Local History in Context

Developing a Public Library Curators' Cohort

GALILEO Annual Conference | June 17, 2021

ABOUT GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Georgia Public Library Service empowers libraries to improve the lives of all Georgians.

We provide scalable library technology and services; staff training, consulting, and best practices; grant administration and more to create equity in library experience for patrons, no matter where they live.

Georgia Public Library Service is the state library administrative agency and a unit of the Board of Regents, University System of Georgia.

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Curators' Cohort

Laureen Alford, Genealogy Librarian, Dougherty County Library, Albany, GA

Muriel Jackson, Head of the Genealogical & Historical Room, Middle Georgia Regional Library System, Macon, GA

Evan Leavitt, Manager of Facilities Operations & Planning, Georgia College (in partnership with the Twin Lakes Libraries), Milledgeville, GA

Advisory Team

Danilo Baylen, Professor of Instructional Technology, Media, and Design, University of West Georgia

Caroline Corbitt, Exhibitions Graphic Designer, Emory University R.W. Woodruff Library

Dustin Landrum, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Georgia Public Library Service

Gayle Schechter, Program Associate, Digital Library Federation (and former Digital Exhibits Coordinator at the Atlanta University Center's R.W. Woodruff Library)

John Wright, Special Collections Librarian, Fulton County Library System

Overview

Project background, goals, and proof-of-concept

The Big Picture

- State library-managed instance of Omeka S with multiple sub-sites

- Three pilot sites (originally four)

- Training sessions led by GPLS and Omeka

- Workshop sessions with Advisory Team

- October - June timeline

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

What Gap is this Project Filling?

Digitization projects were going gangbusters! BUT...

Many public libraries were looking for a platform where they could provide **additional context and information about the histories of their communities**, including narrative text, timelines, then-and-now photos, community scrapbooks, and other forms of digital engagement.

Where are we now?

Date	Task	People
August 10-August 31, 2020	Application window open	Angela
August 31-September 4	Advisory committee meets	Digital Exhibits Advisory Team
September 7, 2020	Site selections announced	Angela
September 21, 2020	Cohort work begins	Angela & library cohort
Late September	Digital exhibits virtual training	Angela, Advisory Team, & library cohort
Mid-October	Omeka virtual training	Angela, Advisory Team, library cohort, GMU Omeka team
October	Omeka S instance installed; DLG items loaded	Angela & GMU Omeka team
December 1, 2020	Draft exhibits plans and content selection due	Angela, Advisory Team, & library cohort
February 15, 2021	Midterm check-in; draft interpretive content due. Review and feedback with Advisory Team.	Angela, library cohort, Advisory Team
April 15, 2021	Draft of full exhibit due. Review and feedback with Omeka team.	Angela, Advisory Team, library cohort, GMU Omeka team
June 1, 2021	Deadline for final exhibits go-live	Angela & library cohort
June 5, 2021	PR	Angela, Deborah, Roy
June 15, 2021	Participant evaluations	Angela, library cohort, advisory committee

The Exhibits!

Albany, Georgia's Courthouses

https://georgialibraries.omeka.net/s/albanycourthouses-history/page/home

Ballard Normal: Student Life in the 1930s

https://georgialibraries.omeka.net/s/macon-ama/page/Welcome

Central State Hospital, Milledgeville, GA: One Town's Unique Experience with Mental Health History

https://georgialibraries.omeka.net/s/central-state-hospital/page/introduction

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Advisory Team

Perspectives from the Advisory Committee

Advising the Cohort

Review of Proposals

- Understanding the Objective
- Reviewing Content
- Choosing the Projects

Initial Feedback

- Exhibit site plans - the "Big Idea"
- Training
- Proofreading & Editing

DEV Sites & Feedback

- Aesthetics
- Usability
- Vicarious Learning

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Curators Cohort

Perspectives from the curatorial team

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Curator's Perspectives (Laureen Alford, DCPL)

In a nutshell: Curate = Create + Communicate.

Steps to Curating a Digital History Collection
   1. Collect electronic Items.
   2. Organize into groups.
   3. Choose the best items to include.
   4. Share with the world

Benefits:
● Improve your own understanding of the subject.
● Make visitors aware of the subject matter--maybe for the first time.

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Lessons Learned (Laureen Alford, DCPL)

- Remember, visitors are new to the subject.
- Think of the viewer's questions.
- Tie exhibit content to your library's collection.
- Get help from co-workers.
- Revise--over and over again.
- Have confidence that you can do this.
- Enjoy the process.

https://georgialibraries.omeka.net/s/albanycourthouses-history/page/home

Lessons Learned (Muriel Jackson - MGRL)

- Examine your collections for possible topics.
- Narrow down the list.
- Research your topic carefully.
- Do not get too caught up in the project.
- Choose a topic to pique the interest of your viewer so that they want to learn more about your collections.

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Remember (Muriel Jackson MGRL)

- Things beyond your control
  - Changes in the software
  - Being limited to items in the DLG
- It helps to have some exposure to HTML
- To use OMEKA-S Directory of exhibits as an example do not try to emulate
- Allow enough time every week to work on exhibit
- Have fun!!

Welcome to Ballard Normal School : Student Life in the 1930s

MIDDLE GEORGIA
REGIONAL LIBRARY

Welcome

About this Project

Lewis High/Ballard Normal (1888-1942) Part 1

Lewis High/ Ballard Normal (1888-1942) Part 2

Parents

Academics

Student Life in the 1930's ▾

Sports ▾

Closure of Ballard Normal School

After Ballard Normal School

Macon African American High Schools, 1949-1970

References

Credits

Browse Items

Welcome, this exhibit explores life for African American students at a private school in 1930s Macon, Georgia. We hope this exhibit will pique your interest in local history and make you want to explore more using the Digital Library of Georgia, your local library, archives and historical societies.

In 1770, the colony of Georgia passed a law that prohibited teaching enslave African Americas. Eventually cities would follow suite with their own ordinances. Even with these decrees, Savannah is known to have had clandestine schools that taught African Americans, both free and enslaved, and were considered an open secret. It is not known if there were any organized efforts to teach African Americans in Macon prior to the Civil War.

An integral part of African American education in Macon and Georgia, Lewis High/Ballard Normal existed from 1866 to 1942. A constant topic of research projects, most of the research focuses on the school's connection to the American Missionary Association (AMA).

This exhibit examines a seldom researched segment of the African American school: student life. We will examine the programs and activities that Ballard Normal School principal Mr. Raymond G. Von Tobel put in place starting in the 1920s and continued until the school closed in 1942.
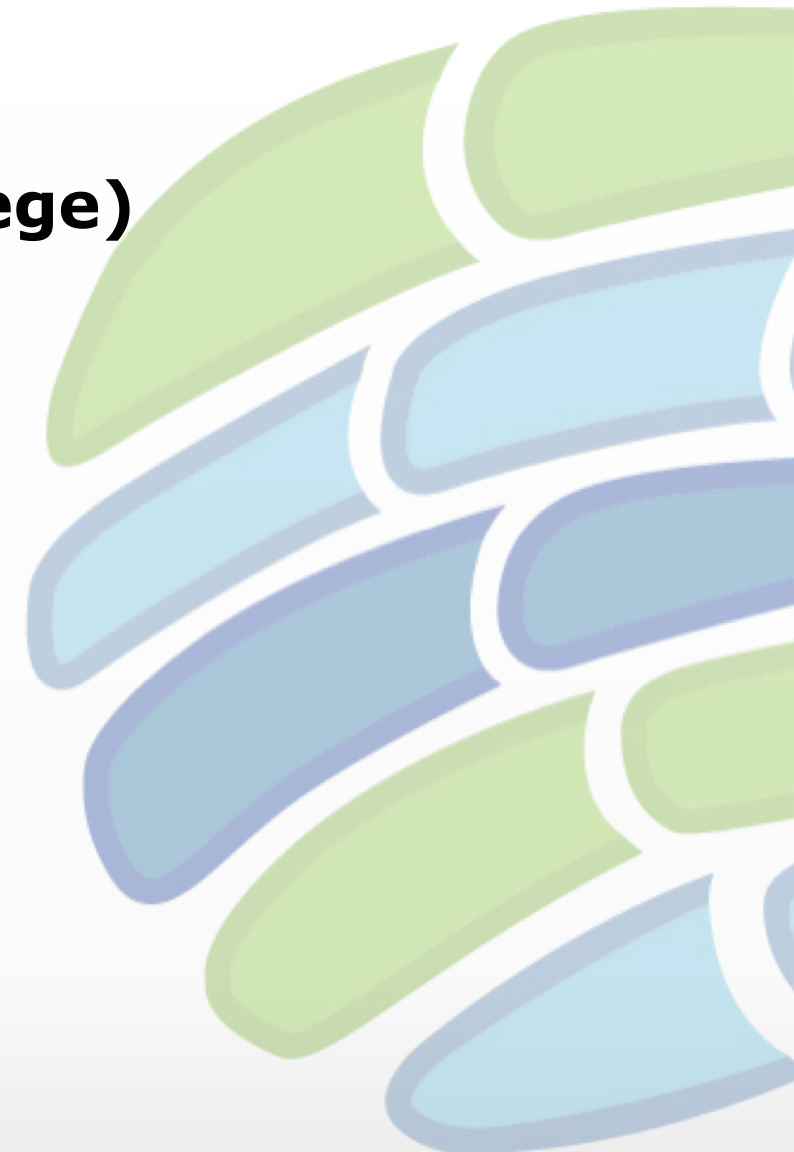
Next

Lessons Learned (Evan Leavitt-Georgia College)

- The nuts and bolts of digital exhibit curation
- Know your audiences
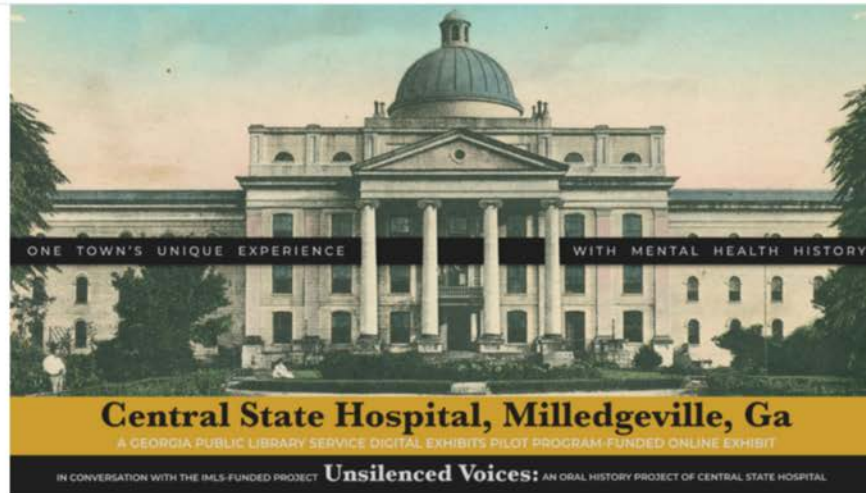- How to physically structure a digital exhibit
- Accessibility
- Plug-ins!

Main Takeaways

- The importance of multiple perspectives
- An additional skill set and arsenal of tools

CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL, MILLEDGEVILLE, GA

Introduction   The Hospital's Formation   Brief History of Mental Health   Early Nursing Training   African American Nurses   School of Nursing   Resources

ONE TOWN'S UNIQUE EXPERIENCE — WITH MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY

Central State Hospital, Milledgeville, Ga
A GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE DIGITAL EXHIBITS PILOT PROGRAM-FUNDED ONLINE EXHIBIT
IN CONVERSATION WITH THE IMLS-FUNDED PROJECT **Unsilenced Voices:** AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL

Introduction

In December 1842, the Georgia State Lunatic, Idiot, and Epileptic Asylum opened its doors, becoming the State of Georgia's first psychiatric hospital. Over its 178-year history, the institution has changed names numerous times, also operating as the Georgia State Sanitarium, Milledgeville State Hospital, and Central State Hospital. By the 1960s, the hospital had grown to include 200 buildings encompassed on a 1750-acre campus, serving 12,000 patients, making the institution the largest mental hospital in the world. This impressive designation took place in a small rural town in Middle Georgia, which only had a population of 11,117 in 1960. Regardless of the lens used to view the history of mental health treatment in the United States, the institution located in Milledgeville, Georgia serves as a paradigm of the country's checkered past in the treatment of people living with mental illness.

Moving Forward

What's next for the DigEx Program @ GPLS

What next?

- New cohort applications have opened and are due by August 31st: bit.ly/GPLSDigEx
  - Applications include an anticipated time commitment to participate in the cohort.
  - Advisory Committee applications will open soon.
- Curriculum changes:
  - Closer review of existing digital exhibits from other institutions.
  - Addition of a dedicated rights training session.
  - Creation of a GPLS exhibits style guide.
- Will be creating a centralized documentation page.

Resources

DigEx Program Information

bit.ly/GPLSDigEx

Omeka

omeka.org

Knight Labs JuxtaposeJS

juxtapose.knightlab.com

Digital Library of Georgia

[dlg.usg.edu](dlg.usg.edu)

UGA's Wilson Center Digital Humanities Lab

www.libs.uga.edu/digi

Knight Labs StoryMapJS

storymap.knightlab.com

Connect With Us

Laureen Alford, lalford@docolib.org

Danilo Baylen, dbaylen@westga.edu

Caroline Corbitt, carolinevcorbitt@gmail.com

Muriel Jackson, jacksonm@bibblib.org

Evan Leavitt, evan.leavitt@gcsu.edu

Gayle Schechter, gschechter@clir.org

Angela Stanley, astanley@georgialibraries.org

GEORGIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE

Questions?