10 Years in: Rooted in Place & Branching Out

“As we enter one decade of working to make publicly available the Black narratives of our region, we remain thankful of the continued relationships, love, labor & support that makes our efforts possible. While 2021 was a terrible year for many of us, Black in Appalachia has been able to leverage the brief openings provided by vaccinations & careful interaction with community members. We have been lucky enough to slowly & safely re-engage with residents in Knoxville, Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia & Southeastern Ohio around their documentation needs. Those small windows have given us hope for the coming year and laid the foundation, we hope, for ongoing support and mutual labor.” – William Isom II, Director of Black in Appalachia
Appalachia, the regional South, rural areas, and especially marginalized groups within, are too often perceived as an isolated niche to be observed. But the reality is that we are just as much a part of these worlds as anywhere else. We’ve made contributions that an informed eye could point out in any medium, from policy, to music, to science and technology, made commonplace in cities like New York and Tokyo. It’s about time we were acknowledged as equals. Our value deserves reckoning.

Misha Awad

“Black in Appalachia Podcast
Season 2

In December of 2021, we put a pin in the Second Season of the Black in Appalachia Podcast. The highlight of this year was our Roadshow through West Virginia, into the Northern Appalachian city of Pittsburgh. There, we hosted a live-recorded episode at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center. However brief, it was great to connect with audience members in-person & learn about the amazing arts, poetry & sustainable community development happening in the city.

In addition to the brilliant people we’ve talked with, we’ve also diversified our production team to include even more voices & enjoyed 75,000 downloads! Season 3 is slated to be just as action packed and, perhaps, we’ll get to hit the road again in 2022, pandemic-willing.
Black In Appalachia Roadshow: August, 2021

Audience & Participants @Live Podcast, August Wilson African American Cultural Center Pittsburgh, PA

Sherri and Dorian James Monticello Community Clarksburg, WV

Enkeshi, Angela, Alona w/ Author Deesha Philyaw Pittsburgh, PA

Joe William Trotter, Jr post-interview w/William Pittsburgh, PA

Mr. Horton, Red Jacket, Logan County, WV

Francine Jones West Virginia Mine Wars Museum Matewan, WV

Takeiya Smith, Young WV Charleston, WV

Scotts Run Museum and Trail, Osage, WV
Documentary Films

Lynchings & Atrocities
For the past several years, we’ve continued to work to figure out how to best address, research and make available the ugly histories of racial terror in our region. Largely encouraged by the work of the Wise County/Norton Community Remembrance Project in Southwest Virginia, we’re now moving forward with the production of short films on the lynchings that have occurred in Eastern Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. Through this work, we hope that community members can utilize these films for locally-specific public education programming as they address these often hidden historic injustices. Communities of focus include: Claiborne, Jefferson, Johnson and Morgan Counties of Tennessee. As well as Lee, Scott, Washington & Wise Counties of Virginia.

Field Office
Whitesburg, Tennessee
After renting our Field Office for one year, Black in Appalachia has taken the leap and purchased our building in rural Hamblen County, Tennessee. Since that time, we’ve expanded our research room, book offerings and developed meeting space for others to use. Currently, we’re engaged in a capital campaign to pay off the mortgage ($110,000) so that we can continue to utilize our resources toward labor and operational costs in support of our primary organizational mission. Donations to the building fund can be submitted through our website or mailed to: Black in Appalachia, PO BOX 37, Whitesburg, TN 37891
School Records
The value of school records to researchers and families is still being understood as we continue to find and compile these collections county-by-county. We do know that these records can provide migration data, a picture of local Black economies, the network of colleges that produced educators, as well as helping to bridge familial information between census years.

Carter County, Tennessee
Now entering our 4th year of work in Elizabethton & Carter County, Tennessee, we’re delighted to be able to report that all available records associated with the rural one-room Black schools have been located, digitized and are now available for downloading & research via the Community History Database. All files have also been made available to the Elizabethton/Carter County Archives as well as the city & county school systems that provided them. These school records have proven to be vitally important in understanding Black educational infrastructure in the county, as well as the teachers and families those institutions served. In addition to this achievement we were able to take the data from the Douglas School Registration Cards and map in-migration to the school, as well as make visible the labor parents and guardians were involved in at the time. School records, spanning 1930-1956, now include: Buffalo, Roan Mountain, Watauga & Douglas.

Made possible through the support of the Appalachian Community Fund.

Middlesboro, Kentucky
In 2021, we successfully completed the digitization, cataloging of thousands of Lincoln Colored School Enrollment Cards. Records of some 450 surnames and portraits of some are not only available on our Community History Database, but copies for the files are also being housed at the Appalachian African American Cultural Center in Pennington Gap, VA, Middlesbrough Independent Schools and the Bell County Historical Society & Museum in Middlesboro.

Greene County, Tennessee
At the top of our task list for some time has been the digitization of Greene County’s rural Black school records. Work on this effort was completely halted during the pandemic, but this year we were finally able to make these records fully available to the public. School records, spanning 1937 to 1958, include: Warrensburg, Pruitt Hill, New Hope, Chuckey, Baileyton, Bulls Gap and Albany.
1860 to 1870 Census Project

One of the biggest obstacles Black families encounter when researching their ancestors is bridging the gap from chattel slavery to national Emancipation. Through 2022, we'll continue compiling, county by county, the Free Families of Color (Black, Mulatto, Indigenous) in 1860 to 1870, as well as the 1860 slave schedules. In 2021, we also started working with students at Watauga High School in Boone, North Carolina to compile the data from Western North Carolina!

To-date, the following counties are now available on-line:

**Kentucky:** Bell, Floyd, Harlan, Knox, Letcher, Pike, Whitley  
**Tennessee:** Campbell, Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Sullivan, Union  
**Virginia:** Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, Washington, Wise  
**West Virginia:** Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Wyoming

Made possible by the 400 Years of African-American History Commission.

**Oakland Community, Knoxville, Tennessee**

Settled by freed men & women after the US Civil and supplemented by families from Union County, Tennessee & upstate South Carolina, this once rural farming community in North Knox County boasts two historic churches, a school built by the Works Progress Administration, several fraternal organizations & four cemeteries. Not to mention the small businesses & dozens of Black families that once called it home. This year, in partnership with Foster Chapel Baptist Church, we began the process of documenting the familial, cultural, educational & spiritual history of Oakland through a Community History Day. Oral Histories and materials digitized will be made available via our websites & the Foster Chapel Historian in February, 2022.

**Support**

**Martin Luther King Jr Day, Bristol, TN/VA**

In support of the annual Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Black in Appalachia provided technical & editing support for the community’s pre-recorded, virtual events, performances and prayers.

**Appalachian African American Cultural Center**

Black in Appalachia continues to provide technical support to this cultural center in Pennington Gap, Virginia. This year, we helped to maintain their web presence and email infrastructure.
Southeastern, Ohio
For the past five years, we’ve been working to document Black life and the September 22nd Emancipation Celebration in Gallia & Lawrence Counties of Appalachian Ohio. This year we got the opportunity to visit with and learn about the waning coal town of Rendville in Perry County. Out of this relationship, Black in Appalachia has now embarked on providing labor, resources and technical support toward the Rendville Historical Association’s efforts to digitize & catalogue their own history. In partnership with Ohio State University’s Folklore Studies.  
*Made possible by the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio’s African American Fund and individual donors.*

Tennessee Archive of Moving Image & Sound
Our working relationship with the Tennessee Archive of Moving Image & Sound (TAMIS) continued throughout 2021 with Black in Appalachia providing funding support toward the cleaning & digitization of several reels of Knoxville College footage. Additionally, we assisted with the identification of participants in Knoxville’s desegregation protest footage from the 1960’s. Any chance we get to work with TAMIS is an absolute treat & look forward to what we can cook up together in 2022.

Education
"The Way We Worked", Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Bristol, VA
In December of 2021, Black in Appalachia provided local materials in support of the Birthplace of Country Music Museum’s hosting of the Smithsonian’s traveling exhibition on labor.

Kingsport Black History Banners, Chester Inn Museum, Jonesborough, TN
From February through June, The Chester Inn State Historic Site & Museum hosted the Kingsport Black History Banners, produced in partnership with the City of Kingsport Archives and Friends of the Kingsport Archives. Kingsport Archivist Brianne Wright & William Isom II conducted a virtual gallery talk with the Museum.

Juneteenth & the 8th of August
We also began tabling this year, a first for our organization. We provided books, brief presentations & Black in Appalachia merchandise at several Emancipation Day events in the region; Juneteenth events in Big Stone Gap, Virginia and Morristown, Tennessee & 8th of August events in Pennington Gap, Virginia and Johnson City, Tennessee.
Presentations, Workshops & Panels

- Finding Your Roots, East Tennessee: Beck Cultural Exchange Center & McClung Collection, Knoxville, TN
- Live Podcast w/Dr. Roland Carter, Equity in the Arts Conference, ArtsBuild, Chattanooga, TN
- Hip Hop History, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN
- Community Archiving: Preserving Movement Memory, Highlander Research & Education Center, New Market, TN
- Black Space/Black Thought: The Political Importance of Black Bookstores, Peoples Hub, San Francisco, CA
- Black in Appalachia: Uncovering & Sharing Regional Black Narratives, Birthplace of Country Music Museum, Bristol, VA
- America’s Promise: Reporting on America’s Past, Present & Future, Frontline-PBS, Washington, D.C.
- Where Are We & Where Do We Go From Here? Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Morristown Task Force on Diversity, Morristown, TN
- Black in Appalachia, East Tennessee Society of Professional Journalists, Knoxville, TN
- Successful Projects & How to Fund Them / Folklife Programming with Media, Kentucky Folklife Gathering, Folk Studies & Anthropology, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, KY
- UNMUTED: A Virtual Oral History Project, The Bottom, Knoxville, TN
- Black History Month, Storytown Radio Show, Jonesborough, TN
- Gallery Talk w/City of Kingsport Archives, Chester Inn Museum, Jonesborough, TN
- Black Narratives, Exhibition & Engagement, West Virginia Association of Museums, Morgantown, WV
- Black Cultural Infrastructure in Northeast Tennessee, Useable Past: Achieving Inclusive Regional Development Workshop, Jonesborough, TN
- 8th of August & Emancipation Celebrations, Swannanoa Valley Museum, Black Mountain, NC
Professional Development

In 2021, Black in Appalachia staff members, William Isom II & Alona Norwood pursued two professional development opportunities:

1. Archival Seedlings Program through Community-driven Archives of Wilson Library Special Collections, UNC – Chapel Hill, North Carolina

2. The Art of Leadership, Rockwood Leadership Institute, Oakland, California

Community Partners
2021 Numbers

**Income**

Individual Donations: $20,894.18

Foundational Support: $59,600.00

Tenant Rent: $1,300.00

Merchandise Sales: $262.51

$82,056.69 – Total Income

**Expenses (Research, Education & Support)**

Labor: $37,612.98

Support (Other Orgs): $2,381.62

Mortgage & Utilities: $42,376.21

Travel: $11,193.86

Materials/Equipment: $10,709.20

Digital Services: $5,513.25

$109,787.12 – Total Expenses

Supporters!

Tina McDaniel

Appalachian Arts Assembly

Andrew French

Harry Boston

Evyn Kropf
BLACK IN APPALACHIA

We work to highlight the history & contributions of African Americans in the development of the Mountain South & its culture. We do that through research, local narratives, public engagement & exhibition. Black in Appalachia is a community service for Appalachian residents and families with roots in & through the region.

Podcast Studio
East Tennessee PBS
1611 East Magnolia Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37917
865.595.0220
Podcast@BlackInAppalachia.org

Tennessee Field Office
8400 E. Andrew Johnson Highway
PO Box 37
Whitesburg, TN 37891
Info@BlackInAppalachia.org

Website: www.BlackInAppalachia.org
Community History Database: www.BlackInAppalachia.Omeka.net

Angela Dennis, Podcast Co-Host
C. Lee Smith, Director of Production Development
Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin, Podcast Co-Host & Producer
James Baines, Podcast Audio Engineer
Jaime Bagwell, Volunteer Researcher
Joseph Fioravanti, Field Audio Engineer
Alona Norwood, Community Archivist
Kathleen Kelley, Researcher & Historian
Kelle Jolly, Narration & Story Development
Misha Awad, Researcher & GIS
Pumpkin Starr, Capital Campaign Coordinator
Sophie Barton, Researcher
William Isom II, Director