

Online Instruction for Participatory Archiving



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On behalf of my colleagues in UASC at UMass Boston, I'd like to begin by thanking LYRASIS for supporting our work and for the opportunity to connect with all of you this week at the Members Summit. Mary Meyer has been a welcoming liaison, and I'm grateful for the chance to meet additional folks from the Leaders Circle and learn from your collective experience.

With our project "Online Instruction for Participatory Archiving" we are creating an informational video and a set of instructional modules that will empower libraries of all kinds to organize day-long digitizing events to collect photographs, stories, memories, and other community-based cultural heritage materials documenting our nation's collective history.

Mass. Memories Road Show



These materials will **position the Road Show to serve as a model for historical societies, museums, and public libraries nationwide, enabling them to use these guidelines for creating their own event. SLOW.**

Since 2004, Mass. Memories Road Show has been documenting people, places, and events in Massachusetts history through family photographs and stories.

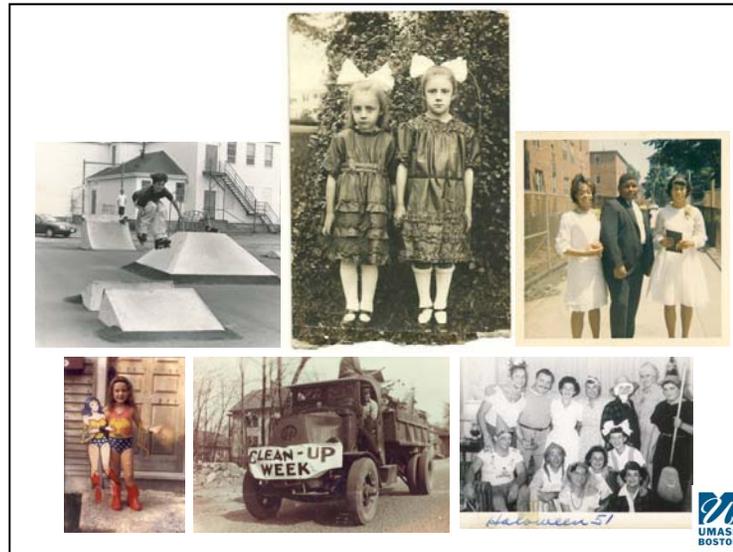


MMRS is a public history program where Community members come together for a free, public, day-long event to share memories, and learn from one another about the history of a town or a common theme.

UMass Boston staff and volunteers guide contributors through a series of stations. Contributors describe their photographs, get them copied., tell the story behind their contribution sin a video interview, and have a photo taken to document their participation in the event.

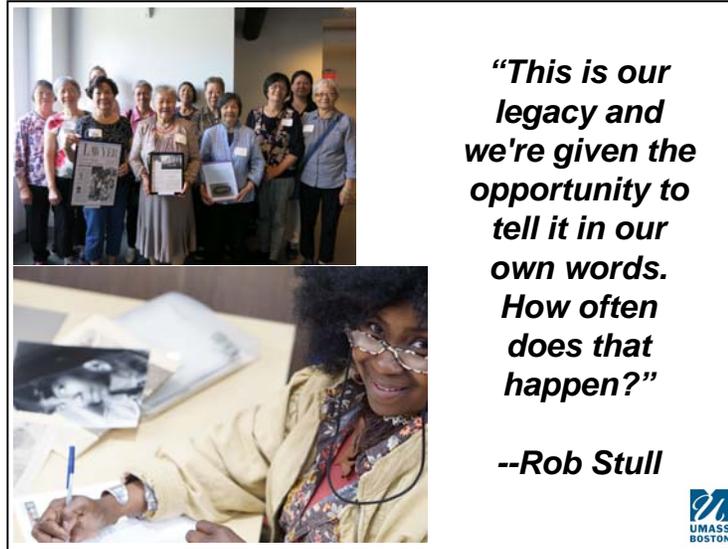


In addition, contributors have opportunities to consult with historians and subject experts and get advice from professional archivists about how to care for family photographs and preserve them.



MMRS is also a digital archive: At the events, we build a unique collection of digital surrogates and original first-person narratives documenting the history of Massachusetts communities.

By inviting community members to bring family photos we have an opportunity to collect materials that may otherwise be lost or destroyed—documents of the everyday lives of ordinary people that are less likely to end up in historical societies, museums, libraries, or archives.



Who is our audience and who do we serve?

Participatory archiving allows us to directly serve the people of Massachusetts—and around the country. Our team has been humbled to learn that there are many, many underserved and underrepresented groups that have important stories to tell and we're working to open up the channels so more of them can share and preserve those histories.

Two of our most recent events--Chinese American Experiences Road Show and another program documenting Boston's Hip-Hop Culture--highlighted the compelling significance of this work in supporting individuals to document their place in American society and culture.

Rob Stull, graffiti artist and graphic designer, summed it up very well in an email after the hip-hop event: **"This is our legacy and we're given the opportunity to tell it in our own words. How often does that happen?"**

Improving outreach & expanding the audience



We have been approached by colleagues throughout the country who are interested in holding similar events. We've always made our Project Handbook freely available online, but this publication doesn't paint a full picture of the details of how we do what we do.

In the meantime, we learned from a survey of our past partners that they had challenges effectively communicating what to expect from and how to participate in these events.

So we realized that to truly assist our colleagues in undertaking independent initiatives and helping them to replicate our program we needed to more clearly articulate what we were doing and how.



The Catalyst Fund is enabling us to create vehicles for sharing our 15 years of experience with our national colleagues.

Our video will describe **what** to expect at these events. It is intended as a tool to supplement any flyer and word-of-mouth communication—to make it easy to spread the word and encourage participation.

The eight online instructional modules will describe how to operate each of our “stations” through short, self-paced lessons. It will be open and accessible to anyone, making it easy to learn from and use the Road Show model.

Impact: helping libraries & archives nationwide



2. Our Catalyst Fund project will provide librarians and archivists with helpful resources to guide participatory archiving. They will be able to learn from our experience and won't have to reinvent the wheel.

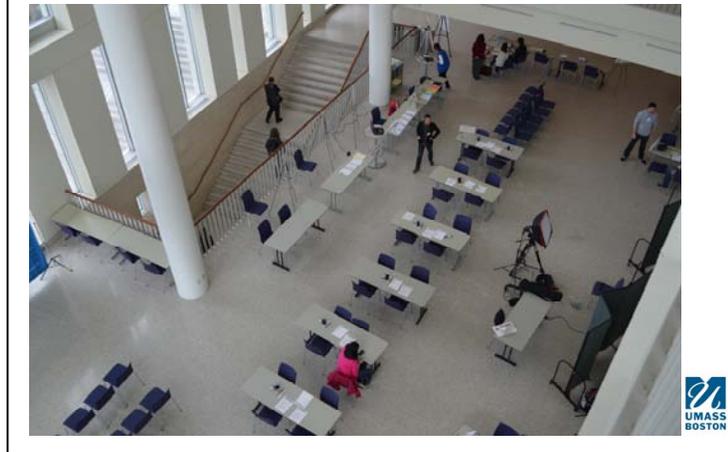
Impact: collecting untold stories of all Americans



Our goal is to equip libraries--large and small, urban and rural--to reproduce this type of collecting so that individuals, families, and community organizations from ever-more diverse corners of the country can share their stories.

Ultimately, the video and instructional modules will allow more unrecorded community histories, stories of underrepresented groups, to be collected, preserved, and made accessible by our nation's cultural institutions.

Project update



The Catalyst Fund has enabled us to hire the professional staff needed to do this work, and I'm pleased to report that **we are great making progress towards our goals**. The video is outlined and scripted, final shooting is taking place this fall. The first instructional module is drafted and we are working to identify the platform and tools for the online training program.

Lessons learned



In the process of our work, one of the things we've learned so far is:

Do not attempt to launch a new project in the summer! People have other things on their mind!

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

