



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

NETWORKING  
BLACK  
PRINT

REIMAGINING BLACK  
BIBLIOGRAPHY

THURSDAY, APRIL 9 – FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

ALEXANDER LIBRARY, RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

*This signature 2-day conference is proudly sponsored by:*



Yale UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Yale FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



# WELCOME LETTER

Dear Conference Participants—

We are honored and delighted to welcome you to **“Networking Black Print: Reimagining Black Bibliography.”**

Bibliographic Study has long been an invigorating field of scholarship, but in the past five years it has become a thriving site of breakthrough initiatives and collaborations among scholars, librarians, curators, artists, and digital humanists. We’ve convened this gathering as a chance to lift up and reflect on work that is re-shaping the practices of Black Bibliography—including the database our project has been building for the past 8 years.

In this program you’ll find a guide to the exciting panels we’ve organized: on the practices and politics of preserving Black print; the movement and uses of Black books; and the recent innovations in Black Bibliography via Black Digital Humanities and Black Literary Studies. The Black Bibliography Core Team and Graduate Fellows will deliver a variety of presentations, including an introduction to our database and a series of “lightning talks” spotlighting what users will find there. You’ll also have the chance to roll up your sleeves and do hands-on “ink work”: we’ve scheduled letterpress printing workshops across both days, and we’re particularly eager for the feedback you can provide by beta-testing the BBP’s digital interface (please note: these workshops required advance registration).

One of the most gratifying experiences we’ve had directing the Black Bibliography Project has involved making new colleagues across so many fields beyond our own as literary critics and book historians. Collaborating with librarians, curators, and cataloguers; booksellers, book dealers, and book collectors; visual artists and software engineers; and the directors of libraries and program officers at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has been transformative not only for the BBP team’s intellectual growth. These people-powered networks enriched the design of the BBP’s database in decisive, long-lasting ways. We could not have built the database without the support and creativity of these colleagues and communities.

We hope that in the next two days you experience the rich vibrancy of those connections, too, since our panelists—and you!—come from those communities as well. Thank you for making the time and journey to New Brunswick. We look forward to “reimagining Black Bibliography” with you.

With appreciation,

Jacqueline Goldsby & Meredith L. McGill, Co-Directors of The Black Bibliography Project

# PROGRAM

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026**

*Archibald S. Alexander Library, Rutgers University-New Brunswick*

- 8:15 AM Coffee, and light breakfast -  
Teleconference Lecture Hall Lobby (4th floor)
- 9:00 AM Registration
- 9:30 - 9:45 AM Welcome
- 9:45 - 11:15 AM **Introducing the BBP database -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall
- Black Bibliography Project Core Team:  
[Jacqueline Goldsby](#) (Yale), [Meredith McGill](#) (Rutgers), [Amanda Awanjo](#) (Yale),  
[Mara Caelin](#) (Yale), and [Tajah Ebram](#) (Rutgers)
- 11:30 AM - 12:45 PM **The Preservation of Black Print -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall
- Librarians and curators discuss on-the-ground challenges faced by those who create and maintain Black print collections in this cultural and political moment. What pressures or concerns surface with regard to acquisitions, preservation, access, and description? What insights have new trends in stewardship, as well as new technologies (including, but not limited to linked data), yielded to keep Black print collections available and usable for researchers and readers?



11:30 AM - 12:45 PM  
(CONT.)

**The Preservation of Black Print -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Raquel Flores-Clemons (Chicago Public Library, Vivian G. Harsh Collection);  
Jennifer Garcon (Princeton University Library);  
Christina Vortia (formerly Howard University, Moorland-Spingarn Collection)

Moderator: Mara Caelin

1:00 - 1:45 PM

Lunch - Teleconference Lecture Hall  
Lobby (4th floor)

1:45 - 3:00 PM

**Concurrent hands-on sessions** - various locations

- (1) Beta testing of the BBP Database - Alexander Library, IHL Classrooms 413 and 415
- (2) Letterpress workshop - Murray Hall, Room 303
- (3) Open Conversation on Sustainability - Alexander Library, Pane Room 157

3:00 PM

Coffee Break - Teleconference Lecture Hall Lobby (4th floor)

3:15 - 4:00 PM

**Lightning talks (4 x 5 minutes each)** - Teleconference Lecture Hall

Black Bibliography Project Fellows present quick five minute talks that highlight their research interests, bibliographic finds while doing data entry, and other fieldnotes from their work with the Black Bibliography Project.



3:15 - 4:00 PM  
(CONT.)

**Lightning talks (4 x 5 minutes each) -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Black Bibliography Project Fellows:  
Arabella Katz (Yale), Brittany Marshall  
(Rutgers), Sydney Smith (Rutgers), and  
Christopher Valentine (Yale)  
Moderator: Meredith McGill

4:15 - 5:15 PM

**Black Books and Visual Culture -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Artists working in the Book arts discuss  
their work in the context of the history of  
Black book design.

Jaamal Benjamin (Yale) and Sam Vernon  
(Pratt)

Moderators: Kristen J. Owens (New York  
University) and Amanda Awanjo (Yale)

5:30 - 6:30 PM

**Plenary Conversation #1: The Future of  
Black Print Collections -** Teleconference  
Lecture Hall

Directors and Curators of major Black  
archival collections discuss the past,  
present, and possible futures for Black  
print materials' institutional formations.  
What histories of risk and threat have  
Black print collections faced, and what  
lessons do those pasts have to teach us  
now? What might Black Print Collections  
look like in 50 years' time, in terms of  
their content and scope, their access and  
use, their sustainability and impact?



5:30 - 6:30 PM  
CONT.

**Plenary Conversation #1: The Future of  
Black Print Collections** - Teleconference  
Lecture Hall

Welcome, Dr. Consuella Askew, Vice  
President for University Libraries and  
University Librarian, Rutgers University

Melissa Barton (Beinecke Library, Yale);  
Kathe Hambrick (Amistad Collection); Joy  
L. Bivins (Schomburg Research Center,  
New York Public Library); Carla Hayden  
(Senior Fellow, Mellon Foundation and  
Former Librarian of Congress)

Moderators: Jacqueline Goldsby (Yale)  
and Meredith McGill (Rutgers)



## FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 2026

*Archibald S. Alexander Library, Rutgers University-New Brunswick*

8:00 AM

Coffee, and light breakfast -  
Teleconference Lecture Hall Lobby (4th  
floor)

9:00 - 10:15 AM

**Concurrent hands-on sessions** - various  
locations

- (1) Beta testing of the BBP Database -  
Alexander Library, IHL Classrooms 413  
and 415
- (2) Letterpress workshop - Murray Hall,  
Room 303
- (3) Open Conversation on Linked Data -  
Alexander Library, Pane Room 157

10:30 - 11:45 AM

**Black Digital Humanities** -  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Leading scholars in Black Digital Humanities will take the pulse of the field and reflect on its relationship to the Black Bibliographic tradition. What insights into Black texts have digital approaches provided? What challenges and opportunities lie ahead? What would it take to build digital projects and infrastructures that endure?



10:30 - 11:45 AM  
CONT.

**Black Digital Humanities -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Marisa Parham (University of Maryland),  
Richard Jean So (Duke University), and  
Kenton Rambsy (Howard University)  
Moderator: Tajah Ebram

12:00 - 1:15 PM

Lunch - Teleconference Lecture Hall  
Lobby (4th floor)

1:30 - 2:45 PM

**Reimagining Scholarship with the BBP  
Database -** Teleconference Lecture Hall

Black Bibliography Project Graduate  
Student Fellows present original research  
that has been shaped by their work with  
the project. Their papers draw on Black  
Book History, bibliographic criticism, and  
the Black Bibliography Project database  
and its textual corpora.

Asya Taylor (Yale), Mitchell Edwards  
(Rutgers), Kristine Guillaume (Yale),  
Jorden Sanders (Rutgers)  
Moderator: Ruthie Block (Yale)

2:45 PM

Coffee Break - Teleconference Lecture  
Hall Lobby (4th floor)



3:00 - 4:15 PM

**The Movement of Black Books -**  
Teleconference Lecture Hall

Field-shaping rare book collectors, booksellers, and rare book and manuscript dealers reflect on the pathways they follow to bring Black print into public and private sites for readers to use. What inspired them to take up their role in setting Black-authored and Black-published texts in motion for reading and collecting publics? What key innovations in their practices have shaped public and private access to Black print materials? What affordances—and limitations—has the recent boom in rare Black book selling and collecting generated for the movement of Black print? Between born-digital Black writing, on the one hand, and the rapid advent of AI, on the other, what possible futures lie ahead for the movement of Black-authored, Black-published print?

Walter O. Evans (private collector), Katie Mitchell (bookstore owner and author of *Prose to the People*), Rebecca Romney (author, co-owner, and rare book dealer, Type Punch Matrix)

Moderator: Laura Helton (University of Delaware)



4:30 - 5:45 PM

**Plenary Conversation #2: Black Bibliography and the Practice of Black Studies** - Teleconference Lecture Hall

Leading scholars in Black Book History address and forecast how bibliographic criticism—its past practices and current innovations, its “mainstream” and “Black” modes—promises to influence the field of African American and Black Diaspora literary studies.

Elizabeth McHenry (New York University), Kinohi Nishikawa (Princeton), Howard Rambsy, II (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville), Derrick Spires (University of Delaware)

Moderators: Jacqueline Goldsby (Yale) and Meredith McGill (Rutgers)

5:45 PM

Closing Reception - Teleconference Lecture Hall Lobby (4th floor)

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Melissa Barton** is Curator of Drama and Prose for the Yale Collection of American Literature, which includes the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection of African American Arts and Letters, at Beinecke Library, part of the Yale Library. At Beinecke, Melissa has curated exhibits including “Gather Out of Star-Dust: The Harlem Renaissance and The Beinecke Library” (2017), “Frederick Douglass: Family and Legacy” (2024), and “Beauty Unadorned: Fire!! and the Harlem Renaissance,” opening in fall 2026. Her catalog *Gather Out of Star-Dust: A Harlem Renaissance Album* was co-published by Beinecke and Yale University Press, and her scholarship has appeared in *American Literary History* and *TDR*, with book reviews in *PBSA* and performance reviews in *Theatre Journal*. Melissa served as Beinecke Library’s liaison to the Black Bibliography Project from 2017-2019. Her own research focuses on histories of Black theater and performance and on Black writers in archives, as well as the peculiarly abundant concepts and practices adhering to the word “archive.”

**Jaamal Benjamin** is founder and designer at Studio Grand. Formerly a dancer in Hip-Hop dance theatre, his interests as a designer, artist and educator center on crafting parallels between the Black experience, mark-making, social change, movement, and music. He received an MFA in Graphic Design from the Yale School of Art in New Haven, Connecticut. Jaamal previously completed his studies in type design through the Type@Cooper Extended Program. He has also served as a Teaching Assistant in the Principles of Typeface Design and Principles of Display Typeface workshops at The Cooper Union in New York City, where he has supported both students and professionals. He has also taught graphic design at the Cooper Union Summer Arts Intensive program and served as a visiting professor at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Joy L. Bivins** has served as Director of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture since June 2021, leading the institution into its 100th anniversary year. A division of The New York Public Library, the Schomburg Center is the world's premier archive devoted to the global Black experience. Bivins first joined the Center in 2020 as Associate Director of Collections and Research Services, bringing nearly two decades of leadership in museums and cultural institutions. She previously served as Chief Curator at the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, and as Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Chicago History Museum. A proud native of Chicago's South Side, Bivins is a graduate of the University of Michigan and Cornell University.



**Mitchell Edwards** is a PhD candidate in English at Rutgers University. His research considers the social and political uses of literature in twentieth-century America. He is at work on a dissertation about post-1945 movement literatures, from the Beats to Toni Morrison's circle. The project reconstructs the collaborative literary culture sustained by these movements, bringing bibliographical and archival methods to bear on their print networks and infrastructures.

**Walter O Evans, MD** (1943-) is a philanthropist, collector, and surgeon. Born in Savannah, Georgia, Dr. Evans served in the United States Navy and attended Howard University, Meharry Medical School, and University of Michigan. He completed his surgical internship and general surgery residency at Wayne State University. He retired in 2001 but continues to provide pro-bono medical services to underserved regions in South America. Dr. Evans has spent over forty years collecting materials—including artwork, manuscripts, books, and artifacts—related to the African American experience.



# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Raquel Flores-Clemons** is Head of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection at the Woodson Regional Branch of the Chicago Public Library. In this role, she also serves as Vice-Chairperson for the Black Metropolis Research Consortium (BMRC). An advocate for equity and access, Raquel maintains a deep commitment to capturing historical narratives of communities of color and engages Hip Hop as a method of archival praxis. Raquel is passionate about connecting community members and organizers to valuable primary resources and is intentional in ensuring that historical gaps are filled by documenting and amplifying the often underrepresented historical narratives and contributions of BIPOC communities to better support efforts to create a more equitable society. Raquel received her Master of Library and Information Science with Special Collections certification from the iSchool at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She also has studied at Howard University and received her Bachelor's in Liberal Arts and Sciences from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

**Jennifer Garcon, Ph.D.** is the Librarian for Modern and Contemporary Special Collections at Princeton University, where she is responsible for the collection, curation, and care of twentieth- and twenty-first-century rare books, manuscripts, and born-digital collections. She is also a steering member of Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia, an activist-archivist group working with BIPOC communities and organizations in the Mid-Atlantic to save, document, and preserve their historical archives and records. Garcon is a Cold War historian, specializing in grassroots social movements in Latin America and the Caribbean and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Miami.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Kristine Guillaume** is a PhD candidate in Black Studies and English at Yale University. Her dissertation, *Below the Fold: Black Print Culture and the Carceral State*, studies Black literary production in prisons during the Black Arts Movement. She is a recipient of the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship (2024) and a Rhodes Scholar (2020). Kristine has been a Black Bibliography Project fellow for three years. She also teaches with the Yale Prison Education Initiative and serves as a graduate administrator for the Black Feminist Collective at Yale. Kristine Guillaume is the daughter of Haitian and Chinese immigrants. She was raised in Queens, New York City where her parents instilled in her the values of education and engaging meaningfully with communities near and far. Growing up, Kristine developed a passion for storytelling—particularly the stories of marginalized people in society—that has motivated her paths in the fields of academia and journalism.



**Kathe Hambrick**, a native of Louisiana, brings with her over 30 years of experience in both the private sector in Los Angeles and the non-profit sector in Louisiana. She currently serves as the Executive Director of the Amistad Research Center.

In April of 2021, she founded a consultant agency, 2PRESERVE LLC. In addition to exhibit design, she provides guidance in program development, museum governance, and interpretative planning. The preservation of historic buildings and slavery era burial grounds is her passion. Hambrick is considered an expert on sugar plantation history in Louisiana and has been interviewed by local, national, and international media. She is experienced in community relations and is a liaison to corporations, museums, governmental agencies, community leaders, and faith-based organizations.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Carla Hayden** is a Senior Fellow at the Mellon Foundation. She is pursuing scholarship, writing, and research projects while also serving as a strategic partner and counsel, working in collaboration with Foundation leadership and staff, advising on opportunities to support and advance libraries, archives, and other organizations in the public knowledge ecosystem.

Carla Hayden was also sworn in as the 14th Librarian of Congress on September 14, 2016. Dr. Hayden, the first woman and the first African American to lead the national library, was nominated to the position by President Barack Obama on February 24, 2016, and her nomination was confirmed by the U.S. Senate later that year on July 13. Her vision for America's national library, connecting all Americans to the Library of Congress, redefined and modernized the Library's mission: to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

During her tenure, Dr. Hayden prioritized efforts to make the Library and its unparalleled collections more accessible to the public. Through her social media presence, events and activities, she introduced new audiences to many of the Library's treasures – from Frederick Douglass' papers, to the contents of President Abraham Lincoln's pockets on the night of his assassination, to James Madison's crystal flute made famous by *Lizzo*. By investing in information technology infrastructure and digitization efforts, she enabled the American people to explore, discover and engage with more with this treasure trove of America's stories maintained by the Library of Congress, even if they never visit the Library's buildings in and around Washington, D.C.

With the support of a \$15 million grant from Mellon Foundation, in 2021, Dr. Hayden launched the Of the People initiative, which created new opportunities for more Americans, especially Black, Indigenous, Hispanic or Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander and other communities of color underrepresented in the Library's collections, to engage with the Library and add their perspectives to the Library's collections. The initiative had three programs that invest in community-based documentarians; fund paid internships and fellowships to engage the next generation of diverse librarians, archivists and knowledge workers; and invite underserved communities and institutions to create digital engagements with Library collections.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Prior to her service as Librarian, Dr. Hayden was the CEO of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in Baltimore, Maryland, since 1993. She was the deputy commissioner and chief librarian of the Chicago Public Library from 1991 to 1993, an assistant professor of library and information science at the University of Pittsburgh from 1987 to 1991 and library services coordinator for the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago from 1982 to 1987. She began her career with the Chicago Public Library as the young adult services coordinator from 1979 to 1982 and as a library associate and children's librarian from 1973 to 1979.

Dr. Hayden was president of the American Library Association from 2003 to 2004. In 1995, she was the first African American to receive Library Journal's Librarian of the Year Award in recognition of her outreach services at the Pratt Library, which included an after-school center for Baltimore teens offering homework assistance and college and career counseling. Hayden received a B.A. from Roosevelt University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago.

Among her numerous civic and professional memberships and awards, Dr. Hayden is an elected member of the American Philosophical Society and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Laura E. Helton** is an Associate Professor of English and History, and the Associate Director of the Center for Material Culture Studies, at the University of Delaware. She is author of the prizewinning *Scattered and Fugitive Things: How Black Collectors Created Archives and Remade History* (Columbia University Press, 2024) and co-editor of the forthcoming *Black Studies on 135th Street: The Founding and Future of the Schomburg Collection* (Yale University Press, April 2026). For the Schomburg Center's centennial celebration, she is guest curating the upcoming exhibition "To Uncover and Reveal to the World: Arturo Schomburg's Library."



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Arabella Katz** is a first-year Ph. D. student in the African American Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies departments at Yale University. Her research focuses on black feminist poetics as a particular form of liberatory praxis under the confines of racial and gender difference. Her B. A. thesis focused on the poetics of Phillis Wheatley-Peters and Zora Neale Hurston to explore the ways they subverted efforts by the literary world to silence and censor them through poetics and vernacular rhetoric. At Yale, Arabella hopes to expand her thinking about black women's poetics as a practice specific to the lives and letters of black women, focusing particularly on the Black Women's Literary Renaissance of the 1980s in the United States.

**Brittany Marshall** is a teacher and poet from Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She earned her B.A in English, Secondary Education at Louisiana State University in 2018 and her M. Ed in Curriculum and Instruction from Louisiana State University-Shreveport in 2021. As a doctoral student at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, her research interests include 20th- and 21st-century Black women's writing, with special attention to Black feminist theory, feminist print culture, and lesbian poetry. In her free time, she loves watercolor painting, zine-making, and is the 'fun auntie' to two nieces.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Katie Mitchell** is a storyteller and bookseller. Katie lives, works, and writes in Atlanta, Georgia. Her online and pop-up Black bookstore, Good Books, has been featured in The New York Times, NBC, NPR, PBS, and many other outlets. Katie is a Dorothy Porter Wesley fellow.

Her debut book, *Prose to the People: A Celebration of Black Bookstores* (Clarkson Potter, April 2025) is a stunning visual homage to Black bookstores, featuring a selection of shops around the country alongside essays that celebrate the history, community, activism, and culture these spaces embody.



**Kinohi Nishikawa** specializes in twentieth- and twenty-first-century African American literature, book history, and popular culture. At Princeton he teaches undergraduate courses on African American humor and African American literary history and graduate seminars on Black archive studies and Black aesthetic theory.

Nishikawa's first book, *Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground*, was published by the University of Chicago Press in 2018. Nishikawa is currently at work on a monograph titled "Black Paratext: Reading African American Literature by Design." Nishikawa has published widely on modern African American print culture, with a particular emphasis on newspapers, magazines, and independent presses.

Nishikawa is curator of the Black Independent Film series for the Princeton Garden Theatre and Renew Theaters' Deep Focus seminars. He is also advisor to the Sites of Memory exhibition of the Toni Morrison Papers at the Princeton University Library, which is lead curated by Professor Autumn Womack.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Kristen J. Owens** is an academic librarian and independent curator specializing in Black visual and material culture. Currently serving as the Librarian for African American and Black Diaspora Studies at NYU Libraries, Kristen has spent the last four years expanding her scholarly focus on Black fashion and art histories to include the study of Black bibliography. She approaches the field as an integral, community-oriented practice of establishing a historical record of Black creative production. Kristen holds an MA in Visual Culture: Costume Studies from New York University, an MS in Library and Information Science from Long Island University, and a BA in Fashion Studies from Montclair State University.

**Marisa Parham** is Professor of English and Digital Studies at the University of Maryland at College Park, where as P.I. she directs the African American Digital and Experimental Humanities initiative (AADHUM) and NarraSpace, an immersive storytelling lab focused on BIPoc experiences. Parham's current teaching and research projects focus on texts and technologies that problematize assumptions about time, space, and bodily materiality. She is particularly interested in how such terms share histories of increasing complexity in literary and cultural texts produced by African Americans, and how this connection enables experimental approaches to digital humanities, electronic narrative, and technology studies.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Kenton Rambsy** is an Associate Professor of African American literature at Howard University. At Howard, he is a core member of The Center of Applied Data Science and Analytics (CADSA), where he serves as the data storytelling and visualization specialist. His areas of research include 20th and 21st-century African American short fiction, Hip Hop, and book history. His ongoing Digital Humanities projects use datasets to illuminate the significance of recurring trends and thematic shifts as they relate to black writers and rappers. Kenton is the co-founder of The Literary Data Gallery, an online gallery that contains a variety of data-driven visualization projects about Black creative works, creative artists, and literary critics. His book, *The Geographies of African American Short Stories* (2022), illuminates an important, though often understudied, mode of literary art by interpreting writers' depictions of characters navigating distinct social and physical environments.



**Howard Rambsy II** is Distinguished Research Professor of Literature at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He specializes in African American literature, literary history, and comic books, and he is the author of *Bad Men: Creative Touchstones of Black Writers* (2020) and the forthcoming *Writing Black Panther: Ta-Nehisi Coates and Representation Struggles* (May 2026). He is the creator and lead producer for *Remarkable Receptions*, a podcast series focusing on responses to African American artistic productions.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Rebecca Romney** is the co-founder of Type Punch Matrix, a rare book company based in the DC metro area. She is the author of *Printer's Error: Irreverent Stories from Book History* (HarperCollins; with JP Romney), *The Romance Novel in English: A Survey in Rare Books, 1769-1999*; and *Jane Austen's Bookshelf* (Simon & Schuster). Rebecca's roles in the wider rare book community include co-founding the Honey & Wax Book Collecting Prize, serving on the Council of the Bibliographical Society of America and on the board of the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America (ABAA), and teaching as faculty at the Antiquarian Book Seminar (CABS-Minnesota). She is a member of the Grolier Club, the Association Internationale de Bibliophilie (AIB), and the American Antiquarian Society (AAS).

**Jorden E. Sanders** is a doctoral candidate in the Literatures in English program at Rutgers University and a research fellow with the Black Bibliography Project. Her work explores how attuning to the archive amplifies African Americans' theorizations of racialized being in the long nineteenth century. Her dissertation "Retuning the Wor(l)d: Blackness, Being, and the Acoustics of African American Literary Culture to 1905" examines the ways African American writers—from James Albert Gronniosaw to Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins—theorized the Black ear as the physical and figurative suture point for critiques of the world as it is and reimaginings of a just world to come. Her article "We Fervently Pray" was published in *Christianity and Literature*, and her essay "Lisen'[sic]" is forthcoming in *Early American Studies*.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Richard Jean So** is the Rhodes Chair in Digital Humanities and Associate Professor of English at Duke University. His work bridges the humanities and data science: using computational methods and AI to study culture, and he explores how cultural insight and critical theory can help shape more ethical and meaningful AI systems. His research appears in leading humanities journals such as PMLA and Critical Inquiry, as well as in scientific venues like ACL and PNAS. He also writes for broader audiences, with recent essays in The New York Times and The Atlantic.



**Sydney Smith** is a third-year doctoral student in the Department of History at Rutgers University-New Brunswick specializing in African American History and Women's and Gender History. Her current research explores the activism, entrepreneurship, and diasporic politics of Black bookstores during the twentieth century. Sydney is a Graduate Fellow for the Black Bibliography Project and serves as the Co-Convener for the Interpreting American History Lecture Series. She received her A.B. in Africana Studies and Political Science from Brown University.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Derrick R. Spires** is Associate Professor of English at the University of Delaware. He specializes in early Black print culture, citizenship studies, and African American intellectual history. His scholarship and teaching are invested in fleshing out as rich and full an account of earlier African American literature and Black aesthetic sensibilities as possible, from the tragicomic to the mundane. He committed to recovering the rich imaginative worlds African-descended people generated through print and how imagining enabled Black folk to make material change.

His first book, *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), won the Modern Language Association Prize for First Book and the St. Louis Mercantile Library Prize. The book traces how Black writers articulated an expansive, practice-based theory of citizenship through a robust print culture, including Black newspapers, the Colored Conventions movement, and other ephemera.

**Asya Taylor** is a PhD student in English and African American Studies at Yale University, where she is a Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration (RITM) Graduate Fellow and a Dean's Emerging Scholar at the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Asya's research focuses on the possibility of Black liberation within African American literature. Her honors thesis, "Echoes of Humanity: Black Aesthetics in Opportunity's 1925 Literary Contest," analyzes conceptions of authenticity in Black storytelling during the New Negro Movement and its entrenchment in institutional desires, gendered expectations, and urban-rural conflicts.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS

**Christopher Valentine** is a third-year Doctoral student at Yale, jointly enrolled in Black Studies and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. His research broadly centers around late 20th-century constructions of black queer identity and history through examinations of archival practices, literature, and print ecologies. Before coming to Yale, Christopher received his BA in Black Studies at Kennesaw State University in 2021 and a Master's in the Humanities from the University of Chicago in 2023.



**Sam Vernon** is a visual artist whose installations and mixed-media works examine the intersections of personal narrative, memory, and identity. Working across sculpture, photography, collage, and text, Vernon constructs layered environments that draw from autobiography, archives, and material histories to consider how images and objects shape cultural memory. Vernon received an MFA in Painting & Printmaking from Yale University in 2015 and a BFA from The Cooper Union in 2009.

Vernon is an Assistant Professor in the Fine Arts department at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Solo exhibitions include the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD), San Francisco, CA; UT Downtown Gallery, Knoxville, TN; the G44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, Toronto; and the Olympic Sculpture Park at the Seattle Art Museum. In 2023-24, Vernon was a fellow in the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program and presented the solo exhibition *Alter-Reservoir* at Kunsthaus Hamburg in Germany. Vernon lives and works in New York City.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# MEET OUR SPEAKERS



**Christina Vortia** is an educator, librarian, writer, and literature analyst with extensive experience across public, academic, and federal library environments. She has served on multiple nationally recognized literary awards juries, including Chair of the 2023 Newbery Medal Committee, the 2025–2026 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Jury, the 2020–2021 Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Young Adult Literature Jury, the 2019–2020 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Committee, the 2017 Michael L. Printz Award Committee, and the Florida Authors and Publishers Association Book Awards Committee.

Her professional work focuses on data-driven assessment, program development, community partnership building, and grant writing. She has applied statistical analysis to evaluate service outcomes and inform strategic planning initiatives.

Christina holds a Master of Science in Library and Information Science from Pratt Institute and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Montclair State University. She is an alumna of Tuskegee University.

**Ruthie Block** is a PhD student in English and Black Studies and a graduate fellow at the Yale Center for the Study of Race, Indigeneity, and Transnational Migration (RITM), a Black Bibliography Project Fellow and a Graduate Writing Fellow at the Yale Poorvu Center. Ruthie’s research applies fugitivity studies to Black print culture studies, with a particular focus on Black feminist book histories.

Prior to starting graduate school, Ruthie worked in non-fiction book publishing for four years at Beacon Press. They received a B.A. from Tufts University in 2021.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# CORE TEAM MEMBERS

**Meredith L McGill** is Professor of Literatures in English, and Acting Director of the Center for Cultural Analysis at Rutgers University-New Brunswick. She is also the co-director of the Black Bibliography Project.

Her research and teaching focus on American literature, book and media history, and poetry and poetics. She is the author of *American Literature and the Culture of Reprinting, 1837-1853* (2003; repr. 2007) a study of nineteenth-century American resistance to tight control over intellectual property. She has edited two collections of essays: *Taking Liberties with the Author* (2013), which explores the persistence of the author as a shaping force in literary criticism, and *The Traffic in Poems: Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Transatlantic Exchange* (2008), in which a variety of scholars model ways of understanding nineteenth-century poetry within a transatlantic frame. She is currently completing a book on the circulation of poetry in the antebellum US.



**Jacqueline Goldsby** is Thomas E. Donnelly Professor of Black Studies and English at Yale University. She specializes in African American literary criticism and Print Culture Studies during the long century of Jim Crow segregation, from 1865 to 1965. She is the author of the prizewinning *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature*, and the widely-acclaimed Norton Critical Edition of James Weldon Johnson's 1912 novel, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*.

She's currently at work on a book about James Baldwin, *The Business of Becoming Jimmy*, and has founded two Archival Studies projects. "[Mapping the Stacks: A Guide to Black Chicago's Hidden Archives](#)" helped transform the practice of archival recovery and description in Chicago and across the U.S, as the project became the model for the Council on Library and Information Resources' \$27.4 million grant program, "Cataloguing Hidden Collections and Archives" (2008-14). Since 2017, she has co-directed [The Black Bibliography Project](#) with Meredith McGill at Rutgers University.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# CORE TEAM MEMBERS



**Tajah Ebram**, (Black Studies Subject Specialist Librarian and Rutgers Team Lead) is currently the Black Studies Librarian at Rutgers University Libraries and the Rutgers team lead for the Black Bibliography Project.

She holds a PhD in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania, where she focused on Black literary and cultural studies with a particular interest in Black feminisms, ecologies, and carceral studies. She approached these issues through print culture, oral history, and digital humanities methods.

**Amanda Dibando Awanjo**, (Project Manager), is a researcher and educator currently serving as the Project Manager for the Black Bibliography Project. She completed her PhD in Critical Cultural Studies in Literature at the University of Pittsburgh in 2022 with a focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century Black children's literature. She has worked in education and program management in museums and libraries, implementing programming that connects with artistic and archival spaces with the community. Her research and illustrations have been published in *Electric Literature*, *The Rumpus*, *The Black Joy Project*, *Fork Apple Press*, *The Edinburgh History of Children's Periodicals*, and *Critical Quarterly*.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# CORE TEAM MEMBERS

**Mara Caelin**, (Metadata Specialist), is a Catalog/Metadata Librarian at Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. She holds a Masters in American Studies from The George Washington University, as well as a Master of Library and Information Science from Simmons University.

She specializes in cataloging 20th and 21st century monographs, serials, and ephemera. Her special interests include linked data, critical cataloging, and metadata remediation.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# THANK YOU

Since its founding in 2017, the BBP has been generously supported by numerous institutions and individuals. Yale University's Beinecke Library, then under the direction of E.C. Schroeder, hosted our first forays into Linked Data and data modeling, with curator Melissa Barton and metadata team Brenna Bychowski, Mark Custer, Audrey Pearson, and Tim Thompson. Yale University Library Director Barbara Rockenbach and Beinecke Director Michelle Light have continued this remarkable record of encouragement and support. Ingrid Lennon-Pressey ensured that we had access to many treasures in the Beinecke's James Weldon Johnson collection.

Don Waters and Patricia Hswe at the Mellon Foundation guided and underwrote the project beginning in 2019. Yale Deans Kathryn Lofton and Marc Robinson, and Rutgers Deans Rebecca Walkowitz and Juli Wade have offered valuable counsel and strategic support. Yale University's Tara Fitzpatrick, Marisa Esposito, and Jasmine Williams, and Rutgers' Robin Yarborough have brilliantly managed our finances and grant reporting. Rutgers' Executive Director of IT, Tom Vosseler and Research IT Developer James Boyce inherited a complex data puzzle and were instrumental in helping us untangle it. Lisa Battle and Duane Degler of Design for Context helped us think about users and imagine how our database might work. For their support and engagement, we are grateful to all the members of the LD4 linked data community who have offered advice and training, and participated, along with colleagues at Yale and Rutgers, in Wikidata edit-a-thons. We are grateful every day for the imagination and expertise of Kenneth Seals-Nutt and Kat Thornton, our database designers.

Many library partners have been crucial to our success, providing access to their collections and helpful advice: Joy Bivins, Barrye Brown, and Cheryl Beredo at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture; Scott Casper, Elizabeth Pope, and John Garcia at the American Antiquarian Society; Jennifer Garcon, Lauren Williams, and Sara Logue at Princeton's Firestone Library; and Reggie Blanding at the Newark Public Library. We would also like to thank Ayesha Hardison and the University of Kansas "History of Black Writing" digital bibliography and Dr. Alok Yadav and his digital bibliography, "Anthologies of African American Writing"

We continue to rely on our active and insightful Advisory Board: Jim Casey, Cecily Marcus, Meredith Martin, Elizabeth McHenry, Ernest Mitchell, Howard Rambsy II, Robert Sanderson, Maurice Wallace, and John Young. And we are grateful for the early counsel that John Ernest and Kinohi Nishikawa provided during the project's pilot phase (2019-20). BBP Graduate Student Fellows have patiently entered most of the data in the database, mastering the elements of descriptive bibliography and the complexities of our data models. Our first cohort of fellows in 2019 included Rutgers students Margarita Castromán, Gabrielle Everett, Alex Leslie, Ariel Martino, and Amadi Ozier, and Yale students Phoenix Alexander, Kassidi Jones, Jeong Yeon Lee, and Sarah Robbins.



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT

# THANK YOU

In the current phase of the grant (2022-6), we've relied on the subject expertise, hard work, and keen eyes of Rutgers students David Carré, Mitchell Edwards, Brittany Marshall, Ai Onubogu, Jorden Sanders, Maria Smith, and Sydney Smith, and Yale students Ruthie Block, Tyler Campbell, Alana Edmondson, Kristine Guillaume, Arabella Katz, Jeania Ree Moore, Thobile Ndimande, Asya Taylor, and Christopher Valentine.

We are also grateful to Yale-New Haven Promise undergraduate interns Ja'nya Hill, Lizamishel Boateng, and Zia-Grace Generette, and Rutgers Aresty fellows Jessica DePaola, Pavithra Jalagar, and Karren Miller-Sweeper.

For offering their insights and expertise in Black bibliography and book history to our summer training workshops, we are grateful to visiting speakers Jesse Erickson, Caroline Goeser, Joy James, Erin McGuirl, Elizabeth McHenry, Kinohi Nishikawa, Howard Ramsby II, Rebecca Romney, Jae Rossman, Derrick Spires, Sam Vernon, Maurice Wallace, Michael Winship, and Richard Yarborough.

Michelle Stephens, Director of the Institute for Study of Global Racial Justice, has offered tactical advice and stunning conference support in the form of the remarkable ISGRJ team: Tania Bentley, Jennifer Leon, Dolores Turchi, and Robin Yarborough. The Rutgers Institute for the Book (RIB), under the direction of Leah Price, and The Scarlet Letterpress, led by Sean Silver, produced postcard swag and set type for the broadsides printed in the letterpress workshop. Mitchell Edwards designed and taught these workshops, with the help of RIB fellows Novella Frasier and Emmett Pinsky.

We are grateful to Rutgers' Vice President of University Libraries Consuela Askew and Associate Vice President for Campus Libraries Caroline Muglia for supporting both the project and this conference. We have relied on the expertise of conference planning wizard Elena Schneider and the Library IT team: Kalaivani Ananthan, Mary O'Mara, and Albert Lee. We have also relied heavily on the School of Arts and Sciences IT assistance; Katelyn Pfeifer and Ed Kenny, Sophie Ziner and Diana Molina provided vital logistical and show-running support.

Deep thanks from all of us for your generous collaboration!



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT



BLACK BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT