

Past & Present Assignment 2: Building a SC COVID-19 Digital Archive

Introduction

We are living in a world historical moment. It is no exaggeration to say that the COVID-19 pandemic will be seen by future generations of historians as a turning point in national and global history. Already, historians and journalists are comparing the COVID-19 pandemic's immediate impact and potential long-term effects to those of transformative events like World War II, the Great Depression, and the Civil War. Many of us are watching—nervously, angrily, or hopefully—televised speeches by our political leaders, reading harrowing firsthand accounts from doctors and nurses, or scrolling through social media feeds to learn how our friends, family, and various other connections are being impacted. As we do, we might consider that historians and their students 10, 50, and 100 years from now will do the same as they attempt to make sense of this moment.

This historical perspective on the COVID-19 pandemic will be simultaneously global, national, and local. Historians of disease and medicine will sort through the data, policy papers, and communications of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Political historians will scrutinize presidential briefings and dig into debates in Congress, while those who study the history of social relations will pour through Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram posts, undoubtedly also making use of a growing body of photographs of deserted streets and socially distanced communities. But how will *local* stories be preserved? In particular, what will future generations of students, faculty, and administrators have to learn how their predecessors at Springfield College experienced this time?

Assignment

Your assignment is to identify, capture, and describe an item that could be used as a primary source by future historians and researchers to study the experiences of Springfield College during the COVID-19 pandemic. You will contribute this item to a digital repository created by Springfield College's archivist, and you will provide important information about the item you selected that will enable future generations to use this item as a piece of primary source evidence. Please start by reviewing the brief reading in *American Yawp* that you did at the start of the semester about primary sources: <http://www.americanyawp.com/reader/introduction/>

Remember, your task for this assignment is to identify an item that could be used as a primary source by future historians to study the experiences of Springfield College during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your *item* can take any number of forms (see below for examples), with the caveat that you must be able to submit it to a *digital* repository. The item must relate to the experiences of Springfield College—its students, faculty, and/or administration—during the COVID-19 pandemic. And you must provide the information (see below) about the item requested when you submit the item to the digital repository.

Logistics

--Your contribution of an item to the digital repository (including the required information) is due by Wednesday, April 22 at 12:00 midnight.

--You will contribute your item *directly to the repository*: <https://sccovid19.omeka.net/>

--For a demonstration/walk through of the repository and to ask questions about this assignment, attend the HIST 106 Zoom meeting on Wednesday, April 8 or Wednesday, April 15 at 8 p.m.

Items to Contribute^[1]

Items can be anything that you feel reveals something about the experiences of Springfield College during the COVID-19 pandemic. Springfield College is a community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators. It is also a physical space—the campus—within the City of Springfield. So your item can be anything that captures something about what it was like to be one of those people or to be in one of those places during this historical moment. Examples include (but are not limited to):

--Photographs from campus or where you are now finishing the spring semester

--Communications (such as emails or announcements) to/from faculty, administrators, coaches, etc.

--Personal stories (text, video, or audio) about the uncertainties of being on campus

--Recorded interviews with family or close relations with whom you're spending this time

--Social media posts by you, your classmates, or other Springfield College connections

--Video recordings of your community that capture the effects of social distancing

Please note that the digital repository *cannot* accept physical items (like a bottle of hand sanitizer or a face mask)

Information

Regardless of what type of item you contribute, you will need to provide information about it when you submit it to the SC COVID-19 repository. The type of information you provide will vary depending on how you classify your item (Text Document, Video, Audio, etc.), and you should fill out *all* of the Information boxes to the best of your ability. However, for this assignment, all contributions must include the following information, which will be graded:

--**Title**: if your item is not already titled, you will make up a title. Keep your title *brief* and easily recognizable.

--**Creator/Author**: who was primarily responsible for the creation or writing of this item?

--**Date**: when was this item created? If you cannot determine the date of creation, include the date when you first encountered this item.

--**Why you chose this item**: provide a 3-4 sentence explanation of why you chose this item. What might it tell future researchers about the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic? Whose experiences will it help future researchers to understand? Why did you think it was important to preserve this particular item? What specifically within this item would you want somebody to notice or understand?

--**Personal information**: your name, email address, name of this class (HIST 106), and instructor's name (Ian Delahanty).

Submitting your Item

Once you have filled out all of the information boxes, you are ready to upload and submit your item. Please keep in mind that:

--if you are submitting a document, it must be saved as a PDF file.

--remember to upload your file by clicking the “Choose File” icon at the top of the Contribute an Item page

--at the bottom of the Contribute an Item page, click the icons labeled “I’m not a robot,” “Publish my contribution on the web,” and “I agree to the Terms and Conditions”

[1] Adapted from Christopher Cantwell, “COVID-19 MKE”:
<https://liblamp.uwm.edu/omeka/covid19mke/about> [accessed April 6, 2020].