

Challenges and Rewards of Community-Engaged Collection-Building: The Lehigh Valley Engaged Humanities Consortium Digital Archive

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The logo for Lafayette College, featuring the word "LAFAYETTE" in a large, white, serif font above a horizontal line with a small diamond in the center, and the word "COLLEGE" in a smaller, white, serif font below the line.

LAFAYETTE
COLLEGE

Workflow Design

Administrative Design Goals

- It must detail all actions from beginning to end.
- It must be flexible and extensible.
- It must be independent.
- It must must be documented.

Workflow Requirements

- Materials need to be compatible with the archive.
- Materials need to be described in the archive.
- Materials can be in multiple file formats.
- Objects can have multiple materials associated with them.
- The repository has technical requirements and limitations that must be respected.
- Objects can be provided to the archive from multiple sources.
- Industry best practices and standards help determine how to accomplish tasks.
- Multiple people with different skill sets and knowledge will work on the archive over time.

Sketching out the Workflow

Start: Propose the collection

End: Publish the collection

Sketching out the Workflow

Propose the collection

Acquire the materials

Describe the objects

Ingest the collection

Publish the collection

Core Workflow

- Grantee: **Propose the Collection**
- Grantee: **Acquire the objects** (consent forms, digitization standards)
- Grantee: **Describe the objects** (template spreadsheet with preset metadata elements, detailed instructions on how to complete each field)
- Grantee: **Submit objects and metadata to archive**

- Archive Assistant: **Review submission, complete administrative fields** in description spreadsheet (detailed instructions)
- Archive Assistant: **Batch ingest materials into the archive** (detailed instructions, metadata map)
- Archive Assistant: **Complete accessibility metadata on objects** (detailed instructions)
- Archive Assistant: **Publish collection**

Division of Labour

- Administrators:
 - Maintain documentation
 - Maintain archive infrastructure
 - Provide Starter Packs and Training
 - Consult with Grantees
 - Supervise Archive Assistants
- Grantees:
 - Grantee workflow actions
- Archive Assistants:
 - Archives Assistant workflow actions

Key Takeaways

- Start small, take the project in sections.
- Work to completion on one section before moving to another section.
- Document. Document, document, document.
- Review and revise. Design is iterative and cyclical.

Community Oral History Projects

Community Oral History Projects in the LVEHC

- Goal: Encourage and empower audio and video oral history grant projects
 - Minimize variation between submitted file formats
 - Minimize technical barriers for community participants
 - Ensure that interviewees provide informed consent and have the opportunity to review and redact
 - High quality, clear recordings
- Oral History Collections in the digital archive so far:
 - African American Migration from Cuthbert, Georgia
 - The Allentown Band
 - Estoy Aquí: Latina Women of the Lehigh Valley
- Up next: Voices from the African Diaspora: The Black Experience in Bethlehem, PA

Workshops, Documentation & Training Tools

- May 2018 daylong Workshop on Oral History in theory and practice, open to community
 - Speakers from Oral History in the Liberal Arts Project, Muhlenberg College, and Lehigh University
 - Familiarize community member with Abbreviated Life Story Model of interviewing, provide resources
- “Oral Historian in a Backpack” packs
 - Inspired by Southern Historical Collection at UNC “Archivist in a Backpack” packs
 - 2x Tascam DR-05 audio recorders, pre-formatted
 - [Short & Simple Quick Start User Guide](#) for operating the recorders
 - Extra batteries, headphones, extra memory cards
- In-person training workshop at Bethlehem Area Public Library
 - Familiarize public librarians with the equipment for their own projects, and for lending the packs out from their branches
 - Video follow-up with participants to keep the door open

Student Worker Involvement

- Teaching opportunity:
 - Oral history practices and community archives
 - Skill-building in simple audio and video editing
 - Accessibility concerns for audiovisual materials in digital collections
- Transcript validation and review for audio and video oral history interviews
- [Audio editing workflow document](#)
 - Tops/tails
 - Volume check and correction
 - Redactions - access copy (MP3) only
- Next up: developing a student worker video captioning workflow