

Sherry Sherrod DuPree
1946-

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"Sidelights"

Educator, librarian, archivist, and author Sherry Sherrod DuPree has dedicated much of her multi-faceted career towards preserving and explaining the history of the African American Pentecostal religious movement. She has penned books on the subject by herself, and with her husband, Herbert C. DuPree. Her titles include the Biographical Dictionary of African-American, Holiness- Pentecostals: 1880-1990, The African American Pentecostal Movement: An Annotated Bibliography, and a collaboration with Mr. DuPree, African-American (Good News) Music. She has also authored several booklets, some with educational or library purposes, others concerning the Pentecostal movement or civil rights. One noteworthy example, again written with her husband, was 1993's Exposed! Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Unclassified Reports on Churches and Church Leaders. In addition to her published work, DuPree also created the DuPree African-American Pentecostal and Holiness Collection at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture of the New York Public Library. She served as curator for a museum exhibit on the history of African American gospel music performers which originated at Santa Fe Community College but traveled to the Billy Graham Archives in Wheaton, Illinois.

As its title indicates, Exposed! is a documentation of the ways in which the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) infiltrated and reported on the activities of many African American organizations, including churches. DuPree quotes from FBI memos that have become unclassified. In one dating from 1943, according to an article by Esmeralda Barnes in Black Issues in Higher Education, former FBI chief Herbert Hoover "requests coverage of all persons associated with Twentieth Century School of Bible Research." In another from the same year, an agent reports that "Bishop Joseph Croom's church, also known as the Triumph Church of the New Age, cannot be located in New York City." A memo from 1969 notes that "The Church of Lebanon, Tennessee, is located within the Negro community and has been attempting to integrate the church with white citizens." DuPree explained the FBI's interest in such organizations to Barnes: "Many churches said their members should not fight in wars

[because of unequal treatment of African Americans in the United States, especially in the South], and the FBI became very concerned. Black colleges also were of great concern to the FBI because they were seen as sources of agitation." The author added that "most Black colleges were religion-based. Church leaders influenced social change during the times of World War I, World War II and the Red scare." DuPree concluded of her work in *Exposed!*: "I don't pass judgment. I just give facts."

In *African-American Holiness Pentecostal Movement*, readers will become acquainted with many interesting figures, including that of Mother Laura Adorka Kofi. Mother Adorka founded a branch of Pentecostalism which featured a kosher diet, accentuated economic independence from whites, and held a belief that black people must return to Africa in order to find self-fulfillment. She was active during the 1920s, and her story has many parallels to Black Muslim leader Malcolm X. She, too, was assassinated, and, as noted in the *Pace of Santa Fe Community College*, "there is controversy about whether the murder was planned by a rival black organization or by suspicious white authorities." DuPree told the *Pace* that Mother Adorka "was a mover and shaker, and whites were frightened of her. She was not one to hide her heritage." G. Holloway, reviewing *African-American Holiness Pentecostal Movement in Choice*, predicted that "this volume will be indispensable to faculty and graduate students."

DuPree told CA: "I have filled many requests over the years from people needing information on various subjects. That is what I love to do. When a student minister requested information on a black Pentecostal church, I discovered how very little information had been published. I have conducted research in many libraries and archives. I have done computer searches and conducted oral interviews. My interest has turned into an unending research project. Young and older people (especially young people) are interested in this information and I feel strongly that it should be available. It is important to black history, religion, civil rights, and other disciplines to be able to read documented histories of the Pentecostal movement.

"In 1994, Barbara Kramer and I attracted a following to the Rosewood cause. Together we formed a group called the Rosewood Forum to research this massacre. Rosewood was located approximately 10 miles northwest of Cedar Key, Florida. The trouble erupted on New Year's Day 1923 when white men were searching for a black man accused of assaulting a white woman. These white men rampaged through the Rosewood community, burning houses and buildings and driving every black resident away. In 1994, the Florida Legislature paid the Rosewood surviving descendants because the State of Florida did not protect its black citizens in 1923. This was the first attempt in U. S. history to pay reparations for racial violence.

"From 1993 to 1995, I was a consultant for the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs, a unit of the Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. The Florida Folklife Programs produced, in 1995, an audio cassette recording of African-American gospel steel guitar music in Florida. The recording features Willie Eason (known as the Father of African American steel guitar players), Aubrey Ghent, Henry Nelson, and others. Articles on this style of folk music were featured in *Newsweek* magazine, July 16, 1996, and *Guitar Magazine*, August, 1996. This music has been found mainly in Holiness Pentecostal churches. I also contributed along

with Bob Stone to 'Folk Masters 1994,' a concert program book and radio listener's guide for the Smithsonian Folk Masters program at Wolf Trap, Virginia, where our Florida players performed.

"After I use the gathered resources for publications, I house them at the Schomburg Center, New York Public Library. The collection is the DuPree African American Pentecostal and Holiness Collection, accession number MG-325. Information concerning my publications and collections are available on the OCLC and RLIN library databases. Some special collections are in the Library of Congress National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections. Gospel music materials are housed in three locations: the Black Music Research Collection, Columbus College, Chicago, IL; the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, Detroit, MI; and the Schomburg Center collection, New York."

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Family: Born November 25, 1946, in Raleigh, NC; daughter of Matthew Needham (a railroad porter-supervisor) and Elouise (an elementary school teacher; maiden name, Heartley) Sherrod; married Herbert Clarence DuPree (an elementary school principal), January 11, 1975; children: Amil, Andre, Andrew. Ethnicity: "African American." Education: North Carolina Central University, B.S., 1968, M.A., 1969; University of Michigan, A.M.L.S., 1974, Ed.S., 1978; graduate study at the University of Florida, 1980- 81. Politics: Democrat. Religion: Holiness Pentecostal. Avocational Interests: Reading, making cloth flowers, playing piano. Memberships: American Library Association, Society of American Archivists, Zeta Phi Beta, Society for Pentecostal Studies, African American Religious Group, Writers Platform Association, Resources to Religions Caucus, National Association for Female Executives, Florida Library Association, Rosewood Massacre Forum, Alachua Library League, Billy Graham Archives Minority Council, Florida Community College Association, University of Florida Libraries Association (past president). Addresses: Office: Santa Fe Community College Library, Building P-208, P.O. Box 1530, 3000 N.W. 83rd St., Gainesville, FL 32606.

Travel and pilot study grant from the Division of Sponsored Research, University of Florida, 1983; travel to collections grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, 1983; educational research grants from International Business Machine, Inc. (IBM) and the National Council of Churches, Inc., both 1983; research matching grant from Santa Fe Community College, 1983; Governor's Achievement Award, from the governor of Florida, 1986; research grant from Howard University Divinity School, 1987; grant for the Holiness Pentecostal Project from the Gatorade Foundation, University of Florida, 1987; visiting fellowship from the Smithsonian Institution, African American History and Culture, 1987; research grants from the Black Seminarians of Princeton Theology Seminary and Nationwide Insurance Co., both 1988; travel grants from the Southern Regional Education Board, 1987- 92; Santa Fe Community College Black Faculty Award, 1990; received one of the 7th Annual Ebony Appreciation Awards, 1990; grants for the Gospel Music Traveling Display from the Friends of the Library (Gainesville) and the City of Gainesville Commissioners, both 1994; grant from Santa Fe Community College to publish educational pamphlets on two Florida Folk Heritage Award winners, 1994 and 1995; Sojourner Truth Award from the Education Committee of the Gainesville Commission on the Status of Women, 1995.

CAREER

Ann Arbor Public Schools, Tappan Junior High School Media Center, Ann Arbor, MI, instructional media specialist and department chair, 1970-76; University of Michigan Hospital, Ann Arbor, summer dietetic supervisor, 1970- 73; University of Florida Libraries, Gainesville, FL, associate Afro-American and religion specialist for main branch, 1977-83; University of Florida, Institute of Black Culture, Gainesville, project director, 1982-93; Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville, reference librarian, 1983--; Bethune Cookman College, Daytona Beach, FL, extension professor of teacher education, 1986-89. Visiting professor in educational media at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI, 1975.

Founder and organizer of the DuPree African-American Pentecostal and Holiness Collection (materials on African American Pentecostal churches, etc.) at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Has also organized museum exhibit on African American gospel music for the University of Florida; exhibit traveled to the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton, IL. Member of board of directors for the Middle Atlantic Regional Press, Washington, DC; Institute for Black Family Development, Detroit, MI; Ocala Marine Institute Canopy; and Florida Ancestor's Project. Consultant; has made presentations on educational and religious issues in several locations, including Toronto, Ontario, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Los Angeles, CA, Atlanta, GA, Seattle, WA, Gainesville, FL, Washington, DC, Dallas, TX, Chicago, IL, New Orleans, LA, and Virginia Beach, VA.

WRITINGS BY THE AUTHOR:

NONFICTION

Biographical Dictionary of African-American, Holiness- Pentecostals: 1880-1990, Middle Atlantic Regional Press (Washington, DC), c. 1990.

(With husband, Herbert C. DuPree) African-American (Good News) Music, Middle Atlantic Regional Press, 1993.

(Contributor, with H. C. DuPree) 1993 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, Abingdon Press (Nashville, TN), 1993.

African-American Pentecostals Movement: An Annotated Bibliography, Garland Publishing (New York), 1996.

Associate editor of *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies*. Also author or co-author of several booklets, including *Displays for Schools*, *Bible Lessons for Youth*, *What You Always Wanted to Know About the Card Catalog But Were Afraid to Ask*, *Busy Bookworm: Good Conduct Book*, *Library Skills*, *Exposed! Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Unclassified Reports on Churches and Church Leaders*, and *The Silent Spokesman: Bishop Robert Clarence Lawson*.

Contributor to reference books, including *Biographical Dictionary of American Cult and Sect Leaders*, Garland, 1986; *Pentecostal Handbook: A Reference Guide to the Origins, Personalities, and Doctrines of the Pentecostal People in the United States of America*, Richard Crayne

(Morristown, TN), 1986; *Black Holiness: A Guide to the Study of Black Participation in Wesley and Perfectionist and Glossolalia Pentecostal Movements*, Scarecrow, 1987; *Researching Modern Evangelicalism: A Guide to the Holdings of the Billy Graham Center, with Information on Other Collections*, Greenwood, 1990; *Religious Leaders of America: A Biographical Guide to Founders and Leaders of Religious Bodies, Churches, and Spiritual Groups in North America*, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1991; *Directory of African American Religious Bodies*, Howard University Press (Washington, DC), 1991 and 1995; *Encyclopedia of African American Religions*, Garland, 1993; *Called to Lead: Wisdom for the Next Generation of African American Leaders*, Moody Bible Press (Chicago, IL), 1995; *Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History*, Macmillan (New York), 1995.

Contributor to books, including *The Life and Times of Gospel Music*, Michael Friedman Publishing Group (New York), 1994; *True Love*, University of Florida Gospel Choir (Gainesville), 1994; *African American Steel Guitar Players*, Florida Department of State, 1995; *This Is My Song: A Collection of Gospel Music for the Family*, Crown (New York), 1995.

Contributor of articles to periodicals, including *Collection Building*, *Media Spectrum*: Michigan Association for Media in Education, *Florida Folklore Society Newsletter*, *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, *Gainesville Sun*, *Sun-Sentinel* (Ft. Lauderdale), *Detroit News*, and the *Miami Herald*.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

"I am preparing references on the Rosewood Massacre featuring pictures of descendants, newspaper clippings, oral interviews, and legislative sources. Next, I will update *The Biographical Dictionary of African American Holiness Pentecostals*. I am writing on the roles of women and youth in Pentecostal churches. Also, I write on how Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) files were used to monitor black churches. I will continue to promote the Golden Era of Gospel Music with more publications and traveling exhibits."

FURTHER READINGS ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

PERIODICALS

American Libraries, February, 1978, p. 99.

Black Issues in Higher Education, April 22, 1993, pp. 14-16.

Chicago Tribune, August 6, 1993, pp. 2, 7.

Choice, April, 1990, p. 1297; June, 1996, p. 1613.

Christian Century, August 11-18, 1993, p. 770.

Detroit News, October 21, 1989, p. A15.

Ebony, August, 1996.

Journal of American History, June, 1990, p. 183-99.

Miami Herald, July 25, 1994, p. 1.

Miami Times, September 14, 1989, p. C2.

Orlando Sentinel, February 27, 1993, p. B5.

Pace of Santa Fe Community College, April/May/June, 1996, pp. 1-2.

Sacramento Bee, September 26, 1993, p. B1.

Sun-Sentinel (Ft. Lauderdale, FL), October 21, 1989, pp. D1-D7.

Tampa Tribune, October 21, 1989, pp. F6-F7; April 25, 1994.

Washington Post, August 7, 1993, p. C6; July 24, 1995.

Western Journal of Black Studies, fall, 1995, p. 231.