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## **National Park Service awards THNOC grant to conduct oral histories on the local civil rights movement**

*September 6, 2017 | New Orleans, Louisiana* —The Historic New Orleans Collection has received a grant from the National Park Service to conduct oral histories with leaders and activists involved in the African American civil rights movement in the New Orleans area. The grant will support the capturing of first-person testimony about events and activities that happened from 1950 through 1976, as well as transcripts of the interviews, lesson plans, a workshop for area teachers and more.

The National Park Service announced \$7.7 million in grants for projects preserving sites and history related to the African American civil rights movement. THNOC’s project received \$23,360 to capture oral histories focusing on 11 locations, organizations and events that played critical roles here in New Orleans.

Senior curator and oral historian Mark Cave will interview participants associated with the protests of segregation at McCrory’s and Woolworth’s department stores on Canal Street, the operations of the New Orleans chapter of the Congress on Racial Equality, the march and sit-in on City Hall to protest its segregated cafeteria, the formation of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference at the New Zion Baptist Church and more.

“It is crucial that we do this now,” Cave said. “Every day we are losing the people that were engaged in this fight—it is our last chance to get their testimony, to hear what it was like from their perspective and to learn more about what happened here in New Orleans.”

The New Orleans Civil Rights Movement Oral History Project will comprise roughly 50 hours of oral histories with a number of individuals from the area, as well as 10 hours of video interviews, which will eventually be available online and fully accessible to the public. The audio interviews will be housed at THNOC’s Williams Research Center at 410 Chartres St., where they will also be available free of charge to visitors.

Other events or places that will be documented for the project include the local “Don’t Buy Where You Can’t Work” campaign on Dryades Street in 1960; the activities at the Haley family home on Tonti Street, sometimes referred to as “Freedom House”; the players boycott of the 1965 American Football League All-Star game at Tulane Stadium; Dooky Chase’s Restaurant at 2301 Orleans Ave., which served as a meeting place for local civil rights leaders; Xavier University, which housed freedom riders arriving in the city in 1961; and the integration of New Orleans transit lines in 1958.

“The modern era of the struggle for African American civil rights in New Orleans is an important part of the city’s history and is a topic the institution is working to document,” said Eric Seiferth, THNOC assistant curator, historian and coordinator for the project. “Our acquisition efforts have built holdings for other time periods in this fight for rights, and this grant allows us to focus specifically on the mid-century activities. This work will continue institutional efforts to build a strong collection of materials documenting the local civil rights movement.”

Other Louisiana projects receiving grants include the Leona Tate Foundation for Change, which plans to renovate the New Orleans school Tate and two other six-year-old girls integrated in 1960, and Lafayette’s Holy Rosary Redevelopment Board, which seeks to rehabilitate Holy Rosary Institute’s main building.

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### **About The Historic New Orleans Collection**

Founded in 1966, The Historic New Orleans Collection is a museum, research center and publisher dedicated to the study and preservation of the history and culture of New Orleans and the Gulf South region. For more information, visit [www.hnoc.org](http://www.hnoc.org), call (504) 523-4662, or follow THNOC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).