History From Chicago's Former Steel Mill Neighborhoods: Digitizing and Providing Access to the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum Collection

FINAL REPORT - NEH Grant PW –253800-17

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Project Overview –
The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum (SECHM) is an all-volunteer, community-based institution located in an ethnically- and racially-diverse former steel mill community. The museum was founded in the early 1980s as the local steel industry was collapsing. Residents who felt their history slipping away donated a large number of items to the Museum including photographs, home movies, documents, albums, letters, postcards, clothing, and objects as well as 180+ oral histories. At the core of the Southeast Chicago Archive and Storytelling (SECASP) project is an interest in using artifacts that residents donated to the Museum – and the meaning those artifacts held for their donors – to explore the historical transformation of industrial communities and what it means to be "working class" in the United States. The NEH grant, awarded in 2017, has supported a collaboration between the project team (based at MIT) and the Southeast Chicago Historical Society/Museum. This collaboration was intended to: 1) aid in the digitization and archival processing work of materials found in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum (SECHM); 2) create an online "archive" and storytelling site (SECASP) designed to generate greater accessibility to, and interest in, these archival materials; and 3) develop a long-term preservation plan for the resulting preservation-quality digital materials.

In 2019, we requested an extension on the grant due to the technical complexities of the work. In 2020, we requested a second extension due to logistical challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Museum's year-long closure. The grant activities are now completed, and we are proud of the work accomplished as outlined below. We feel that the final product, the Southeast Chicago Archive and Storytelling Project (found at https://www.sechicagohistory.org/), has the ability to generate substantial interest in, and access to, a unique collection. SECASP is revealing of an undervalued part of American history and does so in a pioneering way that serves the diverse needs of residents, the general public, students, and scholars.

Project Activities and Accomplishments
Digitization
Under the grant, a number of materials found in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum were chosen for digitization. A smaller subset was chosen for use in the online archive. These items were selected by Project Director Walley in consultation with, and based on criteria established under, an Advisory Committee (including volunteers from the Museum board, representatives from the Chicago History Museum and Field Museum, and community representatives). At the core of the selection criteria was a commitment to highlighting the diversity of working-class experiences found across Southeast Chicago's industrial neighborhoods from the late 19th century to the contemporary period. Chosen artifacts related to the experiences of European immigrants (often Eastern European), Mexican-American immigrants, and African-Americans, as well as the experiences of women and men of varying age groups. Another goal was to capture the richness and tensions of everyday life both inside and outside the steel mills, including attention to family, neighborhood, and institutional life as well as the environment.

Digital materials produced over the course of the grant include the following:

1) **scans** - Project Archivist Derek Potts scanned 3191 items at 1200 dpi resolution creating 6078 preservation quality TIF image files of photographs, albums, postcards, letters, documents, and

other items found in the Museum. Smaller, more manageable working copies of these digital files (in jpeg format) were simultaneously generated for use on the website.

2) **moving image transfers** - Potts and Museum Director Rod Sellers packed and shipped 265 reels of film, tapes, and DVDs from the Museum for digitization by outside professional vendors based in Maryland and Georgia. The resulting digital files include preservation-quality lossless archival masters in Motion-jpeg format as well as mezzanine files in high bit-rate H.264 QuickTime format and working or proxy files in low-bit-rate H.264 QuickTime format.

3) **photos of objects** - Approximately 25 objects from the Museum were photographed by Project Co-Director Boebel using a Sony Alpha a7 III digital camera. Preservation quality files were in RAW format with jpeg working files with a 6000x4000 resolution. A second photoshoot of objects had to be postponed due to the closure of the Museum between March 2020 and June 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4) **oral history transcriptions** - Project Director Walley oversaw the transcription of 180+ video- and audio-taped oral histories found in the Museum, a necessary step in selecting clips from the tapes for both the archive and storytelling portions of the website.

 Digitized materials were placed on two sets of external drives (each set holding approximately 22 Terrabytes of material) and are kept in two geographic locations, one in Cambridge and one in Chicago. In addition, the project has external drives housing working copies of all materials considered for the digital archive and organized thematically by folders. In sum, the project has 21 external drives of material housed across the two locations.

Archival Processing and Preparing Items for Digital Archive
Over the course of the grant (and building upon prior work for an NEH Foundations grant from 2014-15), the museum's accession records which had previously been kept in paper files were entered into a computerized database. Under the first NEH grant, accession records began to be entered into the Archivist's Toolkit database, an opensource archive information management system recommended by MIT Libraries. Potts then supervised the transfer of these records from Archivist's Toolkit to the upgraded and online accessible database "ArchivesSpace," allowing records to be searchable by Museum volunteers and Project team based in different geographic locations, while also storing the metadata in a form where it could be linked to the future website. The ArchivesSpace database is maintained on a hosting site also recommended by MIT Libraries called "libraryhost." Under the grant, Potts completed this archival work, creating or revising 2584 accession records in ArchivesSpace (each containing from one to hundreds of discrete items). He also created 68 accession records for items "found in collections" (FIC) whose provenance was unknown. For the select subset of archival materials destined for the online archive, Potts also created a resource record for each individual item (in addition to existing accession records which group items together based on donations). Potts generated 1441 of these individual item-level resource records in ArchivesSpace which serve as metadata sources for the website. After some culling of items in order to highlight the strongest artifacts across a range of themes, 1034 items were selected for entry into the digital archive.

The SECASP website was built in Wordpress, a free and open-source content management system, in order to make it simpler to use and maintain long-term for the Southeast Chicago Historical Society as a volunteer-based community organization. In a unique arrangement, the website utilizes ArchivesSpace's API in order to allow ArchivesSpace and Wordpress to communicate. While ArchivesSpace's role is to archive and manage information regarding the Museum's collections following archival best practices, Wordpress' function is to siphon data from ArchivesSpace to meet the needs of the website while also allowing digital images, tags, and thematic filters to be attached. Unfortunately, it was not possible to transfer the aforementioned resource records from ArchivesSpace to Wordpress in bulk. Instead, in a time-consuming process, each resource record had to be individually pulled into Wordpress by hand while also being linked to a digital image file for that item and assigned tags and filters. This process was conducted by a research assistant and the Project Director. After a record was pulled into Wordpress, it was linked it to a digital image of the artifact (temporarily stored on the MIT Anthropology server by Potts), and then filters and tags were added. The filters allow website users to search for an item based on thematic categories. These thematic categories were hammered out by the project team and involved revising existing Museum subject categories in ways that facilitated use by a wider public audience. The Project Director assigned filters to each of these 1034 items. Archivist Potts then applied subject tags to these same items, referencing controlled metadata vocabularies including Library of Congress, Getty Thesaurus, and local sources. These subject tags allow the items to be searchable through the online archive's search bar.

For film and video materials, the process was slightly different. The Project Director selected excerpts from the digital files for posting in the online archive, as based on established criteria. For video- and audio-taped oral histories, transcriptions were generated to facilitate searching for segments or quotations that resonated with or complemented materials found elsewhere on the site. A video editor and student assistants then edited the video/audio segments into labelled sequences in the video-editing software Premiere. The video and audio excerpts were then posted on a private youtube channel. Links were subsequently created between the youtube channel clips and the ArchiveSpace resource records that had been pulled into Wordpress, thereby allowing the video/audio clips to be accessed via the website.

The workflow for this overall process was designed by Creative Director Jeff Soyk, who engaged in highly impressive problem-solving over the years (with support from Potts and Developers Jared Kerschner and Krispin Dolbear). This was necessary in order to bring ArchivesSpace and Wordpress into interaction in ways not originally envisioned by ArchivesSpace's creators.

Creating Public Accessibility and Engagement through an Online Archive and 'Storytelling Site'
Over the last two years of the grant, Project Director Chris Walley, Project Co-Director Chris Boebel, and Creative Designer Jeff Soyk worked together intensively, often at weekly multi-hour sessions at MIT, in order to develop the design and implement the larger goals of the project website. The SECASP website is intended to serve as both a digital archive and a form of "storytelling" that links together individual artifacts and oral histories through a form of interactive documentary work centered around larger thematic narratives. These "storylines," as we refer to them, are organized around topics such as immigration, labor struggles, and environmental activism. The goal of the overall website design is to generate points of entry and engagement with the artifacts for users

(including those with no prior knowledge of industrial communities) and to do so in historically accurate, yet compelling, ways that help "bring history to life."

After much intensive deliberation and some experimentation, the following design was developed by the team and then executed by Soyk with assistance in front- and back-end development by Kerschner and Dolbear. Viewers are introduced to the **website** via introductory pages and materials which lay out paths to both the digital archive and to the "storyline" section. The **introductory pages** briefly convey the key concepts of the site and also offer information about the Project and its partners, maps, and a study guide/reading list for use by teachers and students. The **digital archive** section begins with an introductory page consisting of a grid of moving and still images chosen from Museum artifacts and leads to the 1000+ items in the archive. Users can find items either through the search bar or by using filters with an extensive selection of thematic headings.

For users who may not be sure what to search for or how to engage with the materials, there are several features designed to assist. First, there is a rotating menu of 12 **key items** at the start of the digital archive, giving viewers a sense of the diversity of items found within. If users scroll further down the page, they find 13 "**featured curations**" which are mini-exhibits of Museum artifacts clustered around particular topics well-represented in the Museum. These featured curation topics include: "Black Experience in the Mills," "Women at Work," "Union Life," "Having Fun", "From Old Country to New" and others. When viewers click on an individual item, they are able to see information about that donation, including what our team calls "**backstories**" with information about who donated the item and why this item was meaningful to them or within Southeast Chicago's past. When possible, the backstories are supplemented by oral history quotations. Currently, "backstories" are available for approximately 200 items, including all items in the featured curations, with additional backstories being continuously created by the Project and Museum directors.

The "**storylines**" portion of the website begins with another introductory page, conveying to users how the storylines weave together Museum artifacts and storytelling into documentary narratives of broader historical significance. Technically, these storylines are amalgams of digitized archival objects, text or clips from oral histories, documentary film clips shot for the project by Co-Director Boebel, interactive online documentary work, and a text-based "storyteller" voice used as connective tissue. Users are able to explore individual items at their own pace as well as in greater or lesser depth (depending on whether they choose to access links to supplementary material). They can also toggle back and forth between individual artifacts found in the storyline and closer perusal of those items in the digital archive. Extensive historical research went into the development of the storylines by Project Director Walley, and lists of academic references can be found at the end of each storyline. Coding for the storylines was done by Creative Director Soyk. Four storylines are envisioned for the site and two are currently completed (only the first of which is covered under this NEH grant). The storylines include: *Mexican-American Journeys* (funded by NEH); *The Memorial Day Massacre* (about a 1937 labor event with national implications; funded by the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation); and then two in-progress storylines: *The Closing of the Steel Mills* (funded by Donnelley); and *Wetlands to Waste* (about environmental activism in this postindustrial region which is currently unfunded).

Each storyline begins with an artifact donated to the Museum – what academic Sherry Turkle refers to as an "**evocative object**" – followed by contemporary video clips of family or community members handling and talking about that artifact. Such vignettes reveal history to be an intergenerational project of storytelling around objects of significance. The *Mexican-American Journeys* storyline, for example, begins with a framed display of dogtag replicas that had been donated to the Museum. The dogtags belonged to twelve young men from Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in South Chicago who were killed during the Vietnam War. A contemporary video clip features Mary Flores, whose brother was one of those killed. Mary holds the framed display in her home while she talks about the many members of her family who have served in the U.S. military and her long history in Southeast Chicago. The storyline then pans out from a mural of the deceased young men painted on a wall near Our Lady of Guadalupe church to contemporary images of South Chicago. The remainder of the storyline interweaves artifacts donated by other residents with oral histories, allowing viewers to track the story of Mexican immigrants who came to Southeast Chicago in search of work in the steel mills beginning around World War I. The storyline eventually brings the history of Mexican-American community life in Southeast Chicago up to the present. It ends with a photo of a recent Day of the Dead event held at the ruins of the former US Steel-South Works site, where many Mexican-Americans had once worked. At the end of the storyline, viewers are encouraged to return to the 1000+ artifacts in the archive or the archive's 13 "featured curations" for more exploration. Academic references which informed the historical account provided in the storyline are listed at the end, along with production credits.

The digital archive and the first two storylines went live in mid-May 2021. As discussed below, the link is currently being circulated primarily in Southeast Chicago in order to give residents first priority in using the site as well as to gather feedback and address any concerns before wider circulation. A broader public launch with publicity is planned for Sept. '21 as described below.

Creating a Long-Term Preservation Plan for Digitized Items
A key question is how to ensure the long-term preservation and sustainability of the large number of high-quality digital files generated by the project. This question raises issues separate from either the archival processing of Museum materials or the accessibility and public engagement issues at the heart of the website. It is a challenging issue given that it requires planning well beyond the life of the grant and because digital storage technologies are rapidly changing. The project team worked on the long-term digital preservation plan for the Museum in consultation with Nancy McGovern, Director of Digital Preservation at MIT Libraries and former President of the Society of American Archivists. McGovern has advised the project since the early NEH Foundations grant in 2014, and she presented her plan to the project's Advisory Committee on April 16th, 2021.

The digitization of materials in the Museum has been key to creating accessibility and because source materials were, in some cases (such as with the Museum's VHS tapes), degrading. However, digitization itself is not a form of preservation, and digital files require long-term storage and maintenance with programs like Fixity. McGovern has created a plan appropriate for a small community-based institution like the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum (see Appendix B). Although implementing the preservation plan will be costly and is beyond the scope of this grant, we have already implemented basic recommendations and are currently searching for funding for additional preservation work.

Recommendations that have already been implemented include storing digital files on two sets of external drives in two different geographic locations in order to ensure back-up if there is a catastrophic failure in either site. In the future, however, the preservation-quality files will need to be stored in a facility that provides maintenance. Given the currently exorbitant prices of commercial storage facilities, McGovern recommended working with a company that caters to non-profit academic institutions or museums, such as the Canadian-based company, Artefactual. Artefactual allows storage of up to 22T of materials at a set price level. In the meantime, digital files may be stored – although not actively maintained - on MIT servers. We are also currently exploring whether some of our partner institutions in Chicago might be willing to take on storage of the preservation-quality digital materials.

Other Issues of Relevance to the Completion of the Grant
Changes from Original Proposal
The stated goals of the original NEH proposal have been fulfilled. Although some changes have been implemented, none have drastically affected the outcome of the project.

One change involved decreasing the number of Museum items hosted in the digital archive. This was done for both practical and conceptual reasons. As the project developed, we became concerned that posting very large numbers of museum artifacts could result in key items getting "lost" amidst thematically similar items. In addition, posting a very high number of Museum in the online archive raised the possibility of distorting the diversity of Southeast Chicago's actual history. For example, materials relating to Eastern European whites are disproportionately represented in Museum holdings because the Museum is located in a neighborhood that was historically home to many white ethnics. In contrast, materials relating to African-Americans, who worked in large numbers in the steels mills but were less often residents in core mill neighborhoods due to housing discrimination, are under-represented among Museum artifacts. To a lesser extent, similar arguments could be made for the presence of women in Museum materials. In short, placing large numbers of items indiscriminately on the site could both be less engaging and lead to a historically inaccurate overrepresentation of certain groups and underrepresentation of others. Museum volunteers also voiced concerns that by including too many materials, the website could discourage potential visitors from visiting the Museum itself. Finally, the process of creating individual resource records for each item, linking those records to Wordpress and to digital files stored on servers, and conducting research for each "backstory," would be prohibitively time-consuming for large numbers of items. Consequently, we decided to focus on an initial 1000+ items for the archive. Moving forward, additional items may be added either because of the outstanding quality of an item or because the item fills a significant gap in the Museum's collections or online archive.

Certain activities and funding choices also differed somewhat from the original proposal. For example, the digitization of film and VHS tapes proved more expensive than initial estimates suggested in part because additional materials were discovered in the Museum. In the budget, we compensated for this by eliminating already nominal stipends for the Project and Museum Director. The digital humanities consultant position was also eliminated given that the Creative Director and Project Archivist were able to address the key metadata issues. Some initially unanticipated activities were added to the workflow as needed. Among others, these activities included: creating transcripts of the Museum's oral histories; spending large numbers of hours linking ArchivesSpace and Wordpress records; locating a hosting site for ArchivesSpace; and working with a sound

designer on the storylines. The amount of time and collaborative work required to hash out each individual storyline also proved to be far greater than originally anticipated.

The pandemic also created unique challenges. In particular, the closure of the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum from March 2020 to June 2021 led to the cancellation of various film and photo shoots and an inability to access certain items. For example, the Project Director and Co-Director were not able to conduct a second film shoot for the *Mexican-American Journeys* storyline; consequently, we hired a Chicago-based cameraperson to shoot needed footage with a drone. Happily, however, the vast majority of materials intended for use in the project had already been digitized, allowing most work to continue remotely. Childcare constraints posed by the pandemic, however, did result in certain team members having to work fewer hours than initially planned. For example, the Creative Director ended up taking on the role of front-end developer for this reason during this period.

Project Fund-raising and Publicity
Over the course of the grant, SECASP was able to leverage NEH's backing in order to obtain additional financial and other support. This included support from MIT's Anthropology Program, MIT's School of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences (SHASS), MIT's Program in Digital Humanities, and MIT's Taskforce on the Work of the Future. We also received student research assistance through MIT's UROP, MSRP, and Digital Humanities programs. The project also received funding from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation for the creation of additional storylines. At the end of the project, we received the second of two Illinois State Historical Records and Archive Board small grants to continue archival processing work. In addition, the project utilized hundreds of hours of in-kind volunteer labor donated by Project Director Walley, Co-Director Boebel, and Museum Director Sellers. Creative Director Soyk also put in hours considerably in excess of those billed.

During summer of 2021, we have shared the SECASP website primarily with those in the Southeast Chicago area in order to gain community feedback. Active publicity for the project will begin in September. We are currently working on a press release with MIT's public relations office and have also received publicity advice from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation. Website links to SECASP will be created with the Field Museum and Chicago History Museum. We hope to utilize the social media networks of NEH, MIT, and Donnelley to publicize the project. In addition, we will be advertising the site to scholars for classroom use in relevant disciplines such as labor history, American Studies, anthropology, sociology, deindustrialization studies, working class studies, and others.

Evaluation
Evaluation of the project has happened in multiple ways both during the course of the project and at its completion. These forms of evaluation include:

1) **Advisory Committee – ongoing and end-of-project evaluations** - Since the first NEH Foundations grant in 2014, the project has been supervised by an Advisory Committee that has met 2-3 times a year. Discussion of the status of the project and website development has been the focus of these meetings, offering an ongoing forum for feedback and

evaluation throughout the life of the grant. The Advisory Committee includes representatives from the Chicago History Museum and Field Museum, both major institutions in Chicago, as well as the Museum Board, community representatives, and project team leaders.

In addition, after the conclusion of the NEH grant, we asked the two external advisory committee representatives to provide an additional evaluation of the project. Peter Alter, the Chief Historian at the Chicago History Museum and Director of the Studs Terkel Oral History Center, offered the following evaluation on July 9, 2021:

The website does a wonderful job presenting the rich collections of the Southeast Chicago Historical Society in a vibrant and engaging platform. The Mexican-American Journeys and the Memorial Day Massacre storylines draw on important Chicago and U.S. history while weaving together first-person narratives with historic and contemporary film footage. Indeed, the website is a wonderful addition to the online interpretations of Chicago history and a valuable resource to researchers of all ages. Also, post-pandemic researchers will be drawn to visit the museum and see the collections in person.

Advisory committee representative Madeleine Tudor, who is the Applied Cultural Research Manager at the Field Museum, offered the following assessment:

The Southeast Chicago Archive & Storytelling Project website exceeded my expectations in a number of ways. Its main strengths are as follows:

*1. **Stunning Visuals.** The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum's collection is beautifully showcased by the aesthetic design of the site. Immediately upon opening the site, the user is drawn in by compelling, story-filled images presented in a full-screen format. Each carefully-selected image is rich in content and evokes the time and place in which it was captured. Moving deeper into the site reveals images as compelling as those on the home page sequence.*

*2. **Well-Crafted Captions.** Websites (and social media) face the challenge of effectively communicating their content; presenting too much or too little text, or text that doesn't get to the heart of the matter. This website is beautifully written with incisive, eloquent text that brings core messaging to the user in a clear, approachable way, for example, "History is made through the objects we save and the stories we tell about them," and "History is often told from the viewpoint of the powerful. For most of us, however, history is bound up with the everyday objects we save and stories we tell that give them meaning."*

*3. **Website Structure.** The website is easily navigable and gives the user clear options to delve into the content. From the homepage to the menu to the internal sections, the organization of information is logical and provides paths for the user to follow, whether to explore the Archive or the Storylines. The structure is elegant in the way it allows the user to move between the two in its Curation feature which brings together sets of images and stories based on particular themes, as well as videos that offer the option of learning more about how a particular object represents a much larger story.*

*4. **Content Curation**. Selections made by the project's curators show care and knowledge in telling stories and displaying objects that effectively communicate their meaning. The curators also took great care in selecting objects that create a path between past and present, as beautifully demonstrated in the site's videos. In addition, the Curations feature weaves together well-selected sets of images and stories organized thematically, with intersectionality in mind as particular images can be in multiple Curations.*

In terms of future progress, I would like to see a way for users to interact with the content in ways that bring the experience of the residents to bear on the future of the region. For example, what lessons of labor activism could be used to think about the future of today's workforce? Creating a space for dialogue on the site or programming that comes out of comments related to the site's content could be fruitful.

2) **Focus groups** – The project team conducted two focus groups to solicit feedback during the development of the website (both online due to the pandemic). The first focus group on Oct. 6, 2020 included individuals from Southeast Chicago who responded to a call on the Museum's facebook page as well as Boston area participants, ranging from MIT students to the Director of Documentary Educational Resources, a documentary film non-profit. Feedback from the first group was positive but also raised questions about site navigation that led to a substantial reworking of the storyline navigation tools. The second focus group in January 2021 included feedback from five high school teachers who either taught in Southeast Chicago or were from the area. The feedback was extremely positive (suggesting the new navigational tools were successful) and also included helpful suggestions for study guide materials and activities to make the site more helpful for teachers/students.

3) **Facebook group responses from the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum** – The Museum Director posted materials from SECASP on the 6000+ member facebook group for the Southeast Chicago Historical Society as well as on other community facebook pages in Southeast Chicago. Comments so far have been brief, but highly positive, including: "Great work!" "Thanks for all the time and effort put into this." "Wanted to say thank you for such a great job your [sic] doing on this project"'; "Incredible history. Thank you." "Outstanding!!"; "Fantastic!"; "Amazing." In relation to the *Mexican-American Journeys* storyline: "Thank you for such an important contribution to the community." In relation to the *Memorial Day Massacre* storyline: "Nice presentation. Great work…thank you"; and "…the memory of it all, jaw dropping accounts and photos." In addition, some comments referenced family connections to the materials. In relation to the Memorial Day Massacre storyline, one person wrote: "Just read a copy of my uncle's transcript from when he was questioned by the senate after the massacre. He was on crutches with his head bandaged." Another person wrote, "As a member of the Findeisen family, I'm very happy to see that the photos we donated are available for all to see." While the comments have been highly positive so far, we are just beginning the process of familiarizing those in Southeast Chicago with the project.

4) **Meeting with retired steelworkers in Southeast Chicago** – The website project was presented to leaders of Local 1033 of the United Steelworkers union in Southeast Chicago on June 11th by the Project Director, Museum Director, and Archivist. They were positive about the website, but were concerned about elderly retirees' ability to access the website independently and requested that we present it to SOAR, the association of USW retirees in Southeast Chicago. This event was held on Aug. 2nd although technical difficulties with projecting the site, made it possible to only show parts of the site.

5) **Presentation of project in discussions and seminars** - the website prototype was presented by the Project Director, Co-Director, and Creative Director at two seminars at MIT for additional feedback, one in the Anthropology Program on Sept. 23rd, 2020, and one in the Comparative Media Studies Program on Dec. 3rd, 2020.

As noted above, feedback on the website so far has been highly positive. The only consistent criticism received has also been a longstanding concern of the project team: namely, that although the digital archive is accessible via phones, the media-intensive storylines are only accessible on computers and require substantial bandwidth. Given that many residents of Southeast Chicago lack computers, this is a significant concern. Because of this we are actively promoting use of the website in Southeast Chicago schools, which are key points of computer access for young people. In addition, we plan to apply for grants for financial support in optimizing the website storylines for phones. We are also engaging in public events relating to the website in Southeast Chicago, including one held in a public library in August. Given that the library has a computer bank, we had hoped to encourage attendees to explore the storylines on their own afterward. However, the lack of library headphones limited the ability to explore the storylines. It also raised the question of whether cheap inexpensive headphones should be purchased and handed out at future events. In Fall 2021, as circulation of the website moves beyond the Southeast Chicago area, we also plan to conduct additional focus groups for other user groups. In addition, we will be submitting the project to various festivals and forums that accept "interactive documentary" work which offer additional possibilities for feedback as well as dissemination.

Project Audiences
SECASP was carefully designed to address the needs of multiple audiences, including diverse groups of Southeast Chicago residents, the general public, teachers, students, and scholars. As previously discussed, it was also designed to appeal to casual users as well as those seeking greater historical depth. For example, the featured items, curations, and storylines are designed to engage casual users and draw them into the content; while those who would like to take a "deeper dive," are able to access additional information and materials through "backstories," additional material tabs in the "storylines" section, and the scholarly references and study guide.

In general, Southeast Chicago is an underserved region of 78,775 residents that is currently majority Latinx with sizeable populations of African-Americans and whites (often from Eastern European immigrant backgrounds). Since the website launched in mid-May, our goal, as mentioned above, has been to first focus on making the site known within the Southeast Chicago community itself, with a more general publicity launch in the fall to attract broader audiences. As already noted, the effort to speak to Southeast Chicago audiences so far has included circulating the SECASP link on the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum facebook page (with 7000+ members) as well as on a variety of other Southeast Chicago neighborhood facebook groups. According to google analytics when the link was circulated on these groups during late May/early June, 948 new users were recorded with about one-third of those based in Chicago and Northwest Indiana's Calumet region.

Community outreach has thus far included speaking with high school teachers as well as environmental activists in the area via zoom. It has also included meeting in person with members of Local 1033 of the United Steelworkers Union, the steelworkers retiree association (SOAR), and at a local library event in Southeast Chicago. Since many former steelworkers are elderly and lack access to computers, the union meetings have been key to conveying the project to an older generation while also soliciting additional commentary on union and mill materials presented on the website.

The issue of how the project will affect Southeast Chicago residents as well as broader audiences moving forward remains a question for the future. It is already clear that the website is drawing additional attention to the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum. We will continue to monitor use of the website through google analytics moving forward.

Project Sustainability and Long-Term Impact
SECASP is intended as a long-term project and the recent launch of the website is merely the start of the journey. As previously mentioned, the SECASP website was created in Wordpress to make it easier and less expensive to maintain long-term along with our community-based partner organization. A Paypal donation button for the benefit of the all-volunteer Southeast Chicago Historical Society/Museum has been incorporated into the website. Resulting funds will be directed by the Society to support hosting fees as well as ongoing archival processing of Museum materials. If such funds prove insufficient, the Project Director and MIT have committed to supporting hosting fees, as needed, for several years. In the event of the inability of the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum to continue for any reason, the Chicago History Museum has already committed to taking on the physical and digital assets of the Museum and project, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the collection. While long-term impacts of the project in the future remain to be seen, we envision the incorporation of the website into middle school, high school, and university curricula as well as finding audiences among the general U.S. public (and hopefully beyond), including through portals at major institutions like the Field Museum and Chicago History Museum. Support from the National Endowment for the Humanities has been instrumental in securing support from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation as well as MIT and other bodies. We believe that the website itself will also be instrumental in helping the team to procure additional grant funds to develop further storylines.

Award Products
Award products include the website itself https://www.sechicagohistory.org/, which will be disseminated as noted above. For visuals of the website, see Appendix C. For the long-term preservation plan for the museum, see Appendix B.

APPENDIX A:
NEH Grant work summary: entire project
By Derek Potts

As the Project Manager and Archivist, I worked on all archival aspects related to preservation and access. Tasks included:

- packing, shipping, and tracking 256 films, tapes, and DVDs for digitization
- assisting with the migration of accession records from Archivists' Toolkit to ArchivesSpace – creating and cleaning-up records, while coordinating with LibraryHost to ensure that the correct computer software and settings were in place to facilitate the transfer of records
- digitizing museum items for online access and preservation purposes, scanning 3191 items at 1200 dpi resolution which created 6078 TIF image files
- creating 68 accession records for items "found in collections" (FIC)
- creating 1034 item-level resource records in ArchivesSpace (linked to WordPress and used as a metadata source for archival items featured on the website)
- uploading associated digital files to MIT Anthropology server for web designer access and use
- applying subject tags to the 1034 archival items featured on the website, referencing controlled metadata vocabularies including Library of Congress, Getty Thesaurus, and local sources
- recommending organization and preservation strategies at the museum

Within this, the past year's work (June 2020 – May 2021) involved:

- creating 68 accession records for items "found in collections" (FIC)
- creating item-level resource records in ArchivesSpace (linked to WordPress and used as a metadata source for archival items featured on the website)
- uploading associated digital files to MIT Anthropology server for web designer access and use
- applying subject tags to the 1034 archival items featured on the website, referencing controlled metadata vocabularies including Library of Congress, Getty Thesaurus, and local sources

APPENDIX B

Southeast Chicago Archive and Storytelling Project (SECASP):
Digital Preservation Planning Overview

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Overview
Throughout its phases of development, SECASP has initiated and engaged in ongoing digital preservation discussions and planning. The acquisition, digitisation, and storage of the digital collections SECASP manages and makes available have intentionally incorporated good practice. SECASP has been built with a strong foundation of community support, and forged curation and preservation partnerships that are essential for sustaining digital content and collections. This report provides an overview of preservation planning using brief status updates using a framework that reflects the principles of good practice for digital preservation.[1]

Digital Preservation Principles Review
To demonstrate alignment with the principles of good practice for digital preservation, SECASP has or will:

1. Identify the digital content within our scope of responsibility.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has a high-level inventory of its digital content that can be used as the basis for monitoring and sustaining the digital collections.
   SECASP preservation planning status: strong

2. Specify the digital content we intend to preserve.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has identified at-risk content in physical or analog form and in digital form taken steps to protect it by digitizing fragile audio-visual material for example.
   SECASP preservation planning status: ready

3. Establish requirements for storing files in preservable formats.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has digitized with sustainability in mind and in accordance with digitization and digital preservation standards.
   SECASP preservation planning status: strong

4. Weigh options for storing our digital content and adopt optimal approaches for now.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has exceeded minimum requirements for digitisation and digital preservation, and is identifying steps to improve by exploring options.
   SECASP preservation planning status: ready

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[1] The digital preservation principles referenced here are adapted from the principles adopted by MIT Libraries in 2013 (available at: https://libraries.mit.edu/about/files/2019/12/Digital-Preservation-Principles_v_01-mmj.pdf) that are grounded in and informed by good practice for digital preservation, including the ten principles for good practice from the development of *Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria and Checklist* (TRAC) by the RLG-NARA Task Force (available at: https://www.crl.edu/archiving-preservation/digital-archives/metrics-assessing-and-certifying/core-re).

5. Verify that our digital content is secure during day-to-day activities.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP is addressing rights, confidentiality, and security requirements for its digital collections and has implemented procedures accordingly.
   SECASP preservation planning status: ready

6. Ensure that our digital content is prepared for an emergency.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has geographically distributed copies and has considered succession planning through its partners to ensure ongoing access.
   SECASP preservation planning status: ready

7. Develop (and review) plans for managing our digital content over time
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has demonstrated a strong commitment to sustaining its digital content.
   SECASP preservation planning status: ready

8. Demonstrate awareness of standards to engage in our long-term management
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has sought advice and recommendations from partners and other experts to protect digital content by engaging in digital preservation discussions and preparations throughout the project phases.
   SECASP preservation planning status: strong

9. Manage digital content with a commitment to long-term access to our digital content.
   SECASP preservation planning: SECASP takes a collaborative approach to building and curating its collections that leverages the strengths and capabilities of partners and contributors.
   SECASP preservation planning status: strong

10. Commit to the ongoing discovery and delivery of our digital content.
    SECASP preservation planning: SECASP has a discovery environment that aligns with the needs and interests of the community and engages the community that built and relies upon its collections through vivid storytelling, for example.
    SECASP preservation planning status: strong

Next steps and Readiness for SECASP

In addition to its local partners in Chicago where the museum is based, SECASP has:
- Reached out to digital content experts at the Library of Congress and elsewhere who are willing to provide additional assessment and advice as needed;
- Explored available digital preservation storage and service options from open source providers like Artefactual and others;
- Gathered cost information to inform preservation planning for sustaining its digital collections; and
- Implemented the fundamentals of good practice for managing its digital collections until it is possible to engage in full digital preservation.

Rapidly changing technologies, options, and cost models for digital preservation storage are a continuing challenge for sustaining digital preservation programs. To meet ongoing preservation storage needs, SECASP has explored and identified possible options that will need to be updated for future phases and

confirmed before implementing. Artefactual, a top open source digital preservation service provider, has a promising option that is scalable and more affordable for small to medium-sized digital collections. Their option provides a dedicated server that is managed by Artefactual in a data center run by a cloud service provider with a good track record. This service benefits leverages the benefits of cloud services – lower storage costs in secure and well-managed spaces – plus the benefits of dedicated servers to meet digital preservation requirements making it more affordable and compliant. Other providers measure costs per TB of content and add service costs on top of storage costs. The Artefactual model provides a multi-terabyte block of storage that includes digital preservation services (e.g., fixity checking) with lower processing costs on the dedicated server and a second copy in the cloud (if the access requirements for the content allows it to be stored in the cloud). Artefactual expects the amount of storage to increase and the cost to decrease with technological advances, a particularly appealing aspect of this option. The costs in the table below are from a 2019 estimate. Similar more affordable options are likely to be available when implementation proceeds.

Preservation Storage Size	Dedicated Server Storage Plan		Comparison option 1 (with fixity check)		Comparison option 2	
2 copies	Tb / yr	Total	Tb / yr	Total	Tb / yr	Total
10 Tb	$1,250	$12,500	$1000	$10,000	$1177	$11,770
15 Tb	$833	$12,500	$1000	$15,000	$868	$13,020
30 Tb	$416	$12,500	$1000	$30,000	$788	$23,650
60 Tb	$416	$25,000	$1000	$60,000	$704	$42,250

Table 1. Comparison of dedicated server storage option with more common plans

Designating funding for ongoing digital preservation storage costs and keeping up with technological advances are a challenge for all organizations that are responsible for preserving digital collections. It should be possible for SECASP to address these challenges through a combination of implementation grant funding, ongoing local support, and a base of community funding to supplement available funding to cover annual costs. Approaching the implementation phase as a pilot with benefits for similar collections would appeal to foundations and other funders who support technology and preservation-oriented work. There are also possible sources of funding at the State-level that SECASP will explore. Identifying a combination of funding for ongoing preservation costs backed by strong succession planning options and significant national interest as a compelling community-based collection example make the sustainability of SECASP more feasible.

In future phases, SECASP is ready to act upon its cumulative digital preservation planning and preparation.

APPENDIX C
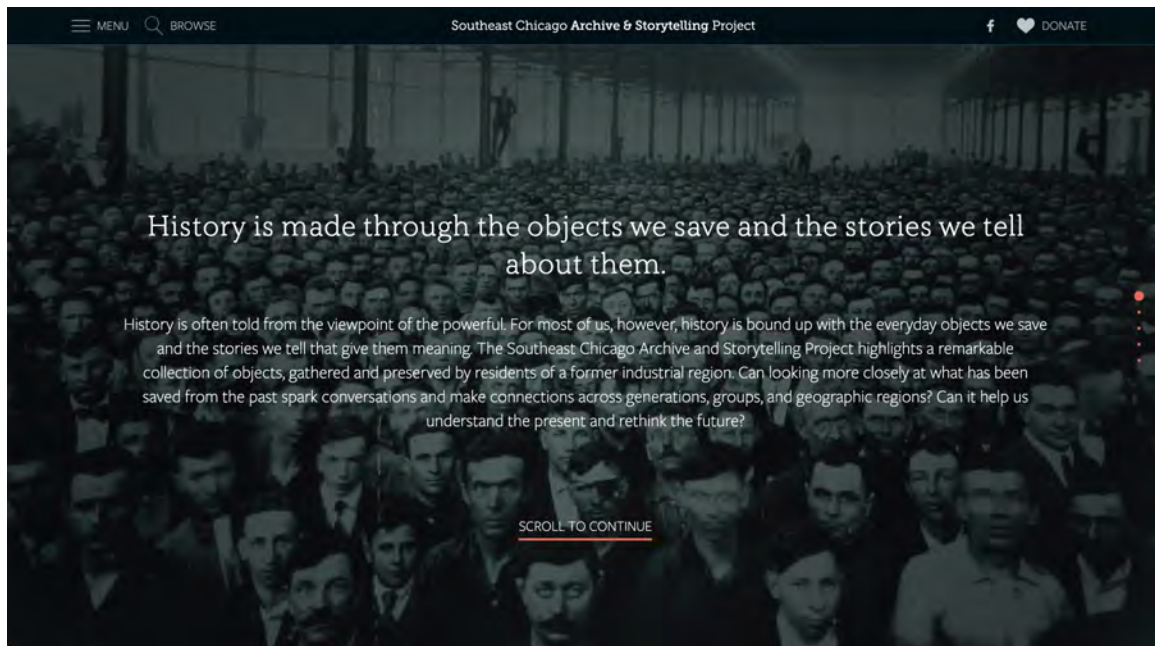
The Memorial Day Massacre

A story told through Museum objects saved by Southeast Chicago residents

BEGIN

this story 🎧 has audio