



A More Complete Record: The Case for Archival Partnerships The Radcliffe Workshop on Technology & Archival Processing **Summary and Takeaway**

Friday, April 13
Knafel Center, Radcliffe Institute | *Public*

9:00-9:15 **Opening Remarks**

- **Jane Kamensky**, Pforzheimer Foundation Director of the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study and Professor of History, Harvard University

9:15-10:30 **The Past and Present in the Future | *Keynote Conversation***

- **Brewster Kahle**, Founder of the Internet Archive
- **Jill Lepore**, David Woods Kemper '41 Professor of American History, Harvard University

SUMMARY

Lepore and Kahle discussed the importance of preserving and providing better access to the archival records of underrepresented groups, and the challenges of doing so. These challenges may include financial obstacles, legal and bureaucratic structures of universities, and questions regarding credit and ownership of materials. Lepore shared a story of researching Joe Gould, a white male writer whose story was easy to trace in archives, and during this process discovering his association with and possibly criminal acts toward Black female artist Augusta Savage, whose story is much less accessible yet needs to be told. Kahle discussed the ways in which the Internet Archive can be part of the accessibility solution by digitizing as many collections as possible, and shared their philosophy of tenacity in going after collections and never leading with “no.” Both speakers emphasized the importance of encouraging potential donors to donate their papers in order to preserve their histories, and of collecting materials from donors while they are still living. These points are particularly important in reaching out to groups traditionally underrepresented within archives.

TAKEAWAY

Digitizing materials can be highly beneficial in ensuring a greater degree of access to collections, and partnering with the Internet Archive may be one cost-effective way for archives to digitize their collections through relying on the platform already built by Kahle and his colleagues. At the same time, we hold a responsibility to interrogate the question of whose materials may be “easy” to find and digitize, and to actively seek out underrepresented stories.