



S602

*#Archives4BlackLives: Archivists
Respond to Black Lives Matter*

Alexis Antracoli, Princeton University Library
Celia Caust-Ellenbogen, Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College
Faith Charlton, Princeton University Library



Agenda:

1. What is A4BLiP?
2. What does A4BLiP do?
3. What is a Racism Audit?
4. Discussion



What is A4BLiP?






BLACK

LIVES

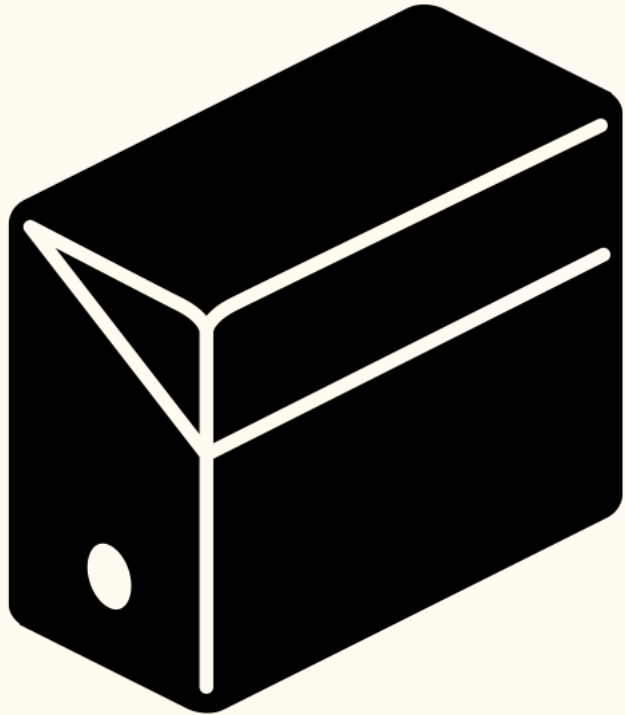
MATTER

A grey t-shirt is centered in the frame against a background of horizontal wooden planks. The t-shirt has a crew neck and short sleeves. Printed in the center of the chest is the text "ARCHIVES ARE NOT NEUTRAL" in a bold, black, hand-drawn font. The text is arranged in three lines: "ARCHIVES" on the top line, "ARE NOT" on the middle line, and "NEUTRAL" on the bottom line. A small white manufacturer's tag is visible at the top of the t-shirt's collar.

**ARCHIVES
ARE NOT
NEUTRAL**



Archives For Black Lives in Philadelphia (A4BLiP)






4




https://github.com/rappel110/A4BLiP

Branch: master ▾ New pull request Find file Clone or download ▾

 **rappel110** Rename 20160109 to 20170109 Latest commit 8710228 on Jul 27, 2017

 20170109	Rename 20160109 to 20170109	a year ago
 readme.md	Update readme.md	a year ago

 [readme.md](#)

#ArchivesForBlackLives in Philadelphia

Version released January 9, 2017. 40+ archivists, librarians, and information professionals in the Delaware Valley contributed to the creation of this document. Join the conversation at <https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/a4blinphilly>

Three years after the #BlackLivesMatter movement began, we continue to be appalled by recurring incidents where killing of and police violence against Black citizens occur with impunity. In a talk at the 2016 American Library Association conference, our colleague Jarrett Drake called on archivists to engage the issues surrounding the #BlackLivesMatter movement and to do better to promote #ArchivesForBlackLives. As a community of Philadelphia-area archivists, we come together to discuss these critical concerns and identify areas for action.

Archivists appraise, collect, preserve, organize, and provide access to archives in adherence to international standards and a professional code of ethics.

Because we have the privilege of choosing what goes into the historical record, we also bear the responsibility to safeguard accurate representations of contemporaneous events. We believe archives exist to hold power to account; to speak truth to power. Because records serve as evidence for factual claims, it is archivists' responsibility, as stewards of records, to stand against their exploitation or abuse.

As archivists, we are committed to anti-oppression values:

- We condemn racist violence against Black people and other people of color.

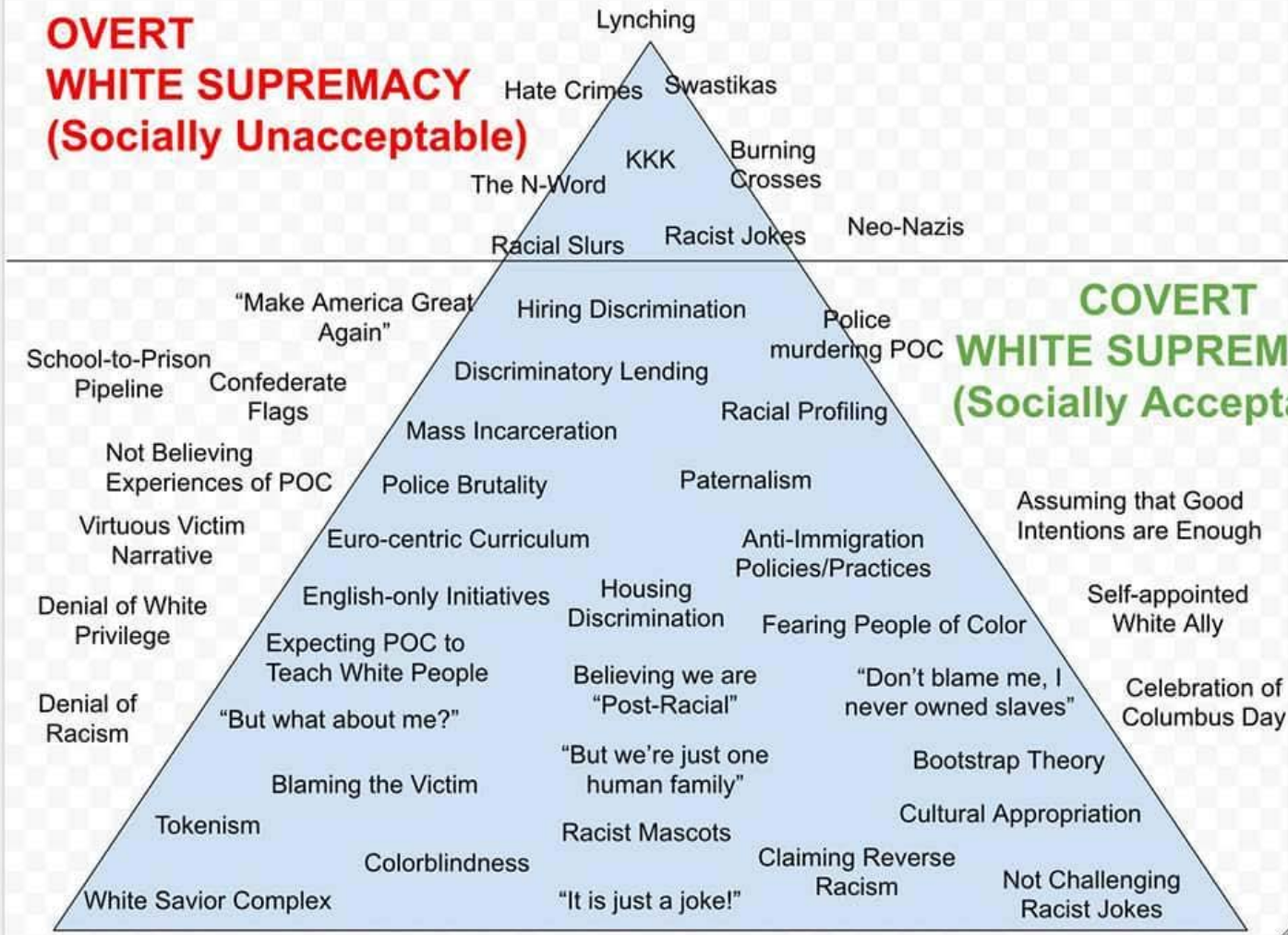
1. Collect, support, lift up Black history narratives



2. Work to make archival spaces more inclusive



OVERT WHITE SUPREMACY (Socially Unacceptable)



Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

An Incomplete List of White Privileges in Archives and Action Items for Dismantling Them*

Content produced in Michelle Caswell's Archives, Race, and Memory class, Fall 2016, UIC. Poster design by Grace Brainerd

*All of the following call for nuance, context, and an awareness that oppression is structural.

Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

DESCRIPTION

PRIVILEGE

When I look for materials that are consistent on archives, they will be described in the finding aid and catalog records using language I can be describe accurately.

ACTION

- Train all archivists to have cultural humility and describe materials using self appropriate language.
- Educate yourself continually and consistently.
- Write more archives of color to describe materials.
- Write more archives of color to describe materials. Compensate them for their labor.

PRIVILEGE

When I look at descriptions of archival materials, I am not always bemused by reminders of my otherness.

ACTION

- Hire more archivists of color to describe materials.
- Update finding aids that are riddled with supremacist language. Keep a note of your change so that more archivists will be reminded of the finding aid as an artifact.
- Engage communities to ask how they wish to describe themselves. Compensate them for their labor.

PRIVILEGE

Materials are described using my native language.

ACTION

- Hire multilingual people as archivists and translators and translate finding aids to appropriate languages.
- Encourage, value, and pay credit for bilingual/multilingual skills in job descriptions containing education.

APPRAISAL

PRIVILEGE

I can be sure I can find materials representing people of my race/ created by people of my race.

ACTION

- Implement policies to collect materials representing and created by people of color. Note that a will take time to build trust and change racist narratives.
- Contact archivists of your local repository and ask them how you want to see collections created by people of color.
- Institute participatory appraisal models that share appraisal decision-making power with communities of color.

PRIVILEGE

The objects I find are valuable for my culture are also deemed valuable in archives.

ACTION

- Expand our cultural values to include materials created by communities of color.
- Educate ourselves (and especially ourselves) about what objects, communities of color value. Don't expect communities of color to do the work for us.
- Work collaboratively with communities of color to model participatory appraisal decisions. Compensate them for their labor.

PRIVILEGE

I can assume archives will be committed to the preservation of materials from my community.

ACTION

- Educate yourself about what specific communities of color value.
- Demonstrate commitment to those communities through relationship building and power sharing over time.
- Learn and honor culturally specific protocols for what should be preserved or destroyed.
- Train and hire archivists of color so they are making appraisal decisions.

Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

ACCESS/USE

PRIVILEGE

I can use an archives without eliciting surveillance.

ACTION

- Fight the hell to maintain the privacy of users.
- Do not collect data that identifies people to law enforcement.
- Do not require users to show an ID to use archives.
- Do not treat users as thieves.

PRIVILEGE

When I go to the archives, I can be relatively sure that I will find something of my race behind the reference desk.

ACTION

- Hire more archivists of color.
- Recruit more undergraduate students of color into MLIS programs to train to be archivists.
- Provide financial and moral support for MLIS students of color so that they complete their program.

PRIVILEGE

When I go into an archive, no one questions why I am there.

ACTION

- Train staff at all levels to identify and disrupt white supremacist messaging.
- Encourage a mentoring environment for people of color in the reading room. Consider the needs of people of color so that they complete their program.

Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

PROFESSIONAL LIFE

PRIVILEGE

People assume I'm satisfied because of my race.

ACTION

- The center relationship in archival practice. Name it. Uncover it. Discuss it. Address it.
- Intervene when you see a behavior perpetuated at a neutral default or unexamined.
- Make your anti-racist values known and hold institutions accountable for the white supremacist values they perpetuate.
- Stay perpetuating the myth of archival neutrality.

PRIVILEGE

People assume I behave "professionally" because of my race.

ACTION

- Question assumptions about professionalism. Think critically about when those assumptions stand white supremacist values.
- Interrupt colleagues and users when they use racist things.
- Practice a phrase to have in your back pocket (such as "that's racist") or "would you see that about a white person?" to disrupt racist comments.

PRIVILEGE

I can be sure funders will see the value of my collections rather than designate them as "niche."

ACTION

- Communicate to funding agencies and officials that their funding priorities often favor whiteness at the expense of people of color.
- Disrupt white supremacist thinking when you serve as review panels and making budgetary decisions.
- Disrupt the whiteness of supposedly "universal" projects that do get funding. Name it. Discuss it. Address it.

Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

EDUCATION

PRIVILEGE

I can be sure that archival practices and concepts from my culture will be represented in my education.

ACTION

- Prioritize and disseminate archival education.
- Create rubrics that reflect authors and communities of color.
- Don't just single out archives of color. Amplify their voices.
- Hold your professors accountable for disrupting white supremacy in the classroom.

PRIVILEGE

I can assume that when I attend an archival outreach or classroom instruction session, materials created by my community will be represented.

ACTION

- Use materials created by communities of color in their archival outreach activities.
- Create assignments based on those materials.
- Disrupt whiteness as a default or "neutral" category.
- Don't assume users are not capable of understanding nuance and complexity about race. Address white supremacy in your instruction sessions.

PRIVILEGE

I can be sure there will be other students of my race in my classes. I can be sure there will be instructors of my race.

ACTION

- Recruit more undergraduate students of color into MLIS programs to train to be archivists.
- Encourage students of color to pursue PhDs and become archival studies faculty.
- Provide financial and moral support for MLIS & PhD students of color so that they complete their program.
- Hire archival studies faculty of color.

<https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/692299>

Identifying & Dismantling White Supremacy in Archives

DESCRIPTION

PRIVILEGE

When I look for materials from my community in archives, they will be described in the finding aid and catalog records using language we use to describe ourselves.



ACTION

- ▶ Train all archivists to have cultural humility and describe materials using anti-oppressive language.
- ▶ Educate yourself continually and constantly.
- ▶ Hire more archivists of color to describe materials.
- ▶ Engage communities to ask how they wish to describe themselves. Compensate them for their labor.

PRIVILEGE

When I look at descriptions of archival materials, I am not always bombarded by/reminded of my otherness.



ACTION

- ▶ Hire more archivists of color to describe materials.
- ▶ Update finding aids that use outdated white supremacist language. Keep a note of your changes so that users can examine the history of the finding aid as an artifact.
- ▶ Engage communities to ask how they wish to describe themselves. Compensate them for their labor.

PRIVILEGE

Materials are described using my native language.



ACTION

- ▶ Hire multilingual people as archivists and translators and translate finding aids into appropriate languages.
- ▶ Encourage, value, and give credit for language courses in MLIS programs and as continuing education.

3. Education and advocacy around police records



"Mayor Rizzo reviews first graduates of new mounted unit," 1972-04-28 (P461120B). Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, SCRC 170, Temple University



Promoting the value and diversity of archives and archivists.

Join/Renew

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<https://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa>

HOME



Issue Brief: Police Mobile Camera Footage as a Public Record

SAA Position

Footage from police mobile cameras, including body-worn cameras, dash-cams, and unmanned aerial vehicles, is a public record with informational and evidentiary value. Footage produced by police-operated cameras should be handled according to local, state, or federal records retention policies; managed in systems that ensure their authenticity; and made available to the public according to government records transparency and privacy laws. Records retention policies for law enforcement agencies should explicitly address camera footage in alignment with these principles.

This issue has taken on particular salience in recent years as a growing number of law enforcement agencies implement mobile camera programs. This trend is due in part to calls from Black Lives Matter, the Movement For Black Lives, and other

What does A4BLiP do?



Out reach



Publicizing Statement and A4BLiP



Concerned Archivists @Concerned_Arch · May 1

Hi all! [#ArchivesforBlackLives](#) in Philly is taking over this week. For more info about us read our statement



rappel110/A4BLiP

A4BLiP - Archives for Black Lives in Philly was inspired by Jarrett Drake, Digital Archivist at Princeton University, and his work to end archives' erasure of Black lives. The [github.com](#)



Publicizing Statement and A4BLiP



Concerned Archivist
Hi all! #Archivesf
about us read ou



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Home

Schedule

Speakers

Sponsors

General Info

Conduct & Safety

Programmatic approaches to bias in descriptive metadata

"Cleaning" descriptive metadata is a frequent task in digital library work, often enabled by scripting or OpenRefine. But what about when the issue at hand isn't an odd schema, trailing whitespace, or inconsistent capitalization; but pervasive racial or gender bias in the descriptive language? Currently, the work of seeking to remediate the latter tends to be highly manual and reliant on individual judgment and prioritization, despite their systemic nature.

This talk will explore what using programming to identify and address such biases might look like, and argue that seriously considering such an approach is essential to equitably publishing digital collections on a large scale. I'll discuss precedents and challenges for such work, and share two small experiments to this end in Python: one aided by Wikidata to replace LCSH terms for indigenous people in the U.S. with more currently preferred terminology, and another using natural language processing to identify where women are named as Mrs. [Husband's First Name] [Husband's Last Name].

Speaker(s)



Noah Geraci

February
20th

10:15 AM

15 minutes

Publicizing Statement and A4BLiP



Concerned Arch
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about us read ou



code{4}lib

Home Schedule Speakers Sponsors General Info Conduct & Safety

Programmatic approaches to bias in descriptive metadata

February 20th

"Cleaning" descriptive metadata is a frequent task in digital library work, often enabled by scripting or OpenRefine. But what about when the issue at hand isn't an odd schema, trailing whitespace, or inconsistent capitalization; but pervasive racial bias in the metadata language? Currently, the work of seeking to remediate the latter is often left up to the user, reliant on individual judgment and prioritization, despite their best intentions.

This talk will explore what using programming to identify and remediate bias in metadata and argue that seriously considering such an approach is essential for digital libraries of collections on a large scale. I'll discuss precedents and challenges, and share some small experiments to this end in Python: one aided by Wikidata, another for identifying indigenous people in the U.S. with more currently preferred terminology, and another using natural language processing to identify where women are named in metadata. [Husband's Last Name].

Speaker(s)



Noah Geraci

RARE BOOK SCHOOL

COURSES ADMISSIONS & AWARDS

Course Schedule Course Descriptions Advance Reading Lists Certificate Program

HOME > COURSES > COMMUNITY ARCHIVES AND DIGITAL CULTURAL MEMORY

L-115. Community Archives and Digital Cultural Memory

Bethany Nowwiskie

Jazz saxophonist Shabaka Hutchings on Afrofuturism: "I've always been fascinated with the word. I think I first heard about it from John Akomfrah's documentary "The Last Angel of History." I watched it and I thought, "What does it mean to me?" I went to a lecture by Kodwo Eshun ... and he was talking about Afrofuturism as being a way of poeticising the past. That you recontextualise it and mould it in a way that gives you a power over history. I like that sentiment. It's essentially this Sun Ra philosophy that I'm really into: *the fact that communities that have agency are able to form their own philosophical structures.*"

About Group

Group name Archives for Black Lives in Philly

Description

Group email a4blinphilly@googlegroups.com
[Contact owner and manager](#)

Group feeds

15 new messages at a time
50 new messages at a time

 [RSS](#)

 [Atom](#)

 [RSS](#)

 [Atom](#)

15 new topics at a time
50 new topics at a time

 [RSS](#)

 [Atom](#)

 [RSS](#)

 [Atom](#)

Members

65

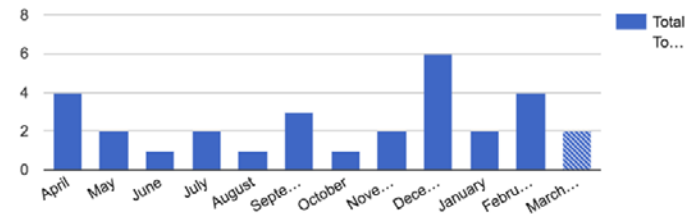
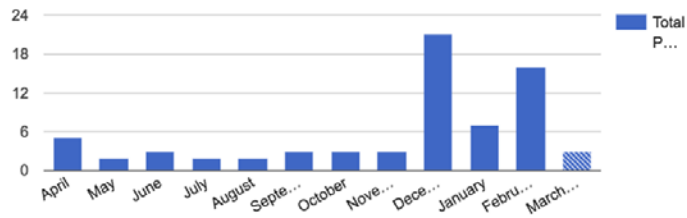
Language

English

Access

Only members can view content.
Anyone can apply to join.
Only members can post.
Only members can view the list of members.

Statistics



Archives For Black Lives

Archivists responding to Black Lives Matter

ABOUT A4BLiP

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

BLOG

RESOURCES



About A4BLiP

Archives For Black Lives in Philadelphia (A4BLiP) is a loose association of archivists, librarians, and allied professionals in the area responding to the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement. The group was inspired by [Jarrett Drake](#), formerly Digital Archivist at Princeton University, and his work to end archives' erasure of Black lives.



Working Groups

Community Archives



Processing the Rasheedah Phillips papers, March 2018

Racism Audit

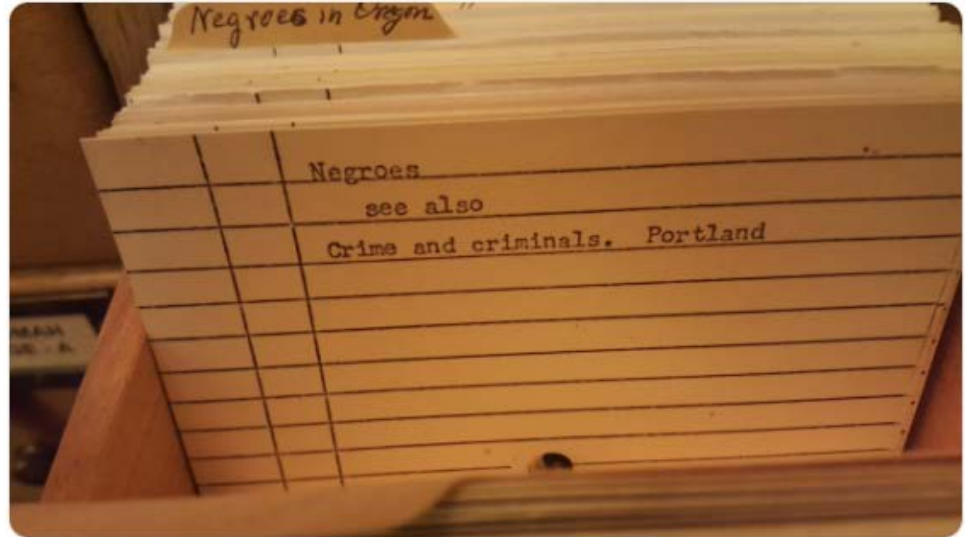


Heather Pitts 
@HLPitts

Following



Cataloging is not neutral.



6:09 PM - 28 Jul 2017

1,253 Retweets 2,064 Likes



 42

 1.3K

 2.1K



me and white
supremacy
workbook

layla f. saad

Reading Group



What is a Racism Audit?





- Annotated Bibliography
- Guidelines for auditing description



- Why?
- How?
- Who?



R₁ E₁ S₁ U₁ L₁ T₁ S₁

A₁

H₄

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E₁

Z₁₀

S₁

P₃

E₁

Q₁

W₁

P₃

R₁

R₁



What's
Next?



Discussion





Issues and Challenges

- Volunteer engagement
- POC representation
- Ethics of volunteering
professional labor

Thanks!

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Faith Charlton faithc@princeton.edu, @archivalsliver

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