

Digitizing the NYSCU Archives: Progress Report

Roger Hiemstra; September 29, 2008

Overall Accomplishments

I am pleased to report that almost everything described in my July 4, 2008, proposal has been accomplished. Following is a listing of those accomplishments:

1. I met initially with Karen Dau at First Universalist in Rochester on June 10 to describe to her what the History Committee at MMUUS had achieved and to discuss her needs as archivist. I also examined the NYSCU archive. This enabled me to develop the July 4 proposal.
2. Based on communication with Judy Adel in follow up to that proposal, I purchased various pieces of hardware as described below. Judi also coordinated with Michael Scott in the acquisition of a computer and related peripherals (described below). Everything is now in the Archive room at First Universalist, functioning well, and situated either on or below that desk shown in my July 4 proposal.
 - a. Based on our initial agreement I purchased the following:
 - i. Used HP 3845 printer (it came with both black and color cartridges, but because it was used they were partially empty)
 - ii. New black cartridge for the printer
 - iii. Used Epson 1260 flatbed Scanner
 - iv. 2 six feet USB cables for connecting the printer and scanner to the computer
 - v. HP DVD 1040E burner (came with connecting cord)
 - vi. 50 pack of burnable CDs
 - vii. 4 GB thumb (flash) drive and one 8 GB thumb (flash) drive
 - viii. A 4 port USB 2 Hub
 - ix. A surge protector for 5 plugs with an extension cord
 - b. I personally donated a used camera stand for needed digital photography and acquired free software for creating PDF documents
 - c. Michael acquired the following:
 - i. Dell Precision 340 tower with a 2GHz Pentium 4 processor, 500 MB of memory, 40GB, built-in 100 MB Ethernet, and several ports
 - ii. Ethernet cord (currently this cord connects the computer to the Internet on a need basis via a port in the RE office)
 - iii. 19 inch Sun-branded CRT
 - iv. Keyboard and mouse (Karen supplied the needed mouse pads)

- v. Windows XP (Michael installed this software)
 - vi. Microsoft Office (Michael installed this software)
3. I conducted the first training session with Karen and her new volunteer colleague, Laretta Young, on September 10, 2008 (described in detail below).
 4. I conducted the second training session with Karen and Laretta on September 25, 2008 (described in detail below).

September 10 Training Session

I began the first training session by helping Karen and Laretta begin work on several important tasks, such as prioritizing, determining an inventorying strategy, and developing an archive policy statement (see Appendix A). While they were doing this work, I set up and/or installed all the hardware and software I had purchased or brought with me.

After nearly two hours, we began the training activities for the day. As shown in that appendix, we made good progress and accomplished much. Both Karen and Laretta practiced on everything and I made sure they had an adequate understanding of what to do as both wanted to begin immediately on digitally preserving some of the material in the archive. I left that session with confidence that considerable work would be accomplished. Karen, of course, knows well what is in the archive and has a good sense of what needs to be completed first. Laretta brings considerable experience and confidence with technology to the required tasks. Together, Karen and Laretta make a good team and will accomplish much during the upcoming months.

I believe I helped them understand the enormity of the task ahead. Doing correct preservation takes time, patience, and a willingness to work hard. I noted that if there were only the two of them doing the majority of the work, it may take a decade or more to completely organize, inventory, preserve, and digitize the material in that archive. I believe they understand the needed effort, but I feel confident that they are up to the task and will work hard in accomplishing what is needed.

September 25 Training Session

I began the second training session by asking Karen and Laretta to continue work on such activities as prioritizing, determining an inventorying strategy, and writing an archive policy statement (see Appendix B). While they were working on these

activities, I familiarized myself with Karen's external hard drive (they can occasionally use that drive for various purposes), set up Laretta's digital camera (they can use that camera temporarily for needed photographing of certain archival items), and checked to see that all the hardware was functioning properly (a couple of connecting cords had become disconnected so this provided a teachable moment later on).

After about 45 minutes, we began the training activities for that day. As shown in the appendix, we again made good progress and accomplished much more in building their preservation skill and confidence. I reviewed everything we had gone over during the first training session to ensure myself that they understood and were capable of proceeding on their own. We also examined what they had accomplished since September 10. Both Karen and Laretta had worked hard and had scanned a number of things. We reviewed some of their practices and I made some fine tuning suggestions.

I also demonstrated how to use a digital camera as an alternative capturing device for those objects, artifacts, and printed materials that are simply too large to be accommodated sufficiently on the flatbed scanner. This included talking about setup procedures for a digital camera when being used on such material, photographing one oversized piece of printed material, downloading the resulting "picture" to the computer, and then "processing" it. This latter involved demonstrating a way the picture can be resized, cropped, and/or divided into more than one picture if necessary. I next talked about how to move the resulting picture or pictures into a folder as either a jpg or PDF file.

We then spent time reviewing and practicing with the DVD burner as they had experienced some difficulty during the time since the first training session. I think they now have a much better understanding of the DVD burner's use and value.

We concluded by my urging them to use such software tools as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and email to detail their inventorying efforts, create records of what they have scanned, and make future reports for distribution to NYSCU Board members and others. I also made several recommendations on future activities for them to consider. These are detailed in the next section.

Overall Perceptions

I believe that we accomplished much during my, Judi, and Michael's initial efforts. The archive now has a functioning technology station to assist with future

preservation efforts. In addition, I believe that because of the time Karen, Laretta, and I spent together in training activities, the two of them can move forward with confidence in their digital preservation efforts and their related paper preservation, inventorying, and record keeping activities. I did offer myself as a resource to answer questions they may have via email and/or telephone.

I finish this report with the following recommendations and suggestions:

1. I urged Karen and Laretta to create a periodic newsletter item to be published on the NYSCU web site as a means of letting people know what they are doing, to reveal the wonderful “gems” they will constantly uncover in their preservation activities, and to draw needed attention to the value of archival work. (See [/newsletterarchives.pdf](#) for an archive of the “Marvelous History Corner” articles through the end of this prior church year that I had published in the MMUUS newsletter). This will promote a greater awareness of and interest in the archives. It also may stimulate some people to contribute additional material to the archives.
2. I urged Karen and Laretta to consider developing a web page or a blog that portrays some of the archival material. (See [/sjmay.html](#) for an example of one of the history-related web pieces related to MMUUS that I developed.) I realize that this would take additional time and effort on their part, but it may be something they can consider in the future or there may be others in the NYSCU family who would be interested in such a task.
3. I urged Karen and Laretta to create a comprehensive annual report for the NYSCU board and a display or workshop for the NYSCU annual meeting. I believe they felt that the time was too short to accomplish either for the upcoming annual meeting, but they should be able to create a brief report or statement for the board and display a CD they have created that contains some of their scanning efforts (they would probably need a computer with a CD player, projector, and screen for maximum visual effectiveness).
4. Although we have accomplished much during the past few months, I believe there are some steps that can be taken to make the efforts to preserve and digitize archival material more efficient and effective.
 - a. I would urge the Board to seek additional volunteers. The addition of Laretta has already made a big difference, but I would like to see two or three more volunteers added to the overall effort. Yes, the working space is small, but I believe that Karen could

coordinate the efforts of all involved so that no more than two people at any one time would be working in that room.

- b. I would urge Karen to add more shelving in that room as needed for increased storage and processing space.
- c. Karen and/or Laretta will be presenting to the Board a NYSCU Archive Policy statement that they have developed. Such a statement will help guide their future efforts and I urge the board to provide appropriate feedback to them and eventual approval.
- d. I believe that Karen and Laretta should develop a digital policy statement in the future to deal with access, copyright, long term storage issues, and dissemination procedures. MMUUS is in the process of developing such a statement and it should be finished during this coming fall. I will share it with them as a potential model for their development efforts.
- e. I believe it would be valuable for Karen and Laretta to have a follow-up training and/or evaluation session in another six months to help them assess their progress, make some fine-tuning adjustments, and enhance their preservation efficiency. Appendix C details the related costs.
- f. Finally, I urge the Board to consider some additional hardware for the archive room. This hardware, potential costs, and the associated training needed to ensure satisfactory use of the hardware are also displayed in Appendix C.

Appendix A

Set-Up Tasks

1. Help Karen and Laretta begin (a) developing an archive policy statement, (b) establishing priorities, and (c) discussing inventorying and preservation strategies
2. Set up scanner, DVD burner, printer, and USB hub and connect them to the computer
3. Make “my computer,” Word, and other needed icons for desktop
4. Create quick launch window and place the most important functions within
5. Download and install Mozilla browser
6. Download and install Adobe reader
7. Download and install Real Player
8. Install digital camera software
9. Familiarize myself with the anti-virus software (Sophos) installed by Michael

Training Activities

1. How to use “My Computer”
2. How to make and use directories
 - a. Naming them
 - b. Moving from one directory to another with two of “My Computer”
3. Saving to desktop and directories
4. Renaming files
 - a. Using helpful file names
 - b. Keeping a record of names and what they mean (using a small notebook)
5. How to make various shortcut icons for the desktop
 - a. My computer
 - b. Word
 - c. PowerPoint
 - d. Adobe Reader
6. Putting needed software functions in quick launch - use Word as an example
7. How to use the anti-virus software, including updating and automatic launch when available
8. Adjusting the computer’s clock
9. How to shut down properly
 - a. Normal and recommended shut down

- b. Hard shut down if hung up
- 10. Backing up files and directories
 - a. Thumb (flash) drive
 - b. CD/DVDs
 - c. Your home hard drives – VERY IMPORTANT
- 11. How to use print screen
 - a. Capturing important information
 - b. Cropping, etc.
- 12. How to use Mozilla – my recommendation is to use it over Explorer
 - a. Favorites
 - b. Tabs
 - c. Etc.
- 13. How to use the various pieces of hardware and software
 - a. Scanner – limited to 8.5x11 sheets until new monies are available
 - i. Photos
 - ii. 8.5x11 documents
 - iii. How to do legal size documents
 - iv. Saving files
 - PDF files – pdf writer software
 - OCR
 - Word documents
 - b. Printer
 - i. Black ink vs. color
 - ii. How to select black ink
 - iii. How to change a cartridge
 - c. DVD burner
 - i. DVDs vs. CDs
 - ii. Read only and read/write
 - iii. Proper labeling
 - Light scribe – burning descriptors with label side up
 - Pasted labels
 - Ink pen
 - Keeping track of contents in a notebook
 - Using CD/DVD jackets to keep them clean and reduce scratching
 - d. Adobe Reader
 - e. PDF writer
 - f. Word
 - g. PowerPoint

- h. RealPlayer
- 14. Paper preservation techniques – handouts

Appendix B

Set-Up Tasks

1. Help Karen and Laretta work some more on inventorying tasks if not far enough along on policy development
2. Set up Laretta’s camera, tripod, and item to be photographed
3. Get second thumb drive ready
4. Check to see that all the hardware is working
5. Familiarize myself with Karen’s external hard drive

Training Activities

1. Review the following:
 - a. Using “My Computer”
 - b. Directories and moving from one directory to another with two of “My Computer”
 - c. Saving to desktop and directories
 - d. Renaming files and using helpful file names
 - e. Keeping a record of names and what they mean (in small notebook both Laretta and Karen can use – Laretta duplicating and recording if working at office)
 - f. Making various shortcut Icons for desktop
 - g. Using word, PowerPoint, Adobe Reader, Sophos, Real Player, etc.
 - h. Backing up files and directories
 - i. Using a thumb (flash) and home hard drives
 - j. Using print screen, capturing important information, cropping, etc.
2. Using Karen’s External hard drive
3. Using Mozilla
4. Karen and Laretta e-mailing attachments to me if needed
5. More review and work on the various pieces of hardware and software
 - a. Scanner
 - b. Printer
 - c. DVD burner, DVDs vs. CDs, Read only and read/write, Proper labeling
6. Using a digital camera
 - a. Using the tripod

- b. Positioning documents to be photographed
 - c. Camera function for photographing documents
 - d. Transferring photos to the computer and an appropriate directory
 - e. Moving photos among directories
7. Using word to build inventories and make reports
 8. Newsletter column for NYSCU
 9. Creating a web page or blog
 10. NYSCU conference – report and/or display

Appendix C

Follow-up Training

I believe one day of training including observation of Karen and Laretta's progress, answering questions, and refining procedures would be valuable. I would be happy to do such training, although there may be others more qualified or appropriate for it. If I were to do it, I would require \$150 plus travel expenses.

Additional Hardware

Following are the recommended pieces of hardware and their approximate costs to increase efficiency, speed, and effectiveness in the digital preservation efforts. In addition, necessary ongoing expenses are included for the overall enhancement and maintenance of these efforts.

1. A combined stack sheet feed scanner – the typical price range is \$500-\$1,000
2. External hard drive – the typical price range is \$75-\$200
3. Digital camera – the typical price range for an adequate camera is \$100-\$200
4. Flat screen monitor (to provide more table work space) – the typical price range is \$150-\$250
5. Better printer – the typical price range is \$100-\$300
6. One ongoing expense is printer cartridges – I suggest up to \$50 a year
7. DVD RW storage media – I suggest up to \$40 a year
8. Associated trainer's time for research, acquisition, installation, and training. If I were to do it, I would require between \$225-\$400 plus expenses