

Project Goals:

- To create access to Laboratory still images and publications through digitization.
- To preserve unique and rare information assets of the Library and the Laboratory through digitization and physical preservation activities.
- To extend the life of information resources by transference to sustainable formats.
- To create a wealth of information resources that can be used for scholarship, exhibits, and publications.
- To provide context and value for Laboratory information resources by providing thorough and standard-adherent description.
- To ensure the authenticity and accuracy of objects by identifying the provenance of collections and individual objects.
- To digitize 300 photographs, 150 slides, 3 handwritten diver observation logs, 5 glass slides, xbt equipment documentation, 3 scrapbooks, and various ephemera.



Reels to Research:

Uncovering 50 Years of Fisheries Science at NOAA's Sandy Hook Laboratory

In 2010, the Lionel A. Walford Library was awarded a NOAA Preserve America Initiative Internal Funding (PAIF) grant to support *Reels to Research*, a project commemorating the James J. Howard Marine Sciences Laboratory's 50th Anniversary through preservation and expansion of access to the Laboratory's heritage assets. Over the past five decades, the Laboratory has generated and accumulated artifacts, documents, and images that collectively express not only the dramatic and fascinating history of the Laboratory, but also, the evolution of fisheries research and management.

While there had been some earlier digitization of documents and still images by the Library, until now, no concerted action has been taken to assure that these historical resources are protected and made widely accessible. The *Reels to Research* project represents a fundamental shift from past efforts. The Library plans to use this project as a template for future digitization efforts and will subsequently assess all aspects of the project. In particular, the Library will evaluate the pertinence and relative ease of use of selected digitization and metadata best practices; the potential expanded use of the content management system ContentDM; and the incorporation of digital curation practices as part of the Library's overall collection management efforts.



This project was supported by the NOAA Preserve America Initiative, part of Preserve America, a federal initiative aimed at preserving, protecting and promoting our nation's rich heritage.

2010-2011 Accomplishments:

Still Images

The Library inventoried and housed the nearly 6,000 still images (slides, negatives, and print photographs) that it has accumulated over the last thirty years. Of these, approximately 900 were selected for the first-stage of our digitization efforts. For each image selected for digitization, the Library created an archival master (TIFF) and an access copy (JPEG). The TIFF image version will fulfill preservation needs, while the JPEG surrogate will be publicly accessible via our ContentDM digital library.

Publications

Nearly 200 reports issued or authored by the Sandy Hook Laboratory were digitized and added to the NEFSC publications page. Additional grey literature authored by Sandy Hook staff was cataloged and added to the NOAA Libraries Integrated Catalog (NOAALinc). Key series digitized include the Sandy Hook Laboratory Report, the Sandy Hook Laboratory Technical Report Series, the Angler's Guide, and the Middle Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Center Informal Reports. There was and will continue to be a focus upon digitizing and cataloging Laboratory and staff publications to ensure widespread access to early research and data.



Meaningful, long-term access to our collections and opportunities generated for reuse and scholarship is the penultimate goal of the *Reels to Research* project.

LIBRARY COLLECTION

A comprehensive survey found some 5,000 still images, five scrapbooks, dozens of glass plate negatives, hundreds of rare books, hundreds of newspaper clippings, and thousands of Laboratory records.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Digitization and preservation activities, while necessary, are expensive and time-consuming. Subsequently, the Lionel A. Walford Library staff invested enormous effort in the investigation of hardware and software, digitization (scanning and metadata) best practices, and training needs prior to commencing project activities. These efforts culminated in the creation of the *Digital Collections & Guidelines Plan*, an informal document that represents the Library's strategy for digitizing still images, as well as other formats. The Plan details the key project components, which included collection survey and sorting, crafting a selection criteria and application of that criteria to the selection of individual items for digitization, picking a metadata scheme, identifying the most appropriate scanning standards, developing a workflow, establishing quality management guidelines and procedures, determining access policies, and identifying staffing and training needs.



WHAT'S NEXT:

- Develop finding aids for select collections of Laboratory records, such as bridge logs;
- Transcribe and convert existing audio files, such as oral histories, to MP3 files; and
- Begin next-phase of still image and publication digitization, including cruise reports.

ACCESS GOALS:

- Create long-term access to the products of this project;
- Create immediate access for Library staff to not only the products of this project, but to items that will be slated for future digitization; and
- Create meaningful, but balanced access for patrons and the public.

Rare Books

Over 200 rare books were cataloged and processed as part of the *Reels to Research* project. Prior to commencing this project, less than 20 rare books were fully processed. This collection of rare books is particularly significant because it exists largely through the generosity of staff, others libraries, and individuals who donated valuable, unique, and older materials to the Walford Library after its fire. The collection includes reports of the early oceanographic expeditions, state fishery investigations, and tomes dedicated to malacology, fishery resources, and zoology.

Artifacts & Ephemera

The Library has a large and growing collection of scrapbooks, cassettes, newspaper clippings, manuscripts, lab memorabilia, and glass slides. We were able to address the processing of some, though not all, of these items during the last year and plan to continue preservation efforts of these heritage assets on an ongoing basis.

The early focus of the Library towards preservation of artifacts & ephemera was obtaining proper storage enclosures for collection items. Manuscripts, scrapbooks, and lab memorabilia are now housed in acid-free archival storage containers. Other progress achieved was the creation of a newspaper clipping collection. Nearly 250 clippings were inventoried and placed in acid-free, buffered folders to forestall any further deterioration. The Library was also able to obtain digital copies for nearly a third of the clippings.

The "Reels to Research" project will serve not only to commemorate fifty years of the J.J. Howard Marine Science Laboratory, but also, as an impressive first step in our ongoing journey to preserve our valuable NOAA assets, perform outreach to the public and partner with the Sandy Hook community. This project built a solid framework for further preservation activities that will ensure that the Laboratory's heritage is chronicled, preserved, and made easily accessible for future generations.