

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 April 1, 2016 – September 30, 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 and the first interim narrative report 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 second interim narrative report for the grant period of April 1, 2016 through September 30, 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:

October 1, 2015-August 31, 2016

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

September 1, 2016

- High priority collections completed and uploaded into LCDL. Digitization of moderate priority collections begins.

As reported in the first interim narrative report, a campus-wide change in hiring policies and procedures delayed the hire of our Project Digitization & Metadata Specialist, Samuel Sfirri, until February 1, 2016. This is the first interim narrative report that will contain digitization and description data for the entire 6-month reporting period. Our previous interim narrative report only contained data for two months of actual work.

While the Manager of Archival Services, Aaron Spelbring, left the College of Charleston in January 2016, I am pleased to report that this position has now been filled by Aaisha Haykal. Ms. Haykal will begin in this role at the Avery Research Center beginning on October 16, 2016. Ms. Haykal will take over Mr. Spelbring's previous task of revising EAD finding aids and MARC records for the 16 collections to include links to the digital surrogates (performance objective #6).

Work Accomplished During Reporting Period

Progress on the deliverables of the project have continued and, as anticipated in the first interim narrative report, digitization efficiencies have been made.

Digitization and Metadata Creation

Digitization and metadata creation (performance objectives #4 & #5) have continued throughout the report period of April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016. During this period, collections digitized, described, and made accessible through the Lowcountry Digital Library and South Carolina Digital Library and (eventually) the Digital Public Library of America are as follows:

Collection Title: Bernice Robinson Papers, 1920-1989

Collection Link: <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/bernice-robinson-papers-1920-1989>

Total Number of Objects: 1,131

Total Number of Scans: 7,745

Collection Title: Esau Jenkins Papers, 1963-2003

Collection Link: <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/esau-jenkins-papers-1963-2003>

Total Number of Objects: 190

Total Number of Scans: 544

Collection Title: Cleveland L. Sellars, Jr. Papers, 1934-2003

Collection Link: <http://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/content/cleveland-l-sellars-jr-papers-1934-2003>

Total Number of Objects: 911

Total Number of Scans: 6,690

All collection listed are accessible via the Lowcountry Digital Library (performance objective #5). The South Carolina Digital Library automatically harvests all of LCDL’s digitized content every month. The Digital Public Library of America is supposed to harvest all of SCDL’s content every two months, though that schedule historically has varied widely, dependent on factors related to the DPLA and outside of our control. As you can see from the above collection homepage links, all digitized collections produced by this award acknowledge the National Historical Publications and Records Commission’s generous support and involvement (performance objective #2).

Total summary statistics for digitization and metadata creation by Mr. Sfirri for the period of April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016 are listed in the table below.

Digitization/Description Summary Data	April 1, 2016 – September 30, 2016
Total Linear Feet Scanned	9.5
Total Scans Created	14,979
Scans/Linear Foot	1,576.7
Hours Scanning	193.5
Average Scans/Hour	77.4
Total Metadata Records Created	10,935
Hours Creating Metadata	336
Average Metadata Records/Hour	32.5

Total summary statistics for digitization and metadata creation by Mr. Sfirri for the period of February 2016 through September 30, 2016 are listed in the table below.

Digitization/Description Summary Data	February – September 30, 2016
Total Linear Feet Scanned	14.25
Total Scans Created	20,339
Scans/Linear Foot	1,427.3
Hours Scanning	292.5
Average Scans/Hour	69.5
Total Metadata Records Created	14,289
Hours Creating Metadata	467.5
Average Metadata Records/Hour	30.6

As you can extrapolate from the above data set, it is unlikely that we will complete digitization of all collections by the end of the award. However, to mitigate this likelihood, we have already met with the new Manager of Archival Services at Avery to help us best determine how we could best spend our time during the second half of this award (assigning additional priority levels to collections). Additionally, we will be working with Ms. Haykal to train Avery’s graduate assistants to aid in the digitization process. This will allow us to digitize even more materials, bringing us somewhat closer to our digitization goals, without costing any additional money. Finally, we suggested to

Ms. Haykal that any collections that are not digitized by this award serve as a potential to-do list for further digitization efforts for the Avery Research Center staff.

Exhibit Production

During the period of April 1, 2016 through September 30, 2016, the project completed one digital exhibit and continued work on a second (performance objective #7). Exhibit #1 work during this period included final editing of exhibit text, image research, exhibition layout, and the public release (with corresponding publicity and promotion). Exhibit #2 work during this period included ongoing consultations with the project author, draft stages of exhibition text, and image research. We anticipate completing performance objective #7 by the end of the year. 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
Link to Live Exhibit: <http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/avery>

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: December 2016

Project Publicity

In this second interim report period, publicity efforts for the project have escalated and we are pleased to report that we have more than accomplished our minimum requirements for this objective (performance objective #9).

Heather Gilbert, LCDL Director and P.I. on this award, spoke at the Society of American Archivists annual meeting in Atlanta Georgia in August of 2016. She delivered the presentation, “Context Clues: Building Workflows Between Digital Libraries and Digital Exhibit Platforms” where she discussed “Digitizing Twentieth Century Civil Rights Collections” as an example of the benefits of collaboration between platform types.

Amanda Noll, Lowcountry Digital History Initiative (LDHI) Project Coordinator, Mary Battle, LDHI Director, and Barrye Brown, Education Outreach Archivist for the Avery Research Center spoke at the International Conference on the Inclusive Museum held at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, OH on September 16-19, 2016. They spoke about their experiences working with various community partners to promote awareness of the history of racial injustice in Charleston, South Carolina. Topics included the project, “Digitizing Twentieth Century Civil Rights Collections” funded by the NHPRC, with an emphasis on increased accessibility to archival materials on the topic of civil rights history.

Sam Sfirri, Project Digitization and Metadata Specialist for this award, delivered a presentation entitled, “Digitizing 20th Century Civil Rights Collections,” providing attendees insight on the grant process, collection overview, and digitization statistics at the South Carolina Digital Library’s statewide conference in July 2016. Additionally, he has contributed a co-authored an article that will appear in the upcoming Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture’s publication entitled, “The Messenger.” This article discusses the nature of the project made possible by the NHPRC, including its scope and highlights from the collections digitized thus far.

Upcoming publicity opportunities include a second co-authored article to appear in a future publication of the Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture’s publication entitled, “The Messenger.” Additionally, Mr. Sfirri has submitted a short article discussing the project, progress, and digitization statistics to the inaugural issue of the South Carolina Digital Library’s newsletter.

Finally, newly hired Manager of Archival Services, Aaisha Haykal, Education Outreach Archivist for the Avery, Barrye Brown, both of the Avery Research Center and Heather Gilbert, plan on submitting an article to [Archival Outlook](#), the award-winning magazine of the Society of American Archivists.