

Partnering with Scholars

Exposing a City's Hidden Collections

Charles Blair and Elisabeth Long
Co-directors, Digital Library Development Center
University of Chicago Library

UNCAP

Uncovering New Chicago Archives Project

- 3-year Mellon-funded project
- Partners
 - Library
 - Faculty
 - Graduate Students
 - Local Archive-holding Institutions
- Precursor project: Mellon Officer's Grant

UNCAP Goals

- City-wide hidden collections initiative
 - Identifying and processing collections supporting African American cultural history
- Faculty-Library collaboration
 - User-driven collections, programs, services
 - Process and preserve important research materials
 - Train graduate students to process collections in their field
- Cross-institutional discovery tool



The University of Chicago

L I B R A R Y

Hidden Collections Initiative

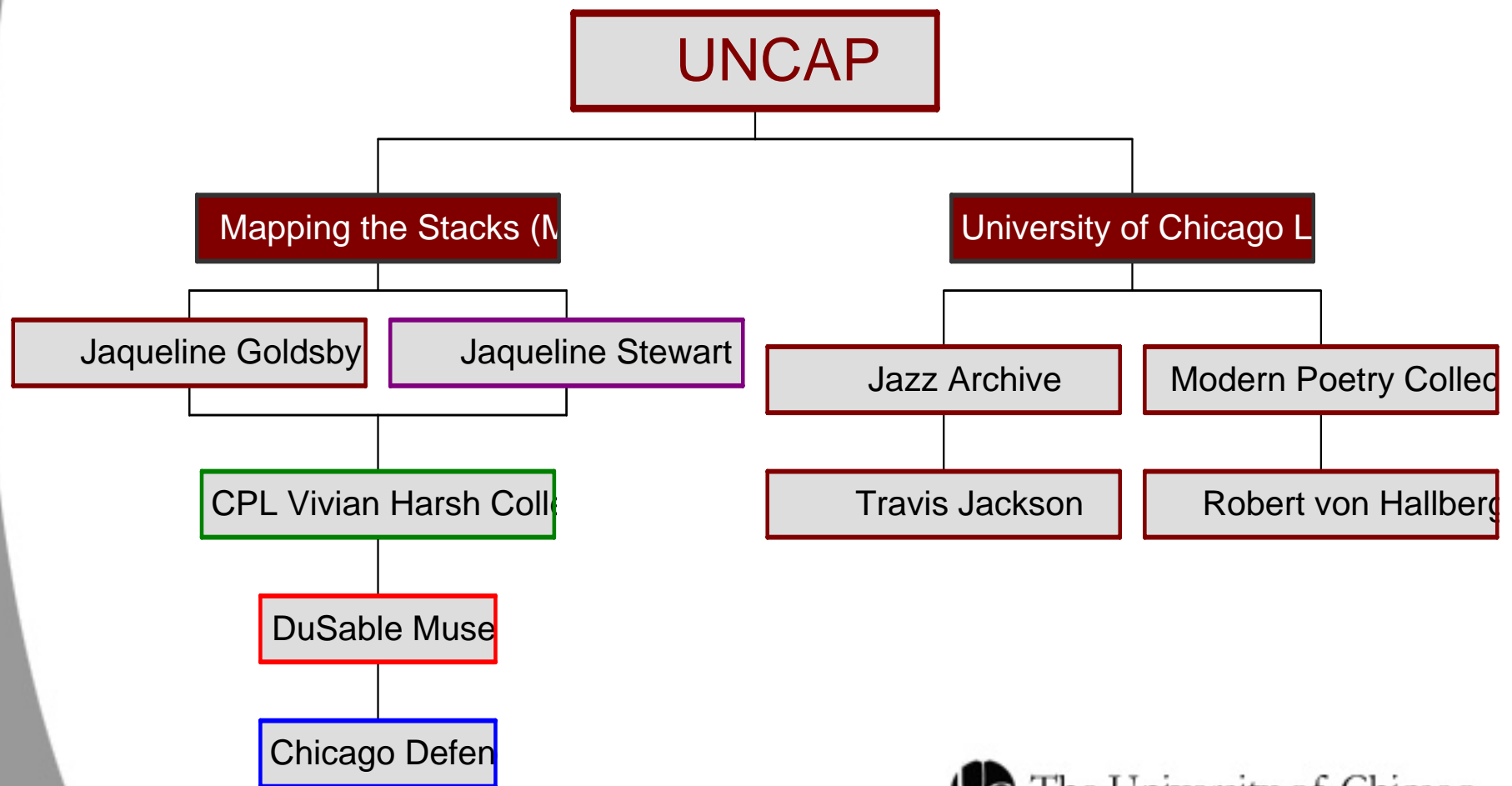
- Library
 - Founding member of ARL *Special Collections Task Force* (2003 Working Conference at LC)
 - More Product, Less Process (Greene and Meissner)
 - Library-wide hidden collections initiative
- English Department Prof's Goldsby and Stewart
 - Post-depression, pre-civil rights era African American literary and cinema history
 - Mapping The Stacks: Mellon Officer's Grant
 - “to identify primary source materials (books, films, photographs, newspapers, magazines, manuscript archives, recorded oral histories, and other ephemera) in need of processing and cataloguing.”



The University of Chicago

L I B R A R Y

Organizational Architecture



Faculty-Library Collaboration: User-driven Collections, Programs, Services

- Not just consultation - Not just scholarship
 - User involvement in Library decision-making and processing
- No one size fits all
 - Processing level dependent on
 - Nature of collection
 - Institutional context and mission
 - Needs of researchers using collection
- Faculty as emissaries in community for collection-building

Faculty-Library Collaboration: Training Graduate Students

- Primary source research skills
 - Hunting is fun, but overwhelming
 - Discovering patterns and relationships
- Fostering interdisciplinary investigation and conceptualization
 - English (including Poetry and Poetics), Cinema and Media Studies, History, Art History, and Music
- Discovery for seminar and dissertation research



The University of Chicago

L I B R A R Y

Faculty-Library Collaboration: Faculty Benefits

- Discover new areas of research
 - Curriculum development
 - Scholarship production
- Student recruitment
- Fostering collaborative research in humanistic fields
 - Breaking the mold of individualistic research
 - Science model

Cross-institutional Discovery Tool

- One Tool For:
 - Multiple institutions with differing needs
 - Hierarchical relationships within project
 - Collection survey and finding aids
 - Multiple formats
 - Personal and institutional papers
 - Radio transcripts
 - Image collections
 - Oral histories
 - Sound recordings
 - Newspaper clippings
 - Stock arrangements
 - Etc.



The University of Chicago

L I B R A R Y

Challenges and Opportunities

- Training students and faculty in archival standards
 - Ease vs. expertise
- Marrying goals of faculty and library
- Politics of inter-institutional cooperation vs. user needs
 - 800 lb. gorilla problem
- Collaborations with libraries in other areas undertaking similar initiatives



Architecture



Partnering with Scholars

Exposing a City's Hidden Collections

Charles Blair

chas@uchicago.edu

Elisabeth Long

elong@uchicago.edu



The University of Chicago

L I B R A R Y