



Ile Ife Films & the Arthur Hall Collection

2014 Annual Report & 2015 Update

May 27, 2015

Looking back on my 2013 report, I am struck by how the best laid plans of mice and men ... I had hoped to modernize the website at ileife.org. That did not happen. I had hoped to arrange, at long last, a home in Philadelphia for the Arthur Hall Collection. That too did not happen, though we did provide to Nana Korantema a fairly large hard drive which contains most of the digital archive as it existed as of February 2014.

Our Board of Directors contracted to five when Kwasi Burgee, Kofi Asante, and Lawrence Clark declined to re-up. Nana Korantema remains artistic director, Patrice Janssen remains the clerk and treasurer, and I remain president. Abbott Meader and Robert Hunt are the remaining members of the board.

With no paid staff, we rely on advisors and volunteers to help chart a path forward. The broad goals remain the same: to preserve and to provide free public access to the Arthur Hall Collection. How to achieve those goals and how best to honor the living legacy of Arthur Hall has evolved significantly over the past seven years, and 2014 provided important new insights, as I trust this report will make clear.

In March 2014, Trevor von Stein of the Internet Archive provided links to two television programs in which Arthur Hall appeared, Input #25 and #26. The programs were broadcast by WCAU on Sunday mornings in the 1960s. Each program was about an hour long, and they suggested that putting longer movies on the internet was getting cheaper and easier. Indeed, Mr. von Stein suggested we could put the entire Arthur Hall Collection on the Internet Archive, which remains an option. Just a few years ago, such a posting would require the support of a large institution. Now we can post materials from the collection on our own three channels on Vimeo:

Edited pieces at <http://vimeo.com/channels/ahc>

Interviews and oral histories at <http://vimeo.com/channels/ahchistory>

The archive of raw, uncut camera tapes at <http://vimeo.com/channels/ahcarchive>

The archive as it is now is just a sampling. Eventually, there will be over 200 hours of materials on this channel alone. Not many people will want to spend hours looking at raw footage, but for the occasional artist or scholar, historian or filmmaker, there it is. Meanwhile, we have complete control over the content on our channels, who can see what and what they can do with it.

In April 2014, the hard drive of the Ile Ife Films iMac crashed and burned. That Mac had been purchased with funds donated by the Dance Ensemble Alumni. Luckily, the Redundant Array of Independent Disks (RAID) did their job, and none of the digital archive that had been created up to that time was lost. We bought a second Mac while the first was getting a new hard drive. The digital conversions and renderings and transfers can take hours of internal churning, especially on the older Mac. With two Macs, I can be working on the one while the other is busy thinking.

In this way, over the summer, I completed an initial conversion to digital of all the S-VHS tapes in the collection (see www.ileife.org/2014appendix01.pdf, pages 2-6). These tapes are now in the climate controlled vaults of Northeast Historic Film in Bucksport, Maine, where Joe Gardner is making proper digital Preservation Masters for each. There is a bit of duplicate effort here, digitizing twice, but I did not know then when the professional work might be ordered and had already waited over two years trying to avoid a double digitalization.

Odunde

Afrikan New Year Celebration Festival



Saturday, June 11, 6 P.M. – 10 P.M.

Sunday, June 12, 10 A.M. – 10 P.M.

23rd & South Streets

Come Traditionally Attired

Afrikan Market Square

Odunde Poster (no year): Arthur Hall in center; also recognizable - to me - are Farel Johnson (Hafiz Shabazz), Obrafo, Kwasi Burgee, and perhaps either Jomo Amen Ra or Twins Seven Seven. I think the dates are wrong. There was no Saturday, June 11, in the 1960s, 70s, or 80s. There is, however, a Saturday, June 11, 2015. If you can add information or identify others, please email ifahc@gmail.com.

Trip to Philadelphia

Again in 2014, Brenda Dixon Gottschild made inquiries on our behalf with the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage and among the Philadelphia dance community, most notably introducing me to Germaine Ingram, who arranged for me to meet with her and with the good people of Kulu Mele, the Philadelphia Folklore Project, the Blockson Collection, and the Special Collections Research Center at Temple University. I am still contemplating the implications of what I learned. There were exciting discoveries and sad disappointments. For the moment, I think the best course of action is to hold steady with what we have been doing. One big question remaining is how best to create a searchable database and “finding aids” for materials in the collection. I also keep hoping that some young artist/writer/historian will latch onto this history, perhaps answering the remaining questions along the way.

I made a little film about my trip to Philadelphia. It is called “Trip to Philadelphia” and can be seen at <https://vimeo.com/ileife/philly>.

Financial Report

The 2014 financial overview is posted at www.ileife.org/iif/2014fin.pdf. Cash donations were made by Abbott Meader, Germaine Ingram, Patrice Janssen, and me. Revenues from Archival Services were mostly from Kulu Mele for my consultations arranged by Germaine Ingram. The fee paid to a director (5606) was \$100 paid to Nana Korantema for her trouble setting up the digital archive for the Arthur Hall Alumni in Philadelphia. Professional fees (5607) was \$50 paid to Frances Scarborough for her troubles during my trip to Philadelphia and \$150 paid to Van Williams for help in identifying items in the Arthur Hall Collection at the Blockson Collection.

Please address any observations or questions to me at bruce.williams@ileife.org.

Respectfully submitted,
Bruce B. Williams