

NEWS RELEASE

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LSTA Grant to Fund Large-scale Digitization of Archival Civil Rights Materials

Chapel Hill—A \$150,000 grant to the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN) will allow its member libraries to digitize 40 large-scale archival and manuscript collections documenting the origins and long-term influence of the American Civil Rights movement.

Through the project “Content, Context and Capacity: A Collaborative Large Scale Digitization Project on the Long Civil Rights Movement in North Carolina,” the libraries at Duke University, North Carolina Central University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) will scan and publish approximately 400,000 manuscript pages. Materials will cover the period from the 1930s through the 1980s and include such topics as life under Jim Crow, the War on Poverty, higher education for African Americans and the rise of the New Right in the South.

The project will be based at UNC under the direction of principal investigator Laura Clark Brown, librarian in UNC’s Southern Historical Collection.

Funding is from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Service under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources. The project is expected to continue over three years, with funding renewed annually by LSTA.

Brown said that each institution selected materials to contribute with the advice of local faculty experts. She also said that each collection will be digitized in its entirety in order to provide the content and context needed for archival research.

In addition to making critical materials more widely available, said Brown, the project will provide proof of concept for a collaborative approach to large-scale digitization and will set the stage for future TRLN collaborations.

“We’re delighted that IMLS and the State Library recognized TRLN’s leadership in this area,” said Sarah Michalak, university librarian and associate provost for university libraries at UNC. “Not only does each library have truly prominent collections related to the Long Civil Rights Movement, but we have the joint expertise to carry out and share technical lessons learned with the broader library and scholarly community.”

Katherine Mellen Charron, civil rights scholar and associate professor of history at NCSU, will serve as a faculty liaison to the project’s steering committee. “This important collaboration between four universities will enhance North Carolina’s position in a global research community,” said Charron. “It will yield a more holistic awareness of the civil rights era that will benefit teachers, journalists, policy makers and the public.”

More information about the project is available on the TRLN website: www.trln.org/cc.

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