

Digitizing Twentieth Century Civil Rights Collections from the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, South Carolina

Award Number: NAR15-RD-10180-15
NHPRC Interim Narrative Report for October 1, 2015 – March 31, 2016

The Project

In late spring of 2015 the College of Charleston was awarded an 18-month, \$81,725 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) to digitize, describe and make freely accessible online sixteen archival collections (52 linear feet) of materials held by the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture. These collections provide insight into the significant role of leaders and organizations from Charleston, South Carolina and the surrounding Lowcountry region in the twentieth century civil rights movement. The original grant proposal for the project “Digitizing Twentieth Century Civil Rights Collections from the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture in Charleston, South Carolina“ may be found at <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/research-and-reports>. This is the first interim narrative report for the grant period of October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016.

Performance Objectives

1. Submit complete reports by the deadlines in the Grant Award Summary.
2. Acknowledge the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in all print and electronic products that result from grant support.
3. Amount of cost share meets or exceeds the amount approved by the NHPRC.
4. Digitize an estimated 93,600 pages from 16 collections.
5. Make all digitized material available through the Lowcountry Digital Library, the South Carolina Digital Library, and the Digital Public Library of America.
6. Revise the EAD finding aids and MARC records for the 16 collections to include links to the digital surrogates.
7. Create no less than two online exhibitions, featured on the Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu>), that highlight the project’s digitized materials.
8. Make announcements about on relevant listservs including the Society of American Archivists, Humanities and Social Sciences On-line (H-Net) and South Carolina Archival Association (SCAA). Also promote the project via social media, including LCDL’s Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook feeds, SCDL’s Facebook page, and the DPLA’s Tumblr and Twitter feeds.
9. Speak at two conferences for K- 12 educators, university faculty, and cultural heritage professionals. Also submit a case study for publication in a professional journal.

Plan of Work for Reporting Period

The original plan of work included in the grant proposal states that during this period the following will be accomplished:

July-August, 2015

- Project Digitization Specialist interviewed and hired.

October 1, 2015-November 30, 2015

- Manager of Archival Services at the Avery Research Center will prioritize materials for digitization based on content and condition at the collection level.

October 1, 2015-August 31, 2016

- Project Digitization Specialist begins work. Digitization and description of high priority collections in completed.

Unfortunately, due to a campus-wide change in hiring policies and procedures, it was impossible to advertise and hire the Project Digitization Specialist position according to the pre-determined deadline. The position description was not released for hire from our institution's Office of the President until the beginning of October 2015. Upon release, we posted the job opening immediately and advertised broadly. After reviewing over 50 applicants we were able to hire Samuel Sfirri into the position of Project Digitization Specialist, with a start date of February 1, 2016. As this is a delayed start of four months, the College of Charleston will be applying for an extension to accommodate this new timeline at the conclusion of the original grant period.

This project also suffered the loss of the Manager of Archival Services, Aaron Spelbring, who left the College of Charleston in January 2016. Prior to his departure, Mr. Spelbring was able to complete the prioritization and selection of materials for digitization based on content and condition at the collection level. Heather Gilbert, project P.I. and Head of Digital Scholarship and Services for the College of Charleston, took on any remaining immediate duties previously allocated to Mr. Spelbring and will take on a larger percentage of cost-share to make up for his loss. This will serve to maintain our compliance with performance objective #3. The only task that will not be fulfilled by Ms. Gilbert in her added role will be the revision of EAD finding aids and MARC records for the 16 collections to include links to the digital surrogates (performance objective #6). This task will be assigned to Mr. Spelbring's replacement (position is open for application now) who is anticipated to begin in Fall 2016.

Work Accomplished During Reporting Period

Despite the delayed project start, we have been making good progress on the deliverables of the project, including using our delayed start to focus on late project deliverables, such as digital exhibit creation.

Digitization and Metadata Creation

Digitization and metadata creation (performance objectives #4 & #5) began in earnest on February 3, 2016 after Mr. Sfirri received one day of institutional orientation and one day of digital library software/hardware training. The first collection, the Septima P. Clark Papers, ca. 1910-ca. 1990 (now available online at <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/septima-p-clark-papers-ca-1910-ca-1990>), was completely digitized and described during the period of February 3 through March 31, 2016. Uploading of the collection was also initiated during this period, but was not completed until early April. It is important to note that while the Project Digitization

Specialist (Mr. Sfirri) was able to begin work on February 1, 2016, he lost approximately 49 hours of digitization time during this period due to ongoing software/hardware training, institution orientation and illness. We anticipate our future statistics will indicate increased efficiencies both in digitization and metadata production. Total summary statistics for digitization and metadata creation by Mr. Sfirri for the period of February 3 through March 31, 2016 are listed in the table below.

Digitization/Description Summary Data	February 3, 2016 – March 31, 2016
Total Linear Feet Scanned	4.75
Total Scans Created	5,360
Scans/Linear Foot	1128.4
Hours Scanning	99
Average Scans/Hour	54.14
Total Metadata Records Created	3,354
Hours Creating Metadata	131.5
Average Metadata Records/Hour	25.5

Exhibit Production

During the period of October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016, the project began working on the creation of at least two digital exhibits (performance objective #7). Exhibit #1 work during this period included the creation and editing of exhibit text, early image research (including looking through the digitized images from the project as they were being digitized - prior to their online release), and preliminary exhibition layout. Exhibit #2 work during this period included preliminary consultations with the project author, early draft stages of exhibition text, and digital image research. Details for both exhibits are as follows:

Exhibit One Details

Exhibit Title: Avery: The Spirit That Would Not Die, 1865-2015
Exhibit Description: 2015 marked the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Avery Normal Institute and the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the [Avery Research Center](#) for African American History and Culture at the College of Charleston. This online exhibition explores the history of Avery, from its origins as a school for Black Charlestonians starting in 1865, to its current form as a center for promoting the history and culture of the African diaspora, with an emphasis on Charleston and the South Carolina Lowcountry.
Project Partner/Author: The College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture
Publication Date: May 2016

Exhibit Two Details

Exhibit Title: Remembering Individuals, Remembering Communities: Septima P. Clark in Charleston's Public History Landscape

Exhibit Description: This online exhibition interprets and maps the life of Septima Poinsette Clark—an African American civil rights educator, activist, and Charleston native—to interrogate historic and present day divisions in Charleston's public history landscape. The project is based on a presentation delivered by Katherine Mellen Charron, author of *Freedom's Teacher: The Life of Septima Clark*, at the 2015 Southern Association for Women Historians' Conference in Charleston, South Carolina.

Project Partner/Author: Katherine Mellen Charron

Publication Date: Fall 2016

Project Publicity

Due to the delayed start of the project, it is still premature to report extensively on publicity efforts engaged to promote the products of this project (performance objective #8). However, Mr. Sfirri will be delivering a presentation on the grant progress and digitization efficiencies learned thus far at the South Carolina Digital Library's statewide conference scheduled in July 2016 (performance objective #9).