

New Schomburg Center Dedicated



The New Home of The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (515 Lenox Avenue, New York City); The five story red-brick building designed by Bond, Ryder & Associates, occupies the entire block between 135th and 136th Street along Lenox Avenue. Afro-American architectural history was the guide in the design of the central rooms and the second-floor Rare Books, Manuscripts & Archives section has walls paneled in sapele wood from Nigeria.

The New York Public Library's new Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture was dedicated in Harlem recently at ceremonies outside the building. Joseph P. Duffey, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Andrew J. Stein, Manhattan Borough President and H. Carl McCall, U.S. Alternative Ambassador to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs, were among the guests.

During the ceremonies, Mrs. Ralph J. Bunche, John Hope Franklin, Frederick O'Neal and Robert C. Weaver received the Schomburg Medal from the Schomburg Corporation (a group of concerned citizens who have supported the Center since 1971).

The new Center was built and furnished with \$3.7 million in Federal funds provided under the Public Works Employment Act of 1976. The five-story building extends the entire block between 135th and 136th Streets along Lenox Avenue. African-American architectural history inspired the design of the central rooms. The second floor Rare Books, Manuscripts and Archives section has walls panelled in sapele wood from Nigeria. The red-brick Center, with an octagon at one end and a tower on the corner, was designed by Bond, Ryder & Associates.

For the last few weeks the collection has been moving from the cramped building on 135th Street which housed the archives for 56 years. Public service began in the new building on September 22. Containing one of the world's most extensive collections for the study

of all aspects of Black culture, the air-conditioned Center will safely preserve this unparalleled research source for scholars from all over the world.

One of the four privately funded Research Libraries of the New York Public Library, the Center is supported by State and City funding and donations from individuals and corporations. The National Endowment for the Humanities has provided direct funding for certain special projects in the last few years.

The Schomburg collection was guided for more than three decades by Jean Blackwell Hutson, who joined Schomburg in 1948 after 12 years in New York Public Library branches. When the Schomburg collection joined the Research Libraries in 1972, Mrs. Hutson was named Chief of the Center. This year she assumed new responsibilities for the Library as Assistant Director of Collection Management and Development for Black Culture. A Search Committee has been formed to find her successor at Schomburg.

The Schomburg Center's new building is currently administered by John Miller, the Acting Chief of the Center. Mr. Miller was formerly Chief of the American History Division in the Library's Fifth Avenue Central Building.

THE SCHOMBURG COLLECTION

When did Langston Hughes write "The Weary Blues"? Where can you see Richard Wright's annotated manuscript of *Native Son*? What famous songs were introduced by Ethel Waters? How did

Sidney Poitier begin his acting career? The answers can be found in the new, air-conditioned, five-story building housing the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at 515 Lenox Avenue and 135th Street.

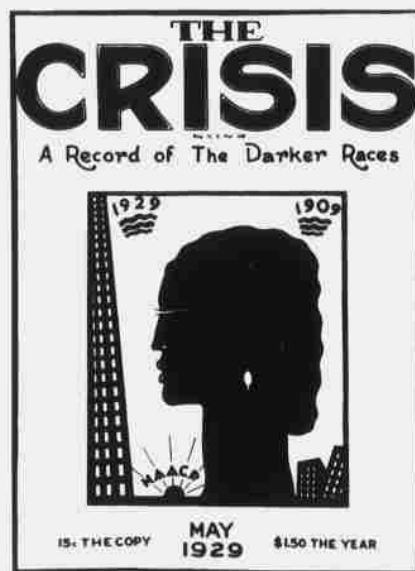
Now in its fifty-sixth year, the Schomburg Center is one of the world's prime reference sources for the study of all phases of black culture. It is named for Arthur A. Schomburg, a Puerto Rican of African descent, whose private collection greatly augmented the Library's original holdings and who served as its Curator from 1932 until his death in 1938.

The Schomburg Center is one of the four main components of The New York Public Library's Research Libraries and plays a vital role in the Harlem community.

Through the years the Schomburg Center has welcomed leading scholars in the field, including writer Gunnar Myrdal and Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Thurgood Marshall. Alex Haley, author of *Roots*, was also a frequent visitor. Schomburg's comprehensive book collection features histories of ancient African kingdoms as well as extensive works on black sociology, poetry, fiction, folklore and history from America, Africa and the West Indies.

In addition to more than 75,000 books, the Schomburg Center boasts a wealth of nontextual material: 10,000 phonograph records and 2,000 tapes covering folk music of Africa and the West Indies, early blues and jazz. Schomburg also maintains an enviable compilation of over 40,000 photographic prints and slides, while interviews with black actors, musicians, political leaders and authors comprise the oral history collection, maintained on video tape, films and cassettes.

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1919 cover of *The Crisis*, official organ of the NAACP.