

Project Justification

Who we are

The Scott County Library System (SCLS) serves the rural areas and towns of Scott County, Iowa, which is located on the western edge of the Mississippi River. Our service area is part of the greater Quad Cities, which includes the larger metropolitan areas of Davenport and Bettendorf in Iowa and Moline, Rock Island and East Moline in Illinois. SCLS has been part of many Quad City Area initiatives and bi-state initiatives, including the RiverShare Library consortium, which has been sharing a library catalog and other resources for more than 30 years under various names. The library system has six branch locations in towns with populations of less than 7,000 people and runs a traveling bookmobile, which has stops throughout the county. The total service area of the library is about 35,000 people. With an annual budget of about one million dollars, the library system provides quality, state accredited services to underserved rural areas and is one of a handful of county systems in the state of Iowa. The Scott County seat is Davenport, which is the third largest city in Iowa, however, the Scott County Library serves the communities outside the metropolitan area. As a member of the nine library RiverShare consortium for several decades, SCLS has a proven commitment to cooperation and collaboration with other cultural heritage institutions.

Our Local History Expertise

The library is transforming from a book warehouse to a community organization in many ways through programming, redesigned spaces, and different types of collections. For the last several years SCLS has committed to preserving, interpreting and providing access to unique collections and items relating to rural Scott County history. In fact, in the last decade the Scott County Library System has undertaken five successful local history digitization projects with no budget line using part-time staff and volunteers. Thanks to the library's commitment to local history, and the leadership of librarian, Christine Barth, anyone with an Internet connection can now access and search: the full run of the North Scott Press (an award winning local newspaper), the North Scott High School yearbooks, the rural Scott County Cemetery records, an archive of Scott County Library historical photos, and the fine arts publication for the high school. Barth researched best practices for scanning and archival storage, and was able to implement high quality projects by collaborating with local organizations. In her previous career she covered the Quad Cities for the *Quad City Times* daily newspaper and the local NBC television affiliate, giving her a familiarity with the area and its concerns.

Currently, Barth is working on writing a comprehensive history of the library system for the 70th anniversary in 2020. This grant's timing works well with the celebrations and publications planned for that event, bringing together many people with memories of the branch libraries and surrounding communities.

Each local history project mentioned above was supported by community organizations, volunteers, and the drive of SCLS staff to meet increasing patron demands for preservation and access to the history of their own communities. In the case of the microfilming and digitization of the North Scott Press, the library managed a \$9,500 state grant that required matching funds. The matching funds were secured from other community organizations, including the Quad City Community Foundation, which supports the "[Quad City area's] vision of becoming even more cool, creative, connected, and prosperous." The library is an integral part of making a creative, connected community and believes collecting, preserving, and interpreting unique local history items is one way to do that.

The Need

Librarians at SCLS have noticed a steady increase in demand for unique local information, but often receive comments about the lack of information on some of the smaller towns or the information not found in town histories last written in the 1970s and 1980s. Dozens have told the library of collections stored in attics, basements, and city halls that would be treasure troves for those studying the local area and rural America in general. Local officials and individuals often lack the time, equipment and expertise to document and digitize these collections. In many cases, the library has been asked to spearhead digitization and the recording of Scott County history. For years, library staff have wanted to have the equipment and the time to scan photographs, manuscripts, city records, maps and the other items local people have. As people instrumental in town growth, county politics, and the evolution of the family farm talk to librarians in their daily routine, the idea for a rural local history project surfaced. The library has staff with experience and expertise, but due to its small size, almost all staff are part-time. Without additional funds to hire a project manager and purchase needed equipment, the library does not have the capacity to undertake the projects that patrons have been demanding. The library's urge to become a trusted cultural heritage institution and a "go-to" place for local history would be furthered by this grant.

When librarians Christine Barth and Sarah Carlin participated in the Iowa Librarians Explore Apply and Discover (ILEAD), a regional series of project management and leadership development workshops sponsored by IMLS' 21st Century Librarian program, in 2013, they learned about the Poweshiek History Preservation Project. A team of academic and public librarians in another Iowa county sought to utilize librarian skills to create a crowdsourced digital collection for county history. Since then, Barth and Carlin have been looking for a way to implement a similar project in Scott County, but due to lack of staff and funding, they were unable to implement the project with the standards desired. Using Poweshiek and the nationally recognized DC Memory Lab as models for inspiration, this grant would combine library staff's experience on digital projects and metadata with the rich historical knowledge of local cultural heritage centers to gather the collections and personal memories of the people who live, work and make an impact in the community.

Meeting the demand for unique local information

This grant will strengthen the library's ability to meet the growing demand for community information and ensure that the Scott County Library System remains a leader in the creation, collection and preservation of community memory.

The rural and small town perspective is vital to Iowa's history and the history of the United States. Located squarely in the heartland of America, Scott County was one of the first areas in what is now the state of Iowa to be settled. Beginning with Native Americans living off the land and pioneers carving out an existence, the farms and county towns of Scott County reveal the heartbeat of history. From the Blackhawk Indian War to Civil War Prisoner of War camps, from the Sanitation Commission (an early seed for the Red Cross) to the industrial revolution, from mobilization for global wars to the farm crisis of the 1980s, from first in the nation caucuses to the Tea Party movement, from the brain drain of Iowa to Main Street revitalization, rural residents of this county have impacted local, state and national events.

On a regular basis, the Scott County library receives questions regarding photos and articles for homecoming and class reunions, historical property information and liens, historical business advertisements and the

evolution of town businesses, how international and global events impacted local farmers and towns, specifics on town milestones and prominent individuals in the county, and more. Local towns in the library service area are especially proud of their heritage, perseverance and the way they compete and even outshine larger metropolitan areas in the state. The library wants to become a space where community memory is recorded, preserved, and passed on.

The families, churches, businesses and community organizations have vital stories to tell and through the Scott County Community Memory project, the library will ensure that these stories reach a wide audience and endure for decades to come.

Project Work Plan

Hiring of project manager

The biggest obstacle to implementing a wide reaching rural Scott County history project is time. The project manager, hired for an average of six hours a week for ninety weeks during the grant term, will oversee scanning days, promote the project, liaise with individuals and organizations in the community, and develop a digital collection for materials entrusted to the library. The project manager will also develop agreement forms, procedures, plans and staff training for activities such as conducting oral histories, scanning multiple types of materials and implementing scanning workshops so that the library will increase its capacity to undertake similar projects in the future. The library will hire at a competitive rate, based on a salary survey within Scott County, and emphasize the wealth of library and history experience to be gained in order to ensure a quality individual is hired. With flexible work hours, an internal candidate who has already worked on library local history projects may even wish to apply. Librarians Christine Barth and Sarah Carlin will support the project manager. Barth has experience with local history projects and Carlin has expertise in programming for teens and adults and was instrumental in creating a twenty percent increase in program attendance last year. With more than ten years of experience in planning, promoting and implementing programs in the library, Carlin has worked with local artists, travelers, and filmmakers to present successful programs in the library. This experience will guide her and the project manager in planning events for the grant project. Both Scott County librarians are committed to working on the grant project and learning from the experience so that future projects will benefit. This staff time will be an in-kind contribution to the grant costs.

Securing equipment

The second large obstacle to implementing a project like this is equipment. The Scott County Library has investigated and priced equipment that would allow for the scanning of bound volumes, slides, documents of varying sizes, and photographs as well as the conversion of audio and video cassettes. Laptop computers will allow some of the equipment to be mobile so that events can be held throughout the county as well as at each branch library. Flash drives will allow users to donate digital items to the library for the digital collection. Previously, the library has used office copiers for scanning work, which are neither accessible to the public nor mobile and do not allow for a variety of sizes or formats. A digital recorder will also be purchased to aid in the collection of oral histories.

Scanning days

With the grant, the project manager will host several scanning days in the library's six branch communities and at other locations such as senior living facilities, the American Legion, and local churches. These days would be heavily advertised to regular library users and to specific segments in each community identified by the project manager. Part of the grant's budget is to pay for advertising costs in traditional and emerging media to promote the programs and digital collection that occur because of the grant. The library has a good relationship with local newspapers and TV stations and should be able to get free news coverage of scanning events. The call would be for individuals and organizations to bring a variety of materials relating to the history of Scott County to which they hold the reproduction rights. These would include photographs, organizational records, photo albums, unpublished manuscripts, slides, newsletters, videos, oral histories on cassette, and more. On a scanning day, people can use the equipment to digitize their information and save it to their own computers or drives. They will be able to fill out a form to give the library rights to display the digital content if they wish, or even to donate physical items to an appropriate local institution. Individuals may also be able to schedule time with the equipment outside of scanning days. The Scott County bookmobile associate Cathy Zimmerman, current vice-president of the Association of Bookmobile and Outreach Services (ABOS), has already incorporated talks about the history of the library system into her regular programming route. Zimmerman would be able to work with the project manager to promote scanning days and even bring some of the equipment on the bookmobile route. As a sign of commitment to the project, the library will absorb travel costs, including the use of library owned vehicles, to transport staff and equipment to scanning days throughout the county.

Participants in scanning days can choose to fill out deeds of gift and digital release forms to allow the library to disseminate the information, including as part of the digital collection.

Other programs

To introduce the project to the public, the library would host a kickoff program in fall 2019. The program would include a brief explanation of the Scott County Community Memory Project, detailing what type of items and information we are seeking. Calendars with dates of scheduled scanning days and staff contact information would be distributed. The program would also include a hired speaker to present the history of rural Scott County and help identify what types of stories and items would be helpful in sharing the history.

A second program would be planned towards the end of the grant period in 2020. This would be a celebration in which we introduce the public to the materials uploaded and donated to us as a result of the Community Memory Project. All contributors and partners would be invited as well as the general public. Librarians or a special speaker will present various parts of the collection. Refreshments would be served. Promotional materials such as printed bookmarks would be distributed to attendees to encourage ongoing use of the collection. SCLS is planning events in correlation with the 70th anniversary of the system and these programs would tie in perfectly with those efforts.

Working together

With a mobile scanning lab, other trusted organizations could also partake in the project. The supervisor of Davenport's Richardson-Sloane Special Collections, Kathryn Kuntz, lends her full support to this project. She has also seen the need for outreach events to collect Scott County history, but lacks the equipment to do so. Kuntz plans to host scanning days in Davenport (Iowa's third largest city and the county seat) supported by the equipment from this grant. The Scott County Iowa Genealogical Society (SCIGS) can help the library identify major players in various communities who may be interested in sharing material or in giving an oral history. In fact, the library already has a list of people to contact in the event the grant is approved. The list includes former journalists, retired library staff, community nonprofit leaders and more. The SCIGS president, Chris Iossi, mentioned that a digital collection would aid in the research for a new Scott County history book in the future. The Scott County Library System hopes this grant will enable connections between cultural heritage institutions to grow so that Scott County can be a leader in the state and region on cooperative local history projects.

Digital collection

With items the library has been given the right to share, the project manager will collect and create metadata using Dublin Core and upload them to a digital collection on archive.org. This nonprofit, national site, which has been around for decades, also hosts other library driven digital collections including the North Scott High school yearbooks and fine arts publications, and photographs of library history. The search capabilities and ease of use are very good, as evidenced by steadily increasing usage statistics, and thousands of hits a month, for the collections the library maintains. Use is unrestricted to anyone with an internet connection and documents undergo optical character recognition (OCR), which enables users to search within documents. The Scott County History collection would be a great addition to the body of local knowledge and would address the need explained in the project justification section of this narrative. Using this platform, it would be possible to give other organizations permission to add to the collection in the future.

Risk and reward

Hiring for the project manager position is important to get right. The person will be responsible for meeting grant expectations and deadlines and will be the public face of the project on scanning days. The library has overseen several volunteers and interns on previous local history projects and has learned from previous experiences. To mitigate the risk of the project manager leaving or failing to complete duties, the library will provide a clear and detailed position description. The library director and project director will stress the benefits this grant experience will bring to applicants. The competitive wage for the area and flexibility in scheduling scanning days will also be a draw for applicants who may have other jobs or are working on higher level degrees. As a former grant-funded project manager, Christine Barth will provide insight into leveraging this project into a career in libraries and museums.

A smaller risk is that no one will show up for scanning days or material will not be gathered. The risk is small, because of the known need in the community for this service and the individuals that library staff already plan to contact. By working with other players in the local history scene and using the library's well-established lines of communications regarding programming, this grant should be successful. In fact, the opposite problem may occur – one of too much information. In that case, the project manager would be able to work with

Scott County Library System, headquarters Eldridge, Iowa
FY19 APP

library staff to prioritize adding to the digital collection based on appeal to the wider county and the uniqueness of the items. The Richardson-Sloane Special Collections Center in Davenport has agreed to take donations of physical material and help with this process as well.

The Poweshiek County Historical Preservation Project has much material online, including forms used in their scanning days. In addition, Scott County librarians have met in the past with staff from that project to learn from their mistakes. One of these was lack of advertising about the scanning days. Part of this grant is to fund specific program advertising costs so that Scott County can make it a priority to get the word out about scanning days. The IMLS funded DC Memory Lab is the other model Scott County is using and they have extensive public information, including presentations about how libraries can scale the DC Memory Lab to their own community. This knowledge of libraries who have previously tried similar projects has enabled the Scott County Library to shape its own vision of how the project should look.

Project Outcome

The completion of the grant will see the following outcomes: well-attended scanning day events in multiple communities and locations, a digital collection of at least 50 unique items relating to Scott County History, and the collection of oral histories or written memories from key community members. This will fill the need for a more comprehensive history preservation effort that so many people from so many different towns in Scott County have requested. It will also provide a basis for future work either by the Scott County Library or partner organizations.

The library plans to keep data on program attendance, items scanned for personal storage, digital and physical items entrusted to the library, advertising reach, and digital collection use. Given the strong interest in current historical programming at the library, dozens are expected at each event along with hundreds of hits a month on the digital collection. Last year, the library saw a 20 percent increase in program attendance, with more than 21,000 people of all ages reached. That number is on track to be surpassed in FY19. The Scott County Library's Director, Tricia Kane, is committed to this project and will allow staff to use time and resources to promote the events, design advertising, answer reference questions and help at events.

The library has a recently updated special collections development policy (approved 2018), which allows for the protection of physical and digital collections and their continued maintenance by library staff. The equipment will be well cared for and should last for many years so that further events can occur and different projects can help the library engage with the community and its history. The library plans to continue scanning days by appointment after the grant period and will train several staff members on equipment. The project manager will develop a framework for continuing the digital collection and oral history interviews as well. Through this project, the library's profile will increase in the community and many people will understand that the library is a trusted place and driving force in the local history scene. The connections made possible with a dedicated project manager will reap benefits for years to come and may inspire other cooperative projects. With every successful project, the library increases its capacity to take on the next big project due to increased staff knowledge, better equipment and more institutional experience.

First year of FY19-APP

Task	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	July	Aug.
Hire project manager	■	■										
Host local history kickoff program		■										
Scanning day events			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Conduct oral history interviews			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Establish digital collection				■								
Add material to digital collection					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

Second year of FY19-APP

Task	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	July	Aug.
Scanning day events	[Blue bar spanning Sept. to July]											
Conduct oral history interviews	[Blue bar spanning Sept. to July]											
Add material to digital collection	[Blue bar spanning Sept. to July]											
Grant conclusion celebration												[Blue bar in Aug.]