

**NHPRC Award No: RB-50059-09**

“Coming to the Surface: Revealing Hidden Collections in Michigan’s Copper Country”  
Michigan Technological University  
Erik Nordberg, Project Director

**Interim Narrative Report for January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011**

July 29, 2011

Objectives

This project is designed to complete collection-level MARC cataloging of 900 manuscript collections in the Michigan Tech Archives. Project funds will support two new staff and the purchase of Proficio, a specialized collection management software program created for archives and museums. Descriptions of each of the Archives’ 900 manuscript collections will be created in the new system, with information shared to Michigan Tech’s Van Pelt and Opie Library catalog and to WorldCat, a national bibliographic utility. In addition to the descriptive cataloging, the project will include a box-level survey of the collections, a brief preservation planning report, and a cataloging planning report.

Our request for a no-cost extension to October 31, 2011, was accepted by NHPRC. The project was proceeding at a productive pace, but it was becoming evident that the three-month delay in the initial hire of the project cataloging archivist was going to challenge the project team to meet all of the deliverables in the project before the original June 30, 2011 end date.

During this reporting period, January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011, the project schedule included ongoing cataloging activity and some preparation for closing the project by October 31, 2011.

Summary of project activities, January 1, 2011 – June 30, 2011

The project cataloging archivist continued to input data to the collection management system. This work drew upon data gathered by the graduate student survey, donor case files, an extant accessions database, existing indexes and finding aids, and interaction with Archives’ staff about specific collections. As of the end of June 711 collection-level records had been created in Proficio. Work included creation of 2,800 authority records and 1,902 accession records.

Project staff noted a surprisingly large number of collections from organizations and businesses (particularly mining corporations) for which we held multiple discrete accessions, often from unconnected donors. In some cases, provenance dictated maintaining the separation of some materials, but in many cases our project team decided to combine related (but previously separate) accessions into single collections under a single collection number and title. From a strictly numeric perspective, this will reduce the total *number of collections* in our final tally – although the project will still complete collection-level records for all of the manuscript material originally defined in our project scope.

The project cataloging archivist and other project team members continue to maintain regular contact with the MTU catalog librarian to clarify process and parameters necessary to output data to MARC format to WorldCat and also into the library's Voyager OPAC. As of June 30, there were 600 records added to these bibliographic utilities. This keeps the project very much on track for completion by the extended end date of October 31, 2011.

## Promotion

Project activities and information has been shared through updates to the Michigan Tech Archives blog site. Web-based collection registers of completed records are updated periodically (<http://blogs.mtu.edu/archives/nhprc-cataloging-project/collection-registers/>). Researchers have indicated increased use of "search this blog" feature on these pages to locate specific key words and collections.

With a larger percentage of our collections described through Proficio and MARC records, Archives' staff have made use of these tools at our service point to assist patrons. We recommend that patrons use the "advanced search" feature of our library catalog (<http://ils.lib.mtu.edu/vwebv/searchAdvanced>) to search key words, personal names, corporations, etc. This catalog system allows researchers to set the "type" option to read "mixed material/collection" to limit searches to the new catalog records for our manuscript collections. In addition, the project cataloging archivist has created a special list in the WorldCat catalog maintained by OCLC for our collection descriptions (<http://www.worldcat.org/profiles/earussel/lists/1246366>).

In April, Assistant archivist Julie Blair and project cataloging archivist Beth Russell, presented a session entitled "Kicking and Screaming Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Transforming Legacy Data" at the Society of Indiana Archivists annual meeting. Information about the session, including a link to the full set of slides, is posted to the Michigan Tech Archives blog (<http://tinyurl.com/MTUSIA>). Although none of the costs associated with this workshop were paid from the NHPRC grant, this activity will draw attention to the project and to the important support received from the Commission.

## Accomplishments and Impact

Goals for the fourth six-month segment of this project have been met. Cataloging processes and workflows have been tweaked and updated, collection-level descriptions were generated in the new software, and MARC records continue to be exported to WorldCat and Library's Voyager OPAC.

Quantitative figures as of June 30, 2011, include:

- 1,052 discrete accessions recorded during box-level preservation survey
- 711 collection-level records in Proficio
- 1,902 accession records
- 2,800 authority records
- 600 MARC records in WorldCat and Library's Voyager OPAC

There has been clear and significant use of the online content. Patrons regularly arrive at the Archives reading room with print-outs from the library catalog or our collections registers. We are also receiving increased e-mail traffic requesting further details of specific collections – collections which they have discovered via these new web-based tools.

## Other Comments

As reported in previous interim reports, our institution has committed to a change in collection management software from Proficio to Archivists' Toolkit. Although Proficio presents some functionality as a general archival collection management tool, deficiencies in MARC and EAD output preclude its long-term viability for the Michigan Tech Archives.

The NHPRC-funded collection-level descriptive work in the current project has provided a firm foundation from which staff can add detailed folder-level descriptions of the manuscript collections. Several initiatives have begun to move the department to the Archivists' Toolkit platform, the ability to export EAD-compliant finding aids, and to begin this type of detailed work. These activities reflect our institution's commitment to ongoing improvement in the description of our collections.

The Michigan Tech Archives was very pleased to receive word of a separate grant through the NHPRC "detailed" program which will arrange, describe, and create EAD-compliant finding aids for more than 90 of our premier collections. This new project will begin in January 2012 and continue through December 2013.

Funding support from NHPRC for these projects is transforming the ways in which our institution manages, describes, and shares information about our manuscript holdings.