

Postal Memory Book

STATEMENT OF WORK

Background

The National Postal Museum (NPM) desires to launch an online Postal Memory Book on its museum website in order to document and preserve stories detailing the history and work of former and current postal employees, the heart of the postal system.

This online Postal Memory Book will add rich and valuable content to the museum's collection of historical information relating to the history and development of the post in America.

The Postal Memory Book project will provide benefits to the museum, including:

- Enhancing the museum's holdings of historical postal-related information and knowledge
- Securing information previously unavailable
- Improving technological gateways to enhance the increase and diffusion of knowledge
- Establishing and encourage a new "community" of users, contributors, and visitors
- Increasing the number of new and repeat visitors to our website
- Creating new awareness and interest in the museum and history of the postal system

The potential audience identified to participate in posting oral histories in the Postal Memory Book includes United States Postal Service's approximately 700,000 current employees and more than 400,000 former Post Office Department and USPS retirees. The institutional knowledge that resides in this audience of more than one million current and former postal workers is invaluable in telling the story of the rich history of the post in America.

Scope of Work

The designers and developers at the Center for History and New Media (CHNM) <chnm.gmu.edu> will create the Postal Memory Book website for the NPM. This website will allow the museum to collect the stories, images, and media that United States Postal Service employees (former and current) wish to contribute in audio, video, or text formats to memorialize their experiences. These recollections and files will be served in an attractive web environment that is easy to search and navigate. The result will be a website that allows the

National Postal Museum to reach out to a core constituency and incorporate their voices in the historic record of the institution. This site will be essential for community building and for increasing the stake that current and former postal employees have in the life and success of the institution.

CHNM's web publishing software Omeka <omeka.org> will form the core engine of the site, providing the public interface and the content management system for the project. The software is free, open source and designed to minimize IT and maintenance costs. Designed with non-IT specialists in mind, Omeka will allow the curators, staff and volunteers at the National Postal Museum to concentrate on the content that they collect from the postal carrier community rather than on the complicated technical aspects of web development. Omeka is standards based. Its Dublin Core metadata structure and suite of data migration tools enables interoperability with existing digital collections systems. Thus, materials from this specific site will be available for repurposing in future websites. Also, Omeka's adherence to web standards ensures that the final website will be fully accessible. The public interface that will allow users to contribute their material to the site will use Omeka's contribution plug-in.

The site will provide audio, video, and textual stories to be submitted and published in multiple categories, as determined by the NPM. The main page of the website will allow visitors to search for stories based on a number of variables, including story categories, location, job category, and name. The main page of the website will provide the ability for the NPM to feature multiple stories from the various story categories.

The work on the site will follow CHNM's standard design and development process. Therefore, the CHNM project team will provide the following:

- Omeka Demonstration and Training
CHNM will provide a training session to members of the NPM, to present all aspects of the Omeka program, its capabilities and functionality; and provide training on how to manage content for acceptance and publication. This training session can take place at the NPM or at CHNM's location.
- Project Vision and Requirements Meeting
This meeting will allow representatives from NPM and CHNM to discuss the structural vision for the site, user roles, and the functional requirements. This conversation is essential to the future success of the project and the final site. CHNM will provide a survey for NPM about design preferences to facilitate this discussion.
- Technical Review Meeting with Smithsonian Office of the Chief Information Officer
This meeting will allow members of SI-OCIO to learn about the technical aspects of the Postal Memory Book and to ensure that the web architecture, web-based applications and/or databases conform to Smithsonian standards; and that the Institution's public web

servers are prepared to accept the website or web-based application and its load without adversely impacting existing websites in the shared production environment.

- Wireframes

These black and white structural maps will outline the site information architecture and navigation. Together CHNM and NPM will discuss and revise the wire frames, and then there will be a final sign-off. Once the sign-off has taken place major revisions will not be possible.

- Mood Boards

CHNM's designer will produce 2-3 mood boards for discussion and review by NPM and CHNM. These boards will provide options on color palette, fonts, and design details. If NPM has already determined the color palette for the site based on an existing physical exhibit, CHNM will work within those strictures. Again, after review and discussion, there will be a final sign-off on the design characteristics.

- Photoshop Mock-ups

CHNM's designer will produce 2-3 sets of Photoshop Mock-ups of the essential pages for the site (Homepage, browse page, item page, single informational pages). NPM and CHNM will discuss the options and select a final design for the site. After final sign-off, the site will move into production with the web development portion of the team.

- Site Build-out

Once the design decisions are complete, the CHNM web development team will construct the site. This involves coding the Omeka theme and layouts to the design specifications and the installation of the required Omeka plug-ins to fulfill the functionality requirements. If there are any software minor customizations necessary, they will take place at this stage.

- Site Walk-through and Sign-off Meeting

When the site is finally complete, there will be a final meeting of the primary representatives from NPM and CHNM. A full site walk-through will be conducted, to catch any minor corrections that might be necessary before launch. This meeting will close with the final sign-off for the site.

- Transfer of Design and Layout

Since NPM intends to host the site on its own servers, CHNM will transfer the theme and page layouts to that installation of Omeka. To do this CHNM will require server access and/or onsite server administrator with which to work.

- Site Launch
Project is complete.

Project Timeline

- Omeka Demonstration and Training: July 2009
- Project Vision and Requirements Meeting: July 2009
- Technical Review Meeting: July 2009
- Wireframes production and review: August 2009
- Mood Board production and review: September 2009
- Photoshop Mock-up production and review: October 2009
- Begin site build out: November 2009
- Continue site build out: November 2009
- Site Walk-through and Sign-off meeting: December 2009
- Transfer of Design and Layout: December 2009
- Launch: December 2009

Cost

Total cost of the Postal Memory Book will be \$29,283.

CHNM Project Staff

Sharon M. Leon (Executive Producer) is Director of Public Projects at CHNM and Research Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Art History. Her research interests include the history of religion in the U.S., especially Roman Catholicism, history of science and twentieth century cultural history. She received her bachelor's degree from Georgetown University and her doctorate in American Studies at the University of Minnesota in 2004. Her book manuscript on US Catholics and the Eugenics Movement is forthcoming from the University of Chicago Press. Her work has appeared in Church History and the Journal of the

History of Medicine and Allied Sciences. At CHNM, she has worked on a variety of education projects and public history sites. She currently directs the Center's work on Historical Thinking Matters <historicalthinkingmatters.org> and The Object of History <objectofhistory.org>, and is co-director of the National History Education Clearinghouse <teachinghistory.org> and Omeka <omeka.org>. Leon will have overall responsibility for the execution of the project and the management of the budget.

Sheila Brennan (Project Manager) is the Senior Digital History Associate in the Public Projects division and also is ABD in U.S. history at Mason. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Bates College and Master's from the University of Notre Dame in American Studies. Prior to coming to CHNM, she worked as the Director of Education and Public Programs at the U.S. Navy Museum in Washington, DC for seven years. Her research interests include popular collecting practices in the U.S., online history museums, material culture, and late-19th and early-20th-century cultural history. She currently is the end user coordinator for Omeka, and has managed the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank and Gulag: Many Days, Many Lives projects. She will coordinate and maintain the day to day management of the project, including communication with the NPM and the project development team at CHNM.

TBD (Web Designer) will be responsible for participating in an initial vision meeting for the site. Then s/he will produce wire frames (information architecture), mood boards (color pallet, font, design effects), and 2-3 Photoshop mockups for the central page types on the site.

TBD (Web Developer) will be responsible for coding the site design and for implementation with Omeka software. S/he will also be responsible for installing and customizing the requisite Omeka plugins that will complete the functionality of the site.

About the Center for History and New Media

Since 1994, CHNM <<http://chnm.gmu.edu/>> has used digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. CHNM combines cutting edge digital media with the latest and best historical scholarship to promote an inclusive understanding of the past as well as broad historical literacy. CHNM's work has been recognized with major awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Department of Education, the Library of Congress, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the National Historic Records and Publication Commission, and the Sloan, Mellon, Hewlett, Rockefeller, Gould, Delmas, and Kellogg foundations.

CHNM maintains more than four dozen online history projects directed at diverse audiences, making them available at no cost through its website. In 2007, CHNM's websites had 300

million hits and 10 million visitors—making it one of the busiest non-commercial history education sites on the Web. CHNM’s staff of more than forty people (including eleven with doctoral degrees) includes those skilled in all aspects of digital history—database architecture, software engineering, web development and design, preservation, and archiving. CHNM has an annual budget of more than \$1.5 million and a \$2 million endowment (achieved with the assistance of a \$500,000 Challenge Grant from NEH), which guarantees the long-term stability of CHNM.

CHNM has a long record of creating publicly available digital collections and resources for scholars and interested members of the public. CHNM has developed the September 11 Digital Archive <<http://911digitalarchive.org>>, which was an effort to collect, preserve and present the history of September 11, 2001 and its aftermath using digital media. The archive contains over 150,000 digital items collected from the public in the wake of that tragedy. In September 2003, the Library of Congress accepted the Archive into its collections, an event that both ensured the Archive's long-term preservation and marked the library's first major digital acquisition. CHNM also hosts and edits the Papers of the War Department, 1784-1800 <<http://wardepartmentpapers.org>>, which makes freely available online to scholars, students, and the general public some 55,000 documents of the early War Department that were lost to fire in 1800.