

ROBERT E. BRYAN FELLOWSHIP

Recording the Rogers Road Historic Neighborhood: A History of Emancipation, Activism, and Togetherness



2008 BRYAN FELLOW

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HOMETOWN: Hillsborough, NC

MAJOR/DEGREE:
Master of Public Health
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PROJECT TITLE:
Recording the Rogers Road Historic
Neighborhood: A History of Emancipation,
Activism, and Togetherness

FACULTY MENTOR:
Eugenia Eng
School of Public Health

COMMUNITY PARTNER:
Rogers Road Historic Neighborhood

PROJECT LOCATION:
Chapel Hill and Carrboro, NC

“After being in this community that before was invisible to me, I now understand how actions taken by local governments can have terrible consequences for people living just miles away from my front door.”



Through this fellowship, I worked with residents of the Rogers Road historic area in Chapel Hill and Carrboro NC. The residents were primarily African American, with a long history of multiple generations living in the area. During my time as a fellow, I addressed their need for improved advocacy tools, organization of community documents, and a written record of community history.

Project Goals

1. Compile a list of resources for creating a neighborhood archive.
2. Recruit ten or more community members to participate in the neighborhood history project.
3. Organize a final presentation of the neighborhood history project and present the document to community members and to the community partner.

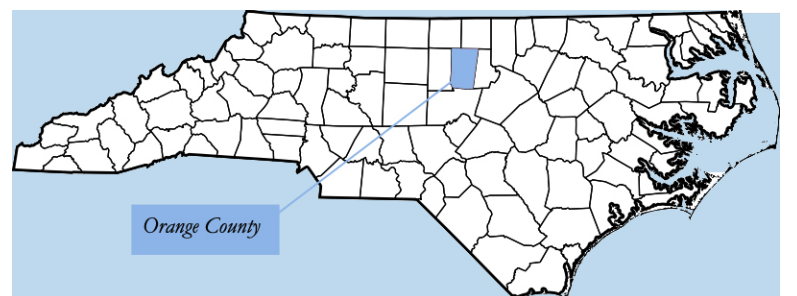
Throughout this project I worked with 12 members of the Rogers Road Historic Neighborhood to document their neighborhood history and how it has been affected by the placement of the Orange County Regional Landfill in their area. The outcome of the project benefited all of the community residents, as well as Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Orange County, by providing a record of local history and a more detailed account of the decision-making surrounding the Orange County landfill in the



area. The archive is the beginning of organizing community documents and information in a public location (Faith Tabernacle Church), rather than in boxes kept in private homes. I hope that the archive will continue to be updated and involve more members of the community.

When I first started going to the community, I saw that they lived without sidewalks, streetlights, water and sewer systems, and gardens). After working with several community members, I now see all that they *do* have—strengths that come from personal and family relationships, and their great effort to fight against the destruction of their history and the peace and security of their neighborhood. Whether

through community organizations, events like the annual “Back to School Bash,” or the warmth and passion with which they discussed their history and their hopes for the future, it was soon clear to me that I was in the midst of a special neighborhood that had developed tremendous inner strength in the face of discrimination and adversity.



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