

[Event is on a short recess and will resume at 9:40 ET. Captioner is on standby.] Good morning, everybody. I am Jessica from GPO. Welcome to this session. Blurring the government documents lines. How one research project

changed perceptions and promoted collections. I would like to recommend Hayley Johnson who is head of the library and Sarah Simms an undergraduate at Louisiana State University. Thank you very much. >> Good morning.

How are we doing? I am loving this turnout. >> Thank you for joining. Today we will share our experience working on a research project that helps us to promote government documents in a new way and breaks down [Indiscernible] at the same time. You so as a government document library and I hope I am not alone in feeling that I am educating people about what government information is and why it is important. I do this for students and faculty sometimes the same faculty member multiple times over. I don't know how that's possible but it happens. And even fellow librarians that I work with. There's a sense of fear and trepidation for government information into the research conversation. The most part anything related gets automatically [Indiscernible]. [Indiscernible-low audio.]

>> Back in 2016 with a chance reading of a newspaper article, they prompted our research into a project on [Indiscernible]. At Camp Livingston in Louisiana. We set off on a journey to uncover what we call a hidden history and conduct research that had never been done before. We were both out of our comfort zones and neither of us were [Indiscernible]. And the project idea would require relying almost exclusively on government information. We were dealing only in [Indiscernible]. Which was new for us and we also had no idea that the project would turn into what it turned into and how it changed our lives personally and professionally. We will give you a recap of the project so you understand where we're coming from. We came across this article and Haley had this idea that maybe there was a sense of [Indiscernible]. That was deep in her memory. And so we began to do oral history and we found there was a camp that was built in Camp Livingston in about 1941. It held approximately 9000 to 1500 [Indiscernible] it started with [Indiscernible]. We have traveled everywhere and found documentation everything you can imagine. It showed which groups were being pulled and where they were being pulled from. It has changed our perception of what it looks like. >> On a daily basis I work to help find information. Some of the goals are historical. It's provided within [Indiscernible]

or online. When we began this project what we needed was not available. We found a few things [Indiscernible-low audio.] there was nothing online pick >> We had to do with the shocked that none of the information we needed [Indiscernible]. That was something that happened in Louisiana. Like Haley said we assumed because of how it works it would be online. We needed to have nothing online and nothing in the neighboring depository. We spent about a week and half that time was spent trying to learn the cataloging system. Is very foreign to us. We were also for the first time in an archival setting. And outside of the regular depository. I am only used to it because of working with Hayley. By doing this research is not a place for people to assume government information exists. We began to view government documents and at times even a hidden collection, maybe because of the accessibility issue. We thought we would understand it. All along the way we have also been discussing how we uncovered this story and we have been consistently sharing the importance of government information. To get people at all levels. History is important. >> When I do an instruction session I am promoting government documents. As an important component. I use marketing material like what you see. I have George Washington saying [Indiscernible] and we all have our set things that we use. A few examples. This project gave us the opportunity to be explicit [Indiscernible-low audio.]

>> For me, I am not a government document librarian. I don't know if you could tell that from my title. I am a teaching librarian. This project completely changed the way that I come at instruction. Usually I would go in and show the library databases and do some learning exercises. [No Audio] six percent >> Old and new at the same time. It's really been quite fun. Our goal with this project came to educate as many individuals as possible at the history of Japanese interment. We did not mention was that with

the information nonexistent the memory of this and kind of the secretive nature meant that no one was aware that this had occurred. That was another uphill battle we had to encounter. It's trying to educate as many people as we can both locally, regionally, and nationally. Along the way we realized we had to go outside of what we call the usual librarian channels. In addition to history this project was discussing [Indiscernible]. I think everyone in this room as librarians we stick to research. It goes on and on. For us, we realize librarians are not the target audience. We wanted history we were uncovering to reach what's possible. We present all the time.

>> Has anyone here been to an history conference? We went beyond library conferences and we have gone into the for a of history and [Indiscernible] the first one we jumped right into the world of history and historians. While we found historians were okay. The conferences are [Indiscernible]. The first non-librarian conference we presented at is an Asian American history conference. It was super excited. And we prepared a beautiful PowerPoint

. We were going to walk in and while the audience. We aligned it. It was gorgeous. All of our discoveries were on their. We got to the session and realized no one on the panel or any other panel for that matter had prepared a PowerPoint. Everyone simply sat at a table like this and read their paper for their entire allotted time. That was our time to get up and we didn't bring the paper with us.

But would we bring it we will do the PowerPoint? To say the least we were mortified. We had to roll with it. We had to start the presentation with an apology and an explanation of sorry we are librarians. This is not how we do information sharing. We went through the PowerPoint. It was fine. An incredibly gracious crowd pick we got wonderful feedback at the end where people came up to us and said we appreciate you not reading. This was the first time we've seen this. [Laughter] so after this we realized we had a lot of things we had to work against. Just based on our own experiences. We also found strange pockets of criticism. They wanted us to use the term wrongfully interned. This was our very first conference. It was an eye opening experience. All the documentation up to this point, everything was still on the books as an alien. It was a very interesting thing to navigate for us.

>> Someone was trying to school us being that they thought we did not have the degree to speak on the subject. We did not know how to respond. We have done the research. We know what the proper term is. We are not going to change it.

>> Existing perceptions of academic librarians we had to fight against and just librarians in general. All we do is answer reference questions. We read books all day. We just teach people how to use the database. And that we don't do original research. We just help other people find resources that will help them. To be seen as legitimate scholars, outside of the library world, we needed to break down those misconceptions. We do this every time we present at a conference. >> When we speak to other historians, there's a lot of interesting personal interplay that comes into this.

To counter a somewhat negative or even myopic view of librarians, we found we would have three slides and these characteristics have been helpful for us. We have been intentional in connecting this project in our role as academic librarians. It's also been intentional connecting it to the importance of information. We literally have any setting we possibly can connected. >> The first characteristic is we have been very strategic in how we approach the project. Granted it started on a whim. We had no idea this would turn into this. At first when we realized this could be long-term and in-depth we sat down to think about how to approach it. One thing we do is if we present at a conference, we try to do research in that area if possible. For instance we had this connection that one of the Army regiments that were based at Camp Livingston was from Wisconsin and men from that one were guards from the internment camp. We were able to accompany that with research. We've done it the opposite way. We recently just got back from Hawaii.. If we would not have pursued that presentation we would have missed out on opportunities to me. They had family members held in Camp Livingston and had actual artifacts. So being intentional at every point.

>> We have also been intentionally sharing. Every time we go somewhere we have tried to meet with scholars to be able to talk about research and we network and we have feedback which was a boom not only for the research but the interpretation. We went to another conference to see what the lens was. We have people who have expertise in the area. They've been able to share to help us finally create what we look through. The first round of this - - the first round of funding we receive was a grant.

You have to make an online something. We made an online bibliography and it has all the information about Camp Livingston. You had this about the Japanese-American [Indiscernible].

Our focus there's not allowed out there. This true term of interment.

>> And we have also been intentional with the presentation so conferences and Asian American studies conferences. We are librarians we hit every single library conference we can. We have also been doing presentations for library schools. So we can talk to students about how we did the research and share what it feels like when you have a Masters degree in information studies and you're still lost at what you are supposed to do. We were hoping to make that connection with library students so they understand they also can do this. It may be a learning curve for them as well. It's open to all of us. >> [Captioners transitioning]

>> This is a graphic from the Japanese-Americans for justice campaign and on one side, you see it is about the forts, one side is about the immigration center and making the connection between those two. We have decided not to shy away from bringing in that political element, and we understand that it resonates with the historical work we are doing today.

>> The other thing is to be open and honest. [No Audio - reconnecting] We have recently integrated the workshops into our honors college, the honors college in English class, these are freshmen and sophomores mostly, they do some

super serious research, so we have worked with the resident Dean of that college, we are in their space, he chose the time and they come in and we have had the opportunity to workshop with them and have these incredible conversations about research to break down any barriers, and we can come from a very personal and honest space. I don't bring this into any time I teach, from here on out, this has been, this changed me as a person because I have never hit so many walls in my life, I don't know if Haley had either but the frustrations, we were angry at certain points, like why is this not there? So, it really was just changing all around, so I bring that into all of the classes that I try to teach and throw in some government documents as well. So, this honors research class we are in now, they are talking about research issues, so the author asked me to put together a bibliography, so she is amazing at finding everything so I asked her to help me pull the government information site so we built this bibliography that rests only exclusively on government information and it has to do with immigration issues because this is supposed to be background information for the students to get started. So we have really been sitting in this background information and talking to professors as much as we can about what government information is, and it is not just a website and that there are different ways to come at this. With background information, it is supposed to be easily accessible and easily readable for the students who are just getting started on this project, so this is wonderful. The other one is to be enterprising and stretching beyond that usual library and role, and we say that, I feel like we are all moving out of that role that is having people understand that we are because again, isn't the perception about what a librarian does and what a librarian is. So because of the research, we have been able to do a podcast at LSU, it was an incredible experience, we have spoken at the national World War II Museum three times, we got invited to do a lunch and learn lecture, that was the very first time we have presented this on a larger stage in the conference so the nerves were there but it was an incredible experience

and from that, we have been able to teach students through the national World War II Museum, they do a national history Day, so we worked with that and the student leadership Academy that we have and again, we are bringing in the research, not necessarily as the librarian aspect, we have been in panel discussions

. We have been asked to sit on panels with other historians. And we have also been working with nonprofit on grants and projects, completely outside of the librarian role and the library role as well. Beyond our duties of our daily work. It is basically boiling down to not being afraid to contact anyone. We have a policy, if you only answer the email, maybe we will find a phone number kind of thing, but it has been really great, at the beginning of this, we had to knock on some doors and that started to change and people are starting to come to us which felt really incredible, they are not coming to us, they are coming to the story. So again, we are very much behind the scenes, but they are very intrigued by the story we have been able to find. So the biggest forum that we have gotten the chance to be a part of so far is to be asked to be a speaker at the TedX, and we have agreed to participate, but we took advantage of it, we highlighted the work we are doing and uncovering the history within the archives but we also opened with poking fun at the stereotypes of librarians. But, TedX was a platform for us to speak with all of the individuals who we wouldn't otherwise reach through conferencing and that type of thing. The library has about 3200 talks online, and if you search the library, only 23 come up, so we thought that was a really great way to showcase the work that librarians can do. We initially wrote this narrative just like we would do a presentation and that scholarly type of style. But we realize that TedX is meant to share ideas widely and broadly, we wanted to get down to the heart that we wanted to communicate and 18 minutes or less, so we really learned a lot through that process and we also had to make room to share why we were the experts, so to speak and why we were the ones sharing this history with everyone. We feel that TedX legitimized our research on a different type of stage and it helps with our imposter syndrome just a bit to help us feel like we have the right qualifications to be speaking to this story in the history of the work we are doing. And that is because we consistently got asked during the process with TedX, why should you be the one speaking about this? That was a lot of soul-searching, late nights up with some coffee thinking, should we be the ones? But, it was, no one else has pulled the information that we have so we are the ones that are sharing this. I will also say that TedX was a twofer, it was a stage to breakdown assumptions to a general audience, so we are in a live face-to-face audience with about 1000 people from the community but it is also on YouTube, so who knows a large audience, it is a way to breakdown the barriers between librarians and the public, especially academic librarians and the public and again, those roles, this comes up again and again, the roles of the librarian. But it also was a call to other librarians so if any other librarians watch this, they could be inspired to do this exact same research because that is part of our presentation, that this is a call for all of us. If you find something that has not been shared or you hunt down something that hasn't been, that has been lost to history to find that platform to share this because it is imperative that we share histories and stories that have gone hidden or ignored or forgotten for so long. Also, we are so lucky, this is backed up by a professor that we met in Hawaii, who told us, he's always stressing to his students, that it didn't matter where they got their degree, what matters is the work that they do. So, he was sitting with us and speaking with us about our presentation and he recognized that the work that we have done with our project signified the nuts and bolts of the work of academics that transcends what we do is librarians. So that is one part of it, that is the one part, the twofer is that it was also this incredible stage to share a compelling and tragic story of one family and as a broader example of what had happened to thousands of families, that many people don't think they realize had happened. So, a couple highlights, the first one research is important, and we all know why research is important but in this context, we mean that as librarians, we typically take a backseat to the research of others and we share the support for them but we need to feel comfortable taking the lead in communicating the importance of the work that we are doing, that is just as valuable as the work that we are helping our

academic colleagues complete. And also, don't be afraid to market the work that you are doing, right, if we hadn't done this, we wouldn't get any of the opportunities that we have gone throughout this project, we wouldn't have been able to speak to the people we have spoken to and we wouldn't have been able to present where we presented. And we have approached everyone and probably a little bit of not knowing who they were helped a little bit because we would help absolutely anyone, I don't care if you are the head of whatever center, we have a project that we would like to share with you. And it has worked out very well for us. Also, you never know how something is going to connect to a larger movement, how it is going to change how you do your work, how you present, or how you teach or how you market your collection. Again, when we started this project, we had no clue that any of these facets would be affected, we just had an interest outside of the work we were doing and decided to pursue it on our own time and it turned into something that has changed the way Sarah teaches, it has changed the way I communicate with government& And it has become larger than we thought it ever would. So you never know what is going to happen with that type of project. And finally, don't be afraid, as we said before, to be your own cheerleader, you are your best advocate, we all know that but sometimes when it comes to pushing out our own research, it is a little more difficult to put into action. But we have to advocate for ourselves. And I feel like that, to mimic what Haley just said, it is not only ourselves but the profession, the collections we have. Librarians are so much part of a fabric of that social justice movement and we are seeing this now more than ever, so we think that is very important and we are just thrilled to have the community and the support that we do.

>> We will take any questions or comments. And thank you.

>> [Applause]

>> Good morning, one comment that I have for you is, each state, as a person who is in charge of national history Day for their state, they are usually looking for workshops for teachers or administrators or school districts that are apart, so if you just go to NHE.org, there is a map, you just click on your state, you will get emails of things going on, I have done that in Pennsylvania for just teaching teachers how to search for things, primary documents, here is an example, the theme this year is breaking barriers and I feel that your presentation would really be great as a part of something like that. >> Thank you very much.

>> One question from the virtual audience, Jennifer, did you have any issues, time or funds with supervisors?

>> At OSU, we have been supported in every aspect that we have done. Our Dean, our immediate supervisors, our associate deans have been behind this project, and we came together to LSU from a different institution, so the previous institution maybe didn't understand the scope but when we got to LSU, they knew we were coming with this project and they have been incredible for us, with us. >> And I will also say that obtaining grant funding has been a huge reason that we have been able to travel as much as we have. Everything up to this point has been grant funded so it has just been incredible.

>> Hi, I am Peter from Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio, and first of all, I want to say you are my two new heroes, I was just thrilled to be able to listen to your presentation and what you have accomplished. The one question that I was going to ask was sort of answered already but, you got the support and I don't find a problem, my

institution with the financial support or moral support or what have you, my question is, were you able to just do it within the work day, or did you have to spend extra time outside of the workday to do this?

>> A lot of extra time outside of the workday, this was not something we could even conceivably do in our work time. Of course we have been very fortunate that we have been able to take worktime to focus on this, we went to Hawaii for research for three weeks. I know, so sad for us, it was so horrible, but, I mean, who is going to let you go for three weeks? Granted we had grant funds, but the majority of the work has been done on our own time. The work of going through camp rosters and researching each and every individual one took I don't know how long, it has just been so much time out of work, you have to be really dedicated to the project and really believe in sharing that information, which we both are

, it hasn't been a burden for us and I will also say, it has been great being partners in this. If Haley had to do this solo I know she would and she would do an amazing job. I probably would have thrown in the towel. But, the two of us being able to work together, and we also work closely together in our office so we can easily talk about this, it has been great that way.

>> That was actually the second question.

>> And I will add to that, the reason I think, apart from the importance of remembering that this happened, and the injustices around it, the focus of our research is actually on an extended family. So, a family that was in Hawaii where the father was picked up on Pearl Harbor day and put into the system, the internment camp system and his wife's cousin was in Louisiana 12 miles away from the camp itself. So we have become close to the families. We are sharing their stories, they have been so gracious to share their memories with us, so that adds to the passion and the necessity to do right by this project.

>> I am Patricia from Queens Library in New York and there are two things I wanted to add, one, first of all, I think it was the person just before me who said, they were inspired by this presentation. I guess as a former graduate student, I believe [indiscernible - audio cutting in and out] in something that allowed me about your presentation, you mentioned the concentration camp, did we have camps where we had the ultimate solution of killing the Japanese here? Were we exterminating them, or using this concentration camp here, where the American concentration camps and what were they? If you could clarify that. But again, thank you.

>> There is a debate right now between the Asian American studies community and there has been literature posted about returning to the original term for these Japanese American internment camps and in the documents, they were originally referred to as concentration camps. When they realized what was happening in Europe, they quickly changed the name. They maintained that the definition of what a technical concentration camp is, the camp still fits, like the term still fits, but there are a lot of people who are really uncomfortable for that reason because they don't want to have that association that that was what was happening here because it wasn't, and also the debate between whether it is an internment or incarceration camp. So there are a lot of legalities I go into the terminology that people are still going back and forth over.

>> I also like that you are bringing up there are multiple definitions and meanings through history and time and that as librarians, we can look historically and keep definitions meanings, as they mean, and infuse them in the context and it is so much richer than sometimes narrowing it down to one thought and meaning, and that is so enriching, it is not fun.

So, thank you.

>> When Haley and I first started this, I think we both just thought everything was an internment camp and through this process, we learned the differences and the choice of terminology is from feedback that we have received from scholars in the field so the camps that we are focused on our true internment camps because they fell under a Geneva convention ruling, these men were considered aliens because they weren't allowed to become U.S. citizens, they were coming over from Japan, they were allowed to become U.S. citizens until 1952 so there are a lot of things that we are learning as we go.

>> We do have one more question from a virtual audience, do you have to share your grant money with LSU library?

>> We share as far as having an office for research support, whatever they call themselves, they to take a cut of grant funds but that is supposed to be built into our budget so we still get will be asked for and they get their money on top of that. But, yes, we do have to pay the fee, so to speak, to LSU.

>> This is just my own comment, for those of you who are interested in learning more about the research, they did a webinar for us, you can go to the repository, just like on the history tag and it'll pop up.

>> Great, thank you everyone. Thanks so much.

>> [Music]