

# **MINUTES OF THE STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD**

Tuesday, March 3, 2020  
WebEx Conference Call  
11:00 a.m.

Attending: Sarah Koonts, Kevin Cherry, Sharon Davis, Drew Reisinger, Erin Lawrimore, Katherine Calhoun Cutshall, Monika Rhue, Karen Feeney, Lynn Chesson Gilliard, Jim Martin, and Christine Botta

## **Call to Order**

### **I. Welcome**

The SHRAB meeting was called to order, and Sarah Koonts welcomed new and returning members. Each board member introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their background:

- Kevin Cherry is the State Coordinator for SHRAB, and the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives and History.
- Sarah Koonts is the State Archivist for North Carolina. She also is the Deputy Coordinator of the SHRAB.
- Christine Botta is the Administrative Secretary for the State Archives.
- Drew Reisinger is the Register of Deeds for Buncombe County.
- Erin Lawrimore is the University Archivist and Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.
- Katherine Calhoun Cutshall is the collections manager for the North Carolina Room at the Pack Memorial Library in Asheville
- Monika Rhue is the Director of Library Services at Johnson C. Smith University.
- Sharon Davis is the Register of Deeds for Durham County.
- Karen Feeney is the head of the North Carolina Collection at the Forsyth County Public Library
- Lynn Chesson Gilliard is the Register of Deeds for Chowan County.

### **II. SHRAB Business**

#### **Review of Minutes**

Prior to the review of the minutes, Sarah reviewed the SHRAB duties and responsibilities as outlined in NC General Statue 121. Dr. Cherry reminded the group that should money be appropriated by the General Assembly, the SHRAB has the authority to offer regrants to cultural institutions. Sarah noted where on the State Archives' website all the SHRAB materials can be located.

There were not amendments or corrections to the minutes of December 6, 2018. Drew moved their approval as written, Sharon seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

### **III. Report of the State Coordinator/Deputy Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Kevin Cherry**

Kevin began his report by detailing the program areas that operate under the umbrella of the Office of Archives and History (OAH). Next Kevin highlighted some work throughout the OAH.

Last year was a successful one for programs in the OAH, with the exception of Tryon Palace. Visitation is still down there following the devastating impact of Hurricane Florence on New Bern. The Museum of History is the third most visited state history museum in the country, and it had its highest visitation last year with nearly half a million visitors. The Transportation Museum welcomed about 160,000 visitors last year. Dr. Cherry mentioned the role receipts play in supporting many OAH institutions, including Tryon Palace, Transportation Museum, Roanoke Island Festival Park, and the Battleship. The Battleship received special appropriations to repair the hull of the ship.

The new book *My NC from A to Z* is a board book featuring African American history topics. This book, produced by the Historical Publications Section, has become the bestseller in their catalog. The “She Changed the World” programming initiative involves many programs in OAH, including the State Archives. The kick-off event was this fall at the State Capitol. The State Archives is touring a special exhibit as part of this initiative. The USA 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary or American 250 as it will be called, is in the planning phases. Our work in NC is tied to that of the national commission. Finally, Dr. Cherry highlighted the important role volunteers play across the OAH, from serving on boards like SHRAB to performing work at individual locations. The OAH is well-served by its many volunteers.

### **IV. Report of the Deputy State Coordinator/State Archivist, Director of the Division of Archives and Records, Sarah Koonts**

Sarah provided brief highlights of accomplishments and upcoming projects for the State Archives. She started by the work to standardize records retention and disposition schedules for state agencies. Now this model is being applied to the local records schedules.

The State Archives recently combined several homegrown databases into one system to manage all aspects of collections management, including the public catalog. Staff are in the process of cleaning up data and adding data to build out this new database.

As Dr. Cherry noted, the State Archives is heavily involved in the “She Changed the World” initiative. In addition to the 18 venues where the special exhibit will be shown, the Archives is also placing special emphasis on collecting oral histories of women in NC. Candidates for an oral history do not have to be the first female in an area, but the Archives is seeking to collect diverse stories of women making a difference in NC history and culture in communities across the state. Monika asked about the process for nominating someone, as well as the process for potentially sharing oral history

interviews. Sarah will follow-up with contact information for the oral historian at the Archives.

The America 250 is also a growing programmatic focus for the Archives. They have been involved in the committee with external partners planning for potential programming for this commemorative period. Monika asked about academic institutions and their involvement in the committee. Dr. Cherry responded that an advisory group of academics would be formed and he welcomed participation.

Finally, Sarah noted some other important grants and collaborations with external groups. The State Archives has been working with UNC Greensboro to advise on their “People Not Property” grant. It seeks to identify, fully index, digitize, and transcribe bills of sale involving enslaved individuals. Several registers of deeds are collaborating on this project, too. Drew also serves on the advisory group for the grant. The State Archives also has an NHPRC grant to work on increased access for colonial court records. Funding for this grant supports work to arrange and describe, provide online access to the finding aids, and conduct selected digitization and transcription for these early records.

#### **V. Grant reports, Sarah Koonts**

Turning to reports on grants, Sarah started with the SHRAB grant that is in the process of being wrapped up. “Digitizing Hidden North Carolina” began February 1, 2018 and ended on January 31, 2020. In the meeting announcement, Sarah included the previous quarterly grant report. The final grant report is being completed and can be shared. The grant supported a program to digitize and make accessible records from NC cultural repositories. Partnering with the NC Digital Heritage Center for the digitization and online access, the grant began with an application process to select the partner repositories. The repositories were first offered training on preparing collections for scanning, as well as metadata creation. The bulk of the grant work was spent on the digitization of the collections. We were able to add an additional collection to the list of partners. That one, Lawndale Historical Society, is the only collection wrapping up at the moment. All other collections have been scanned, posted online, and the original materials returned. The final grant report will reflect the overall deliverables and budget.

The new SHRAB grant, “Preserving and Sharing Community Histories Online” began March 1. This grant grew out of the discussions at the previous board meeting. Andrea Gabriel crafted a grant application that included data gathered by a recent LSTA grant received by UNC Greensboro. It also builds on previous SHRAB grants and the Traveling Archivist Program. The UNC Greensboro LSTA grant included a survey of small cultural repositories to determine their needs. The SHRAB grant will deliver some training on those top needs in the form of on-line tutorials. The grant also includes money to have 5 repositories received a multi-day traveling archivist visit that will also include staff/volunteer training. Near the end of the grant period the SHRAB also will meet to develop a new strategic plan. Dr. Cherry reiterated that the strategic planning process will be for SHRAB, not the State Archives. Finally, Sarah said that the SHRAB

members are welcomed to assist with tutorial development, review of tutorial video drafts, and review traveling archivist applications.

## **VI New business**

Sarah and Dr. Cherry discussed the 2021 budget proposal from President Trump that included the proposed elimination of NHRPC, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute for Museums and Library Services. Many groups of archivists, museums, and libraries will be lobbying to reverse that proposal in the final federal budget.

Sarah highlighted the push that will take place by the National Humanities Alliance, National Coalition for History, Society of American Archivists, and the Council of State Archivists for support of increased funding for the National Archives and NHRPC. A “Dear Colleague” letter is being developed and SHRAB members will be encouraged to contact their Representative to urge support of the letter. The letter and supporting informational material highlight the real impact of staffing decreases and funding cuts to NARA and NHRPC over the last decade. Sarah will distribute that information when it is released by the National Coalition for History. Dr. Cherry noted that NHRPC is the most vulnerable humanities granting program. He was in Washington, DC last week lobbying for museums advocacy day. The message from that trip was to maintain the federal granting programs without cuts. Meetings with the NC delegation revealed general, widespread support for NHRPC funding, with the exception of one Representative. He noted the particular support of NHRPC received by Rep. Price and Rep. Meadows. The board discussed ways to stress support of NHRPC with their Representatives. They wanted to also have information on grants specific to their districts.

Next the topic of NHRPC reauthorization was discussed. Like all federal grant programs, NHRPC needs to be authorized. It can be funded if authorization lapses, but it makes that funding more tenuous. Senator Sullivan of Alaska will sponsor a bill to reauthorize NHRPC, hopefully with a Democratic co-sponsor. When that bill is live, SHRAB members may be called upon to recommend support by the two NC Senators and House delegation.

The last new business was a discussion of an upcoming survey of small archival repositories by NHRPC. They will be seeking feedback on these institutions’ needs. Future grant program development will be informed by the survey feedback. Sarah will pass that survey along when it is ready. She encouraged SHRAB members to share it with cultural repositories in their area.

With no other business before the board, the meeting adjourned at noon.