

Final Performance Report

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NDNP Awardee Final Performance Report
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FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT NARRATIVE

USC is extremely grateful to have been a part of the NDNP program and to have received funding from NEH for three cycles of the grant. We are also grateful for all of the hard work and support from the NEH and Library of Congress staff: Helen Aguera, Leah Weinryb Grohsgal, and Ralph Canevali at NEH and the NDNP Conversion team at LC: Deb Thomas, Tonijala Penn, Robin Butterhoff, Nathan Yarasavage, Henry Carter, Chris Ehrman, Ivey Glendon and Vanessa Mitchell.

A. Project Activities:

There were no major changes or omissions in the project activities. We were able to accomplish all that we set out to do.

Personnel changes did occur over the course of the six years, but they were manageable. Initially, for the first cycle of funding, we had two part-time staff assisting with metadata creation and one full-time project manager. At the end of the first cycle, Ashley Knox, a metadata assistant, moved into a new position in USC Libraries' Digital Collections and Virginia Pierce, also a metadata assistant, began working full time as assistant to Santi Thompson, the Project Manager. In August 2012, during the second year of the second cycle, Santi left for a full time job at the University of Houston Libraries and Virginia took over his position as Project Manager. Laura Blair was hired to take Virginia's place two months after Santi left. Laura left for a permanent job as an archivist at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville at the end of the third cycle of funding. Virginia was able to stay and finish the grant successfully. She has since accepted a job as a reference librarian at Francis Marion University.

There were no direct federal matching efforts, but we did manage to receive some funding from the Humanities Council of SC for travel and invitations to presentations around the state and to purchase posters advertising the site.

There were only a few changes made over the course of the six years of the project. The Library of Congress' software, the DVV, was upgraded a few times from 3.1 to 3.1.4 and the staff made sure to upgrade it at USC. Early on, the staff followed the advice from the Library of Congress and purchased the ThumbsPlus software for reviewing files. And during the final cycle of the grant, the USC Library received a generous donation of a Mekel Mach 12 microfilm scanner. This scanner was used to quickly scan service copies of the microfilm and then review the film as

files on a computer, instead of on the microfilm reader, which made reviewing the files much easier.

Publicity

SCDNP staff members invested considerable time and energy in promoting *Chronicling America* in South Carolina. They utilized several approaches to distribute information about the program to the general public. USC Libraries prepared a press release at the launch of SCDNP and received press coverage from across the state. Over the course of six years there were thirty-four articles reporting the project in state newspapers, local newsletters, local television sources, and web sites. Outlets that covered the project included *The State*, *The Sumter Item*, *The Times and Democrat*, and stations such as WLTX in Columbia, S.C., and WJBF in Augusta, Ga. Furthermore, *Palmetto People*, a local cable program highlighting events in South Carolina, invited the Digital Collections Librarian and Co-PI Kate Boyd to appear in an episode to discuss SCDNP. The episode aired in May 2010 (See Appendix B).

In July 2010, USC Libraries launched the SCDNP website, which contains a general overview of the project, details on the newspaper titles selected for digitization, contacts for individuals seeking more information, and grant documentation. An SCDNP WordPress blog and subject guides were also started and linked off the Web site (See Appendix D). The blog provided users with updated progress reports from SCDNP staff, announced upcoming public events, and contain[ed] posts on aspects of South Carolina history and culture documented in the newspapers in *Chronicling America*. The subject guides bring together information on topics such as education, industry, and commerce and contain links to specific articles about the topics in *Chronicling America*.¹

Over the course of six years, the staff gave a total of 83 presentations to groups, big and small, around the state (See Appendix C). Presentations were given on more than one occasion at the annual conferences of the South Carolina Library Association and the South Carolina Archival Association. Staff gave presentations at public libraries in Beaufort, Lexington, and Richland Counties, among others. They represented the project at the South Carolina Book Festival for three years in a row and created an online webinar with the help of the South Carolina State Library.² Staff also talked to numerous educational groups in the state, such as the South Carolina Council on African American Studies, South Carolina Council for Social Studies, USC Sumter, Kelly Mill Middle School, Dreher High School, Winthrop University, College of Charleston, and a number of USC School of Library and Information Science classes. Overall the staff reached about 582 faculty and students from K-12 and higher education, specifically.

A large effort was also made to reach genealogical societies in South Carolina. The staff applied for a small amount of funding, \$1,000, from the Humanities Council of SC to promote their outreach activities. The staff toured the state for two years and gave eighteen presentations to genealogy groups, reaching about 527 people. Two groups invited the staff back for a second time (See Appendix C).

From casual conversations, it does seem that these efforts to publicize the project have paid off around the state. A greater proportion of citizens are aware of the *Chronicling America* site and

¹ See <http://library.sc.edu/digital/newspaper/index.html> for the website, blog, and subject guides.

² See webinar at <https://vimeo.com/39486118>.

the South Carolina newspapers available within it compared to other digital collections around the state.

B. Accomplishments

The team was successful in completing the objectives set out in the proposal and in some cases went beyond those objectives. Each cycle required 100,000 pages be scanned and delivered to the Library of Congress following their technical specifications. With help from an advisory board, the team selected newspaper titles that met the National Digital Newspaper Program's content selection criteria. Ultimately, the amount of scans required was surpassed, totaling 304,786 pages (See Appendix A). All batches have been delivered to the Library of Congress and have been approved.

During the first cycle of funding an effort was made to find and include African American papers. Ten titles were identified, scanned, and made available online. Many of these were found at the Library of Congress and the team worked with them to access duplicate negative microfilm rolls. The team continues to find more African American papers and hopes to add them online locally at some point.

The team had very successful partnerships with both the South Carolina State Department of Archives and History (SCAH) and Apex CoVantage as well. SCAH duplicated all the master negatives that needed to be scanned and sent to the Library of Congress for preservation. Apex Co-Vantage created the scans, derivatives, and metadata for the project during the course of all three cycles.

In addition to the microfilm scanning, all scope notes were also delivered, catalog records were improved upon, and staff members attended the annual meetings in Washington, DC. Co-PI Craig Keeney wrote a total of 46 scope notes, all of which have been delivered and approved. Keeney also created, edited, and updated 46 bibliographic records for newspapers in WorldCat according to CONSER program standards.

All goals were achieved.

C. Audiences

The audiences for the SCDNP are diverse and include all ages, economic levels, interests and geographic locations. Anyone who is interested in exploring and understanding the past will find this project of interest. Scholars in the humanities and social sciences, genealogists, family researchers, and journalists are typical users of *Chronicling America*, but school children and college students are also a growing demographic.

In South Carolina, the team was successful in reaching lots of different communities through their presentations to genealogical and educational associations across the state. The funding from the Humanities Council allowed for the team to design a SCDNP poster and postcard to be made (See Appendix D). A total of 136 posters were distributed to all public libraries in the state and additional 75 to museums, archives, and academic libraries so that there was thorough geographic distribution. The postcards were mailed to potential presentation attendees and handed out at conferences. The staff continued to handout these posters and postcards to groups such as educators, school library media specialists, historical societies, and all sorts of libraries during outreach efforts throughout the remaining participation in the grant. As a result,

the project reached many different ages and geographic locations. Small communities such as Anderson, Central, Easley, Edgefield, Laurens, Orangeburg, Walhalla, and Winnsboro learned about the project. Generally, everywhere the team spoke, they were welcomed with enthusiasm and great interest.

While neither LC nor SCDNP captures specific demographic information, both programs track usage for content available online. SCDNP began tracking usage of its web site, blog, and subject guides in 2011. LC sent statistics once a year. According to the LC statistics, there is a consistent and noticeable increase in usage over the course of the project; starting in 2012 there were 687,733 page views of S.C. papers, and in the last year 1,205,676 page views were reported. This may be due to the program adding more content, but it is considerable enough to assume that there are more people accessing the pages (See Appendix E). As a matter of fact, Dr. Constance B. Schulz, a member of our advisory board, recently shared with us a great anecdote on how English scholars are using South Carolina newspapers in *Chronicling America*.

Dr. Schulz wrote:

“At the annual meeting of BrANCH (British American Nineteenth Century Historians) at Cambridge University's Madingly Conference Center. The very first session I went to on Friday afternoon was on the topic of reading in the South during the Civil War; two of the three presenters had so many references to people reading (or writing poetry in) small town SC newspapers that at the question period I asked the presenters if they were using *Chronicling America* and that if so I wanted to tell the digital library staff who got it ready that people in Britain and America were USING their work. The result was a paean of praise not only from the panelists but from the audience for how wonderful *CA* is, and how rich in particular the SC newspapers there are for 19th century historians. I thought you and your staff would like to know! The rest of the conference, about half of the papers I heard the British historians (especially graduate students) had been able to do the particular research in American history in which they were interested in part because of the now readily available newspapers online through *Chronicling America*. “

Concerning USC online resources, there was also a steady increase in use over time. During the beginning of the second cycle of funding there were about 1,000 hits a month on the USC resources, including the web site, subject guides, and blog. By the end of the grant, there are now about 4,000 hits a month. The blog has been the most popular resource on the USC site, receiving at least twice as many hits a month as the other two resources do (See Appendix E).

D. Evaluation

The SCDNP project was unofficially evaluated in many ways. As each batch was scanned by the vendor, the files were reviewed, verified, and validated by the SCDNP DVV. This ensured that the files being sent to the Library of Congress were in working order. The Library of Congress then followed the same process on their end and would only accept and ingest the batches when they were sure the files were working correctly. Annually, the staff attended the National Digital Newspaper Program in Washington, D.C., where they learned what other partner institutions were doing and how the project was going as a whole across the country. The staff gave presentations on occasion and received feedback from LC and other state projects. The scope notes were reviewed by Ralph Canevali, Deputy Director for the Division of Preservation and Access of the National Endowment for the Humanities, before being made available online.

From our perspective, this project was a resounding success that has allowed the library to make materials, initially only available on microfilm, accessible to users all over the world. This project was met with huge appreciation almost everywhere the staff gave presentations.

Some comments heard and received from users include:

“We are writing a book, “Discovering Laurens County” in several volumes. The South Carolina Digital Newspaper Program will give us research and personal accounts of the citizens of Laurens County. Most of these facts and stories have not been read in over 100 years.”

“With *Chronicling America* the task of finding a specific person or event is reduced from days to hours. For instance, I received a request to verify a parental link; however, after weeks of searching I was only able to find minor leads—but nothing concrete. Yet, when I utilized the keyword searching feature in *Chronicling America* I was able to find an article that confirmed a parental link for a patron.”

“In short, we had assumed that the *Keowee Courier*, a newspaper from Oconee County, in the early twentieth century only printed marriage announcements for Caucasian couples—but I found out that African American marriage announcements were printed as well. This insight is of great importance when it comes to African-American genealogy.”

Concerning the technical side of the project, USC staff are satisfied overall, but do see some room for improvements. There is always discussion as to whether the LC specifications should call for article segmentation within the page of each paper. Some institutions are going back and doing this, but just having made these materials available in the first place is a wonderful start, and USC staff are less concerned with pursuing that route. However, the staff does believe that the ChronAm software and metadata requirements need to be easier to use. If NEH and LC would like institutions to continue on this path of digitizing newspapers, the *Chronicling America* software needs to be easier to setup locally and made easier to ingest materials. It also needs to be able to connect with other repositories of newspapers in some way. Guidelines need to be put into place that explain simple ingest and the least amount of metadata and derivative files needed as possible. As it stands, the library is still dependent on a vendor because the staff does not have the skills or tools in-house to continue scanning newspapers. The automated conversion of metadata into MODS and METS/ALTO XML standard that meets the LC technical guidelines is the biggest obstacle and requires that the files are outsourced to a vendor. Being dependent on the vendor means the library needs to continue to find outside funding, which is becoming more and more difficult. It would be much easier to continue if staff could scan in-house and load to the library’s local software.

Sustaining the project is fairly easy since the Library of Congress is managing the site and both LC and USC are holding on to files. Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe, as they say. It is unfortunate that the Library of Congress will not continue to take USC scanned newspapers that follow their specifications and scope.

E. Continuation of the Project

As a result, making newspapers available online has become and continues to be a priority for USC Libraries even after its formal involvement with the National Digital Newspaper Program has ended. Of all the materials digitized, newspapers are some of the most important because of the amount of content they include, the fragile state that the originals are in, and the improvements that online access and full text searching bring to users over having to use microfilm readers. Bringing newspapers online and making them full text searchable creates a wealth of historical materials available to the Library's users.

USC Libraries is currently exploring the best and most feasible ways to continue scanning and making newspapers available online. The library has made efforts to follow the non-NDNP conversations, with staff members recently attending an IMLS-funded meeting and a ChronAm software meeting. The staff successfully installed a local instance of the ChronAm software about two years ago and loaded the *Gamecock*, the student newspaper of the University of South Carolina, as its first title³. Library Staff worked with Apex CoVantage to scan the microfilm available from 1908-1988 and then proceeded to also scan large bound color volumes from 1989-2006 in-house. The digital files from the bound volumes were also sent to Apex for additional derivative file creation and metadata. Digital Collections staff were able to load both the microfilmed digital files and the bound volume color digital files all onto the ChronAm instance together. They hope to add more SC newspapers to this software. Other software tailored for newspapers has been reviewed and the library believes ChronAm to be the most easily accessible for users, although not as easy to install and add content to.

As a result of the library's successful involvement with NDNP, the Crowley Company donated a Mekel Mach 12 microfilm scanner, and Digital Collections was able to secure outside funding to scan ten rolls of Horry County newspapers on microfilm, which will be added to USC's local instance of ChronAm this coming year. The Digital Collections department continues to look for funding to scan more newspapers and plans to apply for IMLS' Library Services Technology Act funding this spring.

The Digital Collections department also continues to build on its South Carolina Digital Library (SCDL) partnerships, and its expertise in newspapers is helping to strengthen those partnerships slowly, but surely. A few institutions in the state have contacted the department in the last few years, asking how they can get their newspapers scanned. The library has successfully secured outside funding to digitize Horry County newspapers, and the department hopes to identify more partners with whom to work.

USC Libraries' goal is to one day have a South Carolina Historical Newspapers portal which will include the NEH-funded papers as well as all other historical South Carolina newspapers not restricted by copyright. USC Libraries are also part of the SCDL Service Hub for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). This allows the staff to follow the DPLA conversations and discussions about how they are thinking of bringing digitized historical newspapers across the country together into one portal.

³ See <http://www.sc-newspapers.sc.edu/>

F. Long Term Impact

We will continue to publicize these materials to the students of South Carolina. This project helped us attract funding for digitizing Horry County newspapers and we hope in the future more local communities will become interested in working with us to have their local newspapers digitized. This project also helped us interest the Crowley Company in supporting the efforts with their donation of a Mekele Mach 12 microfilm scanner.

The SCDNP definitely appealed to the public and has only helped improve the public's perception of the University of South Carolina.

G. Grant Products (See Appendix D)

- a. With the help of the Humanities Council SC funding, 400 posters and 700 postcards were printed and distributed.
- b. The staff created and maintained a web site, blog, and subject guides, which will all continue to be maintained, however the blog may become stagnant for a while or moved into a larger, more general Digital Collections blog.
- c. Pamphlets were created as handouts: an overall pamphlet about the program, a pamphlet on African American newspapers, a general research pamphlet, and an undergraduate pamphlet were created. These will continue to be used by the department.
- d. The USC Libraries learned about and downloaded the DVV software and ChronAm software, which will continue to be used.
- e. 83 presentations were given all over the state, discussed earlier, and these will continue to be given as part of the Digital Collections department outreach.
- f. Digital Collections also uses Facebook and Twitter and the newspapers will be mentioned on occasion as part of the materials available through the department.