

The Heart of the Race: Oral Histories of the Black Women's Movement

BCA is proud to announce a new project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to collect oral histories of women involved in and inspired by the Black Women's Movement in Britain.

The project will create a unique resource for the history of women of African and African-Caribbean descent in Britain through the oral histories provided by women who are or have been activists in the movement. Taking as its starting point the book *The Heart of the Race* by Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie and Suzanne Scafe (Virago 1985), the project seeks to collect testimony of those involved in OWAAD and other groups, or who have otherwise been active in fighting for the rights of Black women in the UK.

We are now recruiting for volunteers in the roles of Oral History Interviewer and Volunteer Transcriber to work on the project from January-May 2009.

Oral History Interviewer – task description

In order to be able to take part as a volunteer interviewer, you must be available on all three of the following dates for training, to be held at Black Cultural Archives' London office:

Session A: Thursday January 22nd 2009, 6:30pm-9:00pm

An induction to Black Cultural Archives, the organisation and its collections; an introduction to the Black Women's Movement project, and a guest speaker tbc.

Session B: Saturday January 31st 2009, 10am-5:30pm

A full day of training covering the purpose and value of oral history work, oral history theory and practice, ethics & copyright law, interview techniques and the use of technical equipment with Oral History Society trainer Verusca Calabria.

Session C: Saturday February 14th 2009 10am-5.30pm

Transcription and summarising training and an introduction to digital audio editing with Oral History Society trainer Verusca Calabria.

Volunteering period: January to May 2009 – the amount of hours you wish to volunteer are negotiable, from a minimum of 5 days commitment over a period of at least three months, to be arranged at your convenience between January and May.

Roles & responsibilities:

(1) **To carry out oral history interviews** with Black women who have either been

involved with Organisation of Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) and /or other Black women's groups, or who have otherwise been a part of the Black Women's Movement, using an interview guide/topics (i.e. a list of prepared questions) which will be provided to you.

This may also involve travelling to various parts of the UK to interview participants, but all expenses will be covered, and travelling outside of London is completely negotiable.

(2) **To write a short description of the context of the interview** – including when and where the interview was held; details of the interviewee, and the reading and annotating of transcriptions as needed (for example, noting emotion or other relevant characteristics of the interview context), and a description of any additional issues talked about in the interview which were not listed on the topic guide. A blank form will be given to you to fill out with these details for each interview you undertake.

Person specification:

In order to carry out the oral history interviewer role, you'll need:

1. to be a woman of African/African-Caribbean descent
2. an interest in the Black Women's Movement
3. literacy skills
4. organisational skills
5. to be able to travel in order to interview
6. willingness to receive training in oral history techniques, methodology including transcription and summarising
7. to be trained in using digital audio equipment and software
8. to maintain a degree of confidentiality

Please note, Oral History Interviewers will be encouraged to undertake the same tasks as Volunteer Transcribers in addition to their interviewing work, if time permits.

Volunteer Transcriber – task description

In order to be able to take part as a Volunteer Transcriber, you must be available on dates for training as described as Session A and Session C above.

Roles & responsibilities:

- (1) **To summarise and transcribe oral testimony** from a range of Black women involved in the movement for the rights of Black women in the UK including activities organising, campaigning and lobbying at a grassroots, national or international level.
- (2) **To research the histories of OWAAD and the Black Women's Movement** using archive material and published sources
- (3) **To assist in producing project outputs** – an event, an exhibition, an online resource & blog, digital resources featuring clips of oral testimony, and a booklet/publication

Person specification:

In order to carry out the Transcriber role, you'll need:

1. an interest in the Black Women's Movement

2. good listening, reading and writing skills
3. good attention to detail
4. organisational skills
5. willingness to be trained in transcription, summarising and digital audio editing
6. to maintain a degree of confidentiality

Volunteering period: January to May 2009 – the amount of hours you wish to volunteer are negotiable, from a minimum of 5 days commitment over a period of at least three months, to be arranged at your convenience between January and May.

Interested?

Please submit your CV to mia@bcaheritage.org.uk by Friday 16th January 2008 together with details of at least one referee.

For further information please contact Mia Morris, Oral History Project Co-ordinator, mia@bcaheritage.org.uk or visit the project blog <http://heartoftherace.blogspot.com>.

Tel: 0207 582 8516

Address:

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About Black Cultural Archives

BCA is a community archive, established in 1981 to collect, preserve and promote understanding of Black cultural heritage. BCA's collections spans three centuries and include a wide variety of material, including plantation records, personal papers, rare books, press cuttings, photographs, sculptures and other artefacts, reflecting the history of the African diaspora and the presence of Black people in Britain. BCA was recently awarded £4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish a new centre for Black cultural heritage in Brixton, to open in 2011.

