

Internet Technician Report XII

On The Stevens County Crossroads on the Columbia Digital Archive

For June 2013

By Joseph Barreca

The State of the Archive

This is the 12th report in this series and the 32nd and last month of archiving activity. (To read previous reports, visit <http://crossroadsarchive.org/about/documents/project-progress>.) Nine months ago at the time of the previous report, we had 16,134 items posted on our archive site. We now have 23,790 items posted. Several of them are Adobe PDF documents with many pages. We expect to post another 300+ images by the end of June. This means that at the end of the extended grant period, we will have over 25,000 items in the archive. There are close to 2000 images in process from government agencies. These were given a lower priority since they are not paid curator fees. When they are posted, **we will have around 27,000 items in the archive, 20% above target.**

The archive has material from **17 collections** currently. When government collections are added, there should be 20 or more. The final voucher for \$13,319.84 to the Stevens County Historical Society will complete the \$30,000 allowance to be paid as curator fees to museums. The final amounts to Internet Technicians were paid out at the beginning of the year, so all the hours in the past 6 months spent on technical work have been volunteer hours. Total volunteer hours for the project are not currently available; suffice it to say that they are way beyond the number necessary to provide local matching contributions for the grant.

As this grant winds down, one of our goals is **merging** both the Interpretive (Wordpress) site, www.crossroadsarchive.org and the archive (Omeka) site www.crossroadsarchive.net. This has been accomplished to some extent by opening a window into the archive site through the interpretive site. A software “plugin” for the Omeka program is in the works to seamlessly integrate an Omeka archive into a Wordpress site. Along with the merge, we plan to update the current version of Omeka (1.3) to the latest version (2.0.3). This has proven harder than expected but we have a volunteer who is waiting until the grant obligations are fulfilled to have the site backed up and help us finish the upgrade.

We now use two separate **website tracking** programs to analyze activity on these sites. Google Analytics shows 209 visits to the archive site in the last 30 days vs. 150 per month at the time of the last report, a 40% increase over that period. The ratio of returning visitors, (31%) to new visitors, (69%) is virtually the same as in the last report. Our newer, on server analytics package shows vastly greater numbers, over 1,400 visits in January from 710 unique visitors with slightly lower numbers in subsequent months. By either count our user numbers are growing. Essentially, the Crossroads Archive has become a virtual museum with its own users, mostly from the United States with 60% of those from Washington State.

Current Challenges

Our **current challenges** are many but without the specific contractual agreement with the Federal Government. A laundry list looks something like this in no particular order:

- More Search Hints on the front page of the Archive
- More Exhibits

- Post the government images
- Redo the Names Adobe files
- Determine the future ownership and management of the website
- Look at ways to expand content and readership
- Add more interpretation based on the material at hand
- Get more feedback on how the website is being used
- Get more support for maintenance
- Find long-term storage for the backup drives
- Do more publicity about the site
- There are no more Preserve America funds but we need to apply the information.

Past Challenges

We have learned a lot over the past 2 ½ years. Among the issues we have had to deal with are the following, again in no particular order:

- The sheer size of the archive
- Finding the right affordable software
- How to add a name index
- How to find the right people to build the archive
- How to finish on time (or get more time)
- Appreciating volunteers
- Dealing with Omeka's quirks
- Documenting rights and permissions
- Avoiding copyrighted material

Highlights

There are many treasures in this archive. We can point out a few:

- The Exhibits are a showcase for the content and should be expanded
- The Names index is unique, above the demands of the grant and very valuable
- Having the metadata embedded in each image, media and document is unique and puts a search system on individual computers as well as copyright tracking.
- Being able to export the metadata directly into the upload .CSV files has eliminated a lot of duplicate work and reinforces content.