



Up Front

Archives of the Antebellum:

Documenting a Troubled Past

by Katharine Dunn, Dean's Editorial Fellow

February is Black History Month, a celebration of African American heritage and achievement that has been observed nationwide since the mid-1970s. In its honor, we profile recent GSLIS alumna Holly Smith '08LS, who works with the African American archives at the Southern Historical Collection in Chapel Hill, N.C. While at Simmons, Smith received a scholarship from the Spectrum program, sponsored by the American Library Association to increase diversity in the library profession. We also highlight some of the African American-related holdings at the Massachusetts Historical Society in Boston. (See sidebars for more information about Spectrum and MHS.)

There is little evidence of Dolly other than a partial photo of her wearing a kerchief in her hair and staring directly into the camera, and this description: "She is thirty years of age, light Complexion—hesitates somewhat when spoken to, and is not a very healthy woman — but rather good looking, with a fine set of teeth." This is all we know of her; the rest of Dolly's life is lost. Dolly was an African American slave who worked in the home of plantation owner Louis Manigault in Augusta, Ga. In April 1863, halfway through the Civil War, she ran away, or perhaps was abducted. "It is thought she has been enticed off by some White Man, being herself a Stranger to this City," wrote Manigault in an ad he placed offering a \$50 reward for her return. Manigault pasted the ad in his plantation journal, among pages of crop prices and slave inventories, and it is now with his family's papers in the Southern Historical Collection (SHC) in the Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

"There are a lot of records related to enslavement from the slave holders' perspectives, because these are the kinds of records that have come in," says Holly Smith '08LS, the Overholser Archival Fellow for African American Studies at the SHC, which holds the world's largest collection of material about the American South. About 16 million items have been processed to some degree, and records related to black history are a prominent part of the collection. But many were created by white Southerners. "These documents are still important," says Smith. "They say something important about African American history."

During her two-year fellowship, one of Smith's jobs is to update an online guide of the hundreds of African American-related records in the SHC, which include the Manigault papers as well as those of several African American organizations and

individuals. She and colleagues plan to incorporate Web 2.0 technologies like blogging and a wiki into the site, along with static information from finding aids. The goal is to make the collections more dynamic and easier to access. But they also hope the site will entice people to donate records so that the SHC can continue to document African American individuals, businesses, and families—and fill some of the holes in southern black history. "Historically, African Americans' stories have been underrepresented in the archival record, both intentionally and unintentionally. I want to help change that," says Smith.

Smith, who is originally from Hampton, Va., studied history and black studies at the College of William and Mary in

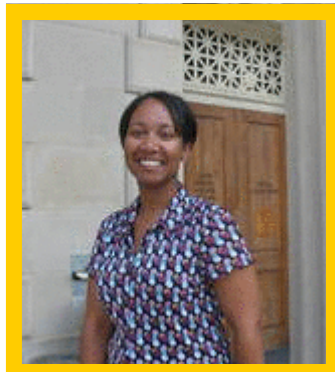
Williamsburg and completed a one-year master's degree program focusing on African American history at Yale before moving to Boston in 2003. She worked for the city's National Historic Park (part of the U.S. National Park Service) and for the Museum of African American History in Beacon Hill before taking a job that introduced her to library and archival science. Smith photographed and inventoried art by renowned black painter and illustrator Allan Rohan Crite, whose work is in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Smithsonian. While working on the project, she met Reginald Jackson, a Simmons professor and colleague of the artist. And through Jackson she met GSLIS Archives Professor Tywana Whorley, who recruited Smith to the GSLIS program, something she

hadn't originally considered.

"In my experience, not many young people of color think of this as a career," she says. "People hear 'library and information science' and think 'librarian,' which has a not-great connotation. It doesn't necessarily make you think of the skills you need today, like being tech savvy and progressive." While at Simmons, Smith worked with Whorley on a diversity initiative grant, brainstorming ways to recruit people of color to library school and, in the process, to clear up that misconception.

Next fall, the SHC will launch the updated Web guide alongside an exhibit of materials from the collection, and Smith is taking the lead as curator. "Pulling items is the fun part, that's what I love," she says. "But how to limit it to a few things?" One document that Smith says will almost certainly appear is an 1853 letter from an enslaved pregnant woman, Virginia Boyd, to her owner, Rice Ballard, begging him to intervene and prevent her sale.

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Holly Smith in front of the Wilson Library

Deanna Beattie

"I applied to a bunch of libraries...[I] knew that I liked finding information."

New GSLIS student Deanna Beattie works as the program assistant for the Managerial Leadership in the Information Professions Ph.D. concentration, helping organize program delivery and preparing educational, administrative, and marketing materials. Beattie was born and raised outside of Concord, N.H., and went to Norwich University in Vermont, where she received a degree in English.

Q: **What is your previous library experience?**
I came out of my degree and thought, 'what do I do now?' I applied to a bunch of libraries because I had worked at bookstores in the past and knew that I liked finding information. I was finally offered a job as circulation assistant at a small public library in Vermont, in Shelburne, right near Burlington. I did that for three years and just loved it. Coming from retail experience, it was great to not deal with money. People are much friendlier when you're not asking for their money.

Except if they have overdue books.

Well, we didn't do fines. I called and harassed people and found that that worked better than fining them.

I was pretty lucky to start out there. I got in under two directors who were very enthusiastic about my library career. They both gave me lots of opportunities to try anything in the library.

What did you like best?

What I liked most, and what was exactly the same as in bookstores, was interacting with the public. It was really rewarding to help them find something, and they were just like, 'Wow, how did you do that?'

I got to do some programming type stuff, too. It was neat that we could go out there and find an organization that, say, did programs on lemurs or something and bring them in and market the program. It was fun to be involved at the start and see a program you planned come out successfully.

You recently worked at a law firm in Boston. What were your duties there?

Document delivery. I was involved in getting different journal articles online. Then there was the book component. If things weren't available at local libraries we'd have to go elsewhere. Sometimes it was a case where [the lawyers] said, 'You have to find this book.' A lot of the time they expected it tomorrow. Sometimes they'd just throw money at it and say, 'Just find that.'

I got to do a little ILL stuff in the public library, and it's a totally different world. Public libraries say, 'Ok, we'll try to have the book to you in a couple of weeks. We'll snail mail it over to you and get the cheapest rate possible.' Whereas with this it was, 'Get it where you can get it the fastest, and FedEx it overnight, we need these things immediately.'

I hear you're a figure skater?

I started when I was eight or so. Along with competing and doing a yearly show, there was testing to get through your levels. I got most of the way through that, and then I started coaching. I

was coaching eight hours a week in high school.

Who were you coaching?

For the most part, real beginners. Three-year olds-putting on skates for the first time up to adults in their 50s. The adults were really fun to work with because they really got it, they had a connection between what their body's doing and what their head's doing.

What's your favorite sport?

One would think figure skating. I don't watch it that much anymore. Basically anything that gets me outside and moving. I love hiking and I miss doing it. I'm kind of far from mountains now. I ski and run and have done a lot of canoeing.

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I went through a lot of things. I thought I might be an interior designer. I had a stage when I wanted to be a physical therapist. Now I'm here, and I know that this is right.

One thing I've really always wanted to try is to drive a big rig, a big truck. The wandering, the challenge of driving something like that — that's always been a thing on my mind.

What book are you reading now?

It's called *Zaatar Days, Henna Nights* by Maliha Masood. It's about this woman traveling in the Middle East. It breaks a lot of stereotypes and shows fully developed people with real personalities beyond what we see on the news. I think it would be a good book for people to read if they want to get a feel for the culture without reading a textbook.

You got it from the library?

It's probably overdue. I'm not particularly good at getting things back on time. Usually every time I go in, I owe something. It's movies that get me, because you can only have them for a week. I love the library, though.

Interview by Katharine Dunn



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Documenting a Troubled Past, cont.

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In the letter, which Boyd writes from a slave trader's yard in Texas, she condemns the man who impregnated her—possibly Ballard's business partner—for selling his own children and their mother. (Boyd and one of her children were sold a few months later.)

"It has been used in exhibits before, but this document is a powerful representation of the cruelty of enslavement, while at the same time showing the incredible strength and courage of Virginia Boyd to confront her oppressor," says Smith. "The fact that we have a written record of this exchange in the archives still amazes me."

Smith says she'd be happy to stay on at UNC after her fellowship ends next year. But her dream job, she says, would be as a curator of African American photography. She's interested in images taken by and featuring African Americans, both of which were relatively rare until well into the 20th century. "Photos are visually compelling. They tell the truth, but then they don't," she says. "Images can be posed, but what's actually going on?"

If only Dolly could have been free to explain.

African American Records at the MHS



Massachusetts was one of the first states to abolish slavery, doing so in 1783, more than 80 years before the Thirteenth Amendment banned it federally. But there had been no statewide mandate in Massachusetts: it took lawsuits on behalf of individual slaves to give de facto freedom to the rest. One of the most high-profile trials

was that of Elizabeth Freeman ("Mumbet"), who had been a slave in Sheffield, Massachusetts for decades when she decided to seek freedom, perhaps after her owner's wife attempted to strike her sister with a shovel. In 1781, Mumbet's attorney, Theodore Sedgwick, argued that slavery was illegal under the year-old state constitution, which said that "all men are born free and equal..." and forbade discrimination on the basis of "sex, race, color, creed or national origin." This convinced the jury, and Mumbet and a fellow slave were freed.

A story written by Sedgwick's daughter about Mumbet's life, along with a painting of her and a piece of her jewelry, are highlights of the Massachusetts Historical Society's collection of African American materials. They are also part of the MHS online exhibit "African Americans and the End of Slavery in Massachusetts." The exhibit (<http://www.masshist.org/endorfsavery/>), created in 2008 for the 200th anniversary of the end of the African slave trade in the United States, features 117 documents, photos, and artifacts.

There are hundreds of individual items related to African Americans in the MHS catalog, ranging from colonial-era poetry to records from civil rights organizations. An overview of relevant collections can be found by searching "African American" in the library finding aids online.

ALA's Spectrum Scholarship Program

Since 1997, the American Library Association has worked to increase diversity in the library profession through the Spectrum scholarship program, which offers financial assistance and mentorship to LIS students from underrepresented groups. More than 20 Simmons students have received Spectrum scholarships — one of the highest numbers among LIS schools — including Holly Smith '08LS (see main story), who was a Spectrum Scholar during the 2006-07 academic year. The highlight of her scholarship year was a leadership institute held in Washington, D.C. prior to the annual ALA conference. "They brought in librarians of color and other professionals to talk to the students about career advice, encouragement, advocacy," she says. "It was inspirational. I felt like, yes, I can make a difference. Yes, I matter."

Brenda Mitchell-Powell, '08LS, a fellow 2006 Spectrum Scholar, agrees. "The networking opportunities were invaluable," she says. Mitchell-Powell is now a PhD student in GSLIS and has a Spectrum Doctoral Fellowship, which provides not only full tuition—"for as long as it takes to get the degree, no matter how long you labor on your dissertation," she says — but also a stipend of \$20,000 for each of two years.

Beta Beta Chapter Book Award



The officers of the Beta Beta Chapter of Beta Phi Mu International Library and Information Studies Honor Society are proud to announce the winner of the 2008 book scholarship award — Elizabeth Fox, a student at the Boston GSLIS campus.

The officers found her application impressive for her demonstration of how GSLIS courses directly affect her work at the Sandwich Public Library. They were further impressed because she has achieved a very high grade point average while balancing not only studies with paid work, but also with raising a family and volunteering her expertise to publicize library programs in the Sandwich community. She has also helped to create a state-wide advertising and marketing campaign to promote libraries, as a committee member of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

Asst. Prof. Joudrey (Co-)Writes the Book

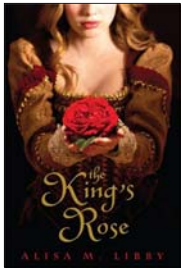
Assistant Professor Daniel N. Joudrey has just published his first book. *The Organization of Information* (3rd ed.), co-written with Arlene G. Taylor, is the textbook for information organization, used by students in LIS programs everywhere.

Joudrey, who has been working with Taylor since he was a grad student at the University of Pittsburgh, has been at GSLIS since 2005. In addition to preparing to work on the 4th edition of *The Organization of Information*, Joudrey is writing a book for Libraries Unlimited, tentatively titled, *Puzzles and Pearls: Determining What Something is About*. The book is based on his dissertation research, and focuses on the nature of 'aboutness' and subject access to information resources. He, Taylor, and Tina Gross, are also currently involved in a research project on the value of Library of Congress subject headings in information retrieval in OPACs.

February – March Events

Monday, March 9, Mary A. Rouse (UCLA) presents “A Princely Gift: The French Translation of Vegetius, 1284-1300,” a Medieval Studies seminar at Harvard’s Humanities Center in collaboration with the Houghton Library. The talk will be in the Lamont Forum Room, Lamont Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, at 4:15 p.m., and will be followed by a reception in the Edison and Newman Room in the Houghton Library.

Thursday, March 12, Richard Rouse Lecture: “Florilegia & Glosses: Books for Reference rather than Reading.” This is a workshop for which one has to register in advance. Places are strictly limited to 12, and priority will be given to members of the Harvard community. If interests warrants, we will schedule a second session on Tuesday, March 10, but only once the Thursday session is fully subscribed. Please indicate your interest by emailing Prof. Jeffrey Hamburger at: jhamburg@fas.harvard.edu. Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.



Thursday, March 19, Book Launch Party. Come celebrate the publication of *The King's Rose*, the second novel by GSLIS employee Alisa Libby. The event will begin at noon in the Kotzen Room. There will be a brief reading, then a reception and book signing. Books will be available for purchase. Light refreshments will be served. For more information about the book and this event, visit www.alisalibby.com.

More information about these and other events can be found at <http://my.simmons.edu/gslis/resources/calendars/events.shtml>.

Welcome New GSLIS Staff

Stacie Parillo is the new GSLIS Fellow for Dean’s Initiatives. Stacie has a B.A. in linguistics and English from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and a M.A. in Communication Studies from Suffolk University. Stacie has a strong background in events and marketing, most recently serving as Marketing Director at Parker Thompson in Providence. She has also worked as circulation clerk at the East Providence Library, as publications designer at Cambridge College, and as associate acquisitions editor at Addison-Wesley Professional.

Sarah Petrakos is the new Assistant Dean for Admission and Recruitment. Sarah comes to us from Emerson College where she was the Assistant Director for Graduate Admission. She has previous experience in graduate admissions at Suffolk University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Her undergraduate degree in psychology is from Providence College and her MBA in Marketing is from Boston College. She is an active member of the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP) and she is the recipient of NAGAP’s first Future Leaders Award.

Student Services Center hours:

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. — 6:00 p.m.
Friday: 9 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. — 1 p.m.

Folks on the Move

Prof. Jeannette Bastian has been appointed by Mayor Menino to the City of Boston Archives Commission.

Irene Herold (Mason Library) presented a three-hour workshop in November for the OCUL (Ontario Council of University Librarians) Associate University Librarians Meeting at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, on mentoring for leadership. This was based upon research she did for Managerial Leadership in the Information Profession courses she has completed for her Ph.D. program at Simmons College. It included a review of three leadership theories (transformational, LMX, and team), their relationship to mentoring, and best practices in leadership mentoring in industry and library organizations.

GSLIS students Anna Jorgenson and Jessica Shurlow have been chosen to serve on the MSLA Executive Board. The MSLA Executive Board establishes the direction and priorities of the organization as an advocate for strong school library programs throughout Massachusetts.

Prof. Danny Joudrey gave a presentation about the latest trends in cataloguing education as a part of the “Hot Topics in Technical Services” program held at annual conference of the New England Library Association in October, 2008.

Kris Liberman, GSLIS Alum and GSLIS CE program manager, was elected in December to be the President-Elect of the SLA Boston Chapter.

Michael Sullivan, adjunct faculty at the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science, announces the release of his latest book *Connecting Boys With Books 2: Closing the Reading Gap*, published by ALA Editions.

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InfoLink

InfoLink is the monthly newsletter of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College. Its purpose is to provide school- and career-related information and to foster community among the many diverse people who make up the school.

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