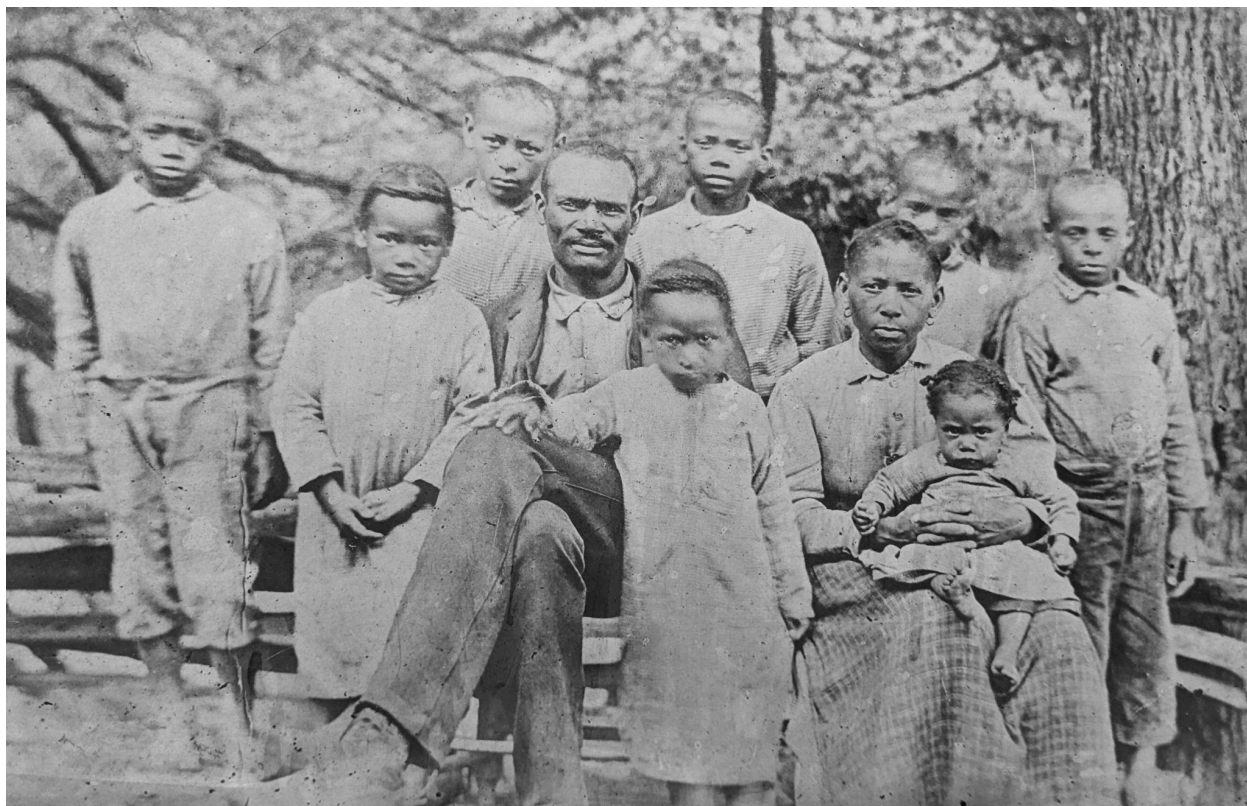


BLACK IN APPALACHIA

research, education and support

2023 **annual report**





Ewing Family, McDowell County, North Carolina

[courtesy: Abe Simmons Genealogy Room & NC History Collection]

Nurturing the Roots & Tending New Growth

“This past year, Black in Appalachia dug deeper into & remained focused, largely, on hyper-local work in and around our physical Field Office. With reduced capacity & an opportunity for a slower pace of labor, our organization was able to venture outside of Eastern Tennessee only in support of project development based on existent long-term goals. Most fulfilling has been the launching of on-the-ground relationships in Southern West Virginia & Western North Carolina, areas we’ve largely not conducted work & support in. 2024 looks to be very similar in scope with a few very exciting infrastructure projects at HQ.”

William Isom II, Director of Black in Appalachia

“

“When we met & started working together, I remember hearing about all the projects [Black in Appalachia] had going on and I thought, ‘They can’t be doing all of these things.’ Well it turns out they are doing all of these things.”

Rev. Preston Mitchell

”



Black in Appalachia Podcast

Season 4



The 4th Season of the Black in Appalachia Podcast consisted of some positively interesting & unforeseen twists & turns. In 2023, the podcast team conducted live-recorded episodes at the historic Green-McAdoo Cultural Center, in partnership with the Smithsonian’s Voices & Votes initiative.

Dr. El-Amin & former colleagues at the University of Tennessee addressed Black Safety from a Sociological perspective. Angela Dennis secured a conversation with 102 year old Clara Hughes from Oliver Springs, Tennessee. And the most unexpected & popular episode this past season was an interview with scholar, activist & presidential candidate Dr. Cornel West. Season 5 is set to launch the Fall of 2024 with a traditional, regional radio broadcast component. Stay Tuned!



Chattanooga Festival of Black Arts & Ideas



William & Kelle Co-Thinkk Awards Asheville, NC



Crystal Good at Melungeon Union Berea, Kentucky



Kelle Jolly, Morganton, NC



Church leaders conversation Preston Mitchell & Ron Carson Welch, West Virginia



Henderson Chapel Church Council, Chili Supper, Rutledge



Watuaga High School Teacher Jamie Wilson & Former Student



Beverly Carlton, Olive Hill Community Economic Development Morganton, North Carolina



William tabling at Juneteenth, Greeneville, TN



Ron Carson, William & Terrence Jackson of Black Voices/Black Stories, Barter Theater Abingdon, Virginia



Visitors from Knoxville!



Mr. Hunt & tabling at the East Tennessee History Center's History Hootenanny



Bookstore manager, Kamora Hunt

Documentary Film

Lynchings & Atrocities

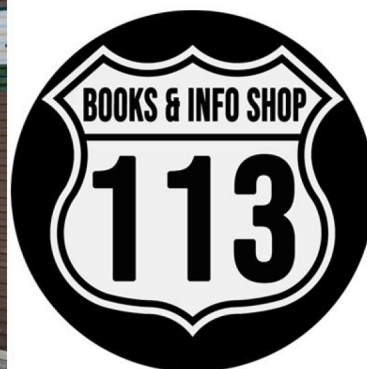
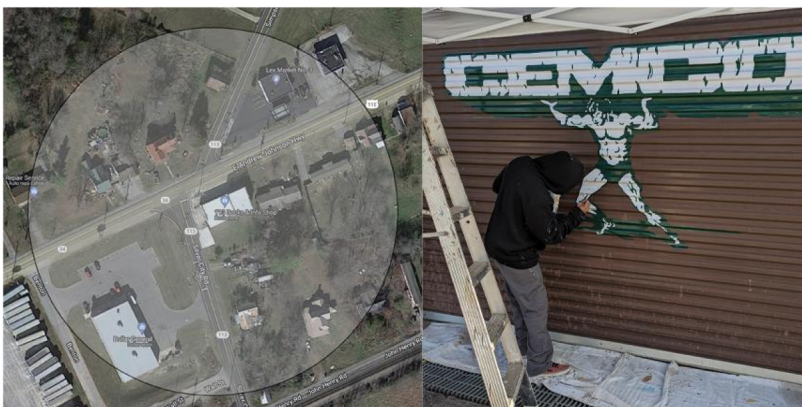
This year, we completed an entire suite of short films covering extrajudicial murders & forcible expulsions that have occurred in our immediate region; Bristol & Gate City, Virginia. Corbin, Kentucky as well as the Tennessee communities of Cumberland Gap, Erwin, Knoxville, Strawberry Plains & Wartburg. Those films & additional resources are now available via the “Atrocities” webpage as well as all social media platforms. In the coming year, in partnership with Tennessee-based educators, we’ll be developing Teachers’ Guides for the use of the films in the classroom.

Funding Provided by Humanities Tennessee, National Endowment for the Humanities, The National Endowment for the Arts, Arts & Cultural Alliance of Greater Knoxville

Field Office

Whitesburg, Tennessee

Black in Appalachia is proud to report that on April 20th, 2023 we paid off our mortgage on the building & are now the free & clear owners of our Field Office. Since that momentous occasion, we’ve formally opened our new & used bookstore to the public. That social enterprise also contains two truck loads of culled books donated from the Highlander Research & Education Center. The very talented High Schooler, Kamora Hunt has taken on the role of bookstore manager & we’ve continued to host fish fries at the space. Through a partnership with Southern Connected Communities Project, our building now provides a cloud of free wifi for our neighborhood. Finally, some new art has been added to the exterior, in recognition of the building’s former life as the CEMCO factory. For 2024, we hope to develop a formal book lending program as well as an on-line shopping option for our used books.



Research

School Records Digitization & Transcription

In 2023, we've continued to work on the transcription of already-digitized Black school records. Through the labor of students from Carson Newman, Tusculum and the University of Tennessee, we've been able to make those handwritten records text-searchable for families and researchers. This year saw the completion of records from Baileyton, Bulls Gap, Chuckey, New Hope schools in Greene County, Tennessee as well as Buffalo, Roan Mountain, Watauga, Douglas Elizabethton in Carter County, Tennessee.

Census Work

This component of our work has now surpassed five years of effort toward the creation of County-level Black censuses for easy reference for researchers. In 2023, we managed to complete and make available, on Omeka, records associated with Black families in; Macon County, NC (1860 & 1870), Buncombe County, NC (1860 to 1870), Graham County, NC (1860 to 1870), Cherokee County, NC (1860 to 1870), Clay County, NC (1860 to 1870), & Watauga County, NC (1880 & 1900). The Watauga County work was conducted by members of the History Club at Watauga County High School.

Personal Collections, Bluefield, West Virginia

Since the inception of Black in Appalachia, we've been looking toward any opportunity to engage with residents of Bluefield, West Virginia. Working in support of the vast amount of Black history in & around Mercer County has been an ongoing goal. Luckily for us, in partnership with Virginia Tech's Appalachian Studies Department & Greater Mt. Zion Pentecostal Church, we were able to conduct two community history days focusing on the digitization of personal collections. This work will continue into 2024 with additional scanning days beginning in May.

Western North Carolina

In January we began working with Asheville-based Dogwood Health Trust to conduct a broad survey of Black history & communities in their service footprint. We visited & began to build relationships in 17 Counties of WNC; Avery, Buncombe, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swain, Transylvania, Yancey. Compiled research & data will be utilized to provide support & inform our work in the state onward.

Support

Under the leadership of Clinch-Powell RC&D & in partnership with the Grainger County Historical Society, we began providing support to Kenny Daily's efforts to preserve and renovate the 1890's structure that once housed Henderson Chapel AME Zion Church in Rutledge, Tennessee.



Since that time, we've seen funding secured, project visibility increased & the descendants of church founders organized into a non-profit body. We anticipate over this year, the needed renovations will continue to occur at a steady pace.

AHERN, Whitesburg, Tennessee

We're really happy to report that during this past year, Black in Appalachia has developed a working relationship with Rev. H. Roger Mills Jr. & African American Health, Education & Religion News which is published in our hometown of Whitesburg, Tennessee. It's been edifying to have AHERN as a neighbor & brother organization.

Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia, Blacksburg, Virginia

Throughout this year, BIA Director William Isom has served on the MAAV grant advisory board, assisting in the determination & conversations around MAAV's funding of new monuments across the region. Monuments Across Appalachian Virginia works to reclaim, imagine, document, reinterpret, display, and amplify histories and experiences that highlight collective struggles for the vitality of people and our shared environment, especially by, for, and with people whose stories have been silenced, denied, or excluded.

Black History Collective of Hendersonville

As part of our membership with the Waymaker's Collective, we were really excited to be able to defer our Radical Rest Grant funds to Crystal Cauley of the Black History Collective of Henderson County, North Carolina, now a new Waymaker Collective member.

Education

Student Internships

In 2024, we were lucky enough to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with students & universities around the region. Through those relationships students at Tusculum University, Carson Newman University and the University of Tennessee assisted us with important transcription & research projects while also receiving community service hours & real-world experience.



113 Books & Info Shop

Outreach:

Throughout 2023, Black in Appalachia really turned up our presence at community events across the region through not only our regular presentations, but by tabling, book sales & distribution of locally specific information.

Those events included:

Appalachian Studies Conference, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio

Juneteenth, Greeneville, Tennessee

Jami Jam 2.0, Morganton, North Carolina

The Melungeon Union, Berea, Kentucky

FolkFest, Cumberland Gap, Tennessee

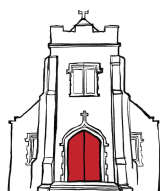
History Hootenanny, East Tennessee History Center, Knoxville,

Tennessee

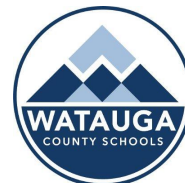
Presentations, Workshops & Panels

- *Black in Appalachia*, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC
 - *Community Archiving for Black Appalachia & Digital Humanities Class Presentation*, Roanoke College, Roanoke, VA
 - *Black in Appalachia*, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
 - *Class Presentations*, Dr. Cicero Fain III, Marshall University, Huntington, WV
 - *Conversations That Matter Podcast w/ Jason Flack*, McKinney Center, Jonesboro, TN
 - *Emancipation Days*, Chattanooga Festival of Black Arts & Ideas, Chattanooga, TN
 - *Black History w/Ron Carson*, Summer Camp, Southeast Community & Technical College, Middlesboro, KY
 - *Black Families of the Cumberland Gap*, Folkfest, Cumberland Gap, TN
 - *Black & Cherokee Interactions*, Funk Heritage Center, Reinhardt University, Waleska, GA
 - *Collecting Community Stories & Building Community Archives*, Waymakers Collective, Knoxville, TN
 - *History Happy Hour with Black in Appalachia*, Knoxville History Project, Knoxville, TN
 - *Now In Session: School Records*, East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville, TN
 - *Skeleton Crew Community Night*, Black Stories/Black Voices, Barter Theater, Abingdon, VA
 - *Class Discussion*, Dr. Matt O'Neil, University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS
 - *Black in Appalachia*, Jefferson County High School Youth Leadership, TN
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Community Partners



CHATTANOOGA FESTIVAL OF BLACK ARTS & IDEAS



2022 Numbers

Income

Foundational Support: \$248,706.59

Reimbursements: \$2,308.84,975.00

Program Revenue: \$59,939.00

\$310,953.84 - Total Income

Expenses (Research, Education & Support)

Labor: \$74,169.68

Support (Other Orgs): \$25,720.00

Mortgage & Utilities: \$125,041.09

Travel: \$29,245.85

Materials/Equipment: \$17,855.84

Digital Services: \$8,272.45

\$280,304.91 - Total Expenses

SUPPORTING FUNDERS & FOUNDATIONS



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.

Team Members

Alona Norwood, Community Archivist
Angela Dennis, Podcast Co-Host
Asma Al-Alriki, Illustrator
C. Lee Smith, Director of Production Development
Derrick Huston, Transcriptions
Dr. Enkeshi El-Amin, Podcast Co-Host & Producer
Jaime Bagwell, Researcher & Digitization Support
Kamora Hunt, Bookstore Manager
Kathleen Kelley, Researcher & Historian
Kelle Jolly, Narration & Story Development
Misha Awad, Researcher & GIS
William Isom II, Director

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