
Connecting Communities and Building Collections

— Archiving a Community's
Resilience during a Pandemic —

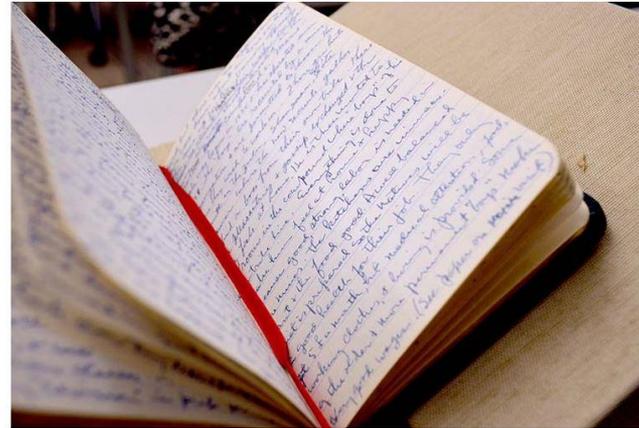
Rachel Makarowski, Carla Myers, Jacky Johnson, and Kim Hoffman
Midwest Archives Conference, 2021 Annual Meeting

Background

- Inspiration of the idea
 - Indiana University's *The Coronavirus Days: Archive Your Story* project

The Coronavirus Days: Archive Your Story

By marmello August 24th, 2020



Background



- Inspiration

- Indiana University's *The Coronavirus Days: Archive Your Story* project
- Mass Observation Archive (<http://www.massobs.org.uk/the-mass-observation-project-1981-ongoing>)

The Mass Observation Project, 1981–ongoing

The Mass Observation Project was launched in 1981, with the aim of reviving the early Mass Observation organisation idea of a national writing panel. Since it began, almost 4,500 people have volunteered to write for the Project. Many of these writers have been corresponding over several years, making the Project rich in qualitative longitudinal material.

The Mass Observation Project

There are currently around 450 volunteer participants on the Mass Observation writing Panel. These writers (often known

as “Observers”) respond to “Directives”, or open-ended questionnaire, sent to them by post or email three times a year. The Directives contain two or three broad themes which cover both very personal issues and wider political and social issues and events. Some examples of Directive themes include: [The Countryside](#) (Winter 2013); [The Big Society](#) (Spring 2012); [Age and care](#) (Summer 2011); [What makes you happy?](#) (Winter 2013). The Project collaborates with academics and non-commercial organisations across disciplines to produce Directives. Visit our [commissioning page](#) for further information on how to collaborate with us.



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- Inspiration of the idea
- Reasoning for starting it at Miami
 - Rallying point in difficult, turbulent times

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- Inspiration of the idea
- Reasoning for starting it at Miami
 - Rallying point in difficult, turbulent times
 - Emotional processing of a stressful and traumatic experience for participants
 - Future value...and current collections

A project is born!

The Documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic Project at Miami University

Communication: Publicity and Outreach

- Call for Volunteers
 - Decisions to be made:
 - Target audience
 - Types of submissions allowed
 - Necessary information to collect



Documenting the COVID-19 Pandemic

Post created: Mar 30, 2020 • by Shawn Vanness, communications specialist

Call for volunteers

Everyone's everyday life has been touched or disrupted since the first appearance of the current pandemic, COVID-19. The adjustments we make, the emotions we feel, and the actions we take will one day be the subject of historical studies.

In an effort to capture the lived experiences by members of the Miami University community, the Walter Havighurst Special Collections and University Archives invites you to keep a journal documenting your life during this pandemic. Journalists may type or write by hand, transcribe news, draw or compose memes, compose poems, gather stories and so forth. No stress needs to be placed on "good grammar", spelling, or style. The emphasis is on self-expression, candor and a willingness to be a social commentator.

Events are changing by the day. They are specific to you, and to your families and friends and communities. Please start writing now!

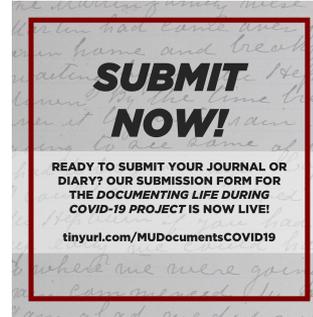
Communication: Publicity and Outreach

- Call for Volunteers
 - Decisions to be made
 - Advertising:
 - Social Media
 - Platforms
 - Instagram
 - Twitter
 - Blog for the main library

Communication: Publicity and Outreach

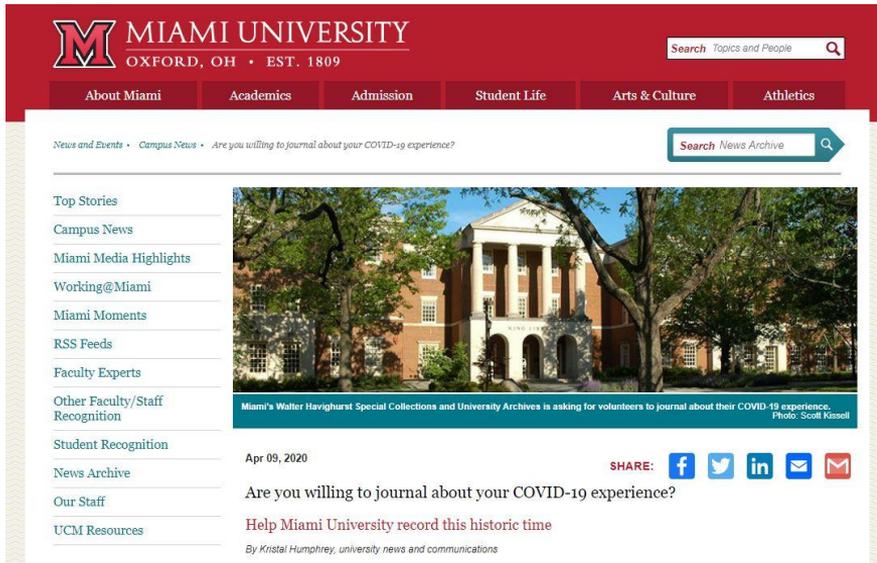
- Call for Volunteers

- Decisions to be made
- Advertising:
 - Social Media
 - Platforms
 - Creation of custom graphics



Communication: Publicity and Outreach

- Call for Volunteers
 - Decisions to be made
 - Advertising:
 - Social Media
 - Newsletter: Miami Matters



The screenshot shows the Miami University website header with the logo and navigation menu. Below the header is a search bar and a secondary search bar for the news archive. The main content area features a large image of a building and a call for volunteers to journal about their COVID-19 experience. The call includes a date of April 09, 2020, and social media sharing options.

MIAMI UNIVERSITY
OXFORD, OH • EST. 1809

Search Topics and People

About Miami Academics Admission Student Life Arts & Culture Athletics

News and Events • Campus News • Are you willing to journal about your COVID-19 experience?

Search News Archive

Top Stories
Campus News
Miami Media Highlights
Working@Miami
Miami Moments
RSS Feeds
Faculty Experts
Other Faculty/Staff Recognition
Student Recognition
News Archive
Our Staff
UCM Resources

Miami's Walter Havighurst Special Collections and University Archives is asking for volunteers to journal about their COVID-19 experience.
Photo: Scott Kissell

Apr 09, 2020

SHARE: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [e](#) [m](#)

Are you willing to journal about your COVID-19 experience?

Help Miami University record this historic time

By Kristal Humphrey, university news and communications

Communication: Publicity and Outreach

- Call for Volunteers
 - Decisions to be made
 - Advertising:
 - Social Media
 - Newsletter → Local county news

Groups working to preserve Butler County stories through pandemic journals



JOURNAL-NEWS
Butler County's Local News Now

Communication: Publicity and Outreach

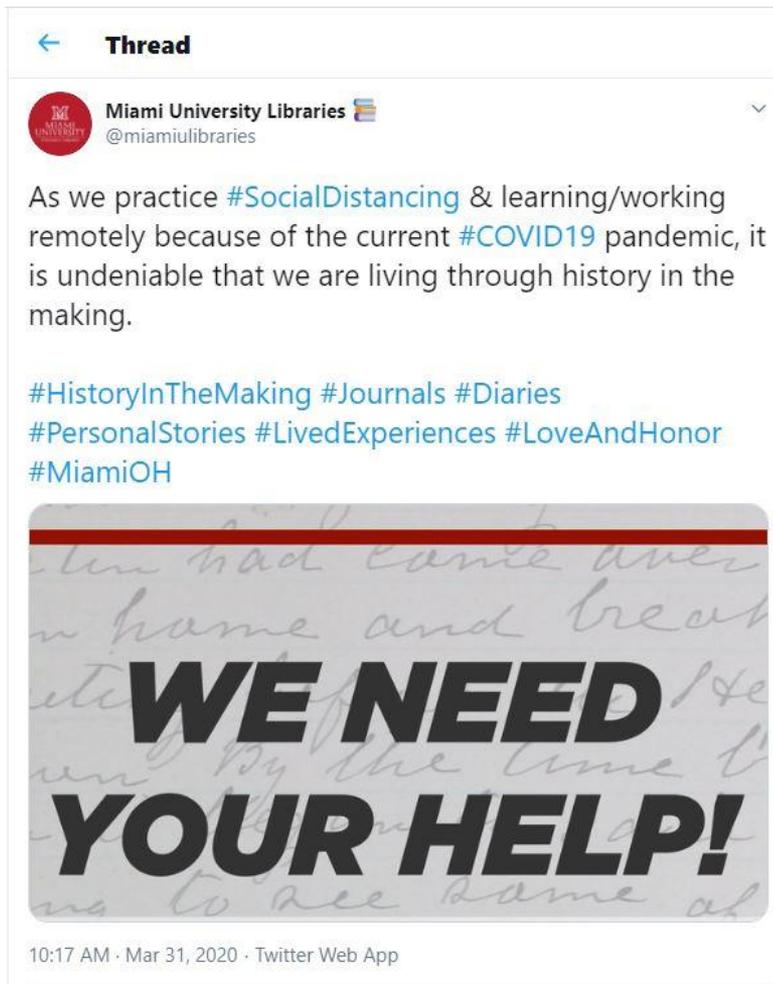
- Call for Volunteers
 - Decisions to be made
 - Advertising:
 - Social Media
 - Newsletter → Local county news
 - Power of word of mouth

Communication: Volunteers

- Emails
 - Welcome email sent to new volunteers on a rolling basis
 - Weekly → Monthly email updates
 - Slowed as time passed
 - Not as many new volunteers = not as many new questions

Communication: Volunteers

- Emails
- Social Media
 - Simple updates posted on Instagram and Twitter
 - Intended to maintain awareness of the project



Communication: Lessons Learned

- Answering questions
 - To everyone or just one person?
 - Some people will have more questions and need more hand holding

Communication: Lessons Learned

- Answering questions
- Sustainability of communication
 - Keeping communication consistent
 - Too often v. not enough

Communication: Lessons Learned

- Answering questions
- Sustainability of communication
- Multiple project leads...but one main contact
 - Benefits:
 - Centralizing the question/answer process
 - Splitting the work
 - Challenges
 - Keeping everyone on the same page
 - The main contact will get MANY emails

Legal Considerations

Copyright, Publicity, and Privacy

Legal Considerations for this Project

- Copyright

- Copyright in the works created by participants
- Copyright in third-party works they may use

- Publicity Rights

- Rights in the image/likeness that may be found in photographs included in submitted materials

- Privacy Rights

- Medical considerations especially, both other info as well

Working with our Office of General Counsel

- Initially, some reservations
 - Scope of legal considerations and workload at a very busy time
- Taking the lead!
 - How were our colleagues addressing these considerations?
 - What resources could we borrow/revise to draft an agreement?
- Drafting our agreement:
https://miamioh.formstack.com/forms/documenting_life_during_covid19_submission_form

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Highlights

- All-in-one submission form
- Thorough, but wanted to make sure our bases were covered now and later!
- Worked to keep the language as non-lawyerly as possible
- Contact info for questions

Recommendations

- Communicate early and often
- Draw upon resources from the community
- Foster a relationship with your OGC, keeping in mind you have knowledge to contribute to the conversation, as they do
- Plan for any eventuality, but also be flexible if those submitting have concerns with the grant of rights

Submissions & Processing

Submissions

- Diaries, Journals, Photographs
 - mostly born digital materials, but some physical
- Firsthand accounts of events
- Importance of the project goes beyond making sure there's a written record for historians to study

Surprise Submissions

- Patrons requesting to submit non book materials such as signs
- Important to “stick” to the submission requirements

Processing

- Record will be placed in ArchivesSpace
- Materials will be made available when public and private access is available according to copyright

Moving Forward

Preservation, Processing, & Future Plans

Preserving the Collection

- Digital preservation “refers to the series of managed activities necessary to ensure continued access to digital materials for as long as necessary” ([Digital Preservation Coalition](#)).

Risks to Born Digital Collections

- Physical damage to the device storing the data
- Degradation of the data itself (also known as “bit rot”)
- Archaic digital or physical formatting (“digital obsolescence”)

File Formats for Submissions

- Restricted acceptable file formats for entries
- Format matters: choose standard, widely adopted file formats

What format of materials will you be submitting? (Select all that apply.)*

- Handwritten text
- Photographs (Highest resolution available; TFF or JPEG2K preferred)
- Video (AVI, MOV, QT, or motion JPEG2K format preferred)
- Audio (WAV format preferred)
- Text in a born-digital format (.pdf, .docx, etc; PDF preferred)

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Life Cycle: Storage

- Submitted via Formstack, where data initially lives on Formstack servers
- Download locally to network drives to process
- Upload to long-term digital preservation repository Preservica



Life Cycle: Embargo Period

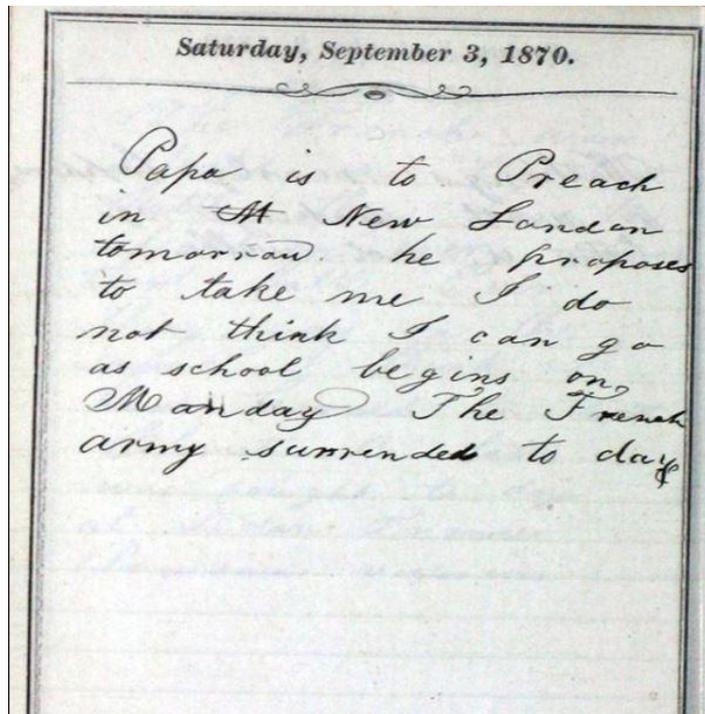
- 50 years (maximum embargo period) is a long time in digital preservation
- Hard to know what the future will hold
- Condition will determine future choices

Hopes for the Future of the Collection

- Research

Hopes for the Future of the Collection

- Research
- Outreach
 - Exhibitions
 - Social media



miamioh.spec
King Library



miamioh.spec One of the things we love most about the diaries and journals in our collections are the glimpses of everyday life that are captured in them. For instance, #OTD in 1870, Charles McGuffey Hepburn (grandson of William Holmes McGuffey) wrote the following: "Papa is to preach in New London tomorrow. He proposes to take me. I do not think I can go as school begins on Monday. The French Army surrendered today." To explore more of Charles' journal and others, check out our University Diaries and Sketchbooks Digital Collection! #TBT #Journals #Diaries #CharlesMcGuffeyHepburn #MiamiOHSpec #SpecialCollection #UniversityArchives



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SEPTEMBER 3

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Post

Hopes for the Future of the Collection

- Research
- Outreach
- Instruction



Questions?

Thank you!