

FACT SHEET

Digitizing Historical Resources

BACKGROUND

The documentary heritage of Massachusetts is essentially intact from its founding, and much rich information and documentation exists. Throughout the Commonwealth, repositories house irreplaceable collections of books, as well as private and public documents, which serve as a rich resource for researchers involved in local, state, regional, national, and international studies. Library staffs in public and academic libraries and in other repositories have long collected materials that document their immediate and adjoining locales as well as focusing on specific collecting areas. Although much of this material is monographs and pamphlets, a significant portion is manuscript material (personal and organizational papers), photographs, posters, ticket stubs, broadsides, etc. Many of these collections are physically sound and have been organized with a finding aid but need greater accessibility for patron use.

Through this digital imaging program, Massachusetts' libraries will have support to participate with a growing number of libraries in making our national memory available to all. Although final standards for the digitization of such materials do not yet exist, guidelines and "best practices" have been evolving through numerous projects. Any digitization project funded through this LSTA program will be expected to follow these guidelines and/or "best practices", and any standards, including metadata standards, which have been developed throughout the project and beyond. The institution must also commit to maintaining the digital files and making them available to researchers for the foreseeable future. By creating digital images of these resources and by making them available on the Internet, libraries will be providing access to them for research from anywhere in the world. Moreover, the original documents can then be preserved and stored in secure, climate-controlled storage for those who actually need access to them in person for their research. Note that this Targeted Program is not to be considered a preservation program. Digitization is currently designated only as an access tool.

The library will be responsible for providing a current finding aid for the manuscript and/or archival collection(s) based on current practices as recommended by the Society of American Archivists. Samples will need to be submitted with the grant application. The original document(s) must have undergone appropriate conservation measures, be processed and cataloged prior to digitization, and be stored under appropriate conditions (both environmental and physical.) Digitized documents must be available on the Internet, and, once available, the URL must be included in the catalog record for the document.

The completion of a preservation survey and a library preservation long range plan is required to be eligible for this program. Eligible costs include: proper care and handling of original documents to prepare them for scanning; the costs of scanning and image and metadata creation; the cost of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) work to create searchable text; and the costs associated with mounting these files on a web site. This program does not fund the purchase of equipment, the deployment of staff to digitize documents or images, or conservation activities. Rather it is assumed that these services will be purchased. Creation of a web site will not be funded. At the same time, this program is not intended to disqualify potential applicants who have created their own scanning lab to digitize their own collections, have dedicated staff to do the scanning, create the appropriate metadata for the scanned images, and mount these images on the Internet. If an institution has such a program in place, the staff should contact Gregor Trinkaus-Randall at (800) 952-7403 x 236 or at gregor.trinkaus.randall@state.ma.us to discuss the possible project and its eligibility. The library holding the documents will be responsible for mounting and maintaining all related files on the Internet. Digitized items and/or collections must be listed in the MBLC's online Special Collections Directory available through MBLC's web site, and be available to be

harvested by the Digital Commonwealth Project for access by researchers. Hyperlinks will be provided directly to the image and/or text files.

MASSACHUSETTS LONG-RANGE PLAN GOAL

Goal 1: Massachusetts residents, no matter where they live, will find and obtain the resources they need using an improved technological infrastructure that links all types of libraries and provides and coordinates shared electronic resources. Residents will have access to digitized images of unique and valuable resources, improved access tools, and properly preserved physical and electronic materials.

PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Any library or cooperating group that meets standard eligibility requirements for Direct Grant programs is eligible to apply. A cooperating group may apply on behalf of one or more of its members. To apply for funds, a library or cooperating group must:

- Provide at least one fifth of the total project costs to achieve the required 4 to 1 ratio of federal to local funds.

PRIORITIES AND FUNDING

Under this program, priority will be given to materials of local, state, regional, or national importance that contribute to an understanding of our historic and cultural heritage. Preference will be given to collections in the following order and subject areas: 1) collections documenting significant Massachusetts historical, geographical, cultural, economic, and natural developments and/or collections with direct application and relevance to Massachusetts; 2) unique collections representing resources unavailable in any other repository; and 3) collections located in Massachusetts repositories that provide a unique and/or cohesive resource, independent of subject area. Libraries will be awarded grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$30,000.

INTERESTED?

Applicants must submit a **Letter of Intent** form with the “Digitizing Historical Resources” option checked off under **TYPE**. If you need more information about this program, please call Gregor Trinkaus-Randall at the MBLC, 800-952-7403 x 236 or e-mail him at **gregor.trinkaus-randall@state.ma.us**.