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NEW YORK HERITAGE

A DIGITAL ARCHIVES

BY SUSAN D'ENTREMONT

New York Heritage <newyorkheritage.org> is a free online resource that provides access to digitized primary sources held by institutions throughout New York State. There are currently over 670,000 photographs, manuscripts, oral histories, postcards, scrapbooks, and more on the site, and items are added almost daily. Contributors to the site include libraries, universities, historical societies, museums, and other organizations ranging in size from the University at Buffalo to Colton Historical Society in St. Lawrence County. The site includes many small collections that, prior, to being uploaded to New York Heritage, were relatively inaccessible due to location or limited hours. Even local residents often first hear about a collection through the site.

The administration of New York Heritage is decentralized. Contributors work with their local Empire State Library Network council <www.esln.org> to learn how to catalog and upload materials. Some readers may remember regional sites, such as Tools of History in South Central New York and North Country Digital History in Northern New York. Since 2011, these sites have been merging with New York Heritage. As of this



Shovel Maker by Gary Rathbone, ca. 2001. Gary's work often focuses on specific characters or occupations found in everyday life like this shovel maker. Courtesy of The Folklife Center of Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY.

writing, the only region of New York that does not have a presence in New York Heritage is Southeastern New York, which is made up of Columbia, Greene, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Sullivan, Putnam, and Rockland Counties. The Southeastern New

York Library Resources Council showcases material from this region on their Hudson River Valley Heritage site <hrvh.org>.

There are currently two collections in New York Heritage that focus on folklore material: the Crandall Folk Art and Artists Collection



ARTiculate

Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester



Log loading operation, Colton, NY.
Courtesy of the Colton Historical Society.

from Crandall Public Library Folklife Center in Glens Falls and the Heritage Awards Collection from Traditional Arts of Upstate New York (TAUNY), headquartered in Canton.

Todd DeGarmo, Founding Director of the The Folklife Center at Crandall Public Library, collected the pieces highlighted in their digital collection. The images are a sample of contemporary folk art Todd has added to the collection since 1986 to support the Center's folklife programs and exhibitions. Although the website only includes images of the objects themselves, the Center also holds files documenting the artists and traditions. Like most of the collections in New York Heritage, the images alert researchers and the general public to the existence of material that



Akwesasne Basketmakers, winners of TAUNY's Heritage Award for their traditional sweet grass and ash splint basketmaking, date unknown. Photo by Martha Cooper. Heritage Awards Collection, Traditional Arts of Upstate New York, Canton, NY.



EXTREME·MATERIALS

OCTOBER 23, 2011 - JANUARY 15, 2012

Cover of *ARTiculate*, September-October 2011, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester

they never knew existed in the region. New York Heritage is only the tip of the iceberg for most of the collections depicted, and the contributing institutions are usually more than happy to answer questions or provide access to additional materials.

TAUNY's Heritage Awards Collection is a new addition to New York Heritage. The images in the collection depict both the artists honored by TAUNY and the items these artists create. The awards are given to people and organizations in the state's North Country that demonstrate 'evidence of traditional-ity, mastery, and creative commitment to their art form over time, and a commitment to their community and the teaching of others' <tauny.org/ncha/about/>. Some of the arts documented in this collection include quilting, basketmaking, fiddling, decoy carving, and storytelling.

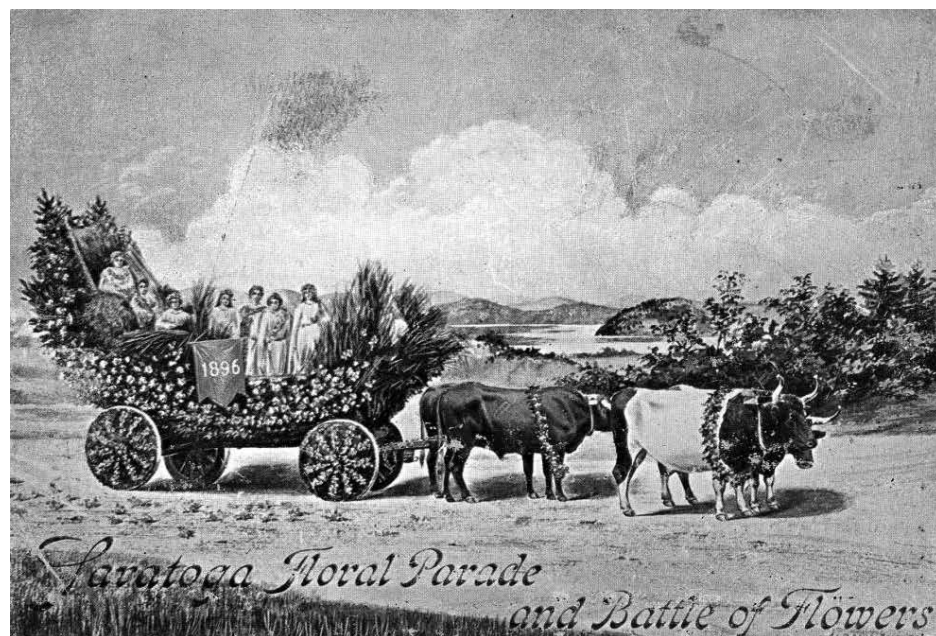
Although there may be only two collections in New York Heritage that focus on folklore, there is an abundance of items related to folklore. They just take a little bit of searching of the site to unearth. The "Collections" tab at the top of the site's homepage brings searchers to a list of the institutions that contribute to the site. The "Browse" tab brings users to several different avenues to peruse the collection: general topic area, location of the collection, date, and "sub-collection." An institution may contribute multiple subcollec-

tions, which are groupings of materials from their holdings. Institutions interpret subcollections differently—they may group materials with similar format, subject matter, or provenance into a subcollection.

Most users begin their searches with a general key word search from the search box at the top of the page. The results from this type of search can often be overwhelming. Users can limit their search by subject, format, type, and more. However, like any sort of catalog or database, the results are only as good as the information that contributors have added to the site. New York Heritage contributors vary widely in how much and what sorts of information they add to the site, so if you don't find something you are looking for, it doesn't mean it's not there! If your results are disappointing, try broadening your terms.



"A Prospective Mother Needs to Foster her Strength and Energy, Not Waste It," ca. 1937, WPA Fine Arts Projects in Rochester, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester.



1896 Saratoga Floral Parade and Battle of the Flowers Program. Courtesy of Saratoga Room, Saratoga Springs Public Library.

As would be expected, there is a lot of old material in New York Heritage. Cultural institutions have millions of pages of undigitized material, so it makes sense to start with material that is out of copyright. But the site definitely reaches out almost to the present day, and there are many long runs of material. For example, the Memorial Art Gallery of the University at Rochester has uploaded hundreds of their publications, including their Gallery Notes and, more recently, their ARTiculate publication through 2013. The Museum has a number of other subcollections in New York Heritage, including some ever-popular WPA posters.

People love to document their special events more than the everyday, so our institutions tend to hold many items related to festivals and celebrations that may be of special interest to folklorists. The City of Saratoga Springs spent over \$800,000 on bringing an entire Mardi Gras parade to Saratoga around



A girl stands in line for a procession on Good Friday at St. Simon Stock Church, Fordham, 1984. Photo by Georgeen Comerford. Childhood in the Bronx Collection, Leonard Lief Library, Lehman College, CUNY.

the turn of the 20th century, and there is a collection in New York Heritage that provides a lot of detail on this Floral Fete. Materials documenting other special events, from the Blessing of the Fleet in Montauk to weddings and processions in the Bronx to Clarkson University's Ice Carnival to the spectacle of people going over Niagara Falls are scattered throughout the site.

This article provides just a taste of what New York Heritage has to offer. One of the biggest challenges for our contributors is choosing material to put on the site. Digitization is time-consuming and expensive, but it definitely pays off in increasing accessibility if the material is in demand. We would love to hear what sorts of material and information you would find useful so that we can help our participants determine which collections to conquer next. ▼

Susan D'Entremont is Digital Project Manager for the Capital District Library Council (CDLC), a member of Empire State Library Network. Susan has worked in various roles at CDLC for 16 years.

Prior to that, she was an archivist at the Wisconsin Historical Society and the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. She received her MA in Library and Information Studies, with a concentration in Archives from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Photo by Kariann Kakeh.



Here's a sample of what you can find in New York Heritage:

Thanksgiving Ceremony, Buffalo (Temple Beth El, 1957, Jewish Buffalo Archives Project):

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/BUF009/id/253>

Log Loading Operation, Colton: (Colton Historical Society)

<http://nyheritage.nynln.net/cdm/ref/collection/p16694coll16/id/41>

Shovel Maker, Crandall Public Library, Folklife Center:

<http://nyheritage.nynln.net/cdm/ref/collection/crandall/id/47>

Akwesasne Basket Makers: (Traditional Arts in Upstate New York)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16694coll60/id/246>

Gallery Notes with Basketry Exhibit: (Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p277601coll5/id/4669>

Cover of MAG publication, ARTiculate: (Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p277601coll5/id/6691>

WPA Poster "A Prospective Mother Needs to Foster her Strength and Energy, Not Waste It": (Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester)

<http://nyheritage.nynln.org/cdm/ref/collection/p277601coll5/id/15>

Floral Fete Program "1896 Saratoga Floral Parade and Battle of Flowers Program": (Saratoga Springs Public Library)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/sspl/id/107>

Girl in a Good Friday Procession: (Lehman College, Childhood in the Bronx)

<http://nyheritage.nynln.net/cdm/ref/collection/p128401coll5/id/31>

Hindu Student Festival Poster: "Baisaki Mela" Punjabi Festival (Queens College Archives)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/qcgslls/id/456>

Rose Day 1939 video: (The College of Saint Rose)

<http://nyheritage.nynln.net/cdm/ref/collection/strose/id/1767>

St. Patrick's Day Parade, Montauk, 1963: (Montauk Library)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15281coll78/id/252>

Tub Race, Schenectady, 1895: (Museum of Innovation and Science)

<http://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/schmuse/id/184/rec/28>

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Folk Archives Project
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