The Amistad Research Center is one of the nation’s major repositories for documents on black Americans. It was incorporated in 1968 by the American Missionary Association, now a part of the Board for Homeland Ministries of the United Church of Christ.

According to Dr. Johnson there are nearly 5 million manuscript items in its archives.

The NAACP, from its beginning, has consistently supported aspiring Negro writers, painters, sculptors, musicians and other artists and has always been a source of encouragement to them to develop their talent and ability.

Bishop Spottswood, in making the presentation, said the event reminded him of the second great declaration of the purpose of the NAACP, “to make the American Negro educationally free for quality education.” The first declaration is to make him physically free from lynching.

The bishop said the “NAACP,” although dedicated to militant, disciplined pursuit of the total fulfillment of the American dream for Negro Americans, has fostered through 61 years of our history the cultural identity of the Negro in all the areas of activity in the making of the United States. We have encouraged, fostered and subsidized black artists, scholars, authors, poets, painters, professionals, and statesmen.”

Bishop Spottswood pointed out that the Amistad Research Center has the basic history of the American Negro in some 100,000 papers of the American Missionary Association, most of which were written more than 100 years ago.

“In this day of emphasis on black Americans in our history, the Amistad Center’s collection of papers, manuscripts and publications pertaining to and by Negroes, will constitute a gold mine for a future hard to write the epic on “The Ways of Black America.”

Speaking earlier at a press conference held by the New Orleans Branch NAACP at the Claver Building, Bishop Spottswood said the Nixon administration “has been backwards and not forward. As far as freedom has been concerned, Mr. Nixon’s movement has been that of repression.”

He stressed that the NAACP doesn’t believe in the force of the nation by force, but does believe in the force of the nation by process. They are in sympathy with the causes that brought about action that have caused the Panthers to react as they have. The young people feel that the pace has been a slow one since 1954. They, these young people, say that when they are hungry they want to be fed now and not in the future. Racism is the major factor that is causing much of our trouble.

“If the Panthers are raided, then the KKK and other similar organizations should likewise be raided,” he added.

The bishop added that the NAACP through the years advocated and followed militant discipline,” which he explained as action through the courts and other legal means.

“With and with it,” he continued, “we have done away with segregation laws in the South and segregation practices in the North. If you blow up the capital of the United States that will not change the hearts of people.”

On the question of youth in the NAACP, Bishop Spottswood said the Youth Organization has over 67,000 youngsters enrolled and it was the NAACP Youth organization that staged the first sit-in.

“They call us conservative, but we are the most militant in the civil rights fight,” he concluded.