

Connecting to Pittsburgh Area Community Archives

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ABSTRACT

Pittsburgh is home to a wealth of archival initiatives, including not only institutional archives but individual and community efforts to create and preserve documentation. Through a project called Documentation Lab, we have begun to develop a resource library and workshop series designed to identify and facilitate meaningful forms of support and connection for memory workers in Pittsburgh, working in partnership with local nonprofit Prototype PGH. Our primary goal is to support and strengthen connection and collaboration between Pittsburgh's professional archival community, including MLIS students from the University of Pittsburgh, and the local individuals and community groups engaged in the work of documenting and preserving materials that reflect their own experiences. With this goal in mind, we have adopted a community-engaged scholarship approach that is both iterative and generative, with programming shaped by the stated needs and desires of our communities.

In the next phase of this project, we will build upon this work by conducting an environmental scan of current community archives in Pittsburgh and conducting semi-structured interviews with local memory workers to learn about their work and communities, their current resources and needs, and whether or how they are interested in working with the MLIS program, and specifically with a Community Archives elective course. Findings will point to ways in which the MLIS program may meaningfully collaborate with community archivists, and will inform the redesign of the Community Archives course, aligning it more closely with Pittsburgh's current community archives landscape.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

archives; community engagement; community-led services; information needs; education programs/schools

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

community archives; engaged scholarship; archival education