The PUPS Model:
Private Funding, University Staff, Public Records and State Archives

By: Jaime Karbowiak and Emily Antoville

ABSTRACT:

The PUPS Model focuses on the collaboration between private and public institutions on the Robert Moses Collection Project and details how through private funding, Long Island University archivists are currently making use of New York State Archives best practices and procedures for inventorying, processing, and digitizing archival materials to enable remote accessibility to records on the New York State Archives website.

The Robert Moses Collection Project (RMCP)

- In 2019, the **Robert D. L. Gardiner Foundation** awarded **Long Island University's** Palmer School of Library and Information Science a $695,000 grant to fund the three-year Robert Moses Collection Project (RMCP).
- The RMCP is an ambitious venture to create public access to **New York State Parks** records produced during the era when "Master Builder" Robert Moses served as President of Long Island State Park Commission (1924 -1962) and developed most of Long Island's public parks and parkways.
- Under the direction of Professor Dr. Gregory S. Hunter, alumnae from the Palmer School's graduate program in Archives and Records Management are processing and digitizing the collection.
- At completion of the three-phase project, the **New York State Archives** will publish the digitized images and a finding aid for the collection on its website.
- The RMCP is a rare initiative under which state agencies and private entities have joined forces to bring to light a hidden collection and exemplifies how vastly different organizations are succeeding in working together to create public access to state records.

THE PUPS PARTNERS:

PRIVATE FUNDING
Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation

UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES
Long Island University (LIU)

PUBLIC RECORDS
New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYSP)

STATE ARCHIVES
New York State Archives

PARTNERSHIP BENEFITS:

- In addition to the grant, there has been some cost sharing: LIU Post provided funds for fellowships and LI Parks has supplied packing materials, additional electronics, and overhead costs for facility use.
- Using State Archives worksheets and templates saves time and helps promote consistency and application of best practices.
- Providing remote access to the collection on the State Archives website is especially important now due to COVID-19.

CHALLENGES:

- Differing digital systems and descriptive needs of various stakeholders must be accommodated. Using ArchivesSpace and its various publishing options to create the finding aid will help to meet every organization's requirements.
- Processing in a building already occupied by park staff led to some initial navigation of space and equipment-sharing difficulties.
- Due to limited Wi-Fi and internet access in state parks, the team must work offsite at LIU Post when extended online access is required.

PHASE 1: INVENTORY
(3 months)

- LI Parks leadership facilitated unprecedented access to record storage areas within the Long Island State Parks Regional Headquarters building at Belmont Lake State Park in Babylon, New York.
- A team of two LIU archivists spent three months (May-July 2019) conducting an archival inventory and identified close to 450 cubic feet of records from the Moses era.
- The team followed New York State Archives inventory procedures and used a Records Inventory Data Worksheet provided by the agency.
- They also developed a Processing Plan based on series identified during the inventory in order to hit the ground running in Phase 2.
- LI Parks workers transported the records to the Long Island Parks Regional Archives facility (located within Planting Fields Arboretum State Historic Park in Oyster Bay, New York) for processing.
- At completion of the inventory, the project team also made sure to meet with LI Parks leadership to discuss progress and implementation of Phase 2.

PHASE 2: ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION
(18 months)

- Full intellectual and physical control is being established during processing (August 2019-January 2021) as the records are arranged, described, and rehoused at the Long Island Parks Regional Archives.
- An additional archivist and graduate fellows will join the team during this phase, and the Senior Archivist will delegate project tasks based on experience and complexity.
- The archivists are following New York State Archives procedures for arrangement and description, as well as using a container list template provided by the agency.
- A finding aid will be created using ArchivesSpace in order to enable later export of PDF and encoded EAD files for website publishing.
- The archivists have created a Digitization Plan and will conduct a Digitization Pilot Program in late 2020 to continue momentum into the next phase.
- The project team maintains frequent communication with stakeholders through email, telephone, in-person meetings, and remotely via Zoom. This is essential to ensure continued cooperation and mutual understanding of goals.

PHASE 3: DIGITIZATION
(12 months)

- Three LIU archivists, plus graduate fellows, will digitize the collection between February 2021-January 2022.
- Imaging will be based on a triage system of priorities according to condition, research value, and level of demand.
- They will comply with New York State Archives best practices for digital imaging and metadata creation, and use the State Archives metadata template when recording information for digital images.
- A Portable Epson Perfection V800 scanner will be used for smaller items and an oversized Epson Expression 120000XL scanner for items measuring 8.5 x 14" and larger.
- Oversized items that are considered priority will be scanned in LIU Post's Digitization Laboratory using its DT Atom Digitization System.
- Digital images and related metadata will be stored on external hard drives and transferred in bulk to the State Archives for upload into the archives' digital content management system.
- New York State Archives will publish the digital images on its website at the end of Phase 3 to ensure the collection is made discoverable and digitally accessible to the public.

CONCLUSION:

The RMCP can be used as a template to guide organizations in bringing additional hidden collections to light. Government Archives will especially benefit from studying how varied groups have contributed what unique resources they could to further a shared objective of creating access to a large body of records that would otherwise remain inaccessible. Creating public access to these types of collections could prove crucial in providing further insight into the implications of historical issues on modern society, while also allowing for expanded governmental transparency and accountability. Therefore, while there have been small bumps along the road, the benefits and results of the alliance far outweigh any challenges faced.