

THE W. MONTAGUE COBB RESEARCH LABORATORY NEWS

A bi-annual newsletter brought to you by the Cobb Research Laboratory, Howard University, USA

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Top stories in this newsletter



Jackson joins Lab as its Director, forms Advisory Board



Cobb Research Lab Advisory Board approves new Mission Statement



New research opportunities available with expanded set of projects at Cobb Research Laboratory



Watkins and Muller teams complete Cobb Lab inventory over the summer 2013; Reconciliation of materials underway

Professor Jackson to Direct Cobb Research Lab, names Advisory Board

Dr. Fatimah L.C. Jackson, Professor of Biology in the College of Arts and Sciences at Howard University has recently joined the W. Montague Cobb Research Laboratory as its Director. Dr. Jackson is a Cornell-trained biological anthropologist and human biologist with a strong research interest in the African Diaspora and human population genetics. Dr. Jackson previously served as Director for Genetics for the New York African Burial Ground Project. She can be reached at: fatimah.jackson@howard.edu



One of her first actions as Director was to name a new Advisory Board to assist in the development of the Cobb Research Laboratory. Distinguished members of the Advisory Board include Dr. James Donaldson (Mathematics), Dr. Clarence M. Lee (Biology), Dr. Ivor Livingston (Sociology), Dr. Gregory Carr (African American Studies), Dr. Georgia Dunston (Microbiology and NHGC), and Dr. Rachel Watkins (Anthropology at American University).

Cobb Research Laboratory Advisory approves new Mission Statement

The new Advisory Board has already begun working closely with the Director to transform the Cobb Research Laboratory into one of the key research units on the Howard University campus. Towards that end, the Advisory has approved a new Mission Statement for the research laboratory.

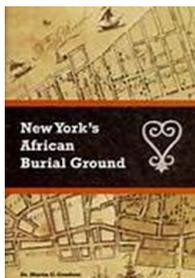
Mission Statement

The W. Montague Cobb Research Laboratory at Howard University is dedicated to enhancing the international prominence, research portfolio, and instructional opportunities of Howard University through providing innovative opportunities for advanced study of the biological and archaeological materials housed therein. The Cobb Research Laboratory is committed to the generation and dissemination of interdisciplinary, scholarly information to enhance our understanding of the lives of the peoples of the transatlantic African Diaspora. The Cobb Research Laboratory is dedicated to maximizing the research potential of the collections contained within the Laboratory and training a new generation of scholars. As a result, the Cobb Research Laboratory will be the pre-eminent professional resource for interdisciplinary research on the Cobb Collection of human skeletal remains, the New York African Burial Ground remains, and the other assemblages of key research resources.

Towards this end, the W. Montague Cobb Research Laboratory will:

- Maintain extensive documentation on the physical samples housed at the Research Laboratory;
- Regularly seek funding in support of the Research Laboratory, its academic activities, and public outreach program;
- Enhance the public understanding of the importance and scientific significance of the materials contained in the Research Laboratory;
- Encourage the publication of scholarly research on the Research Laboratory collections, particularly among Howard University affiliated researchers;
- Hire support staff and establish an active Advisory Board to assist the Director in optimizing the Research Laboratory;
- Annually communicate the status of the Research Laboratory to the COAS Dean and the larger Howard University community; and
- Conduct systematic international public outreach on the Research Laboratory to keep the larger community informed and engaged in the Laboratory activities.

Cobb Research Laboratory Expands Research Collections and Research Opportunities



The Cobb Research Laboratory has recently expanded its research collections from two to eight projects directly connected to the African Diaspora and added three levels of affiliation for individuals interested in conducting research at the Lab. The three levels include [Senior Research Associate](#), [Research Associate](#), and [Research Assistant](#). Details of the expectations of each of these positions will be found on the forthcoming Cobb Research Laboratory website.

By increasing the number of research collections housed in the Lab, the opportunities for research projects at the Cobb Research Laboratory are greatly enhanced. Interested faculty, graduate and undergraduate students are invited to become engaged in research at the Cobb Research Laboratory. These collections now include the following:

[Cobb Human Skeletal Collection](#)

[New York African Burial Ground Project](#)

www.huarchivesnet.howard.edu/0008huarnet/blakey1.htm

[Walter C. Pierce Park Archaeological Survey](#) walterpierceparkcemeteries.org/

[Warriors Project](#) archaeology.about.com/.../Warriors-Project-Excavations.htm

[Nicodemus Archaeological Project](#)

www.coas.howard.edu/.../anthroprogramresources.htm

[James Island, Gambia Archaeological Project](#)

www.academia.edu/.../Stabilization_and_Tourism_at_the_Gambia_River...

[Eastern Cape, South African Archaeological Project](#)

web.uct.ac.za/depts/age/aco.htm

[Sauratown Project](#)

New Research Protocols Established for Studies

The Cobb Research Laboratory has recently implemented new protocols for studies done on the collections housed at the research laboratory. The protocols cover the following domains:

- ▶ **Distribution of collected materials:** Original materials are not permitted to physically leave the Cobb Laboratory. Authorized copies may be made as needed for research purposes with approval of the Director of the Cobb Laboratory.
- ▶ **Research on Cobb Collection materials:** The Cobb Collection is open to review all proposals for research on this collection. Howard University affiliated researchers are particularly encouraged to consider proposing scholarly projects connected to Laboratory materials. Non-Howard University researchers are expected to have at least one peer research collaborator from Howard University as part of their research team.
- ▶ **All grant proposals for use of the Cobb Laboratory materials** must be submitted to the Director for review and gain approval by the Advisory Board. Proposals should then obtain Howard University IRB clearance (either approval through protocol or approval through exemption) before the research can be initiated.
- ▶ **Externally funded projects on Cobb Research Laboratory materials** are expected to include a The Cobb Research Laboratory as a percentage of their overhead budget. These funds are used to maintain the physical facility and research collections of the Cobb Research Laboratory. The percentage to be retained by the Cobb Laboratory is determined by the intensity of use of Laboratory materials, the duration of the research project, and other factors determined by the COAS Dean.
- ▶ **Student access to the Cobb Research Laboratory collections:** Students are encouraged to consider conducting advanced studies at the Cobb Research Laboratory in conjunction with their faculty sponsors/supervisors. Graduate and undergraduate students wishing to conduct scholarly studies at the Cobb Research Laboratory should submit their requests to the Director for review by the Advisory Board.
- ▶ **Publication of research based on the Cobb Research Laboratory materials:** All publication of research results should be reviewed and approved by the Director and the Advisory Board prior to the submission of manuscripts for publication consideration. A copy of the final version of the publication should be placed within the W. Montague Cobb Research Laboratory Archives

Researchers are encouraged to consult these protocols when preparing research proposals for work on collections of the W. Montague Cobb Research Laboratory.

Inventory and Reconciliation of the Cobb Collection Underway

Over the Summer 2013, research teams led by Dr. Rachel Watkins (American University) and Dr. Jennifer Muller (Ithaca College) systematically inventoried the human skeletal materials currently stored at the Cobb Research Laboratory. COAS Dean Segun Gbadegesin has initiated the recall of remaining Cobb Collection human skeletal remains that have, over the years, migrated to other Howard University Colleges and departments. Consolidating the Cobb Collection is imperative if the university is to take full advantage of this invaluable, precious scientific resource.

