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Civil Rights Collections in the Digital Realm

Editor's Note

As more archival institutions begin to provide digital versions of their materials, many technical and archival issues come to surface. Archivists must consider issues with copyright restrictions, image size, and metadata when creating a usable digital collection. One must also evaluate the types of materials chosen for digitization and their historical significance and/or usability. Many digital collections contain material from a specific collection's Creator: such as the Civil War letters of a Union soldier at the Siege of Vicksburg, the photographs of an early Twentieth century female photographer, or the diary of a young girl traveling through the West. While others contain materials of like categories, like Jazz sheet music, images of farm equipment, or sports ephemera. There are other collections though, which bring together materials of different types, from various collections and creators, that when brought together help to tell a story of difficult times in history and illuminate the thoughts of people who lived in those times. It is that subject which we highlight in this issue: the story of the American Civil Rights Movement as seen through digital collections.

The following articles depict the various issues, both technical and archival, in maintaining collections that focus on the Civil Rights era in American history. Whether they are the personal papers of Civil Rights leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, or the oral histories of young men and women who worked tirelessly throughout the American South, these articles provide a glimpse into the technical aspects required to maintain digital collections and the issues of selection and access to these materials. They also reflect the care that archivists, librarians, and historians employ with these materials and the historical value of such valuable collections.

Ryan P. Semmes
Editor

Ryan P. Semmes is the Assistant Archivist at the Congressional and Political Research Center at the Mississippi State University Libraries where he helps maintain the records of *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* editorial project. Prior to working at Mississippi State University, he was the Archivist at the Washington, D.C., Public Library's Washingtoniana Division. He received both his Master of Arts in Public History-Archives and his Master of Library and Information Science from the University of South Carolina. He received his Bachelor of Arts in History from Mississippi State University.

The Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive

Diane DeCesare Ross, University of Southern Mississippi

Mississippi was a focal point in the struggle for civil rights in America, and Hattiesburg, home of The University of Southern Mississippi, had the largest and most successful Freedom Summer project in 1964. Through the use of digital imaging and other information technologies, The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries is providing a worldwide audience of researchers with a firsthand perspective on the Civil Rights Movement that otherwise would be restricted to local users and only the most dedicated of historical researchers.

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries laid the foundations of the *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* in 1999. For the first phase of the project, the Libraries cooperated with the University's Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage to offer more than 60 oral history transcripts on the Civil Rights Movement, such as those by civil rights leaders Charles Cobb, Charles Evers, Aaron Henry, and Hollis Watkins. This collection also includes oral histories of race-baiting governor Ross Barnett, national White Citizens Council leader William J. Simmons, and State Sovereignty head Erle Johnston. The project was expanded in 2001 by the addition of twenty-two letters from the Joseph and Nancy Freedom Summer Collection and four diaries of freedom school teachers in 1964.

With the award of an Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Grant for 2002-2004, the second phase of the *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* went into full swing. The grant project resulted in the addition of 84 more oral histories, as well as nearly 1,000 items selected from the Libraries' manuscript and photograph collections, totaling more than 7,000 pages. In addition to enhancing access to primary source material, preserving original materials by creating digital surrogates, and creating learning opportunities for remote users, the project provided a demonstration of what a digital imaging program in a medium-sized repository can accomplish. The digital archive has continued to grow since the grant project ended. At the time of this writing, more than 1,600 items are available to online researchers. These include the papers of Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party founder and Senatorial candidate Victoria Gray Adams. Further selections include the papers of State Sovereignty Commission director Erle Johnston, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) field secretary Sheila Michaels, civil rights advocate Rabbi Charles Mantinband, and Freedom School teacher Sandra Adickes.

Building the Digital Archive

Image Capture and Standards

Creating digital surrogates for the original materials was the most straightforward part of the process. Flatbed scanners were used for objects that could be safely captured in that manner; a professional-quality digital camera was used for books and oversize materials. Though the primary goal of the effort was to provide electronic access to records, an off-line archival-quality set of images was created in anticipation of future needs and changing standards. These masters were captured in 8-bit gray scale or 24-bit color at 600 dpi. They were saved in uncompressed TIFF file

format, the industry standard. The access images, derived from the masters, are 8-bit (gray scale) or 24-bit (color) 200 dpi JPEG compressed images.

Descriptive Data

Prior to the *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* project, archival holdings in McCain Library and Archives had only been cataloged at the collection level. Making selected materials available online required individual descriptive records for each item in the database. Bibliographic Services and Special Collections librarians agreed on the vital importance of a controlled vocabulary in digital projects. *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) was the first choice for a project thesaurus, but it was quickly evident that the headings available in LCSH were not specific enough for optimal access to the items being digitized. As a result, librarians created an in-house thesaurus that combines nationally authorized LC headings supplemented with locally created terms backed by careful authority control. The Civil Rights in Mississippi thesaurus is an ever-growing resource with cross-references and see-references, available for online use at http://www.lib.usm.edu/techserv/cat/tools/crm_index.

Intellectual Property and Privacy Issues

American race relations is as complex an issue in the beginning of the twenty-first century as it was in the middle of the twentieth. Thus, a digitization effort addressing relatively recent civil rights events has been quite a challenge. When the *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* grant project began in 2001, most repositories solved the problem of intellectual property and privacy issues inherent in twentieth century materials by simply eliminating such collections from consideration for digital capture. This practice severely limited access to original materials on the twentieth century's social movements and other recent events of historical significance.

In general, McCain Library and Archives does not own the intellectual property rights to materials in its collections. Therefore, a substantial effort was put into the identification of rights holders and the establishment of an appropriate level of permission that would allow the inclusion of primary sources in the digital archive in a manner that was consistent with the interests of the rights holders. Permission from collection donors was obtained first. If selection of items within the collections had been limited to materials authored by the collection donors, the intellectual property resolution process would have been greatly simplified. However, many of the items selected for digitization were authored by individuals other than the donors, so permissions were also pursued from other authors of individual items within the collections. The procedure included identifying potential copyright and privacy issues, opening a channel of communication with affected individuals, and providing contextual information. Rights holders also had an opportunity to review the digital assets before they were made available to the general public. For example, former Mississippi Freedom Summer volunteer Zoya Zeman reviewed the portions of her papers that were particularly private in nature, including her Freedom Summer diary and letters written home to her family from Clarksdale, Mississippi. This process not only had the effect of increasing the comfort level of the rights holder with the project, but it also created a valuable opportunity for Ms. Zeman to impart contextual information that has enhanced the research value of her collection.

Database Management and Access

The current software used for file management, searching, and browsing is OCLC's CONTENTdm. CONTENTdm features the ability to create compound objects within the database so that searches result in full digital objects rather than separate pages of items such as books, postcards, or sides of three-dimensional objects. It also offers fast searching capabilities, flexibility

of metadata structure, scalability for future growth, and greater ease of use by both staff entering the data and patrons searching the database. Users can perform more complicated searches or browse through all items in a particular collection.

Historical Context

The web site for the *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* also provides historical context to the materials presented online. Information specific to the Civil Rights Movement in various Mississippi towns is presented, including biographical information of major people involved in the Movement, active civil rights groups, notes of important places, and major civil rights activities and events. The web site provides a link to a timeline of Civil Rights Movement activities that begins in the early 1900s and continues until the present-day, as well as a resource which defines the many organizational acronyms related to the Civil Rights Movement and provides cross references and background information (http://digilib.usm.edu/cdm4/crmda_context.php).

Moving towards the future

The *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive* became the cornerstone in a broader vision to build a statewide cooperative digital archive to preserve and provide electronic access to resources throughout Mississippi. The pilot effort of the *Mississippi Digital Library* (MDL) was a cooperative civil rights project drawing together the most significant resources on race relations in six of the state's historical repositories. With funding awarded in December 2003 by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, the library began as a partnership between the University of Southern Mississippi, Delta State University, the University of Mississippi, Tougaloo College, Jackson State University, and the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. The collaboration originally focused on materials associated with the civil rights era.

The *Mississippi Digital Library* has since expanded to include collections from Beauvoir, First Regional Library in Hernando, the Gulf Park Women's College Alumni organization, the Katrina Research Center, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and Mississippi State University. More collections will be added soon. The ultimate aim of the *Mississippi Digital Library* is to provide access to primary source materials covering a wide range of subject areas from Mississippi museums, archives, libraries, and historical societies. Cultural heritage institutions throughout the state are welcome to participate. The web site can be accessed at <http://www.msdiglib.org/cdm4/about.php>.

Diane DeCesare Ross is currently Curator of Manuscripts, Archives, and Digital Collections at The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries. Her educational background is in American Studies, photography, anthropology, and Library and Information Science. Diane also serves as Director of the Mississippi Digital Library.

Digitizing the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection

Courtney Chartier, Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library

In June 2006, the papers of Martin Luther King, Jr. were being prepared for auction at Sotheby's.[1] A group of prominent Atlantans learned of the sale, and pooled their resources in an effort to buy the documents as one collection, and return them to Atlanta. The collection was then transferred to Dr. King's alma mater, Morehouse College. As the official library of Morehouse, the Robert W. Woodruff Library was granted custodianship of the collection.[2]

The Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection (MCMLK) is comprised of over 10,000 documents (approximately 43 linear feet) and 1,100 books from Dr. King's personal library. Materials span Dr. King's lifetime, but focus primarily on his work as a minister, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and a Civil Rights leader. There is very little family or personal material. The research value of the Collection is vast, ranging from such treasures as the handwritten drafts of Dr. King's Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech and lecture, to everyday items such as register tape from unidentified businesses. The Collection also contains a large number of handwritten sermons by Dr. King, which are previously unpublished outside of an editorial context.

Early in the processing of the MCMLK Collection executive staff decided to reformat the entirety of the manuscript collection to ensure preservation and the security of the materials. Reformatting would allow the Archives to not circulate originals, protecting them from theft and unintentional damage. Digitization also would allow staff to recreate and manipulate iconic pieces for temporary display or reproduction requests with no further handling of the manuscripts.

Due to the volume of the collection, the Woodruff Library contracted with NA Publishing, Inc., to scan the documents on site. An overhead scanner was employed by NA Publishing staff, who visited Woodruff Library several times over nearly two years, completing the scanning in batches of approximately 4,000 images. Images created onsite were saved to an external hard drive, and returned to NA Publishing headquarters with the technician. There, the images were cropped and oriented using automated software.

The MCMLK Collection was processed on the item level and described in a traditional Encoded Archival Description (EAD) finding aid, with each series represented in its own XML file.[3] The scanning was concurrent to the processing. As the two archivists completed a series, or the majority of a series, each item was numbered to correspond to the series, subseries and folder number. For example, Series 1, Subseries 1, Item 1 was numbered 1.1.0.10, with the final number in increments of ten. These numbers were used by the scanning technician to name the raw TIFF files as they were created and inserted into the item level description in the EAD by archivists.

The file numbers were created not only as a method of tracking the scans, but also as a unifying field for matching the images to appropriate metadata. With the technical assistance of staff at the Digital Library of Georgia (DLG)[4], metadata was automatically harvested from each item description into a spreadsheet. The tab delimited format allowed for automated matching between

metadata and images in a content management system.

Before the MCMLK project began, Woodruff Library had already implemented use of CONTENTdm as a partner in the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Library Alliance's digital collection collaborative.[5] CONTENTdm is collection management software produced by OCLC that handles the storage, search and display of digital collections. Based on positive experiences with this previous implementation, a second CONTENTdm instance was purchased for the management, display and search/browse functions of the MCMLK Digital Collection.

Once the TIFF images were returned and the metadata had been harvested, a Woodruff Library Digital Services Technician converted the images to JPEGs, then simultaneously ingested the metadata file and the scans. CONTENTdm was set to automatically match the numbered scan files (compound objects) with the numbers embedded into each digital object unit in the metadata.

Once the images and metadata were in CONTENTdm, the archivists would start a lengthy quality control process, matching the images to the physical items, and the metadata to the finding aid. If a compound object had technical problems, it was either reported to the Digital Services Technician for editing, or marked for rescanning at a later date. Common technical problems included illegibility, incorrect orientation, missing images, and corrupt JPEGs. If the metadata was incorrect, it was edited by the archivist.

After quality control was complete, the archivists created links to the objects in CONTENTdm, then pasted the links into <dao> units in the EAD. Each series page was then converted to HTML, using a stylesheet written and customized by DLG staff. The archivists then conducted a second quality control process, to ensure that the links were unbroken and connected to the correct images.

In January 2009, approximately one half of the Collection was opened for research. This initial release included portions of the collection that were considered to be of most interest to the public, including Dr. King's writings. Over the next year, the processing, scanning and quality control process continued on the remaining series in the Collection. The Collection was completed and the remaining series opened to the public in January 2010.

Once the MCMLK Collection was open for research, the finding aid was made available online, using a simple Google-style search box. Once a researcher was in the reading room of the ARC, they could browse or search a version of the finding aid with links to digital images within the item description. Users could also browse or search the digital collection, using the simple and advanced search options built into CONTENTdm.

The next goal for the public web portal was to institute a more refined search mechanism. The archivists, in consultation with Woodruff Library IT and programming staff, decided to implement eXtensible Text Framework (XTF)[6] as the search architecture for the MCMLK Collection. Particularly attractive were the simple and advanced search functions for structured data, as well as XTF's ability to display browse pages and search results in an easily customizable format.[7]

Since the MCMLK Collection was opened for research, it has become the most used collection in the ARC holdings. Due to the unique nature of the collection's ownership[8], the digital surrogates are accessible only from workstations in the reading room of ARC. The book collection, as well as portions of the manuscripts that were not reformatted, are available for researcher use in the reading room.

Despite these limitations, the collection is frequently accessed, particularly by students and faculty

of the AUC schools. Morehouse College staffs an office associated with programming for the collection, with whom the staff of ARC have collaborated on class curriculum, possible research projects for independent study and fielding research requests from visiting scholars.

Another challenge in providing research access is in handling patrons who want to “see” the Collection. When the papers first came to Atlanta, they were put on display at the Atlanta History Center for several months. There is still a perception that the collection is a museum piece, and not a research collection, though selections are not on permanent display.[9]

In retrospect, there were several decisions made regarding digitization that hampered the process. As the physical processing progressed, the archivists continually found items that had been sorted into the wrong series. Frequently those series had already been scanned. The number naming system for the scans allowed new numbers to be inserted, but archivists had to consistently track additions, create their metadata separately, and pull them separately for each scanning visit.

Equally problematic were items that had to be rescanned due to technical problems. Frequently these items could not be fixed by the Digital Services Technician at Woodruff Library, and the original items had to be pulled and rescanned on the next scanning trip. After the first delivery of additions and rescans to already scanned series, the staff learned that the process of correcting compound objects was complex and time consuming, requiring staff to completely reload and index a series within the content management system every time new images arrived. Loading rescans also required new links, as the original link disappeared when the compound object was changed.

These issues led the staff to streamline the process of quality control. In the first few rounds of scanning, archivists conducted quality control checking of the scans after they were ingested into CONTENTdm. In order for Woodruff Library staff to make changes to any images, the Collection then had to be reloaded into the system. Once this was realized, the staff shifted the quality control to fall after the JPEG images had been created, but before they were ingested into CONTENTdm, so that editing changes could be made. The Collection then was not loaded until after all rescans and additions were created, added and checked. This cut down significantly on the time needed to create a single series within the digital collection.

The Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection was the first whole scale digitization effort of the Archives Research Center. Despite the missteps along the way, it was ultimately an important teaching case, not only due to the problems, but also to the implementation of new technology. Digitization will allow for the continued preservation of an essential resource to Civil Rights Movement, and American, history.

[1] For more information on the sale and transfer of the Collection, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5618143>

[2] The Woodruff Library serves four historically black colleges and universities: Clark-Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse College and Spelman College.

[3] Archivists used XMetal editing software and an EAD template from the EAD Official Site. Initially, archivists were going to use the Archivist’s Toolkit (AT) open source software to generate the EAD encoded finding aid, the first such finding aid published by the Archives Research Center. However, the instance of AT used was not local, but maintained at Boston University. The connection would consistently drop, and all work would be lost. Based on this experience, as well

as other quirks of the AT, staff made the decision to move to a traditional EAD creation method. ARC continues to use AT.

[4] Specifically, Toby Graham, the Head of the Digital Library of Georgia, shared a script that automatically generated tab delimited metadata from EAD for ingest into CONTENTdm using standard Dublin Core metadata fields. The steps in the process included evaluating the EAD files to see at what <container> level the digital objects existed. EAD files with digital objects at multiple <container> levels had to be processed sequentially. Depending on those levels, an appropriate XSLT file created by the DLG was used to extract the metadata into an XML file using simple MSXSL commands. The file could then be edited in a text editor, then imported into MS Excel as an XML file, saved as text. The file was then ready for ingest into CONTENTdm. These types of services fall into the mission of the Digital Library of Georgia as a collaborative center for support of digital collections and library resources in Georgia.<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/?Welcome>

[5] The product of this collaborative is the digital exhibition “A Digital Collection Celebrating the Founding of the Historically Black College and University.”<http://hbcudigitallibrary.auctr.edu/>

[6] XTF is an open source product of the California Digital Library, specifically designed for searching across archival collections, particularly encoded documents.<http://www.cdlib.org/services/publishing/tools/xtf/>

[7] XTF is now implemented for all of ARC’s EAD encoded finding aids.

[8] Morehouse College is the owner of the collection, and Woodruff Library is the guardian and provider of research access. However, copyright is still maintained by the King Estate.

[9] The Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta holds exhibition rights to the collection. The Center is not yet constructed. <http://www.cchrpartnership.org/> The Archives does plan to rotate image reproductions in the near future.

Courtney Chartier is currently the Assistant Head of the Archives Research Center of the Atlanta University Center Robert W. Woodruff Library. She has worked previously as the Processing Archivist for the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection and the Voter Education Project Organizational Records. As a student she worked as an Archives Assistant at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History (UT-Austin) and at the Archives and Special Collections of the University of Mississippi. She holds a BA in American Studies (UT-Austin), a MA in Southern Studies (Mississippi) and a MS in Information Studies (UT-Austin). She is currently the Senior Co-Chair of SAA’s Archivists and Archives of Color Roundtable, and the Chair of SGA’s Outreach Committee.

Access the Copyrighted: Integration Correspondence from the James H. Meredith Collection

Jason Kovari, University of Mississippi

The violence surrounding the 1962 desegregation of Ole Miss inherently links the University of Mississippi (UM) with the history of the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, the Department of Archives & Special Collections at UM holds extensive civil rights related collections[i], ranking amongst our more frequently researched topics. Aside from contributing to a statewide grant-funded initiative in 2003, the UM Archives & Special Collections has shied away from prioritizing Civil Rights materials in our digital collections; however, this decision does not stem from emotion. Historically, we have focused on 19th century materials, clearly in the public realm, in an attempt to evade the complexities of contemporary copyright law. This focus has shifted recently. Taking advantage of digital rights management, UM has expanded digital focus to include 20th-century items, notably civil rights materials, in order to meet user needs.

In the past year, UM's Archives & Special Collections has mounted two civil rights digital collections: The Integration of the University of Mississippi[ii] & the United States v. Mississippi Interrogatory Answers[iii]. Using CONTENTdm, UM's content management system, these two digital projects feature images and unsolicited correspondence concerning integration in education as well as court documentation concerning African American voting rights, respectively. To further broaden access to materials on this subject, we have more civil rights and race relations materials in the planning phase of digitization.

Project Description

Our most used and complex civil rights digital collection, the Integration of the University of Mississippi, features two layers of access: materials open to the public and those restricted to UM library computers. Currently, the unrestricted integration material includes images of the 30 September – 1 October riot on the UM campus and subsequent enrollment of James H. Meredith[iv]. Pulling from multiple visual collections, these photographs represent the perspective of a contemporaneous UM student and faculty member. Additionally, the images from the Mississippi Highway Patrol, a law enforcement entity attempting to preserve peace during Meredith's enrollment, are publicly available. Upon donation, UM obtained the copyright to these image collections, which allows the archive to present the items without restriction. Although all involved wished to broaden access, this expansion raised concern over unauthorized dissemination due to the incredibly high request rate and use of the originals; thus, we watermarked the access files.

The selection criteria for materials included in the IP-based restricted sub-collection focused on preservation with rank-order based upon request rates. Currently, restricted materials comprise integration correspondence from the James H. Meredith Collection. Including correspondence from across the World, both supporting and objecting to Meredith's enrollment at Ole Miss, these documents illustrate the narrative of early-1960s racial attitudes and the broader context of

desegregation. Each semester, multiple UM courses require students to conduct research with the thousands of letters sent to Meredith between 1962 & 1963.

For any archive, frequent physical handling of materials causes serious security and preservation concerns. Although we follow the same security procedures with the integration materials as with all of our holdings, the sheer number of researchers working with these items increases concern over the possibility of theft. This same rate of use increases the possibility of wear-and-tear on the materials, as well. While items from this collection have not been stolen and the materials have not yet suffered due to the high rate of handling, the number of researchers using these materials increases the need to devise alternative methods of access to combat the increased threats.

Prior to this project, the six boxes of integration correspondence represented the sole part of the nearly 150 boxes in the James H. Meredith Collection without item-level description; thus users could not narrow their search without handling all items. Instead, many requested the initial few folders in the first box, exhausting themselves before gaining a fuller appreciation for the depth of the materials. By creating a digital presence for the integration correspondence, users can now easily choose their access points and browse without being limited to a certain number of items at-a-time.

Although more traditional archival researchers use these materials, undergraduates comprised the primary user group considered during development. As the correspondence is limited to library computers, an increased digital presence does not aid remote users, which generally guides digital projects. Instead, this project contributes to the wider library goal of expanding resources for UM students. Thus, we meet the needs of undergraduates while subverting the inherent concerns that arise with frequently pulled items.

Process

To streamline digitization of the James H. Meredith Collection integration correspondence, undergraduate workers created metadata concurrent to digitization. In an Excel spreadsheet, students entered basic metadata fields, such as “Author”; “Date”; “Author location” and “Physical extent”, thus gaining a digital surrogate while removing the time burden associated with metadata creation from full-time staff. To ensure quality, consistent formatting and proper vocabulary usage, all undergraduates working on UM digital collections undergo training in Library of Congress controlled vocabularies and Getty Research Institute thesauri. Employing undergraduates for concurrent digitization and metadata creation saves time for our full-time staff but significantly slows the digitization process; it is unknown, however, whether the time is comparable to segmenting the work between undergraduates and librarian-status metadata specialists.

Metadata was then saved as a tab-delimited file and batch uploaded with the documents into CONTENTdm. Having metadata readily available in Excel allows seamless inclusion in the collection’s EAD finding aid, as well. Since all items inhabit the same EAD container level, encoding the series is accomplished through simple insertion of code. By adding further depth to the finding aid, researchers can request specific items rather than requesting at the box-level as has been done in the past. However, with the creation of digital surrogates, requests of the physical items will become limited with encouraged use of the digital collection.

All scanning was performed at 600dpi, 24-bit color and saved as TIFF files. Master files demand between 35 and 50GB of storage space per Hollinger box, depending on number of pages and

original page size. Once scanned, the files were converted to significantly smaller JPEGs. These files were then batch watermarked and, finally, converted into PDF. The choice of using watermarked PDFs stemmed from the belief that students will wish to print pages from the letters, a task easier performed with PDFs than JPEG2000 files, our other preferred file type. Although creating TIFF master files demands additional file space than simply scanning as access resolution JPEGs or PDFs, these files allow more robust re-use while alleviating the concern for additional digitization in the foreseeable future; preservation of these original documents is one of the goals spearheading the project.

Unlike the widely available open materials, which are branded with a distinctive UM watermark, these materials are watermarked with thin red diagonal "Copyrighted" text. As the ownership of copyright over these materials is highly varied throughout the collection, we did not wish to imply the ownership of the intellectual content by using a UM seal.

Limitations

The main limitation in UM civil rights digitization projects has been the same omnipresent concern as in many archival projects: copyright. Attempting to mount modern materials derived from an extensive variety of sources makes obtaining permission not merely impractical but impossible. As the legal nature of intellectual property rights becomes stricter in opposition to the diminishing borders afforded by the web's proliferation of knowledge, institutions face considerable implications when selecting 20th-century materials for digital consumption. In the case of the James H. Meredith Collection integration correspondence, UM has employed basic digital rights management.

Primarily, rights management focuses on limiting access to IP-addresses located in the J.D. Williams Library on UM's Oxford, MS campus. By controlling the physical borders of the digital collection through IP-restrictions, we can more effectively limit access to usage protected under the fair use exemption of U.S. copyright law [v].

In addition to geographically limited access, each record includes a statement detailing that intellectual rights remain with respective authors. Further, the rights statement denies permission to use materials outside the scope of fair use. Watermarking access files as described in the section on Process, in conjunction with a strong rights statement, removes all doubt as to the documents being the author's intellectual property.

We were particularly concerned with abiding by legal restrictions with this project due the sensitive nature of much of the correspondence. As is not surprising given the era and viewpoint, much of the anti-integration letters include statements of hatred, racial slurs and death threats accompanied by the author's name. Since these documents are less than fifty years old, consideration was given to the authors' immediate descendents. Ultimately, we decided that responsibly broadening access trumped potential sensitivities.

UM strives to create item-specific subject terms & descriptions for all metadata records; however, limited staff time and diverse departmental projects disallowed this practice for the integration correspondence. Instead, basic descriptive metadata elements were chosen. Subject analysis is limited to the correspondence as a whole, using the terms "Meredith, James, 1933-"; "College integration -- Mississippi -- Oxford"; "Race relations"; & "University of Mississippi -- History".

The main exception allowing classification-by-content is the designation of "pro-Integration" and

“anti-Integration” in each record. Without this basic stipulation, researchers would be unable to browse the author’s viewpoint, which comprises the vast majority of first-level search requests. Fortunately, this designation was easily included, as it comprises the main physical organization of the correspondence.

Although less impactful to development than copyright concerns, many limitations encountered in UM projects containing multi-page documents stem from the content management system used in their creation, CONTENTdm. Unfortunately, without customization, CONTENTdm is not user-friendly for this document type. Although functional, non-experienced users often encounter difficulty navigating the various levels of each record, such as document description and page description. Through work by the UM Web Services Librarian, some of the concern has been removed as document-level metadata for multi-file documents now appears beneath each image, thus allowing more intuitive use.

Conclusion

Gaining sort-able control over the collection allows researchers to approach these items in new ways. Before item-level description existed, research demanded physically handling each letter, an arduous task when confronted with thousands of documents. Through sorting by metadata fields in CONTENTdm, such as author’s viewpoint or author location, researchers can more easily analyze the documents according to commonly queried designations, regardless of their relative physical locations in the collection’s organization.

Reception of photographs in the Integration of the University of Mississippi has been positive. Routinely ranking amongst our most used digital collections, they averaging a few thousand record views per month. As this resource grows to include varying formats and richer documentation concerning Meredith’s enrollment, we forecast a significant expansion of the collection’s user base. As the materials restricted to J.D. Williams Library computers were first mounted during this article’s writing, usage statistics on these materials were unavailable for comparison.

Regardless of the copyright implications, prioritizing 20th-century materials for digitization is important to meet the needs of undergraduates and scholars. While our digital projects in 19th-century materials continue to expand, we are beginning to counter-balance the proportion of resources to better reflect user needs. Additional 20th-century civil rights materials are queued for digitization in the coming year.

The digitization of integration correspondence is not yet complete. In the coming year, the remainder of the six boxes will undergo the same process, creating a comprehensive resource.

[i] "Civil Rights & Race Relations subject guide", University of Mississippi Archives & Special Collections, accessed September 24, 2010, http://apollo.lib.olemiss.edu/guides/archives_subject_guide/civil-rights

[ii] "Integration of the University of Mississippi", University of Mississippi Archives & Special Collections, accessed September 24, 2010, <http://clio.lib.olemiss.edu/archives/integration.php>

[iii] "*United States v. Mississippi* Interrogatory Answers", University of Mississippi Archives &

Special Collections, accessed September 24, 2010,
http://clio.lib.olemiss.edu/archives/usvms_ia.php

[iv] "Integration of the University of Mississippi" Publicly available materials, University of Mississippi Archives & Special Collections, accessed September 24, 2010,
http://clio.lib.olemiss.edu/archives/integration_open.php

[v] "U.S. Copyright Office - Copyright Law: Chapter 1", accessed September 25, 2010,
<http://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html>

Jason Kovari serves as Metadata Librarian at Cornell University. Previously, he held the position of Special Collections Digital Initiatives Librarian at the University of Mississippi. Kovari is a member of Rare Books and Manuscript Section of ACRL, serving on various committees and as the RBMS web editor (2011-2012)

The Walter White Project

Jackson Stakeman, University of Southern California, and Randolph Stakeman, Bowdoin College

The Walter White project began with a few vague notions about creating a website that served as a resource on the late civil rights leader, who led the NAACP for seventeen years. As a figure in the Civil Rights Movement his role is pivotal. In addition his life and work makes him a sort of an intersection connecting the lives of people from the humblest African Americans to those in the highest seats of power. The range of his activities is so diverse and complex that it was challenging to envision how we could, in a non-linear way, best display divergent strands of his life to work in a cohesive whole. The collections and resources related to him are numerous, but scattered, so an online repository presenting his many sides from many places would not only be fitting, but also necessary. Fortunately, soon after embarking on this quest we were selected as fellows to participate in a National Endowment for the Humanities workshop called “Broadening the Digital Humanities” that sought scholars who would use a developing software framework called “Scalar” now in its alpha development stage at the University of Southern California.

Scalar is a new digital publishing platform from the Vectors Journal (vectorsjournal.org). From its inception Vectors Journal has been dedicated to the publication of scholarly content that would be impossible to print on paper. Scalar continues that mission to encourage and explore the possibilities of digital scholarship. On its surface Scalar’s interface is familiar, it has many similarities to popular blogging platforms like WordPress, but under it’s hood, so to speak, it sees its mission and architecture as quite different. Without much in the way of user intervention, Scalar acts as a thin layer atop a varied, and growing list, of media archives. Resources from YouTube, Internet Archive, Critical Commons, are integrated seamlessly together.

It became clear early on, that the success of this project depended on networking media from a wide variety of sources in an array of different forms. Some examples of the media we are using are pictured in Figure 1.

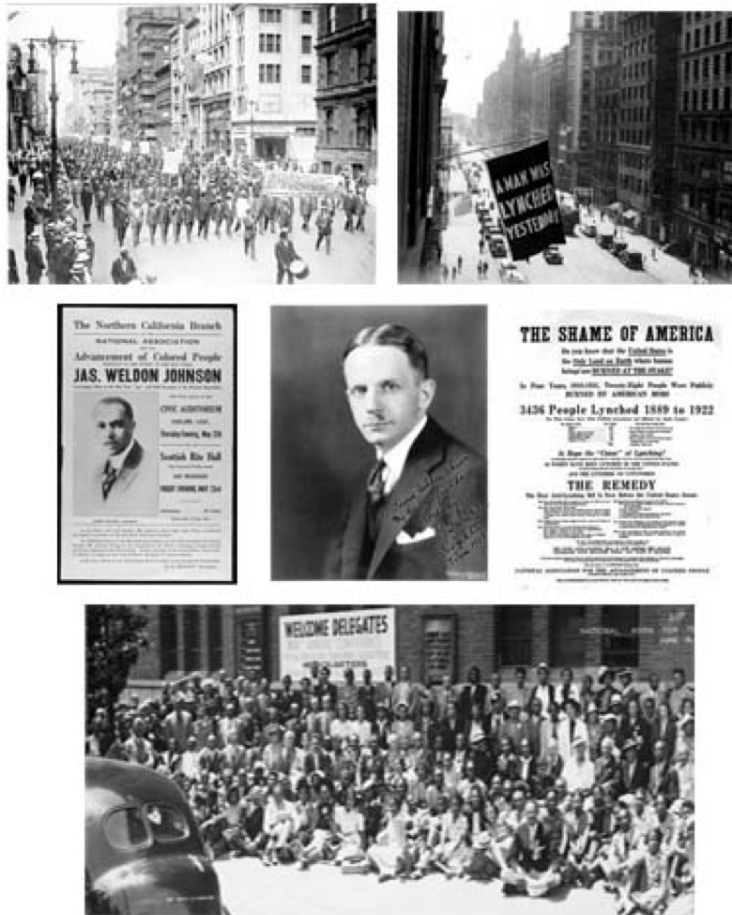


Figure 1

We collected material from libraries and archives at venues ranging from the National Archives and Library of Congress to Smith College, the New York Public Library’s Schomburg Collection, Yale University’s Beinecke Rare Book Library and the University of Massachusetts’ Du Bois Library. This material included text, photographs, video and audio clips. Fortunately some of the media were already online or at least digitized. Some of them were available at no or minimal cost, but the format, quality, and size of media in these holdings varied greatly. The requirements of media online are significantly less onerous than that of broadcast or print, and with Scalar we were able to utilize this material along with clips from feature films hosted by Critical Commons or YouTube. The platform’s open “come as you are” approach helped maintain our project’s cohesion.

Our ultimate goal with this project is to weave together these materials into a public educational project that will be open to all. One of the main strengths of the Scalar platform is in the extensive ways one can connect different pieces of information together. The platform’s basic unit is the “page” which is a combination of text from the site and media drawn in from outside sources on the Internet. To facilitate the flow from one page to another, Scalar implements “paths” to organize collections of pages. “notes”, brief annotations, and “tags” or descriptive markers round out the basic structures. Our challenge was finding ways to use these building blocks to tell stories and form arguments about African American history in the first half of the twentieth century. Our process owed as much to the design of a museum as it did the traditional expository writing.

We first thought about breaking up concepts into their smallest narrative unit, that is, a self-contained bit of the story, capable of function both in and out of the context of its neighbors. In order to map this emerging network of ideas, we used the Visual Understanding Environment (VUE) mind-mapping software developed by Tufts University.

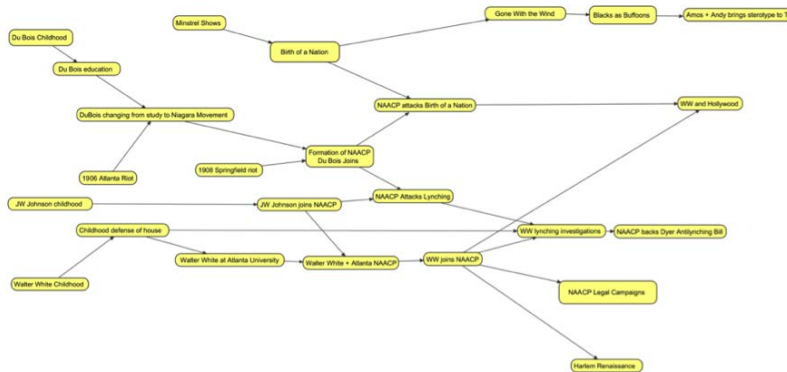


Figure 2

An example is Figure 2. Each oval node in the diagram corresponds to a page in Scalar. The lines show potential order for them as we assemble the individual pages into paths, that is groups of pages. With this rough skeleton in place we began to populate each path with relevant text and media resources. Some of these were simply matching text to photographs, but more commonly it was matching text and different kinds of media e.g. audio, feature film clips, documentary film clips, slide shows of photographs, pages of a graphic novel or combinations of these.

Scalar comes with a selection of templates for each page, which an author can assign to arrange the text and media contained within it. In line with its philosophy of open architecture though, the author merely selects the default view. Each reader is capable of viewing each page in whichever template they wish. This loss of authorial control definitely took some getting used to, but in the end non-linearity is best expressed by user freedom.

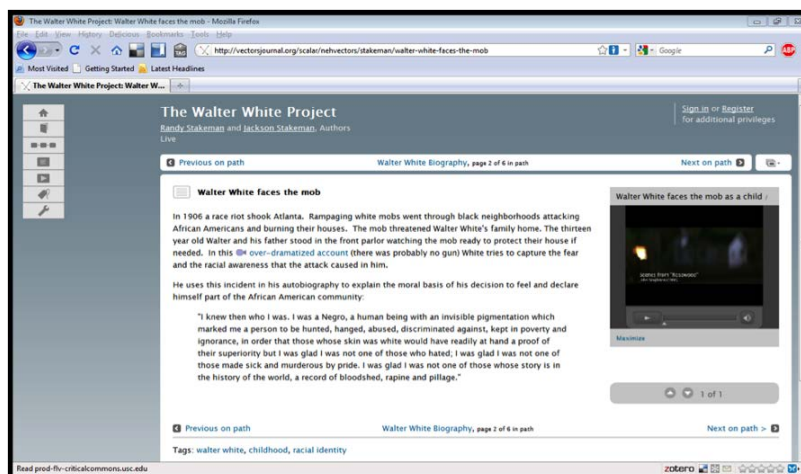


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows an example of a page in its text-centered template. For this page in the project, the

text includes an explanation of why this incident was so important to White and a quote from Walter White's autobiography. The media component is a combination of a scene from the feature film *Rosewood* (without its audio) mixed with audio of Walter White himself taken from a radio broadcast in the 1940's explaining the importance to him of this event. The key was finding that combination of text and available media that told the story best. The feature film clip showed a mob advancing on a house displaying white violence and capturing the fear of African Americans that White sought to portray in his radio account. Each page produced will have its own identity with a range of media and text sources.

Developing paths was also conceptually challenging. We strove to curate pages into meaningful narrative arcs. We organized paths into themes, various chronologies, or biographical narratives. Walter White's biography is the backbone of the project but since his life functions as a nexus of different historical threads, it is far from the totality. For example Walter White joined the national office of the NAACP in 1918. To make sense of what has led to this, one must not only know White's biography till this point, but also the history of the NAACP to that point. To understand the history of the NAACP it was necessary to explain the stories of W.E.B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson until 1918. Thus pages and paths about the formation of the NAACP, Du Bois and Johnson became part of the project.

Tags served as another important organizational feature to move not only between pages, but paths as well. For example we labeled "childhood" the biographies of James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois and Walter White before they embarked on their adult careers. There is no path called childhood, but because of the tag a reader can simply sort through all the material filtering out everything not involving childhood. In the same way one could ask for all the Walter White or W.E.B. Du Bois audio clips used in the project, photographs of James Weldon Johnson, or feature film clips etc. and re-purpose them in new user defined narratives.

These basic templates and structures allow for a tremendous amount of design control without much web design expertise. For the more adventurous though, Scalar allows for the insertion of HTML and JavaScript. We are taking advantage of this to use various slide shows, widgets, and even a geo-spatial interfaced based on Google Earth.

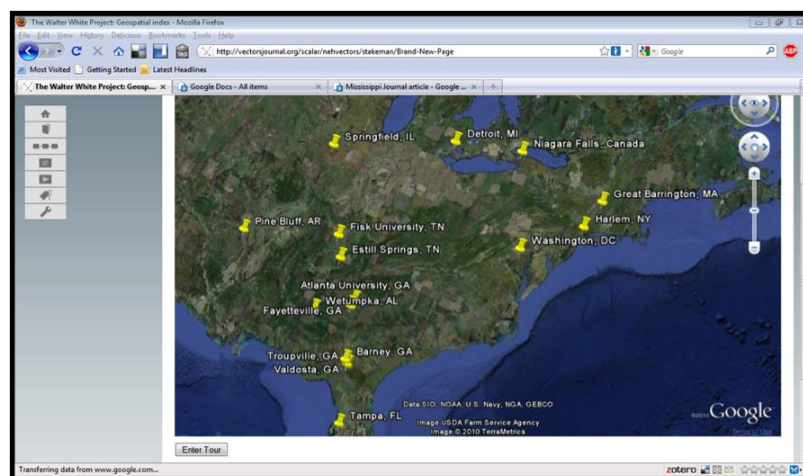


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the Google Earth interface with which we are experimenting. The pushpins

represent the geographical locations where some key events in the project happened. They act as yet another way to navigate through the Scalar project, allowing the user to get a sense of place and context for the events described. This view allows one to see geographic and spatial patterns that may not be obvious or even observable from the pages themselves.

The project has around fifty pages and we are currently working to produce more pages and paths. At the same time we are also looking for ways we can work new HTML code into Scalar to increase its capacities. The University of Southern California developers of Scalar, Eric Loyer and Craig Dietrich, are also working to develop new capabilities for it and to fix bugs in it. Until then we'll continue developing the project up to and past Scalar's release date.

Jackson Stakeman attended Wesleyan University and the University of Southern California where he earned a B.A. in Critical Studies from the School of Cinematic Arts with a Minor in Digital Studies and a Honors in Multimedia Scholarship. Long fascinated by the intersections of culture, semiotics, technology, and media production he now splits his time between Los Angeles and the internet.

Randolph Stakeman earned his B.A. from Wesleyan University and his Ph D. from Stanford University. For thirty years he worked as a professor at Bowdoin College, a small liberal arts college, before retiring and stepping away to look at where the profession was going. Not only has he been an African and African American historian and a teacher, he has also been a dean in student affairs, a dean in academic/faculty affairs, a department chair, director of an interdisciplinary program, director of a study abroad program, and director of two grant programs. Lately he has been exploring new ways in which digital tools might help professors and archivists.
