

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is about the social life of archives. Each chapter opens not with a bibliophile alone in a library but with an exuberant scene of collaboration or convergence. So, too, has the making of this book—which began nearly twenty years ago—grown out of conversations and communities for which I am deeply grateful.

Every historian owes a debt to archivists, curators, and librarians, but my debts are perhaps more than most, given that this book draws heavily on material not only *in* but also *of* archives: the records of how these remarkable collections came to be. For sharing their expertise and knowledge of institutional histories—or for facilitating access to unprocessed materials—I am especially grateful to Beverly Cook, Joellen ElBashir, Diana Lachatanere, Thai Jones, Megan Mizak, Clifford L. Muse Jr., Tal Nadan, Dana Chandler, and the late Michael Flug. To research this book, I spent time at a more than dozen archives, and I thank the dedicated staff at each one: the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University; Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature at the Chicago Public Library; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture at the New York Public Library; Hampton University Archives; Roanoke Public Library; Tuskegee University Archives; Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library; Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library; Syracuse University's Special Collections Research Center; National Archives for Black Women's History at the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House; Fisk University's Special Collections and Archives; Atlanta University's Archives Research Center at the Robert W. Woodruff Library; and the institutional archives of the New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. In Roanoke, I am grateful to retired librarian Carla Lewis, and to

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The idea for this book came into focus when I worked as an archivist of social movements. At the Tamiment Library, which houses the history of American radicalism and trade unionism, I learned that every social movement has its resident documentarian or archivist. As a field archivist in Mississippi, I surveyed civil rights records across the state in the early 2000s, when the still-fraught anniversaries of civil rights landmarks served as daily reminders that archives are always urgent sites of contestation in the present. Those professional experiences shaped my desire to write about the politics of historical recovery, and I thank my colleagues in New York and Mississippi, especially Gail Malmgreen, Diane DeCesare Ross, Clarence Hunter, Minnie Watson, Elaine Owens, Alma Fisher, and Alix Ross. Peter J. Wosh introduced me to archival studies and provided unparalleled support early on.

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SCATTERED AND
FUGITIVE THINGS



