



ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEASTERN RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Project Summary

“Deeply Rooted: The Agricultural & Rural History of the American South”
Fall 2013

Introduction / Overview / Background

The Association of Southeastern Research Libraries (ASERL) proposes to create its second shared digital collection, focusing on agricultural and rural history content drawn from members' collections and building on Mississippi State University's Consortium for the History of Agriculture and Rural Mississippi (CHARM) (<http://charm.msstate.edu>) digital collection. It is anticipated that nearly all ASERL libraries have content relating to the agricultural and rural history of the region and the communities where our institutions are located; this content would be welcome and valuable additions to this shared online collection.

To commemorate the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, in April 2011 ASERL launched an online portal (<http://www.american-south.org/>) to shared digital collection, containing content from the Civil War Era (defined as 1850-1865). This collection contains more than 10,000 items today from more than 30 libraries, and more than 55,000 visitors have viewed the website since the launch.

The ASERL Civil War portal harvests metadata from participating libraries into a single user search interface. This portal was developed for ASERL by the University of Georgia / Digital Library of Georgia, which has significant experience in creating successful partnerships among libraries and cultural heritage organizations. The DLG website (<http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/>) provides access to 289 collections held across the Peach State. Another DLG initiative is the Civil Rights Digital Library (<http://crdl.usg.edu/>), an online collection digitized materials aggregated from 152 libraries, museums, media outlets, and other cultural history repositories across the country.

Most recently, DLG provided the metadata from ASERL's Civil War Era content (and other DLG portals) to the Digital Public Library of America (<http://www.dp.la/>), a relatively new but groundbreaking development in providing free public access to digitized content from America's libraries and other cultural history organizations. It is anticipated that most new traffic for the ASERL Civil War collection will come from DPLA.

Project Scope & Content

As with the Civil War project, ASERL seeks to enable broad participation in the “Deeply Rooted” collection, so the content parameters for this effort are intentionally broad. This collection will contain content that describes *economic, technologic, and social factors significant to the development of agricultural practices, crops, technology, and agrarian life in the region.*

By definition, Land Grant universities have agricultural development as part of their institutional mission and are likely to be large contributors to the Deeply Rooted collection. Of particular interest at the outset is content generated at agricultural field experiment stations and other facilities that is not well documented and at risk for loss. However, any rare/special content that relates to the region's agrarian history should be considered for this collection. ASERL will also reach out the HBCU Library Alliance to invite their members' participation in this effort, and investigate other potential content

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partners, such as the National Agriculture Library (<http://www.nal.usda.gov/history-art-and-biography/history-agriculture>) and the “Land-Grant History Project” (<http://lghp.msstate.edu/>).

Content will be selected by each institution, digitized via locally-determined methods, and housed on local servers. Any rights management issues will be the responsibility of the contributing library. An ASERL-led Steering Committee will provide metadata specifications and determine a process for harvesting metadata from local servers for use by the search interface.

In order to reduce costs and to simplify discovery, metadata from the Deeply Rooted project will be normalized by librarians at Mississippi State University, who is contributing time to lead this effort. The metadata will then be provided to DPLA via a DPLA Service Hub. DPLA will serve as the primary means of discovery for this collection.

Anticipated Timeline

Fall 2013: Recruit Steering Committee Members; Identify User Experience Issues and possible re-uses of DPLA’s API and other tools; Work with ASERL members to publicize this effort and identify content for digitization/contribution.

Winter 2014: Draft Metadata Specifications; Continue to recruit partners to digitize content; Test metadata harvesting processes and user experiences.

Fall 2014: Launch “Deeply Rooted” collection. Seek an event to “piggyback” – possibly 2014 DPLAfest.

Anticipated Costs

At this point, project development activities are expected to be covered by participating libraries – see below. Mississippi State University Libraries will provide administrative support for the Steering Committee as well as dedicating .5 FTE in support of harvesting and normalizing metadata from contributing libraries. MSU staff will work with UGA and/or other DPLA Service Hubs to deliver metadata to DPLA.

ASERL members contributed to a central fund to support the initial development of the initial Civil War portal. Approximately \$16,200 remains in that fund, which will be used to defray any unanticipated out-of-pocket costs.

- Senior project managers from Mississippi State University and the University of Georgia will contribute time to leading the project’s Steering Committee to ensure timely project development.
- Librarians and archivists at ASERL libraries will contribute time to select content relevant to this collection.
- Digitization and metadata specialists at ASERL libraries will create, describe, and house the digitized content.