

- I. The goal of our presentation is to put forth an idea for partnering with community archives projects, personal collectors (citizens), and/or up and coming community archives projects. Through this partnership, professional archivists would provide mentorship, support, and guidance to communities looking to document their histories and stories. This knowledge-sharing partnership would benefit both parties as the archivist would also learn more about the communities surrounding them and/or communities that are missing from the archival record.
- II. Our inspiration for this project has come from many sources; but most notably from Michelle Caswell, Jarett Drake, and Bergis Jules
- III. The roots of our project can be tied to the ideas of “liberatory archives”, which are a type of community archives. Caswell and Drake both speak to the concept of liberatory archives as a set of processes that have the potential to free “traditional” (often institutional) archives from their elitist tendencies. Liberatory archives are participatory in that users are also collectors, appraisers, and managers of the archive. These archives can be either physical in nature or virtual. Both models have their pros and cons, and the format should be decided by the founding community. These archives are usually post-custodial in nature, meaning that the materials belong to the community and do not belong to an institution. Control over the physical aspect of the collections is kept in the hands of the community and all decisions regarding description and care are brought to the community forum. Lastly, these archives are independent and autonomous, meaning that they are self-serving and not under the direction of any hierarchical, elitist institution.
- IV. We analyzed three case-studies to demonstrate some of our examples of liberatory archives (see slide details for further description of these case studies)
 - A. Archives of the Occupy movement (physical and virtual)
 - B. South Asian American Digital Archive (virtual)
 - C. Shorefront Legacy Center (physical)
- V. How can professional archivists help to build a “liberatory archive”? One way is to serve as a mentor, partner, and teacher for communities looking to collect and tell their histories. How can we begin?
 - A. Cultivate a community partner - let the community define themselves
 1. Base your relationship on respect, empathy, sensitivity, and flexibility
 2. Come up with a solid communication strategy
 - B. Broaden your collecting mentality by moving away from traditional definitions of records. Look to collect art work, poems, recipes, videos, photographs, and memorabilia.
 - C. Make sure the whole community actively participates in the management of the archive
 - D. Knowledge sharing should flow both ways (from archivist to community and

from community to archivist) Offer your skills (ex: coding, social media, preservation, digitization)

VI. Possible obstacles to keep in mind

- A. So you want to help and share your skills, but can't find a community partner
 1. Look at your collections and see what voices are missing, can you find someone in the community to approach with your idea for collecting these materials?
 2. Look at collections in your geographical location, what voices are missing there?
 3. Is there someone from the communities you serve that is collecting on their own that might be interested in partnering with you on a project?
 4. Can you reach out to local churches, youth groups, community centers to learn more about your community?
 5. Encourage everyone that uses your materials that their own personal stories matter and are worth archiving.
- B. Language barriers
- C. Digital divide
- D. Sustainability of partnerships