Works in Progress Webinar: *Umbra Search*  
**African American History**

14 February 2017, 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM  
Tuesday 14 February 2017 12:00-1:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time

Presenting today from the University of Minnesota:  
**Cecily Marcus**, Curator, Givens Collection of African American Literature/Principal Investigator, *Umbra Search*  
**African American History**  
**Sarah Carlson**, *Umbra Search* Project Manager  
**Dorothy Berry**, *Umbra Search* Digitization and Metadata Lead
What we will cover:

1. History of the project
2. umbrasearch.org site
3. Identifying Content
   a. Metadata and description
   b. Mass digitization across collections
4. Community engagement and outreach efforts
5. Public Launch
6. Future directions
About *Umbra Search*

*Umbra Search African American History* makes African American history more broadly accessible through:

1. Freely available online search tool [umbrasearch.org](http://umbrasearch.org), and embeddable widget

2. Digitization of half a million African American history materials across University of Minnesota Libraries collections

3. Support of students, teachers, artists, and the public through residencies, workshops, and public events.
Project History

- Planning grant (2012-2013, IMLS) to understand needs and motivations of those who create archival collections, with a focus on culturally specific arts organizations.

- Development grant (2014-2016, IMLS) to develop institutional partnerships; build; test; release *Umbra Search*.

- Community engagement (2015-2017, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation) to share *Umbra Search* with partners, stakeholders, and the general public through a variety of activities.

About umbrasearch.org

umbrasearch.org brings together more than 500,000 digitized materials from over 1,000 libraries, archives, and cultural heritage institutions from across the country.

Materials aggregated in Umbra Search represent:

• Those that have been collected by libraries, archives, and cultural heritage institutions, and

• The specific selections that have, to date, been digitized and made openly available online.
519,264 items from more than 1000 U.S. archives, libraries, and museums.

Get Started
Try some example searches to see what you can find in Umbra Search:

- African American Firsts: 1675 items
- Video from the Civil Rights Movement: 367 items
- Underground Railroad (Advanced Search): 454 items
- The Creation of the Niagara Movement: 260 items
- The Repertoire of Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater: 70 items

Discover and Share with #UmbraSearch
Exploring African American stories through digital projects by students, artists, and archivists.

- Life and Times of Hellie Q. Brown
- "A Poem for Scooter" by Andrea Jenkins
- Partner Feature: Temple University
- A Century of Black Hair
- Join Us: Givens Collection Open House
About *Umbra Search*

African American Registry  
Alabama Department of Archives and History  
American Theatre Archive Project  
Amistad Research Center (Tulane University)  
Apollo Theater  
Barnard College  
Boston Public Library  
Brown University  
California Digital Library  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Digital Commonwealth  
Digital Public Library of America  
Digital Library of Georgia  
Emory University  
Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis  
Georgia State University  
Governors State University  
Howard University  
Illinois State Library  
Johnson C. Smith University  
Kentucky Virtual Library  
Knox College  
Library Company of Philadelphia  
Library of Congress  
Linda Hall Library  
Lowcountry Digital Library  
McNeese State University  
Michigan State University  
Milwaukee Public Library  
Minnesota Digital Library  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History  
Missouri Historical Society  
Missouri State University  
National Museum of African American History and Culture  
New York Public Library for the Performing Arts and Schomburg Research Center for Black Culture  
Northwestern University  
Payne Theological Seminary  
Penumbra Theatre Company  
Queens College  
Recollection Wisconsin  
Smithsonian Institution  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville  
St. Joseph County Public Library  
Temple University  
Theatre Communications Group  
Theatre Library Association  
Trinity University  
University of Georgia  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
University of Iowa  
University of Kentucky  
University of Massachusetts Amherst  
University of Michigan  
University of Mississippi  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
University of Pennsylvania  
University of South Carolina  
University of Southern California  
University of Virginia  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Virginia Union University  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
Yale University
Where content comes from?
Where does content come from?
Where content comes from?
Site Development

Blacklight Solr user interface
• Open source discovery platform

Harvesting Content: APIs and ETL
• Application Programming Interface
• Extract Transform Load

History of Discovery and Aggregation Projects
• Ojibwe People’s Dictionary (ojibwe.lib.umn.edu)
• EthicShare ( ethicshare.org)
• Minnesota Digital Library (mndigital.org)
Site Development: Challenges

Sustainability

• Digital collections and institutions without technological capacity or infrastructure
• Digital Public Library of America

Design and Presentation

• Navigation
• Content and Description

Identifying Content

• Search strategy
• Conversations with curators
Identifying Content for *Umbra Search*

- **Archival Description** - Lack of Standardization Makes Machine Understanding Challenges
- **Lack of Transferable Documentation** - Assumptions About Users Narrow Accessibility
- **Speedy Processing** - Low Budgets for Processing and Describing Level Underrepresented Histories in the Margins
Metadata and Harvest Analysis

- Developing systems to pull relevant and well curated records with minimal human labor
- Clarifying subjects and keywords as they are used in practice
- Using data to improve description of African American related records across institutions
Editor Tags

- Voting relevancy of records
  - Ability to “hide” content from users and rank content

- Adding search terms and keywords
  - Increasing usability on Umbra Search platform while maintaining integrity of records
Mass Digitization across Collections

Over 2 years, Umbra Search staff will digitize and make discoverable hundreds of thousands of African American history materials from across University of Minnesota Libraries collections.

This work is supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources’ Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program.
Mass Digitization across Collections

- Pulling from collections across UMN Archives and Special Collections
- Identifying hidden records related to African American history and creating opportunities for discoverability and access
- Enhancing metadata and description, creating opportunity to rethink traditional methodology
- Almost 500,000 items identified, 156,103 digitized to date.
Mass Digitization Across Collections

- Documenting process for future projects both inside and outside the University of Minnesota
- Creating new controlled vocabularies for in-house African American collections
- Deep research to expand description
Digitizing African American History

Using Archives to Present the Past

African Americans in the Ozarks

Missouri State University has the largest collection of materials relating to an oft-neglected Black community.

A Potential Power of Which They Had Little Dreamed

The Woman's Missionary Council (WMC) of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, learns from African American women.
Community Engagement

Public Events to celebrate African American history, culture, and art.

In the Classroom with K12 & higher education students & teachers.

Residencies and Workshops
In the Stacks program with Coffee House Press (2015-16)

#UmbraSearch365 African American history every day.
Follow @UmbraSearch!
Advisory Board

Dorothy Berry, CLIR Digitization Project Manager, University of Minnesota Libraries
Janet Bishop, Associate University Librarian, University of Minnesota Libraries
Valerie Caesar, Black Seed Photography
Lynnee Denise, Scholar, Performative lecturer, Wild Seed Group
Ezra Hyland, Teaching Specialist, Professor of Multicultural Literature, University of Minnesota
Athena Jackson, Head of Special Collections Library, Penn State University Libraries
Sharon Kennedy Vickers, IT Management Consulting
Kara Olidge, Executive Director, Amistad Research Center
Junauda Petrus, Performance Artist, Writer, Free Black Dirt
Erin Sharkey, Writer, Free Black Dirt
Catherine Squires, Professor of Communication Studies and Director of Race, Indigeneity, Gender & Sexuality Studies Initiative (RIGS), University of Minnesota
John S. Wright, Morse-Amoco Distinguished Teaching Professor, Departments of African & African American Studies and English, University of Minnesota
Future Directions

**Education Initiatives**: K12 and higher education

**Metadata Work**: inclusive metadata standards for archival collections large-scale digital aggregations

**Programming**: public events, workshops, residencies

**Site Refinement**: UX/UI enhancements to meet known user needs

**Sustainability**: DPLA alignment for thematic collections
Umbra Search Team

Cecily Marcus, Director

Sarah Carlson, Project Manager

Jason Roy, Director of Digital Library Services

Chad Fennell, Lead Developer

Dorothy Berry, Digitization and Metadata Lead

Jennifer Hootman, Education Lead

Erin Sharkey & Junauda Petrus, Free Black Dirt, Community Outreach
Contact Us

Cecily Marcus
marc0082@umn.edu

Sarah Carlson
carl4256@umn.edu

Dorothy Berry
djberry@umn.edu

umbrasearch.org
info@umbrasearch.org
@UmbraSearch
#UmbraSearch365