Digitization to Data: Turning Challenges to Opportunities Digitizing at a Small Institution.

About the Project
- CLIR Hidden Collections: Grass Roots Activism and the American Wilderness: Pioneers of the Twentieth Century Adirondack Park Movement.
- Union College, Schenectady, New York
- Scope:
  - 210 cu. ft. of personal papers.
  - 500 digitized objects.

Equipment and Software
- Zeutschel OS 12002 Overhead Book Scanner
- Omniscan Software
- (3) Laptops
  - Scanning scheduled during student breaks allowed the project to borrow additional laptops from circulation.

Digitization Metrics
Time measured from the removal of the item through all three hands of description to the replacement of the item in the folder.
- Photographs: 5 minutes
- Single Page Manuscripts: 6 minutes
- Multi-Page Manuscripts: 8 minutes

“Assembly Line” Combined Digitization-Description Workflow
Designed to prevent “metadata burnout”. Each segment of fields fits the width of one computer screen.

1) Graduate Assistant A
- Removes item from folder.
- Metadata Fields
  - Creator
  - Physical Description
  - New York Heritage Topics
  - Description

2) Undergraduate Assistant
- Scans item.
- Metadata Fields
  - Title
  - LCSH Subjects
  - Location
  - Date

3) Graduate Assistant B
- Returns items to folder.
- Metadata Fields
  - Type
  - Physical Format
  - Local Location
  - Filename
  - Date of Digital

4) Project Archivist
- Reviews metadata for quality control.
- Inserts 8 Default Fields

Metadata Selection and Workflow Development
- Discoverability
  - Split the full-text searchable descriptive fields between two people to ensure the best, most robust description by utilizing two perspectives.
- Vocabulary Selection
  - Traditional: LCSH
  - Crowd-sourced: Geonames
  - Specialized: New York Heritage K-12—allows New York State educator access and future facilitation with the DOE’s Open Educational Resources database.
- Preparation
  - “Metadata Monday” workshops to train team by practicing the scanning procedures and description workflow.
  - Selected items organized by scanning requirements (single page, multipage, etc.) beforehand.

Lessons Learned
- This process relies on the strength of all team members involved.
- Practice! Hold a few mock-sessions with analog worksheets.
- Be patient!
- Geonames can be frustrating and difficult to use, but this was outweighed by the number of locations available.
- Believe in your students! Our undergraduates loved using the scanner and have impressed us with their research.

Undergraduate Student Embedded Research as Digital Exhibits.
- Two full-time undergraduate summer research fellows.
- 12, 4-6 part research articles turned into illuminated digital exhibits.
- Front page offers “tiles” of digital exhibit subjects.
- Layer one of the digital exhibit offers “tiles” of multiple related subtopics of each exhibit subject.
- Layer two of the digital exhibit features student generated research illuminated with multiple digital surrogates from the project’s collections.

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