

21 August 2024

To: Members of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Commission
From: Brian Grogan
Re: Virginia Civil Rights Digital History Platform

Please accept my thanks for the opportunity to address the commission in June. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the meeting today due to obligations at Hampden-Sydney College with the start of the fall term. I do plan to attend your meeting scheduled for November 20 and will have a more detailed proposal for you then. For the moment I wish to share a few developments:

1. Moton Museum and Longwood University:

I have had extended conversations with Cainan Townsend, Executive Director of the Museum on building Prince Edward history archives, along with the educational and research potential of a Virginia Civil Rights Digital History platform. Recently we met with the archivist at Longwood University libraries, Jamie Krogh, to discuss the National Archives and National Endowment grant opportunities. She responded enthusiastically to the concept of a workshop of scholars, archivists, librarians and digital experts to explore approaches to the undertaking.

2. VCU Libraries Special Collections:

Brian Daugherty is professor of history at VCU and co-editor of our book on Prince Edward County. We met to discuss these ideas and steps forward. He has recently been working on projects with the new director of Special Collections at VCU which already has a large collection on Civil Rights and Prince Edward history, notably the Edward H. Peeples archive from his work in the county in the 1960s and including the study he prepared for the King Commission in 2008 on the actual number of students effected by the closing of the public schools. Professor Daugherty is going to arrange a meeting for us with the Director of Special Collections in the coming weeks to discuss the digital platform concept and grant opportunities.

3. University of Georgia - Civil Rights Digital Library: <https://crdl.usg.edu/>

This platform was introduced to you at the last meeting. I have been in touch with UGA Libraries to request a conversation on the origins and development of their platform. A consultation with them could be invaluable to developing such a project for Virginia.

4. Virginia Humanities:

I am meeting with Matthew Gibson at Virginia Humanities this week to discuss funding possibilities for my archive of Prince Edward research, as well as conceptual approaches to a Virginia Civil Rights Digital platform.

5. Hampden-Sydney College Special Collections:

Recently I have had conversations with the new archivist at Hampden-Sydney College Bortz Library on reviewing the College archives for related material. I am also seeking to develop opportunities for student independent work in organizing my archive of Prince Edward material through the Public History program there.