

Advisory Board Meeting NEH Grant July 27th 2012

Advisory Board members present:

Carl Halbirt, City Archaeologist, St. Augustine

Susan Parker, Executive Director, St. Augustine Historical Society

Herschel Shepard, Retired Architect, FAIA

Glenn Willumson, Director, UF Museology Program

UF Project Team members present:

Thomas Caswell, PI, Unearthing St. Augustine

James Cusick, Co-PI, Unearthing St. Augustine

John Freund, Conservator

Randall Renner, Manager for Operations & Digital Projects, DLC

Mark Sullivan, Systems Programmer, DLC

- Tom C. mentioned that because there was a reduction in the grant awarded there will be a reduction in the number of documents that will be digitized by about 10%.
- Board members and Project Team members introduced themselves.
- Tour of the Government House –including the library, flat file room, and digitization lab/office.
- Discussion of what the role of the advisory board entails:
 - There are 6 members {two of the members were not present – Roy Graham and Dana St. Claire. There was a mention of perhaps replacing Roy Graham because he is now living in Dallas.}
 - to provide guidance in selecting items to be digitized.
 - to provide expert user perspectives about interface features necessary to improve scholarly access and work
- Introduction of project timeline – {reduction of items to be scanned from 11,000 to 9,975}
- Discussion of how often the board will meet. Quarterly? Face to face? Skype?
Face to face? Plan ahead at the members' convenience? Meet at the Government House?

Topic of Discussion – How to Prioritize Items?

- Historic, heritage
- Need to be sure to include documents with African American and Native American history

- Glenn Willumson asked what the percentage of the total documentation from all St. Augustine sources will be digitized with this grant.
 - Jim Cusick responded – not scanning flat items (25%) – don't know how many slides and photographs are in the collection. Colonial items are a small percent about .5-1% of the whole.
 - Susan Parker – in the documents for the Historical Society there are mentions of Native Americans in about 70%. Mention of African Americans would depend on the time period of the documents.

Collections Overview – see handouts

- Jim Cusick – question about ingesting documents – invite other organizations to participate and make them accessible from UF's web page. Most of them are public entities.
- Herschel Shepard – question about unearthing – how much of the grant money goes to cataloguing and listing records after they are scanned? Architectural fabric for the buildings (for facilities planning) – no documented plans for why things were changed in these buildings – take specific sites get an index of the information and categorize by building.
 - Tom Caswell responded saying that they can try but he doesn't want to take focus away from the grant proposal – will try to get grad students to work on this.
- Herschel Shepard – will make a list of important buildings so they can add focus when going through the documents.
 - Jim Cusick suggested that once they have the list of buildings they can give it to grad students in hopes of generating interest and direction for their future projects.
- Jim Cusick questions the function of the Advisory Board as the project moves forward. Can they look at materials as they are scanned and posted to the web site and let the Project Team Members know if the links are useful and easy to access? They would like to have feedback during the project about the functionality of the webpage display early on in the grant - after the first 6 months.
 - Mark Sullivan said that would be possible.
- Susan Parker showed examples of the types of documents that would be digitized from the Historical Society's collection.
 - The collection began in the 1800's but was significantly reduced by a fire in 1914.
 - Spanish documents, documents put in type script and some others have been translated.
 - There is a variety of paper types in their collection. Most are not the originals. Carbon copies, Xeroxes, onion skin items, and negatives make up the collection – the type of material that they used was indicative of point in history when it was created.

- Discussion of the need for these documents to be easily searched by patrons after they have been scanned.
 - Typescript, for example, will be completely searchable.
 - Susan Parker expressed concern that superscript might not be as searchable.
- Susan Parker questioned what timeframe does the grant want to focus the project on?
 - Jim Cusick suggests that a hybrid of examples be available with a page of sample documents - the most requested items highlighted.
 - Tom Caswell – documents must be geared towards all researchers not just K-12.
 - Glenn Willumson questioned how are the documents going to be displayed? What is our target audience?
 - Susan Parker –too time consuming to pick and choose documents.
 - Glenn Willumson suggests to randomly pick and choose.
 - Jim Cusick and Susan Parker – 1st figure out how many items there are to be digitized to see if all can be scanned and if not, then go back and deselect if need be.
 - Tom Caswell – the grant will cover a myriad of subjects and time periods and items scanned will be geared towards researchers as the target audience.
- The project manager will begin employment in October
 - Tom Caswell – even though the majority of the grant funding will be spent on the infrastructure the number of scanned items listed will be easily accomplished.
- Carl Halbirt's archaeology files
 - From all time periods
 - Native American
 - Questioned how we are going to be assured that this digitized collection will be in line with other similar collections.
 - How are we going to categorize it?
 - Lot and block?
 - What do you want to focus on? Most have not been previously published – primarily data for professional researchers.
 - Have 1,000s of photographs digitized already that could be incorporated.
 - Site summaries – about 2,000 items that can be downloaded too.
 - What does it mean when we use the phrase "item"?
 - Also have some maps that have not been scanned that range in size from 8.5 x 11 to 60" x 40".
- Randall Renner said that he feels confident that the project should be able to scan well above the number of pages listed in the grant proposal.
- Tom Caswell envisioned layering the documents and text.
- Carl Halbirt questioned whether items will be organized by time period or place?
 - Could show how St. Augustine evolved from initial downtown settlement.
 - Tom Caswell suggested using time periods and areas of St. Augustine.

-Set up guidelines before beginning the project.

- Mark Sullivan suggested using maps to show time lines.
-Get representations early on.
- Carl Halbirt has maps digitized by him and can send the images.
- Tom Caswell – people want old items – the older the better. Have historic maps and reproductions of them as well – is it OK to post these or do we need permission of some kind?
- Jim Cusick said that he could request permission when needed.
- Susan Parker said that most of these documents are already available online, people just need to know where to look.
- Herschel Shepard suggested that modern maps be used for the project so that researchers will be able to tell in current time and space where the digitized maps relate.
-The University Planning Department has already done GIS mapping of St. Augustine – perhaps we could link to their documentation in order to plot where things are.
-Tom Caswell said that all the documents that were scanned for the mini-grant have GIS mapping as well as lot and block numbers listed.
-Susan Parker mentioned that GIS mapping won't relate to the documents from the Historical Society.
- Jim Cusick suggested that from the main page, items should be searchable by map, date, name, and keyword.
-Jim Cusick expressed concern about going onsite to see what there is to be scanned and then calculate the number of items.
-Tom Caswell has estimates for how long things will take to scan.
-Herschel Shepard reiterated that the audience is the most valuable thing for archaeological sites and that the project should concentrate on listing the overviews of sites' summaries.
-Tom Caswell said that each folder listed on the main page will have a clickable link to expand what is actually in each folder – page by page. They will also have pointers to finding aids that list things not digitized.
-Herschel Shepard said that the more general the information the better.
-Tom Caswell said that each will have a unique collection built under the larger unearthing umbrella.
- Glenn Willumson said that the public will be interested in authenticity – it is real?
-Are there things attractive to the public? If so why? Because they are old, intricate, beautiful?

- Carl Halbrit mentioned that he has all sorts of things besides paper documents that might be considered for this project. Artifacts. Randall Renner said it might be possible to scan 3-dimensional items depending on time and money.
 - Herschel Shepard questioned who decides what gets posted.
 - Jim Cusick suggests a sharp student focus on research material.
- Tom Caswell will be devoting 20% of each work week for this project.
- John Freund will be available for assistance when transporting any materials to and from St. Augustine to be sure they are protected.
 - Glenn Willumson questioned whether or not any of the current documents are in danger of being destroyed.
 - John Freund will meet with the new hires to train them the correct way to scan items without damaging them. For example how to remove tape and staples without harm to the item.

Proposals?

- Target the 1st quarter of items (1500) by December.
 - Basic selection
 - Time period?
 - Span of years?
 - Architecture – list of important buildings from Herschel Shepard and important archeological sites from Carl Halbrit
- End of October – begin scanning
 - Gives the board members 3 months to determine what is to be scanned
 - Prioritize items in that time.
 - Randall Renner wants items to be ready to be scanned by October.
- Jim Cusick mentions that all pictures and slides need to be marked and described well so that patrons will know what they are looking at.
- Tom Caswell requested 100 excavation sites from Carl Halbrit
 - 7 quarters of productivity
 - October 1st identify 10-15
 - Locks on corner office need to be changed to secure documents.
 - Need to develop a system of removing and returning items during scanning.
 - Scanning of materials will start Oct 1st, but this will be an ongoing endeavor over the course of the next year and a half. For archaeology, 10 to 15 site summaries need to be ready for scanning, which is 10% of the total.
- Susan Parker said that scan and finding aids with descriptions will be helpful for the Historical Society's materials.

- Tom Caswell and Jim Cusick will decide whether to meet weekly or every other week to discuss the progress of the project.
- Tom Caswell said that Herschel's list will be helpful when going through the Government House's documents.
- Susan, Carl, and Herschel will get materials to be scanned ready by October 1st 2012.
- Herschel's list will start with the National Registry Sites 1st and then concentrate on the sites that UF manages.
- Need a page or less describing what this project is going to look like – more specific for grad students in hopes of getting them interested.
- Carl Halbrit - how does this contribute to the overall knowledge of St. Augustine? When choosing items to be scanned he will use personal knowledge.
-Side note - he mentioned wanting to scan the 1821-1860 City Commission Book of city council meetings so that it could be digitized too.
- Susan Parker will choose items not known in any other database in order to expand the colonial base and digitize items that patrons don't know exist.
- Tom Caswell reiterated that the main focus of this grant is to uncover hidden collections that here to fore have not been seen by the public.
The only clarification is the time line for scanning.

Questions?