THE Community Curation PROGRAM

Bridging the divide between African American generations with digital technology

nmaahc.si.edu/familyhistorycenter
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African American families have a rich history of storytelling that informs, inspires and imparts each generation with a sense of place and purpose. The National Museum of African American History and Culture’s Community Curation Program (CCP), which will launch in 2017, will marry this tradition with smartphone technology to preserve our past and to share inspirational stories that reflect uniquely American values, such as perseverance, resiliency and achievement.

The CCP — a new initiative at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), sponsored by the Robert Frederick Smith Fund for the Digitization and Curation of African American History — will bridge the generational divide in African American communities by enabling participants to preserve and share their stories by uploading audio, video, photographs and other archives to a central repository. By encouraging all Americans to participate in the curation of our nation’s rich heritage, the CCP will empower each of us to be an active participant in writing our nation’s history.

Selections from the CCP will be featured in the Museum’s Robert Frederick Smith Explore Your Family History Center. This innovative, high-tech facility will allow on-site visitors of all ages to discover the wonders of diverse family stories, while enabling off-site participants to visit the Center remotely. The Center will also feature interactive digital experiences and allow participants to share meaningful audio and audiovisual stories, such as a grandmother speaking about attending a segregated school, a grandfather discussing his military service or an uncle talking about his struggle to gain voting rights.

The CCP is a first-of-its-kind preservation effort that will empower the collecting and sharing of family histories — from before the Industrial Age through the Information Age and beyond.
Participate Now

The National Museum of African American History and Culture, and its Robert Frederick Smith Explore Your Family History Center, will open to the public on September 24, 2016. The capabilities of the Center’s Community Curation Program will expand exponentially with the launch of the app in 2017. Your participation in this groundbreaking initiative, however, can start now.

The Museum invites individuals across the nation to start identifying, collecting and curating the stories and objects that will make the CCP an unparalleled archive of personal, compelling and never-before-known histories of African American individuals, families and communities. In addition to the many family stories we hope to collect, we also are keenly interested in the contributions of community groups, religious organizations and chapters of nonprofit national organizations. Chapters of Alpha Phi Alpha, 100 Black Men, the Urban League and the NAACP have already begun working on the CCP.

This will be a unique opportunity to celebrate African American history at the community level, and to tell the full American story by sharing the contributions made by African Americans. As a result of these grassroots efforts, African Americans of all ages will be able to join together to preserve the traditions of family, community, culture and America for current and future generations.
CCP Goals

• Promote an understanding of why archiving black history is critical.

• Demonstrate how modern technology allows us to curate this material like never before.

• Encourage everyone to search for forgotten family treasures — photos, home movies, recordings, writings, heirlooms — that may now reside in closets, attics or even old shoe boxes.

• Excite individuals about interviewing family and friends to create oral histories that celebrate their past and inspire the future.

• Expand and coordinate preservation efforts with the launch of the CCP app and digital repository.
The CCP App and Digital Repository

Thanks to the generosity of the Robert Frederick Smith Fund for the Digitization and Curation of African American History, a free app and digital repository will launch in 2017. This innovative, easy-to-use app will help users preserve, upload and share photographs, audio and video files, and other archives via their smartphones to a central CCP repository.
For More Information

For updates on the pending launch of the CCP app and digital repository, please visit the museum’s website at nmaahc.si.edu/familyhistorycenter.

When the CCP app and digital repository launch, the website will instruct community leaders and individuals alike in efforts to register and participate in the CCP. FAQs will help visitors upload digital files of images of heirlooms and stories for inclusion in the CCP’s remarkable African American archive. Together, we will help tell America’s story through the lens of African American history and culture.
About the National Museum of African American History and Culture

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the 19th and newest museum of the Smithsonian Institution. It is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history and culture. It was established by an Act of Congress in 2003, following decades of efforts to promote and highlight the contributions of African Americans. To date, the Museum has collected more than 36,000 artifacts. Over 120,000 individuals have become charter members of the Museum. NMAAHC is a public institution open to all, where anyone is welcome to participate, collaborate and learn more about African American history and culture.
About the Robert Frederick Smith Explore Your Family History Center

The Robert Frederick Smith Explore Your Family History Center will leverage 21st-century technology to engage and educate regular museum visitors, at-risk youth, technologically inclined millennials and global audiences. The Center was donated by Robert Frederick Smith, the Founder, Chairman and CEO of Vista Equity Partners, a leading enterprise software–focused private equity firm. Mr. Smith has been widely recognized for his business achievements and global philanthropic efforts and has received numerous awards, including the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Chairman’s Award, the Reginald F. Lewis Achievement Award, the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Robert Toigo Foundation, the Ripple of Hope Award from Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, the Award of Excellence from the National Association of Investment Companies and the Archdiocese of New York Pierre Toussaint Medal.