

# STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

## Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2022, 11:00 AM

Online via Zoom & YouTube streaming

Members present: Trey Adcock, Katherine Calhoun Cutshall, Karen Feeney, Drew Reisinger, Deputy Secretary Darin Waters, and State Archivist Sarah Koonts

Staff present: Adrienne Berney, Brooke Csuka, Matt Zeher

Sarah opened the meeting with a greeting. There were not enough members present for a quorum, so the vote on minutes approval for the June 1, 2022 meeting will need to be revisited at the next meeting.

### **Reports from the Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives & History and the State Archivist:**

Dr. Waters stressed that the Department appreciates members' service. The General Assembly has passed a 2-year budget bill, which Governor Cooper approved July 11. Dr. Waters has been with dept. for just over a year and sees that Archives & History staff is grossly underpaid. He is advocating for salary increases, but in the meantime, the state budget allows for a 3.5% raise this year, in addition to the 2.5% implemented last year.

The state budget also includes an additional \$1 million in renovations for Halifax State Historic Site for exhibit updates. Halifax is an especially important site for the upcoming Revolutionary War commemoration. Other funds appropriated this biennium will mainly allow updates for the visitor center and Davie House. Ft. Dobbs will receive \$500,000 for visitors' center construction planning. \$200,000 has been one-time money was allocated for America 250 NC planning. Dr. Waters is aware of additional funding needs—especially for the Archives & History bldg., which needs upgrades to meet preservation standards. He encouraged SHRAB members to advocate for that, as opportunities arise, with their local legislators.

Sarah Koonts reported that the State Archives is accommodating a huge increase in requests for tours. Tours are time consuming for staff but good for raising awareness of the purpose and value of archives. A nice variety of groups have been requesting tours, from K-12 classes to cultural societies and state agency interns or pages. Staff have also been contributing to in-person events including a festival at Somerset, DNCR Days, and upcoming festivals at the Museum of History.

Archives staff have received and managed a grant to conduct an in-person training for a statewide Cultural Resources Emergency Support Team at the group's annual Summit in August. The event included hands-on wet recovery for collections and was well attended and received. The digitization of Aycock Brown photography collection has been another recent staff project; additional digitization work includes Revolutionary War records in preparation for the A250 commemoration, support for Historic Sites' documentary

collections, including Charlotte Hawkins Brown. Staff are also working with Drew Reisinger on a project to borrow cohabitation records from counties statewide and include them with State Archives records in a centralized digital repository. Most surviving cohabitation records are at the State Archives, with a few records remaining in county custody. Katherine thanked Drew for his advocacy on this and similar projects. A future digitization project will be the “grandfather clause” books, which listed eligible voters after early 20<sup>th</sup>-century restrictions. These records will be a good project for crowdsourced transcriptions. Season 3 of our staff’s podcast, “Connecting the Docs” is now live and features stories including the journey of an archival record, coastal history, and mountain dialects and music. A final highlight is that Lord Cultural Resources, a visitor experience consultant, continues to work with the Department and will visit the Archives in the coming weeks. While the Archives’ does not have a traditional visitor experience like museums or sites do, the review of our public services could yield productive input on how to ensure our services are approachable and accessible to a variety of users.

**Current grant project:**

Adrienne reported that the Traveling Archivist team completed its fifth in-person consultation last week at Durham Tech Community College. An experienced archivist from Duke, Meghan Lyon, joined the team and offered useful arrangement and description guidance for a productive visit. The contact from the NC Black Repertory Theatre Company has not been responsive. Karen acknowledged that there are some internal issues with that organization that have stalled out archiving progress. For the remainder of 2022, the TAP team will finalize recipient reports and prepare to advertise for another round in 2023.

Additional aspects of the current grant project include an order for oral history recording stations at 3 locations. The order has been delayed but is now underway. Adrienne’s summer intern completed her contract to set up online primary source directories for A250-related topics. The intern made a good start, but staff will need to devote some time to finalizing them and working with the new website developers to shape them into a useful resource.

Our first Community Collecting & Storytelling workshop in Asheville went well. We had to close registration early and had about 35 participants. Feedback was good and instructors will continue to tweak the timing of various elements at future iterations. The Winston-Salem event is coming up soon—October 24 at Karen’s library. Planning for 3 sessions in 2023 is underway. We’ve identified a location in Pembroke at the Indian Education Center and are in discussion with 2 Edenton venues. Raleigh will be our 3<sup>rd</sup> and final location and we need to work through some space issues in this building in preparation.

**America250 national and statewide planning:**

Recently appropriated funding will support some archaeology planning work in Brunswick town, in particular. Additional initiatives underway include teacher resources, lesson plans, teacher training; development of wayside signage; traveling exhibits; and

kids activity kits to distribute through public libraries. Sarah would like to establish a grant program for local entities to support commemorative programs and hopes to push for that with future funding opportunities.

**Strategies for next grant:**

A community archiving train-the-trainer workshop series is a strong idea for the 2024-25 grant cycle. Both Karen and Katherine re-iterated the usefulness of that type of training for librarians. Topics would include a variety of basic-level archival principles. This work would lend itself to possible partnerships within the Department, especially the State Library and the heritage commissions. They asked about commission members for the new American Indian commission. Sarah is aware that group's first meeting is next week but has not yet seen an announcement of members. She will continue to collect updates to share.

**Board updates:**

Sarah will be in touch about terms coming to an end and interest in renewing terms for several current members. She requested ideas for good additions to the board at any time. Sarah, Brooke, and Erin Lawrimore will be presenting at the upcoming NC Community College Archives Association's annual conference. It's gratifying to see the community college group grow and build capacity.

Archivist of the U.S., David Ferriero retired recently. President Biden has nominated Dr. Colleen Shogan for the position. She has been director of the White House Historical Association and holds a Ph.D. in political science from Yale University. She has also worked on various political committees. The Council of State Archivists supported her nomination. However, a preliminary approval vote in the Senate broke down along party lines in committee. Sarah hopes support will coalesce. The National Archives faces big challenges, especially with veterans' and tribal records access. Search rooms have been closed since 2020 and there is a backlog in services across that agency.

**Future meeting scheduling:**

Without a quorum today, Sarah expects the next meeting will be a special meeting, pursuant to regulations about open meetings laws. At that meeting the board can vote on the meeting schedule for the rest of the year. She asked about frequency of meetings for the board. Members agreed that 3 times a year seems reasonable. Tuesdays and Thursdays are better for Katherine. Early spring will be a good time to meet and to include a discussion of a draft of the 2024-25 grant application.

**Adjournment**