Schomburg Celebrates the Second Anniversary of the African Burial Ground Reinterment

On Wednesday, September 28 the ceremonial groundbreaking for the African Burial Ground exterior memorial took place in Lower Manhattan, kicking off the second anniversary of the reinterment of the 419 ancestors. Wednesday’s event coincided with the distribution date of the National Park Service (NPS) Draft Management Recommendations for the African Burial Ground. AARISS architect and memorial design winner, Rodney León joined Howard Dodson, Schomburg Director; Stephen A. Perry, Deputy Director, National Park Service, to mark the memorial site. The project is slated for completion by October 2006.

Stephen Perry noted: “When you reflect on how long it has been since we began this journey, indeed it has been way too long. But we have finally come to the day when real progress is evident in terms of the memorialization of this site and the ongoing celebration that we have annually to commemorate the lives of the people that we celebrate today.” Perry delivered some good news to the Center. “I’m pleased to note that the Schomburg has been chosen to be the permanent repository for all of the artifacts and documents related to the Burial Ground site.” He also announced that the Schomburg was now handling the educational and public outreach programs for the African Burial Ground during the transition period until a final management solution is reached. In addition, Mr. Perry recognized members of the African Burial Ground Memorial.

The discovery of the African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan was instrumental in shedding some light on the lives of many Africans who resided in and help to build colonial New York City. Just as the anniversary celebrations for the African Burial Ground concluded, the New-York Historical Society opened its latest exhibition Slavery in New York, the first installment of a program slated to run two years.

The exhibition program series organized by the New-York Historical Society in collaboration with other institutions, organizations, and corporations, features a wide range of public programs. It took the New-York Historical Society three years to create Slavery in New York. Some of the artifacts on display are runaway and auction ads, the first paintings with blacks being depicted in everyday life; chains and whips; replicas of clothing that might have been worn by colonial-era blacks; maps and timelines detailing major events in New York’s early history; and some personal narratives.

Schomburg Director Howard Dodson gave the opening exhibition lecture, “Slav...
It’s hard to believe that it has been over 14 years since New York’s African Burial Ground was “discovered.” Within weeks of its “discovery,” Mayor David Dinkins drafted me to chair his advisory committee, and a few months later I found myself chairing the Federal Steering Committee on the African Burial Ground. The Federal Committee was charged with producing a report with recommendations on how to memorialize the site and the ancestors with the respect and dignity they deserved. Our report was submitted to Congress on April 6, 1993. It was one of the only things that was completed on time in the history of this project.

In the intervening years, despite a wide array of conflicts, delays and missteps, several of the report’s recommendations have been implemented. Memorial art works have been commissioned and installed in the Federal Building at 290 Broadway. Scientific research on the 419 ancestral remains that were removed from the Burial Ground site has been completed. All but one of the research reports have been completed and the last is slated for completion this spring. The 419 enslaved Africans were reintered at the Burial Ground Memorial site in a series of ceremonial events that affirmed the significance of the 20,000 ancestors buried there in the formative stages of the development of the City. The national competition to select a permanent memorial to be built on the site has been completed. And Elk Street, which abuts the Burial Ground Memorial site, has been renamed African American Burial Ground Way. Over the last month (September-October), we have taken several additional steps toward completing the memorialization agenda.

First, the Center organized the groundbreaking ceremony for the permanent memorial monument. This event occurred on the Burial Ground site on Wednesday, September 28th and featured the U.S. General Services Administration Administrator, Stephen A. Perry (the African American head of GSA who has spear-headed most of the recent developments) and Rodney Lezin, the Haitian American architect who will design the permanent memorial. Donald W. Murphy, Deputy Director of the National Park Service (NPS) announced the release of the NPS Draft Management Recommendations for the African Burial Ground report, which proposes four alternatives for the long-term management of the site. President Bush also took steps to make the site a National Monument—paving the way for the preferred alternative proposed in the NPS study. And over the weekend of September 30 - October 2, the Center organized and presented a series of commemorative events marking the second anniversary of the reinterment of the 419 ancestral remains.

Inspired by the “discovery” of the African Burial Ground and the events surrounding it over the last 14 years, the New-York Historical Society has organized a major exhibit—the largest in its history—on the theme Slavery in New York. The exhibit opened October 7 and runs through March 5, 2006. The Schomburg Center has collaborated with the Historical Society in developing the exhibit and its public program series, both of which will enhance public knowledge of the Burial Ground and the African presence in New York City. The Malcolm X exhibit continues to attract large audiences and will run through December 2005. In response to the continuing interest in the theme, the Center will represent In Motion: The African American Migration Experience starting in February, Black History Month 2006.

The General Research and Reference Division has moved to the American Negro Theater space. The main entrance to the Center has moved to 103 W. 135th Street (the original Schomburg Center building entrance) and the construction and renovation project is running full steam ahead. The Photographs and Prints Division, which was closed for a month for renovation, has reopened. And the Center’s fall programming season is in high gear. We are all here ready to welcome you and be of service to you when you visit. When you can’t make it in, check our Web site at www.schomburgcenter.org to keep abreast of what’s happening.
African Burial Ground Moves Toward National Designation

Two days after the ceremonies ended for the second annual African Burial Ground reinterment celebration, President George W. Bush sent a memorandum to Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, asking her to provide him with "an assessment of the historic and scientific significance of the African Burial Ground and whether it may warrant permanent Federal protection through designation as a National Monument."

"This burial site was closed for 200 years and wiped from the public's memory," explained Schomburg Director Howard Dodson. "The President's decision will engrave in the public's memory an awareness of the role people of African descent had in the making of New York and the Americas."

The President's request is a major step in determining the future management of the African Burial Ground. New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg has sent a letter to President Bush stating the city's support for the National Monument status. Its designation as a National Monument will pave the way for the African Burial Ground site to become a unit of the National Park system.

Meanwhile, the National Park Service (NPS), at the request of the General Services Administration, has conducted a study to identify management alternatives and released its findings in its Draft Management Recommendations for the African Burial Ground. The NPS has gathered public comments on the draft report in writing, electronically, and at two open house gatherings, and will incorporate its findings into the final report.

Although things seem to be moving on track toward finalizing management plans for the African Burial Ground site, Dodson cautions that, "The key now is to ensure that the National Park Service has sufficient authority and resources to make the designation real." From the way Deputy Director Murphy spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony it seems that he is truly determined to see things through. "I am extremely confident that this site will become a National Historic Monument and it will be managed by the National Park Service for posterity—for this and future generations."

The students first assembled at City Hall Park where they were welcomed by Schomburg Center Director Howard Dodson and legendary Hip-Hop artist MC Lyte, who challenged the students to honor their ancestors by "taking seriously" their education. They were then directed to begin the circle, carrying flags bearing the Sankofa symbol, logo for the African Burial Ground project. The students assembled, downtown office workers could hear the sounds: singing, shouting, and drumming, in honor of the 20,000 men, women, and children buried beneath the buildings, streets, and sidewalks of New York. The Youth Ring Shout will be a national annual event at the African Burial Ground celebration, where the city's youngest gather to let their voices ring loud and proud.

This was followed by a consecration ceremony to prepare for the permanent memorial at the burial ground site. Ecumenical prayers were raised by Rev. Gregory Robinson Smith of the historic Mother A.M.E. Zion Church, Canon Frederic B. Williams, Church of the Intercession; Dr. James Forbes, Riverside Church; Rev. Darren Mitchell, First A.M.E. Zion Church; Rev. Darnell Montgomery, Metropolitan A.M.E. Church; and Rev. Renee Washington, Memorial Baptist Church, along with a stirring performance by The McCallough In-tenders brass band plus violinist and Hurri-cane Katrina survivor, Tadia Lynch. Speakers—New York State Regents Vice Chancellor Adelante L. Sanford, Schomburg Director Howard Dodson, memorial de-signer Rodney Leon, and New York City Councilman Bill Perkins—all took the stage to share their thoughts. Later Councilman Bill Perkins and Robert Jackson directed the unveiling of the African Burial Ground Way street sign, A vigil held by Rev. Gerald Beckles concluded the first day's festivities, with a performance by Drummer Louis Hayes and the Cannonball Adderley Legacy Band, a spoken word tribute by Russell Simmons Def Poets Black Ice and Kayo, and open mic presentations.

Saturday's activities began with ecumenical prayers by Rev. Herbert Daughtry, House of the Lord Pentecostal Church; Spiritual Leader Kevin Tarrant of the Hopi and Winnebago Tribes; and The Native American ensemble, The Silver Clouds. The afternoon African Diasporan cultural celebration featured performances by singers, Kaisa, from Cameroon and Ileana Santamaria (Cuban descent); along with The Eleanor Roosevelt Intermediate School Concert Choir, The Garifuna Dance Company; Addada-Caporosa; and Brooklyn's Mussert Steel Drum Band. Also in attendance were actor Wesley Snipes with his family, and Consul Generals Julia Machado of Angola and Fábio Magalhães of South Africa, all of whom greeted the audience. On the final day, the African Burial Ground site was open for public viewing. Many people drove their families to see the final resting place for the 419 rein-

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Youths Gathered to Celebrate the African Burial Ground

On the last Friday of September 2005, two thousand New York City students circled the African Burial Ground. To an unformed bystander, the kids may have just been winding their way through the streets of Lower Manhattan, but they were actually tracing the historic boundaries of the largest slavery-era cemetery ever discovered in the Americas by participating in a Ring Shout.

The Ring Shout is one of the oldest African American musical traditions. With origins in Africa, the Ring Shout combined all of the musical elements that later evolved into other musical styles, including gospel, jazz, and rhythm and blues. It is a combination of music, dance, and song. The ceremony was used for happy or sad occasions, like marriage or death. To start, people first gathered, then they began to move slowly in a counter-clockwise circle to a beat or cadence started by a drum or other musical instrument, or singing. Hand-clapping, foot-stomping, or vocal calls can be enough to start the shout. Participants then simply followed the rhythm and path of the ring leader.

The students first assembled at City Hall Park where they were welcomed by Schomburg Center Director Howard Dodson and legendary Hip-Hop artist MC Lyte, who challenged the students to honor their ancestors by “taking seriously” their education. They were then directed to begin the circle, and the Youth Ring Shout. Many students held hands as the line extended for two blocks along Broadway, and Duane and Centre Streets, three sides of the original seven-acre cemetery. At its widest expanse, students linked hands along Chambers Street—spanning the length of two football fields.

The police stopped traffic on Broadway and the Brooklyn Bridge for nearly half an hour to get the students into place. Once the young participants were assembled, downtown office workers could hear the sounds: singing, shouting, and drumming, in honor of the 20,000 men, women, and children buried beneath the buildings, streets, and sidewalks of New York. The Youth Ring Shout will be a national annual event at the African Burial Ground celebration, where the city’s youngest gather to let their voices ring loud and proud.

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AROUND THE SCHOMBURG CENTER

The Honorable Rex Nettleford (center), Vice Chancellor Emeritus of the University of the West Indies, Jamaica; Caribbean International Network (CIN) CEO Steven Hill (left), and Howard Dodson at CIN’s “Caribbean Diversity: A Defining Point in the History of the Americas,” on October 20, 2005.

Councilmen Bill Perkins and Robert Jackson unveiled the street sign renaming Elk Street, African Burial Ground Way. (left to right) Canon Frederick R. Williams; Rev. James Forbes; Dr. Adeline L. Sanford; Howard Dodson; Bill Perkins; Tadia Lynch; Robert Jackson; Rev. Darren Mitchell; and Rev. Gregory Robeson Smith.

Singer Ilena Santamaria performs at the African Burial Ground celebration.

Howard Dodson joins (from left to right) Dr. Delois Blakely; Fikile Magubane, Consul General of South Africa in NY; and singer Kaissa to honor those buried at the site.

Dick Gregory’s humor makes it hard for Dr. West and Rev. Al Sharpton to contain their laughter at the Leadership Forum.

The youngest members of the McCullough Invaders Brass Band entertain the audience at the African Burial Ground celebration on Saturday, October 1, 2005.

Artistic and professor Ben Jones nominated Steven G. Fullwood, Schomburg Manuscript Librarian, for The New York Times Librarian Award, after receiving assistance from him on many occasions. According to Fullwood he was just doing what he enjoys. “I am fortunate because I love my job, love my co-workers and I also have the privilege of doing work that connects people to information and that’s gratifying,” says Fullwood.

On November 16, 2005, The New York Times issued its prestigious award to 27 librarians across the country. Out of 1,280 entries, Fullwood was selected as one of the recipients. The winners were based on their outstanding public service and the impact they have on their patrons. As part of the ceremony, The Times invited all the participants and a guest to their New York office for the award presentation and a cocktail reception. Each winner not only received a check for $2,500 and a commemorative plaque, but also another plaque to display at their respective libraries. Fullwood commented, “we often suffer from a lack of resources, yet even under dire circumstances, we do so much to facilitate and translate information to a wide range of people for a multitude of reasons. It’s a noble field and I am honored to be a part of it.”

Speakers at the 25th Commemoration of Walter Rodney gathered to remember and honor Guyana’s revolutionary scholar. (From left to right) Lincoln Van Slynvman; Anita Swadlin; Humberto Brewer; Moses Bhagwan; Walter’s daughter, Kanini Rodney; Horace Campbell; and Howard Dodson on October 21, 2005.

Manuscript Librarian Steven G. Fullwood multitasking.

Howard Dodson, humorist and activist Dick Gregory, and series moderator Dr. Cornel West prepare for the first of four Leadership Forums, “Higher Pursuits: Black Political Aspirations, Obstacles, and Challenges,” at the Schomburg on October 17, 2005.

Kanini Rodney joins Howard Dodson to celebrate her father’s legacy.

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Check Out These Holiday & Black History Month Gift Ideas at The Schomburg Shop:

**In Motion**
This landmark work covers four major periods of migration that define the African-American experience and shaped the cultural, religious, economic, and political life of the communities with which they settled. A follow-up to the critically acclaimed Jubilee, In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience (National Geographic) also chronicles a people whose movements over the last 500 years, both coerced and willing, inspired a culture and shaped a nation. In Motion will make a perfect holiday gift and also features 170 illustrations and four maps. Price: $35

**Jubilee: The Emergence of African-American Culture**
Howard Dodson with Amiri Baraka, John Hope Franklin, Gail Buckle, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Annette Gordon-Reed, and Gayraud S. Wilmore
Jubilee (National Geographic), a beautifully illustrated full-color volume, documents the courageous and innovative ways that enslaved Africans developed their own unique culture in the midst of slavery. It also examines how that culture evolved and flourished the years after emancipation to the turn of the century. Note: members receive an additional 10 percent off when they purchase this publication. Price: $14.95

**The Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History, 2nd Edition: The Black Experience in the Americas**
The second edition of The Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History (Thomson Gale) is a six-volume, comprehensive compendium of knowledge on the historical and cultural development of people of African descent at the beginning of the twenty-first century. A product of the most recent scholarship on the African-American and African Diasporan experience, The Encyclopedia offers a convenient introduction to this vast array of information. Note: Limited copies will be available to Schomburg Society members beginning at the Supporter level ($100 and above) at a special price of $300 until the end of Black History Month 2006. Price: $625

**The Schomburg Shop is open Tuesday through Saturday, Noon to 6 p.m.**

**On-Line Services**
In Motion This website documents the migrations of people of African descent in, within, and outside the U.S. It covers thirteen migrations with more than 16,000 pages of essays, books articles and manuscripts, 8,000 images and 100 detailed lesson plans for middle and high schools (covers geography, geology, social studies, language and arts) and 60 maps. The In Motion site offers a wealth of information for educational institutions, schools, educators and students. For more information, visit: www.schomburgcenter.org

**Schomburg Center to be Beneficiary of the 10th Anniversary National Black Fine Art Show Preview**
Keeling Wainwright Associates has selected the Schomburg Center to be one of the beneficiary of the 10th Anniversary National Black Fine Art Show (NBFA) preview party on Wednesday evening, February 1, 2006. The Preview will be held at the Puck Building at Houston and Lafayette Streets in New York City. The National Black Art Show presents the unique opportunity to view as well as purchase work by African-American, African, and Caribbean artists, both established and emerging. Since its founding in 1997, the show has become one of the most influential fine art fairs in the world. Thirty-eight international exhibitors will participate in the 2006 NBFA. Schomburg Center director Howard Dodson noted, “The Schomburg Center is delighted to have been selected to be the National Black Fine Art Show’s 2006 Preview Beneficiary. Its focus on the art of people of African descent complements and enhances the Center’s commitment to preserve and celebrate the history and heritage of African peoples worldwide.”

Describing its impact and significance, show founder Joseylin Wainwright commented, “The National Black Fine Art Show has taken an underexposed area of the fine art market and successfully injected it into the mainstream consciousness of the art world. The art produced by any culture represents the experience, thoughts, and circumstances of the people of that culture. Supporting the unhindered production of that art is a job that we all have the obligation to encourage.”

Susan L. Taylor, Editorial Director, Essence Magazine, will perform their research. Note: The collection will be available to colleges and universities on a subscription basis. For more information, visit: www.schomburgcenter.org

**Schomburg Programs and Exhibitions**
Schomburg Center programs and exhibitions are supported in part by the City of New York, the State of New York, the Office of the Borough President of Manhattan, the New York State Black, Puerto Rican and Hispanic Legislative Caucus, the Rockefeller Foundation Endowment for the Performing Arts, The Cut-Cloe Foundation, New York Life Foundation, Annie E. and Sarah L. Delany Charitable Trusts, J.P. Morgan Chase Co., and the Edle Hawkins Foundation.

The Schomburg Center is a member of the Harlem Strategic Cultural Collaborative (HSCC).
Open House Meetings Held to Get Public Comments About the Future of African Burial Ground

On Saturday, October 22nd and Monday, October 24, 2005 the National Park Service (NPS) held public open house gatherings so members of the community could come out to raise questions and voice their opinions about the four alternatives in the NPS Draft Management Recommendations for the African Burial Ground. The four alternatives are:

**Alternative A** The implementation of the present center to create a memorial and an interpretive center at 290 Broadway. It would still be a National Historic Landmark but the center would have its own staff with operations being handled by an outside institution and administration by the General Services Administration. Visiting hours will be limited to the weekdays.

**Alternative B** Includes the present plans, as listed in Alternative A, with administration and conveyance by a state or municipal agency. The Historic Surplus Property Program would handle management of the African Burial Ground memorial.

**Alternative C** Would upgrade the African Burial Ground site to National Monument, National Historic Site or National Memorial designation. This alternative would have a strong emphasis on extensive educational outreach. The African Burial Ground would become a unit of the National Park Service and feature externalized programming that would occur off-site. The 290 Broadway space would house the educational hub. Plus a heritage trail of related sites would be created throughout lower Manhattan. Civic engagement would be through an African Burial Ground Federal Advisory Commission. This allows the African Burial Ground increased visibility, although the visiting hours would still be limited to the weekdays.

**Alternative D** Would also upgrade the site to either a National Monument or National Memorial designation with expanded African Burial Ground facilities, programming and visitors center. 290 Broadway would still be used for educational programs. There would be an additional facility within the National Historic Landmark boundary. Although the external programming portion would be less intensive, it would still include the heritage trail, and a visitors’ facility that would be open seven days a week. A Federal Advisory Commission is recommended to assist in planning/programming.

Rental Service Available

In addition to our collections, the Schomburg Center has an active rental service. The beautiful facilities are professionally equipped and can accommodate a variety of events. Call (212) 491-2257 for rates and information.

E-mail Announcements

The Schomburg Center would like to send our members e-mail announcements about upcoming program events. To join our e-mail list, please fill out this coupon and return it to Membership, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, 515 Malcolm X Boulevard, New York, NY 10037.

Name__________________________
E-mail address__________________________
Phone number__________________________
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JUNIOR SCHOLARS, Continued from page 3

Scholars with his scholarship and historical insight during his visit in November. In past visits, Dr. Asante has commented that, “The Junior Scholars is an impressive program for inspiring and challenging our youth. It is well run, dynamic and powerful.”


SLAVERY, Continued from page 1

African Burial Ground increased visibility, although the visiting hours would still be limited to the weekdays.

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Howard Dodson speaks to a standing room only audience at the New-York Historical Society’s lecture, “Slavery in the Americas, Slavery in New York.”

Citizens come out to the Brooklyn Public Library and the Schomburg to give their feedback, ask questions, and fill out a survey about the future management of the African Burial Ground.

The Schomburg Center is pleased to acknowledge the following donors of gifts of $1,000 or more from August 30, 2005 - October 26, 2005.

Mr. Kenneth C. Allen
Ms. Regina Austin
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Ms. Lovetta Brooks and Ms. Vivian L. Reid Dr and
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Ms. Helen Russell

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A Message from the National Membership Chair

Knowing our legacy—undistorted by others and documented by those who lived it—correctly aligns you and me and our children in the continuing struggle to fully claim our dignity in all areas of life.

Please join with me and thousands of others who are making certain that the Schomburg has the funds not only to continue its unique mission, but to expand its outreach into every home, school, and library.

Please join me as a Schomburg Society Member now!

A Message from the National Membership Chair

ASSOCIATE - $35
($35 tax deductible)
• A year’s subscription to the Schomburg newsletter
• A 20% discount in the Schomburg Shop
• A monthly program calendar
• A personalized membership card
• Up to 20% discount on tickets to select Center-sponsored programs

SUPPORTER - $100
($94 tax deductible)
All Associate benefits, plus:
• An annual subscription to the Quarterly Black Review of Books
• Invitations to VIP events

PATRON - $250
($226 tax deductible)
All Supporter benefits, plus:
• A complimentary copy of a major Center publication

SUSTAINER - $500
($414 tax deductible)
All Patron benefits, plus:
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CONSERVATOR - $1,000
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All Sustainer benefits, plus:
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• A private behind the scenes tour led by the Center’s Chief

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All Heritage Circle benefits, plus:
• An invitation to an annual lunchon with the Chief

Please make check or money order payable to the Schomburg Center/NYPL. Mail to: The Schomburg Society • 515 Malcolm X Boulevard • New York, NY 10037-1801. To charge call The Shop: (212) 491-2206, Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.