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Mass. Memories Road Show

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Mass. Memories Road Show

Joseph P. Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston,
in collaboration with communities across throughout Massachusetts



Summary/Abstract

The Mass. Memories Road Show is an event-based public history project that digitizes family photos and stories shared by the people of Massachusetts. We work with local communities to organize free public events where residents are invited to bring family photos to be scanned and included in the archives at UMass Boston.

Goals and Objectives

To document local history; to bring together local residents of all ages, ethnicities, races and backgrounds in lively and thoughtfully orchestrated public events; to validate and celebrate each person's family history and contribution to the community -- whether they have lived there for generations or are recently arrived; to build and strengthen connections within the communities of Massachusetts; to build a digital archive of primary sources related to Massachusetts history, culture, and community.

Results/Impacts

To date, the Mass. Memories Road Show has digitized more than 4,000 photos and stories from across the state, creating an educational resource of primary sources for future generations. Over time, we hope to visit each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Approaches and Methods

Each Road Show is held in a public space and consists of "stations" devoted to specific functions. Contributors move from one station to another having their photos digitized and their stories recorded. Contributors complete paperwork providing data on their photos and grant permission to include their photos in UMass Boston's collections.

In addition to having their photos scanned, contributors are invited to share a brief story about their photographs on camera. We also have local historians and archivists on site to provide advice on dating, organizing, and preserving family photos.

Conclusion/Next Steps

Following each Road Show, UMass Boston archivists process the photos and stories and insure permanent inclusion of the digital and paper records in the University Archives & Special Collections at UMass Boston.

Copies of photos and stories are given to local partners and many partners produce a video or display to highlight the results of the Road Show.

UMass Boston archivists work with researchers, as part of the overall responsibilities of the department, to access and use photos and stories from the collection.

References and Resources

In 2012, the Road Show will be visiting Lowell, Milton, Peabody, and Halifax, among other communities.

To learn more about the Road Show and to explore the collection, visit openarchives.umb.edu, email library.archives@umb.edu, or call 617-287-5929.

Additional Partnerships, Interests, Information and/or Contacts

The Mass. Memories Road Show is an initiative of the Archives & Special Collections Department of the Joseph P. Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston and is co-sponsored by Mass Humanities.