

Final Report for SCRLC: RDBG Grant 2020

Seymour Public Library District: *Voices of Cayuga County* Oral History Project

2020-2021 Project

Voices of Cayuga County is a local oral history collecting and archiving project envisioned by the Seymour Library and the Cayuga Museum of History and Art. The project's primary focus is to actively seek out the stories of communities that have traditionally been underrepresented in our collections. These include African American, Latinx, LGBTQ+, and immigrant communities.

The pandemic altered some of the processes and approaches of our project but did not prevent our collection of a dozen significant interviews. We had originally planned to collect video interviews by camcorder during the summer of 2020 and facilitate as many self-collected audio interviews as possible May - September 2020. Instead, we collected video interviews by Zoom during the summer and fall of 2020 and during the summer of 2021. In addition to the prompts we had originally planned, we also asked our interns to initiate questions regarding the interviewees' experiences of the pandemic. We are ready to facilitate the audio self-collection as soon as feasible post-pandemic.

We thank SCRLC for approving an extension of the project period into 2021 and for allowing the necessary reallocations of budget lines to make the project successful in a pandemic. Some of the things we learned in developing "Plan B" (offsite internships and Zoom interviews) are effective approaches that we will carry into future projects.

The interviews, along with their transcripts, are posted on the library's YouTube channel as well as at New York Heritage. We are promoting them through the websites and social media of both the library and the museum. SCRLC funding for this project allowed us to begin creating a culture of story-sharing in Auburn and to establish an accessible database of local oral histories that accurately represent our diversity and how that diversity has impacted Auburn's history. We look forward to expanding this collection with additional diverse narratives in the future and to incorporating the narratives into our exhibits, programming, and outreach.

Budget

	Proposed	Actual
Wages for intern(s)	2,400.00	2,572.32
Audio recorder	170.00	— — —
Camcorder	156.00	— — —
Tripod	23.00	— — —
Memory card	7.00	— — —
NAS storage	435.00	— — —
Mobile audio recording booth	400.00	419.00
Laptop	838.00	988.00
Microphone	71.00 (microphone, cable, stand)	71.95 (of 76.00 purchase; just microphone)
Internet service for 1st intern		261.83
Zoom access for interns		136.96
Filmora for 2nd intern		49.94
TOTAL	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00

To meet the required 20% in-kind contribution of \$900, we provided at least \$2,300 in personnel costs. Personnel costs were calculated at \$23/hour for 100 hours for hiring and supervising the interns during two summers, promoting the project, developing prompts, overseeing the editing/reformatting/uploading, and promoting the availability of the resulting collection.