UNCOMMON BONDS: LABRADOR INUIT AND MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES
PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

MEETING #3: MAY 4TH, 2021

1. WELCOMES AND FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

1.A – ATTENDANCE

Joan Andersen, Member, Moravian Church in Newfoundland and Labrador

Janet Bangma, Associate University Librarian, Memorial University

Caitlin Horall, Secretary for National Heritage Digitization Strategy (NHDS) and employee of Library & Archives Canada (observing member)

Tom McCullough, Assistant Archivist, Moravian Archives Bethlehem

Lena Onalik, Archaeologist, Nunatsiavut Government

Paul Peucker, Archivist, Moravian Archives Bethlehem

Mark David Turner, Manager of Audio-Visual Archives & Media Literacy, OKâlaKatiget Society and Nunatsiavut Government

Regrets

Anita Kora, Librarian-Archivist, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Sarah Jensen, Chair, Moravian Church in Newfoundland & Labrador

1.B – ISSUES ARISING FROM MINUTES

Nothing to report.

1.C – UNRESOLVED ISSUES FROM LAST MEETING

Nothing to report.

2. CURATION

2.A – INTRODUCTION TO DIGITIZED UNCOMMON BONDS MATERIALS PUBLISHED ON THE MORAVIAN ARCHIVES WEBSITE, PRESENTED BY PAUL PEUCKER

The basic presentation of the records conforms to the original 1959 finding aid prepared by William F. Whitely and women archivists from the Moravian Archives (MAB). In the Findbuch platform, the basic navigation is by community and then genre of records under each community.

These records are *not* downloadable from the Findbuch platform but there are no restrictions for taking screen shots.

All identified materials are now online with the exception of the printed materials as Findbuch is not capable of hosting that content.

You can search by search term in the platform, but those hits are restricted to descriptive metadata as none of the content has been run through OCR.

The Findbuch platform contains references to the complete collection that was shipped to the MAB, but digital images of all of those materials are not present here (e.g. Okak church register). No camera symbol means the record was not digitized. It could also mean there is no original in the collection.

It is likely, however, that all of the content that made its way to the MAB exists on the microfilmed copies of the collection that are there (and also the Memorial University's QEII Library and Library and Archives Canada).

No announcements have been made on this yet as they are still working on the collection on the back end. Discussion turns to the best ways of how to make the announcement, bearing in mind that the Findbuch platform serves a certain audience, and that the collection will also be available on the DAI as well as the NG platform.

The Moravian Church in Newfoundland and Labrador would like to review the material before it is publicly announced but there is a general recognition of the tension between community oversight and general accessibility.

When developing the project, we observed Moravian Archives and US-protocols. Moravian Church in North America has a rule to restrict everything younger than 75 years and the US federal government has a rule to restrict anything younger than 72 years. Both of those are observed here. Most materials in the collection are older than 75 years. The collection itself was transferred 62 years ago and nothing has been added. The youngest document in the collection is from 1944.

There was also review of younger materials in as well, but nothing close to the threshold seemed to deal with personal matters.

Idea of introducing each of the different online editions of the collection by way of different blog posts and accompanying announcements that give content for how the content is curated and what audiences it serves.

Discussion about what the missionaries ultimately recorded was social commentary from their perspective. Descendants of the subjects of that commentary might take offence or feel embarrassed such content is publicly available about their ancestor(s).

The MAB came across a similar situation in its Antigua project and the "speakings" that were contained in that collection. There was focussed discussion then around whether that content should appear online. Ultimately, they opted to put it all online in order to make it accessible. MAB did not want to control how people use that material. The goal was to make it accessible to people (particularly in Antigua whose history this is) that otherwise could not access the physical records (at the MAB).

Idea of using our various platforms to curate records for the different audiences that they are meant to serve.

With Antigua project, there was a take-down procedure in place, but this was ultimately abandoned by both the MAB and the University of Florida which also hosted the content. This content exists on the MAB and the Digital Library of the Caribbean. It appears there were never any requests to take materials down. The suggestion is raised that the parties that look the worst with these records is the church rather than the subjects of the records. From the church's perspective, there is no objection in having these out as it does not want to hide any part of its history.

There is a lot of use of the Antigua records and no community objections to having the content online. People tend to be very grateful, and people are requesting digitization of more records. The items used the most have been used over 5,000 times.

For these records, the MCNL would spot check rather than go through in a comprehensive way. It is essential to provide curation that speaks to local audiences and makes it clear that we do not have any responsibility for the content of the records.

2.B DEVELOPMENT AND PRESENTATION OF POLICY

Discussion of how to present emerging policy on the website. No immediate models were identified.

3. UNCOMMON BONDS WEBSITE

3.A RE-ALLOCATION OF BUDGET TO DEVELOP OUR WEBSITE INTO A WIDER-REACHING EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE IN LIEU OF A COLLECTION GUIDE

Because of covid, the website is not only the best way to publicize the project in a long-term way, it also seems to be the best mechanism to present the Collections Guide deliverable for the project.

It is also apparent there will not be a meeting of the committee in Bethlehem any time soon. Therefore, we are proposing re-allocating travel budget for the Bethlehem trip towards developing the website towards the above ends. Consensus on this re-allocation.

Discussion around OCR as well and the cost and associated labour in the context of a budget of reallocation. Such a reallocation would not only take considerable financial resources but also take us off of our timeline.

Discussion about a possible partnership to OCR and quality control a pilot project of few thousand pages with the Digital Archives Initiative. What would be important is to find a German resource person to work on the quality control. There are no staff at the MAB that can do this, someone else would need to be hired.

There are roughly 150 year of meeting minutes from this collection that were run through Transkribus before it moved to a paid model. This represents 789 pages, but the last 100 pages are typewriter and can be run through regular OCR. 660 pages in total in handwritten script. We need to confirm that we can use those transcriptions and that Transkribus does not own the transcriptions that were run through the free version.

Discussion of accessing the Documentary Community Heritage Program for OCR later.

4. DIGITIZATION REPORT, PRESENTED BY THOMAS MCCULLOUGH

Tabled until next meeting.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion of how best to format the digital objects on the DAI and that this is a work in process. There are also implications for tweaking content on the MAB.

The DAI will be migrating to a new platform and re-imagine the interface. This will likely take a few years.

6. ADJOURNMENT

PART II: ACTION ITEMS

1. We will introduce the MAB digital edition of the collection through a blog post in June. The blog will be published at approximately the same time as the MAB newsletter and will use similar prose. Mark will begin writing the blog post and share with Paul for editing.

2. Joan will take until Friday, May 28th to spot check the records that have been published for any possible issues. Once this is complete, we will describe Joan's working process in the blog and newsletter.

3. Mark will write CLIR about budget reallocation focussing on website development and a pilot OCR project.

4. Mark will seek quotes from web developers for website re-design.

5. Mark will follow up with Hans Rollmann regarding the researcher he hired in Germany to prepare translations/transcriptions.

6. Mark and Tom will meet next week to discuss OCR pilot project and connect with Janet afterwards.

7. Mark will explore models for presenting policy.