

Archival Products

NEWS

JMU Libraries and Educational Technologies Celebrates James Madison University's Centennial with Real and Virtual Exhibits

By Tracy Harter and Julia Merkel

ON MARCH 10, 1908, THE Virginia General Assembly voted on a bill to establish the "State Normal and Industrial School for Women in Harrisonburg, Virginia." One hundred years later, the fledgling school is known as James Madison University, and the library is showcasing its earliest documents.

The Vision

Library preparations for James Madison University's 2008 Centennial began in 2003. In anticipation of heavy use of the university's archival materials, Special Collections Librarian, Chris Bolgiano, allocated funds from the Margaret Burruss Endowment to support institutional research grants based on holdings in Special Collections and to seek support for digitizing the university's founding documents. The ultimate goal was to create real and virtual exhibits both to showcase and to preserve these unique materials.



"Dressing for Education: JMU in the Founding Years," an exhibit in the 1939 wing of Carrier Library, features photographs, yearbooks and ephemera from Special Collections and period clothing from the School of Theatre and Dance. Photo courtesy of JMU Photography Services.

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By 2005, a proposal was drafted stating the purpose of the digitization project as follows: "To enable the Library to make a substantial, permanent, and uniquely relevant contribution to the celebration of the JMU Centennial...." The intentions were: To digitize a selection of the most important documents dating from the



Mrs. Edna Schaeffer, Glee Club director, wearing a formal recital dress as pictured in the 1920 yearbook, the *Schoolma'am*.

With only 18 linear feet and five feet of clearance in the micro-climate museum case, the exhibit focuses on the earliest campus fashions and accessories and features additional photographs and ephemera.

establishment and earliest years of the institution that reflect the values, goals, and strategies of administrative planning, the nature of curricular offerings, and the multiple facets of student life. Further, to create an attractive, user-friendly, searchable website to facilitate access to these documents by a variety of patrons, from elderly alumni to contemporary students researching topics in education.¹

The First Goal: Institutional Research

Four faculty and staff members rose to the institutional research challenge: Pamela Schuelke Johnson of the School of Theatre and Dance, Richard Roberds of the College of Integrated Science and Technology, Danielle Torisky of the Department of Health Sciences, and Sean Crowley, library staffer and history intern. Crowley compiled an extensive, annotated historical timeline of the first 50 years of JMU history. Johnson completed a major research paper and digital compilation of the JMU Historical Clothing Collection. Her tome, *Dressing for Education the First Fifty Years: Highlights of the JMU Historic Clothing Collection, 1908-1958* demonstrates a unique relationship to the larger context of social mores and fashion of the period. Roberds published *The History of the College of Integrated Science and Technology: Its Founding and the Early Years*. And, Torisky submitted a *History of Dining Services at James Madison University*.

The Second Goal: Centennial Exhibits

Johnson's research project formed the basis for the first centennial exhibit in the historic lobby of Carrier Library. "Dressing for Education: JMU in the Founding Years 1909-1929," was conceived by Pam Johnson; Julia Merkel, Preservation Specialist; and Johlene Hess, library exhibits coordinator. Student interns from Theatre and Preservation, Anna Neubert '09 and Ashley Spencer '07, assisted with the installation. Financial assistance came from the JMU Libraries and Educational Technologies, the JMU Centennial Commission Office, and the

School of Theatre and Dance. Numerous other individual contributions of technical assistance and physical labor made the exhibit possible.

With only 18 linear feet and five feet of clearance in the micro-climate museum case, the exhibit focuses on the earliest campus fashions and accessories and features additional photographs and ephemera. Images were scanned and enlarged—some as high as 1200 dpi depending on the dimensions of the original and the desired enlargement size. A particularly relevant image from a silver gelatin print circa 1910 shows the first campus buildings: Maury, Jackson, and Ashby Halls. When enlarged to poster size, a horse and cart emerged from the background putting the image squarely in historic perspective.

Articles of clothing donated by alumnae of the college are juxtaposed with images of students and faculty culled from the pages of the earliest yearbooks, *The Schoolma'am*, (predecessor to the *Bluestone*). Visitors to the exhibit witness styles change from the uniformity of "a sea of white garments" to the more colorful "roaring twenties" as hairstyles and hem lengths change dramatically.

Textiles conservator, Maureen Callahan of Richmond, was consulted for this project. State-of-the-art dress forms were purchased and carefully padded out to help distribute the weight of fragile fabrics. Repairs were made to seams and convey both a history of the garments and of their wearers. One exquisite piece, a post-war, Parisian-inspired, silk evening dress with metallic trim is centrally featured and shown with an image of Edna Schaeffer, the school's choir director, in a strikingly similar garment. The dress receives less than 10 foot candles of ambient light and is illuminated by a built-in fiber optic system.

The Third Goal: Interactive Founding Documents Website

<http://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/foundingdocs/>
The Founding Documents in Special Collections website was launched in 2007



The web exhibit contains links to hundreds of early documents and images in the JMU Historical collection. Viewers can navigate through five categories of documents. Architect, Charles Robinson's, rendering of the campus circa 1908 reveals the founders' early ambitions for the school.

and contains links to hundreds of early documents and images in the JMU Historical Collection. Users can navigate to documents and images from the following categories: Academics, Board of Trustees, Faculty, President Burruss, Student Life, and Timeline.

Charles Robinson's architectural rendering of campus, circa 1908, provides a visual anchor for the site. The "Academics" page opens with an attractive 1912 diploma of Ruth Randolph Conn, and to high-resolution pdf images of early commencement programs and Normal Bulletins. The latter contain academic calendars, faculty profiles, course descriptions, expenses, and other narrative and statistical information. Files were scanned at 600 ppi and saved as tiff files from which jpg derivatives were created at 72 ppi, with 1600 pixels on the long side of the image. Individual images were combined in Adobe Acrobat for ease of viewing. Publications with larger file sizes were parsed into smaller units of less than 15mb each to reduce on-screen loading time.

The "Board of Trustees" page contains a pdf version of the typed transcription of its meeting minutes, 1908-1914. The transcription is fully searchable because the pdf was created from a

text-based file, Microsoft Word. In the same vein, the "Faculty" page also provides access to a typed transcription of meeting minutes, 1909-1915. The entire handwritten volume is accessible to compare the transcript.² These pages went through a three-step process similar to the *Normal Bulletins* which were scanned at 400 ppi and saved as tiff files, followed by jpg derivatives created and combined as pdf documents.

"President Burruss" links to digital documents graciously offered by Virginia Tech, the institution that has legal ownership and copyright of President Burruss' papers [Citation: Julian Ashby Burruss Papers, RG 2/8, Digital Library and Archives, University Libraries, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University]. The logistics of serving these documents has proven particularly challenging as they were selected from unprocessed, unarranged folders, which were scanned and saved as individual pdf files with minimal identification.

"Student Life," displays full-color thumbnail images of selected student literary society posters, *Schoolma'ams*, 1910-1912, and student handbooks, 1912-1915. The oversize posters were scanned in segments and pieced as 400 ppi tiff files. Next, jpg derivatives were made at 72 ppi and viewed at 800 pixels and 1600 pixels on the long side for higher magnification. The handbooks and *Schoolma'ams* were scanned and saved as tiff files, from which jpg derivatives were created, and ultimately combined as pdfs.

The "Timeline" link is the capstone of the online exhibition. The first 10 years of Crowley's "Annotated Historical Timeline of James Madison University, 1908-1959" was transformed into an interactive, illustrated timeline. To help users navigate, the selected year is highlighted and corresponds to that selection on the timeline bar. Events and brief descriptions from that year are listed chronologically through the center of the page. Up to eight corresponding thumbnail

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Two of the first instructors, Natalie Lancaster (Mathematics) and Lida Cleveland (Music) on the boardwalk in front of Maury Hall, the first academic building c. 1911. Note the thick mud of a campus under construction. (JMU Special Collections #Facq111)

images grace the bottom of the page. Each entry is bookmarked to the text in the pdf timeline.³ Each thumbnail links to Special Collections' JMU Historic Photos Online.⁴

With Bolgiano's retirement in 2005, the proverbial clock was ticking but scanning continued in the Center for Instructional Technology or "CIT" under Craig Baugher's supervision. However, project management was in a holding pattern until Tracy Harter, Special Collections Librarian, was hired in 2006. Harter and Merkel collaborated with Sandy Maxfield, Director of Public Services; Jennifer Keach, Head of Digital Services; Bill Hartman, Systems Administrator; and Kevin Hegg, CIT Software Engineer. The group determined that a web exhibit was more practical than a searchable digital collection.

Web manager, Greg Brown, designed the site based on Merkel's initial sketches and selections of images. Meanwhile, Harter coordinated with Baugher and Hegg to complete the scanning, create derivatives or service copies and arrange the files. Several steps were involved in this process: the scans were placed on a temporary server; quality-controlled for consistent sizing, missing pages, etc.; files re-named; batched to create derivatives; multi-page documents combined into pdfs; and finally, copied to the main library server.

Imaging equipment included a Microtek Scanmaker 9800 XL, an Epson Expression

10000XL, and a Canon EOS 10D Digital SLR camera at 6.3 megapixels. While industry standards for master tiff images were 600 ppi in 2003⁵, the enormous file sizes, and limited server space determined that the majority of scans be 400 ppi saved as uncompressed tiff files. Hegg used xat's Professional Image Optimizer⁶ to batch-process service images as jpg derivatives of varying sizes from the master tiff files. The derivatives worked very well for serving the student posters but not for multi-page documents. Multiple jpg images were combined into pdfs using Acrobat 7.0 Professional.

The "Founding Documents" website and the "Dressing for Education" exhibition were both unfurled in 2007 in time for inaugural centennial events. However facile the end results appear, both projects took four years of considerable staff time in addition to hundreds of faculty research hours. Much was learned along the way, but three areas that should be addressed both for future projects and for ongoing maintenance are: metadata (the importance of metadata cannot be understated in digital endeavors); migration of data; and website search options.

NOTES

1. JMU Founding Documents Digitizing Project Proposal. Chris Bolgiano, Special Collections Librarian, January 18, 2005 (Revised Feb. 8, 2005)

2. See the highlighted term "fornoon" on page 15 of the transcript. In the pdf version of the original document, a user can see the script at close range and determine whether "fornoon" may in fact be "forenoon."

3. For examples, see specifically the entries for March 10, 1908 "Harrisonburg Gets Normal: Conditions of Establishment" and November 25, 1908 "Maury & Jackson Halls: Groundbreaking, Construction Begins."

4. <http://www.lib.jmu.edu/special/jmuphotopages/jmuphoto.aspx>

5. Western States Digital Standards Group, Digital Imaging Working Group. "Western States Digital Imaging Best Practices." Version 1.0. January 2003. p. 24-31.

6. See <http://www.xat.com/> for more information.

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The Next Wave of Statewide Preservation Planning

By Tom Clareson

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE the mid-1990s, there is an upswing in statewide preservation planning for libraries and cultural heritage institutions. A “Third Wave” of statewide planning has begun, pushed forward in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) “Connecting to Collections” program.

How did this “new generation” of statewide efforts come about? What can these new programs learn from some of the “classic” statewide initiatives which have survived for 15-20 years or longer? And, how can individual institutions across the cultural heritage spectrum take advantage of this new focus on collaborative planning? A review of the history of statewide preservation planning and the goals of current programs pushing these efforts forward can help preservation professionals knit together a national fabric of state efforts.

The Classics

A number of statewide preservation programs have their genesis in the March 1989 National Conference on the Development of Statewide Preservation Programs, sponsored by the Library of Congress and the Division of Preservation and Access, National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

The meeting brought together state librarians, state archivists and academic librarians from a majority of the 50 states to develop preservation plans customized to their constituents. Although it may be difficult to believe now, when collaboration is key to the cultural heritage community, many representatives from the states said at the time that this meeting marked the first opportunity at which staff from these enti-

ties sat around the same table to discuss preservation planning issues.

Following that meeting, NEH created a grant program to support statewide preservation planning, with grants of up to \$50,000 available. The program ran for five years and supported preservation planning in 11 states: Massachusetts, Nebraska, North Carolina, Maine, Rhode Island, Maryland, Kansas, New Hampshire, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Iowa. Because of a decline in the number of applications, the program was discontinued in fiscal year 1995.

While many states developed programs as a result of these statewide planning grants, there were some which had statewide preservation planning efforts in place even before the NEH initiative. Many consider the New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials as one of the “models” for all states to emulate. This program, administered by the New York State Library’s Division of Library Development, was developed through library legislation in 1984, and further developed in 1986 and 1990 into one of the nation’s leading programs.

Key in the appeal of this project is the discretionary grant program which provides funding up to \$30,000 annually for projects preserving research materials in New York’s libraries and cultural heritage institutions. Funded projects include preservation surveys, collection microfilming, improvement in collections storage areas through environmental monitoring, conservation treatments and training. Current information on the program can be found at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/cp/>.

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The program provides a wide array of training opportunities, especially focusing on disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation.

While not a group that usually awards grants, the Ohio Preservation Council, active since 1984, is a statewide program which includes institutions that win awards (The Cleveland Public Library, an active OPC member for many years, was the first public library to win the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works/Heritage Preservation joint Award for Outstanding Commitment to Preservation and Care of Collections in 2007).

Ohio's long-standing effort focuses on education, with bi-annual workshops and symposia often attracting 100 or more people, and a strong advocacy program, keeping preservation in the public eye through vehicles such as posters publicizing specific aspects of preservation activity. The OPC website is <http://opc.ohionet.org>.

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) statewide preservation program (<http://www.mass.gov/mblc/advisory/preservation/Preservationinfo/preservation.php>), which began in 1988, was one of the first to emphasize the importance of environmental monitoring and control to the institutions in its state, offering loans of environmental equipment and support for the use of that equipment to its audience, which began as public libraries and now includes all types of collection-holding institutions. The program provides a wide array of training opportunities, especially focusing on disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation. Information on a variety of program offerings including emergency assistance, preservation needs assessments and site surveys, is available online through this well-documented program.

What makes the programs in North Carolina and Iowa successful and sustainable? The North Carolina Preservation Consortium (NCPC) has a history of developing conference programs that are “ahead of the curve” of many other organizations and associations’ preservation education efforts. NCPC

(<http://www.ncpreservation.org/>) has sponsored annual conferences and workshops on digital preservation and audio preservation long before these topics appeared on other groups’ agendas.

In Iowa, advocacy and information have ruled the day in the work of the Iowa Conservation and Preservation Consortium, or ICPC, a multi-institution-type organization which has provided preservation information and education for a range of members including academic libraries and living history museums. Information on ICPC is available at <http://web.grinnell.edu/individuals/stuhrr/icpc/about.html>.

Certainly, there are other states with long-standing preservation efforts, but many regard these “classics” as standout programs.

The Second Wave

In the early 1990s, assisted by the State Library of California, preservation professionals from a variety of institution types, in this case ranging from libraries to state parks, to museums, came together to develop a program which is now seen as one of the strongest and most comprehensive statewide preservation programs in the United States.

Initially begun through NEH-funded planning, the project took off in 1997 with a large-scale preservation needs assessment survey, which uncovered education, information and consulting needs. California built on the strength of some existing regional disaster networks in the state such as the Inland Empire Libraries Disaster Response Network (IELDRN) and San Diego/Imperial County Libraries Disaster Response Network (SILDRN) and developed a program which was able to provide preservation support and education to all sizes and types of institutions across the state. The California Preservation Program, or CPP, (<http://calpreservation.org/>) improved upon some industry standards

by developing tools such as brief preservation site survey reports (which have proven more palatable and actionable to top administrators) and disaster preparedness training which, through initial workshops and subsequent follow up sessions, truly have pushed institutions into developing disaster plans. Attendees at the American Library Association's 2008 Annual Conference will be able to learn more about the CPP at a program, "P(l)anning for Gold: Preservation Models in California and the West," scheduled for Saturday, June 28, from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Further up the "Left Coast," the Washington Preservation Initiative, or WPI, (<http://www.secstate.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/preservation.aspx>) began in 2003 with strong support from the Washington State Library in the form of funding and actual liaison staff. The WPI used an initial statewide preservation needs assessment survey as the program's kickoff and has since offered preservation workshops on both sides of the state and funded 29 preservation grant projects. A program of preservation sites surveys was made available through application to the Washington State Library. This activity has allowed institutions with widely varying collection types and staff sizes ranging from 1 to over 100 to gain customized insight into the needs for improvement of their buildings, collections and especially their preservation policies. The WPI has most recently focused on environmental monitoring as a statewide activity. This program has been hailed by

Washington librarians and library administrators as one of the most effective Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)-funded programs in the State's recent history.

In a recent issue of "Archival Products Newsletter" (Volume 14, Number 3, 2007), Kris Kern detailed the next phase of preservation support offered by the CPP, WPI and other Western states through the Western States and Territories Preservation Assistance Service, or WESTPAS, which will assist 14 states and territories in the West with disaster preparedness workshops and other preservation information.

A "Call to Action" Begins a New Era

The Heritage Health Index (<http://www.heritagehealthindex.org>) was published in 2005 by Heritage Preservation, and as the first comprehensive survey of the preservation status of America's cultural heritage collections, it has had many positive impacts on the fields of preservation and conservation. Perhaps the most profound has been the "Connecting to Collections" initiative, sponsored by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This wide-ranging program includes a nationwide series of forums on preservation issues, the ability for institutions to acquire a relatively comprehensive "Conservation Bookshelf" and potentially most importantly to the future of preservation in the U.S., a program of statewide preservation planning grants which, over two years, will be awarded to every state and territory.

The planning grants, in amounts up to \$40,000, can be used to

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Many of the states which will benefit from this program will be tackling statewide preservation for the first time ever or at least in many years.

address one or more of the key findings of the Heritage Health Index including improvement of collection storage conditions, development of emergency plans, institutional program-building in preservation and development of public and private support for collections stewardship. Following the two-year period where each state will receive a grant award, a selected number of states will receive implementation grants to continue and expand upon their plans.

Some of the “classic” and “second wave” programs are among the 19 states utilizing the first round of IMLS preservation planning grants to “build out” their strong existing programs (see <http://www.ims.gov/news/2008/012308.shtm>). The State of New York, for example, will attempt to reach as many of its cultural heritage institutions as possible with a preservation needs assessment survey to help determine future directions for its program. Washington State will focus on building programmatic sustainability through a series of conferences and working groups. Many of the states which will benefit from this program will be tackling statewide

preservation for the first time ever or at least in many years. Planned activities from these states include everything from “town meetings” to on-site surveys at institutions within the state. More than 30 states and territories will still have the opportunity to apply for “Connecting to Collections” grants by the October 2008 deadline (see <http://www.ims.gov/collections/grants/index.htm>). It will be exciting to see the variety of activities proposed.

Statewide collaborative projects focusing on the digitization of library and archival materials have provided a great deal of momentum in building a wide spectrum of digital resources and assets. With the “kick start” provided by the new IMLS program, it is hoped that preservation programs in each state can cast a “safety net” of preservation planning, disaster preparedness and collaborative work that will help preserve our cultural heritage for generations to come.

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