

NEW YORK STATE
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

PRESERVING
ENGAGING
EDUCATING

Fenimore Art Museum

The Eugene and Clare Thaw
Collection of North American
Indian Art

Research Library

Cooperstown Graduate Program

New York State History Day

October Conference for Teachers

Conference on New York
State History

New York History

Heritage

www.harvestofhistory.org



March 31, 2015

Ms. Mary-Carol Lindbloom
South Central Regional Library Council
Clinton Hall
108 North Cayuga Street
Ithaca, NY 14850

Dear Ms. Lindbloom,

On behalf of New York State Historical Association (NYSHA) staff and Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to submit this final report to South Central Regional Library Council (SCRCL) for our most recently received Regional Bibliographic Data Bases and Interlibrary Resources Sharing (RBDB) grant. With your organization's generosity, NYSHA was able to digitize a significant portion of our John J. Burger Railroad Collection. Below is a summary of the project, its goals and outcomes, and our planned evaluation methods. Following the summary is a final budget detailing how time was spent and how funds were allocated.

Project Summary

In 2012, NYSHA's Research Library received a large donation of materials relating to electric railroads in New York State, which was compiled by amateur collector John J. Burger over the course of twenty-one years. Through the digitization of a portion of this extensive archive, NYSHA created a digital gallery made available to local historians, railroad enthusiasts, students, scholars, and interested members of the general public. In making this unique collection accessible via the Internet, this project promotes NYSHA and SCRCLC resources and benefits the Research Library and Council's regional and national audiences. Additionally, this project also promotes other relevant secondary and primary resources at NYSHA and related collections at SCRCLC member institutions.

Goals & Outcomes

As detailed in our grant application, the foremost goal of this endeavor was to provide remote access to the John J. Burger Railroad Collection via digital surrogates made available online. With the funding received from SCRCLC, NYSHA staff digitized five sequential photograph albums from a total of thirty five volumes included in the Burger Collection. In addition, Burger's complete 513 page unpublished manuscript titled *The Leatherstocking Trolley: A Detailed Chronological History of the Southern New York Railway and its Predecessor Companies* was also successfully digitized.

Together, these six volumes comprise the Burger Railroad Collection digital gallery, and serve as a broad entry point to the complete physical collection as well as other relevant primary and secondary sources on railroads held onsite

P.O. Box 800
5798 State Highway 80
Cooperstown, NY 13326

PHONE (607) 547-1400
FAX (607) 547-1404

www.nysha.org

NEW YORK STATE
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

PRESERVING
ENGAGING
EDUCATING

Fenimore Art Museum

The Eugene and Clare Thaw
Collection of North American
Indian Art

Research Library

Cooperstown Graduate Program

New York State History Day

October Conference for Teachers

Conference on New York
State History

New York History

Heritage

www.harvestofhistory.org



at NYSHA. By digitizing a portion of the John J. Burger Railroad Collection and making it accessible to national and international users online, this project also supports both NYSHA's and SCRLC's overarching goal to educate the public on the history of New York State, while simultaneously connecting interested users with our rich cultural heritage.

A major outcome of this project is increased access to and understanding of the collection's content through descriptive metadata and subject headings. Each volume has been assigned Library of Congress Subject Headings, pertinent dates, and geographic location. Additionally, these volumes are accompanied by full-text transcripts, which will greatly enhance a user's search results.

The digitized photo albums improve upon the collection's text-based finding aid, which was made available online last year, as users searching the digital gallery now have immediate examples of the kinds of images held within these volumes. Furthermore, John Burger's *The Leatherstocking Trolley* serves as a well-organized and thoughtful resource for users interested in electric railroads and the Southern New York Railway Company, and provides researchers with an excellent entry point to the topic.

Written largely from his own personal research, Burger's unpublished manuscript provides context for the undigitized portions of the collection, which are largely comprised of the author's notes and primary resources. By digitizing the 513 page history, researchers are now able to read Burger's full account remotely and identify more specific points of interest therein. If more information is needed regarding these significant dates, events, or names, researchers are able to contact the Library to see if more information is available within the author's collected research; a great number of newspaper articles and notes from oral histories cited within Burger's manuscript are available within the full collection, for viewing on-site or with the help of Library staff if the user is outside NYSHA's locality.

Planned Evaluation

As mentioned in NYSHA's interim report submitted to SCRLC late last year, some staffing shifts affected the original planned timeline. Because our newly hired Project Manager did not begin his assignment until January 5th of this year, much of the scanning, metadata assignment, and subsequent upload of all digital files did not take place until the final months of the grant period. As a consequence, NYSHA has not been able to thoroughly reflect upon and evaluate use statistics of the John J. Burger Railroad Collection and digital gallery at the time of writing this final report. However, we plan to track a wide range of statistics that relate to the Burger Collection digital gallery.

P.O. Box 800
5798 State Highway 80
Cooperstown, NY 13326

PHONE (607) 547-1400
FAX (607) 547-1404

www.nysha.org

NEW YORK STATE
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

PRESERVING
ENGAGING
EDUCATING



As we do for all our digital resources, we will track the number of hits the John J. Burger Railroad Collection receives on our website. We have also developed a survey form that is given to each researcher who uses a collection in person that will help determine how they learned of the collection. In addition, statistics are kept on the number of users who use collections online, and users of the Burger Collection will be included in these statistics. Statistics are also kept for phone inquiries, and attention is paid to out-of-town reference requests. We are confident that through these evaluation techniques, we will be able to gather usage data that will illustrate the ultimate effectiveness of this joint digitization effort between NYSHA and SCRLC.

- Fenimore Art Museum
- The Eugene and Clare Thaw
Collection of North American
Indian Art
- Research Library
- Cooperstown Graduate Program
- New York State History Day
- October Conference for Teachers
- Conference on New York
State History
- New York History*
- Heritage*
- www.harvestofhistory.org

Budget

Funds received from SCRLC's generous grant and NYSHA's match were applied to personnel costs incurred through employee time spent on this project. As shown in the table below, the full amount of SCRLC's grant was applied to our Project Manager's salary, as this individual completed all scanning and metadata tasks, as well as the subsequent upload of digital assets to the CONTENTdm project client. NYSHA matched this amount through contributions to the salaries of several staff members who provided assistance with this project. These staff members include: NYSHA's Head Librarian, who served as Project Director and selected materials for digitization; a Library Assistant, who assisted with general administrative duties related to the grant; and a Cataloging Assistant, who provided quality control as it pertained to the assignment of metadata.

Personnel	Duties Completed	Grant Received	NYSHA Contribution
Project Manager – Special Collections Librarian	Scanned documents and assigned metadata	\$2,466.00	
Project Director – Head Librarian	Oversaw project, selection of materials		\$1,233.00
Library Assistant	General administrative duties		\$616.50
Cataloging Assistant	Quality control		\$616.50
	Total:	\$2,466.00	\$2,466.00

Final Conclusions

As researchers of all ages and levels of ability are beginning to conduct much of their research online, the digitization of library materials and archival collections is more important now than ever before. We appreciate SCRLC's assistance, which enabled us to take on this project with RBDB funds; without this specific grant, NYSHA would not have been able to make a selection of the John J. Burger Railroad Collection available online.

P.O. Box 800
5798 State Highway 80
Cooperstown, NY 13326

PHONE (607) 547-1400
FAX (607) 547-1404

www.nysha.org

NEW YORK STATE
HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION



PRESERVING
ENGAGING
EDUCATING

It is our aim to continue to seek similar grant opportunities in the future that will make our collections further accessible to the public and meet our researcher's growing demand for digital and remote access to primary resources. The funding received from SCRLC greatly enhances NYSHA's mission to connect scholars, genealogists, and the general public to the rich cultural heritage of New York State, and we are extremely grateful to have your organization's continued support.

Sincerely,

Joe Festa
Special Collections Librarian
New York State Historical Association

- Fenimore Art Museum
- The Eugene and Clare Thaw
Collection of North American
Indian Art
- Research Library
- Cooperstown Graduate Program
- New York State History Day
- October Conference for Teachers
- Conference on New York
State History
- New York History*
Heritage
- www.harvestofhistory.org

P.O. Box 800
5798 State Highway 80
Cooperstown, NY 13326

PHONE (607) 547-1400
FAX (607) 547-1404

www.nysha.org