Robert Lundeen OSU Library Faculty Development Grant Report

END OF FUNDING PERIOD REPORT

Title of Project: Exploring post-custodial theory in practice: a statewide survey and collections development pilot project for the Oregon Multicultural Archives and Oregon Hops & Brewing Archives

Applicants: Natalia Fernández and Tiah Edmunson-Morton

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Time Period of Grant: June 2014 - July 2015; June 2014 - September 2014 (majority of travel)

Amount of Award Received: $2,300

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS and EVALUATION

BACKGROUND:

Both the OMA and OHBA document communities and culture, which allows for exploration of new ways to work with creators and define collections. While this means each can be responsive to community and creator needs, it also challenges the more traditional modes of physical acquisition and transfer of materials. A post-custodial approach allows us to document a living culture and record a historic past without relying on a traditional definition of accessioning that relies on the physical transfer of unique, individual items. Instead, acquisition can be framed as an initiative to gather important materials or information.

The professional literature on community archiving and a post-custodial approach to collecting are helpful when thinking about the type of archiving work that we do. The Society of American Archivists says post-custodialism is

> n. ~ The idea that archivists will no longer physically acquire and maintain records, but that they will provide management oversight for records that will remain in the custody of the record creators.

The 2008 article "Post-custodial approach" on the Personal Archives Accessible in Digital Media site (http://www.paradigm.ac.uk/workbook/collection-development/post-custodial.html) highlights the relationship inherent and necessary for a pure post-custodial approach to collecting,

> "the archivist develops a continuing relationship with the record-creator and provides advice over a number of years. Such advice is likely to include the creation of regularly updated basic guidelines on best practice management of digital records as well as advice given in response to personal preferences relating to creation or storage. The aim of this approach is to allow the creator to retain custody of the archives, but to assist them in managing their records so that they can be transferred in good condition when the timing is right."

Though we are not following this theory in a strict sense, we are drawn to how the South Asian American Digital Archive says community-based archives can

> "serve as an alternative venue for communities to make collective decisions about what is of enduring value to them, to shape collective memory of their own pasts, and to control the means through which stories about their past are constructed."

For archivists, a post-custodial "gathering initiative" can mean collecting knowledge about collections at state, regional, and national repositories, reference referrals and research assistance, or professional training opportunities to teach archival principles for management of archival collections. It can also mean acquiring collection content by scanning physical items without transferring copyright, copying electronic files that may continue to be used by the creator, or accessioning traditional print materials and transferring ownership. For donors, this post-custodial approach offers them an important choice of whether "acquisition" means physically and legally transferring historical documents or alternatives that allow items to stay in a community *and* be preserved in an archive.

The OMA and OHBA are similar as collecting initiatives, but for our Lundeen funded project we explored disparate pieces of a post-custodial approach to collecting.

PROJECT PLANNING AND EXECUTION:

We developed a project that entailed traveling to institutions across the state to survey collections, accession materials, and make contacts with colleagues and potential donors. We conducted 4 summer trips, July - Sept 2014 and OHBA had two follow-up trips in Fall 2014 and Winter 2015.

We made arrangements to travel to locations together while then visiting local repositories (OMA) and community members (OHBA). While it was cost-effective for us to travel together, this collaborative effort offered us an added benefit of having time to process and discuss our findings. It is beneficial that we are working on similar initiatives with similar approaches to collecting, and the findings of one of us will inform and build off the work of the other.

PROJECT GOALS:

As the curators of the OMA and OHBA this project enabled us to gain insight, hands-on experience, and more effective implementation of the emerging practice of post-custodial archiving within our respective collections. The data gathering process also provided an excellent opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with our colleagues across the state that may in the future lead to collaboration initiatives for the benefit of both the institutions involved and the communities with which we work.

The mission of the Oregon Multicultural Archives is to assist in preserving the histories and sharing the stories that document Oregon's African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American communities. Over the past decade various other institutions across the state have begun collecting initiatives similar to the OMA. The purpose of Natalia's research part was to look at the relationships that other institutions have with communities of color and the archival materials they hold related to those communities, specifically those within the mission of the

OMA. This process enabled Natalia to both 1) learn of relevant collections that she can then share via the OMA and 2) develop new projects based on gaps in the historical record.

The Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives is the first of its kind dedicated to collecting, preserving, and sharing materials that tell the story of OSU research, hops farming, and craft brewing in Oregon. While it also highlights history, the archive actively collects information and materials from active commercial and research industries. This interaction offers opportunities for blending community outreach and collection development in unique and informal ways. As a result, during the summer of 2014 Tiah prioritized identifying and surveying historical materials held in business and personal collections, meeting with potential donor communities to gain trust and get to know them and their needs, and sharing her experiences through the OHBA Tumblr blog.

For OHBA to effectively explore or implement a post-custodial model it is vital for people to know about the archive, its mission, and the options for contributing. Further, while physical collections are preferred, Tiah conducted her surveys with the expressed purpose of determining best practices for SCARC's acquisition workflow for physical, born-digital, and digitized materials. This included an exploration of the feasibility of on-site digitization of materials, the resulting for accessioning and providing access to born digital/scanned items, and best practices for working with donors concerned with how their materials will be shared and used.

CONTRIBUTION TO OSULP, SCARC, & the OMA AND OHBA:

With both a land grant mission and open access objective, the OMA and OHBA are in line with other OSULP programs and initiatives to provide access to information that may otherwise be unknown or inaccessible due to location, repository funding or staffing limitations, or a variety of other reasons.

This project looked at how the OMA and OHBA can more effectively work with communities to provide access to their historical materials physically and/or virtually. The intended outcomes of the project were to democratize access to that information and allow for new forms of scholarship or interaction with materials. Further, there were real concerns for digital objects such as the paperwork and process for acquiring digital materials, copyright and access to items for which we only have a digital surrogate, methods of digitizing on-site at breweries or hop farms (e.g. portable scanner, self-submission), and acquisition through "non-traditional" methods (e.g. attachments on Facebook). Our findings helped to inform SCARC's policies on best practices for the acquisition of digital materials (e.g. paperwork, process for transferring electronic files), access, and copyright.

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Travel plans and making contacts takes a lot of time - summer may be a great time for us to travel which means it is for everyone else as well.
- If you are doing a statewide initiative project, you have to have a good sense of the state as a whole *and* the particular characteristics of regions.
- Post-custodialism - great in theory, tough to practice.

OMA LESSONS LEARNED

- Life as a researcher is challenging.
- The variety of "archives culture" can be vast and vary by region and type of institution.
- Other archives also struggle with collection development policies.
- Multicultural history is present but not commonly highlighted and there are gaps in the historical record.

OHBA LESSONS LEARNED

- Oregon is a big state and there are real regional differences reflected in brewing and agricultural industries.
- Make friends with people who aren't brewers.
- Travel is really, really expensive.
- You can't just show up with a box and get it filled with historical treasures.
  - Trust takes time. This isn't a sprint.
  - But… If you say "exhibit" people give you more stuff than if you say "archive."
- Brewers have a different definition of "scheduling in advance," "meeting times," and "quiet place for an oral history."
  - And they don't have much time so talk fast.
  - You have to be flexible and creative in how you spend your time.

II. IS YOUR PROJECT COMPLETED?

Yes. Overall, this project was meant to be a time for information gathering. The trips were completed, but the work continues as we gather more information, meet new people, do more research, and reflect on how post-custodialism and community-based archiving works in practice. In the months since we presented to the LFA in April, we've had new projects related to digitization/creation of digital surrogates and community field-work emerge, allowing us to build on the work we started in 2014.

We talk about challenges and lessons learned in the previous section, but at its highest level carving out time for two people to travel was difficult and likely placed strain on the rest of the SCARC staff, especially as it pertains to reference desk coverage. While more money would have allowed for more trips or longer trips, the biggest challenge was in finding time for travel. This is a larger issue with community-based archiving at a state level; travel takes time and processing information takes time. We do have plans to continue the work we began in 2014.

OMA FUTURE PLANS
- Process the information gathered and potentially present it for researcher access
- Continue research and data gathering at other archives
- Begin to formulate plans to address gaps in the historical record based on data gathered
- Potentially collaborate with other institutions
- Develop a plan to truly make the OMA state-wide

OHBA FUTURE PLANS

- Follow up with existing and new contacts.
- Find additional sources of funding for travel.
- Take advantage of opportunities to connect with new people through events, conferences, statewide projects.
- Continue to work with professional industry organizations to connect with industry professionals who have materials or interest in oral histories.
- Continue to gather materials to digitize and return, while documenting workflow and process for an article.

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Original Budget: $2,300
Total Spent: $2,215.11

Supplies

Item	Estimate	Actual
Portable Scanner	$175	$79.99 – Accounted For

Travel

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$945 (Motor Pool is $21/day, $.20/mile)	$827.60
Lodging	Lodging for 10 nights $1180 ($118 / night)	$1307.52
Total travel	$2,125	$2,135.12

Southern Oregon: Roseburg, Medford, and Ashland

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$200	$169 – Accounted For
Lodging	$354 (3 nights / 4 days)	$222.18 ($97.91 and $124.27) – Accounted For

Central Oregon: Bend and Prineville

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$125	$137.80 – Accounted For
Lodging	$236 (2 nights / 3 days)	$375.78 – Accounted For

Northern Oregon: North Coast: Astoria, Lincoln City, Tillamook & The Gorge: Hood River, The Dalles – THIS WAS SPLIT INTO TWO TRIPS

	Estimate	Actual – see below for 2 trips
Transportation	$300	$0
Lodging	$590 (5 nights / 6 days)	$0

Northern Oregon: Trip 1: Hood River and The Dalles

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$150	$144.40 – Accounted For
Lodging	$236 (2 nights / 3 days)	$346.62 – Accounted For

Northern Oregon: Trip 2: Tillamook and Astoria

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$150	$108.60 – Accounted For
Lodging	$118 (1 night / 2 days)	$137.61 – Accounted For

Portland: November 19/20th (TEM trip)

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$85	$81.20 – Accounted For
Lodging	$0	$0 – Accounted For

Bend: February 18-20th (TEM trip)

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$125	$127.00 – Accounted For
Lodging	$236 (2 nights / 3 days)	$225.33 – Accounted For

Portland: March 18th (TEM trip)

	Estimate	Actual
Transportation	$60	$59.60 – Accounted For
Lodging	$0	$0 – Accounted For

IV. SHARING YOUR PRODUCT/RESULTS

We shared our project results with library faculty and staff as part of the Faculty Seminar Series on April 10, 2015. The results of our work continues to benefit us in our current OMA and OHBA activities.

We will continue to gather information and look for practical applications of a post-custodial model for our department. One possible project includes the workflow for digitizing what we do not intend to physically archive; potential scholarly opportunities include discussing the policies and workflow needed and addressing the issues of pre-accessioning, accessioning, access, copyright/rights and access statements. However, beyond scholarship, we see great value to the profession in sharing our experiences through public talks and more informally in conversations with peers. There are also excellent opportunities to engage graduate students; we worked with University of Washington MLIS students in 2015-2016 who worked with us on the workflow redesign.

V. NOTE

Information included in this report may be reprinted or posted on the web for dissemination.

Adapted from Librarians Association of the University of California Research Grants Program
http://www.ucop.edu/lauc/committees/rpd/endoffundingeport.doc