

NEH Application Cover Sheet (HAA-256122)

Digital Humanities Advancement Grants

PROJECT DIRECTOR

Mr. Brandon Lunsford
Archival Services Librarian
100 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 282165302
USA

E-mail: bdlunsford@jcsu.edu
Phone: 7043716741
Fax:

Field of expertise: History, General

INSTITUTION

Johnson C. Smith University
Charlotte, NC 282165302

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Mapping the Historic West End: The Digital History of African American Neighborhoods in Charlotte, North Carolina*

Grant period: From 2017-09-01 to 2019-02-28

Project field(s): History and Philosophy of Science, Technology, and Medicine; African American History; Literature, General

Description of project: We seeks a Level 2 Digital Humanities Advancement grant from NEH in the amount of \$69,039, with a cost share of \$30,735 for a total cost of \$99,774. This project will create a web and mobile app framework for publishing location-based content including historical photographs, documents, and oral histories that will populate a digital interactive map. The map will document the Historic West End, a vibrant 150 year old African American community that surrounds the university on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina and is currently faced with gentrification and social change. This project will expand the boundaries of how libraries can use mobile technology to bring visual history and users together, and will utilize a partnership between academic and public libraries, museums, government agencies, and community members that will provide a model for other small and historically black college and university libraries that seek to bring their local history alive in the digital age.

BUDGET

Outright Request	69,039.00	Cost Sharing	30,735.00
Matching Request	0.00	Total Budget	99,774.00
Total NEH	69,039.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

Dr. Diane Bowles
100 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 282165302
USA

E-mail: dbowles@jcsu.edu
Phone: 7043781202
Fax: 7043301330

Table of Contents

List of Participants	PG 2
Abstract	PG 3
Narrative	PG 4
ENHANCING THE HUMANITIES.....	PG 4
ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN.....	PG 5
HISTORY OF THE PROJECT.....	PG 5
WORK PLAN.....	PG 6
STAFF.....	PG 8
FINAL PRODUCT AND DISSEMINATION.....	PG 9
Biographies	PG 10
Project Budget	PG 14
Data Management Plan	PG 23
Appendices.....	PG 25
I. HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS IN THE WEST END.....	PG 25
II. NOTABLE SITES OF THE WEST END.....	PG 28
III. JAMES G. PEELER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION.....	PG 29
IV. HISTORYPIN SIMILAR PROJECT EXAMPLES.....	PG 30
V. HISTORYPIN DETAILED SERVICES.....	PG 31
Letters of Commitment	PG 35

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

*** James B. Duke Memorial Library, Johnson C. Smith University:** (Central repository for concentrated digital and physical content)

Brandon Lunsford, University Archivist and PI for Mapping Biddleville

Chelly Tavss, Photographic Archivist for James G. Peeler Collection

Project Assistant (to be hired with NEH funds)

***Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Charlotte:** (Partner institution for contributing content, canvassing for new content, and advisory planning team)

Project Consultants

Dawn Schmitz, Associate Dean for Special Collections & University Archives

Aaron Shapiro, Director of Public History

***Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room, Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library** (Partner institution for contributing content and advisory planning team)

Sheila Bumgarner, Archivist

***Levine Museum of the New South** (Partner institution for contributing content and advisory planning team)

Dr. Brenda Tindal, Staff Historian

***Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department** (Partner institution for contributing content and advisory planning team)

John Howard, Historic Districts Commission Administrator

***Tom Hanchett, Community Historian, History South** (Advisory planning team)

***Kathryn Frye, Second Ward Alumni Association** (Advisory planning team)

ABSTRACT

The James B. Duke Memorial Library seeks a Level 2 Digital Humanities Advancement grant from NEH in the amount of \$69,039, with a cost share of \$30,735 for a total project cost of \$99,774. This project will create a web and mobile app framework for publishing location-based content including historical photographs, documents, and oral histories that will populate a digital interactive map. The map will document the Historic West End, a vibrant 150 year old African American community that surrounds the university on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina and is currently faced with gentrification and social change. This project will expand the boundaries of how libraries can use mobile technology to bring visual history and users together, and will utilize a partnership between academic and public libraries, museums, government agencies, and community members that will provide a model for other small and historically black college and university libraries that seek to bring their local history alive in the digital age.

NARRATIVE

Enhancing the Humanities

The James B. Duke Memorial Library at Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) seeks a Level 2 Digital Humanities Advancement grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities in the amount of \$69,039, with a cost share of \$30,735 for a total project cost of \$99,774. The proposed 18-month project will explore the creation of a web and mobile app framework for publishing location-based content including historical photographs, documents, and oral histories that will provide a digital interactive map of the Historic West End, a vibrant African American community that surrounds the university on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina. This project will enhance the humanities by expanding the boundaries of how libraries can use geo-location and mobile technology to bring visual history and users together, and by utilizing a partnership between academic and public libraries, museums, government agencies, and community members that will provide a template for other small and historically black college and university (HBCU) libraries that seek to bring their local history alive in the digital age.

The long term goals of the project are to provide a way for a new generation of students to connect with African American history in Charlotte, and to launch a series of digital maps on other neighborhoods that will create a new model of participatory community history wedded with technology. We seek to make the history of African American neighborhoods and the story of their survival and adaptation in the face of threats such as urban renewal and gentrification appealing for a new and younger generation, one that understands the world around them through their phones, devices, and social media. The ultimate goal of the project is to kick start a campaign whereby Charlotte becomes an example for other cities that wish to enhance the humanities in new ways using the members of their communities to influence the telling of their own histories.

The West End area of Charlotte provides an excellent model for the humanities to study because it is the only historic black neighborhood in Charlotte that was relatively untouched by urban renewal policies in the 1960's and 1970's, and has largely maintained its historic character over time. Many residents of the West End have been lifelong neighbors, and their families have lived here for generations since the neighborhood's inception. This is largely changing, however, as urban development threatens this historic area. The West End includes the area of Biddleville right around JCSU, which is currently undergoing an intense period of change as Charlotte has become the fastest growing city in the United States over the last decade. Its proximity to downtown has led to rising rents and an influx of higher income white residents that are rapidly gentrifying a neighborhood that was 96% African American in 2000. White residents currently make up a quarter of its population, and many cities across the country are experiencing a similar re-orientation of their African American populations. Libraries and museums can replicate our model of digitally preserving the stories and images of the West End to help document neighborhoods around them that may be experiencing urban displacement. No definitive mapping project or historic survey has ever been done on the West End, which makes this a rare opportunity to extensively document an important African American community in a major city for the first time as it is entering a period of rapid change

and evolution. Digitally documenting an African American neighborhood and using that information to spark a conversation about history, society, and racial diversity in a growing city would make this project invaluable to the humanities and provide an excellent teaching opportunity for audiences not just in Charlotte and among the African American community, but across the country. The proposed project would not only highlight the history of a vibrant African American community in Charlotte, but could also serve locally as a model of how historical research and survey information could be managed to further education, planning, and historic preservation throughout Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Digitally chronicling the West End could in fact make Charlotte a model for new methods of historic preservation and community archiving for other cities.

Environmental Scan

A thorough environmental scan has identified similar digital projects that have been studied and used as models. In *West Side Stories*, developed by Oakland based production company Youth Radio, audio vignettes are placed on the map alongside neighborhood profiles and points of interest. The map is centered on some of the areas that have been hit hardest by gentrification, as home prices continue to climb in the San Francisco Bay Area. Another example is PhilaPlace, an interactive site created by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania that connects stories to places across time in Philadelphia's neighborhoods. We would like to create something similar to the multi-tiered format used by PhilaPlace that includes searchable map layers featuring text, pictures, audio and video clips, and podcasts along with the option to allow visitors to map their own stories. PhilaPlace also includes tools for ongoing community programs and publications, from workshops for teachers to trolley tours and exhibits that we could use as a model to continuously adapt and evolve the site. These two sites provide great models for studying the effects of historic neighborhoods generally and gentrification specifically in a digital format, although the geographical and racial context of Mapping the Historic West End will be much different and quite unique.

A similar project that has been done involving the African American community in Charlotte is Romare Bearden's *Charlotte*, created by the Levine Museum of the New South to digitally chronicle sites that helped shape the well-known Harlem Renaissance artist's worldview in his earliest years following his birth in 1911 in Charlotte. The map markers include his family's home and church as well as nearby African American landmarks. This site is excellent but very limited in scope and functionality and focuses on an individual's story instead of that of an entire neighborhood but will still provide a good local perspective. Project advisory team member Tom Hanchett helped develop the project for the Levine Museum and will provide his expertise and experience.

History of the project

The genesis of this project was in 2014 when various cultural institutions in the Charlotte area joined together to discuss a collaboration of resources on the African American neighborhoods in the city that were held in different places. That coalition of institutions including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library, the history department and archives at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Levine Museum of the New South, and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department will be advisors on this project and have written letters of support pledging to share their resources as well as help expand the understanding of the West End. With input from this partnership, an application to the 2014 IMLS National Leadership

Grant for Libraries in the demonstration category was submitted, with a broader focus on African American neighborhoods in Charlotte. The project was not funded, and a decision was made to narrow the focus and drill down on the West End area and the Biddleville neighborhood in particular so as not to overtax the resources and scope of the project. The hope for the future is that a successful mapping platform for the West End will be used as a model to extend the project to the other historic African American neighborhoods of Charlotte, which have already been damaged by urban renewal and are less populated currently with black families with neighborhood legacies. The ultimate goal is to provide a digital footprint for the legacy of African American daily life in a developing Southern city, and the coalition felt that the West End was the area that was not only the least represented, but had the most potential for becoming a national model for a black neighborhood that has survived and thrived through decades of historic change. We will use the cultural institutions we have gathered for our advisory board to continue to seek out future funding sources and opportunities on the federal and local level, and we will use the completed Mapping the Historic West End project as an appeal to our university and our advisory institutions to invest in the framework of the project's future as well.

Work Plan:Phase One (September 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018)

The first phase of the project will be 5 months, and its goal is to complete a survey of existing digital and non-digital resources at our own archives and those of our partner institutions, determine their copyright and potential for inclusion, and to integrate them into a central digital hub hosted by Johnson C. Smith University. These survey and research trips to other institutions will be conducted by the Principal Investigator and the Project Assistant with the aid of the advisory board at each institution surveyed. In the first phase of the project the team will also be accumulating a list of names of individuals and organizations to contact for interviews and to discuss the donation of further materials, with the aid of our advisory planning team. The project assistant, with help from JCSU's Photograph Archivist, will begin by identifying resources at our own institution relating to the West End. We will be using a very large archive of unseen photographs and negatives from the James G. Peeler Collection held at Johnson C. Smith University; Peeler was from the West End, and his work as a photographer in Charlotte spanned almost half a century as he captured the lives of many black residents of the neighborhoods by shooting important social, political, social, and religious events. His work also includes several street scenes of the neighborhood and several influential community members including local civil rights pioneers and business owners. Peeler's work has often been published in local and national publications, but Johnson C. Smith recently received a donation of over 200,000 images from his personal collection that have been processed and have never been seen before. There are precious few photographs of Biddleville and its surrounding neighborhoods in public hands, and this may be the best collection that exists to provide these images. The Photograph Archivist will be responsible for identifying images from the Peeler Collection to include in the project, and for organizing and processing other images obtained throughout the project.

The Principal Investigator and the Project Assistant will travel to all four of the partner institutions in Charlotte who have provided a letter of support for the project to research their archives and identify resources to include in the central archive. During each visit we will also be creating a list of interview subjects and organizations to contact on the advice of our

partners and our own research into the fabric of the West End neighborhood. We will also begin the evaluation and assessment of the project during this phase. The Principal Investigator will organize a focus group with members from outside our partnership team that will include West End residents selected from neighborhood associations and churches as well as Johnson C. Smith University students and professors to get feedback on how well we are approaching the history of the neighborhood, if we are contacting the proper stakeholders, and if our plan for the remaining phases of the project are going smoothly.

Phase Two (February 1, 2018 – August 31, 2018)

The second phase of the project will be 7 months, and will consist of contacting organizations and individuals in the project area, collecting oral histories, and receiving initial training from our consultants at Historypin on digital mapping and community outreach. We will use the contacts list we built during the first phase of the project to collect interviews and materials for donation, which will be the responsibility of the Principal Investigator and the Project Assistant. We will be integrating oral histories already collected by UNCC students as part of the [Washington Heights oral history project](#) and will be working with local Charlotte community historian Tom Hanchett, who has been documenting the history of the McCrorey Heights neighborhood on the edge of Biddleville. We will also seek to identify neighborhood residents for new interviews by approaching local churches, businesses, neighborhood associations, and alumni organizations. We will work with our project advisory team and these community leaders to delineate the boundaries of the West End in preparation for the digital map, using Sanborn fire insurance maps held at the Carolina Room of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Library and resources like [HPOWeb](#) at the NC State Historic Preservation Office to identify places of historic importance. The Archivist and Project Assistant will be working together to formulate the geographic limits of the map at this stage in the project, while determining what resources are available for each distinct neighborhood and historical property identified. The goal is to identify at least 15 new individuals to interview in addition to earlier interviews that will be used. We will focus on longtime neighborhood residents, especially those who have had a prominent role in the social, political, religious, or cultural history of the area, and outside experts and specialists who can speak to the fabric and history of the West End. These experts will be drawn from or identified by consultation with our project advisory board. The interviews will be conducted by the Principal Investigator with assistance from the Project Assistant, and will be recorded with the permission of our subjects and full adherence to IRB standards. The second phase will also result in the first training from Historypin for our project team, although we will be staying in full contact with them during the first phase and providing them with any data we plan to use for the map. They will be involved in providing advice on community outreach and marketing in this key second phase of the project based on their previous experiences. As part of the ongoing evaluation and assessment conducted by the Principal Investigator, we will be reaching out to the HBCU Library Alliance and fellow HBCU archivists in this phase of the project to identify 2-3 HBCU libraries that are either considering similar projects or would be in the position to assume a similar leadership role in their communities, and will invite them to study and critique our process as a model for their own institutions. We will be cultivating relationships with this population for the third and final phase as well, and they will be an extremely important network to advance the future of the project outside of the

initial grant phase. Their input will be solicited and considered throughout the remainder of the project.

Phase Three (September 1, 2018 – February 28, 2019)

The third and final phase of the project will be 6 months: once we have identified, gathered, and created digital content, we will begin implementing a mobile-optimized website featuring geo-location layers. After a thorough examination of sites such as [Curatescape](#) and [Story Maps](#), we decided to contract [Historypin](#) with the goal of helping us design a detailed digitally accessible site that is available on several platforms and open to community contribution and curation. Historypin is an international not-for-profit organization that operates a free platform where people can collaborate to create shared archives and collections of historical photos, videos and sounds about their local community. As contractors, Historypin technicians will provide in-person and online training and support materials for community engagement, technical integrations, and measurement and evaluation as well as communications, marketing support, and promotion. The Principal Investigator and the Historypin consultant will direct this phase of the project, while the Project Assistant works on the long-term planning, dissemination, and marketing of the project in the local community.

If funded we will work with Historypin to create a stand-alone iPhone and Android app for the Project that is based on an open source codebase and the Historypin open Application Programming I to deliver a seamless experience to end users. The mobile optimization of this site will greatly increase its visibility throughout the community and to scholars and interested researchers that seek to use our project as a model for their own surrounding neighborhoods that need to be digitally documented. Detailed proposals of Historypin's services and responsibilities to the project are given in the appendices.

Historypin's consultation team will provide measurement and evaluation services in this final phase of the project that will provide training, resources, and expertise on monitoring and evaluating the continuous social impact of the project for the project team and community leaders. We will combine that assessment tool with our own efforts that will be cultivated throughout the project to adequately study how the project has progressed and if we have achieved our target goals, reached our intended population, and had the desired affect. Our focus group members will be invited to test our finished platform in a classroom setting, and feedback about the design, usability, and search functions of any prototype sites will be particularly useful for the future design tweaks of the platform. We will test the usability of several different smart phones, tablets, and different web browsers for functionality. Questionnaires will be administered to all focus group members from inside and outside our institutions to get their final views on the project and suggestions for its future sustainability. The third phase will also involve working with our advisory board to formulate a plan for the future of the project, and deciding which neighborhood will be our next focus. This phase will also involve working with Historypin and community leaders and advisors to determine how the West End digital platform can evolve as the neighborhood continues to do the same, and how residents can continue to have a voice in its design and growth.

Staff

The Principal Investigator/Project Director for this project will be **Brandon Lunsford**, Archival Services Librarian at Johnson C. Smith University. He holds an MA in Public History with a concentration in Historic Preservation, and has worked on the West End area before for the

Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. He also wrote his MA thesis on gentrification and social change in a white working class neighborhood in Charlotte as well as the book *Charlotte Then and Now*, which focused extensively on changing neighborhoods over time in the city. Mr. Lunsford will provide 20% of his time to the grant, and will be responsible for supervising the project team, determining and evaluating resources for inclusion, coordinating meetings and evaluation sessions with partner organizations, and working with technical consultants to design and develop the mobile-optimized prototype software. He will also be responsible for assembling focus groups to evaluate and assess the impact and future sustainability of the project.

Chelly Tavss, Photographic Archivist at Johnson C. Smith University, will provide 10% of her time to the project team and will oversee all aspects of photographic items that will be collated, collected, and digitized. She holds advanced degrees in photography and photographic preservation, and curated an exhibit in the library on the Peeler Collection. She is experienced with digitization, metadata, and Content DM, and works with professors to integrate the use of archives and archival materials into the classroom

We plan to use NEH funds to hire a part time **Project Assistant**, who will work 20 hours per week to administer the daily activities of the grant. This person will be largely responsible for compiling, collecting, and organizing the materials to be used in this project, as well as researching copyright information for included items. The Project Assistant will be compiling a list of individuals and organizations to approach for oral history interviews, conducting and recording, and transcribing those interviews, and providing metadata and housing for the newly obtained materials and interviews. We will seek an individual with at least a BA in History, Geography, Anthropology, or a related degree with specific experience with oral history interviews, GIS systems, and project management.

Our collaborators in the cultural partnership will form an advisory planning board that will meet regularly with the project team and provide feedback on project activities, how to help us identify and collect material, and how to market and promote the project to create a maximum impact on its target audience. They will also help us identify, determine copyright, and approve inclusion into the central digital hub of the resources at their institutions that can illuminate the history and culture of the West End. The advisory board members are given in the list of participants section in the application.

Final product and dissemination

The final product of this project will be a mobile-optimized digital map and a white paper that detail the activities of the project, the obstacles and lessons learned during the process, and ultimately how the finished product will provide a template for other small academic and HBCU libraries seeking to document historic neighborhoods. The mobile platform and website we create through Historypin will be completely open source and will be available for anyone to view on any platform, and will be specially designed to be accessible to users with disabilities. Our digital mapping project will be published on SourceForge, and our white paper will be free and publicly available online. All minutes at meetings with our partners and consultants will be recorded, and these documents along with any correspondence and marketing materials including fliers and guides will be preserved and held in the Inez Moore Parker Archives at the James B. Duke Memorial Library at JCSU.

DATA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Roles and Responsibilities

This data management plan will be implemented and managed by the Principal Investigator and the Photographic Archivist. The Project Assistant will also assist with data management. Historypin will provide training on how to manage digital tools and how to back up digital mapping data as part of our software maintenance package. The James B. Duke Memorial Library at Johnson C. Smith University will be responsible for data storage, access, and dissemination if the Principal Investigator leaves the institution.

2. Expected Data

We will be collecting several items that have already been digitized and are wrapped in metadata, and will be preserving and digitizing newly obtained items including photographs, letters, and oral histories. We will also be documenting the preservation process, which will include transcripts of oral histories obtained, gift agreements between institutions declaring and clarifying copyright and ownership of material, and text files of correspondence, planning documentation, and meeting minutes generated by the advisory planning team. This documentation will ultimately be preserved as an academic white paper that will serve as the project's final report and outcome. transferred data will be made publicly accessible.

All digital content collected from partner institutions and newly digitized material will be managed with Content DM and displayed on Johnson C. Smith University's Digital Smith online repository, and will be stored on University servers with weekly backup. Notes documenting advisory team meetings and the acquisition and preservation process will be made using Google Drive, and downloaded and backed up on a library computer weekly.

Digitized material will be made available to the public through the non-profit public history website, historypin.com. The Historypin.com website software is proprietary, and use of the site and membership is free. Terms and conditions of use for the site can be found here: <http://www.historypin.com/terms-and-conditions/>. The access sized images will have CC BY-NC licenses unless in the Public Domain, and will be identified as such on the item level. Images will be uploaded to Historypin.com via bulk upload, and then georeferenced within the Historypin system, which utilizes Google Maps and Google Street View APIs. The Historypin.com website is hosted on Google App Engine and Big Table. It uses a NoSQL database and programming is done in Django and Python.

3. Period of Data Retention

All relevant data will be deposited in Digital Smith for indefinite long-term storage upon completion of the project, and any additional data that is added to the digital mapping platform after the project is over will be added with the same data protocol. Once data is transferred to Digital Smith, all data will be made public immediately and indefinitely.

4. Data formats and dissemination

All digital content will be managed with Content DM and displayed on Johnson C. Smith University's Digital Smith online repository. Many of our partner institutions also use Content DM, and data can easily be analyzed and transferred between our systems.

A Dublin Core schema and Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) will be employed to sufficiently provide detailed and easily discoverable metadata for the project. In order to maximize contributions Historypin requires minimal descriptive metadata, but it will be mapped to MARC when added to collections. The final product will be a mobile app showcasing archival and community content, which will utilize an open source code base using the Historypin API and database to explore and share content directly in the community. While content can be licensed in any number of ways on Historypin, from All Rights Reserved to Public Domain, the backend is interoperable with the Digital Public Library of America, the Internet Archive, as well as other platforms through an Application Programming Interface (API).

Interviews will be for historical purposes only and conducted to Oral History Association standards. IRB approval will be sought and obtained to interview new human subjects identified through the course of the project. Oral history subjects will sign a release form which will be explained to them in detail before the interview is conducted.

Historypin will preserve following data formats where possible: Preservation masters: Photos: 3000 pixels on long edge, 2100 dpi, TIFF. Video: AVI Audio: AIFF files.

Access copies: Photos: 1000 pixels on long edge, 72 dpi, JPEG. Video: MP4 Audio: MP3

Thumbnail copies: Photos: 60 pixels on long edge, 72 dpi, JPEG

Copyright of the included items will be determined during research and items with questionable copyright will not be included. If there are any issues related to rights or ownership of the intellectual products generated from this project, the JCSU University Intellectual Property policy will be consulted. But also mention that the funding agency reserves an exclusive right to get access to, use, share and distribute your project products.

5. Data storage and preservation of access

All public data will be deposited in Digital Smith, which has the capabilities to manage, archive, and share digital content. Digital Smith allows access to the public via persistent URLs, provides tools for long-term data management, and offers permanent storage options. Backup data will be stored on JCSU servers, which have built-in contingencies for disaster recovery.

Historypin data development documentation is recorded in Github. The primary final product will be an offline collection process that will run from software on a computer to record submissions and then bulk upload to Historypin once an internet connection is available. There will be user interface on a locally run database and filenaming process, together with a bulk upload mechanism. Contributions to the Historypin website are stored with redundant file storage, and select contributions will be added to the JCSU Digital Smith online collections as a bulk download of all project contributions.

APPENDICES

The importance of creating a digital map for an African American neighborhood that is threatened with change is that it will capture the history, culture, and geography of the area in a medium that is easily absorbed, transmitted, and transferrable in the future. This is a neighborhood of which little has been documented and collected, and that information has been obtained by disparate organizations and individuals. A physical map could be created, but having it sit in a drawer in an archive somewhere will not teach the lessons that this historic neighborhood has to offer to the next (and current) generation. This is a chance for historians and neighborhood residents themselves to tell and present their own history, and to present it in a way that will have an impact on a world that now speaks a digital language. Technology will no doubt change in the future, but preserving these records digitally will allow the story of this neighborhood to continue being adapted and told as it continues to change throughout history. The digital story of the West End will only be the beginning of the digital footprint of African American history in Charlotte, North Carolina, which as a New South city undergoing rapid change, is becoming a test case for the survival of regions of concentrated African American culture and history throughout this country.

The Historic West End neighborhood is ideal for this project and as a model for other historically African American pockets in large urban areas because of how it was formed and its unique destination for white and black families; how it survived the period of urban renewal, and how it has remained largely homogenous in the face of past and current threats. This may not always be the case, however, in the face of sudden and rapid gentrification, and the age and migration of many of its longtime residents. A symbol of the economic strength of an emerging black middle class, the Historic West End helped shape the direction of black suburban growth after World War II in Charlotte. University Park, McCrorey Heights, Biddle Heights, Hyde Park, and a number of other predominantly black developments may now be found on Beatties Ford Road in the Historic West End, many of them home to families that have lived in this area their entire lives. To understand the importance of the West End, it is integral to understand the formation of its three most important and historic sections: Biddleville, Washington Heights, and McCrorey Heights.

I. Historic Neighborhoods of the West End

Biddleville

Biddleville is Charlotte's oldest surviving black neighborhood; at its heart is Johnson C. Smith University, opened shortly after the Civil War in 1867 by white Presbyterian ministers as Biddle Institute to train black preachers and teachers. Biddleville began in 1871 as a ring village next to the college, two miles from the center of the city but distinctly separate from its white residents. Around the turn of the century the city grew out to meet the village, and the suburbs of Western Heights and Roslyn Heights were built, followed by the Smallwood Homes and Crestview subdivisions after World War II. The whole area today is called Biddleville-Five Points, taking its name from the original village and from the intersection of West Trade, West Fifth Street, Rozelles Ferry Road, and Beatties Ford Road adjacent to the JCSU campus near the center of the neighborhood. It was one of several small black ring villages that emerged in Charlotte in the late 1800's, but outside of Biddleville and the vastly developed Cherry settlement near downtown, all of these have been demolished.

The earliest settlements in Biddleville were by the white presidents and faculty members of the university, but even early on this nucleus was augmented by sales to blacks from other white landowners. Over the years Biddleville became known as a favored residential area for the black elite, and was populated by families who wanted to raise their children in an intellectual atmosphere centered around the university. Residents included not only college students, professors, and alumni, but also black public school teachers, principals, and businessmen¹.

In 1897 the first "streetcar suburb" was platted in the area, which became known as Western Heights; once the subdivision was established the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company extended its trolley tracks out West Trade Street into Biddleville, commencing service April 25, 1903. For several years this suburb was a white area; though the trolley served Biddleville and its college as well as the white areas, the route was known as the Seversville line. In the early 1920s another white suburb, Roslyn Heights, was built next to Biddleville. This area, like the nearby Seversville village, remained white until the 1960s when the destruction of the African American Second Ward neighborhood downtown due to urban renewal created a massive shift in Charlotte's black population.

This early mixing of blacks and whites in Charlotte is one of the elements that makes the history of Biddleville so unique and interesting, and worthy of study so many years later when once again longtime residents of different cultural backgrounds are trying to coexist. By the time the city directory began covering the streets in the 1910s, black families tended to live close to the campus and whites closer to downtown proper, but they still sometimes shared the same block. After black families lost their homes to urban renewal, "white flight" ensued; in 1965, the Charlotte Observer wrote about real estate agents flooding the area, warning white residents that "colored people are taking over." In 1961, the city had begun tearing down 1,480 structures in Brooklyn, also known as Second Ward. This wasn't Charlotte's only urban renewal project, but it was the largest, displacing 1,007 Brooklyn families, destroying connections between neighbors, and scattering the businesses and institutions that had anchored their lives. The city built no new housing for these Brooklyn refugees, which is why Biddleville and the West End became the catchment area for people displaced by urban renewal. Areas in Biddleville like Smallwood went from 90 percent white in 1960 to 90 percent black by 1980². Like inner-city neighborhoods across the country, the community was battered by crime that began rising in the 1970s as jobs migrated to the suburbs, and it became worse in the 1980s and '90s as cocaine and crack hit. But a core group of neighbors who had lived in Biddleville all their lives kept fighting for their homes, and over the next 20 years violent crime dropped dramatically enough so that in 2007, The Today Show's real estate guru included Biddleville in a roundup of "up and coming" neighborhoods. It has always been an example of how blacks and whites interact both successfully and disastrously, and in an era where urban living is once again desirable it is invaluable that people of all ages, races, and income levels understand the stories and lessons of Biddleville.

Washington Heights

By the 1910s the Trade Street/Beatties Ford Road streetcar track ran beyond JCSU as far as the corner of Oaklawn Avenue where the line terminated. Behind the Excelsior Club lies the neighborhood of Washington Heights, one of the few African American “streetcar suburbs” in America. A group of white investors led by Walter S. Alexander, who was just completing the white Elizabeth suburb across town, teamed up with black businessman C.H. Watson to plat the suburb in 1913. Watson was one of Charlotte’s pre-eminent black leaders, and was responsible for *Colored Charlotte*, a thick booklet published in connection with the 50th anniversary celebration of the end of the Civil War in 1915. No less than whites, the emerging black middle class longed for the advertised benefits of suburban living for themselves and their children. Land use controls seemed especially desirable, for black downtown neighborhoods were subject to even greater disruptive forces than white ones; white real estate developers in Charlotte could not ignore this ready market, however. A number of professional black real estate investors also purchased lots, sometimes building a house for rental income, sometimes holding the land for eventual resale. Some 160 families lived in Washington Heights by the time that city directories began covering this distant edge of the city in 1931, and the earliest residents were “middle-class” by standards of African American life in that era.

The developments in the Washington Heights area in the post-1940 decades meant that the neighborhood no longer looks exactly as it did when it was Charlotte's only black streetcar suburb. The names Booker, Tate, Sanders, and Celia continue to celebrate black history however, and most of the early bungalows built by Charlotte's black middle class of the 1910s and 1920s are still extant. In addition, there is evidence that the Washington Heights development is unique in North Carolina; real estate developments for, and in some cases by, blacks were not uncommon in the early years of the twentieth century. Most, however, were in center city locations or otherwise within walking distance of employment. Architectural and historic inventories conducted under the direction of the North Carolina Division of Archives and History have yet to identify another black North Carolina neighborhood built as a streetcar suburb³.

McCrorey Heights

The McCrorey Heights neighborhood was created by H. L. McCrorey, longtime president of Johnson C. Smith University from 1907-1947. President McCrorey not only transformed Biddle University into JCSU through his vision and fund-raising, but he also created this prestigious and stylish black residential neighborhood along the north side of Beatties Ford Road beyond the campus. As early as 1912 he had a grid of streets laid out, but it wasn’t until 1949 as the United States struggled out of a housing slump caused by the Depression and World War II that McCrorey Heights began to take shape. Residents of the neighborhood of fashionable ranch homes included JCSU professors, black leaders in the medical field, ministers and some of the earliest African Americans to hold important positions in local government in Charlotte. Project consultant Tom Hanchett has been doing an intensive historical and architectural survey of the McCrorey Heights neighborhood, and will be a key contributor to the Historic West End digital platform⁴.

II. Notable Sites of the West End

Johnson C. Smith University - In the aftermath of the Civil War, Presbyterian elders in Charlotte formed a plan to build a school to educate leaders among the formerly enslaved African Americans; the widow of a Union soldier, Henry J. Biddle of Pennsylvania who had died fighting for freedom of African Americans, gave a substantial gift and the fledgling school became Biddle Institute in his honor. The institution hit its stride in the 1920s under the leadership of Henry L. McCrorey. The Duke Endowment came aboard as a major underwriter. Established by cigarette and electricity magnate James B. Duke, it continues to aid Duke University, Davidson College, Furman University and JCSU. President McCrorey also secured funding from the estate of Johnson Crayne Smith, a white Pittsburgh industrialist. In 1923 the college took the name Johnson C. Smith University.

Grand Theater - The Grand Theater, located at 333 Beatties Ford Road, is significant as the only movie theater surviving in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County that served African Americans exclusively during the Jim Crow era. Of the five black movie theaters built in Charlotte between 1920 and 1960, the Grand Theater is the only physical reminder of the limited entertainment options open to African Americans during segregation. The construction of separate movie theaters for blacks and whites began in Charlotte in the early 1920s and continued until the early 1960s. The Grand Theater, which opened in 1937 and served only African American moviegoers until its closing in 1967, is a prime example of the way in which Jim Crow laws shaped the city's built environment during the first half of the twentieth century⁵.

Excelsior Club - The Excelsior, located on Beatties Ford Road about one-half mile north of the main entrance to Johnson C. Smith University, was for many years the leading private black social club in the Southeast, and one of the largest of its kind on the East Coast. In addition to its importance as the only social club for black professionals in the area, it also became a political focal point of the city and county for both black and white candidates for office, and a meeting place for boosters of Johnson C. Smith University. Started in 1944 in a house built in the 1910s, the club took on its present appearance in the early 1950s⁶.

West Charlotte High School - Thad Tate, a barber who ranked as Charlotte's most respected African American civic leader in the decades around 1900, gradually opened streets into farmland he owned along the left side of Beatties Ford. Charlotte school officials approached Tate to see if he would donate land for a new black high school, and West Charlotte High opened in 1938. The brick facility with its modern Art Deco touches became a beacon drawing education-minded black families into the suburbs. Eventually West Charlotte High would move further out to its current campus and the Beatties Ford Road building became Northwest Junior High. In 1996 it became Northwest School of the Arts, a CMS magnet school that is one of the most culturally vibrant and ethnically diverse places in the city⁷.

Biddleville Cemetery - Biddleville Cemetery is considered vital on several counts: It wasn't a slave cemetery, but was instead a rare neighborhood cemetery for free blacks. It's also the resting place of some of the city's most notable black citizens, including veterans of the Spanish-American war, World War I and World War II. Historians note the cemetery contains examples of a largely extinct form of African-American funerary art found in cemeteries from the late 1800s until the mid-20th century. The oldest extant grave marker at the site dates to 1894, and many notable residents of Biddleville are buried in the cemetery⁸.

III. James G. Peeler Photograph Collection

James Gibson Peeler's work as a photographer in Charlotte, North Carolina spanned over half a century. Born on February 16, 1929, he was the oldest of four children born to Phoebe and Clarence Gibson Peeler. After attending Biddleville Elementary School and West Charlotte High School, he graduated from Johnson C. Smith University in 1951 and left for a tour of duty in the US Army during the Korean War. Following his discharge, Peeler enrolled in the New York Institute of Photography on a GI bill, and when he returned to Charlotte in 1953 he opened the first location of Peeler's Portrait Studio, the first black-owned photography studio in the Biddleville neighborhood. He took photographs and wrote feature stories for the Charlotte Post, and his images have been featured in the documentary, "Portraits of a Movement," as well as online and physical exhibits in the Mecklenburg County Public Library and Charlotte's Museum of the New South. His photographs also appeared in several books including the Black America Series: Charlotte, North Carolina, and after his death in 2004 the Charlotte Observer paid tribute to his work with a popular month-long series of photographs and articles. In 2010 the James B. Duke Memorial Library at Johnson C. Smith University received a collection of Peeler's prints and negatives as a generous donation from his family, and have received grant funding from the Lyrasis HBCU Photographic Preservation Project and the State Library of North Carolina to preserve these images. Most of this work dates from the 1950s to the 1980's and displays the wide range of subjects and events that caught the attention of his camera. His lens recorded the wide variety of black families and black-owned businesses in the West End, including banks, barber shops and beauty salons, dry cleaners and funeral homes, and nightclubs and restaurants. He photographed Martin Luther King, Jesse Jackson, and other national figures in the civil rights movement when they came to Charlotte, as well as lesser known home grown people fighting for the Charlotte's black citizens like Kelly and Fred Alexander and Reginald Hawkins. He was taking pictures of the black community at a time when a lot of mainstream newspapers, including the Charlotte Observer, were ignoring their stories and their struggles. Some of these images are the only ones of their kind that have survived to document these places lost to history, and the only extant images of historic structures and events relating to these neighborhoods.

The use of this invaluable collection and its access to thousands of images of the families, streets, homes, businesses, and events in the history of the West End make this project truly unique and unlike any other of its kind. Using Peeler's images we will be digitally recreating the past of a neighborhood that has long been under-documented, even though it is a shining example of the survival of an African American neighborhood steeped in history and culture in the face of almost 150 years of challenges and change.

Images of the West End from the Peeler Collection



Kelly and Fred Alexander after being arrested for participating in a protest march



The Grand Theater, Beatties Ford Road



Rev. Martin Luther King visiting Johnson C. Smith University, 1966



Beatties Ford Road, Historic West End

IV. Historypin Similar Project Examples

Year of the Bay, San Francisco, USA, January 2013 – December 2014

<http://about.historypin.org/inspirations/year-of-the-bay/>

Stanford University's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis wanted to explore how public knowledge could enrich existing collections containing photographs, maps, and textual content. They also wanted to engage the community in the history of San Francisco Bay and the cultural

heritage surrounding it. They chose to engage local people in the project by framing queries about the date, location or content of historical photos, videos and audio files from historical archives as ‘mysteries’ that needed to be solved.

Special digital tools were built on Historypin.org to facilitate this collaborative approach to improving historical content. Suggestions were made via the site and approved by Historypin or the content owner. The people of San Francisco were encouraged to solve these mysteries and add materials and memories relating to the history of the Bay area to the online archive. The project was promoted widely locally, via social media, local community history networks, local blogs and newspapers, and a series of public events. These included the Bernal Heights history group holding a historical mystery solving evening and a historical ‘Hackathon’ with California Historical Society. The project was accompanied by a blog, documenting the project over the year. One of the most popular posts featured a remarkable video of Market Street, San Francisco in 1906.

Queens: Neighborhood Stories, Queens, New York City, USA, January 2014 – June 2014

<http://about.historypin.org/inspirations/neighborhood-stories/>

Queens Library wanted to celebrate the heritage of Queens and the diversity of its neighborhoods. This project aimed to build on an existing program about the history of the area, by increasing community participation and encouraging the public to add to a collaborative archive telling the history of the area. Queens Public Library staff, supported by two CUNY Service Corps interns, worked with local branch libraries to run a series of community events which brought together community groups in their local library to share and capture local stories.

The centerpiece of this program was a partnership with St Albans library, which ran activities that tied in with wider programming around the history of hip hop. They blended afternoon reminiscence sessions targeted at local older people with evening events targeted at younger audiences to create a free flowing event of community storytelling about St Albans. All the material gathered, as well as archival material, was shared on a dedicated Neighborhood Stories space on Historypin.org where people also used the Tour tools to create digital heritage trails around particular neighborhoods.

V. Historypin Detailed Services

1. Website and Community Engagement Setup, Strategy and Support

There will be a dedicated area on Historypin for the Historic West End project, undertaken by the James B. Duke Memorial Library at John C. Smith University (hereinafter referred to as the “Project”), utilizing Historypin’s pro project format with its own visual identity, branding and contextual information.

It will feature the following content delivery tools:

- Easy to use upload functionality to allow user contributions to the project
- Gallery view – allowing easy browsing and selection of all content
- Map view – allowing exploration of geo-tagged content
- Metadata and content – for each piece of content, showing meta-data, stories/comments
- Information and links via an RSS feed – a series of tout boxes that provides access to information about the project and the partnership. These can link to content within or without

the project, like your own blog, Historypin blog, etc. in order to share more dynamic updates, growing lists of participants, etc.

It will feature the following exploration tools:

- Curation of content through Collections -- ability to allow users to create their own Collections from existing content or add their own
- Contribution of individual materials – adding images, video, audio and documents
- Contribution of comments to individual materials – by the original user and by any other registered user
- Sharing of content – by email and through Facebook, Twitter and Google+

It will feature the following additional functionalities:

- Batch upload of photographs from any partner institutions

Web Design Requirements

The Historic West End team will be provided with image requirements for the main page of the Project. Up to four logos may be submitted to be included on the main page and the “About the Project” section. Official project name, short tagline, and all “About the Project” text will be provided by the Historic West End team.

Post-Moderated Content:

Content on the project will be post-moderated, which means that content is added to the project immediately without any moderation. Historypin staff does regularly view new content for inappropriate material. Any content that is added to the project and deemed inappropriate to the Historic West End team can be flagged and Historypin administrators will remove it from the Project, and perhaps from the Historypin site altogether based on our terms and conditions.

Community Engagement Planning and Training

Historypin staff will be available for strategic planning for integration of the Project into existing or future campaigns, including leveraging existing tools and social media networks available through Historypin, and approaches for “Pinning Days,” or community memory events. These events will not be run by Historypin staff however.

Specifically, training deliverables will include:

- A customized pdf “Getting Started Guide” for Library staff and partner cultural heritage organizations
- A planning and engagement strategy “kick-off” meeting to work with the Historic West End team to identify:
 - key target audiences for the project
 - basic user personas
 - establish an evaluation template to record aims, intended outcomes, outputs, measurements and data collection methods
- Conduct one in-person and one webcast workshop by Jon Voss or Kerri Young that illustrate how to:
 - plan community memory events
 - determine event activities and workflows
 - recruit participants
 - create and customize a Historypin profile
 - add content to the Project
 - geolocate and share content.

- An optional “Getting Started” video created in collaboration with SHIFT staff and the Historic West End team, with the Historic West End team providing any introductory segments, and SHIFT staff providing the how-to elements mentioned above.
 - Support throughout the community engagement phase of the Project
- Communications strategy will be planned and coordinated, and will include a Historypin blog post, Historypin #pinoftheday on the day of the public launch, scheduled Historypin Facebook and Twitter posts in the first week, occasional followup tweets during the first month, and featured in the rotating Historypin Featured Projects section on the front page of Historypin.org for at least the first month.

Design Phase and Public Launch Milestones

Primary milestones will include initial design meetings (via Skype, phone, or Google Hangout) with the Historic West End team, and then presentations of demos to give comments and feedback to the development/design teams (dates to be determined):

- Mutual agreement on dates for milestones
- Gathering of images, logos and draft text
- Presentation of User Interface (“UI”) on private link; feedback on graphic assets, style, branding and copy (not layout or functionality)
- Development and coordination of communications plan
- Presentation of live project on Historypin (still accessed through private link)
- Testing, pre-launch content uploading
- Public launch of project/communications rollout
- Up to two workshops for Historic West End partners

2. Mapping The Historic West End App

We propose developing a stand-alone iPhone and Android app for the Project that is based on an open source codebase that has been developed to utilize the Historypin and Museums.eu backends to deliver a seamless experience to end users. The advantage of using this code base is that multiple cultural heritage organizations have invested in the user testing and development for very similar uses that allows it to be modified for relatively little development costs, and all improvements to the codebase will be published with GNU General Open License. The development costs outlined below will allow us to work with the Historic West End team to create new designs, evaluate target user needs, and redevelop the app for this particular purpose. We will follow the same process outlined here, though investments in the open source app from organizations like the US National Archives and the Historic New Orleans Collection allow us to have a substantial head start in the development process.

Target Users

One of the first tasks of the design process is to identify the target users of the app, as well as the intended outcomes of its use.

- A primary goal is to connect the public to primary sources, welcoming them to add their own family stories and content around particular themes.
- The app could also utilize crowdsourcing, knowledge community activities, and other tools to enrich the information about individual items in the collections.

The primary purpose of the app is to highlight content specific to the West End neighborhoods, increasing the relevance and discovery of this content for local communities. We propose to use Library content, imported and linked using open data principles and powered using an open

API, using the Historypin.org repository to power a compelling location-specific mobile app that develops significant user engagement around this unique local content. We intend for the app to be usable on both iOS and Android devices.

Design Principles

Based on our consultations with the Library, the following principles should guide the overall product requirements, and will be further refined in the project kickoff

1. Involve multiple institutions in the design and marketing of the app. The app should be far-reaching and collaborative in scope in order to increase visibility and reuse of Library content on a more public, local level. Involvement of multiple cultural heritage organizations also provides a marketing pipeline to publicize the app through local events and exhibits.
2. Ensure maximum access by delivery on multiple platforms. The app should endeavor to use responsive design and shared data services with mobile app wrappers in order to be accessible to the widest possible audience and the greatest number of devices.
3. Measure impact against community engagement outcomes. The app should be measured against specific outcomes of the community engagement effort of the Project. As far as possible, the app itself will collect metrics that are relevant to the project's engagement goals.

Co-Design Workshops

The purpose of the co-design workshops are to build user experience and insights into the design process and ensure that we are creating tools that answer particular needs and interests of our target audiences. The workshops will be led by experienced software developers and product managers to create user journeys and features to appeal to the uses identified. Our process is based on the standard ISO 9241-210:2010(E), a standard for human-centered design of interactive systems. This process helps us to identify the most focused, targeted and usable set of requirements that will complement the workflows of our target user personas, by involving our users in the process of creating, testing and iterating our designs. The standard describes four principles of Human-Centred Design, which we will be following in our approach to this project.

¹ Hanchett, Tom. "Biddleville Five Points Neighborhood." *Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/Biddleville.html>. Accessed December 5, 2016.

² Hanchett, Tom. "Neighborhood History Around Johnson C. Smith University. *History South*, <http://www.historysouth.org/jcsu/>. Accessed December 16, 2016.

³ Hanchett, Tom. "Washington Heights Neighborhood." *Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/WashHts.html>. Accessed December 7, 2016.

⁴ Hanchett, "Neighborhood History Around Johnson C. Smith University. *History South*, <http://www.historysouth.org/jcsu/>. Accessed December 16, 2016.

⁵ "Survey and Research Report on the Grand Theater." *Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, <http://landmarkscommission.org/2016/11/09/grand-theater/>. Accessed December 16, 2016.

⁶ "Survey and Research Report on the Excelsior Club." *Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, <http://landmarkscommission.org/2016/11/02/excelsior-club/>. Accessed December 17, 2016.

⁷ Hanchett, "Neighborhood History Around Johnson C. Smith University. *History South*, <http://www.historysouth.org/jcsu/>. Accessed December 17, 2016.

⁸ "Survey and Research Report on Biddleville Cemetery." *Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission*, <http://landmarkscommission.org/2016/12/29/biddleville-cemetery/>. Accessed December 17, 2016.