



2020-2021

Volume 17

J

ournal for the Society of North Carolina



**Journal for the Society of North Carolina
Archivists**

Published by

Society of North Carolina Archivists

J-SNCA Editorial Board

Courtney Bailey, *Editor*

State Archives of North Carolina

Randall Bowman, *Editor*

Elon University

Kate Collins, *Photograph Editor*

Duke University

Bari Helms, *Publication Chair*

Reynolda

Gene Hyde, *Editor*

University of North Carolina at Asheville

Tracy Jackson, *Editor*

Duke University

Elizabeth Johnson, *Editor*

Mercy Heritage Center

Rita Johnston, *Editor*

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Amy McDonald, *Editor*

Duke University

Kristen Merryman, *Managing Editor*

North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

Katie Nash, *Reviews Editor*

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Matthew Peek, *Editor*

State Archives of North Carolina

Kelly Policelli, *Editor*

State Archives of North Carolina

Diana Sanderson, *Editor*

Warren Wilson College

Travis Souther, *Editor*

New Hanover County Public Library

Matt Turi, *Editor*

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

ISSN 1945-8533

Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists

Volume 17 COVID issue

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 2	Imagining Better Futures for Archival Labor	
		Dorothy Berry
Page 11	Artivism, Virtual Workshops, and the Pandemic	
		Adreonna Bennett
Page 16	Homecoming Is What?!?! Performing Content-Analysis Research on an Enduring University Tradition Using Digital Collections during COVID-19	
		James Stewart, Franklin Robinson, Edward Lee Love, and Iyanna Sims
Page 35	Mobilizing Citizen Archivists: North Carolina Documents the Great War	
		Kathelene McCarty Smith and Keith Phelan Gorman
Page 57	Working Through COVID-19 at the Alabama Department of Archives and History	
		Kayla Scott
Page 66	Reviews	

About the Cover

Polio vaccine, May 13, 1955, photograph, Daily Reflector
Negative Collection (#741), East Carolina Manuscript Collection,
J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University,
<https://digital.lib.ecu.edu/2534>

Imagining Better Futures for Archival Labor by Dorothy Berry

This keynote was given virtually at the Society of North Carolina Archivists mini conference in May 2020.

I'll start off by saying, I had a totally different plan when I agreed to give this keynote. Labor and archives, a timely and historic topic, maybe throw in some charming anecdotes from the one time I interviewed for an archives job in North Carolina, talk about possibilities, throw out some statistics about contingent labor. I had truly even considered doing some of the pair and share dialogue-building activities that I've never personally enjoyed, as an audience member, but that other people really seem to get a kick out of! When everything began falling apart, and especially when my university banned all professional travel, I can genuinely say that I felt a bit of relief. I'm not generally one for imposter syndrome, but in a time when people whose entire professional and academic lives have been based on studying economic trends repeat the word *unprecedented* enough times that the word has lost meaning, who am I to talk to a group of people of any stripe about futures for archival labor?

My name is Dorothy Berry, and I am currently employed in a noncontract position as the inaugural Digital Collections Program Manager at Harvard University's Houghton Library. I'm the sort of person who often finds themselves in situations with people who wrongly assume I am from the same cultural, class, and economic background as they are, around folks who have *sympathy* for student loan debt, not *empathy*.

Archival labor means this May marks the first time I have lived in one state for two full calendar years since 2012, as I have moved from short-term position, to fellowship position, back to finishing up a missing graduate credit, to a two-year grant-funded position. All in different states, all requiring broken-lease fees and moving van rentals and first and last month's rent.

I have seen my labor manifest in tears of joy from students who have never before seen a picture of a nineteenth-century Black person whom they saw as self-composed, self-possessed. Whom they wanted to see themselves in.

I have seen my labor manifest in tears of sadness when I have been called into a room as an expert and listened to others in our field talk about Blackness in the archives with the same amount of dignity as one might give to a trending topic on Twitter: you can't ignore that people seem to be interested, but it's certainly not something worth devoting serious thought to.

My labor is complicated and illuminated by race, both my own and that of the materials I choose to work with most. A lot of my archival labor takes place outside of the stacks, outside of the endless metadata spreadsheets. I end up taking reference requests in coffee shops, outside of bookstores, in my Instagram DMs, from Black artists and scholars and seekers who recognize my archival labor in ways institutions do not. These may sound like unique circumstances, but I think we are in a moment of heightened awareness that everyone's labor is complicated, by their histories, by their families, by responsibilities.

It's difficult to talk about labor these days, and in this context, without immediately transitioning to pure rage. I'm mad about my loved ones losing their jobs. I'm mad about my loved ones fighting for raises and now learning that all that foot dragging from management means their status as underpaid will remain static for years at a minimum. I'm mad for everyone who saw a light at the end of their employment tunnel suddenly get snuffed, for folks who had plans to leave toxic workplaces. Of course, I'm even more mad, on top of all of that, that in a time of immense human physical and emotional suffering due to illness, I have to be mad about work!

Don't Get into Libraries 'Cus You Love Books

I don't believe it is wrong to be angry. I do believe it is wasteful to not transform your anger, however, if you are at all able. When I was asked for a title for this talk, the first word that came to mind was *imagining*. This is a time

when we are hearing across academia that things that were previously thought to be impossible in terms of service or workflows are suddenly moving forward in archives, without two internal review sessions or the formation of a task force under the working group commissioned by the Committee for Workflow Development. Extreme circumstances are forcing structural change, and we don't really have the time or energy right now to discuss why we let those structures get built in the first place. I want to imagine a future where it doesn't take a global pandemic for us to examine our pedagogy, to consider the cost of charging high fees for digitization, to stop placing a higher value on the manuscripts in our stacks than on our staff.

I was mulling over this reality when I was reminded of the aphorism I heard when I was pursuing an MLIS: "Don't get into libraries because you love books. Get into libraries because you love people." Now I do not want to ignore the more common wisdom, and perhaps more reflective of my own path, "Get into archives because you want a more stable career, and you studied ethnomusicology and experimental music performance, so somehow archives is the more stable option" or, to simplify further, "Get into any career because you need money and health insurance, and don't feel guilty if you don't love what you do." Those are deep truths, and I don't want to put Pollyannaish wallpaper over them. I do, however, want to spend this time with you using this righteous anger that is in the air to plant seeds of imagination, of the possibility of better futures in archival labor through a practice of manifesting a love of people in our work practices, not romantic love or even familial love, but the human love that asks us to put ourselves in the shoes of those we work with and for. This may sound too gushing for you, but I hope to describe it by explaining my framework. I do not think people need to love their work; I think that is a rare privilege, and more often a delusion people fall into that makes them sacrifice themselves for an enterprise that cannot love them back. I believe it is paramount that humans love other humans, that we acknowledge the full depth of the other's humanity by recognizing it is as wild and nuanced as our own. If *love* as a word is still too woo-woo for you, feel free to replace my usage in your mind with "respect," because that is at the core of what I'm talking about.

Respecting the humanity of archival subjects and reifying the dignity of archival labor are tasks of imagination that are tied closely together. The aforementioned “Don’t love the books, love the people” maxim is often a chiding toward those who fantasize about working in an empty, quiet space full of interesting and compelling books and silent, self-shushing patrons. I think it takes on a different color when viewed from the archivists perspective—now that we have thrown gatekeeping and false neutrality out the window (or, at least, I hope we all have!), envisioning a career of sitting in an empty space where you take all the time you want to research the greatest figures in history, write them a glowing biog-hist, process to the item with all the ALS and TP notes needed, and then share this information with only the most sacrificing scholarly pilgrims is both anachronistic and undesirable. Loving the people in archival labor is the act of uncovering those hidden voices, the silenced histories. Loving the people is working with new patron demographics who explore collections in ways they weren’t designed for. Loving the people and not the archive is something I feel called to do as the core of my archival labor, but lest I give a false impression, I do not find it easy, nor have I generally found myself compensated to do so. Regardless, I am talking to you today about imagining better futures, and I want to work with you to imagine loving the people who work with/for you, and loving the people for whom you work.

Love People (Who Work with/for You)

I have been told by folks, hard-working folks, in comfortable and secure special collections leadership positions that they see nothing wrong with contingent hiring, because it worked out for them, sometimes with the implication that I shouldn’t complain either, because it worked out for me too. There is no point in arguing the details there, of getting to a definition of “worked out,” because we have again reached the sort of failure of imagination that leads to the state we are currently in: this field is far too full of intelligent people for us to let a single conversation go by with the implication that one person getting a permanent, so they say, job out of every fifty or one

hundred people who remain underemployed in contract positions is any metric of success.

That response doesn't come from, in my experience, a place of callousness or ignorance; it comes from a very bad and very human practice of assuming that one's own lived experience is the best judge of how other people's lives should work out. To put it more simply, it comes from a failure of imagination. What makes that failure of imagination dangerous, of course, is designing a system that is dependent on specific jobs being filled but that reports upward that those jobs are, in fact, not crucial enough to be codified with what little permanence is on offer in archives and special collections these days. We've created a world where we have colleagues working alongside other people with the same credentials, the same experience, sometimes even the same amount of time at our institutions, but some of them are permanent employees and some of them are on tenterhooks every summer.

This is a particularly complicated imaginary, as it works across intersecting ideals. If they wanted a permanent job, they would apply for one! Even though it's a renewable contract, it's pretty much the same as a permanent job! When you think about it, we're all contingent—anyone could be fired, right? This is the only way to get the work done with our current budgets. Folks usually don't say any of that out loud, but the ideas meld together to create what has, for the last decade-plus, excused practices that have recently revealed themselves to be unsustainable when push comes to shove.

I've been greeted with shocked faces and subtle glares when I've questioned the efficacy of two-year diversity residencies and project jobs based around hiring a marginalized archivist to work with marginalized peoples' collections. We need to diversify the workforce, and this is a pipeline! How else will we get people of color into our archives? How else can we gain subject-area knowledge in marginalized histories? We can't create permanent positions to just change the current demographics for a field that is more than 80 percent white women.

This is another complicated matrix of imaginaries that doesn't finish its thought. The starting point is great, but what jobs exist for folks finishing up those fellowships? Where is the pipeline for an early career African American

collections archivist residency if there are no African American collections archivist positions to move into? How are we preparing those early career professionals to interview at our institutions, where we say, “It seems like you are really strong in mid-century African American history, but our collections are primarily those of nineteenth-century scholars and merchants?”

Both of the labor practices I’ve described can, of course, lead to positive outcomes. People with fantastic, long careers started off in a term position and transitioned into mid-career stability. People with interesting and affirming positions began as visiting archivist for Latinx collections. What behooves us, however, when envisioning the future of archival labor, is to think of not only how things can go right but also how they can go wrong. This is made extra difficult by the reality that the people who are most often making big organizational and hiring decisions are those for whom employment, at least, has gone right.

The point I’m making here is not that we can create a slew of permanent positions—that isn’t viable in the best of times and is most likely laughable now. Instead, I suggest that we work through loving respect of the other, and plan for what is likely, not for what would be best. When we have contract staff who have been doing standard operational work in our archives year after year, instead of thinking, “If they wanted a permanent job, they would apply for one,” we should acknowledge that we have created false permanency and need to be honest with ourselves and our colleagues. When we create, and widely publicize, diversity positions to bring in temporary new voices for a year or two, we should work hard internally to understand why we have difficulties recruiting and retaining staff of color in our other positions.

When I was last on the job hunt, I interviewed for a position working at an Ivy League university. Midway through the day, I had a one-on-one with a library administrator. She had a copy of my CV in hand and said, “University of Minnesota is a pretty big shop. Why can’t they make a job for you to follow up on your contract position?” I had a quick response, because one of the biggest kindnesses I’d been offered in my career to that point had come from my supervisor at University of Minnesota. As my grant-funded project was drawing to a close, he sat me down and told me, clearly, that there was no ongoing funding and

that there would be no permanent job. Other people had said that they loved having me there, and that maybe this or that project could be extended, and I could hop over to that project. My supervisor was right, however, to tell me the truth, not what he would have liked the truth to be, and to assist me in finding and applying to jobs that could offer me some sort of stability and career growth. The system we've built up has undervalued and underappreciated labor so much, though, that it made perfect sense for that administrator to think it was fair to ask me why my two-year grant-funded employment couldn't be extended for another six months or a year to give me a bit more time working in one place, something that appeals to hiring managers.

Love People (for Whom You Work)

“Love people for whom you work” is grammatically correct but feels unnatural coming out of my mouth! “Loving people you work for” is more likely how I would say this in everyday conversation, but it immediately asks—who are the people in question? I think it is a kind idea to love and respect your managers and administrators, but I am also somewhat indifferent to that as a topic of discussion. The people for whom we work, as archivists and information professionals, are our users and, in my opinion, our archival subjects. We owe it to both groups to work to see them fully and meet them where they are. We all know we are the inheritors of a long tradition of gatekeeping and putting on airs, but even in a time when there is a growing focus on opening up the archives, it's still often hard for us to see beyond the doors of our own institutions. The idea of who we serve, or, more important, the ideas we hold about who is interested in archives, can be stunted by limitations of imagination.

I am constantly amazed by the folks I meet who should be posted up in my repository every moment our reading room is open but who tell me, “Oh, I don't really go there.” I was recently giving a presentation at the Black Portraiture conference at New York University, and I attended a fantastic panel where a young scholar spoke about her research around the buying and selling market for daguerreotypes featuring Black subjects, and how she related

that to the historical marketplace around those same Black bodies. It was an expertly given talk, and I was surprised to see in the program that she was a first-year graduate student at my own university. I approached her afterward to tell her we have many collections related to her research and to ask if she had made her way over. She laughingly let me know that that place just wasn't for her but asked for my card so she could email me some research questions. That same day, following my own presentation, a young man from Chicago asked if he could have my card because he was beginning a postgraduate residency and didn't trust that his new adviser was thinking about archives in ways that would include Black and queer subjects. I bring these anecdotes up not to call out anyone in particular, and definitely not to create the illusion that there is anything particularly special about me! What strikes me about both of them is how they illustrate how we as a field have made it clear to some people, some people who are still relatively privileged - Harvard University graduate students and University of Chicago postgraduate scholars -that they are not who we serve in archives.

I believe that same messaging, that there is a group we serve and that some users are on the outside of that group, plays out in our relationship to our archival subjects. We are in a moment when the concept of "community archives" has served to galvanize interest and support in archives generated, managed, and controlled by, often marginalized, communities. Unfortunately, this interest has led to a dichotomous trend in thinking: there are community archives, which hold the record of people of color, of queer folks; and there are institutional archives, which live at universities and hold the record of privileged White folks. This, to me, is a misreading of the great opportunities of community archives, for self-determination and narrative creation, and a failure of imagination of institutional archives, an abdication of responsibility toward the archival subjects who live in the margins of our collections. We often say that we don't have rich collections of, for instance, people of colors' history, but what we really mean is that we have never valued that as a collecting area, or as an area of scholarly expertise. Opening up our minds to the depths of American history makes clear that if we have been collecting the papers of well-to-do or socially notable people, there is

no way their papers don't intersect with the lives of Black people, of the working class.

We have such amazing opportunities to diversify our user base and our collections if we shift some of our focus onto what we already have and begin imagining ways to see our collections through other eyes. Shaking off our (often well-earned) notions about what's in our stacks and who comes into our reading room is difficult and time consuming, and when the suggestion comes from the voice of a newcomer like me, it is sometimes, I'm sure, simply just annoying. The opportunity at hand is so spectacular, so much more engaging than shrugging away our holdings as "mostly old, rich white men," that I'm very willing to be annoying and to ask that we love the archival subjects we have hidden away as much as we love the archives users who are eager for our information if we just let them in.

Conclusion

As I said at the beginning, this is a strange time to do almost anything, and a particularly strange time to write a keynote on archival labor. I thank you so much for your time and for choosing to log in to yet another Zoom meeting. In the face of almost no encouraging evidence, I am one who actively chooses the possibility of positive futures and invites you to explore your imagination for archival futures in which your labor is valued in all senses of the word. I did not get into this because I love the archive but rather because I love the people the archive serves. I believe we can all continue in that service, but only if we open our minds and look closely at the systems we are designing and the systems that we uphold.

Dorothy Berry is an archivist whose work focuses on the description and discoverability of African American cultural heritage materials. She has worked at the Archives of African American Music and Culture, the Black Film Center/Archive, at University of Minnesota on Umbra Search African American History, and currently at Houghton Library, Harvard University where she serves as the inaugural Digital Collections Program Manager.

Artivism, Virtual Workshops, and the Pandemic

by Adreonna Bennett

I was hired as a Community Engagement Archivist in the Special Collections and University Archives unit at J. Murrey Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte in June 2019. Not only was this my first full time library job but it was also a new position within the library. The first few months consisted of meeting my colleagues and important community members to get the lay of the land. Through these meetings, I was introduced to Alvin C. Jacobs, Jr. Alvin is a local Charlotte photographer and social justice activist. Jacobs was also the artist in residence at the Levine Museum of the New South and the Harvey Gantt Center for African American Art & Culture. At the latter, he created an exhibition entitled “Welcome to Brookhill,” which documented a neighborhood in Charlotte threatened by gentrification due to its proximity to uptown Charlotte. After the debut of his exhibit, awareness of this neighborhood increased, and public conversations turned into how the developer could work with the Brookhill community to ensure residents were not forced out.

Partnering with a Community Photographer

Jacobs has captured eye-catching and emotion-evoking images of uprisings and protests that have occurred over the last five or so years. These movements are not new but, with the advent of social media, it is easier for them to be documented. They are typically sparked by the murder of a Black person at the hands of law enforcement. Sometimes it is by a vigilante set on taking matters into their own hands, which was the case in the killings of Trayvon Martin in 2012 and Ahmaud Arbery in 2020. Charlotte itself is no stranger to such events with Keith Lamont Scott being murdered in 2016¹ and Danquirs Franklin in 2019² at the hands of Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department.

During my meeting with Jacobs over a cup of coffee, he mentioned wanting to lead a workshop that would teach people how to take social justice pictures safely by

using something just about everyone has on them: a cell phone. He explained that he had seen well-meaning people be injured by law enforcement or arrested for taking pictures, which could have been prevented if they had better situational awareness and knew when it was time to leave. While talking with him, I felt how important this was not only to him but to the community and the historical record. Photographs and videos can and have changed the common narrative around protests and uprisings, thereby passing the mic (or lens in this case) to those typically left out.

We planned to host these workshops before the Republican National Convention that was scheduled to take place in Charlotte in August 2020. In previous years, political conventions have been spaces of contention where supporters and protesters make their grievances known and sometimes clash, often leading to involvement from law enforcement. By hosting these workshops prior to this event, participants who wanted to document public activities surrounding the Republican National Convention would be equipped with the skills to safely do so.

Workshop Planning

Identifying a granting source for this project became the next task. Like most libraries, funding at UNC Charlotte Libraries is tight, especially for specialized projects or one-off events such as this. From my colleagues, I learned more about small grants offered by UNC Charlotte. The Chancellor's Diversity Challenge Fund was created by former Chancellor Phillip DuBois in an effort to "support faculty, staff, and student initiatives promoting the daily value of diversity in the intellectual life of campus." These small institutional grants are given on an annual basis in June and require that programming be completed within the fiscal year. In December 2019-February 2020, I completed an application for the Chancellor's Diversity Fund Challenge and the project was approved in May 2020 for \$2,250, with the majority going to Jacobs as an honorarium. The remainder was spent on marketing, masks, and refreshments. During the initial planning stages before COVID-19 hit, we decided to have the series be four parts. The first workshop would introduce Jacobs and the importance of social justice photography. The second

workshop would have Jacobs guiding participants in taking their own photographs. The third workshop was to be presentations where participants would talk about the pictures they took and Jacobs would offer feedback. The fourth and final workshop for the series would be a crash course on personal digital archiving and teaching participants best practices for saving their photographs and videos given by our digital archivist, Tyler Cline.

Transitioning to Virtual in a COVID-19 environment

Planning for the workshop series did not start until the end of May to early June. Given the nature of Jacobs' work, it seemed almost impossible to turn an in-person photography workshop into a virtual program. We envisioned that this workshop series would provide hands-on professional photography training and let participants practice their skills in different environments. Another challenge was North Carolina's constant change in the number of people allowed to gather inside or outside due to COVID-19, which made it difficult to plan any in-person components of the workshop series. COVID restrictions on gatherings prevented the Republican National Convention from being held, which was a major event that the workshop series was initially centered around. Taking all of these things into consideration and weighing the pros and cons, we decided to continue virtually. The university and city of Charlotte's mandates played a huge role in our decision making.

After talking to Jacobs about his vision and desired outcomes, we settled on reducing the number of workshops from four to three to keep participant interest and maximize Jacobs' time. The first workshop remained the same topically but had to be presented via Zoom. Jacobs was still able to convey what social justice photography means and showed examples of his work. The second workshop became a socially-distanced walking tour of the uptown area of Charlotte and stayed true to its purpose. However, there was a 25-person restriction to this event due to university guidelines. Masks were required (we had some on hand for anyone who forgot) and social distancing was encouraged. Participants brought their own cell phones and professional grade

cameras to take pictures of the area. Jacobs was still able to give guidance while also serving as a model for pictures to show differentiation between lenses and techniques. After the walking tour, participants sent in any images they had and Jacobs critiqued them live during the next workshop. Our digital archivist, Tyler Cline, was still able to give a Zoom presentation about how participants could archive their own images and videos to save them for future generations. He shared best practices from Witness.org and Authority Collective about how photographers can protect those photographed and themselves from police retaliation. While the purpose of the workshop was to equip attendees with the tools necessary to document history happening around them, we also recognize that these images could be used negatively against those protesting.

Impacts and Takeaways

Despite the challenges presented by COVID-19, the content and purpose of the workshops stayed the same. Over all three workshops, we had around 43 registrants and 30 participants, with the first session being the most well-attended. The outdoor photo tour had 15 participants, which was higher than anticipated. Had we been able to have all in-person sessions, I assume attendance would have been higher. Those who attended ranged from Charlotte community members to UNC Charlotte students and staff, but we had several student participants back out due to a class conflict. We sent out an anonymous feedback survey after the event to gauge participant interest in this topic and what they learned overall. There were only two respondents, but they provided positive words about the workshops. One respondent said, “Alvin made social justice photography seem really accessible and something that anyone could do, even with limited equipment.” When asked about digital archiving, the other respondent said “[The workshop] made me realize that I need to go through my images and other digital media and make a plan for organizing and preserving them.” These comments showed that our anticipated outcomes were successful but with only two participants respondents it is hard to say what the overall experience was.

One unintentional outcome from this workshop series was a student art donation. A student attendee created a

photography exhibit around race, lynching, and violence against Black bodies. His work was exhibited in the gallery of UNC Charlotte's student union and in a community gallery. After these exhibitions were over, he chose to donate his artworks to the Special Collections & University Archives at J. Murrey Atkins Library. Without this event, he may not have considered the university's archives as a place for his work and that history would have been lost. While we hope to partner with other community activists and photographers in the future, there is still a distrust between large institutions and communities, particularly in Black and Brown communities where there may be a history of marginalization. It is imperative that archivists work with activists and community organizations to preserve their records in a way that is mutually beneficial for both parties.

Adreonna Bennett is the Community Engagement Archivist at the J. Murrey Atkins Library at UNC Charlotte. She conducts outreach to the Charlotte community and coordinates events, exhibits, and projects centered around Special Collections and University Archives materials. She holds a Bachelor's of Arts in Communication Studies from UNC Chapel Hill and a Masters in Library Science with a concentration in archives from North Carolina Central University. Her research interests include African American history and North Carolina history.

NOTES

1. "Shooting of Keith Lamont Scott," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shooting_of_Keith_Lamont_Scott

2. Amanda Zhou, "In Rare Move, Charlotte Review Board Disagrees with CMPD on Danquirs Franklin Case," *Charlotte Observer*, February 6, 2020, <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/news/local/article239926313.html>, 1.

Homecoming Is What?!?! Performing Content-Analysis Research on an Enduring University Tradition Using Digital Collections during COVID-19

by James Stewart, Franklin Robinson,
Edward Lee Love, and Iyanna Sims

North Carolina A&T State University, located in Greensboro, North Carolina, is a Second Morrill land grant doctoral research university established in 1891, with a national reputation in STEM education. Ranked as number one among public historically black colleges and universities, North Carolina A&T State University has over twelve thousand students and seventy thousand alumni.¹ The university has a rich historical legacy and has played a significant role in civil rights for African Americans in the United States. The F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections safeguards the documents that tell the story of the university's 130-year history. It procures or otherwise collects, organizes, describes, maintains, and preserves records of historical and administrative value to the university. A second collection focus is on persons or events that have significantly impacted the African American experience in the Piedmont Triad region. The archives has a collection of approximately thirty thousand linear feet of records, photographs, research collections, periodicals, and rare books and assists, on average, more than 160 researchers and students a year.

COVID-19's Impact on F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections

In March 2020, under the direction of the university and allied with the rest of the world, F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections closed its doors due to COVID-19, and staff began to work off-site.² While univer-

sity administrators worked diligently to determine the best steps for moving the campus forward in an impending pandemic, the staff at the archives began to critically think of ways to modify services that relied heavily on physical access. The decisions made had to adhere to safety guidelines to protect the well-being of staff and patrons. Influenced by shared practices from colleagues, the archives staff moved services to the virtual environment to promote social distancing to reduce the transmission of the disease.³ These services included instruction, reference, research, and collection access. All classes requesting archive instruction were held via Zoom or Blackboard. Patrons were instructed to use the library's online chat feature, email, and/or phone to ask archival reference questions. For researchers in need of in-depth research, consultations were offered via Zoom when applicable. By the beginning of summer 2020, the archives began to adjust to its new normal. The archives was able to assist 120 students with instructional sessions on archives and databases successfully during this time.

While trying to provide substantial virtual archival services during unprecedented times, the archives staff received a question that would show how important archival research can be during a pandemic to help inform present-day decisions. Faced with the inevitable decision to cancel homecoming, the University Relations department posed this interesting question to the archives: *Was this the first time that North Carolina A&T State University's homecoming had ever been cancelled?* University Relations wanted the answer to this question to ease relations with alumni, vendors, and the community.

Because an estimated 100,000-plus people from around the country converge on Greensboro annually for homecoming, the reality of an in-person event was not feasible. The implications could have been disastrous in terms of spreading the virus nationwide. Many people at North Carolina A&T State University knew the cancellation was coming, but the news was still shocking and hard to believe. "In response to health and safety concerns relating to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic,"⁴ the beloved homecoming, affectionately known to many as the Greatest Homecoming on Earth (GHOE), was canceled for the first time in human memory. The cancellation sent shockwaves throughout the collegiate world. North Carolina A&T State University and

Winston-Salem State University's cancellations prompted *HBCU Gameday* to ask, in a headline on June 18, 2020, "Who's Next?"⁵

Historical Background and Impact of GHOE

A brief background of homecoming at North Carolina A&T State University will show the importance and impact of this research question. Homecoming signifies a very important time for the university and the city of Greensboro, North Carolina. North Carolina A&T State University's homecoming started in the 1920s, introducing beloved traditions that are still observed today, like the big football game and many social events for alumni and the community. The popularity of homecoming attracts notable figures every year. Several presidential candidates, such as Hillary Clinton and alumnus Jesse Jackson, have attended the festivities over the years. Homecoming also attracts many celebrities who come to participate and perform in the festivities. Some of the more famous performers include singers James Brown, Patti LaBelle, hip-hop artist Tupac Shakur, and David and Tamela Mann and comedian Katt Williams.

The economic impact of homecoming goes beyond the university. North Carolina A&T State University's homecoming is one of the most profitable events of the year for the city of Greensboro. University and city officials state that GHOE generates an estimated \$10 million annually.⁶ This economic boost is shared with hotels, restaurants, vendors, transportation services, and many other types of businesses. In past years, the university has worked with local hotel chains to secure several thousand rooms for the weeklong event. Restaurants extend their hours, and hundreds of food trucks and vendors converge around the area surrounding the University.

The Homecoming Collection and Past Research

Prior to COVID-19, the archives had three artificial-collections boxes documenting homecoming history from about 1949 to 2015 measuring approximately 4.5 linear feet.⁷

In just the past couple of years, the homecoming collection has nearly tripled in size to 12 linear feet with the addition of a pre-1949 box and one large 26" X 22" box for each year since 2017. The archives staff attributed the collection growth to several factors. For one, the archives staff began to discover homecoming artifacts in other areas of the collection while answering general research questions and conducting in-depth research for articles published in an alumni publication. These items were properly processed and added to the homecoming boxes. Second, as a part of outreach and programming, the archives staff worked with academic departments and University Relations to acquire homecoming-related material for exhibits and preservation. Newly acquired items were processed and added to the existing homecoming collection. Such efforts helped to expand the homecoming collection and meet the growing demand from alumni and student researchers.

As stated, the archives had previously researched the history of homecoming for a variety of reasons. In 2016, a digital display was created to chronicle homecoming events such as parades, coronations, games, and concerts between 1970 and 2015. Images were sourced from yearbooks,⁸ the *A&T Register* (college newspaper),⁹ and homecoming archival boxes. After the digital display in 2016, the library created two more exhibits about homecoming and wrote a history of the homecoming parade that was published for a university alumni newsletter. While substantial research was done on the history of homecoming for exhibits and publications, it was not noted in any whether homecoming had ever been cancelled. Therefore, the archives staff began to identify a way to confidently provide an answer to University Relations.

Researching the Question

Performing any archival research to answer questions relating to when or whether something is a first can be an arduous task under the best circumstances. By their nature, these questions require researching multiple collections that span decades and cover different areas and time periods, due to gaps in the records. Depending on how far back in

time the request requires one to search, records can be incomplete. Specific to North Carolina A&T State University, the first yearbook was published in 1939 and the second in 1946. Yearbooks are also inconsistent in the depth of information they provide relating to student life and sporting events, especially in the earlier, slimmer editions. Hard copies of newspapers and other paper documentation are rarer the further back the researcher goes. For much of the university's early history, the archives staff often refers to the annual school bulletins¹⁰ that were published from the university's beginning. The bulletins from the first several decades offer a wealth of information, such as lists of students, graduates, and degrees earned; however, they generally do not cover specific sporting events.

Adding to the difficulty, staff had to answer this question in a timely manner while working remotely during a pandemic. Many of the first sources that the staff consulted were available digitally. The main exceptions were newspaper articles and documents devoted specifically to North Carolina A&T State University's football program and homecoming events.

Content-Analysis Technique

To solve the mystery of whether any homecoming had ever been canceled before, a content-analysis technique was used. This form of qualitative research is used to observe patterns of social behavior in documents.¹¹ This technique is recommended when researching digitized communication artifacts because it is "non-reactive, unobtrusive, and not limited by geography."¹² This was beneficial since the archives staff only had access to digitized materials. With quick planning, an archives staff member created a spreadsheet that would help determine if any of the traditions had been interrupted, or if there were any discrepancies in institutional histories. The spreadsheet would also collect information on the three most longstanding homecoming traditions in the event any were cancelled but not the entire celebration. Those three event fields were the big football game, the parade, and concerts and homecoming performers, which were grouped together into one field called

“Entertainment/Concerts.” The following categories were captured:

Year—The archivists began logging dates between 1926 and 2019. The dates were divided between the two archives staff, with one taking the years 1926 to 1969 while the other compiled research from 1970 to 2019. As research continued, the log included unconfirmed years before 1926.

Homecoming Took Place—A simple yes or no was given to denote if homecoming was cancelled *in its entirety*. This field was placed first in the spreadsheet because it would answer the basic research inquiry of whether a homecoming was ever cancelled.

Date Begin, Date End—Two fields for date ranges. While originally intended to only confirm dates for events, this field would make it possible to watch for changes in homecoming event schedules over time.

Football—Yes for a confirmed game, no for a cancelled one. If a game could not be confirmed, the field was left blank.

Game Date—Date of a football game.

Game Location - This field was not necessary for confirming homecoming games, but it could be very useful for future research requests.

Played—The name of the football game opponent.

Score A&T-opponent—Regardless of outcome, the final A&T score was listed first.

Parade—Yes or no, or blank if unconfirmed.

Ag. Fair—The Agricultural Fair, which took place in the university’s earliest days, was a fitting tradition for an “agricultural” land grant college. The “Ag. Fair” field was added because the fair was previously researched for the 2019 article “History of A&T’s Homecoming Parade.”¹³ Keeping track of lost traditions like the Agricultural Fair increased the potential of this data to be a definitive record of homecoming.

Entertainment/Concerts—The A&T homecoming is well known for celebrity musical guests. In the modern era, there are alumni concerts, the main concert geared mostly toward students, and the

Aggie Fun Fest, which takes place in the Greensboro World War Memorial Stadium.

Notes—Any special references to historically significant information about homecoming from a particular year that could also be highlighted in future exhibits and projects.

Choosing Digital Primary Resources for Analysis

The archival research needed to answer the question of homecoming ever having been cancelled before the COVID pandemic did not come without challenges. This request came three months after the Bluford Library was completely closed to faculty, staff, students, and the public. Archives faculty and staff were not permitted to bring rare materials home, so all research requests had to be addressed using personal history books, digitized files, and available digital collections. Working remotely meant that this project relied entirely on electronic resources such as databases, open collections, and digital newspaper archives for primary and secondary sources. The F. D. Bluford Library has working digital collections of our student newspaper, the *A&T Register*; the yearbook, *The Ayantee*; and our campus bulletins.

For the earliest homecoming games, many historical materials are not available to begin with. North Carolina A&T State University's first administrative building, Dudley Hall, burned to the ground in 1930, destroying the contents of the first library with it. The student newspaper, the *A&T Register*, was established in 1894, but fewer than 10 issues from before 1931 still exist. Also, as mentioned above, North Carolina A&T State University did not publish a yearbook until 1939. The succeeding edition came out in 1946, completely bypassing World War II campus life.

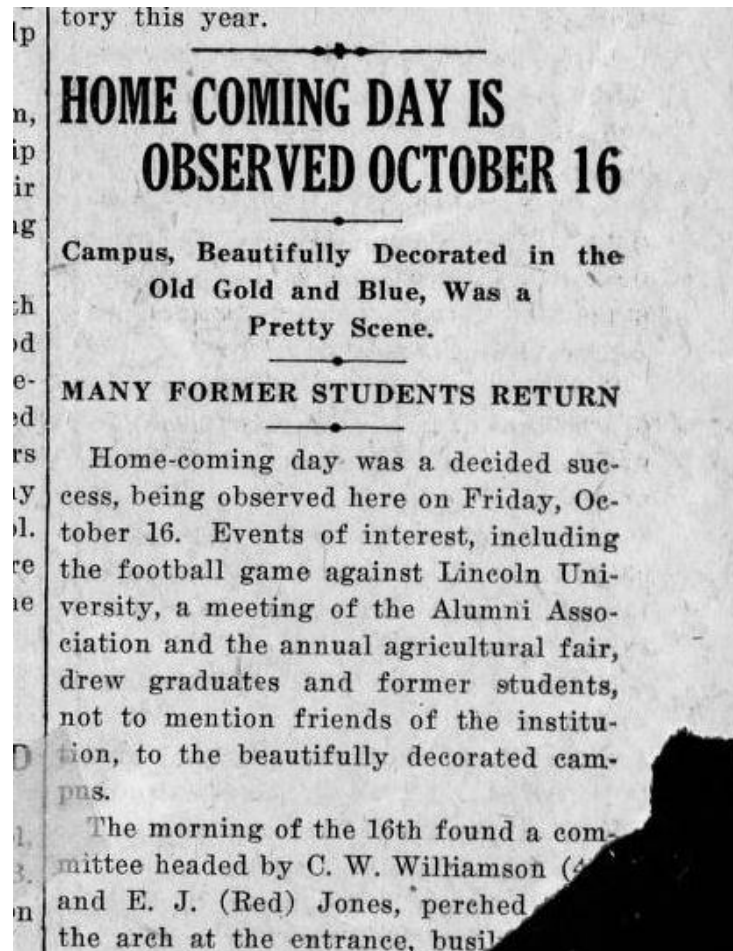


Fig. 1. Snippet from the *A&T Register*, November 1931. This newspaper article is the oldest existing homecoming story from the *A&T Register* newspapers collection in the F. D. Bluford Library archives. It is told in past tense, reflecting events after they happened, like the Agricultural Fair and the football game.

These gaps in historical materials added to the questions of confirming homecoming histories. Were there events scheduled during World War II? Could homecoming have

existed before 1926? The biggest emerging question was where else these histories could be found. At Bluford Library the archives staff have a practice of finding lost institutional histories of North Carolina A&T State University from multiple digital sources.

Using the digitized school yearbooks and newspapers as sources also was limited by the fact that the most recent yearbook volume and issues digitized were from 2009. Furthermore, yearbooks in general are problematic as informational sources, as they do not follow any consistent standard from year to year in what information they provide and in how much detail. Some years would barely cover sports much less provide information such as dates and scores for major games. By the 1970s, the amount of coverage for homecoming in North Carolina A&T State University's yearbooks had expanded. Part of this may be attributed to the yearbooks being larger than they were in the early years, as well as the growth and ease of color photography and reproduction. More full-color pages were exploited to provide pictures of the floats, parades, and marching band, as well as the colorful dresses of the various Queens vying for being crowned Miss A&T. A quick perusal through the digital copies of the yearbooks would provide some basic information for some years as a start but could not be relied upon for the depth of information that was desired.

Since North Carolina A&T State University's homecoming was one of the biggest sporting events to occur in the Triad area each year, it received consistent coverage in the local daily newspaper, the *Greensboro News and Record*. A subscription to the e-edition of the newspaper at www.greensboro.com allowed searching and access to articles as far back as 1990, bridging the gap in recent decades' coverage in the archives' digital collections. For events that took place before the 1990s, the archives staff turned to databases from Bluford Library. The staff also consulted open-source digital collections such as Fulton History, an independently run newspaper collection, and *Chronicling America* from the Library of Congress. From the Bluford Library homepage, the archivists could remotely access ProQuest Databases and the Black Studies Center, which contained back issues of seven historically black

publications, like the *Chicago Defender*, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, and the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, which had Greensboro, North Carolina, area columnists in the 1920s and 1930s. Coverage of the homecoming events was not consistent in any one publication, but collectively, they provided enough details to confirm games, dates, and other details.

The North Carolina Digital Heritage Center (Digital NC), the premier digital collection for the Tarheel State, was consulted for game dates and recaps. Digital NC is a statewide digitization and publishing program that assists North Carolina cultural heritage institutions with scanning, describing, and publishing historical materials online.¹⁴ The archives has partnered with Digital NC multiple times for the digitization of yearbooks, bulletins, and regional newspapers. With the Digital NC collection, it was possible to search many historically black community and college newspapers throughout the state, like the *Carolinian* (Raleigh, NC); the *Carolina Times* (Durham, NC), which would include games with A&T's most famous sports rival, North Carolina Central University; and the *Winston-Salem Chronicle* (Winston-Salem, NC). In 2018, North Carolina A&T State University acquired back issues of the *AC Phoenix*, a community newspaper founded by alumnus Rodney J. Sumler. It was digitized by Digital NC, making it possible to find more coverage of North Carolina A&T State University events from a Winston-Salem area perspective.

To ensure correct information was collected from these papers, homecoming-event articles with descriptive information were favored over announcements and flyers. An announcement of an event or game only showed that it was *planned*. What was really needed was a source with final game scores and recaps of events after they had taken place. One example of this was the difficulty of confirming any homecoming event before the accepted first date of 1926. Research in the Black Studies Center led to a 1925 article with an upcoming football schedule for North Carolina A&T State University. In the schedule was a game labeled as the "Home Coming" game.¹⁵ While a final score for this game was found, to date, this schedule is the only primary reference to a homecoming game before 1926, and it is hoped that another source calling it a homecoming game can be found in further research.

To show the University Relations department the accuracy of this research, ninety-eight items of documentation, including photographs and pdfs of newspaper clippings, were downloaded and included in a subfolder with the spreadsheet. These files were organized by year for easy reference—for example, “1929 – article *Norfolk Journal and Guide*.”

Year	Homecoming Took Place	Date Begin	Date End	Football	Game Date	Game Location Played	Score	Alt-opponent Parade	Ag. Fair	Entertainment/C oncerts	NOTES
pre-1923 ???											Can not rule out possibility Homecoming started before mid-1920s. According to some sources this was the first A&T Homecoming.
1924 ???						St. Paul Normal Institute	14-13				**Only one newspaper claims this was a "Homecoming" Game
1925 YES		1925-11-07		YES	1925-11-07						Recognized today as the "First" Homecoming.
1926 ???											First CIAA Championship Year
1927 YES		1927-09		YES	1927-09-30	War Memorial Lincoln	20-0				Earliest known "Home coming ball"
1928 YES				YES	1928-10-06	War Memorial Tuskegee	07-07				"Smiling Billy Steward and His Kansas City Serranaders"
1929 YES		1929-09-28		YES		Bluefield	06-19				
1930 YES		1930-10-25		YES	1930-10-25	Union					
1931 YES		1931-10-16		YES	1931-10-16	Lincoln	0-12			1931-10-16; 1931-10-17	
1932					1932-10-29	Johnson C Smith					

Fig. 2. Data from the Homecoming History Project with the earliest years. Yellow highlights are for years where little or no documentation was found. For the "Notes" column, a major milestone was highlighted in gold as a reference point for future research and as something that may be recognized by the university in the future.

	Football	Game Date	Game Location Played	Score	A&T-opponent	Parade	Ag. Fair	Entertainment/C oncerts
1								
77	Yes	1998-10-31	okman			Yes		Yes
78	Yes		Howard					Snoop Dogg, Common
79	Yes	2000-10-28	Bethune Cookman					
80	Yes	2001-10-13	Florida A&M		Yes			Yes
81		2000-10-12	Morgan State		Yes			Yes
82	Yes	2003-10-25	Howard		Yes			Yes
83	Yes	2004-10-08	Morgan State					
84	Yes	2005-10-15	Delaware State		Yes			Yes
85	Yes	2006-10-21	Howard	0-26	Yes			Yes
86			Bethune-Co okman					

Fig. 3. Data from the Homecoming History Project from more recent years. More coverage of homecoming events was available from regional sources, and it was possible to more accurately date homecoming games over the past thirty years.

Results from the Process

In July 2020, a formal email detailing the content-analysis findings was sent to the vice chancellor of university relations, the associate vice chancellor for alumni relations, the director of alumni communications, and the dean of library services. In this email it was announced that no conclusive evidence was found that any homecoming had been cancelled in its entirety since 1927.¹⁶ Up to July 2020, documentation was found for nearly every homecoming, with the exceptions of 1926, 1928, and 1932.

The findings from this research led to new perspectives on common homecoming histories. In publications by the university, 1926 was referenced as the first homecoming year.¹⁷ During research for this project the archives staff found information that may contradict that date. For example, an October 24, 2003, *Greensboro News and Record* article referred to a circa 2003 *Winston-Salem Chronicle* article that mentions the first homecoming taking place in 1924, the same year that North Carolina A&T State University joined the CIAA conference.¹⁸ No other documentation was found for a 1924 game. One reference was found for a 1925 “Home-Coming” in an edition of the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*. While no hint of a traditional homecoming was found before 1924, the word “home-coming” was used to describe a May 1919 celebration for African American soldiers who returned from Europe at the end of World War I.¹⁹

The findings also revealed more information about the homecoming parades and games. More than forty-five parades since 1934 were confirmed, and there is no information to suggest any before that year. The data showed dates for sixty football games, with final game scores from forty of them. All opponents from 1926 to 2019 were identified except for five. The archives having confirmed homecoming games in 99% of the intervening years since 1926 showed that, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, no major world event, not even World War II and the draft, had canceled the game.

Use of Research Findings

The decision to cancel homecoming in 2020 was made before the research request to the archives. University Relations had hoped that sharing information about a previous cancellation when GHOE 2020 was cancelled would help relieve tension among alumni and the community. While the archives staff could not confirm neither a fully cancelled homecoming nor a cancelled event due to a national or international crisis, the spreadsheet they created was made available for immediate use with the goal of using the data as the foundation for a public-facing database to foster long-term research.

The request for this information was timely, and the archives found it to be in demand among other administrators around campus and the broader community. In September 2020, athletics directors at North Carolina A&T State University contacted the archives for information on when North Carolina A&T State University's football team began playing games at the historic Greensboro War Memorial Stadium. They wanted to plan a commemorative game for the centennial of the first university game at the stadium, which is believed to have taken place in 1924. While an investigation into this history is ongoing, the homecoming history spreadsheet and resources provided evidence for games as early as 1927.

COVID-19 did not end all celebrations of homecoming. The beloved homecoming was reimagined in a virtual space. A2B Productions was specially commissioned by the university to film a new documentary to premiere virtually during the 2020 homecoming titled *Stay at Homecoming*. The film, which debuted October 30, 2020, included homecoming histories, images, and footage from the archives. The archives shared the spreadsheet along with digitized footage of the 1988 Homecoming Parade for that production. The Greensboro Historical Museum gave the archives an opportunity to share our new homecoming discoveries with a wider audience. The museum hosts a weekly Facebook Live program called *History Lunch Break*. The archives staff previously had worked with the Greensboro History Museum over the years on other exhibits and projects. The archives librarian was asked to give a half hour talk about A&T homecoming. This session was scheduled for October 23,

2020, and new findings from the homecoming research project were shared with a live audience.

Conclusion

Though the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it many challenges, it also brought new knowledge, opportunities for collaboration, and ideas for enhancing collection access. The archives staff learned of new resources that might not have been sought out pre-COVID. Being able to identify ways to help University Relations with the research question despite limitations due to COVID helped strengthen the growing relationship between the archives and University Relations. It also provided an opportunity to showcase, to other university departments, the value of using archives for administrative uses.

Additionally, the archives was able to identify areas of improvement for the homecoming collection. Since homecoming is a major part of North Carolina A&T State University's identity, in the future, historical homecoming collections should be completely processed with finding aids made available online. Selected rare items in the collections will be digitized as backups for staff to access remotely. The archives staff will also explore the possibility of combining the findings from this research with digitized images, audio, and video to develop a database or an interactive history website for researchers to easily discover historical facts about the Greatest Homecoming on Earth. These improvements will hopefully provide researchers and the community with more history of this enduring tradition that only the University Archives can share.

James Stewart is the archives and special collections librarian at North Carolina A&T State University, serving since 2017. Over the past seven years he has worked on and supervised digitization projects from the historical collections of A&T, UNCG, Greensboro College, Bennett College, Laurel University, Wake Forest University, and North Carolina State University. In archival research, he specializes in the reconstruction of lost institutional histories. He makes new collections and findings accessible to the A&T community in a monthly column for the "NC&AT Alumni Times."

Franklin Robinson is the cataloging and metadata librarian at North Carolina A&T State University. He has more than ten years of experience in public and academic libraries. In his current position he performs original and complex cataloging and metadata analysis that enhance the discovery of library and university collections, focusing primarily on materials that require original cataloging and the special collections of F. D. Bluford Library.

Edward Lee Love has been the archives specialist at North Carolina A&T State University since 2016. While pursuing his MLIS, he worked in the Center for Creative Leadership's library conducting copyright and trademark research and was part of a digitization lab at HF Group, a book preservation and restoration company. Previously, he had worked for twenty years with the Raleigh News and Observer, a daily newspaper.

Iyanna Sims has over ten years of experience in special and academic libraries. She currently serves as head of bibliographic, metadata, and discovery services at North Carolina A&T State University's F. D. Bluford Library. In this role, she provides strategic direction for cataloging, electronic resources management, serials, government documents, and archives. Her professional interests include library technology and trends in scholarly communications.

NOTES

1. North Carolina A&T State University, "About N.C. A&T," accessed April 5, 2021, <https://www.ncat.edu/about/index.php>.

2. Brian McCloskey, Giuseppe Ippolito, Lucille Blumberg, Paul Arbon, Anita Cicero, Tina Endericks, and Maya Borodina, "Mass Gathering Events and Reducing Further Global Spread of Covid-19: A Political and Public Health Dilemma," *Lancet* 395, no. 10230 (2020): 1096–99, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30681-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30681-4).

3. Center for Disease Control, "How to Protect Yourself and Others," last modified March 8, 2021, <https://>

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html.

4. “Official Announcement Regarding Homecoming 2020,” Office of Alumni Relations, Division of University Advancement, North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University email message to authors, June 18, 2020.

5. Domonique Whitehurst, “Who’s Next? HBCUs Canceling Homecomings,” *HBCU Gameday*, July 10, 2020, <https://hbcugameday.com/2020/07/10/whos-next-hbcus-are-canceling-homecomings/>.

6. Meredith Stutz, “North Carolina A&T Prepares for Virtual ‘Greatest Homecoming on Earth,’” last modified October 25, 2020, <https://www.wxii12.com/article/coronavirus-greensboro-a-t-homecoming-virtual-events/34473522>.

7. Homecoming History Collections, F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections, Range 4A.

8. Ayantee Yearbooks Collections, F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections, Range 2A, www.library.ncat.edu/ayantee.

9. A&T Registers Collections, F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections, Range 5A, digital.library.ncat.edu/atregister/.

10. Campus Bulletins and Catalogs, F. D. Bluford Library Archives and Special Collections, Range 2A, www.library.ncat.edu/bulletins.

11. Vera Armann-Keown and Liane Patterson, “Content Analysis in Library and Information Research: An Analysis of Trends,” *Library and Information Science Research* 42, no. 4 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101048>.

12. Ibid.

13. James Stewart, “History of A&T’s Homecoming Parade,” *NCA&T Alumni Times*, October 24, 2019, <https://relations.ncat.edu/pubs/alumnitimes/2019/oct24/blufordoct.html>.

14. North Carolina Digital Heritage Center, "About Us," accessed September 13, 2021, <https://www.digitalnc.org/about/>.

15. "A&T Grid Squad Opens the Season," *Norfolk New Journal and Guide*, October 3, 1925.

16. James Stewart, "Homecoming History Findings," email sent by the author, July 21, 2020.

17. Creative Studio Group, *NC A&T State University 2011 Homecoming Magazine*, video, September 16, 2011, <https://issuu.com/kivanter/docs/ncat2011homecoming>.

18. Jim Schlosser, "A&T's Homecoming Rich in History: Old-Timers Say the Parades Were Long, the Crowds Large and the Games Fierce," *Greensboro News and Record*, October 24, 2003, https://greensboro.com/a-ts-homecoming-rich-in-history-old-timers-say-the-parades-were-long-the-crowds/article_8fc72cd4-1b0f-5bfe-b1cb-3b9c0596d277.html.

19. "Negros Welcome the Returned Men of War," *Greensboro Daily News*, May 9, 1919.

Mobilizing Citizen Archivists: North Carolina Documents the Great War

by Kathelene McCarty Smith and
Keith Phelan Gorman

Introduction

Upon entering the Great War in April 1917, the United States found itself ill-equipped to fight an overseas conflict and equally unprepared to systematically document it as a historical phenomenon.¹ In contrast to many European nations, the United States government lacked an official national archive; and instead relied heavily on federal agencies and individual branches of the military to collect, preserve, and store records.² At the state level, executive and legislative departments were responsible for maintaining their own material. However, various factors including administrative policies and resource allocation levels caused states' documentation strategies to vary widely.³ Nevertheless, the urge to document was strong. Reacting to the inadequate documentation of North Carolina's contributions to the American Revolution and the Civil War, state officials pledged to record the state's military service and home-front mobilization.

Within weeks of President Woodrow Wilson's declaration of war, North Carolina's Historical Commission expanded the scope of its activities from managing the state's official war records to actively collecting unofficial documents related to home-front mobilization.⁴ This Commission appealed directly to state agencies, civic and social organizations, businesses, academic institutions, and community groups to gather "every scrap of material" related to the Great War.⁵ After the Armistice in 1918, the North Carolina state legislature formalized this documentation effort by authorizing and funding the position of "Collector of War Records." With little money to hire the necessary professional staff, the state had to rely on a network of citizen volunteers to fulfill the position's goals and broaden the reach of the project. Using predetermined categories of selection, these civic-minded historians functioned as archivists at the county level.⁶ To ensure effective local collection, the commission sought citizen representatives for each of the state's one

hundred counties. This study examines three key issues related to the documentation of the Great War in North Carolina: first, the underlying reasons the state committed to collecting war records; second, the scope and scale of the collecting project; and third, how the empowerment of citizen archivists to collect war-related material in their respective communities contributed to a shared historical narrative.

The Impetus to Collect

As one of the original thirteen British colonies, North Carolina is prominently placed in the southeastern United States. Situated between the states of South Carolina and Virginia, some North Carolinians describe themselves as a “vale of humility between two mountains of conceit.”⁷ The state’s geographic location, with access to both farmland and seaports, made it economically and politically important during both the American Revolution and the American Civil War. While the citizens of North Carolina distinguished themselves in both wars, state officials and historians felt that their participation had not been adequately chronicled. This failure to document the state’s previous wartime contributions may have prompted the North Carolina Historical Commission to take immediate responsibility for recording what was initially termed “the war with Germany.”⁸ Although strongly committed to preserving the records of North Carolina’s mobilization in 1917, the commission was not prepared to undertake large-scale collection. It had to devise and implement a state-wide plan to gather and preserve war-related material, and such an initiative had no historic precedent in the state.

The scope of the plan was broad and inclusive. In its efforts to obtain formal and informal war records, the Historical Commission sought the cooperation of state and county agencies, local civic clubs and social organizations, members of the military, and civilians.⁹ Moreover, beyond collecting official records, commissioners deliberately aimed to document “the state of mind of the people toward the war, the effect of the war on social, educational, economic, agricultural, political and religious conditions, and the personal achievements, sacrifices, and services of individuals.”¹⁰ Succeeding in this enormous undertaking necessitated appealing to North Carolinians’ sense of state pride, honor, and patriot-

ism. To this end, the Historical Commission appointed the organization's secretary, Robert Digges Wimberly Connor, to initiate the ambitious collecting project. A historian and archivist, Connor had been appointed to the commission at its inception and worked tirelessly throughout his career to make it one of the most effective historic preservation agencies in the country. In 1934, Connor became the first Archivist of the United States. When he accepted the task of collecting state war records in 1917, however, he had no official budget or resources. Therefore, he had to solicit the help of North Carolinians throughout the state to accomplish the commission's collection aims.

A Wartime Campaign

Just weeks after the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, Connor sent a letter to members of the State Literary and Historical Association, a non-government body of scholars and amateur historians, notifying them that the commission was spearheading an organized effort to collect and preserve materials related to statewide mobilization.¹¹ This letter established collecting priorities, which included official records, semi-official documents, public service information, educational activities, propaganda, photographs, economic information, clippings, and "fugitive" printed material collected from concerts, fairs, and events held to support the war effort. To obtain these wartime documents, Connor created an effective plan to enlist citizen historians throughout North Carolina to carry out his collecting directives. Although highly unusual for the time period, the historian and archivist Robert Connor created a plan to recruit both African American and Caucasian collectors from each of the state's one hundred counties to contact local branches of agencies and organizations, county leaders, soldiers, and individuals to request their war records. The archival record does not reveal Connor's thinking regarding this decision, yet he clearly saw the need to broaden the documentation effort to capture the complete North Carolina experience for current and future historians. Despite his attempt to account for the African American wartime contributions, his plan did not challenge the prevailing local practices and policies of segregation.

Lacking adequate funds and staff, Connor had to do considerable legwork himself. His outreach to the community for records yielded limited results. To expand and strengthen his collection goals, Connor solicited the help of Dr. Daniel Harvey Hill, the chair of the North Carolina Council of Defense. A professor, college president, and prominent proponent of Confederate and Reconstruction memorials, Hill was also a member of the Historical Commission. To advance the collection of the state's war material, Hill established a historical committee called the "Historical Preservation" committee within the Council of Defense and appointed Connor as its chair.¹² This appointment to the state's Council of Defense raised Connor's institutional and community standing. While the archival record is silent on this point, Connor's close association with Hill may point to a shared desire for North Carolinians to control the writing of their own history and the memorialization of their fallen citizens.

Meanwhile, other collecting initiatives began to emerge throughout the state. Colonel Frederick Augustus Olds, "Field Collector" for the North Carolina Hall of History in Raleigh, had initiated his own search for war records.¹³ Olds owned a large personal cache of historic material and was known as an avid collector. When the North Carolina State Legislature established the Hall of History in 1902, Olds donated his sizable collection and became its first director.¹⁴ During the war years, Olds traveled throughout North Carolina collecting war-related items that he then forwarded to the Historical Commission or kept for the Hall of History. While a noble endeavor, these competing collecting efforts occasionally caused confusion among state and local officials.

The Armistice and Postwar Collection Efforts

On November 11, 1918, fighting on the Western Front concluded with the signing of the Armistice. Although the United States was prepared for a protracted overseas campaign, after only eighteen-months Americans were beginning to break down their war machine. Far from weakening the urge to collect, however, the Armistice prompted the North Carolina Historical Commission to redouble its efforts to preserve the nation's contributions to the Great War.¹⁵

In 1919, the North Carolina General Assembly formalized the collection of the state's war records through the general provisions of Chapter 144, sections 3–6, of the Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina.¹⁶ As the secretary of The Historical Commission, Robert Connor appointed Robert House as the full-time state Collector of War Records. A native of North Carolina and a graduate of both the University of North Carolina and Harvard University, House had served overseas in the American Expeditionary Forces. His status as a veteran thus gave him a personal stake in ensuring that the state's wartime efforts would be permanently recorded. He truly believed that "What North Carolina did in the World War is one of the most marvelous achievements in history. What the World War did in North Carolina is likewise a most thorough social revolution."¹⁷

On June 16, 1919, Robert House officially assumed his position with the commission. His charge was to "survey all probable sources of war records and materials; to assemble these in the archives of the Historical Commission; to classify and arrange them; and eventually to publish from them a complete history of North Carolina in the Great War."¹⁸ With the assistance of only one part-time stenographer, he began evaluating previous collecting efforts and planning the next steps for the state-wide preservation of war records.

The Shame of Apathy

As Robert Connor transferred the Historical Commission's collecting project to Robert House, he communicated his frustration regarding the apathy shown by the citizens of North Carolina. Documenting the state's participation during the war had not been an easy venture. In a Historical Commission memorandum titled *An Aftermath of Vainglory*, the author (believed to be House) recounted a North Carolinian's reaction to a request for his war-related material. Even though he had served with distinction during the War, the man doubted the value of documenting his efforts or those of his state, commenting, "Why this aftermath of vainglory?" Whether this query reflected modesty, laziness, or the comfort of the "vale of humility," it soon became apparent the man's indifference was in no way exceptional. Connor had encountered similar apathy from the state's citizenry when collecting material during the war years. Indeed, upon

hearing this account, he deemed it “a fine illustration of that old, traditional, unintelligent indifference of North Carolinians to their history, which is the very thing that North Carolina, together with all other progressive, enlightened States, is trying to overcome.”¹⁹

This irreverence and lack of interest in the state’s history would haunt House’s future endeavors and he would continue to question why some citizens were reticent to send their war records to the Historical Commission. To combat this apathy, he employed a strategy of cajoling, pleading, and appealing to the local pride of various communities into relinquishing their material for future generations of North Carolinians. He reminded citizens that the state had taken a “second-rate place in recorded history”²⁰ in the American Revolution and the Civil War. Perhaps hoping to fuel the flames of regional patriotism and Lost Cause sentiments, he taunted his fellow southerners: “What side of the Civil War has the world at large read? The Northern side, of course, because it is the only side that has been adequately preserved in documents.”²¹

To further rally the state’s citizens, House compared North Carolina to other “progressive states” that were “putting money, time, energy, enthusiasm, and brains into preserving their war records.”²² He held up states such as Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York, and Kentucky as stellar examples of successful wartime preservation. House also pointed to the excellent collecting abilities of England and France, quoting historians Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos, who stated, “History . . . is studied from documents. Documents are the traces which have been left by the thoughts and actions of men in former times. There is no substitute for documents. No documents, no history.”²³ Adopting this “modern view” of historical scholarship, House dedicated himself to obtaining the appropriate documents to tell North Carolina’s story, and to avoid the shame he still attached to the state’s failure to document its previous wartime endeavors.

An Environmental Scan

In one of his first tasks as Collector of War Records, House conducted an environmental scan to ascertain how war-related materials were being collected. He realized that

all the combatant nations would now be assembling the records they needed to compose histories that reflected their national perspectives²⁴, and he understood that many states in the union would be doing the same. In fact, in 1919, House learned that governmental agencies in at least thirty-five states had taken steps to document their respective contributions to the services.²⁵ There had been early interest between states regarding what records merited preservation and how they would be collected. In July 1918, Franklin F. Holbrook, director of the Minnesota War Records Commission, wrote to the North Carolina Historical Commission asking if it had initiated efforts to systematically collect and preserve the state's war records.²⁶ Specifically, Holbrook wanted to obtain information regarding the related state agency, commission, or committee spearheading the endeavor, the source of the group's authority and financial support, and what it was collecting. He also mentioned the possibility of publications resulting from these state initiatives.²⁷

As part of the environmental scan, House began surveying official documents held by federal agencies in Washington DC that related to North Carolina's participation in the War. During this search, he found that other states had been assembling their own war histories. Key states participating in this documenting effort had planned a meeting in Washington, DC to coordinate a survey of relevant federal government records, which House attended in September 1919. The meeting resulted in two significant achievements: it created a committee that systemized the transfer of service records to each state, and it formed the National Association of State War History Organizations.²⁸ The North Carolina Historical Commission became an official member of the Association, paying a \$200 membership fee to gain access to various resources.²⁹ Channeling the collective momentum generated by the conference, House challenged North Carolinians to keep up the pace. He declared in a pamphlet directed to citizens that "each State's civic energy can be measured by its efforts to preserve its records."³⁰

Returning to North Carolina, House began reviewing records from state agencies, and sifting through the extensive material that members of the Historical Commission, the Council of Defense, and the Hall of History had gathered. He also refined the scope of his collecting strategy. In a summary report to the Historical Commission, he described the

chaotic state of this previous uncoordinated documentation effort,³¹ concluding that many of the records collected during the war years were woefully incomplete. While many citizen archivists showed initial enthusiasm for contacting organizations and individuals in their respective counties, they had done little to secure actual documents. Other volunteers found that critical war-related material had been destroyed immediately after the Armistice and this sapped the project of momentum.

Robert House had no choice but to try to resuscitate and broaden the commission's outreach efforts, and to clarify the original vision and message of the collecting project. To accomplish this, he reconnected with potential donors, appealing to their patriotism and highlighting the importance of recording state's wartime contributions for future generations. In any way he could, House sought to educate North Carolinians about the importance of preserving records as a "monument" to their wartime participation.³² He felt that the best way to chronicle the effort was to collect documents that illustrated "the spirit of the people and their contributions to the cause."³³ With an eye toward documenting the war as a historical event, he specifically pursued more personal, informal narratives, commenting, "I have the formal reports; I want color and North Carolina character."³⁴ In addition to soliciting the stories of soldiers, he sought information regarding every community's "quiet hero."³⁵

Do Your Part

In initiating this revitalized postwar effort, House implemented a well-thought-out, systematic approach to collection management. He prepared a roster of North Carolinians who were responsible for war work, scheduled meetings with them, and asked for their help. Specifically, House looked for individuals who had "organizing ability, patriotic vision, and the ability to achieve a following in [their] county," and he continued Connor's efforts to contact both African American and Caucasian women and men from each county to head regional efforts to gather war records. Acknowledging the official nature of their positions, he even offered them the use of Historical Commission stationery.³⁷

While Connor had encouraged citizens to donate wartime materials, House's efforts to train volunteers to identify

certain types of documents for collection proved unique within North Carolina and among other American states. In training these volunteers, House instructed them in basic archival methods. He directed them to refrain from organizing material that they collected, so he could use his own classification standards.³⁸ He also cautioned them to avoid pasting material in scrapbooks, encouraging them to instead “bundle it up loosely but securely and mail the whole business” to him.³⁹ To ensure that his citizen archivists understood which documents to preserve and deliver to the commission, House convened a meeting of county collectors in Raleigh on February 4, 1920, where he demonstrated collecting strategies.⁴⁰ He subsequently deemed this meeting a success, claiming it produced “definitive results.”⁴¹

To broaden his audience, House also employed brochures and pamphlets that clearly communicated his collecting vision. Historical Commission pamphlets detailing the project’s mission and identifying appropriate materials to collect (with titles like “Do Your Part,” “North Carolina in the World War,” and “What are You Doing?”) were sent to county representatives. These pamphlets encouraged citizen archivists to take every opportunity to connect with people in their respective communities, dispensing brochures at fairs, veteran reunions, and even movie theaters. To support the volunteers’ efforts and build excitement about the project, House “advertised” by distributing bulletins and appearing at commemorative events, such as local Armistice Day celebrations. He also asked editors of large state newspapers to publish his articles—mostly biographical sketches and military stories—regarding North Carolina’s participation in the war.⁴²

House made a special effort to reach out to the 83,000 North Carolinian officers and soldiers who served in the War, both at home and overseas. He urged them to tell their stories, send photographs, and donate personal letters to the commission. Understanding the particular value of wartime correspondence, House noted, “It is the tendency of human nature to forget the facts and figures of history and to remember feelings and ideals of great times. Nothing on earth can so preserve the feelings and ideals of North Carolina in the Great War as letters written during that time.”⁴³

Reaching Out to Underrepresented Populations

The scope and liberality of the Historical Commission's expansive outreach plan was ahead of its time. During this era of Jim Crow, religious intolerance, and southern resistance to women's suffrage, the commission's decision to document underrepresented populations was extraordinary. Both Connor and House were committed to an inclusive approach to outreach that cut across gender, racial, and religious lines, actively seeking material from women, African Americans, and Jews.⁴⁴ This encompassing approach enabled them to develop a more detailed understanding of North Carolina's mobilization, which would counter later efforts to selectively forget the contribution of the state's often disenfranchised citizenry.⁴⁵

Women's Networks and War Work

Women's groups were particularly active in home-front mobilization and the Historical Commission deliberately solicited their participation in document preservation. Robert House asked volunteer county historians and archivists to reach out to community leaders and women's clubs, believing that "they have more leisure to put on this work and as a rule, take more interest in the collection of material than men."⁴⁶ These collecting efforts had the definite advantage of being able to draw upon highly organized women's networks. Social and political connections provided efficient channels for collecting over 2000 items and countless narratives.⁴⁷ Women of North Carolina supported the documentation effort, as well as the publication of an official book chronicling women's war work. In a letter to House dated June 25, 1921, Mrs. Laura Holmes Reilley, Chair of the Woman's Club of North Carolina, specifically mentioned a promised publication of wartime accomplishments that had yet to take place, noting that while most states had done this, North Carolina had not.⁴⁸ Many women felt that they had made substantial contributions to the war effort, and they wanted their sacrifices officially acknowledged.

House was also directly in contact with members of the Women's Liberty Loan Committee, who had been very ac-

tive and successful in raising funds during the war years. This organization provided House exactly what he wanted—a wealth of information and anecdotes about women’s “heroic work and patriotic effort” on the home-front. This included moving narratives, such as a story about a milliner in one of the mountainous counties of western North Carolina who “closed her doors for days and canvassed the county alone, selling every bond that was sold by a woman in her county,” and the story of an older woman from one of the northern counties, who bought a hundred-dollar bond with her life savings of dimes that she kept in a jug under the floorboards of her home.⁴⁹

As part of its overall state outreach, the Historical Commission also contacted women’s colleges throughout North Carolina. During the initial wartime phase of the collecting process, Robert Connor corresponded with college presidents to ensure that campus mobilization was being chronicled.⁵⁰ Walter Clinton Jackson, a professor of history at the State Normal and Industrial College, eventually became one of the most widely recognized war collectors in the state. The history department at this public women’s college issued its own pamphlet in 1918 titled, “Women and the War in North Carolina: Suggestions for the Collection of Historical Material.” The pamphlet emphasized the importance of documenting women’s mobilization efforts and directed the college’s students and alumnae to collect material related to women’s wartime service. The pamphlet also suggested that State Normal be the permanent repository for this material, claiming “when the historian of the future comes to tell the story of this great epoch, unlike the historian who tries to write of woman’s part in the life of former days, he will not lack for ample and correct records.”⁵¹ The pamphlet directed readers to send their material to the college at which point Jackson, as an official citizen volunteer for Guilford County, would forward it to the state capital in Raleigh.⁵²

The African American Response

When Robert House took the position of Collector of War Records, he continued the Historical Commission’s directive to reach out to North Carolina’s African American and Caucasian communities in search of citizens who might be interested in securing war records. Just weeks after begin-

ning his official duties, he wrote to the County Superintendents of Public Instruction requesting assistance in finding African American representatives to gather information about how organizations and individuals in the African American community had been contributing to the war effort.⁵³ Responses were immediate and enthusiastic. Many African Americans were “on fire with the thought” of having their participation in the war preserved for historical posterity.⁵⁴ Responding by letter, attorney W. H. Quick commented that the tone of House’s request had “the right ring to it” and pledged his support for the project.⁵⁵ Seeking to go a step further, the Grand Secretary of the African American Masonic Lodge wrote to House and suggested that North Carolina align itself with other states and appoint a committee of African American members to work with the historical committee.⁵⁶ He pointed out that some states even included African American men on their official historical commissions. This type of collaboration would not occur in North Carolina.

In most cases, House responded to these letters personally. He also sent a bulletin to the “County History Collectors for the Colored Race,” thanking them for their offers of help and suggesting specific strategies for assembling county war records.⁵⁷ Believing that African Americans could better collect material in their own communities, he suggested that they organize history clubs or committees to gather wartime data. He recommended that they begin by assembling a record of all African American soldiers who died in the War, including photographs, correspondence, and a completed honor roll. Most importantly, he urged immediate action, emphasizing that “if such work is not done now, there is no possible chance of fairly representing the colored race in any history that may be written of the war in the future.”⁵⁸

Ultimately, House recruited African American citizen archivists from sixty-two North Carolina counties who began contacting local organizations, churches, civilians, and soldiers to collect material. Some volunteers made personal visits and others employed letter writing campaigns to reach as many people as possible. The Reverend E. A. Taylor of Scotland Neck, North Carolina, felt that the power of the press would be the best way to reach the African American population in his community. To this end, he published a compelling article in the African American newspaper, *The News Report of Scotland Neck, N. C.*, addressed to the

“Colored People of Halifax County, North Carolina.” The article urged readers to donate their war records and documents and provided detailed information from Robert House regarding the scope of collection.⁵⁹

Despite the strong effort to reach out to African American communities throughout the state and the enthusiastic response from county representatives, the final tally of documents received was disappointing. Although numerous African Americans served in the military and took part in fundraising efforts, only twenty items were forwarded to the Historical Commission.⁶⁰ The realities of Jim Crow and the violence directed toward returning African American veterans likely made the community hesitant to respond to calls for this type of documentation.

Conclusion

As the postwar collecting phase began to wind down, Robert House shifted his efforts toward the “systematic arrangement, study, and publication” of war records.⁶¹ In some ways, the state-wide collecting initiative had proved disappointing. Although he had recruited sixty-five representatives from North Carolina’s one hundred counties, he often found citizen archivists’ participation “spasmodic and somewhat ineffective,” producing uneven results.⁶² Moreover, House’s administrative duties as sole program officer were overwhelming, eclipsing his efforts to venture out into the field and meet with collectors and donors.⁶³ His focus on bureaucratic obligations also prevented him from fulfilling his original charge of writing an illustrated history of North Carolina’s participation in the Great War.

In other ways, however, the project was a groundbreaking success. House felt that he made significant strides with war documentation, collecting over 100,000 items during his tenure as Collector of War Records.⁶⁴ In the 1918-1920 Biennial Report of the Secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission published in 1921, House noted that some collections were almost complete, such as the records from the State Council of Defense, the Food Administration, and the Governor’s Office.⁶⁵ He believed that the Historical Commission could complete other collections—including service records, organization reports, and county and military histories—if given additional time. Finally, he realized that

collecting “human interest documents,” such as letters, photographs, and narratives, would remain an ongoing process, and anticipated that the Historical Commission would continue to acquire these documents well into the future.⁶⁶

As House was finalizing his report to the Historical Commission in 1920, public sentiment regarding the justification for fighting an overseas war and the postwar settlement began to shift, and interest in remembering the conflict increasingly waned. Aware of this change in the American view of the war and inundated with thousands of items, House pivoted from community outreach to the more practical reality of processing the received collections. Although material continued to trickle into the Historical Commission, the grand collecting initiative to archive the Great War had ended.

Still, the initiative’s ripple effects extended to future discussions regarding the importance of archiving the country’s history and the role of citizens in documenting mobilization efforts. Indeed, in 1942, historians considering the best ways to chronicle the United States’ participation in the Second World War looked back on House’s model as one of the more effective state documentation initiatives.⁶⁷ Ultimately, however, the government did not embrace his model. The establishment of the United States National Archives in 1934 changed the way the nation documented the country’s history. This central institution now defined archival practices and collecting strategies at both the national and state levels, and the professionally trained archivists it employed felt that they did not need the help of average citizens to chronicle the new war. Going forward, the National Archives would assume the leadership role in all future US military conflicts.

Kathelene McCarty Smith currently holds the position of Interim Director of Special Collections and University Archives at UNC Greensboro where she also serves as Assistant Professor. Smith’s research and writing focuses on how North Carolina’s efforts in collecting war records contributed to the collective memory of the state’s wartime experience.

Keith Phelan Gorman is the Director of the Booth Family Center for Special Collections at Georgetown University.

ty. Gorman holds a MLS from Simmons College and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In recent years, Gorman has examined how nations document and explain the experience of WWI homefront mobilization.

NOTES

Editor's Note: For more information on the war records collecting efforts before and after Robert House's time as North Carolina War Records Collector, see the historical notes for the finding aids of the North Carolina Council of Defense Records (WWI 1) and North Carolina County War Records (WWI 2) in the WWI Papers of the Military Collection at the State Archives of NC. They are available in the State Archives' online DOC catalog.

1. Franklin F. Holbrook, "The Collection of State War Service Records," *The American Archivist*, 25:1, (October 1919), 72-76; Newton D. Mereness, *American Historical Activities During the War* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923); *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1917* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920); *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1918* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921); Waldo Leland, "Historians and Archivists in the First World War," *The American Archivist*, 5:1, (January 1942), 1-17.

2. Robert McIntosh, "The Great War, Archives, and Modern Memory," *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998), 1-31; Joan A. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science*, 2, (2002), 1-19; J. Franklin Jameson, "The Need for a National Archives Building," *Bulletin of the American Library Association*, VII (July 1914), 130-136.

3. Kimberly J. LaMay Licursi, *Remembering World War I in America*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 1-42; Waldo Leland, "The Archivist in Times of Emergency," *The American Archivist*, 4:1, (January 1941), 1-12; Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993).

4. The Historical Commission was established by the state's General Assembly in 1903. Comprised of five members appointed by the governor for two-year terms, the commission was charged with collecting, publishing, and distributing documents important to the history of the state. It eventually grew to contain the State Archives of NC and the NC Museum of History by the 1940s. Now, it oversees all of the state-managed historical resources.

5. Robert House to Sir, June 25, 1919, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

6. In the United States, a county represents a political and administrative division of a state. Only one state in the United States is not divided into counties—the southern state of Louisiana, which is divided into parishes.

7. The “Vale of Humility between Two Mountains of Conceit” is a phrase describing North Carolina that originated from a speech given by Mary Oates Spratt Van Landingham. The phrase is found in Landingham's “A State's Scant Literature: The Native Literature of North Carolina: Influences of the Past; Prospects for the Future,” in *Glowing Embers*, (Charlotte, NC: The Observer Printing House, 1922), 30.

8. *Seventh Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, December 1, 1916, to November 30, 1918, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company State Printers, 1919).

9. “Formal records” were designated as federal, state, and county reports and “informal records” constituted documents that reflected a more personal account of the war.

10. *Seventh Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1919.

11. R.D.W. Connor to Members of the State Literary and Historic Association, May 16, 1917. Julius Isaac Foust Records, UA 2.2, Box 19, Folder 3, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, Jackson Li-

brary, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina, USA.

12. The members of the committee were George Gordon Battle (Edgecombe County, NC), Adelaide Fries (Winston-Salem, NC), J. G. deR. Hamilton (Chapel Hill, NC), Haywood Parker (Asheville, NC), Lida T. Rodman (Chapel Hill), and Paul W. Schenck (Greensboro, NC); Historical note of the finding aid for the North Carolina County War Records, WWI 2, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

13. *Seventh Biennial Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1919.

14. The Hall of History became the North Carolina History Museum in 1965, but remained part of what is now the North Carolina Office of Archives and History (including the State Archives of NC).

15. Jessica Bandel, *North Carolina and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

16. The North Carolina Historical Commission, *Do Your Part*, (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1919).

17. "The Preservation of North Carolina's World War Records" manuscript. Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

18. Robert House, "Preserving North Carolina's World War Records as a State Enterprise." Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

19. *An Aftermath of Vainglory*, Box 5, Folder 17, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.
22. The North Carolina Historical Commission, *Do Your Part*, 1919.
23. Loosely translated from Charles-Victor Langlois et Charles Seignobos, *Introduction aux études historiques* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897); Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
24. Robert House, "Preserving North Carolina's World War Records as a State Enterprise." Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.
25. Franklin F. Holbrook, "The Collection of State War Service Records," 72.
26. Franklin F. Holbrook to R.D.W. Connor, July 22, 1918, Box 6, Folder 5, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.
27. Ibid.
28. Robert House, "Preservation of North Carolina's World War Records," *The North Carolina Booklet*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, January 1920.
29. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, December 1, 1918 to November 30, 1920, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company State Printers, 1921).
30. The North Carolina Historical Commission, *Do Your Part*, 1919.
31. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1921.
32. "The Preservation of North Carolina's World War Records" manuscript. Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

33. This philosophy was part of Connor's original vision of the project, and House continued to collect in this vein. R.D.W. Connor to Sir, July 22, 1918, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

34. Robert House to the County Chairman of the Woman's Liberty Loan Committee, October 30, 1919, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

35. Robert House, "Preserving North Carolina's World War Records as a State Enterprise." Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

36. Correspondence from Robert B. House, February 20, 1920, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

37. Robert House to Sir, September 16, 1919, Box 5, Folder 24, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

38. Robert House to Sir, June 25, 1919, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

39. *Bulletin to the County History Collectors for the Colored Race*, September 8, 1919, Box 6, Folder 3, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

40. Raleigh Preservation Conference, Box 5, Folder 21, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

41. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1921.

42. Robert House to Managing Editor, August 27, 1920, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

43. Correspondence from Robert House, September 20, 1919, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

44. The Historical Commission developed a multi-pronged strategy to reach out to North Carolina's Jewish community. The immediate plan was to contact religious and community leaders. In addition, the Historical Commission sought the assistance of the New York-based Office of Jewish records. This organization provided the Historical Commission with the names, addresses, and military units of North Carolina Jewish enlistees.

45. Believing that its population was not statistically significant, the Historical Commission did not reach out to the state's Native American population. However, Native Americans in North Carolina did serve in the war. On July 11, 1917, 117 members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians registered for the draft. North Carolina Draft Records, Box 5, Folder 21, WW 3, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

46. Robert House to Sir, September 16, 1919, Box 6, Folder 3, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

47. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1921.

48. Laura Holmes Reilley to Robert House, June 25, 1921, Box 5, Folder 8, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC. Reilley, a native of Charlotte, was a prominent member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs and served as Chairwoman of the Woman's Committee of the North Carolina Council of Defense during the war years.

49. Robert House to the County Chairman of the Woman's Liberty Loan Committee, October 30, 1919, Robert B. House

Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

50. R.D.W. Connor to Dr. J. I. Foust, July 9, 1917, Julius Isaac Foust Records, UA 2.2, Box 19, Folder 3, Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, Jackson Library, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, USA.

51. "Women and the War in North Carolina: Suggestions for the Collection of Historical Material," Greensboro, North Carolina, 1918.

52. Robert House to Dr. Archibald Henderson, August 28, 1919, Box 5, Folder 8, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

53. Robert House to County Superintendents of Public Instruction, June 25, 1919, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

54. L. W. Hall to Robert House, September 22, 1919, Box 6, Folder 3, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC. Hall was a North Carolina pastor and House had actively sought to engage African American religious leaders.

55. W. H. Quick to Robert House, September 10, 1919, Box 6, Folder 3, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

56. C. S. Brown to Robert House, July 14, 1919, Box 6, Folder 3, Robert B. House Collection, WWI 82, WWI Papers, Military Collection, State Archives of NC.

57. *Bulletin to the County History Collectors for the Colored Race*, September 8, 1919.

58. Ibid.

59. E. A. Taylor, "The Making of a Great Book," *The News Report of Scotland Neck*, November 1919.

60. Specifically, two county collectors, W. H. Quick from Lee County and J. Dempsey Bullock from Wilson County, sent programs and data. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission*, 1921. The Historical Commission also received materials from George Peabody Carter, a records collector from Hyde County.

61. Ibid.

62. Robert House, "Preservation of North Carolina's World War Records," 1920.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. *Eighth Report of the North Carolina Historical Commission: December 1, 1918-November 30, 1920*, 1921.

66. Ibid.

67. Lester Capon, "The Collection of World War I Materials in the States," *The American Historical Review*, 48:4, (July 1943), 733-745.

Working Through COVID-19 at the Alabama Department of Archives and History

by Kayla Scott

At the end of February 2020, rumors of a potential health issue were beginning to circulate in Alabama. Unfortunately, the rumor was not the only thing that spread across the state, as the nightmare known as COVID-19 began to infect people across the state and the nation. Word came from our director in early March that we should prepare for working from home if our governor decided that state employees should do so. Most state government offices and many businesses were shut down beginning on March 16. After only a few days of preparation, we began working from home on this date. For me and several other employees, this included having to secure a WIFI hotspot and a laptop from our IT department that had the capabilities needed for our projects. For several staff in the Reference Department, most of the final day of March 15 was spent scanning supreme court case title pages as we prepared to work on our state supreme court indexing project from home. Moving all documents, downloads, and many department files to a flash drive, I left that day with the hope that we would return soon.

Besides the technology issues I encountered in the beginning, there were some challenges to working from home. We all missed the books, collections, and some of our subscription programs such as Fold3 that we could not access at home. We missed project files that we did not think about taking with us. We missed the in-person collaboration. I had the personal issue of my apartment complex deciding a pandemic lockdown was the best time to renovate the metal and concrete staircases on each building. The jackhammer and welding noises certainly failed to compare with the ambiance of the Research Room! Despite the issues that arose, we all managed to continue working toward the goals that we had prior to the pandemic, while adding a few new ones along the way.

One of many positive aspects of working through the pandemic was how everyone stayed in contact through texts, emails, Zoom, Webex, and Microsoft Teams meetings and chats. Our department coordinator checked in with us a

minimum of twice daily, with the director sending email updates an average of once or twice a week. I learned many things during this period, including how to make a grocery delivery order from Instacart and how to use several different platforms for meetings and presentations. I was thankful for the support we received from our supervisors and that creative ideas were welcomed. In addition to these things, I have been thankful for how I continued to feel like part of a team. The Reference Room at the Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) has the best staff I have had the pleasure of working with and we make a cohesive team that respects and supports each other during normal operations. I was pleased to not lose that sense of teamwork while we were apart. While it was a little more challenging to do so, we continued to circulate and discuss ideas.

While we worked from home there was no shortage of tasks to be done. We continued to answer emails and phone messages that were accessed remotely, with research requests being fulfilled as often as our access to records and subscription programs would allow. A skeleton crew of staff members spread out over the building were tasked with coming in to answer phone messages from the main line as well as fulfilling DD214 military discharge records requests for veterans and their families. All staff were asked to have email and phone message recordings updated to reflect our status of closed yet working from home, while our website and social media pages were updated to reflect our status as well. In April, members of the Reference staff began coming in one at a time at a rate of about once every other week to gather further materials for working from home. Projects, research, and contact with the public continued throughout the process. At times, patrons were required to wait longer than usual for answers to their questions, but we did our best to direct patrons to online resources and answer reference questions. Having access to our digital collections as well as subscription services such as Ancestry.com made a great deal of research possible during this period.

Prior to the pandemic, four of the Research Room staff, including myself, had been making plans for in-person genealogy workshops. We had decided on topics and dates and had begun working on the content of these presentations when the pandemic began. Our reference coordinator decided we would amend the remainder of our spring full-length

programs to brief recorded presentations that we would offer on YouTube for free. This proved to be a popular and appreciated idea, as the number of views were high and the feedback was positive. After we returned to work, it was decided that we would make the fall sessions available through live Webex presentations that would be uploaded to YouTube after the presentations were over. The programs would continue to be offered at no charge as more concise versions of our regular presentations, with the added advantage of allowing live attendance for the first 150 people who signed up online. The two-part sessions would then permit patrons to ask questions at the end of each program. Our most recent presentation had over 80 attendees, with one member of the audience being from as far away as Montana! I do not believe we would have considered changing the format of so many of our programs before COVID-19, but it has proven to make us more accessible to a wider audience.

The time during and following working from home has led to enhanced creativity for the entire department. As we considered ways we could continue to interact with and provide resources to the public, I had the idea of doing a quick presentation on tips and tricks that could help with transcribing historic documents. I was pleased when this idea was approved, and began working on gathering examples of the poor (and sometimes eccentric) handwriting that shows up in all sorts of historic documents. Since we were not in the office and I began this without an internet connection, I was only able to use documents that I had scanned for other projects. *Beginning Transcription: A How to Guide* used diary pages, letters, state supreme court cases, marriage records, military records, a death certificate, and even a blurry newspaper article to show transcription techniques. This presentation was in addition to our scheduled spring workshops on topics such as African-American genealogy research and using census records and non-population schedules. The transcription presentation video currently has over 370 views, despite having very little advertisement on our social media pages. This “attendance” number is far higher than any in-person workshop presentation would have garnered. The presentation has further led to an invitation to speak about transcription in a virtual speaker series across the state. Attending this speaker series in person might not have been feasible prior to COVID-19, but since so many

programs are now virtual, we are able to reach a wider and often larger audience.

Many departments in our organization have experimented with various platforms for providing video content and holding meetings, including Webex, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Facebook Live, Techsmith Capture, and StreamYard. Each application presented pros and cons depending on what we needed to accomplish. Webex proved to be the least user-friendly and dated option and was deemed best for large meetings, not interactive workshop presentations. Zoom was more user-friendly and would have been perfect for workshops, except there was a limit to the number of participants we could host without paying for an expensive subscription. Teams has been used successfully for in-house meetings of departments and the entire organization. Facebook Live has been used to broadcast our lecture series and some educational programs and has been used in conjunction with StreamYard for some of these events. StreamYard has been chosen as our agencies' current favorite for providing live and recorded content, as the finished product is sharp and professional. Techsmith Capture was used by the Reference staff for our recorded workshops in the beginning. While the user could pause the recording if they needed a break, the application did not allow editing. Interruptions or mistakes that made it into the recording necessitated the re-recording of the presentation, which was not the most effective use of our time. StreamYard appears to provide more functions and higher quality for our outreach needs.

We returned to work with new protocols in place on May 4, 2020. Temperature checks, masks, and wellness questions became part of the daily routine. Full staff meetings and even meetings with people in the same department continued to be held on Microsoft Teams and Webex. One Reference staff member was required to move her desk for social distancing purposes. Other departments have used staggered work schedules with some staff members remaining at home. A number of employees were asked to begin arriving at a different time so large groups would not encounter each other during morning check-ins. Work times were limited to hours between 7:30 am and 5:30 pm so cleaning could take place. The elevators were no longer shared by multiple people, with social distancing to be maintained during staff interactions. I believe we were all thrilled

to return to work so we could have access to the materials we were accustomed to having for our projects and research requests.

As an organization, each department has remained productive while working from home as well as through our closure to the public. Alabama History@Home has been a popular product of the social distancing and closures that organizations have faced in our state. Alabama History@Home (<https://www.alabamahistoryhome.org/>) is a vast collection of links to free online resources for exploring Alabama history from the comfort of home. Visitors to the website can choose from options such as Publications, Exhibits and Tours, and a Streaming Media section that includes a long list of educational video presentations. A section for Parents and Kids includes coloring pages and activity sheets. Museums and programs from all over the state have submitted content for this website, which happily includes a link to our Reference Department workshops. Our gift shop manager took this time to completely overhaul the giftshop's layout and offerings, as well as launch a new online store. The Education Department has worked on a variety of presentations, teacher workshops, and educational resources during this period, including the live reading of children's books for young audiences.

As the pandemic has worn on, the museum has remained closed and, as of December 1, 2020, will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. However, on June 2, 2020 we began allowing researchers to make appointments to view un-digitized, original records only. The Research Room was re-arranged slightly to block off all but the restricted reading area in the back, with all but one chair removed from each of the four tables. Signs noting directions and reminding patrons of health guidelines litter once-empty spaces on doors and tables. Plexiglass partitions were created by maintenance staff to help divide patron spaces from our Reference desk. Hand sanitizer is made available at several points throughout the building. Appointments are made in advance for morning or afternoon sessions, with patrons being required to wear masks, social distance, and supply a list of collections and call numbers for at least the first 6 boxes they wish to view. These boxes are then pulled and made ready for the patron when they arrive. Door handles and frequently-touched surfaces are cleaned by Reference and janitorial staff. Staffing

the Reference desk went from the typical four people divided into two shifts each day to one person who staffs the desk for both shifts and one person who is assigned to answer the phone at their desk. This second “on-call” staff member is also required to assist in pulling additional boxes that patrons may request. This staffing routine was created by our reference coordinator to minimize the number of staff who work with patrons each day. The introduction of contact with the public has not been completely without anxiety. While masks and temperature checks are required, a few patrons have chosen to forget the mask policy at times throughout their visit, prompting polite reminders from staff that the mask goes completely over the mouth and nose.

Once we were back in the office, one of the aspects of normal operations I believe we all missed were the student workers. The Research Room typically has two or three part-time student workers who help us with large copy and scan projects. They also help us with retrieving archival collections, a task that can be a heavy chore when pulling boxes for multiple patrons. I believe the pandemic has shown us all many things we might not have appreciated enough in the past. Reference Department student workers and their ability to help us increase daily productivity was one thing that I certainly have a renewed appreciation for. The amount of work they help us with can be tremendous. We were thankful to have them finally return on August 17. All volunteers currently continue to remain at home. Their service to ADAH is invaluable and we look forward to their eventual return as well.

As time has passed, we have dealt with working through possible COVID-19 exposure and two-week periods where entire departments are abruptly working from home. After one such rushed scenario, everyone was asked to remain outside the building while our supervisor collected everything we needed from our desks. We each had a long list of necessities that we asked her to gather for us. The more organized staff members are, the easier the transition can be. I have since committed to being more organized and strategic in planning ahead. Keeping documents current on my work flash drive, organizing current research requests and research in a single folder on my desk and having all necessary equipment located in one place are just a few things I can do to make this process easier in the future. Any presentations I

am working on also need to go in a labeled file folder so everything can be quickly gathered.

As author Cheryl Oestreicher noted in her recent publication of *Reference and Access for Archives and Manuscripts*, “As a profession rooted in physical spaces working with physical materials, archivists have had to shift the concept of access and reference practices.” As the changes in how we work and present materials to the public have taken place, the focus has remained on providing good reference services while following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and department guidelines. For researchers who choose to make an appointment, our reference coordinator works with them prior to their visit to identify original document collections that will fulfill their research questions. This close communication prevents long face-to-face conversations and helps the researcher use their appointment time effectively. Research appointments are often found to be unnecessary during these conversations, as a great deal of our most requested materials have been digitized and made available online. The staff is accepting and completing a wider range of research requests for patrons and providing increased services by phone and email. Providing increased research services offsets any inconvenience to patrons who wish to access currently restricted items such as microfilm. For smaller requests, we often email information at no charge to the patron when we previously would have suggested the patron visit us for access. Increased services during this time have required extra effort for staff, but such effort has been well worthwhile. Even while working from home, we were able to keep up with phone messages and provide reference services by email, answering questions and providing resources patrons could access online.

Another aspect of working through COVID-19 for ADAH has been the continued efforts of our agency to gather materials that illustrate how COVID-19 has affected everyday life. *Collecting A Crisis: Alabama During COVID-19* is a campaign focused on collecting items such as photographs, journals, correspondence, artwork, videos, and even copies of social media posts that reflect the challenges Alabamians have faced during the pandemic. Items are being accepted in both digital and hard copy formats, with an online submission form available for easy access on our website. Everyone, including healthcare workers and victims

of the disease, is encouraged to document the devastating effects of this event. Many libraries and archival institutions across the United States have chosen to institute similar programs for their counties and states, including those being done by the Austin History Center in Texas and the William and Mary College Libraries in Williamsburg, Virginia. Such projects will contribute to a thorough documentation of this event for researchers in future generations.

The extra time spent at home provided a great opportunity for professional development. Many in our field have enjoyed webinars and virtual education programs that they would never have been able to attend in person. I have had time to read books, articles, and enjoy new-found history podcasts, in addition to completing personal research and writing. Besides these pastimes, I am one of many who has a renewed appreciation of the outdoors.

There are several things that can be taken away from the experience of working through COVID-19 so far. The situation we find ourselves in has brought a fresh appreciation for things taken for granted, such as consistent access to records, the help of student workers, and even the ability to physically work in an office setting. It has provided positive opportunities for professional development, online presentations, and general collaboration. I had loved my job and been thankful for the opportunity it presented prior to COVID-19, but these past months have given me a further appreciation for great co-workers and the presence of strong and thoughtful leadership. As we continue to deal with the effects of COVID-19 on our everyday lives, may we remember to look for opportunities to learn and find something positive whenever possible.

Kayla Scott holds a MA in Public History from the University of North Alabama and has worked as a reference archivist with the Alabama Department of Archives and History since July 2019. The author has published several articles with the North Alabama Historical Review and the Encyclopedia of Alabama.

NOTES

1. Cheryl Oestreicher, *Reference and Access for Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2020), 142.

2. To learn more about the Austin History Center's COVID-19 project, a detailed article entitled "Documenting the Pandemic: Libraries Launch COVID-19 Archival Projects" by Jennifer A. Dixon can be found at <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=Documenting-Pandemic-Libraries-Launch-COVID-19-Archival-Projects-archives>. For information regarding the efforts of William and Mary College's Library and Special Collections, visit their website at <http://libraries.wm.edu/libraries/departments/special-collections/documenting-life-during-COVID-19-19>. For further details about the Alabama Department of Archives and History's collection work, visit https://archives.alabama.gov/COVID-19_19/collecting_a_crisis.html.

REVIEWS

Michael Moss and David Thomas, *Do Archives Have Value?* London: Facet Publishing, 2019. 240 pp. £69.95 UK (CILIP nonmember); £55.95 UK (CILIP member).

During 2009 and 2010, at the height of the Great Recession, a group of archivists led by Elizabeth Yakel (including North Carolina's own Helen Tibbo) tried to ascertain the financial value of archives in the United States and Canada through an extensive survey. As we currently face another economic crisis due to COVID-19, it is a bit deflating that their findings, recounted in Michael Moss and David Thomas's *Do Archives Have Value?* (xxii), found that the economic impact of archives was minimal at best. With many institutions now facing drastic double-digit budget cuts, how do we make a case about the importance of archives to administrators and upper management if the best answer has little to do with revenue?

Moss and Thomas acknowledge this problem in their introduction. Though this book came out prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the authors are based in the United Kingdom, which had been undergoing the Brexit saga and its looming economic consequences for three years prior to the book's publication (xvi). Although Brexit is only explicitly mentioned once, its presence can be felt throughout the book, which is a compilation of ten case studies from around the world, examining different meanings of value derived from archives based on circumstances and cultures. Some cases, like the Hillsborough Football Disaster in England or the Bringing Them Home campaign in Australia, are frequently studied in Western archival circles due to the central role records and recordkeeping played in them. However, other cases, such as colonial land records being used to steal land from natives in Malawi or India's attempt to "construct" a national memory after the end of its colonial period, are given less attention. Much like the Bringing Them Home campaign, the situations in Malawi and India revolve around the complicated process of trying to rectify wrongs perpetrated by a dominant culture on indigenous peoples. Records originally created to enforce

colonial policies upon subjugated populations took on new meaning as vehicles of restorative justice, however late.

The standout chapter in the book is only peripherally a case study. Louise Craven's essay on personal memory in the archive during the digital age considers whether we in "memory institutions" like archives are really providing for the needs of our researchers given the seismic shift the digital age has caused. Realizing that we often discuss memory without really defining it, Craven sets out to find a working definition that fits, finally settling on the fact that memory is difficult to define because it is an enormous subject that is fraught with many layers—and it continues to change. Through Andrew Hoskins's research on how the digital revolution is changing our concepts of time and space, Craven concludes, "It seems that life after the digital revolution is no longer 'how you remember it in order to recount it' . . . rather, it is what you can find, see, link, and like in the archive" (129–130). The Internet, and social media in particular, draws the past into the present so that past events are experienced and re-experienced in a loop. If Hoskins's assertion about this distortion of time is correct, what affect is this having on archival users? Craven ends her essay with a series of questions we ought to pose to researchers coming into archives that would capture how archives help them understand memories, both individual and collective. This, she asserts, would assist archivists who need ways to prove the intrinsic value of collections in our current climate.

The final chapter, by Daniel German, is the timeliest for US-based archivists, exploring how the post-truth society we currently live in is affecting archives and evidence-based research. Bluntly asking, "What are archives and have they any value?" he catapults into the question of whether intrinsic value is enough in a society that can't define what "truth" is anymore (168). Like Craven, German argues that the digital age has completely changed reality, though German's focus is the dissemination of information. Unlike Craven, however, German sees the digital age as having the same effect as previous technological advances. The 1915 film *Birth of a Nation* revitalized the Ku Klux Klan, Father Charles Coughlin stirred up anti-Semitic sentiments in the 1930s via his radio program, and Senator Joseph McCarthy utilized television to great avail in the 1950s to promote his Red Scare. With each of these came a reaction, and

German clearly feels we're on the cusp of another such reaction to Fake News. The value in archives, then, is that they are there to provide documents that hold governments and institutions accountable in the future—but only if they collect “sufficient factual information to document our time” (188).

Almost all of the chapters focus on the intrinsic value of archives, with one exception. Thomas and Moss's own chapter on companies that contract with archives to provide genealogical records via subscription services is really the only chapter that focuses on financial issues. Companies like Ancestry.com make millions of dollars a year by providing archival records on demand. There clearly is an amount that patrons were (and are) willing to invest for this information, given how many people subscribe to Ancestry.com and its competitors, but archives did not have the manpower or funding to invest in creating databases with the retrieval capabilities that these companies offer. Archives, then, are relegated to the position of contracting out their records, which does not appear to have a big return on investment. Moss and Thomas point out that this contracting out of services is typical of the current funding models for many archives and fits ideologically within the neoliberal mindset of most funding agencies. Not developing this point further seems like a missed opportunity.

Overall, *Do Archives Have Value?* is a good resource for those looking for different ways to prove their institution's intrinsic value. It will not help anyone needing to prove financial value. This is the continuing dilemma of archives, and in the time of COVID-19, it will be interesting to see if showing intrinsic value will be enough.

Nahali R. Croft, Georgia College

Jeanne Kramer-Smyth, *Partners for Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation Through Cross-Community Collaboration*. London, Facet Publishing. 212p. \$93.99.

Jeanne Kramer-Smyth's *Partners for Preservation: Advancing Digital Preservation Through Cross-Community Collaboration* is not a handbook of answers, a manual, or case studies addressing technology issues. Instead, it is a book of preservation challenges faced by those working in

the digital world across disciplines. Kramer-Smyth's twenty-year career as a software developer prior to her work as an archivist at the World Bank Group gave her the opportunity to see digital preservation from a non-GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archives, and Museum) perspective and the benefits of working with those outside the field to address technological conundrums archivists can't solve on their own. By bringing together academics and experts from fields such as law, journalism, architecture, and cybersecurity, she gives archivists a roadmap to identify the types of partners to collaborate with to address shared digital preservation issues.

Partners for Preservation is divided into three sections: Memory, Privacy and Transparency; The Physical World: Objects, Art and Architecture; and Data and Programming. The ten chapters include discussion on who owns digital materials post-mortem, the right to be forgotten (RTBF) and privacy in the age of personal data assimilation, the Internet of Things, color rendering, data visualization, preservation and sharing of research data, and digital preservation standards. Each chapter delves into a specific topic and explores the theoretical elements along with real world applications and problems and solutions being developed.

Ellie Margolis's chapter, "Link Rot, Reference Rot, and the Thorny Problems of Legal Citation," examines how link rot and reference rot adversely affect the citations of online sources in legal cases in an age where more and more legal content is born digital. Anyone citing online sources in their work can relate to the issues of dead links and modified web content, but in a field where lost citations can be legally detrimental, the issue is an even more crucial one to solve. This chapter might also be helpful to anyone in the medical field or those working with medical professionals, since the stakes for correct and valid links to information are just as high as in the legal field.

Vetria Byrd's chapter, "Sharing Research Data, Data Standards, and Improving Opportunities for Creating Visualizations," is a timely and valuable tool for those in Scholarly Communications or other fields trying to preserve and share data. As more and more raw data is produced, the greater the struggle is to maintain it in a meaningful way. Byrd's focus centers specifically on using visualization tools for data representation and analysis, but the need for standards in the way raw data is kept and shared is also

emphasized. The references listed at the end of the chapter are a valuable resource for the reader interested in visualization and data preservation and would give a good introduction to where the field has been and where it is headed.

Overall, the text is heavy with jargon at times and weighs on the side of being too technical for the accidental digital preservationist who might be less technology savvy. The chapter by Abhijit Sarkar, “Accurate Digital *Colour* Reproduction on Displays: From Hardware Designs to Software Features,” gets in the weeds of the technical specifics of color rendering, including manufacturing of display devices. It does offer a brief history of the development of color science and digital display but more focus on the bigger issues in the field and development of standards might have been better served.

The conclusion, written by Jeanne Kramer-Smyth, ends with the encouragement for mid-career technologists to shift over to the world of digital preservation as digital archivists. Hiring those with the skills already in place to deal with the issues faced by the digital archivist would seem to be an ideal solution, but in the non-profit world, most GLAM repositories don’t have the luxury of being able to recruit from an already-competitive field of technology professionals. Hopefully, texts like this can provide enough context and resources for digital archivists who do not have a strong technology background to identify where they can seek help and guidance.

Anyone facing digital preservation issues could benefit from reading this book. Archivist or not, many people deal with some element of preserving digital material. *Partners for Preservation* also brings up challenges some might not have considered or might face in the future. For example, inheritance of digital content post-mortem is relevant for anyone with a Facebook or email account and online privacy is important to most everyone. Eireann Leverett writes about the Internet of Things and the consequences of the need for smaller, cheaper devices. Leverett’s chapter reminds consumers that nothing in the digital world is free and lack of privacy is often the price. Those not specializing in digital archives but still faced with digital preservation decisions can use this book as a reference tool to guide them through potential collaborations and consult resources for more information. The more technical chapters might over-

whelm the non-technologist but still offer valuable recommendations for further study.

Overall, sections and chapters are logically organized and the index makes it easy to find information regarding specific topics. Each chapter contains extensive references, and most have suggested further readings on various topics. Some of the authors propose solutions to the challenges they introduce, but the overall theme throughout the book is that there are no easy answers. As technology evolves, digital preservation challenges will continue to need new and more dynamic solutions. Kramer-Smyth recognizes we are all in this together and working across disciplines will help archivists connect with those who can help them.

Jennifer Daugherty
East Carolina University

Christine Weideman and Mary A. Caldera, eds., *Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene*. Chicago, Society of American Archivists. 316p. \$55.00.

In wrestling with the big questions regarding professional identity, renowned archivist Mark A. Greene announced and promoted his idea of core values for archivists in his 2008 address as President of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). In 2011, the SAA Council developed an official statement founded on Greene's core values. Answering why, what, and how archivists do what they do, these values--when employed and adopted by the profession as a whole--would boost engagement among archival workers and collectively empower archivists through a set of aligned principles and practices that could serve as guides towards effective action and visibility for the archival profession.

Christine Weideman and Mary A. Caldera, editors of *Archival Values*, make clear in the book's introduction their purpose to honor Greene through guest-written essays that assess the context, application, and impact of Greene's core values from their inception to the present. While the core values have some conceptual overlap, they are divided by three overarching themes: why are we [archivists] here; what do we do; and how do we do it. The "why" essays cover the values History and Memory, Social Responsibility, and Diversity and Accountability. These "why" values serve

as foundational concepts that acknowledge the importance of the archives and how archival work serves society. Responsible Custody, Selection, Access and Use, Preservation, and Advocacy are values categorized in the “what” of archival work and explained as more precise actions and duties performed that serve the broader goals of archiving. Finally, rounding out the essays and leading up to Meissner’s conclusion, are the values of Service and Professionalism: how do [should] archivists carry out their responsibilities?

In addition to an introduction by the book’s editors and an afterword from Greene’s close colleague and “More Product Less Process” collaborator Dennis Meissner, the bulk of the book is twenty-three essays that focus on one of SAA’s eleven core values. Most of the essays are short reads. The strengths of this essay collection come from the varying backgrounds of the authors, whose wide range of personal and professional experiences benefit the purpose of the book by enabling both admiration and healthy criticism of the values. Each value is printed before its respective response piece, but the entire list can be found as an appendix at the end of the book. As the selected text for SAA’s 2019-2020 “One Book, One Profession” group reading initiative, *Archival Values* includes a variety of discussion questions that make this text great for class discussion topics in graduate archival and library and information science programs, as well as a reference text for the self-reflecting seasoned professional.

It is difficult to highlight just one or two standout chapters from each section because every chapter represents a different viewpoint and each of the eleven values have continued to be topics du jour within the archival profession. The two chapters provided by Joel Wurl and Steven D. Booth about diversity within the profession reinforce the idea of introspection and prompt readers to consider how any of these values can shift from being well-meaning ideals to actions and goals with measurable outcomes. In his essay, Wurl asks, “What does it mean to value diversity.” This inquiry was not only intended to be a rhetorical question for readers to consider; before publishing, Wurl garnered real responses from colleagues that ranged from cynicism to optimism. In comparison to Wurl’s essay, Steven A. Booth’s writing offsets doubt and highlights diversity work that is currently being achieved. Booth provides one of the more

introspective essays out of the bunch. He acknowledges his place within marginalized communities; despite this, he examines the opportunities he has still been afforded and how those experiences enabled him to assist students and new archival workers to establish professional identities. Booth also uses components of the Diversity core value statement to plug organizations and individuals like DocNow, the History Makers Fellowship, and several SAA member sections (Lesbian and Gay Archives, Archives and Archivists of Color, etc.) that currently exemplify this core value.

Ben Goldman's essay, included in *Preservation*, uniquely focuses on the environmental impact of archiving, particularly as it relates to climate change. Goldman addresses the rather somber fact that digital preservation and digital access will look different in the future because this type of material management has and will continue to require the use of fossil fuels for preservation and storage. He makes the bold suggestion that archives will have to limit collecting and restructure collection development to be more environmentally sustainable. Though *Archival Values* was published in 2019, before COVID-19 protocols and mass shut-downs, it would be remiss not to acknowledge the irony of Goldman's forewarning in this chapter and the importance of digital storage and access many institutions and users relied on for well over a year during stay-at-home orders. Nonetheless, Goldman urges archivists to show discernment in future collecting and preservation to lessen the carbon footprint of archival work.

Dominique Luster contributes an enlightening and well-rounded critique on Professionalism that manages to encompass actions from every other core value. Luster opens her essay by explaining her "what" and "why" as archivist of the Charles "Teenie" Harris Photograph Collection at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. She also tactfully suggests that SAA's interpretation and explanation of "professionalism" is coded and has roots in elitism and exclusivity, neglecting the importance of developing a trusting relationship between archives and communities. Luster springboards from this idea into explaining the significance of valuing creators and communities over managing materials without input or direction from in-group members, signaling a move from traditional gatekeeping to widely sharing materials for the benefit of both users and creators.

The writing is concise throughout the book: while many essays are presented as companion writings with shared sentiments over the same value, others take on contrasting tones, with harsh judgments against what can be interpreted as insincerity due to inaction. This book was not intended to be an end-all guidebook for professional practice, but a useful tool for individual and group assessment that can be revisited as often as needed. No one value is more relevant or important than the others; rather, each one deserves examining and reexamining if SAA intends to use the core values as guiding principles for archivists.

Ashelee Gerald Hill
Wake Forest University

Kathleen D. Roe. *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists. 2019. 160 p. \$69.00 (nonmember); \$49.00 (member).

Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists, the third volume in the third iteration of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) Archival Fundamentals Series (AFS), fills an important need in the archival literature. While there are numerous books and articles on arrangement and description, preservation, appraisal, and processing, resources on archival advocacy are scant. Notably, the previous editions of the AFS did not include a volume on advocacy. As Roe observes early on, “although archivists have been involved in advocacy, awareness, and even lobbying since the establishment of the profession in the United States, those activities have not generally been acknowledged as an essential function in archival education or as an ongoing job responsibility” (3). As the AFS aims to provide training and reference in support of an archivist’s foundational skills, Roe’s addition is both welcome and overdue. Students, emerging professionals, and seasoned archivists alike will find this volume to be a valuable introduction to an important area of archival theory and practice.

Roe’s main goal is to help archivists develop an “advocacy frame of mind” (14), suggesting that all archivists have a role in advancing archival advocacy efforts from local to national levels. Individual archivists often struggle to secure necessary resources within their institutions, and the

archival profession overall is frequently misunderstood as ‘people who work with old, dusty papers.’ Instead of quietly chafing at these slights, Roe urges archivists to thoughtfully plan and carry out targeted advocacy efforts to enhance the use of local collections, to lobby for laws that safeguard records, and to advance the standing of the profession. While Roe elaborates particular skills and practices for advocacy work, she stresses that “nearly every function archivists undertake can be used as an opportunity to raise awareness” about the value of archives and the significant societal role of archivists (113). Roe illustrates how advocacy has been foundational to the profession in the United States, which grew as a result of concerted efforts to establish a National Archives along with many distributed efforts to found state archives and university archives. Ongoing advocacy and awareness efforts are essential to sustain a vital profession.

Building on strong opening chapters covering this rationale and history, Roe dedicates the bulk of the book to presenting clear and actionable approaches for doing the work of advocacy and awareness. For something that may seem unreachable for new and emerging professionals—perhaps a responsibility of senior archivists and elected SAA officials—Roe deftly breaks this apparently lofty if laudable undertaking down into steps that can be followed and skills that can be honed. Many chapters feature workbook tables and templates that readers can copy and fill out as they brainstorm advocacy efforts at their own institutions, in their local communities, or directed at state or federal governments. Along with more general guidelines and overviews, Roe supplies directed questions that prompt concrete, detailed thinking about how to realize an advocacy plan in a particular setting. For example, Roe poses questions about how social media platforms might be utilized (81) and posits tips for preparing for an interview with a journalist (85). Along with several helpful appendices, readers of varying levels of experience will be equipped with the advice, tools, and additional resources needed to either augment or altogether jumpstart advocacy efforts.

While Roe provides a robust overview of advocacy, awareness, and lobbying for archivists, she herself emphasizes that each advocacy effort proceeds in a specific context, advancing specific goals and involving specific stakeholders (39). Roe underscores this specificity of advocacy goals

throughout the book, and cautions archivists against vague statements of purpose like ‘better serving the general public’ or ‘improving access to online collections.’ To be effective, advocacy efforts need to translate into precisely defined courses of action. While the present volume is only able to allude to illustrative examples of specific advocacy efforts in passing, readers can profitably complement Roe’s book with *Many Happy Returns*. Superbly edited by Larry Hackman, *Many Happy Returns* presents a diverse array of case studies in which archivists from a range of institutions and professional settings describe in detail the specific aspects of advocacy efforts that Roe outlines at a more general level.

Despite the many strengths of the book, I was left disappointed in one major regard: *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists* addresses archivists’ role as advocates for archives and the archival profession, but Roe does not thoroughly discuss archivists’ responsibilities as advocates for social causes that intersect with archives. Roe does present some examples in this vein, such as archivists working to ensure accountability of government officials, for instance by blocking former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani from maintaining his mayoral records in a private warehouse (31). These examples, though, are limited in scope and primarily focus on the inward implications for archivists and archives. Increasingly, archival students, scholars, and practitioners are energized by the potential for archivists to advocate outwardly on behalf of causes like climate justice and racial equity, leveraging archival expertise and the value of archival records to enact real social change on these critical issues. Similar to how Roe calls upon archivists to take up the mantle of advocacy, Randall Jimerson has called upon archivists to reckon with the power of archives and use our professional positions to serve the public good. This strain of archival advocacy is also an underdiscussed though absolutely essential activity. By becoming vocal proponents of social change, archivists can also raise awareness of the profession and the value of archival records—the failure to make this crucial connection between advocating for archives and advocating through archives leaves a marked gap in an otherwise excellent addition to the literature on fundamental archival skills.

As a first-of-its-kind primer on archival advocacy, the volume is essential reading for archival scholars and

practitioners at all stages of their careers. Roe rightly acknowledges the need to elevate advocacy to an essential area of archival theory and practice, and this book should spark further conversations, research, and advocacy efforts critical to the vitality of the profession.

Colin Post
University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Michele Valerie Cloonan, ed., *Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age*. Chicago, American Library Association, Neal-Schuman. 736p. \$110.00 (non-member); \$99.00 (member).

Some books are so significant that it is necessary to bring them to the attention of those who are unfamiliar with their relevance and to remind others why they should be an important part of their libraries. That is certainly the case with *Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from Antiquity to the Digital Age*, winner of the 2016 Preservation Publication Award from the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Seldom does a comprehensive anthology reflect such a breadth of information while remaining so accessible to students and professionals alike.

Michele V. Cloonan, dean emerita and professor of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, has drawn upon her vast expertise and recommendations from a diverse group of scholars and practitioners to assemble writings pertaining to the preservation of cultural heritage from 700 BCE to the 21st century. Short commentaries, poems, articles, and excerpts from a variety of sources give a well-rounded and thought-provoking view of preservation through the ages and demonstrate how scholars have drawn on past sources to advance its philosophies and practices. Cloonan has focused on topics including preservation and cultural heritage, digitization, collection development, multicultural perspectives, and sustainability. Each of the eleven chapters has a commentary by Cloonan, in which she gives a short synopsis of what will be covered within the subsequent pages. This is followed by clearly defined “selections” supporting the topic of her chapter.

Cloonan begins the anthology with an extensive timeline that places the book and its writings within their chronological context. Commencing with Old Testament

prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah extolling the importance of saving documents, the timeline traces the evolution of thought regarding the preservation of texts, antiquities, and art; the importance of safeguarding material through contemporary methods; and more recent themes of digital preservation and “fair use.” Some of the entries are remarkable, such as Queen Elizabeth I of England’s issuance of a proclamation against defacing monuments (1560); John Murray’s account of his chemical analysis of paper (1829); and the suggestion by Canadian Reginald A. Fessenden that microform was a viable option for managing large quantities of documents (1896). This chronology puts the topic into perspective and gives the reader a sense of its variety and magnitude.

Cloonan initially focuses on classical writings which have formed the basis of current thought. Various perspectives are contributed by poets, social commentators, jurists, librarians, archivists, and scientific writers, each drawing on their own experiences, as well as from earlier resources. In addition to outlining the emergence of the initial impetus to preserve, Cloonan seeks to answer the important question: why preserve? Answers include religious reasons, political concerns, philosophical and scholarly interests, and personal rationales. She also traces early motivations to record and save important texts, as well as the growing interest in the preservation of art and architecture. This was reflected in the understanding that environmental and man-made damage could be prevented by measures such as designing buildings appropriate to their environment, limiting the use of candles in the same room as valued paintings, and ending the devastation of historic religious buildings such as the “Dissolution of the Monasteries,” an event which resulted in the pillaging of churches and monastic houses throughout England. The destruction of valuable material caused by war and other religious and political conflicts also caused growing concern with preserving antiquities.

The continued concern surrounding the protection of valued texts are echoed in librarian Gabriel Naude’s view of assembling collections and preserving them in libraries. He established his position in *Advice on Establishing a Library* (1727), in which he pondered the importance of developing collections and preserving them for research. Other writers contemplated different preservation options, such as Thomas Jefferson (1743- 1826), who asserted that creating

multiple copies of documents would fight against “time and accident” that were damaging important public papers; John Murray (1786?- 1851), who was concerned about the poor quality of paper; and William Morris (1834- 1896), who celebrated the theory of “do no harm” when approaching the preservation of architectural buildings.

In subsequent chapters, Cloonan seeks to place preservation in context. She begins with a discussion of cultural heritage, exploring the term with the assistance of anthropologists, archaeologists, and scholars. *Culture* is specifically defined as “socially constructed behavior and attitudes that are manifest in arts, beliefs, customs, and institutions” and *heritage* is described as “a perpetuation of culture—its historical scope and reach” (19). *Preservation* naturally follows as “assuring the longevity of cultural heritage” (19). These definitions lead the reader to place cultural heritage within the framework of “particular societies at particular times” (20). Cloonan continues the conversation regarding cultural memory through articles such as “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity” written by Jan Assmann. Assmann recalls earlier scholars who questioned whether collective memory is biological or cultural, but ultimately finds a solution to this question by his definition of cultural memory as “a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behavior and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation” (23). Cloonan selects works by other authors to continue to explore the idea of cultural heritage, describing it in philosophical, legal, and ethical perspectives.

Particularly interesting to educators and practitioners are the chapters concerning contextualizing preservation within libraries, archives, and museums. Cloonan chooses authors who describe the many roles that these collecting institutions play, including facilitating learning and conserving “the treasure of culture and identity.” The selected scholars question the roles of these institutions and mark their similarities and differences. They also tackle the definitions of preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. Additionally, Cloonan includes more practical writings which consider challenges such as how to start a preservation program, collection development and management, dealing with budgetary issues, monitoring preservation needs of large

collections, and retention. These chapters slowly move the readers from questions regarding *how* items should be saved to pondering the question of *should* they be saved. Issues like space, cost, and digitization choices are weighed against what could be lost.

Cloonan devotes two chapters to current risks to cultural heritage and conservation. Although she covers the subject of cultural risk throughout the book, these chapters cover the real possibility of serious threats with practical suggestions regarding how they should be met, such as Peter Waters' "Excerpts from revised text of 'Procedures for Salvage of Water-Damaged Materials'" and Christopher Clarkson's "Minimum Intervention in the Treatment of Books," which both involve procedures and practices for handling actual disasters. Clarkson, who coined the phrase "book conservation" after the horrific 1966 Great Flood of Florence, gives specific examples of the analysis and repair of damaged books.

Subsequent chapters deal with preservation in the current digital environment. Interestingly, Cloonan includes articles dating to the late 1990s, which give the reader the opportunity to see the progression of opinions on the topic, such as what collections should be chosen for digitization, the nature of use, costs and benefits, and copyright concerns. The book is also comprised of articles written specifically for the text, including "Preservation in a Time of Transition: Refining Stewardship of Time-Based Media in the Digital Age" by Karen F. Gracy, which discusses the very immediate issues of how transition to digital formats has impacted archivists. Other sections deal more specifically with moving image material, sound and audio archives, and audio and visual preservation. While this subject matter may seem very specific, it also reveals the importance of preserving this type of material to maintain our "cultural, linguistic, and ethnic" history.

Cloonan clearly states in the preface of her book that her aim is to "introduce students and professionals to readings that will help them in their studies and in their professional practice" (xv) and she does exactly that. The anthology's format and chronological organization makes it an excellent reference and the readings can easily be integrated into classes across many disciplines. I often incorporate sections of *Preserving Our Heritage: Perspectives from*

Antiquity to the Digital Age into my classes and I highly recommend it for students who are becoming familiar with the subject, as well as professionals who value having a variety of excellent writings about cultural preservation at their fingertips.

Kathelene McCarty Smith
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Brianna H. Marshall, ed. *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving*. Chicago: ALA Editions. 2018. 304 p. \$68 (non-ALA member); \$61.20 (ALA member).

When I accepted the task of writing a review for *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving* in January 2020, I could not foresee my institutional library closing to the public for months due to COVID-19. I also could not have imagined how much this climate would cause a rapid shift towards a near total focus on digital services and outreach. Digital preservation is not new, but this pandemic has made the need to capture and preserve digital assets and new histories more eminent. For years, I have researched, reflected on, and practiced different methods of digital archiving, but my efforts still seemed to fall short in both personal and professional needs. If there was ever a book that I needed to read as an archivist, digital librarian, and co-chair of a library community engagement, in the right time and going forward, this was the one.

Personal Digital Archiving (PDA), is the “collection, preservation, and management of personal and family materials created in digital media” (Gunn xi). PDA includes multiple skills that are needed by scholars and keepers of community histories alike. This book was created to be an introductory text for information professionals who may not be completely knowledgeable in the best ways to advise their patrons on managing their own digital assets. Editor Brianna Marshall has compiled excellent information and firsthand teaching experiences from 23 information professionals throughout the United States. The authors roles cover a broad range in the information sciences field, such as reference, digital curation, data management, archives, and even a few doctoral candidates.

The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving is written in, as Marshall frames it, an “informed, yet

personal” style with information presented anecdotally. Instead of the expected straightforward instructions and definitions presented in the third person (as is common in some related publications), the reader learns about PDA from a combination of researched facts, and the author’s personal experiences and motivations for using PDA. The result is that each chapter feels like an observational-style conversation with professional colleagues that engage the reader to ask questions on how to incorporate PDA techniques into their communities, to teach their patrons, and to use in their personal and professional lives. While reading this engrossing book, I found myself experimenting on my laptop with newly-acquired teachings, making plans and recommendations before I could finish each chapter.

Following the forward by Marshall and an introduction to PDA, the body of the text is composed of 15 chapters divided into four sections. Part One (including chapters one through five) discusses formats, tools, and approaches for archiving digital photographs, audio and video, images, social media, and web content. Each of these chapters gives special instructions for teaching these digital preservation techniques to patrons. A memorable insight is being able to differentiate from what is done at the professional level (digital preservation of photos as TIFF files) versus the needs and resources that are commonly available for the community archiving patron (digitizing those images as JPEG for less memory capacity and more flexibility). These chapters pulled back a large veil of general misunderstanding which others in the profession (and beyond) may have concerning best practices and digitization terms.

Part Two (including chapters six through eight) focuses on three case studies of PDA for community archiving. The first case study features a public library in Washington, DC, that created memory labs to educate and assist its patrons on digital preservation. The next case study is about a library project in Queens, NY, that used community scanning events, and digitization classes to gather and collect oral histories and photographs. The third case study details how a public university created guidelines to archive a specific community group’s history and heritage. All three case studies show personal digital archiving as an important connection between community engagement and digitization within libraries.

Part Three (including chapters nine through eleven) elaborate on PDA for academic institutions. More case study examples are presented, with some using many of the same approaches from Part Two. The examples provide clear distinctions of the needs of academic faculty, students and researchers, and the curation of personal and professional collections. For example, chapter 10 is a case study on PDA for artists' archives; chapter 11 discusses research data management. These chapters also show how libraries can hold informative sessions on their campuses with research examples of what works for an academic audience.

Part Four (including chapters 12 through 15) discusses the social and ethical implications of personal digital archives. Chapters 12 and 13 present case studies in archiving files held in cloud storage, acquiring born-digital materials, making plans for files created in apps, and understanding the implications of embedded metadata and its importance for personal archiving. Chapter 14 presents a first-person case study on PDA and highlights the importance of teaching the correct skills to communities so they may become proactive in saving their digital histories. Chapter 15 presents perspectives on digital estates, which may involve acquiring and mapping digital content before the time of death.

The authors collectively have excellent foresight into the changing nature of PDA and digitization in libraries. For example, while some software and digital tools are explained, there is also emphasis on teaching and understanding that the software and web tools used could quickly change and become obsolete. It is more important for archivists to understand the importance of planning and teaching procedures for saving digital artifacts. The authors know their audience. With clear concepts they illustrate that if the PDA initiatives they set out to do can succeed, then others learning from their experiences will also succeed.

The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving succeeds as a very usable and extremely valuable primer for its topics. For someone who is not an information professional, Part One may be the easiest section of the text to understand and consume at a basic level. The book is very readable with easy to comprehend charts, diagrams, glossary terms, legible text, and specially highlighted sections where given. All chapters except one include bibliographies. In these bibliographies, the authors consistently use

peer-reviewed sources, related trade publications, and information from conferences—leaving little doubt to the credibility of presented information. The “Further Resources” sections of the chapters include an incredible amount of helpful resources on all aspects of personal digital archiving.

The abundance of instruction with the provided resources are a needed starting place for practicing digital archivists. All the chapters are recommended for informational professionals in academic libraries, regardless of which type of patron or institution one serves. Published in 2018, *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving* seems like it was written in 2020; and I anticipate it will be used enthusiastically by informational professionals for some time, or until its next edition.

James R. Stewart Jr.
North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University

Submissions and Subscriptions

The *Journal for the Society of North Carolina Archivists* seeks to support the theoretical, practical, and scholarly aspects of the archival professions by publishing articles and reviews related to curatorial issues (e.g., collection management and development), technical services (e.g., cataloging, processing, digital collections, EAD, preservation, conservation, etc.), and public services (reference, instruction, outreach) for special collections and archives.

The *Journal* accepts a range of articles related to research, study, theory, or practice in the archival professions. All members of the archival community, including students and independent researchers, are welcome to submit articles and reviews. Contributors need not be members of SNCA or live in the state of North Carolina. The *Journal* will not reprint or republish articles submitted to and accepted by other publications. Full manuscript submission requirements can be found at: <http://www.ncarchivists.org/publications>.

The *Journal* is open access and can be viewed at <http://www.ncarchivists.org/journal-of-the-society-of-north-carolina-archivists-j-snca/>. For additional information concerning *J-SNCA*, please contact the Publications Chair at publications@ncarchivists.org.