Digitizing Community Collections

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Local History & Genealogy
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Agenda

1. About community collections (Angela)
2. Digital community collections (Cindy)
3. My Upload (Nicole)
4. Metadata for My Upload (Aaron)
5. Questions (All)
Community Collections

• As old as collecting
• An opportunity to make items from private collections accessible
• Both for crisis response and everyday collecting
• What does your community want to preserve?
Evolution of Community Collections

• Scanning days
• Manual process with paper forms
• All-digital user uploads
Poll

What is your organization’s experience with community collections?

A. Do not accept community collections at this time
B. Accept items in-person only
C. Accept items on-line (or in electronic form) only
D. Accept items both in-person and online
Community Collections

• Created to take collection out of archival collections and into people’s homes
• Created in response to event in community or world
University of Virginia

• “Unite the Right” Rally and Community Response
  • August 11th and August 12th, 2017
  • Captured information that weekend
  • Three weeks later launched tool for community to upload photos and videos
Peace Corps

• Began the Peace Corps Digital Library to commemorate its 50th anniversary in 2011
• Asked for photos and stories from volunteers and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs)
• Uploaded using online submission form
Des Plaines Library

• Began My Des Plaines Memory Project in 2014
• As of October 2019, there were 218 items in the collection
• Works with community partners and small businesses in the community
COVID-19 Specific Projects

• Ball State University
  • In partnership with Everyday Life in Middletown and Muncie Public Library
  • Participants are able to submit a number of different kinds of material

• Atlanta History Center
  • How is this affecting your life?
  • Collecting physical items after social distancing is over
COVID-19 and My Upload
What is My Upload?

My Upload is an open-source, online tool to collect community contributed materials.

Designed to enable CML and other organizations create community archiving projects.

2019 LYRASIS Catalyst Fund award recipient.
My Upload Features

My Upload’s main features and benefits include:

• User-friendly language
• Individual or bulk upload
• User submitted rights information
• Streamlined process for staff
• Open-source – use it with CONTENTdm, Omeka, Islandora, etc.
My Upload: User Experience

Welcome to My History Upload!
Help us document and preserve central Ohio's history.

Upload ➔ Describe ➔ Submit
My Upload: Staff Experience

Review → Approve → Extract

Export Approved Data
Download Approved Media
Creating Metadata in Community Collections

- Old way was handing someone a form. Forms scare people!
- Lack of interest or confusion because of number of fields
- Incomplete metadata due to time constraints or lack of clarity
Common Problems with Metadata

• Dates were sometimes incorrect or vague
• Addresses usually were not included
• Creator was surprisingly confusing
• Copyright scares people!
Tell us about your item.

Title*
Crayfish at Three Creeks Metro Park

Original Date
May 21, 2020

Original Location
3860 Bixby Rd, Groveport, OH

When was the item taken or created?

Author/Creator*
Aaron O’Donovan

Who took the photo or wrote the document?

Description*
A Red Swamp Crayfish washed up on the walking trail of Three Creeks Metro Park after days of rain which flooded Alum Creek.

What is this item and why is it important?

Permissions
Make Copyright and Metadata Less Scary
To Put it Simply

• Box Good, Form Bad
Experiences

• Better metadata with fewer fields and simple language
• Most users only care about nouns, librarians care about all metadata. Don’t let perfect be the enemy of good
• We can add and edit metadata fields in ingest, customers lose interest or are overwhelmed after about 3 minutes
• Don’t over complicate something for your own reasons
Questions?

Contact us at history@columbuslibrary.org