Abstract

Originally a partnership of three institutions – Orange County Library System, Orange County Regional History Center and the University of Central Florida Libraries, **Central Florida Memory** (CFM) began in 2002. During the pilot phase, the partners digitized over 2,000 images covering the period 1880-1930. A website was designed containing stories to engage learners, sample lesson plans and metadata descriptions for researcher accessibility. This proposal seeks to build upon this successful pilot project by adding new partners and expanding CFM goals and mission.

The mission of Central Florida Memory is to create, through collaboration among museums, libraries, historical societies, and archives in Central Florida, a comprehensive digital collection, serving the needs of scholars, students, teachers, and residents. Here they will access textual and graphical images and objects that document the region's historical and cultural heritage.

In order to fulfill its mission, CFM established the following goals:

- Provide access to the rich and varied content of libraries, museums, historical societies, and archives throughout Central Florida.

- Create an extensive digital resource for scholars, students, teachers, genealogists, Central Florida residents, visitors, and the general public, promoting life long learning.

- Assist museums, historical societies, and libraries in digitizing their collections and become a forum for sharing expertise and technical knowledge.

- Offer a digital archive to those museums, historical societies, and archives unable to establish their own digital infrastructure.

- Provide an innovative digital resource for K-12 teachers and parents to bring alive the region's history into existing and new lesson plans.

- Expand, enhance, and disseminate the collaborative structure model developed during the CFM pilot phase.

- Contribute to the larger body of knowledge of Florida history via access to the CFM website through other statewide project sites.

Drawing on the collections of the participating institutions, CFM will provide a comprehensive collection of manuscripts, public records, ephemera, books, photographs, and maps documenting social, business, political, educational, cultural, and civic life. Materials from all partners will be digitized centrally. Initial descriptions for metadata will be gathered from each partner for the images from its collection. The project cataloger will create metadata entries. This will facilitate the development of a significant educational component through the inclusion of engaging lesson plans. Increased outreach to the community is an important segment of Central Florida Memory. A one-day conference will be held to share lessons learned and the structure of the collaborative model with possible future partners and other interested institutions from the community of archivists, librarians, and museum curators.

In many other areas, information about a region's history is easily accessible in one or several large, well-known repositories. In Central Florida, an area which is the focus of worldwide attention as a recognized destination for visitors, this partnership offers small repositories, both museums and libraries, a chance to collaborate in the development of a digital repository for the region. CFM offers many people an opportunity to use an open, publicly accessible resource on the diverse history of Central Florida and connects them to their community.

The anticipated outcome of this project is the building of a richer, more comprehensive resource through the addition of images, story structure, and educational components, as well as a strengthened collaborative model through the addition of partner institutions. Additionally, this project is expected to generate public awareness of CFM and of the area's history, provide a useful website and educational models, and disseminate information about CFM's collaborative model. CFM will continue its growth as new partner libraries, museums, and historical societies join.