Black Heritage Featured At Art Center Show

By BOB ANGERS

Art, artifacts, music, photography, lectures, broadcasts and a popular exhibit at the Art Center helped focus attention on the black heritage of Lafayette and Louisiana during the bicentennial year.

A 2-hour oral history tape is permanently available through the Louisiana Room at the Library, Ted Hayes, chairman of the Black Heritage Association bicentennial project, has a chair available on call to present performances before interested groups. Kenneth Moxon was project co-chairman. Also playing key roles in coordinating the program were Mrs. Josephine Segura and Mrs. Augustine Venito who, along with Hayes, serve on the Lafayette Bicentennial Commission.

Month-Long Exhibit

When Hayes and Moxon appeared before the commission representing the BHA to request partial funding of the plan, two February, 1976, at the time the black heritage exhibit at the Art Center. Their project request reflected plans for an exhibit of artifacts and recordings of music, art, work of black artists and writers, a slide presentation of history of blacks in Lafayette Parish and oral narratives of blacks. The month-long exhibit attracted such widespread attention that it was extended for another three additional weeks.

On display during the Art Center exhibition were art and sculpture of regional artists, as well as Texas artist Burford Evans and Louisiana's Clementine Hunter as well as local artists, teachers and other members of the community.

Black heritage researchers gathered recordings of local and area jazz bands, musicians and singers and provided 78 rpm recordings of area performers. Photographs of area blacks from the early 1800s to the present were secured, as well as photographic histories of local families. Color slides depicted points of interest dealing with black life and history in the area. Research emphasis was placed on art, government and politics, education, labor and business, science, technology and sports.

Continuing Project

Mrs. Segura said that one of the continuing projects of the Black Heritage Association is the reconstruction of the interior of a typical black home in the post-slavery area. The objective was realized in part in time for the February exhibition, and she added that future plans call for erection of a slave cabin in the Acadian Village at the Allen Center. The cabin will contain furnishings made by the slaves and other blacks for themselves and their masters, household goods, articles of clothing and accessories for the home.

Coordinators of the project, seeking to establish pride in the black heritage of Acadians by documenting achievements, hope for a permanent public display of the material collected. In the meantime, they continue to give lectures, make appearances in schools, take part in radio and television programs, offer the services of the choir to sing gospel music, and provide the 2-hour oral history tape.

CROWLEY ARTIST — Mrs. Augustine Venito, a member of the Lafayette Bicentennial Commission, discusses Acadian country paintings with Ernest Harris Jr., who exhibited in the bicentennial exhibit featuring Black Heritage. This display was held at the Art Center in February, 1976.

LOUISIANA PRIMITIVES — The paintings of Clementine Hunter of the Cane river area near Natchitoches were spotlighted during the Black Heritage Exhibit in February.

ORAL HISTORY — The recollections of early Lafayette and Acadiana were compiled on a two-hour tape by the late Miss America Dugas in cooperation with the Black Heritage Association. Miss Dugas died last September when she was 66-years-old. This project was funded by the Lafayette Bicentennial Commission.