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Chapter 9

Invisible in Plain View: Libraries, Archives, Digitization, Memory, and the 1934 Chatham Coloured All-Stars

Heidi L.M. Jacobs

There is a small stretch of railway along the Windsor-Québec City corridor that contains a remarkable piece of Canadian history. Although I had taken the train through Chatham, Ontario hundreds of times, I had never noticed Stirling Park until one June afternoon in 2016, when I stood alone in the ballpark with my feet on home plate and saw the VIA train pass by. Now, whenever I take the train through Chatham, I wonder how I had missed something so obvious so many times. Stirling Park has been there for at least eighty-five years, but it is hidden in plain view to many, myself included, who simply pass by.[1]

If you know where to look, however, you can see Stirling Park from the train, just past a thin row of trees. It was there, in the summer and fall of 1934, that Chatham's Black community gathered by the hundreds

1. I am grateful to the University of Windsor's Humanities Research group for awarding me a Humanities Research Group Fellowship to research and write this article and to the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences and Leddy Library for facilitating my acceptance of the fellowship. I would also like to thank Devon Fraser for her assistance in preparing this manuscript. I would especially like to acknowledge my gratitude to the Harding Project team: Miriam Wright and Dave Johnston, Blake and Pat Harding, Don Bruner and Mike Murphy from the Chatham Sports Hall of Fame, and Dorothy Wright Wallace and Samantha Meredith from the Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society.

to cheer on the Chatham Coloured All-Stars, the first Black team to win the Ontario Baseball Amateur Association championship. This is the ballpark where Earl "Flat" Chase hit home run balls "so hard, they're still looking for them" and where left-handed shortstop Kingsley Terrell dazzled fans with improbable—near impossible—plays that people remembered decades later. Stirling Park's home plate is less than one hundred feet from the Scane Street house where Wilfred "Boomer" Harding and his siblings grew up and where his mother Sarah collected material to make scrapbooks for each of her eight children.

Like Stirling Park, there are many things about and within libraries, archives, and digital projects that are also "hidden in plain view": questions about the work we do as librarians and archivists, about the choices we make, and the assumptions that guide our decisions. In this article, I use our *Breaking the Colour Barrier* digitization and public history project as a way to engage with pressing questions and issues related to history, memory, archival documents, community, preservation, and librarianship.[2] In so doing, I hope to highlight questions that I believe we must—both as individual librarians and as a profession—consider in more depth and through a range of critical lenses. In particular, I want to engage with the conversations held within archival studies about power and the past and argue that these are also urgent issues for the field of librarianship to consider. Critical archival studies offer a particularly useful model for how we might go about having these conversations.

Before proceeding, it will be useful to describe the larger endeavor that we've come to call the Harding Project and the smaller subsection of the project called *Breaking the Colour Barrier*. In May 2015, my University of Windsor colleague in History, Miriam Wright, presented a local history award to a group in Chatham, Ontario and offered a brief overview of how public history was changing due to digital developments. After her talk, Wright was approached by Pat Harding, who told her about the scrapbooks she had assembled to document the life of

2. University of Windsor Leddy Library, *Breaking the Colour Barrier*, last modified February 15, 2018, http://cdigs.uwindsor.ca/BreakingColourBarrier/.

her late father-in-law, Wilfred "Boomer" Harding (1915-1991), focusing on his life-long athletic activity in a racially divided world. Pat Harding was hopeful that Wright and the University of Windsor could help her build a website so this important story could be both preserved and made accessible. Wright's interest was immediately piqued because she realized that the Boomer Harding story offered vital insights into the often overlooked history of race and racism in Southern Ontario. Wright contacted me and my librarian colleague Dave Johnston, asking if our then-new Centre for Digital Scholarship would be interested in partnering to develop a website based on the materials. We were equally excited.

When Boomer Harding's son Blake brought the scrapbooks to the library, we were all shocked to see that the scrapbooks Pat Harding had described were, in fact, three very thick binders, brimming with documents. As we examined them, we saw photographs of Boomer Harding standing with an otherwise all-white high school basketball team, headlines from the *Chatham Daily News* recounting how a Black baseball team played and beat white teams thirteen years before Jackie Robinson started with the Brooklyn Dodgers, and a newspaper photograph of Boomer with a hockey stick and headlines that read: "Boomer Harding Makes Hockey History at Olympia. Becomes First Negro to Play on Local Rink. May be 'First' in Pro Hockey."[3] There were letters Boomer had written while serving in the Canadian military during World War Two, a story about Boomer being Chatham's first Black mail carrier, and evidence that Boomer was a formidable athlete for his entire life. Our project team agreed with the Harding family that the stories contained in the scrapbooks had rarely been conveyed in Canadian history and we were in awe of the meticulousness and comprehensiveness of the historical record that Pat Harding had preserved. We knew that we had something rare and vital and that we needed to do something with it.

3. "Boomer Harding Makes Hockey History at Olympia. Becomes First Negro to Play on Local Rink. May be 'First' in Pro Hockey." *Michigan Gazette*, November 16, 1946.

MAY BE 'FIRST' IN PRO HOCKEY

"THE BOOMER"—That's the nickname Wilfred Harding, above, earned during his hockey playing days around Chatham, Ont., where he spent his childhood and learned the rough game of hockey. Now "Boomer" is bidding for a position on the Auto Club hockey squad, one of the Detroit Red Wings' subsidiaries. Harding is a forward, and according to those who have seen him in action, is an excellent one.

Figure 1. "Boomer Harding Makes Hockey History at Olympia. Becomes First Negro to Play on Local Rink. May be 'First' in Pro Hockey." *Michigan Gazette*, 16 November 1946

The Hardings wanted Boomer's story to reach as many people as possible and thought we should target the following audiences: race, sport, and history scholars; friends and descendants of the team; local and regional communities; and kindergarten through post-secondary students. As our project team looked through the binders, we understood that the scale, scope, and importance of Boomer's story could not properly be told in its entirety and that it would be best for us to, initially, focus on one aspect of it and do it well. From there, we believed that we, or future scholars, could add further aspects of the story over time. To this end, we decided to focus on the Chatham Coloured All-Stars' championship winning season in 1934 and we partnered with the Harding Family and the Chatham Sports Hall of Fame to secure an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. The grant allowed us to develop and launch our website[4] and to engage in a wide range of public outreach activities.[5] Although the Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society was

4. It will be useful here to distinguish between two terms—digital archive and digital exhibit—that are often used inter-changeably, and erroneously so. A digital archive is, in many ways, the digital equivalent of a physical archive: materials are "raw" and are an un-curated collection of materials that can be explored by users in a range of ways. A digital exhibit is a highly curated selection of materials that are arranged to tell a particular narrative or to engage users or readers in particular ways. The Harding Project, for example, created both a digital archive (where the team digitized every artifact in high resolution, created detailed metadata and records for each item, created a finding aid, and established protocols for long-term storage and preservation) and a digital exhibit (where we selected items and wrote accompanying text to tell a particular narrative based on the materials we received as a way of introducing scholars and members of the public to the materials and to the story of the Chatham Coloured All-Stars).

5. The Harding Project team is grateful to the Ontario Trillium Foundation for its support of this project through a seed grant. This grant allowed us to digitize and preserve well over a thousand items and create searchable metadata records; conduct and transcribe over a dozen interviews with descendants and friends of the team; find and digitize local press coverage about the 1934 season and place it on an interactive timeline; develop and curate a website with contextual essays; commission the award-winning teacher, Shantelle Browning-Morgan, to write curricular activities for grades 1-12 based on the Ontario curriculum; design and build storyboard exhibits to travel to schools and public libraries; commission a single-page cartoon by Eisner Award nominated cartoonist Scott Chantler; create a set of vintage-looking baseball cards that tell the story of the Chatham Coloured All-Stars players and that are sold as a fund-raising venture for the Chatham-Kent Black Historical Museum; and host a project launch event in Chatham where over three hundred people attended. We also

not a formal partner, the project could not have progressed without its support and assistance.

On the whole, our library was supportive of this project; still, a few comments were made in discussion that revealed several often-unquestioned assumptions about the nature of librarianship and the scope of a librarian's purview. One colleague thought that we should not digitize the material unless our Archives and Special Collections could possess the physical artifacts. Once we possessed the scrapbooks, only then, my colleague argued, should we digitize them as a means of preservation and perhaps access for distant scholars. Another colleague thought that we should simply digitize the material and make the files available in a form that replicated the original scrapbooks. Another colleague suggested that "meddling" with these historic documents was a very "un-librarian" practice. I mention these comments because, taken together, they raise fundamental questions about the nature of librarians' work and reveal assumptions about what a librarian is supposed to be and do. Moreover, these comments suggest a couple of underlying assumptions about historic and archival documents: 1. that there is a "pure" and untainted historical record that must be preserved, and 2. that digitization projects can be neutral.

Libraries, some might argue, are about collecting and facilitating access to knowledge, not about creating it. While some might find this "collecting and facilitating" versus "creating" knowledge question one of mere semantics, I am intrigued with it because it raises an issue that is at the core of librarianship: do we merely collect and provide access to materials or do we, in fact, shape knowledge? To suggest that we do not shape the knowledge our users access overlooks a very obvious practical reality of librarianship: we can only spend money once. And, if we can only spend money once, we must make decisions. As the

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began work on a comprehensive site called "Wilfred 'Boomer' Harding: A Barrier Breaking Life," which more closely resembles a digital archive (of all three scrapbook binders) than a digital exhibit. This project has won several awards, including a 2018 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Excellence in Conservation and an Ontario Council of University Libraries Outstanding Contribution Award (2017).

English librarian, I am routinely faced with difficult decisions like, should I spend $600 on scholarly editions of several Sir Walter Scott novels, or should I purchase twenty books by emerging and diverse Canadian poets, novelists, and playwrights? The choices I make about how to spend that $600 shapes what future English students will find on the shelves and thus how they, quite literally, see the literary traditions in English. My $600 question is a variant of a question that librarians answer daily, if not hourly, in their everyday work: how should we allocate resources, be they of a monetary, spatial, or human resources nature? Every single choice we make helps to shape our library for present and future users.

When I reflect on the work my colleagues and I have done with the Harding Project, I am frequently reminded of my favorite high school math teacher, Mr. Yeske, who spent countless hours helping me pass his courses. He was insistent that we "show our work," since the final result or answer was only part of any solution. In showing our work, he could trace the journey we made from problem to solution, the logic we followed, and the assumptions and choices we made. For him, the steps we took to arrive at our answer were equally, if not more, important than the final right answer. I see deep connections between the way that Mr. Yeske taught me math and the way I think about libraries and librarianship.

In libraries, we often focus on articulating a final answer and in so doing neglect to "show our work" regarding how we arrived at that answer. Often, we will summon user statistics or other forms of evidence as a way of justifying a renewal or a cancelation, but we rarely articulate to ourselves or to others what assumptions inform the choice of statistics or our interpretation of them. Justifying decisions, however, is not necessarily the only reason to show our work. Sometimes, the final answer at which we arrive might not be quite right, but the assumptions leading up to solving the problem are sound. Or, the decision may be fine, but there are deep flaws in the logic used to make those decisions. It is for this reason that computer programmers show and share their code: people can see the assumptions, help solve potential problems, and build upon what exists to make it better. Or, consider an exhibit I

recently saw at the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. The curators displayed several dresses inside out to emphasize that sometimes it's not what the dress looks like from the outside that is important or innovative but, rather, how the inner structure, stitches, and seams work together that is worth considering. Again, it's not always about the final result—it's about the assumptions and principles that guide the work.

Unless our decision-making work is shown—be it in library collections, archival acquisitions, digitization projects, or any other kind of project—we're left with a partial understanding of the work we've done and no rationale or explanation for the decisions we've made. To be sure, there are times when librarianship must provide concrete answers. For example, "Do you have the Merck Index?" or "Should we renew our subscription to the Modern Language Association database?" are not questions we can answer with "perhaps" or "yes and no are equally valid answers." We know how to answer those questions and we are comfortable answering them with confidence. There are times, however, when we must ask difficult questions that lack obvious or definitive answers. These kinds of questions can make us feel uncomfortable. When we're uncomfortable, we are likely to gravitate toward questions we can answer comfortably. In so doing, we put off asking the uncomfortable questions we cannot answer but should be asking.

There are many ways that we could consider the questions related to what is at stake and at play when we make those decisions for our libraries. I would like us as a profession to consider these questions in greater detail and in relation to specific contexts. The scope of this chapter allows me to consider just one aspect of this question: how digitization projects are informed by many material and ideological assumptions related to power and representation.

In researching this project, I was struck by the relative dearth of librarians writing reflectively about academic libraries writ large and asking the difficult questions about the spaces that librarians and libraries occupy in the world. There has been a bourgeoning of excellent, reflective work within the area of critical librarianship written about aspects

of academic librarianship such as information literacy and cataloging, or about the impact of neoliberal practices upon academic libraries, yet not much about academic librarianship as a whole and our multi-pronged and interrelated navigation of power structures. Some of the most rigorous, reflective, and praxis-based scholarship I have seen in recent years has come out of critical archives studies. This body of scholarship has much to offer librarians, particularly those engaged in digitization projects. Critical archives scholarship provides questions and a model of inquiry that can help us think reflectively about librarianship and the work we do, pushing our inquiries in new directions so that we can ask new questions about our work—or, at least reframe existing questions in new ways.

In the discussion that follows, I explore how current writing and thinking within archival studies provide us with modes of inquiry that can help us confront, acknowledge, and reconsider our biases and their relation to existing power structures. I will first provide an overview of some of the recent discussions about archives work that could be useful in reconceiving how librarians might think about their work. I will then discuss how this line of thinking influenced our approach to the Harding Project.

Within most scholarship about libraries and librarians, archives and archivists, there is often a careful and understandable drawing of boundaries between these two disciplines. However, in the public eye, they are often seen as interchangeable. The Society of American Archivists offers this distinction: libraries "can generally be defined as collections of books and/or other print or nonprint materials organized and maintained for use…Libraries exist to make their collections available to the people they serve."[6] Like libraries, archives "also exist to make their collections available to people, but differ from libraries in both the types of materials they hold, and the way materials are accessed."[7] Archival

6. "What Are Archives and How Do They Differ from Libraries?" Society of American Archivists, https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives/whatarearchives.

7. "What Are Archives?" Society of American Archivists, https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives/whatarearchives.

materials, they go on to argue, "are often unique, specialized, or rare objects, meaning very few of them exist in the world, or they are the only ones of their kind."[8] The nature of the materials determines, to a great extent, the kind of access allowed: "Since materials in archival collections are unique, [archivists] strive to preserve them for use today, and for future generations of researchers."[9] It is important to see the distinctions and demarcations between the two professions but, as we navigate similar terrain, we should be mindful not to let these differences interfere with conversations that could be mutually advantageous.

For a myriad of logical reasons, we often hold onto these distinctions within librarianship: librarians do library work and archivists do archival work. A recent book published by the American Library Association entitled *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together*, is particularly revealing of this professional distinction and/or disciplinary split. It aims to "narrow the divide" between libraries and archives and "build shared understandings between archivists and librarians and library directors while helping archivists working within libraries to better negotiate their relationships with the institution and with their library colleagues."[10] The suggestion that libraries and archives are separate and separated is even apparent on the book's cover, which shows parallel lines of library books on the far left and boxes of archival holdings on the far right, with a rigid corridor in between. Even the non-italicized "Archives" in yellow and italicized "Libraries" in red on the cover suggests a "farmers and ranchers" type of relationship between the professions.

The scope of this article won't allow an in-depth discussion about how or why those distinctions exist, nor how we might overcome them.

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8. "What Are Archives?" Society of American Archivists, https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives/whatarearchives.

9. "What Are Archives?" Society of American Archivists, https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives/whatarearchives.

10. Jeanette A. Bastien, Megan Sniffen-Marinoff, and Donna Webber, *Archives in Libraries: What Librarians and Archivists Need to Know to Work Together* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2018).

Additionally, I do not want to elide or dismiss the vital and distinct professional differences between archivists and librarians. Instead, I want to argue that librarians, especially those engaged in digital projects, have much to gain and learn from engaging in the conversations that archivists are having about their work. Many archivists, especially those engaged in critical archives studies, are currently asking urgent and deeply relevant questions that can problematize our own thinking in libraries and thus push us to complicate our understanding of our work and broaden our professional discussions. Of particular interest to me are the ways in which some archivists have taken on questions related to power and inclusion within archival work.

The material and cultural records we have of the past are, quite simply, an amalgamation of artifacts and documents that, serendipitously or deliberately, have survived. Libraries, archives, and special collections are filled with items that did not befall misfortune at the hands of natural forces or human intervention: letters that were kept in an attic that did not leak or a basement that did not flood; diaries that were saved and not burned; newspaper stories that were published and not tossed into an editor's wastepaper bin; articles that were saved; pictures that were put into albums; and newspapers that were microfilmed. The preservation of the historical record is made possible by chance, choice, and/or careful neglect.

When one thinks of archivists and scholars doing archival research, one often thinks of the white gloves worn so our fingers don't leave dangerous oils on fragile pages. The white gloves can also be a generative metaphor for thinking about how we see our interactions with historic documents. We might, for example, want to believe that—as librarians and archivists—we have metaphoric white gloves on and that we leave no trace of ourselves on the collections we accession, preserve, maintain, and/or digitize. The Harding Project, like most other archival or digital collections, is covered in fingerprints—real and metaphoric—of those who assembled and created this collection of documents and who ensured—actively or passively—that this material record would exist for future generations. Boomer's mother, Sarah Holmes Harding,

for example, collected and saved documents and newspaper clippings about all of her children and gave them to each child. Boomer's wife, Joy, saw these stacks of papers as junk and clutter and would have tossed them all out but was persuaded to let Boomer keep them in his shed. When Pat Harding saw these clippings, she saw them as treasures worth saving. One does wonder what the legacy of Boomer Harding and the Chatham Coloured All-Stars would have been had Joy Harding gotten her way and taken the piles of paper to the burning barrel or if Pat Harding hadn't seen the value in them and made scrapbooks. We must also be thankful that these documents weren't victims of floods, mice, or fire. Thinking of the collection of documents that we have digitized for the Harding Project reminds us not only of the precarious nature of the material record, but also of the continuous level of evaluation and choice within a document's lifespan. Decisions are made at multiple junctures in a document's existence about whether to consider it part of an historical record and preserve it or discard it as extraneous or inconsequential. The chance encounter between Pat Harding and Miriam Wright and our collective decision to digitize the material is just the latest in a long stream of events and decisions that determined whether these documents and the stories they tell would survive, and who would be able to see and hear them. As technology evolves, it will be up to future librarians and archivists to decide whether to retain the physical scrapbooks and steward the digital files.

If we consider the ways in which decisions—whether deliberate and methodical or serendipitous and haphazard—inform what gets preserved in the material historical record, we can see how power-laden archival choices are. What gets preserved, stored, displayed, or maintained determines what stories are told and what voices are heard. Joan H. Schwartz and Terry Cook consider the notion of archives and power and write that

> [a]rchivists have long been viewed from outside the profession as "hewers of wood and drawers of water," as those who received records from their creators and passed them on to researchers. Inside the profession, archivists have perceived

> themselves as neutral, objective, impartial. From both perspectives, archivists and their materials seem to be the very antithesis of power.[11]

But archives, they continue, are much more complex sites than these notions reveal, since records

> wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity, over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies. And ultimately, in the pursuit of their professional responsibilities, archivists – as keepers of archives – wield power over those very records central to memory and identity formation through active management of records before they come to archives, their appraisal and selection as archives, and afterwards their constantly evolving description, preservation, and use.[12]

In the same way, librarians engaged in digitization or digital projects also wield power over records, shaping memory and identity formation. In both instances, the metaphor of the white gloves that leave no trace of ourselves on the documents falls apart, since our fingerprints are all over the records we select and privilege.

It would be easy for our Harding Project team to say that we made no choices—that we simply digitized what we were given and then made a website of items reflecting the Harding scrapbooks. The reality of this project, and indeed, the study of history, is that there is no "pure," untouched historical record free of bias. Individuals and institutions continually make active and passive decisions that shape the historical narrative we inherit. The Harding scrapbooks are a highly mediated collection of documents. Boomer's mother, and others along the way, clipped certain articles that told and illustrated the story they wanted to tell about the Harding family. Pat Harding created the scrapbooks as part of the nomination package she submitted to get Boomer Harding into the Chatham Sports Hall of Fame and thus she shaped them to tell a particular story. Similarly, when we saw the scrapbooks, they aligned

11. Joan M. Schwartz, and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (2002): 1-2.

12. Joan M. Schwartz, and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2, nos. 1-2 (2002): 2.

with stories that we thought needed to be told, particularly those stories that reflected southern Ontario's history of racial discrimination and that have been left out of Canadian history far too often. The resultant *Breaking the Colour Barrier* site and project is an amalgamation of the choices that Sarah Holmes Harding, Boomer Harding, Pat and Blake Harding, and the Harding Project team made about what we thought should be preserved, shared, acknowledged, remembered, or, through choices of omission, forgotten. There are metaphoric fingerprints of judgments, beliefs, values, and assumptions all over this project.

Schwartz and Cook argue that it is "essential to reconsider the relationship between archives and the societies that create and use them."[13] For those reasons, it's important to acknowledge several other layers of fingerprints indelibly shaping this project. Several granting agencies provided nearly $80,000 to make the Harding Project a reality, because it told a story that these agencies believed was valid and worth preserving and sharing. This site has won awards because various committees saw value in this story and the project. We are grateful for every grant dollar and award we received, but we also recognize that there were other equally important historical projects that did not get funding or projects that were not recognized because our project was selected instead. There were layers of evaluation and judgment hidden in plain view at every level of the Harding Project that allowed its story to be told instead of another.

Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone have noted, "history and memory are not abstract forces: they are located in specific contexts, instances and narratives, and decisions have always to be taken about what story is to be told."[14] As we considered various ways to share and convey the stories contained in the three Harding scrapbooks, we knew we could not tell the entire Boomer Harding story in one project. We knew we had to make decisions about the scope and scale of the

13. Schwartz and Cook, "Modern Memory," 2.

14. Katharine Hodgkin, and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (London: Routledge, 2003), 5.

project. We decided to pick one aspect—baseball—and one team—the 1934 Chatham Coloured All-Stars—as our focus. Our project team then "created" or highlighted a particular narrative from the wealth of materials in the same way that Scott Chantler, the cartoonist we commissioned to draw a single-page comic strip for our project, selected the most compelling and representative scenes to tell the story of the Chatham Coloured All-Stars.

To state the obvious: archives and library collections are not found pre-existing in nature; they are, of course, social constructs. As much as we would like to downplay this fact and as much as we feel disempowered by a range of forces, libraries and archives, too, are about power. Every choice we make—about collecting, about accessioning or deaccessioning, about providing or withholding access—is an exercise in power over what is and what will be known. As Schwartz and Cook further contend, archives "have the power to privilege and to marginalize. They can be a tool of hegemony; they can be a tool of resistance. They both reflect and constitute power relations."[15] Certain voices, they continue, "thus will be heard loudly and some not at all,…[and that] certain views and ideas about society will in turn be privileged and others marginalized."[16] Michelle Caswell, Ricardo Punzalan and T-Kay Sangwand take Schwartz and Cook's ideas about archives and power a few steps further. They write,

> there has been an explosion of efforts to examine the ways in which records and archives serve as tools for both oppression and liberation. This recent scholarship and some community-based archival initiatives critically interrogate the role of archives, records and archival actions and practices in bringing about or impeding social justice, in understanding and coming to terms with past wrongs or permitting continued silences, or empowering historically or contemporarily marginalized and displaced communities.[17]

15. Schwartz and Cook, "Modern Memory," 13.

16. Schwartz and Cook, "Modern Memory," 14.

17. Michelle Caswell, Ricardo Punzalan, and T-Kay Sangwand, "Critical Archival Studies: An Introduction," Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies 1, no. 2 (2017): 1.

Caswell et al. have argued for an embracing of the term and intent behind "critical archival studies," which is "emancipatory in nature, with the ultimate goal of transforming archival practice and society writ large."[18] In this way, scholarship concerning archives connects well with parallel concerns within librarianship and offers additional insights into how librarians might engage with critical praxis in our work and thinking.

Other areas related to cultural heritage have also been considering how to make visible the often invisible or "white glove" work of the scholars and researchers behind heritage work. In 2006, "The London Charter for the Computer-Based Visualisation of Cultural Heritage" emerged from a need to "reconcile heritage visualization with professional norms of research, particularly the standards of argument and evidence."[19] Of particular interest to me are the London Charter's fourth principle, "Documentation" and sub-principle 4.6 "Documentation of Process ('Paradata')."[20] Documentation is outlined in this way: "Sufficient information should be documented and disseminated to allow computer-based visualisation methods and outcomes to be understood and evaluated in relation to the contexts and purposes for which they are deployed."[21] The documentation of process, or paradata, is a way to reveal the "fingerprints" of those who created the heritage object and the choices and assumptions that led to its creation. As Hugh Denard describes,

> [n]o matter how thoughtfully a research question is posed in relation to the existing field of knowledge, how painstakingly available sources are researched and interpreted, how discerningly or creatively an argument is elaborated visually, to the viewer, a finished image alone does not reveal the process by which it was created. Even a real-time model,

18. Caswell, Punzalan, and Sangwand, "Archival Studies," 2.

19. Hugh Denard, "A New Introduction to The London Charter," in *Paradata and Transparency in Virtual Heritage*, eds. Anna Bentkowska-Kafel, Hugh Denard, and Drew Baker (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012): 57-58.

20. The six principles described within "The London Charter" include: Implementation; Aims and Methods; Research Sources; Documentation; Sustainability; and Access.

21. Denard, "London Charter," 66.

> while it allows the user to explore a space in linear time, if it lacks an account of the evaluation of sources or of the process of interpretation, does not, in itself, render the research process visible to the visitor and thus fails to allow the viewer to assess it as part of an argument.[22]

"At the heart of The London Charter," Denard argues, "is the principle that heritage visualizations: 'should accurately convey to users the status of the knowledge that they represent, such as distinctions between evidence and hypothesis, and between different levels of probability.'"[23] The concept of paradata—the documentation of the "evaluative, analytical, deductive, interpretative and creative decisions" that make visible the "relationship between research sources, implicit knowledge, explicit reasoning, and visualisation-based outcomes"—is a useful concept for librarians working with digital collections and exhibits to consider. Paradata is an example of how we might "show our work" by reflecting upon, revealing, documenting, and sharing the choices and assumptions that guide our work and our decisions.[24]

Just as Chantler selected key moments from the Chatham Coloured All-Stars' story to build his four-panel cartoon, we knew that telling a compelling story with a relatable narrative arc would not only pique people's interest, it would make them want to learn more. We fully understood how easy it would be to overwhelm people with too much information, yet we also wanted to offer portals to additional material for those wanting more information. For our web exhibit, we consciously chose a concise narrative arc with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and we looked for opportunities to raise issues of race, racism, and the All-Stars' struggles to defy expectations. Understanding that it would be impossible to accurately convey the whole story of race in Chatham in the 1930s, we hoped that the 1934 season would not only be seen as an engaging narrative but would also be read metonymically for the larger issues of race and racism in Canadian society.

22. Denard, "London Charter," 60.

23. Denard, "London Charter," 60.

24. I am grateful to Devon Mordell for drawing my attention to this document and the potential uses of paradata for this project.

The 1934 Chatham Coloured All-Stars: A Story in Four Panels
© Scott Chantler (2016)

Figure 2. The 1934 Chatham Coloured All-Stars: A Story in Four Panels by Scott Chantler (2016).

Selecting this particular narrative arc meant that we did not focus on Boomer Harding's hockey story, which was, perhaps, even more revealing of the racial barriers that Black Canadians faced and still face in Canada. Harding's hockey story had no decisive victory at the end: no 13-7 score, no parade, no banquet, no headlines. It was difficult to leave that story out of our initial project, but we did so hoping that, by telling the story of the 1934 baseball season well, we could branch out and tell other stories related to Boomer Harding's life, as well as those of other team and community members that were noteworthy. At present, we are currently undertaking several other large-scale projects that not only begin to tell the fuller story of Boomer Harding, but also of sports, race, and racism in Canada. It was, and remains, our project team's hope that the story of the Chatham Coloured All-Stars can generate discussions that bring other stories and documents to the fore. Whether we made the best choices remains to be seen: we made choices and have attempted at each juncture to articulate why and how we made the ones we did.

Focusing our time and resources on the baseball stories has meant that other stories remain untold. Like the $600 I can spend only once on books for my library's literature collection, my time and that of my colleagues is also limited and finite. Every moment we spend on the Harding Project is time we cannot spend on other projects. Every time I see Dorothy Wright Wallace, President of the Chatham-Kent Black Historical Society and a tremendous supporter of the Harding Project, she always asks me, as she should, "But Heidi, what about the girls?" Wright Wallace remembers Black girls' baseball teams in Chatham and Japanese girls' teams from farm camps that few people talk about and has urged us to look at this history. For reasons worth considering, the history of women's sports was not as well documented nor as conveniently preserved as that of men's sports. The history of Japanese farm camps in this part of southern Ontario are just starting to get the attention they have long merited.[25] Focusing our efforts and time on

25. Another project at the University of Windsor's Leddy Library is Art Rhyno's work on the Nisei farm camps of Southwestern Ontario: https://cdigs.uwindsor.ca/omeka-s/s/nisei/page/welcome.

Boomer Harding and the All-Stars has meant that we cannot devote that time to recovering girls' and women's history. As someone whose early career was all about trying to find lost and silenced women's literary historical voices, I admit that I am troubled by letting the girls' stories sit silent, but there are simply too many projects and too few hours to do all the work we would like to do. In addition to research into girls' sports, there are also other equally fascinating and important heritage projects that we turn down, put on the back burner, leave on the shelves, or politely decline because, while they are valid and fascinating, we lack the time to get the grants we need to get them off the ground. Again, all of this digital preservation and storytelling work is rooted in choices and decisions.

Fobazi Ettarh describes "vocational awe" as "the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique."[26] The "stereotypical library," Ettarh writes, "is often portrayed as a grandiose and silent space where people can be guided to find answers."[27] In this iteration, librarians are a conduit between knowledge and the users: they are acquirers, organizers, preservers, and facilitators of information. Or, considered another way, librarians are invisible, passive, staid, and static, a conduit between questions and answers.

But a library is not a democratic institution simply because it has "Library" on the front of the building. A library is a democratic institution only when it actively and decisively works to preserve, defend, and enable democratic ideals. Similarly, an archive or a digital exhibit is not inherently democratic or emancipatory simply by existing. In all cases, we must examine our intents and actions, our assumptions and ellipses, in the choices we make. We must ask ourselves the difficult questions about the work we are doing and the work we are not doing. As Schwartz

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26. Fobazi Ettarh, "Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe* (January 10, 2018), http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/.

27. Ettarh, "Vocational Awe," January 10, 2018.

and Cook note, "The point is for archivists to (re)search thoroughly for the missing voices, for the complexity of the human or organizational functional activities under study during appraisal, description, or outreach activities, so that archives can acquire and reflect multiple voices, and not, by default, only the voices of the powerful."[28] Further, as Kellee E. Warren compellingly argues, "When archives ignore or emphasize one narrative over another, it influences how people see themselves and how others see them. When the powerful have control of archives, they can establish narratives of their choosing."[29] Libraries, like archives, must consider and work to enact concrete ways to move in the direction of greater diversity and inclusivity on a range of fronts and in multiple ways.

As Rabia Gibbs cautions, "Incorporating diversity into the historical record does not mean blindly accessioning records related to a specific race or ethnicity…we must see ethnic communities as independent, complex social groups instead of presuming that our diversity agenda is in alignment with minority documentary needs and histories simply because it addresses the issues of diversity."[30] The aim, she argues, is to "initiate a discussion about how to make our diversity initiatives more authentic and meaningful."[31] These are vital questions to consider, especially for those of us working with collections of materials from communities distinct from those to which we belong. In short, it's simply not enough to digitize "lost," "endangered," or "marginalized" voices; we must consider a range of vital questions. For example, how are the voices represented? How are the communities or individuals that produced these voices involved in the decision-making process? Punzalan and Caswell contend that "the challenge is not just how to

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28. Schwartz and Cook, "Modern Memory," 17.

29. Kellee E. Warren, "We Need These Bodies, But Not Their Knowledge: Black Women in the Archival Science Professions and Their Connection to the Archives of Enslaved Black Women in the French Antilles," *Library Trends* 64, no. 4 (Spring 2016): 786.

30. Rabia Gibbs, "The Heart of the Matter: The Developmental History of African American Archives," *American Archivist* 75, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2012): 203.

31. Gibbs, "Heart of the Matter," 204.

get more faces of color at the table, but to interrogate the cultural foundations and accompanying power structures upon which the table is built."[32] Moreover, as Warren argues, changes in our libraries and archives must happen at multiple levels in multiple ways: "the state of archives on enslaved black women and the current data on the recruitment of underrepresented groups in the archives and LIS professions demand the incorporation of concepts from black feminist thought, critical race theory, and cognitive justice into archival science and LIS curriculums. These frameworks will introduce future archivists and librarians to inclusive concepts and practices – practices that not only increase bodies but also create a cosmos of knowledge."[33] Again, librarians can look to the work of critical archival studies scholars as a way to start these conversations and work toward a more inclusive praxis.

As white scholars, none of us from Chatham, we have been constantly aware of the fine line that exists between facilitating a community's efforts to tell their own stories and appropriating those stories. Some members of the Chatham community wondered if it might be best for the community to undertake this digitization project themselves. Had this been the will of our community partners, we would have stepped away. As a result of many open and sincere conversations, we and our community partners came to understood that all parties involved in this project shared a deeply held belief in the importance of the voices and memories, and that each group had various skills and unique resources we could leverage to achieve our shared goals. The Harding family, other team members' families, and various Chatham community groups had documents, varied and vivid stories to tell, community connections, and a passion for history. At the University of Windsor, we had access to grant money, skilled students we could hire, technological equipment and expertise, server space, and a passion for history. In short, we offered the community the support and infrastructure we had access to through

32. Ricardo L. Punzalan, and Michelle Caswell, "Critical Directions for Archival Approaches to Social Justice," Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy 86, no. 1 (2016): 34.

33. Warren, "Bodies," 789.

the University, so that the community could tell its stories and that those stories could be preserved in their own voices.

Nevertheless, our roles as outsiders in this project were constantly in our minds and probably in the minds of our partners. As with all relationships, we made mistakes; some, we are aware of, and of others, we remain ignorant. We tried, at every step of our project, to consult with our community partners and make sure to have the difficult conversations when they arose. Our community partners did the same. We are often asked whether white scholars should have taken on this project and we understand where that question comes from. We know that, on the one hand, there are legitimate concerns about appropriation and the silencing of voices. On the other hand, there is the potential for the fear of appropriation to dominate so fully that it leads to inaction, which is another form of silencing or exclusion.

None of this work is easy.

Nor should it be.

When it starts seeming easy, we need to stop and consider whether we are asking the difficult questions of ourselves, our work, and our profession. If not, we need to have those conversations and "show our work." Scholarship within librarianship has, in many instances, been guilty of what Michelle Caswell has articulated regarding humanities scholars' refusal to engage with the scholarship of archival studies. Like the humanities, librarianship can benefit tremendously from engaging in this work, since critical archival studies "calls into question fundamental humanities assumptions about how we exist in the world, how we know what we know, and how we transmit that knowledge."[34] If, as Caswell posits,

> critical theory is that which explains what is wrong with the world, how we can change it, and who should change it, then archival studies can

34. Michelle Caswell offers this overview of critical archival studies: "It 1. Explains what is wrong with the current state of archival and recordkeeping practice and research and identifies who can change it and how; 2. Posits achievable goals for how archives and recordkeeping practice and research in archival studies can and should change; 3. Provides norms and strategies and mechanisms for forming such critique." Michelle Caswell, "Owning Critical Archival Studies: A Plea," (2016), 6.

> add a crucial records-centered component to this configuration; archival studies can interrogate how records contribute to what is wrong with the world, how records can be used to change it, and by whom. Archival studies can help critical theorists conceive of what "a real democracy" is (using Horkheimer's term) by adding our century-long discussion of representation, evidence, accountability, and memory.[35]

These are questions and concerns with which librarianship must engage as we envision what our profession and our broader work should look like today and in the future, and how we might move toward that vision.

In closing, I return to what Mr. Yeske, my patient math teacher, told me as I struggled with a problem I could not solve: "tell me the story of what you're trying to do with this problem." From there, I talked through what I was trying to do and he listened. He validated my thinking but also showed me alternative ways to proceed. Although I couldn't articulate what he was doing then, I now realize that his approach showed a respect for process – an openness to talking about things other than the "right" answer. I came to translate his insistent "show your work" as "I may not like your answer, but show me where you wanted to go, what you were trying to do, what assumptions you were making as you moved through the problem, and we can have a discussion." Perhaps my history with math classes explains a lot about how I approach librarianship. It's not about the one "right" answer but it is about "showing our work." It's about talking through what we're trying to do and working together to find the best ways to proceed. And, it's also about being open to making mistakes, talking them through, and learning from others.

Novelist Arundhati Roy has said, "We know of course there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless.' There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard."[36] Librarianship, digital humanities, and history are about choices—about what we tell, what we preserve, what we make accessible, what we highlight, and what we, regardless of our best intentions, silence, neglect, forget, or repress. Who are we not listening

35. Caswell, "Owning Critical Archival Studies," 6.

36. "Arundhati Roy: Sydney Peace Prize," November 4, 2004, http://sydney.edu.au/news/84.html?newsstoryid=279.

to when we're listening to others? What stories and voices are hidden in plain view right in front of us that we either cannot or do not see? We cannot do everything but we do make choices about what we do and what we do not do. We must carefully consider and articulate what we're not doing alongside of what we are doing.

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