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Archives Field Trip! Bringing Public History to the Archives

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Archives Field Trip! Bringing Public History to the Archives

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Lori Schwartz, Hagel and Technical Services Archivist
UNO Libraries' Archives and Special Collections

July 25, 2024
Public History at UNO

- History department had interest in offering a Public History course but had no expertise
- Would we be willing to teach? Yes!
- Claire had strong rapport with History Department through archives instruction sessions and serving as history subject specialist.
- Both Lori and Claire have Masters from Public History programs (Go Gamecocks and Wolfpack, respectively)

Courtesy OSU's Public History Program
Reasons for Archives Field Trips

• Flipping the traditional “one-shot” instruction session
• Hands-on approach combine practice and theory
• Very little about archives in other public history syllabi, compared to other PH work (museums, digital, oral history, etc.,)
• Conveying skills of processing and outreach in 2 hours was a challenge
Processing

- Students learned multi-level arrangement by moving folders into a series structure.
- We rotated through 3-4 collections to give students experience with different collections and document types.
- Next time, we will keep this structure but change out one collection for a more complex one.
Outreach/ Exhibit

• We gave students a tour of department displays
• We asked students to select items from pre-pulled boxes and write drafts of an introductory panel and item labels
• Goal was to examine topics of handling, collection, ethics, outreach (all things we discussed in class and readings)
• Agency and creativity caused paralysis
• Next time, we will pre-select items, not boxes; send students collection/ item descriptions before class for context, and create a worksheet
Archivist Teaching Survey

- Scope
- Audience
- Questions galore
- Categories:
  - Background Info
  - Teaching Experience
  - Course Development
  - Compensation

Screenshot showing survey categories in Qualtrics.