



Biographical Investigation Proposal

Presented to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection,
Historic Preservation Office
Revised January 16, 2017

Abstract:

Stockton University is pleased to submit this research proposal to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Historic Preservation Office (HPO), for a biographical investigation of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the potential historical significance of 753 Walnut Street, Camden, New Jersey. If funded, the final report will assess available documentation about Dr. King's time in southern New Jersey between 1948 and 1951, including a systematic analysis—both positive and negative—about his residency. More specifically, it will assess the historical significance of whether such residency, if demonstrated, was a formative influence on Dr. King's ideas, activism, and professional development.

Stockton's study will be administratively housed in its South Jersey Culture & History Center (SJCHC). The Center was founded for three purposes: 1) to help foster awareness within local communities of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Southern New Jersey, 2) to promote the study of this heritage, especially among area students, and 3) to produce publishable materials that provide a deepened understanding of this heritage.

As requested in HPO's call for proposals, this project includes four inter-related phases: a literature search of Dr. King's autobiographical writings and of biographies written about him; a "local" investigation of New Jersey sources; an oral history component; and a "distant" investigation in regional and national archives. Phases I through III will be conducted simultaneously between February and April 2017. Phase IV, which would require more extensive travel, will be undertaken after the first three phases are complete and a preliminary report submitted, and only if the project team and HPO staff deem such additional work essential. This work could be conducted only after the academic year concludes in mid-May, and would be complete by the end of June 2017.

The team proposes two project leaders: John O'Hara, Associate Professor of Writing and Critical Thinking, and Paul W. Schopp, Assistant Director for Stockton's South Jersey Culture & History Center. Dr. O'Hara will oversee Phases 1 and 3 and serve as the principal point of contact on the project. He would also, if deemed necessary, oversee Phase 4 of this proposal. Mr. Schopp will lead research on Phase 2.

Team leaders will meet monthly with HPO staff by Skype, along with other team members as appropriate, to ensure that HPO remains up-to-date on project developments.

Research Plan and Schedule of Work:

HPO's call for proposals includes a detailed set of research questions and potential sources about the historic significance of 753 Walnut Street. These inform the following research plan.

A. PHASE ONE: Review of Existing Material (1 month)

This stage of the investigation includes a review of published autobiographical and biographical materials, as well as those primary materials already collected by the HPO, for information about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s time in Camden, New Jersey. Although past researchers have mined these resources, it is the natural starting point for this research. Such work would not only establish any past references to the city, and to 753 Walnut Street specifically, but also might indicate if Dr. King spent substantial time elsewhere during the same years. Dr. O'Hara will complete this work with the assistance of Dr. Michelle McDonald and a dedicated Graduate Research Assistant, Emeline Fishel, provided and funded by Stockton's graduate program in American Studies.

Priority will be given to Dr. King's own writings as well as select biographies, particularly those that include information about King's earlier life and are recommended by The King Center in Atlanta, Georgia, arguably the institutional authority on this subject. Most of these works focus on Dr. King's later life, but also include reference to his years in seminary. All of the following have already been confirmed to contain at least some references to King's time at Crozer Seminary, and are available in print, through inter-library loan, or electronically through Stockton University's library:

Select Primary Publications:

- Claybourne Carson, et al. (eds.), *The King Papers* - Volumes 1-7 (with more volumes forthcoming), University of California Press.
- *Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1958.
- *The Trumpet of Conscience*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1968. (Foreword by Coretta Scott King).
- *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1967.
- James M. Washington (ed.), *Why We Can't Wait*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963.
- Carson, Clayborne (ed.). *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: IPM in Association with Warner Books, 1998.

Select Secondary Publications:

- Lewis Baldwin. *Never to Leave Us Alone: The Prayer Life of Martin Luther King Jr.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Coretta Scott King. *My Life with Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1969. Revised edition copyright 1993 by Coretta Scott King.
- Thomas F. Jackson. *From Civil Rights to Human Rights: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Struggle for Economic Justice.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007.
- Lerone Bennett, Jr. *What Manner of Man.* Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., Book Division, 1964
- Oates, Stephen B. Oates. *Let The Trumpet Sound: The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Harper & Row, 1982.

B. PHASE TWO: Local Archival Research (2 months)

The second phase of this project, conducted alongside Phase 1, is a thorough review of records related to residency available in New Jersey repositories. These include the 1947 Camden City Directory and the Sanborn fire insurance maps for Camden, available at the New Jersey State Library, as well as records of the Camden City building department and tax assessor's property report cards (Treasury Department records also available in Trenton). Paul Schopp will be primarily responsible for this part of the project; we have budgeted two months, as Mr. Schopp's current job responsibilities will limit his ability to visit area libraries and archives to two days a week.

The team acknowledges that, as noted by the HPO, there may be gaps in information recorded in city directories (which were published in 1947 and 1950, so are less helpful in tracking activity during the intervening years, a pattern further compounded by transience in the years following World War II). The goal, however, is to reconstruct a street-level residency scheme of property owners and tenants. Finally, this phase would also include analysis of judicial records related to the June 12, 1950 incident of alleged discrimination prosecuted at the Burlington County Court House.

At the same time, Dr. O'Hara and Dr. McDonald, again assisted by Emeline Fishel, will complete analysis of historic newspapers (utilizing such databases as <http://www.newspapers.com>, which includes *The Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *Courier Post*) as well as genealogy websites (such as Ancestry.com) to research names of potential interview candidates as they become available through local archival research. This will prepare the team for the subsequent phase of this project, oral history documentation.

C. PHASE THREE: Oral History Collection (1-2 months depending on interviewee identification and availability)

Only after Phases 1 and 2 are complete, as the HPO notes in their December application assessment, will it be possible to identify interview targets who might be able to more concretely demonstrate the extent of Dr. King's presence in Camden between 1948 and 1951. Such research is also needed in order to draft suitable questions to frame interview questions.

The goals of this phase are to reach a definitive conclusion about the times, lengths, and purposes of Dr. King's time in Camden. Ideally, such witnesses would be able to corroborate recollections with additional documentation (such as personal letters, photographs, etc.). If those living at the time are unavailable or no longer living, the team will endeavor to locate descendants who might still retain such documentation.

Finally, team members will reach out to more distant archives (including the Delaware County Historical Society, Colgate Rochester Divinity School, the King Center, and Stanford University) by phone and online to assess whether additional documentation that might yield significantly more information is available. When possible, this data will be requested in photocopied or digital form for review.

At the conclusion of this phase, the team will prepare a final report for HPO that summarizes evidence and conclusions to date, and decide whether phase 4 of this projected is warranted. Dr. O'Hara and Mr. Schopp, both of whom have prior experience developing or contributing to applications for National Register consideration, would serve as lead editors for the report, but all team members will contribute to its drafting and final revision. Information would be organized by the principal questions posed by HPO:

- What evidence is available about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s residency between 1948-1951 (in Camden, NJ or elsewhere)?
- What can be documented about Dr. King's experiences of racial prejudice during the same time period, as well as any legal recourse he sought?
- Is the residence under consideration (753 Walnut Street, Camden, NJ) sufficiently tied to these events to warrant consideration for historic status?
- What formative impact, if any, did Dr. King's experiences while in seminary have on the later trajectory of his career in Civil Rights activism?

Copies of all primary sources located will be appended to the report for HPO's files and any subsequent review. A second set of all materials would be maintained by Stockton, which asks HPO to consider allowing the university to chronicle the research project online and/or by an exhibition hosted at the campus library.

D. PHASE FOUR: Distant Archival Research (1-2 months)

If preliminary conversations with more distant archives warrant, and HPO agrees, May and June 2017 would also be used to conduct research as needed in more distant locations.

The cost proposal below includes more specific detail about transportation and, when appropriate, accommodation and per diem costs that are based on the Stockton's travel policies and procedures. Approximately, 22 travel days are estimated for local research, with an additional 16 working days if Chester, Rochester, San Francisco, and Atlanta are determined valuable venues for this project.

This phase of the project can only be completed once the academic term is complete, and, if local research justifies the undertaking, would be completed by Dr. O'Hara, assisted by either Dr. Gregg or Dr. McDonald.

Regardless of whether historic status is ultimately deemed viable, this work offers a remarkable opportunity to demonstrate how faculty and students conduct research collaboratively, the value of academic and community engagement, and the interpretive nature of historical inquiry.

Timeline:

The request indicates that a final report should be issued within 120 days of receiving the Notice to Proceed. While Phases I through III should be completed within that time frame, and a preliminary report prepared, oral histories may take longer to schedule because they cannot take place until candidates are identified by the first two phases, and interviewees' availability may vary.

Moreover, all members of the team have existing teaching and work obligations that dictate their availability. Faculty have already set their course syllabi for the term, while SJCHC staff members have committed to projects that likewise extend through the end of the calendar year. Consequently, team members will be limited to no more than two working days per week.

We are asking that HPO consider amending the project timeline to accommodate the demands of an academic calendar. More specifically, Stockton proposes:

February 2017: Complete review of existing documentation made available by HPO; conduct literature review.

February-March 2017: Conduct local online and archival research (specifics provided above); begin identifying and recording local oral histories; complete newspaper and genealogical research.

April 2017: Prepare and submit preliminary report to HPO, along with schedule for research in more distant libraries and archives, if HPO deems such work is warranted.

May-June 2017: Conduct distant archival research once the spring 2017 has ended (this work cannot be completed earlier as such teaching schedules for team members span Monday through Friday). Compile second report to be submitted to the HPO when research is complete, and no later than June 30, 2017.

Research Team:

Dr. John O'Hara will serve as Co-Leader for Stockton's Research Team. In this capacity, he will supervise the work of the project's graduate student researcher, assist in the interpretation of local archival material, coordinate and assist in conducting oral history

interviews, and—if the project proceeds to Phase IV—conduct research in designed distant archives. He will also participate in monthly HPO meetings, and serve as lead author of the team’s final report to HPO. Dr. O’Hara is Associate Professor of Critical Thinking and First Year Studies at Stockton University, where he also teaches in the Master of Arts in American Studies Program. His research on social movements of the 1960s has appeared in *American Quarterly* and *The Sixties: A Journal of History, Politics and Culture*, and he is the co-author and general editor of *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument* (Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2017). With support from the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and Stockton University, he recently directed and curated “A Time for Change: Civil Rights in South Jersey,” and exhibition displayed at the African-American Heritage Museum of Southern New Jersey (AAHMSJ) and Stockton University, and has also contributed to the National Register application of Kent State University.

Mr. Paul W. Schopp is the Assistant Director of the South Jersey Culture & History Center (SJCHC) at Stockton University, and will serve as Co-Leader, particularly for Phase II of this project, attend all HPO meetings in Trenton, and—given his past experience assessing evidence of historical significance—will play an important role in assembling and editing the project’s final report. He holds an A.A.S. in History from Burlington County College, and has worked in the local history field for over 42 years. During that time, he successfully completed or participated in nine National Register nominations, including four that were directly associated with African American history. He served on the Timbuctoo Discovery Committee for five years, conducting extensive research on this fugitive slave enclave located near Mount Holly, Burlington County. Mr. Schopp is a leading authority on identifying and locating black hamlets in South Jersey, having compiled a list of over 130 communities with more than 90 of them dating to the antebellum period, and he continues to conduct research on infamous slave catcher George Alberti and his activities. In addition to completing historical contexts for well over 200 Cultural Resource Management reports, he has written two published books and a number of peer-review journal articles.

Additional academic support on the team include two Stockton historians with experience in African American history, local history, historic preservation, and public history, the director of the SJCHC, and one dedicated Graduate Assistant (funded by Stockton University):

Dr. Robert Gregg is both Professor of History at Stockton University and Dean of the School of General Studies. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and has held fellowships from the American Council on Learned Societies and the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University. His research focuses on African American and comparative history and he is the author of *Inside, Outside: Essays in Comparative History* (MacMillan, 1999) and *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia’s African American Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890-1940* (Temple University Press, 1993). Dr. Gregg also brings a strong background in public history to this project. Prior to his teaching career, he co-founded a public history consulting firm, and served as an adviser on exhibitions for both the Library of Congress and African American Museum of Philadelphia. He was the historian for the 1991 exhibit, “Let This Be Your Home: The African American Migration to Philadelphia, 1900-1940,” served in 1992 as the consultant to provide a plan for a permanent exhibit at the African American Museum.

Dr. Michelle McDonald is both Assistant Provost and Associate Professor of History at Stockton University. She holds an M.A. in Museum Studies from George Washington University as well as a Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan, and has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, New Jersey Council for the Humanities, Harvard Business School, and McNeil Center for Early American Studies. Dr. McDonald has worked for over sixteen years in public and academic history, several years as the Director of Education for museum properties owned and operated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She is on the faculty of Stockton's undergraduate programs in History and Africana Studies, as well as its Master's in American Studies program, and was a co-curator for "A Time for Change: Civil Rights in South Jersey," a museum exhibition directed by Dr. O'Hara.

Dr. Thomas Kinsella is both Professor of Literature and Director of Stockton's South Jersey Culture & History Center (SJCHC). He received his Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of Pennsylvania and has held fellowships from the American Philosophical Society and the Faculty Resource Network Scholar-in-Residence program at New York University. Much of his early career involved the study of the book, in particular the history of colonial American bookbinding. He has worked in archives across the nation and has extensive experience curating library exhibitions. Since 2011 Kinsella has directed SJCHC. To date the center has published or republished nine works that explore South Jersey's rich cultural heritage; nearly all have been produced with the assistance of student editors. The most recent publication is a 558-page study of the history of the city of Burlington, New Jersey.

Stockton has committed to fund one Graduate Assistant (Emeline Fishel) to provide additional support for this project. Stockton's Master's in American Studies has provided student researchers for a variety of SJCHC initiatives, including the transcription and republication of several historical volumes related to South Jersey history, as well as research for museum exhibitions. Most recently, students have helped SJCHC to develop the *Hammonton History Project*: a visual database of more than 500 historical images celebrating the sesquicentennial of the Town of Hammonton, New Jersey. Outreach to the local community, in order to gather a broad sampling of images, included a community digitization day when community members brought photographs, postcards, documents, and artifacts to be scanned or photographed. Stockton GA assistantships are limited to 4 hours per week.

Curriculum vitae with additional detail about academic backgrounds and relevant past experience for all team members are attached as Appendix A.

Cost Proposal:

A. STAFFING (based on a projected 4-month timeline of February-May, 2017)	Phase	Amount
John O'Hara (Co-Team Leader): budgeted at the equivalent of one course release	I-IV (esp. I, III, IV)	\$5,800.00
Paul W. Schopp (Co-Team Leader): budgeted at \$34/hour x 14 hours/week x 16 weeks	I-IV (esp. II)	\$7,616.00

Michelle McDonald (Team Member): review of research materials and contributions to draft report (15 hours total at \$90/hour)	I-IV	\$1,350.00
Robert Gregg (Team Member): review of research materials and contributions to draft report (10 hours total at \$90/hour)	I-IV	\$900.00
Tom Kinsella (Team Member): review of research materials contributions to draft report (10 hours total at \$90/hour)	I-III	\$900.00
Total		\$16,566.00
<i>*Figures above are based on extant hourly wage rates or on the union-negotiated, state-approved rate of \$90/hour for contractual hire of faculty.</i>		

B (1). TRAVEL (Phases I-III)	Phase	Amount
Transportation to and from Stockton University to the New Jersey State Library; 2 working days estimated (70 miles each way, or 140 round trip x 2 days x \$.54/mile)	II	\$151.20
Transportation to and from Stockton University to the Camden City Bureau of Records (City Hall, Room 329); 4 working days estimated (55 miles each way, or 110 miles round trip x 4 days x \$.54/mile)	II	\$237.60
Transportation to and from Stockton University to Camden, NJ to conduct oral history interviews; 10 working days estimated (55 miles each way, or 110 miles round trip x 10 days x \$.54/mile)	II	\$594.00
Transportation to and from Stockton University and the Burlington County Superior Court, Mount Holly, NJ; 6 working days estimated (50 miles each way, or 100 miles round trip x 6 x \$.54/mile)	II	\$324.00
Total		\$1,306.80

**Figures provided above are based on Stockton's state-mandated transportation guidelines for domestic travel.*

C. ADMINISTRATIVE	Phase	Amount
Photography Charges	I-IV	\$200.00
Production cost of 1950 Census	II-III	\$150.00
Total		\$350.99

D TRAVEL (Phase IV—if deemed necessary following Phases I-III and preliminary report)	Phase	Amount
Transportation to and from Stockton University and the Delaware County Historical Society, Chester, PA (if needed; 4 working days estimated (60.4 miles each way, or 120.8 miles round trip x 4 x \$.54/mile)	IV	\$326.16
Transportation to and from Stockton University to the National Archives, Washington, D.C.; 3 working days estimated (182 miles each way, or 364 miles round trip x \$.54/mile)	IV	\$196.56
Overnight accommodation in Washington, D.C. (2 nights x hotel and per diem at \$182/day; third day meals and incidentals only at \$69)	IV	\$433.00
Transportation to and from Stockton University to Crozer Theological Seminar (if needed; 3 working days estimated at 389 miles each way x \$.54/mile):	IV	\$420.12
Overnight accommodation in Rochester, NY (2 nights x hotel and per diem at \$104/day; third day meals and incidentals only at \$59)	IV	\$118.00
Transportation to and from Stockton University to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center in Atlanta, GA (if needed; 3 working days, airfare estimated via Expedia.com):	IV	\$220.00
Overnight accommodation in Atlanta, GA (2 nights x hotel and per diem at \$148/night; third day meals and incidentals only at \$69)	IV	\$365.00
Transportation to and from Stockton University to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, Stanford University (if needed; 3 working days airfare estimated via Expedia.com)	IV	\$400.00
Total		\$2,478.84

TOTAL COST PROPOSAL (Phases I-III): \$18,212.80
TOTAL COST (including Phase IV): \$20,691.64

Curriculum Vitae:

Please see attached Appendix A for brief curriculum vitae of proposed team members.