

Association for the Study of African American History and Culture (ASALH)

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The Journal of African American History

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ASALH announces the publication of the second issue in the second century of *The Journal of African American History*, Volume 101, No. 3, Summer 2016.

Special Issue

“Faith in Action:

**Historical Perspectives on the Social and Educational Activism of
African American Catholics”**

Guest Editors Katrina M. Sanders and Cecilia A. Moore

The Journal of African American History (JAAH) issue for Summer 2016 is now available. With Guest Editors Katrina M. Sanders and Cecilia A. Moore, “Faith in Action: Historical Perspectives on the Social and Educational Activism of African American Catholics” includes two articles on African American women and Roman Catholic religious orders; another on Father Boniface Hardin, the Benedictine Monk who founded Martin University in Indiana; and one on the contributions of Xavier University President Norman C. Francis to civil rights campaigns and the Black Catholic Movement. In their Introduction, Sanders and Moore offer a comprehensive overview of the scholarship on the history of the Black Catholic experience in the United States.

Shannen Dee Williams’ “Forgotten Habits, Lost Vocations: Black Nuns, Contested Memories and the 19th Century Struggle to Desegregate U. S. Catholic Religious Life” describes the sustained efforts by African-descended women to pursue vocations in Roman Catholic religious orders. African American women who could not “pass for white” were turned away, and those who did enter the convents were forced to keep their African heritage a secret. It was not until the 20th century that sisters of a darker hue were admitted to many Catholic religious orders.

The Oblate Sisters of Providence, the African American religious order, was founded in 1828 in Baltimore, and historian Diane Batts Morrow has published widely on the sisters’ antebellum

origins. In “‘Undoubtedly a Bad State of Affairs’: The Oblate Sisters of Providence and the Josephite Fathers, 1877-1902,” Morrow takes the story into the second half of the 19th century when the order was being overseen by Mill Hill Fathers from England, the Josephites, who held racially biased views toward the sisters and questioned the effectiveness of their mission and educational practices, despite the proven successful outcomes for the children they taught.

Martin University is the only historically African American institution of higher education in Indiana and its origins can be traced to the Black Catholic Movement. In “Walking with All of the People: The Struggles of Boniface Hardin as Priest, Social Activist, and Founder of Martin University,” Nancy Van Note Chism and Andrea Walton present the historical background and biographical information on the life and work of Benedictine Monk Boniface Hardin who became a social and educational leader who impacted the lives of thousands of Catholics and non-Catholics in Indianapolis and throughout Indiana.

Even before Norman C. Francis was chosen in 1968 to become president of Xavier University of Louisiana, he had been engaged in civil rights activities. In “‘Nothing Is to Be Feared’: Norman C. Francis, Civil Rights Activism, and the Black Catholic Movement,” Sharlene Sinegal DuCuir documents his Black Catholic family background, his undergraduate efforts to improve interracial understanding, and his support for the Freedom Riders who had been attacked by a white mob in Alabama in 1961. As Xavier University’s president in the late 1960s, Dr. Francis helped to nurture the emerging Black Catholic Movement through his support for the Institute of Black Catholic Studies, launched in 1980 at the university.

The JAAH Summer 2016 issue also includes Essay Reviews of books on “Catholic Missionary Work and Racial Justice” by Cecilia A. Moore; and books on “Identity in Passing: Race-ing and E-Race-ing in American and African American History” by Thomas J. Davis.

In addition, there are reviews of 15 recently published scholarly works on African American history and culture.

The JAAH Summer 2016 issue is available for purchase from ASALH in hard copy, and for use in courses at a discount through Publications Director, Karen May, at kmay@asalh.net. The digital version will be available through “JSTOR Current Journals”; please check and make sure your university library subscribes to the program.

For more information, go contact Sylvia Cyrus, JAAH Managing Editor, at executive.director@asalh.net; or ASALH Office - 202-238-5910.