

Aisha LaDon. Abdul Rahman

Archivist & Digital Heritage Researcher | Community Archives & Immersive Access Specialist

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Professional Summary:

Culturally grounded digital heritage archivist with 10+ years of experience supporting community archives, digital preservation, and equitable access to cultural heritage. Experienced in GLAM partnerships, metadata standards (Dublin Core, MARC), immersive technologies (VR/AR), and community-centered storytelling. Proven ability to design and deliver training programs, lead distributed teams, and implement sustainable digital access initiatives for institutions and community-based archives. Committed to open knowledge practices and the preservation of underrepresented histories.

Education:

Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) – California State University, San Jose

Bachelor of Business Administration (Minor in Project Management) – AIU Online

Certificate of Completion in Genetic Genealogy – Trace DNA Academy

Selected Roles & Projects:

Archivist, Heritage Preservation Specialist

Legacy Planning & Preservation Ltd | 2021 – Present

Community Engagement & Partnerships

- Led collaborative digitization and access initiatives with libraries, archives, and museums supporting historically underrepresented collections.
- Built sustainable partnerships through consultation, training, and capacity-building for small GLAM institutions.

Training & Capacity Building

- Designed and delivered hands-on trainings on metadata standards (Dublin Core, MARC) and digitization workflows.
- Developed toolkits and implementation guides for digital preservation, rights management, and discoverability.

Digital Access & Systems

- Created and curated digital exhibits using Omeka, Airtable, CatalogIt, and Collective Access to expand public access.
- Designed custom metadata schemas and lightweight DAM systems to support long-term preservation.

Project Leadership

- Managed grant-supported projects, timelines, documentation, and virtual collaboration across time zones.

Private Estate & Family Archives (Confidential Projects)

Legacy Planning & Preservation Ltd | 2025–Present

- Conducted confidential archival preservation and digitization projects for private families safeguarding World War II–era records, including materials connected to Jewish Holocaust survivor lineages.
- Assessed, stabilized, and digitized fragile personal documents, photographs, correspondence, and ephemera using archival best practices.
- Developed culturally sensitive metadata frameworks and organizational structures to support long-term family access while respecting privacy, consent, and historical trauma. Advised families on archival storage, digital stewardship, and intergenerational legacy preservation.

Consultant Project Archivist & Digital Access Strategist

Lewis Latimer House Museum × New York Public Library | Queens, NY

- Digitized and described 300+ historical items from the Lewis Latimer House Museum and the New York Public Library to support the creation of a unified digital collection.
- Developed a comprehensive digital collections infrastructure using CollectiveAccess, including object records, metadata fields, and controlled vocabularies. Designed and launched a public-facing digital collection and online exhibit, expanding access to African American scientific, cultural, and domestic history.
- Applied archival digitization and metadata best practices to ensure long-term preservation, discoverability, and ethical access.
- Created training materials and documentation for museum staff and board members to support ongoing collection management and sustainability.
- Provided capacity-building support to enable internal teams to maintain and expand the digital collection beyond the project lifecycle.

Outcome:

Established a sustainable digital collections system and public exhibit while transferring long-term stewardship knowledge to institutional staff and leadership.

Consultant Project Archivist & Digital Access Strategist

Sojourner Truth African Heritage Museum | Sacramento, CA

- Digitized and described 200+ artifacts using Airtable and Omeka.
- Implemented culturally responsive metadata practices for African American heritage collections.
- Integrated VR/AR into exhibits, increasing engagement and remote access.
- Developed SOPs and internal documentation for sustainable collections care.
- Led cross-institutional collaboration with the California State Railroad Museum.

Outcome:

Established a sustainable digital collections system and public exhibit while transferring long-term stewardship knowledge to institutional staff and leadership.

Teaching, Instruction & Curriculum Development:

Instructional Designer/ Digital Asset Manager

Rooted Storytelling, Tunisia, Africa | April 2023- December 2023

Instructional Design & Capacity Building:

Designed online training modules for professionals in cultural tourism and heritage storytelling, focusing on accessibility, learner engagement, and multilingual audiences.

Developed educational materials and workflows that could be adapted across cultural contexts, reinforcing open knowledge practices and ethical digital storytelling.

Digital Asset Management & Workflow Design:

Oversaw organization, tagging, and rights management of multimedia learning materials using structured DAM practices.

Developed and implemented Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure sustainable workflows and consistent team onboarding across time zones.

Remote Team Leadership & Process Optimization:

Managed cross-functional project teams, established clear timelines, and ensured the successful delivery of multiple training modules.

Demonstrated excellent communication and documentation skills to support global collaboration with creators, editors, and stakeholders.

Volunteer Staff Training & Development, Instructional Designer

URockCliffe University, Virtual World of Second Life | 2009-2012

Designed and delivered virtual training programs for educators using immersive platforms like Second Life and Moodle LMS.

Led staff development and instructional workflows across remote teams, supporting accessible online education through open digital environments.

Coordinated curriculum development, platform implementation, and performance tracking to enhance training consistency and impact.

Legacy Designs Studio Inc.

Founder & Digital Heritage Director | 2020–Present

Nonprofit Digital Heritage & Community Archives Initiative

- Founded and lead a nonprofit digital heritage initiative focused on preserving, interpreting, and expanding access to Black and African diaspora cultural heritage through community archives and immersive technologies.
- Curated and produced large-scale virtual exhibitions, including the *Black Lives Matter Virtual Art Exhibit* and *Juneteenth Virtual Art Event*, engaging over 4,000 global

participants.

- Designed and implemented immersive heritage experiences using VR and AR platforms (Spatial.io, Mozilla Hubs), enabling remote access to cultural narratives often excluded from traditional archives.
- Developed replicable frameworks for community-centered digital curation, ethical storytelling, and trauma-informed heritage preservation.
- Partnered with artists, educators, cultural organizations, and GLAM institutions to support inclusive public history and digital access initiatives.
- Served as a testbed for applied research on immersive technologies, digital engagement, and open access in heritage contexts.

Select Presentations, Publications & Public Engagement:

Peer-Reviewed Publications

“Leveraging Browser-based VR for GLAM Institutions: Broadening Access to African and Diaspora Cultural Heritage.” Handbook of Trends and Innovations in Library and Information Science, De Gruyter, 2024.

DOI: 10.1515/9783111443003-004

Books

Tracing Our Roots, Reclaiming Our Legacy: An African American Guide to Genealogy, Heritage Travel, and Heritage Preservation. Self-published, 2024.

Dive Deep: A Journey of Self-Exploration & Discovery. Self-published, 2016.

Conference Presentations & Talks

California Society of Archivists Annual General Meeting, 2024

Pivoting for Access and Engagement: Leveraging Browser-Based VR in Libraries, Archives, and Museums

SJSU iSchool, 2024

Bridging the Digital Divide in Heritage Preservation Using Browser-Based VR

Popup Research Station, 2023

Preserving African and African American Cultural Heritage through VR

SJSU Immersive Book Talk, 2023

Banned & Controversial Topics in Virtual Learning Spaces (Mozilla Hubs)

Wanderful – Heritage Tourism Event, 2023

The Black Travel Journey to Freedom

Juneteenth Gem Interview, 2021

Legacy, Resistance, and Cultural Curation in Black Art

Professional Service & Peer Review:

Research Grant Reviewer – African American Heritage Preservation Program
Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture | Oct–Nov 2024

Selected to serve on a panel of preservationists and historians evaluating \$5M in grant proposals for African American cultural heritage projects. Reviewed 25 applications, assessed feasibility and impact, and provided expert recommendations on digital heritage, community engagement, and sustainability.

Juror, Digital Arts Category – California State Fair
Sacramento, CA | July 2024

Invited to evaluate digital art submissions alongside curators and university faculty for one of California's premier art exhibitions, attracting over 750,000 visitors. Ensured fair judging and supported the visibility of diverse digital creators.

Awards & Honors:

Certificate of Excellence – SJSU CPGE, 2024

President's Academic Excellence Award – AIU, 2021

Affiliations:

Phi Kappa Phi, San Jose State University, 2024