

Society of American Archivists
Public Library Archives/Special Collections section

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020



An open letter from our Section Chair

Angela Stanley, Director
Georgia HomePLACE, Georgia Public Library Service

Call it what you will--quarantine, shelter-in-place, the “new normal”--but what we all know is, **this is hard**. For many of us, the two month anniversary of the moment our world turned upside down is approaching and, I’ll speak for myself here, every day is still exhausting. I’m more than #zoomtired. My spirit is weary.

Here’s what I know: Compassionate distancing is hard. Watching my 7-year-old daughter struggle to make sense of a world most adults can’t comprehend is hard. Being away from the people, places, and materials that give my professional work meaning is hard. Looking down the barrel of an uncertain future is hard.

But there are bright spots.

- Watching YOU find creative ways to remain open while closed, bolstering communities in need and helping to bridge the digital divide (that we’ve been screaming about *for years* but that this crisis has now laid bare) is a bright spot.
- Witnessing the generosity of spirit exhibited by librarians and archivists around the country as they share everything from response plans and materials quarantine workflows to PPE vendors and copyright expertise is a bright spot.
- Seeing colleagues donate to the [Archival Workers Emergency Fund](#)--*even as they know they shouldn’t have to be the ones throwing out a lifeline to co-workers in need*--is a bright spot.
- Interrogating [vocational awe](#), [martyrdom](#), and [institutional oppression](#), and drawing energy and inspiration from resisting these things as we eventually move past the pandemic, is a bright spot.

Many of us are now in the difficult position of helping our institutions fight for funding as the economic repercussions of the pandemic begin to make themselves known. **PLASC is here for you as you advocate for your work**, and we encourage you to check out our [Advocacy Toolkit](#), as well as SAA’s many [Advocacy resources](#) and ALA’s [Fund Libraries](#) campaign. Please continue to share your stories

with us by emailing newsletter submissions to PubLibArchives@gmail.com, and share your brilliance by posting your plans, strategies, and questions on the PLASC listserv.

Finally, if you have a suggestion for how PLASC could best support you and your archives during this time, please drop us a line. The Steering Committee meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 3pm EST, and you're always welcome to join us.

Wishing you all more bright spots than hard days,
Angela, 2019-2020 Chair

Your Story Is the Peninsula's Story: Local History in the Time of Coronavirus

Sarah Ostman
American Library Association, Public Programs Office

"History is often associated with the past — events of someone or something not connected with us. There is nothing like a global health crisis, however, to realize we are making and living history right now."

So began a March 23, 2020, [open letter](#) to the community from archivist and local history librarian Monique Sugimoto with the Palos Verdes Library District (PVLDD).

As libraries across the nation were grappling with how to bring their programs online to serve their communities during the COVID-19 [pandemic](#), Sugimoto decided one way she could help was to

convert an in-person public scanning program to an online format, allowing contributors to donate [historical images](#) and documents from home during mandatory self-isolation periods. We talked with Sugimoto to learn more.

Hospital ship U.S.N.S. MERCY T-AH 19 leaving San Diego for San Pedro. Courtesy of the Palos Verdes Library District Local History Center Collection.



How did Your Story Is the Peninsula's Story come about?

Monique Sugimoto: Your Story is the Peninsula's Story (YSPS) started in 2016, funded in part by an IMLS grant (#40-8615) administered by the California State Library. By engaging the community in telling its own story, the goal of the project is to build a true community archive that captures the breadth of the Peninsula community and its rich past for future generations.

The images, texts and stories included in YSPS are contributed by community members — both longtime residents and newcomers. For several years, we solicited contributions through in-person scanning events held at the library and with community partners. We received many images that showed life on the Peninsula after the post WWII period, which is what we were hoping for, since that is when the Peninsula had a boom in population and development. These early residents helped build the community and we need to document their recollections and stories.

Having the ability to contribute remotely had been a longtime goal of the Local History Center. The coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic was the perfect catalyst to move the program online. Since we started the program and with changes in technology, many people already have their materials in a digitized format, so bringing the effort online was the logical next step.

Why was it important to you to capture daily life from the pandemic?



In my letter, I asked, “How will this current public health crisis be remembered? I suggest it is much more than the number of cases and deaths; it is how each and every one of us is experiencing it in our day-to-day lives.” I launched YSPS Online now to encourage the community to add images and stories of how their lives have been turned upside down with the current health crisis. People are working from home, homeschooling their children, figuring out new ways to serve their neighbors and communities. I wanted to give people an opportunity to document the reality of this extraordinary event and to give future generations an insight into how we lived through this. It is literally history in the making.

Monique Sugimoto

Tell us about the logistics. How did you go about setting up YSPS Online?

Creating YSPS Online required creating an online submission form and incorporating existing YSPS program documentation into the form. Working with my Digital Services Department, I created a **four-part form** using Google Forms with sections for project introduction, photo information and upload, contributor information and authorization.

The form now accepts .jpg and .tif files, but we're thinking of video and audio file submissions, too. We also branded the form with the YSPS and Local History Center logos. For those who don't have a Gmail account, they can contact me directly for assistance in uploading their images.

How did you get the word out to your community?

We used our library's existing programming channels including our library newsletter, a local history group's Facebook page and program announcements to each of the four cities in our service area and previous YSPS contributors. I was also contacted by a local newspaper reporter, who wrote [an article](#) about the project.

How do you handle submissions as they come in?

As with contributions from in-person YSPS scanning events, images submitted on YSPS Online are processed and added to PVLDD's existing digital repository, palosverdeshistory.org. The digital repository is built on the Islandora platform, which allows for bulk upload, though this takes a little more processing that I can't do on my Mac at home.

Currently, I enter images one at a time using an XML template to expedite the upload process. Handling online submissions is actually easier than working with the handwritten submissions gathered from in-person scanning events. I had to alter our numbering system to track submissions but that was a minor consideration.

What are your hopes for this project going forward?

I started YSPS in response to a community needs assessment and comments that our Local History Center collection did not reflect the community and further that entire decades of documentation were missing. There was also a desire to have more materials online. Going forward, I hope that we'll be able to continue to address these needs and supplement our collection so that it really does reflect our community. YSPS Online is just one more way to do that.

One of the outcomes of the YSPS project was increased awareness and visibility of the Local History Center and its mission to preserve the history of the Peninsula. This has brought more and more donations of letters, organization records, maps and other physical materials to the Center. Perhaps during this crisis, diaries and journals kept by community members documenting their experiences during this health crisis will come in too, bringing with it a potentially rich source of primary resource for future researchers, especially students.

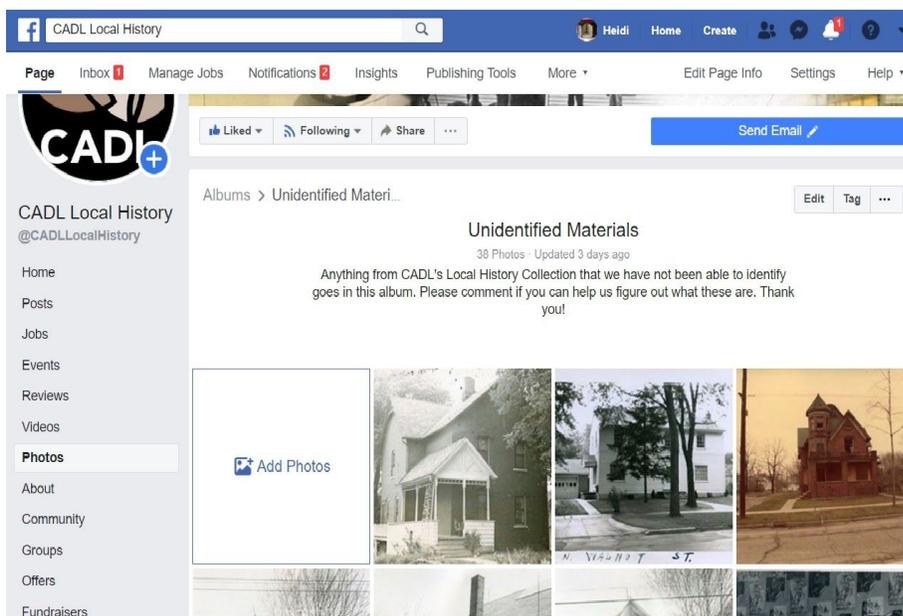
This article was originally published on programminglibrarian.org, a website of the American Library Association. Used with permission by Sarah Ostman and Monique Sugimoto.

Maintaining and Expanding Local History Interest in a Crisis

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My library system has been closed to the public for about three weeks. The Local History Room already had limited open hours, and the majority of our requests involve our digital material, so it hasn't been that big of a challenge to continue serving our users. We are always looking for new ways to engage the public and we had to get creative since we are separated from the physical collections and only part of our materials have been digitized.

Something we've done for a while now is use an "Unidentified Photos" album on our Local History Facebook page. Right before closure, a coworker had been trying to identify a few hundred slides. Most were scanned so that details could be easily seen, but had not been identified yet. These scans were on the network and were accessible from home, so we have been adding a little batch of them



each week to the Facebook album. So far, we've had about a third of them solidly identified by our followers. If nothing else, they generate a lot of comments and speculation.

Normally we post content and then share it to just one or two community partners' pages, such as the area historical societies. Lately we have looked around for additional relevant groups and

pages in which to share content to broaden access. Some of the "I Grew Up In..." type groups have their daily weather updates and political battles, but we now bravely share our content there with mostly positive results. We have also shared our posts to niche interest groups; an example of this is a local railroad history club, when a train line was in an image. These strategies not only helped get materials identified, but also allowed us to gain many new followers on our own page.

We use PastPerfect to manage our Local History Online collections, and have just begun to set up Pinterest boards to see if that will drive new traffic to our site. Their free business account allows you to collect analytics. We plan on making some Zoom backgrounds, and already have a few users trying out our online jigsaw puzzles. Since these tasks can be done easily from anywhere, they are easy to

delegate to library staff outside of the Local History department or to volunteers, some of whom are working remotely. Websites such as Later.com can also be used to schedule posts into the future.

While being apart from most of the physical collections has been challenging, there are ways to stay on your community's Local History radars and offer them enjoyment in these stressful times.

Whenever things return to some form of normal, we'll go back to in-person reference, and with luck, have a bunch of new virtual fans to serve as well.

Boynton Beach City Library Local History Archives

Sharing to the Digital Public Library of America

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Boynton Beach City Library Local History Archives is a small repository in a public municipal library which collects historical material concerning Boynton Beach and surrounding communities.

Through a partnership with Florida International University (FIU), and with assistance from a grant from Southeast Florida Library Information Network (SEFLIN), images from their collections are being shared online through [FIU's Digital Collections dPanther Repository](#). High resolution digital files along with a spreadsheet of data is shared, and FIU includes them in their database along with other community partners.



FIU is a member of the Sunshine State Digital Network (SSDN), and through them, the FIU content is being harvested by the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). The process is still being adjusted, as fields in the FIU database are not all being transferred to DPLA, but the resulting expansion in access and outreach is worth it.

Image: Sport Fishing Woman, c. 1960s

From the Archives...Denton's First Municipal Airport

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While doing an inventory of maps and blueprints transferred to the Denton Public Library during "Trash to Treasure Day 2016", I came across a survey map of the Denton Municipal Airport (Denton, TX) dated November 1928. The Denton Municipal Airport depicted by this map operated from October of 1928 to December of 1937, but I didn't know that when I found it.

What I did know was that Denton, TX had been home to a number of airfields over the years. I further knew that [Denton Enterprise Airport](#) was previously known as Denton Municipal Airport, and I assumed this might be an early map of that airport. It wasn't: the City of Denton didn't purchase the land for Denton Enterprise Airport until 1943. In addition, this map placed the airport between a location which in no way resembles the physical features of Denton Enterprise Airport. Just by comparing this map to current online maps of Denton, I could get a general idea of where this airport was located. There seemed to be little easily discoverable information on this particular airport. That lack of information drove me to want to find its exact location.

I searched old editions of the Denton Record-Chronicle and found an article about the opening of the airport on the front page of the Oct. 2, 1928 edition. The article mentions festivities that included air races from Meacham Field (Fort Worth, TX) and Love Field (Dallas, TX), stunt contests, a model plane competition and a dance on the courthouse lawn. The article also gave me the general location of the airport, "three fourths of a mile northwest of the courthouse."

I was surprised at how close to downtown that sounded and wanted to pinpoint its location as best I could. Other sources have listed its general location relevant to landmarks, but I wanted something definitive. I reread the October 2nd article and realized I had missed something.

Mentioned in that article were the names of the pilots that participated in the air races from Meacham and Love Fields and their passengers. I recognized one of those names immediately. While I was an intern at the [History of Aviation Collection](#) at the University of Texas at Dallas, I was responsible for reprocessing the [William G. Fuller Collection, 1917-1978](#). Fuller was the original Airfield Manager for Meacham Field. He was also Director of Aviation for Fort Worth and Grand Prairie, TX, Mayor of Euless, TX and the name that caught my attention in that Denton Record-Chronicle article. He was listed as a passenger on M.L. Buchanan's plane during the race from Meacham Field. I then realized there were other names that seemed familiar, several in fact: Buchanan, Vernon Johns, W.O. Jones, Bill Ponder and Mrs. W.G. Fuller. Not only were these names familiar to me because of the work I did on Fuller's collection, but I realized I had seen them all in the same photograph!

On the back of that photograph, along with the names of the people in it, were the words "Opening Denton Airport 1930." I got in touch with Cody Yates, a GIS Analyst with the City of Denton, and he was able to provide me with a 1942 aerial photograph of the area. This was the earliest photo he had, but there was still nothing recognizable to me as the remnant of an airport. I decided to broaden the scope of my search, and thus began a series of frustrating disappointments in trying to locate a photograph, map or anything that would definitively show the airport's location.

Two local historians, DJ Taylor and Mike Cochran, were then able to provide me, thankfully, with some contemporary accounts of the airport. Mr. Taylor provided me with a photo of the area from before it was developed as the Municipal Airport and was being used as a landing field by Army pilots training out of Love Field.



Denton Landing Field, 1924, Courtesy DJ Taylor

From here though, I was stuck. I put my search on hold for a couple of weeks before revisiting it again, from the beginning. I reread that October 2nd article and noticed a paragraph I skipped over. It reads, “A circle 100 feet in diameter was traced with white rock near the center of the field...” I had dismissed the circle in the survey map that started this search as some arbitrary symbol denoting the center of the map, never thinking for a second this was an actual, physical feature of the airport. This is where I am especially thankful that Mr. Yates sent me that 1942 aerial photograph. When I looked at it again, like a slap in the face, there were the remnants of a perfect circle, just east of Alice St. situated between Emery and Cordell Streets.



Section of 1942 Aerial Photograph, Courtesy of City of Denton GIS Analyst Cody Yates.

This was my *Eureka!* moment. Once I managed to get the circles to line up and on the same scale I could then put points on the map that corresponded with the four intersections that surrounded that circle. Then, I georeferenced the survey map with current satellite map data using those points,

adjusted the opacity a bit and created the two images below that show the location of the original Denton Municipal Airport in relation to how Denton looks today.

PLASC Monthly Meetings

Did you know that our meetings are open to all PLASC members? We meet every second Wednesday of the month at 3pm EST (unless otherwise noted). Meetings are announced via the PLASC listserv prior to the meeting day, with instructions on how to join the call. Unable to join in? Previous meeting notes can be viewed through our [microsite](#).

We want to hear from you!

Be featured in our next newsletter! Do you have any special collections you'd like to highlight? A newly processed collection, new acquisitions, or library programs that you would like to share or announce? If you've recently read a great book or article that archivists and librarians might find interesting, why not do a review of it? Submissions on topics of interest to the public library archivists and librarian community are welcome.

Format for submissions: All articles and items submitted for consideration should be delivered via email attachment to PubLibArchives@gmail.com. Be sure to include the author's name, repository name, location, and contact information at the end of your article. Please attach any images separately as JPG or PDF files and include a caption for each image in the article document file.

Submissions will be reviewed and edited by our newsletter editor, Patricia Delara. The deadline for the Summer issue will be announced next month. We will send out another call for submissions soon!



The Public Library Archives and Special Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists serves to encourage advocacy for and education about archival, manuscript, local history, genealogy, and other historic and special collections within public libraries of all sizes. To learn more about PLASC, or to get involved, please visit our [website](#).

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