WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY ONVIEW

WEST VIRGINIA AND REGIONAL HISTORY COLLECTION, WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

WEST VIRGINIA AND REGIONAL HISTORY COLLECTION

A DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1 Photos are selected by Project Manager

2 Cataloging record (DLXS) created by student assistant

3 Photo is scanned (600dpi tiff) by student assistant

PICTURE PERFECT: CONDUCTING A LARGE DIGITAL ARCHIVES PROJECT ON A SHOESTRING THROUGH COLLABORATION IN AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY SETTING

4 Photo scan and catalog record are verified by Project Manager

5 Catalog record is reviewed and augmented by Cataloger

6 Library Systems stores tiff and uploads jpegs

THE WEB SITE

The West Virginia OnView Homepage offers users the option of browsing or searching the collection. Browsing can be done via the use of pages containing 20 thumbnail images. Boolean search capability enables users to search on any character strings that occur anywhere in the catalog records.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The West Virginia and Regional History Collection possesses the most significant collection of photographs pertaining to West Virginia history in existence. The collection is one of the most heavily used resources in the WVRHC. Use of this collection has long been hampered by the lack of an effective finding aid. The goal of this project is to create a searchable online digital photographs website.

RESEARCH METHOD

Though seeking grant funds was initially considered, we decided to proceed with this project using existing resources, including an abundance of student labor, and collaboration within the WVU Libraries.

With the assistance of WVU Libraries Systems staff, DLXS (Digital Library Extension Service) image class freeware was selected as the project software platform. A metadata template of composed of ten Dublin Core fields was developed.

The project is directly supervised by the WVRHC Photographs Unit Manager. The Manager selects photographs for inclusion in the digital collection. Students scan the photographs (600dpi TIFFS) and create metadata records from information gleaned from labeling on the reverse of the photos and from image content.

The scans and metadata are reviewed and edited by the Manager and forwarded to Library Systems for addition to the project database. JPEG versions are uploaded for online

display and TIFF images are archived. The metadata records are edited by Cataloging staff who enhance the records with LC subject headings as needed.

RESULTS

The results of this project have exceeded all expectations. Currently offering 40,000 photographs, West Virginia History OnView draws a half million visitors to the WVRHC's website annually. The project has exponentially increased use of the photographs collection and other components of the WVRHC. Copy services and fees have created a revenue stream that supports the project and other needs. The project has led to collaborations and numerous donations that have enhanced the WVRHC and WVU Libraries. The educational experience

students have enjoyed has been unexpected benefit. Whereas student workers generally achieve mixed results in assignments in special collections, nearly all who have worked on this project have found it to be exceptionally rewarding.

FINDINGS

This project has demonstrated that a large scale digital collections project can be successfully undertaken in a college setting through collaboration and reliance on student workers. It has opened up the WVRHC photographs collection to literally millions of users and is providing an ongoing revenue stream which support this and other projects.