information. All of the programs collected so far, from families, churches and funeral homes, have a Buffalo connection. The earliest program is from an individual born in 1848. There are more than 3,600 programs, donated from across the United States, in the four volumes of the digital collection and in the physical collection housed in the William A. Miles Center for African and African-American Studies at the Merriweather Branch Library.

The Collection includes programs memorializing individuals such as: Walter Blandford Holland, Sr., a dentist who ran his practice from 1935 – 1988; Raymond E. Jackson, co-founder of the Colored Musicians Club; the Reverend Burnie C. McCarley, founder of St. John Baptist Church in 1927; Al Tinney, a well-known musician; Quadir Lateef Habeeb, an RN and owner of Habeeb's Body Oils on Fillmore Avenue; and Daniel Acker, Sr., president of the NAACP, who was also a chemist who worked on the Manhattan Project and founder of HOME; and Bessie Paige Fugitt, a Bridge Life Master and board member of the Michigan Avenue YMCA.

The opportunity for the collection to be digitized and therefore fully available to all including family members, genealogists and researchers worldwide was made possible through a collaboration between BGSAD; the Western New York Library Resources Council; University at Buffalo Digital Production, Preservation and Annex Operations; and the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, with a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services, a federal agency, as part of the ConsidertheSourceNY.org Diversity and Collaborative Knowledge Program.

The Collection can be accessed in-person at the Merriweather Branch Library-716-883-4418 or visit [www.BuffaloLib.org](http://www.BuffaloLib.org) for Library hours. Digital access is available through [NYHeritage.org](http://NYHeritage.org), [BuffaloLib.org/research-resources/digital-collections](http://BuffaloLib.org/research-resources/digital-collections) or through the Buffalo State University Monroe Fordham Regional History Center: [https://library.buffalostate.edu/archives/mfc/aaobit\\_collection](https://library.buffalostate.edu/archives/mfc/aaobit_collection) The collection process is ongoing. Printed funeral programs to be donated can be taken to the Merriweather Branch.

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