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Legacy of the Spirit
June 21 – September 3, 2004

Orlando, FL (April 26, 2004): The culture and customs of the Caribbean, with a focus on Haiti will be showcased in several exhibits at the UCF Library's Special Collections Department this summer. Events will include a lecture series and curator's tour. The exhibit will be accompanied by a catalog and bibliography of sources in Special Collections that serve as a guide for further study on Haiti.

Exhibits will be drawn from the Bryant West Indies Collection, a scholarly collection of over 1,700 books and periodicals on the history, geography, economy and social life of the West Indies. The collection includes paintings, graphics, sculptures, sound recordings and anthropological artifacts. Dr. Rosalyn Howard, an anthropology professor at the University, will be the guest curator for an exhibit on Red Bays, a settlement of Black Seminoles located in the Bahamas. Dr. Howard has published a book on her research entitled *Black Seminoles in the Bahamas*. This book is the first full-length ethnography of a unique community within the African diaspora. It traces the history of the isolated "Red Bays" community of the Bahamas, from their escape from the plantations of the American South through their utilization of social memory in the construction of new identity and community. Some of the many African slaves escaping from southern plantations traveled to Florida and joined the Seminole Indians, intermarried, and came to call themselves Black Seminoles. In 1821, pursued and harassed by European Americans through the First Seminole War, approximately 200 members of this group fled to Andros Island, where they remained essentially isolated for nearly 150 years. Drawing on archival and secondary sources in the United States and the Bahamas as well as interviews with members of the present-day Black Seminole community on Andros Island, Howard reconstructs the story of the Red Bays people. She chronicles their struggles as they adapt to a new environment and forge a new identity in this insular community and analyzes the former slaves' relationship with their Native American companions. Black Seminoles in contemporary Red Bays number approximately 290, the majority of whom are descended directly from the original settlers. As part of her research, Howard lived for a year in this small community, recording its oral history and analyzing the ways in which that history informed the evolving identity of the people.

The Head of Special Collections, Carla Summers, will be the curator for an exhibit on the Library's Artwall during the month of July entitled "Haiti: Legacy of the Spirit", looking at the Haitian art movement and its depiction of the indomitable Haitian spirit. The Reading Room exhibit "The Caribbean: Legacy of the Spirit" will be curated by the University's new Archivist and Manuscript Curator, Elizabeth Konzak. Drawn from the holdings of the University Libraries, these unique exhibits will connect students and faculty to the vast and rich nature of the culture of the Caribbean. Summers has been Special Collections Head since March 2004 and her last exhibit was in August 2003 about UCF Mascots for the 40th anniversary celebrations. Elizabeth Konzak recently joined the Library faculty from the Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley.

More information on the Bryant West Indies Collection and the Special Collections Department can be found at <http://library.ucf.edu/specialcollections>. The UCF Library's Special Collections Department is open to the public and the UCF community from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday-Friday, and is closed on major and university holidays. The Special Collections Department is located on the 5th Floor of the UCF Library, Room 501. For more information or to make an appointment, please call 407-823-2576 or e-mail speccoll@mail.ucf.edu.

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