

Dr. William Christopher Laws

(Chris)

Contact Information:

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Educational Background:

Doctor of Philosophy in Public History
Concentrations in Museums/Historic Sites, Interpretation and Commemoration,
Public Memory, Southern US History
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
February 2022

Master of Arts in History
Concentration in Public History
Public Administration Minor
North Carolina Central University, Durham, NC
August 2017

Grades 6-12 Social Studies Teaching Certification
North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC
May 2008

Bachelor of Arts in History
East Carolina University, Greenville, NC
May 2006

Awards and Achievements:

- Carrington Middle School Teacher of the Month in April 2009 and April 2010.
- Awarded ETS Recognition of Excellence in acknowledgement of outstanding score on the Praxis Series Social Studies: Content Knowledge, in March 2011.
- Appointed History Department Co-Chair at Carrington Middle School in August 2011.
- Appointed Academic Team Leader at Carrington Middle School in August 2013.
- Appointed Representative on Superintendent Advisory Council in August 2013.
- Appointed 8th Grade Social Studies PLC Leader in January 2014.
- Graduated *magna cum laude* with a MA in History from North Carolina Central University in August 2017.

Research, Presentations, and Professional Experience:

- Developed new Volunteer Training Manual for Duke Homestead State Historic Site, Fall 2015-Spring 2016.
- Lead researcher on a community history project focusing on businesses in Durham's Hayti neighborhood during the mid-20th century. Under the direction of Mr. Andre' Vann, North Carolina Central University Archivist.
- Lead researcher on a museum exhibit project based on tobacco television advertisements. Under the direction of Mrs. Jessica Shillingsford, Duke Homestead State Historic Site Manager.
- Assisted in the appraisal and accessioning of documents and artifacts donated to Duke Homestead State Historic Site.
- Assisted in planning of community outreach events at Duke Homestead State Historic Site.
- Contributing researcher for the Legacy of Edgecombe County Farm Owners of Color project. Under the direction of Dr. Charles Johnson.
- Panelist for "So You Want to Go to Graduate School..." panel discussion sponsored by the Earl E. Thorpe Society and the History Department at North Carolina Central University. April 5, 2017.
- Guest Lecturer for the Earl E. Thorpe Society and the NCCU History Department's Community Outreach Program on Confederate Monuments. The lecture was titled, "The Rich Man's Memory That the Poor Man Buys: Providing Context for Piedmont NC's Confederate Monuments." November 1, 2017.
- Elected to the Duke Homestead Education and History Corporation Executive Board of Directors. November 13, 2017.
- Authored educational literature for the *Durham Humanities Alliance* to be distributed as part of their "Free History Lessons" program at the site of the Durham Confederate monument, July 2018.
- Presenter at the 2019 North Carolina State Graduate Symposium. Presentation was called "The Political Implications of Releasing Water from a Dam: A Case Study about Hurricane Fran, Falls Lake Dam, the Neuse River and the US Army Corps of Engineers." March 20, 2019.
- Guest Lecturer for the Ethical Humanist Society of the Triangle. The lecture was titled, "The Rich Man's Memory That the Poor Man Buys: Providing Context for Piedmont NC's Confederate Monuments." June 16, 2019.
- Presenter at North Carolina Central University's "Unlocking Success" Symposium. November 2, 2019.
- Guest lecturer for the North Carolina State Capitol. The lecture was titled, "Worth Bagley: The Southern Savior?" March 24, 2022.
- Consultant for Gibbs-Smith Education's new North Carolina History textbook. Edited content for historical accuracy, to eliminate racial and cultural biases, and to provide a more nuanced narrative.
- Guest lecture for Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices. The lecture was titled, "Building Out of Jim Crow: October 1898 and The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company." August 23, 2022.

- Oversaw development of a new Preservation Durham walking tour of Beechwood Cemetery, Durham's historically Black city cemetery in the Fall of 2022.
- Revised Preservation Durham's Maplewood Cemetery tour to ensure that the tour narrative adhered to best historical interpretation and contextualization practices.
- Supervised three Preservation Equity Project grants in 2022. Led Preservation Durham volunteers as we fixed structural issues, replaced and repaired floors, fixed plumbing problems, painted kitchens and bathrooms, and upgraded old electrical systems to modern circuit breakers.
- Managed Preservation Durham's Downtown Walking Tours. Our Downtown tours (Murals by Bike, Tobacco Heritage, Civil Rights History, and Architecture & Urban Landscape) took over 400 visitors around Durham, NC in 2022, introducing many of them to Durham history and heritage for the first time, which served as a great outreach to raise awareness about historic preservation.
- Administered a \$46,000 Federal grant on behalf the Friends of Geer Cemetery, used to conduct Ground Penetrating Radar survey, and submit an application for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Consultant on a Local Historic Landmark application for the Chicken Hut restaurant in Durham, NC.
- Restarted Preservation Durham's architectural salvage operation.
- Increased Preservation Durham's operational budget by 30% within one calendar year through efficient organizational management, targeted fundraising, and successful educational programming.
- Collaborated with Durham City and County planning staff on a new comprehensive plan that runs through 2050. Wrote three new policies regarding preserving historic neighborhoods and infill development guidelines, acknowledging and addressing current and past land use inequities, and incentivizing preservation of historic resources. Successfully lobbied for Preservation Durham to be named in the document as a collaborative partner in public-private development projects.

Membership in Professional Organizations

- Vice President of the Duke Homestead Education and History Corporation
 - Chairman of Nomination Committee; Chairman of the Interpretive Opportunities Committee; Co-Chairman of the Bylaws Committee
- Member of Southern Historical Association
- Member of the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association
- Member of Preservation North Carolina

Courses:

- HIS 111- World Societies Before 1450
- HIS 112- World Societies Since 1450
- HI 253- Early American History

- HI 254- Modern American History
- HI 300- Research Methods & Writing
- HI 364- History of North Carolina

Publications:

- Laws, William C. "A Brief History of Tobacco Television Ads." *Gold Leaf: News of Duke Homestead*. Vol. 38 , Issue 2. Fall 2016. (Also published in the *Durham Herald Sun*, 11/27/2016)
- Laws, William C. "Placing the Durham Confederate Monument into Historical Context." Distributed by the *Durham Humanities Alliance*, July 2018.
- Laws, William C. "The Millennium of Their Glory: Public Memory and War Monuments in North Carolina, 1867-1929." (Dissertation)
- Laws, William C. "The Rich Man's Memory That the Poor Man Buys: Analysis of Confederate Monuments and Memorials in the Piedmont Region of North Carolina, 1868-1914." (Master's Thesis)
- Laws, William C. "Worth Bagley: Southern Savior, Confederate Christ, Masculine Messiah." (Manuscript in Progress)
- Laws, William C. "North Carolina's Heroes of the Spanish American War." (Manuscript in Progress)

Media Appearances:

- CSPAN's *Lectures in American History* series: "Worth Bagley and Civil War Reconciliation." Recorded July 18, 2023. Originally aired on September 9, 2023 on CSPAN-2. <https://www.c-span.org/video/?529068-1/worth-bagley-civil-war-reconciliation>

Employment History:

North Carolina State University

August 2018 - Present

Assistant Teaching Professor (August 2022 - Present)

Lecturer: (August 2018 - May 2022)

Department of History

North Carolina Central University
Adjunct Professor
Department of History

August 2024 - Present

Preservation Durham
Executive Director

March 2022 - October 2023

Johnston Community College
History Instructor

January 2020 - July 2022

North Carolina State University
Teaching Assistant
Department of History

August 2017 - May 2018

Duke Homestead State Historic Site, Durham NC
Historic Interpreter I

October 2015 - June 2017

Carrington Middle School, Durham NC
Social Studies Teacher, Department Co-Chair,

August 2007 - February 2015

Riverside High School, Durham NC
Permanent Substitute Teacher

August 2006-June 2007