

Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network Project

PROGRESS REPORT

5-6 JUNE 2007 MEETING

HERITAGE CENTER, BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

Background

On 5-6 June 2007, staff from MHS met with representatives from cultural institutions to discuss the Great Rivers Cultural Heritage Network (GRCHN) project. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an overview of the GRCHN project, report on the work done on this project to date, and identify target audiences, corresponding content, possible partners and future projects. The meeting agenda is attached as an appendix to this report.

Participants

State Historical Society of North Dakota: Lotte Bailey, Claudia Berg, Rick Collin, Jim Davis, Mike Frohlich, Becky Lingle, Gerald Newborg, Merl Paaverud, Fern Swenson, Len Thorson, Rachel White

North Dakota State University (NDSU): John Bye, Michael Robinson

Prairie Public Television: Bob Dambach, Kim Stenehjem

Minnesota Historical Society (MHS): Jaime Haire, Bob Horton, Marj Kelly, Irene van Bavel

University of North Dakota (UND): Curt Hanson

Three Affiliated Tribes Museum: Marilyn Hudson

Bowman County Historical and Genealogical Society: Dorothy T. Pearson (also with *Museums in North Dakota*)

Maxine Hill (ret.)

Discussion

On June 5, 2007 MHS staff met with participants for a full-day meeting. Bob Horton gave an overview of the GRCHN project and discussed ways in which MHS will develop a new infrastructure that will expand its capability to manage, preserve, and provide access to digital content. Working in collaboration with partners in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota, MHS will extend these services to other institutions and become a digital content and service center for the cultural heritage of the Upper Midwest. The presentation outlined a basic three-year work plan and defined the roles of project participants. Sustainability and collaboration were identified as key elements for the success of the project.

Irene van Bavel discussed various digital initiatives undertaken by MHS to develop digital resources and tools that enhance access to its collections. They include the digitization of

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newspaper collections through the NDNF Program, the digitization of the *Minnesota History magazine*, the Geography and History Online project, the development of an open-source online exhibitions tool (Omeka), the Immigrant Oral Histories Project, and the Shared History Project with Canada, among others.

Marj Kelly reported on the development of PeopleFinder, a federated search tool that provides integrated access existing resources on the MHS website. She went on to explain the iterative processes and workflows involved in making our partners' digital content accessible through this application. There were discussions about branding and logo and participants stressed the importance of retaining their institutional identities or "skins" when viewing their material online. Many county historical societies and cultural institutions in Minnesota and North Dakota develop digital content in PastPerfect and ContentDM and the project will examine the ways to export and retrieve data from these two systems.

The afternoon session focused on specific content and audiences of the North Dakota partners. During our brainstorming, common elements emerged that helped define the priorities for project activities.

Existing Collaborations:

- ContentDM (Prairie Public, NDSU, Concordia) photos, standards, DAM, one-stop shopping, moving towards video

Concerns:

- templates, skins, hosting, benefits defined for the public, user-friendly, accessible, interpretable, internal communication & integration

Collections and content:

- death records – digital index
- vital records – marriage divorce
- county collaborative – property records (some counties)
- birth records < 100 years
- photos
(NDSU) – 20,000 records, no images
(State Archives) – 20-25,000 images + index
- 1885 census index
- naturalization index (online at NDSU)
- bio index (NDSU) – 220,000 names indexed, ongoing
- online catalog – OLIN (UND)
- Cass County index (NDSU) – marriage, probate, divorce, civil cases
- county & state agency (State Archives) – court records, marriage records, licenses – state's vital records start in 1925
- GIS Hub – data & metadata
- artifact database – PastPerfect (&CHS?)
- UND university photos (200) & political cartoons (350)
- coal mine maps online PSC

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- student newspapers (NDSU & UND) index, forum index (obits)
- Frontier Scout (no OCR)
- periodical indexes 1980s-90s too many formats
- N.Dakota History index
- small databases – vets history, periodicals
- video collections indexes (SHS) 50,000 clips of mainly news, specials, sports -- Including the Snyder Studio film index – commercials, tourism
- online exhibits (NDSU)
- WWI & WWII posters – index 1000 thumbnail images
- finding aids (UND, NDSU, SHS) No EAD, HTML, ODIN link
- Welk Collection (NDSU) – 11, 000 arrangements, 6-8,000 songs, 800 records indexed
- Fargo home index (NDSU) approx 5000
- sports film index (NDSU approx 2500
- glass negatives, index 20,000 campus, etc.
- slide collections (no index) standing structures, sites
- prairie churches index (SHS) no photos, images
- homestead claims (Bureau of Land Mgmt. online)
- cemetery indexes (ND GenWeb by county)
- school censuses
- newspaper inventory
- architectural index (SHS) private firms, state capitol

Information about existing formats and audiences is included as an appendix to this report.

Primary audiences:

- genealogists
- teachers K-12 (ND History in grades 4&8, ND History Day Program, soon to be a HS elective) incl. students
- photo/film community (Pix/Logic)
- tourism, (esp. cultural heritage)
- taxpayers/voters & legislators
- university audience – students, faculty, alumni, athletics, PR, Dev.
- federal, state agencies (FAA, parks)

Other users and audiences:

- researchers – variety, writers, publishers, filmmakers, environmental assessments, agricultural, photo researchers, news outlets, local media
- other historical organizations
- internal (marketing, reference, exhibitions, education)
- job-seekers
- advertising
- collaborators – outreach, traveling exhibits, partners
- museum visitors
- general audience

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On June 6, MHS staff met with staff from the State Historical Society of North Dakota to talk in more detail about their digital resources. The focus again was on specific content and audiences and next steps.

Audience:

- genealogists
- photo/video community of researchers
- K12 teachers
- cultural tourists
- internal audiences (e.g., development, public relations, athletics for universities)
- taxpayers/legislators

Content:

- vital records (e.g., state censuses, death records etc)
- photos and videos (primarily indexes, but some digitized content)
- *North Dakota History* (for digitization)

Action items

June 2007

- Write and distribute meeting and progress report – MHS
- Create project abstract for hand-out to potential partners – MHS
- Distribute information on PastPerfect workshops – MHS
- Send a copy of NDNP proposal– MHS (done)
- Send a copy of specifications and RFP for digitization of *Minnesota History* – MHS (done)

July 2007

- Launch web site to communicate project information and make GRCHN demo accessible to partners – MHS

Summer 2007

- Explore possibilities of access to death records index - SHSND
- Partner meeting – MHS with South Dakota
- Partner meeting – MHS with Anoka, Blue Earth, Nicollet and Olmstead county historical societies
- Continue to test Autonomy IDOL search engine application with internal databases and learn more about integration with ContentDM and PastPerfect - MHS
- Identify relevant standards for digital content and metadata - MHS
- Develop survey form for inventories of existing digital content - MHS
- Describe data and data structures for evaluation – GRCHN Partners

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Fall 2007

- Schedule focus group, partner meeting in Fargo for closer look at GRCHN prototype
- Develop outreach and education resources for local and county historical societies

Ongoing

- Explore additional funding sources for digitization projects:
 - NEH grant for National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP)
 - Integrate Red River trails resources into Share your Heritage proposal
 - IMLS grant proposal for digitization of immigrant oral histories, with curriculum and public program components
- Review regional web sites for digital content currently online – GRCHN Partners

APPENDIX A

Agenda -- 5 June 2007 Meeting

9	Coffee, continental breakfast
9.30	Introductions (Gerry)
9:45	Project overview (Bob)
10.15	Progress report (Irene)
10.45	Break
11	Technology and application demonstration (Marj)
12	Lunch
1	Content and collections: brainstorming session (Bob)
2	Audiences and tools: brainstorming session (Bob)
2:45	Break
3	Technology capacity and initiatives: brainstorming session (Bob)
3.30	Wrap up and next steps (Bob)
4	Final thoughts

Agenda -- 6 June 2007 Meeting

9	Review
9.30	Content selection and prioritization
10:30	Outreach and education
11:30	Next steps

APPENDIX B

*Collections and Content***CONTENT &
COLLECTIONS**

North Dakota

	Organization	Format	Index	Digital Format?	Online?	Digital Objects	USERS			
							Genealogists	Tourism	K-12	Photo/Video
Images	NDSU	Images	20,000	Y		0	1	1	1	3
						20,000				
Images	ND State Archives	Images	20,000-25,000	Y		25,000	1	1	1	3
Video collections indexes 50,000 clips of mainly news, specials, sports	SHSND	Video	50,000	Y		?	1	1	1	3
University Photos	UND	Images	200	Y		200	1		1	2
University Political Cartoons	UND	Images	350	Y		350	1		1	2
Online Exhibits	NDSU			Y			1	1		2
WWI & WWII posters		Thumbnail Images	1000	Y		100		1	1	2
Fargo Home Index	NDSU		5000	Y			1		1	2
Sports Film Index	NDSU		2500	Y			1		1	2
Glass Negatives, index			20,000	Y			1		1	2
Prairie churches index	SHSND		Y	Y		0	1	1		2
Death records			Y	Y			1			1
Property Records	ND - County Collaborative			Y			1			1
1885 census index				Y			1			1
Naturalization Index	NDSU			Y	Y		1			1
Biographical Index	NDSU	Names	220,000	Y			1			1
Cass County index – marriage, probate, divorce, civil cases	NDSU			Y			1			1
County & State Agency – Court records, marriage records, licenses	ND State Archives			Y			1			1
– state's vital records start in 1925				Y						
GIS Hub – data & metadata				Y			1			1

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Artifact database – PastPerfect (&CHS?)				Y				1	1
N.Dakota History Index				Y				1	1
Welk Collection – 11, 000 arrangements, 6-8,000 songs	NDSU	800		Y				1	1
Homestead claims	BLM			Y	Y			1	1
ContentDM (photos, standards, DAM, one-stop shopping, moving towards video)	Prairie Public, NDSU, Concordia	Images	?	Y	N	?		1	1
Marriage, Divorce Records									0
Birth records < 100 years									0
Online Catalog – OLIN	UND			Y					0
Coal Mine Maps online PSC				Y					0
Student Newspapers Index,	NDSU, UND			Y					0
Forum Index (obits)	NDSU, UND			Y					0
Frontier Scout (no OCR)				Y					0
Periodical Indexes 1980s-90s (too many formats)									0
Small Databases – vets history, periodicals				Y					0
Finding Aids No EAD, HTML, ODIN link	UND, NDSU, SHSND			Y					0
Slide Collections (no index) standing structures, sites									0
Cemetery Indexes (ND GenWeb by county)						Y			0
School censuses									0
Newspaper inventory									0
Architectural index private firms, state capitol	SHSND								0