Clio's Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century U.S. Social Movements and the Uses of Collective Memory

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DISSERTATION

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Introduction: *Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century US Social Movements and the Uses of Collective Memory*

*Identities and Memories are not things we think about, but things we think with. As such, they have no existence beyond our politics, our social relations and our histories.*

In the early 1970s, painting student Jocelyn Cohen, who was enrolled in a feminist arts program at California State University, went looking for a postcard to send her girlfriend who lived outside of the local calling area. The couple had taken to corresponding when they were unable to make the hour commute that it took to spend time together. Frustrated by a lack of postcards depicting women’s experiences, Cohen and her partner Nancy Poole embarked on a twenty-year endeavor to research, print, and distribute historic images and stories of women’s experiences to feminists across the country. From a single desire for historical recognition and representation, a rich thread of second-wave feminist collective memory emerged.

We draw upon a wide variety of sources to make narratives about the past. Each day, throughout the day, we understand our present experiences in the world based on our knowledge of past events. The social movements of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s sparked a powerful transformation in the consciousness of subjugated peoples. African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, Native Americans, Chicanos and other marginalized groups transformed their communities into much more forceful political presences, but also inspired a desire for identity-based history. Movement participants

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2 Interview with Jocelyn Cohen.
found that their new consciousness led to the call for social and political equality, but it also generated a demand for cultural representation and a longing for a rich sense of collective struggles and successes, both present and past.

With this dissertation I contextualize the efforts of activists within the Civil Rights, Black Liberation, Women’s Liberation, and Gay and Lesbian Liberation Movements who functioned as community historians. I argue that in each movement they developed new and honed existing memory practices in the service of their communities' collective memories. Usually working with minimal resources, often with little or no formal training in history or education, they researched, archived, authored, and presented their collective histories. Although not all of these agents viewed their work as formal historymaking, all sought to craft a useable past that couched their newfound political identities in a legacy of shared struggle with those who came before them.

While activist historians served their communities and movements first and foremost, they also engaged mainstream liberal institutions like archives, universities, and public schools in a variety of ways. First, they critiqued the failure of mainstream organizations to address their communities’ needs. Second, they pressured liberal institutions to be more inclusive as they worked within community-based venues. Third, they used their positions as professionals working within libraries, archives and universities to shape the institutional polices and practices towards inclusion and multiculturalism. In other instances, they formed new community-controlled organizations that paralleled mainstream institutions.

Individuals came to collective memory work from a variety of backgrounds. Activists within the Civil Rights Movement tended to be community organizers first, and
cultivators of collective memory second, as exemplified by the grassroots educational projects of Septima Clark, Esau Jenkins, and Myles Horton in the Civil Rights Movement. After these projects were established, organizations such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference engaged academic historians like Martin Duberman and Staughton Lynd to assist in the development of formal curriculum and texts. Black Power leadership was responsible for initiating larger projects of historical education within the movement, usually as alternatives to mainstream grammar, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. Black Power activists from highly varied political orientations such as Malcolm X, Elijah Muhammad, Howard Fuller, Huey Newton, and Ericka Huggins all developed historical curriculum as part of their efforts to build Afro-centric institutions that paralleled mainstream educational structures. Women’s Liberation activists built historical projects that were primarily more informal and less institutionalized initiatives. Feminists like Jocelyn Cohen, Judy Chicago, and Laura X initiated individual projects engaging women’s history themes that flourished into significant collective endeavors and that attended to movement-wide education, although community history work was also taken up by academic historians like Gerda Lerner. Likewise, many Gay Liberation activists had a connection to academic history, as people like John D’Emilio and Gregory Sprague worked simultaneously to bring LGBT studies into the academy as they also developed community resources. Still others like Joan Nestle, Deb Edel, and Jonathan Ned Katz worked entirely outside of academic institutions to promote popular historical consciousness within the community.

Collective memory activists working within all of the movements realized an impressively wide array of projects to promote historical consciousness within their
communities. Through their work, popular historians established community-based organizations like primary and secondary schools, archives, libraries, universities, and adult education programs. Activists also produced materials such as school curricula, children’s literature, scholarly and popular books, historic postcards, resource guides, microfilmed collections, and archival manuals for publication and distribution. Visual and performance projects also provided community historians with venues for distributing their research as part of art installations and multimedia slide shows, as well as in theater and film. Some activists developed distinctive memory practices as they sought to collect, preserve, and catalog historical materials as part of their goal to promote research and democratize access to historical materials within the community. Still others organized conferences and gatherings to foster conversations about these memorial practices.

While this project enriches the historical literature on community memory, grassroots organizing, and cultural activism undertaken by Civil Rights, Black Power, Women’s, and Gay Liberation activists, it also significantly broadens the scope of historical authorship beyond the walls of the Ivory Tower. Although public and academic historians are increasingly acknowledging the significance of memory to the larger field of historical knowledge, both still primarily regard community historians as hobbyists at best, misguided amateurs at worst. With this dissertation I intend to demonstrate that activists authored historical narratives that both significantly impacted their communities as well as shifted cultural authority towards the communities themselves, that these historians raised a question of who can speak for whom on community historical matters. The result is that we cannot solely understand the democratic impulses in academic and
public history circles as singularly arising from well-meaning historians within universities and museums, but we also must acknowledge that this change came in response to cultural activism from the subjects examined here.

**Strange Bedfellows: Academic History and Collective Memory**

American historical narratives have long done the cultural work of connecting individuals from a variety of backgrounds into a single national community. For example, Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob trace the role of collective memory in building an early American imagined community by marking shifts in the historiographic tradition of the American Revolution and Early Republic. Their analysis reveals how “the histories of the nineteenth century had discursively woven together a nation of strangers and newcomers,” while lamenting that the "price to be paid for this national fabric was the suppression of cultural differences.”\(^3\) These authors point out that early historical scholars like George Bancroft and Alexis de Tocqueville smoothed over the messiness of the Revolutionary Era to serve the nation building purposes of their contemporaries and as such laid the bedrock for the twentieth-century cultural conflict over historical narratives from those who did not share in the vision and privileges of mainstream American society. Thus, from the early days of U.S. nationhood, historical narrative served to produce national identity, which, as Benedict Anderson reminds us, ultimately "can not be 'remembered,' [but rather] must be narrated."\(^4\)

Despite the culturally productive role of scholarly history, academic historians have traditionally been suspicious, even at times hostile, towards history created outside

the bounds of scholarly inquiry, a response which has failed to produce engagement with popular ways of knowing the past, or what David Thelen calls "a participatory historical culture."\(^5\) Worse yet, for some, the influx into the field of more democratic and inclusive historical narratives has also been viewed with skepticism. In his sweeping history of the academic profession in the United States, Peter Novick chronicles the shift in the 1960s and 1970s, when a more elitist history and the value of "universalism" was shattered as black and women historians gained entrée into the profession. Although Novick positions himself as a critic of the universalism touted by mid-century U.S. historians, he is nonetheless derisive towards the calls for disciplinary change arising from the new members of the profession, depicting them as misguided activists who were “committed to one or another form of cultural nationalism” or possessed “agendas which called for a thoroughgoing transformation of historical consciousness.”\(^6\) Public historians, according to Novick, are even guiltier of providing “particularist celebration,” suffering from an “uncritical overidentification,” and at times participating in the lamentable practice of “advocacy history.”\(^7\) Although the field has increasingly engaged questions of audience, public discourse, democratic knowledge practices and shifting standards of authority, much work remains in changing the attitudes of academic historians towards a significant engagement with the full range of historical knowledge.

If we understand current political formations like the nation through stories about how such institutions came to be, it stands to reason that communities who find


\(^7\) Novick, *That Noble Dream*, 511, 515.
themselves denied full participation in or recognition from the nation would also fail to identify with the sanctioned histories. As people of color, women and sexual minorities found themselves excluded from national historical narratives, activists in social movements identified creating such narratives as a cultural front in the struggle for liberation. Only after a history of these individual communities was established could such groups also develop political identities and demand recognition for the same. Their next step would be working towards an integration of these marginalized histories into a revised pluralist history of the nation, a trajectory taken by the subjects of this study.

While the more populist of academic historians have begun to acknowledge the significance of popular uses of the past, there remains a significant lack of scholarship in the ways everyday people author their own histories. This dissertation seeks to begin to fill that gap. The development of the field of public history brought academically-trained historians into museums and historic sites and advanced a populist agenda within academic history circles. At the same time, community historians that had little or no formal training worked locally to preserve and interpret their own histories. As public historians developed their professional authority during the 1980s and 1990s, they included the representation of popular memory within their professional responsibilities and contributed to the legitimation of history outside of the academy. Yet grassroots work by community historians contributed to the democratization of historical authority, and these efforts have not received sufficient scholarly attention.

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Literature on popular memory encompasses both academic validations of informal ways of knowing the past and professional approaches to public history work. The former is a recent body of scholarly literature that seeks to legitimize casual, everyday, and popular experiences with the past as worthy of study and productive of historical knowledge. This literature challenges an earlier assumption that academic history stood at the top of a trickle-down structure of historical meaning. Interdisciplinary influence on history has greatly opened up this conversation, drawing on methods and traditions from American Studies, Art History, Sociology, Museum Studies, Cultural Studies, and English to engage popular memory.

The other growing body of literature I engage addresses the practice and ethics of public history. The professionalization of the field of public history as a discipline within academic history has greatly helped to expand the circle of actors whom we consider historical authors. Public historians emerged, like social historians, out of the general zeitgeist of the 1960s and brought a more democratic approach into the historical profession, albeit more through practice than scholarship. The idea of shared authority has informed public history professional conversations over the last few decades and has generated some laudably democratic practices within project development, educational programming and museum professional structures. Similarly, oral history literature has

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offered some of the most thoughtful and populist contributions to the study of memory. Indeed, the idea of shared authority came out of Michael Frisch's analysis of the dynamics present in oral history work. After observing the dialectical production of meaning that occurs in the making of oral history interviews, Frisch urged public historians to approach all of their work as such, underscoring agency in the consumption of public historical texts.\textsuperscript{11} Alessandro Portelli, in turn, positioned oral history as a radical history research practice, arguing that memory makes many uneasy because "it has disarranged many accepted truths."\textsuperscript{12} Throughout the contemporary literature on the theory and practice of public history, memory is a legitimate, if at times flawed, site of historical meaning production and is taken seriously as a source for historical knowledge, an approach I too embrace.

In this dissertation I address a significant gap in the literature on public history, the historical profession, and museum studies, an omission that fails to recognize the grassroots pressures in the growing pluralism in social, cultural and public history. While the aforementioned scholarship performs important work within the larger discipline of history, all have failed to engage the on-the-ground work of history-making within the transformative social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The outcome of this omission is that \textit{shared authority} appears as a benevolent practice arising from the profession rather than being the product of consciousness-raising, history-making, and other forms


\textsuperscript{11} Frisch, \textit{A Shared Authority}.

of activism out of the communities of people of color and women. As the public and academic history worlds are still disproportionately peopled with white, middle-class professionals, failing to recognize the role of marginalized populations in this shift is quite problematic; attributing democratic impulses in the production of historical knowledge to academic practitioners narrates a tale of white liberal cultural paternalism. Instead, I argue that the change towards more pluralistic and democratic museum practices cannot be understood without an examination of how activists at the grassroots level served as key agents of change in the distribution of historical authority.

In their landmark book *The Presence of the Past*, Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen manage to address, overtly and implicitly, the collective scholarship on popular American memory and public history theory. Asserting “everyone a historian,” Thelen reflected on the results of their phone survey of 1,453 Americans as evidence of vibrant historical consciousness being alive and well: “Using the past is as natural as eating or breathing….What we have in common as human beings is that we employ the past to make sense of the present and to influence the future.” Rosenzweig and Thelen confirmed what most public historians knew: that rather than historical meaning trickling down from the ivory tower, Americans generated individual and collective historical meaning through an array of daily practices. While their work and other scholarship on memorialization has greatly increased our understanding of popular historical knowledge by shifting the agency of historical authorship to non-academic individuals and communities, this literature has yet to provide full recognition of the roster of actors in

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the democratization of historymaking.  

14 My work extends the argument put forth by Rosenzweig and Thelen and opens up for scholarly exploration an important moment in U.S. political and cultural history in which marginalized groups took collective ownership of their historical assets, narratives, and representations.

Frisch's concept of Shared Authority and its ethical mandate to include communities in their own representation did not emerge only because of liberal-minded historians who paid attention to the communities outside of academic and museum circles. Rather, people of color, women, and sexual minorities demanded inclusion and cultural ownership of their historical narratives. Each chapter of this dissertation explores case studies of this process of ground-up historical consciousness-raising in a different socially-marginalized group. Each of these communities has distinct and overlapping engagements with collective memory. Movements borrowed memory practices from one another while also attending to community-specific needs.

The Stakes of Collective Memory

If, as Benedict Anderson has argued, shared symbiotic structures like those that constitute mass media are tools that create an imagined community, then history is the binding agent in that community.  

15 Some historians have traced the connection between history and nationalism to Georg W. F. Hegel, who held that "history revealed truth, and


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nations were its carriers.¹⁶ Activists in the social movements at times considered themselves, and were in effect, stateless, having been systematically denied the advantages of full citizenship enjoyed by white male citizens. African Americans had lived for nearly four centuries in the American colonies and the United States with little to no political representation, first through de jure, then de facto means. Women had been enfranchised for less than fifty years prior to the birth of Second Wave Feminism, and even at mid-century only a small minority enjoyed significant economic and social autonomy from male-dominated institutions and society. Gays and lesbians had only just begun to understand themselves as part of a community during the latter half of the 20th century, and then only in small numbers and isolated geographies. They had also very recently witnessed a kind of civic death through the intensive policing of homosexuals in the post-war era and the ousting of gay and lesbian employees from the federal government through McCarthy-era congressional investigations. Although individuals within these communities varied significantly in their investments in mainstream society and American democracy, the early manifestations of these movements generally presented a subjectivity that was outside of the legitimate nation state. Although most of these movements did not overtly engage in rhetoric of new nation building, their respective separatist projects illustrate a desire for autonomy in response to the political and cultural exclusion that the experienced in mainstream American society. In many ways, the identity-based social movements of the mid to late 20th century were projects in political sovereignty and self-determination, and like any nation-building project, understood the power of historical narrative to legitimate and coalesce community.

¹⁶ Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, *Telling the Truth*, 65.
As politically and culturally disenfranchised communities, American women, people of color, and gays and lesbians shared struggles, strategies, and rhetoric with anti-colonial struggles around the world. The civilizing powers of Europe colonized the past through the ownership of scholarly history, a narrative production that explained the Orient as backwards and infantile and the Occident as noble and benevolent.\(^\text{17}\) Dipesh Chakrabarty points to the western construct of academic history and its failure to understand non-western (and by extension, western marginalized) experience. Chakrabarty calls this discrepancy the \textit{lived versus analytic}, charging academic history with a failure to fully account for human experience, despite its pretenses of doing so.\(^\text{18}\) Chakrabarty’s critique, that academic history relies on analytic categories that fail to fully encompass lived experience, provides a distinction that extends usefully to minority groups in the U.S. As social movement leaders found mainstream academic accounts failed to explain black resistance during slavery or women’s participation in public life, they critiqued the interpretive methods of academic historians and rewrote their communities’ historical narratives through the research and writing of organic intellectuals within their movements. Similarly, Michel-Rolph Trouillot credits \textit{archival power} as playing a key role in historical silences, especially of those from marginalized communities.\(^\text{19}\) The politically and culturally disenfranchised communities who are the subjects of this project worked against the silencing effects of archival power, at times relying on non-traditional sources, reading archival traces against the grain, and collecting documents that mainstream archives and historians had ignored or overlooked.

\(^\text{19}\) Michel-Rolph Trouillot, \textit{Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History} (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1995), 57.
Recognizing the discursive power of collections, community historians shifted the scope of historical collections to include materials that represented the experiences and lives of the marginalized as a critically-important memory practice. Although American marginalized groups certainly engaged with their histories before the anti- and post-colonial eras, the consciousness of global colonial struggles fueled their claims for cultural as well as for political self-determination. Social movement leaders understood that the institutional ownership of historical narratives was another form of imperial power and subjugation, and that demanding cultural ownership of such was a critical act in their own liberation. As leaders of these movements borrowed, sometimes explicitly, sometimes indirectly, language and ideas from the global struggle for self-determination, they were certainly influenced by the call for direct democracy and its related call for cultural ownership.

Contrasting the power of official, state-sanctioned narratives with oppositional memory does not, however, need to lead us to romanticize the historical narrative of the marginalized as somehow more true or authentic. Just like their scholarly counterparts, the memory work of community historians is a production, an assemblage, rather than a pure representation of a historical experience. Alison Landsberg argues that, in the vein of Anderson's Imagined Communities, mass media has produced prosthetic memory, one that has little to no direct connection with experience. This mediated memory is especially true for those who have been transplanted from their communities, as "certain memories and traditions and rituals flourish in the diaspora in ways they never did in the
For groups who have experienced political trauma and alienation, the relationship to community memory is a choppy one, requiring reconstruction and creativity.

**Method and Memory**

Earlier theoretical approaches to memory, like Maurice Halbwachs' *collective memory* and Pierre Nora's *lieu de memoire*, illuminate some of the processes at play in the production of grassroots history in mid- and late-20th century social movements. *Collective Memory*, a term coined by Halbwachs in the 1920s, has long provided a theoretical model for scholars interested in popular conceptions of the past. The term and concept launched an understanding of memory as social, discursive, selective, and through a lens shaped by the present.\(^ {21}\) Working in this tradition, Pierre Nora's *lieu de memoire*, or space of memory, describes the intentional inscription of memory onto a given space; Nora argues that such intentional remembering occurs when *milieu de memoire* is torn.\(^ {22}\) For Nora, pre-modern society enjoyed a more simplified form of collective memory, as individuals and groups associated past events with spaces that were part of daily life. Modernity, with its transience and heterogeneous spaces, required a more deliberate remembering, a condition well understood by the marginalized groups of this study. Similarly, Yael Zerubavel contrasts academic history and collective memory, framing the latter as an "organic part of social life that is continuously


transformed in response to society’s changing needs.” Collective memory, thus, provides a framework for understanding how historical consciousness is produced and shared throughout communities, often in isolation from academic historical production. Women's historical limited access to public space generated a cultural denial of milieu de memoire, resulting in a particular need to craft lieu de memoire, a task which they undertook by cultivating collective memory that relied on spaces accessible to women like private homes and correspondence, but also pushed into more public venues, like public school curriculum and art museums.

Although Halbwachs' and Nora's concepts are useful in interpreting oppositional community history, I use the term memory practices to advance these interpretive approaches. Memory practices serve as a framework for understanding how movement members produced collective memory and lieu de memoire, not simply by excavating a stagnant past, but also by producing narrative and identity through a wide variety of forms and projects. French historian Michel de Certeau outlines practices as everyday methods of operating in structures of power. For de Certeau, practices are ways of resisting and creating individual meaning within mostly closed systems. Reacting to the totalizing theories of Marxist, psychoanalytic, and semiotic cultural theory, de Certeau's practices account for how subjects act in opposition to structural oppression.

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25 Annemarie Mol's work is one applied example of the framework of practices. Mol engages practices to shift analysis from objects of knowledge to the production of knowledge in medical engagements with atherosclerosis, providing an alternative approach to empiricism by demonstrating how a single medical condition is understood in markedly different ways by various sub-disciplines of medicine. Similarly, her work gives humanists and social scientists an
practices, thus, illuminate the active role of memorialization in a wide variety of cultural forms towards the production of the new political identities. Rather than uncovering a pre-existing historical truth, a singular explanation for past events waiting in the archives for discovery, grassroots historians constructed historical narratives that supported their worldviews and political goals, just the same as academic historians. Community activists employed historical data in the production of a useable past that gave legitimacy to new identities and movement politics. The impulse that activists felt towards developing historical resources and education was generated from the political goals of the various movements and, resultantly, community historians developed a wide array of memory practices to promote collective memory broadly within their communities. By tying together educational gestures employed in a breakfast program along with efforts to reform archival taxonomy, we can see a rich picture of the operations of collective memory deployed by social movement historians.

While the heterogeneity of memory practices provides a rich tapestry of popular historical meaning-making, it is also an interpretive challenge. Even though cultural history has increasingly taken a topical approach to historical research rather than focusing explicitly on narrowly-defined place as social history tends to do, drawing together a broad array of evidence, organizations, individuals, and communities requires a framework that allows for such comparative work. This proliferation of collective memory iterations is what another empirical theorist has called mess, or that which defies easy categorization and resists traditional disciplinary boxes.26 Annemarie Mol, a

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ethnographer whose work has been influential in the cultural studies of science, deploys a method she calls *praxiography*, or the charting of related cultural practices to map disparate actions and iterations. Mol's method provides a model for comparative interpretive work, and it is in her tradition that I trace memory practices across the distinct identities. Historians have generally shied away from comparative work, tending instead to focus on topics bounded by a single time period and locale. This dissertation instead engages both urban and rural locales across the United States, and engages different identities to map out the changes in collective memory rather than focusing closely on one movement. For example, in some instances, a cross section of memory practices worked in a unified manner towards a single movement goal, such as the production of a proud public identity. In other moments, one practice worked to radically alter the ownership of community history while another reinscribed the role of a liberal institution like mainstream universities as interpretive authorities in African-American, queer and women's histories. Another critically important advantage of the model of praxiography is that it attributes agency without romantically overlooking other determining factors. For example, in the case of Black Panther activists, it allows for recognizing the intention and determination of Liberation School administrators while also recognizing the limiting structures in which they worked.²⁷

Perhaps even more importantly, the analytic framework of *practices* allows me to compare collective memory efforts that on the surface might seem entirely different from one another. At first glance, a lesbian separatist community archive might seem quite different from a black power children's storybook, but their partial connections demand

²⁷ Law, *After Method*, 3.
that scholarship account for the ways that they overlap. Similarly, a set of practices within a given organization like the Nation of Islam might at times function coherently together, but in another instance may utterly contradict one another; as such, they require a comparative approach of differing memory practices like that enabled by praxiography, one that "is tolerant of realities that are multiple, diffuse, and non-coherent." In this manner, I bring together curriculum and rhetoric, archives and postcards, to better understand how a popular sense of the past was assembled and shared throughout communities traditionally excluded from mainstream sources, forms and institutions of historical knowledge.

Although memory as a category of study became increasingly popular in the last few decades, there remains much fertile ground for further analysis, especially within the context of American Studies. Scholars working on collective memory have approached the topic with a discursive lens, understanding memory itself as a cultural production. This approach rejects "older notions of memory as a passive process of storing and retrieving objective recollections of lived experience" in favor of "an understanding of memory as an active, ongoing process of ordering the past." There is also rich and growing literature that specifically engages public space and collective memory; this approach looks to the production of public symbols and space as constitutive not only of

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local and national memory, but also of identity and citizenship. Similarly, there have been other scholars who talk about memory as a kind of "bearing witness" to the atrocities of the past. These studies generally look at cultures that have undergone intense conflict and violence, often attending to diasporic or colonized peoples with the assumption that collective memorialization functions as an attempt at cultural healing.

Yet there remains a dearth of analysis of broad-based grassroots memory projects, or the ways that communities have authored their own history. My work begins to explore this, but much popular history-making remains to be considered beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Social Movements as Comparative Phenomena

Social movements are nebulous formations. The term encompasses a stunningly wide array of grassroots political struggles driven by a presumed shared ideology, more

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often than not from the political left of a given moment. Sociologist Sidney Tarrow defines social movements as political communities in which ordinary people “join forces in confrontation with elites, authorities, and opponents.”

What he terms contentious politics gets activated by a “culturally resonant, action-oriented symbol” and uses the mobilized forces to make change on entrenched institutions and practices, just as the actors in this dissertation used community history to build political momentum via both separatist and mainstream organizations and institutions.

Tarrow rightly argues that scholars need do a better job of historical analysis within the study of social movements, as most comparative works engage social movements as rather ahistorical phenomena. My work begins to address this gap, specifically engaging the cultural impact of these movements. The very nature of social movements makes them well suited to comparative work, as activists in different movements often borrowed grassroots collective memory methods from one another.

This dissertation also challenges a common interpretation of the latter half of the twentieth century. The dominant explanation of mid-century social movements begins with Civil Rights as a groundswell of liberal reform, a political direction that falters only with the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. This narrative arc locates the birth of Black Power in this period of disenchantment, and also sets the interpretation for all other movements of the era. As Women's and Gay Liberation movements are woven into this trajectory, feminist and queer activism emerges from a similar vision for a radically redefined society and slowly becomes more mainstream and accommodationist as the movements grew in size and responded to

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34 Tarrow, Power of Movement, 6.
pressures from the conservatism that increasingly characterized American society in the 1970s. This interpretation flattens out distinctions within the movements, but also depicts leftist activism as in serious decline by the end of the decade. Such a frame also severs the important identity-building groundwork laid by these movements that provided the basis for the culture wars of the 1980s and 1990s. Instead of relying on the liberal into radical into declension arc, I trace the ongoing liberal and radical impulses in collective memory throughout all the movements considered.

When I use the term liberalism, I am invoking a 20th century American political worldview that understands government, social and cultural organizations as fundamental agents in human well-being and social change. Integral to this ideology is a faith that mainstream institutions work towards ensuring liberty for all, or, as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. phrased it, “with freedom thus a matter of birthright.”

In the context of social movements, activists who looked to make change through legislatures, courts, schools, museums and universities engaged in liberal activism. In contrast, I use radicalism to describe activist efforts that occurred outside of mainstream institutions, led by a vision of a reconstructed society that was often linked to Marxist ideology. Throughout this study, I recognize both liberal and radical iterations of collective memory building. Across these social movements, activists used community history as a means to both reform existing social structures as well as create parallel institutions and alternate cultural forms.

Animating my work is the conviction that grassroots collective memory was a cultural act of self-determination that supplemented more explicitly political demands and actions. Many historians of the 1960s and 1970s who assess the era broadly are prone

to analyzing change in a top-down manner, either lauding policy as the most important factor in social change, or assessing the impact of social movements primarily in the realm of high politics.\textsuperscript{36} This overemphasis on high politics disregards the more subtle aspects of resistance during the era, as well as disregarding the important cultural work that happened as communities began to re-envision themselves as political agents and active historical subjects. Notable exceptions to this include the work of Michael Kazin. Kazin rightly underscores the significance of grassroots activism to make cultural shifts in popular culture, as leftists cultivated “a culture of rebellion” and expanded “the meaning of equality” beyond traditional progressively political circles.\textsuperscript{37} By examining the activism of this era through a cultural lens, the distinction between liberal and radical activism becomes blurry.

Many historians of social movements have begun to engage the slipperiness of concepts like radical and liberal activism, choosing to place their subjects on a continuum somewhere between liberal and radical poles. Timothy Patrick McCarthy and John Campbell McMillian remind us that radicalism is "a contested and fluid concept" and "a painfully subjective concept: One person's radicalism is another person's reform."\textsuperscript{38} In the thick of social movement activism this becomes quite apparent, as tactics and strategies in one context might do little to challenge the status quo while proving extremely antagonistic in another. Likewise, Glenda Gilmore calls our attention


\textsuperscript{37} Michael Kazin, \textit{American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation} (New York: Knopf, 2011), xiv.

to the radicalness of the Civil Rights Movement in the context of daily life under Jim Crow, noting that "ideologies looked different when I considered their sources," while Adam Fairclough argues that the “accommodation-confrontation-separatism scheme" falsely collapses disparate acts into single analytic categories.39 Similarly, I understand the nascent roots of black collective memory in the Citizenship Schools as a radical act of cultural autonomy and identity-building, one example of the fluidity of radical and liberal collective memory. Historian Devin Fergus also extends this analysis, assessing Black Power's status as a radical movement less through an examination of violence and armed struggle and more towards an assessment of financial support and engagement with mainstream institutions, a move which I strive to replicate as I look at how Black Power groups created separatist structures that transmitted Black Nationalist collective memory while at times also engaging mainstream institutions.40

Gender-based resistance during the 1960s and 1970s also eludes neat division into the categories of liberal and radical. In the case of Women's Liberation, Carol Giardina has pointed out that radicalism often took the form of an anti-capitalist stance during the early years of the movement, yet a materialist criticism can be found in pockets of the later movement as well.41 Likewise, I extend this analysis to consider how collective memory practices in the Women's Liberation Movement relied on mainstream

institutions or charted new autonomous directions for women's history. Scholarly historical analysis of the Gay Liberation Movement is the most underdeveloped of the movements considered here, yet the few historians who have engaged the topic have rudimentarily understood the early years of the movement as "confrontational," categorizing the mid-1970s and beyond as "more conventional" while also recognizing the resurgence of activism around the AIDS epidemic as another iteration of radicalism within the movement. Accordingly, activist's work on LGBT collective memory ranged from interventions into liberal institutions to outright rejection of such partnerships by focusing on separatist institution building. In all the movements considered, activists struggled over issues of accommodation, partnerships with institutions of their oppressors, and self-determination and ownership of cultural forms.

Scholarship on social movements reveals variances, contradictions, contestations, and differences among the ranks of movement members. Historians often make sense of this "mess" by periodizing the movement, demonstrating shifts over time. More than just a method of ordering the movements, at the heart of periodization is the larger narrative arc of the mid-century social movements. Periodization in social movement historiography performs fundamental interpretive work, both illuminating and obscuring the efforts of the collective memory activists in this dissertation. The memory practices deployed by individuals and organizations respectively considered part of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements both align with and challenge this traditional narrative.

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Historians have produced rich debate over the periodization for 20th-century black political and social struggle in what is collectively referred to as the Black Freedom Movement. Most scholars agree that what is popularly understood as the Civil Rights Movement, generally starting in 1950 and ending with the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., built on a rich and multi-vocal race activism throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Likewise, what is generally held as the Black Power Movement and popularly understood as a marked shift from Civil Rights in the mid 1960s and continuing through the 1970s, not only serves as an extension to the Civil Rights movement, but also has ideological and tactical roots that date back at least to Marcus Garvey's early pan-Africanist Black Nationalism. Still, other scholars have cautioned against collapsing all struggles for Black equality into a single movement, a move that fails to distinguish nuance and ideological shift. I take cues from both of these camps, recognizing the intellectual traditions that activists drew on in crafting Black collective memory even as I underscore the important distinctions between groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Convention and the Black Panther Party. Indeed, I divide my treatment of the Black Freedom Movement into two chapters, illustrating the different kinds of collective memory generated by the liberal reform sought by SCLC and others and the more radical efforts towards building autonomous institutions and cultural forms by later activists. Yet I also reveal where these memory practices illuminate radical impulses in the Civil Rights Movement and liberal approaches to reform in the Black Power Movement.

**Periodizing Social Movements**

Scholars have shed less ink debating periodization of the Women's and Gay and Lesbian Movements of the 1960s and 1970s, even though a significant and growing body of historical literature treating feminism's Second Wave and late 20th-century LGBT activism has emerged recently. Women's historians have generally framed the movement within the period in a range of years, spanning anywhere from 1945 into the mid 1980s, while Sara Evans has defined the women's liberation phase of the movement as spanning 1967 to 1976, calling it "the most coherent and easiest to describe in a dramatic, narrative overview."\(^{45}\) Evans's periodization draws on the work of Alice Echols, who charts a key shift within the second wave by arguing that in 1975 cultural feminism "eclipsed" radical feminism, at which point "the movement turned its attention away from opposing male supremacy to creating a female counterculture."\(^{46}\) My analysis of collective memory in the Women's Movement begins in the late 1960s, but the growth of history projects that celebrated an essentialized womanhood like Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* align with Echols' interpretation of the movement. I continue my analysis into the late 1970s and early 1980s, tracing cultural feminism’s arc through popular historymaking that continued the tradition of women-led history projects while it increasingly sought to bring women's history into mainstream educational institutions.


\(^{46}\) Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 5.
Similarly, the periodization of the Gay Liberation Movement has been minimally debated, as most if not all scholars agree that the Stonewall Riots in New York City during late June of 1969 marked a key shift in the political imagination of lesbians and gays, transgender and bisexual people. Much early scholarship in gay and lesbian history in the 1970s and 80s undertook the task of complicating the narrative that depicted Stonewall as the first moment of LGBT consciousness and community, demonstrating that same-sex loving identities and collective awareness existed before Stonewall. Contemporary scholars generally regard post-Stonewall as a new era of political mobilization that built on pre-Stonewall activism and ideas, an interpretive position I share. When movement nomenclature shifted from "Gay Liberation" to the "Gay and Lesbian Movement" is unclear. I use the term Gay Liberation Movement to indicate LGBT activism from 1969 into the 1980s and follow movement history projects through separatist projects that thrived at the same time as gay history made inroads into the academic profession.

**Organization**

I have structured the layout of this dissertation by the individual social movements, an arrangement that allows me to chart shifts within the movements and analyze the historical narratives by identity. In chapter one, I consider how the Civil Rights Leadership built collective memory within the movement. I examine Highlander Folk School’s Citizenship School Initiative, tracing how activists developed their curriculum into an organizational tool for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

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and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee's Freedom Summer efforts. In chapter two, I look to the Nation of Islam for the development of a distinct collective past that blended the enslaved past with Islamic traditions and African symbols to produce a new hybrid narrative. I also consider how Black Panther Party leadership rhetorically used the past in speeches and Liberation School curriculum to channel political anger and educate children about the injustices of the past. My inquiry into Women’s Liberation in chapter three considers how the women's movement used visual arts, informal educational projects and curricular interventions to reframe women's history as one of resistance and accomplishments. Lastly, I look at Gay Liberation’s claiming and construction of a queer past in chapter four. Like the Women’s Movement, I look to community-based history efforts to build collective memory through popular education efforts such as slide shows and the development of community based organizations. In the conclusion, I examine the repercussions of these efforts as they provided a for the Culture Wars of the 1980s and 1990s. The outcome of the activists’ efforts to claim history in the 1960s and 1970s manifested in debates over historical authorship and ownership over curriculum, education policy, and cultural representations in museums and other cultural texts.

This dissertation endeavors to tell a history of individuals who desired to change the world they inherited. They understood the power of the past to explain the present and to reimagine the future. They recognized that culture was a key front in their struggle for liberation, and they knew the power that identity held for building political community. They understood that mainstream institutions had not represented their struggles and
victories in a favorable light, and they redefined the terms by which liberal institutions interacted with their stories, their artifacts, and their representations.
Chapter 1
In a Long Line of Protest: The Civil Rights Movement and a New Collective Memory

For Civil Rights Movement activists, collective memory served as a new and important tool of community mobilization. Although Black intellectuals had been authoring and preserving their history throughout the late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries, most of their efforts came from the Black elite. Informal kinds of collective memory existed in community events like festivals and parades, yet a wide-sweeping commitment to the transformative potential of black history emerged only in the milieu of demands for racial equality in the 1950s and early 1960s. During this time, community leaders established Citizenship and Freedom Schools across the south to promote voter registration and participation, as well as advance demands for other kinds of equality, primarily through the rhetoric of citizenship and racial equality.

The memory practices brought forth by Civil Rights activists were primarily movement educational initiatives that also asserted the right to citizenship for Blacks.\textsuperscript{48} These projects engaged the primary goals of the movement, namely to empower all black citizens towards the goals of cultural, political and economic parity with whites. Most of these leaders also attended to questions of power within the movement, often actively promoting grassroots leadership and a widespread and multi-authored collective memory. These leaders drew on two primary traditions in their collective memory narratives and work. First, they produced narrative that placed their contemporary struggle in the

\textsuperscript{48} Although black communities had possessed rich collective memory before this era, especially though the media of jazz music, the early black arts movement, and black scholarship, the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century movement for racial equality used collective memory to bolster the goals of democratic education, enfranchisement, and social parity.
context of racial struggles of the past, making connection between their efforts in the 1950s and 1960s and the resistance of enslaved people, the work of Abolitionism, and the struggles for rebuilding the American racial order during the Reconstruction Era.

Secondly, they drew upon grassroots organizing and popular educational traditions in the labor movement, including the use of music, to transmit collective memory that stood in opposition to mainstream American historical narratives. Both of these traditions manifested in curriculum content and design and approaches to school leadership in the Citizenship and Freedom Schools, and would lay a foundation for popular education taken up later in the Black Power and Gay and Women's Liberation movements.

The Legacy of Black Education

For those who sought to change racial relations in the United States, education had long been embraced as a critically important tool towards that goal. Enslaved blacks, abolitionists, and slaveholders all understood the radicalizing power of literacy, and reformers embraced education as a critical tool in transforming racial politics during the Reconstruction era. Likewise, northern white philanthropists poured money into southern Black educational institutions during and after Reconstruction, believing education to be the first step towards economic and social equality. Yet even as they provided black students with much-needed educational opportunities, Historically Black Colleges and Universities often ended up unintentionally reproducing systems of racial inequality by
constructing a separate but equal system that offered black students a significantly inferior education.\textsuperscript{49}

A leading figure in the early 20\textsuperscript{th}-century struggle for racial freedom, W.E.B. DuBois devoted a significant portion of his writing and activism towards improving black education. DuBois placed Black education at the forefront of the struggle for racial justice, prioritizing the development of educational opportunities as “the very first step toward the settlement of the negro problem.”\textsuperscript{50} DuBois intended that the Talented Tenth of the black race would form a leadership core that would produce solutions to racism, poverty, and equality by virtue of their vision and intellect. The role of authority and leadership are quite clear for Du Bois—such would flow from "the top downward…[as] The Talented Tenth rises and pulls all that are worth the saving up to their vantage ground."\textsuperscript{51} While black efforts to claim and articulate a proud and useable past certainly predated the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, many of the earlier efforts made towards preserving and researching black history embraced a similar social hierarchy as Du Bois's. In his vision, intellectuals would provide community leadership, and such vision and direction could be fostered only through formal schooling and universities.

In the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, a new generation of black intellectuals began to expand the production and dissemination of black history. The 1910s were a particularly rich decade for such work, with Arthur Schomburg founding The Negro Society for Historical


Research in 1911 and Carter Woodson establishing the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915. Schomburg, born in Puerto Rico in 1874, immigrated to the United States in 1891. A passionate archivist, Schomburg avidly collected documents and art related to international African diasporic experience. In 1926, the New York Public Library purchased Schomberg's extensive collections and named him the director of the Harlem library branch where the collection was made available to the public.52

Born to former slave parents in New Canton, Virginia in 1875, Carter Woodson grew up poor and only attended school sporadically during childhood. Woodson began his formal education at the age of 20, finally earning a PhD from Harvard at the age of 37, only the second African-American to do so. During the latter half of his career, Woodson turned away from primarily scholarly and elite projects, choosing instead to work on a more popular promotion of the Negro past, founding Negro History Week in 1926, an annual event aimed at the cultivation of collective memory in black communities.53

Although intellectuals played a key role in the cultivation of black history in the late 19th and early 20th century, widespread popular forms of collective memory flourished as well. First commemorating the end of the Atlantic slave trade, then Emancipation at the end of the Civil War, Black Americans celebrated their freedom widely through parades and rallies. Speeches given at freedom festivals throughout the 19th century, during both antebellum and post-emancipation eras, harkened to individuals and events that underscored Christian values and promoted respectability for black

citizens. In addition to their efforts to create a proud public culture for Black Americans, organizers explicitly linked the need for shared history to the process of identity building. Historian Mitch Catchun charts the decline of these celebrations by the early 20th century, arguing that forgetting the slave past became as important as remembering other aspects of collective historical experience.\(^{54}\) While these isolated efforts contributed towards the development of Black collective memory, it was in the fertile loam of the 1950s Black Freedom Movement that this memory was first widely cultivated.

**Citizenship Schools and the Highlander Folk School**

Although founded by white southerners, the Highlander Folk School proves to be an important institutional base for the development of historical consciousness for grassroots "black Civil Rights Movement activists. Myles Horton and Don West founded the Highlander Folk School in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains near Monteagle, Tennessee in 1932. Inspired in part by the Danish Folk School movement, Horton and West aimed to empower and mobilize impoverished communities of the region through adult education. In the first decade, Highlander worked primarily with labor organizations and local people to build coalitions among coal miners, woodcutters, textile workers and farmers in the area as part of a small but committed tradition of southern progressivism.\(^{55}\) In 1937 the school allied with the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which inspired other labor organizations to engage the school’s workshops for union leadership training. During the 1940s, the school's racially integrated workshops began to

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attract negative attention, as state and federal agencies began to redbait Highlander leadership, charging them with running a "Communist training school." After an overnight raid by the state of Tennessee in 1961 that closed Highlander and revoked its charter, the school reopened shortly after as the Highlander Research and Education Center first in Knoxville, then in 1972 moving to New Market, Tennessee.

Throughout the school's history, Highlander staff actively cultivated grassroots leadership through their programs. In the early 1950s, Highlander initiated a three-year Community Leadership Training Project in Alabama and Tennessee, an experience they hoped would give community leaders "a better understanding of the nature of a democratic society and the individual's role as a citizen." Built on the tenet that a vision for the future needed to come from within a community, Highlander experimented with various models for civic action and leadership training during the 1940s and 1950s, a project that was funded by a grant from the Schwartzhaupt Foundation. During earlier initiatives, Highlander staff struggled to find an appropriately hands-off role in regards to local issues. As historian John Glen phrased it, staff had to learn that "they could not 'cook up' a project for a community." Through the development of the Citizenship School model, Highlander would greatly improve on these issues, in part due to the pivotal role that Esau Jenkins, Bernice Robinson, and Septima Clark played in the development of the program.

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57 Highlander Folk School, 21st Annual Report, 1953. Highlander Research and Education Center Archives (New Market, TN).
The Civil Rights era was a rich one for the Folk School, as the Citizenship Schools proved to be the most successful manifestation of Highlander's values in a flourishing program. Designed to increase voter registration by preparing adults for the literacy tests that kept southern blacks from being able to vote, citizenship schools became a fundamental tactic in the movement. Although the staff had imagined the Highlander Folk School as a racially integrated space, it wasn't until 1942 that Highlander held its first integrated event, after which Highlander quickly became a rare institutional space that actively cultivated integration. In 1953, staff refocused the school's direction away from poverty in general, specifically gearing its work towards racial justice through the implementation of workshops on school desegregation. When the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision in 1954, Highlander had already institutionalized conversations and activism around the topic.\(^{59}\)

The popularity of the workshops led to an unprecedented growth in the number of participants and spawned other initiatives, as activists like Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins travelled to Highlander to take part in the workshops.

Septima Poinsette Clark was born in Charleston in 1898. Trained as a teacher, she first worked in a small rural school on Johns Island as a teaching principal in 1916, where she developed a connection to the community and a commitment to working for racial and economic justice. In 1947, Clark moved back to Charleston to teach in the public school system where she worked until 1956, when state law banned school employees from engaging in the Civil Rights activism.\(^{60}\) Firmly committed to her activism, Clark was fired from her position, after which she subsequently took up movement work on a

\(^{59}\) Glen, *Highlander*, 200-203.

full-time basis. Clark had learned of the integrated workshops at the Highlander Folk School in 1952 when she went to a meeting on childhood education at the black YWCA in Charleston. In June of 1954, Clark wrote a letter to Myles Horton, requesting a scholarship to an upcoming “Workshop on Segregation,” as she wanted to “organize a group from various clubs to use the training” offered by Highlander. Clark introduced herself in her application as a well-positioned community leader, noting that she held "offices in three interracial groups," a nexus from which she could marshal "their support to work out a program for the community." Horton immediately granted her a full scholarship via telegram a mere three days after she posted the letter in Charleston. Clark went to Highlander twice during the summer of 1954, meeting Rosa Parks and bringing Johns Island resident Esau Jenkins to a later workshop on the United Nations, an event at which the idea for the first Citizenship School circulated between black community leaders Clark and Jenkins and the white Highlander staff.

Homegrown leadership proved not only an ideal match for Highlander’s institutional initiatives, but also contributed to the success of the first Citizenship School. Esau Jenkins was born on Johns Island in 1910 and spent the majority of his life there. Jenkins met Septima Clark at the age of fourteen when he attended the island’s school. Jenkins supplemented his farming income by running a transportation business between Charleston and the island. In 1956, Jenkins, Clark and Horton set up an adult education program on Johns Island. True to the principle of homegrown leadership, the program extended the efforts of a local organization called the Progressive Club.

Esau Jenkins had been acting as an informal tutor for Johns Island residents, helping them to pass the state's literacy tests. Jenkins conducted these sessions as he shuttled residents during the 45-minute drive to and from their jobs in Charleston.

According to Clark, Jenkins had singlehandedly registered 200 people to vote between 1948 and 1954, voters who now used their newly enriched citizenship to ask for improved roads, schools and school buses. The popularity of these "classes" led him to envision a more formal educational environment that could better address the widespread illiteracy in the Islands and facilitate political agency for the residents.

As conversations progressed around the development of a program on Johns Island, Highlander staff initially deferred to Jenkins and Clark in dealing with local response and promoting the school. After the initial groundwork for the school was laid, Highlander staff became more engaged in developing the program, working closely with Clark and Jenkins to get the school off the ground. To this end, Zilphia and Miles Horton began a yearlong series of visits in 1954 to the first Citizenship School on Johns Island as planning was underway to purchase a building for the school. By 1955, Clark was driving local representatives to Highlander for conferences on leadership and desegregation, as well as producing a film series on the islands. With financial help from Horton, the Progressive Club secured an old schoolhouse building and remodeled the

63 Unpublished History of the Extension Programs on Johns Island and Charleston, Septima Clark Papers, 3:5, Avery Research Center, College of Charleston (Charleston, SC).
building into a cooperative grocery store, meeting and classroom space.\textsuperscript{67} In January of 1957, the first formal Citizenship School met, led by Bernice Robinson with fourteen adult students. Robinson was a local hairdresser who had attended Highlander workshops with Clark. Although at first reluctant to take on the role of instructor, Robinson was persuaded by Clark and Jenkins that even though she had no formal teaching experience, her connections to the community gave her the best preparation for the work. Robinson proved to be an excellent choice, as her role in the community combined with her respectful classroom demeanor facilitated her students' trust at a time when attending the school was extremely risky. In light of Robinson's success as a teacher, Highlander staff continued to rely on her expertise as the program grew, employing her as a mentor for other Citizenship School teachers and asking her to write a manual for training new instructors.\textsuperscript{68}

Although Highlander staff remained committed to the principles of local control and autonomy in the development of curriculum for the citizenship schools, at times their vision for the schools conflicted with the on-the-ground realities faced by Robinson and other teachers. Septima Clark served as intermediary between Citizenship School teachers and Myles Horton, a relationship which at times resulted in Clark and Horton having to "shout it out."\textsuperscript{69} Although initially producing conflict, Horton always ceded final authority to local experience as represented by Clark.\textsuperscript{70} Yet even Clark had to modify her views to recognize local needs; as she began to work outside South Carolina,

\textsuperscript{67} John M. Glen, \textit{Highlander: No Ordinary School}, (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky, 1988).
\textsuperscript{68} Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, \textit{We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change} (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1990).
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
she found that as an outside organizer she "had to let them talk to [her] and say…whatever they wanted to say." Similarly, even though she was a local, Citizenship School teacher Bernice Robinson developed her lesson plans in tandem with her fourteen students, who requested writing lessons for filling out forms, as well as reading literacy for election laws. Although Highlander staff desired to cede to local needs in their programming, the Citizenship School project revealed tensions in such decentralized work.

Citizenship School teachers used materials that reflected the balance between the larger goals of the movement and on-the-ground needs in South Carolina. When Highlander drafted the first formal workbook for the schools, the chapters echoed these newly learned lessons on local autonomy. The booklet included the history and policies of HFS, background on South Carolina’s election laws, and sections addressing the subjects requested by students, such as how to fill out forms and address local officials. As HFS developed a library for teachers to use in the Citizenship Schools, titles focused primarily on reading and writing primers alongside introductions to American government, including the now venerable Government by the People and the secondary-level US history textbook My Country and Yours. Teachers used booklets like The American Constitution; Your Flag and You and the U.N. to provide students with a civics education that mirrored that received by white children in the public school system.

71 Ibid.
73 Citizenship Schools Book, Clark Papers, 7:10.
Handouts also provided background on the First, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments, to give participants a background in traditional civics as well as grounding in the black struggle for electoral and democratic power. While the Citizenship Schools curriculum under the purview of HFS stuck closely to literacy and local politics, black heritage was also incorporated in less formal ways through the musical heritage of the Sea Islands.

**The Singing Schools and Musical Heritage at Highlander**

Throughout the Folk School's history, Highlander staff embraced the power of music and singing as a memory practice. Before coming to HFS, Zilphia Mae Johnson trained as a professional musician at College of the Ozarks. In 1935 she first visited Highlander with the intention of preparing for labor union work, but fell in love with and married Myles Horton, formally joining the school as Music Director. Highlander’s emphasis on cultural preservation was a perfect environment for Zilphia Horton to merge her passion for music and radical politics. She initiated cultural outreach programming as well as provided musical curriculum for the residential programs, as workshop singing became an integral part of the Highlander experience. Part of her work included collecting sheet music for traditional folk songs, sometimes with new lyrics, which would then be mimeographed and handed out at strikes to lift unionists’ spirits. In 1939, she oversaw the publishing of a collection of such songs for the United Textile Workers of America entitled *Labor Songs*. Although Zilphia died tragically in 1956 of an accidental poisoning before the founding of the first Citizenship School, she left an indelible imprint on the movement. Before her death, she institutionalized music into the Highlander culture.

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her role as Music Director, Horton regularly added new lyrics to old folk songs, adapting them for contemporary movement purposes. The most famous example of this adaptation was the Civil Rights anthem "I Will Overcome," a song that had been popularized by Methodist congregations in the early 20th century, and then later appropriated by labor leaders. In collaboration with Pete Seeger, she changed the lyrics to the more collectivist "We Shall Overcome," and the song became a favorite at Highlander meetings and rapidly spread throughout the larger movement.

After Zilphia Horton's passing, folk singer Guy Carawan took over her position as Music Director, further enriching Highlander's use of music in movement-building and collective memory. Born in 1927 in California, Guy Carawan moved to the South in 1959 to work with Highlander. Carawan was both an ethnographic scholar and teacher of folk music, but in his work at Highlander, Carawan also became passionate about the role of music in building social movements. He met Candie Anderson, a student who was visiting Highlander from Fisk University in Nashville in 1960, and the pair married soon thereafter. As he attended movement events to teach songs and facilitate lyric development, he compiled lyrics and mimeographed impromptu songbooks to hand out at sit-ins and conferences.76 His passion for folk music proved a fine match to Highlander's work in the Sea Islands, where a rich local music tradition had flourished for many years. After meeting Esau Jenkins and hearing of his Citizenship School efforts, Carawan took up residency at Johns Island on Christmas Eve of 1959. Carawan spent several months living with Jenkins, conducting an evening singing program on the Islands as well as documenting the area's traditional music. That winter he developed a singing program for

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the Citizenship Schools with both cultural preservation and pedagogical aims. Out of this endeavor emerged the Sing For Freedom workshop, first held in late summer of 1960. The initial workshop focused on putting the Beatitudes to music and rearranging old spirituals to include “new words of freedom replacing the old words.” An old slave song that promoted faith during times of struggle asked "throw me anywhere, Lord, in that old field," a song often accompanied by a dance called the "Buzzard Lope," making reference to a graveyard while also promising peace and glory in the afterlife. SNCC freedom summer workers substituted "jail" for "field," refashioning the song from providing hope during long hours of agricultural work to sustaining movement energy during long hours in southern jails. Similarly, "We Are Soldiers In the Army" transposed "holding up the blood stained banner" of the Lord's army to "holding up the freedom banner" of the Civil Rights Movement. By changing the lyrics to traditional spiritual songs, activists developed a memory practice that connected their contemporary struggles to those of generations of enslaved ancestors as it also transmitted cultural heritage to a new generation.

Under Carawan’s guidance in 1960, the Citizenship Schools formally included singing activities as part of their curriculum. Starting with schools on Edisto, Wadmalaw, North and South Johns Island, and on the north side of Charleston, Carawan traveled from school to school for singing sessions, events in which he took both a passive role of learner and ethnographer and an active role as music teacher. Sessions began with thirty

minutes of instruction in new songs, after which he opened the floor for requests for old favorites. Participants took turns leading songs, and sessions would often end with testimonials “about how the songs have helped give them the faith and determination to hold on and overcome their many hardship and to come through them still full of love for their fellow men.”80 Such recollections of the music workshops echo the relationship between the former spirituals and secular freedom songs; what had once been a religious form was now secularized for the struggle for racial equality. Carawan also noted that the elite Black churches proved to be the least useful in locating folk cultural traditions. Rather, it was in the rural churches in the isolated parts of the Sea Islands that practiced less hierarchy in services that the folkways of testimony, prayer, and song—many of which were not included in the hymnbooks—flourished.81

Coming out of the workshop in 1960, Highlander produced a mimeographed songbook entitled “Sing For Freedom” that included songs connecting the slave past to contemporary struggles. One song framed the freedom struggle as dating back to emancipation, remembering how "our folks have been in bondage we could not equalize, today our chains are broken…the freedom train is coming…just let us work together."82 Choruses included references to John Henry, the mythic black rail laborer, as well as freedom lyrics sung to traditional Negro spirituals. Another song entitled “John Brown’s Body—Negro History Week Song” connected present struggles to a heritage of past freedom fighters: “In the roster of our heroes is a great and shining throng, Negroes famed in Art and Science, famed in History and song, and the freedom road they opened

80 “Spiritual Singing in the South Carolina Sea Islands,” Clark Papers, 7:24.
81 Ibid.
is the road we march along, the truth goes marching on.”

With the inclusion of singing programs into the rest of the curriculum, Citizenship School students linked their cultural heritage to their political future as well as linked their own struggles to those of their forbearers.

Carawan understood his role not only as a cultural worker in a political movement, but also as a documentarian and preservationist. During his first visit, Septima Clark and Esau Jenkins took Carawan to meetings and church services, where he observed the region's distinct form of “shouting” spirituals, an experience which left him inspired to document the musical traditions of the islands. In 1963 the Carawans returned to the island to develop a more substantive cultural preservation program, committing themselves to the conservation of "the oldest and purest Afro-American music known to be in existence in America today." Out of their research the Carawans produced Ain’t You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?, a book of photographs, biographies, and music from the residents of Johns Island. The Carawans also produced recordings and promoted local musicians in an effort to keep the musical traditions of the islands alive. Carawan's work not only served to integrate current movement politics into familiar cultural traditions, but also to weave heritage into the movement's vision for a racially just future. Later workshops brought together volunteers from the Council of Federated Organizations, the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Alan Lomax, and others together to further enrich the political movement with a sense of history. Lomax, an

ethnomusicologist and folklorist who travelled around the south recording local folk musicians, saw a direct connection between the development of racial pride through black cultural heritage:

A few of these songs have served the Negro people directly in the freedom movement; they have been transformed into the “freedom songs” which provide the morals for the movement. Yet, in spite of this fact, most negroes today feel rather ashamed of their musical heritage…This movement should provide them with the audience and the appreciation they so richly deserve. They in turn can provide the movement with the treasure of their talent and their songs and make it, not only stronger, but culturally rich and at the same time more firmly rooted in the Negro community.86

The "shame" invoked by Lomax stemmed from the dismissal of black culture from mainstream white society —the belief that black cultural forms reflected a lack of education and finesse. This shame was also a byproduct of class divisions within the black community, a judgment against folk art forms that extended across American society. A young folk singer, Len Chandler, recalled that at a "Sing for Freedom" workshop held at the Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, GA, some younger participants "seemed ashamed of the 'down home' and 'old time' music" and that "slave songs seemed out of place at a 'sing for freedom.'"87 For Carawan, Lomax, and many of the workshop participants, building black cultural pride served as a key facet in the struggle for political justice. For the movement to be a success, both historical understanding and cultural continuity were necessary ingredients, a gesture that build on early 20th century work to preserve and document folk music.88

87 Josh Dunson, "Slave Songs at the 'Sing for Freedom,'" Highlander Research and Education Center Records, Box 64, Folder 17.
88 For more on early 20th century efforts to preserve and document American folk music, see Benjamin Filene, Romancing the Folk: Public Memory and American Roots Music (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2000).
In October 1965, Highlander sponsored a Conference for Southern Community Cultural Revival, which included a workshop on Negro Folk Music. Alan Lomax spoke at the event, which included participants from the Newport Folk Foundation (a sponsor of other festivals and conferences) as well as freedom movement organizers from South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. The event underscored the importance of music and protest for Highlander. An article written for the Southern Patriot, a newsletter of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, positioned African American folk music heritage to a new generation of activists: “The moving force comes from young Southern Negroes who have come out of the freedom movement. Possessed of an inner freedom and sense of dignity won in struggle, they no longer feel ashamed of traditions of the past and have suddenly discovered a beauty and strength in the culture of their forefathers. They have determined that it not be lost.”\textsuperscript{89} Highlander staff saw this not only as a bridge between white and black activists, but also as a way to empower “downtrodden rural negroes” as teachers and leaders in the movement via the transmission of their cultural knowledge.\textsuperscript{90}

A report generated by conference participants underscored the connection between cultural heritage and political action as it committed activists to “enriching the newly aware and modern Negro with a sense of identity in his own and American culture.”\textsuperscript{91} Such efforts were necessary because "the Negro has been brainwashed, turned against his cultural heritage because of white-dominated teaching in the schools…and

\textsuperscript{89} "Folk Music Workshop at Highlander Center," Southern Patriot, the Newsletter of the Southern Conference Educational Fund, October 1965. Highlander Research and Education Center Records, 65:2.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
because of the distorted way in which his music has been presented by the mass communications industry."92 The “Statement of Intent” also demonstrated how participants understood the importance of preserving distinct African-American cultural forms as an act of resistance to assimilation, entreating “the Negro community to come alive in its own spirit and on its own terms…political and economic progress does not have to mean conformity.”93 Cultural preservation served not only as an intergenerational bond, but also as an assurance against cultural homogeneity in an era of liberal improvement.

The Next Era: Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Citizenship Schools

As the state of Tennessee continued its war on the Highlander Folk School, Horton and Clark took steps to transfer the administration of the Citizenship Schools to the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) under the directorship of Martin Luther King Jr. Even before the political pressures grew on HFS, the school leadership had considered transferring the program to another organization due to the immense growth that the schools experienced. Clark followed the schools, accepting a position with SCLC as Director of Education when the program formally transferred in 1961. Bernice Robinson also followed the program to SCLC, working on voter registration campaigns and implementing new Citizenship Schools. Within two years, the program boasted 9,575 graduates out of 277 classes from eleven southern states.94 Under the aegis of SCLC, the

92 Ibid., 3.
93 Ibid.
Citizenship Schools assumed a new level of prominence in the southern Black freedom struggle.

SCLC’s desire to expand the Citizenship School program led to the creation of a unified curriculum as an institutionalized memory practice. To this end, the organization published a 33-page booklet entitled “Citizenship Workbook” for use in the schools. Citizenship School participants were all given the same materials from which to learn math, reading, writing, and history. This new standardized workbook included the purpose and history of the schools, community organization tactics, reading and writing exercises, handwriting tutorials, vocabulary lists, instructions for filling out money orders and other forms, math lessons, religious justifications for enfranchisement, and freedom song lyrics. This was a striking amount of material for adult students who possessed little if any literacy, a fact which demonstrated that SCLC envisioned the schools as playing a pivotal role in mobilizing southern blacks into the movement, as "political, economic, and social progress" rested on "the importance of education."\(^95\)

History assumed a prominent role in the new curriculum. The introduction framed the schools as the endpoint of the freedom struggle that began with the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in 1619. The essay transversed the conditions of slavery, the possibilities and disappointments of Reconstruction, the failure of the seven decades following Reconstruction to produce racial equality, the appointment of the Civil Rights Committee by President Harry S Truman and the struggle for racial justice via the Civil Rights Movement.\(^96\) For the first time, participants in the Citizenship Schools clearly


\(^{96}\) Ibid.
understood their role in a historical struggle against racial inequality. As students were invited to make their own personal connection to slavery and racial struggle through time, they also connected their own participation in "a new kind of school, a new approach to learning" to the freedom struggle taking place in the streets.97

Even though Black cultural heritage worked its way into earlier curricular manifestations through songs and reading passages, SCLC’s curriculum formally incorporated black history throughout its content. Five of the nine pages of reading examples contained within the book include history lessons on black heroes in the American past. Readers learn that “slavery was a degrading experience for the Negro but the progress of the last one hundred years and the rugged determination to be free makes our heritage glorious.”98 Throughout this section, narratives of past struggles blossom with detail, but ultimately the stories serve contemporary struggles. For example, Revolutionary War soldier Crispus Attucks is presented as an early Black hero, indeed “one of our first freedom fighters.”99 The curriculum positions him not only as a figure of Black history, but also as a national martyr, as he “was the first man to die for our country’s freedom,” an act that would be best commemorated "by giving our vote.”100 The number of newly registered voters not only marked the success of the classes, but also the internalizing of historical narratives. Amid reports of political and literacy outcomes, one young student declared “attending the citizenship school helped me to

97 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
learn the contributions made by Negroes. I am a senior in Richland County High School and never heard of Benjamin Banneker, Harriet Tubman or Sojourner Truth."\(^{101}\)

As the movement increasingly embraced voter education as a means to grassroots mobilization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference recruited more volunteers, most of whom were predominantly white students from the north, to work as educators in the schools. Application forms for teacher training outlined desirable candidate qualifications: at least twenty-one years old, possessing strong reading and writing skills, and “an interest in helping adults help themselves,” as well as “persons with practical skills who could be taught to teach,” \(^{102}\) In 1965, SCLC also encouraged retired teachers, businessmen, housewives, beauticians, tradesman [sic], etc.)" to apply for positions for the Summer Community Organization and Political Education (SCOPE). Freedom Summer's political education efforts had resulted in over 17,000 new attempts at voter registration, and SCLC sought to continue building this momentum with SCOPE during the following year. Volunteers chosen for SCOPE attended an orientation session, during which time they were given courses in Southern politics with required readings in Black History.\(^{103}\) By importing leadership from the north, SCLC shifted the focus away from grassroots leadership towards an interracial and broad based demand for black enfranchisement.

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SCLC’s commitment to nonviolent struggle in the South required a past that emphasized a trajectory from slavery to full citizenship; the struggle for voting rights was a key issue in that story. This vision was based on a liberal view of social change, that rational appeal to a democratic society could produce a racial equality. SCOPE's promotional brochure couched the project's mission in the historical struggle for racial equality:

After the slaves were freed 100 years ago, Negroes were allowed to freely vote. We had Negroes in the government and were on our way to rising from slavery to first class citizenship. We soon would have had equal jobs, education, housing, and political power. Federal troops from Washington were in the South to see that Negroes’ rights were respected as human beings. There were as many Negroes as whites in many part of the South and soon we would have had as much voice in government as the whites. White Southerners realized that they would have a 'good thing' if they could keep Negroes uneducated and without political power [emphasis in original]. They would have the best jobs and all the political power for themselves. It would be almost as good as slavery. So a deal was made in Washington. The federal troops were pulled out of the South. We were unprotected.\(^{104}\)

For SCLC leadership, the black historical struggle for political agency had intellectual roots in the Reconstruction era, and the movement would surely claim victory on this issue a century later through the efforts of citizen education. In this version of the failure of Reconstruction, the first wave of southern black political enfranchisement had failed due to the weakness of the federal government, leaving black citizens vulnerable and victimized. The second wave of contemporary activism would succeed due to the mobilization of grassroots activism and education, at last fulfilling the task of black liberty.

Even after the Civil Rights Voting Act ensured Black enfranchisement, SCLC continued with the Citizenship Education Program and the curricular emphasis on black

\(^{104}\) Southern Christian Leadership Conference, SCOPE Brochure, circa 1965, Highlander Research and Education Center Archives, Record Group MH-RG2-I-10, "Citizenship School: SCLC."
history through the promotion of grassroots leadership and economic development. South Carolina Citizenship School Field Supervisor Benjamin Mack lectured regularly on the topic, and his notes were featured in staff newsletters to inspire other teachers. Mack accused textbook authors of omitting black achievements, leaving nothing “for children to respect except white people,” depicting Blacks “as happy go lucky slaves sold on the auction block or picking cotton,” and presenting Reconstruction as “the worst period in American History because Negroes found their way into government.” He also opined that this denial of Black history “took away our identity and said we were nothing,” and that the movement needed to bring black history into the movement because it "inspires us to do better. It gives us pride and dignity." Although Mack's work with SCLC fit squarely within the mainstream intervention imagined by the Civil Rights Movement, his comments about black history hint at the cultural activism that would mark the Black Power Movement's engagement with history. As the movement saw a fuller enfranchisement of Black citizens who still failed to experience social equality, leadership shifted the political goals from electoral politics towards cultural and political radicalism, demanding cultural autonomy for black communities, often using history as a tool for the development of racial pride.

Scholars agree that the impact of Highlander and the birth of the Citizenship Schools on the Civil Rights Movement was significant. SCLC organizer Marian Wright Edelman remembered Septima Clark’s efforts with Highlander as providing a “training infrastructure” to SCLC’s voter registration campaign, which she credits as “a process
that transformed southern politics."\textsuperscript{106} Voter education served not only to enfranchise thousands of Black citizens across the south, but also mobilized and politicized a grassroots base that provided a groundswell for other movement goals. As the Citizenship Schools developed within Highlander’s and SCLC’s institutional structures, their curricular forms evolved to reflect some of the tenets of each organization. Both Highlander’s commitment to developing local leadership and the informality of the Citizenship Schools generated a curriculum that was informal, flexible, and relatively light on explicit references to the Black past. Highlander's use of songs in movement building demonstrates how the organization's staff understood the emotional power of a collective past to mobilize individuals for the realization of movement goals. As SCLC expanded the schools in an attempt to expand movement force and political power, they shifted the curricular focus to draw more significantly from history for both content and inspiration. At the same time, SCLC leadership also downplayed the significance of local leadership in favor of coalition building with northern white academic communities, a choice that laid the groundwork for the mass educational campaigns that followed shortly. While this shift moved the historical narrative towards a more universal narrative of black American experience, it also formalized black collective memory, validating a single collective narrative via a standardized curriculum that fostered a less personal and less local collective memory that had been promoted by the schools under Highlander's leadership.

\textsuperscript{106} Marian Wright Edelman, \textit{Lanterns: a Memoir of Mentors} (Boston: Beacon, 1999), 126.
A New Direction for Collective Memory: The Freedom Schools

While the Citizenship Schools were focused on adult education, a parallel movement of grassroots education for southern youth emerged. In 1961, as the newly formed Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) facilitated voter registration efforts in places such as McComb, Mississippi, volunteers worked with high school students to stage a walkout at the Burgland High School. The action was a protest in support of Brenda Travis, a student who had been expelled for participating in a sit-in earlier that year. When administrators refused to address the problems raised by the protests and ordered students to return to class, SNCC leaders established a short-lived “Nonviolent High” that gave black students an alternative to the repressive environment from which they would have been expelled for participating in future protests.  

This event sparked discussions about other ways that the movement could expand its educational efforts, a conversation which culminated in a 1963 proposal that declared "the development of a comprehensive educational program imperative" to the continued mobilization of grassroots activism. The resultant Freedom Schools were an alternative free school project in which Civil Rights activists educated black southern students who were receiving substandard educations in the public school systems. This initiative echoed both the long-standing faith in the role of education in racial uplift as well as a growing disenchantment with liberal institutions, which SNCC felt "sacrificed important elements of education and socialization." COFO and SNCC began to facilitate freedom school curriculum in various isolated locations, but by the end of 1963, it had become apparent

109 Ibid.
that a more comprehensive plan was needed, as isolated voter registration initiatives were proving ineffective. To this end, SNCC field secretary Charlie Cobb formally proposed Freedom Summer, a suggestion that resulted in the Curriculum Planning Conference in spring of 1964. The schools were conceived of as an alternative to the Mississippi public schools system, which movement leaders identified as key tools of racial oppression.

Planners imagined that the Freedom Schools would offer students an improved academic experience, but also—and equally important—give students a background in nonviolent resistance and social movement heritage, as the experience would "give them the perspective of being in a long line of protest and pressure for social and economic justice." As a result, the curriculum emerged with an unprecedented emphasis on giving students "a better image" of themselves through the transmission of their "negro heritage."

Freedom School curriculum planners possessed a strong commitment to history. Participants included Staughton Lynd, professor of history at Spelman College, Septima Clark and Myles Horton, as well as SNCC director Ella Baker. In 1927 Baker, who herself had grown up listening to her grandmother tell stories of slave revolts, had organized a Negro History Club at the Harlem Library. The freedom schools continued in this spirit of collective memory building, culminating in substantive Negro History lesson plans. In 1964, teachers, clergy members and other volunteers met in New York

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111 Southern Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, "SNCC's Educational Program," Highlander Research and Education Center Records, 9:12.  
City to prepare the curriculum.\textsuperscript{113} Participant Sandra Adickes recalls how Summer Project staff poured over curriculum materials, revising and reworking language to "create an educational model capable of raising the consciousness of the black youth of Mississippi."\textsuperscript{114} The result of these efforts produced several hundred pages of materials, several units of which either explicitly engaged Black History or wove historical analysis into current political themes.

SNCC’s emphasis on teaching the past greatly exceeded the importance given to the topic in the Citizenship School curriculum. This was in part due to the envisioned growth of the schools as well as the identified need for formalized materials for the many new volunteer instructors deployed to the Freedom Schools, Changes in the curriculum also echoed a shift in organizational strategy: SNCC was focused leading the movement nationally, while Highlander had been more attenuated to the local, a difference that was seen in the shift from musical heritage to a formalized national curriculum. Planners relied on traditional primary and secondary scholastic topics as well as incorporated units on southern power relations, leadership development, and nonviolent action. To bring the planners ideas to fruition, Barbara Jones, a black volunteer from SNCC’s New York Chapter and Bea Young, a white volunteer from the Chicago office, wrote outlines that white New Left activist and historian Staughton Lynd then incorporated into the finalized draft of the curriculum. All volunteers who staffed forty-one Freedom Schools across Mississippi during the summer of 1964 were given copies of the curriculum, as well as training in how to implement the content.

\textsuperscript{114} Sandra Adickes, \textit{Legacy of a Freedom School} (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 39.
The *Guide to Negro History*, a copy of which each staff member from forty-one Freedom Schools across Mississippi received, provided instructors with introductory text introduced the essays as background reading for teachers, and encouraged them to adapt it to their needs. The first section included readings on the Amistad Case and African history, slave trade and revolts, abolitionism, and U.S. presidential engagements with slavery. Beginning with Amistad, the authors wanted to recover the heroic tale to inspire Freedom School participants with a tale “so lost in the mainstream of history (along with most important aspects of the history of the Negro), would most adequately set the tone for the freedom school curriculum. Within this story can be found most of the major issues to be included in the subsequent curriculum.”

The next section entitled "The Origins of Prejudice" traced the legal status of slavery through the American Revolution and the development of the U.S. constitution, and another section entitled "Negro Resistance to Oppression" charted the Haitian Revolution and quotidian forms of resistance during enslavement. Reconstruction received its own unit, a narrative that divided the period between four plans, the last of which led to the present moment of struggle for voting rights.

In addition to underscoring the significance of reclaiming such narratives, authors made an explicit connection throughout the materials to contemporary movement goals. Teachers were also encouraged to "discuss with the students some of the Great African empires such as Ghana, Mali and Songhay, the African universities, the politics of these African states and the important African inventions, such as the smelting of iron; or they

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can simply discuss the organization of African life before its complete destruction by the slave trade." This emphasis on African culture and politics foretold the movement's shift towards Black Power and its focus on African heritage, going beyond the simple goal of voter empowerment towards the production of an identity that turned away from white European culture.

Curricular accounts of slavery and Reconstruction took care to underscore the agency of Black subjects. The essay described the conditions of slavery as dire and oppressive while emphasizing "important dates for this period," including the births of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman, revolts by Denmark Vesey, John Brown, and Nat Turner, and white abolitionist activism of William Lloyd Garrison and Henry Thoreau. While the curriculum intermingled white abolition work with slave insurrections, it also noted that black activism was much more militant than its white-led counterparts and emphasized that "protest is nothing new for Negros." 

The *Guide to Negro History* consistently brought the struggles of the past into the present movement, locating a useable past in the narrative of post-civil war struggles for equality. The Reconstruction section drew connections between contemporary struggles and historical narratives as it attempted to answer how the black vote was granted and then lost. In this section, curriculum authors argued that the failure of the period lies in the economic imbalance between whites and blacks and the inability of the federal government to enforce the Reconstruction amendments. The segment entitled “Myths About Reconstruction” made an historiographical intervention in the interpretation of the era, charging academic history with presenting "the most distorted period in the writing

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of American history," particularly challenging the portrayal of Congressmen Thaddeus Stevens and Charles Sumner as "vengeful fanatics." Finally, the curriculum focused on local history in a section entitled “Reconstruction in Mississippi.”

Over time, individual Freedom School instructors and their students helped shape the curriculum as they added their own research to it. Staughton Lynd, then director of the Freedom Schools project after overseeing the development of the curriculum, advised instructors that their “curriculum should be built around the political platform the students themselves create” during the months following Freedom Summer. For Lynd, grassroots decision-making was a critical piece of movement education, much like the tenets of movement education established by Highlander in the Citizenship Schools. To this end, many instructors added history curriculum to the collection of teaching resources. In the opening notes of their curriculum, teachers from the Jackson Freedom School aimed “to explore the history of the Negro on the American scene in the hope of developing in the students an added appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of American patterns of race relations. Special concern should be given to Negro contributions to the culture, to white reactions, and to political problems for the future in light of knowledge of the past.” Their curricular addendum also offered a bibliography and outline of twentieth-century Negro history. Other contributors also interacted with the curriculum as a kind of scholarly conversation and accumulation of knowledge. Otis Pease, a white professor of history from Stanford working with the Freedom Schools, contributed research on “The Development of Negro Power in American Politics Since

120 Ibid.
121 “Guide to Negro History,” 106.
122 “Guide to Negro History,” 234.
1900.” He prefaced his paper with an invitation to dialogue, as his argument “makes no claim for completeness or total objectivity. I look for discussion, argument, and even replies distributed similarly in a spirit of dissent.” Pease understood that writing movement history gave an opportunity to engage living memory, and as such he envisioned a more democratic process of knowledge production than traditional academic history allowed. His commitment to local needs carried throughout the curriculum plans, as his pedagogical proscriptions left instructors with room to adapt to individual and community needs within the Freedom Schools.

In addition to discussion and lecture on Black History topics, theater served as an important pedagogical method for the expression of collective memory. Historian and playwright Martin Duberman authored a document-based drama entitled In White America that was staged for Freedom School participants. In one scene used by Freedom School teachers, a Ku Klux Klan member stands trial for lynching a local black man, followed by testimony given to Congress by the U.S. senator Ben Tillman from South Carolina. This scene provided exposition to the failure of Radical Reconstruction and the history of legislative complicity in the south. Duberman was an activist scholar, teaching at Princeton University and in the midst of researching the Abolition Movement. The play featured vignettes interspersed with a narrated timeline of reconstruction, lynchings, and civil rights history. In response, the Freedom School at Milestone wrote and produced their own play, dramatizing scenes from Black History and finished with a powerful treatise on the past and the present:

I am the American Negro.
You have seen my past: you have known my past.
And you have seen the trouble I’ve seen.

123 “Guide to Negro History,” 246.
Today we have seen many men die
Because they stood for their rights.
Today we have seen three men disappear
For joining our fight.
Tomorrow many more will die.
And many more will suffer,
But we’ve begun and we are not turning back
And someday, somehow, we shall overcome.\textsuperscript{124}

Freedom School teacher Sandra Adickes recalled that her students eagerly embraced the opportunity to reenact revisions of dominant American history, as they dramatized the invention of the cotton gin not by Eli Whitney, but rather by plantation slaves. Adickes' use of role-playing in the classroom also allowed students to express contemporary political anger at "adults they believed were too compliant with segregation."\textsuperscript{125} This sentiment echoed the frustration felt by many Civil Rights activists who felt that the complacent older generation had failed to meaningfully push back against Jim Crow and that younger activists possessed the vision, tactics, and determination to finally make meaningful change in racial relations.

In addition to curriculum planners, volunteers on the ground found the need for Black history a critical one. An unnamed Freedom School teacher in Hattiesburg, Mississippi lamented that “the students are taught nothing of their heritage. The only outstanding Negroes they are told about are Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. They learn nothing of the contributions Negroes have made to our culture or anything else which could give them any reason to disbelieve the lies they are told about Negroes being unable to do anything worthwhile.”\textsuperscript{126} Yet while some looked to the Black past for inspiration and pride, others used the history of slavery to energize

\textsuperscript{124} "Guide to Negro History," 18-19.
\textsuperscript{125} Adickes, \textit{Legacy of a Freedom School}, 68.
\textsuperscript{126} Elizabeth S. Martinez, \textit{Letters From Mississippi} (Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 2007), 106.
participants towards the goal of freedom. Lucia Guest spent Freedom Summer in Ruleville, Mississippi, a small town that was also the birthplace of Fannie Lou Hamer, where Guest recalled using an innovative role-playing method to teach history lessons. Beginning with a scene depicting the middle passage on a slave ship, Guest directed students to sing contemporary freedom songs as they pretended to be slaves.\textsuperscript{127} In another case, students enrolled at the Freedom School at Priest Creek Missionary Baptist Church in Hattiesburg prepared a performance of Duberman's \textit{In White America} to be staged at a local community center, although the performance was cancelled due to rumors of an attack by local whites.\textsuperscript{128} The use of drama was one of the more innovative memory practices deployed by freedom school teachers, giving students an opportunity to imagine themselves as part of their shared past.

Other portions of the Freedom School curriculum made connections to historical themes outside of Black history. An essay entitled “Nonviolence in American History” linked contemporary struggles, Quaker history, and abolitionism to the ideas of Henry Thoreau’s interpretation of the American Revolution and Thomas Paine’s political treatise \textit{Common Sense}.\textsuperscript{129} Yet another case study drew parallels between Nazi Germany and the Southern slaveholding past: “The very exaggerated character of the Nazi experience should serve to bring into clearer focus an understanding of realities latent or only partially observable in Negro history and in the South today.”\textsuperscript{130} In several places the lesson plan prompted teachers to draw connections between enslavement and totalitarianism, including asking students to draw connections between "an event from

\textsuperscript{128} Adickes, \textit{Legacy of a Freedom School}, 75.
\textsuperscript{129} "Guide to Negro History," 332-333.
\textsuperscript{130} "Guide to Negro History," 284.
Nazi Germany and one in Negro History."\textsuperscript{131} In another case, teachers drew analogies between "Nazi methods of arrest and transport" and "descriptions of captures of Negros in Africa."\textsuperscript{132} These curricular and pedagogical strategies provided students with a larger context of exploitation in which to understand their own political realities and histories. For southern youth who had grown up with a narrative of the benevolence of slavery, the connection between their forefathers and foremothers enslavement and an uncontested icon of amoral Nazi exploitation and cruelty was crucial to the development of their political consciousness.

\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{The Student Voice, February 18, 1964, 4.}
\end{figure}

The embrace of the emancipatory possibilities of the past also went beyond freedom school curriculum. SNCC’s newsletter \textit{The Student Voice} from February 18, 1964 featured a sketch announcing Negro History Week on the back cover, promoting

\textsuperscript{131} "Guide to Negro History," 277.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
“Negro History, a basis for the new freedom.”

The accompanying image shows a suit-clad black man striding out of a book encircled by chains. It is unclear if the book has bound him or liberated him, but the caption makes it clear that knowledge of Negro history is the means by which freedom can be obtained. As Civil Rights began to fade as the prominent ideology within the larger Black Freedom Movement, the connection between collective memory and liberation was firmly entrenched in black communities and provided a basis for Black Power's shift towards heritage as identity and political legitimacy.

Conclusion

Manifesting in both on the ground and cultural politics, the Civil Rights Movement distinguished itself from earlier collectivist efforts towards liberation in its abiding commitment to and widespread impact on grassroots organizing and mobilization towards the goal of full black citizenship. One of the key tenets in this shift was the in the role of the intellectual, a turn which would reframe black history in general and set a precedence for the democratized use of history in liberation movements that followed. In the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, Black intellectuals like W. E. B. DuBois envisioned social change through a racial uplift model that mirrored a more traditional social hierarchy via the talented tenth. Through education and social promotion, DuBois and others imagined a Black elite that would provide direction for the rest of community. Frustrated at the lack of change brought on by this model and its inherent elitism, Civil Rights activists brought

\footnote{Graphic from *The Student Voice*, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, February 18, 1964, 4.}
a new definition of leadership to the black freedom struggle, promoting grassroots direction and authority throughout the movement. The model of leadership activated by the movement might best be understood as a conscious cultivation of organic intellectuals, a term coined by the Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci.\textsuperscript{134} For Gramsci, the proletariat needed to cultivate its own group of intellectuals, a sub-community that would bring informal knowledge and analysis to lead the struggles for economic and social justice.\textsuperscript{135} Although Martin Luther King Jr. came to function within the movement as a traditional locus of movement leadership and power, local leadership like Septima Clark, Bernice Robinson, and Esau Jenkins were among countless others who began their work on the local level, yet impacted the shape of the movement and its successes on the national level.

By decentralizing authority within the movement, Civil Rights activists laid a foundation for the use of history in social movements that would follow. Through the validation of local knowledge and embracing of folk traditions, they also sought to democratize education as they cultivated a group of movement intellectuals. Such decentralized leadership also shifted the position of collective memory within the black community, laying ground for the identity-based demands for cultural ownership that would follow shortly in other movements. The interpretation of the past no longer simply served the movement in an organizational capacity but varying interpretations would lead to much ideological debate across camps, as we will see in later chapters. At this critical

\textsuperscript{134} Quintin Horare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, \textit{Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci} (London: Electric, 2001), 131-147.

\textsuperscript{135} Similarly, Leon Fink uses the term \textit{movement intellectual} in a manner similar to Gramsci’s \textit{organic intellectual}, emphasizing knowledge and direction emerging from popular experience and grassroots leadership. Leon Fink, \textit{Progressive Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Democratic Commitment} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 1997).
turning point, movements began to disregard elite historical authority and develop a democratic approach to the acquisition of historical knowledge.

As the Civil Rights Movement focused attention on northern and urban racial injustices, Black Power rhetoric and ideology grew and connected these struggles to the larger trajectory of civil rights struggles. The Watts Riots in Los Angeles during the summer of 1965 and the riots that spread across Chicago, Detroit, Newark, and other cities after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. fueled a growing disenchantment with non-violent resistance. King himself had begun to connect the southern civil rights struggle to northern urban poverty and struggles for racial justice, a move that fueled the shift towards Black Power within the larger movement. Septima Clark, like many other Civil Rights activists, reflected frustration that the vision of racial justice held by Civil Rights activists had failed to come to fruition:

By way of definition, the functional role of the ghetto as an institutionalized form of racism is to facilitate the special exploitation of the Black population through the mechanisms we have described. As such, the ghetto is merely an updated modified version of the 19th Century slave quarters in the American system of exploitation, and the revolts against the conditions in the ghetto today are linked by history to the revolts against slavery in the past. Such terms as “riots and hoodlum” have no place in any honest objective appraisal of these events.  

For Clark and others, Black history illuminated contemporary issues and was rhetorically useful in mobilizing communities with the pent-up anger that accompanied much Black Power activism.

As Clark witnessed the growing focus on identity as the Black Freedom Movement shifted from a focus on Civil Rights to Black Power, she expressed concern that identities not become an end unto itself. Couching her emphasis on the past as a civic

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inquiry into the nature and possibility of a true American democracy, she underscored that “Black History is not simply ‘soul food’ and ‘soul music’ as some of its misinterpreters have suggested,”¹³⁷ but rather called for the “control over our institutions…of the telling of our story" as she positioned Black history as a key site of cultural contestation. Here Clark identified a critical turn in the use of collective memory within liberation movements--interpretive ownership of the past served not only as a site of cultural self-determination but also and explicitly, one of political power. This turn towards black ownership of cultural narratives and resources mirrored the direction that SNCC, Nation of Islam, and the Black Panthers moved in—cultural self-determinism. As the arc of the larger Black Freedom Movement turned towards the values and rhetoric of Black Power, the production, interpretation, and dissemination of historical narratives became an important front in struggle for racial justice.

Civil Rights activists developed memory practices that served the goals of the movement, shifting them from the more locally focused use of folk music to a more nationally efficacious standard curriculum. By weaving black history into citizenship curriculum, teachers and administrators of the Citizenship and Freedom Schools connected black southerners efforts to claim full citizenship to the struggles of their enslaved, newly freed, and jim crow-bound predecessors. Teachers from the Citizenship Schools connected their literacy lessons to communal pasts even as singing schools curriculum linked musical heritage to present day struggles. The effect of these efforts was a more broad-based black collective memory that directly linked the struggles of the past to contemporary demands for social equality and full citizenship. Although later

movements placed greater emphasis on history as a foundation for identity, the bedrock
laid by Civil Rights activists provided a basis for the significant role of history for
movement building and the role played by identity politics in the late 20th century culture
wars.
Chapter 2
Knowledge of Self: Liberation and Education Through Black Separatist Collective Memory

We have to study black history but don't get fooled. You should know who John Hulett is, and Fannie Lou Hamer is, who Lerone Bennett is, who Max Stanford is, who Lawrence Landry is, who May Mallory is and who Robert Williams is. You have to know these people yourselves because you can't read about them in a book or in the press...that responsibility is ours.  

–Stokely Carmichael

This chapter explores both formal and informal educational efforts by the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X Liberation University, and the Black Panther Party, collectively known as the Black Power Movement, as I demonstrate the change in collective memory brought forth by the political goals of the movement. Black Power activists used similar memory practices to their Civil Rights counterparts like movement schools for both children and adults, but they also developed new memory practices, including the rhetorical incorporation of black history elements in speeches and movement newspapers. Like Civil Rights, movement leadership wove historical narratives into curriculum designed for edification and movement building. But where Civil Rights deployed education primarily towards the goal of realizing full citizenship for black Americans, Black Power constructed a transnational heritage that primarily served in the development of a separatist political identity.

Historians have traditionally periodized the Black Power era as beginning in 1966 and continuing through the 1970s. Marked by a desire to build and maintain cultural and political forms separate from hegemonic American society, Black Power has generally

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stood as a foil to the Civil Rights Movements, as its angrier, more violent offspring, although recent literature has begun to complicate this interpretation. When Stokely Carmichael coined the term in 1966 to a crowd frustrated with the failures of integration, the term set more liberal-minded organizers like Martin Luther King, Jr. ill at ease but resonated deeply with a younger generation of activists who shared frustration at the rate of change set by integrationist activism.

As the heir apparent to the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power radically reformulated the use of history within the struggle for racial justice, away from lauding black Americans who stood as community heroes during and after slavery and towards a narrative that linked contemporary blackness to a proud Pan-African heritage and reimagined the US struggle for racial justice in solidarity with global liberation struggles. Civil Rights activists had used Black History primarily to connect mid-century efforts to past struggles for social equality and full citizenship. The birth of the Citizenship and Freedom Schools under the auspices of the Highlander Folk School, Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Southern Nonviolent Coordinating Committee employed historical education towards the goal of social and political parity. In contrast, the Black Power Movement used history to build a movement that celebrated racial difference by lauding blackness. In a session called “Culture: Black Awareness and Love” at the first Black Power conference in July 1967, participants outlined the need for scholarship on

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both African and Afro-American history, calling for both “black interpretations in history” and eradication of “white distortions and myths.” This call echoed the intellectual foundations of Black Power and Afro-centric black history laid in part by the Nation of Islam. The mythological origins laid out in Elijah Muhammad's theology had created a sub-cultural fascination with African origins, and Malcolm X's urgent rhetoric about black history provided the movement with a link between the burgeoning Black Power identity and African heritage. From the movement’s onset, leaders underscored the importance of reframing of Black history both as community asset and as transnational narrative that placed great importance on the era before US enslavement.

One of the ways that the Black Power Movement distinguished itself from the Civil Rights Movement was the production of and emphasis on a new black identity. To this end, Black Power activists used movement education to share a pan-Africanist identity that supported the movement's goals of not only racial pride but also cultural and political autonomy. Activists and organizations envisioned that a key tool in the transformation of political relations in the US depended upon black communities and individuals reimagining themselves as autonomous from white society. Leaders in the Black Power Movement built this new identity in part on a reworking of black American historical narratives that were transmitted via memory practices like speeches, curriculum in movement educational initiatives, and movement newspapers.

Although Black Power leaders began to claim interpretive ownership over Black history, the idea of cultural and political separatism had much earlier roots. Marcus Garvey’s establishment of the Universal Negro Improvement Association and African

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140 Conference Report, July 22, 1967, Cleveland Sellers Papers, 12:8, Avery Institute, College of Charleston (Charleston, SC).
Communities League in 1914 laid the intellectual groundwork for Black Power ideas and cultural forms. By connecting Garvey’s early 20th century movement with the Black activism in the late 1960s and 1970s, one can understand the continuity across the 20th century that Peniel Joseph has called the “Long Black Power Movement.” By looking at Black Power activism through this lens, one can see how late 1960s and 1970s activism relied on earlier Black Separatist ideas and forms.

Like the highly varied political activities and strategies that coalesce under the label of Black Power, the memory practices too vary from one another, with the common goal of the formation of an Afro-centric identity. This chapter looks at three institutional manifestations of Black collective memory that embodied the values of Black Power and what Jessica Christina Harris has called “Educational Nationalism.” In the first instance, I consider how the Nation of Islam and its founder Elijah Muhammad crafted a historical narrative that supported the separatist political program through a reimagined sense of black self, one that shifted away from the Black American slave past towards a history that emphasized Black racial pride, if not superiority. This narrative, much like Marcus Garvey’s use of history during the earlier part of the 20th century, served to build a pan-African consciousness and identity that supplemented a Black Separatist political vision, and as such, convinced a large number of African Americans of the desirability of parallel institutional forms and community ownership of collective history.

The second instance I consider is the Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), a Pan-Africanist university that emerged out of student protests at Duke University in North Carolina. Although Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) had educated black students since the Reconstruction, many of the new Black Nationalists found HBCUs inadequately educating black youth for self-determination, an ideological tenet necessary for the political project of Black Power. The establishment of MXLU gave Black Power activists an institutionalized opportunity to realize the goal of cultural nationalism in a higher educational setting.

Collective memory efforts within the Black Panther Party provide a third distinct example of the ways the values of the Black Power Movement informed the production of a new political identity premised on a reworked narrative of the past. To this end, Black Panther leadership used the party's newspaper to create and transmit a collective memory that served to supplement the socialist revolutionary agenda of the party through the creation of a historical narrative that explained racial oppression through a materialist lens. In a similar manner, the Black Panther Liberation Schools used historical narratives to cultivate the critical thinking skills they imagined necessary for the next generation of Panther leadership. In all three instances, activists revised the dominant historical narratives to construct a political identity that demanded cultural autonomy from mainstream American society.

**Nation of Islam and the Historical Self Knowledge**

*The number one thing that makes us differ from other people is our lack of knowledge concerning the past. Proof of which – almost anyone else can come into this country and get around barriers and obstacles that we cannot get around; and the only difference between them and us, they*
know something about the past, and in knowing something about the past, they know something about themselves, they have an identity."\(^{143}\) — Malcolm X

Although the founding and building of the Nation of Islam predated the term Black Power, the organization nonetheless laid crucial bedrock for the larger movement, making Black separatism intelligible, if not inevitable. From the ashes of Marcus Garvey’s nascent Black Separatism, the Nation of Islam (NOI) emerged not only as a new religious and quasi-political organization, but also as a beginning of a Black collective memory that was Afro-centric and supportive of separatist goals. The self-determining demands of the Black Power Movement in the 1960s actually took cues from the Nation’s earlier collective memory groundwork. Although Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. Dubois and Carter Woodson had been using Black history towards the goal of racial justice during the earlier 20\(^{th}\) century, the Nation of Islam’s engagement of history set forth to build a historical narrative in service of a separatist political identity. NOI narrative and mythology placed Afro- and Asiatic Black experience at the center of human history; for movement leadership, Blacks required a heritage that not only built racial pride but also placed black experience in the center of history of all of human society. This prehistory gave way to a de-emphasis of Black slave experience and foreshadowed the Nation’s political project of nationhood and separatism. NOI leadership developed memory practices that transmitted this newly crafted heritage to all generations of Nation membership through sermons, newspaper articles and the University of Islam schools.

The humble origins of the Nation of Islam were located in the slums of Detroit, Michigan, as a door-to-door fabric salesman began preaching a new religion to his Black clientele. Wallace Fard called on his followers to reject Christianity and return spiritually to the practice of a retooled Islam, a hybrid religion that Fard promoted as the religion of their ancestors. In 1930, Fard institutionalized his evangelical work by founding NOI. To enhance his legitimacy, Fard preached an origin myth that blended elements of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, a narrative that explained the history of race relations while also justifying his Black separatist political program. Fard's date of birth, national origin, and ethnicity are shrouded in mystery; much more is known of his successor, Elijah Poole. Born to a poor sharecropper in Sandersville, Georgia in 1897, Poole worked various jobs until he met Fard in Detroit in 1931. An early convert, Poole quickly endeared himself to Fard, and was sent to Chicago in 1932 to found the Nation's second temple, at which point he also assumed the surname “Muhammad.” When Fard mysteriously disappeared in 1934, Poole assumed leadership of the fledgling organization.

Muhammad, like others who went before and came after, firmly believed in the connection between community education and liberation. He argued that "knowledge of self" kept Black Americans from "enjoying freedom, justice and equality...[which] belongs to them divinely as much as it does to other nations on the earth."144 Central to the project of “a true knowledge of self” was a revision of Black history that would refocus the narrative away from unsatisfactory figures lauded by white historians to African heroes and a transnational sense of history:

144 Elijah Muhammad, Message to the Blackman in America (Chicago: Muhammad Mosque of Islam No.2, 1965), 31.
So-called Negro History is all slave history... Muslims extoll, in the place of Booker T. Washington, Richard B. Allen, etc., the fighting men and women of the black man’s past such as Hannibal of Carthage and King Menelik of Ethiopia whose small army in 1866 inflicted a resounding defeat on the mighty forces of imperial Italy at the Battle of Aduwa... According to the messenger, the Black man’s history will begin only and when he stops groveling, begging, cringing in fear before the white man, still his master, and stand on his two feet as a full-fledged man with pride of self and race.  

For Muhammad, there was nothing useful about Black history in the United States. As long as the Black community embraced narratives of the slave past, liberation would be forestalled. In fact, one of the most critical elements of social change was "the true knowledge of self, as it means their salvation," a goal which NOI-authored history advanced through the construction of a separatist historical narrative that placed Blacks in a pivotal role within human history. By reframing the narrative of human development around black experience, Muhammad inverted the narrative of racial hierarchy that justified white supremacy.

Yet Black history was more than just a tool of identity; for Muhammad, it was the key to understanding and overthrowing white racial power. The heritage claimed by Fard and Muhammad lent legitimacy to Black separatism and entitlement to NOI's millenarianism. Fard asserted that God viewed his congregation as "members of the original people or black nation of the earth.... long before the white man himself was a part of our planet, we were the original people ruling the earth, and according to the Holy Qur-an, we had governments superior to any we are experiencing today." Not only did Muhammad’s myth serve to generate identity and racial pride, but it also established Black folk as an a priori foundation to humanity as a whole. Additionally, Muhammad

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paved the way for Women's Liberation activists to use myth as a memory practice that reframed power relations and fueled social revolution.

During Muhammad’s life and leadership, the origin story embraced by the nation remained mostly consistent to Fard's historical narrative. According to the doctrine, Black people originated in Asia, but first possessed smooth hair and delicate features. As the story went, “original man” emerged 76 trillion years ago, then shifted into the deity form of Allah. One of the twelve clans of Black humanity, the Tribe of Shabazz emerged as the first civilized African people. A member of this tribe named Yacub was destined to betray his people, which he proceeded to do through a combination of sorcery and science. Yacub crafted a race of White people who came to dominate the twelve Black tribes. Fard drew upon elements in both Judeo-Christian and Islamic theology for this origin tale, crafting a mythology that was a sort of useable past of American and Islamic influences. But beyond serving as a historical explanation for racial difference and conflict, this theological myth also foretold the coming of a savior who would complete the twenty-five thousand year cycle with a renaissance of Black separatist civilization: “We have arrived now at the day we call six thousand years from the creation of the white man’s world. And now, according to the prophecy and your own understanding of history, the truth must be told.” That truth, of course, was the inevitable ascendancy of a superior Black civilization led by Fard and Muhammad.

NOI's origin narrative serves to explain a history of oppression while simultaneously providing liberation from that legacy. By locating the birth of humankind

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in Blackness, they built a sense of racial pride, even superiority, as they claimed a kind of ownership over the entirety of human civilization. The myth of Yacub served several important purposes towards changing Black heritage from a tale of victimization to a purposeful trajectory: First, Yacub himself served to explain the transition from an era of Black social power and cultural achievement to one of colonialism, slavery and exploitation, rejecting the "civilizing" narratives of much White-authored history. Second, the inclusion of the “White Devil” justified NOI’s call for Black separatism as it demonstrated the moral bankruptcy of White culture. Third, the millennial structure lent an imperative to the movement, which served the Nation's recruitment efforts. Eclectic as the narrative itself was, Muhammad’s articulation and promotion of a historic backdrop that outright rejected Euro-centrism would provide a foundation for others to reject, rework and reclaim Black history on their own terms.

Identity building was a critical part of the doctrine and spiritual path for Nation of Islam members. NOI held special appeal to those who had been or were currently incarcerated, as it aggressively marketed a formula for personal transformation to respectability. The program laid out by Muhammad required adherents to reimagine themselves shaking off the ideology of White America. Premised on the idea that NOI adherents had internalized the hatred projected upon them, the Nation’s promotion of "Knowledge of Self" included an unlearning of the Black slave past and relearning of African historical experience. Muhammad identified education as a key front in the cultural war waged by NOI, faulting mainstream schooling for failing to "teach us the knowledge of self. We have been to the schools of our slave-master. We have been to their schools and gone as far as they allowed us to go. That was not far enough for us to
learn a knowledge of self.”\textsuperscript{150} Muhammad recognized that the intellectual and cultural realm for Black Americans was irrevocably tainted with racist ideologies. Thus, claiming ownership over the form and content of education was a means to self-respect, a drive for nationhood, and the development of the skills to be economically independent from mainstream society.

The disdain that Nation of Islam leadership held for "the schools of our slave master" transformed into pragmatic action through the establishment of the University of Islam, the educational arm of NOI. Although the schools held a more significant place in the organization during the late 1950s and 1960s, the early years of the school were significant for the development of collective memory in the curriculum. Just before his disappearance in 1934, Wallace Fard founded the first such institution in Detroit. As one of the church's earliest programs, the University of Islam initially instructed 4th through 12th graders, ultimately expanding its curriculum to encompass students as young as preschool age. The school quickly attracted matriculants, provoking anxiety in the mainstream press. An article in \textit{Time} from 1934 described how "negro moppets have been disappearing in batches from Detroit's public schoolrooms."\textsuperscript{151} The occasion of the article was an investigation, with subsequent arrests of teachers and administrators for "contributing to the delinquency of minors."\textsuperscript{152} Even as Detroit officials sought to close down the radical school, Muhammad and his adherents grew in their commitment to

\textsuperscript{150} Elijah Muhammad, \textit{Message to the Blackman}, 34.  
\textsuperscript{151} "Education: University of Islam," \textit{Time}, April 30, 1934.  
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
oppositional educational work. In the following years, NOI expanded its educational mission, opening several more University of Islam campuses across the country.

The prescription of appropriate comportment was a key element in U of I's curriculum. Teachers instructed students in the conservative gender roles espoused by the Nation, a social framework and hierarchy that was extremely important to the doctrine of the church. Girls wore long dresses and covered their heads in scarves while taking on additional domestic coursework called "Muslim Girls in Training." Female students also adhered to a strict doctrine prohibiting the wearing of high heels, makeup, and dancing with anyone other than a husband. Young men supplemented their training with courses to prepare them for membership in the Fruits of Islam, the church's paramilitary organization. Muslim women's history was highlighted in the newspaper, lamenting, “it is indeed sorrowful to hear our people exclaim that the Muslim woman is a backward product of Islamic Society.” The status of women in the Nation of Islam had received much criticism from outside the organization. Critics derided NOI's expectations for women's dress and comportment as placing women in a subservient role. In response, the article touted a 1,200 year old example of Zodeidah, a philanthropist who supported Muslims on pilgrimage and also was a noted engineer, an article that served "to locate the past greatness of women and to inspire black women" in the present. NOI leadership ardently defended their doctrinal teachings on women, both lauding women as important members of the community but also placing them under the control of men.

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Both Nation of Islam leadership and their critics within mainstream American society understood the power in the oppositional historical narratives being taught at the University of Islam. In 1962 Illinois state Senator Arthur Gottschalk toured the University of Islam in Chicago. Gottschalk had called for a state investigation into the school, charging the institution with fomenting race hatred in school children, a charge that was lobbied in part over the way history was taught at the school. For the two years prior, the school had refused routine inspections from the Cook County Superintendent of Schools, presumably to shun the judgment of the white educational establishment, as NOI's National Secretary grounded the accusations in "the fear by some elements that they cannot control the black man's education."\footnote{156 "Muslims Welcome Probe: Call Charges 'Ridiculous,'" \textit{Chicago Daily Defender}, May 14, 1962, 1.} After growing concern in the press, National Secretary John Ali invited the senator to tour the school.

Coverage of the senator's visit in \textit{Muhammad Speaks} invoked both cold war ideology and racial strife. The opening paragraph referred to the Senator's perceptions of the school as if it were "behind the walls of the Kremlin" and that the anticipated visit had stirred "lynch fever" in the larger white community.\footnote{157 "Senator Gottschalk Meets the Muslims," \textit{Muhammad Speaks}, July, 1962, 3.} Photos from the visit featured the Senator examining students and their reading materials, with captions noting that the curriculum included several Black history textbooks to enrich the students understanding of the past. The article also underscored the importance of economic knowledge, noting that both American and Arabic models were taught to students. For administrators, curricular choices echoed moral choices: “We teach the history of the Black man, which is not taught in the public schools. We are trying to...bring them back to their culture and
give them roots."\textsuperscript{158} The senator remained hostile during the visit, and was not swayed by the tour, vowing to continue his fight to close the institution.\textsuperscript{159} Gottschalk continued his campaign for a few months, insisting that school administrators repudiate the teachings of Elijah Muhammad, a demand which they unflinchingly snubbed. A few months later Gottschalk's bill died in the senate, and the issue faded from the limelight.\textsuperscript{160}

Beyond training the next generation of NOI citizenry, Nation leadership was also proud of the academic successes of its students. A 1963 article in \textit{Muhammad Speaks} boasted of their college placement of recent graduates as attesting to the emphasis on education and skills training in the Muslim program.\textsuperscript{161} But the larger movement also understood the academic institution as furthering the racial and class uplift mission on which NOI prided itself. Much like their adult counterparts, youth who had fallen into undesirable company and behaviors could be rehabilitated through the school. In 1964, Willie X recounted his teenage salvation through the University. Rescued from underage drinking, armed participation in a street gang, starting fights and girl chasing, Willie was unequivocal about the source of his redemption as he declared the University "the best school in the United States or the world."\textsuperscript{162} The University of Islam also understood its work as a reformer of the behavioral problems arising from the ills of white education.

The Nation also actively criticized mainstream educational institutions in its newspaper. Articles engaging Nation membership in a criticism of white-produced curriculum and textbooks frequently appeared. In one case, L. P. Beveridge Jr. charged the entire educational complex with perpetuating white supremacy. "There is in the

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{159} "Vows to Continue Fight Against Muslim School," \textit{Chicago Daily Defender}, May 22, 1962, 3.
\textsuperscript{161} "Islam Grads Move Into Top Colleges," \textit{Muhammad Speaks}, September 27, 1963, 18.
\textsuperscript{162} "University of Islam Rescues a ‘Dropout’," \textit{Muhammad Speaks}, June 19, 1964, 21.
United States today,” he declared, “a national conspiracy to indoctrinate our children with white supremacist propaganda. This conspiracy operates quite openly; it is condoned by most parents' organizations, officially approved by most school boards and indirectly subsidized by federal, state and local governments. It is able to reach every school child in the country with its insidious chauvinist literature. I refer to the multi-million dollar textbook publishing industry.”

For Beveridge, school curriculum reproduced racial ideologies through an incorrect historical picture of Black humanity's history by not acknowledging that "four hundred years of absence from our own people" had been endured. Coverage in *Muhammad Speaks* also applauded developments within historiography that enhanced interpretations of Black American's contributions. A 1964 article lauded John Hope Franklin's work, commending his scholarship as both author and university curriculum planner for revisionist history that represented Blacks in a favorable light without comment on Franklin’s liberal political inclinations. The embracing of Franklin's work by NOI was likely due to the leadership of Malcolm X in the paper's production. By 1963, Malcolm had begun to embrace orthodox Islam, which also fostered in him a more inclusive and tolerant worldview that increasingly embraced interracial activism.

Instructors at the University of Islam entwined collective memory and political ideology throughout the curriculum. The student enrollment unit required that new

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matriculants be able to answer questions regarding the Original Man, the Colored Man, the population of the Original Nation, population of the Colored People, land use for each of these groups and age of various world religious systems. The expected answers ensured that students had internalized the precedence of the Asiatic Black Man, the production of the Colored Man through Yacub's mischief, and the omnipresence and eternal nature of the Nation of Islam in contrast to the more youthful Buddhism and Christianity. Once demonstrating an aptitude for these foundational myths, students then advanced to the full curriculum. Although the specter of transatlantic slavery hung over NOI's historical narratives, the primary focus of U of I's curriculum oriented students away from U.S History and towards that which came before the middle passage.

By the time of Muhammad's death in 1975 there were over 40 Universities of Islam across the country, proving an effective institutional arm for recruitment and the reproduction of the membership's values and ideology. Upon taking the helm of the organization after his father's death, Wallace D. Muhammad sent out a memo to all mosques recommitting his energies to the enhancement of the universities. Wallace was a product of the Nation's educational system, and as such had both personal and professional commitment to their excellence. Under his leadership the schools were soon called Clara Muhammad Schools, in honor of his mother. U of I lessons encompassed a broad array of values and knowledge espoused by the Nation. A single packet of lessons contained training on the Nation's organizational structure regarding the Fruit of Islam and the Muslim Girls Training groups, the history the Qur'an, geographical

167 Memo, March 15, 1975, Nation of Islam Collection, box 11, folder 9, Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture.
data on the earth, biographical data on Wallace Fard, a question-and-answer style reading aptitude script that inculcated NOI's racial ideology, and a historical lesson on Yacub and the Original Nation.¹⁶⁹

NOI's engagement with historical education also went beyond its own institutional doors. Readers of Muhammad Speaks followed other efforts at popular education within the Black Freedom movement. In 1963 the paper lauded the efforts of Boston's Freedom School to "place Negro history in its proper perspective in relation to American history."¹⁷⁰ Similarly, the paper congratulated the efforts of the members of Chicago's Amistad Society, among whom numbered high school teachers and undergraduate history majors working to educate broadly on African American history topics.¹⁷¹ Similarly, coverage of the Chicago School Board protests against segregation and underfunding celebrated the efforts of activists involved in the action, charging that white-authored history about Black experience "omits the contributions of Negros in an effort to convince Negros that they have no heritage."¹⁷² The newspaper's support was surprisingly unequivocal, given the Nation's efforts to emphasize an African past while downplaying Black enslaved historical experiences, and likely reflects the growing tolerance and equanimity of Malcolm X towards the larger movement.

As important as formal historical education was to the Nation, perhaps the most significant, and certainly the most intimate, ritual of collective memory was the practice of renaming. In Message to the Black Man in America, Elijah Muhammad equated slave names with linguistic shackles and charged his followers with taking a name reflective of

¹⁶⁹ Malcolm X Collection, Box 11, Folder 4, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.
¹⁷² "Demonstrators Fight for Negro History in Schools," Muhammad Speaks, August 3, 1963, 19
their African heritage. Many in the early Nation dropped their surname in favor of "X," indicating the eradication of identity under slavery. Adherents increasingly took up Islamic names, including “Muhammad,” “Ali,” and “Shabazz.” According to Muhammad, freedom could never be known until Black folks understood themselves on terms outside of white society: “After nearly a hundred years of freedom, we are still representing ourselves by the names out slave-masters called us….It is time for us to learn who we really are, and it is time for us to understand ourselves."\textsuperscript{173} For Muhammad, heritage was a fundamental condition of citizenship, and thus Black liberation could only come with the personal and intimate claiming of their African heritage.\textsuperscript{174}

Perhaps one of the richest examples of the Nation's success in cultivating a collective memory that served a separatist political goal can be found in Malcolm X. The enthralling historical narrative preached by Elijah Muhammad inspired an early and important convert to engage richly with Black history. Malcolm Little was serving time in a Massachusetts State Prison in the mid- to late-1940s when he met a devoted member of the Nation of Islam. After a rapid conversion to NOI's doctrines and faith, Malcolm began a project of self-education, as he vigorously set to reading books spanning a wide array of historical subjects. He delved particularly into Black history, both on U.S. slavery and global Black experience. Malcolm’s search led him to H.G. Wells, W.E.B. DuBois, and Carter Woodson, all who gave him a background in pre-slave trade Black empires, slavery and colonialism, and early African American struggles for freedom.

\textsuperscript{173} Elijah Muhammad and Elijah, \textit{Message to the Blackman in America} (Messenger Elijah Muhammad Propagation Society, 1997), 35.
\textsuperscript{174} Although other leaders like Du Bois, Carter Woodson, and Marcus Garvey had invoked elements of an African past in their efforts to build a black nation, none before had so explicitly linked a personal sense of heritage to a Black Separatist political agenda.
Malcolm's anger increased as he continued his readings, his newfound knowledge fueled his identification with the Nation of Islam: "Not even Elijah Muhammad,” he wrote, “could have been more eloquent than those books were in providing indisputable proof that the collective white man had acted like a devil in virtually every contact he had with the world's collective non-white man.”

Through early Afro-centric history, Malcolm found inspiration for organizing and building the Nation as well as a rhetorical basis for the change he preached to the rapidly growing congregations. Upon leaving prison, Malcolm took his newfound passion for history into his role as an NOI leader, often using history in his sermons and recruitment efforts. Malcolm's passion for scholarly historical research also marked a shift in the historical narratives within the Nation; through his sermons and editorial hand in the Nation's newspaper *Muhammad Speaks*, collective memory within NOI deemphasized Elijah Muhammad's origin myths and began to include more Black American history.

In 1963, as Malcolm learned of Elijah Muhammad's secret affairs, he experienced a mistrust in Muhammad's teachings and began to further develop his own interpretation on the collective past of Black Americans. In 1965, just weeks before his assassination, Malcolm X gave a speech on African-American history as part of a three-part lecture to kick off the platform for his new project, the Organization for Afro-American Unity. Underscoring the importance of heritage, Malcolm started the series with his speech on the importance of history. He used the second speech to address the current state of racial politics, and wrote the third on his political program for the future, but the delivery of the speech was precluded by his death. Malcolm’s sentiments on Black history took on even

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more importance after his death, as they stood out as part of his final ideas and legacy for racial change. Malcolm's speeches at the end of his life quickly became foundational to the nascent Black Power Movement, with Malcolm assuming a position of "secular sainthood," as biographer Marable Manning points out.177

Less master narrative than thematic essay, Malcolm X’s speech both underscored a critical need to better understand Black history within the Black community even as it served as a criticism of dominant White versions of Black history. The speech served to reframe African American history away from the American slave past towards one that emphasized the glories of ancient Black civilizations. Malcolm also took issue with commemorative practices around Black history. Negro History Week had been celebrated since 1926, when Carter G Woodson established the commemoration under the auspices of Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History. Malcolm charged the public acceptance of the event as indicative of white hegemony:

[D]uring this one week they drown us with propaganda about Negro history in Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama. Never do they take us back across the water, back home...so Negro History Week reminds us of this. It doesn't remind us of past achievements, it reminds us only of the achievements we made in the Western hemisphere under the tutelage of the white man.178

This charge echoes a common refrain within NOI discourse, as both Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad often referred to the "so-called negro." They both felt that “negro” indicated only African-American experience within the national context of slavery and instead preferred to use "African." By extension, framing of Black history within the

177 Manning, Malcolm X, 7.
context of that term cut off not only significant parts of Black experience, but also
defined such as within the terms of enslavement.

For the purposes of cultural nationalism, the benefits of reperiodizing Black
history away from American “Negro” experience and towards a universal history of
Black humanity were multiple. Attending to Black history as a whole reclaimed a history
that generated racial pride. While racial categories proved tenuous and shifting across
time and space, a part of Malcolm's historical project was to lay claim to peoples who
were previously considered Caucasian or Asian. Malcolm claimed Sumerians, Moors,
Egyptians, and peoples from the Indian subcontinent as “high civilizations” that predated
European counterparts.  

These civilizations gave white society traditions around
clothing, food, architecture, universities and pedagogy, and other social achievements.
According to Malcolm, the invention that broke Black cultural superiority and self-rule
was the development of gunpowder. Through this tool of domination, White slave traders
created the institution of American slavery, eradicating the high moral fiber of West
African societies through enslavement by what Malcolm considered the dregs of
European society. "The founding fathers from England," he argued, “came from the
dungeons of England, came from the prisons of England; they were prostitutes, they were
murderers and thieves and liars."  

From the pulpit, Malcolm X entreated his
congregation to proudly reclaim an African heritage that told a story of superiority over
European historical narratives.

As Malcolm X provided a bridge between the earlier theological separatism of the
Nation of Islam and the secular cultural focus of later Black Power projects, his

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contributions transitioned black collective memory from the cosmological focus of NOI's origin myths towards emphasizing "the black race's historical greatness."\textsuperscript{181} Malcolm charged Black Power activists with reclaiming historical authority, lamenting that history "has been so 'whitened' by the white man that even black professors have known little more than the most ignorant black man about the talents and rich civilizations and cultures of the black man of millenniums ago."\textsuperscript{182} Although Malcolm would not live to realize his demand for the revision and authorship of black history, others would take up the charge in his name only a few years later.

\section*{A University for Black Power}

Black Power activists identified intellectual production as an important site of struggle for the movement. Higher Education quickly became a target for that very contest, and activists brought memory practices to bear on the development of pan-Africanist liberal arts styled curriculum in the Malcolm X Liberation University. By the late 1960s, campuses witnessed a swelling of dissatisfaction among students and communities of color.\textsuperscript{183} Newly formed Black Student Associations at campuses across the country brought the activism of the Black Freedom Movement into the classrooms,

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\textsuperscript{182} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{183} For background on the rapid growth of Black Studies, see Fabio Rojas, \textit{From Black power to Black studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).
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curriculums and campuses of both state and private institutions of higher education. Among this milieu of higher education activism, a group of students at Duke University in 1969 found themselves dissatisfied with the educational environment for Black students, leaving the school to found an Afro-centric university. After occupying the Allen Administration building on Duke’s campus, fifty activists assembled an informal education group, calling their protest activities the Malcolm X Liberation University (MXLU), and provided the Black Power movement with its first separatist institution of higher education. While their counterparts at mainstream institutions shaped the future of humanistic and social scientific intellectual production, organizers and students at MXLU sought a direct solution by establishing an institution of higher education that fully was by Black Americans, for Black Americans.184

Amid a national context of student protests demanding Black Studies programs and courses, Duke’s Afro-American Society (AAS) had been working on Black student grievances for three years when they demanded a Black Studies program from university administration in February 1969. Although Duke finally agreed to start the program, administrators refused to cede to student demands for Black student representation on the program's advisory board. Upon finding university administration unwilling to negotiate further, more than 50 percent of the Black student population decided to withdraw from Duke and form a grassroots organization.185 Durham activist and community organizer Howard Fuller served as advisor to the group and helped organize a leadership committee

184 Although HBCUs usually had all black administrations, many originated or experienced indirect control from white elites. In contrast, MXLU was formed as a conscious act of separatism, imagined as creating citizens for a new Afro-centric culture and a self-determining separatist nation. See James D. Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988).
drawing from local student bodies as well as Black educators from area colleges and leaders. Interest in the school blossomed, and organizers scrambled to build a full-time institution out of the informal organization.

The vision for MXLU first and foremost was to train young people for the task of liberating the Black diaspora. Early planning efforts situated the University squarely within the struggle for the equality of Black people everywhere: “The revolutionary struggle of Africans in this country has reached a level where there must be total understanding of the relationship between Black people in this country and the whole Pan-African liberation struggle...[we] must develop a Black Revolutionary Ideology, crystallize and project positive self-awareness for Black people, and create an educational process that builds and disseminates concepts and techniques to the Black community.”\(^{186}\) The link that organizers made between US racial and anti-colonial struggles across the globe both sought to address systems of oppression that operated beyond national lines and rhetorically worked to create a transnational blackness that sought political self-determination in diverse geographic locations.

Although leaders made easy distinctions between mainstream, white-majority universities and the vision for MXLU, the relationship between the new school and existing Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) remained less clear. School documentation does not reveal the administration’s views on their Black mainstream counterparts. However, Fuller kept in his records another treatise on the need for a community-led institute of higher education; a few years earlier, the Southern Student Organizing Committee published a booklet entitled “Towards a Black University.” A fairly radical affiliation of students from southern universities, SSOC.

members were, interestingly enough, mostly white. Although explicitly fighting against racial inequality, SSOC members nonetheless embraced their southern background, using the Confederate flag as a backdrop for the icon of white and black handshake as the organizational logo.187 Within their preamble, SSOC outlined a position that racial equality would absolutely “require radical changes in many of America’s present institutions.”188 Throughout several paragraphs of the introduction to their proposal for a new Afro-centric model of education, SSOC charges HBCUs with perpetuating an intellectual ghetto and failing to address the material and class issues that Black youth faced. Moreover, HBCUs mimicked white institutions, thus failing to include a curriculum that engaged Black culture in any meaningful way. Worse still, HBCUs assumed the eradication of blackness, as they worked towards “the goal of the Negro college, [which] was to liquidate itself when the great day of Integration arrived and to resurrect itself as a white entity.”189 For SSOC, HBCUs' commitment to racial uplift whitewashed their cultural background as they trained black students to be more ‘white’ and thus failed to address the educational needs of their community. Though MXLU’s founders did not publicly take such a strong stand against their Black educational counterparts, the inclusion of this in Fuller’s planning documents indicates, at minimum, interest in this criticism.

MXLU’s organizers understood their work as a response to an educational crisis that was larger than the needs of the student body at Duke University. In the spring of 1969, after the first informal course had been organized under the new university’s

189 Ibid., p. 3.
purview, a planning committee formed to engage broader representation from various state and private universities in North Carolina in the development of a full-fledged institution of higher education. Planners appealed to faculty at various institutions in April to participate in brainstorming sessions for the new Black Power university, raising questions “about the practice of teaching history, political science, sociology, psychology, economics and other non-scientific courses" as "the student – especially the Black student – finds it difficult to relate his total college experience to the problems of race and poverty in our society.”190 While racism within coursework was a major concern, equally troubling was the lack of connection between university education and attention to social problems within the Black community, an educational challenge that planners intended to rectify.

In May of 1969, representatives from several institutions of higher education came together for a three-day conference in Bricks, North Carolina to plan curriculum, infrastructure and policies for the new university. Participants from Wake Forest, S. Augustine, Shaw, North Carolina State, North Carolina Community College, Duke, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical, Bennett, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, East Carolina and Elizabeth City State Universities submitted recommendations for the institutional goals of MXLU in the context of what their home institutions failed to provide for Black students. During planning sessions, participants hashed out ideas for leadership composition, social and curricular goals, and faculty and

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190 Memo from the Foundation for Community Development to faculty at neighboring universities, April 10, 1969. *Cleveland Sellers Papers*, box 12, folder 3, Avery Institute, College of Charleston.
Coming out of this event, an Interim Committee oversaw the implementation of the session's findings until the University opened in the fall. This committee was comprised of a range of stakeholders, including Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activist Cleveland Sellers, university instructor T. D. Pawley, Cornell staff member Faye Edwards, writer Robert Brown, activists Jim (Kwame) McDonald and Frank Williams, MXLU Director Howard Fuller, Federal City College's Black Studies Program Director Jim Garret, and eight students from supporting campuses. Although international rhetoric and identity increasingly characterized the Black Power movement, local needs remained the first concern of MXLU’s form and function.

Organizers set out to design a curriculum that would incorporate the historical struggles of the Black community, weaving historical topics throughout the curriculum. Out of sixty-two courses proposed by the planning conference, a vast majority tended towards such heritage-focused topics: African History, African Slave Trade, Study of the White Movement, Development of Black Dictionary, Imperialism and Exploitation, Swahili, Hausa, and Yoruba Languages, Black Economics, Black Religion, Study of Black Community, Study of Minorities in the U.S., Study of Revolutionary Leaders, Colonialism, Afro-American History, History of Predominantly Negro University and Black Literature. Planners imagined from the start that cultural heritage was a key factor in creating social change through a transnational African identity, even as they critically engaged with a history of poverty, prejudice and exploitation.

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192 "Proposal for Malcolm X Liberation University," June 5, 1969, Cleveland Sellers Papers, Box 12, Folder 3, Avery Institute, College of Charleston.
On an October Saturday morning in 1969, 3500 community residents turned out to the Hillside Park in Durham, NC to celebrate the birth of an institution of Black higher learning that shunned an earlier value of movement integration, preferring instead the goal of self-determination. The day-long celebration included a parade through Durham, a Pan-African festival, and a long list of speeches given by figureheads in the burgeoning Black Power movement. The program’s highlight was the appearance of Betty Shabazz, widow of the slain leader for whom the college was named and the “First Lady of the Black Nation.” The speaker’s platform also featured leadership from community institutions such as the television show “Black Journal,” the Center for Black Education, and sponsoring organization Foundation for Community Development (FCD). Courtland Cox, Executive Director of FCD, used the opportunity not only to celebrate the achievement of MXLU’s opening, but also to call for even more efforts towards the development of Afro-centric education: “The fact is that this is just a start—where is our Black high school? The question now is where is the Black kindergarten? The question is where are the Black technical schools? Where are the Black agricultural schools? Where is every aspect that governs our mind from the cradle to the grave?” More than just a singular community resource, administrators positioned MXLU as a beginning of a new era in Black grassroots education.

Less than a year later, President Fuller announced that the university would be moving to Greensboro. Although Fuller explained the move as arising from a need for more spacious facilities, rumors circulated about finding less than full support from Durham’s Black community. By the third academic year, the Greensboro Record ran a

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194 Ibid.
195 Ibid.
four-part article depicting the school as a committed gathering of young Pan-African leaders. Although mostly sympathetic, the article ultimately suggested that the school served African needs more than African American needs, as it presented a tight-knit community of activists engaged in day-long training sessions that looked more like military training than a Socratic debate about lived struggle. 196 Devin Fergus argues that the separationist ethos of MXLU was also at odds with more integrationist energy in Greensboro, and thus the Afro-centric university failed to secure community support in either location. Still, MXLU continued to educate students, strengthened in part by an alliance with the Federation of Pan-African Institutions, an organization of other Afro-centric schools ranging from elementary through higher education. 197

Ultimately, the shuttering of MXLU in 1973 was due to an amalgam of issues financial and ideological. In a 1974 article, The Black World journal argued that the failure of MXLU was due in large part to long-standing debates in the Black Liberation Movement between Marxist and Pan-Africanist visions for racial justice. 198 Certainly, a split in the Black Freedom movement emerged in the early 1970s, with groups like the Black Panthers addressing the needs of urban Black Americans, and Pan Africanists like Fuller and Black Power activist and poet Amiri Baraka focusing more on international activism as a means to solving racial struggle on a global level. Like most oppositional groups, MXLU also struggled during its entire duration to raise sufficient financial support. Fuller quickly found himself primarily in the role of fundraiser, a marked change from visionary and the direct action organizer he had been just a few years earlier.

196 “Controversial School Comes of Age,” Greensboro Record, undated as found in Sellers Papers, 12:9.
197 For a thorough analysis of Black community support of MXLU, see Fergus, Liberalism, 74-76.
Although it might be tempting to dismiss MXLU as a short-lived failure, the school served as a manifestation of the values of the Black Power Movement and as a significant experiment in Black separatist education. As Black Studies programs were emerging in mainstream institutions, the attractiveness of a separatist institution ceded to the development of black-controlled spaces within the academy. As MXLU administrators struggled to build and sustain a separatist, Pan-African institution of higher education, activists extended the Black Power Movement to mainstream college campuses across the country, demanding and establishing Black Studies courses, faculty, and programs.  

The 1970s served as a fertile period of cultivation in the streets and in the classroom of the desire for Black histories that supported self-determination and racial pride. By the 1980s, the "golden age of African American history" had arrived in the academy, as the field enjoyed new legitimacy and vibrant intellectual production.

Although MXLU was a short-lived institutional manifestation of collective memory for Black Power, it nonetheless reflects an important moment and ideology within the movement's engagement with black history. Envisioned as a learning space for the study of Pan-African heritage, planners realized the vision put forth by Malcolm X just before his death—a scholarly institution that would undo centuries of black history as written by white academics. By planning a curriculum that wove African heritage throughout its course offerings, MXLU advanced a memory practice that offered post-secondary training centered on black collective memory.

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Black Panthers: No Understanding without Knowledge

The Black Panther Party was founded in Oakland, CA in 1966 as a grassroots response to police brutality towards the city’s Black population. As the party grew rapidly under the leadership of Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, programs organized by the party moved towards a cultural revolutionary agenda. Even as the Panthers set out to distinguish itself from other Black Liberation efforts that its leaders deemed inadequate, the party echoed the long-standing tradition within the Black community that underscored the importance of education.

Like many of their predecessors and contemporaries in the Black Freedom struggle, the Black Panther Party (BPP) embraced collective memory as a tool for building community, identity and political momentum, deploying a wide array of memory practices throughout party activities and discourse. The Panthers wove historical narrative into the rhetoric of the party though speeches, the party newspaper and literature, and through the establishment of community schools. Much like Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael and Howard Fuller, the Panthers understood themselves as having an imperative to teach community and party members, young and old, about the historical experiences of the Black community. Like the Nation of Islam, the BPP’s historical narrative shifted during the duration of the Party’s existence. During the early years, the party’s historical narrative had a unique arc. Early instances of collective memory building served the party’s Marxist agenda, aiming to fuel revolutionary energy. By the Party’s demise in the mid-1980s, however, both content and
form had shifted towards more liberal goals as it engaged more with public schooling and emphasized love and racial pride rather than revolutionary aims.

In all of their initiatives, the Panthers created a national political party and culture that allowed for local input. All BPP leaders received training on party background, including a curricular unit that answered “What is the history of the Black man in America?”

Rather than narrating the founding specifics of the party, the training gave a crash course in World history, which argued that religious differences between Europeans and Sub-Saharan Africans led to the slave trade. According to training materials, imperialists had explained their civilizing mission to Sub-Saharan Africans on the basis of their pantheistic faith, missionaries having preached that Africans from northern half of the continent were “good” Africans because they primarily were monotheistic.

Much like the Nation of Islam and MXLU, the historical narrative of the Panthers located the origins of the US-based 20th century political party within the historical context of Africa before European contact, charging that the imperialists "raped Africa economically.” Yet the Panthers' distinguished their engagement with Black history by framing the narrative in a Marxist interpretation of history.

Like their leadership counterparts in the Nation of Islam, Black Panther Party leaders also used the group’s newspaper *The Black Panther* to disseminate their collective memory in efforts to build membership and mobilize their communities. Party leadership used the newspaper as a pedagogical tool, regularly including articles on a wide variety of topics related to party ideology that wove in historical themes. The nature

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202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
of the BPP as, in part, a defensive front against police brutality placed the organization in
the legal spotlight much more than NOI, and a significant number of paper articles dealt
with these legal struggles. Yet even within coverage on intense police repression and
extreme corporal struggles, authors connected their polemicizing narrative to history:

> The American Historian has a way of justifying this system by using
> Germany as the most vicious enemy against mankind; this is perhaps true
> for the people of Jewish descent. But when we really check this shit out,
> starting with the genocide of the Indians, the 50,000,000 Black people
> slaughtered by the oppressors when taken against their will at the point of
> guns, over 400 years ago, right here in America. Then reminding ourselves
> of the genocidal and imperialist war against the Vietnamese people, the
> burning of Black on the sacred cross of Christianity. Then it becomes
> easier to relate to the chieftains of fascism, imperialism, racism, and
> Bobby Seale’s demand for his right to self-defense. 204

Party membership certainly read *The Black Panther* to keep up on the party's political
struggles, but they also received a revisionist history lesson as part of the context for their
contemporary moment. Here the paper’s coverage of Seale’s trial as one of the Chicago
Eight, a group charged with conspiracy to incite a riot at the 1968 Democratic National
Convention in Chicago, made an occasion to educate party membership on Black history
in the U.S. Beyond presenting an oppositional history, the author also critiqued the
failings of contemporary mainstream historical knowledge.

> The Party’s raison d’etre was, in fact, very much based on history. Beyond the
ten-point platform, the party understood itself as part of a longstanding tradition of Black
physical resistance:

> Throughout our history black men with guts and nerve have stood up to
challenge this system with bullets and pamphlets: Men like David Walker
who wrote an appeal to the slaves to organize and overthrow their masters
by any means necessary, was murdered because his ideas were
“dangerous.” Henry Garnet who taught that submission to slavery was

204 “What You Are, Speak So Loud I Hardly Hear Anything You Say,” *The Black Panther*,
November 8, 1969, 6.
wrong and that black people should forget those who cautioned them about force and who said that the lord would provide. Garnet said that God helps those who help themselves. All the way down through our history men like Garnet have been ignored.\textsuperscript{205}

The collective and often unremembered past offered inspiration, precedence, and mandate; by invoking narratives of resistance during slavery, Black Panthers intertwined their struggle with a history of Black resistance, naturalizing their agenda and legitimating their political project.

True to the Party’s commitment to serve the radicalized Lumpenproletariat, the underclass of extreme poverty and criminality, the Panthers reached out to prison populations with adult education courses. Among these efforts, the party developed two significant programs at the medium security prison in San Pedro, California and the federal penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. At both sites, activists from outside of the prison formed study groups with prison population that echoed the nascent Black Studies programs popping up on college campuses across the country.

Both study groups generated intellectually rigorous, in-depth group discussions based on assigned readings. While the San Pedro group brought African American history into a broader course on Black culture, the Leavenworth Afro-American History study group undertook a sizeable reading list that could have rivaled an academic history course in terms of breadth and thoroughness. Using lectures, discussions, photographs and film, participants worked through a syllabus covering units including topics on The Black Man in America, Myths and Realities, The African Legacy, Black Cargoes, The Colonial Experience, The Peculiar Institution, Slavery in the Americas, Neither Slave nor Free, The Crusade Against Slavery, The War to Make Men Free, Reconstruction: The

Great Experiment, The Road to Reaction, The Great Debate, Washington vs. DuBois, The Roots of the Northern Ghetto, The Great Migration, The Era of the New Negro, Depression and Hope, The Genesis of the Black Revolt, The Civil Rights Movement, The Quest for Identity, and The Fire This Time. The narrative arc of the course clearly put Black experience front and center in American history via monographs of mainstream academic scholars such as John Hope Franklin, Basil Davidson, Kenneth Stampp, Martin Duberman, C. Vann Woodward and Gunnar Myrdal. Although instructors framed the course as political education, the books read by prisoners could have mirrored a graduate course in African American history.

One of the most significant ways that the Panthers complicated the radical paradigm was through their Survival Programs. These inner-city community initiatives included programs such as free breakfast for school-age children, senior assistance, clothing distribution, self-defense classes, health clinics and sickle-cell anemia testing; through these projects the party provided for the material needs of the communities as it worked to politically organize in a radical and revolutionary direction. Their programmatic efforts would not only produce new and parallel institutional forms, but would also echo the larger movement’s integration into liberal processes that would characterize the identity politics struggles of the 1980s and 1990s.

Perhaps the most successful of the Survival Programs were the Liberation Schools. The BPP first established informal educational groups for children, teaching everything from basic literacy to Black history. One party member explained “we recognize that education is only relevant when it teaches the art of survival,” a sentiment

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which echoed the influences of earlier educational theorists like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Dewey with a bit of a Black Panther twist. Like other contemporary alternative educators, the Panthers embraced the educational reform tradition of child-centered learning and pragmatic education, while also engaging the unique needs of urban Black children and the larger political goals of community self-determination. In 1969, the Party opened schools in Oakland, San Francisco, Queens, and New York, projects that often served as extensions of the BPP’s breakfast program.

More than just edifying diversions for youth lured in by free breakfast, party leadership viewed the schools as a critical arm of the Party’s work. The schools served as a manifestation of Point Five from the Panthers ten point manifesto: “We want decent education for our people that exposes the true nature of this decadent American society. We want education that teaches us our true history and our role in the present-day society.” From the beginning, party leadership envisioned the schools as transmitters of Black history and revolutionary culture. The most rudimentary schedule of the first school offered the following weekly plan: “Monday is Revolutionary History day, Tuesday is Revolutionary Culture Day, Wednesday is Current Events Day, Thursday is Movie Day, and Friday is Field Trip Day.” For the BPP, creating a revolution required an education that understood both histories of oppression and resistance, as well as provided an engagement with present struggles and needs.

The success of and demand for the schools led the party to transform these informal educational efforts into a parallel institutional form. In 1970, David Hilliard

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208 As published in every issue of *The Black Panther*.

created the idea of a full-time liberation school, which would soon develop into the Intercommunal Youth Institute in 1971, changed to the Oakland Community School in 1973, and ultimately became the longest lasting BPP school. The school proved very popular, quickly reaching capacity at 150 full time students and maintaining a waitlist, sometimes as large as 400 names, which included yet-to-be-born children. The school, directed by Ericka Huggins and Donna Howell, provided students with a residential and tuition-free education. Initially funded by the sale of the Black Panther newspaper, a funding committee called the Each One, Teach One Foundation organized in 1973 to cover tuition and expenses for the entire student body.\textsuperscript{210} The majority of students were African Americans, yet also included Mexican Americans, Asian Americans and even a small minority of Caucasians. Students wore black and blue uniforms, which mirrored adult BPP member uniforms. Majeedah Rahman, Director of Curriculum, saw the school as striving "to create a learning environment that promoted revolutionary thought, community service and cultural awareness."\textsuperscript{211} She also recalled that she based some of the school's curriculum on the cultural and educational revolutions in China and Cuba during 1957 to 1976. This emphasis on multiculturalism distinguished BPP schools from their cultural nationalist counterparts like MXLU, as Panther schools emphasized an international class awareness rather than Pan-Africanism.\textsuperscript{212} Through the curriculum, Panther leadership transmitted to the next generation the party's commitment to international solidarity with marginalized people of color across the world.


The Schools became not only a space for resisting mainstream schooling, but also an expression of a different philosophy of education. School leadership integrated Black history into the entire curriculum. As Minister of Education and Director of the Oakland Community School, Erika Huggins vociferously embraced the intertwining of education and history, declaring “that my mind and heart immediately go back generations to the enslavement of Africans and I think of how brutal [conditions were if] we wanted or were found to be learning to read, to write, to think critically…and I know you know what happened if we did…It hasn’t changed much…”\textsuperscript{213} Huggins had a passionate interest in the role of education in marginalized communities from an early age. After growing up in Washington DC, she studied education at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania in 1967 at the same time that Charles Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael penned their movement-defining book \textit{Black Power}.\textsuperscript{214} At Lincoln, Huggins met her future husband John Huggins, with whom she headed to Los Angeles to join the Black Panther Party and quickly moved into leadership positions within the party. After John was gunned down by Black Panther rivals in 1969, Ericka continued to serve as a leader within the party, founding the New Haven BPP chapter and Liberation School, writing for the party's newspaper, and ultimately directing the Oakland Community School from 1973-1981.\textsuperscript{215}

BPP educators gave much attention to the role of pedagogy in the schools. In 1973, Bobby Seale echoed Howard Fuller's sentiments on the role of education for the Black community, this time with a focus on elementary and secondary education: "We’re

\textsuperscript{213} Interview with Erika Huggins for \textit{The Black Commentator} in June 2008, as transcribed at http://www.blackcommentator.com/285/285_iss_oakland_community_school_pinkney.html


not here to teach our children WHAT to think, We're here to teach our children HOW to think," and the promotion of critical thinking about historical narratives was a fundamental part of that vision. Party Chairwoman Elaine Brown also understood the school’s work as more about developing the next generation of revolutionary citizen than about the simple transmission of party ideology, that the school was “not a freedom school or a liberation school in the sense that we teach the children rhetoric” but rather to show “that Black, poor children are educable.” For Brown and others, critical thinking skills, not rote memorization of party politics, would ensure that the next generation could lead the revolution. Administrators of the school also recognized that their schooling efforts emerged in the broader context of growing progressive educational projects, such as the free school movement, yet they also recognized that the liberation schools were not simply an extension of the primarily white-led education reform movement: they shunned the term "alternative school" in favor of the more uplift-oriented "model school," refusing to further stigmatize their students, many of whom had been deemed substandard by mainstream schools.

Under the leadership of Huggins, the Oakland Community School offered not only a safe learning environment, but was also a manifestation of a community school based on love and care. The school was housed in the Oakland Community Center, a grassroots-funded hub of BPP community programs. Along with kindergarten through sixth grade students, Oakland residents seeking medical, seniors, adult education, and

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219 Interview with Ericka Huggins.
martial arts services and programming frequented the center. Huggins sought to cultivate an anti-authoritarian learning environment, using yoga and peer justice systems to deal with conflict and problem behaviors. Teachers also encouraged self-expression and utilized engaged, hands-on learning techniques at a time when such pedagogical approaches were anything but the norm for poor urban children.

Although teachers integrated Black history throughout the curriculum year-round, the month of February provided special opportunities for the celebration of Black historical achievements and struggles. Each year the school sponsored Black history bees, calling them a “friendly competition about the history of our people from Olduvai Gorge to Jonestown.” During the month the school’s newsletter featured a Black History Month calendar, highlighting the birthdays of Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Rosa Park and Huey P. Newton. The festivities culminated in 1980 with a special program called “Pass the Freedom, Please.” During the performance, students dramatized George Washington giving medals to slaves who fought in the Revolutionary War, a classroom activity that integrated blacks into the origins of the American nation. American history units continued to revise the national narrative, a research paper on black politicians during Reconstruction, and 20th-century interracial working-class history unit spanning a satirical comic book on John D. Rockefeller and interviews with contemporary union representatives.

Beyond curriculum, administrators cultivated an educational culture that immersed students in the collective memory denied them in mainstream American

220 Interview with Ericka Huggins.
221 Murch, Living for the City, 182-3.
222 Undated flyer, Newton Collection, 2:16:4.
224 Social Science Curriculum, Newton Collection, 2:17:6.
schools. Upon accepting their position, teachers were given a manual that outlined expectations for pedagogy, curriculum and student-teacher interaction. In a section on the physical environment of the classroom, teachers were instructed to maintain a colorful bulletin board in their classrooms where they were encouraged to use themes of Black history. The School also maintained a calendar that observed numerous holidays, including standard U.S. holidays as well as celebrations of marginalized communities like International Women’s Day to recognize the historical struggles of women worldwide, May Day as a moment of remembrance for class struggles of the past, and Malcolm X’s birthday as a connection to the larger Black Power movement and history of US racial struggle. The inclusion of such holidays reveals the school's commitment to liberatory politics focused on all marginalized people. The academic calendar reflected the Panther's identification with other liberation struggles across time and space and highlights the efforts of some of the party's membership to build coalitions across national lines.

Over the years, curriculum at the school became significantly more standardized. By 1978, the reputation of the school and its successes had spread to larger educational circles and local school districts. The attention received by the school left administrators imagining a larger future as they sought to copyright the schools’ curriculum in an effort to maintain control over the school’s design. As the school continued to flourish, leadership began to seek more creative ways to finance their endeavor. Federal funding for educational initiatives had increased over the last decade as part of President Johnson’s Great Society programs, and by 1982 the Panthers had become significantly

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226 Ibid.
more hospitable to partnerships with the government. As a result, administrators undertook the significant task of bringing the school’s current curricular structure in line with California state standards. This initiative provided school administrators with an opportunity to design a comprehensive history curriculum including "the history of the chattel slavery of blacks as well as the slave-like exploitation of Spanish-speaking peoples and Asians in the U.S. [and] the migration of Native Americans," as well as "Harriet Tubman and Julius Caesar; Ethiopia and the British Empire; China before and after 1949 and France before and after 1789."²²⁷ This topical list reflected both an identification with other marginalized peoples and a rewriting of a historical narrative that was organized around political oppression and revolution. Other social science topics followed similarly, as Geography units contained assignments to study housing needs in Oakland, and World Studies plans brought in guest speakers on land reform in Cuba and engaged students in an examination of the origins of the caste system worldwide.²²⁸

In American history, planners divided the curriculum into three periods: Revolution through 1873, Imperialism and War: 1873–1938, and War, Suspicion and Rebellion: 1932-1968. Antebellum and Reconstruction gave students “the opportunity to hold a mock debate between the Abolitionists and slave owners,” while the Imperialism unit included the reading of “Mighty Rock,” a text that satirized the Rockefeller family.²²⁹ The most contemporary unit covered the span of Panther political causes and included a visit to a union hall, a tour of a Japanese-American concentration camp and listening to personal accounts of Civil Rights Movement activists, again revealing OCS commitment to addressing all marginalized experience. Here too the curriculum strayed

²²⁷ Social Science Curriculum, Newton Collection, 2:17:6.
²²⁸ Curriculum Design Notebooks, Newton Collection, 2:17:3-6.
²²⁹ Ibid.
from traditional US periodizations, emphasizing the contradiction between the revolution and slavery through the first period, the growth of the US as a world power in the second, and subversion and repression in the third. With this rich historical curriculum, the school continued to educate Party members’ children until 1982, when it was the final program of the BPP to shutter.

The significance of BPP educational initiatives lies in impact it had on the ownership of Black history within the movement and community. The Black Panther Party used a wide variety of memory practices, from articles in *The Black Panther* to the development and evolution of the Liberation Schools, practices that echoed their political goals of transforming the cultural and economic realities of African Americans through a political agenda that connected marginalized people and resisted capitalism and imperialism. Like their movement counterparts in the Nation of Islam and Malcolm X Liberation University, they began with a strong commitment to radical change and increasingly embraced over time a more liberal agenda of humanistic inclusion. Although historians have traditionally marked the difference between Civil Rights and Black Power between liberalism and radicalism, perhaps it is more useful to see the various approaches to the question of racial difference. Civil Rights leaders largely sought racial equality through the goad of removing social, legal and cultural differences between whites and blacks. While Civil Rights groups generally sought to create significant change through a non-violent reform of mainstream American society, at times they embraced forms of self-defense that many considered “violent” while also seeking to create new community-controlled institutional forms. Black Power activism proved equally complex, as activists strove for various kinds of separatism but also engaged existing institutional forms and
increasingly framed their work within rhetoric of racial pride rather than one that was simply critical of mainstream American society, a tactic that is perfectly compatible with political liberalism.

Conclusion

The Black Power Movement as a whole reframed the struggle for racial change away from a demand for social equality and integration towards a forceful call for political autonomy and profound cultural changes. Activists calls for "self-determination" and "revolutionary struggle" took precedence over the desire to battle racism within existing institutions and legal structures. Stokely Carmichael's battle cry called for Black Power as a more autonomous direction for the Black Freedom Movement: the unification of all black people in the United States, the recognition of Black heritage and the building of a clear sense of community united in political, cultural and economic goals. At the core of this project was the transformation of black identity, and activism to this end sought to change the schooling of black students as well created more informal kinds of adult education through movement newspapers and community programs. Although these initiatives emphasized a political identity that was more separatist than earlier manifestations in the Black Freedom Movement, the emphasis on community-led education was a century old tradition in black struggles for equality.

Although these three institutional examples hang together under an operative definition of Black Power as a movement of cultural nationalism and Black autonomy,

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each of these institutions varied significantly from one another in terms of political visions and tactics. The Nation of Islam was in many ways politically conservative in terms of its gender politics and economic/class views. The organization also relied on a very narrow model of leadership that was dependent upon charisma in the pursuit of separatist racial uplift. Leadership of Malcolm X Liberation University envisioned social change through cultural nationalism that reclaimed African traditions, identities, and values while in practice sometimes giving less attention to the lived local struggle of black Americans. The Black Panther Party engaged highly disenfranchised and politically repressed working-class urban blacks in a Marxist program of social and economic revolution that sought to liberate all working peoples. While all three deployed collective memory to support the movement's political goals, their respective memory practices produced highly varied programs and curriculum.

Each of the three examples also differs from the others in terms of the narratives constructed. The Nation of Islam broke sharply away from Black historiographical traditions by significantly disregarding the American slave past and crafting myth and narrative to explain a collective African past while also foreshadowing their intended future. Later collective memory activism arising out of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Black Panther Party incorporated the slave past while enriching it with other useful narratives. The Malcolm X Liberation University balanced a dark historical narrative with a Pan-Africanist cultural heritage in order to build racial pride. Likewise, the Black Panther liberation schools taught a Marxist version

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233 Ericka Huggins has suggested the term "Black Liberation Movement" instead of the "Black Power Movement," to underscore the interconnectedness of Black Panther activism with Women's Liberation and Gay Liberation Movements. For reasons of clarity and to connect these three examples, I have chosen to keep "Black Power." Interview with Ericka Huggins.
of Black American history while connecting that experience with other marginalized
groups. Across all of these examples, Black Power activists developed parallel
institutional structures to promote memory practices that refuted dominant historical
narratives in favor of narratives that supported cultural and political sovereignty for Black
Americans.
Chapter 3
A History of One's Own: Feminist Collective Memory in the Second Wave Women's Movement

Much like their counterparts in the Black Freedom and Gay Liberation Movements, Second Wave feminists crafted a community history that supported their political goals. Their struggle also was marked by a desire to construct a new, shared identity that was self-defined within their own community of womanhood. The drive for such an identity was inextricably bound up in seeking collective memory. Community historians looked to the past for narratives of women who had realized personal success, resisted patriarchal limitations, and worked for women's equality; these stories were then used to inspire feminist consciousness and activism as they transformed gender roles in both public and private contexts.

As their counterparts in the Black Freedom Movement built institutions to educate their communities outside of mainstream institutions, Women's Liberation activists worked more informally, often germinating women's history projects within existing arts and educational institutions to make "women's work, movements, families, and loves visible to an indifferent present." Women's Liberation collective memory projects tended to emerge when feminists interacted with mainstream institutions and found themselves frustrated with the representation of women's history therein. As a result, Women's Liberation activists focused more on research than their Civil Rights or Black Power counterparts. When activists founded separatist history projects such as women-only community archives, the organizations were generally short-lived, and their collections were shortly thereafter integrated into mainstream repositories.

At the level of historical narrative, activists sought to reframe women's history as public, a revisionist effort that refused to confine women's historical experiences to home and family. Community historians embraced the ideal of universal womanhood, crafting a historical category that was transnational and spanned economic class. Although they were often white and middle-class, collective memory activists within the Women's Movement made efforts to transcend their privilege to craft a past that accounted for race, class, and ethnicity while breaking these social divisions in favor of promoting the primary identity of womanhood.

This chapter traverses collective memory practices put forth by a variety of activists and organizations. Women's Liberation activists collected historical documents, developed research skills and methods for locating sources in traditional archives and literature not focused on women's history, and crafted narratives in a wide variety of memory practices to provide the larger movement with a community history and a shared identity. Beginning with the movement building process of Consciousness Raising, I consider how activists used the Women's History Library, Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* art installation, the Helaine Victoria Press' historical postcards and the Summer Institute for Women's History to develop memory practices that suited feminists need for a proud past through both women's separatist projects and interventions in mainstream organizations.

**The Seeds of Collective Memory in the Women's Movement**

An organized desire for women's history emerged at the end of the first wave of the women's movement, sparked primarily by activist scholars working within the academy.
In the early 20th century, few women historians held academic jobs. Women who managed to secure academic appointments felt professionally marginalized and were often disregarded by their male counterparts as serious colleagues. In response to what several women perceived as a hostile environment at the American Historical Association's annual meetings, Louise Fargo Brown and Louise Ropes Loomis founded the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians in 1930. Loomis and Brown created a professional environment where women could form supportive friendships within the profession. This organization would go on to figure significantly not only in the establishment of Women's Studies within the academy but also in the work of Women's and Gay Liberation community historians.

Women's historians working in the early 20th century recognized that a lack of sources severely constrained research and writing on women's historical experience. Emerging from the end of first wave feminism's successes in 1935, historian and archivist Mary Ritter Beard founded the World Center for Women's Archives in New York City. Supported by international suffrage activist Rosika Schwimmer, American feminist Alice Paul, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and artist Georgia O'Keefe, Beard initially envisioned an archival repository as well as a university that would institutionalize women's history. Financial difficulties continually plagued the Depression-era project, and by 1940 the organization had folded. Archives chairwoman, feminist author and activist Inez Haynes Irwin entreated supporters to view women's history as integral to the larger movement and uphold the preservation work, suggesting that "every member of your Board and of the organization itself is a potential World Center for Women's Archives."235 Upon the

235 Letter to members of World Center for Women's Archives, as reprinted in Anne Relph, “The World Center for Women’s Archives, 1935-1940,” Signs 4, no. 3 (1979), 602.
Center’s closure, the holdings were either returned to their donors or transferred to other appropriate archives, including sending collections to cultural institutions that collected on topics pertaining to women's history, including Wellesley, Barnard, and Radcliffe Colleges. During the 1940s, women's college administrations continued pathbreaking yet limited preservation work, establishing the Sophia Smith Collection at Smith College in 1942 and the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe University in 1943.

In the late 1960s women's history and collective memory efforts resurfaced as part of the Second Wave of feminist activism. In the wake of the new collective political consciousness that coalesced around Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, women working in the early part of what was emerging as the Women's Liberation Movement began to take up the recently developed practice of Consciousness-Raising (CR). Arising out of the mandate embraced by early radical feminists that asserted "the personal is political," CR became a tool for connecting individual experiences of depression, frustration, listlessness and a lack of agency to larger social processes found in patriarchal societies. Women who participated in the process generally discovered that experiences they had previously understood as singular to them were often shared by many other women; participants also often made connections to their mother's or maternal ancestors' experiences, a connection that strengthened the idea of universal womanhood. In 1967, a group of women formed the New York Radical Women, adapting a form of small group critical discussions from radical left organizations, who had themselves adapted such practices from Maoist Chinese dissidents. First calling them “rap sessions” or “bitch sessions”, these early radical feminists brought the burgeoning practice to Chicago for the

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236 Letter from the World Center for Women’s Archives, November 25, 1940, Mary Ritter Beard Collection, 2:23, Sophia Smith Archives, Smith College (Northampton, MA).
first national Women’s Liberation Conference in November of 1968, where the practice spread to other local groups.

Early guides to CR encouraged an informal connection between the personal and the collective past. In *Women’s Fate: Raps from a Feminist Consciousness Raising Group*, women exploring CR were told that the practice “serves as an anvil for women to beat out a lifetime of ingrained hostility men have encouraged them to feel for each other. In small groups, the myth of the feminine bitch is destroyed. Women learn their history. They learn that *female is good* [emphasis in original].”

For these early proponents of CR, women’s historical experience was key to moving beyond simply sharing their frustrations with each other and towards imagining collective action. Early radical feminist and Redstockings Collective member Kathie Sarachild wrote an outline for the Chicago conference, underscoring the importance of “discussing possible methods of struggle in a historical context.”

For early radical feminists, history could provide not only legitimacy and explanation for women’s oppression, but serve as a tool for women to resist patriarchy. Although CR did not always explicitly encourage connection to women's history, the sense of long-term oppression that emerged from such discussions came from a place of personal history and often resulted in a sense of a collective historical experience. The collective identity produced by CR often moved participants from the experience of a shared catharsis to a desire for further knowledge, inspiring reading groups devoted to women’s history or feminist political theory.

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Women in the movement were torn over the embrace of CR. This division remained throughout the 1970s as activists debated what the primary work of feminism was. Many felt that CR sessions did nothing to further the political goals of the Women's movement; some even worried that such efforts detracted from action. The New York Radical Women eventually split in part over the issue of CR, with the emergent Redstockings group claiming the CR torch. This tension reflects a larger anxiety over the relationship between expressly 'political' and the more nebulous 'cultural' work, as some felt that the movement work needed to first attend to collective social issues like equal pay and access rather than interior experiences of women. In what Alice Echols refers to as "the Politico-Feminist Fracture," early radical feminists struggled over the nature of the movement: was it to be a separatist space for activism led by identity work or was it to be a gender-conscious wing of the new left? Although the larger women's movement never came to a full consensus on this issue, many groups began to veer towards the identity-based agenda. In the mid 1970s, leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) took an interest in Consciousness Raising as a tool for growing the movement and recruiting new NOW members. As CR's role in the Women's Liberation Movement shifted from memory practice to organizational recruitment tool, women's desire for a shared history shifted to other projects within the movement.

Although the practice of Consciousness Raising and its ability to lay seeds of desire for women's history were a key activity for the Redstockings Collective, leaders of

239 Alice Echols, Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 85.
241 Alice Echols, Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 53.
the group also engaged women’s history rhetorically to ground their contemporary political work in a tradition of women's resistance. In one example, Kathie Sarachild invoked the classic *History of Woman Suffrage* to inspire and direct contemporary feminist struggles. Written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Matilda Joslyn Gage, *History of Woman Suffrage* was a six-volume project first conceived of in 1881 and published in 1922 on the first wave of the feminist movement. Sarachild argued that first-wave feminists used history in movement building and that they understood history “as movement, as development, as continuing struggle; a history of the present as well as the past-for the future…a history by the activists, those who write history to change history.”

It is striking that Second Wave activists like Sarachild not only placed themselves in a tradition of women's activism, but also in a tradition of community history-making: as Sarachild and many others believed, the task for the next generation of feminists was not only to generate social change, but also to preserve the historical record for future generations.

As feminist consciousness and organizational development exploded in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the desire for women's history also expanded across the movement. Feminists responded with a variety of projects and initiatives that developed historical narratives in a variety of resources and formats that attempted to create a sophisticated, if not comprehensive, narrative of women's history. Feminists undertook archival, fine art, pop culture, community education and broad curricular projects to build a collective memory that would serve the political goals of second-wave feminism.

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An Archival Basis for Women's History

Perhaps the first feminist to envision a major historical project arising out of Women's Liberation was a young woman, Laura X, who had found herself infuriated in 1969 with a male professor's dismissal of women's history. Laura had asked her professor at the University of California at Berkeley to develop a course exploring women's historical experiences, to which he scornfully doubted that he could find sufficient content to fill an entire semester. In response, Laura X and a few friends set out to prove him wrong, researching and writing a pamphlet entitled "Women in World History."

Laura's historical curiosity had been first piqued on International Women's Day in 1968 during a screening of The End of St. Petersburg, a film that depicted a women's demonstration during the Russian Revolution. Laura's excitement about the film reflected a new universal experience of womanhood embraced by Second Wave feminism. At the same time, Black Power activists were exploring similar ideas around identity and nationhood, and the film fueled Laura's growing commitment to a transnational movement of women that paralleled that of Black Nationalism.

After publication of the brochure, Laura X set out to begin collecting anything she could find on women's history, as well as actively documenting the movement of which she herself was a part. Finding a deluge rather than a dearth of information, she founded the Women's History Library in Berkeley, CA as a women's separatist cultural organization to collect and preserve women's history. Using her own inheritance and 243 "Womens History Research Center Library," 1971. Boston N.O.W. Collection, 19:690, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA).
home to fund and house the rapidly growing collections, Laura and a growing group of volunteers broadly collected materials on women's historical and contemporary experiences and political resistance. Striving to "get [women's history] back and record herstory in progress," the library sought not only to collect women's historical materials, but also right historical wrongs like "the woman who invented the cotton gin and got ripped off by Eli Whitney." Although she sought to collect both traditional archival materials and documents from the blossoming second wave, she also included such unusual archival objects as photos of graffiti traces, old books on 'tokology' and midwifery, and graduation books.

Laura X's experience with her male professor who scoffed at the idea of women's history fueled the development of an archive that would provide the raw material for scholarly and popular historians alike. By January 1970, less than a year after the organization's founding, the WHRC compiled and published a report on its developing collections. Thirteen pages of typewritten notes divided the collection topically by subjects such as politics, art, sciences, and professions and further organized the materials according to era and region, specifically identifying thirty countries across Asia, Europe, North America and South America. WHRC staff concluded the guide with an amended quote from the Declaration of Sentiments, a document produced by the Seneca Falls Convention in 1948, reminding second wave feminists that "the history of mankind IS A HISTORY OF REPEATED INJURIES AND USURPATIONS ON THE PART OF MAN TOWARD WOMAN, HAVING IN DIRECT OBJECT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ABSOLUTE TYRANNY OVER HER...P.S. 1/27/70 THE ONLY FUTURE IS

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244 Introduction to "Women's Songbook," Boston N.O.W. Collection, 19:690.
245 Ibid.
REVOLUTIONARY FEMINISM [emphasis in the original] For Laura X and her colleagues, not only was the construction of women's historical knowledge an important form of activism, but they also located their historical work within the legacy of past generations of feminists.

As the collections at WHRC rapidly expanded, the larger movement's desire for women's historical resources became increasingly evident through the growing number of research requests made to the organization. By 1969 the Center was publishing the monthly periodical SPAZM, and by August 1970 had shifted to printing a 200-page catalog of its rapidly growing holdings. In only a few short years, WHRC amassed archives of all known women's liberation periodicals, a significant law library, a compendium on women in the arts, materials on women and health, a women's film guide, books, and topical files, as well as serving as a reference for other small press and ephemeral publications, resources that were eagerly used by feminists. As word of the collection spread, staff increasingly struggled to keep up with research request correspondence, a correspondence that itself illustrated the increasingly popular desire for women's history within the movement.

Women from all across the country corresponded with WHRC on a wide variety of topics, reflecting the diverse interests and issues germane to movement participants. Although WHRC served as a full repository of information on women, both contemporary and historical, many of the research requests focused on historic inquiries.

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246 Laura X and Women's History Research Center, Collections Subject Guide, January 28, 1970, Women's History Research Center Collection, Northwestern University (Evanston, IL), 13.

Some were broad historical questions inquiring into women's experiences, like women in WWI, women's organizations in Atlanta between 1890-1920, American women during the Depression, New Jersey women in history, nineteenth century British women and working women in Philadelphia from 1900-1940. Many of the inquiries sought to recognize individual women activists and early feminists, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Sylvia Plath, Mary Wollstonecraft, the Grimke Sisters, and Susan B Anthony and the Suffragists. Others reflected the values of second wave feminism, looking for resources on women in experimental and utopian living communities of the nineteenth century, Mexican American women, and women’s lib in the 1940s. Still others sought to uncover earlier women in unexpected places and social roles that defied their contemporary gender norms, such as women mystics, preachers, and witches in the seventeenth century, US women who have declared for the presidency, women and war from 1607 to the present, and women in early American printing. Movement participants also drew upon the resources of WHRC to add historical depth to contemporary political issues. To this end, women inquired on a wide array of professional topics including working women, prostitution, women and politics, women in data processing careers, women in Psychology, and discrimination against women in college admissions. Other inquiries posed a wide variety of personal topics such as mental health, child custody and lesbian mothers, problems of old women, rape, self esteem, and lesbianism. Still others sought out answers to cultural and representational issues such as sexism in children’s literature, advertising and women consumers, cultural differences in women of different countries, the sociology of middle class women’s movement, and the Swedish Women’s Liberation Movement.  

248 Requests for Information, 1973. Women’s History Research Center Records,16, Sophia
Although the Library primarily collected print materials, staff also endeavored to preserve other kinds of artifacts. Judy Busch, a musician who approached Laura about compiling women's folk songs after finding only a few in WHRC's "oral herstory" collection, believed that song was a particular form of women's memory practice that transcended generations and cultures. Busch understood that women had transmitted historical experiences in less formal ways "because we've been denied education and writing materials for so long…the only way our story has been carried through time is via songs, 'wives tales,' lullabies and what has 'previously been slandered as gossip.' Working together, Laura and Busch collected songs and graphics penned by women and published their findings in a collection they called the "hermenal," continuing a playful tradition of feminizing nouns that were masculine-sounding.

During its relatively short life span, the Women's History Research Center flourished as a model feminist separatist organization, if not a financially viable one. From 1968 to 1971, WHRC blossomed out of Laura X's personal collection, growing into a substantial community resource. First located in Laura's home in Berkeley, WHRC shortly expanded to employ a full-time staff that worked to continue developing the collection. By 1972, Laura's own funds had run out, and the organization came to rely on volunteer labor and work-study students from local colleges. As Center leadership began to struggle to raise funds, Laura and others urged other women's organizations to collect and organize historic materials within their own communities. WHRC staff especially encouraged others to collect newsletters, as they found them to be "very special historical

Smith Archives, Smith College (Northampton, MA).
documents. They frequently reflect the arguments which six months to a year later become national task force issues.\textsuperscript{251} This urging underscored that staff were actively concerned about preserving their own historic moment as well as documenting the grassroots origins to major policy shifts. Much like their First Wave counterparts, WHRC staff worked to instill in feminists the historicity of their individual work as well as inspiring an egalitarian desire to document the movement as a whole.

**A Cultural History of One's Own**

While others amassed historical documents as an archival basis for women's history, other feminists claimed cultural space within male-dominated art museums and galleries. In the early 1970s, artist Judy Chicago dedicated her practice to the exploration of women's history. Having studied studio arts at UCLA where she earned BA and MA degrees, Chicago developed a Feminist Art Program at California State University at Fresno in 1970 that sought to teach art skills to young women while simultaneously building feminist consciousness. Between 1974 and 1979, Chicago led the development of a collaborative art project called *The Dinner Party* that provided a master narrative of world history focused solely on women. *The Dinner Party* was a massive multimedia installation featuring a triangular-shaped table with thirty-nine place settings, and served as a feminist response to the all-male environment depicted in Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* painting. Chicago had first conceived of the piece as a wall installation entitled *Twenty-five Women Who Were Eaten Alive by History*, but found herself enthralled by the idea of women's history and shifted the plan to the much more sizeable

\textsuperscript{251} Laura X, "Grow Your Own...Women's History Research Center" School Library Journal 19, (January 1973): 41.
dining table. The triangular motif represented for Chicago a structure that was more
feminine and egalitarian; as no one individual could be placed at the head of the table, the
triangular shape reflected the feminist goal of dismantling hierarchical structure.\textsuperscript{252}

The Dinner Party told a revisionist human history which placed women at the
center. Although the idea originated with Chicago, hundreds of volunteers took part in
the research, production, and promotional stages of the project. The project emerged from
the ideological groundwork of the early portion of the second wave movement: that
patriarchal society oppressed every woman and that each had an intimate and personal
connection to collective liberation. Chicago embraced a collectivist process for both the
research and production of the installation, cultivating a separatist arts space that
attempted to embrace the anti-hierarchical ethos of the movement. Set in a triangular
shape, the dining room setting harkened to women's space of the hearth and home, and
the place setting motif allowed Chicago to elevate feminine crafting heritage into fine art
through ceramics and embroidery.

Asserting a wide-sweeping historical thesis, The Dinner Party exemplified the
intertwined nature of a new feminist identity and a narrative of past collective struggles
and identities. In the introduction to The Dinner Party: a Bibliography, Chicago detailed
the process by which women's history shifted from a personal interest to a massive
educational and artistic project:

I began to do research in women’s history in the late 1960’s in an
effort to see myself in the context of women’s rather than men’s
achievements. Discovering the enormous amount of information that
existed about women, their work, and their lives, and realizing the

potential power of that information started me on the journey which eventually led to the creation of The Dinner Party. Headed by Ann Isolde, team members slowly learned to “read through” the sexist biases of history which disguised, rather than illuminated, women’s accomplishments.253

Chicago argued that dominant historical narratives obscured and distorted women's historical social roles and contributions, an oversight that Chicago wished to rectify. Chicago's own "reading against the grain" of historical sources paralleled the growth of social history in the academy, as scholars who wished to recuperate common voices began to critically engage with archives that had traditionally favored the powerful. Researchers' notes also reveal an engagement with other scholarly research, connecting their work to historical writing in diverse publications such as *Music Journal,* *New Yorker,* *MS, Science and Society Journal,* as well as with scholarly monographs.254

More than twenty volunteers spent over two years building up a massive collection of research notes that the themes of the installation engaged. Massive file drawers of index cards detailed the lives of a wide array of artists, physicians and nurses, explorers, lawyers and judges, painters, playwright, political figures and social reformers, philanthropists, educators, journalists, authors and orators, religious figures, historians, entertainers and athletes, natural and social scientists, and even outlaws.255 From this strikingly large array of candidates, the research team featured thirty-nine individual women, each with her own place setting, as well as giving special mention to 999 through the triangular floor tiles.

254 Undated Researcher Notes, Judy Chicago Papers, 17:12, Schlesinger Library, Harvard University (Cambridge, MA).
255 Research Files, Judy Chicago Papers, Boxes 37-39.
Promotional materials for the installation detailed the research and nomination methods deployed by Chicago and her twenty plus volunteers during two years of research:

Ultimately over three thousand women were researched and then we began to make choices based on three criteria: 1) Did the women make a significant contribution to society? 2) Did she attempt to improve conditions for women? 3) Did her life illuminate an aspect of women’s experience or provide a role model for the future? We selected 999 women who, we believed, represented a range of nationalities, experiences, and contributions. Our choices were limited by language barriers, fragmented information, and our own inexperience and biases. Our intention, however, was not to define women’s history, but to symbolize it—to say that there have been many women who have done many things, and they deserve to be known.256

Chicago's language reveals a critical engagement with both her own research bias and the limited source materials that skewed her work towards European heritage. As a popular historian, Chicago's concern with broadly representing women's experience both reveals the imagined universal womanhood that was the project of cultural feminism, but also reveals the progressiveness of her work at a point in the women's movement in which many white middle-class feminists failed to engage meaningfully with race.257 The Dinner Party's main place settings spanned female figures such as the Hindu goddess Kali, the Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut, a Shoshone diplomat, explorer Sacagawea and freedwoman abolitionist Sojourner Truth. Ceramic floor tiles also featured a number of figures from South and Central America, although African and Asian women remained

257 For a useful definition of cultural feminism and its universal views of womanhood, see Alice Echols, Daring To Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967-1975 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 243-247.
somewhat underrepresented. Although *The Dinner Party* did not fully represent the totality of global women's historical experiences, Chicago's efforts are noteworthy for her sensitivity towards this issue and her efforts to include a wider representation of women's history at a time when many academic historians operated with little concern for Eurocentric biases.

The dining room table provided the viewer with a structured account of women's history from western antiquity to the present. Each side of the table served to present thirteen women who typified Chicago's periodization—*From Prehistory to the Roman Empire*, then *From the Beginnings of Christianity to the Reformation*, and lastly *From the American to the Women's Revolution*. In the first section, visitors learned of, among others, goddess figures including an unnamed primordial goddess and Ishtar, the Assyrian fertility goddess through the Greek scholar Hypatia. The second era included the canonized St. Bridget from Sweden and the medieval physician Trotula of Salerno through the Italian Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi. The modern period spanned from early American settler and theologian Anne Hutchinson and British writing and early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft through painter Georgia O'Keefe and writer Virginia Woolf. Likewise, the 999 tiles that decorated the floor stood in for Aztec goddesses, American anarchists, and Finnish epic heroines. Taken as a whole, the installation told a grand and seamless narrative of the dawn of humanity through the inevitable conclusion of western women's enlightenment and liberation.

 Visitors responded to *The Dinner Party* with a variety of emotions ranging from joy and exuberance to frustration and rage. Hundreds of visitor letters reflect how the installation positioned visitors' sense of self within a larger historical context. One visitor
described the exhibit as offering "a sense of belonging—finally—to a dynamic, honorable group. There is a history; I don’t exist in a vacuum.”

But the sense of continuity that some women felt led others to express anger that their history had been denied for so long: "Why did it take so long? Why did we have to unearth these women buried and obliterated? Why do the power-holders even now try to keep such beauty and such strength and such worth invisible, denied?" Still others found themselves motivated by the installation to further pursue women's history, as two visitors formed a study group to connect to their "own history—a sense of self, our place, and validation." Visitors also responded to the exhibit with a desire for as many women as possible to see the project. Grassroots groups sprung up in cities across the country to organize local exhibitions of the event, often including ancillary programming and conferences on women's history as part of the opening festivities.

_The Dinner Party_ proved to be a highly effective instrument of a useable past, as educators used it as a text from which to teach women's history. William Monter, professor of History at Northwestern University required forty of his undergrads to attend _The Dinner Party_ in Chicago. Students each selected two figures from the place settings and two figures from the center, and wrote about their impressions and the impact the installation had on them. Students were profoundly moved by their encounter with the installation, recounting "an emotional mix of sadness, proudness, and happiness." In another instance, a California high school teacher incorporated _The Dinner Party_ into her

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262 Letter from students in William Monter's course, Judy Chicago Papers.
curriculum with 9th grade students, in which teens were required to write a ‘toast’ to a female historical figure of their choosing. Each student researched one of the exhibit's featured women, then created their own table setting as a tribute to the figure. As part of their final presentations, they recorded their toasts and played them during a simulated banquet dinner. As one student toasted Mildred “Babe” Didrikson Zaharias, she offered a heartfelt "thank you for the hopes, memories and dreams” that Didrikson's story had inspired.263 For young women coming of age in the late 1970s and early 1980s, female role models were a critical tool in creating a new consciousness and identity for the next generation, a generation that second-wave activists envisioned as populated with self-possessed, fully empowered women.

Judy Chicago relied not only on empirical work to develop a connection to the past, but also engaged myth to further link feminist consciousness with a sense of a shared past in her project following The Dinner Party. Drawing on the material amassed by her volunteer research team, Chicago drafted an alternative 'history', again placing women at the forefront of human evolution. The draft became the content for an illuminated manuscript she entitled Revelations of the Goddess. In her cosmology, the planets emerged from an abyss through a vaguely birth like process that produced "the Vagina Primera," culminating in "one last wail sounded in the Universe as Gaea gave birth to Woman."264 From this first woman emerged the human race, until "some of the sons of Woman grew restless" out of envy and desire for power.265 This desire led to violence between the genders, resulting in the expulsion of the human race from the

263 Undated letter from Lynn Firth, Judy Chicago Papers, 24:3.
paradise they had once inhabited. Much like her counterparts in the Nation of Islam, the crafting of myth gave Chicago an opportunity to both explain current power relations and craft a teleological narrative of social revolution. In *Revelations of the Goddess*, Gaia allowed the transfer of power to men as the finalized punishment for women's desire for power. This shift had allowed for women's subjugation until a millennium passed and feminine wisdom returned through the restoration of Gaea as spiritual authority. The myth incorporates the motifs of *The Dinner Party* in the conclusion: "The true worth of my Apostles and my Disciples [those who have carried feminine wisdom through centuries of patriarchy] and their long toil for redemption, will neither be seen nor known until the day when I shall carry thirty-nine of my Apostles and nine hundred and ninety-nine of my Disciples to my side. Then shall we celebrate at a heavenly banquet when my daughters will at last arise from their servitude and be resurrected in glory." It is the production of *The Dinner Party* itself, then, that signals the new utopian feminist era. Structurally, this myth parallels that of Yacub in the Nation of Islam's cosmology. In both stories, a fantastical narrative accounts for historical subjugation as it hearkens a transformation of the social order. Furthermore, the space of both *The Dinner Party* and *Revelations of the Goddess* provided movement members with a civic engagement with an imagined community of unified womanhood.

Judy Chicago and her team of researchers and artists contributed towards the development of feminist collective memory by developing memory practices that were collaborative and honored women's crafting traditions. By bringing women's historical narratives into male-dominated spaces, they infused the cultural sphere with women's

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experiences and talents. Although the production of The Dinner Party took place in a separatist manner, the exhibition itself took women's history out into the public sphere, proving to be both a radical act of feminist arts production and a liberal intervention into the cultural sector.

**Mementos of Memory**

As mainstream institutions of art and archival collections received an influx of women's historical themes and stories, another pair of feminists were developing a much more personal intervention into women's collective memory. Founded in 1973 by Jocelyn Cohen and Nancy Poore, the Helaine Victoria Press (HVP) produced and distributed historically themed postcards that educated feminists on women's history themes for nearly twenty years. Cohen had been a student of Judy Chicago's in the painting program at California State University where Chicago had piqued Cohen's interest in this history of women artists. The project grew organically out of these women's interests and experiences, and ultimately flourished into a project to "uncover women’s history, to make those findings highly visible and affordable through a popular art medium, to enrich the field of postcard art and to help keep the craft of letterpress art alive."²⁶⁷ Cohen and Poore had begun dating long distance, and had taken to corresponding via postcards to save on long distance phone bills. Over time, the women found themselves frustrated with the dearth of postcards depicting women in a positive and non-demeaning manner. Inspired to create such, Cohen and Poore began an arts school hobby that quickly

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blossomed into a full-blown non-profit endeavor and the two women transformed themselves into self-taught community historians. Feminists working on these projects worked within and against institutional frameworks that ignored or diminished the accomplishments of women throughout history as they first sought to identify women's historical experiences, then integrate them into a larger national narrative.

Community historians that emerged within the Second Wave came to their research from an organic desire to know more about women's historical experiences. For Cohen and Poore, what started as a simple hobby inspired by feminist anger at a lack of representation transformed into a full-time occupation and non-profit endeavor. Initially the women contracted with a professional press to produce an eight-card set that they had researched and designed. After growing increasingly frustrated with commercial presses that were run by men who were derisive about the postcards and offensive towards them, they began to print the cards themselves in a graphic design space at California State University.\textsuperscript{268} From the beginning, the women sought "to uncover women’s history, to make those findings highly visible and affordable through a popular art medium, to enrich the field of postcard art and to help keep the craft of letterpress art alive,"\textsuperscript{269} a vision that they fulfilled over seventeen years of researching, designing, printing, and distributing women's history postcards. Cohen and Poore undertook most of the work of the entire business, only employing minimal administrative help after a few years as the business grew.

Cohen became increasingly involved in the work of HVP towards the end of her degree, and Cohen's interest prompted her painting instructor Judy Chicago to discourage

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Cohen from pursuing full-time work as a community historian and printer. Chicago and Feminist Arts Program co-founder Miriam Schapiro had felt that the project wasted Cohen's painting talent, and Chicago saw Cohen "as a painter, not a politico." Chicago's response was ironic, as Chicago herself was in the midst of realizing her own massive work exploring women's history. Cohen disregarded Chicago's urging, and after graduation threw herself full-time into press work. In 1976, Cohen and Poore moved the press to rural Indiana, taking an opportunity to manifest the back-to-the-earth lifestyle they had come to admire. Upon moving to Indiana, both Cohen and Poore grew passionate about printing heritage as they reconstructed an antique letterpress on which to print the postcards.

By 1982 the partnership, both personal and professional, had eroded, and Poore moved away from Indiana, leaving Cohen to manage HVP alone. Cohen would keep HVP alive until 1990, working collaboratively with a research team that included academic historians from nearby Indiana University, having moved all press operations to Bloomington in 1986. By the time that the press shuttered, Cohen felt that her intellectual production positioned her as "a forerunner in the field of women's studies," a self-categorization that was more than fair given the scope of her research and the broad dissemination of her work.

When Cohen and Poore began to seek out images to reproduce in their postcard project in 1973, they found themselves frustrated with a lack of source material. Cohen had received a modest introduction to the history of women in the visual arts from Judy

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270 Interview with Jocelyn Cohen.
Chicago at California State University in the early 1970s, but otherwise had little experience in scholarly research, historic or otherwise. Cohen and Poore began their research process by pouring over published sources. When the pair felt that they had exhausted the existing literature, they began to undertake archival visits, frequenting the Library of Congress and National Archives in search of new postcard images and captions.\textsuperscript{272} They also visited academic libraries, including Wayne State and University of Michigan. Although these libraries had collecting scopes outside of women's manuscripts and books, their holdings in labor history and anarchist collections proved fertile ground for identifying prominent women in leadership roles, and their research ultimately inspired a series on women in the Labor Movement. After identifying themes and images for reproduction, Poore and Cohen often shot the images themselves on film, using the photos for postcard graphics.\textsuperscript{273} The images they identified were often beyond the copyright years, and creating new photographs from books also gave the women some wiggle room around copyright law. As the business grew and they became more savvy researchers, they began to seek authorized reproductions from the archives themselves.

Cohen and Poore quickly grew familiar with the existing, if scant, literature on women's history, as the pair found that library card catalogs offered little on the topic. Similarly, they struggled to find interesting images to use for the postcards. Cohen and Poore would often roam throughout the sections, searching almost randomly for useful historic images of women. At other times when they found themselves particularly frustrated at libraries' limited holdings, they sought out-of-print books from used

\textsuperscript{272} Research Files, Helaine Victoria Press Records, 17.
\textsuperscript{273} Interview with Jocelyn Cohen.
bookshops. Cohen and Poore's home and workspace began to overflow with books, as the pair quickly purchased any books they found. Cohen and Poor began to sell their expanding library along with their postcards, including a catalog of secondhand women's history books in their mailings. Customers of the press purchased books spanning a wide variety of topics, from *A Hilltop on the Marne*, a reproduction of the letters sent by an American spinster from her retirement home which was inconveniently located in a World War I battle zone published in 1916; a Victorian feminist comportment guide from 1893 entitled *What Can a Woman Do?*; the biographical *Frances E. Willard*; Rita Sackville West's *Saint Joan of Arc* from 1936; a 1928 version of the lesbian classic *The Well of Loneliness* featuring an introduction by famed sexologist Havelock Ellis; 1886's *The Life of Nellie C. Bailey*, which the trial of a wife accused of murdering her husband; and the biographical novel *Judith of France*, which narrated the life of a 9th century Saxon queen. Such books impacted the movement's collective memory on two different levels: first as a resource for the development of the postcard's texts and rich captions, secondly as the texts circulated through the larger community of feminists.

Like many of their counterparts in other social movements, Cohen and Poore became self-trained historical scholars with a knowledge base that was both general but also notably in-depth. Although they identified as popular historians, scholars in the fields of women's history and studies took note of their research. Ruth Perry, a Humanities professor from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, wrote the women, commending them "because the information you cite on the back of your Mary Astell

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notecard is all right, which is more than many scholars in the field can manage.⁷¹⁷ Cohen and Poore took care to develop significant context in the postcard sets through captions and small essays that accompanied the sets. During its existence, HVP published over 200 distinct cards, many of them grouped thematically in series. HVP’s popular *Women in History* offered several sets that broadly highlighted a wide range of women’s historical contributions. In other cases, series such as *Women and Ecology*, *Sisters of the Harlem Renaissance*, *Latina History and Culture*, *Women Library Workers*, *Women in Social Protest: The U.S. Since 1915*, and *Bread and Roses: Women of the American Labor Movement* all introduced larger historical themes that advanced the movement’s sense of a collective past.

HVP’s historic postcards functioned as manifestations of collective memory via both graphics and text. Although the main utility of the postcards as a memorial practice was to circulate historic images in the promotion of a sense of shared female struggle, Cohen and Poore strongly desired to share the whole of their research findings with their audience. While both women cared deeply for disseminating the historical narratives that the cards encompassed, Poore brought particular care as a former writer and editor, and her captions printed on the back of the postcards nearly brimmed over with context and narrative. The now iconic image of Jane Addams and Mary McDowell carrying American and peace flags during a suffrage march was chosen as a postcard image in 1984 and packs in over 200 words, filling more than half of the writing space of the card. The "Bread & Roses" series from 1979 featured eight cards, each with a thick paragraph of biographical data, movement history, and a nuanced analysis of the larger political

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context of each featured woman. Cohen recalled having to exert a great deal of restraint in the crafting of the captions, as she and Poore agonized over which detail to omit from the text. This passionate commitment to sharing as much information as possible with their customers reveals the power that the historical narratives of resistance and power held for them.

The printing press and the cards themselves were a labor of love through which Cohen and Poore transmitted their growing knowledge of women's history via lovingly handcrafted objects. Upon moving to Indiana, Cohen and Poore purchased an antique press, trekking across the state to locate necessary components to set up their new shop. Over time, Cohen and Poore became more sophisticated in printing methods, with each series taking on new challenges as they claimed a rarified place as women in the printing trade. The physical production of the cards was quite labor intensive, with one set requiring fourteen press runs, that is, fourteen distinct passes for each item to complete the full process. Another run of a 1,000 sets of a series required Cohen and Poore to hand-glue the letter pressed outer jacket of the series onto the boxes. This dedication to detail produced images and objects that had a keepsake quality, encouraging customers to treasure the cards.

Unlike contemporary women's history projects like the Women's History Library and The Dinner Party exhibit, Helaine Victoria postcards operated on a much more intimate level of collective memory. More akin to Consciousness Raising, the postcards promoted a direct relationship between women's own experiences and the history of

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276 Postcards from my own collection.
277 Interview with Jocelyn Cohen.
collective womanhood. Cohen and Poore envisioned the postcards as a medium for a popular and informal tool of movement education. In the folksiest of manners, an introduction to the postcard catalog outlined HVP's mission: "Why do this? Because we want to help remedy the shortage of convenient information in so many areas of history. We chose postcards because they are relatively cheap and tell the story quickly and memorably. And people see them along the way – sender, recipient, postal clerk and carrier. And maybe some of those people who see our cards and posters feel like going out to do something to help fix the world good and proper. That's our real purpose." Cohen and Poore imagined their work as bringing women's history into some of their most personal spaces: hanging on bedroom walls and refrigerators, or serving as a gentle exchange between two friends who shared a desire to restructure gender relations but perhaps did not share a zip code. Customers wrote to Cohen and Poore, effusing over the significance of the cards and the connection that they made between the past and the present. One customer wrote that she "never expected to be moved to tears by a postcard catalog—and [HVP] did it twice." Likewise, some women used the images and stories contained within the postcards to educate others; another customer expressed appreciation for the postcards "not only for myself, but as a means to introduce other women in a subtle way to women in history." The casual sharing of historical narratives between feminists is perhaps the most decentralized of historical education.

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within the movement, as the nature of the medium made informal, one-on-one education possible.

**Branching Out with Women's History**

Although much of Second Wave's early collective memory work emerged in grassroots organizations and as individual projects, as the 1970s waned, movement activism increasingly addressed mainstream institutions. Likewise, feminists increasingly gained access to higher education, bringing their reform ethics along with them. In this vein, the Graduate Program in Women's History at Sarah Lawrence College produced the Summer Institute in Women's History for Leaders of Women's Organizations in 1979, an initiative that would equip movement leaders with a scholarly training to disseminate women's history throughout the movement. The Institute on Women's History created a temporary community of learners selected from diverse grassroots organizations in a residential setting that immersed feminist leaders in topics and debates on women's history. The event inspired delegates to take their knowledge beyond the bounds of the feminist movement, and their shared enthusiasm for the subject matter led them to support a local effort in California to incorporate women's history into school curriculum. Having success at the local level, these activists led a campaign to establish the first National Women's History Week, then National Women's History Month. The Summer Institute on Women's History stood out from other collective memory projects in that it relied on academically trained feminists for leadership and sought to use existing feminist institutional structures to broadly cultivate historical knowledge throughout the
movement. This institute mirrored the trajectory of the larger movement's political goals, as activists looked increasingly towards the courts and legislatures to initiate gender equality in the workplace.

With financial support from the Women's Action Alliance, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Lilly Endowment, academic historians Gerda Lerner, Alice Kessler-Harris, and Amy Swerdlow, along with graduate students from the Sarah Lawrence M.A. program in Women's Studies, planned and executed the residential event. Planners hoped that the institute would "bridge the gap between the theory and practice of feminism: to spread the knowledge of Women's History to activist women and to make Women's History an integral part of the life of women's organizations." The Institute's academic leaders, ranging from junior to senior members of the field, planned and executed a seventeen-day immersive learning experience that gave women activists a robust background in women's history as well as a network of colleagues dedicated to bringing women's history into the front lines of the struggle for gender equality.

Institute planners recruited for the seminar with the intention of attracting a diverse and passionate group of delegates, seeking "the broadest possible representation from the organized women's community." While admission was competitive, forty-five participants were chosen on the basis of their record of leadership and activism within the movement rather than more traditional selection criteria of educational background and

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Despite drawing on a non-traditional crowd, the faculty planned "a very intensive curriculum, designed to give the equivalent of a 15-week graduate course" scheduled into a rigorous seventeen-day schedule. Sensitive to criticisms within the women's movement regarding race and class, the Institute consciously struggled to bring in a racially and economically diverse group of women's activists. Their outreach strategy aimed to address some of the challenges faced by feminists of color: the invisibility of activists of color, lack of resources within working class and minority organizations, and a lack of connections between mainstream organizations and smaller marginalized feminist groups.

Curriculum for the Institute on Women's History led delegates through a broad survey of American women's experience. Required lectures spanned a wide array of topics including: women's work, family life, activism, suffrage and reform, sexuality and control, modern feminism, and black women, while elective courses gave delegates the opportunity to delve further into these issues. Faculty handed out an eight-page annotated bibliography entitled "Basic Books in the History of American Women," encouraging delegates to extend their learning beyond the bounds of the sessions. As part of the requirements of the Institute, participants researched an individual project and presented their findings in small work groups, an assignment which gave delegates the opportunity to conduct original research. Participants were also encouraged to actively plan for the dissemination of their learning once they returned to their communities; one of the

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284 Ibid.
suggestions administrators offered to participants was to include women's history facts in newsletters, an inclusion that would weave feminist collective memory into the everyday interactions of women across the country.

In addition to concerns over diversity within the event's delegation, planners also strove to be inclusive of women of color in the scope of the curriculum. One of the scheduled days included lectures and discussions on working and black women, followed by evening programs that promoted awareness of the issues facing feminists of color. Although Kessler-Harris, Lerner, and Swerdlow had identified scholars of Native American, Asian, and Chicana Women's histories, financial constraints prevented these scholars from appearing at the Institute. Nonetheless, a few of these scholars did share their research via printed materials submitted beforehand that engaged the histories of Native American, Chicana, and Asian-American women.287 While conference organizers lamented a lack of funding to bring in women of color scholars like Grace Lee Boggs, Lupe Castillo, and Clara Sue Kidwell to the conference, their final report also underscored that future events must prioritize the inclusion of minority scholars, not to "be added merely as token lecturers, but must be involved in all aspects of the educational planning of the institute."288

Institute leadership expressed similar concern over replicating anxiety around 'the lavender menace', a term that was attributed to Betty Friedan in 1969, who cautioned that were the women's movement to be associated with lesbianism, the movement would lose ground and be less efficacious. Lesbian activists had entreated Women's Studies

287 Report from the 1979 Institute, 5.
288 Report from the 1979 Institute, 18.
organizations to engage lesbian topics in scholarship, and as a result the Institute proactively included panels on "Lesbianism and the Cultural Tradition," a discussion which included a biographical examination of feminist lesbian Lakota Tillie Blackbear and black lesbian poetry and music.\textsuperscript{289} Through the diversity of panel topics, planners demonstrated a commitment to inclusion that many of their movement contemporaries had yet failed to fully embrace.\textsuperscript{290}

Just as planners hoped, Institute participants found themselves inspired to incorporate history into their grassroots organizing upon their return. Women returned to their communities inspired by the "genuine feminist community" who vigorously studied history and applied past women's struggles to contemporary movement goals. Participants reflected back on the value of their experiences, underscoring the importance of both "the study of women's history with wonderful teachers and role models and the opportunity to get to know so many wonderful women activists."\textsuperscript{291} Participants also praised the structure of the Institute, calling it "a valuable model for reaching women's organizations."\textsuperscript{292} By activating feminist pedagogic principles in developing the curriculum, the Institute distinguished itself as an exemplar of feminist community education, as it promulgated feminist collective memory out into the larger community.

\textsuperscript{289} Report from the 1979 Institute, 8-9.
\textsuperscript{290} In my Gay Liberation chapter, I discuss the efforts of the Women's Caucus to include scholarship on lesbians within the Berkshire Conference for Women and the National Women's Studies Association.
\textsuperscript{291} Comments from a letter from an anonymous institute participant from fall 1979 as it appears in the "Report from the 1979 Institute on Women's History for the Leadership of National Women's Organizations," page 7. Women's Action Alliance Collection, 102:2.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid.
The passion for women's history generated by the Summer Institute certainly led to newly inspired activists, but the most far-reaching outcome of the event was the creation of "National Women's History Week." During the Institute, organizers learned of a recent grassroots effort in Sonoma County, California from delegate Molly Murphy MacGregor. The Education Task Force of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women in California had initiated a weeklong celebration of women's history in 1978 organized around International Women's Day. Inspired by this work, participants decided to extend the energy of the Institute, taking a demand for recognition both into their own communities as well as to the national level. Institute participants organized campaigns to petition legislators and governors to recognize the week at the state level. The following fall, the Women's Action Alliance hired an intern to support the national campaign to pressure the U.S. Congress and President Carter into formally recognizing the week at the federal level, an initiative that passed in 1981.\footnote{293 "Report from the 1979 Institute on Women's History for the Leadership of National Women's Organizations," 14-16. Women's Action Alliance Collection, 102:2; Letter sent out with National Women's History Week Packet, Loretta Ross Papers, 21:28, Sophia Smith Archives, Smith College (Northampton, MA).} Institute participants also produced programming in their home organizations to commemorate the week.\footnote{294 "Report from the 1979 Institute on Women's History for the Leadership of National Women's Organizations," 14-16. Women's Action Alliance Collection, 102:2.} In response to further pressure from women's groups, Congress expanded the resolution from a week to a month in 1987.

National Women's History Week provided collective memory activists with a project that likely had the largest impact of such movement education projects. MacGregor's initial vision was to promote awareness around women's history in elementary and secondary schools and provide resources to teachers participating in the
commemoration. In 1972, MacGregor became enraged when a colleague derided her proposed semester-long course on women's history. Much like Laura X's experience, derision from a male colleague provided the frustration that fueled a major historical project. The Women's National History Week's Project packet, which was produced by Institute alumnae, provided a guide for classroom activities; the majority of the fifty-one page packet also offered organizing materials, including sample letters to educational professionals, women's organizations and academic history departments, churches and religious organizations, social and civic organizations, as well as sample press releases and public service announcements. Equally important as getting resources to teachers was the need to educate the local community on the importance of women's history.²⁹⁵

Within a few years, the impact of the Summer Institute had realized its goal "to spread the knowledge of Women's History to wider circles, into our museums, libraries, schools, [and] communities" through the establishment of national recognition for the importance of women's history.²⁹⁶ Through these efforts, women's liberation activists handed down to the next generation a feminist identity that was inextricably linked to collective historical struggle and achievement.

Feminist Identity and Women's Collective Memory

Unlike their counterparts in the Black Freedom Movement, many of the collective memory activists responsible for the development of a feminist collective memory

²⁹⁶ Speech by Gerda Lerner given at the Smithsonian Awards Breakfast for Institute Participants, as printed in "Report from the 1979 Institute on Women's History for the Leadership of National Women's Organizations," Women's Action Alliance Collection, 102:2.
individually had little institutional or scholarly bedrock on which to ground the
development of a community history. Early efforts like the Women's Center for World
Archives and the development of the Sophia Smith and Schlesinger Collections were
either short lived or the specialized nature of collections failed to cultivate a broad
scholarly or popular community during their early years. As a result, the first stirrings of
historical curiosity within the movement created a demand for grassroots researchers and
new scholarly methods. To this end, activists amassed collections on women's history and
dug through mainstream collections to identify documents and images that illustrated a
portion of women's historical experiences. As community history projects developed
collective memory within the movement, activists' intertwined desire for history and a
proud identity led many towards educational projects that went beyond the bounds of the
movement. Some of the most successful Women's Liberation education projects often
took a more informal approach than their movement education counterparts in the Black
Freedom struggles. Instead of building formal institutions of learning, feminists utilized
more informal means of transmitting collective memory. Additionally, as the majority of
women still found themselves financially dependent on men, the movement's ability to
maintain predominantly separatist institutions proved challenging. Although the WHRC
emerged early in the movement as a promising cultural institution, Laura X and others
were unable to financially maintain the organization, and the significant collections

297 The founding of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in
1915 and the Journal of Negro History in 1916, as well as the establishment of the
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, indirectly provided an intellectual
foundation for the development of community collective memory. Although the founding of
the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians provided scholars with an opportunity to
network and socialize with one another, the organization did not make the promotion of
Women's History a major goal until the founding of the "Big Berks" conference in 1973.
Journals devoted to women's studies and women's history were also founded in the 1970s
and 1980s.
amassed in a remarkably short time were transferred to mainstream institutions. In an example of a more informal educational project, the postcards of the Helaine Victoria Press circulated from woman to woman through the mail or as gifts, sharing narratives of historical women's struggles between individuals. As a more formal education project, *The Dinner Party* exhibit travelled across the country, transforming museum spaces into ephemeral feminist gatherings that fomented movement memory.

In other ways, the collective memory projects of Women's Liberation were distinct from their counterparts in other social movements. Feminist activists had long pushed back against the idea that a woman's place was in the home, shielded from the public sphere. Although first wave activists had made considerable gains in securing a place in civic life for women, second wave activists still struggled against patriarchal cultural norms that discouraged women from participating in public life. This struggle is reflected in the shape of collective memory work in the movement, as projects like *The Dinner Party* and the Summer Institute for Women's History pushed women's history into museum and grassroots political organizations. Yet the work of the Helaine Victoria Press reflects another distinction in women's collective memory – that of a personal and intimate means of transmission. Cohen and Poore intended that the postcards be exchanged through friendships and one-on-one encounters, providing a conduit of collective memory that might suit isolated women or feminists who might not be inclined towards organizational work. In contrast to the Black Freedom Movement, Second Wave collective memory activism was distinctively more project-based, less institutionalized, and relied more on personal relationships and intimate interactions.
For all participants in the Women's Liberation Movement, a basic shared goal was to elevate women to equal political, social and cultural status with men. For so many women, one step in this process was to undo the internalized misogyny and perceptions of inferiority. This identity project took on many different fronts, from direct action events like the Miss America protests to a basic and prideful reclamation of women's bodies as beautiful and revered. Likewise, the collective memory practices of second-wave activists were bound up in questions of identity. A desire for a new autonomous sense of self drove activists to create narratives of the past, even as a growing knowledge of women's history generated a new feminist identity. While building organizations and producing informal education projects served an important and overt part of the movement's efforts towards building a feminist collective memory, some feminists tapped into the emerging social movement process of identity development to connect women to the past on a very personal level. With *The Dinner Party*, Judy Chicago and a league of volunteers crafted a massive visual display of historic women's achievements, creating a sense of women's heritage that visitors could engage with on a personal level, as they recognized their own achievements, talents, and struggles in other women's biographies. In a similar vein, the Helaine Victoria Press understood the complexity of the new feminist identities. Although their earliest postcards took on a rather broad idea of womanhood, the press shifted its focus to explore the intersection of women's identities with race, sexuality and class. At a time when the larger movement was still struggling with how to address such complexities, Cohen and Poore navigated such debates by promoting a diverse historical picture of women's experiences and activism.
Identity had both unifying and divisive implications for the Women's Liberation Movement. Beyond the sense of unity that the movement gained from tactics like Consciousness Raising, it also experienced divisions as women of color struggled with the intersections of the oppressive structures of gender and race. Or, perhaps, the trajectory is not that neat. Carol Giardina has altered our understanding of women's experiences within the Civil Rights Movement, demonstrating that while misogyny informed interactions and structured hierarchy, in many instances women found more opportunities for leadership than in mainstream society. While many feminists of color found the mainstream women's lib organizations too often struggled with charges of not sufficiently engaging issues of race, there were many activists and organizations that actively grappled with the intersection of gender and race.

There are many examples of academic women's historians and women's studies scholars supporting community history projects, demonstrating the relative fluidity between academic and community women's historians at this time. Helaine Victoria Press founder Jocelyn Cohen recalled many fruitful exchanges at the Berkshire Conference of Women's Historians, a triennial conference that started in 1973, itself a reaction to academic conservatism and sexism, as academic scholars mingled with popular historians like Cohen staffing booths at the conference. Although the results were in part a demarcation between grassroots and academic history endeavors, this professional shift was part of the same foment that produced the wide array of popular memory practices examined in this chapter. Helaine Victoria Press would later go on to work closely with

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299 Interview with Jocelyn Cohen.
academic scholars in the mid-1980s to develop some of the later series produced by the press. Likewise, the Institute of Women's History provides a fine example of women academics applying their skills to movement activist causes and organizations, although the academic feminists still maintained authoritative positions as teachers to front-line activists. Despite the significance of women's history memory practices to the second wave of feminism, by the 1990s there remained few community-based women's history projects, and most of the authority of women's historical narratives was assumed by academic women's historians.

Through both research and education efforts, community historians working in feminism's Second Wave produced a new feminist identity based in part on narratives of women's history. More personal and intimate than their peers in the Black Freedom and Gay Liberation Movements, collective memory within the Women's movement both enriched a new feminist identity through individual dialogues with texts that were both consumed individually and collectively. Although academic history claimed authority over women's history, grassroots activists created archives, conducted original research, criticized historiography and educated the movement and beyond on women's historical successes and struggles.
Chapter 4
Scripted to Win: Collective Memory in the Gay Liberation Movement

Like liberation leftist social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Gay Liberation took cues from the direct action and democratic demands that typified other identity-based groups. Black Power, Red Power, the Anti-War Movement, and Women’s Liberation all shared rhetorical forms, movement building strategies and demands for cultural representation. Like their counterparts in these other movements, LGBT community historians took various paths to the dissemination of queer history. Shortly after the Stonewall Riots of June 1969 in which drag queens, gays, and lesbians resisted police violence and repression, queer historians worked to share resources, build archival access and collections, and create a new body of historical knowledge. In the early 1970s, activists became amateur (and sometimes academic) historians, blurring academic and popular history. By the 1980s, however, two paths towards the institutionalization of LGBT collective memory took shape. In some cases, the cultivators of collective memory sought to engage with existing institutions through a struggle for legitimacy within the academy and archival repositories. Others, however, worked outside of the institutions of dominant culture, establishing grassroots organizations that would be accountable only to the LGBT community.

Beyond simple recognition of the longstanding existence of same-sex loving practices, a claim to the past was part of the development of a proud identity. By asserting the endurance of same-sex love, activists asserted the resilience and strength of queer folks in the face of ostracism from mainstream American society. In 1979, historian and gay studies pioneer Jonathan Ned Katz saw an explicit connection between
the movement’s struggle to shrug off the pathologizing narratives of psychiatry while finding a place for gay and lesbian experience within the American past. Implicit in Katz’s critique was both an assertion of a historical presence and a legacy of resistance as he invoked the quest for historical origins as “an important contribution to our current struggle to dispossess the professionals and repossess ourselves” while simultaneously “finding spiritual nourishment in knowledge of our historical foremothers and fathers.”

To lay claim to the past provided not only the legitimation of both presence and precedence, but also contributed to the building of a proud identity inspired by those that came before.

As within other social movements of the era, memory practices varied across place and changed over time. The homophile movement of the 1950s and 1960s invoked prior same-sex loving figures as a rudimentary step towards creating a public identity. The Daughters of Bilitis, a lesbian homophile organization active during the 1950s and 1960s, drew its name from a literary figure associated with the Greek poetess Sappho, an act that emphasized history while underscoring the literary focus of their monthly publication *The Ladder*. Though not explicitly laying claim to the past as a source of legitimation, articles appearing in *The Ladder* often mentioned historical female literary figures, including reference to their passionate relationships with other women. Reprints of Sappho's poems lament "with grief that so much has been lost." These invocations remain in the mode of excavating famous figures from the archive.

This call to the past served only to bring integrate LGBT history into mainstream historical accounts, as gays and lesbians began to claim well known historic figures as

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301 “Sappho of Lesbos,” *The Ladder*, December 1, 1958, 12.
same-sex loving ancestors. Such early claims to gay and lesbian history stood in contrast to the cohesive cultural and social history that LGBT historians would begin writing histories organized around more populist gay and lesbian experiences during the late 1970s. What Charles E. Morris III terms “proprietary claims” on the past marked an early point in the formation of a collective past for a social movement such as gay liberation.  

The Stonewall Riots and ensuing Gay Liberation Movement shifted queer memorial practices away from the reclamation of famous figures towards the exploration of a more populist gay and lesbian history. As activists in the LGBT community devoted to this work began to seek out narratives that would represent a wider array of historical experiences, LGBT history caught the tide of social history, striving to understand a wider variety of historical experience of same-sex loving people.

In addition to articles featured in community newspapers and the beginnings of academic inquiry in LGBT history, community activists identified an explicit need for popular education. In the mid 1970s, activists and scholars working independently and in community organizations used a variety of queer memorial practices, including slide show lectures, conferences, films, and other programming, to bring research to the community. Many of these projects would develop into books, videos, and exhibits; the efforts of others would lead to the formation of archives and history projects. Such projects are a critical component of understanding how activists viewed their role as community historians and the importance of a useable past. This chapter examines various memorial practices to illustrate four significant strategies made by collective memory proponents in the Gay Liberation Movement. The first called for the cultural

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ownership of gay history, which gave rise to the founding of these institutions and others like them. Next, researchers and archivists developed taxonomical and archival forms to support and nurture a body of knowledge about LGBT experience. Third, activists began to share their findings on LGBT history throughout the Gay Liberation movement, most notably through the popular education forms of slide shows and films as researchers began to produce new knowledge about same-sex erotic experiences. Subsequently, as the movement built community-based organizations to preserve and interpret LGBT memory, some activists began to work to legitimate LGBT history within academic and other mainstream cultural institutions. These efforts were at times complementary, and at times in conflict with the grassroots origins of the community's collective memory. Tension between community ownership and mainstream inclusion emerged more quickly than other movements of the era. In contrast to the Black Freedom and Women's Movements, LGBT history had no presence in liberal institutions before the 1970s. Although quite rare, historians dealing with women and black historical experience were part of the academy before the 1970s, yet gay and lesbian historical experience was entirely absent from scholarly historical circles. As LGBT history began to emerge, gay and lesbian community historians struggled over whether community-based organizations or mainstream liberal institutions were the best repository as they crafted a historic narrative that supported the identity-based goals of the movement. Regardless of this split, the development of LGBT history in both community and academic settings transformed in less than 15 years from a few loosely affiliated movement intellectuals to a significant body of knowledge and constellation of institutional homes.
The Cultural Ownership and Institutional Development of Gay History

The theft of lesbian herstory has been blatant, infuriating, devastatingly thorough. Still, there are ways to reclaim the herstory of which we have been doubly deprived by being women and lesbians. –Frances Rooney

We have a special need for history. Raised as we were in heterosexual families, we grew up and discovered our gayness deprived of gay ancestors, without a sense of our roots. We need to create and carry with us a living awareness of gay generations, to incorporate in our consciousness not only the organized struggle of our predecessors, but the everyday struggle to survive that our ancestors engaged in. We need to affirm and appreciate our past, not in some abstract way, but as it is embodied in living human beings.

- John D’Emilio, Body Politic February 1979

The development of a community history was bound up with the cultural front of the movement—a new proud political identity required a historic narrative of presence and persistence. As activists increasingly used history to legitimate the movement, queer community history transformed from a simple excavation project into community-controlled ownership and authorship of LGBT history. Part of the desire for community control emerged from a profound mistrust of mainstream institutions, as well illustrated in the quotation from Frances Rooney. Yet, not all LGBT historians felt such mistrust, as illustrated by John D'Emilio's words. While an individual's suspicion of liberal institutions might be attributable to myriad experiences and circumstances, it nonetheless illuminates the separatist impulse desired by some community historians, most notably lesbian activists who had much less comfort with mainstream organizations than many of their gay male counterparts. Additionally, the act of claiming ownership of their own historical narratives and forming community-based cultural organizations was an act of

304 As reprinted in Flaunting It! A Decade of Gay Journalism from The Body Politic, Ed Jackson and Stan Persky, eds (Vancouver: New Star, 1982).
self-determination that echoed larger movement goals that emerged from the early days of Gay Liberation. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s a popular preoccupation with the past thrived within the gay and lesbian community. Articles in popular LGBT newspapers and slide-show lectures in community centers posed questions and offered answers regarding earlier same-sex loving practices. Writers for community newspapers explicitly link a claiming of the past with a demand for equal status: “as more knowledge about human sexuality and behavior has been discovered and disseminated, greater numbers of persons have begun to realize that not only is it okay to be, it is the normal lifestyle for some people.”

The effort to develop LGBT history took root in 1973, emerging largely from an informal meeting in a New York City apartment in March of that year. A handful of academics and community intellectuals gathered there found both personal and intellectual kinship with one another, and from this alliance the Gay Academic Union (GAU) emerged. From the activism and community built by GAU activists, several other lesbian and gay history projects emerged, notably the Lesbian Herstory Archives in 1974 and The History Project in Boston in 1980. Although this first incarnation of GAU itself was relatively short-lived, it generated social networks from which much early LGBT history emerged and was fomented.

One of the oldest and most significant queer history organizations in the United States, the Lesbian Herstory Archives emerged out of the young Gay Academic Union proceedings in late 1973 or early 1974. Women members of the GAU who felt a need for a women-only space formed a consciousness-raising group to address both a political need for self-determination and a cultural need for lesbian history and intellectual

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production. As the group focused its efforts more on the collective lesbian past, its members began to pool their personal collections and actively collect additional materials pertaining to lesbian experiences.\textsuperscript{306} For members of the LHA collective, the personal commitment to archival work did not end, however, with the donation of materials. Many of these women quickly devoted significant portions of their lives to the project. Most notably, founding member Joan Nestle housed the archives in her Upper West Side apartment from 1974 to 1991. Born and raised in New York City by a single mother, Nestle came out as a Fem in the late 1950s.\textsuperscript{307} Her experiences in the pre-Stonewall lesbian community grounded her own sense of self in an earlier identity. In the early 1970s Nestle, unsettled that Lesbian Feminism dismissed the significance of butch-fem community and experience, determined to incorporate the earlier generation's experiences into the contemporary movement. During the years that Nestle maintained the collection in her apartment, the holdings grew from a few boxes to an archive filling several rooms of the apartment. Women from all over the world began to travel to the archives, and Nestle and other volunteers welcomed them, offering research support and tea.\textsuperscript{308} This intimate space of the archives echoed the ethos of lesbian feminism, committed to creating a safe and personal space to create the community’s collective past.

As LHA grew, members of the collective fiercely held to their commitment of being a grassroots organization in the service of lesbians everywhere. In a conversation with other LGBT historians, Nestle underscored the importance of keeping the Archives


\textsuperscript{307} "Fem" is a spelling used by some mid-century lesbians, invoking a sexual identity that also embraced a working class identity.

\textsuperscript{308} Oral History with Joan Nestle.
entirely separate from a patriarchal institution, insisting that lesbians “should be in control of our own materials, our own history.” Leadership within the archive insisted that the archives offer a safe space for women. To this extent the Archives prohibited men from using the space and collections, a policy that lasted through the 1970s and well into the 1980s. The Archives also maintained a strict commitment to a non-elite atmosphere. While gay researchers often found themselves barred from established institutional or academic archives due to a lack of institutional credentials, LHA maintained a commitment to accessibility for all lesbians, a commitment which led to exclusion of non-gay women and all men. Book and slide show researchers comiled with recent mastectomy survivors who came to look at erotic images as a means of reclaiming sexuality. Throughout its organizational history, collective members remained committed to the Archives as “a cultural institution which, though it plays a dynamic role in the Lesbian community, is, at its core, a safe, nurturing environment, a mixture of library and family album.” This commitment led to the organization not simply serving as a historical resource for lesbians, but as a community center.

Members of the Lesbian Herstory Archives participated along with other lesbians from across the country in a consciousness-raising event organized by West Coast lesbian.

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310 As Lesbian Separatism diminished in favor within the movement in the 1980s, LHA began to relax the policy. During the 1970s, a few gay male researchers who had proven themselves feminist allies through their activism were occasionally allowed to conduct research at the Archives, including John D’Emilio and Jonathan Ned Katz. Although most of the lesbians involved in the archives had some amount of separatist tendencies, most cultivated alliances with gay men who were sensitive to gender issues within the Gay Liberation Movement. When the Archives opened the new building in Brooklyn, male researchers with a clearly defined research query begun to be admitted.

311 Interviews with Deb Edel and Joan Nestle.

312 Deb Edel, “Building Cultural Memories,” 270.
activists outside of Los Angeles in May 1975. A group of eight women, including Jocelyn Cohen and Nancy Victoria who founded the Helaine Victoria Women’s Press as a part of collective memory efforts within the Women’s Liberation Movement, spent a year in preparation for the Lesbian History Exploration. This event, claimed as the “first national lesbian separatist event” in the country, drew women from across the country for a weekend of festivities focused around building lesbian historical consciousness.313 Event planners gave careful consideration to the use of history versus herstory, ultimately settling on what some considered a masculinist word. The Collective produced an invitational packet that included an explanation of several paragraphs on the Greek origins of the word, arguing that it in fact did not come from the masculine pronoun but rather from istor, meaning knowledge or learning. To this end, planners rejected the increasingly popular herstory: “We plan to include in the Exploration some way for women to give words to each other, to invent and share new words, and to reclaim lost woman-words. But we don’t want to discard words at face value. We want to take our own history seriously, and we want to take seriously the history of the words we use.” 314

Planners imagined a wide array of uses for lesbian history within the lesbian feminist movement, from embracing the difficulty of historical lesbian struggles to the development of a future political strategy of the movement as a whole. To this end, Jan Oxenberg, an organizer and filmmaker, acknowledged that a full understanding of historical lesbian struggles might prove unpleasant: “This event has to do with pain, incredible pain and rage. What we’re doing is just dredging up crumbs from the

past...like dragging the lagoon for dead bodies. What I really want from this event is *catharsis.* [emphasis in original]”315 While most of her peers in Gay Liberation talked about using the past as a means to build a proud identity, this comment marks a distinct new use of the past, as a means to process suffering and loss through a shared history marked by oppression and erasure. Still others strove to use such narratives as a means to political reinvigoration, like Exploration participant Jo Hyacinthe, who was driven by past oppression to organize for change: “We’re changing our scripting, we’ve always been scripted to lose, now we’re gonna be scripted to win. I see a lull in lesbian feminist politics, it’s not the time for marches or rallies—that was just the beginning—it’s time now to create theory, get facts, [determine] where we’re coming from, why, [and] where we’re going.”316 This expansive, and at times unpleasant, engagement with the past contrasts sharply with the Daughters of Bilitis reclamation of famous and laudatory figures. In only a decade or so, lesbian activists greatly expanded the utility of the past, fitting it to the current goals of the movement.

Regardless of the movement ends it served along the way, event planners understood community ownership as the most important outcome of the Lesbian Herstory Exploration. Although most lesbians understood themselves to be part of the larger Gay Liberation Movement, for many there was a need to carve out lesbian-only cultural space. This sentiment extended to lesbian history as well: “The orientation of the Exploration is Lesbian Prime, lesbians as a group rather than a sub-group.”317 This desire for historical autonomy mirrored other separatist impulses within Lesbian Feminism, which faulted the

315 Jan Oxenberg, as quoted Transcript of Lesbian History Collective Meeting Notes, May 13, 1974. “Lesbian History Exploration Invitational Packet.”
316 Jo Hyacinthe, as quoted in Transcript of Lesbian History Collective Meeting.
larger Gay Liberation Movement for, at times, being structured by masculinist forces and failing to undermine patriarchy. To this end, organizers articulated a need to “reclaim our history, the history of lesbians as a people, and to record it in a concrete form…for us and for our daughters, the lesbians of our future.” Likewise, organizers of the event welcomed only lesbian-identified women to the event, asking straight women to share materials with organizers ahead of time rather than attend the event. This exclusion ensured that the event was as much about consciousness-raising and identity-formation through history as it was an intellectual exercise in generating lesbian historical knowledge.

As a passion for gay history stirred up within the Gay Academic Union, local gay and lesbian history projects continued to form across the country. In most instances, these organizations emerged from community researchers' own work, such as that of Greg Sprague and Allan Bérubé. Sprague, a Chicago-based graduate student in Education at Loyola University of Chicago, got involved with the Gay Academic Union and began to organize community history efforts in Chicago during the mid-1970s. Sprague's informal educational project, the Lavender University, led to the founding of the Chicago Gay History Project, which would eventually become the Gerber-Hart Library. Bérubé, a college dropout turned antiwar activist, also pursued research interests in gay history as he co-founded the Gay and Lesbian History Project in San Francisco. Both Bérubé and Sprague exemplified the intellectually diverse backgrounds that underpinned the new community historian in the LGBT Movement, as neither were formally trained in history and both were deeply committed to community education and the development of

318 Ibid.
historical organizations in service to the LGBT community. Similar efforts in Toronto led to the establishment of the Canadian Gay Archives just a few months before the founding of the GAU in the States. Canadian activists formed alliances with their American counterparts in the GAU and other smaller community projects, and from these cross-national partnerships emerged the Lesbian and Gay Researchers Network, a professional organization that fostered dialogue around the challenges to and methods for preserving lesbian and gay history. The network later merged with the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History of the American Historical Association in 1982. This merger echoes the shift in the production of LGBT history away from the purview of community-based researchers towards academic historians and professional archivists.

Memory Practices in the Queer Archive

For gays and lesbians beginning to work on historical projects, source limitations appeared as the first challenge. Although same-sex loving experiences existed throughout history, the social repression of such had also silenced the archival record. Researchers looking for material on same-sex affection in mainstream repositories faced a lack of description and indexing in their search for sources. Additionally, activists claimed of a variety of kinds of relationships as historical precedence, including casual erotic encounters, long-term affectionate relationships that may or may not have been erotic, and life partnerships that resembled contemporary gay and lesbian couples. Activists who began to work on collecting and describing LGBT materials entered a profession that did

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not acknowledge the topic at all. Both sides faced a need for new taxonomy that would acknowledge the history of gays and lesbians.

Researchers working on gay and lesbian history topics in the 1970s relied heavily on one another for a variety of support. These networks often emerged from other Gay Liberation organizations and activism that served to strengthen friendships and professional collaborations as activists moved deeper into the work of LGBT history. These networks also gave community scholars an opportunity to share resources and methods with one another as they researched and interpreted a new field of historical knowledge. Their collaboration served as another memory practice, as movement intellectuals who were generally unsupported by larger institutions sustained one another worked in uncharted intellectual terrains, oftentimes in geographic isolation. Fledgling LGBT historians faced many challenges in the early years, but the most significant barrier to their work lay in the opacity of the archives. As scholars began to research same-sex topics, they found archival professionals who were often reluctant to acknowledge homosexual behaviors in their subjects’ papers. This silencing led many researchers to share strategies with one another even as community archivists began to develop professional tools to deal with their burgeoning queer archives. As small archives increasingly collaborated with one another, they developed professional methods that came to impact the larger archival profession. Gay and lesbian archivists therefore broke taxonomical ground and generated ethical standards for archivists working within the history of sexuality.

Nascent LGBT historians found success in thinking broadly about a possible source base, often beginning with their own contemporary and personal connection to the
movement and working from there. Organizers of the Lesbian History Exploration sought out “research on known lesbians and lesbian communities of the past; personal testimony about the variety of ways that women have lived as lesbians…first hand reports by women who have participated in the major events that have shaped the recent lesbian movement; historical fantasy, mythology, folklore and recreations of our lesbian past; stories about the lost women; women who should have been lesbians, women who were ‘cured,’ women who commit suicide.”

Organizers of the event encouraged all participants to research a topic in lesbian history and present their findings at the event. Presenters were also urged to reproduce materials they had to share with other participants for the sake of developing a collaborative lesbian researcher network and source base for the community.

Early efforts at finding archival sources for same-sex loving experiences in the past proved to be daunting. Yet one of the first researchers to undertake a sizeable gay history research topic, Jonathan Ned Katz, remembered not a dearth of sources, but rather faulted other mainstream institutional barriers that silenced love letters and buried other traces of queer history, a result of what historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot has called *archival power*. Rumors proved to be a fruitful method for Katz, who would often receive leads from other activists in the movement at parties or during informal chats about his work. Although often closeted themselves, queer librarians and archivists also proved quietly useful in the early days of Katz’ research, oftentimes leading him

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surreptitiously to useful boxes. Early scholars working on LGBT history topics often shared information on both methods and resources. Gregory Sprague corresponded with a variety of researchers regarding his projects to “hit pay dirt” as he mined what he could from traditional archives. Judith Schwartz also corresponded with Jonathan Katz, alerting him to archival items in the FBI files at the National Archives that documented numerous lesbians who had not yet been written about. Suggestions and hints regarding how to locate sources were passed back and forth in letters between individual scholars doing research for books, slide shows, films and community history courses. These letters illuminate the creative strategies necessary for LGBT historians working within an archive organized by forms of knowledge that did not recognize nor document gay and lesbian historical experiences.

Usually working without formal institutional support, LGBT historians faced other obstacles, including limited access to academic repositories and financial support, as well as the general difficulty of sustaining energy for a project that may or may not have come to fruition. Correspondence between Jonathan Ned Katz and other researchers such as John D’Emilio, Allan Bérubé, Madeline Davis and Gregory Sprague reveal conversations about possible funding sources, publication strategies, source suggestions and interpretive debates, often couched in empathy for the difficulty of their work. Katz also recalled his fear that the response to the publication of *Gay American History* might generate further repression, and that this volume might therefore be the only

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325 See correspondence files in Gregory Sprague Papers, Chicago History Museum (Chicago, IL) and Katz Papers.
chance to get such material into publication.\footnote{327} Most of the correspondence between researchers was characterized by enthusiasm and a warm collegial tone. Researchers were often good friends with one another, and this network provided emotional support as well as pragmatic advice. In a postcard from 1980 meant to be more conversational than professional, D’Emilio reported to Katz that Bérubé’s latest project was a slideshow on gay men in San Francisco, enthusiastically reporting that “my head spins, it’s so exciting.”\footnote{328} Letters that primarily sought advice on methods or sources almost always included warm encouragement and enthusiasm for the other’s projects. These friendship networks brought much needed energy to the otherwise solitary work of gay and lesbian scholarship.\footnote{329}

One of the methods researchers employed in traditional archives was engaging with other topics of sexual difference. Indeed, Sprague spent much time searching through materials on vice districts and prostitution to locate materials on gay and lesbian history.\footnote{330} Like Katz, Sprague relied on rumor to generate research leads, and often such rumors led him to other topics of “deviance.” In one instance, activist and community researcher James Wickliff advised Sprague in 1980 on several local legends: a prostitute with a “very close woman friend,” a “very effeminate” Henry Holmes, the mass murderer who would go on to otherwise notorious status, several vice districts that were known for, amongst other things, orgies.\footnote{331}

\footnote{327} Interview with Jonathan Ned Katz.
\footnote{328} Postcard, March 31, 1980. Katz Papers, 1, “John D’Emilio.”
\footnote{329} Interview with John D’Emilio.
\footnote{330} Sprague’s research folders recording his research at Chicago History Museum, Newberry Library, Northwestern University, University of Chicago, and University of Illinois at Chicago. Sprague Papers, 7.
\footnote{331} September 2, 1980 letter. Sprague Papers, 11, “Research Leads”.

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Individual memory served as an important source for other researchers as well. Several people wrote to Sprague after his articles on popular gay experience began to appear in *Gay Life* and *The Advocate*. These letters provided him with memoirs of gay subcultural life during the early part of the 20th century. One author recalled his grandfather's involvement with the Society for Human Rights, the first U.S. homophile organization that was founded by Henry Gerber in 1924, an engagement which, "for his troubles, grandpa and the other men spent some time in the Cook County Jail."  

Another author recalled a year spent in study at the University of Chicago as especially opportunistic for meeting young men. In particular, he recalled the beach beyond Jackson Park as a favorite cruising spot, where on a bathroom wall one man had written, "my mother made me a queer," and another responded cheekily with "ask her to knit me one too." Authors of these letters recalled a surprising amount of interracial spaces and early (pre-Stonewall) protests and boycotts against repressive businesses and police. In addition to the recently developed importance and emphasis placed on the queer past by activists, it would seem, at least for some, a vital sense of predecessors was already part of the community identity and sense of self.

Like their researcher counterparts, community archives also found a need for different archival memory practices to support and make accessible their rapidly growing collections. From the onset, Lesbian Herstory Archives collective members quickly engaged in the task of generating new research practices to make lesbian experience accessible.

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334 Later academic scholarship on same-sex relations in Chicago's south side would build on this knowledge. See Kevin Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New York in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University, 1997).
intelligible and accessible. To this end, they created new knowledge both for locating materials within mainstream archives and for creating finding aids for published materials. Likewise, in April 1980, the Boston Area Lesbian and Gay History project published *A Beginning Handbook for Researching Lesbian and Gay History in the Boston Area*. The handbook advised researchers to employ a long, oftentimes offensive, list of terms in card catalogs and indices, including *amazon, berdache, convent, flash in the pan, houseboy, interior decorating, lesbos, pederasty, social reform movement, spinster, suffragist, tribadism, uranian*, and the ever useful *vice*. The handbook also republished a portion of the index from Jonathan Ned Katz’s *Gay American History*, as well as etymological essays on *lesbian and gay*.335 Similarly, the Circle of Lesbian Indexers produced a voluminous index of lesbian periodicals and subject thesaurus “to foster in our community a sense of continuity with the lesbian past.”336 The index, a project of LHA collective members as well as J. R. Roberts and historian Claire Potter, served as a broad guide for researchers working on lesbian topics and was divided into sections, including: a file of authors and subject entries; book reviews; lesbian writings; poems; and reproduced visual art. The thirty-nine page subject file offered an extensive annotated topical list, traversing topics as broad as the *Back to the Land Movement, Feminist Wiccans, Conformity in the Lesbian Community, Plumbing Repair, Psychosurgery, Taxation and the Orange Juice Boycott*.337 Among other indices, Deb

337 The Orange Juice Boycott was a protest sparked by Anita Bryant's spearheading of the "Save Our Children" campaign to repeal a gay rights ordinance in Dade County, Florida in 1977. As orange juice was a major export from the area, organizers hoped to put economic and public
Edel developed a bibliography to track the treatment of lesbians in psychology texts, a document that she topically divided into “friends, enemies and wishy-washies.”

Before the distinction between academic work and community cultural activism began to solidify during the 1980s, collaboration between various community-based archival projects led to the production of the Lesbian/Gay History Researchers Network Newsletter. Each community-based organization took a turn at producing the newsletter, which featured essays, queries about research topics, announcements for slide shows, annotated bibliographies, professional training and descriptions of affiliated collections. In the second issue, researchers shared a guide to producing community oral history projects, as well as a guide to reading against the grain of FBI records and working with the Freedom of Information Act in the course of LGBT research. These organizations served both academically trained historians and community-based activists at a point in the movement when the boundary between the two was not yet fully established.

As LGBT archivists worked to make historical documents of same-sex loving experiences accessible, mainstream archives slowly began to respond to pressure to bring their materials out of the archival closet, as it were. Using venues like the Berkshire Conference of Women’s Historians, lesbian historians and archivists in the late 1970s pressured women’s repositories like the Schlesinger Library to use the label of “lesbian” relations pressure on the constitutents of Dade County. “The Lesbian Periodicals Index and Thesaurus of Subjects,” 3rd Edition, September, 1981, Circle of Lesbian Indexers. Circle of Lesbian Indexers Collection, 1, Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY); “Preserving our Words and Pictures,” transcript of interview of Joan Nestle and Deborah Edel by Beth Hodge, circa 1980. Topical Files, "Publicity" Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY).


on materials that contained same-sex loving practices among women. In a similar manner, the lesbian and gay archival movement began to successfully pressure mainstream archives to collect the papers of gay and lesbian figures. Although acceptance into mainstream cultural organizations was viewed in some ways as a victory of the movement, this issue was always in tension with a desire to keep community assets under the purview of community organizations.  

The development of LGBT history provoked conversations both within community and academic history circles regarding the ethics and interpretive accuracy of applying the terms "gay" and "lesbian" to historical subjects who likely would not have used the terms themselves. By the late 1970s, community organizations and historians like LHA were pressuring mainstream organizations to uncloset their same-sex loving subjects. Academic historians of sexuality began to debate the use of such terms, problematizing the use of contemporary categories of identity for the analysis of historical experiences. A few years later, such concerns made their way into academic history circles. In 1995 historian Leila Rupp argued that even using the category of sexual could be misleading, as it "still assumes that we know what is 'sexual' and that, however diverse, acts and relationships between people of the same sex share some fundamental similarity." As scholarly historians debated the utility of analytic categories, community historians and archivists fought with mainstream repositories to engage those very same categories to make available archival materials on same-sex loving experiences.

340 Interview with Deb Edel.
341 Leila J. Rupp, A Desired Past: A Short History of Same-Sex Love in America (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1999), 9.
Although community archival projects as both repository and reference flourished during the 1970s and early 1980s, movement historians diverged over whether or not to keep the historical assets in the community or bring LGBT history into the mainstream. Just as Jonathan Ned Katz remembered that evidence of gay history was all around, often hidden by mainstream archivists who buried same-sex loving experiences in collection description and cataloguing, the *Gay Archivist* assured burgeoning queer historians that traces of the queer past were “simply everywhere. Gay people have always existed, and wherever there is recorded history, we may expect to find glimpses of them.”342 While mainstream archival practices that closeted historical subjects led members of the Canadian Gay Archives, the organization that published the *Gay Archivist* newsletter, to argue for community-held repositories, others felt that keeping such historical materials out of mainstream institutions was a disservice to the history and the community.

Beyond the question of ownership of materials, LGBT archivists passionately debated one another over issues of access and collections control. Such conversations took place in a professional space that encompassed both self-trained community historians and professionally trained gay and lesbian archivists. Deborah Edel, an activist first and archivist second, lamented that some authors and artists in the community, although otherwise very supportive of LHA, deposited their own papers at a mainstream institution. Some of these women worried that their papers would receive a higher level of preservation care and were also desirous of the legitimacy bestowed by prestigious mainstream archives.343 Another reason to entrust LGBT historical materials with

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343 Interview with Deb Edel.
mainstream institutions was articulated by Chicago GAU member Jim Monahan, who urged gay historians “to integrate the past into [mainstream] historical thinking.”\(^{344}\) Although Monahan recognized the importance of early archival activism in the hands of the community, he argued vehemently against keeping such materials in separatist organizations: “The only separation and faction this archival movement can tolerate is one that allocates tasks, and divides the labor required to bring the gay archives into, and thereby creating, the major research centers that hold them.”\(^{345}\) While Monahan advocated for sensitivity and security for LGBT historical materials, his main concern was the consolidation of gay materials into one or a few centrally located repositories located within academic libraries.

In response, Joan Nestle came out against the removal of local and community control of historical materials. The occasion gave Nestle the opportunity to put forth a practice she termed radical archiving. Applied to the Lesbian Herstory Archives, radical archiving called for not only community ownership, but also for community responsibility for the archives:

1. All lesbian women must have access to the Archives; no academic, political or sexual credentials may be required for usage of the collection; race and class must be no barrier to the use or inclusion. 2. The Archives will collect the prints of all our lives, not just preserve the records of the famous or the published. Every woman who has had the courage to touch or desire another woman deserves to be remembered here. 3. The Archives shall be housed within the community, not on an academic campus which is by definition closed to many women, and shall be curated and maintained by lesbians. 4. The community should share in the work of the Archives. 5. The Archives shall be involved in the political struggles of all lesbians. 6. Archival skills shall be taught, one generation of lesbians to another, breaking the elitism of traditional archives. 7. Funding shall be

\(^{345}\) Ibid.
sought from within the communities the archives serves, not from the government or mainstream financial institutions.\textsuperscript{346}

For Nestle, the practices connected with maintenance of the archives were woven into the daily fabric of the community, and as such were intertwined with the political struggles and other needs of the community. To this end, the lesbian community had an obligation to share in the work and the financial well being of the institution, and in return the community had a stake in a cultural institution that was open and available to all members as a cultural, historical, political, and social resource.\textsuperscript{347} Although both Monahan and Nestle wanted LGBT history to serve the community, their significant disagreements illustrate the tension between using LGBT history in the service of community-building and identity-making, and the effort to gain mainstream acceptance through claiming a place in the national historical narrative by making queer archival materials widely available to scholars, a tension also keenly felt in the Gay Liberation Movement than in the Black Freedom or Women's Liberation Movements.

Oral history projects also served to capture the diversity of the experiences within the community. In many ways, LGBT historians and archivists envisioned a democratization of historical authorship, and a key element of this movement promoted the use of oral history to document individual and collective historical experience. To paraphrase the well-known Gay Liberation slogan, an army of historians couldn’t have


failed, and many archivists and historians put forth effort to train new grassroots historians. Guides for conducting oral histories trained nascent community historians in crafting of an interview script that would acquire a rich snapshot of collective gay experience. Suggested questions probed personal background, early impressions of the queer community, coming out, same-sex meeting places, diversity of queer meeting places, sexual practices, friendship and relationships, queer humor, family-making practices, discrimination, institutional placements including prisons, mental hospitals and the military, aging, and local history. Organizations like LHA also distributed guides to preserving one’s own papers and collections, including conservation standards, annotation tips for correspondence and organizational techniques. The San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project also distributed a manual to show how “personal archives (letters, photographs and other artifacts), physician’s case histories, institutional records (police, asylums, prisons, etc.), demographic statistics, residential patterns, and oral histories can be used to ‘decode’ the invisible history of gay people.” Grassroots projects such as these and other scattered local projects served not only to document and narrate a wide array of historical experiences, but also to democratize the authorship of community history.

Another early example of a populist collective memory initiative was the Buffalo Oral History Project. Setting forth “to produce a comprehensive, written history of the

348 The phrase "an army of lovers cannot fail" appeared on parade banners and buttons in the 70s. In the same democratized spirit, activists encouraged all movement members to conduct oral histories to build an archive and document the LGBT past.
lesbian community in Buffalo, New York,” Avra Michelson, Liz Kennedy and Madeline Davis began collecting oral histories in the spring of 1978. The project underscored the importance of oral history as a method that was “particularly valuable in documenting the lives of the invisible; one which allows the narrators to speak in their own voices of their lives, community loves and struggles…[as] little research exists that documents the lives of ‘common’ lesbians who have left no written records.”

Project founders considered their work a “political responsibility” and gave significant consideration to the ethics of representation, collaboration and the return of project profits to the community. Davis, Kennedy and Michelson also shared their methods for dealing with anonymity, publishing rights, archiving and the parameters of consent forms. After three and a half years of oral history collecting, Kennedy and Davis began to write *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold*, a text that proved groundbreaking in the use of oral history method in history of sexuality literature.

As in so many other facets of activism in the LGBT movement, a robust and passionate debate over archival ethics and practices flourished. While all archivists and historians sought to unearth tales of same-sex loving practices from the past, there was a growing desire within the movement for all queer people to be visible. As Harvey Milk was calling for all members of the community to come out in all aspects of their lives, LGBT archivists balanced a desire to preserve and tell the stories of the community along with a need to respect wishes for privacy. When Joan Nestle issued a press release in

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1982 to find lesbians who lived in New York City from early- to mid-20th century, she asked for materials and interviews spanning "anything that they are willing to share. Confidentiality assured." Indeed, in most cases, archivists came down on the side respecting the privacy of their subjects, but this ethical position certainly was in tension with the larger movement’s initiative to urge all queers out of the closet, a tension that never was fully resolved.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, grassroots and community history research projects served as an important cultural front for the goals of Gay Liberation. Countless projects blossomed on local, national and transnational topics and took a wide array of forms: scholars hosted conferences devoted to the sexuality of Oscar Wilde and Walt Whitman’s extended visit to Ontario; historians conducted oral histories of lesbians in New York City, in Cincinnati and even of lesbian hobos; activists developed archival collections on Toronto, North Carolina, Boston and more; scholars put out research calls for topics like lesbian pulp novels, lesbian and gay images in sci-fi literature, and leather subcultures. In one particularly colorful example, the "Cincinnati Lesbian HYSTORICAL Society" [emphasis in original] put out a wide call in 1982 for anyone wishing to contribute their life story to the project, expressing a particular interest in "recording oral hystories." Some of these projects failed to become fully realized.

Yet their very proliferation illustrates the exciting frontier of LGBT history during the heyday of the Gay Liberation Movement.

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355 Fliers for various slide shows, Topical Files, "History Projects" Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY).
Community Education for LGBT Historians

Movement education was a highly-prioritized memory practice for all LGBT historians. Researchers keenly understood the intimate connection between identity and history and eagerly sought to return their research to the community. Out of this desire, LGBT historians developed immensely popular community-based slide shows that were eagerly delivered and received. As improvised community centers filled to capacity with cheering crowds, young gays and lesbians coming of age during the 1970s and 1980s received an informal education in their community’s histories. Documentary films that attended to the historical experiences of same-sex loving folks such as Word is Out and Before Stonewall also blossomed during this period, further generating passionate interest in LGBT history. As queer historians reached out to the community through their educational efforts, they extended the larger movement goal of crafting a new political identity to the individual members of the movement.

LGBT historians embraced the community slide show format as a medium to disseminate their research findings. These events gave scholars an opportunity to show visual materials like photographs, art, and book covers as they narrated their findings to an enthusiastic audience. John D’Emilio recalls a giddy euphoria sweeping over the audience as they enthusiastically watched images and listened to narration of a history they had long craved. Scholars would often travel with their shows, booking a full tour of LGBT gatherings and relying upon local organizers to turn out a full house, a task

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357 Interview with John D’Emilio.
which seemed to be anything but difficult in communities filled with gays and lesbians eager to learn more of their past. Institutions also used slide shows as a part of their community educational work. The Lesbian Herstory Archives quickly embraced the slide show format, even sending “Archivette” Alexis Danzig out on a cross-country motorcycle tour to promote the collections and disseminate lesbian history. The slide show format emerged rather organically for LHA. As archive volunteers sought out opportunities to connect with the community, they also found travelling with archival objects a challenging task.\footnote{Interview with Joan Nestle.} Slides gave the presentation an exciting visual focus and were easily transported from one site to another. LHA representatives including Alexis Danzig, Deborah Edel, and Joan Nestle traveled significant distances to present in Toronto, at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem North Carolina, Louisville, Kentucky, Santa Cruz, California, Washington DC, and around New York City and Upstate New York. Some slideshow screenings like the one at the Women’s Studies Forum at SUNY Plattsburgh complemented scholarly discussions, while women’s bookstores organized others, with one slideshow even functioning as a benefit for a local lesbian writer’s group.\footnote{Fliers for various slide shows, Topical Files, "History Projects" Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY).}

LHA slideshows used the collections materials to give a sense of the breadth of lesbian history. One of LHA's collections promotion slideshow began with the \textit{Ladder}, the first lesbian publication in the U. S. and main membership and communication tool for the Daughters of Bilitis. Presenters followed with other lesbian newsletters and publications, both historic and contemporary examples, after which came publications
from international groups. The slideshow showcased LHA’s broad collecting scope through a stunningly wide array of materials, including autobiographies, poetry, science fiction, handmade books, music, t-shirts, buttons, boots, and spanning themes as broad as lesbian mothers, male-authored works on lesbianism, third world lesbian texts, conferences, photos of lesbian elders in New York City, a Daughters of Bilitis party in which a participant covered her face before the camera, lesbian couples in literature, health and sexuality. For LHA, slide shows served not only to educate the lesbian community on its history, but also as a solicitation for archival material donations.

Beyond LHA, many other community historians and activists in LGBT history projects utilized the communicative power of the slide show. On a given Friday or Saturday night during the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s, queers in towns across the country could take in a traveling slide show on a wide array of gay and lesbian topics. Some were part of what would turn into scholarly research projects; some came out of the collective labors of community history projects. Yet some were simply labors of love for a gay or lesbian individual, who felt passionate enough about an LGBT historical topic to undertake research and produce a visual narrative. Some topics were more traditionally historical inquiries bounded by space and time, such as Lesbians and Gay Men in Early San Francisco, 1849-1880; Our Boston Heritage; From the Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement to the Holocaust, 1860-1935; and 100 Years of the Lesbian in Biography. In other cases, slideshow content reflected the growing transnationalism of the LGBT movement, covering topics as broad as African Women in Antiquity: Lesbian Themes among the Amazons; Mayan and Mexican Goddesses; and Gay Germany. Topics that

360 Ibid.
echoed gynocentric themes flourished within the lesbian community, including *The Goddess and the Witch; The Mother Goddess; Lesbian Erotica by Women Artists;* and *Yantras of Womenlove*. Cultural history themes also proved quite popular, including *What the Well-dressed Dyke Will Wear--Dyke Fashion, 1900-present; Gay Science Fiction; Lesbian Masquerades; Lesbian Pulp: Twilight Tales; Styles of Being Lesbian, 1890-1945; Lavender Letters: Lesbians in Literature;* and *The Captive* (1922). Still others underscored the importance of community to earlier generations, some examples of which were *A Family of Friendship-- Portrait of a Lesbian Friendship Group; Marching to a Different Drummer; From Boston Marriage to the Tell-All ‘70’s;* and *The Heterodoxy Club of Greenwich Village*.  

Film scholar Vito Russo used an interesting variant on the slide show model for community education. In community centers across the country, Russo screened film clips to illustrate his research for *The Celluloid Closet*. Russo’s project traced changes in the treatment of gay characters in American cinema. By screening clips, Russo brought his research into the community to use cinema to educate about gay and lesbian history: “Our movement has forgotten that our people are made up of drag queens, butch lesbians, angry mobs, s/m leather boys, vegetarians, AIDS activists, day-glo hippies, radical faeries, separatist lesbians, boy lovers, queer anarchists, witches, queer punks, pagans,

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361 Fliers for various slide shows, Topical Files, "History Projects" and "Slide Shows," Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY).
and others.” Russo published The Celluloid Closet in 1981 and supported Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman’s production of a documentary film based on his book.

While slide shows certainly communicated a basic historical narrative to audiences, they also showcased complex scholarship. Narration often included quite nuanced historical points. For example, Greg Sprague's introduction for his slideshow The Making of the Modern Homosexual argued that “the cultural roots and antecedents of the post-Stonewall generation of gays can be traced back many decades before 1970. There is a continuity between those two worlds. This slide presentation will attempt to explore the historical transformation of urban gay subcultures into a national gay culture.” Sprague couched his scholarship within contemporary historiographical debates; this is striking because his primary graduate training was not in history, but in education. It is especially noteworthy that community historians brought such academic standards to bear on popular historical work. LGBT historians, although devoted first and foremost to community education in the name of gay liberation, took scholarship quite seriously and gave audiences a carefully argued thesis rather than a simple congratulatory narrative. Occasionally, LGBT historians gave slide show presentations of material that would become monographs. Allan Bérubé presented his research on lesbian and gay soldiers in WWII via the slide show circuit before crafting his research into his highly praised book Coming Out Under Fire. Similarly, James

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364 Sprague explained his own work as being in conversation with the works of Michel Foucault, Kenneth Plummer, and Jeffrey Weeks. "Proposal for AHA Paper," Sprague Papers, 12:17.
Steakley, Eric Garber, and Vito Russo first presented research, which they would later publish, to community audiences.365

Yet community members did not embrace slide shows uncritically. In a letter written to Sprague, visual artist and fellow slide show creator Judith Schwarz critiqued a proposed show entitled *Legacy of the Matriarchy*. Schwarz minced no words in her critique as she declared that she “failed to see how a goddess culture in a pre-technological culture can teach me how to deal with present society’s treatment of women, especially lesbians, or even how I could deal with my sister lesbians in an atmosphere of ‘peace and harmony.’”366 Likewise, Eric Garber workshoped his *T’aint Nobody’s Business* show with his peers at the San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project, where he received both support and constructive criticism. This discussion provided members of the group with the occasion to debate the political implications of a white scholar “speaking for” black gay experience.367 Audience members and peers within the LGBT historian community critiqued shoddy scholarship or inappropriately celebrative narratives, be the authors primarily academic or amateur historians. Although the gay and lesbian community enthusiastically embraced the production of slideshows,


peer review was part of the process, as community historians held themselves to the standards of academic intellectual production.368

Those LGBT historians who had some formal connection to the academy enjoyed entry and legitimacy others did not have. Author and activist Marie Kuda presented over 100 slide show lectures in a span of 25 years, yet her audience remained more of a popular one, and as an independent scholar she did not reap the benefits of academic affiliation. Active in the Gay Liberation Movement in Chicago, Kuda researched and authored several slide shows and reference materials on the history of lesbian literature. She organized conferences on lesbian literature and wrote often for local and national gay and lesbian publications. Whether intentionally or not, her work played out on a much more grassroots level. Kuda utilized the slide show venue throughout the 1980s and 1990s to continue building awareness of gay and lesbian history, and received several awards from local organizations for her educational and activist efforts. Yet her scope of influence remained largely outside of academic circles, possibly due to the fact that she confined her publishing efforts to bibliographic reference texts rather than interpretive works like Jonathan Katz or Allan Bérubé.

The production of an LGBT past certainly produced a significant number of community and burgeoning academic historians, but the real impact of LGBT history was on the countless queer folks who couched their new political and often public identities in narratives of the past. After the publishing of Gay American History, Katz recalled a

368 The San Francisco Gay and Lesbian History Project, which would later become the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Historical Society, was founded in 1979, and by 1980 members workshoped slide shows, as their peers offered feedback for improving the content and presentation. Audio recordings of slide show workshops, San Francisco Lesbian and Gay History Project Records, 2.
profusion of correspondence from readers who were incredibly grateful for the new historical connections made to their own experiences. Likewise, visitors to LHA often cultivated an intimate relationship between the personal and collective past, using archival documents for varied purposes from dealing with sexuality after mastectomy to using the space and materials to facilitate coming out to a mother. Community history certainly provided an environment in which proud political identities developed but also offered a space of healing for the personal challenge of coming to terms with being lesbian or gay.

**Into the Ivory Tower**

What started as an informal meeting of like-minded intellectuals quickly emerged as the Gay Academic Union, a significant organization that served as an incubator for numerous community history projects. This group, which first met in an apartment on New York City’s Upper West Side in March 1973, consisted of a small group of academics, graduate students and writers. The organizing members were an interdisciplinary group, included academically trained historians John D’Emilio and Martin Duberman, English scholar Karla Jay, and other young queer writers and teachers like Joan Nestle and Jonathan Ned Katz. Its membership thus spanned a potential divide between academics and community activists. By November of that year, the organization held its first conference with 325 gay and lesbians in attendance. Chapters quickly formed across the country, taking a leadership role in both queer activism and academic

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369 Interview with Jonathan Ned Katz.
370 Interview with Joan Nestle.
legitimation. After much debate, the members of GAU settled on an agenda that straddled community and academy and collectively asserted “the interconnection between personal liberation and social change.” The union’s statement of purpose articulated the link between the personal and the professional, as they sought "simultaneously to foster our self-awareness as individuals and, by applying our professional skills, to become the agency for a critical examination of the gay experience that will challenge those generalizations supporting the current oppression.”372 This initiative marked a very important moment for the larger LGBT movement--activists used the GAU to bring their movement goals into the academy, a key site of knowledge production about gay and lesbian experience.

Like many other grassroots organizations, contestation emerged over the purpose and direction of the Union’s mission. Although members agreed on the importance of equal gender representation, they disagreed over how to implement it, as well as over other issues like the inclusion of bisexuals. From the onset, the organization attracted more gay men than lesbians, and women’s roles within the organization quickly became a conflicted issue. While many men felt strongly about the importance of dismantling patriarchy, others were less aware of the masculine privilege within the Gay Rights Movement. Both men and women within the organization struggled with these issues, first attempting to attract more women into membership, then striving for equal representation in leadership. One significant outcome of the gender divide was the splintering off of the Lesbian Herstory Archives.373

373 Interviews with Joan Nestle, Karla Jay, Jonathan Ned Katz and John D’Emilio.
As the Gay Academic Union grew, its membership grew more diverse in worldview and political goals. Many of its members held strong socialist values, including John D’Emilio and Jonathan Ned Katz, yet as the organization grew, fewer members held radical viewpoints and a more conservative group began to dominate the organization.\textsuperscript{374} Union Members began to debate the nature of the activism the organization should undertake. D’Emilio found the organization to offer a vibrant environment for debate: “of course, we were academics. The verbal nitpicking for which we are famous at last served us well.”\textsuperscript{375} Yet rather than destabilizing the group, D’Emilio found that this contest led to a sense of “collective accomplishment.”\textsuperscript{376} But others felt that after a while the meetings started to lose track of the organization’s founding purpose; Martin Duberman recalled feeling uncomfortable with how casually social the meetings had become, which he described as “excessive to the point of self-indulgence.”\textsuperscript{377}

Although the Gay Academic Union offered both social opportunity and scholarly support, the primary work of the organization focused on the legitimation of gay and lesbian academics within the academy. This close connection with the academy was part of this movement more so than others for a few reasons. Many of its members came into the organization with some connection to universities and colleges. For such activists, they were able to hide their outsider status by closeting their sexual identities, a discretion they were eager to shed. Additionally, as white men, many of the early GAU members possessed other forms of privilege that facilitated their access to academe. Participants of

\textsuperscript{374} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{376} Ibid.
the organization's first conference recall that only a few members with academic appointments were actually out on their campuses, and certainly only if they had tenure.^[378] Even in the cases when an academic might be out to colleagues and administration, ties to other faculty members at other universities became a key form of support. Similarly, academic members felt a need to organize within their individual disciplines. Historians within GAU formed an informal committee of gay historians at the 1973 meeting of the American Historical Association (AHA). This group held sporadic meetings until 1976, at which point the committee fell apart, due to the shift in Union membership. In 1978, Gregory Sprague and Walter Williams organized the Committee on Homosexuality in History, which would shortly become the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History (CLGH).^[379] CLGH did not gain official AHA recognition, however, until 1982, at which point the Lesbian/Gay History Researcher's Network Newsletter was folded into the Committee's publication. Not surprisingly, the emphasis on community-based archives and individual researchers shifted towards professional activities and disciplinary concerns, a shift that took place quite rapidly. In 1980, the Lesbian and Gay History Researcher's Network Newsletter shared announcements of _Gay Community News_ now being available on microfilm, newly published popular books, memoirs, community newspaper articles and pamphlet publications.^[380] Yet as early as 1983, the Committee on Lesbian and Gay History Newsletter featured a front page article recounting a discussion at the most recent AHA meeting in which presenter Harold Poor bemoaned that LGBT history tended to attract people interested in "rumors," a lament to

^[378] Interview with John D’Emilio.

^[379] Committee on Lesbian and Gay History Newsletter, Fall 1980, 3, From the personal papers of John D’Emilio.

which the panel's attendees nodded in agreement. This is most striking in contrast to the eager embracing of rumor as the starting point for investigations for LGBT researchers only a decade earlier. In just under ten years, LGBT historical research had expanded from a frontier endeavor to a rapidly professionalizing practice, from casual conversation at parties and political meetings to the conference rooms of professional organizations.

Women working within lesbian history also initially struggled for inclusion within women’s history and women’s studies professional circles. At the fourth meeting of the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women in 1978, a gathering of approximately 200 of the conference’s 1100 attendees, including a few gay men, convened as the Lesbian Caucus to address the systemic homophobia that prevented lesbian history from being integrated into women’s history. Of the 200 attendees, twelve lesbian historians, independent researchers and archivists produced a memo to the Program Committee, charging the committee with producing a “proportionate lack of lesbian history content,” pointing out that the second conference in 1974 had featured two explicitly lesbian panels, and that the third conference in 1976 had produced “two or three panels which overtly dealt with lesbian history.” Caucus members were particularly frustrated that the 1978 Conference engaged lesbian themes even less than earlier conference programs, a choice which seemed "to be, at best, a regression from the 2nd and 3rd conferences." Using the rhetoric of feminist inclusion, the caucus argued the centrality of lesbian experience to women’s history. The caucus, which remained an informal network after

381 Committee on Lesbian and Gay History Newsletter, Summer 1983, Sprague Papers, 22:10.

the conference, also provided a networking space for lesbian scholars. From this network, participants organized several panel proposals emerged for the 1981 Berkshire Conference and the 1980 Women’s Studies Association meeting, several of which were accepted.\footnote{383 “The Lesbian Caucus News,” Topical Files, "History Projects," Lesbian Herstory Archives (Brooklyn, NY).}

**An Army of Historians Cannot Fail**

The memory practices of a social movement like Gay Liberation are unintelligible in isolation. Memory, collective and individual, is a cultural production, and as such reflects the larger context from which it comes. In the case of the Gay Liberation movement, memory practices mirrored shifts in the larger movement. The early movement years were marked by a desire to connect all same-sex loving people under a single unified public, political identity. During the early and mid 1970s, activists worked to lay a foundation for LGBT history, as they built collections and started to craft a master narrative for the community's history as an act of cultural self-determination. From these projects, they reached out to the larger community to offer up a new political identity to lesbian and gay individuals. Along the way, they conducted interventions into liberal institutions, like the academy, to change the larger cultural representation of the community.

Lisa Duggan has argued that gay and lesbian history’s unique relationship to its community resulted in memorial practices that were “highly democratic and innovative” in comparison to mainstream history, qualities that sprung from the socialist and feminist
theoretical foundation of the movement. 384 For the new LGBT historians, knowing and preserving the queer past was not simply a complement to the more political work of Gay Liberation, but was in fact a key struggle in the work of liberation. Scholars have understood the post-Stonewall era as one marked by the “self definition of gay men and women,” and historical authorship proved to be a key segment of such cultural activism. 385

Shortly after publishing *Gay American History*, Jonathan Ned Katz reflected on how political consciousness and a desire for history were inextricable from one another:

> Only recently have lesbians and gay men begun to think of ourselves in time, as a long-oppressed and resistant social group. This new consciousness of ourselves arises from our recent political organization and activity…Previously, deprived of our history, we were made one-dimensional, diminished, trivialized. Without serious research into our history we made do with silly gossip. Learning our history gives us a deeper, more rounded, complex picture of ourselves. It tells us who we’ve been, so that we more clearly perceive who we are now, and who we could be in the future. 386

For Katz and others, to seek a past went far beyond a recreational desire for history; rather, the on-the-ground political work and cultural production reproduced one another. At the core of Katz’s and others’ sentiments was a desire to build a proud identity. In this way, Gay Liberation activists were like their counterparts in the Women’s and Black Liberation Movements— all recognized the import of the cultural to such a goal. Katz's words are also illustrative of a striking phenomenon in the formation of identity. He begins by talking of the newness of an LGBT historical identity, yet he also projects back

in time a core, a-historical gayness. Here Katz posited a coherent and timeless gayness, a narrative that served to legitimate a contemporary political identity through the construction of a useable past.

LGBT history, borne out of private collections, rumors, living room conversations, letters exchanged between friends, and informal networks, changed remarkably during the 1970s and 1980s. Although LGBT history still has a strong connection to community organizations like archives and libraries, by 1990 historical authorship had transitioned from primarily being located in informal community projects and individual labors of love towards a highly professionalized academic endeavor. As LGBT studies became a legitimate area of research in the academy, the lines between community and scholarly history became more clearly drawn. Although community archives and individual scholars interacted with one another, the majority of gay and lesbian scholarship centered on academic spaces and formally-trained historians. Over time, the LGBT movement enjoyed more success in redefining same-sex relationships as normal loving human experiences, in significant part through the development of a proud political identity premised on the historical achievements and survival of same-sex loving individuals and communities. As the movement shifted away from community educational efforts towards a larger social intervention, the terrain of LGBT history shifted also from community-based organizations towards larger liberal institutions.
Conclusion: Oppositional Collective Memory as a front in the Culture Wars

We have lost control of our cultural institutions. Liberalism long ago captured the arts, the press, the entertainment industry, the universities, the schools, the libraries, the foundations, etc. This was no accident.  

-Rush Limbaugh

In 1992, the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore handed the keys to their artifact storage room over to Fred Wilson, a young visual artist of African-American, European, and American Indian decent, allowing him free rein in creating an exhibit. Using only items in the collection, Wilson's Mining the Museum employed historic artifacts in radically different contexts, a curation that teased out racial narratives embedded in seemingly neutral objects and disrobed the social role of museum collections. Wilson presented his work as an intervention in the museum itself, a place where "multiple meanings are lost and the complexity of the object and of those who remembered them is lost with it.” Wilson cautioned that, “museum people are mistaken when they believe museums collect ‘things.’ They collect memories, meanings emotions, and experiences.” Wilson's institutional intervention was an act of reclamation, a memory practice that exposed the ideology of categorization within the museum's collections and interpretations. It was a memory practice that would have made the collective memory activists of this study proud.

Wilson's institutional critique challenged longstanding recurrent themes in US history, from westward expansion to the benevolence of slavery. In the first exhibit room, Wilson placed drug store Indian statues facing photographs produced by the Maryland

Commission on Indian Affairs against a map of Maryland. The map overlaid contemporary hunting and gun clubs with historical native tribal territories. In another section, video featuring a dark-skinned narrator was projected through a torn canvas depicting the face of a white man, an installation that evoked the inner struggles of racial passing as the voice whisperingly reminded "nobody knows that I am inside of you." Provocative juxtapositions like a Ku Klux Klan hood nestled in a 19th century baby carriage startled viewers into engaging with the enduring legacy of racism. In a section entitled "African-Americans Who Resisted Slavery," a painting depicting the uprising at Harper's Ferry and pikes used in the struggle contrasted with the domestic idyll of a child's dollhouse showing black domestic labor as the names of black abolitionists projected across the scene. Throughout the exhibit, traditional exhibit narratives were abandoned in favor of loose associations. As a result, time and space flowed freely as visitors were left with impressionistic ideas about race, violence, exploitation, and memory.

*Mining the Museum* marked a significant shift in exhibition practices and also exemplified a larger change in mainstream cultural institutions that had transpired during the decade prior. The efforts of movement activists to institutionalize their community history within grassroots organizations, the academy, museums and archives, and curriculum standards inspired, and at times pressured, cultural institutions to re-define their constituent base. The political, intellectual, rhetorical, and cultural impact of the social movements of the earlier decades generated a crisis in museum authority, and

Wilson's work was a perfect example of recent shifts in cultural authority, a shift applauded by many, but also reviled by others.

By the early 1980s, mainstream cultural institutions were mounting exhibits on black and women’s history and art produced by black, women and queer artists. For example, an exhibit produced by the New York Historical Society in 1982 entitled "The Female Touch: The Ladies' Periodical as a Reflection of an Age" explored the ways in which late 19th century women navigated a public world that was relatively hostile towards their participation.392 Similarly, a new generation of social historians serving on the curriculum committee at Colonial Williamsburg initiated a major revision in the interpretive scope of the site itself towards "a 'laboratory' in which to examine social relationships rather than 'as a storehouse of moral precepts." More specifically, it was to be a laboratory that brought the experiences of enslaved blacks out of the woodwork and into the national colonial narrative.393 The history of queer Americans was less easily integrated into mainstream institutions, but inroads were made with the New York Public Library's Becoming Visible: The Legacy of Stonewall in 1994.394 The Stonewall exhibit, developed to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, proved to be a litmus test for questions of funding, as the National Endowment for the Humanities refused to back it, a cautious decision that was likely fueled by the NEH funding controversies regarding queer artists whose work provoked another conservative
backlash.\textsuperscript{395} Yet, such inclusive exhibitions, while not fully embraced by the national agenda demonstrated that the cultural activism of the earlier generation had nonetheless successfully shifted mainstream representations towards a pluralistic ideal that was nearly unimaginable thirty years prior.

This period also ushered in a new commitment by museum professionals to broaden representation and to create democratic spaces for civic dialogue. Having been generally influenced by the demands from social movements of the 1960s and 1970s and particularly inspired by the cultural interventions made by activists like those examined in this dissertation, curators, administrators, and museum educators began to reimagine their role less as authorities and more as facilitators. Two groundbreaking conferences sponsored by the International Center for the Smithsonian Institute in 1988 and 1990 resulted in the publishing of two highly influential edited volumes entitled \textit{Exhibiting Cultures} and \textit{Museums and Communities}.\textsuperscript{396} Karp and Levine echoed the language of earlier collective memory activists, arguing that debates over cultural representation "resolve themselves into claims about what a nation is or ought to be as well as how citizens should relate to one another."\textsuperscript{397} Shortly after, the Association of American Museums released a report entitled "American Association of Museums, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums," a document which called for

\textsuperscript{395} Mike Wallace, \textit{Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory} (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1996), 120.
\textsuperscript{397} Karp and Levine, \textit{Exhibiting Cultures}, 2.
museums to reimagine themselves as in service to their communities broadly as educational institutions and pluralistic forums.\textsuperscript{398}

Democratizing work also transpired in other cultural sectors. After fifteen years of lobbying efforts, Congress passed the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), legislation that provided for the returns of unlawfully obtained human remains and cultural artifacts to Native American tribes. This legislation further urged cultural institutions to be accountable to their communities and to view themselves as cultural stewards rather than authorities. Academic conversations also echoed concern with the power of cultural representation, producing Michael Frisch's \textit{shared authority}, one of the most widely influential ideas to emerge.\textsuperscript{399} Although Frisch introduced the concept as an ethical practice for oral historians, the framework gained rapid popularity in public history circles, providing cultural workers a method for engaging communities and fostering multiple meanings in interpretation. From this angle, it seemed that the cultural activism of earlier social movements had won a major victory by pressuring mainstream institutions to rethink their representational choices and methods.

As this professional debate over cultural matters flourished in the early and mid 1990s, a conservative backlash fomented against museum exhibits that employed pluralistic inclusion and shared interpretive authority. In an essay on the recent democratic impulses in the museum world, one conservative periodical expressed anxiety over "would-be radical reformers…working within the state-dominated museum to subvert the 'perpetuation' of the supposed 'ideology' of the state," citing \textit{Mining the American Association of Museums, Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums} (Washington, DC: The Association, 1992).

Museum as an example of such.⁴⁰⁰ Conservative pundit Rush Limbaugh's 1993 book *See I Told You So* served as the conservative's battle cry to the culture wars, and conservatives heeded the call, rallying around several projects and exhibits that emerged in museums and educational institutions during the 1990s. The book was enormously influential, boasting the second biggest early sales of a hardcover book in publishing history.⁴⁰¹

At the heart of the conservative position in the culture wars was a romanticized defense of American experience and power relations before the democratic and inclusionary pressures of the 1960s and 1970s. Several museum exhibits came under fire during this time, including exhibits produced by Smithsonian Museums. As the official national museums, the location of these debates reflects how far marginalized communities had advanced conversations around the preservation and interpretation of their histories. In 1992 *The West As America*, an art exhibit mounted by the National Museum of American Art that critically engaged with westward expansion, was lambasted as an example of the despicable outcome of identity politics and the denial of American greatness.⁴⁰² Another well-documented example in 1994 was the controversy over the National Air and Space Museum's *The Crossroads: The End of World War II, the Atomic Bomb and the Cold War*. An exhibit featuring the fuselage of the WWII plane *Enola Gay*, the exhibit commemorated the bombing of Hiroshima for the 50th anniversary of the event. After plans for the exhibit became public, controversy erupted in several communities, including Air Force and veteran's groups, scholarly historians, and

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Japanese Americans. Remarkably, after many months of negotiations with the various interest groups, museum staff cancelled the full exhibit, opting instead to exhibit only the fuselage in a neutrally decontextualized manner. Later that same year, Lynne Cheney sparked an angry outpouring towards the new National Standards for US History, faulting organizations that represented African Americans and Native Americans, as well as "an academic establishment that revels in the kind of politicized history" Cheney found so abhorrent. Other theaters of the Culture Wars decried National Endowment for the Humanities funding for visual and performance art exhibits. Although Timothy Luke points out that these cultural struggles are "simply the most recent flare-ups in conflicts that never end," we would be mistaken not to recognize the direct connection between the collective memory work of social movement activists and the subsequent conservative backlash on the interpretation of national history.

Despite the pressures from conservative groups to maintain the traditional historical narrative, African American and women's organizations maintained the spirit of their collective memory activist predecessors as they struggled to expand pluralist history into public spaces and cultural organizations. After several years of pressure, in 1997 Congress voted to restore the location of a 1920 statue depicting Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B Anthony, and Lucretia Mott from a basement crypt to the Capitol Rotunda. The Woman Movement, or the Sisters of the Crypt as the piece had come to be known, had been commissioned by the National Women's Party to mark the passage of the 19th amendment, and was promptly hidden from view in a closet after the dedication.

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This late 20th century desire to commemorate women's struggle for enfranchisement and participation in civic life extended the efforts of Women's Liberation activists into the next generation. The sculpture was not only a site of struggle for the historical interpretation of gender, however, but also of race. As the campaign to move the piece into the rotunda brought attention and conversation to the artwork, the National Political Congress of Black Women began to push to add Sojourner Truth to the sculpture, asserting that the struggle for women's right to vote would be incomplete without Truth's inclusion. Efforts to place the statue in the Rotunda succeeded, and Congress also conceded to placing a bust of Truth in the Capitol.

Although earlier collective memory practices and projects were either separatist in nature or primarily intended to serve the communities, by the 1990s identity-based collective memory projects were attenuated to inclusion in mainstream museums and institutions. To this end, perhaps the strongest legacy of collective memory activism from the 1990s was to create the National Women's History and National Museum of African American History and Culture. Although the idea had circulated much earlier, organized efforts to realize a national museum devoted to African American experience and history grew in the late 1980s and early 1990s. After much debate over the interpretive scope and the rationale of a separate institution, the National Museum of African American History and Culture was endorsed by Congress in 2003 and voted into existence by the Smithsonian Board of Regents in 2006. A national museum devoted to women's history has proven more elusive. The women who worked to restore the suffragist

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memorial sculpture to the Capitol rotunda extended their efforts towards building a museum on the National Mall, but after nearly two decades have yet to secure the funding and political will to do so. Some have blamed mismanagement of the fundraising campaign for the inability of the project to get off the ground.409 Women's experiences have been significantly integrated into other mainstream museums, but many feel that there remains a significant lack in "America's Front Yard" as long as a national museum dedicated to women's history remains an unrealized vision. Similarly, the LGBT community has yet to realize a mainstream national museum. Although the holdings at San Francisco's GLBT Historical Society are rich and national in collecting scope, the "queer Smithsonian" lacks the state-sanctioned validation enjoyed by the National Mall institutions.

The Legacy of Collective Memory Practices of the 1960s and 1970s

Although most of the collective memory projects of the Civil Rights, Black Power, Women's and Gay Liberation Movements were relatively small, they performed critical work on the consciousness of African-Americans, women, and LGBT communities. They instilled in members an inextricable sense of community history along with a transformed sense of themselves as political and social agents. Beyond this, they developed strategies for building collective memory that existed apart from, and oftentimes in contradiction to, mainstream sanctioned national history. They built institutions to support their collective memory work, as well as made inroads into

mainstream institutions, demanding representation and ownership of their heritage. Lastly, they developed memory practices that were strategies for the development and deployment of a useable past. The Black Freedom Movement, through the work of Civil Rights and Black Power activists, crafted a collective memory that laid claims to both US citizenship and Pan-African heritage. Relying on a long-standing tradition of education as racial uplift, activists created parallel institutions for both children and adults to rectify the wrongs of a century of separate and unequal learning. They used history to claim civic entitlement as well as undergird a new political identity for afro-centric communities and institutions. Women's Liberation activists used personal relationships and intimate, communal forms of expression to develop a narrative of shared historical experiences and struggles. They found inspiration in past movements, and claimed women's rightful place in public space, both historically and in contemporary political, social and cultural milieus. Gay Liberation activists developed a collective past alongside the development of a collective political identity. They used history to demonstrate presence, unearthing ancestors and predecessors where none had been visible before. Although their struggles led to various degrees of acceptance in mainstream venues, for all, memory was a means by which to empower, mobilize, inspire, and validate.
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New York Public Library, New York, NY  
Jonathan Ned Katz Papers  
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Women's History Research Center Collection

Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, MA  
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Judy Chicago Papers

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Vita

Lara Kelland

Education

**PhD**  University of Illinois at Chicago, History, November 2, 2012
Dissertation Title: “Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century US Social Movements and the Uses of Collective Memory.”
Advisors: Robert Johnston and John D’Emilio

**MA**  University of Chicago, Humanities and Museum Studies emphasis. June 2002

**BA**  University of Minnesota, American Culture and its Significations of the Past major. December 2000
Thesis: “An Examination of Two Exhibits: Subjectivity and Identity in History Museums.”

Teaching Experience

**UIC – Visiting Instructor**  June—August 2012
Taught *Community, Digital and Oral History as Method and Practice*, a research course for history majors in which students conducted oral histories, wrote a research paper and produced a digital history project for the Richard J. Daley Library Special Collections.

**UIC – Visiting Instructor**  June – August 2011
Taught *Urban History as Public History*, a research course for history majors in which students researched and wrote a paper and produced an exhibit for the Richard J. Daley Library Commons.

**North Central College – Visiting Instructor**  August – December 2010
Taught *Introduction to Urban and Suburban Studies*, a core course for minors participating in the Chicago Term, an immersive survey with a significant Public History component.

**UIC—Teaching Assistant**  August 2008 – May 2009, Jan – May 2010
Facilitated discussion sections and assessed assignments for undergraduate courses in the History department, including *American Civilization to the Late 19th C.*, *American Civilization since the 19th C.*, and *History of American Women*.

**After School Matters**  January 2004 – present
Designed curriculum and led a group of thirty high school students in an after school employment program engaging neighborhood history and community development themes.
Public History Experience

**Logan Square Neighborhood Association**  June– August 2009
Led a group of 15 youth and two interns through an oral history research project culminating in a booklet on neighborhood perspectives on the future of Milwaukee Avenue.

**Trust for Public Land**  June 2009 – August 2009
Led a group of 15 youth and one intern through an oral history project focused around the Bloomingdale Trail in the Wicker Park and Bucktown neighborhoods in Chicago.

Conducted research for and assisted in developing *Changing Neighborhoods* exhibit. Provided reference assistance to researchers for manuscript collections, university archives, and rare books, processed University Archives collections.

**Logan Square Neighborhood Association**  June 2008-August 2008
Led a group of 25 youth in an oral history/photography program focused on a developing multi-purpose recreational trail on the Northwest side of Chicago.

Processed manuscript collections, including cataloguing and writing of finding aids. Assisted patrons with primary research in special collections reading room.

**Newberry Library**  February 2004 – May 2004
Conducted content research on *Outspoken, Chicago’s Free Speech Tradition*, an exhibit depicting the history of free speech in Chicago.

**Architreasures**  July – August 2003, 2004, 2005
Lead group of teens in neighborhood history research project on the Near West Side of Chicago. Developed an exhibit and audio project using oral histories.

**Chicago Historical Society**  September 2002 - April 2003
Conducted content and image research while assisting in exhibit development for Chicago Sports: You Shoulda Been There, an exhibit narrating the history of popular, professional, and academic sports in Chicago.

Publications

*History @Work* blog, National Council on Public History, Regular Contributor.
http://publichistorycommons.org/


“Memory: A Keywords Essay” in “Theories of Media—Keywords Glossary,” University of Chicago, W.J.T. Mitchell faculty webpage 

**Awards**

*Chancellor’s Award for Interdisciplinary Research, Summer 2010; Summer 2011
Provost’s Award for Dissertation Research, Summer 2008*

**Academic Administration and Service**

**National Council on Public History**

November 2012-April 2013
Served on *Best Practices for Establishing a Public History Program* working group.

**UIC – Department of History**

August 2010 – present
Served as assistant to department chair, writing, designing and publishing department newsletter and managing general education curriculum restructuring project.

**Presentations and Invited Engagements**

*Panel Commentator, "Grassroots Activism in the Long 1960s," Windy City Graduate Student History Conference, November 5, 2011.*

"Clio’s Foot Soldiers: Gay Liberation and the Production of LGBT Collective Memory," 
*Digital History Lab, Berkshire Conference of Women Historians, June 10, 2011.*
“Crafting Herstory: The Use of Collective Memory in the U.S. Second Wave Feminist Movement,” University of Illinois at Chicago, Department of Gender and Women’s Studies Brownbag Seminar, April 20, 2010.


