

ALCTS EXCHANGE 2017 | Day 3, Preserving Connections: Connecting to Communities Through Preservation Programming

>> Miriam Nelson: All right. Hi. Can everybody hear me okay? Hopefully I'll take that as a yes. Okay. Great. I am Miriam Nelson. I'm from Ohio University and the ALCTS preservation outreach committee and I'm here with my colleague, Nancy Godoy_Powell from Arizona State. Our session today focuses on reaching out to our communities through the lens of preservation. And as stewards of objects and information, our preservation strategies are really the connecting thread between what is collected now and what from our time and before will be available to future generations. So while there's some big ideas to unpack in that frame, we also find a direct parallel in the way we as individuals create our personal histories by keeping and passing down objects as family heirlooms.

So what preservation does as a concept is give us a framework to inform and train our community of users to better steward their own personal collections. And we do this in the hope that they may be better empowered to document and preserve their own stories and community histories, as Nancy will discuss, but also so that they may be empowered to more fully engage with institutional collections and better relate to the work in the cultural heritage sector more broadly.

So setting these ideas at the stage, I'll share some examples of how preservation week has been used as a jumping off point for community outreach and engagement, and Nancy will speak in depth about her project, which seeks to engage Arizona's Latinas community and archival presentation.

So I just want to quickly gauge people's familiarity with preservation week. If there is a poll we can put up. There we go. Thank you.

So if you guys would select everything that applies to you and for everyone who hasn't, who fills in anything other than I've never heard of preservation week, if you wouldn't mind telling us in the chat how you've engaged with that in the past. I'll give a little bit of a background for preservation for those less familiar.

So as I mentioned, preservation week is a week that comes out of preservation reformatting section and it began as a working group established in 2009, and involved into a committee over the last four or so years. It takes place the last week in April and it's an Asian and advocacy tool for information professionals and their patrons, and this past year, the committee has further evolved, joining forces with the preservation and action ___ or sorry, joining forces with preservation in action, which is a day of service offered at the ALA annual conference.

So from here, I'll go ahead and share some examples of well_established preservation week programming that demonstrates community engagement. So I'll start with the Indiana Historical Society.

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Okay. So right off the bat, you can see that we're not just in the realm of academic library. And these efforts really do depend on reaching across the network of institutions, galleries, libraries, archives and museums, or GLAMs, as they're sometimes called, Indiana historical society preservation road show clearly echoes the PBS series Antiques Road Show and they partner with the state library of Indiana and other local and regional professionals to provide activities and services related to the preservation of personal collections. And as you can see here, this includes appointments with appraisers from different specialties, and also conservators, some of whom are on the historical society staff and others who are in private practice or from the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and they really make an effort to represent many different specializations and a variety of formats and disciplines. The event is free and open, but it is ticketed because it's become very popular, and as you can imagine, it's also really popular with donors. Next we'll take a quick look at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. They switch up their theme every year. They, too, collaborate and work to bring in people from across the university and the local community. This year, Baylor Libraries worked with the Department of Museum Studies to put on a preservation fair. It was a one_day event held from 5:30 to 7 p.m., so making it available to the public outside of regular work hours. The preservation fair brought of variety of people and preservation resources to the community from Baylor Libraries, from the Waco McClennon County Libraries and as I mentioned, from the University museum studies.

So in the process of developing programming collaboration has really been key for the people that have shared these experiences with us. And as you would imagine, some collaborations are a little more fruitful than others. Baylor was able to make the collaboration with the museum studies department a four_credit class project which ensured strong collaboration and reciprocal benefit, which is really important, and these events are also an excellent opportunity to re_affirm connections with allied groups that may have enjoyed closer connections to the institutions in the past that, for whatever reason, don't interact on a daily basis any longer. And as an example, I highlighted the Waco genealogical society as a collaborator on their annual events.

And Beth was also kind enough to share some challenges that she's experienced with us, and these include ensuring that each collaborator is really equally invested, and also understanding local political hurdles. She highlighted the perennial town and gown divide that those of us living in college and university towns will be familiar with.

Not all participants will have the same end goals, and really resources aren't evenly distributed.

She also shared some really solid ideas about how to keep these events sustainable, and I think the most important one is picking programming that's really interesting and engaging to you even if it's a little bit outside your wheel house. When attempting to engage with the community, that excitement is essential to a successful program.

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Okay. So at the University of Illinois Urbana Champagne, the preservation and conservation department has participated in the University of Illinois's preservation Emporium since 2006. So this pre-dates preservation week. This informal event this past year was held at the Spurlock Museum and it welcomes visitors to meet and talk with preservation specialists whose expertise range from antiquities to modern media. And so you see a pattern that develops this program, and Baylor's, as well as the Indiana Historical Society. They have all found a model that functions really well.

So in past years, the Emporium has been held at the Champagne Public Library which provides the same access to expertise, but changes the audience reach just by changing the venue. And the University of Illinois has also engaged with things like Home Movie Day, emphasizing preservation of AV formats in connection to the celebration of amateur and personal film making. And taking the perspective that programming should first be engaging in order to be informational, in 2006, they invited Ann Schmitt, vice president of programs in the area of River Front Museum to talk about a current exhibit titled family portraits along history of awkwardness. I wish I had a picture from this but unfortunately I don't. In the talk Ann shared, and I quote, strange __ a strange and amusing glimpse into the history of how and why we keep a visual record of ourselves and our loved ones and why that record is worth preserving.

I like this example because the strategy, again, takes a pop culture phenomenon, awkward family photos, and leverages the existing fascination to begin a discussion on how to preserve personal photographs, collections, and then also their place in the larger cultural record.

So the last example I've got is from the preservation lab, which is a joint lab between the University of Cincinnati and the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. So what we have here is a built-in collaboration. However, the lab is on the UC campus, and this is why they found it really beneficial to youth preservation week as a catalyst for annual lab tours, hands-on events. It helps them increase awareness that the lab serves the dual community. And these hands-on activities allowed the public to see the tools of the lab, but also try their hands at things like paper repair. And they've also taken the opportunity to set up demonstrations in the library, performing simple repairs and creating enclosures right next to the circulation desk.

The most involved hands-on activity that they put on came from a grant that they received to purchase a paper __ to purchase paper-making equipment, which included a Hollander beater. Staff and students and the public made sheets of paper with the assistance of the conservator and the conservation desk.

So one thing I would like to point out about all of these examples is that none of the institutions who shared their programs with us were doing this alone, regardless of their size or their internal resources. And this is really why the preservation outreach committee exists. And we would really enjoy being an excellent resource for people to start and continue preservation programming.

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So just to show you some of the resources, during preservation week, we're really active on Facebook and twitter to promote the new webinars that are created this year ___ or each year. And we also work with don to answer preservation_related questions and these answers are archived on the preservation week Web site. They're also printable book marks, sheets and information cards and posters. And we do have a growing list of resources in Spanish, and we would like to expand this further if people are aware of preservation resources in other languages. There they are.

Also, we branched out a little bit this year working with Miriam Centino and AnnMarie Wiler on peer_focused content based on their research on diversity and inclusion and the fields of preservation and conservation, which included a video presentation and a live Q & A, and we hope to carry this theme forward in 2018. So in closing, I hope to encourage you all to consider preservation not complete as a functional activity, and more than a bi product of curation, but as a frame through which we can connect our professional efforts to the personal spirits of our youth. And with that I would like to hand it over to Nancy, who will talk about her really interesting program.

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: Thank you. Hi, everyone. This is Nancy Godoy. I'm the archivist of the research collection at Arizona State University. Today I'll be sharing information about my current project. In 2016, I formed a partnership with two ASU faculty members, Dr. Sue Vega, and Dr. Vanessa Fonseca. We received a secret to further develop and modify community outreach workshop that had originally developed back in 2015. The workshop provides an introduction to genealogy research, archival theory, and oral history. Our main goal is to engage, educate, empower studies outside of the university, especially in marginalized communities. Throughout the project, we never expected the community to come to us at the university. We also seek to identify the needs of the community, and improve the under_documentation of history. I'll talk a little bit more about that in a little bit.

And then finally, we're collaborating with local teachers to develop selection plans that highlight not only Arizona history, but, Latino history by incorporating the use of primary resources and narratives that we have within the Chicano Research Production.

So I'm going to take you through the workshop and give you a sense of what the audience learned. I initially engaged the community by talking about genealogy and family history. I start the workshop this way because it creates a personal warm environment. Sadly, nobody cares about archival theories or oral histories. Not at first. Eventually I engage them. So we make the workshop about them. How I can help and I basically give them a good intro they don't necessarily know.

So for most Latinos, conducting research is specifically genealogy research, is very hard because there's a lock of resources. Or access to primary resources. So step one of this part of the workshop includes gathering information and Tracy interviews one person at a time. I share my experience with genealogy research. So in step 2, I encourage them to be detectives and find resources that confirm

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the information they originally gathered. I talk about the different types of documents, you know, anything from Catholic church records to baptism records, marriage, death certificates, census, military records, border crossings, immigration records, newspapers, photographs I imagine that I share my personal experience. I'm not a genealogist, but I feel like when I make it personal, I give them hope in a way.

And again, I use language that they understand. That they understand and they're comfortable with.

So I highlight where they can find the resources. I briefly show them how to use and find databases, like ancestry.com and family search.org. I also suggest that they use local repositories. I use this little as a way to basically promote the chicano research collection and the services they provide, and the collection was established in 1970 by my predecessor during the chicano movement, which was part of the school rights movement and so we collect personal records, family records, organizational records and popular secondary records.

And then in step 3, I recommend that they find a support system. This could be basically them creating or finding a genealogy group in person or online. This whole genealogy section actually takes about 20 minutes. I give them a family tree and they actually brain storm and fill out as much information as they can. The majority of the time people don't have any information, so it's actually __ this is when they can go home and basically their homework and start gathering information from the family members.

And so this basically starts the archival theory section, which is about 30 minutes, and when I started my current position five years ago, I discovered that the vast majority of the communities I serve who are not affiliated with the universities are not familiar with terms like archives or archivists, and most people I talk to have never entered an archive or used primary resources. So for this reason I start the second half of the workshop by providing definition and statistics.

The Latino community has lived in Arizona since the early 16th century. However, their history is severely under_documented and archived. We did a survey in 2012. A lot of the large repositories throughout the state. We wanted to see who was doing a good job in documenting and what needed work, and we basically found that 30% of Arizona's population identifies as Hispanic, Latino, which is the sixth largest community in the United States, but they're only represented in two percent of known archival collections. So Arizona's archives have been dominated by __ I'm just going to give you some of the topics. Angle pioneer cowboy narrative, territorial history, Geronimo tombstone history which doesn't really do a good job summarizing Arizona's history. My goal is to mold people in to community archivists, which is what I am professional trained to be, an archivist, and prepare them to be agents of change in Arizona archives. So I need help, and hopefully the community can help me. So in step one of this section, I provide a brief introduction more specifically on appraisal and collecting. Seeing as

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this committee has been marginalized for so many years, the majority are not aware of the historical worth of their material. This is where I initially plant the seed in the minds, and I ask them to think about what they might have in their home, anything, of course, correspondence, diaries, scrap books, photographs, artifacts. And then in step 2, I ask them to describe and arrange their materials in order to make it accessible. The woman in the slide is actually my mom, so I share it in the workshop that I've had it in my own family is this work, so again, when I use personal, warm experience, it helps build that sense of trust. So I don't want to overwhelm them with information so I share simple tips. For example, I ask them to identify people, places and dates in photographs, organize the materials by subject, date or size, and I even ask them to create a finding aid once they have everything organized. That tells them what's in each box and each folder. And then in step three I give them an archive starter kit that contains brochures in Spanish and English as well as archival supplies, acid_free boxes, folders, the gloves, I call them the Mickey Mouse gloves and that usually makes everyone smile. I show them how to properly store the material. I also __ I think this is probably the most important part. I also offer alternatives to storage if they can't afford to buy more supplies after the workshop. I talk about something as simple as using a plastic bin and make sure you don't keep your photographs in the garage, or maybe using zip lock bags. Again, this __ being honest and straightforward usually helps build a sense of trust between the community and myself. And also, the fact that I'm not asking them to donate right away, they basically really encourage them to take care of their material. And then eventually some day I'll ask them for donations. And then I also briefly talk about water damage and what to do if they ever encounter this. Even though we live in Arizona, we do have a monsoon season in southern Arizona during the winter, and some people might run in to this problem.

And then the last step, I briefly talk about digital preservation, and I encourage them to stay current with technology and establish a back_up system. Most people sadly rely on social media to preserve their especially family photographs, so I put that seed in their head. And then the final part of the whole workshop focuses on the verbal preservation of history. Some people might not have documents, just stories, so I ask them to conduct an oral history with not only their family, but perhaps their surrounding communities, neighborhoods. I also recommend that they use oral history apps to engage the younger generation. During the workshop, we provide a list of questions they can start with and they get hands_on experience by interviewing their neighbor. The photo on the slide shows a young student interviewing her aunt at the moment, we're analyzing the data we collected at these workshops. So after every workshop, the person who attended would fill out a quick survey with about 30 __ 20 questions, actually. We wanted to get a sense of why they came and what they wanted from the workshop. Our goal is to basically modify this workshop, and I think reviewing the data is going to help us with that. So in one year, we conducted four workshops in the state, in Mesa, Tempe, Phoenix and Flagstaff. We were able to reach 200 people, and the average age of an individual was 55, so we reached the senior citizens demographic, but we reached as young as 24 and as old as 83.

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People who attended could trace their history in Arizona back to the 1700s, which was pretty impressive, and feedback shows that 78% attended the workshop because they wanted to document the past. 26% wanted to document their specific role in Arizona history, and 63% had old pictures, documents and wanted more information about how to preserve the material.

So I believe this workshop can be modified to fit any community with ___ in fact, in 2015, I became the unofficial archivist of LGBT collections at ASU. Earlier I mentioned the statistics about what communities were basically being marginalized, and the LGBT community didn't even make up 1%. And any other minority group, it's the same way. So that would be the African_American community, Asian_American and several other religious groups. So we have a lot of work to do. And I really feel like this workshop within Arizona could help a lot of people.

So going back to how it can be modified, I established the Arizona LGBT history project, a partnership between Phoenix and the university, and I've already modified the workshop and we're actually hosting our first workshop this June, which is pretty exciting.

So as an archivist, I believe the preservation of multiple perspectives is necessary for a balanced understanding of Arizona and American history. The workshop helps communities recognize the historical value of the material, teaches them how to preserve their own history, and like I mentioned before, it eventually encourages them to donate their material to an archival repository to make it basically accessible to future generations.

And then as I mentioned earlier, I'm also collaborating with local teachers to develop lesson plans that highlight Arizona history. This is very important because Latino children and other minority groups represent the majority of Arizona K_12 education system, but they're not represented in curriculum. In fact, the Latino community in Arizona has been aggressively targeted by legislation. In 2010, politicians banned the teaching of ethnic studies, more specifically Mexican_American studies down in Tucson. So this is a topic that's very important to me personally.

And finally, I'm currently trying to provide online access to our primary resources. So we're digitizing certain collections, creating exhibits and library guides as I basically have the time and resources. I placed a high importance on building relationships with individuals and making information accessible, because again, it needs to trust, and this is necessary if we want to engage future generations in bringing libraries and repositories. As demographics change, we need to change the ways we engage and serve our patrons. I have personally moved beyond traditional community outreach and collection development approaches that often exclude communities. I've created an atmosphere that creates equal archives, and shares stewardship responsibilities. And I think one of the biggest changes I've made is I've acknowledged I'm an archivist because the community has rights, and they should cover

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and preserve their own history. So I see this as not only the right thing to do, but the future of our field.

So I actually I just published a paper in the Journal of Western Archives talking about my community outreach and collection development approaches, if you're interested, feel free to take a look at that. Thank you.

I think we're ready for questions.

>> Thank you. We really appreciated your talk this afternoon. If attendees could, if you have any questions, please feel welcome to post them in the general chat and questions box. While we wait for others to chat, could you describe more about preservation and action and what __ how one could volunteer for that?

>> Sure. So preservation in action is now a part of the registration process for the annual conference, and so it's one of the options you can choose when you go ahead and register. So far, it's been very successful in that registration for volunteers builds up really quickly. So the idea is that as a day of service where we are sending our information professionals to a local library archive or museum that has a particular need that we can make some sort of progress to address within the span of one day. So often, that focuses a lot on maybe re_housing, and so we depend on support from a lot of the vendors who can provide us with archivally sound materials, and we depend on the time of our colleagues to help us with that effort. And so the location is totally dependent on where the conference takes place.

>> And actually while you were speaking, Keri just jumped in and made a point that preservation in action is sold out and there is actually a waiting list, so I guess that's a very good sign. That's great.

So we also have received a question from Sarah Becker in Massachusetts. She's asking, did the workshop patrons all speak English, or was Spanish spoken as well? Kind of changing directions here.

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: Yeah, so we promoted the workshop in English and Spanish through social media because the Chicano collection has several media accounts, specifically Facebook, twitter and tumblr, but sadly I didn't really get a lot of Spanish speakers. I did mention I'm working with two faculty members. One of them is a Spanish professor, so I did have her there with me in case somebody needed translation. I'm a Spanish speaker, so at any point I could have translated, but in order to keep the workshop flow going, I only spoke in English. But we did make sure to promote it in English and Spanish so then that way Spanish speakers would feel comfortable coming. So if and when we do more workshops, we're going to probably focus more on the Spanish speaking community first generation.

>> Well, that makes a lot of sense, for sure.

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: And I did mention in the presentation that the majority __ actually all of our marketing material, as far as like the preservation brochure that we give out, the tips on how to do certain things, all of it is bilingual. So it's in English and Spanish. So let's say an English speaker goes home and, you know, their grandmother only speaks Spanish, they could still look at the information together. So we don't want to create a language barrier.

>> Thank you. And I see a Miriam is posing a question for us. Thanks Miriam. So here we go. Can you talk more about how you chose the locations of the workshops and how you reached out to the community in that area?

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: So I mentioned that I didn't want __ I mean, it's nice when people come to universities, specifically the library, but for the most part, the campus is not really friendly to people outside of the university. You have to take the parking, and I think that turns people off. And so and just how crowded the campus is. So we decided to build relationships with local public libraries. So I mean, situations like parking wouldn't be an issue, so I reached out to local librarian __ public librarians, and so they promoted and then we promoted on social media. But it was a collaboration, I think. We're looking for another grant to basically keep the workshop going. I think we want to separate the workshop in to three segments. People really, really love the genealogy part. I was hoping that they would be in to the archives part a little bit more, but I think it's just still too new to them. So I need to do a better job in still educating them about my world.

And then people were also really engaged with the oral history component. So I think eventually if we find another grant, we want to break it up in to three, and then not only work public libraries but also work with community centers. There's several throughout the Phoenix area, and we really do want to make this a statewide initiative, or maybe even a regional initiative and work with other universities or communities who want to basically participate.

>> Well, that sounds exciting. And kind of following up on that, we also have a question from Stephanie at the University of Washington, and she's asking, do you anticipate trying to reach out to the community in ways other than social media? Any additional ways?

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: Yes. So I personally use social media to basically follow social trends. I have a professional __ basically manages the social media accounts, and so I become friends. That sounds kind of weird, but I become friends with donors, and so I follow, you know, and get a glimpse of their world. So then eventually I get invited to community events, or sometimes I just crash parties as the archivist, and I've kind of, you know, put myself out there in the community in order to engage them and show them, you know, information about the archives and what the world consists of and how they could participate and how they should participate.

So I think I have so much on my plate right now that I can't really think of other ways besides the workshop that we're doing, and then also the social media.

>> There seems to be a strong __ Stephanie is thanking you for explaining as well.

Are there other questions from the audience that people would like to pose Miriam and Nancy? This has been a really interesting talk so I imagine there's more questions out there. If not, I have some on my own, but I would rather have you all ask.

So earlier in your talk, so this is once again kind of switching gears a little bit here, but you mentioned watching the video about diversity and inclusion on preservation, and that's been something we've talked about, you know, throughout the day, and for those of us who are interested in viewing it, where could we find that video?

>> Nancy Godoy_Powell: So you can find that a couple of places. It's posted to the preservation week Facebook page, and you can view that there. But if you don't use Facebook, it's also been archived on the ALCTS YouTube channel, and so if you were to go to YouTube and search for ALCTS CE, you should find it among those videos. And it's something I really enjoyed about the programming we did this year, because it's __ Nancy had mentioned this a little bit especially about collecting practices, but preservation and conservation really aren't neutral actions either. So it's interesting for us in the profession to kind of start to interrogate our own practices and then also think about the demographics of the profession and how that impacts the work that we're doing. And into the future. Those are some of the issues that Miriam and AnnMarie tackle in that video and the Q & A.

>> And while we were speaking, thank you, Keri, she also posted a link for us in the chat box if anyone wants to grab that, the YouTube video. It's available there, the URL.

Any other questions from our audience?

>> I have one more comment. Going back to Stephanie's question, if we thought about any other ideas, one of our colleagues proposed creating that a digitization list to mobiles so something, again, where we don't wait for the community to come to us. We go to them. And I feel like a few different universities are actually trying that already, so we need to do our research a little bit more and see what's out there and what we can possibly even create from scratch. But I think what we were thinking was creating something that goes in to communities, scans, original photographs, give them a copy. I know some institutions are doing outreach events where they encourage the community to come to the university or to a historical society, and they scan the material for them, and then they give them digital copies, and then they also keep some of the copies themselves. I mean, that's another option of something we can do, but I feel like we've again, have a lot of positive about the workshops. So for the moment, we're sticking with that. We only have so many resources.

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>> Okay. Well, thank you both. This has been a great talk and a great streaming session this afternoon. If anyone has any final questions or comments, please feel welcome to share. Otherwise, we'll switch to our wrap_up. I'll pause for a moment. Okay. Well, thank you both.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Good afternoon or evening, everyone. We have reached the end of day 3 of the ALCTS Exchange. The ALCTS Exchange organizers would like to thank today's presenters for leading us through the timely topics of decolonizing catalogs, collection development for a diverse audience, culturally themed digital collections, and preservation programming within your community. And a very special thank you to Trevor A. Dawes for his very informing and eye_opening day 3 keynote talk. ALCTS would also like to thank our sponsors, Wiley and ExLibris. Without their generosity, the ALCTS Exchange would not be possible.

For those of you on social media, we invite you to continue the conversation over on twitter. Using the #ALCTSx 17, or ALCTSx17, and on the ALCTS Exchange Web site, where you will find discussion forums for each session, where you can continue to engage our presenters, take surveys and review the group discussion guides. If you missed any of the presentations today, the recording of day three will be available tomorrow on the ALCTS Exchange Web site. You can explore the poster presentations any time during the exchange on the ALCTS Exchange Web site. If you're part of a group attending the Exchange, you will need to log in with your individual log_in to see access these presentations, and your group leader should have those for you.

We're looking forward to hosting you for the last day of the Exchange this Thursday, May 18th at 1 p.m. eastern. Thursday's theme is "Building Skills To Prepare For the Future. We'll learn about a technical services tool kit designed for new and emerging leaders, best practices for assessing and understanding your statistics, using Pi mark like a pro, multi_dimensional measurements and collection assessment, making sure your electronic resources are accessible using something called WCAG, lessons from data refuge librarians, and a day 4 wrap_up that will address the future engagement with ALCTS.

Please be on the lookout for an evaluation that will be E_mailed to you from the ALCTS office at the conclusion of the exchange. This exchange is the first of its type for ALCTS, and we welcome your feedback.

Thank you for attending today. Please visit our online forum to engage with the presenters and I'll put that link in the chat box right now. And thank you for attending. We will see you on Thursday.

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