

# The Black Metropolis Research Consortium:

Fifteen Years of Preserving and Documenting Black History and Culture in Chicago

## **Introductory Panel**

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) is a Chicago-based membership association that aids in expanding broad access to its members' holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic history, politics and culture, with a specific focus on materials relating to Chicago. Our members include universities, libraries, museums, community, arts-based and government archives. It is the mission of the BMRC to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.

The BMRC was founded at the University of Chicago, which serves as the consortium's host institution. In 2003, faculty members at the university started discussing and devising ways to address a common problem – difficulty accessing African Americanist archival materials in Chicago that were essential to their research. Among these faculty were Danielle Allen, then a Professor in Classics, and Jacqueline Goldsby, then a Professor in English Language & Literature and the College. Over the next three years, a series of meetings took place between University of Chicago faculty and archivists from area institutions with significant African American holdings, including the Chicago Public Library's Vivian Harsh Research Collection, the DuSable Museum of African American History and Columbia College Chicago's Center for Black Music Research.

Through these discussions it was decided that the best course of action for addressing the many factors that hindered accessibility to collections would be an active collaboration among institutions, archivists and researchers. These discussions resulted in several multiinstitution archival initiatives: Mapping the Stacks, Uncovering Chicago Archives Project (UNCAP) and the Black Metropolis Research Consortium. The BMRC was initiated in the spring of 2006 at a meeting of chief executives and representatives from fifteen Chicago area institutions who supported the formation of a collaborative effort to make African Americanist collections more broadly accessible to researchers. Danielle Allen, then Dean of the Division of Humanities at the University of Chicago, led the meeting. The BMRC was formally launched on July 1, 2006.

In 2021, the BMRC celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This exhibit documents the origins of the BMRC, its efforts to aid discoverability and access to Black historical collections, and the consortium's flagship Summer Short-term Fellowship and Archie Motley Archival Internship programs.

Exhibition Curator: Marcia Walker-McWilliams, Executive Director of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium

### **Acknowledgment Panel**

Over the years, many individuals have contributed to the success and growth of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium and we wish to thank our founders, current and former staff, Board members, committee members, advisors, fellows, interns, volunteers, funding partners and other supporters. We wish to acknowledge all of the BMRC member institutions, especially the following for loaning objects for this exhibit: University of Chicago, Chicago Public Library, Roosevelt University, Columbia College Chicago, Shorefront Legacy Center, Chicago History Museum and the Newberry Library. Special thanks to Dan Meyer, Patti Gibbons and Chelsea Kauffman from the Special Collections Research Center for their contributions to this exhibition.

### **I. Origins of the BMRC**

Chicago has been a central site of efforts to document, understand, share and preserve Black history and culture for over 100 years. Many of these efforts laid the foundation for the BMRC. Historian Carter G. Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) in Chicago in 1915. Dissatisfied with segregated historical associations and the devaluation of African American history, Woodson sought to create an organization for scholars and the public that would promote the study and appreciation of African American history. The Chicago Public Library's George Cleveland Hall Branch Library, the first full-service library for Black Chicagoans on the South Side, opened in 1932 and quickly became the center of a robust Black literary community under the leadership of librarian Vivian G. Harsh. Like Woodson, Harsh championed the study and preservation of African American history.

Major New Deal era research studies focused on Chicago's Black Belt – the areas of the city's South and West sides that were predominantly Black. *The Illinois Writers Project: Negro in Illinois* study looked at the experiences of Black people statewide from enslaved Africans in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the cultural, political and economic realities of African American Illinoisans during the 1930s. *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City* by St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton was one of the first studies to document Black history, culture and race relations in Chicago. It is from this seminal, groundbreaking text that the Black Metropolis Research Consortium takes its name.

1.) *Black Metropolis: A Study of Negro Life in a Northern City*, St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, 1945

Courtesy of Special Collections Research Center, Rare Books, University of Chicago

*Black Metropolis* spanned the history of Blacks in Chicago from the 1840s through 1940, documenting race relations and racial discrimination against Blacks as well as the culture and forms of community they were able to build in the city. A significant portion of the study focused on Bronzeville, the center of Chicago's Black South Side. Prior to *Black Metropolis*, Drake and Cayton worked on research projects that explored racial caste systems in the South, and Black labor organizing, respectively. Drake and Cayton were also influenced by their studies at the University of Chicago with sociologist and anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner, and what would later become known as the "Chicago School" of Sociology.

2.) Horace Cayton Jr., 1945

Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection

Noted sociologist, researcher and writer, Horace Cayton Jr. (1903-1970) was born into an illustrious family. His father Horace Cayton Sr. was publisher the *Seattle Republican* newspaper, and his mother Susie Revels Cayton was a teacher, writer and daughter of Hiram Rhodes Revels, the first African American United States senator. In addition to the research project that would eventually become *Black Metropolis*, Cayton wrote for the Pittsburgh Courier for nearly thirty years and served as director of Parkway Community House, a central arts hub of the Chicago Black Renaissance.

3.) St. Clair Drake, c. 1940s

Courtesy of Roosevelt University Archives

St. Clair Drake (1911-1990) developed a distinct appreciation for African American and African diasporic cultures, often through the lens of anthropological research. A graduate of Hampton University, Drake worked as an instructor and researcher before matriculating into the anthropology graduate program at the University of Chicago in 1937. After publication of *Black Metropolis*, Drake held faculty appointments at several universities including Roosevelt and Stanford where he was instrumental in founding some of the first Black Studies programs in the nation. Drake also taught at universities in Liberia and Ghana while serving as an advisor to Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah in the 1960s.

### **Focus Panel: The George Cleveland Hall Branch and Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection**

George Cleveland Hall (1864-1930) was a prominent doctor, original member of ASNLH, civic leader and the second African American appointed to the Chicago Public Library Board. Hall lobbied for a library branch on the South Side that would serve a growing number of African Americans and secured financial support for the branch from the NAACP, the Chicago Urban League and the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The George Cleveland Hall Branch opened in January 1932 and was the first full-service branch of the Chicago Public Library to serve Bronzeville. Vivian G. Harsh (1890-1960), the library branch

manager at Hall, created the “Special Negro Collection” at Hall Branch, which she modeled off of similar collections held at the Schomburg Center, Fisk University Library and Atlanta University Library. The collection grew to contain books, photographs, pamphlets, newspaper clippings, donations from local patrons, writers, activists and researchers. In 1975 the collection was relocated to the Carter G. Woodson Regional Branch and renamed the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature. The Harsh Collection is the oldest and largest Black history collection in the Midwest.

#### 4.) Women’s Reading Group at Hall Branch, 1940

Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection

The Women’s Reading Group was one of many groups that met at Hall Branch. Vivian Harsh, branch librarian is pictured standing left. Standing right is Charlemae Hill Rollins, the first children’s librarian at Hall Branch. Rollins served in that capacity for thirty years and focused her efforts on building a children’s collection that would inspire self-worth and a sense of broad possibilities for African American children. Rollins frequently spoke to parents about Hall branch resources.

#### 5.) Book Review and Lecture Forum flyer announcing Gwendolyn Brooks as guest, 1949

Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection

In 1933, Vivian Harsh started the Book Review and Lecture Forum. Held bimonthly, the forum provided a venue for the wider Bronzeville community to engage the works of Black writers like Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, Alain Locke and St. Clair Drake. The forum was a key site of the Chicago Black Renaissance, a cultural movement akin to the Harlem Renaissance that produced formative works of literature, art and music emanating out of the city’s Black South Side.

#### 6.) *The Negro in Illinois*, edited by Brian Dolinar, 2013

From 1936 to 1942, over one hundred researchers led by poet Arna Bontemps and writer Jack Conroy conducted a massive study documenting the African American experience in Illinois from 1779 to 1942. The project was commissioned as part of the Illinois Writer’s Project, a state-based initiative under the New Deal’s Works Progress Administration. Bontemps and Conroy attempted to have the study published in 1943, but were unsuccessful. The bulk of the project was then placed in the Special Negro Collection at Hall Branch. In the early 2000s scholar Brian Dolinar working closely with archivist Michael Flug, painstakingly compiled chapters from the Harsh Collection and other repositories that held parts of the project: the Newberry Library, Syracuse University and Fisk University. The volume was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2013.

#### 7.) Danielle Allen, 2020

Danielle Allen, an esteemed classicist and political scientist, founded the Civic Knowledge Project in 2003 and the Black Metropolis Research Consortium in 2006. Both efforts were founded collaboratively with the goal of bridging the academy with knowledge communities outside of its walls on the South Side. From 2004 to 2007, Allen served as Dean of the Division of Humanities at the University of Chicago. Allen went on to join the faculty at Princeton in the Institute for Advanced Study before assuming her current roles as the James Bryant Conant University Professor at Harvard and Director of the Safra Center for Ethics.

#### 8.) "The Civic Knowledge Project: Grounding Ideas" 2003

This document, authored by Danielle Allen, laid the foundation for the Civic Knowledge Project and influenced the early vision of the Black Metropolis Research Consortium.

#### 9.) BMRC Original Vision Statement, 2006

Outlined in this document is the early vision for the BMRC, including its goals, member institutions and proposed activities. Today, the BMRC continues to operate as a membership-based consortium with staff, a central office and a governing board of directors made up of representatives from our member institutions.

## **II. Survey Initiative**

During its first year, the BMRC conducted initial studies of its member institutions' holdings of Black historical collections as well as staffing, space, training and conversation needs that contributed to backlogs in processing, or organizing Black historical collections. These initial studies laid the groundwork for the BMRC's first major collections initiative. In December 2008, the BMRC was awarded a multiyear grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to conduct a broader collections survey. The BMRC Survey Initiative ran from January 2009 through December 2011.

The goals of the Survey Initiative were to determine where Black historical collections existed across the city, the subjects represented within those collections, and any collection preservation concerns. In addition to its member institutions, the BMRC surveyed "SecondSpace" organizations – smaller, community-based organizations and individual holders of collections. In assessing Black historical collections, the Survey Initiative helped provide archival institutions with important data about their collections that could inform individual and collaborative grant proposals to address collection needs. The Survey Initiative also provided preliminary descriptions for all surveyed collections which created records of their existence and contents in an online searchable database.

#### 10.) BMRC Survey Institutions

The BMRC cast a wide net and surveyed museum, libraries, historical societies, universities, businesses, non-profit organizations and a small number of collections held by individuals.

11.) Andy Steadham and Bergis Jules surveying Bronzeville Historical Society materials, 2010

The Survey Initiative required additional staffing for the BMRC beyond inaugural Executive Director, Vera Davis and Consortium Archivist, Tamar Evangelestia-Dougherty. Bergis Jules was hired as Project Director, Lisa Calahan as Lead Survey Archivist and Lauren Kalal and Andy Steadham as Survey Archivists.

Depending on the size and organization of an institution's archive, project archivists spent anywhere from several hours to multiple days surveying relevant collections. Here, Steadham and Jules examine materials from the Bronzeville Historical Society. The Bronzeville Historical Society was founded in 1999 by Sherry Williams to preserve and protect African American history and culture of Chicago.

12.) Lisa Calahan surveying Shorefront Legacy Center collections, 2010

Project archivists surveyed collections using a ranking system that evaluated a number of criteria, including the condition of the material, the quality of its housing, physical access to the collection, its local Chicago value and African American research value.

Here, archivist Lisa Calahan examines a photo album in a collection from Shorefront Legacy Center. Shorefront was founded in 1995 by Dino Robinson to collect materials that represent and document the contributions, lives and history of Blacks on the Chicago North Shore.

13.) Infographic of survey data

14.) BMRC Survey website still, 2011

Increasing access to collections and materials that document African American history and culture was a key objective of the BMRC and major outcome of the Survey Initiative. The survey project's website provided basic descriptions of each collection surveyed, whether or not the collection was fully processed and available to researchers. Of the Black historical collections surveyed, project archivists noted strengths in collections related to housing, segregation, politics, jazz, civil rights and social services.

15.) "Copyright and African American Collections" Workshop, 2010

As part of the Survey Initiative, the BMRC developed a workshop series, "A Gathering Place for Second Space" catered to smaller, community-based organizations and individual

holders of collections. In addition to the copyright workshop advertised in the above flyer, the series included workshops on Archivist Toolkit, the More Product, Less Process method of processing archival collections, and the preservation of African American collections.

#### 16.) “Full Exposure” Conference Program Schedule, Cover

In October 2011, near the end of the Survey Initiative, the BMRC held a one-day conference, “Full Exposure: Archives and Community Collaboration” to discuss insights gained from the project. “Full Exposure” featured sessions on the benefits of the project to researchers and archival institutions, strategies for preserving collections and increasing public access to African American collections.

#### 17.) “Full Exposure” Conference Program Schedule, p. 1

Dr. Tukufu Zuberi, the Lasry Family Professor of Race Relations, and Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, gave the keynote address. Dr. Zuberi, a graduate alum of the University of Chicago, is also a documentary film maker and was a host on the PBS television series, *History Detectives Special Investigations*.

#### 18.) “Full Exposure” Conference Program Schedule, p. 2

The conference provided an opportunity for many of the same scholars, archivists and librarians who helped found the BMRC to convene once again. In addition to the conference panels, the BMRC hosted off-site workshops on the history and stewardship of Black historical collections.

### **III. Color Curtain Processing Project**

The BMRC’s Survey Initiative revealed just how many important Black historical collections remained hidden because they were unprocessed and unavailable to researchers, or underprocessed and less usable for researchers given the unknown scope of contents within those collections. Significant backlogs in processing collections were often due to a lack of adequate staffing, staff time to process collections, a lack of financial resources needed to house and care for materials and in some cases a lack of familiarity with the subject or creator of a collection and the collection’s research value. In June 2011, the BMRC received a Council of Library Resources (CLIR) Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives Grant. Originally a two-year grant, CLIR extended the BMRC’s grant for an additional six months through December 2013.

The BMRC’s grant project – the Color Curtain Processing Project (CCPP), expanded on the Survey Initiative and its goals of increasing access to Black historical collections. The main objective of the project was to process about 100 to 150 collections and produce finding aids, or guides to those collections. The project would train and employ graduate students enrolled in Master of Library and Information Science programs to process collections at

survey institutions. The CCPP also employed undergraduate student interns as a way of exposing them to the archival profession. Ultimately the CCPP processed about 130 collections with significant research value in African American Studies. Materials from a small sampling of those collections are featured in this exhibit.

19.) Color Curtain Processing Project Manual, Cover page

As part of their training, student interns learned key archival terms, conventions and best practices to aid in processing collections. The training included hands on experience processing collections and practice using tools for describing archival collections. CCPP student interns received this manual, a processing packet and a processing plan to guide their work on site at archival repositories. Student interns worked twenty hours per week under the guidance of CCPP Project Director Lisa Calahan and on-site archivists.

20.) Color Curtain Processing Project Manual, p. 26

The CCPP utilized More Product, Less Process (MPLP), a theory and practice for processing archival collections theorized by Dennis Meissner and Mark Greene. Under MPLP archivists perform minimal processing of a collection in order to decrease the time it takes to make it available to researchers and reduce processing backlogs. For each collection, student interns completed a processing worksheet which detailed how they processed the collection and what information they used to produce the finding aid, or description of the collection. Student interns wrote blog posts about the collections they processed and organized a Wikislap to edit or create entries on the Black historical figures, events and places represented in CCPP collections.

21.) CCPP student interns Kristin Moo and Ollie Larsen processing ShoreBank Corporation Records at University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections and University Archives, 2012

ShoreBank Corporation was founded in Chicago in 1972. The following year the corporation launched, Shorebank, a community development bank that provided loans and banking services in predominantly African American and minority communities. It was the first bank holding company to combine commercial banking, real estate development, nonprofit loan funds, and international advisory services aimed at community development. Shorebank expanded its operations nationally and internationally but suffered during the Great Recession and the bank closed in 2010.

22.) Theodore Charles Stone Concert Flyer – Eleventh Street Theater, 1949  
Courtesy of Center for Black Music Research Collection, Columbia College Chicago

Internationally known baritone and music journalist, Theodore Charles Stone (1912-1998) served for many years as president of the Chicago Music Association (CMA) and National



Association of Negro Musicians (NANM). Both organizations were founded in Chicago and addressed growing concerns about access to performance venues for classically trained black musicians among other issues. In this performance, Stone performed a mix of classical songs and African American spirituals. Collections of Stone's papers, including hundreds of music programs, are housed at Columbia College Chicago and in the Harsh Research Collection of the Chicago Public Library.

23.) Douglas-Lake Meadows, 1959

Photograph credit: Mildred Mead

Courtesy of Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records, Chicago Public Library, Special Collections

In 1946, the City of Chicago embarked on one of its largest and most expensive urban renewal projects, the creation of Lake Meadows in the Douglas neighborhood on the city's South Side. Urban renewal gained traction after World War II as a solution to urban crowding and "slums" whereby older and often substandard buildings were demolished to make way for newer buildings and new residents. Critics of urban renewal charged that it removed poor and minority residents from their homes on valuable real estate and displaced them into public housing sites in segregated areas. The Chicago Department of Urban Renewal Records document the city's urban planning and renewal efforts from the 1940s through the 1970s. This image, taken by photographer Margaret Mead who worked for the department, captures the stark divide of urban renewal. A Lake Meadows high-rise looms large while an older apartment building soon to be demolished is partially pictured in the foreground.

24.) Draft manuscript, Christopher Reed, "Black Chicago: The Emergence of a Black Metropolis, 1920-1929"

Dr. Christopher Reed is a historian and distinguished scholar of Black Chicago history. He is the author of several books including: *The Depression Comes to the South Side: Protest and Politics in the Black Metropolis, 1930-1933* (Indiana University Press, 2011) and *The rise of Chicago's Black metropolis, 1920-1929* (University of Illinois Press, 2011). Dr. Reed taught for many years at the University of Illinois and Roosevelt University, the latter serving as the institutional repository for his collection of personal papers. Dr. Reed also founded the Black Chicago History Forum, a public forum dedicated to increasing awareness of the history and contributions of Black Chicagoans to the city.

25.) Emergency Sign from Community Hospital of Evanston Collection

Courtesy of Shorefront Legacy Center

Outside of medical emergencies, most Evanston and Chicago hospitals did not admit Black patients or the Black doctors who treated them. Dr. Isabella G. Butler, one of the first Black women doctors in Illinois and her husband, Dr. Arthur Butler founded Evanston Sanitarium

in 1914 in the upstairs level of their home to provide medical services to Blacks in Evanston and on the North Shore. Dr. Isabella Butler was one of the first Black women doctors in the state of Illinois. After Dr. Arthur Butler's death in 1924, Evanston Sanitarium became the Butler Memorial Sanitarium. Community support and philanthropy helped Dr. Isabella Butler expand the sanitarium into a hospital, originally chartered as the Booker T. Washington Hospital Association but renamed Community Hospital of Evanston. The hospital relocated to a large home known as "Penn House" at 2026 Brown Ave. In 1952 the hospital moved to its final location at Grey and Foster streets and the Penn House location became a nursing home. Community Hospital of Evanston closed permanently in 1980. During the demolition of the Penn House location in 1992, a future board member of Shorefront Legacy Center rescued this emergency sign.

*Note:* Object 25a is an image of Penn House to be included with the item description

#### 26.) Society of American Archivists Distinguished Service Award, 2013

The BMRC received this award because of its contributions to archival theory and practice, fostering of collaborative relationships between member institutions, and ingenuity in its service to the community displayed through the Color Curtain Processing Project and other initiatives. The CCP and the processing manual remain valuable tools for communitybased organizations creating and caring for their own collections.

#### **IV.) Summer Short-term Fellowship Program**

The Summer Short-term Fellowship Program, through an international competition, provides one-month residential fellowships in Chicago to scholars, artists, writers, and public historians. Fellows create new, original research and art that illuminates the national and international importance of Chicago's African American community. Fellows conduct their research at BMRC member institutions using collections featured in the BMRC's searchable database, including collections from the Survey Initiative and Color Curtain Processing Project.

Fellows also give public presentations of their research projects. Since the program's first Fellows cohort in 2009, the BMRC has awarded over 107 fellowships resulting in dissertations, articles, documentary films, photographic exhibitions, musical compositions and over twenty published books. The program has received support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Gaylor and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation.

In October 2018, the BMRC hosted the first Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Scholars. Former Fellows from Chicago, throughout the US, Canada and France, and scholars of Black Chicago converged in Indianapolis in concurrence with the 2018 Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History. A special edition of selected Former Fellows' essays is forthcoming in the BMRC's first publication, *Revisiting the Black Metropolis: New Histories of Black Chicago*.

Books by BMRC Fellows

27.) Richard Courage, *The Muse in Bronzeville: African American Creative Expression in Chicago, 1932-1950*, Rutgers University Press, 2011.

**2009 BMRC Fellow**

28.) Mabel Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the Worlds of Fairs and Museums*, University of California Press, 2012.

**2010 BMRC Fellow**

29.) Ibram Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972*, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2012.

**2011 BMRC Fellow**

30.) Ayesha Hardison, *Writing Through Jane Crow: Race and Gender Politics in African American Literature*, University of Virginia Press, 2014.

**2009 BMRC Fellow**

31.) Sarah Potter, *Everybody Else: Adoption and the Politics of Domestic Diversity in Postwar America*, University of Georgia Press, 2014.

**2009 BMRC Fellow**

32.) Thomas Bahde, *The Life and Death of Gus Reed: A Story of Race and Justice in Illinois during the Civil War and Reconstruction*, Ohio University Press, 2014.

**2010 BMRC Fellow**

33.) Mary Barr, *Friends Disappear: The Battle for Racial Equality in Evanston*, University of Chicago Press, 2014.

**2012 BMRC Fellow**

34.) Catherine Fennell, *Last Project Standing: Civics and Sympathy in Post-Welfare Chicago*, University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

**2010 BMRC Fellow**

35.) Mitsutoshi Inaba, *John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson: The Blues Harmonica of Chicago's Bronzeville*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

**2011 BMRC Fellow**

36.) Christine Zanfanga, *Holy Hip Hop in the City of Angels*, University of California Press, 2017.

**2011 BMRC Fellow**

37.) Danielle Legros Georges, *Letters from Congo: Poems*, Central Square Press, 2017.

**2013 BMRC Fellow**

38.) Ian Rocksborough-Smith, *Black Public History in Chicago: Civil Rights Activism from World War II into the Cold War*, University of Illinois Press, 2018.

**2012 BMRC Fellow**

39.) Linda Chavers, *Violent Disruptions: American Imaginations of Racial Anxiety in William Faulkner and Richard Wright*, Peter Lang Publishers, 2018.

**2013 BMRC Fellow**

40.) Diane Allen Jones, *Lost in the Transit Desert: Race, Transit Access, and Suburban Form*, Routledge Press, 2018.

**2015 BMRC Fellow**

41.) Jacob Dorman, *The Princess and the Prophet: The Secret History of Magic, Race and Moorish Muslims in America*, Beacon Press, 2019.

**2010 BMRC Fellow**

42.) Spencer Dew, *The Aliites: Race and Law in the Religions of Noble Drew Ali*, University of Chicago Press, 2019.

**2011 BMRC Fellow**

43.) Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power*, University of North Carolina Press, 2019.

**2012 BMRC Fellow**

44.) Jonathan Fenderson, *Building the Black Arts Movement: Hoyt Fuller and the Cultural Politics of the 1960s*, University of Illinois Press, 2019.

**2012 BMRC Fellow**

45.) Naa Oyo A. Kwate, *Burgers in Blackface: Anti-Black Restaurants Then and Now*, University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

**2016 BMRC Fellow**

46.) Robert Weems, *The Merchant Prince of Black Chicago: Anthony Overton and the Building of a Financial Empire*, University of Illinois Press, 2020.

**2010 BMRC Fellow**

47.) E. James West, *Ebony Magazine and Lerone Bennett Jr: Popular Black History in Postwar America*, University of Illinois Press, 2020.

**2013, 2015, 2017 BMRC Fellow**

48.) Kim Gallon, *Pleasure in the News: African American Readership and Sexuality in the Black Press*, University of Illinois Press, 2020.

**2015 BMRC Fellow**

Creative Projects by BMRC Fellows

49.) Marcus Shelby performing at 2010 BMRC Fellows Reception

An accomplished bassist, composer, bandleader and educator, Marcus Shelby was a **2009 BMRC Fellow**.

50.) *Soul of the Movement: Meditations on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.*, 2011

As a Fellow, Marcus Shelby conducted research at BMRC member institutions with collections that shed light on Martin Luther King Jr.'s role in the Chicago Freedom Movement and the successes and failures of civil rights activism in Chicago. Shelby's research led to this album, a compilation of original compositions and arrangements of civil rights-era spirituals performed by a 15-piece jazz orchestra.

51.) *Mama's Dream Exhibition*, 2015

Carlos Javier Ortiz, a visual artist and documentary filmmaker, was a **2015 BMRC Fellow**. As a Fellow, Ortiz explored the Great Migration through photography and engaged how the hopes and dreams of Blacks fleeing the South for greater economic, political and social freedoms matched up with the realities of life in Chicago and northern urban cities for generations to come.

52.) "Say it With Pictures" Advertisement, 2018

Dr. Amy Mooney, a **2013 BMRC Fellow** and Professor of Art and Design at Columbia College Chicago conducted research on African American-owned and operated portrait studios in Chicago from 1890 to 1930. Dr. Mooney's study explored how artistic expression through photography reflected and drove Black cultural consumerism and race consciousness. This program was a part of Art Design Chicago, a Terra Foundation initiative.

53.) *Untitled and Yet to be Determined*, 41.8949° N, 87.7654° W(Austin): A Photographic Exploration of Race, Class & Space in Austin

A **2019 BMRC Fellow**, photographer Sasha Phyers-Burgess' project blended archival research on housing segregation and economic inequality with photographic exploration of contemporary Black residents in Austin. Phyers-Burgess' photography contrasts systemic

disinvestment in Austin, one of Chicago's largest neighborhoods, with scenes of Black daily life and community.

## Fellows Reunion

### 54.) BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Program Cover, 2018

Led by former Executive Director, Andrea Jackson-Gavin, the BMRC held a reunion in conjunction with ASALH's 2018 Annual Meeting. The reunion featured presentations by former Fellows, guest speakers and scholars of Black Chicago. The gathering provided an opportunity for attendees to network, provide feedback on the fellowship experience and its impact on their scholarly endeavors.

### 55.) BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Program Schedule, 2018

Panels included former Fellows, scholars of Black Chicago and archivists from BMRC member institutions.

### 56.) BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Friday Panels, 2018

### 57.) BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows Reunion and National Gathering of African American Studies Attendees, 2018

Attendees at the Reunion included former Fellows, BMRC Board members, BMRC staff, ASALH members and guests.

## **V. Archie Motley Archival Internship**

In an effort to diversify and provide students with exposure to the archives profession, the BMRC founded the Archie Motley Archival Internship Program. Archibald Motley III (1935-2002) was a long-time archivist at the Chicago History Museum and leader in the profession. Motley served as first president of the Midwest Archives Conference and was an active member of the Society of American Archivists. Before his death, he was named Chicago History Museum's Archivist Emeritus, in honor of his tireless collection development efforts to preserve Chicago's urban, social and cultural history –especially collections related to labor, African Americans and community organizations. Those collections include: the papers of Claude Barnett, founder of the Associated Negro Press; Earl Dickerson, an attorney for Supreme Life Insurance Co.; and papers of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

The Archie Motley Archival Internship Program is designed to recruit students and early career professionals of color as a means to address the issue of under-representation of

critically needed ethnic archivists within the archives profession. Interns gain an understanding of archival preservation practices, as well as learn about Chicago-area history and culture as it pertains to African American and African Diasporic people. Since the program's initial cohort in 2016, the BMRC has awarded eleven internships.

58.) Archie Motley, c. 1960

A young Archie Motley cleaning an archival document with Absorene, a product that aids in the conservation of books and paper products. Motley was the son of Archibald Motley Jr., a painter and artist who rose to fame as part of the Harlem Renaissance and Chicago Black Renaissance. Motley's mother, Edith Granzo, was the daughter of German immigrants. Motley grew up on the South Side of Chicago and began working in libraries and archives in the 1950s before joining the staff of the Chicago History Museum around 1960.

59.) Archie Motley Archival Internship Processing Manual, Cover

Former BMRC Executive Director, Camille Brewer and Program Manager/Archivist, Anita Mechler led the BMRC's launch of the internship program in 2016. To help prepare interns, who may have little exposure to archival collections, the BMRC developed a handbook similar to the CCPP processing manual that provided foundational knowledge on archival processing.

60.) Archie Motley Archival Internship Processing Manual, p. 1

The primary work of Archie Motley Interns is to aid member institutions in making archival collections accessible to researchers. Interns have taken inventory of what materials in new or unprocessed collections; arranged (organized using archival standards) collections; digitized parts of collections and described collections using finding aids.

61.) Archie Motley Archival Internship Processing Manual, p. 2

Interns are provided a copy of the handbook and receive preliminary training and professional development from the BMRC. However, the bulk of their practical experience takes place at the internship site under the invaluable guidance of archivists and collections staff. Each year the BMRC puts out a call to member institutions seeking to host Archie Motley interns. Most internships take place during the summer.

62.) Kellee Warren and Alexandra McGee, **2016 Archie Motley Interns**  
Internship: Provident Hospital Records, Chicago State University

Warren, an early career archivist and McGee, a DePaul University undergraduate, worked on the Provident Hospital Records held at Chicago State University. The collection contains photographs, correspondence, birth registers, student records, financial and administrative

records, and newspaper clippings from Provident Hospital, which was founded in 1891 on Chicago's South Side. Provident Hospital was created to provide services to African Americans who were denied treatment at other Chicago area hospitals, and also provided post-graduate training for African American doctors and nurses. Chicago State University Special Collections also stewards a digital collection owned by the Provident Foundation, which preserves the legacy of Provident Hospital.

63.) Megan Naylor, **2017 Archie Motley Intern**, and Melanie Chambliss  
Internship: Carol Moseley Braun Collection, Women and Leadership Archives at Loyola University Chicago

Naylor, a University of Chicago undergraduate, and Chambliss, a **2015 BMRC Fellow** and volunteer at the Women and Leadership Archives worked together to process part of the Carol Moseley Braun Collection. Carol Moseley Braun became the first female senator from Illinois and the first African American woman in the Senate where she served from 1993 to 1998.

64.) BMRC staff, board members and interns with Senator Carol Moseley Braun at the Women and Leadership Archives, 2017

Pictured left to right: Nancy Freeman, former Director of the Women and Leadership Archives and BMRC Board member, Steven Adams, BMRC Board Chair, Megan Naylor, Senator Carol Moseley Braun, Melanie Chambliss, Anita Mechler, former BMRC Project Manager/Archivist and Andrea Jackson Gavin, former BMRC Executive Director

65.) Donna Edgar, **2018 Archie Motley Intern**  
Internship: Rachel Eubanks Collection, Center for Black Music Research Collection, Columbia College Chicago

A graduate of Dominican University's Master of Library and Information Science program, Edgar processed original scores composed by African American female composer Rachel Eubanks (1922-2009), who was also a music educator and founder of the Eubanks Conservatory of Music in Los Angeles. In addition to processing the Eubanks scores, Edgar researched and provided recommendations for digital collection and preservation tools for the center.

66.) Christopher Johnson, **2018 Archie Motley Intern**  
Internship: Chicago Reporter (Periodical) Records, Chicago History Museum.

Johnson, a University of Chicago undergrad, prepared the Chicago Reporter (Periodical) Records (1972-1989) for research at the Chicago History Museum. The collection documents a monthly publication and organization founded in 1972 with a focus on race and poverty issues in Chicago and impact to African American and Latinx communities.



## **VI. Member Institutions**

### 67.) 2020-2021 BMRC Member Institutions

- Chicago History Museum
- Chicago Public Library
- Chicago State University
- Columbia College Chicago
- Cook County Historic Archives and Records Office
- DePaul University
- Dominican University
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Newberry Library
- North Park University
- Northwestern University
- Oak Park Public Library
- Rebuild Foundation
- Roosevelt University
- Shorefront Legacy Center
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois at Chicago

An accompanying slideshow will list some of the significant Black history collections/collection strengths (with digital images) for each member institution.

## **VII. Collaboration and Community Engagement**

The BMRC was founded on collaboration and partnerships between the academy and community institutions and researchers and archivists. Through the Survey Initiative and the Color Curtain Processing Project, the BMRC established connections with communitybased archives and a wider range of individuals committed to the preservation of Black historical collections. Our Fellows program is also open to academic researchers as well as public scholars, artists and professionals often seeking to amplify community histories.

A core requirement of Full and Associate level membership in the BMRC is that an institution must have archives that are freely accessible to the public. The BMRC's Annual Meetings and Fellow presentations are also open to the community. The BMRC receives and responds to research inquiries from high school students in search of topics and sources on Black history for history fair projects, undergraduate students seeking primary sources for a college assignment and advanced researchers working on publications.

Providing legacy management resources for holders of Black historical collections is a component of the BMRC's 2018-2021 Strategic Plan and a significant focus of a multiyear

grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In addition to consortial activities, the BMRC supports the programs and initiatives of our individual member institutions to promote broad community engagement with Black historical collections. The consortium also collaborates with local and national partners who share aspects of the BMRC's mission.

#### 68.) Documenting Movements: Archivists as Social Justice with the Chicago Collections Consortium, 2018

The BMRC partners with the Chicago Collections Consortium annually on a public program that engages aspects of archival and Chicago history, often with a focus on race, social justice and the importance of Chicago-centric collections. The Chicago Collections Consortium is a membership organization composed of not-for-profit institutions with collections that chronicle the rich history of Chicago.

#### 69.) Preserving Chicago's African American Papers: A Cultural and Moral Imperative, 2019

The HistoryMakers, the Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, UChicago Engages and the BMRC partnered on a half-day symposium to help provide crucial services for potential donors and holders of Black historical collections in Chicago. The day's programming consisted of keynotes by HistoryMakers founder, Julieanna Richardson on the impetus for the symposium and Dr. Miriam Petty, an Associate Professor at Northwestern University who spoke to the importance of archived legacies for scholarly research. Other sessions included a panel of legacy holders who donated their Black historical collections to repositories and a panel of BMRC representatives who discussed the various ways in which donated Black collections have been activated. The symposium ended with an opportunity for community members to meet and ask questions of archivists, librarians and curators from BMRC member institutions.

#### 70.) Community Curation in Chicago, 2019

The Robert F. Smith Fund's Community Curation Program, a division of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture seeks to preserve community and family histories through digital preservation, curation and educational public programming. In 2018 and 2019, four BMRC member institutions worked with Community Curation team to plan Community Curation in Chicago. The BMRC member institutions were represented by BMRC Board members: Raquel Flores-Clemons (Chicago State University), Tracy Drake with assistance from Beth Loch (Harsh Collection, Chicago Public Library) Skyla Hearn (then at the DuSable Museum) and Dino Robinson (Shorefront Legacy Center).

#### 71.) Community Curation in Chicago Film Festival, 2019

In addition to opportunities to have their legacy materials digitized at BMRC member institutions and workshops on preserving family and community history, Community Curation in Chicago included screenings and film discussions where the public could engage Chicago's Black History. In a film screening hosted at Chicago State University's Gwendolyn Brooks Library, Dr. Thabiti Lewis, **2019 BMRC Fellow**, unveiled his documentary film on the Black Arts Movement in Chicago which featured the institutions, artists, writers and publishers who sustained the movement.

#### 72.) Chicago 1919 graphic novel created by Anya Davidson, 2019

"Chicago 1919: Confronting the Race Riots," was a year-long series of public conversations initiated by the Newberry Library to collectively remember and engage the legacy of the riots which were sparked when an African American teenager, Eugene Williams, drowned after being hit with a rock by a white assailant who claimed Williams crossed an invisible line of segregation in Lake Michigan near the 29<sup>th</sup> Street Beach. Thirteen organizations, including the BMRC joined the Newberry Library as Chicago 1919 Project Partners. Over 2,700 Chicagoans took part in the Chicago 1919 discussions. Artist and professor, Anya Davidson created comics depicting each public event in the series and compiled them into this graphic novel. The Newberry received the 2020 Outstanding Public History Project Award from the National Council on Public History for the "Chicago 1919" project.

#### 73.) BMRC 2020 Annual Meeting Flyer

The BMRC holds an annual meeting open to the public to review the past year's activities, discuss upcoming initiatives and provide an opportunity for all in our broad network to engage one another around Chicago's Black history and culture. In 2020, the BMRC's annual meeting took place virtually with a timely discussion on the impact of Covid-19 on African American archival repositories, collections and communities in Chicagoland.

#### 74.) BMRC Legacy Management Resource Portal brochure, 2020

A multiyear grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funds the BMRC's latest initiative, "Documenting Black Chicago Through Technology, Sustainability and Outreach." A major component of the initiative includes updating the BMRC's searchable database into a modern portal for Black studies research. The other major component of the grant project entails building a Legacy Management Resource Portal to provide education for donors seeking archival homes for their collections as well as resources for individuals and organizations who wish to properly care for their own collections. The resource portal, created by the BMRC's Community Engagement Archivist Tanya Calvin, is available as an online resource on the BMRC's website.

## Conclusion Panel

Fifteen years after its founding, the BMRC continues to be guided by our mission to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences. Guided by our mission, we center Black historical collections at the focal point of our work and aspire to engage Black historical collections at all stages in their life cycle. We believe in providing resources that enable the creation and proper care of collections that document Black history and culture in Chicago and beyond. We believe in collaboration with our member institutions, partners and Fellows to activate and aid in the use of Black historical collections. And we believe in the power of Black historical collections to serve as tools for diversifying future generations of archivists and collection professionals.

Thank you for viewing this exhibition. To learn more about the BMRC and connect with us, please visit our website, <https://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu>.

### 2020-2021 BMRC Board Members and Staff

Steven M. Adams, *Chair*, Life Science Librarian & Psychology Liaison, Northwestern University

Raquel Flores-Clemons, *Vice Chair*, University Archivist, Chicago State University Archives, Records Management, and Special Collections

Elisabeth Long, *Treasurer*, Associate University Librarian for Information Technology and Digital Scholarship, University of Chicago

Jamie Nelson, *Secretary*, Head of Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University

Lynn Hudson Associate Professor, Department of History, University of Illinois at Chicago

Elizabeth Loch, Archival Specialist, Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection, Chicago Public Library

Estevan Montaña, Director of Libraries, Roosevelt University

Liesl Olson, Director of Chicago Studies, Newberry Library

Morris (Dino) Robinson, Jr., Founder, Shorefront Legacy Center

Cecilia L. Salvatore, Professor, Dominican University and Coordinator, Archives and Cultural Heritage Certificate Program

Adam Strohm, Director, University Archives and Special Collections, Paul V. Galvin Library, Illinois Institute of Technology

Leigh Tarullo, Manager and Curator of Special Collections, Oak Park Public Library

Julie Wroblewski, Head of Collections, Chicago History Museum

Leroy E. Kennedy, Trustee Emeritus

Kathleen E. Bethel, Trustee Emeritus

Jacqueline Stewart, BMRC Faculty Advisor, Professor, Department of Cinema and Media Studies and the College; Director of Arts + Public Life, University of Chicago

Marcia Walker-McWilliams, BMRC Executive Director  
Allison Sutton, BMRC Program Manager/Archivist  
Laurie Lee Moses, BMRC Portal Archivist, *Mellon Grant*  
T Calvin, BMRC Community Engagement Archivist, *Mellon Grant*

**Additions to 2022 reinstallation of exhibition:**

75.) E. James West

*A House for the Struggle: The Black Press and the Built Environment in Chicago*

University of Illinois Press, 2022

2013 BMRC Fellow

76.) Melissa Ford

*A Brick and a Bible: Black Women's Radical Activism in the Midwest during the Great Depression*

Southern Illinois University Press, 2022

2013 BMRC Fellow

77.) E. James West

*Our Kind of Historian: The Work and Activism of Lerone Bennett Jr.*

University of Massachusetts Press, 2022

2013 BMRC Fellow