



BLACK METROPOLIS  
**BMRC**  
RESEARCH CONSORTIUM

# NEWS

***In this issue:***

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## BMRC Fellows Continue to Make an Impact on the Field

### Publish New Scholarship on Black Experiences

Since its establishment in 2009, the BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows Program has supported 108 scholars, writers and artists in conducting archival research at BMRC member institutions using collections that document Black experiences. Their projects have resulted in scholarly books, dissertations, journal articles, news articles, documentaries, photographic exhibitions, plays and musical performances.

**AMANI MORRISON, Assistant Professor of English, Georgetown University**

Congratulations to former BMRC Fellow, Amani Morrison for her recently published article in the American Studies journal, *American Quarterly* (March 2022). Morrison's article, "Quotidian Expenses: Residential Repertoires and Domestic Pedagogies in Great Migration Chicago Kitchenettes" is a cultural history exploring kitchenettes as built environments that shaped the development of the South Side and Black life.

The article is part of a larger book project on kitchenettes. Morrison is also working on a digital humanities project leveraging data and insights from the archives. In the fall, she will teach a new course entitled "Literature and the Archive" inspired by her time moving between Chicago's Great Migration-era literature and the wealth of BMRC member institution archives.



Amani Morrison  
2015 & 2017 BMRC Fellow

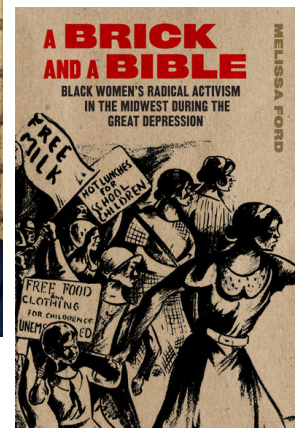
*"The fellowship took me out of my literary comfort zone and made me fall in love with archival research, and it has since opened so many more doors of inquiry and opportunity for me."*

**MELISSA FORD, Assistant Professor of History,  
Slippery Rock University**

Congratulations to Melissa Ford for the recent publication of *A Brick and a Bible: Black Women's Radical Activism in the Midwest During the Great Depression* (Southern Illinois University Press, 2022). *A Brick and a Bible* builds off of Ford's fellowship research and examines Black working-class women's radical and labor activism in the Midwest in the 1930s during the Great Depression.



Melisa Ford  
2013 BMRC Fellow

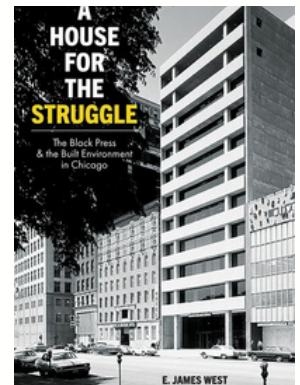
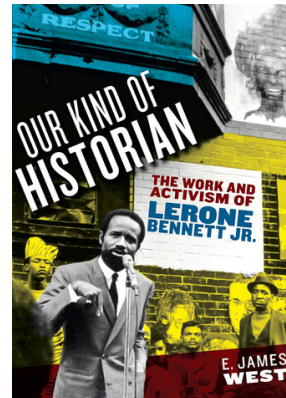


**E. JAMES WEST, Lecturer in Modern U.S. History,  
University of York, United Kingdom**

Congratulations to E. James West for two new publications that expand on his fellowship research, including *Our Kind of Historian: The Work and Activism of Lerone Bennett Jr.* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2022) and *A House for the Struggle: The Black Press and the Built Environment in Chicago* (University of Illinois Press, 2022). West's scholarship focuses on histories of the Black Press and Black Chicago.



E. James West,  
2013, 2015 & 2017  
BMRC Fellow



**About the BMRC**

The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) is a Chicago-based membership association of libraries, universities, museums, community/arts organizations and other archival institutions. The BMRC's mission is to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.

It is the vision of the BMRC to be essential to promoting discovery, preservation, and use of Black historical collections. Through consortial programs, the BMRC aids in expanding broad access to its members' holdings of materials that document African American and African diasporic culture, history, and politics, with a specific focus on materials relating to Chicago.

**Connect with us**

Website: [bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu](http://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu)

Email: [bmrc@uchicago.edu](mailto:bmrc@uchicago.edu)

YouTube: [BMRC-Black Metropolis Research Consortium](https://www.youtube.com/BMRC-BlackMetropolisResearchConsortium)

Socials: [@ChicagoBMRC](https://www.instagram.com/ChicagoBMRC)



# Chair's Letter



Dear BMRC Community,

With this BMRC newsletter, we intend to reward your curiosity about the latest events and initiatives of the consortium. We also hope to spark your interest in contributing to our mission to “connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.” The staff, board, and member institutions of the BMRC have done significant work in the last year to nurture such connections and we are excited to share the results. Our grants, programming, exhibits, internship, and fellowship highlight the role of archival institutions in advancing knowledge creation and legacy preservation for Black Chicago.

The pandemic may have sent our community on a few detours, but one would not be able to tell when exploring the amazing work highlighted in this issue of *BMRC News*. I would like to take a moment to applaud the vision and strategic work of Marcia Walker-McWilliams, Allison Sutton, T Calvin, and Laurie Lee Moses, our esteemed BMRC staff members. Their brilliance, hard work, and dedication ensured that we never lost momentum during this difficult time. Thank you for broadening our impact, attracting new consortium members, completing projects successfully, and initiating new collaborations.

I would also like to take a moment to thank our board members and member institutions for their commitment to preserving and promoting Black history and culture as part of the BMRC. Our consortium benefits from the range of interests and perspectives of each board member; thank for your contributions and hard work! The BMRC is energized by the breadth of initiatives from member institutions, and strengthened by consortial collaborations like the Black Metropolis Graduate Assistantship, the Archie Motely Internship Program, and the Summer Fellows Program. I believe the dynamic collaboration within this community is an example which other regions, nationally and globally, can use to advance and enrich their work. We are privileged with the opportunity to amplify your projects, build your capacity, and collaborate with you. Thank You!

Lastly, we truly appreciate the energy each member of this community invests in the consortium. If you are a current or former fellow, an intern, a past, current or future collaborator, a funder, or an interested member of the Chicagoland community, we thank you for your time, effort, and interest.

Sincerely,  
Steven M. Adams  
Board Chairperson, Black Metropolis Research Consortium

# Executive Director's Note



Dear friends,

After a brief hiatus in January 2022, the *BMRC News*, our biannual print newsletter, is back! In this issue, you'll learn more about our 2022 cohorts of Archie Motley Interns and Summer Short-term Fellows, our grant-based initiatives, new resources and the relaunch of an exhibit on the history of the BMRC. I hope you enjoyed reading this issue's cover story featuring some of the amazing work of former BMRC Fellows.

On Wednesday, August 3rd, we invite you to attend the BMRC's 2022 Annual Meeting which will be held virtually via Zoom webinar from 10:00 to 11:30am CT. You can learn more about the meeting and register to attend on our website. Our staff have been hard at work creating new resources and supporting the ongoing initiatives of the BMRC and we're excited to share more at the Annual Meeting.

We remain grateful to our host institution, the University of Chicago, our member institutions, individual donors and funders including the Mellon Foundation and Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation for their support over the past year. Our network of friends, partners and supporters continues to grow. Please continue to spread the word about the Black Metropolis Research Consortium.

Stay well. Stay safe. Stay engaged.

Marcia Walker-McWilliams  
Executive Director, Black Metropolis Research Consortium

# Get to know the 2022 Archie Motley Archival Interns

*The Archie Motley Archival Internship Program provides stipends to students of color to provide practical employment experience as cultural heritage professionals working in BMRC member institutions. Thank you to the BMRC, DePaul University and University of Chicago Career Advancement for supporting this year's internship.*



**Cameron Drake** is a rising junior at the University of Chicago where he majors in History and Critical Race and Ethnic Studies with a minor in Theater Performance

**Project and BMRC host institution:** Cameron will work on the Documenting Black History in DeKalb County and at Northern Illinois University project, a joint effort of BMRC member institution, Northern Illinois University and the Dekalb County History Center.

**AMAIP Goals/Future plans:** "America is currently in a transition period within its history. I firmly believe that the best way to analyze and accurately portray history is through studying the archive. [During this internship] I hope to study how these stories have been told and how they should be told in order to best benefit the subjects of these stories: the black community."



**Sydnie Martin** is a 2022 graduate of DePaul University where she received her B.A. in African and Black Diaspora Studies with a minor in History.

**Project and BMRC host institution:** Sydnie will work on the Oral Histories of the Black Student Union project in Special Collections and University Archives at DePaul University

**AMAIP Goals/Future plans:** "Professionally, I would like to have a career in archives. I hope to pursue a graduate degree in library science or museum studies...I have a passion for studying Black history and think it is incredibly important for Black archivists to preserve it before it is lost completely, or completely misunderstood."



**Daian Rodriguez** is a rising sophomore at the University of Chicago where she majors in Anthropology and Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

**Project and BMRC host institution:** Daian will work on the Cook County Historic Archives and Records Office (CARO) Oral History Collection at the Cook County Historic Archives.

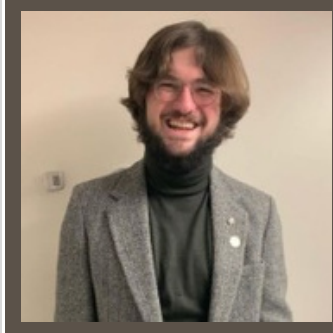
**AMAIP Goals/Future plans:** "My goals right now are rather open, I don't have an established end goal for my career. I do know that I would like to focus on cultural Anthropology and be able to work on research projects regarding regions like Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. I'm interested in this internship because I would like to have some exposure to a working environment where preserving cultural heritage is important."

# Meet the 2022 BMRC Summer Short-term Fellows

**Richard Benson, II, PhD**  
Associate Professor,  
Education, Spelman College

**Project:**

*Harold Washington: Black  
Power Politics and United  
Front Radicalism in the  
'City of Wind'*



**Daniel Candee**  
M.A., Social Sciences,  
University of Chicago

**Project:**

*From the Front Door to the  
Factory Floor: Triumphs and  
Tribulations of Black  
Autonomy in the Interwar  
Illinois Communist Party*

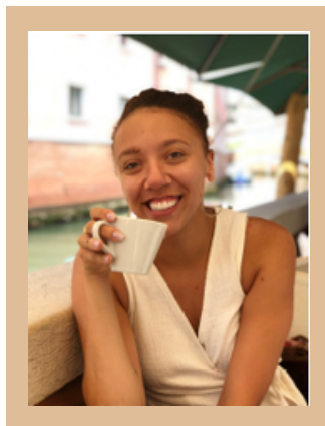


**Peter Kent-Stoll**

Ph.D candidate, Sociology,  
Certificate in African Diaspora  
Studies, University of  
Massachusetts

**Project:**

*Imperial Metropolis: Settler  
Colonialism and Antiracism  
in Chicago, 1952-1972*

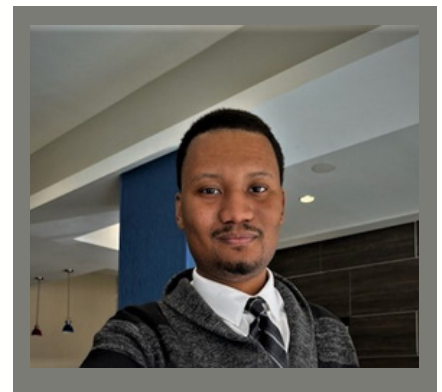


**Michelle Johnson**

Ph.D candidate, History and  
African American Studies,  
Yale University

**Project:**

*Wagons and Warehouses:  
Desegregating Chicago Public  
Schools, 1942-1966*



**Brandon Stokes**

Ph.D candidate, African American  
and African Diaspora Studies  
Indiana University

**Project:**

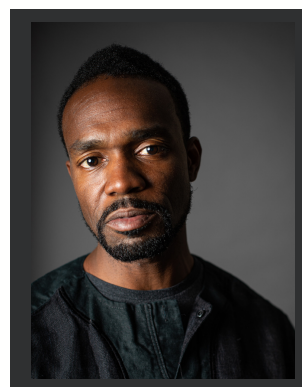
*A Divided Bronzeville: How Race  
and Class Created Separate  
Housing Institutions for African  
Americans in the Black Metropolis*

**Paul Michael-Thomson**

Ph.D student, Afro-  
American Studies,  
University of Massachusetts  
and Founder & Executive  
Director, Governing  
Ensemble  
The Story Theatre, Chicago

**Project:**

*Comparative Practices in  
New Play Development,  
Conversant with Chicago's  
Black Arts Movement*



**Andre Zachary**

MFA, Performance &  
Interactive Media Arts  
Brooklyn College, CUNY and  
Co-Founder/Artistic Director,  
Renegade Performance  
Group, Brooklyn, NY

**Project:**

*Against Gravity: Flying Afrikans  
+ Other Urban Legends*



A screenshot of the BMRC Archives portal homepage.

# BMRC Wraps Up Three-Year Grant from the Mellon Foundation

In 2019, the BMRC embarked on a pivotal grant project, “Documenting Black Chicago Through Technology, Sustainability, and Outreach,” funded by an award from the Mellon Foundation. The grant supported two important initiatives that have now come to fruition. First, the BMRC has created educational resources and public programming for potential donors and archivists that encourage the caretaking of a more diverse historical record. These resources were developed by T Calvin, Community Engagement Archivist, in partnership with experts in the field of archives, genealogy and collections care.

Second, we have re-envisioned the BMRC’s searchable database of Black historical collections, leading to the launch of a new online gateway, the BMRC Archives Portal, in March 2022. This project was led by Laurie Lee Moses, Portal Archivist, with support from staff in the Digital Library Development Center (DLDC) at the University of Chicago and with input from staff at BMRC institutions.

## Grant Outcomes At a Glance

- ✓ Legacy Management Resource Portal
- ✓ 6 Archiving and Legacy Management workshops for community members
- ✓ Cultural Competency and Collection Diversification workshops for staff at BMRC member institutions
- ✓ Consolidation and update of 1,000+ collection records across BMRC-related project sites
- ✓ BMRC Archives Portal



The Mellon grant supported the hiring of two staff members, Laurie Lee Moses as Portal Archivist (pictured left) and T Calvin as Community Engagement Archivist (pictured right). Laurie and T shared insights into their work on the Mellon grant initiatives in the July 2021 issue of the BMRC News.

# BMRC Awarded ALA-NEH Grant



The Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC) was one of 200 libraries nationwide awarded an American Library Association's American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grants for Libraries, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The competitive award comes with a \$10,000 grant.

The BMRC's grant initiative, "Tools for Exploration & Sharing Chicago's African American Archival Gems" will provide training to local Chicago Public School history teachers to support exploration and use of archival documents from BMRC member institutions in their classrooms and in the development of student history fair projects. We are excited to partner with Chicago Metro History Day (CMHD), the local affiliate of National History Day, archivists at the Chicago History Museum, and historians within the BMRC network to provide immersive summer workshops in 2022 for teachers.

## BMRC Exhibit Relaunch

### The Black Metropolis Research Consortium: Documenting and Preserving Black History and Culture in Chicago

**Exhibition dates: July 25 - September 2, 2022**

**Location: Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 E. 57th St, Chicago, IL**

A relaunch of the 2021 exhibit exploring the history of BMRC and key aspects of the BMRC's mission, which is to connect all who seek to document, share, understand and preserve Black experiences.



*Visitors will be asked to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination or a recent COVID-19 test, consistent with University policies and protocols. For more information, visit the [Access page](#).*



# BMRC Membership Benefits

Note: The default category of membership for archival repositories with freely accessible Black historical collections is Full Membership.

	FULL \$2000/yr	ASSOCIATE \$500/yr	AFFILIATE - ORGANIZATION \$200/yr	AFFILIATE - INDIVIDUAL \$50/yr
Collections included in the BMRC's searchable database	●	●		
Access to a network of archivists, librarians, researchers and other professionals with knowledge in Black history and culture, especially in Chicago	●	●	●	●
Workshops	●	●	●	●
Grant participation	●	●		
Eligibility to serve on the BMRC Board, committees and working groups	●	●	By invitation	By invitation
Voting rights on consortium initiatives brought to the membership	●	●		
Participation in BMRC Programs, including the Summer Short-term Fellowship Program and Archie Motley Archival Internship Program	●	●		
Promotion on the BMRC website and/or communication channels	●	●	●	●
Invitation to annual meeting and events	●	●	●	●
Monthly e-newsletter and mailing (print copy) of <i>BMRC NEWS</i> , our biannual newsletter published in January and July	●	●	●	●

## Become a BMRC Member!

**Full Members** and **Associate Members** must have archives that are:

- 1.) Free and open to the public, AND
- 2.) Contain collections or materials relevant to the Black experience

If you or your organization does not meet the above requirements, consider an Affiliate membership with the BMRC.

**Affiliate Members** are:

**Organizations** or **Individuals** without freely accessible or relevant archives, but who support the mission and work of the BMRC.

They may include stewards of private collections, family archives, collections not yet accessible to the public, and independent researchers.

LEARN MORE and APPLY:

<https://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/about/membership-information/>

### 2021-2022 Members

Chicago History Museum  
 Chicago Public Library  
 Chicago State University  
 Columbia College Chicago  
 Cook County Historic  
 Archives and Records Office  
 DePaul University  
 Dominican University  
 DuSable Black History  
 Museum & Education Center  
 Illinois Institute of Technology  
 Loyola University Chicago  
 The Newberry Library  
 North Park University  
 Northern Illinois University  
 Northwestern University  
 Oak Park Public Library  
 Rebuild Foundation  
 Roosevelt University  
 Shorefront Legacy Center  
 South Side Community Arts Center  
 University of Chicago  
 University of Illinois at Chicago

## 2021-2022 Board of Directors

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**Steven M. Adams, *Chair*,**  
Librarian for Graduate and Postdoctoral Initiatives, Northwestern University

**Raquel Flores-Clemons, *Vice-Chair*,**  
Unit Head, Vivian Harsh Research Collection, Chicago Public Library

**Elizabeth Long, *Treasurer*,**  
Interim Library Director and Associate University Librarian for IT & Digital Scholarship,  
University of Chicago

**Jamie Nelson, *Secretary*,**  
Head of Special Collections and Archives, DePaul University

**Anthony Dunbar, Assistant Professor, School of Information Studies, Dominican University**

**Lynn Hudson, Associate Professor, Dept. of History, University of Illinois at Chicago**

**Laura Mills, University Archivist, Roosevelt University**

**Liesl Olson, Director of Chicago Studies, Newberry Library**

**Emily Reiher, Director, Women and Leadership Archives, Loyola University**

**Morris (Dino) Robinson, Jr., Founder, Shorefront Legacy Center**

**Adam Strohm, Director, University Archives and Special Collections, Paul V. Galvin Library, IIT**

**Leigh Tarullo, Manager and Curator of Special Collections, Oak Park Public Library**

**Julie Wroblewski, Head of Collections, Chicago History Museum**

**Kathleen E. Bethel, Trustee Emeritus**

**Leroy E. Kennedy, Trustee Emeritus**

### **BMRC Faculty Advisor**

**Jacqueline Stewart, Professor, Dept. of Cinema & Media Studies  
& The College, University of Chicago**

### **BMRC Staff**

**Marcia Walker-McWilliams, Executive Director**

**Allison Sutton, Program Manager/Archivist**

**Laurie Lee Moses, Portal Archivist**

**Tanya Calvin, Community Engagement Archivist**