

Diving into the Archives: Processing Histories of Marshall University

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Project Summary: Olivia Andrew-Vaughan (fall 2023)

Abstract and Introduction:

Throughout the course of the semester, there were several goals I wanted to accomplish throughout the Undergraduate Creative Discovery Award proposal award period. Some of those goals included items outlined within the research proposal that we submitted, however, additional goals were accomplished throughout the semester to facilitate my overall understanding of archival work, technology skills, and personal interests in topics that live within Marshall Special Collections. In this final report, I will outline what those projects were and what technologies I learned. Additionally, I will include direct links to those completed projects and also include those links in Appendix A.

Results:

Among the goals that were included within the research proposal, all three were accomplished. The first goal was to process a university archives collection from the Office of the President at Marshall University from 1974-1984. The second goal was to properly ensure access to Academic Affairs' publications, *The Greenbook*, via Marshall's Institutional Repository. The final goal was digitization, metadata creation, and publication of Marshall University News Releases from 1976-1979. These goals required learning archival-level processing, working knowledge in two separate scanning software programs, training in making documents full-text searchable utilizing optical character recognition, and training in an expanded Dublin-Core metadata schema. The first project, which was to process the papers from the President's Office at Marshall, lives on Marshall Digital Scholar here: [19870515: Robert Hayes and Board of Regents, 1979-1985](#). The second project, which was to upload a publication created by Academic Affairs, lives on Marshall Digital Scholar here: [Marshall's Faculty Handbook, The Greenbook](#). The final project was to digitize Marshall News Releases, lives on Marshall Digital Scholar here: [Marshall News Releases](#). The final project was a continuation of an existing digitization effort to preserve Marshall's history.

There were some additional projects that were not included in the proposal that I was able to accomplish throughout the course of the semester. One of these projects was digitizing over 90 film slide photographs for the Owen Clinic Institute, which was a rural mental health facility in Huntington, West Virginia. To achieve this, I had to use trial and error in how to properly digitize materials based on each individual photo's quality. For example, some photos needed to be saved

as TIFF and others needed saved as Jpeg. If there was a red overlay on the physical copy of the photo, we had to use different settings to not include “dust removal” or “color restoration” as it would affect the overall quality of the photo on an individual basis. The result of this project allowed me to not only see what life was like in Huntington in the 1950s, but it also allowed me to work with new photo digitization technology and experiment with different processes to improve the quality of each item uploaded. The result of these photos live on Marshall Digital Scholar and can be found here: [Owen Clinic Institute Photos](#). The second project included using video software to edit and trim film clips from Marshall Special Collections’ WSAZ news archive. Through this project I was able to learn video editing skills on various types of media sources (16 mm film and already digital) to adjust the format of these videos to accommodate modern technology. These projects have allowed me to gain experiences and new skills within the Archives profession.

Discussion:

One of the primary successes was that I was also able to “job shadow” in ways that organically happen throughout the day-to-day operations within the Special Collections department. I was able to attend department meetings and learn about what each team member within the department was working on via their monthly updates. I was also able to attend college-wide training about how to use the *TIV* technology that will be going into classrooms across campus via the technology setup in Drinko 349. I was also able to listen to team members troubleshoot problems with legacy collections taken in by the departments’ former employees.

In summation, throughout the duration of my semester as an Undergraduate Creative Discovery Research Scholar, I was able to accomplish several things with real-world impact. Almost every project I completed lives in a Google Indexed environment through Marshall’s Institutional Repository to make it accessible to a wider audience. Further, I was able to learn more about the archive’s profession and an avenue for potential employment. The experiences I gained with the technology tools, especially with the digitization content, is easily transferable to future work. This was an enjoyable semester and I loved having the opportunity through this award to learn and work alongside those in Marshall Special Collections.

Appendix A (Links to Digitized Work Completed):

- 19870515: Robert Hayes and Board of Regents, 1979-1985:
https://mds.marshall.edu/ua_finding_aids/220/
- Marshall's Faculty Handbook, The Greenbook:
<https://mds.marshall.edu/greenbook/>
- Marshall News Releases:
https://mds.marshall.edu/marshall_news_releases_archives/
- Owen Clinic Institute Photos
https://mds.marshall.edu/owen_clinic_institute/index.html