

PROJECT SYNOPSIS

Importance to the Arts and Humanities

The Arthur Hall Collection contains motion pictures, sound recordings, photographs, posters, programs, scrapbooks, monographs, books, and papers that document five major aspects of Arthur Hall's life-long devotion to African and African American cultures:

- his international work bringing African and African American dance forms to the modern concert stage,
- his central role in fostering the Black cultural arts movement in Philadelphia,
- his founding and support of Africanist cultural institutions in Philadelphia and abroad,
- his use of African art forms for community development and for therapy, and
- his role as a master teacher and visiting artist in schools, colleges, dance studios, and festivals in this country and on five continents.

The Arthur Hall Collection should be a valuable resource for dance historians, cultural historians, ethnographers, choreographers, artists, teachers, movement therapists, students of cross-cultural exchanges or comparative religion, and all who recognizes the broad, creative potential inherent in traditional African and African American cultural expressions.

Principal Activities

The first step in preserving and ensuring broad public access to the Arthur Hall Collection is to create a coherent digital archive of the moving images in the collection in accord with current best practices and standards in the rapidly developing digital realm. As explained in detail in the body of this proposal, we shall create digital *Preservation Masters* from the moving images in their various original formats, which will be archived in redundant mirror systems in Maine and in Philadelphia. From these *Preservation Masters* we shall produce a series of corrected *Edit Masters*, also archived in redundant mirror systems in Maine and in Philadelphia, but separate from the *Preservation Masters*. From the *Edit Masters* we shall produce a series of *Access Files* in various formats available to the public either on portable media or online as a special collection administered by the library of an established host institution. Once digitized, all original films and videotapes will be stored in a climate controlled facility, providing three layers of preservation. The entire digital collection will be fully documented and its database will be searchable online.

This project also includes provisions for the digitalization and incorporation of moving images related to Arthur Hall which are known to exist outside the collection, and, with our host institution, we shall conduct a coordinated inquiry and acquisition of digital copies of significant materials thought to be in private collections.

Expected Results

At the end of this project, all motion picture films and videotapes in the collection to be properly conserved, documented, and archived. Digital assets in the Arthur Hall Collection will be freely accessible to the public and fully searchable online, as provided by our host institution, ensuring broad, long-term availability of the collection as a valuable resource for historians, ethnographers, choreographers, teachers, performing artists, therapists, theologians, and community activists and for use in public programming.