

# Chaitra M. Powell

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## EDUCATION

### **The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ — *Masters of Arts in Library Science (MLS)***

JANUARY 2008 - MAY 2010

### **The University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ — *Bachelor of Arts in Sociology (BA)***

AUGUST 2003 - MAY 2007

## EXPERIENCE

### **ASU Library, Tempe, AZ — *Associate University Librarian for Special Collections***

OCTOBER 2025 - PRESENT

- Offering strategic oversight and supervision of 18 FTE in the Special Collections directorate
- Participate in fundraising and grant writing activities across ASU Library
- Increase the visibility and use of Special Collections via public programming and exhibitions
- Contribute to library's strategic planning and decision making as a member of the dean's senior leadership team

### **UNC Libraries, Chapel Hill, NC — *Sarah Graham Kenan Curator, Southern Historical Collection***

NOVEMBER 2021 - SEPTEMBER 2025

- Manage our collection development workflows - triaging over 100 collecting offers/leads each year, with an average of 30% acceptance rate. I also hired an archival consultant in Fall 2022, to help us refine our collection development policy, looking across our 5800 unique manuscript collections and distinguishing between our active and selective collecting areas
- Supervise 3 full time professional librarians, and 1 full time administrative assistant, plus up to 4 graduate assistants in the department, each semester
- Steward 35 endowed funds, reflecting over 2 million dollars of available funds for our collection. Work closely with our development office to draft stewardship reports and meet with donors and Friends of the Library, including the 1.5 million dollar gift from the Kenan Charitable Trust, to endow my position in 2023
- Served as principal investigator for a National Endowment for Humanities grant (\$150,000) about communities impacted by

## LEADERSHIP

Queens Memory Project Grant  
Advisory Board, member,  
2024-2025

UNC Libraries Appointments  
and Promotions Committee,  
chair, 2022-2024

Leadership and Career  
Development Program Fellow  
2022-2023 cohort, Association  
of Research Libraries

On these Grounds: Testing  
Partner, Project Lead (2021 -  
2022)

Digital Humanities  
Collaborative of North  
Carolina, Communications  
Manager (2020 - 2021)

UNC Faculty Assembly,  
Delegate (2019 - 2022)

Tar Heel Library Apprentice  
Program, Founder (2017 -  
2019)

## TRAINING

Course Design Institute, UNC  
Center for Faculty Excellence  
(2022)

Well-Being and Morale, DeEtta  
Jones and Associates (2021)

Archives Leadership Institute  
(ALI), Berea, KY (2018)

climate change and UC-Irvine CCAP TEACH sub-award (\$10,000) for a student curators pilot program

- Engage with UNC-Chapel Hill students and faculty as an adjunct professor in the African American and African Diaspora Department, shifts in the research room, and consultations
- Curate digital and physical exhibits, as well as programs to highlight collection materials about a myriad of topics like UNC's connection to the Watergate Scandal, the desegregation of North Carolina public schools, Omar ibn Said, and Hanes Lecture on Bibliography (co-hosted with our Rare Book Collection curator)

## **UNC Libraries, Chapel Hill, NC — *African American Collections and Outreach Archivist***

AUGUST 2014 - OCTOBER 2021

- Develop collecting and outreach initiatives with African American Families, Historically Black Colleges, Historically Black Towns and Settlements, as well as Black descendants of slavery
- From 2018 to 2021, served as the Project Director of our Mellon funded Community Driven Archives Grant (\$877,000), supervising 2 full time staff members, and 3 graduate students. Manage the relationship with 4 community partners and 10 local history keepers. Develop key deliverables for each community, including the digital toolkit, and the "archivist in a backpack" prototype
- Raised 1.5 million dollars for an NEH Challenge Grant to endow the African American Collections and Outreach position, and an additional \$50,000 from a foundation to purchase more supplies for our "archivist in a backpack" kits
- Curated exhibits about African American childhood, migration and mobility, and the Black artist materials in the collection, including Charles Alston, Eugene Grigsby, and Hale Woodruff

## **C. Marie Archival Consulting, Los Angeles, CA — *Archivist***

JUNE 2013 - SEPTEMBER 2014

- Identified and completed unique archival projects including processing collections, fundraising, training volunteers, cataloging art and photographs, and historical research.
- Clients included the California African American Genealogical Society, Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum, Alitash Kebede Gallery, Southern California Library for Social Science Research, and the California-Pacific Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church

## **The Historymakers, Chicago, IL — *Archival Fellow***

MAY 2012 - JULY 2013

- Participated in the second cohort of early career archivists in a 12 month fellowship. The first three months included archival and historical training as well as working on EAD finding aids for Historymakers oral history collections.

Developing and Administering African American Resources (course), California Rare Book School (2015)

Digitization for Cultural Heritage Institutions (certificate), Pasadena City College (2014)

Certified Archivist (by exam) Academy of Certified Archivists (2013)

### **AWARDS**

2017 Library Journal Mover and Shaker, Innovator

- Nine month placement at the Mayme A. Clayton Library and Museum involved processing collections, supervising volunteers, giving tours, coordinating public programs, and curating exhibitions.

## TEACHING

### **AAAD 395: Through the Archives: Gullah Geechee History, Traditions and Culture – Summer 2025 (UNC-Chapel Hill)**

Re-tooled AAAD 290 to give a bigger emphasis on the development of research skills. Students will still have the on-site component in St. Helena's Island, SC

### **AAAD 290: Memory Work at Penn Center — Summer 2023 (UNC-Chapel Hill)**

As an adjunct professor in UNC's Department of African American and African Diasporic (AAAD) Studies, and in partnership with the Willson Humanities Center at the University of Georgia, I taught a Maymester class. Drawing on the Penn School and Penn Center papers in the Southern Historical Collection, students followed various paths through published works, and an on-site component in St. Helena's Island, SC, to critically engage with primary source materials.

<https://blogs.lib.unc.edu/community-driven-archives/2023/08/22/penn-center-a-place-an-archive-a-class/>

**Learning Outcomes:** The archives were at the center of this course. I wanted students to build confidence in their ability to navigate and interpret these sources, learn about the history and culture of the South Carolina Sea Islands, and see how archives can be utilized to support the current residents of St. Helena's Island, SC.

### **Community-Driven Archives Workshop — Summer 2022 (Sunshine State Digital Network)**

I was invited to discuss our community-driven archives grant and methodology, followed by a workshop with librarians/archivists in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndyd6-yUzWg&t=926s>

**Learning Outcomes:** The Sunshine State Digital Network hosted a series of free workshops for informational professionals in Florida, through a grant. This session was designed to share strategies for connecting with communities and making libraries more accessible to the broader public.

## **Refusal and Repair: Black Women as Memory Workers Teach-In— Fall 2021 (Elon University)**

The third in a four-part Archives as Communal Practice Teach-In Series at Elon University, Fall 2021, co-hosted by Philosophy, Women and Gender Studies, and Belk Library, featuring Amanda Bennett (Duke), Devonya Havis (U. Buffalo), and Holly Smith (Spelman), and co-moderated by Lauren Guilmette and Libby Coyner.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d44MM7oipaA>

**Learning Outcomes:** A conversation designed to engage poetry/creative writing, philosophy and archival practice, for Elon students. Students were asked to think about archives as a study in the past, present, and future, “ways of thinking” and gives us an opportunity to consider who is seen and who is rendered invisible.

### **PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS**

#### **The Hungry River Collective: Engaging Black Feminism, Ethics of Care, and Community-Driven Principles in Commemoration of the Residents of Goldsboro State Hospital (book chapter) – *forthcoming volume on new approaches to archiving the American South***

Co-authors: Brianna McGruder and Hannah Jacobs

Editors: Stephanie Rountree, Lisa Hinrichsen, and Gina Caison

**Main Idea:** Hungry River is a group of women with diverse professions (artists, genealogists, social workers, archivists, and scholars) who chose to wrestle with the ethical challenges of stewarding an archive reflecting the lives of the Black patients in North Carolina’s segregated asylum. We engaged a myriad of historical, philosophical, creative, and community resources to understand the power and possibility of these materials. The article shares what we learned about archival appraisal and community engagement.

#### **Sweet Resolve: Mayme A. Clayton’s Life and Legacy (book chapter) – *forthcoming volume on Black Women Librarians***

Editor: Dr. Nicole Cooke, American Library Association

**Main Idea:** I use my proximity to Dr. Clayton’s archives to demonstrate that she built her own collection after having her vision dismissed by larger cultural heritage organizations. Her willingness to forge ahead in spite of tremendous challenges, set a path for the Black women librarians who came after her and made her more than just a quirky collector.

## **A Continuum of Archival Custody: Community-Driven Projects as a path toward Equity— November 2021**

Co-authors: Kimber Heinz, Kimber Thomas, and Alexandra Paz Cody  
Special Issue of *Across the Disciplines* (Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Language, Learning, and Academic Writing) Journal, Colorado State University Open Press

<https://wac.colostate.edu/docs/atd/volume18/Powell,Heinz,Heinz,Paz.pdf>

**Main Idea:** At their core, community-driven archives projects should consider the legacy of the host institution and a myriad of methods for supporting community stories

## **This [Black] Woman's Work: Exploring Archival Projects that Embrace the Identity of the Memory Worker — Fall 2018**

Co-authors: Holly Smith, Shanee Murrain, and Skyla Hearn, Special Issue of *KULA* (knowledge creation, dissemination, and preservation studies) Journal, University of Victoria Libraries

<https://kula.uvic.ca/index.php/kula/article/view/115>

**Main Idea:** Archivists with diverse voices and backgrounds contribute invaluable expertise to the profession

### **SELECTED PANEL PRESENTATIONS**

## **Representation and Reckoning with “On These Grounds”: A reflection from UNC Libraries – Spring 2023**

Co-panelists: Meaghan Alston, Flannery Fitch, and Jillian MacKinnon, “At this Place”: Universities Studying Slavery Conference, University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill, NC)

**Contribution:** Explaining why the Southern Historical Collection is committed to surfacing the names of the enslaved individuals in our manuscript collections, and how we plan to strategically engage with the “On These Grounds” methodologies

## **Finding Baldwin: An Exploration of Belonging and Identity in the Archives – Spring 2022**

Co-panelists: Maria Estorino, Dawne Lucas, Aaron Smithers, Elizabeth Ott, and Nadia Clifton, A Reckford Lecture Event in partnership with UNC University Libraries (Chapel Hill, NC)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8KmxabMjOI&t=6519s>

**Contribution:** Introduced the panelists, offered closing remarks and facilitated the Q&A for this program.

## **Imagining Archives without Borders – Spring 2020**

Co-panelists: Miranda Mims and Steven Fullwood, International Gullah Geechee and African Diaspora Conference, Coastal Carolina University, (Conway, SC)

**Contribution:** Folding community driven archives frameworks into collection development work is form of sustainability

## **Democratizing Digitization: Increasing Capacity with Equipment Sharing Programs — Fall 2019**

Co-panelists: Angela Stanley and Marisa Wood, Digital Library Federation Annual Meeting (Tampa, FL)

**Contribution:** Focused on how the strength of the “archivist in a backpack” prototype lies in its simplicity and modular nature, allowing diverse voices to add to the archival record

## **Dismantling a Jim Crow Archive: The What, Why, and How — Spring 2019**

Co-panelists: Lydia Neuroth and Laura Hart, Lemon Symposium, College of William and Mary (Williamsburg, VA)

**Contribution:** Discussed numerous examples of African American scholars, collectors, and communities who are craving access to African American archival materials (demand) as a reason for predominantly white repositories to unlock collections via more equitable description.

### **SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

## **Hungry River Collective: Creating Community and Family Around Sensitive Archives – Spring 2022**

National Council for Public History Annual Meeting (virtual)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MCcVTPyImfY&list=PLOXlP9aHA4ExpfTShbjl20ZLFiDHg0v-p&index=25>

**Story:** I am a part of collective of artists, archivists, scholars, and mental health practitioners that come together monthly to discuss interdisciplinary and empathetic approaches to stewarding a collection of images from Cherry Hospital, North Carolina’s original asylum for African Americans, founded in 1880 in Goldsboro, NC. We used the session to discuss our journey together.

## **Off the Shelf: A Book Series from UNC Press and UNC Libraries Spring 2021 & Spring 2022**

2021 Conversation with Cathleen Cahill (Recasting the Vote: How Women of Color Transformed the Suffragette Movement, UNC Press, 2020) and Alison Parker (Unceasing Militant: The Life of Mary Church Terrell, UNC Press, 2020) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTSOy7uK2oQ>

2022 Conversation with Robin Brooks (Class Interruptions: Inequality and

Division in African Diasporic Women's Fiction, UNC Press, 2020)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VGus-bw5Gc>

**Story:** Based on my general interest in these topics, I was selected to read these books, meet with the authors, and facilitate discussions about their books.

### **Exploring the Nuance of Community-Driven Archives — *Spring 2021***

Archival Seedlings Capstone Program University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SwuLOf27qDQ>

**Story:** As our Mellon grant drew to a close in 2021, we invited peers from Arizona State University (Nancy Godoy) and the University of California, Irvine (Jimmy Zavala) to discuss their experiences with community driven archives. I developed the prompts and facilitated the Q&A portion.

### **Cultural Heritage Tourism Starts with a Story: A Collaborative Effort between UNC Libraries and the Town of Navassa - *Spring 2020***

Connect, Engage, Transform: Rural Community Partnerships Conference, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC)

**Story:** I presented alongside the mayor of Navassa about our archivist in a backpack program and collaboration with Historically Black Towns and Settlements, through our Mellon grant. The mayor made connections to his goals about surfacing the Gullah-Geechee culture in NC and bringing more tourism to his community.

### **Building a Black Grid: Discussing Strategies for Sharing Community Based African American Historical and Cultural Assets — *Fall 2018***

Intentionally Digital, Intentionally Black: African American History, Culture, and Digital Humanities Conference, University of Maryland College of Arts and Humanities (College Park, MD)

**Story:** Using examples from Historically Black Towns and Settlements Alliance as well as recent Black Communities Conference charrette, I discussed the value of reciprocity and sweat equity in developing relationships with community partners

### **Slow Archive in Urgent Times: On Building Trust, Negotiating Relationships, and Examining Power and Privilege with the Southern Historical Collection's Community Driven Archives Team — *Spring 2018***

Annual Meeting of the Society of North Carolina Archivists, Duke University (Durham, NC)

**Story:** 18 months into our grant, I discussed how our assumptions about graduate students, advocacy work, university resources, and staff capacity were being disrupted and we were going to have to recalibrate.

## SELECTED COMMITTEE SERVICE

### **ARL IDEAL Conference Planning Committee 2023 - 2024**

About 30 Librarians from across the United States and Canada who will evaluate conference proposals for the inclusion in the 2024 conference

**Contribution:** Evaluating conference proposals

### **Wilson Special Collections Library Reckoning Coordinating Committee 2022 - 2025**

Cross functional group of UNC Libraries staff supporting and advancing IDEA (inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility) work in special collections.

**Contribution:** Serving as co-chair, setting the agendas and facilitating the work of the committee

### **Advisory Board for Community-Centered Archives Practice: Transforming Education, Archives, and Community History (C-CAP TEACH) 2022 - 2025**

Set of archival practitioners from around the country that are offering feedback and guidance for this project, based at the University of California, Irvine.

**Contribution:** Perspectives on doing this work in a university, and our experiences on the community-driven archives grant

### **Antebellum Finding Aids Task Team — 2021 - 2022**

Cross functional group of UNC Libraries staff making recommendations on remediation strategies for antebellum finding aids

**Contribution:** Perspectives on how proposed changes may impact donor engagement and access to the stories of enslaved individuals in the collections

### **Penn Center Mellon Grant Advisory Board — 2021 - 2025**

In collaboration with Willson Center for Humanities and Arts at the University of Georgia, the board will share programmatic elements with broader audiences

**Contribution:** Perspectives on access to Penn Center archival materials and community based archival engagement in St. Helena's Island, SC