

**Chemung County Historical Society
SCRLC 2020 Technology and Digitization Grant
Final Report, March 30, 2021**

The Chemung County Historical Society received a grant for \$620 from the South Central Regional Library Council to digitize the Black Oral History Collection. The Collection consists of 29 cassette tapes recorded between 1989 and 1991 containing 25 interviews with 22 individuals. The digitization vendor, Cutting Corporation of Rockville, Maryland, created WAV 24-96, WAV 16-44, and MP3 versions of each recording, which they returned to CCHS on a 1TB detachable hard drive. The total cost for this service was \$652. CCHS covered the difference in cost.

The material was sent out to be digitized on January 10, 2020. The tapes were returned along with the digital versions on February 22. As of the writing of this report, 22 of the 25 interviews have been transcribed and posted to New York Heritage as well as CCHS's YouTube Channel. Most of the transcriptions were done by Elmira College students who were able to listen to the recordings while sheltering in place during the pandemic. Two of the outstanding interviews are currently in the process of being transcribed and will likely be posted within the coming months. The last interview, which spans two tapes, will likely never be posted as the first tape contained no usable sound.

The video versions of the interviews have received 815 views on our YouTube channel with an unknown number of hits on the New York Heritage website. Information from the interviews was used in several posts on our weekly blog including "Sisters of St. Joseph" (May 15, 2020) and "How Racism Kills" (July 20, 2020). On February 22, 2021, CCHS hosted a Zoom panel discussion with several leaders in the local Black community where they listened to and then discussed selected quotes from the oral histories. The resulting videos were shared on CCHS's Facebook and YouTube channel and have been viewed by 1,087 people. We were not the only organization to benefit from making these interviews available digitally. Over the summer, selected interviews were used as part of the local YWCA's Diversity Council 21-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge as something participants should listen to in order to educate themselves about the legacy of racism in our area.

As part of the grant, CCHS staff received training on uploading material to the New York Heritage website on February 20, 2020. We have since parlayed these skills into the uploading and sharing of additional oral history collections.