

# CHRISTOPHER SMOTHERS

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## EDUCATION

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05/2022

### **Bachelor of Arts: History**

#### **Clark Atlanta University - Atlanta, GA**

- Completed a rigorous program of study in American, European, African Diaspora, and World history, as well as courses in historiography, research methods, and critical analysis.
- Developed advanced skills in research, writing, and critical thinking, including the ability to analyze primary and secondary sources, formulate arguments, and communicate ideas effectively.
- Participated in various extracurricular activities, including academic clubs, volunteer work, and internships, gaining practical experience in historical research, preservation, and outreach.
- Engaged in independent study and research projects, culminating in a capstone project that demonstrated mastery of historical analysis and research skills.
- Graduated magna cum laude, with honors, reflecting a strong academic record and a commitment to excellence in the field of history.
- Dean's List [Fall 2021 & Spring 2022]

08/2018 to 2/2019

### **Professional Genealogy Certificate**

#### **Boston University Continuing Education Center – Boston, MA**

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION & CERTIFICATIONS

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11/2022 to Current Board Member: **Bonnet Carré Historical Center** – LaPlace, LA

05/2021 to Current Board Member: **Reclaim the Records** – New York, NY

12/2020 to Current African Diaspora Genealogy Director: **Ancestry Detectives** – Ontario, CAN

05/2018 to Current Member: **Association of Professional Genealogists**

## PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

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A highly skilled genealogist and digital historian with experience in forensic research and cultural curation, dedicated to uncovering and sharing diverse inclusive stories. Possess a degree in history and a focus on forensic genealogy. Experience working with prestigious organizations such as the Library of Congress and the National Archives. Has a strong track record of analyzing, organizing, and interpreting historical materials to shed light on marginalized voices and experiences. As a committed educator and genealogy business owner, passionate about sharing expertise with others and helping them discover their own unique family histories.

## SKILLS

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- Genealogical research
- Forensic analysis
- Cultural inclusivity
- Digitization of historical documents
- Pedagogy of American History
- Client relationship management
- Differentiated instruction
- Research and analysis of historical record data and planning
- Freedom of Information and Open Data (FOIA) requests
- Triangulation of DNA

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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- 12/2018 to Current **Chief Executive Officer: Unearthing Your Roots Inc.** – Atlanta, GA  
 As Chief Executive Officer of Unearthing Your Roots, LLC, I am responsible for overseeing all aspects of the business, including strategic planning, financial management, and team leadership. My expertise in genealogical research and forensic analysis enables me to provide clients with comprehensive and accurate information about their family histories. Through my leadership, we strive to provide exceptional service that empowers individuals to connect with their past and gain a greater understanding of their identity.
- 08/2022 to Current **American History Teacher: Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools** – NC
- Independently lead classroom instruction in grade levels 10-12th
  - Integrate culturally inclusive material into differentiated instruction
  - Assess student progress, analyzed data, and planned instruction
  - Provide meaningful feedback
  - Adjust instruction as needed to meet the needs of diverse learners
- 01/2023 to 03/2023 **Recruiter: University of Delaware**
- Establish contacts to activate a \$500,000 Bank of America Grant
  - Expose Historically Black College and University (HBCU) students to the discipline of art conservation through in-person and virtual presentations
  - Collaborate with professional paper and objects conservators
  - Demonstrate a 400% increase in undergraduate applicants
- 06/2022 to 12/2022 **AHHA Intern: Library of Congress** – Washington, DC
- Heighten visibility and promote accessibility for Library of Congress
  - Created resources that (more fully) represent the rich cultural and creative heritage of the United States.
  - Acclimated myself with Citrix and Confluence Telework Platforms
  - Analyzed, organized, and interpreted Theodore Roosevelt's Presidential Papers to identify African American voices that help share an inclusive story of the American experience
- 01/2022 to 01/2023 **Lead Genealogist: Morehouse College** – Atlanta
- Sponsored by Kenneth Chenault, Chairman of the Smithsonian NMAAHC and retired former CEO of American Express
  - Unearth the legacy of the Chenault-Quick family through genealogical research

and digitization projects at National Archives Records Administration (A1)

- Organize and delegate research for 400-level Special Topics History Capstone Course

06/2022 to 08/2022 **Summer Intern: Princeton University Art Museum** – Princeton, NJ

- Conduct research and drafted texts related to the Museum's new acquisitions from Souls Grown Deep Collections
- Collaborate with museum staff to elevate the voices of African American folk artists through historical and genealogical lens
- Performed seminal research on the Quilter's at Gee's Bend to democratize/situate the origins of the Quilter's themselves and their ancestors
- Synthesized art from Purvis Young, Henry and Georgia Speller, and John B. Murray
- Investigated the naturalization process of Purvis Young's ancestor, Beatrice G. Armbrister for exhibition

03/2021 to 11/2022 **Genealogist: Souls Grown Deep Foundation** – Atlanta, GA

- Identify living heirs of artists in the Souls Grown Deep Foundation collections to assign royalties
- Digitize 19th Century records from Wilcox County, Alabama Courthouse Identify the origins of the enslaved population of Gee family of Halifax County, North Carolina
- Contextualize 250 years of historical documentation for museum curation in National Gallery of Art and Royal Academy of Arts

01/2019 to 01/2021 **Forensic Genealogist: Raven Home Buyers, LLC**

- Identify living heirs of foreclosed properties in New York City and State real estate
- Research court deeds documenting the history of abandoned property

01/2020 to 08/2020 **Volunteer Forensic Genealogist: City Of Tulsa**

- Partner with Deputy Mayor of Tulsa, Amy Brown, PhD and Philip Spivey, professional genealogist
- Trace the origins and migrations of those affected by the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921
- Extract and triangulate DNA from mass grave sites to identify living descendants for reparation initiatives and historic preservation

04/2019 to 08/2021 **Digital Archivist: National Archives and Records Administration** – Morrow, GA

- Digitize a variety of rare collections:
  - Deaths and Internment at Camp Nelson, KY
  - Station Hospital Vital Records, Maxwell Field, Montgomery, Alabama
  - U.S. Railroad Pensions

05/2018 to Current **Board Member: Reclaim The Records**

- File specialized Freedom of Information and Open Data (FOIA) requests to get public data released back to the public.
- Sue government agencies for restricting access from public records behind exorbitant paywalls
- Digitize the Mississippi Death Index (1912-1943) which account for over 450,000+ names added to historical databases on Familysearch.org/Ancestry.com
- Survey and discovered off-site locations of minority records affecting underrepresented populations of the South
- Facilitate the exchange of records between classified agencies to transfer records into public domain
- Develop programs to support other non-profits seeking record acquisitions

**PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS** \_\_\_\_\_

- *Presenter, Bennett, B. "Unearthing the Story of Henry Brookhart" Research at the National Archives. (2021, December).*
- *Presenter, Daniel Spelce. Family Sparks. "Moses Johnson: Crime, Imprisonment & Pardon" (2021, November).*
- *Presenter, Norwood, N. "Bonnet Carre Spillway holds a hidden history" Fox 8 News. (2021, February).*
- *Presenter, Cooper, T. "Understanding Consumer DNA Tests and Genetic Tools for Genealogy," On the Town with Tanya. (2019, May).*

**GRANTS/AWARDS** \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Edward Sluby African American Scholarship (2022)

Dr. Yvonne J. Chandler Memorial Scholarship (2021)

**REFERENCES** \_\_\_\_\_

Daniel Black, PhD

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**Director of African American Studies**

**Clark Atlanta University**

Karcheik Sims-Alvarado, PhD

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**Director of Public History Studies**

**Morehouse College**

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