

**ARLIS/NA + VRA 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Conference 2016 | Seattle**  
**Poster Session**

**Preserving Peeler's Photographic Legacy** — *Chelly Tavss*, Photo Archivist Librarian, Johnson C. Smith University

How one photo archivist at one small institution is handling the processing of an enormous photograph collection, from appraisal, surveying, cataloging and rehousing to providing access and outreach, and now planning an exhibit. When the James B Duke Memorial Library at Johnson C Smith University acquired the James G Peeler Collection in 2010, it a mess of 38 Rubbermaid tubs stuffed with over 50 years of photographic materials from one African American commercial photographer. Over the course of 3 years using different grants to fund the project, from 2012-2015, I, along with student workers, slowly make our way through the collection. To date we are only slightly more than half-way through processing it - after an initial survey of the materials in the tubs, there is an estimated 200,000 individual items in the collection (prints and negatives)! From the start we devised a plan, but over time the course of action changed and adapted as we realized what worked and what does not. Grant funds are tight and we rely on inexpensive (and free) materials and software – such as utilizing GoogleDocs to create our database and finding aid. With the Peeler Collection we are archiving a breathtaking assemblage of photographs that depict African American life in Charlotte and the South.