Inventory of the
Old Slave Mart Museum Collection, 1929 - 1987
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  1. Old Slave Mart Museum, 1929-1985............................................................................ 6
Descriptive Summary

Title: Old Slave Mart Museum Collection,

Dates: 1929 - 1987

Creator: Miriam B. Wilson Foundation.

Abstract: The Old Slave Mart Museum in Charleston, South Carolina was founded in 1937 by Miriam B. Wilson as a museum of black slave crafts and related African artifacts. The museum was operated as a private, non-profit organization until her death in 1959. After Wilson's death, the Miriam B. Wilson Foundation was created to operate and manage the Old Slave Mart Museum.

The Old Slave Mart Museum Collection is largely comprised of photocopied material, consisting of meeting minutes from the Miriam B. Wilson Foundation and a history of the museum compiled for a grant application in 1985. It also contains audio cassettes tapes of Foundation meeting minutes, Foundation correspondence, the Old Slave Mart Museum collection inventories, and a 1929 postcard of the Old Slave Market.

Extent: 0.75 linear feet (2 archival boxes)

Repository: Avery Research Center at the College of Charleston

Call Number: 1092

Language of Material: Material in English

Historical Note

The Old Slave Mart Museum, located at 6 Chalmers Street, Charleston, South Carolina, was founded in 1937 by Miriam B. Wilson as a museum of black slave crafts and related African artifacts. The museum was operated as a private, non-profit organization until her death in 1959. After Wilson's death, the Miriam B. Wilson Foundation was created to operate and manage the Old Slave Mart Museum.


The Old Slave Mart Museum contained within its collection over 1400 items of art and artifacts and over 8000 multimedia reference and research materials. The museum's collection can be divided into four categories: slave crafts, African art and artifacts, contemporary black art and crafts, and archival materials. The central portion of the Old Slave Mart Museum's collection was its slave crafts. The majority of the slave crafts were collected by Miriam B. Wilson in the early quarter of the century and included items such as wrought and cast iron-work; quilts, comforters and homespun, hand-woven coverlets and sheets; tools, basketry, hand carved canes. The African art and artifacts in the collection were used to illustrate the direct relationship and similarities between art and craft skills and styles used by African craftsmen and those utilized by African-American craftsmen. The African art and artifact portion of the collection consisted of agricultural tools and baskets, as well as, masks, amulets, beads, musical instruments, and weaponry.
In 1973, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. When the museum closed due to lack of funds, the City of Charleston purchased the building in 1988 for $200,000.00.

Collection Overview

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The materials in the collection were photocopied by the Avery Research Center in 1995 from an unknown repository. The postcard and cassette tapes were acquired separately.

Collection Arrangement

1. Old Slave Mart Museum
2. Miriam B. Wilson Foundation

Restrictions

Access Restrictions

No restrictions.

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Subject Headings

African Americans -- Museums
Miriam B. Wilson Foundation
Old Slave Mart Museum and Library
Wilson, Miriam Bellangee

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], Old Slave Mart Museum Collection, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, USA.
Processing Information

Processed by Staff, 1995, and Melissa Bronheim, February 2010

Encoded by Melissa Bronheim, March 2010

Funding from the Council on Library and Information Resources supported the collection processing and encoding of this finding aid.
Detailed Description of the Collection

1. Old Slave Mart Museum, 1929-1985

Box 1 Folder 1  Postcard, 1929
Box 1 Folder 2  "Old Slave Mart Museum Lecture: Slave Days" by Miriam B. Wilson, 1946
Box 1 Folder 3-4  Collection Inventories, 1975
Box 1 Folder 5  Photocopied Flyers, 1983
Box 1 Folder 6  "Comprehensive Information Relating to History, Purpose and Operation of the Old Slave Mart Museum," 1985


Box 1 Folder 7  By-Laws, 1962-1983
Box 1-2 Folder 8-18  Minutes, 1962-1987
Box 2 Folder 19  Board Meeting Minutes on Cassette Tapes, 1986
Box 2 Folder 20  Correspondence, 1986