

Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Student Guide



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Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship

The Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Program is sponsored by New York State and offers support for historically underrepresented students in graduate programs across the university. Students in the program have outstanding academic credentials which contribute to an impressive graduation and retention rate of close to eighty percent. Schomburg Fellows participate in conferences and seminars and present papers in their respective disciplines. Since its inception in 1987, over 500 academically talented students have received support through this Fellowship program.

About Arthur A. Schomburg

Arthur A. Schomburg was born in Puerto Rico on January 24, 1874. His father was of German background and his mother, from neighboring St. Thomas, of African ancestry. Some years later, young Arthur (then using his birth name, Arturo) left for St. Thomas and St. Croix to live with his maternal relatives. Later still, in 1891, he left for New York City.

Schomburg had become socially conscious even as a very young man in the Caribbean, and his social and political commitment was evident in New York from the beginning. It was only in 1873, after all, one year before his birth, that slavery was abolished in Puerto Rico—and even then with apprenticeships imposed upon the freedmen. As for the Virgin Islands (still Danish in that period), abolition had been forced upon the plantation owners amidst some disorder, in St. Croix especially, this a mere generation earlier, in his mother's youth. Just thirty years later, in 1878, a few years before his own move to the Danish territories, St. Croix was again the site of conflict, the scene of bitter and widespread Black insurrection and incendiarism, the "great fire burn" as it was called. And even St. Thomas, the less resentful island, was, it is well-known, the birthplace of the gifted "Father of Pan Africanism," Edward Wilmot Blyden. Born in 1832, Blyden was by the 1880's already revered. Perhaps, indeed, Schomburg's early sense of social commitment was not even especially remarkable in those islands. He was merely one of a number of exceptional young men and women born in the last decades of the nineteenth century in the Danish territories (to say nothing of Puerto Rico), emerging to become very prominent in Black New York's politics in the early years of the twentieth. They included Hubert Harrison, Frank Crosswaith, Elizabeth Hendricksen, Ashley Totten, and Casper Holstein. They were nearly all of decidedly, sometimes overtly, radical temper. Coming from small islands in the region of classic European imperialism, their reflections were apt to possess hemispheric and global sweep. Hendricksen and Crosswaith were Marxist, and Harrison's perspectives were, like Blyden's or Schomburg's, dominantly scholarly and Pan Africanist.

Schomburg's earliest causes in New York were understandably those of Puerto Rican and Cuban liberation from the burdens of Spanish colonialism and of greater freedom and respect for men of color within those two societies. In the Hispanic environment that he came to, these causes were live issues, embraced by popular feeling and the subject of political action and journalistic support. His position as secretary (1892-1896) of the important New York organization, Las Dos Antillas, assumed when he was barely eighteen, is testimony to his fervor. By the end of the century, however, the dismantling of Spanish rule in the Spanish-American War of 1898, the deaths of heroes such as Jose Marti and Antonio Maceo, the growing disappointments of his hopes for social liberations in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and his now lengthy residence in the city and local family commitments had had their effect. He began to transfer his allegiance to the cause of Black America and to another cause that his rearing and his temper had prepared him for: that was wide research—and its dissemination—on the achievements of men and women of color everywhere, not least in the insufficiently examined Spanish-speaking world. In a community distinguished for the presence of several other collectors of Black-related material, Schomburg's diligence and broad concerns were such that his collection of books and artifacts became especially celebrated. By no means a wealthy man, Schomburg was nevertheless anxious, even at some potential cost to himself, that the collection become and remain accessible to the Black reading public especially. This was effected in 1926. A Carnegie Corporation grant enabled New York Public Library to acquire it for its Harlem Branch at 135th St. and Lenox Avenue. The Harlem Library immediately became and remains the most renowned center of Black research in the United States, the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture as it is now called.

Arthur Schomburg's services to the Black community extended far beyond book and art and craft and memento sleuthing and collecting during his trips abroad and from his home in New York. And his services benefited communities well outside New York City. Perhaps most easily forgotten, because of its distance from New York, is Schomburg's extraordinary contribution to the growth of the collection at Tennessee's Fisk University—as an appraiser of prospective material and as its curator (and collector) from 1930-1931. In the understated language of his excellent biographer,

Elinor Des Verney Sinnette, Schomburg's role was "pivotal." His vigor there, even before his curatorship, as an informal leader of seminars and symposia in the entire Nashville community (including non-Black institutions such as Vanderbilt) was typical of the spirit he brought to his work everywhere in the United States, including of course his curatorship from 1932 at the Harlem Library's Schomburg Collection.

It is easy to forget also that Schomburg wielded wide influence not only through his travels, but also as a result of his extensive correspondence. He also presented several papers on Black subjects, and wrote many articles for newspapers and for *Crisis and Opportunity*, the best known Black journals of his day. The title he chose for one article, "The Negro Digs Up His Past," included in the famous Harlem Renaissance edition of pieces for the *Survey Graphic* (1925), well describes his passion. But New York was inevitably the greatest beneficiary of his work. His very broad knowledge, extremely keen memory, and remarkable generosity with his time, his information, and his materials were inestimable boons to Black researchers and intellectuals, including some of the most distinguished figures in Black Historical writing. He was somewhat ill-rewarded, however, even by many who depended greatly on him. But his repeated disappointments never overcame his good-natured impulses.

Arthur Schomburg was interested in his own times as much as in those of his forebears. He combined essentially Radical convictions with a deceptively mild disposition and with an uncommon distaste for chauvinism and opportunism. Marcus Garvey's UNIA well accommodated his convictions and temper and he became an energetic Garveyite, attaching himself fervently even much later to causes loyal to the spirit of the movement. He was interested in contemporary Black art and literature as much as in social science or history, and he functioned often as an informal, unpaid agent in New York for Black writers and artists. He was an enthusiastic member of the Negro Society for Historical Research and of the American Negro Academy, rising to the presidency of the latter in 1920. At the same time, his full-time day job in a bank notwithstanding, he was also extremely active in several other organizations, most especially the masons. He had become by 1918 the devoted and industrious Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of the Prince Hall masons of the State of New York.

Arthur Alfonso Schomburg died on June 10, 1938. An exhibit in his honor at the University at Buffalo is especially appropriate in at least one particular respect. He was untiring in assisting seasoned scholars but was genuinely delighted in instructing the young.

Academic Practica Policy

Recipients of Arthur Alfonso Schomburg Graduate Fellowships are required to complete a minimum of one semester at the master's level and a minimum of two semesters at the doctoral/professional level (based upon departmental guidelines) of an academic, research, or service practicum during the period in which they receive funding. Schomburg Fellows who receive a graduate assistant, research assistant, or teaching assistance position through their academic department are exempt from this requirement.

Academic departments in which Fellows are enrolled will have the authority to implement this policy. All practica activities that fellows plan to pursue must be pre-approved by their academic departments, and if applicable, the outside agency that will benefit from the project. Practica activities may include, but are not limited to, teaching courses at the graduate, undergraduate, or pre-collegiate levels; career or personal counseling; theoretical or applied research; and technical assistance either on campus or in the Western New York community.

In certain instances where, for example, a Fellow may already be required to teach, perform research or service as a part of a degree program, the recipient may petition his or her academic unit to have this practicum requirement waived or to have existing activities fulfill the practicum requirement.

Summer Support Policy

Funding provided by the State of New York for the Arthur A. Schomburg Fellowship Program is limited, and requests from Schomburg Fellows for support during a summer term are considered only if funds are available. Awards are generally limited to one summer over the period of an individual Fellow's academic program, unless exceptional circumstances are presented.

If sufficient funds exist, summer support may be requested only by Schomburg Fellows who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The Fellow's academic program requires all students (whether Schomburg Fellows or not) to undertake specified coursework during the initial or concluding summer term of the program consistent with the approved/registered curriculum; or
- The Fellow needs summer support in order to complete his/her degree program by the end of that summer term. The expectation is that the student will graduate at the end of the summer in question (September 1 degree conferral). Note that Fellows receiving summer support under this criterion will NOT be eligible for any further Schomburg Fellowship funding beyond the "concluding" summer in which such support is received; or
- Completion of required clinical component(s) of the program during the summer will enable the student to finish the degree program a semester early.

If awarded, summer tuition scholarship support covers tuition only (not fees or other charges). Such tuition support is limited to the general graduate tuition rate in effect for that summer term.

If awarded, summer stipend support will be \$250 for each week of the required summer enrollment period (e.g. a total of \$1,500 for a 6-week course period; \$2,500 for a 10-week course period), regardless of the number of courses taken during that period.

Requests for special summer support should be in the form of a letter from the Fellow addressed to the Graduate School (408 Capen Hall), and should include information describing the specific coursework to be completed and how that coursework relates to the eligibility criteria listed above. Requests must be accompanied by a letter of support from the Fellow's academic department that includes confirmation that the summer coursework in question is required of all students under the program, and/or certification that the Fellow will complete his/her academic program by the end of the summer term, and/or that the Fellow's completion of required clinical components of the program during the summer will enable the student to finish the degree program a semester early.

The deadline for receipt of written requests for summer support under the Schomburg Fellowship program is the last day of scheduled classes during the Spring semester.

State University of New York at Buffalo

FELLOWSHIP PAYMENTS

Calendar of Payment and Appointment Due Dates
2009/2010 Academic Year

Appt/Changes/Cancellations Must be Submitted By **Noon on Friday**	International Payroll Submission Dates	Distribution Date Thursday	Payment Number
Friday 8/21/2009	8/5/2009	8/27/2009	1
Friday 9/4/2009	8/19/2009	9/10/2009	2
Friday 9/18/2009	9/2/2009	9/24/2009	3
Friday 10/2/2009	9/16/2009	10/8/2009	4
Friday 10/16/2009	9/30/2009	10/22/2009	5
Friday 10/30/2009	10/14/2009	11/5/2009	6
Friday 11/13/2009	10/28/2009	11/19/2009	7
Wed 11/25/2009 <	11/11/2009	12/3/2009	8
Friday 12/11/2009	11/25/2009	12/17/2009	9
Thurs 12/24/2009 > ***	12/9/2009	12/31/2009	10
Friday 1/8/2010	12/23/2009	1/14/2010	11
Friday 1/22/2010	1/6/2010	1/28/2010	12
Friday 2/5/2010	1/20/2010	2/11/2010	13
Friday 2/19/2010	2/3/2010	2/25/2010	14
Friday 3/5/2010	2/17/2010	3/11/2010	15
Friday 3/19/2010	3/3/2010	3/25/2010	16
Friday 4/2/2010	3/17/2010	4/8/2010	17
Friday 4/16/2010	3/31/2010	4/22/2010	18
Friday 4/30/2010	4/14/2010	5/6/2010	19
Friday 5/14/2010	4/28/2010	5/20/2010	20
Friday 5/28/2010	5/12/2010	6/3/2010	21
Friday 6/11/2010	5/26/2010	6/17/2010	22
Friday 6/25/2010	6/9/2010	7/1/2010	23
Friday 7/9/2010	6/23/2010	7/15/2010	24
Friday 7/23/2010	7/7/2010	7/29/2010	25
Friday 8/6/2010	7/21/2010	8/12/2010	26
Friday 8/20/2010	8/4/2010	8/26/2010	*1* 2010/2011 academic year

Payment 1-23
expenditures
charged to
09/10 fiscal
year

Payment 24-26
expenditures
charged to
10/11 fiscal year

NOTE: > Appt/Changes/Cancellations cutoff Thursday due to Friday Holiday
 < Appt/Changes/Cancellations cutoff Wednesday due to Thurs/Friday Holiday
 *** Verify Visa status for possible payroll change for 2009

Highlighted weeks are monthly pay dates. International payroll bi-weekly only