

Mapping the Stacks: Cataloguing Chicago's Hidden African American Archives

A University of Chicago Project

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by

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I. Project Background

The post-Depression-pre-Civil Rights era is a compelling period to research in African American cultural history because of the paradox it presents. On the one hand, the era seems to fulfill W.E.B. DuBois' famous prediction that the "problem" of the 20th century would involve the divisive force of the "color line"; after all, these were the years when the repressive structures of Jim Crow segregation were perfected not just in the South but across the nation as well. On the other hand, DuBois' prophecy comes under revealing pressures in light of the record of artistic and cultural production during this "swing" era. How should we understand the rich aesthetic life that, paradoxically, racial segregation gave rise to during the mid-twentieth century?

For instance, why is it that black writing across the genres—the novel, poetry, drama, and essay—rated high on best-seller lists and earned widespread critical acclaim as "American" art during the 1940s and 1950s? Because of the popular and critical appeal of "social problem" films during the post-WWII years, African American-cast and directed "race movies" drew larger audiences to the screen than ever before. In a time when American national identity was forged around the consensus that the United States was rightfully dominant on the world scene, why were stories dramatizing the traumas of racial intolerance box office draws? More well-known is the fact that jazz music radicalized the nation's sense of style and taste; however—and more profoundly—Cold War anti-communism prompted critics and the general public to regard jazz improvisation as the best evidence of democratic freedom in action. What did it mean that African American cultural practices were deemed central to the nation's self-understanding in the mid-20th century? Generally speaking, then, how did these turns in American cultural history occur when racism's ill effects permeated national society so thoroughly? And why do these developments seem to be influenced by geography: that is, what distinguished Chicago as a magnet site for this great cultural shift? Why did Harlem's "renaissance" of the 1920s move to Chicago after World War II?

These and many other questions lie at the intersection of several fields of study—cultural, political, intellectual, and social history; visual and media studies; American music and intellectual history; aesthetic theory. Both here in the city of Chicago and across the nation, scholars of African American and American studies are beginning to pay concerted attention to this era's developments, including ourselves. Professor Jacqueline Goldsby's *Birth of the Cool: African American Literary Culture of the 1940s and 1950s* explores the "literary cosmopolitanism" that characterizes the work of such Midwestern writers as Gwendolyn Brooks, Richard Wright, Margaret Walker, and Robert Hayden. Professor Jacqueline Stewart's *The Films of Spencer Williams and the Frontiers of Black*

Cinema explores the “vernacular modernism” of Spencer Williams’ films, examining how his efforts to craft a new cinematic language in the 1940s speak to African American audiences living between the realms of segregation and integration, particularly in their consumption of mass culture. The emerging scholarship about this era together with our research thus far confirms that Chicago is awash in primary source material to support countless such studies.¹ However, two obstacles frustrate researchers’ efforts. First, there is no centralized archival guide that identifies where these and other related questions can be researched. Second, the archives where African American-related sources are held oftentimes do not have finding aids for their collections, or in many important instances the collections themselves aren’t catalogued at all.

For instance, the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American Literature and History (a branch of the Chicago Public Library) is, perhaps, the single most significant repository of materials that sheds light on African American history and culture during the period.² In its archives are the papers of Horace Cayton, the famed sociologist who co-authored *Black Metropolis* with St. Clair Drake in 1945. During the late 1950s, Cayton began to research a biography of Richard Wright but abandoned the project. Included amongst Cayton’s papers are 30 audiotape interviews with Wright’s closest friends in Chicago. Unfortunately, the Harsh Collection’s archivists cannot catalog the material because the reel-to-reel tapes are brittle. Moreover, since the costs of preservation are high, the tapes remain unprocessed. The Harsh Collection also holds the records of the George Cleveland Hall Branch Library (the original home of the Harsh collection), which sponsored a long-running public series, the “Book Review and Lecture Forum.” During its heyday (1933-53), a who’s who of African American literature presented its works to Chicago’s South Side reading public. Luminaries such as Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks, Zora Neale Hurston, and Richard Wright all appeared at the library’s forums. To date, though, no scholar has written on this series and the potential impact it had on Chicago’s literary scene. Like many other vital collections in this repository, only the phenomenal recall of the senior curators leads scholars to the Hall Branch Library’s administrative records where evidence of the Forum’s meetings are tracked. As a result, this vital chapter in mid-twentieth century American literary-cultural history remains obscured.

Similarly, the DuSable Museum of African American History³ holds a vast collection of printed matter, visual art, films, clothing and costumes, sound recordings, and other ephemeral artifacts which are not adequately catalogued. In its Moving Image Collection, there are easily 700 items, of which are two rare sets of films: home movie footage of the great gospel singer Mahalia Jackson in Chicago, New Orleans, and Hawaii; and travelogues shot by the Museum’s founder, Margaret T. Burroughs, documenting her trips to Africa and Russia during the 1960s, at the height of decolonization movements abroad. Because these films have been kept in canisters that are more than 30 years old, they must be cleaned before they can be screened. Without prompt attention to preserve these artifacts, we will certainly lose an astonishing record of black women’s history. Indeed, the fragile state of these films means that moving images may very well constitute the most hidden collections of all.

As these examples make clear, there are rare, cultural treasures here in Chicago that, when properly catalogued and made accessible to scholars and the general public, promise to transform what we know about mid-twentieth century African American—and, indeed, American—cultural history for generations to come.

II. Mapping the Stacks: A Pilot Project

Realizing that Chicago's African Americanist archives lack both the staff and funding necessary to keep their collections fully accessible to the public, we initiated Mapping the Stacks (MTS) guided by this central goal: to survey the holdings of Chicago-area libraries and archives and to identify primary source materials (books, films, photographs, newspapers, magazines, manuscript archives, recorded oral histories, and other ephemera) that were in need of processing and cataloguing. MTS would then perform that work, combining our own field expertise and labor power together with that of graduate students from the University of Chicago. Awarded seed grants by the University of Chicago's Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture (\$5,000) and the Division of the Humanities (\$19,000), we launched a pilot program that has been fully operational since July 2005.

Pilot Study Method

In Spring and Fall 2004, we established contact with the curators at the Vivian G. Harsh Collection to propose a collaboration using these seed monies, wherein we offered paid student labor to assist in cataloguing of its unprocessed collections. We next embarked on a course of self-study in archival management techniques; then, the student workers were assigned collections to process under the direct supervision of the senior curator. The Harsh staff selected collections for their pedagogical value as much as for their historic significance. Our shared goals were to identify collections (1) that would teach the students cataloguing techniques; and (2) that could be feasibly completed while students managed their coursework and other school obligations. In Summer 2005, we established a similar relationship and agreement with the DuSable Museum of African American History.⁴

We hired five Ph.D. students (in History, English, and Cinema & Media Studies) to work at these two sites. We selected these students because all of them had substantive experience working with archival primary source materials. Indeed, we were especially fortunate that one student had earned his M.A. in film preservation studies at UCLA. As important—and in direct response to the sites' archivists and librarians' request—we chose students who had course training in African American history and culture, so that they could bring field-subject expertise to bear on the collections they were assigned to process and catalog.⁵

Once our process of self-study was complete--two weeks reading library science publications on archival management techniques—the students began work at their assigned sites in August 2005. As of this writing (nine months' time), the students have processed four collections, complete with inventories and/or draft finding aids.⁶ This work has been supervised and reviewed by the site curators and librarians. We are

pleased to report their enthusiastic approval of the students' work (we can furnish letters of support from these sites if the Mellon Foundation would like such testimony). Throughout this time, we have also consulted with the archival staff of the University Library's Special Collections Research Center (SCRC), which organized tutorial workshops to review principles of collection management and composing effective finding aids.⁷ Finally, to facilitate our inventory of the DuSable Museum's Moving Image Collection, we brokered an agreement with the University's Film Studies Center, which graciously allowed us to use its equipment to conduct preliminary inspections of the movies located there.

Pilot Study Results

By the end of this academic year, our pilot efforts will have produced outstanding results. Four unprocessed collections will be ready for public use. The finding aids that accompany these collections will be available as print guides at each site and posted on the Harsh Collection and DuSable Museum's web sites. As impressively, the course of self-training followed by direct field practice has sharpened the students' archival cataloguing skills to the point where they operate quite independently at their work sites. This means our presence is not creating prolonged or undue burden on the sites' staff.

The pilot phase has also led us to refine our project's goals and ambitions. A union catalog that would comprehensively synthesize and index the holdings of these and other African American archives across the city would be ideal and is much needed. In fact, producing such a reference compendium was one of our initial goals. However, we now realize that a union catalog's necessary first step—identifying and cataloguing germane material—is enormously time consuming in itself. Completing that work and digesting it into a "mini" union catalog (via print compilations of the finding aids and web sites linking the aids to one another) will be a significant contribution in its own right.

Furthermore, where we once wanted to canvass the entire city with this project, we now realize that our efforts are best directed towards a targeted, limited number of institutions. Two issues prompt this decision. First, between the demands we face in our university posts and the students' need to stay current with their degree requirements, we must limit the project's scope to manageable dimensions. Second, during the course of this year's pilot work, our colleagues at the University Library informed us that MTS' focus on processing inaccessible collections linked our project to other efforts across the library community to make "hidden collections" available to scholars and other researchers to use. By admitting our time constraints and realizing the professional context in which we're pursuing our work, we're confident that MTS can make substantive contributions to Library Science's endeavor to expand archival collections' accessibility precisely because we'll work in a limited number of sites.

Finally, there are outcomes we could not have expected but are delighted and proud to see occur. The students are deeply committed to the sites where they work. They routinely attend public events and exhibitions at both sites to show support for their institutions' work. At least two students have identified collections they plan to use in their dissertation research. As a group, the students' sense of professionalism has

widened, as they now know first-hand the pivotal roles librarians, archivists, and curators play in facilitating scholarly research. MTS' work has made a palpable difference at the sites, too. For instance, we invited the non-curatorial staff at both the Harsh and DuSable Museum (i.e., librarians who handle archival materials but have no formal training in the field) to attend the archive workshops sponsored by the SCRC; they were hungry to have a chance to obtain specialized training from skilled archivists. In its reports to its Board of Trustees, the DuSable Museum now cites MTS' cataloguing work as evidence of the archival collections that will be housed in the Museum's library annex, which is slated for occupation in 2008. Moreover, processing its manuscript and moving image archives will aid the DuSable's bid for accreditation by the American Association of Museums.⁸ In short, working together as colleagues and collaborators toward MTS' central goal, the students and the site staffs have forged ties that are both intellectually and professionally rewarding to everyone involved.

III. Project Expansion Plans: Methods & Management

Given the successes of our pilot program, we want to expand the sites where Mapping the Stacks is doing its cataloguing work. We envision this expansion occurring in two phases.

First, we want to conduct a survey to determine which historically significant sites in Chicago hold archival materials that are relevant to our charge. We will then assess the processing and cataloguing needs of those holdings. The second phase would involve three activities: to process the selected sites' relevant collections; to produce and publish (in print and via website links) finding aids for those collections; and to disseminate accounts of our work to the scholarly and lay public. We estimate that the first phase would require 6-8 months' work (June 2006-January 2007). The second phase would be a multi-year project, three years' length in time.

The question of preservation work deserves particular notice. We fully anticipate that we'll encounter collections that are in dire need of preservation in both phases of our project. However, it is not our aim to tackle such projects in a full-scale way. Rather, we envision implementing three methods of intervention. First, during the survey stage (Phase I), we would include a preservation assessment as part of our review of a given collection. Second, we would use our seed funding (from the University of Chicago; see section V below) to purchase a select set of archival supplies that will allow us to handle small-scale emergency cases on a limited level (e.g., housing loose correspondence files in acid-free folders and Hollinger boxes, or splicing leader film onto reels in order to make films viewable). Third, we would use the survey reports we produce to advise archival sites on preservation grants they might apply for to address their needs following structural, systematic, and long-term approaches.

Site Expansion—Phase I

In Phase I (June 2006-January 2007), we aim to investigate and then canvass between three to five Chicago-based institutions and organizations whose holdings in African American history and culture need processing. In preparation for this work, we would engage in three kinds of training. First, we would organize study groups wherein student staff would read a select number of books and/or articles on Chicago's African American history. Second, we would review prior efforts to produce surveys like the one we will conduct, such as the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's "Archival Collecting Management System," and the Medici Archives Project. Third, in collaboration with the University's Library's archivist staff (and using "The Archivist's Toolkit" developed by NYU and UC San Diego as a guide), we would design a workshop for the student staff to define a protocol to use in our own survey efforts.

During the first months of Phase I (May-June 2006), we will contact institutions and organizations to propose conducting our survey. Our selection criteria for these sites will be as follows.

First, we will prioritize sites that scholars recognize as centrally significant to developments in African American cultural history in Chicago. Second, we will target sites that, in addition to their compelling historical significance, pose particular kinds of archival challenges that will advance the work of libraries, archives, and other academic fields seeking to process their own hidden collections in more efficient ways.

For instance, since Pilgrim Baptist Church--the home of gospel music in America--was recently destroyed by fire, it is imperative to canvass the city's African American churches and assess which congregations have extant collections that are historically significant and in need of cataloguing. Print culture institutions would be likely candidates for MTS to survey as well. The *Chicago Defender* is, arguably, the most important African American newspaper of the 20th century. Likewise, Johnson Publications revolutionized mass media production and consumption in African America and across the black diaspora with publications like *Negro Digest*, *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines. For scholars to have access to these institutions' holdings would potentially transform the fields of U.S. urban history as well as print and mass culture studies, not least because both organizations are privately-held enterprises whose holdings have been accessible to the public in limited if not restricted ways. What systems of collections management and storage will we need to implement or invent for institutions and organizations that are *not* research-oriented or do not handle public traffic? How can we do the work of cataloguing in places that are not designed for such labor? Moreover, what kinds of archival organization systems would be necessary to meet the dual needs of researchers, on the one hand, and businesses that still need to use archival materials in their daily operations, on the other hand? Finally, what intellectual property agreements might need to be crafted should these private organizations wish to use their archival materials for revenue-generating purposes? In other words, how can MTS' work facilitate the public's access to previously private collections?

Two other kinds of collections and repositories illustrate the kind of work we hope our Phase I survey can accomplish. As our pilot work at the DuSable Museum revealed, rich troves of moving image artifacts are likely to exist in sites that are strong in 20th century collections. Where else might we find rare black films? How might we make such collections publicly accessible? Similarly, there is the case of less-heralded institutions such as the South Side Community Arts Center. Though well-known locally in Chicago, this site boasts an astonishing history that deserves wider knowledge and study. When the Center opened in 1941, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt presided over the ceremonies which were nationally broadcast via CBS radio. The only surviving arts center founded by the WPA Federal Arts Program, the center counts among its alumni some of the most gifted painters, photographers, and sculptors in African American art history: Eldzier Cortor, Charles White, Gordon Parks, Archibald Motley, and Elizabeth Catlett. The Center also served as the headquarters for the legendary “South Side Writers Group,” whose members included Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Margaret Walker, Willard Motley, and Frank Marshall Davis. And rounding out this scene’s electric offerings was none other than Nat King Cole, whose trio performed at the Center on weekend nights. At a locale such as this, how might we define “historically significant” knowledge-objects: are we looking for actual art objects? If so, do we only want those produced by recognized canonical artists or should we aim instead to survey the works of their less-famous colleagues, since one of the hallmarks of Chicago-based aesthetic production is the emphasis on collective, egalitarian access to art-making projects? And as with sites such as the *Defender* and Johnson Publications, what systems of collections management and storage will we need to implement or invent for an institution like the Art Center, which is *not* research-oriented? How can we foster a commitment to archival management that will endure at the institution beyond the work MTS might do?

In short, we will identify sites to survey whose historical distinctiveness will teach us how to refine existing models--and, where required, develop new methods--that further the aim of processing hidden collections. MTS’ contribution will be unique because of the varied institutional settings where we will do our work: traditional research libraries and archives; museum libraries and archives; print versus visual archives; community businesses and institutions; schools and churches; well-capitalized institutions and financially strapped organizations. By deliberately selecting a diverse set of repositories and collections, our survey will advance efforts to meet the challenges involved in cataloguing hidden collections and, ideally, produce effective solutions.

Staff Expansion & Training—Phase I

Currently, we have a core student staff of five students. In order to conduct the Phase I survey, we need to expand the staff to eight. This way, we can assign students in teams of two to the sites, pairing an already trained, experienced core staff member with a new recruit.

All of the student staff will participate in the Chicago cultural history reading seminar that we will organize and direct, to gain background information about the broader milieu and specific institutional histories of the sites we plan to survey. This preparatory work will be followed by a workshop we will organize with the archivist staff of the SCRC, to

teach the students techniques of archival survey work. The reports of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's model for prioritizing backlogged collections (its "Archival Management System"), the Medici Project, and the Archivist's Toolkit will serve as touchstones for the workshop's curriculum, as will instruction in how to use reference tools of relevant sorts (e.g., dictionary biographies). We will use the workshop to plan a protocol for identifying and surveying the collections at the expansion sites.

IV. Proposed Activities & Timeline for Planning Grant Work

Spring 2006 (May-June)

- hire three additional student staff (to a total of 8)
- negotiate with selected expansion sites to begin surveying work in Summer 2006
- in consultation and collaboration with SCRC archivists, prepare workshop to train students in archival survey techniques; develop protocol for survey methods at selected expansion sites
- in consultation and collaboration with MTS faculty directors and the digital staff of the University Library, Humanities Division digital staff will develop and launch a promotional web site for MTS. The website will feature finding aids created during the pilot phase, the inventories produced by the site surveys, and the funding proposals submitted to support MTS. All postings will be in HTML.⁹

Summer 2006 (July-September)

- conduct seminar with core student staff to read cultural histories for background on selected sites
- hold workshop at SCRC on archival survey techniques; review/refine protocol for survey methods at selected expansion sites
- assign student workers to archives/organizations; students conduct collection surveys
- meet regularly with student staff & site liaisons to monitor project progress

Fall 2006 (September -December)

- student workers complete collections survey and draft written summary reports
- organize workshop to review/critique student survey reports led by SCRC archivist staff

Winter 2007 (January 2007)

- hold workshop to review/critique students' collection survey reports, led by SCRC archivist staff
- post inventories on MTS website

V. Funding Request

We are requesting funding from the Mellon Foundation to support Phase I's principal cost: labor. The start date of the grant would begin June 1, 2006 and end January 31, 2007.

We need funding to expand the student staff by three, to a total of 8. Funding student labor would cover the hourly wage rate we want to offer of \$12 and \$13 per hour. The pay figures represent two methods to encourage MTS' stability. First, we have set pay rates higher than the campus scale (\$10 per hour) in order to recruit strong student-workers. Second, with a graded pay scale, we can offer raises based on job performance. Thus, the core group of five who've been working on the project this pilot year would earn \$13 per hour during Phase I (gaining a \$1 per hour raise that rewards their excellent performance, longevity, and additional duties of mentoring new recruits). New recruits will join the Phase I project at \$12 per hour. By offering such incentives, we hope to retain the students we recruit for both phases of the project.

The second cost supported by Mellon funds would cover salaries paid to us for our efforts organizing and directing MTS' activities. Jacqueline Goldsby will serve as lead Principal Investigator. She will be responsible for the overall execution and completion of the Phase I activities. Her duties will include: recruiting, selecting, and hiring new student staff members; negotiating MTS duties at the expansion sites; supervising the work of all student staff; directing the Chicago cultural history reading seminar; leading weekly student staff meetings; reviewing all student progress reports and inventory drafts; and holding monthly conferences with site staff to monitor MTS performance and progress. Jacqueline Stewart will serve as co-Principal Investigator. She will direct select sectors of Phase I's work, reporting to Goldsby on the progress of her units. Specifically, Stewart will supervise MTS' work with moving image collections. This will involve meeting with student staff assigned to such collections; conferring with site staff to monitor MTS performance and progress in moving image collections; and reviewing student inventory reports of these collections. Both of us will share the responsibility of defining MTS' conceptual development. This work will involve planning the Chicago cultural history reading seminar; collaborating with the SCRC archivist staff to organize both the archival survey and inventory critique workshops; coordinating the development & maintenance of the MTS website; and preparing for Phase II work of MTS.

The figures for our compensation are based on 1/9 of our summer salaries (1/3 of 1/9 for Goldsby, and 1/4 of 1/9 for Stewart). In sum, the labor costs for Phase I total to \$48,935.32. For a line item budget, please see Appendix A (attached herewith).

Based on the activities we describe above, there will be other costs to be covered during Phase I of our work. We will deploy our seed money from the University of Chicago (\$19,000 per year for three years) to cover these costs, which entail the following:

Archival training by SCRC staff	in kind contribution
Reading seminar materials & reference library	\$1,000
Archive supplies	\$5,000
Website development	\$6,000-10,000
Sum total	\$16,000

VI. Anticipated Outcomes

We envision that the work of Mapping the Stacks will benefit several academic fields and constituencies at once: African American and American Studies; art history and visual culture studies; literary and cinema studies; urban, political, cultural, and intellectual histories; political science and sociology; Library Science; and Chicago’s African American archival community. At the end of Phase I, we hope that:

- the survey we compile will be used by participating archival institutions to plan for their cataloguing and preservation needs. Used in this way, the survey will lay the groundwork for the production of a union catalog of African American holdings across the city of Chicago;
- the protocols we devise to process the collections can model how to deploy faculty-student labor in cataloguing hidden collections;
- the protocols we devise to identify and organize historically significant holdings can model best practices for processing hidden collections in varied institutional settings;
- the training and work experience in archival practices will refine Ph.D. students’ skills at archival research, as well as expose them to professional career opportunities in library science; and
- the outreach to community libraries, archives, and organizations will foster strong, positive, collaborative relationships between those institutions and the University of Chicago’s faculty, students, and Library system.

VI. Conclusion

Our long-range goal is that this project will bring to light historically significant collections chronicling the African American experience in Chicago during the mid-twentieth century. By transforming the sites we have designated into more accessible archives for researchers and students in the city, across the nation--and, indeed, around the world--we hope to generate interest in and respect for mid-20th century black history as a central force in American life and culture. Crucially, too, testing solutions to the challenges that African Americanist collections present to librarians and curators will model productive practices that traditional—and non-traditional—repositories might replicate to process hidden collections for public use.

As a result, much like Yale's Beinecke Library and the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture are rightfully renowned as essential repositories to study the Harlem Renaissance, Chicago (the city and university) will be able to assume its rightful place as *the* site to do sustained, edge-cutting research in mid-20th century African American cultural, literary, political, and visual history. We respectfully request that the Mellon Foundation support us towards reaching this goal.

ENDNOTES

¹ Pivotal works on the "Chicago Renaissance" era include: Robert Bone, "Richard Wright and the Chicago Renaissance, *Callaloo* 9(Summer 1986): 446-468; Bill V. Mullen, *Popular Fronts: Chicago and African American Cultural Politics, 1935-1946* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1999); Maren Stange, *Bronzeville: Black Chicago in Pictures, 1941-1943* (NY: New Press, 2004); Anne Meis Knupfer, *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 2006); and Adam Green, *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press; forthcoming, Nov. 2006). Also see the Chicago Public Library's Web-based digital collection, "Chicago Renaissance, 1932-1950: A Flowering of Afro-American Culture," www.chipublib.org/digital/chiren/index/html.

² The Vivian G. Harsh Collection of Afro-American History and Literature is housed in the Carter G. Woodson Regional Branch of the Chicago Public Library. Originally founded in 1932 as the George Cleveland Hall Branch Library (at 38th and Michigan Avenues), the Harsh Collection is now the largest repository of African American history and literature collections in the Midwest. For more on the collection's history and holdings, see: www.chipublib.org/002branches/woodson/wnharsh/html.

³ Founded in 1961 by Margaret T. Burroughs, the DuSable Museum of African American History is the oldest history museum dedicated to "correct the apparent institutionalized omission of black history and culture in the educational establishment," according to its website. For more on the museum's origins, mission, and exhibition topics see: www.dusablemuseum.org/about.asp.

⁴ Our contacts have been with Robert Miller and Michael Flug, Chief Curator and Senior Curator (respectively) at the Harsh Collection. At the DuSable Museum, our liaisons are Antoinette Wright (CEO); Charles Bethea (chief curator); Bea Julian (head librarian); and Theresa Richardson (Registrar).

⁵ Our staff include: Allyson Hobbs (Ph.D. candidate, History), who is writing a cultural history of racial passing; Melissa Barton (Ph.D. student, English), who specializes in 1930s American and African American literary history; Mollie Godfrey (Ph.D. student, English), who specializes in comparative studies of African American and Euro-American modernisms; Christina Peterson (Ph.D. student, Cinema and Media Studies), who investigates race films and U.S. cinema history of the early silent era; and Doron Galili (Ph.D. student, Cinema and Media Studies), whose M.A. degree in Moving Image Archiving from UCLA provides us with trained personnel to assess film holdings.

⁶ At the Vivian G. Harsh Collection, student staff has completed processing the Ben Burns Collection (36 boxes/18 linear feet) and the Cyrus Colter Papers (16 boxes/10.5 linear feet). At the DuSable Museum, we have completed processing the Joseph & Charlemae Rollins Collection (8 boxes/4 linear feet) and organized what's now known as the Moving Image Collection (250 videos; 71 films). Our film specialists (Christina Peterson and Doron Galili) are now inspecting these holdings to determine their preservation needs.

⁷ Archivists Daniel Meyer, Eileen Ielmini, and Kathleen Feeney of the University Library's Special Collections Research Center conducted our first workshop in October 2005. That session covered collections processing methods, materials, and techniques. Meyer, Ielmini, and Feeney will lead a second session to be held in May 2006, to review and critique the students' draft finding aids.

⁸ Personal communication with Antoinette Wright, CEO of the DuSable Museum, April 25, 2006. On the Museum's annex construction and accreditation standing, see <http://www.dusablemuseum.org/news1.asp>.

⁹ In Phase II, we envision that the University Library will develop a web site to host and preserve these and other pertinent finding aids from participating collections holders. Documents posted on this web site would be encoded in EAD and with an interface to support cross-collection and cross-institutional searching.