CALM Monthly Meeting • February 23, 2021

Zoom meeting, 3:00 pm, PRESENT: James Davis (CLS), Kim Roche (Lasch Center), Chris Barrett (Huguenot Society), Georgette Mayo (Avery Center/Guest speaker) Sara Lanham (Guest speaker), Teri Lynn Herbert (MUSC), Catherine Stiers (CofC), Molly Solomon (SCHS), Mary Jo Fairchild (CofC), Gyllian Porteous (Lasch Center), Suzanne DiBella (IAAM)

Secretary's note: I have the minutes transcribed from the Zoom recording. Since Georgette and Sara both made such great presentations and inspired such great participation, I have left them intact for reference, and for the benefit of those unable to attend.

Kim: Georgette Mayo is the Processing Archivist at the Avery Research Center for American History and Culture at the College of Charleston. She's been very active within the convent that work in recent years and we are very lucky to have her speak on the South Carolina Lowcountry African American Women's project that she's been involved with. So Georgette if you could take it away, please.

Georgette: Thank you Kim for the intro. So, we are coming off the end of Black History Month and March is Women's History Month, so I felt that I could combine those two aspects and hence my presentation. As Kim noted, I am a Processing Archivist for the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. We are a archive, small museum and cultural Center for public programming. And the women that I'm going to discuss, fortunately, we have some of the women that we have their collections and I'll know which ones that we do have. The first woman I'm going to discuss is SeptimaPoinsette Clark. Personally, she's near and dear to me. I felt like she's like a kindred spirit, she was born the day before I was, except decades before. She was born in Charleston, South Carolina in 1898 to Peter Porcher Poinsette and Victoria Anderson.

Georgette: Clark attended small private schools in the Avery Institute, getting a teacher certificate in 1916. She married Nerie Clark, who was a navy cook in 1920. And they had one surviving child Nerie, Jr. She received her B.A. from Benedict College in 1942, and the MA from Hampton Institute in 1946. Going back to, let's see, Nerie, her husband was originally from Dayton, Ohio and Septimalived there

briefly. Unfortunately, he passed away and she returns to the south. And she received her B.A, oh, I've mentioned that before, from Benedict College in Columbia and went on to get her MA from Hampton Institute in 1946 in Virginia. She taught at various schools throughout South Carolina, furthering the cause of civil rights in 1956. Unfortunately, she was fired from the Charleston County School District for being a active member with the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured people, the NAACP.

Georgette: Clark next worked in Monteagle, Tennessee with the Highlander Folk Center where she met Rosa Parks. And much of her work was aimed at practical education, empowering disenfranchised African Americans to register to vote and to become active in social issues. In 1957, she staged her model, a citizenship school on Johns Island teaching those there how to read and pass voter registration test. She continued such schools until the Highlander Folk Center had its charter revoked by the State of Tennessee in 1961. The school's worth transferred to Southern Christian Leadership Conference, better known as the SCLC in Atlanta, Georgia. At her capacity as Trading Supervisor, she helped fuel the growing civil rights movement in the American self, working with the likes of Dr. Martin Luther King, who she also accompanied in Norway in 1964, to accept his Nobel Peace Prize.

Georgette: Retiring from the SCLC, she bought a house on President Street and spent her remaining active years in numerous capacities on the school board, Charleston County School Board, in church work and involved in numerous feminist African American and civil rights causes. Creating daycare centers, trying to get scholarships for students and never retreating from her dedication to equal rights and opportunities for all. Now, there'll be something that you'll notice with all the women that I will discuss today, and I want to ask that question later on, but they all have a common thread in common. I cannot talk about Septima Poinsette Clark and not mentioned her cousin Bernice Robinson. Robinson was also born in Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina in 1914. And she attended Simonton Elementary and Burke Industrial High School, graduating in 1931.

Georgette: She then relocated to Harlem, New York, where she worked in the garment district during the day and attending evening classes at the Poro School of Cosmetology. Upon Robinson's return in 1947,

into South Carolina, she opened a beauty shop and worked with the Charleston branch that NAACP as Secretary and Chairperson of membership. Now, let me go back, you might be wondering why Ms. Clark was fired from the NAACP in the 1950s. Unfortunately, that organization was considered a communist organization. And anybody that was affiliated, particularly if there were school teachers, if they had a government job and they belonged to NAACP, they were suspect, and they were unfortunately fired. In Robinson's case, she was basically working for herself, she was an entrepreneur. So it was safe for her to work and be affiliated with the NAACP.

Georgette: In 1954, she attended the Highlander Folk School workshop in Tennessee, along with her cousin Septima Poinsette Clark. On the insistence of Clarke and Esau Jenkins, a businessman and founder of the Progressive Club on Johns Island, Robinson became the first citizen school ship teacher for adult education in 1957. She worked as a volunteer and part-Jamese employee teaching adults reading skills to enable them to vote. When the Highlander transferred the program to Southern Leadership Conference, she stayed with Highlander holding voting registration and political education workshops in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, among other southern states.

Georgette: She left SCLC in 1970 to work with South Carolina Commission for Farm Workers, as Supervisor of Volunteers in Service to America, the VISTA program. And in 1972 and 1974, she ran unsuccessfully for the South Carolina House of Representatives, being the first African American woman to run for that office in South Carolina. She returned to the South Carolina Commission for Farm Workers in 1975 as Director of migrant daycare, and in 1979, she became a loan and relocation officer for the Charleston County Community Development Department, a position she held until she retired in 1982.

Georgette: Okay, Thelma T.C Drayton was a community leader and City of Charleston Community Liaison Coordinator in the Department of Housing and Community Development for over 20 years, from 1980 to 2000. She was also an active advocate for crime prevention, affordable housing, and job opportunities. The T.C stands for Top Cat that's what her community members called her, and I'm really dating myself, but there was a popular cartoon about a cat named Top Cat back in the 1960s. So that's who she

was named after and that's what the T.C stands for. Working closely with the former mayor Joseph P. Riley, he states, "Her leadership had a profound positive effect on the citizens of our communities and those that she came in contact with. As a liaison between the city and the East Side, Drayton's charge was to locate affordable housing for residents to purchase. Additionally, through her work as Programme Coordinator, with the City of Charleston's Job Resource Center, it ensured that residents were prepared for and access to employment." It is esJamesated she found jobs for 10000 people through numerous job fairs and employment seminars.

Georgette: As a community leader, Drayton sponsored an annual anti-drug parade, and city clean sweep throughout the East Side. Politically, she was involved in efforts to get out the vote in every election. As a volunteer, Drayton devoted her Jamese to the March of Dimes, the Agape Ministries, the East Side Community Council and a Friendship Baptist Church where she also worshiped. She passed away in 2000 at the age of 55, I mean, I'm sorry, 53. After her death, Drayton is remembered through the naming of the TC Drayton Family Technology Center on Meeting Street, and a scholarship for East Side's High School seniors through the Coastal Community Foundation.

Georgette: Christine Osburn Jackson is a native from Marion, Alabama. She has lived in South Carolina for over 55 years. Her late husband, the Reverend E.L. Jackson and educator, moved his family to Charleston after he was fired from the Alabama school system from marching with Dr. Martin Luther King on the Alabama State House to pray. Prior to join the YWCA of Greater Charleston, Incorporated as its Executive Director, she was the assistant home demonstrator agent for the Charleston County Clemson University Extension Service. When she joined the YWCA... She joined during the height of the civil rights movement when the YWCA operated as one for blacks and one for whites. She feels her greatest accomplishment was bringing the two YWCAs together. During the late 60s the YWCA of Greater Charleston was organized. The Coming Street YWCA branch ceased to exist in the late 1960s and the Central YWCA George Street became the Christian Family why? This is confusing. The YWCA of Greater Charleston, Incorporated serves the Tri-county area and is one of three YWCAs in South Carolina with the state and national charters.

Georgette: Serving the YWCA of Greater Charleston for over 36 years as Executive Director, Christine O. Jackson, clearly is a critical force in the YWCA's history. Fortunately, she is still with us, she just turned 92. And in August I think, and if I'm not mistaken, August the 1st. And they had somewhat of a social distanced ceremony for her. The mayor came out and gave her proclamation. And she's needless to say, throughout her 92 years, she's won numerous awards. No survey of African American women in the Lowcountry could not be complete if we did not include Lucille Whipper. And I feel very indebted to Ms. Whipper because of her advocacy for turning what used to be the Avery Normal Institute that became the Avery Institute, which was a school, into the Avery Research Center for African Americans History and Culture, which is, again, the Archives, the Slam Museum and the Cultural Center for Public Programming.

Georgette: Another Charlestonian, she was born in 1928 to Sara Marie and Joseph Simmons. She was raised in the East Side neighborhood of Ansonborough, also referred to as The Borough, and attended private schools and public schools in the city including Avery Institute, graduating in 1944. She became a educator, guidance counsellor, academic administrator, community and religious leader and the first African American woman to serve in the House of Representatives, which Bernice Robinson was trying to do the decade prior. And she was a representative for the District 109 between 1986 to 1996. She exercised her activism for a graduating class at Avery Institute, in the attempt to desegregate the College of Charleston in 1944. Decades later, Whipper was instrumental in working with the State of South Carolina and the College of Charleston to obtain the former Avery Institute to establish the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture.

Georgette: Early in her industrious career, Whipper taught in various public schools. Bonds-Wilson, North Charleston and Haut Gap middle school on Johns Island, and was the Academic Director of a school programme at Burke High School. Served as a trustee on the Charleston County School District, constituted board number 20 and was the first African American to serve as the elected official in the Tri-State area County. During her tenure as legislator, she sponsored legislation to make marital rape a crime and efforts among her colleagues led to the opening of the Senator for

women, along with monitoring the state's agencies for hiring minorities and women. And as a devote religious leader and married to the Reverend William Whipper, she served as a Minister of Music of St. Matthews Baptist Church. And her involvement with the Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina, National Baptist Convention USA and in particular, the Women's Baptist Educational and Missionary Convention of South Carolina is extensive. And again, fortunately she's still with us, and she's in her mid 90s by now.

Georgette: Now in regards to the collections that we have on women, we were very proud to hold a Septima Poinsette Clark collection, the Bernice Robinson collection, along with the Lucille whipper papers. And these are just some, this is just a tip of the iceberg of some of the collections that we hold on women or women collections. And then an affiliation with the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, there's a new online virtual exhibit, focusing on the enslavement of women in the Lowcountry and US South. Let me exit out of this, and let me find, a sec. And this is an introduction to the site. And if you're not familiar with the exhibits on the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, they're pretty extensive, and they obviously use not only the narrative, but they use a lot of artifacts and photographs to basically illustrate and create, basically an online exhibit.

Georgette: Okay. Let me go back. What I basically showed was the introduction. You can just breeze through this. And again you can go through the College of Charleston Library, and look for the Lowcountry Digital Library, and then look for digital exhibits. And it'll take you to the Lowcountry Digital Library, the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, it's two separate entities. Okay, any questions? Okay, I do have a question from my audience, "What was the thing that showed through with the women that I highlighted?"

Sara: I think for me it's service to the community. Just lifelong, dedicated service to the community, which is not something that we all necessarily think of as a goal anymore.

Teri Lynn: And being proactive.

James: What was that Teri Lynn?

Teri Lynn: Being proactive.

James: Weren't they also all educators?

Georgette: Yes, very good. That they were, in their own way, yes. And what other aspect? I think Teri Lynn had somewhat mentioned that also.

Kim: It's interesting to see them building off one another too in the works that they did.

Georgette: That they were all civil rights social activists, and what we now call fighting for social justice. So even though the terms have somewhat evolved, it all based off the same thing. And one more thing about our collections, basically the majority of our collections are 20th century. Not only of women, men, we have church collections, businesses, funeral homes, yet they all seem to... We have some prior to the 20th century, and we're trying to get some from the 21st century, but the majority of is 20th century. And there was a term that was used during the time that these women were particularly active, and it was within the community that you lift as we climb. So while one person is climbing, they can't go so far if they don't bring up other people along with them. So that was a model among civil rights and particularly women that worked with women's clubs which Ms. Clark, and definitely Ms. Whipper, who's very active in working with African American's women's clubs. Which were proliferated around the State of South Carolina, and really nationally particularly the mid 20th century. Well, thank you for your attention.

Kim: That was amazing, thank you-

James: Thank you so much Georgette-

Kim: Thank you so much Georgette.

James: ... I just want to [crosstalk 00:30:45] to deep dive into what another call member, their collections and what they are doing, and I hope we get more of that this year.

Kim: I'm going to stick Avery's donation page in the chat if anyone feels so inclined to donate a few dollars for the work that Georgette

and her colleagues are doing at the research center. So thank you Georgette.

Georgette: Thank you.

James: So today we have a very special meeting because we get two discussion topics/speakers. So I'd like to introduce Sara Lanham, who is an emerging conservator. And she lives and works in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and possible a future library society intern. And she's going to be talking with us about hiring practices within cultural heritage. So take it away Sara.

Sara: Thank you James. Thank you Georgia for those comments. Part of what I was thinking about with my comments for today was really about service and so hearing you talk about these ladies, it really is inspiring. Particularly hearing about people who it sounds like suffered consequences for their activism. So yeah, hi everybody, as James said, I'm Sara, and thank you for having me here today. I am working on a career change into cultural heritage conservation. Unlike James, I am not yet a fully minted conservator, far from it. I'm in the lead up to grad school, hence the interest in an internship. I consider anyone in the Southeast here to be my neighbour. I like to say that the Southeast feels like the scrappy underdog when it comes to cultural work, which I hope you guys can relate to.

Sara: Because Chattanooga is my hometown, I did want to start with a couple of acknowledgments about this land, particularly as someone who has worked the land here and worked with it's spirit, I guess you could say. Historically, Chattanooga has been home to many indigenous groups, including prehistoric settlements. And this land is part of the traditional homeland of the Cherokee who were forcibly removed by the US government. I also wanted to acknowledge my region's active participation in and attempts to perpetuate slavery, especially because of the month we're in. That's a history that shadows us to this very day, whether it's from unconscious bias, to overt bigotry, to violence, and I think we've seen a lot of that in the past year.

Sara: The marginalization of black and brown members of our community is an ongoing, unacceptable occurrence that requires attention from every one of us, every single day. And I think, again, just going back to having role models for that, like the ones

Georgete introduced, is really inspiring for that ongoing daily effort. And so I think, as colleagues in the cultural sector, we all know what the consequences of that ongoing ness are for our work. We see limitations in who we're relating to, who we're representing in our work, and ulJamesately, who we're serving through our work. Because our work is about service, and it's about people. So we want to be serving everyone and in order to do that, in order to serve people of all kinds, conservators, for example, need to be people of all kinds. So I don't think it's going to surprise anybody to learn that conservators are still today predominantly white women, which I am a representative of that.

Sara: So as a point of necessity and entering this work, I've been really trying to look at how realistically we're going to change that. So that's led me, of course, to hiring practices. Which is how we bring people into our field, and then also how we allocate leadership and power in our field. So I've been looking into, let's say, some of the archaic hiring customs that persist in our sector. I got my start in gallery work and have interfaced with museums and art and craft throughout the years. And throughout, I would say, I've seen some fairly archaic practices that persist, that when I talk to my colleagues about them, I just get this stare, where it's like, "You're in the dark ages basically."

Sara: So this is why James asked me to come crash the meeting today. And what I have so far is nothing akin to expertise, this is a sketch and hopefully a conversation starter. I know that this meeting isn't terribly big but I was hoping that if folks are interested in having a more in depth conversation about this, or in sharing resources that maybe we could connect, starting through this conversation, and then move forward. For today, I just have a snack plate of hiring practice ideas that I thought were particularly relevant for our sector. So I'll dive into those.

Sara: One thing that has struck me is that right now we have an opportunity to really radically rethink job requirements, and what we see as qualifications and characteristics of desirable candidates. So we see a lot of, must be able to lift 50 pounds, and it's a nonprofit where you don't have to lift 50 pounds. Or automatic disqualification based on the simple fact that you don't have a master's degree or a PhD, which I think a lot of us can relate to that, and that's why I am going to graduate school. It could even be something about a candidate's personal

presentation, notions about eye contact, or that firm handshake that you get taught to give. I know, for me, a prejudice I have had is spelling errors on resumes or like right out.

Sara: These are biases. And I think, again, particularly in gallery and museum work, I've noticed there really are some pervasive stereotypes about how a person should present themselves visually to be working in these areas. So we have a chance now to undo that framework and just take a step way back and take a look at it. And lay out job descriptions with what we really think is necessary in an intellectually honest way when we're writing job descriptions. So that's exciting.

Sara: And then, part of the comments that James has heard me make before on AIC have to do with job postings, So I'll bring a little bit of that up today. Job postings should be informative and accessible. And again, this is like a obviously type thing, but in our field, this is not always the case. So for instance, it's not necessarily a practice that everyone will post a salary range or benefits on their job ads, and this just needs to be done. And I think inquiries around this information, those need to be treated with courtesy and not as like the candidate is being nosy and rude. So posting, being upfront with salary range. I think that job postings need to be radically findable and accessible.

Sara: And what I mean by that is, so Stacy Gordon is a diversity expert who uses the term, unlocking the door. If you have been a gatekeeper to your field, and now you are unlocking the door, you need to probably take a sec to step outside and beckon everybody to come through the door, because it's been locked for so long. So rather than just, "Yeah, we're posting this on Indeed, or our professional network online," we need to actively go out and make sure that these messages are making it to the people who we're trying to reach. And let them know that, "Yes indeed, you are welcome."

Sara: And this is going beyond just putting a two sentence statement at the bottom of our job ad, it's got to be a lot more proactive than that. And then this is something that I won't get too far into, but I will say if any of you guys know about how this works, please contact me. So I have noticed, especially in government-run organizations or larger organizations with HR policies out the wazoo, there is a custom of having to put up job posts even when

we perhaps know the candidate who will be receiving the job. I see a head nodding. This is not intended to be a malicious practice but I think it does have consequences for people. And in conservation, in this specific moment, we've had a perfect storm situation where jobs have disappeared, and maybe they have reappeared and someone's just getting hired back into an old job and then a job posting goes up.

Sara: So then what we have is a job posting and a lot of maybe potentially desperate people seeing this and thinking, "Oh my gosh, is this a real job?" That might not be so disastrous, except we're having such a terrible, terrible Jamese right now. And these things do have real consequences for people on the other end. So this is something I would like to understand more. I've been in the private sector and tiny businesses, so I really don't get it, I don't pretend to get it. I hope to get it eventually and maybe push back a little. Okay, need to move along here.

Sara: Okay, online interviews. 2020, if nothing else, has shown us how useful these can be, so much more useful than we would have imagined, probably most of us. And so we can capitalize on that in the future, which is really exciting. We don't have to insist that someone fly themselves out and pay for accommodations to necessarily do an in-person interview every Jamese. Of course, there's probably still going to be contexts where that is needed, but particularly if it's on that person's dime, it's going to be really good to have this tool already in circulation, and people already know what it's worth, so that's exciting. The other thing that I've come across, that I think is actually really meaningful for us in the culture sector is, hiring for diversity, we need to measure or attempt to measure our success.

Sara: So the hiring, it's not just about onboarding, but it's about retention, and it's about creating belonging. And so if we are trying to lay out metrics for the level of success of our hires, however we decide to gauge that, It could be we have systems for tracking employees orientation or training progress. It could be tracking things like equitable pay for comparable roles across the org chart. These could be productivity measures. If we're doing that, then it means that we're taking the time to attempt to measure. And it shows that our effort is organized and committed, which are both essential to supporting a diverse workforce over time. Because again, this is going to take a lot of

sustained effort. And it's important that as we set out to do this, that we recognize that.

Sara: I think, based on my experience, this is something that, as far as metrics, it does tend to fall through the cracks for some organizations. And that just really struck me as, "Oh yeah, this is a good way of really committing to the project." So that's my snack plate for you guys. I just wanted to return to the word belonging for a sec, because I know that we've all heard diversity and inclusion, these have become buzzwords to the point of sadly over use and it means that when you hear it, you don't take the meaning as well. Whereas I think the word belonging has a little more of its eloquence, and it acknowledges that feeling that we're going for.

Sara: I think about jobs where I felt I belonged, and then jobs where I really felt like I didn't belong, and obviously, we know where we're going to do our best work. So we really want and need a work culture of acceptance and belonging. And then yeah, I guess, for conservators, I think there's a unique challenge here. And I don't know, maybe James you can weigh in on this, but because we do deal with materials, and making things last, our work can really seem to be about things. And that's a problem, because it's about things only in as much as that is a valuable and meaningful service to other people. So really, we are serving other people through our work. And we really have to keep that in mind. And I know that for some of us, it's hard because we're very introverted on average, and we tend to hide and... So keeping that in mind is really crucial.

Sara: And then I'll just close with a very brief phrase that I picked up yesterday. The AIC had a webinar in which Jamaal Sheats, who's the curator at the Fisk University Galleries spoke, and he used the phrase, he really wants people to advocate from within their organization. And I think that just struck me. Those of us who are already in the door, we have the ability to influence and advocate. And I guarantee that if we're conducting hiring, we can definitely find ways to improve. And even if we ourselves are not hiring, we can still find ways to talk about this topic and to raise our concerns and really to just normalize newer ways of doing this.

Sara: And I think we've already seen a success in that on AIC, where now there's a rule that you must post a salary range on job postings in areas where you used to not have to do that, so, little steps. I was thinking maybe, around this topic, if folks did want to talk more, because it's so huge, I can provide my email in the chat and I would love for anyone who's interested in this, just shoot me an email and maybe we can set up a group or a one on one chat. And then I have compiled a brief sheet of just resources, courses and articles and whatnot. And maybe James, I could send that to you to forward along, just some stuff that I've found interesting. But yeah, that's what I have. Thank you guys.

James: Thank you Sara. Silent claps. Did anyone have any questions for Sara?

Gyllian: I have a comment to share. One, I know the AIC post you're referring to in reference, the Phantom jobs.

Sara: Yes.

Gyllian: And I've worked for organizations who have done this but I've also been on the other side, where I've applied for a job that was not real. And I can say that issue is one... Sorry, this is coming from another perspective, I'm originally Canadian, so I'm involved with the Canadian Association for Conservation. And we've just put out a resource called, The Hiring Resource for Heritage Institutions to try and help encourage institutions to hire people in conservation, not just conservators, but in all levels of expertise. And within that, also to advocate through that document that they need to be paid positions, as opposed to unpaid. And that once you get to a certain place in those ranges, you really need to be paying well above minimum wage if you're wanting... Because we had issues where people were posting jobs for people who've gone through grad school, taking on that student debt, and then were still trying to get away with, in Canada, that's $15 an hour, which is better, but still.

Gyllian: So anyway, but we've been running up against this issue as well. And the trouble is that it's an HR policy, so it's not typically within conservation departments. And this is what's happened at other organizations that I've worked for. It's typically someone who has been working on contract, and they are continually having to

re-hire them on this contract. And it usually doesn't involve benefits. And then when they want to hire that person on permanently, there's a rule within the institution usually, particularly if it's a anything associated with government, where it has to be posted publicly. And then to try and give that person a leg up, go write the job position specifically for them.

Sara: Yeah.

Gyllian: Which is a problem. So it becomes an issue of we need to advocate on a grander scale than just within a conservation department. It's about trying to advocate within what is a larger hierarchy of policy.

Sara: Yeah, and I think it's going to be about figuring out who in our world can interface with someone who can interface up the ladder there. And I just still feel like I'm on the very bottom rung here, so I plan to do a sneak attack on this as I go through my career, quite honestly. You'll see what I can do. But thank you for that.

Gyllian: I just thought I'd toss in that info.

Sara: Yeah. That's really good to know.

Georgette: Hi Sara?

Sara: Yes. Hi.

Georgette: Thanks for the presentation. Before we get to the hiring, isn't there a challenge with the education?

Sara: Absolutely.

Georgette: I mean, don't you have to have a certain type of education to be a conservator.

Sara: Absolutely. So-

Georgette: So I would think that the schools, that would be a barrier.

Sara: It is.

Georgette: I mean when I went to school you didn't really hear... I knew about conservatives. In fact, I went to USC, where we had a conservation lab but there was not any ongoing press to encourage anybody to become a conservator. It's just word of mouth.

Sara: Yeah, conservation has had a huge... It's been very exclusive over the years. In fact, when I first researched it, I was an undergrad in the early 2000s, and I was like, "Wow, this is not diverse at all." And then I came back to it to research it again in 2018, and I was expecting that some things had shifted maybe with that. And they really almost hadn't, which was just beyond comprehension. Conservation has had some really hard core gate-keeping practices. And one of those is education, for sure. And it's not just, "Do you have a degree?" It's how incredibly difficult it is to get into a funded program, to even just study it. And up until very, very recently, there were so many unpaid internships happening as prerequisites for graduate programmes. It's just crazy, to be honest.

Sara: And I think we're starting to see some movement. You guys who are in the field, actually, who have been in the field can maybe weigh in on that. But it looks to me like there's finally starting to be a little more momentum building up, which hopefully will just snowball. But man, it's wild.

James: Well I think the conversation's changed, and that's given a platform for the diversity that conservation does have, but I'm still finding huge barriers with hiring. And my evolution has been, first of, what can I do about this right now? And hiring was the power that I had, that I hoped to make some changes with and those barriers have slowed that progress down. And so, like Georgette said, I've expanded it to education even with children. And you just feel like, "What's that going to do? I'm not going to live to see those changes, but that's what I'll have to do on all fronts, really, I've decided.

Kim: And not to be overly negative, but I do have an issue sometimes, a bit of a crisis of conscience when you think about all the advocating and outreach we're doing and knowing those roadblocks exist and still very much exist. And I haven't seen substantive movement, just in the education barrier. Or the way

we view training, even the apprenticeship style route, especially in this country. I don't see that changing in a way that I necessarily always feel comfortable encouraging other people to go into this field. There are way more ways, alternatives that you can work with heritage without being a conserver. And it's, I don't know, it's a-

James: Real bummer.

Kim: What's that?

James: Real bummer Kim.

Kim: No, I think the gatekeepers of conservation, it's not unique to conservation, but there is still very much a sense of entitlement and superiority that I do not subscribe to, I do not believe you have to be that way. And I do think there are alternatives at the moment, at the current moment, that are more accessible. And there are some people who have the alternatives, who maybe are living in big cities, and can take an unpaid internship and get that experience or can afford to go or take on student debt and study abroad or whatever, but that's just only a matter of people. I'm optimistic it can change. And I do know a lot of good people in this sector that are pushing to make things happen, but when I see a little girl that wants to go into heritage, is conservation going to be the first path I direct her toward? I don't know.

Kim: I give her options to them. There are plenty of ways along stan that you can interact with heritage, also in the humanities, also in museums. So I do think we can get there, this isn't to be a total bummer, but I do still think there are major roadblocks that aren't going to move within the next three years.

Gyllian: Absolutely. And just to jump on in on that, so for that exact reason, my Canadian organization that I do all my volunteering with, our focus has been about trying. Our initial, when we were first talking about addressing issues of diversity in the field and trying to make conservation a more flexible field for everyone to participate in, because recognizing that we're getting one perspective of conservation, that if we put every single cultural groups, the conservation of their material culture in the hands of one cultural group, as much as a cultural group, as you can call white America or white Canada, you're just not going to see the

appropriate response to conservation issues that relate to those cultural materials.

Gyllian: So when we were first trying to address this, our first step was, "Oh, we just need other people other than white women to go into conservation." And then we ran into that exact issue, which was are we going to go to schools and try and convince students to go into this and then have their hearts broken when they realize that it's outside of what they're able to access. So instead, what our focus has been, we've looked at advocating at a bunch of different levels. So one of our primary objectives is paid internships and unpaid internships. And that we're trying to do at a multi-level route, so we're trying to advocate within organizations that should have the funding to make paid internships, first of all. And trying to advocate within those organizations, to try and prioritize representatives that have traditionally not seen representation of their cultural groups in heritage settings.

Gyllian: Then we're also trying to see about trying to advocate within private funding organizations to create the funds that smaller museums can apply for and other heritage institutions for that matter, that they can apply for to create those internships. We're trying to encourage concept like the traditional conservator role to engage more within communities and that doesn't necessarily need to be... What we've been trying to do instead of saying, "Go out and tell people about conservation, how they need to be part of conservation," instead, invite communities in and invite them to engage in direct the conservation of their own materials. And even if you're speaking with elders at that point, so a lot of my work has focused around trying to establish collaborative relationships with indigenous community members, and leaders and elders.

Gyllian: And while it may start at an elder or a leader level, they frequently will engage in bringing younger generations who are growing, they're learning and growing up their community and their culture, so there fits that connection there as well. I've worked at museums that intentionally train community members in conservation skills, so that they can use those within their own communities. Again, it's totally about trying to isolate every gate there is and attack it. And it's a lot of different gates, a lot. But it doesn't mean that we can't do it, it's just about, I think that a lot

of people, especially myself, when I was first starting to decide to advocate within conservation. I was viewing everything from like, "Oh, we just need to convince people to go into it," without realizing that there was just so much. Like, I mean, again, I'm from an upper, middle-class, white family in Canada, and I still really struggle with getting into conservation and finding those unpaid pre-programme internships to be able to go into this field.

Gyllian: And then managing, do you take all the unpaid work I continue to have through grad school? And it's a lot, it's a lot for anyone. And it's a myth, if it's a lot for someone in my position, it's a significant barrier for everyone else. Clear, so anyway... sorry, so that's just my schpeel. But I think it's just about strategizing your approach, and specifically tackling different barriers. And I think that we can totally encourage young people to go into conservation, but we have to be accountable to them. So that if I'm telling someone who's in high school, that they should go into conservation, I need to be doing the work to try and make sure that within my field, there are going to be positions for them to take. So that when they are looking for a part Jamese work in high school or in college, that those positions exist. And giving them other opportunities to engage within conservation, that doesn't necessarily need to have a graduate direct programme direction.

James: Thank you. Well Sara, I really appreciate it. I think this really brought up some good conversation. So thank you for talking with us today. And obviously, it's something that we could go on and on about.

Sara: It really is. Thank you guys for your comments today. And I just put my email in the chat, so if this is something you all want to talk about more, I am all about just trying to hear what's going on from other people who know more than I do, because I'm just dropping in. So thank you, guys.

James: Thank you. All right. Well, those are our two speakers for today. So we'll move into our regular Calm business. Today's discussion was really brought to you by our subcommittee TEACH, I always forget what it stands for. But it's the team dedicated to equity and equality and cultural heritage. Kim, do you remember what the acronym stands for? No, I'll look it up, I need to write it down. We're hoping to have a meeting of that subcommittee in March,

we're working that out, but I think a majority of our work this year is going to be obvious to you through the regular Calm meetings. So the next piece of old business is the membership survey. Iv you haven't had a chance to fill that out yet, we've had about 16 responses so far, and we're going to leave it open until the last day in February before sharing that information.

James: It's an anonymous survey, but we'll gather the results and share whatever we can extrapolate about Calm from that. We've set the meeting schedule through June, I think you all saw that email. So our next meeting will be March 18th at 10:00 AM, and we're going to hear from a woman named Nola at the Kicari Freedom School to continuing our theme. So stick around for that. That'll be great. And then do we have a new member with us today?

Kim: We do, Suzanne. Would you like to introduce yourself to everyone?

Suzanne: Hi, everyone. My name is Suzanne DiBella. I'm the Registrar for the International African American Museum. I've been there since about September, and prior to that I was with the South Carolina Historical Society, hi Molly. And so we've been working with Clemson in the Warren Lasch Center and so Kim and Gyllian have been doing a wonderful job where we at least set base there for our artifacts while we wait for her museum to be built. So Kim was kind enough to invite me to join the group here. So thank you very much.

James: We're excited to have you. We've heard a lot about this museum coming to Charleston, so it's good to have somebody part of Calm, that's also a part of that.

Suzanne: Thank you. Yeah, I'm very excited.

James: Okay, any other old or new business anybody wanted to bring up? Okay, chugging right along, we'll go to institutional updates. Suzanne, you don't have to go again, unless you want to. We'll start with Kim.

Kim: You've heard from me enough today, so I'll keep it short. We've been doing a lot of different contract projects at the moment. So we've been fortunate enough to work with Suzanne and IAAM. So we've been in-taking different batches of their collections as

they're coming in and hammering out all that fund collections management stuff. What else is going on this week? We are possibly excavating in the fall. So I've been working with the archeologists to get permitting stuff going forward with that. Otherwise, just conference presentations, private contracts, all kinds of funds, stuff like that.

James: Thank you. I'll go next. So we've been extremely busy. A lot of commission work coming in, I think related to the pandemic, every conservator I know has said the same thing. We had a couple of items adopted since I presented about our conservation wishlist at our annual meeting. So that's been a lot of work. And then I've been working with volunteers and people on various projects, so been really busy. Teri Lynn, you're up.

Teri Lynn: Hi, I'm Teri Lynn Herbert at the Medical University of South Carolina. There's nothing new to report in the library. We're getting ready to move the offices in a couple weeks over to the sixth in the eighth floor of the old hospital. Which is now called The Hospital Annex, that I can never get used to not calling it the Old Children's Hospital. So the only thing that I can say is that, just flashed across my screen was that McMaster, our governor, just signed that COVID vaccination bill, so that should be moving on to get the proper people vaccinated. That's about it.

James: Teri Lynn, I think your construction has spilt over to the library society. We have at least one medical student who studies here now.

Teri Lynn: Very good because we've lost the library to study in. Yeah. Well, that's good.

James: Georgette, do you want to share from the Avery?

Georgette: Yes, we're really excited. We just launched our new website, it's long-overdue. And it highlights our new Director, Dr. Tamra Butler, who is originally from, she grew up on Johns Island for a while so she's a real Lowcountry woman. So we're really happy and proud to have her. And since what's coming off the tail end again of African American History Month, and going into Women's History for March, I think there's some things coming up. I didn't see anything on the website just yet because we're still showing things

for February but check out the website and they'll put it into chat.

James: Sara did you want to share anything that you've got going on project-wise or you don't have to?

Sara: I think I have so much going on that I can't even think of one single thing that's pertinent to this meeting, I think so. Yeah.

James: Thank you for sharing your comments today. Chris?

Chris: Thanks. Not much, I invited my two paid interns and one unpaid intern to this meeting and I'm doubly disappointed that none of them made it, especially since the subject ended up being about them, I think they would have enjoyed that. I do my best to communicate that choosing this career field doesn't mean they're going to end up like me, so it's good for them to meet other people. And Georgette, thanks so much for your presentation. I think that was pretty seamless actually, the examples that you chose. And like you said their innate activism and how that led to public service, I think it's pretty sweet and important too. You can't talk about it enough, frankly, one month is not enough.

Chris: Not much going on at the society. Starting a strategic plan, drafting a planning committee and getting that off the ground, interesting, it's a different language for the organization. But it's fun, it's a good challenge, thanks. And I will send an email out, I guess, probably tomorrow, last chance for the survey. You guys spread that around, among your own colleagues and friends, if you like. Even if they don't attend, if they could tell us why, that's useful information. Thanks.

James: Thanks Chris. I'm also really bad about saying who I am and what institution I'm from but everybody remember that. Molly, you're up.

Molly: Hi, everyone, I'm Molly Solomon. I'm the Librarian at the South Carolina Historical Society. And I don't think we have too much new to report. We're open by appointment and Catherine can maybe touch on that too. We've working with our CFC colleagues for research appointments and we've been pretty busy. And just keeping up with research requests and reproduction requests has been keeping us pretty busy. And I think there is something to the

pandemic, and people cleaning out their shelves and contacting us with long lists of books, which is a good thing, but also a lot of work, so that's been keeping me busy lately. We just finished up our last one hour lecture series today, which was good. We had four talks this month, from scholars around the country and those went pretty well. And then the other main thing, we've been trying to keep up with social media and stay present, and we've been trying to post every day when we can. So yeah, that's pretty much it.

James: Thank you. Catherine.

Catherine Stier...: So I'm Catherine Stiers from the College of Charleston special collections. And like Molly said, our reading room is still open just by appointment only. So we're only allowing two people in the reading room at a Jamese. And I was a little surprised that I could actually make it to this meeting today, because we've been pretty booked. So I did have a researcher who ended up leaving a little early, so glad I could make it. The College of Charleston actually just announced that they're planning for a more or less normal fall, upcoming this year, with in person instruction resuming completely, so we'll see how that goes. Cases at the college have decreased quite a lot following a pretty intense increase in cases after the holidays. So hopefully, they will keep declining and we can continue doing what we're doing and letting people come research and at least in some capacity.

James: Thank you. Suzanne, I think it would be good to hear the latest from the African History Museum.

Suzanne: Yeah, absolutely. So right now we are really full steam ahead with finishing up all of the content for the exhibits. So all of the finalizations for script writing, for text panels and such, choosing images and acquiring our actual objects. We're in a strange position, opening up a new museum where we need to actually go out and find our collection and bring it to the museum. And on top of that, it's the objects and finding the right objects to fit with the story that has been written for the museum that we're going to be telling. So it's an interesting position, it's working in a different approach to collecting than I've done before. But yeah, we are really in the all feet on the ground going towards that goal. So it's going to be a busy couple months with that, as we reach all of those deadlines.

James: Did you say what the expected opening date is?

Suzanne: We don't have a specific date that we're advertising, but we're looking at summer of 2022, opening.

James: When that time comes, we should maybe organize a Calm field trip.

Suzanne: Absolutely. That would be wonderful.

James: Thank you. And finally, Gyllian.

Gyllian: Hi everybody. I'm Gyllian Porteous, I work with Kim Roche at the Warren Lasch Conservation Center, as conservator here. Kim pretty much summed it up, not a huge amount to report, although we're fairly busy, largely just writing up contract proposals for different conservation treatments. And, yeah, that's about that it for me.

James: Awesome, thank you so much everyone. Well, that's all I've got, unless anybody wants to share anything last minute.

Sara: James, I did think of something. I just dropped a link in the chat you guys. I don't know if anyone caught this talk last week. I think it was by Dr. Tiffany Momon, but she is in charge of the Black Craftspeople database, which is mapping data points across the Lowcountry at present, focusing on 18th century historical record. And it's really cool. She described her work in many other states, Tennessee included, but you might want to check it out if you haven't seen it, it's really neat.

James: There's an opportunity there to find bookbinders.

Sara: Indeed, there is, because they need some bookbinders on there.

James: Yeah. Awesome. Thank you Sara.

Sara: Sure.

James: All right guys. Well, I'm going to wrap this up and please join us next month and fill out the survey if you haven't yet. Bye.