Connecting K-12 educators with regional digital heritage

Alexandra Chassanoff and Lyric Grimes

SAA Research Forum

July 23, 2025

Baptizing, Beaverdam Baptist Church

R-7—The Reidsville Plant of the American Tobacco Company, Reidsville, N. C.

H. T. BUNN & C. R. HIGGS GENERAL REPAIRS CARS & TRUCKS ELECTRIC OR ACETYLENE WELDING

Today's Talk

- Background
- Research questions
- Project overview
- Preliminary findings
- Future Work

- Mass digitization has increased access to unique forms of digital heritage (yearbooks, city directories, oral histories, photographs) in regional archives.

- Teaching with primary sources has high impact on student learning and literacy

- Mass digitization has increased access to unique forms of digital heritage (yearbooks, city directories, oral histories, photographs) in regional archives.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How can we build partnerships between K-12 classrooms and regional archival collections to empower the use of digital heritage?

- What impact might place-based learning have on student engagement with digital heritage?

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Launched online survey for K-12 educators (ongoing)

- Organized pilot workshop for K-12 educators in partnership with the North Carolina Collection at the Durham Public Library (Fall 2024-April 2025)

- Conduct focus groups with K-12 educators (Fall 2025)

TEACHING WITH PRIMARY SOURCES

bit.ly/k-12psi

a survey!

You're invited to participate in a brief online survey designed to understand how archives can better support K-12 education.

diving into archives!

Fall 2024

Establish partnership with North Carolina Collection (NCC)

Assemble project team

Research unique artifacts from NCC

Draft primary source lesson plans

Map NC teaching standards

Spring 2025

Recruit educators for workshop

Creating lesson plans for digital / physical materials

WORKSHOP *for educators*

ON TEACHING WITH **PRIMARY SOURCES!**

diving into archives!

SATURDAY, APRIL 26 | 2PM-4PM

Want to learn more about incorporating archival collections into your curriculum? This **FREE** workshop will provide an overview of how to find primary sources and use them in the classroom. Come for the lesson plans, stay for the amazing materials DPL's North Carolina Collection has to offer!

BIT.LY/ARCHIVEDIVE

Durham County Main Library
300 N Roxboro St, Durham, NC 27701

Diving into Archives! Workshop Application

B I U ⊖ ✕

Are you an educator? Do you want to learn more about incorporating primary sources and other materials from archival collections into your classroom lessons? If so, consider attending the upcoming workshop "*Diving into Archives!*"

This free workshop introduces archival materials from the North Carolina Collection and provides an overview of how to find and use primary sources in your classroom. Educators will leave this two hour workshop with lesson plans and curricular ideas for engagement with primary sources.

Diving Into Archives!
Saturday, April 26th, 2025
2:00-4:00pm
Durham County Main Library

Reach out to Gabi Benedit (gabib [@] unc.edu) with questions.

Image: Carolina Duke Motor Inn (April 1977), NCC_0161_0235. John Schelp papers and postcards (NCC.0161). North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library, NC.

Considerations and Guiding Questions:
- Who?
  - Students and K-12 Educators
- What?
  - Wants and needs
  - Connection to NC Carolina Social Studies Standards
  - Engaging, thought-provoking, combinable, counternarratives
- When and Where?
  - Online/Digital; Digital Archives
- How?
  - In collection selection, consider…
    - Themes
    - Collection features
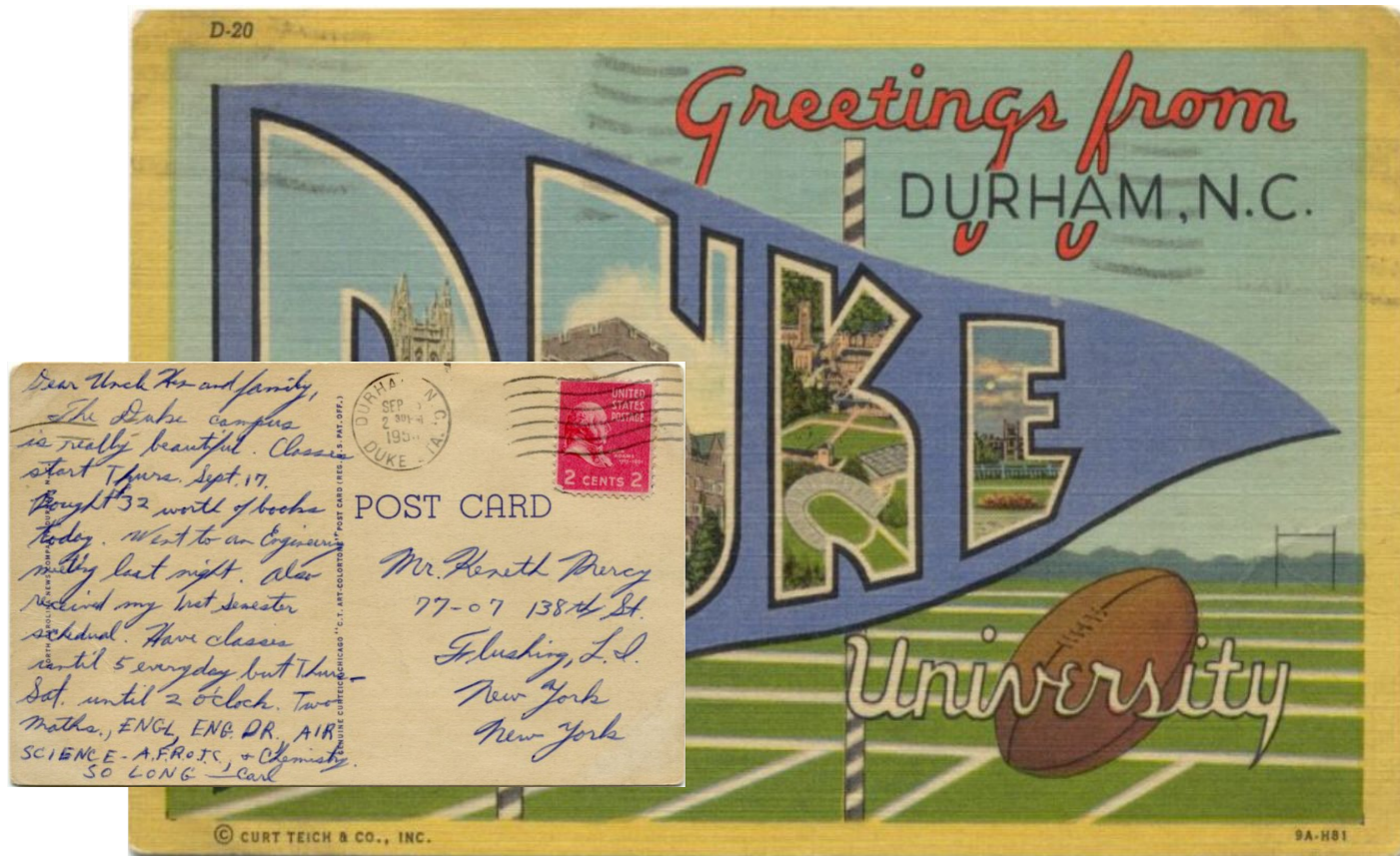   - NC Standards
    - CUREs and Backwards Design

John Schelp Postcard Collection[1]
- Themes: Social life, NC Life
- Features: Postcards; Digital; Notes
- **AH.B.1.2** Critique multiple perspectives of American identity in terms of opportunity, prosperity, and crisis.

1 https://nccdigital.durhamcountylibrary.org/collections-a-z-1/john-schelp-papers-and-postcards

Early Project "Findings"

- Community partnerships provided a welcoming space for workshop
  - Making contact with teachers is difficult without a K-12 teacher on the team

- Archival intelligence (Yakel & Torres, 2003) remains a hurdle for effectively engaging with non-academic audiences
  - Educators do not know much about archives or digital collections
  - We overestimated how much the teachers might already know about archives – they did not know that digital collections do not require password access, for example

- Educators want Plug and Play Lesson Plans > Training in primary source archival literacy

- Develop plug-n-play instructional exercises that help educators teach regional histories with digital primary sources

- Testing and evaluation of frameworks and models for inclusive teaching and how they might be transferable for instruction with archival materials
  - E.g., CURES

- Adopt community-based participatory research methods through partnerships with UNC School of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Thank you for your time!

Feel free to reach out with questions.

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