

Transcript

(Intro music)

Angela: Welcome to the Digital Creator Podcast, the show where we spotlight students working on cool digital projects. I'm Angela, a consultant at the Digital Knowledge Center, where we empower students to be digital creators. Today's guest, Drew, created a podcast series and website that connects his major in historic preservation with his passion for baseball focusing on the history of Negro League Baseball and its influence on the game today.

Drew: My name is Drew. I use he/him and I'm a historic preservation major graduating in 2025, so in a couple weeks.

Angela: Cool. That's so exciting. So, can you tell us a little bit about the project that you're partnering up with the DKC on?

Drew: So, I'm making a podcast series and website talking about historic preservation as it relates to baseball. The idea kind of came from a couple of class projects that I've worked on. In my first year seminar, I had to build a road trip. I was in the FSEM called See the USA: the History of the American Road Trip, and I had to build a road trip to places that I wanted to see, and a lot of those places involved both national parks and baseball. So, I just went to baseball stadiums a lot of the places. And then in a later class called Material Culture in historic Preservation, I had to do a project where I looked at an object, any object of my choosing, and talked about either the object itself or how it related to history. And so, I chose a baseball glove from the 1940s and talked about how you can see Negro League Baseball history through that glove and where all that comes from. In my next semester, I took an archaeology class and wanted to dive a little bit deeper into Negro League history. So, I used the national parks thing with baseball to look at Hinchliffe Stadium in Paterson, NJ, a Negro League ballpark that's run by Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and see how that's preserved and interpreted. And they had a restoration project pretty recently, so it was pretty cool to look at that and see how it could relate to archaeology and finding things about people in the past. I've made a podcast episode about that for the class. And then, the next semester, that same professor asked if I wanted to do an independent study where I made a story map looking at 13 stadiums just like Hinchcliff, all Negro League ballparks, how they're preserved and interpreted, how they could relate to archaeology, how they could relate to other aspects of preservation. All that is a lot of fun. And then this phase of the project, the fellowship that I'm doing, is just kind of building off of that and connecting the Negro Leagues to every other part of baseball, the major

leagues, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, baseball movies, other things people enjoy about baseball, and see how preservation can relate to all of that too. So, it's been a pretty long and extensive project that's kind of been turning wheels since I started college and then really picked up steam over the last couple years. But yeah, that's the project.

Angela: Yeah, it sounds really cool. It sounds like, yeah, you've been working on this project with the DKC, but you've obviously been working on parts of this project before then. So, did you play baseball when you were younger?

Drew: I did, yeah.

Angela: Okay, that's just what I was wondering about. So, then what drew you to learn about Negro Leagues specifically?

Drew: Well, I guess it's just, you hear about it a lot like, I mean, Jackie Robinson's a big name. I find it kind of annoying that Jackie Robinson gets all the credit just because he was the first. There are so many more that had arguably bigger contributions to baseball, or at least just as big that you don't think about. Like, who is Josh Gibson? He never played in the major leagues. Who is Satchel Paige? He played in the major leagues, but when he was in his 50s and 60s. Who was Larry Doby? He integrated the American League. All these people. Like, some people know who they are, but others like Monte Irvin, who the heck is that? Buck O'Neil. Who the heck is that? I want to, I think that those guys deserve voice and you can see their voice through the places where they played. That's, I mean, historic preservation is about using places from the past to make a better future that we can see good things and bad things that happen and connecting them to now. So, I think combining all of that is what drew me to the Negro Leagues.

Angela: Yeah, just like kind of shining a light on all the other people who aren't really spotlighted.

Drew: Yes.

Angela: Alright, so obviously you're doing a fellowship with the DKC. So how did you first hear about doing a fellowship? How did you know how to connect with the DKC?

Drew: Well, in that independent study project for the story map, my faculty advisor, Dr. Parker, for that project, asked if I wanted to find a way to have a little bit more direction to continue the project after that and said that this was the thing I could do. And I had not really done much podcasting before, aside from that one archaeology class that I took with Dr. Parker. But I thought, I had fun with that, might as well give it a try. And then the website building was just kind of building out from the story map to like have more like written

content because that's what I'm better at. So, I wanted to not just burn myself out with trying something new, but also have something steady that I'm used to to kind of balance out the enjoyment of it. The DKC has been awesome with helping me figure out how to do all that.

Angela: What point are you in your project? Have you recorded some podcasts already or where are you with that?

Drew: I have one episode published on the website preservingourpastime.com if you want to go look at it. And then I'm working on outlines for two more and I'm hoping to record another one this week and then edit it together and hopefully by the end of the semester have another one published.

Angela: Alright. So, like your end goal is a total of 2?

Drew: Yes. Maybe 3, but that's pushing it. We'll see.

Angela: Gotcha. About how long are the podcasts?

Drew: The last one was about half an hour long. I'm shooting for like 20 minutes to half an hour.

Angela: Gotcha. So, how do you prepare to record the podcast?

Drew: Well, I just kind of make an outline. I approach it like I'm giving tours. So, I have done a lot of interpretation stuff with the National Park Service and have given tours at battlefields, so I kind of approached the outline the same way as that, so I can just have bullet point lists of like what I want to talk about and then talk freely about it because I know it well enough from the research that I did to be able to do that. And then that also helps me get some padding time and other things and I can go on a little bit of side tangents with it, but not too bad because I got to save time but that's kind of the process for that. I just, there's a lot of research or at least gathering sources to be able to cite even for stuff that I already know, at least in the last case, because it was just an overview of what is baseball. I'm not the most academically reliable source, so I wanted to give other people credit for the information I got.

Angela: That makes sense. So, in your podcast episodes, do you do like a lot of sourcing that way people can like, you know, trace back to where you get the information?

Drew: Yeah. I have, on the website, I have the transcript and everything with sources listed. And then I also have like some supplemental content too, like for stuff that I talk about but not super in detail like, hey, this is what I meant by that or I actually meant to say this and that's not what I said, here's a correction or stuff like that. And I have to source that too.

Angela: So, doing this podcast and you know doing all the research for it, have you had any challenges that you've had to overcome?

Drew: Mostly figuring out the systems for like editing. Like, I've used Soundtrap and Adobe Podcast. Figuring out how to make the audio file fit into those, like changing the file type from a wave file to an MP3, figuring out how to edit it just right so that I don't have part of a word and then it just sounds weird. So, they also have transcripts come out like automatic, but then I realized that I need to enunciate better when I talk. It helps a lot with making the words come out right on the auto transcript. So, working on that too. I think all of that's been a challenge like trying to figure out the technology behind it, but it's been fun.

Angela: You mentioned Soundtrap and then Adobe. Do you prefer one? Or like, which did you try? Did you try out one first and then change? How did that work?

Drew: I tried Soundtrap first in the archaeology class and that was pretty intuitive and easy to use. But then, Cartland brought up Adobe Podcast as like I can edit without having to listen to myself talk because nobody wants to listen to themselves talk on like an audio thing. So, I was like, bet, I'm sold. So, I tried that and it was actually really easy and it worked really well. So, for this last episode that I did, the first one of my series here, I combined using Adobe Podcast and Soundtrap. I did the editing in Adobe and then put it in Soundtrap to get like music to start and end the episode and make sure that I get those final little cuts so that I'm not having part of a word or ums and uhs too much.

Angela: Gotcha. And then for the transcript, does Adobe create that transcript for you?

Drew: Yes, but I found that it didn't let me copy and paste it into a Word doc to cite stuff. So, I then had to put the final audio file that I had in Soundtrap into Word, so they would create it there, and it was a different transcript than what I got from Adobe Podcast. So, that was interesting.

Angela: Okay, yeah. So different challenges with your editing tools. And then, so once like it uses the transcript, you have to go back and edit to make sure.

Drew: Yeah, get proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, all that. Because sometimes it hears slightly wrong. Like I say, Stephen Strasburg's name and they spelled his name wrong, like with a "v" instead of a "ph".

Angela: Gotcha. So, in doing this project, what has been the most rewarding thing or what will be the most rewarding thing once you're done?

Drew: I think it was a huge relief to see the final product of the first episode and see my website built into something that actually looks decent now. I started out, I'm like, I don't have a clue how to use WordPress.

Angela: So, had you not built a website before this?

Drew: I had not.

Angela: Okay, cool. Cool.

Drew: So, like, that's been a lot of fun to see how to do that. And it's pretty intuitive, but I didn't believe in my ability to do it before I started. I'm like this might be a little bit over the top thinking, but it's actually been really fun. And now I have pictures on the website. I have a lot of content. I put the first podcast episode in and now it's like that can be shared. It's just, it's really rewarding to see that. And then I also connected the story map to the website so that people can see that more too.

Angela: Who are you sharing this podcast with right now?

Drew: At the moment, just the Historic Preservation Department that I worked on the story map with, but I'm eventually going to put a link to the website on like my LinkedIn page that I have like people from the Park Service and other connections and just like kind of find ways to share it in other places too. I'm presenting at Research and Creativity Day about it, so I was going to have a link to the website on my slideshow.

Angela: Yeah, that's awesome. So, once you graduate, and you said for this fellowship you're planning on like definitely 2, maybe 3 podcasts, are you planning on continuing the podcast after you graduate, or was it just a now thing? Like, what does that look like?

Drew: I definitely want to continue it at some point. I've been, since I've been working on the project for a couple of years, I'm kind of getting a little bit burned out with this, so I might take a little break while I'm doing a season out in South Dakota with the National Park Service. I probably won't have much Internet service there anyway, so probably a good time to take a little break. But then once I get back into a place where I can have a little refresh, I definitely want to continue because it's been a lot of fun. And it's really interesting to learn all the stuff that I've learned.

Angela: And another question I have is obviously this project kind of ties into historic preservation, the classes you've taken, so has doing this project made you a better student, would you say?

Drew: 100%. Not only has it helped me understand the National Register and all that criteria for like why we do things the way we do them, because that's been a big part of like

interpreting the preservation of these places, it's also just doing the research and figuring out like, here's how I reach out to someone and ask for help. Here's how, like I manage my time so I can do 9 hours a week for this independent study while also taking like 17 credits of regular classes. I think that's really helped my ability to, you know, just get things done in a timely fashion and not worry about time management when I have a lot on my plate.

Angela: Yeah, that's a lot to do, so makes sense. So, after the people listen to this podcast, they should totally check yours out. So, what's some fun facts you learned from doing your podcast that you can share with us?

Drew: Well, for Negro League stadiums, there's one in Indianapolis called Bush Stadium that is now an apartment complex, but the stadium is still there. They just threw the apartments into the shell of where the seating area used to be, and they kept the field. And it's just awesome. It's like, the coolest thing ever I want to live there someday.

Angela: Have you visited before?

Drew: I have not, but I want to. That's like just a fun thing. I've been to a couple of the stadiums I looked at, but that's not one of them yet. Let's see, for the podcast, I talked about the history of baseball and major events that have happened. And one of the things I talked about was Hank Aaron breaking Babe Ruth's home run record versus Barry Bonds breaking Hank Aaron's. And I learned that when Hank Aaron had hit his last home run, his 755th, one of the pitchers he faced was named Mike Bacsik. Later in 2007, when Barry Bonds broke Hank Aaron's record, when he was sitting on 755, ready to break that record, the last pitcher he faced, the one that he hit the homer off of to break the record, was Mike Bacsik, the son of the guy that Hank Aaron faced.

Angela: Wow, that's crazy.

Drew: So, the only two pitchers in history to face a guy sitting on 755 home runs and then that. Yeah.

Angela: Wow, that's really cool. Alright. Would you recommend that students do a fellowship with the DKC?

Drew: Oh, yes! If you have a project that connects in any way to digital stuff or even like this one didn't really connect at first, but now, you find a way, definitely do it. It's been really rewarding, and Cartland and Shannon are awesome guides. They are really helpful for learning all of this and I'm thankful for it. It's been a lot of fun. Check out the website preservingourpastime.com. It's got everything in there. You can even access my blog posts through the DKC on there. I've linked them, so you can see the behind the scenes process a little bit if you want to know more about that.

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Angela: This has been the Digital Creator Podcast. You can find a transcript of our conversation and more about this project below. This podcast was produced by me, Angela Payne, with help from the resources at the Digital Knowledge Center. Are you interested in becoming a digital creator? Do you have a cool project you want to share? Go to dkc.umw.edu for information on how to get started. Thank you for listening!

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