Catalyst Fund Proposal

Proposal Title:	A Digital Map of the Historic West End
ID:	18
Institution:	James B. Duke Memorial Library, Johnson C. Smith University
Requestor:	Brandon Lunsford, University Archivist
Budget:	$25,000
Goal (as pulled from the application):	"The James B. Duke Memorial Library seeks to create a web and mobile app framework for publishing location-based content including historical photographs, documents, and oral histories that will populate a digital interactive map. The map will document the Historic West End, a vibrant 150 year old African American community that surrounds the university on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina and is currently faced with rising gentrification and social change."
Description:	The James B. Duke Memorial Library seeks to create a web and mobile app framework for publishing location-based content including historical photographs, documents, and oral histories that will populate a digital interactive map. The map will document the Historic West End, a vibrant 150 year old African American community that surrounds the university on the west side of Charlotte, North Carolina and is currently faced with rising gentrification and social change. This project will expand the boundaries of how libraries can use mobile technology to bring visual history and users together, and will utilize a partnership between academic and public libraries, museums, government agencies, and community members that will provide a model for other small and historically black college and university libraries that seek to bring their local history alive in the digital age. The West End area of Charlotte provides an excellent model for the humanities to study because it is the only historic black neighborhood in Charlotte that was relatively untouched by urban renewal policies in the 1960's and 1970's, and has largely maintained its historic character over time. Many residents of the West End have been lifelong neighbors, and their families have lived here for generations since the neighborhood's inception. This is largely changing, however, as urban development threatens this historic area. The West End includes the area of Biddleville right around JCSU, which is currently undergoing an intense period of change as Charlotte has become the fastest growing city in the United States over the last decade. Its proximity to downtown has led to rising rents and an influx of higher income white residents that are rapidly gentrifying a neighborhood that was 96 % African American in 2000. White residents currently make up a quarter of its population, and many cities across the country are experiencing a similar re-orientation of their African American populations. Libraries and museums can replicate our model of digitally preserving the stories and images of the West End to help document neighborhoods around them that may be experiencing urban displacement. No definitive mapping project or historic survey has ever been done on the West End, which makes this a rare opportunity to extensively document an important African American community in a major city for the first time as it is entering a period of rapid change and evolution. Digitally documenting an African American neighborhood and using that information to spark a conversation about history, society, and racial diversity in a growing city would make this project

invaluable to the humanities and provide an excellent teaching opportunity for audiences not just in Charlotte and among the African American community, but across the country. The proposed project would not only highlight the history of a vibrant African American community in Charlotte, but could also serve locally as a model of how historical research and survey information could be managed to further education, planning, and historic preservation throughout Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Digitally chronicling the West End could in fact make Charlotte a model for new methods of historic preservation and community archiving for other cities.

The genesis of this project was in 2014 when various cultural institutions in the Charlotte area joined together to discuss a collaboration of resources on the African American neighborhoods in the city that were held in different places. That coalition of institutions including the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Library, the history department and archives at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, the Levine Museum of the New South, and the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Department will be advisors on this project and have written letters of support pledging to share their resources as well as help expand the understanding of the West End.

We will be using a very large archive of unseen photographs and negatives from the James G. Peeler Collection held at Johnson C. Smith University Peeler was from the West End, and his work as a photographer in Charlotte spanned almost half a century as he captured the lives of many black residents of the neighborhoods by shooting important social, political, social, and religious events. His work also includes several street scenes of the neighborhood and several influential community members including local civil rights pioneers and business owners. Peeler's work has often been published in local and national publications, but Johnson C. Smith recently received a donation of over 200,000 images from his personal collection that have been processed and have never been seen before. There are precious few photographs of Biddleville and its surrounding neighborhoods in public hands, and this may be the best collection that exists to provide these images.

The long term goals of the project are to provide a way for a new generation of students to connect with African American history in Charlotte, and to launch a series of digital maps on other neighborhoods that will create a new model of participatory community history wedded with technology. We seek to make the history of African American neighborhoods and the story of their survival and adaptation in the face of threats such as urban renewal and gentrification appealing for a new and younger generation, one that understands the world around them through their phones, devices, and social media. The ultimate goal of the project is to kick start a campaign whereby Charlotte becomes an example for other areas in the Lyrasis community that wish to enhance the humanities in new ways by allowing neighborhoods to tell their own histories.

The first phase of the project will be 5 months, and its goal is to complete a survey of existing digital and non-digital resources at our own archives and those of our

partner institutions, determine their copyright and potential for inclusion, and to integrate them into a central digital hub hosted by Johnson C. Smith University. The second phase of the project will be 7 months, and will consist of contacting organizations and individuals in the project area and collecting oral histories, photographs, and artifacts. The third and final phase of the project will be 6 months: once we have identified, gathered, and created digital content, we will begin implementing a mobile-optimized website featuring geo-location layers. *(Note: per email project contact confirmed that the project can be done in one year.)* Project funds will be used to contract Historypin, an international not-for-profit organization that operates a free platform where people can collaborate to create shared archives and collections of historical photos, videos and sounds about their local community. As contractors, Historypin technicians will provide in-person and online training and support materials for community engagement, technical integrations, and measurement and evaluation as well as communications, marketing support, and promotion.

We will be collecting several items that have already been digitized and are wrapped in metadata, and will be preserving and digitizing newly obtained items including photographs, letters, and oral histories. We will also be documenting the preservation process, which will include transcripts of oral histories obtained, gift agreements between institutions declaring and clarifying copyright and ownership of material, and text files of correspondence, planning documentation, and meeting minutes generated by the advisory planning team. This documentation will ultimately be preserved as an academic white paper that will serve as the project's final report and outcome. transferred data will be made publicly accessible.

All digital content collected from partner institutions and newly digitized material will be managed with Content DM and displayed on Johnson C. Smith University's Digital Smith online repository, and will be stored on University servers with weekly backup. Notes documenting advisory team meetings and the acquisition and preservation process will be made using Google Drive, and downloaded and backed up on a library computer weekly.

Digitized material will be made available to the public through the non-profit public history website, historypin.com. The Historypin.com website software is proprietary, and use of the site and membership is free.

All public data will be deposited in Digital Smith, which has the capabilities to manage, archive, and share digital content. Digital Smith allows access to the public via persistent URLs, provides tools for long-term data management, and offers permanent storage options. Backup data will be stored on JCSU servers, which have built-in contingencies for disaster recovery.
Historypin data development documentation is recorded in Github. The primary final product will be an offline collection process that will run from software on a computer to record submissions and then bulk upload to Historypin once an internet connection is available. There will be user interface on a locally run database and filenaming process, together with a bulk upload mechanism. Contributions to the Historypin website are stored with redundant file storage, and

	select contributions will be added to the JCSU Digital Smith online collections as a bulk download of all project contributions. A white paper will also be provided to Lyrasis that will provide a model of our experience and results that can encourage similar communities, small libraries, and HBCUs to digitally map and study their surrounding neighborhoods. BUDGET: Historypin consultant - $10,000 (for training, creation and maintenance of digital site, marketing and promotion, and mobile optimization) Project Assistant - $10,000 (JCSU or grad student hired to help conduct oral histories, scan and organize digital content, provide metadata, scan the Peeler collection to choose images for inclusion, locate images and documents at other institutions that reference the Historic West End) Travel - $5,000 (travel to other institutions in Charlotte and around NC to search for images and documents that reference the Historic West End, and to conferences locally and regionally to learn about GIS mapping, similar projects, and to share our results and experiences for other institutions that wish to embark on a similar project)
Comments from Field Reviewers:	1. This project focuses on a much under-served community. I like that it incorporates geolocation and phone technologies to make archives accessible, relatable, and community-based in a contemporary format. You might even consider a secondary phase of the project that incorporates a museum partner and digitized 3D objects from the neighborhood. With regards to schedule and budget, I am concerned about the time-frame. Depending on the depth and numbers of the archives, the first phase could take far more than 5 months. A baseline survey could probably be done on this schedule, but determining copyright and integrating all of the images into the central hub along with their metadata seems to be a stretch for the time allotted. It also would have been nice to see a breakdown of the travel funding, including which institutions will be visited as well as what trainings will be attended and how these fit in with the schedule concerns above. Overall, any use of collections in collaboration with the originating communities to better serve those communities should be standard collections practice and this is a worthy project that will serve as an excellent example to other archives and museum professionals.
	2. Interesting project but there were several elements of the proposal that were unclear making it more difficult to assess the project. The timeline info is unclear - phase 1: 5 months; phase 2: 7 months and phase 3 is 6 months. This is longer than 1 year but there is a note that the project would be complete within a year. Are they already underway? Or is this funding a portion of the project? Phase 1 has "integrate materials into" - I understand a survey - is the resultant survey info going to be in the hub or the images/metadata during that time? I don't see the actual digitization or metadata creation included in any stage; are these being done separately? There was a little confusion about where these materials are

	going. Is the "map" going to be made available via historypin or CONTENTdm or both? It would be good to see some reference to standards used in project for digitization, metadata, copyright etc.
	3. The project has strength in its identification of community partners and provides for an outcome and deliverable that will have significant impact for the Charlotte Mecklenburg community as well as those conducting historical research in urban planning and development. The timeline is very ambitious.