

# NEH Application Cover Sheet (HAA-261291)

## Digital Humanities Advancement Grants

### PROJECT DIRECTOR

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**Field of expertise:** Communications

### INSTITUTION

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Marian Cheek Jackson Center for Saving and Making History  
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-2303

### APPLICATION INFORMATION

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**Title:** *The Northside Digital Commons*

**Grant period:** From 2018-09-01 to 2020-02-29

**Project field(s):** African American History; Communications

**Description of project:** The Northside Digital Commons is a new initiative in community archiving. It goes well beyond preservation to engage users in both saving and making history. Our primary goal is to provide a virtual space through which historically black communities facing economic displacement and generational discontinuity can continue to grow and prosper. The proposed project uses innovations in digital historiography to mobilize a professionally curated body of oral histories and artifacts for community renewal and national reckoning. It focuses on the Northside community in Chapel Hill, which emerged as a segregated labor settlement serving the University, and will model possibilities for similarly endangered communities across the nation. Primary activities include web development, resource supplementation, guidance by a Community Review Board, integration into an existing k-12 curriculum, a large-scale launch event, and ongoing evaluation and revision.

### BUDGET

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<b>Outright Request</b>	67,000.00	<b>Cost Sharing</b>	60,170.00
<b>Matching Request</b>	12,000.00	<b>Total Budget</b>	139,170.00
<b>Total NEH</b>	79,000.00		

### GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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### **Project Participants**

Della Pollock, Project Director, Marian Cheek Jackson Center

Heidi Dodson, Digital Archivist and Oral History Manager, Marian Cheek Jackson Center

Hudson Vaughan, Senior Director, Marian Cheek Jackson Center

Kathy Atwater, Community Advocacy Specialist, Marian Cheek Jackson Center

Tim Stallman, Web Developer, Independent Consultant

Rachel Seidman, Director, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Chaitra Powell, African American Collections and Outreach Archivist, Southern Historical Collection,  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Seth Kotch, Assistant Professor, American Studies, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Lisa Gregory, Program Coordinator, North Carolina Digital Heritage Center

### **Abstract**

The Northside Digital Commons is a new initiative in community archiving. It goes well beyond preservation to engage users in both saving and making history. Our primary goal is to provide a virtual space through which historically black communities facing economic displacement and generational discontinuity can continue to grow and prosper. The proposed project uses innovations in digital historiography to mobilize a professionally curated body of oral histories and artifacts for community renewal and national reckoning. It focuses on the Northside community in Chapel Hill, which emerged as a segregated labor settlement serving the University, and will model possibilities for similarly endangered communities across the nation. Primary activities include web development, resource supplementation, guidance by a Community Review Board, integration into an existing k-12 curriculum, a large-scale launch event, and ongoing evaluation and revision.

## Narrative

***Enhancing the Humanities.*** The Northside Digital Commons is a new initiative in community archiving. It goes well beyond preservation to engage users in both saving and making history. Our primary goal is to provide a virtual space through which historically black communities facing economic displacement and generational discontinuity can continue to grow and prosper. Our focus is Northside: the collection of neighborhoods, 4 and 5 generations deep, that once bordered UNC Chapel Hill's campus and whose residents built its walls. The project will expand and strengthen 10 years of community partnership and collaboration with over 50 resource partners, including the University, the towns of Chapel Hill and Carrboro, and the Orange County and Chapel Hill Carrboro school systems. It will enable Northside community members—including all who live, work, worship, play, and serve in Northside and all of those whose sense of identification and connection remains strong despite geographical distance—to sustain the kind of community pundits say we are losing across the U.S.: communities characterized by interdependence, invested values, active citizenship, and the strength and flexibility necessary to adapt and to contribute to changing times.

The Northside Digital Commons will:

- Provide a virtual space to replenish loss of shared public place
- Renew multi-generational continuity through dynamic interaction with historical materials
- Recognize unique histories of civil rights and labor movements in Chapel Hill, NC
- Emphasize a user methodology consistent with goals of community self-determination and sustainability
- Model possibilities for creative community building and place-making through innovations in digital historiography

The Northside Digital Commons will activate the Jackson Center's Oral History Trust, a community archive currently composed of 150 fully processed oral histories, associated Dublin Core metadata, over 1500 contemporary and archival images, and the content of three exhibits, using the open-source Omeka content management system. The Marian Cheek Jackson Center (MCJC) is working closely with the Southern Oral History Program at UNC to cross-reference another 90 interviews and anticipates similarly collaborating with the Southern Historical Collection to link in a wide range of relevant, digital artifacts not otherwise easily accessed by community members. All materials will be deposited with the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center to ensure long-term preservation on the UNC server.

The MCJC uses a multi-faceted approach to digital development to advance the unique power of oral history not only to convey the nuances and complexities of histories that have been largely unavailable, forgotten or effaced but to drive community development and municipal collaboration. Accordingly, to date, oral history has been at the heart of three, major exhibits, a multi-million dollar housing initiative, the *Learning Across Generations* k-12 curriculum in oral, local, and civil rights history--which reached over 1200 students during the academic year 2016-2017, and such documentary initiatives as "Histories of Homes: A Walk with Northside Neighbors," an audio-tour composed exclusively of excerpts from interviews held in the MCJC Oral History Trust and most recently: a community-curated neighborhood gateway, composed of hand-hewn stone featuring 8 granite slabs etched with images of civil rights action in Chapel Hill and captioned by excerpts from the oral histories of Northside freedom fighters.

The proposed project will transform the current digital repository into a dynamic, digital space through an iterative process that uses community feedback to shape the direction of platform development. In the first phase of web development, the Jackson Center will integrate and customize a diverse array of Omeka plugins that invite user participation with the Commons. These include the Omeka Contribution plugin, which allows users to upload images, sound, and documents, and the Audio Recorder plugin, which allows users to record their personal stories or responses to the site content. Custom development of the Posters plugin and addition applications will allow the widest possible range of community members to create digital mosaics of image, sound, and text using site content and

contributed materials. Integration of the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, an open source, web-based application developed by the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, will provide easy access to the rich subject content of oral history interviews through indexing and syncing of recordings and transcripts. The second and third phases will focus on integrating new functionalities while the Community Review Board and project staff solicit feedback from stakeholders in a variety of contexts, including focus groups, a “History Harvest,” *Learning Across Generations* team meetings and workshops, and our annual Northside Festival. This data will be used to further develop the site using open-source applications and web design enhancements. This feedback loop of development and community consultation will ensure that The Northside Digital Commons is genuinely owned and led by the community and that histories that have been so generously told will be reincorporated into the fabric of community life.

The Northside Digital Commons (NDC) will take what are already innovative and effective archival practices to the next level. Through new modes of digital historiography, it will document the vibrant and difficult histories of civil rights action in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. More important: it will cycle those histories back through the communities from which they emerged for contemporary uptake. The freedom movement in Chapel Hill was unique in its courageous leadership by local teenagers and for the failure of municipal leaders to rise to their example, leading the dramatist Paul Green to describe Chapel Hill as like a beacon to the South that is dark at its base. (Ehle, p. 284). It long preceded and followed the modern 1960-1964 period but has been largely overlooked by heroic accounts of our national past (Hall, 2005).

The struggle continues. In cities and towns across the country, we are losing historically black communities and, with them, social and economic diversity, historical depth, and models of collective resilience and mutual support. Robert Putnam and Marc Dunkelman, among others, have shown the cost of “the vanishing neighbor” to U.S. culture broadly. Without the networked complexity of long-term communities, Dunkelman argues, we lose the very basis of American democracy. Between 1990 and 2010, uncontrolled and predatory investment in Northside resulted in 1:1 displacement of black homeowners by white tenants. Still, Northside neighborhoods remain the most socially and economically diverse in Chapel Hill and, in the last 2 years, a historic community, town, University partnership facilitated by the Jackson Center has resulted in the first rise in the black population in Northside in 50 years. But numbers are only the start of renewing longstanding traditions of self-determination and intergenerational mentorship. Hence the Northside residents who have been at the front of the housing initiative and the many partners who have made it a success so far are asking: *how do we “renew the glue”?* How do we integrate new residents into the history and culture of Northside? How do we engage young people in the sense of historical and invested belonging necessary to citizen leadership and personal accomplishment? How do we connect with community members who are now long dispersed?

The Northside Digital Commons will meet dispersion with connection. It will invite old and new neighbors into a field of collaborative recall. It will emphasize the power of “remembering forward” or carrying the visions and values of the past into making history now (Pollock, 2005). It will emphasize thematic connections among oral histories; the capacity of users to correct and to complement histories told; synergy between digital representation and community building; heterogeneity and interdependence among narrators; and the possibility for remembering to gather momentum and force in contemporary discussion of policies that affect neighborhood vitality, diversity, and affordability. The project takes up Sam Schrager's foundational (1983) question, “What is social in oral history?” while it builds on and extends possibilities for community ownership of its history and representation (per e.g. Filene and Adair, *Letting Go? Sharing Authority in a User-Generated World*, 2012).

In practice this means that, while the MCJC will continue to use its resources to supplement subject content, users will mobilize that content on their own terms using ready means either remotely or at organized events. For instance, with the help of a community-curated User Manual, a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation resident could link to the Digital Commons from her social media account, click on the exhibit title, “Witness to Rights,” and find her 14-year-old self in a black-and-white photo of a crowd of friends and family members gathered in front of the church down the street. She could then navigate the vibrant interface to “Tell Your Story Here” and, remembering above all a prized tradition of telling the past in the

present for the future, she uses the audio record function to recount how her parents had encouraged her to do what the threat to their jobs and livelihoods prohibited: to join with hundreds of others in yet another year of escalating, non-violent protests. She might then take up the invitation to “Listen Here”—and find herself suddenly in thrall to the voice of a cousin who used to live a couple doors down and with whom, until the cousin felt compelled to move in with family in another state, she regularly talked back and forth across porch railing. Listening, she is reminded once more of her cousin’s mandate: “*Without the past, you have no future.*”

At the same time, down Merritt Mill Road, at a suspension program housed in the hull of the former black high school, a 14-year-old student might be taking part in a *Learning Across Generations* workshop offered by the MCJC in conjunction with the civil rights leaders and community educators that form its Community Mentor Team. He roams the Northside Digital Commons, opens the “Witness to Rights” exhibit, hears the resilient phrase, “*Without the past, you have no future,*” and thinks, *oh yeah, sure: with the past, I have no future.* His mind races with reiterations of violence against black men and the number of friends whose families have basically disappeared from his home community. He may be feeling hopeless and increasingly rootless but the digital frame gives him a chance to talk back. Clicking on “Contribute Your Pictures Here,” he now thinks, *Ok, you want to see what this looks like?*, and using the technical means most immediately available to him: his phone, he goes into the hallway and starts taking pictures of kids leaning against their lockers, ditching class, going to class, fighting, laughing, talking, sharing headphones. He uploads them to the Digital Commons then uses the “Create a History Mixtape” option to start building a digital mosaic, adding text and audio narrative to each image, saying what they show, what each means to him. He looks at the jigsaw puzzle of pictures he has created and realizes that his mini-exhibit is not so different from the array of photos that comprise “Witness to Rights”: there are the young people like himself, the anger, the frustration, the friendships, and the strength. He clicks on “Tell Your Story Here” and starts a spoken word poem he later calls: *With the past, I have a future.*

That night, he asks his grandmother, “*where were you during the freedom movement?*” At the next municipal hearing on the commercial rezoning of his neighborhood, they renew another tradition and join together at the podium to tell a history of multi-generational contributions to the town and region that, if nothing else, surprises listeners who simply did not know the content of their narrative or who had not reckoned with the fault lines in prevailing narratives of progress.

The NDC treats memory and culture as dynamic, adaptive and collective. it hails the vision and values history carries forward. It engages participants in an intimate and immediate sense that young people were and remain a necessary part of shaping the course of history. It moreover does so in a way that, while locally generated, is not locally limited. Because of its digital scope, the NDC will connect Northside with similar locales across the nation and provide a model for community building and creative place-making at a time when both are more crucial than ever.

**Environmental Scan.** The project reflects an unusual university-community collaboration that speaks to the labor history at once uniting and dividing the community and university, and culls combined resources with national implications. No other project advances a similarly open-ended, interactive approach to community archiving. The project borrows on the model of local interviewing provided by the “Breaking New Ground” project initiated by historians Mark Schultz and Adrienne Petty at the City College of New York. While “Breaking New Ground” used student interviewers in areas to which they were personally connected in order to pursue issues of black land loss, we have engaged both students from across the UNC system and Northside neighbors as interviewers, with the aim of grounding the digital record in cross-generational listening. Similarly, through the “Staring Out to Sea” Project (Kean University), students who went into their own communities to record oral histories with their friends and neighbors about the effects of Hurricane Katrina found that this act helped them transition from a sense of helplessness to a sense of their power to lead change. The Northside Digital Commons project advances this model, organizing students, independent scholars, and neighbors as participants in the deeply personal, complex, heterogeneous, unfolding history of a landmark moment in civil rights action and the ongoing life of its community of actors.

Projects like the Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive (University of Southern Mississippi), which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and West Side Stories (Youth Radio) are compelling examples of repositories that, in the first case, provide a more complex picture and vision of civil rights action than that for which prevailing narratives account, and, in the second case, offers histories of the present: stories about gentrification and displacement in West Oakland that show how residents have been affected by urban change. The NDC will draw on a similar body of archived materials. Unlike the Mississippi project, it will be community-based. It will be laser focused on a site that has long been seen as one-dimensional. Beyond both projects, the Northside Digital Commons will move stories of change into exchange, create a feedback loop between digital and live interaction, and utilize multi-mediated storytelling to create a common space in endangered place. For these purposes, we have been particularly intrigued by the Documenting Ferguson project (University of Washington), which uses the Omeka Contribution Plug-in to allow the public to add images, audio, and video to what is nonetheless expressly described primarily as a “digital repository.” The proposed project is set apart by deep community involvement and investment in the project, which helps to address issues of ownership and mitigate against reproducing access issues of the “digital divide,” and the preceding existence of a fully, professionally accessioned collection of oral histories and images. While we will continually supplement that collection, with the Commons, we are shifting from defense to offense: from primarily saving histories of courageous leadership and multi-generational survival in a university town that continues to grow with the industrialization of the modern South to putting those histories back into action—in and through a community that has always seen history as a primary tool of self-creation but that now lacks the means to tell it. Unlike other projects, the Commons will draw on and serve the Jackson Center’s related initiatives in housing advocacy, youth development, and community renewal, initiatives that are increasingly making the MCJC a model of university-community partnership.

***History of the Project.*** We seek Level II funding for the revitalization of an in-progress digital project. We have already completed significant work to ensure its success.

The proposed project effectively began in 2005 in course partnership with St. Joseph C.M.E., a hub of civil rights action. Its initial challenge was distrust of the University, which was charged with unyielding research paradigms (as one resident put it: “y’all have studied the hell out of the black community”) and uncontrolled off-campus student living that, as another resident put it, was turning Northside neighborhoods into “a big dorm.” By shifting the terms of research beyond reciprocity towards what Kelly Oliver calls the “response-ability” of listeners (Oliver, 2011), we began to bridge sharpening lines of difference. A coalition of university, community, and municipal participants soon emerged. In an emerging matrix of collaboration, the Jackson Center was founded in 2009; in 2012, it was formally incorporated and its base in the community secured. As part of its compact with neighbors, all of the Center’s initiatives follow on the momentum of oral histories. One result has been renewed leadership by community members including in the form of a Compass Group and Community Mentor Team. They have been joined by a Student Leadership Group and resource partners from across the University and region in commitments to education, advocacy, and celebration facilitated by the MCJC. The proposed Digital Commons will continue the essential work of what Mindy Fullilove has famously called “urban alchemy” (Fullilove, 2013).

For many years, oral histories were relatively loosely maintained on local hard drives. Since 2014, the MCJC has engaged staff, interns, and consultant, Tim Stallman, to develop the Omeka platform for the Oral History Trust, and to process and to upload over 150 interviews (including abstracts, consent forms, life history data, tape logs, images, partial transcriptions, keyword and proper word forms, and fieldnotes). We will be depositing all content with the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center for greater security and access. In 2016, the project director and Executive Director of the Center, Della Pollock, worked with MCJC’s part-time oral and public history specialist, Heidi Dodson, to cull years of learning into the MCJC’s Oral History Guide, which establishes all protocols and policies for appropriate and effective interviewing from the MCJC’s “community-first” perspective. As the MCJC’s primary reference for training and accession, the Guide has allowed us to move forward quickly and efficiently on



additional content development through external hiring. Over the past year, the usability of the interface has been significantly improved through targeted staff and community feedback. The Oral History Trust will be launched in the Spring of 2018 with the primary goal of making full interviews and associated photographs and transcripts available to community members.

The work of the MCJC generally and the proposed project specifically was catalyzed in 2010 by the gift of 100 prints of civil rights action in Chapel Hill taken by the former photojournalist for the University student newspaper and Director and Curator of Photographic Services at the Smithsonian, Jim Wallace. In subsequent open houses and interactive exhibits, these images have generated an outpouring of recollection and dialogue.

In ongoing collaboration with the Southern Oral History Program and the Southern Historical Collection at UNC, MCJC staff and colleagues will continue to add to the Trust. At the same time, anticipating its transformation into the Northside Digital Commons, we will begin to make the critical shift from *storage to stage*: we'll build out the archive from a place of retrieval into a platform for community curation and remix. The project will be maintained through institutional financial support.

**Work Plan.** The Northside Digital Commons team will step up the use and value of the Oral History Trust through significant web development and community engagement to proceed along 4 concurrent tracks, including these primary activities (see Detailed Project Timeline in Appendices):

1. *Primary web development*

The web development process will use an agile methodology, a cycle in which software developers, Jackson Center staff and key stakeholders work together to identify potential development tasks, estimate the resources and time necessary to complete each, and then work together to prioritize tasks to be completed with the available development time. Focus groups and one-on-one feedback sessions with members of key audiences for the Northside Digital Commons as well as consultation with external experts on Digital Humanities and Public History will be a critical part of this process.

2. *Resource supplementation*

In collaboration with the Southern Oral History Program and the Southern Historical Collection at UNC, we will cross-reference approximately 90 previously recorded Northside/Pine Knolls interviews and link in a wide range of historical print and film documentation (including H. Lee Waters WPA documentary films of Depression-era Northside), most of which current community members are unaware. We will simultaneously engage a team of project fellows to conduct an additional 45 interviews to increase depth and breadth. As the project develops, we will sponsor neighbor-to-neighbor interviewing projects.

3. *Direct community engagement*

- Following the model set by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (including guidelines for description and metadata), we will conduct a targeted community "History Harvest," with the twin aims of retrieving, securing, and mobilizing large bodies of historical ephemera currently held privately and celebrating collective interest in the NDC.
- We will integrate the NDC into the current high school and middle school programming provided by our *Learning Across Generations* curriculum. We are currently piloting workshops in a local high school retention program and across 3 middle school grade-levels that introduces students to historical testimony and trains in media and research skills so that they can develop related, short audio-documentaries. The NDC will allow us to revise the program for independent use by teachers and community leaders and to provide both a home for students' audio productions and a much wider range of opportunities for their critical, creative engagement in regional history.

4. *Site completion and activation*

Completion will involve creating and fully vetting a Northside Digital Commons User Guide, piloting all phases of digital implementation, releasing the platform at a large-scale launch event, and initiating formal evaluation metrics. At the heart of the NDC will be a Community Review Board, a group of community members invested in ensuring community leadership, oversight, sustainability, and the highest possible ethical standards for representation. Evaluation will be ongoing. It will include online

feedback, focus group discussion, Community Review Board assessment, and impact interviews with users.

**Staff.** The NDC project team includes MCJC staff, Northside residents, consultants in Digital Humanities, Website Development, and Library Sciences, curatorial fellows, and expert partners. The project manager will be the volunteer Executive Director of the Jackson Center, Della Pollock, Professor of Communication and former Interim Director of the SOHP, UNC-Chapel Hill. Senior Director, Hudson Vaughan, 2008 graduate of UNC, History, Northside resident, and recent recipient of the University Alumni Award for Achievement in Diversity, will collaborate on project oversight. Kathy Atwater, a leading Northside resident, former staff member at the Southern Historical Collection, and Community Advocacy Specialist at the MCJC will serve as a leading member of the Community Review Board and as a primary community liaison. Rachel Seidman, Director of the Southern Oral History Program, and her staff will collaborate on linking archives, developing a user base, and providing interviewer training. Chaitra Powell, University Archivist and one of our newest Northside neighbors, will lead partnership with the Southern Historical Collection and serve on the Community Review Board. Lisa Gregory will provide advice on digital preservation and will help accession archival materials into the Carolina Digital Heritage Center. Heidi Dodson and Tim Stallmann developed the current Data Management Plan. Going forward, Dr. Dodson will serve as the archival specialist and oral history manager. She will oversee project fellows in oral history interviewing, data processing and curation, and support community review and focus groups. Mr. Stallmann will serve as the website developer and primary portal designer; he will write the code for Omeka-based portal, upload batches of new content, oversee the backup system, and work with archival and design consultants to implement relevant applications. Seth Kotch, Assistant Professor in American Studies and Digital Humanities at UNC, will provide scholarly review, support technical design, and help to develop and implement evaluation metrics.

**Final Product and Dissemination.** The Northside Digital Commons will carry a professionally curated collection of oral histories at a unique site of insurgence in the South into ongoing community renewal and national reckoning. It notably provides a range of modalities to ease use by persons across the widest possible range of abilities, following guidelines established by NC State's Centre for Excellence in Universal Design.

Plans for dissemination include advance notice to 4,000 invested contacts and extended communities through project partners: SOHP, SHC, Programs in Public History at UNC-Greensboro and NC State and MCJC affiliated institutions and approximately 100 non-profit and municipal agencies, ethnographic documentation of process and outcomes to be featured on the Center's website, in text framing on the Northside Digital Commons platform, and in presentations at regional and national conferences on African-American history, oral history, digital humanities, and community development. The Project Manager will prepare a concise white paper for distribution through open source platforms for purposes of modelling and replication. She will also provide more reflective consideration in her current book project on tactical communication strategy and the history of the MCJC. We also expect that the short, NDC User Guide will directly useful to other communities wishing to pursue similar appropriate to their local histories and constituents. The Guide will be distributed as part of an invitation to the launch, shared in formal and impromptu "hands on" demos, introduced with the NDC in a district-wide, schools presentation, and inculcated into regular use through ongoing, multi-generational workshops. The Northside Digital Commons will be a permanent and dynamic resource for untold numbers of teachers, communities, scholars and virtual visitors to Northside and Pine Knolls. It will be a model for making historical materials optimally usable. It will connect dispersed community members and disperse the abundance of Northside community across the region and nation.

## **Detailed Project Timeline**

### *Ongoing:*

*Document process and outcomes*

*Identify and recruit participants at every level*

*Implement multi-faceted evaluation*

*Review ethics, inclusion, and community-first leadership*

*Provide updates on project in process through a range of media and forums; generate momentum*

Spring/summer 2018

(prior to grant period)

Project Activities:

Milestone: MCJC Oral History Trust launched

- Complete formal accession of 150 interviews
- Cross-reference SOHP interviews
- Notify all narrators of pending access
- Produce OHT manual
- Host launch event

Milestone: Data transfer secured

Strategic action:

- Set up the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS)
- Develop and document OHMS workflow
- Transfer associated metadata to the North Carolina Digital Repository

Sept-Nov 2018

Strategic action:

Milestone: Northside Digital Commons platform initiated

- Create institutional thesaurus of keywords to improve subject access to materials in Omeka and OHMS
- Integrate existing oral history content with OHMS
- Integrate, theme, and test Omeka Audio Recorder plug-in
- Identify and being linking related material from the Southern Historical Collection
- Convene and charge the Community Review Board. For general consideration: *How can we ensure and improve access? How can the site be more effective in engaging all community members? What are we overlooking and/or what opportunities are we missing?*
- Plan preliminary testing, design feedback, and overall review by the CRB
- Integrate CRB recommendations to improve site usability and design
- Design workflows for accessioning, archiving, and providing public access to the digital content produced through the new plug-ins

Nov 2018-Jan 2019

Strategic action:

Milestone: Northside Digital Commons incorporated into middle/high school *Learning Across Generations* curriculum

- Complete online transfer of “Witness to Rights” exhibit

*The Northside Digital Commons: Detailed Project Timeline*

The Marian Cheek Jackson Center

January, 2018

- Integrate and test Omeka Contribution and Poster plug-ins
- Conduct one-on-one feedback sessions with key stakeholders and expert consultants
- Convene 2 focus groups (Community Mentor Team, Phoenix Academy student/teacher group) for trial use and curricular brainstorming
- Consolidate curricular plan
- Index all related material and sync transcriptions in the OHMS

Feb-April 2019  
Strategic action:

Milestone: Targeted History Harvest completed

- Identify 3-4 neighbors for preliminary harvest of privately held archival materials
- Develop selection criteria; establish workflow and protocols for digital accession
- Recruit and train History Harvest intern team for on-site upload, documentation, and caption of physical content
- Run trials
- Conduct History Harvest
- Recruit summer NDC Curatorial Fellows
- Identify and secure preliminary consent for an additional 45 oral history interviews by NDC fellows (at 15 each)

May-August 2019  
Strategic actions:

Milestone: Resource supplementation completed

- Provide supplemental training for NDC Summer Fellows
- Complete 45 additional oral histories focusing on civil rights action in Chapel Hill per the Oral History Trust Guide
- Fully integrate linked access to SOHP and SHC materials into the NDC interface

Milestone: NDC Guide readied for school implementation

Strategic actions:

- Develop, vet, and distribute NDC Guide
- Engage neighborhood Student Leadership Group in workshop test runs
- Schedule full, initial implementation of the Northside Digital Commons with middle/high school partners
- Complete additional plug-in and web development

Sept-Nov 2019

Milestone: Northside Digital Commons piloted in classrooms

Strategic actions:

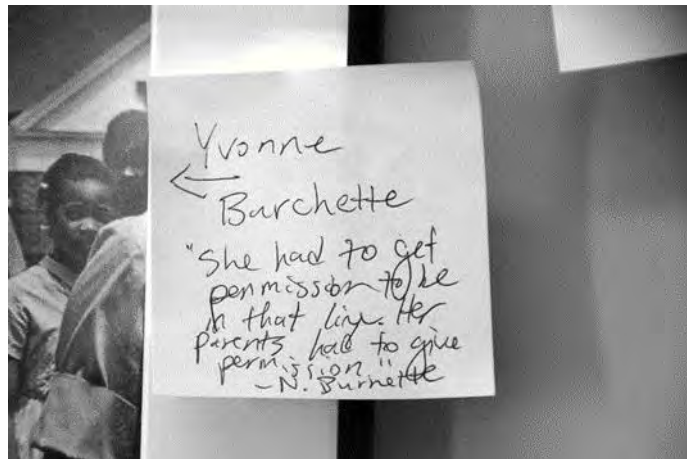
- Engage NDC opportunities in a combination of individual classrooms and full grade-levels
- Showcase student contributions
- Solicit student, teacher, and community mentor feedback
- Engage CRB review

Dec 2019-Feb 2020 Strategic actions:	Milestone:	Northside Digital Commons launched
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize space, equipment, food, décor, program, and staff for “open house” launch event, including magnified display and computer stations</li> <li>• Produce digital and print NDC Guides</li> <li>• Develop and implement recruitment/publicity plan to include on-site and remote participation</li> <li>• Post documentation of process and goals on the Center website and the NDC platform</li> <li>• Hold launch event</li> <li>• Coordinate documentation of all aspects of the project for dissemination online and ongoing/future consultation</li> <li>• Initiate formal evaluation protocols</li> </ul>
March-May 2020/ After the grant period Strategic actions:	Milestone:	NDC white paper posted
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct use and impact interviews</li> <li>• Do project debrief</li> <li>• Write \white paper for open source submission</li> <li>• Pursue related presentations and publication</li> <li>• Continue to troubleshoot, update, and improve the NDC; upload and share new content regularly</li> </ul>

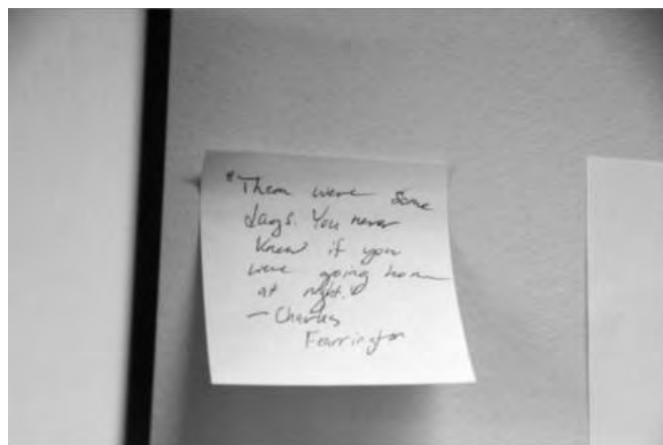
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**Images from Jackson Center Events & Exhibits**



*Written response to Witness to Rights Exhibit*



*Written response to Witness to Rights Exhibit*



*Witness to Rights Exhibit – Demonstrators gather in front of St. Joseph CME Church*



*Esphur Foster reading to children during a Learning Across Generations session, the Jackson Center's curriculum in local oral and civil rights history*



*Willie Mae Patterson with children during a Learning Across Generations session*





*Russell Edwards responding to the Facing Our Neighbors exhibit  
(photograph depicts four generations of Edwards family)*



*Albert Williams, Eloise Williams, Marian Jackson, and Delores Bynum at the  
photography Open House (Left to right)*

## **Data Management Plan**

**Roles and responsibilities:** This plan will be implemented and managed by Della Pollock, Hudson Vaughan and Heidi Dodson.

**Types of Data:** This project will largely generate data at two levels: data associated with the archival files we are collecting, curating, sharing, and preserving and documentation of the Omeka site development.

The data associated with project archival content include digital files of oral histories, audio documentaries, images, textual narratives, and historical textual materials to be shared in the digital commons. The project will also generate digitized digital exhibits within the Omeka platform, which includes photographs, audio clips, video and textual responses. Other data include text files: documentation of project planning and processes, a Northside Digital Commons user manual, project and historical context for digital collections, and documents associated with oral history processing, including life history forms, consent forms, abstracts, field notes, proper word lists, tape logs, and transcripts. Archival item metadata will also be generated.

Documentation of software development includes source code documenting the development of the Omeka content management system.

**Data Management Prior to Dissemination:** Oral history audio files and associated files such as photographs are recorded and collected at the interview site (varied locations) and are then renamed according to the Jackson Center's protocol and uploaded to a Dropbox account that is synced to the hard drive of the password-protected Jackson Center computer. Within Dropbox, the original files are uploaded to a master folder. Copies are made and transferred to a working folder. These files are also backed up on a weekly basis to both an external hard drive and a shared server. The files are thus saved in four locations. Volunteers work from copies placed in a separate designated shared folder and do not have access to the working or master folder. As they process the interviews, Project Staff transfer materials to the working and master folder. Textual planning and process documents are stored the institutional Google Drive account and are backed up to the external hard drive and shared server. Source code for the Digital Commons is maintained in a version-controlled repository hosted by Bitbucket.org, and also backed-up locally on developers' computers. The Digital Commons site itself is stored on servers operated by Reclaim Hosting, and the site and associated database are backed-up regularly to an off-site location.

**Factors that might impinge on ability to manage data:** If an interview or associated item does not have a consent form giving permission to share the data, it will remain in storage until a consent form can be obtained. If an interviewee requests part of the interview be restricted, the original audio file will remain in the designated digital storage locations, and an edited audio file copy and/or transcript will be created to provide access to the non-restricted material.

**Data Formats and Dissemination:** Audio interviews are recorded as uncompressed wav files, which are converted to mp3 files for sharing in Omeka. Photographs are typically jpeg format, but archival scans made at the Jackson Center include uncompressed tiff files. Textual documents will be stored and disseminated as pdfs. Interviews and photographs will be uploaded to the Omeka site as soon as an abstract and keywords have been created. These minimum elements will facilitate public access to the interviews. Additional materials, such as transcripts, photographs, and tape logs will be uploaded as soon as they are created by Jackson Center Fellows. Paper consent forms and other hard copies of photographs or textual data will be stored in an office file cabinet, filed under the interviewee name. All interviewees and their families will be given CD copies of the interview for their own use. In addition to access and

download interviews through the digital platform, neighbors will be able to access and download files or make cd copies at the Jackson Center. The lowest level of aggregated data that project directors might share would be an mp3 or wav audio interview file, digital photographs, and processed materials from community documentary initiatives.

### *Metadata*

Descriptive metadata for audio and image files materials are stored in one main Excel workbook on Dropbox, in Omeka, and on the local computer hard drive, backup external hard drive, and shared server. Metadata elements for audio and image files are created using the original Dublin Core Metadata Element Scheme (15 elements). For audio oral history interviews, two additional elements, length of recording and interview processor, are also captured in Omeka. The Excel workbook contains administrative metadata, such as interview processing status, that is not included in Omeka. Fellows and consultants will create and apply controlled vocabularies for subject terms and keywords added in Omeka and will use consistent content conventions for other fields in order to improve discoverability.

### *Procedural documentation*

The Jackson Center's manual will be updated to include the Data Management Plan so it is accessible to staff, Fellows, and consultants. As we work on the re-design and expansion of the Omeka site, we will document our changes in a separate, in-house Omeka manual and on Github. The in-house manual will include technical instructions as well as explanations for our decisions regarding design, public accessibility, and metadata.

### **Long-term Data Storage and Preservation:**

The Jackson Center will maintain the archival components of the Northside Digital Commons using best practices established by the Southern Historical Collection at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. All unrestricted oral history files and associated metadata will be stored in the Carolina Digital Repository through submission to the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center on a biannual basis. The Community Review Board will be tasked with identifying the appropriate partner for long-term oversight and storage if, at any point in the future, the Jackson Center were to cease to exist. The Digital Commons site is stored on Reclaim Hosting's servers, and backed up regularly.

**Legal Policy:** Interviewees will retain their copyright to interviews and photographs submitted to the Jackson Center, but will agree to license public use of the materials through the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This permission is granted through the Jackson Center's Interview Agreement form. The interviewees have the option of including restrictions on access.