

Material Memory Season 3, Episode 3 “Walking on Sacred Ground”

Transcript

[Music]

Narration: Hello and welcome to season three of Material Memory. I am your host, Sharon M. Burney. Today’s stop on our HBCU Library Alliance tour takes us to Baltimore, Maryland, where we will have the pleasure of conversing with Dr. Ida E Jones, archivist at Morgan State University.

We’ll discuss the fascinating collections at Morgan, the history of Black women in the profession, and how to manage traumatic archival material. We will explore the influence of Black culture in the DMV (DC, Maryland, and Virginia) both past and present, and its connections to Morgan. Most importantly, we will discuss our responsibility to each other when we inhabit the sacred ground of HBCU campuses.

A quick warning that this episode touches on topics of historical trauma and violence.

So, let’s get started. Here is Ida.

Ida E. Jones: I am Dr. Ida E. Jones, and I am the inaugural university archivist at Morgan State University, hired in 2016.

Sharon M. Burney: When did you first fall in love with the library and/or books?

Ida E. Jones: That’s a very interesting question. I guess I would have to go back to elementary school, because in elementary school they have these kinds of competitions to generate, I guess, the idea of literacy. And there were prizes attached to it. I’m a sucker for a prize. So I actually have the trophy from eighth grade for having read the most pages in eighth grade. And I wasn’t going to be an athlete and I wasn’t going to be a beauty queen. So this was my category where I could kind of, you know, go on the rim and hang. My mother herself was a very literate person. So words were always around me and words became paint and they could actually change the color and tone of the conversation. So, words in general became this kind of tool for me. The intentions were to be a lawyer. And, of course, Thurgood Marshall was retiring—“Hold on, I’m gonna come and take your place!” And I went to journalism and thought that was the career path for me, and then I took a history class, and [that] class was what I learned about public history. And it’s this idea of how archives, museums and libraries are information service providers and stewards. And I was like, that sounds interesting. So I get to bring in law. I get to bring around love of words, the old things, the reading. So it was all the synergy of the things I loved.

Narration: The recurring themes in Ida’s work history display a connection to history, culture, and education. I asked her what influenced her connection with history.

Ida E. Jones: The Black women. My mother in particular, as much as she did not want to call herself a historian, she was, because she was the only daughter of her parents. So three adult male children and her, the only girl. She was very close to her mother. So the stories from my grandmother, from my great grandmother, from the women in the world, it was always these stories. And these stories always had some kind of context in terms of race, gender, class, ethnicity, because we are West Indian descended from Barbados. So all of these stories were captivating to me.

Narration: And these ancestral stories were filled with complex intersections of race and gender.

Ida E. Jones: And these stories always had context, even in terms of my mother's life—not being allowed to go to nursing school. She was a graduate [of] high school in 1949. And when she went to apply, they said, well, we have seven Negroes ahead of you and we only take one a year, so you can figure out what you're going to do with your life. So the dismissiveness that she experienced in her life really galvanized me to understand there's something to this integrity of living, something to the power of stories and perseverance. So all of that really was impetus to know more about who these Black women were, you know, who was an Idalia Roach, my maternal grandmother, or Edelma Farquharson, my paternal grandmother? What did they go through? Because apparently, I've lived this life before—some other time as another person *[laugh]*. And so I wanted that quest of self. So that's what I've been doing.

Narration: It was the Black women in her life, particularly her mother, who helped her understand the power of storytelling and inspired her to join a long tradition of Black women preserving the records and memories of their communities.

Ida E. Jones: The librarians are a feminized profession. So you have nursing, library, social work, and teaching. They were considered the feminized professions. So Black women who entered these fields really were the glue in the community. So in the HBCU universe, these women librarians, both professionally or simply laypersons interested in stewarding information, became that connection to that yesterday, and also that kind of prognosticator for that future. And that's what you find—whether it be [Dorothy Porter](#) at Howard University, or [Beulah Davis](#) at Morgan State University, or [Jessie Carney Smith](#) at Fisk University—you find these women who are doing this work and not just simply being administrators, but they are the feet, the ones on the ground. And these women who graduated from the HBCUs are going to public schools and public librarianship. So they're always somewhere diffusing race and culture, as women are the culture caretakers.

Narration: Ida told me about one such cultural caretaker at Morgan State.

Ida E. Jones: If you kind of drill down to the granular of Morgan State, Beulah Davis, she was the first academically trained librarian at Morgan State, hired in 1926. And she works for the next 40 years. So, she builds the collection from 7,000 volumes to over a hundred thousand volumes of books during the course of her career.

Narration: Ida understands the legacy she's carrying on as university archivist at Morgan State. She clearly loves the school, but she remembers when she was a newcomer in this space.

Ida E. Jones: I'm a native New Englander. I came from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to attend Howard University in 88. And of course, because of "[A Different World](#)" and [Spike Lee's "School Daze"](#), it was quite a revival of that experience. So when I got to DC, everything was Black. I mean, the mayor is Black, the criminals are Black. The police are Black, the squirrels are Black. I had never been so immersed in such a diversity of Blackness and I fell in love with it. I never left.

Narration: Howard and Morgan State are just a one- to two-hour drive from each other. However, the cultural and community distinctions between the two are prominent.

Ida E. Jones: The culture of the campus, unlike where I was, does not understand the importance of history and archives. They kind of just simply have this one line they run every year about, you know, "This is Morgan" and that's not history, that's public relations. Because the brand is so much deeper and so much richer than this one little line.

And I'm trying to have them move past that, but I'm not one of them. And my friend who taught there for 20 years, was like, they have to get to know you, you can just slow down. You have to kind of be pledged into the process and I'm like, "Do these blankity-blanks understand?" And he's like, "They do, but you can't just come busting in like that," you know. And I didn't realize being in DC and Maryland are literally two different things. It's a very Southern space, it's very cloistered. And then when I learned the history of Morgan, I said, I understand because they were surrounded by just such White adversity and just hostility, that they had to be very insular. And they really had to kind of keep that circle tight. And it's still, to this day, a very insular space. I've broken through some layers, but it took time to learn and get to have that trust.

Narration: As Ida suggested, there's a good reason why the Morgan community is skeptical about those coming from the outside.

Ida E. Jones: Morgan had [three campuses at one time](#) they were running—one in eastern Maryland called [Princess Anne Academy](#) and one in Lynchburg. So they actually had three campuses running to kind of meld the Du Bois and Washington idea together.

Narration: She's talking about [W.E.B. Du Bois](#) and [Booker T. Washington](#), famous Black intellectual rivals in the early 20th century. Washington was known for advocating for Black economic independence, which relied on strategies of acquiescence to White people. Du Bois pushed instead for systematic change, fighting for civil rights and political enfranchisement.

Ida E. Jones: So Baltimore would be the De Boisian campus, whereas the Eastern shore in Lynchburg would have been more Washingtonian focused. Mysteriously, [Lynchburg burns down in 1917](#). No one knows who started the fire, but there was a fire. And then in Princess Anne Academy, because of the stress on the funds of the Methodist church, the Black Methodists could not support two campuses.

So they sold Princess Anne to the state, and that becomes [University of Maryland Eastern Shore](#). The state of Maryland took about 20 years to pay them for it, by the way, and just didn't include the interest on the payment. So that idea of retrenchment and that idea of cloister really goes tight on that campus, where they're physically situated. And so, as a result, I understand intellectually the spiritual mind of the campus. It's just trying to bring that into the now so that people can understand they're walking on sacred ground that was paid for with pennies, nickels, and dimes of formerly enslaved persons. They really need to understand that whether you're Black or not, whether you're domestic or not, you need to understand that you're walking on sacred ground. And that's what I try to do with these collections because they talk to me every day, and they literally cry out, "tell my story, tell my story." And I'm trying as best I can.

Narration: It took time, but Ida did earn the trust of the Morgan community.

Ida E. Jones: What I have found to be most important is that there is an understanding, and now people are bringing things to me. And I'm very excited about what they're bringing to me. Cause they're like, well, now we can trust you. You're not a betrayer. So they're showing me all of these things. People who had relatives who were lynched in various parts of Maryland bringing me elements of that lynching, the family history is bringing me family collections, talking about their long roots of five, seven generations in Maryland.

So there's such a great expanse through the Morgan community now, because all these people are Morgan affiliates, Morgan raised, Morgan born four or five generations, and fascinating stories. And they're like, "We can trust you now." And I'm like, so overwhelmed, like, oh my God, I need a staff bigger than I thought.

[Music]

Narration: As Ida suggested, there are some treasures in the collections at Morgan.

Sharon M. Burney: What is your most prized possession in that collection?

Ida E. Jones: I can't even begin to think. I guess—I don't know. It's so hard to say, it's like, "What's your favorite child?" Yeah. I have an affinity for [Victorine Adams](#), because she and I are in the same sorority

and she was the first Black woman elected to city council in Baltimore City. And she dies in 2006, and I'm like, "I'm right here. How did I not know who she was?" So I think I have an affinity for her collection, because she understood her worth, because she literally saved everything. We have pictures of her as an infant, pictures of her as a child, and letters from pretty much every organization. She participated in hundreds, if not thousands, of photographs of life at [Elktonia Beach](#). Her husband bought a beach in Annapolis for colored people to have resort and leisure. And he absorbs Carr's Beach, which was another notable Black beach in Annapolis. So all these photographs of Black leisure and Black business, and I'm like, "Are you kidding me? This is amazing!" And Baltimore City, which was a hub during the 20th century as well. But for some reason, a lot of these collections have not made it to repositories. So you go on the *Afro* other kinds of crumbs, but she has a very comprehensive collection that has yet to be fully explored in terms of just the visuals alone, a Black upper-class life in Baltimore, between the twenties and the 1980s.

Sharon M. Burney: Can you speak a little bit about [the Afro-American newspaper](#) and its role in Baltimore and the community? And are those collections there?

Ida E. Jones: Yes, they are currently—I don't want to say squatting [*laughs*—currently housed in the Davis room. They are in the operations of creating their own space where they're going to move their collection to, but it was founded 150—[one hundred-]twenty-five years ago by the patriarch of the family, [John Murphy](#), who was a formerly enslaved person, who in the 1890s decides to create a Black newspaper. So after the Black church and the Black women's club movement, you find the Black press coming along those same kinds of venues, because now we have to present and speak for ourselves. So even though you have the [North Star](#) and [Freedom's Journal](#) in the early part of the 19th century, the late 19th century up until the 1940s and fifties, the Black press really is gonna burst open because you're able to talk about Black businesses, Black education, Black churches, Black fashion.

So it becomes a marketplace of ideas, and Baltimore rivals Washington DC in terms of being a space of Black ideas and Black proliferation. They were the largest pre-Civil War free community of Black people south of the Mason-Dixon line. So when you look at Black Baltimore, they had the luxury of doing things that other Black communities in the south had no opportunity to do. So Baltimore does have that kind of color popping capacity, and it kind of just remains in the consciousness, but kind of on the fringes of the consciousness. So when the *Afro* gets started, they're going to be able to have [Sharp Street Methodist Church](#), and [Bethel AME](#), and [Union Baptist Church](#) to be able to talk about, and these are leaders in the Black world. So as a result, they weren't simply trying to create content. They had content already. And so over the course of its 125 years, the *Afro* actually would have over 13 to 15 different satellite papers around the country. I did not know this. They had papers in Oklahoma, the various parts of the West, other parts of the Northeast and the Southwest, where they had the *Afro* printed, but the Baltimore *Afro* is the flagship. And now it's the last standing relic of that empire of Black press.

Narration: With their flagship publication based in Baltimore, the *Afro* had a special relationship with Morgan State University.

Ida E. Jones: They definitely were the scribe for Morgan State College, Morgan State University during the course of its evolution as well. And so Carl Murphy, actually of the *Afro* family, he was the first African-American to be chair of the board of trustees at Morgan State College, and helped really navigate the racial terrain during the era to make sure that the university could stay open because there were efforts by the state to close the doors of the school. So the *Afro* uses its leverage to be able to tell our people to rally and to push back against the darkness of police brutality, economic injustice, political injustice, any kind of injustice, or any kind of celebration of our victories. The *Afro* was there to document that. And so on that note, the *Afro* becomes its own institution, its own kind of anthropomorphized ancient person that stands the testament to our greatness. And that's an amazing thing to do.

Sharon M. Burney: It is a wonderful thing to do. I know my mother and her sister were taken from her mother when she was like nine. She has no pictures of her mother, but there was this story about my mother and her sister. They tried to run away—or they thought they had tried to run away—and they were in the *Afro-American*. And it's a picture of her mother in there. I've been trying to find that for her for so long. That would be probably the only picture my mother could have of her own mother.

Narration: There are collections of well-known importance at Morgan, like the *Afro*. However, another aspect of Ida's job is identifying people who are not widely celebrated historical figures but should be.

Ida E. Jones: So I'm reprocessing these collections and learning about these people all in terms of the sesquicentennial in 2017. And then I'm just looking at these papers. So then this man Fleming comes across my radar and I'm like, "Wow, this is a very large collection. Who was this person?" Well, he was a journalist who becomes the founding director of the political science department at Morgan. And of course, he was a friend of Mary McLeod Bethune. So that definitely got me very excited.

Narration: For those unfamiliar with [Mary McLeod Bethune](#), she was one of the most prolific Black educators, civil and women's rights activists, [government officials](#), and philanthropists of the 20th century. Among her countless accomplishments, she founded the [National Council of Negro Women](#) (or NCNW) in 1935 and the *Aframerican Woman's Journal* and was a consultant for the founding of the United Nations. It is not surprising she is a personal favorite figure of Ida Jones.

Ida E. Jones: So it's always about Mary McLeod Bethune. She's actually on my screen and my wallpaper for my laptop as well [*laughter*], so everything cycles back to MMB. And interestingly enough, she was involved with him with the FEPC, the Fair Employment Practice Commission, which apparently, he did his dissertation on.

Narration: [George Fleming](#)'s impact expanded well beyond his friendship with Mary McLeod Bethune. In addition to founding the poli sci department at Morgan, he organized and supported Black intellectual excellence in the community.

Ida E. Jones: There was a group in Baltimore city called [the Goon Squad](#), G-O-O-N Goon Squad. And apparently this was a collective of Black men and white men who sought to kind of dismantle or disrupt the politics, the political machine of Baltimore City to the benefit of the larger community. So even though Fleming was not officially a part of the Goon Squad, he helped create the intellectual structure behind it. So Augustus Adair, who was also in the department of political science, along with Fleming—was probably one of the more radical from what I understand—was really partnering with the community and the academy to bring about this change and then [Parren Mitchell](#) as well. And then there was Reverend Hathaway's predecessor, I forget his name, so that the Black church was also involved. So there was this whole kind of coalition of Black men from various walks of life who said, together, we can dismantle this and this is how we're going to do it.

Narration: While doing all this, Fleming was also writing a column in the *Afro*, which he maintained for 30 years, called “Now and Then.”

Ida E. Jones: And I'm like, how did I not know who this person was? And I have friends who are Black political scientists who are like, “No, I've never heard of him,” but there's so many HBCU political scientists we don't know about because we don't focus on them. If they don't captivate the University of Chicago or Harvard or Princeton, they fall between the cracks. It does not mean they're not valuable.

Narration: There are many reasons why Ida has paid so much attention to this particular collection.

Ida E. Jones: And then he kind of melds that with the idea of creating a model UN at Morgan State in the 1960s. He gets grant funding to create [the] idea of the Institute for Political Studies at Morgan State. So you're going to have people like [Kweisi Mfume](#), [Verda Welcome](#), [Victorine Adams](#), other people coming out of Morgan State, Parren Mitchell, who are going to go into politics, having the theory created by Fleming and Augustus Adair, and they're going to then eventually become active politicians. So they're putting this theory into practice in the state of Maryland to dismantle Jim Crow, to dismantle segregation, and to promote the HBCU communities of Maryland. And this is all done by Morgan people. And I said, we don't have the names, but we are living the benefits of these things. And now with people passing away and retiring, we don't have another structure to kind of replace that. So my question becomes, “Will you look at the blueprint and replicate that?”

[Music]

Sharon M. Burney: I love that you're a historian and an archivist at the same time. And I'd like to touch on that a little bit where you could expand on the specific importance of archives in its relation to our history, our lack of knowledge of our history, and finding our history?

Ida E. Jones: That's a great question. [Dr. Harold T. Pinkett](#), Morgan class of 1935, was the first professional archivist hired at the National Archives—African American person—in the 1940s. And he

writes in the [Crisis magazine](#) in 1941 that the archival work is race work. We have to value our stories and value ourselves enough to save these things for generations who will never meet the physical person. And then in 1946, Mary McLeod Bethune starts a National Archives Day at the NCNW, where she's telling all of her NCNW daughters, "Send us in Washington, DC, everything you have, so we can document for ourselves who we are," because her mother and her grandmother were enslaved. She had siblings who were enslaved. She was the 15th of her mother's 17 children. So she never experienced enslavement, but she knew eventually people would pass away. They're not going to physically be here to tell us these stories, but they can leave behind a scarf, or they can leave behind the oral tradition, or they can leave behind a letter. And those ideas of healing and putting yourself in terms of a long line of survivors is extremely important for us as Black people.

Narration: Archives are so important to Black people, but there are very real challenges for Black people who work in the library and archival professions. As of 2010, the most recent year we were able to find statistics for, the American Library Association found that [just 5% of librarians in the US were Black](#); by contrast, [88% were White](#).

Ida E. Jones: You know, we went to library school, and I was like the only Black person in the class, or I was one of two Black people in a class of 40 or 50 people. And you could feel it in terms of the questioning and other things like that. So unless you have a tough skin, you just wouldn't want to believe these people who promote information and equity and open access and all those other kinds of talk [live so contrary to that talk](#), and I always let my students know that this is how America lives. So when you talk about gentrification in terms of either a city space or an intellectual space, information service providing is the last field to conquer.

Narration: One example she gave of this was the experience of Dorothy Porter, who was the archivist who built out much of Howard University's special collections and archives.

Ida E. Jones: Dorothy had to [basically invent her own cataloging](#) because they had no cataloging for Black people; it was either "criminal" or like "prostitute" or something. So she had to create her own system. Cause Dewey Decimal did not include that. So once again, the gentrification of space or the gentrification of an idea in this field, in the GLAM, needs to be acknowledged and destroyed, and that's going to be a tough one to do, because as far as they're concerned, they are the most inclusive and the most open. And there's a level of blindness that they don't even acknowledge. They literally don't know. They can't see it. And we have to find a gentle way to bring this to their attention.

Sharon M. Burney: What is privilege's role in the work that you do?

Ida E. Jones: Privilege is the fact that anyone in any kind of "profession" that requires graduate education is privileged, because the idea of going to graduate school is not an option for most people who have economic challenges. And then even if you have the capacity economically, sometimes intellectually because of family responsibilities, other things that siphon off that energy, you don't have

the luxury of doing that. So I think privilege is endemic to the field in and of itself. And then also there is the idea of the clannishness of it, where there are certain feeder schools that give their students better internships and then, ultimately, employment that precludes other individuals. I was on a project back in, I guess the nineties and all the Black people had been working on master's and doctoral degrees. The White students had maybe bachelor's degrees or maybe were working on master's degrees. And then I asked about, you know, permanent employment in the institution. They're like, well, we don't really have employment. That's not really an option right now, but five of those ten White people walked into straight federal government career-track positions that they're still holding to this day, and I'm like, "You gotta be kidding me." But I think now we're creating our own gravy, so to speak, and going into these places that nobody else is going into. So whether it's community work, whether it's organizational work, whether it's genealogical work, we're creating spaces for ourselves in the GLAMs that are causing them [to] scratch [their heads]. "Well, we didn't see that." Well, you wouldn't have, 'cause you didn't value those people.

Sharon M. Burney: How do we protect ourselves from being locked out of those spots that we create?

Ida E. Jones: Well, this is happening through the grant funding. We did receive an IMLS grant to process and digitize [the Ellen Irene Diggs collection](#). And she was the research assistant for W. E. B. Du Bois and possibly the first African American woman to receive a PhD in anthropology, in the Western hemisphere, at the University of Havana, Cuba, in 1947. And so she was an amazing dynamo, and she was at Morgan from about '47 to about 1980. And so as a result, her career impact is bringing attention to the institution. So as a result, it's creating its own space where, by which now we're saying, "We own this, she was a Morganite." And as a result, if you want to come here, you have to learn about her here. So that's bringing that conversation to us. On the flip side of that, it's also making us now reach out to her undergraduate institution, Monmouth University, I think it's in New Jersey. And so as a result, we're seeing kind of bilateral conversations going on. And so now the HBCUs aren't just simply Black space that do Black things. They're intellectual space[s] that create a broader view of humanity, which includes a Black filter, but not solely, only a Black filter.

Narration: HBCUs are also places of Black mentorship, which we also see in their libraries and archives.

Ida E. Jones: I have a very impressive mentor, Elizabeth Clark Lewis, and I actually had the pleasure of working with Dorothy Porter in the winter of her life. And from what I've been able to glean once again, with all these Black women, is that you've crossed this bridge so now it's incumbent upon you to be a bridge. So as a result, that has been kind of my voluntold perspective, although I am an introvert and prefer to just simply be with me in the collections for my next great work. But it was very selfish of me and my mentor said that you could get such and not really consider giving that back. So I've now committed to replacing myself by five. I want to have at least five mentees that will go consider this field and come into it and do like I did, to sit under Dorothy Porter and just glean everything that you can, and hopefully come into the field.

[Music]

Sharon M. Burney: How do you—because we are starting to have conversations about self-care, self-love. We have not had that before, and expressing that yes, we have been traumatized. And so how do you, as an archivist, handle the trauma?

Ida E. Jones: My colleague has started an oral history project with Black archivists. And he's also concerned about self-care because as stewards, or I guess culture keepers, it weighs on you in a sense that you don't even know it weighs on you. And I'm teaching a class at Lancaster Bible College, and we're talking about the mid-Atlantic slave trade and the students are like, "I couldn't read this, I had to stop." It was too traumatic. And I guess I've been trafficking in it for so long, I'm like, "It's history." But then I guess I've hardened that and I need to really kind of acknowledge that this really happened to people. These people look like me, these people were my pre-incarnate self. And so there is some trauma there, there is some pain there that has to be acknowledged and it's not to be a wimp or to be, you know, weak, it's to be human.

Sharon M. Burney: What would be your advice to graduate students on how to process the trauma in some of the collections that they're navigating in, you know, in these spaces—lynchings, barbaric histories, and experimental warfare that's been done against our bodies. How do we handle that?

Ida E. Jones: I think the first part is to acknowledge that we're human. It's been, once again, superimposed upon us, especially as Black women as being super women, you don't feel pain. You don't register certain things on the emotional level that "other human beings" do because you're a lesser form of human. But I think the biggest thing to do—and that's what really was my revelation with my class—was to say, "OK, stop." This is a human experience. When you're talking about people's skin being opened by lashes, where gaping wounds are being inflicted, and hot branding irons put—and I've burned myself with an iron. Imagine that amplified, that was not intentional. So when it's now intentionally wounding, you kind of have to really stop and process this, to realize that this was done to a person and to peoples, and that now they have proved with epigenetics, that it now literally is in your DNA. Your molecular structure has changed according to that trauma. But we have survived in the midst of it—in fragments and pieces. And now we have the luxury of distance of time to really sit back and have a collective moment of catharsis and healing.

Narration: An essential part of the healing process is embracing our gifts and talents, which is something the Morgan community understands.

Ida E. Jones: Our current president has these kinds of points of excellence. So the intentions are very similar to that of [Martin Jenkins](#), who was the second Black president who actually did excellence or genius studies. Martin Jenkins believed everybody was innately gifted with something. Now there's actually genius in Black people too, because they did say Negroes did not have genius. So Martin Jenkins' whole experiment was to have this interracial space of higher education where all brilliance could be brought out of anybody.

So the idea is that we can create a space of learning and equity. We're not just for African Americans or Africana people, but the world can come and be democratic and informed to live a better life for all of us. So that humanity itself will either sink or swim according to how the least of us is treated. So the intentions are to acknowledge that there is some difference and that that difference is not damnable, but that it's actually just a matter of difference. And in that difference becomes some level of strength.

Narration: As an archivist, scholar, and educator, Ida plays a vital role in fostering the legacy of academic excellence in the students at Morgan State. Standing on the shoulders of Bethune, Fleming, Porter, Adams, Dubois, Davis, and all the cultural caretakers before her, she leaves her indelible mark on the sacred ground upon which she walks.

Ida E. Jones: And so I think that's what I try to kind of resuscitate on the campuses and with the students, is this rich legacy, almost a sacredness to this space of being an African American intellectual or an Africana intellectual, because for everyone in these seats in the class, there's five people that deserve to be here who couldn't be here; and of the five there are ten that should have been here. So if you're the one, then understand how unique and how sacred that moment of oneness is. But you're not just one, you represent a community of before and after yourself that you have to be accountable to. And like they said, if [no one speaks](#) for the ones who are being slaughtered then all of us will be slaughtered, there'll be no one to speak for you. So it's the same principle with Africana scholarship that if you don't defend and understand the culture of what has brought you to this point, then you will simply cease to exist and become a nonissue yourself. So it's a way of reverencing the past and prognosticating that future.

Narration: Thanks for joining us. To learn more about the collections at Morgan State University, the Fleming Collection and the *Afro*, check out our show notes at material-memory.clir.org. In our next episode, we'll be talking with Blanche Sanders at Alcorn State University, about their "If Walls Could Talk" oral history collection.

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I'm your host, Sharon M. Burney, and this is *Material Memory*.