

History Continues.
Be a Part of It.

Celebrate with the Winston-Salem African American Archive

African American contributions have left an indelible mark on every facet of society, shaping culture, innovation, and progress. From the realms of civil rights to arts, sciences, and beyond, their impact resonates globally. Through resilience and creativity, African Americans have enriched humanity's tapestry, fostering diversity and inclusivity. Recognizing their contributions is not just a testament to their achievements but also a crucial step towards acknowledging and honoring their historical significance. In embracing and celebrating African American contributions, we embrace the essence of equality, justice, and unity, fostering a brighter and more inclusive future for all.

African Americans made significant contributions to the development of Winston-Salem, NC, from the 1800s to the mid-20th century, particularly in the following areas: *Tobacco Industry, Education, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Religious Institutions.*

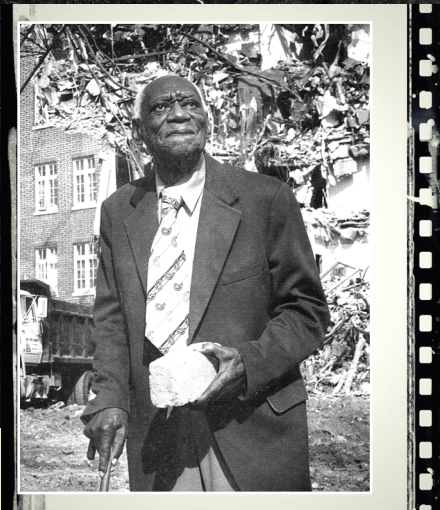
The collaboration between WSAAA and UNCSCA's Media + Emerging Technology Lab (METL) has resulted in a short documentary film and immersive experiences to share and celebrate this important history.

Hosted By:

METL
MEDIA +
EMERGING
TECHNOLOGY
LAB



Winston-Salem
African American
Archive



About

Winston-Salem African American Archive

Although the Winston-Salem African American Archive was officially incorporated in 2015, it has been acting as a community resource for many decades, preserving and documenting the vibrant Black history in Winston-Salem.

The force behind WSAAA - Billy Rich, President, and Lester Davis, Board Member and Archivist - have proven to be a formidable team ensuring the documents, photographs, and artifacts entrusted to them have been protected and preserved despite not having a permanent home for the Archive. Now with a permanent location in MUSEws (Museum of Understanding, Storytelling and Engagement), WSAAA is part of a significant renovation of the museum, which is slated to re-open in Fall 2025.

You can be a part of preserving this rich history by contributing your own stories, your time in organizing materials, and, if possible, funds to support the Archive's investment in preserving its materials for future generations.

George Black (1879-1980)

Laying the Foundation for Winston-Salem

Rising from the son of a former slave to international recognition for the craftsmanship of his handmade bricks, George Black helped to shape the architectural landscape of Winston-Salem. His work is in the homes, banks churches, and hospitals of this city. R.J. Reynolds reportedly commissioned one million bricks from him to build his tobacco empire. Mr. Black was honored by the President of the United States for his enduring legacy.

The Team

Billy Rich
WSAAA President

Lester Davis
WSAAA Archivist and Board Member

**Bridging the Gap:
Past, Present and Future**
WSAAA Immersive Event

Hilda Willis
Curator & Lead Artist

We Are, Because We Were
Short Documentary Film

Rodney Wilds
Director

Joshua Robinson
UNCSA Student Producer

Ben Wanko
UNCSA Student Cinematographer

Gavin Smith
UNCSA Student Editor

Jason Leeper
UNCSA Student Sound Mixer

Alexia Forsythe
UNCSA Associate Student Producer

Deborah LaVine
Dean of UNCSA School of Filmmaking

Robert Keen
METL Creative Director

Stacy Payne
METL Producing Director

Friday, May 10

We Are, Because We Were
Short Documentary Film

Screening, Q&A + Reception
5 - 6:30 p.m. and 6:30 - 8p.m.

**S O U
A R T S
H**

Funded in part by South Arts in partnership with the
National Endowment for the Arts and NC Arts Council

Sat, May 11

**Bridging the Gap:
Past, Present & Future**
Immersive Tech Experiences

5 - 8 p.m. Runs Continuously
Documentary Screening @ 6 p.m. & 7 p.m.

**NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**
arts.gov

Funded in part by the National Endowment for the Arts

WSAAA MISSION

To educate and preserve the contributions of culture, the entrepreneurial innovative spirit and economic impact African Americans have added to the prosperity of Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, WSAAA has provided presentations in schools, city-wide festivals and expositions, as well as private and public organizations. Its information has also been used in print with other historical preservations

METL MISSION

UNCSA School of Filmmaking launched METL in 2017 as a training ground for the innovative creators of tomorrow. Using the power of advanced technologies, METL is an incubator for immersive storytelling of all kinds

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our collective great thanks to the following people for their support of these projects:

Chenita Johnson WSAAA Vice President

Linda Dark WSAAA Community Engagement

Mike Wakeford MUSEws

Hilda Willis Voiceover Artist

Paul Johnson Voiceover Artist

Chad Cheek Elephant In The Room

Owens Daniels Photography

Michael C. Lewis Recording Artist

PBS North Carolina

Many thanks to our funders whose support allowed us to accomplish this work as well as forge a meaningful community partnership. More to come.



Rodney Wilds

Rodney Wilds is a filmmaker from Greensboro, NC with a Master of Fine Arts in Documentary Filmmaking from Wake Forest University. He attended North Carolina State University, where he graduated summa cum laude with a degree in History. While in Raleigh, he also minored in film studies, which is where he found his love for film. Rodney has worked as a filmmaker and editor on numerous projects that have added to his acumen as a filmmaker, including his film *Unique Past, Bright Future*. Rodney strives to tell compelling stories while also continuing to adopt new filmic strategies that will aid his endeavors in the future.



Joshua Robinson

A veteran producer says this about Joshua, "[he's] a hardworking, creative, and collaborative producer who likes to mix it up in terms of the types of project he takes on. The growth I've seen in Joshua is pretty inspiring. I'll probably be working for Mr. Robinson someday." Joshua Robinson is a storyteller, film producer, & director. Born in Durham, NC, raised in Columbia, SC, & graduating with a BFA in Film Producing at the UNC School of the Arts in Winston-Salem, NC. He's produced short films, directed music videos, is producing an animated short film, & is in the process of taking his documentary short *We are, because we were* to festivals.



Ben Wanko

Benjamin is a senior at The University of North Carolina School of the Arts, who is soon to receive his BFA in filmmaking. Concentrating in cinematography, he has spent the last years devoted to his work both in the classroom and on set. Focusing primarily on crewing in the department, he aims to move to New York to start his career. Falling in love with film at an early age, he carries his passion for the art with him to the industry.



Gavin
Holmes

My name is Gavin Holmes Smith and I am the editor for the short documentary We Are Because We Were. I come from Madison, Alabama and enrolled at UNCSCA in 2020 where I have studied filmmaking, focusing primarily on picture editing and sound design. Throughout my time at UNCSCA, I've been part of a variety of projects ranging from narrative shorts to documentaries. History has always been a great interest for me, so when I was presented with the opportunity to edit this documentary for the African American Archives, I was eager to get to work. This has been one of my favorite projects I've worked on, with this being creatively fulfilling as well as educational.



Jason
Leeper

My name is Jason Leeper and I am from Atlanta, Georgia. Ever since Elementary school, I have had a tremendous passion for entertaining others. My love for cinema and filmmaking became clear to me once I entered high school, in which I discovered several life-changing filmmakers that inspire and influence me to this day. I have made it my life's objective to make films that have a significant impact on those who watch them and to showcase highly original and ambitious ideas that enthrall the audience.



Alexia Forsythe

Alexia Forsythe is a filmmaker from rural Pennsylvania whose strong sense of curiosity has propelled her into nonfiction storytelling about real world issues. Driven to uncover every side to a story, she designs her projects to give a voice to the unheard so that her audience becomes inspired make a change in their lives and those around them.

Alexia focuses on micro-level stories within the lens of macro-level issues to engender empathy and unite people from many different backgrounds behind the same message.