

Angela Michele Thorpe

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EDUCATION:

Master of Arts in History, Museum Studies Concentration, May 2014
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

Bachelor of Arts in History, December 2011
University of Florida, Gainesville, FL
Minor: African American Studies

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

North Carolina African American Heritage Commission, NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, Raleigh, NC

Director (April 2019-Present)

- Provide visionary leadership, empowering staff to connect multi-generational audiences to North Carolina African American history, arts, and culture through public history content, educational resources, and community-based experiences.
- Strengthen organizational infrastructure through successfully advocating for staff positions, contract positions, and recurring organizational funding; two permanent positions, three temporary positions, and \$135,000 in recurring operational funding secured during tenure.
- Expand fundraising strategy to advance institutional mission and grow organizational impact; have secured \$413,028 in organizational funding from federal, state, and private entities and \$97,775 in collaborative funding from state and private entities during tenure.
- Create systems to streamline organizational processes; to formalize state, regional, and national partnerships; and to improve constituent-centered technical assistance strategies.
- Build coalitions and create systems to sustain cultural institutions, grow capacity of grassroots cultural heritage workers, and develop emerging public humanities professionals in North Carolina.
- Offer statewide technical assistance to heritage groups and cultural institutions to cultivate innovative and strategic placemaking; to grow inclusive interpretation and programming; and to foster sustainable grassroots heritage work.
- Conceptualize and implement strategies to grow statewide African American heritage tourism infrastructure.
- Create and execute strategies to develop and strengthen board; support AAHC Chair in shaping advocacy priorities.

Acting Director (September 2018-April 2019)

- Created and implemented change management strategy to lead organization through leadership transition.
- Grew capacity and strengthened infrastructure of organization to support its transition from a program of the NC Arts Council to a division of the NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources.
- Created five-year implementation strategy for organizational strategic plan, designed to respond to the needs of grassroots culture workers, creators, emerging heritage professionals, academicians, and partners.
- Established and refined strategic partnerships with national stakeholders to create and advance major statewide initiatives, including the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Nina Simone Childhood Home National Treasure Campaign) and the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History & Culture (Africa to Carolina and Freedmen's Bureau Transcription Project).
- Created and executed rural programming initiative to connect existing programs to underserved North Carolina counties, fostering economic development, and increasing access to educational content.

Associate Director (June 2017-September 2018)

- Developed a constituent-centered strategic plan, which refined organizational mission, vision, and goals.
- Grew organizational awareness by creating and implementing messaging and digital communications strategy.
- Strengthened organizational initiatives and increased statewide impact by building and implementing a suite of programs for youth, educators, and adults.
- Served as project director for two projects funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, "Green Books' Oasis Spaces: African American Travel in NC, 1936-1966" and "A Tale of Two Ships: Developing a Research & Interpretation Plan for One Ship with Two Names."

President James K. Polk State Historic Site, Pineville, NC
Historic Interpreter II (May 2015-June 2017)

- Amplified African American stories through research, interpretation, and programming.
- Grew institutional relationships with grassroots community groups and institutions rooted in African American and Latinx heritage, culture, and traditions.
- Revised institutional fundraising strategy and established a new partnership strategy to create a pathway towards more frequent, cost-effective, and inclusive programming.
- Designed and launched comprehensive social media strategy for site, leading to over 30% increase in Facebook engagement and over 115% increase in Twitter engagement in twenty-two months.
- Created and shared an innovate suite of educational resources for multiple grade levels, including lesson plans, traveling trunks, and interpretive tours.
- Grew support programs, including volunteer program, internship program, and junior historian program.
- Served as site collections manager and exhibition developer.

The HistoryMakers, Chicago, IL

Marketing and Communications Lead & Oral History Researcher (August 2014-May 2015)

- Led marketing and communications and oversaw promotional efforts to local, state, and national outlets to grow awareness of organization.
- Worked with a small team to create research-based social media content related to African American history.
- Strengthened relationships with schools and educators across the country via innovative programs, trainings, and special events.

PUBLICATIONS & DOCUMENTS

Angela Thorpe and Sarah Watkins Kenney, PhD, Kimberly Kenyon (ed.), “A Tale of Two Ships: A Collections Research and Interpretation Plan for Revealing Hidden Histories of One Ship with Two Names: *Queen Anne’s Revenge/La Concorde*,” NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (March 2021)

Angela Thorpe, “Green Books’ ‘Oasis Spaces’: African American Travel in North Carolina, 1936-1966 White Paper,” NC Department of Natural & Cultural Resources (August 2020)

Angela Thorpe, “Rethinking Diversity” series, History@Work (November-December, 2014)

CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, COURSES & HEARINGS

Moderator, **Beginner’s Guide to African American Cemetery Preservation Webinar,** (March 2022)

Alabama African American Civil Rights Heritage Sites Consortium Virtual Retreat (June 2021)
Panel Moderator: “History Empowers Community: Economic Development, Tourism & Placemaking”

NC Growth Economic Development Webinar (April 2021)
Panel Moderator: “Black Placemaking for the Culture”

African American Cemetery Preservation Virtual Mini-Conference, Elizabeth City State University, (February 2021)
Speaker: North Carolina African American Cemetery Preservation Initiative

Association of African American Museums Virtual Conference, (August 2020)
Panelist: “Oasis Spaces: Shifting and Sharing North Carolina’s ‘Green Book’ Narrative”

Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference, Charleston, SC (October 2019)
Panelist: “Revealing and Retelling Hidden Histories of One Ship with Two Names: *Queen Anne’s Revenge/La Concorde*”

Association of African American Museums Conference, Jackson, MS (August 2019)
Panelist: “Seeking Oasis: Documenting Jim Crow-Era Travel in North Carolina”

U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands Hearing, Washington, DC (May 2019)
Testified in support of H.R. 1179 (African-American Burial Grounds Network Act)

North Carolina Museums Council Conference, Wilmington, NC (March 2017)
Moderator and panelist, “How to Listen: Listening Sessions as Tools for Community Engagement”

AWARDS

Friends of the City of Raleigh Museum “Woman of Change” (June 2021)

North Carolina Museums Council Diversity and Inclusion Award (March 2021)

American Alliance of Museums Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship (January 2016)

PROFESSIONAL & CIVIC AFFILIATIONS

American Alliance of Museums

Association of African American Museums, Program Committee

Association for the Study of African American Life & History

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Member-At-Large

Leadership Raleigh, Member, Class 43

Museums Association of the Caribbean

National Association for Interpretation

National Council on Public History

National Trust for Historic Preservation

North Carolina Museums Council

Southeastern Museums Conference