

Historian-Librarian Team Land National Archives Grant



Thursday, September 8, 2016

In the spring of 2014, Professor and Chair of History (<http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/st-johns-college-liberal-arts-and-sciences/history>) Elaine Carey (<http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/st-johns-college-liberal-arts-and-sciences/success-stories/feminist-historian-honored-contributions-latin-american>), Ph.D., added a new assignment to her section of the University Core history course, Emergence of a Global Society. In order to teach historical thinking skills regarding scale, sequence, and periodization, she asked students to write about a major historical event or theme to which they have a personal, family connection, and then present each other's work. The result was a fascinating series of student presentations on each other's family histories, including: the tale of Yehuda-Daniel Katz '18TCB's parents having to flee the former Soviet Union as scientists who contributed to the first super computers; Taylor Reeves '18CPS's story about her grandfather, an African American soldier who fought for the United States in three different wars; and Kharishma Dasrat '18TCB's story about her great-great-grandfather fighting the British during the Sepoy Rebellion.

Carey was impressed not only by the diverse histories students brought to the class, but also by their level of engagement with the project. She teamed up with Associate Professor Kathryn Shaughnessy (<http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/bio/kathryn-shaughnessy>), M.L.S., to implement inquiry-based family history curricula on a larger scale. Their project, "Family, Immigration, and History: Grade 10 Citizen Archivists in the Digital Age," empowers New York City public school teachers of grade 10 to involve students in family history projects that foster understanding of historical methods, engagement with historical resources, research proficiency, and digital literacy. The proposal received \$149,936 in grant funding (<http://archives.gov/nhprc/awards/awards-5-16.html>) from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (<http://archives.gov/nhprc/>) (NHPRC), a division of the National Archives and Records Administration (<http://archives.gov/>) (NARA).



During this three-year long project, Carey and Shaughnessy – in partnership with the Queens Memory Project (<http://queensmemory.org/>) and the New York City Department of Education (<http://schools.nyc.gov/default.htm>) (NYCDOE) – will develop curricula and resources aligned with Units 5 and 6 of the NYCDOE's Social Studies Scope and Sequence 9-12 (https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwitzpSw6f3NAhULND4KHQ8MAi8QFggiMAE&url=http%3A%2F%2Fschools.nyc.gov%2FNR%2Frdonlyres%2FA739A67E-6228-4084-99C8-F890617D265B%2F0%2Fscopeandsequence912_v6_web.pdf&v6u=ht) and fill a teaching gap between testing and the end of the school year. Carey and Shaughnessy's goal is to engage teachers and students in the research and re-use of extant, freely-available digital historical records, thus providing a model for wide-spread adoption in formal and informal educational settings.

"We want to challenge the way the history of immigration is taught," said Carey. "The current narrow approach focuses mainly on the immigrant experience from a U.S. perspective, but leaves out motivators for leaving other places, like China, the former Soviet Union, Mexico, Ecuador, India, Pakistan, and African countries. Queens is the 'world's borough,' and the New York City public schools educate students from around the world, so this was clearly the place to start."

Graduate students in the Ph.D. World History (<http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/st-johns-college-liberal-arts-and-sciences/programs-and-majors/world-history-doctor-philosophy>) and M.A. Public History (<http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/st-johns-college-liberal-arts-and-sciences/programs-and-majors/public-history-master-arts>) programs at SJU, under Carey and Shaughnessy's direct supervision, will help build digital tools and pedagogical materials for public school teachers to use in their classrooms, gaining valuable experience

with digital archive records, community archive projects, and historical pedagogy as a result. During a week-long workshop in the summer of 2017, Carey, Shaughnessy, experts in various related fields, and SJU graduate students will offer professional development and open access digital resources tutorials to the first cohort of teachers. Carey and Shaughnessy will continue to mentor these teachers throughout the school year, conducting follow-up workshops both at SJU and on-site in schools. Drawing on the resources, tools, and tutorials compiled by the grant team, teacher participants will create curricula that are easily tailored to various grade levels and institutions and are aligned with the Common Core, allowing a wide range of students and teachers to access these learning modules and resources at no cost.

As part of the curricula, students will research aspects of family history using primary resources drawn from NARA, the Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la/>), the Queens Memory Project and other open access resources. Students will then use ChronoZoom (<http://join.chronozoom.com/>), a freely-available online tool, to create interactive family history timelines. They are also encouraged to contribute digitized artifacts to the Queens Memory Project, a collective resource for recording the history of New York City's most diverse borough. "The curriculum enables students not only to do research, but to be active participants and 'citizen archivists' who contribute artifacts to digital historical resources at the local, national, and state level," said Shaughnessy.

Carey and Shaughnessy's grant proposal was one of only four other applications in NHPRC's Literacy and Engagement category that received funding, and it was the one that received the most funding. The size of the grant is unusually large for a humanities project, especially for a first application. Queens, the most diverse borough of New York City, has received little attention for archives funding, and Shaughnessy notes the student work that will come out of the curriculum project will serve as a "new crop of resource on immigrants."

"One of the elements that made this a winning grant proposal was the collaboration between an academic history department, the library, and the other community partnerships to promote global history in Queens" said Carey. "The project recontextualizes family and immigrant history within the broader scale and scope of world history."

Along with the NHPRC grant, the history department received another recognition for its strong faculty and ties with New York City public schools from the Alliance for Learning in World History (<http://www.alliance.pitt.edu/>), a collaboration of educators and history scholars to advance the global teaching and learning of world history, as one of four office centers of the Alliance, which will work through the department to lead professional development workshops.

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