A Continuum of Archival Custody: Community-Driven Projects as a Path toward Equity

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Abstract: Typically, when a community's historical materials encounter a large academic library's archives, the engagement is transactional: they sign forms, they hand over their archives, and we assure them that their materials will be valued by researchers. These procedures make assumptions about comfort with gift agreements (what if communities seek compensation?) or value ascribed to academic researchers (what about other kinds of information seekers?). These approaches may work for communities who have only been extolled and affirmed by the formal archive, but other communities need a different approach. We argue that community archives are strengthened with the strategic support of institutions, and institutional aspirations thrive with the inclusion of community voices and practices. In this paper, we use examples from the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries and its community partners to demonstrate how putting work with community-based collections in sharp relief with the practices of institutional repository reveals the fundamentally white supremacist foundation of archival studies and gives us an opportunity to imagine what is required for sustainable repair and healing.

During an outreach trip to Grambling, Louisiana, in November 2019, two representatives from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Libraries' Community-Driven Archives team were treated to a history lesson and community tour by long-time resident Phyllis Miller. We toured Grambling's Rock Valley Church cemetery. It held a marker for "Our Black Mammy" (Figure 1), and we learned about the voter suppression activity in Grambling that precipitated the Colfax Massacre of 1873, in which 60-150 Black men were killed by a white militia (Lewis, 2016). In both instances, the lives of Black people were figuratively and literally removed. Grambling is one of the communities in the Historically Black Towns and Settlements Alliance (HBSTA), and UNC is providing support to HBTSA-affiliated local leaders who want to leverage the town's history to encourage cultural tourism.

This trip to Grambling and collaboration with HBTSA are a part of UNC Libraries' Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded Community-Driven archives grant (2017-2021), designed to elevate community narratives. This grant aims to support local history keepers across the American South in making well-informed and well-resourced choices about how to best steward their stories and historical materials. Based in the Southern Historical Collection at UNC,

Figure 1: Photograph of a gravestone reading: "Our Black Mammy, Mrs. Frank Price" in Grambling's Rock Valley Church, taken by UNC Libraries staff in November 2019.

members of our grant team have collaborated with diverse groups of local partners to leverage institutional resources in support of community-driven archival collections and initiatives.[1]

Like other archives professionals, UNC Libraries' archivists have responded to calls for redress of the harms caused by archival gaps and erasures by shifting collections and services to center community leadership and guidance.[2] But is this sufficient for communities (Imarisha, 2017; Zavala, 2017; Cook, 2012)? Should archives professionals and institutions remain involved with community archives, given the harm done by our White supremacist institutions over the course of centuries?

A tempting response to these questions is "no, institutions should not be involved with community archives." For better or worse, however, institutional archives and the resources that animate them belong to the people, including those whose participation and visibility have not been prioritized in the past. We, as archives professionals, must acknowledge that traditional archival institutions have historically acted as vehicles of White supremacy and settler colonialism, supporting their maintenance in the historic record, while erasing and ignoring the stories and lives of Black, Brown, Indigenous, people of color, poor and working class, and LGBTQIA people (Ghaddar, 2019; Zavala, 2017; Caswell, 2017). As Saidiya Hartman (2008), who writes on enslavement, underscores, institutional record collections and their historiographic counterparts often offer only hollow glimpses of the lives of people outside of the white Western elite: "History pledges to be faithful to the limits of fact, evidence, and archive, even as those dead certainties are produced by terror" (p. 9). Dominant archives, often counter to their good intentions, uphold and reproduce oppressive hierarchies based on the content of their collections and how they put them to use.

Despite this legacy, we agree that traditional repositories and the archivists who manage them have a role to play in conversations about community-based collections (Cook, 2013). We can contribute to the conversation if we reflexively, carefully shape our actions with self-consciousness and reflection. In the Southern Historical Collection, when we reflect on the prejudice of our past, we see the need to be "community-driven." Practicing community-driven archives or centering the needs of the community over the needs of our institution allows us to consider our work with deference to marginalized communities. We accept that each community's relationship to an institutional repository is different. Each community collaboration and donor relationship requires institutional archivists to develop a unique set of skills and approaches, on a continuum from custodial to post-custodial. Not only can this approach broaden the relevance of collections in our care, but it can also support our greater communities' needs and calls for accountability, justice, catharsis, or reconciliation (Giemza, 2017). Typically, when a community encounters a large academic library, the engagement is transactional: they sign forms, they hand over their archives, and we assure them that their materials will be valued by researchers. These procedures make assumptions about comfort with gift agreements (what if communities seek compensation?) or value ascribed to academic researchers (what about other kinds of information seekers?). These approaches may

work for communities who have only been extolled and affirmed by the formal archive, but other communities need a different approach (Christen & Anderson, 2019; Caswell & Cifor, 2016; Sangwand, 2018). Throughout this paper, we will use examples from the Southern Historical Collection and its community partners to demonstrate how putting work with community-based collections in sharp relief with the practices of institutional repository reveal the fundamentally white supremacist foundation of archival studies and gives us an opportunity to imagine what is required for sustainable repair and healing.

Change Starts with Us

We, the archivists of institutional records, have a complex challenge: to more fully understand the scope and limits of our roles and responsibilities related to materials in our care and to redefine our role in proximity to community (Caswell, 2020). Reckoning with our own institutional history is a crucial first step toward acknowledging power dynamics and supporting honest efforts to address gaps and erasures in the archives and repair harm.

The Southern Historical Collection (SHC) is almost 100 years old. It has over 5,500 collections and is made up of more than 20 million items. It is one of the most important repositories for the records of the American South and has informed many contemporary influential books[3] on critical Southern history, including white supremacist narratives of the Old South, and Lost Cause mythology (Brundage, 2005). It is well-known that the SHC's founder, J.G. de Roulhac Hamilton, wanted to build "a great repository to tell the story of the South," but the fact that his collecting practices reflected his own racist perspectives is less well-known (Hoffman 2015, Shelton-Ormond 2021). In a contemporary context where Confederate monuments and names of buildings are being challenged for their violent connotations, forthrightness is crucial. Biff Hollingsworth, a SHC curator and community-driven archives grant co-investigator, has said that the entire Southern Historical Collection is one of the "biggest monuments to the confederacy" on the UNC campus.

For example, the papers of Julian S. Carr—a North Carolina ex-Confederate, white supremacist, politician, and businessman—exist in the SHC and include a copy of his 1913 dedication speech to UNC's most polarizing Confederate monument, "Silent Sam." In Carr's (1913) speech, he talks about "whipping a negro wench until her dress [is] shredded for insulting a white woman on the street." As the controversy over the Silent Sam statue heated up in 2019, a group of artists and students erected a monument in honor of this woman, which was promptly removed and vandalized by counter-protestors (Hill, 2019). While the university agreed to remove "Silent Sam," Carr's violent speech remains a part of the Southern Historical Collection, reminding us of the glaring absence of records of the life and community of the Black woman Carr referenced. (Figure 2)

Figure 2:Screenshot of a news segment depicting the plaque "In honor of the Negro Wench" on the UNC-Chapel Hill campus, recorded on February 23, 2019. Courtesy of Spectrum Local News.

Archivists must operate under the assumption that multiple things can be true at the same time. We never stop collecting, but we miss so many stories. We strive to describe materials in ways that anticipate the

broadest possible use, but we fail to be comprehensive. We are knowledgeable about our collections and engaged with content creators, but we do not know everything about all our collections. Even the infamous Carr speech (accessioned in the 1940s), which documented an important university landmark, was not actually mentioned in the finding aid until 2009 (Farzan, 2018). Yet researchers and communities continue to weave critical stories from the archival scraps and fragments available (Christian, 2019). The Carr papers include many omissions about the presence of Black people in Chapel Hill, but their contents can reveal important truths about the Black community that can help Black people piece together their own histories. In this instance, the careful record keeping, and preservation measures of professional archivists help us understand the severity and consequences of anti-Black racism in 1913 and scaffold us when we name it in 2021.

The Southern Historical Collection's founder, Dr. Hamilton, decided to build a broad collection that reflects the South, providing a mandate to support communities across the region. Although the SHC has a white supremacist history upheld by many generations of archives professionals at UNC, newer generations of SHC staff and scholars have begun to critique this legacy as a part of their archival labor (Poole, 2014). And while many of our archival ancestors did not see "us" coming— "us" being the current mix of racial, political, gender, ethnic, sexuality, regional, and generationally diffuse archives professionals—we are inextricably linked to those who came before us (Powell, 2018).

We are poised to shed the title of "other" to acknowledge the harm done through these archival practices and our responsibility in correcting course (Caswell, 2016). We see, for example, that the titles, content, and structure of our antebellum finding aids often obscure the enslaved communities who deserve recognition and contextualization (Dean, 2019; Hartman, 2008). Given the embeddedness of white supremacy in our institution and our profession, how can we confront this reparative work? Through our community-driven approach, we, as archives professionals, aim to challenge our institution's legacy while acknowledging our role as institutional actors in the work required to end oppressive historical narratives. We believe that "community-driven" is a framework that allows us to make new understandings of the American South and its many communities not only "available but inevitable" (Morrison, 2012).

Strictly Post-Custodial

On the continuum of how we as archives professionals support community archiving, there must be a post-custodial option for engaging with communities. Based on our team's experience, however, a community's decision to manage their collections independently does not fully eliminate a role for the resources and expertise of professional archivists (Sangwand, 2014; Kelleher, 2017).

Over the course of our grant-funded community-driven archives initiative, we have witnessed and wrestled with the impulse of professional archivists and librarians, to strictly look at community-driven approaches as a way to diversify our own holdings. For instance, we know researchers are looking for more content from marginalized communities, and we design an initiative to attract more of these types of collections into our repository. Historically, our point of reflexivity stops after undertaking the labor to diversify our institutional collections: we acknowledge archival gaps, fall over ourselves to engage diverse communities, and coax potential donors into our world of gift agreements and reading room access only (Evangelista-Dougherty, 2020). We ignore the extractive White supremacist practices embedded in our policies and procedures and expect communities to be grateful for our attention and resources.

While this impulse, to engage communities in a narrow way to support our researchers, is accepted by special collections curators, it can feel horribly reductive to communities still experiencing the legacies of trauma or those that are striving to tell stories and build archives independent of predominantly White structures. Community members rarely want to hear that their materials are extraordinary but not "appropriately placed" in a community setting. We believe strongly in the need to imagine archival

collections as a constellation of custodians and locations (Archival, 2011). Librarians and researchers are resourceful enough to consider access and stewardship of collections beyond the traditional extractive model.

In addition to avoiding problematic attitudes—like degrading a community's capacity for managing their own collections or dismissing a community's preferences surrounding the fate of their materials—traditionally held by some librarians and archives professionals, one important reason to advocate for post-custodial avenues for historical materials is that archival collections are bound to be understood differently when they are surrounded by similar collections, as opposed to being a special initiative in a larger repository (Booth, 2020). "Representational Belonging," the feeling of seeing yourself in the archives or an archive that reflects the nuance of your community, cannot be replicated at an institution (Caswell, 2016). While communities can easily articulate the nuance of their points of view through their members and collections, institutions struggle to reconcile who we have been with who we want to be. Without that full reckoning, we will continue to tell incomplete narratives and miss opportunities to meaningfully connect to relevant communities.

We have seen institutions make meaningful gestures to develop a more welcoming place for marginalized communities that fall flat because, while they focus on increasing racial diversity, they fail to decenter Whiteness and to truly recognize archives outside of an institutional context. (Evangelista-Dougherty, 2020; Archival, 2011). Post-custodial and community archives are options at one end of the "community-driven" continuum of archival practice and can be liberating for professional archivists as well as for communities who maintain direct control over their materials. If a community has the inclination to develop and sustain their own collections, we are eager to leverage our resources and expertise to encourage their vitality. This does not mean that we stop examining our own bias or moving closer to our vision of a truly representative archive of the American South, but we acknowledge aspects of a traditional repository that will never be acceptable to some communities, and that is okay. We argue that if we only engage with collections that "belong to us," professional archivists will restrict our own growth as practitioners and perpetuate a default White supremacist bent in the historical record.

Our community partnerships with Historically Black Towns and Settlements Alliance and the San Antonio Community Archive and Museum allowed us to explore opportunities for the library to support independent community-based archives. We designed our involvement in ways that aligned with community goals, fostered a sense of confidence, and provided an influx of resources to community members who want to control their own narratives and archives.

Historically Black Towns and Settlements Alliance (HBTSA)

HBTSA was founded in 2013, with the goal of improving cultural tourism in five historically Black communities in the Deep South, based on their rich histories.[4] These towns' mayors, who dominated the early membership of HBTSA, saw tourism as one potential vehicle of repair to address the legacy of structural racism that has taken a toll on the political, economic, and spiritual lives of these important places. Our community-driven archives team spent a great deal of time in HBTSA communities training volunteers and supporting the generation of archival content as one piece of a complex strategy to bolster cultural tourism. Our team worked alongside local leaders in all five of HBTSA's founding communities, described below.

Grambling, Louisiana, is most known as the home of the impressive, historically Black Grambling State University and its legendary sports figures.[5] The city has done much work to secure markers and historical designations for residents who have made great contributions to Grambling, the state of Louisiana, or the nation. Our biggest engagement with this community was selecting a community historian for our "Archival Seedlings" program (Heinz, 2020). This program trained and supported civic leader and Grambling historic district coordinator, Phyllis Miller, in developing a new oral history project to document the lives of Grambling elders, and purchased supplies to digitize and store content from older interviews.

Mound Bayou, Mississippi, founded by Freedmen in 1865, has often been called the "Jewel of the Delta" and has an extraordinary history of African American self-determination and autonomy (Block, 2017). Our team connected with the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, a local fraternal order, around the disposition of their archival materials, which were in storage in a dilapidated building. These historical records included copies of their newsletters (see Figure 3), applications for burial insurance, and a host of artifacts and photographs. Our engagement involved moving the items to a climate-controlled storage unit nearby.

Hobson City, Alabama has been an African American-controlled municipality since its founding in 1899. In 2015, the mayor of Hobson City created a historic preservation committee, and they are currently developing a museum, located in Town Hall and dedicated to the history of Alabama's African American spaces and places (Cunningham, 2020). The town hall already houses a variety of informal and formal archives, including photographs of community leaders, maps, municipal paperwork, high school football trophies, and antique furniture. Our team connected with a museum specialist at UNC and, together, they made the trip to Hobson City to spend two days with local volunteers, demonstrating how to handle, store, and document archival materials and historical objects.
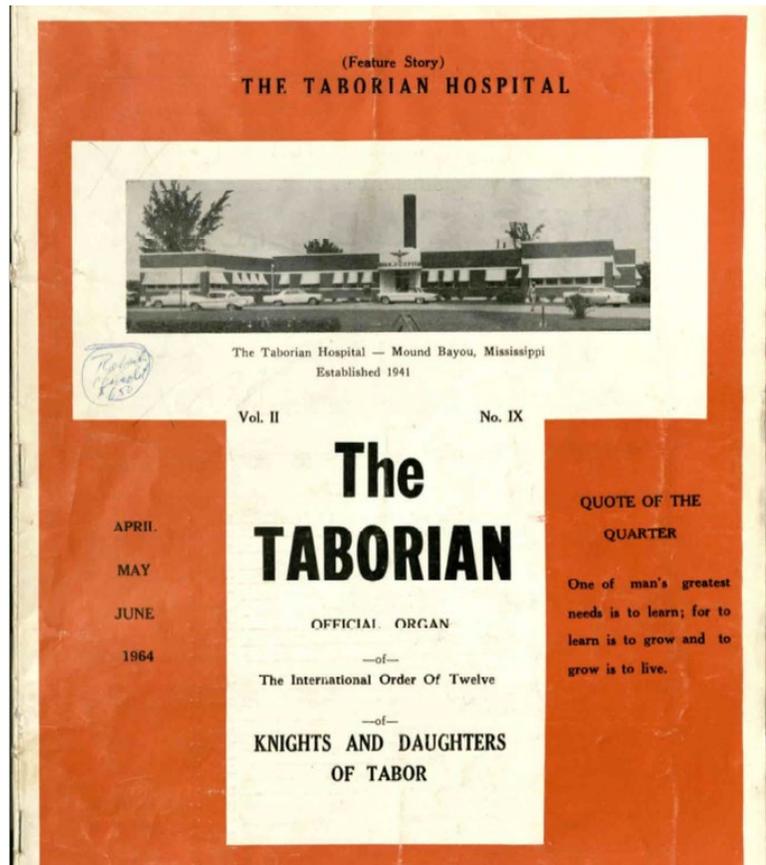

Figure 3: Scanned cover of Spring 1964 issue of The Taborian: Official organ of the International Order of Twelve Knights and Daughters of Tabor, captured in Mound Bayou, MS in November 2015. Courtesy of Community-Driven Archives Team

Although **Tuskegee, Alabama** was not founded by African Americans, the impact of Booker T. Washington and the Tuskegee Institute on the African American experience is undeniable. In fact, many of the other founding HBTSA towns consider themselves "Booker T. Towns"[6] because graduates of Tuskegee were often sent to work in their communities, resulting in Washington's self-help rhetoric permeating their towns as well. Many might wonder why Tuskegee needs support for cultural tourism when there are three National Parks sites and a university in its midst, but the town's residents struggle to engage tourists in its Black-owned restaurants, theaters, and museums. Our team connected with the executive director of one local museum, the Tuskegee Multicultural Center, to add capacity to her outreach initiatives. We are in the process of directing funds toward the installation of an oral history booth at the museum and outfitting an adjacent space for one of its archival collections (see Figure 4). Both efforts are designed to make the museum more of a destination for local and out-of-town visitors.
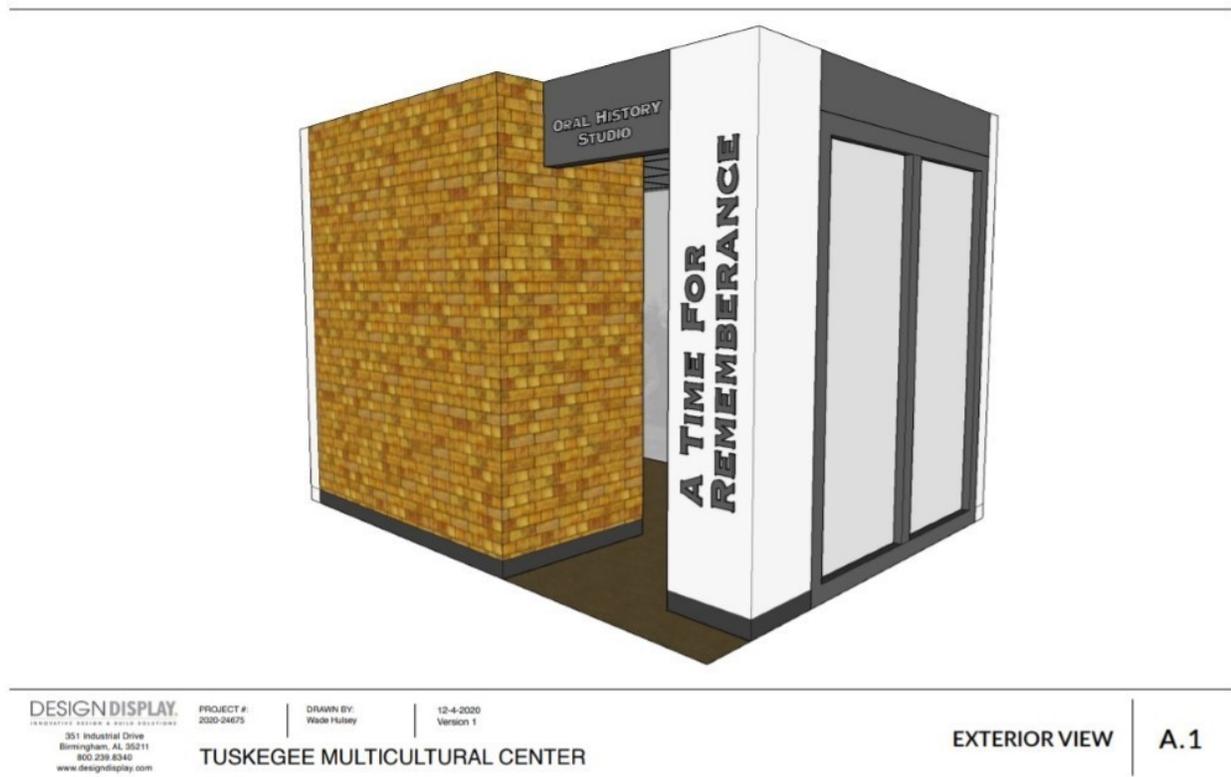

Figure 4: Architectural rendering provided by Design Display Inc. (Birmingham, Alabama) of the proposed oral history studio in the Tuskegee Multicultural Center in November 2020. Courtesy of Tuskegee Multicultural Center

Eatonville, Florida and its 30-year-old, annual Zora! Festival—a three-day art, cultural, and literary festival honoring hometown hero Zora Neale Hurston—have provided a blueprint for many other HBTSA communities for attracting cultural tourism. Eatonville's community leaders have used their history to generate income, partner with local institutions, and maintain archival collections through its Preserve Eatonville Community organization.[7] Our work in Eatonville has revolved around connecting with the broad spectrum of communities who attend the Zora! Festival. In one year, we offered a workshop on building an archive on a small budget, designed to demystify archival work. Another year, we were able to discuss oral history and share our "Archivist in a Backpack" prototype, which included a curated set of oral history recording and archival tools, with a cohort of students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (Powell, 2019).

San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum (SAAACAM)

Our team met with SAAACAM's founders during a community meeting in the AT&T Center in San Antonio. During the session with local artists, librarians, funders, and community members, we discussed how San Antonio's African American history could be found in the memories and homes of residents. The group agreed that San Antonio's dominant cultural heritage entities had given short shrift to the city's Black people for too long, and it was time to build a local, Black-led organization for collecting and sharing stories (Gibbons, 2018). SAAACAM has already surfaced stories about Black ranchers and cowboys through their cattle brands (see Figure 5), locations of Black cemeteries, and the history of Black placemaking over the last 100 years (Petty, 2020). These stories and more have brought a fresh perspective to San Antonio's cultural and tourism landscape, as demonstrated with an exhibit at the San Antonio International Airport and inclusion in the city's *Fiesta*[8] programming.

Our work with SAAACAM leaders and our advocacy of their vision for their organization has been anchored by our support of their digital archive along with archival skills workshops. SAAACAM shared that managing its digital archive was an immediate need because while its early outreach initiatives were rooted in successful community scan days and oral

Figure 5: Screenshot of a chart featuring baseball hats with 19th century Bexar County, Texas African American livestock/cattle brands embroidered on the front, taken from San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum's (SAAACAM) Facebook page on Jan 5, 2021. Courtesy of Everett Fly.

history sessions, processing the subsequent influx of digital records was an area where it would need to build capacity over time. Our team was able offer "dark storage" (preservation without public access) on UNC servers for SAAACAM content. We participated in wide-ranging conversations with our library's digital archivists concerning the best way to manage material that we did not own. We are eager to iterate on the model as one of many ways that libraries can use our resources to support projects (Hughes-Watkins, 2018). Within three years of its founding, SAAACAM entered a multi-faceted and mutually beneficial arrangement with Texas A&M University at San Antonio to be the new stewards of SAAACAM's digital and physical archives, making their content available for researchers. We advised SAAACAM in brokering this deal and are proud of this transition because it is aligned with our other efforts to bolster SAAACAM's collections and outreach work within San Antonio. Our presence in meetings with local politicians and

funders and our service on SAAACAM search committees (executive director and digital archivist), rooted in deference toward SAAACAM leadership, illustrate our commitment to seeing SAAACAM thrive on its own terms.

Beyond Custodial

Ironically, the content of the previous section is not too controversial to most traditional archivists. They may rationalize that if "we" can't collect community materials with the necessary sensitivities and nuance, "they" are welcome to set up their own mechanisms for their stories. What happens when communities assert their desire to be a part of an established repository AND their unique needs for appraisal, description, or access? What can be gained for taking these opportunities to examine our procedures and capacities? How can we focus beyond a case-by-case basis to draft new policies that would serve all marginalized communities (Kendi, 2020)?

On the campus of UNC-Chapel Hill, a coalition of students and researchers (see Figure 6) dug through the archives to prove that most of the UNC students who died fighting for the Confederate cause were slaveowners (Silent, 2019). This means that the tuition they paid and all their subsequent contributions to the university, including the beginnings of the Southern Historical Collection, were made possible because of slavery. If we, 155 years later, refuse the descendants of these enslaved communities the chance to be heard

Figure 6: Screenshot of the Silent Sam's Reckoning Twitter account, taken January 4, 2021.

and partake in our abundant resources, we perpetuate the legacy of our white supremacist founders.

In addition to reckoning with complicated histories, becoming an archival home for marginalized communities allows the institutional archive to center community knowledge, expand our donor community, and bring important narratives to new audiences.

Most traditional repositories are populated by boxes of papers, elevating the contributions of communities that are able or willing to share ideas through the written word. These repositories also reflect the worlds that most of these privileged creators populate, such as local governments, businesses, and courtrooms. For example, in a search to find material about Black migration in a recent exhibit, our repository struggled to look past ship manifests, fugitive slave ads, and railroad company records to surface the stories of African

Americans in their own words. When we start to incorporate the records of historically marginalized peoples, the discovery potential of the archives increases exponentially. Not only do our "community-driven" partner communities bring new types of materials into our library, such as oral histories, obituaries, recipes, and scrapbooks, but they also help us to better understand what we already have through new linkages, ontologies, and epistemologies (Caswell, 2016).

We transform our perspectives about how archives are created and why they matter, through engaging our new "donor communities." Instead of imagining new ways to show the traditional white, owning-class donor that their ancestors influenced history, we support our community partners in empowering future leaders with the contents of their collections. Our community partners look at young people, non-traditional scholars, and community members specifically as target audiences for their collections. This gives us, as archives professionals, a mandate to share stories beyond reading rooms, peer reviewed publications, and library exhibit spaces.

Our partnerships with the Eastern Kentucky African American Migration Project and the Student Health Coalition allowed us to better understand how our role as collection stewards could bend in support of community needs. While these materials are preserved and accessed through the library's standard procedures, our role in shaping how they are shared and utilized goes far beyond standard notions of custodianship.

Eastern Kentucky African American Migration Project (EKAAMP)

When Dr. Karida Brown was a doctoral student in the Sociology department at Brown University, her dissertation advisors encouraged her to contact the Southern Historical Collection (SHC) about her growing collection. Brown's dissertation focused on the experiences of a multi-generational, diasporic community of Black coal miners who migrated in and out of Lynch, KY, between 1927 and 1970 (Fossett, 2017). Brown's EKAAMP project took her around the country to record over 200 oral histories (see Figure 7). Brown connected to this community primarily through the Eastern Kentucky Social Club (EKSC), a network of Black former coal-mining families of Lynch. EKSC chapters in major cities like Detroit, Cleveland, Los Angeles, and throughout the country maintain the connectedness of this diasporic community and stewarded its migration story across generations.

Figure 7: An audio clip of William "Biscuit" Jackson reflecting on the happy atmosphere of an Eastern Kentucky Social Club reunion in Lynch, KY during an interview with Dr. Karida Brown in October 2013 (0:40). Courtesy of the Southern Historical Collection. [click image to play; see Appendix A for audio transcript]

Brown's grandfather was a coal miner, and her role as a member of this community as well as a community-engaged scholar forged a level of care for EKAAMP materials that required reciprocation by the host repository. Through a series of conversations and negotiations, Dr. Brown agreed to gift her collection to the SHC and encourage EKAAMP participants to give their materials to the library as well (see Figure 8).

Through a series of exhibitions[9] over the course of the grant, Brown draws on her extensive oral history trove to develop themes that complicate the lives and reveal the humanity of Lynch's Black coal miners. Exhibit narrators discuss school, sports, popular culture, and their home life with the backdrop of the Appalachian Mountains; the exploitative coal mining industry; and the tumult of Black life before, during, and after the Civil Rights movement (see Figure 9). EKAMMP invites visitors listening to oral history clips in each exhibit to feel the physical and psychological toll of racism in America.

Figure 8: Exhibit panel designed for the EKAAMP traveling exhibition, Gone Home: Race and Roots Through Appalachia, *designed by Design Dimension, Inc. (Zebulon, NC) shared in October 2020.* Courtesy of the Community-Driven Archives Team

Figure 9: An audio clip of Cynthia Brown Harrington discussing her father and his experiences with racial terrorism while traveling from Alabama to Kentucky during an interview with Dr. Karida Brown in June 2013 (01:57). Content warning: this clip contains several uses of the n-word in the context of recounting a historical event. Courtesy of the Southern Historical Collection. [click image to play; see Appendix B for audio

The Student Health Coalition (The Coalition)

Our initial conversations with this community did not veer from the typical procedures in the Southern Historical Collection. In 2013, after the death of William W. Dow, a medical doctor and one of North Carolina's influential organic farmers, Southern Historical Collection curators were invited to his home to appraise, and ultimately accession his materials. This work sparked the interest of Dow's former colleagues from Vanderbilt University's Student Health Coalition. The Coalition was founded in 1968 to provide free medical care, via health fairs and clinics, in the rural counties of Eastern and Western Tennessee. [10] We learned that Members' experiences were so transformative they wanted to add to Dow's collection with their own memories and include voices from the communities where they served. Our grant team (see Figure 11) showed them how to collect oral histories, helped them set up a project website, and encouraged them to

Figure 10: Digital photograph of Student Health Coalition members (left-right): Margaret Ecker, Dana Ellis, Jean Carney (community member), Barbara Clinton, and Bernetiae Reed (UNC staff) during their visit to Western Tennessee in June 2018. Courtesy of the Community-Driven Archives Team

Figure 11: A video clip of community health clinic practitioner Jean Carney showing the Coalition members and grant staff around the Douglass Community Health Center in Stanton, TN and sharing memories on June 2, 2018 (01:42). Courtesy of the Student Health Coalition. [click image to play; see Appendix C for audio transcript]

deposit material in the library. The Southern Historical Collection embraced a "community-driven" collecting and access models for this group because our standard ways were not working for them. If their priority audiences are rural communities with inadequate internet or students with short attention spans, downloading a 45-minute oral history is not probable. Coalition members organized themselves to curate high interest clips and place them on a website with their own context and messaging (see Figure 10).

Like the EKAAMP oral history collection, the interviews collected through the Coalition project disrupt White supremacist and dominant narratives within the Southern Historical Collection about power and Southern identity, at times recentering storytelling through a Black lens. In the clip referenced above, local health practitioner and activist, Jean Carney, discusses the racial dynamics at the Douglass Community Health Center in Stanton, Tennessee. Towards the end, the interviewer, our team's project documentarian, Bernetiae Reed, remarks that White patrons waiting at back doors to be seen by Black doctors is the inverse of what one would expect at a segregated medical clinic. This community truth shared by Jean Carney, a Black woman, reveals an example that could help us better understand the hypocrisy of racism and segregation in our communities. How does a Black doctor convey expertise and provide treatment to a White patient, when a Black person could be lynched for looking a White person in their eyes? How do intersections of class, criminality, or politics of discretion complicate the "color line" in the American South? Jean Carney's memories spark these conversations for us and complicate a history that we thought we understood so well: what other assumptions can we upend with the inclusion of community voices?

We often talk about EKAAMP and the Student Health Coalition as a similar flavor of our community-driven archives project. They both have large born-digital audiovisual collections, highly committed and motivated community champions, and they open our repository to collaborations with African American coal miners and rural community health practitioners and patients, marking important moments in American history. Our argument is that denying community requests for support and sticking to traditional library roles restricts our growth as practitioners and perpetuates a default White supremacist narrative.

Conclusion

The potential extensions and connections to this community-driven model are exciting and plentiful. Over the past few years, we have explored a large slate of tactics, including paying for digital and physical storage, curating exhibits, troubleshooting websites, offering training opportunities, and facilitating community conversations. Are there other opportunities to engage technology, develop new workflows, or design new kinds of library or community jobs to scale and distribute these ideas and resources to more communities? At the same time, there is an administrative liability of packaging community-driven as a singular strategy that could be deployed and made effective at any moment—there is still more to be learned here. This is tied up in notions of special projects, grant funding, and staff turnover, none of which is conducive to strong community partnerships (Giemza, 2017). What about the small and large policy shifts that are attempting to consider community in addressing inequities across the archives? In addition to our descriptive practices, we are scanning our gift agreements, our grant budgets, and our reading room policies as sites for improvement. We are already having discussions across the special collections, using our grant communities as case studies to demonstrate how themes like resources, ownership, and power are currently leveraged in the libraries as well what positive change could look like.

This work is just the beginning of the journey to tear down White supremacist constructs and bring equity and anti-racism to the archives. As Isabel Wilkerson (2020) so keenly observed, we are only 156 years (1865-2021) removed from a slaveocracy which took 246 years (1619-1865) to build, and the first 100 years (1865-1965) of Black citizenship rarely lived up to its promises. Our field has just begun to develop the vision to see how destructive racial hierarchies can be and it will take time to develop the practice of repair. It is not an accident that the stories featured in this piece and the archival materials that support it were not initially archived. It is not inevitable that important stories will be saved. We make a hundred decisions per day

through emails, collections, initiatives, hiring, et cetera to uphold these damaging norms or disrupt them. We are a part of the solution because we are willing to face the trauma and erasure caused by our forebearers and demonstrating a willingness to be inspired and changed by the communities who have crossed our paths.

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Notes

[1] At any given time, the Community-Driven Archives Team consisted of three full-time library staff members, three grant-funded full-time staff members, and three graduate students. Our length of engagement with our pilot partners ranged from one year to five years. More information on our grant team's roles and configuration can be found here: https://library.unc.edu/wilson/shc/community-driven-archives/about/.

[2] Our UNC Libraries team initiated our Community-Driven Archives grant project based on critical questions raised within the field about the harm perpetuated by institutional archives that fail to interrogate their histories and practices. Beyond our team within the Southern Historical Collection, the Wilson Special Collections Library has embraced conscious editing, a practice that addresses oppressive language historically perpetuated through archival description, and is similarly reviewing the ways staff describe, share, and interpret the items and objects in our care.

[3] See Ed Baptist's The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism (2014), Daina Ramey Berry's Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia (2007), and Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's Sisters and Rebels: A Struggle for the Soul of America (2019).

[4] The Historically Black Towns and Settlements Alliance has more facets and members beyond the scope of our involvement, Learn more about their vision and mission here: https://hbtsa.org/about-us.

[5] Grambling State University's sports history is well documented in the Eddie G. Robinson Museum, housed on the campus. More information can be found here: https://www.robinsonmuseum.com/.

[6] Former ballet dancer, playwright, actor, and director of the Tuskegee Repertory Theater Dyann Robinson commemorated the Booker T. Washington connection among HBTSA's founding members with a play, *Booker T.'s Towns*. More information about Ms. Robinson's career can be found here: https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/shc/2019/02/20/dyann-robinson-and-the-tuskegee-repertory-theater-1991/ and clips from the play can be found here: https://tuskegeerep.com/booker-ts-towns.

[7] The Association to Preserve Eatonville Community (https://preserveeatonville.org/) is the repository for Zora! Festival maintains a museum, and advocates for the residents and the history of Eatonville.

[8] San Antonio's Fiesta (https://fiestasanantonio.org/history-of-fiesta/) is an important annual event. When SAAACAM was invited to produce their own Fiesta medals and provide programming in 2018, it was a strong sign that they had "arrived" on the cultural tourism scene in San Antonio.

[9] Themes from Dr. Brown's EKAAMP collection have deep resonance in African American history. Dr. Brown's collaboration with Brown University's Center for the study of Slavery and Justice is detailed here: https://cssj.brown.edu/work-center/public-humanities-projects/exhibitions/exhibition-archive/black-shackle-african

[10] The Student Health Coalition's website (https://studenthealthcoalition.org/) includes a timeline, maps, personal reflections, and links to additional sources. The Coalition members continue to add content as they conduct more oral histories and gather more manuscript material from their members.

Appendix A: William "Biscuit" Jackson reflects on the happy atmosphere of an Eastern Kentucky Social Club reunion in Lynch, KY [transcript of audio file, see Figure 7]

Lynch, Benham, Cumberland. Those Tri-Cities, I wish I could explain it, but I can't. It was just something that was there... The reunions were just…I remember back in the day it was probably over 2,000 people [that] would show up at those places. I mean everybody, you just see…and it was all love, you spend three quarters of your day hugging people, just hugging and shaking hands that's what it was about, ya know, renewing old acquaintances and ahhh, I used to love you back in high school [laughter]…I used to, ya know, it just…

Appendix B: Cynthia Brown Harrington discusses her father and his experiences with racial terrorism while traveling from Alabama to Kentucky during an interview with Dr. Karida Brown [transcript of audio file, see Figure 9]

Content warning: this clip contains several uses of the n-word in the context of recounting a historical event.

Cynthia Brown Harrington:

I can remember times we would just sit on the floor and just listen to mom and daddy, talk about things in times and how he got to the coal mines. He, he ain't hit it. All right. Can you tell us that story? Yes. He, he used to get drunk, drunk, uh, and he basically told us the same story when he got drunk, uh, about how he hobo-ed, he called it hobo-ing.

We call it hitchhike. He said he hobo-ed from, uh, Alabama. Because he had heard about the jobs, uh, in the mines in Kentucky, I think he was in his thirties at that time. I'm not actually sure, but he said he was hobo-ing and he was walking and these White men saw him one day and they said, "hey nigga, where are you going?"

So he told them that he was going to Kentucky to get a job. Right. And he said, they continued to taunt him for a while. And they said to him, um, "we heard that niggas can preach". So they said to him, "nigga preach". And I asked him, I said, so what did you preach? He said, "he only knew one book in the Bible" So he preached the, uh, book of Job.

So he said he had to do it because he was a little afraid and then he said, after he preached, uh, they said, "well, we heard niggas like to dance". He said, they said, "nigga, dance". And then I said, did you dance? He said, sure. I danced. And you know, once he danced and they taunted him some more, they let them go.

Dr. Karida Brown:

Was this in Alabama?

Cynthia Brown Harrington:

He was on his way. Uh, it was, you know, he was on his way to Kentucky. So I don't know exactly when this happened because he was hitchhiking here where somewhere along the way, you know, he ran into these White fellows and that's what happened. So he used to tell us the story. On, you know, when he got drunk and he also told us the story, how he met, uh, uh, Leona Brown.

Appendix C: Community health clinic practitioner, Jean Carney, shows the Coalition members and grant staff around the Douglass Community Health Center in Stanton, TN [transcript of video file, see Figure 10]

Jean Carney:

I was able to get this building. I don't remember who I got it from...rundown building.. and we renovated it. And this was the waiting room in the front... waiting room.. from the door. You could sit on this side. That's uh, and we had, um, four exam rooms going down the hallway, had a little area for lab. We had a bathroom back there and we had an area in the back for a physician.

And, uh, after the clinic was going... and come on around, uh... for a while. And then... for, uh, a White gentlemen, um, it's said that they were gambling up there. I don't know what happened, but he came down here bloody and he came in the door, come around into the side door….[Hey, how y'all doing? I'm well..] Oh, he came in the side door here.

This is the side door and he came, and Dr. Cannon treated him in there. And after that folks started coming down here, they wouldn't come and sit in the waiting room with the Blacks. They come in this door and asked Dr. Cannon for service.

Margaret Ecker:

White people?

Jean Carney:

Yeah

Margaret Ecker:

And the first one, the first White person to come in there was this guy that was bloody and gambling...

Jean Carney:

This guy...yes, said that's what I heard he was doing. That they were gambling down there somewhere and he got bloody. He had blood dripping all over him,

Bernetiae Reed:

So, that's like the reverse they were going in the back door.

Jean Carney:

Yeah. They did not want to be seen coming to this Black doctor.

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