

Archival Educators Roundtable

Newsletter

Summer/Winter 2021–2022

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Looking Ahead

It's hard to believe we are about to have our next AER Winter Workshop. The virtual setting has allowed us to get to know colleagues from other parts of the country, and to continue the valuable discussions about the field of archival education.

We look forward to many more conversations and workshops with our supportive and welcoming group.

Many thanks to Janet Bunde, our first Guest Editor, for all of her excitement and dedication during her role as Guest Editor. She exemplifies the spirit of the AER by opening up conversations, bringing to light issues and innovative ideas, and tackling relevant and practical topics in the field. Many thanks to Kathleen Leary, as well, who co-edited this issue. We are thrilled whenever we have the chance to connect with such talented professionals.

I hope everyone's winter is going along as smoothly as possible, and look forward to seeing you at the 2022 AER Winter Workshop.



Co-Editor's Welcome Remarks

For the Summer/Winter 2021–2022 issue of the AER Newsletter, we have invited graduate students and new professionals to consider the future of teaching with primary sources. Each of our authors brings their experiences— as students, as researchers, as artists, as activists— to their work and their ideas about what teaching with primary sources is and can be. The essays in this newsletter push the boundaries of our professions in productive and provocative ways.

Claudia Campanella shares her personal journey into working in archives and poses important questions about access to primary sources. Jubilee Marshall, in her essay about preparing a new online resource for educators about LGBTQ+ history, discusses how documents relating to the history of marginalized groups can be integrated throughout curricula. Juliana DeVaan reminds us how archives can resonate in the present day and that instruction can happen on the picket line as easily as in the classroom. Julie Lemberger provides an exciting way to reimagine and recontextualize primary sources to transform them into a tool for teaching.

I am grateful to each of this issue's contributors for their creativity and inspiration. I am also grateful to Kathleen Leary, who graciously agreed to co-edit this issue of the newsletter with me, and who will lead the next phase of this publication's evolution. Her keen attention to detail and enthusiasm for communicating about our work make her a perfect choice for this role. I look forward to continuing the conversation.



AER Newsletter Co-Editor 2020-2022

Co-Editor's Letter

The theme of the Summer/Winter 2021–2022 issue of the AER newsletter, students and early-career educators teaching with objects, resonated with me when it was chosen. I could empathize with several challenges students and early-career professionals faced and continue to face, being an early career archival educator myself. First, over the past year and a half, in-school and new educators had to learn how to teach about the pandemic using physical objects to center a discussion around what was happening in the world around them. We have had to teach in spite of the pandemic, relying on archival material to support current events such as a national discussion around race and racism. We have also had to respond to social and emotional elements of teaching that can sometimes be separate from the materials themselves. Those of us who teach with objects were also keenly aware that we are within a historical event and physical items should be archived for future interpretive purposes. Thus I was curious as to what our authors would choose to memorialize.

Dance educators, the population that I work with the most, offer an interesting perspective to pandemic teaching, and I was happy that dancers and former dancers submitted articles when asked. In dance archival education, we consistently talk about the "body as an archive." With so much human and physical knowledge held within teacher and student, this group of learners could still explore, create and respond through in-person, social distance dancing, or performing their parts separately and filmed for a virtual concert.

In Juliana Ariel DeVaan's piece about the Graduate Workers of Columbia, she supports the current physicalizing of protest through current picketing with historical objects contextualizing another physical form of protest, a sit-in in 1968. Researching and archival teaching can be solitary work during normal times, and our authors have found a way to use the alone time to build an archive from scratch, to redisplay their collections in a way that is historical record, but also entertaining, and to use their time wisely through available archival internships when other institutions were limited or closed.

In the Museum Education Master's Program at George Washington University, our mascot is a duck traveling calmly along the surface of the water, all the while paddling its little webbed feet below. I have seen a calm demeanor this year from students and early career professionals that has been extraordinary, knowing that they are consistently paddling around new restrictions, outdated technology, and converted workspaces. What this year also taught me is that I don't have to be that one duck paddling alone. I can reach out for help and create a "raft" (yes, a group of ducks are called a raft). I can sit still for a minute and not be so reactionary, and I will still float, before I figure out the next way to go. I believe these are good lessons to practice, whatever the future brings.

Kathleen Leary

AER Newsletter Co-Editor 2021–2022

Reflections from a Recent History Graduate

By: Claudia R. Campanella

Recent graduate, BA/MA program City College of New York

didn't discover my interest in archives and preservation until I started writing my MA thesis. As a history student, I have found no shortage of people asking me what I plan to do with my degree. Most people assumed I would go into teaching or law. Others asked if I planned to pursue a PhD and continue in academia. To be perfectly honest, when I started my undergraduate studies, I only knew I had a passion for learning about and preserving history. My goal has always been to highlight social, racial, and gender-based inequities as part of a more mainstream narrative on American history. I never desired to be a teacher, but I have always felt drawn to educating the public on underrepresented narratives.

While working towards my BA in history at City College, I discovered the dual BA/MA history program. I chose the thesis track for my MA because I wanted to produce work I felt mattered to how many understand American history. I spent most of my MA research in libraries and archives across the tri-state area. I've always loved poring over old newspapers, correspondence, and journals. I enjoyed learning about individuals and their unique stories. As I began piecing together the details and argument of my thesis, I became curious about the processes that created the many collections I perused. I asked myself questions like, "How did these documents and correspondence get here?" "How have they been preserved for nearly one hundred years?" "How has this been made so accessible to me and others?"

These questions are what prompted me to apply for an internship through my school at the Rockefeller Archive Center, and later that year I began learning firsthand what it took to process archival material, as well as the role of archives in



their local communities. While at this internship, I recall attending several meetings on improving access to research and education in the community, as well as making archives friendlier to undergraduate students. At one conference in particular, we discussed what archivists can do in classrooms and how they can engage students of all different backgrounds and interests. I really enjoyed these discussions, as I had not been introduced to archives in my undergraduate studies. In fact, before I started my thesis, archives were incredibly intimidating to me, and I did not realize the wealth of their resources until much later in my academic career.

Questions of accessibility and community outreach only became greater with the onset of the global pandemic. I and many other students were thrust into uncertainty as we wondered how we would continue to produce academic work with unstable Wi-Fi connections, poor home work environments, lack of available resources online, and general anxiety and uncertainty about our futures. Amidst these unprecedented circumstances I wondered how I would finish my thesis when I could no longer visit archives in person to conduct research. Many did not have the materials I needed online and were closed to visitors or researchers looking for scans. I wondered how archives, many of which are already short-staffed and underfunded, would begin to recover from an increasingly digital world full of financial instability. When local governments did slowly begin to open up, I often waited for months on scans from archival staff, often just one or two people with limited hours and long lists of requests. To obtain other materials, I was forced to buy physical reprints from obscure book sellers. In the worst case scenarios, I reworked portions of my thesis to accommodate this lack of primary source material. I often found myself wondering what these new circumstances would mean for people who already struggled with access to historical material.

With the pandemic plunging many of us into uncertain and unfamiliar circumstances, forcing people to continue work from home rather than schools and offices, digital accessibility to archives remains an issue, especially for undergraduates. Improving digital accessibility is paramount to facilitate connections between archives and undergraduate students. Increasing material available online and creating easy-to-use and -read interfaces will not only serve to pique interest in archives among new demographics but also help accommodate students who may not be able to physically access archives for their research. For information to be truly accessible for community outreach and public education, we need to break down the barriers that make academic work and resources appear inaccessible, intimidating, and difficult to connect with. Bridging the gap between archives and students through the digital world will help undergraduates to see the wealth of information that waits for them.

Using LGBTQ+ Primary Sources in the Classroom:

By: Jubilee Marshall

Graduate student in Archives and Public History New York University



The landing page of the "Military History and the LGBTQ+ Community" collection includes a collection overview and a list of learning goals, as well as links to seventeen primary sources, a background essay, and additional resources such as a bibliography, an index of terms, and teaching activities for the classroom.

LGBTQ+ people have played a vital part in virtually every area of American history. Despite these many contributions, teachers can find it difficult to incorporate their stories in the social studies and history classroom. The American Social History Project, which uses diverse mediums including books, documentaries, and digital programs to make the past vivid and meaningful, has sought to make this task easier. In particular, their Social History for Every Classroom (SHEC) website does so by providing hand-picked, classroom-ready primary source documents and teaching materials to support historical learning at all levels. Recently, SHEC published a new collection of LGBTO+ primary sources. The theme of the collection is "Military History and the LGBTQ+ Community."

As the intern responsible for developing the collection, I kept two goals in mind throughout the process of selecting a theme, curating primary source documents, and creating accompanying texts.

First, it was important to me that we present a long view of LGBTQ+ history. Often, students don't have any formal introduction to the topic and may lack even a murky understanding of the richness of LGBTQ+ history that stretches back to the earliest days of the United States. The seventeen documents included in the SHEC collection span almost 250 years and highlight the diverse and extensive roles that LGBTQ+ people have played in American military history. Second, it was vital that we provide a novel and relevant collection of documents that teachers can incorporate seamlessly into their existing curriculum. Existing lesson plans on LGBTQ+ history tend to focus on topics such as the Stonewall riots and the AIDS epidemic; this collection can supplement those lesson plans and allow teachers to incorporate LGBTQ+ primary sources into other areas of the curriculum. Teaching LGBTQ+ history does not necessarily require its own unit. Instead, teachers can draw on LGBTQ+ primary sources consistently throughout the school year as they cover core topics like the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, or World War II.

To create the collection, I first read broadly about LGBTQ+ American history, flagging themes or events that I thought were especially vital to include. Then, to select the documents, I followed the footnotes from secondary works. These led me to online repositories such as the National Archives, OutHistory.org, or the Digital Transgender Archive, where I was able to locate government documents, personal letters, and even photographs. After creating a pool of potential documents, I worked with a team of ASHP staff members to make sure that the final collection represented a diverse and expansive window into LGBTQ+ military history.

Creating the "Military History and the LGBTQ+ Community" collection was a challenge in selecting age-appropriate sources, drawing from a diverse range of individuals, time periods, and document types, and ensuring that each document and accompanying text contributed to the learning goals outlined on <u>the landing page</u>. Nothing in my history background prepared me to write a five-paragraph essay covering two centuries of LGBTQ+ military history for an audience of middle schoolers! Nevertheless, I found this project to be both rewarding and instructive, and I anticipate that middle and high school teachers will be able to make excellent use of the documents and teaching activities provided.

By: Juliana DeVaan

PhD student and Richard Hofstadter Fellow Columbia University

uring the 2020-2021 school year at Columbia University, students, graduate workers, faculty, and university administrators have reflected on inequality and injustice and how the University contributes to such disparities. At Columbia, where I am a first year PhD student in US history, undergraduate students have organized mutual aid networks to support those in need during COVID, called for Columbia to diverge from the NYPD, and the Graduate Workers of Columbia (GWC) organized a strike which demanded extended funding for those who were unable to research during COVID, comprehensive healthcare, neutral arbitration for cases of discrimination and harassment, and a living wage.

At a <u>teach-in on the digital picket line</u> for the GWC strike, associate professor of history Frank Guridy connected the graduate workers' present demands to protests of the past. In 1968, when Columbia students mobilized against the University's involvement in the Vietnam War, expansion into Harlem and Morningside Heights, and displacement of African American and Puerto Rican tenants in Columbia-owned apartments, graduate students occupied Fayerweather Hall, where many history department offices and classrooms are located today.

Guridy explained that the graduate students in 1968 "were united around one principle: that being a graduate student, that being a scholar in the making, means more than simply pursuing your individual research project. It means standing for a community, hell, it means having the audacity to create a fair and equitable community." He told us, "You're standing for a university that is guided by democratic, participatory principles...a community that rejects violence and militarization and injustice." He continued, stating that "the GWC is just the latest group in a long history of constituencies who have struggled for justice and recognition on this campus."

Guridy's comparison between 1968 and the present-day strike resonated with me, since I had spent time in the Columbia Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML) looking at materials from the 1968 protests and their aftermath in the early months of 2021. Due to COVID restrictions, most libraries and archives were closed, but the RBML remained open for Columbia affiliates. Eager to get back to in-person research, I trolled the RBML catalogue looking for materials that were relevant to my interests.

One day, I came across a collection titled "The Urban Center of Columbia University," which appeared to house materials relating to Columbia's efforts to address "urban-minority affairs" in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I made an appointment at the RBML, masked up, and entered a special collections reading room for the first time in almost a year. As I reacclimated to the ritual of archival research, I quickly learned that the Urban Center's history was connected to the events leading up to and following the protests of 1968.

On October 31, 1966, Columbia President Grayson Kirk announced that the University would undertake a 200-million-dollar capital campaign that would transform the campus by expanding student housing, teaching facilities, and the footprint of the University using New York State's "urban renewal law" to acquire land on Morningside Heights and in Harlem. Article 15 of New York's General Municipal Law, better known as urban renewal law, stated that municipalities, including the City of New York, had the rights and powers to purchase, gift, devise, or condemn property for the purpose of redeveloping "conditions of deterioration or blight." The law also allowed the City to appoint sponsors to undertake urban renewal projects. Under this condition, Columbia University could purchase neglected, dilapidated single-room-occupancy buildings around Morningside Heights and Harlem with the promise of rebuilding the properties for campus use.

The mostly African American and Puerto Rican residents of the area Columbia intended to acquire interpreted the plan as a racist and expansionist takeover of their community. In a City Council hearing about Columbia University's proposed expansion through urban renewal, community members described Columbia as an "octopus" trying to displace "undesirable" non-white, low-income inhabitants with its "tentacles" as it extended campus.

The community's accusations were not unfounded. Columbia promised to build some low-income units in the new construction, but the proposal included only seventy units; more than ten-thousand low-income residents would lose their homes under Columbia's urban renewal agreement. An internal statement by the Office of University Planning stated that the University's location should be exclusively for "institutions" and that local residents should not have a say in the matter. Moreover, the memo described those African American and Puerto Rican residents as "pursuing noisy, unsanitary or illegal activities" like "crime and disorderly conduct." The neighborhood, believed the University, would be better without them.

In an attempt to ease tensions between community members and Columbia, the Ford Foundation announced that it would contribute 35 million to the capital campaign-the largest gift the Foundation had ever bequeathed a university—so long as 10 million of the donation went to "one of the greatest problems and opportunities of American life-the problem and opportunity of Harlem," in the words of Ford President McGeorge Bundy. When Bundy spoke of "the problem and opportunity of Harlem," he was referring to what he would come to see as the nation's foremost social problems, which he eventually articulated in his 1967 "President's Review" for the Ford Foundation's 1967 Annual Report: "the struggle for Negro equality" and "the prejudice of the white man." Columbia's fraught relationship to Harlem and

Morningside Heights was a perfect situation in which Ford could experiment with how grant money could facilitate meaningful efforts to fight against racism and inequality. "After Columbia, what? We do not know yet," mused Bundy.



Image from the Columbia Spectator vol. CXIII no. 40, November 22, 1968, 1.

With Ford's ten-million-dollar gift (today worth more than eighty million dollars), Columbia President Grayson Kirk established the Urban Center, which would serve as the central administrative organization that would allocate and distribute the rest of the money in the hopes of building a positive relationship between Columbia and Harlem. However, almost two years passed before the Urban Center began to operate. Only after the spring demonstrations of 1968 during which protestors forced Columbia to address its existence as a racist institution and bad neighbor to Harlem did the Urban Center begin to disperse the Ford money.

From 1968-1973, the Urban Center distributed the Ford grant to Harlem-based organizations and individuals who addressed specific, local needs in the areas of education, public health, cultural enrichment, housing, recreation, employment and economic development. Looking through correspondence, memos, and grant proposals, I concluded that the student movement of 1968 deeply influenced the way the Urban Center gave away its money.

Reflecting on the demonstrations, William Sales, leader of the Society for Afro-American Students, concluded that "the Columbia uprising was not essentially about black student issues. It was about Columbia University's relationship with Morningside Heights, to Harlem and to the Harlems of the world." When it came time for the Urban Center to respond to what had happened in the spring of 1968, administrators of the Center knew they had to partner with Harlem community members to address the ways in which Columbia impacted the neighborhood. The spirit of the 1968 protests was defined by its vision of justice for all—not just Columbia students but the people whose lives were affected by the presence of the University as well.

Unfortunately, many of the issues that students protested in 1968 persist today. While the Urban Center aimed to support Harlemites in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Columbia continued to purchase land in Harlem and Morningside Heights, dislocating community members so that the University could grow. This behavior has continued into the 21st century. Recently, even as Columbia makes statements about diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism, the University has taken advantage of eminent domain to purchase land from Harlemholdouts to develop the new Manhattanville Campus above 125th Street. However, like Guridy said, the idea that we must fight for everyone in a long struggle for recognition and equity also endures.

In the graduate workers' strike of the present, the GWC labored to show that Columbia's priorities remain in real estate expansion rather than supporting students and being a good neighbor to Harlem. During the strike, when I visited undergraduate students in Zoom classes to explain why the graduate workers were striking and answer any questions, I presented documents from my research to illustrate that the struggles of today are a continuation of those from the past.

I showed students a transcript from a 1968 City Planning Commission Public Hearing about Columbia's plans to purchase buildings that housed African American and Puerto Rican tenants and turn them into Columbia housing, displacing 10,000 residents. We read through quotations from various community members chastising Columbia for acting like "a corporation" and denying the fact that what they called "urban renewal" was really "Negro and Puerto Rican removal." I also displayed documents from the Urban Center archives, showing how the collective protests in 1968 led to massive, experimental spending on Harlem-based community organizations. I shared a photo and transcript from the official Urban Center press conference with Ford President McGeorge Bundy and Urban Center Director Franklin Williams, in which the two explained how the Urban Center would attempt to develop a relationship between Columbia and Harlem. Finally, I shared a report from the Ford Foundation evaluating the Urban Center.

The Ford Foundation deemed the Urban Center a failure, describing Columbia's attempts to address its institutional racism as "Action, Reaction, and Inaction." Because the Urban Center threw its available funds at a wide range of projects, usually as a one-time gift, the Center did not contribute to any long-lasting, fundamental changes at Columbia or in Harlem. The Ford Foundation also wrote that Columbia should have incorporated the Urban Center into its own infrastructure. Instead, when the Ford money ran out, Columbia President William McGill, Kirk's successor, closed the Urban Center.

Current students related the Ford Foundation's assessment and critique of the Urban Center to their own experiences with Columbia's recent efforts to address systemic racism and inequality. Many griped about the generic statements University administrators made in support of Black Lives Matter while continuing to purchase real estate in Harlem, refusing to reduce tuition during the online school year, and continuing to pay Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger an exorbitant salary while graduate workers were fighting for a living wage. They started to see how constellations of injustices were connected and how Columbia needed to make meaningful change. Columbia should learn from the failures of the Urban Center, suggested one student; it should listen to its students, workers, and community members and respond accordingly by investing in long-term, structural support so that everyone who interacts with Columbia, be they neighbor, tenant, student, or employee, feels like they have a stake in the success of the University.

On April 8, 2021, Columbia President Lee C. Bollinger emailed the entire University announcing the Columbia Student Support Initiative, "an effort dedicated to raising \$1.4 billion in financial assistance for students by June 2025 and involving all 16 of our schools." When he sent the press release, the GWC was still on strike, and I was still talking with students-both graduate and undergraduateabout the ways in which Columbia has consistently prioritized property and prestige over its students, workers, and neighbors and why we needed to continue pressuring the University to reach a contract agreement with the GWC. However, the Initiative shows that protest works. President Bollinger's commitment to provide significant, institutional financial support directly responded to students' demands during COVID.

Just as the protests of 1968 affected the way Columbia distributed the Ford grant through the Urban Center, so too did today's student organizing result in financial commitment from the University. However, today we know more, and can learn from the failures of the past. We must keep organizing and protesting, using lessons from 1968 and the Urban Center to guide us towards equity and justice, so that the GWC can win a fair contract, and all student workers at Columbia are valued for their contributions to the University.

Making Use of an Archive and Its Future Function:

How a dance photographer repurposed her primary source materials to produce a coloring book that celebrates today's women of dance.

By: Julie Lemberger



Before:

Francesca Harper in the premiere of her "Modo Fusion" as a part of the annual 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Festival at the Ailey Citigroup Theater in New York City, March 8, 2006.

am a photographer, an educator, and a dancer, but mostly I am an artist and a woman. I have been photographing dance in NYC for nearly 30 years, for journals, books, and websites, those that cover dance as an art that has a history— my images highlight the choreographers' oeuvres, their productions and the performers who devote lifetimes to their fleeting craft. My photography is the aftereffect of live performance— the bit that lasts longer than the transitory acts.

After:

Francesca Harper's coloring page from Modern Women: 21st Century Dance.

The question I've been grappling with has been what to do with my growing cache of dance photography after the initial event, debut, or premiere has occurred, and what future will the photographs serve? What will these pictured moments of dance history reveal and when will they be called upon next to be shared with the world? It seems to be a passive waiting game.



Before:

Annie-B Parson, jumping in a park near her home in Brooklyn, during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic, and immediately afterwards we both put on our masks. She was the only artist I photographed purposely to be included in Modern Women: 21st Century Dance, June 2, 2020

After:

Annie-B Parson's coloring page from Modern Women: 21st Century Dance.



Before:

Michelle Dorrance in a solo performed at Buttenwieser Hall at 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center as a part of their Fridays At Noon low-tech presentations, October 5, 2012.

After:

Michelle Dorrance's coloring page from Modern Women: 21st Century Dance. This image features several moments of the dance presented as if in a sequence and a composite, adding a feeling of movement and animation to the still images. As time passes, archives of dance become chunks of darkness, out of sight and soon to be forgotten. Like all history, if it's not revved up, energized, or spotlighted for a new audience, it will not be remembered except by those who witnessed it. The inherent nature of photography and especially documentary photography is to preserve the moment: to be a witness to history for posterity, for those who weren't there. My photography is that witness, and instead of passively waiting to be called upon to display my images for an obituary or some other historical reference, I've decided to take matters into my own hands, and share my images my way!

Innovation is the key to entice new audiences to consume old news in new ways, so repurposing archival materials by putting them into new contexts helps to re-examine the originals, both of the dance and the photography, which is an artifact of the dance. I created a coloring book as a way to discover and enjoy the images anew. I decided to focus on the women of the concert dance community, because they are the largest and diverse population within the community but are often under-recognized.

By employing Photoshop, I transformed my digital photography into line-art illustrations and then recontextualized them by placing them into abstract and floral *scenery or worlds* "to dance in." These new illustrations were derived from my photographs of many living women dancing, found in my archive.

The line drawings then become interactive in the coloring book, and the viewer is invited to respond to the dancer's gesture through observing and coloring.

Additionally, I reached out to each dancer to collaborate in the process. I asked them to write a response or a commentary that corresponded with each image to provide a point of view or other information about the dance, as well as biographical notes.

So instead of waiting passively for someone to activate my archive, I transformed and curated my own work into an interactive activity for a new audience and made something new by repurposing and reinvigorating archival photographs.

Lemberger's coloring book is titled Modern Women: 21st Century Dance and can be purchased at etsy.com/ shop/dancecoloringbook.





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