

The Politics of Collections



Towards Blackness: Strategies and Approaches in Improving Digital Collections

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Black Teacher Archives

Project Manager Perspective

Context: grant funded project envisioned by two Black scholars with experience using archives.

Positionality: Hired for the grant, position is associated with Harvard Ed School library.

Black Teacher Archives

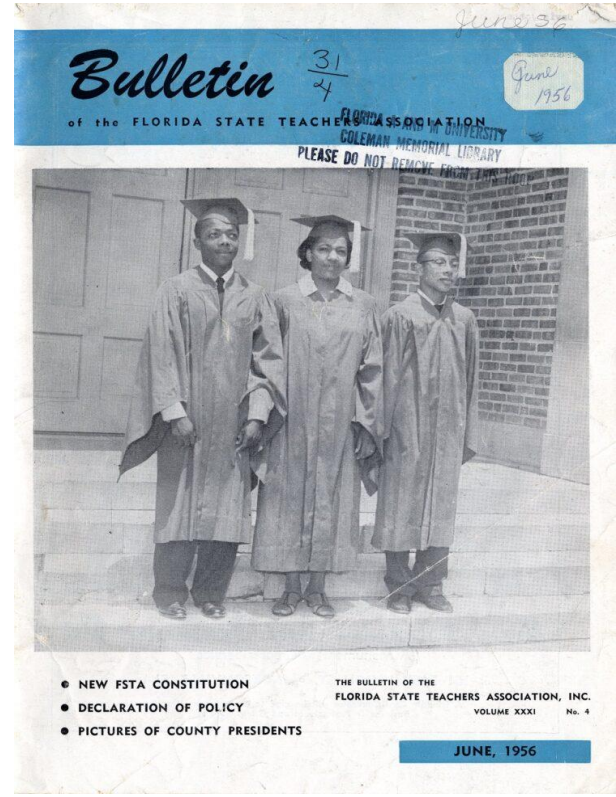


An archival and digital humanities project that seeks to make more accessible the political, intellectual, and cultural contributions of Black educators before the 1970s.

Black Teacher Archives Project Goals

In service of creating a centralized portal of “Colored Teacher Association” publications:

- Locate copies
- Develop relationships
- Navigate infrastructures
- Digitize information



Florida State Teachers Association Bulletin
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Archives 4

Gaps in Our History

Digital Services Librarian
Perspective

Context: Local history collection in Watertown Free Public Library, a mid-sized public library in Watertown, MA

Positionality: Collaborating with our Local History Librarian to examine and update our digital collections

Watertown Free Public Library Context

- Library established 1869
- Population & Demographics
- Local History collection created around 1900
- Collected materials date back to 1630
- Digital local history collection



Digital Collection Analysis

- Outsider perspective of New England history
- User experience and Digital Commonwealth
- SWOT analysis of digital collection
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
 - Opportunities
 - Threats



Initiatives for Change

- Acknowledging gaps in our historical collection
- Connecting with resources in the community
- Collecting contemporary history
- Creating opportunities to tell community stories



**A Conversation
With Culture
Keepers About
Local Indigenous
History**

3/18 | 6:30 PM | VIA ZOOM

Digitizing the Black Caucus Archives

President of the Black Caucus
of the American Library
Association Perspective

Context: Intentional culling of resources to preserve and make accessible organization's history and professional impact.

Positionality: Collaboration with executive board members and North Carolina Central University.

Power of the Cell Phone



Historically Black Colleges and Universities



The image shows a screenshot of the HBCU Library Alliance website. At the top, there is a purple header with the HBCU Library Alliance logo on the left, which includes a building icon and the text "HBCU Library Alliance". To the right of the logo, the text "HBCU Library Alliance" is written in a large, white, serif font, with "Historically Black Colleges & Universities" in a smaller font below it. Below the header is a dark navigation bar with white text for "ABOUT US", "PARTNERSHIPS", "MEMBERSHIP", "PRESS ROOM", and "RESOURCES".

The main content area features a large banner with a black and white photograph of students in a laboratory. Overlaid on the left side of the banner is the text "HBCU Digital Collection" in a white, serif font, with a left-pointing arrow to its left and a right-pointing arrow to its right. Below the banner is a row of five small, light-colored circles, with the fourth one from the left being filled in.

Below the circles is a quote in italics: "We serve the unique and indispensable role as gatekeepers for history, culture and the African-American experience..."

Below the quote is the word "Mission" in bold, followed by a paragraph: "The HBCU Library Alliance works to transform and strengthen its membership by developing leaders, preserving collections and planning for the future."

On the right side of the page, there is a vertical stack of three buttons: a yellow "Donate Now" button, a purple "Building Capacity Promotion" button, and a black "HBCUs Join Now" button.

EJ Josey Papers

Debut at the National
Conference of African
American Librarians
July 28- August 1, 2021



What is the correlation between these digital project efforts and the movement for Black Lives?



May 11, 2016 cover of TIME magazine with photo by Devin Allen

What acknowledgements have been key to approaching the work?

What collaborations and relationships are being cultivated to achieve project goals?

What have you learned from challenges?

Role of contextual information in digitizing collections centering Black people?

Recommendations for Black digital collection collaborations?

Thank You

Feel free to reach out to us:

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