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Mass. Memories Road Show: Your Place in Massachusetts History

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Mass. Memories Road Show

Your Place in Massachusetts History

University Archives & Special Collections in the Joseph P. Healey Library,
in collaboration with communities throughout Massachusetts

Summary/Abstract

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

Goals and Objectives

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



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 photographs digitized and their stories recorded. Contributors complete paperwork providing data on their photos and granting permission to include their photos in our collection.

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



Community members, contributors, and Roadies at the Dorchester (Codman Square) Road Show in 2006.



Mill Girls on Strike, circa 1940s.

"This photo is of my mother, Josephine Julia Urso-Collura, when she worked as a seamstress for Boston Maid Company. She loved her job and her friends, whom she stayed in touch with for decades. Photo was taken at Francis Cabot Lowell Mill on Moody Street in Waltham, MA."

Sarafina Collura's contribution to the 2011 Waltham Mass. Memories Road Show.

Results/Impacts

To date, the Mass. Memories Road Show has digitized more than 5,000 photographs and stories from across the state, creating an educational resource of primary sources for future generations. Over time, we plan to visit each of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Conclusion/Next Steps

Following each Road Show, UMass Boston archivists process all digitized photographs and stories and ensure permanent inclusion of the digital and paper records in University Archives & Special Collections. As part of the overall responsibilities of the department, archivists work with researchers to access and use photographs and stories from the collection.

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

For More Information

The Mass. Memories Road Show is an initiative of the University Archives & Special Collections in the Joseph P. Healey Library at the UMass Boston. To learn more about the Healey Library, visit www.umb.edu/library.

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