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The "Ceaseless Quest for Truth"
The Southern Historical Collection and the Making and Remaking of the Southern Past

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Introduction

Thank you, Tim, for that generous introduction and for inviting me to take part in this very special event. I also want to take a moment to thank Bethany Johnson, whose study of the professionalization of southern history informs this talk and also to recognize Joe Mosnier and Beth Millwood, my co-conspirators in the Southern Oral History Program, who have played such a big role in whatever contribution we've been able to make to the Southern Historical Collection.[1]

The Southern Historical Collection, as most of you know, helped to put UNC on the map in the 1930s, and it has made the university a Mecca for scholars ever since. Now fifteen million items strong, the Southern, moreover, serves not just scholars but researchers of all kinds—including creative writers, local and family historians, and students—who learn here what it means not just to memorize dead historical "facts" but to "do history," to connect their lives to a *living* past.

The exhibit we are seeing tonight reminds us of the incredible *diversity* of materials one can find here. It gives us a taste of the riches in a collection too vast for any one person fully to explore. It showcases items that have always been seen as the *treasures* of the collection—plantation records especially come to mind—but which have been reread over and over again, revealing new truths with each new generation. The exhibit also enables us to marvel at the "underdogs" of the collection—the ephemera, the seemingly mundane, perishable, everyday items that that could so easily have been lost to the scrap heap.[2] Such items, which reflect the lives of the uncelebrated, sometimes lie dormant for decades, even generations, and then suddenly are made to speak. I hope you will linger over these words and images and sounds. I hope also that you will contemplate the time, the resources, the energy that goes into *organizing* these materials so that we can find in them not only a cacophony of haunting voices but also the threads from which to weave truthful and useful narratives of the past.

Archive Fever

As I contemplated this exhibit, I found myself thinking of a term coined by the philosopher Jacque Derrida and borrowed by a British historian named Carolyn Steedman in a wonderful meditation on the history and meaning of the archive in Western culture.[3] The term is "Archive Fever," and Steedman

uses it in two ways. She uses it to describe the impulse that led kings and newly created nation-states to build the first modern archives. *Their* desire was to create a paper trail that would make orderly, centralized governance possible and to provoke in their subjects the sense of patriotism and common identity on which rulers' rely.

But Steedman also uses Archive Fever to describe the *emotions* "associated with visiting archives"—visits which, ever since history became a *profession* in the nineteenth century, have been *the* rite of passage that transforms a student or an amateur into "a historian.[4] At the center of this nineteenth-century claim to *professional* status was the belief that primary documents provide a transparent window on the past, that historical research was or could become a "science," and that the mark of the professional historian was "objectivity"—the ability to put aside passion and politics and peer through the documents to see the past as it really was.[5]

In fact, I am here to tell you that historians, then and now, were far from passionless. The nineteenth-century founders of the profession—all of whom, of course, were men—spoke of a "desire for data" and often described their visits to the archives in the language of courtly love and sexual conquest. The facts buried in the archives, as Leopold von Ranke put it, were "so many princesses, possibly beautiful, all under a curse and needing to be saved." And again, an unseen archive was "an absolute virgin. I long for the moment I shall have access to her . . . whether she is pretty of not."[6] When women overcame their *exclusion* from the profession, breaking through in significant numbers only with the rebirth of feminism in the 1970s, they, too, often spoke of "rescue"—not the rescue of princesses by prince charmings but of foremothers by daughters determined to rescue women from the invisibility and condescension of the past.

In one passage, Steedman imagines Archive Fever literally—as the sensations of a historian tossing and turning on a narrow bed, in a cheap hotel, after a visit to the archives. Here's how she puts it:

> Archive Fever comes on at night, long after the archive has shut for the day . . . . What keeps you awake [is] . . . the myriads of the dead, who all day long, have pressed their concerns upon you. You think [to yourself]: these people have left me a *lot* . . . . You think: I could get to hate these people; and then: I can *never* do these people justice; and finally: I shall *never* get it done.[7]

I am sure researchers visiting the Southern Historical Collection today experience all of these reactions—the thrill of access to new documents, the sense of *responsibility* to the people you study, the tossing and turning, the feeling of urgency that comes from contemplating all this "stuff," which archivists have *labored* to preserve and organize and catalogue, but which "just sits there until it is read, and used, and narrativised" and made to speak. The fear that you can only scratch the surface, that you will never get it *done*.[8]

But Archive Fever has another cause as well, and *that* is our keen awareness of what is *not* there, of all that has been and *will be* lost. For we know that the Southern Historical Collection, like all archives, was shaped as much by loss and exclusion as by inclusion, by what was destroyed or ignored as well as by what was salvaged and saved.

Origins/Context: the Turn of the Century and the Depression Decade

I'm sure that many of you have heard stories about how J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton roamed the South in the 1930s and 1940s, scooping up the papers hidden away in attics and decaying mansions and saving them from the ever-present threat of rats and fire. Most southern archives at the time were *state-*

oriented, not regional or national in scope, and state loyalists were sometimes less than amused by Hamilton's raids across state lines. From Virginia, one of Hamilton's informants wrote, "They regard you [here] as the Great Devil, and Duke as something worse."[9] (Duke, I should mention turned out to be Chapel Hill's major competitor, in the archives as on the basketball court.) A South Carolinian called Hamilton "'That Chapel Hill pirate.'"[10] From Nashville came a postcard saying: "Out here they call you Dr. J. G. de *Ransack* Hamilton. More power to you."[11]

Hamilton seldom came back empty-handed, and, in the end, he realized his dream of creating "the most important regional collection of manuscripts in the United States."[12] Moreover, he spurred others to collect and preserve, with the result that other southern universities developed distinguished collections as well. As Frank Porter Graham put it: "With little, and at times no, capital except a second-hand Ford, [Dr. Hamilton] ransacked our countryside and saved much of the records of our people."[13]

Graham's remarks underscore Hamilton's accomplishments. But they also point toward questions I want to raise. An anniversary like this one always directs our attention to founders and origins, but I think it is equally important to consider the archives in *evolutionary* terms.[14] Who did the archivists and historians of Hamilton's generation see as "our people"? How *inclusive* were the records and what stories of the past did those records underwrite? In short, what political and moral vision lay behind this great archival project? And, just as important, how did it evolve and remain vital over time? How has the Southern Historical Collection managed both to fulfill its founder's aspirations and to transcend them, in order to serve what Hamilton called "the ceaseless quest for truth"?[15]

To answer those questions, we need to look at three critical moments in history: the early twentieth century, the era in which Hamilton and his cohort were trained; the 1920s and 1930s, the era in which the Southern Historical Collection took shape; and the 1970s, when the study of the South blossomed and what was called "the new social history" or history from the bottom up burst upon the scene. And for each of these moments, we need to consider what Jan Paris and Lynn Holdzkom, in a wonderful, earlier exhibit, called the "invisible process" by which archivists, librarians, and conservators interact with researchers to make and remake our understanding of the past.[16] For this interaction has made *new* sources available, raised new questions about *old* sources, and challenged our very understanding of what "primary sources" are and what meanings they hold.

Let's begin, then, with the early twentieth century. Like virtually every member of the South's tiny first generation of professional historians, Hamilton took his Ph.D. in the North—in 1906 at Columbia University, where he studied under William A. Dunning, a northerner who surrounded himself with southern disciples, trained them in the new, supposedly "scientific" approach to history, and sent them out to write enormously influential studies of Reconstruction.[17]

By *Reconstruction* I am referring to the brief period after the Civil War when Congress reestablished military control, demanded the reorganization of planter-controlled state governments, and authorized voting and office holding by black men. These newly democratized legislatures, in turn, established the South's first system of public education and, in other ways, launched what scholars today see as an unfinished democratic social and economic revolution—a revolution which, had it been allowed to run its course, might have spared the South from generations of segregation, poverty, and oppression.

To Dunning and his students, however, Reconstruction was a dark time in which Yankee carpetbaggers exploited ignorant and gullible ex-slaves for their own political and economic gain. For them, the Ku Klux Klan and other "Redeemers," who used almost any means necessary to reassert white control, were the heroes, not the villains of the story. And the lesson they drew was that blacks could not and

should not be full citizens and that the federal government should not try to enforce civil rights in the South.[18]

Hamilton's first book, *Reconstruction in North Carolina,* was published in 1914, at about the time that he began to collect documents and dream of establishing the Southern Historical Collection. That book exemplified what came to be known as the "Dunning School" of thought on Reconstruction.[19]

I cannot *overemphasize* how pervasive this view of Reconstruction was at the time—among white scholars and the white public in both the North and South, and it went hand in hand with the reigning belief that slavery was a beneficent "school of civilization."[20] And yet, from the outset, there was also a counternarrative—preserved in black folk memory and documented by black scholars.[21] Only four years after the publication of Hamilton's study, for instance, W. E. B. Du Bois hurled the first volley in his challenge to the Dunning School.[22] In a paper on "Reconstruction and Its Benefits," he argued "that the reason for certain adjectives applied to Reconstruction is purely racial. Reconstruction was 'tragic,' 'terrible,' a 'great mistake,' a 'humiliation' not because of what actually happened [but] because here an attempt was initiated to make American democracy and the tenets of the Declaration of Independence apply not only to white men but to black men."[23] White scholars could not avoid grappling with such critiques. And over time, this dialogue between dominant narratives and counter narratives changed the way we see the past.[24]

At first, however, Hamilton and his cohort were prisoners, not just of garden variety racism, but of their own professional culture—which led to what I think of as the sin of certitude. They were convinced that they—and they alone—were impartial observers who had simply *found* their facts in the archives. They saw African Americans (and women for that matter) as incapable of the objectivity scientific inquiry required.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that these men were anything but impartial. They had *grown up* in the shadow of Reconstruction and, whether they knew it or not, they were influenced by *white oral* traditions—the white version of history they had been told. They were also influenced by the politics of the era in which they wrote. They were, after all, publishing their books at the very moment in which their *own* generation of white leaders was destroying a biracial Populist movement, disfranchising blacks and many poor whites, and locking the South into a system of legal segregation that would last until the 1960s, when it was overthrown by the civil rights revolution.[25]

Moreover, the very *sources* on which they relied were shaped by an ideologically driven process of inclusion and exclusion. As W. E. B. Du Bois put it: the "'chief witness' [to] Reconstruction, the emancipated slave, was 'banned from court,' his written Reconstruction record largely destroyed and nearly always neglected." And this is to say nothing of white ignorance of black oral traditions.[26]

I focus here on Reconstruction *not* in order to condemn or dismiss our predecessors or to set ourselves up as more enlightened than they. My goal rather is to stress that the stories historians tell about the past *never* simply arise from the archives. They emerge from the interaction of archivists and historians, of sources and assumptions, within a particular moral and political atmosphere. Those stories change as the atmosphere changes—but they do not do so arbitrarily. It is not true that "one story is as good as another," that "it's all relative." Rather *true* and *useful* stories arise as successive generations ask new questions and pursue those questions through a rigorous process of collecting, research, dialogue, and critique.

To put it another way: When historians of today look back at the people of the past, including the *scholars and archivists* of the past, they do so through a double lens. Through one lens, they measure

them by their own hard-won insights into the operations of inclusion and exclusion, of power and oppression. Through the other lens, they measure them by the standards and possibilities of the past.[27] They then submit their judgments to public and professional scrutiny and revise them in response to informed critique.

In recent years, pundits have taken to using "revisionism" as a dirty word—in effect equating the interpretive process I'm talking about here with the deliberate, cynical rewriting of textbooks by which repressive regimes try to control access to knowledge and wipe out inconvenient memories of the past. In fact, for historians, re-visioning, seeing the past anew, has *always* stood at core of the "ceaseless quest for truth." The archives do not provide a direct conduit to "the truth," but they are our most important companion in this quest, our best guarantee that however partial today's understandings may be, future generations will be able to go to the sources and discover new truths by bringing their own double lenses to bear. Indeed, the very point of creating the Southern Historical Collection—a specifically *southern* archive—as Hamilton explained it, was to "make possible [a] fresh interpretation of the nation's history."[28]

To explain this a little differently, let me switch to another metaphor: our stories never simply capture the past "as it was." The past is beyond us, it can be represented, but it cannot be retrieved. And those representations, those stories *must* emerge out of a dialogue between the past and present—a dialogue that is *disciplined, kept honest* by free access to rich archives and by an interpretive community engaged in free, ongoing, open-minded dialogue and critique.

Some of you may be aware of the recent controversy over the Cornelia Phillips Spencer Bell Award and over the whole issue of how the built environment of the university—the names on its buildings, its monuments, and so on—commemorates those who "redeemed" the South from Reconstruction and led the segregation and disfranchisement campaigns while ignoring other actors in the southern past. Few thoughtful people advocate tearing down statues and renaming buildings and thus simply obliterating the landscape of the past. Most argue instead for careful attention to *current* and future choices (the Bell Award, for instance, was a choice of the 1990s, not of the ancient past) and for using earlier monuments as teaching opportunities and augmenting them with commemorations to other people and events. I think that this should be done and can be done, but, at the end of the day, monuments are, well, "monuments"—they are literally written in stone. They tower over us, memorials to a political and moral regime—or to aspects of a regime—to which we can no longer give our allegiance, in which we can no longer believe.

Archives are different. They hold multiple meanings; they are multi-layered; they live; they are always in flux. Hamilton's failure to view blacks as responsible, self-conscious political actors certainly led to the sins of omission that Du Bois pointed out. Hamilton's generation also assumed that women did not make history, and until very recently archivists buried information on women's lives in collections named for and devoted to men—thus creating one of the biggest barriers that historians of women had to overcome.[29] The papers of the slave owners and Redeemers and disfranchisers, on the other hand—like the buildings named after them—were always treated as the Collection's treasures.

And yet the fact remains that the same archives that grew out of a tradition of scholarship that assumed the beneficence of slavery and the evils of Reconstruction has made possible the *re*interpretations, the new stories of modern times. In fact, that re-visioning began *immediately*: a young radical named C. Vann Woodward came to UNC as a graduate student only a few years after Hamilton founded the Southern Historical Collection in 1930 specifically to use the Tom Watson Papers, which Hamilton had acquired. And he used those papers to write a history of the Populist movement and the disfranchisement

campaigns in which black and white farmers were the heroes of the story as they formed an interracial alliance in opposition to the Redeemers' regime.[30]

Thus we can see that *from the outset* the Southern Historical Collection contained eloquent evidence of uncelebrated lives. This is true in part because the papers of the rulers can and have been read for evidence of the ruled. It is also true because of the ferment that took place during my second critical period—the 1920s and 1930s, when the modernization of southern intellectual life, the shock of the Great Depression, and the promise of the New Deal inspired new ways of thinking about the South. I have stressed Hamilton's training in the early twentieth century. But the Southern Historical Collection was a product not just of his *original* assumptions but of his maturity in these *interwar* years—a period that produced a new generation of southern writers and intellectuals and laid the groundwork for a new, more inclusive and more critical understanding of the South.[31]

We know a great deal about the writers of that generation—William Faulkner and the like. We also celebrate the regional sociologists, such as Howard Odum, the godfather of southern studies at UNC. But archivists and historians were also critical to this new spirit. And out of their efforts came a new emphasis on race and class conflicts as well as on ordinary people's historical agency. This approach was exemplified at UNC by C. Vann Woodward and Julia Cherry Spruill in the 1930s. It was carried forward by our own George Tindall and Joel Williamson and, if I may claim her for UNC despite the fact that we lost her early on to Duke, by Anne Firor Scott.[32] And it has kept Chapel Hill in the forefront of southern history ever since.

Hamilton never changed his mind about Reconstruction, and he could be quite huffy toward the black and white southerners who, in the 1930s, began to challenge and ultimately to demolish the work of the Dunning School. But Hamilton the archivist was an *omnivorous* collector, he responded to the changing interests of historians, and he did not maintain a "great men" approach to the past. In 1942, for instance, he wrote a wonderful article entitled "The Importance of Unimportant Documents," pointing out that "More and more historians . . . are impressed with the significance of social history—the portrayal of the life and thought . . . of the people as a whole . . . . Every *despised and neglected* document has possibilities. [The papers] of the humble and obscure may give a clearer explanation of the past . . . than the lives and thoughts of the great."[33] True to his word, Hamilton scooped up what other people saw as the "boring" diaries of rural women, the writings of the ex-slaves, and other "underdog" sources.[34]

Moreover, it was the New Deal, with its work relief agencies aimed both at putting the unemployed to work and building the infrastructure of the nation, that made possible the cataloging and organizing of the collection in the 1930s—and Hamilton was far-sighted enough to leap at this opportunity.[35]

And finally, despite the scientific historians' deification of *written* records, the Southern Historical Collection housed the life history interviews with ordinary southerners conducted by the Federal Writers Project, another New Deal innovation, under the direction of UNC Press's founding editor W. T. Couch—and in that sense helped to pioneer a tradition of documenting the lives of the "humble and obscure" through interviews that was revived by the oral history movement in the 1970s.

The Southern Oral History Program, the Digital Revolution, and Beyond

Let me turn now from the early twentieth century and the 1930s to my final critical period, the 1970s, when the civil rights movement inspired a huge surge of interest in southern history among scholars throughout the country and the world. Many of these scholars were also influenced by what was called "the new social history," and they sought not only to understand the deep roots of the great racial drama taking place in the South, but also to expand the range of voices on which such an understanding

could rest. In Du Bois's terms, they wanted to call the witnesses who had long been "banned from court." To do so, they had to reread old sources and find new sources, sources that enable us to view history "from the bottom up."[36]

The Southern Historical Collection advanced this effort in a host of ways, and I'll end by talking briefly about two of these.

First, beginning with the establishment of the Southern Oral History Program in 1973 and the arrival of the Southern Folklife Collection thirteen years later, the Southern moved decisively beyond written records in order to collect the sounds and images—the recordings, photographs, videos, and the like—that *must* be preserved not only in order to write the history of the uncelebrated but, indeed, to write the history our own times.

George Tindall of the History Department was the Southern Oral History Program's founding father, but he had the help of Bill Powell of the North Carolina Collection, Isaac Copeland, Director of the Southern, and former Chancellor Carlyle Sitterson; funding from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation; and the ongoing support of University president Bill Friday and all of the Collection's subsequent directors. I, of course, was a mere child at the time, but I had the great good luck to be hired as the Oral History Program's first director.

All of us at the Program—like the whole oral history movement—were driven by two main concerns. The first was a desire to make history more democratic by including the voices of people who do not necessarily leave behind written records or whose records are seldom preserved. The second was the realization that written sources *alone* are no longer adequate for understanding even the lives of our most influential leaders because modern forms of travel and communication—the airplane, the telephone, and now the Internet—are making it less and less likely that they will leave behind the intimate, detailed letters and diaries that Hamilton collected and on which historians have always relied. In short, much of recent history resides only in memory. Our job has been to capture the memories of the *celebrated and* the uncelebrated before they are irretrievably lost.

The relationship between the Southern Historical Collection and the Southern Oral History Program brings into sharp focus the often invisible interactions between archivists and historians that make and remake our understanding of the past. We are, as far as I know, unique among major oral history programs, in being housed first in a history department and now in the interdisciplinary Center for the Study of the American South and directed by a faculty member who is also engaged in teaching and research. For this reason, we have always been devoted not only to *creating* sources but also to *using* them—to advance new scholarship on the South. We, in turn, rely on the Southern Historical Collection to oversee the process of preserving fragile tapes and transcripts, cataloging those materials, and making them available to people like yourselves. We strive to *complement* the Collection's written holdings. The Collection, in turn, builds on our interviews by seeking out the papers of underrepresented groups. In this way, archivists and historians work together—more self-consciously and visibly than they often do—to cope with a technological revolution and to advance our understanding of the past.

Second, and more recently, the Collection has been in the forefront of developing new guides and categorizations that make it easier to find the uncelebrated voices hidden in the documents of the past. The *Guide to African-American Documentary Resources in North Carolina* published in 1996 and edited by Tim Pyatt is a case in point.[37] Moreover, by digitizing its finding aids and, increasingly, its documents and interviews, the Collection has democratized the archive by making it accessible to a larger audience than ever before.[38]

And so, the process continues. J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton might not recognize the stories that are now emerging from the documents in the collection he founded. He would certainly be surprised by the World Wide Web. But he would recognize the Archive Fever that compels us to this beautiful building with our pencils (and now our laptops) in hand.[39] And he would urge us onward in our "ceaseless quest for truth."

Notes

[1] Bethany L. Johnson, "Regionalism, Race, and the Meaning of the Southern Past: Professional History in the American South, 1896–1961" (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 2001). Johnson helped me immeasurably with the research and thinking for this talk. I also thank Tim West for supplying me with information and answering my many questions and Robert Korstad for his reading of the text.

[2] Jan Paris, "A Conservator Reflects," in *The Invisible Process: Ingenuity and Cooperation in Finding Women's Lives*, ed. Jan Paris, Lynn Holdzkom, and Elizabeth Chenault (Chapel Hill: Academic Affairs Library, UNC Chapel Hill, 1997), 3.

[3] Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

[4] Jo Tollebeek, "'Turn'd to Dust and Tears': Revisiting the Archives," review of *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, by Carolyn Steedman, *History and Theory* 43 (May 2004): 238.

[5] For the complex history of this ideal, see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[6] Leopold von Ranke quoted in Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and Historical Understanding," in *Learning History in America: Schools, Cultures, and Politics*, eds. Lloyd Kramer, Donald Reid, and William L. Barney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 109.

[7] Steedman, *Dust*, 17–8.

[8] Ibid, 68.

[9] From Louis B. Wright to J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, 11 June 1940, Box 5, Folder 143, in the Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton Papers #1743, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[10] From William Elliott (editor, *Columbia State*) to Hamilton, 14 February 1941, Box 5, Folder 146, in the Hamilton Papers #1743.

[11] From Jonathan Daniels to Hamilton, 5 April 1960 [postmark], Box 7, Folder 193, in the Hamilton Papers #1743.

[12] From J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton to Victor S. Bryant, 20 February 1946, Series 2, Folder 881, in the Fletcher Melvin Green Papers #4265, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[13] From Frank Porter Graham to Rufus L. Patterson, 1 November 1933, in the Records of Academic Affairs Library: Manuscripts Department #40052, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

[14] Susan Grigg, "Archival Practice and the Foundations of Historical Method," *Journal of American History* 78 (June 1991): 234.

[15] Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton, *A National Southern Collection at the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1933), Series 2, Folder 881, in the Green Papers #4264.

[16] Paris, Holdzkom, and Chenault, eds., *Invisible Process.*

[17] Claire Bond Potter, *The Living Present: The Civil War, William Dunning, and a Modern Historical Imagination* (forthcoming).

[18] "Rarely," as C. Vann Woodward observed, "has history served a regime better by discrediting so thoroughly the old order from which the new rulers seized power." C. Vann Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 25.

[19] Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton, *Reconstruction in North Carolina* (New York: Columbia University, 1914).

[20] The Dunning view was popularized especially by Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution after Lincoln* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), which, according to Bowers's biographer sold "more than any book ever written on Reconstruction." Peter J. Sehlinger and Holman Hamilton, *Spokesman for Democracy: Claude G. Bowers, 1878–1958* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2000), 122. Ulrich B. Phillips of Yale was the chief architect of the reigning view of slavery.

[21] The Dunning School, for instance, was slammed in the *Journal of Negro History*. For an example, see the Review of *A History of the United States Since the Civil War, Vol. 2: 1868–1872*, by Ellis Paxon Oberholtzer, *Journal of Negro History,* 8, no. 4 (October 1923): 458–61 (unnamed reviewer).

[22] This was the first volley for Du Bois, but Alrutheus A. Taylor, another important if less well known black historian of Reconstruction, arguably prefigured Du Bois in his research and historiography. See Stephen Gilroy Hall, "'Research as Opportunity': Alrutheus Ambush Taylor, Black Intellectualism, and the Remaking of Reconstruction Historiography, 1893–1954," *UCLA Historical Journal* 16 (1996): 39–60.

[23] Du Bois quoted in Jessie P. Guzman, "W. E. B. Du Bois—The Historian," *Journal of Negro Education* 30, no. 4 (Autumn 1961): 379. Du Bois delivered this paper at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in New York in 1909; it was published as "Reconstruction and Its Benefits," *American Historical Review* 15, no. 4 (July 1910): 781–99.

[24] Bethany L. Johnson, "C. Vann Woodward and the Reconstruction of the New South," in *Origins of the New South Fifty Years Later: The Continuing Influence of a Historical Classic*, eds. John B. Boles and Bethany L. Johnson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

[25] The story the Dunning School told about Reconstruction helped to justify these actions by driving home the assumption that blacks had to be written out of politics and cordoned off from whites in order to end racial tensions and allow the region to progress. Jack Temple Kirby, *Darkness at the Dawning: Race and Reform in the Progressive South* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 4.

[26] Du Bois quoted in Guzman, "W. E. B. Du Bois," 380. Du Bois's opus on Reconstruction was *Black Reconstruction: An Essay toward a History of the Part which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1935).

[27] For a similar metaphor of the double lens, see Suzanne Lebsock, "Woman Suffrage and White Supremacy: A Virginia Case Study," in *Visible Women: New Essays on American Activism*, eds. Nancy A. Hewitt and Suzanne Lebsock (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 65.

[28] Hamilton, *National Southern Collection at the University of North Carolina*.

[29] Deborah Gray White, "Mining the Forgotten: Manuscript Sources for Black Women's History," *Journal of American History*, 74, no. 1 (June 1987): 237. See also Joan Rabins, "Records Redux: Enhancing Subject Access through Redescription," *Midwestern Archivist* 8, no. 2 (1983): 17–27; and Frederic M. Miller, "Social History and Archival Practice," *American Archivist* 44 no. 2 (1981): 113–24.

[30] Woodward, *Thinking Back: The Perils of Writing History,* 9–42; C. Vann Woodward, *Tom Watson, Agrarian Rebel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938).

[31] For this generation of historians, see Johnson, "Regionalism, Race, and the Meaning of the Southern Past"; and Ellen Fitzpatrick, *History's Memory: Writing America's Past, 1880–1980* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).

[32] Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1938); George Brown Tindall, *South Carolina Negroes, 1877–1900* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1952); Joel Williamson, *After Slavery: The Negro in South Carolina during Reconstruction, 1861–1877* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965); Anne Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830–1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[33] Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton, "On the Importance of Unimportant Documents," *Library Quarterly* 12 (1942): 518.

[34] Carolyn Wallace, "Roulhac Hamilton, Manuscripts Collector," unpublished manuscript in Tim West's possession.

[35] Historical Records Survey of North Carolina, *Guide to the Manuscripts in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941). Also, when the contingencies of World War II threw up roadblocks in terms of gas rations or the unavailability of new tires, Hamilton creatively negotiated for the needed supplies, or put his pen to work corresponding with potential donors, and lobbying the government to pay heed to the protection of historical documents in wartime. Johnson, "Race, Regionalism, and the Meaning of the Southern Past," 129–30; Gay Garrigan Moore, "The Southern Historical Collection in the Louis Round Wilson Library of the University of North Carolina, from the Beginning of the Collection through 1948" (M.S. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1958), 44, 53.

[36] See this article for the relationships between archivists and historians and the rise of new social history: Patrick M. Quinn, "Archivists and Historians: The Times They Are A-Changing," *Midwestern Archivist* 2 no. 2 (1977): 5–13; and Ellen D. Swain, "Oral History in the Archives: Its Documentary Role in the 21st Century," *American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (2003): 139–58.

[37] Tim Pyatt, ed., *Guide to African-American Documentary Resources in North Carolina* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), online at http://www.upress.virginia.edu/epub/pyatt/.

[38] This also enables researchers to create their own search categories, rather than being quite so dependent on imposed systems of categorization, which may not be intentionally exclusionary but are by their nature inflexible.

[39] I thank Bethany Johnson for the structure of this paragraph and some of its phrasing.