

July 1, 1993

LCMR WORK PROGRAM 1991

I. Historic Records Database

Program Manager: Michael Fox
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A. M.L. 91 Ch. 254, Art. 1, Sec. 14, Subd. 3(j) Appropriation: \$ 180,000
Balance: \$ 0

Historic Records Database - Final Phase: This appropriation is to the Minnesota historical society to automate and make widely accessible the society's collections.

II. Narrative:

A. Statement of the Problem

The Minnesota Historical Society has installed a computerized catalog of its research collections with the previous support of the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources. This catalog is part of the Minnesota State University System's Project for Library Automation (PALS) network.

The PALS system requires catalog records to be in a standard library electronic format known as MARC. The Historical Society has created records in this format for all new library materials acquired since 1977. Information on catalog cards for manuscripts and older library books and periodicals must be converted into this form to be usable in the computer catalog.

B. Importance

The online catalog provides direct access to the Society's library, manuscripts, and state archives collections both in the Society's reading rooms and at all 50 participating PALS member libraries in Minnesota and North Dakota. This system makes the Society's resources more accessible to all Minnesotans than was formerly possible when the only access was through a series of card catalogs in St. Paul.

C. Extent of the Problem

Significant portions of the collections await conversion into electronic format. This project will complete the addition of catalog records for the remaining library books and periodicals and the manuscript collections into the PALS system.

III. Objectives:

A. Complete building of the Historic Database

A.1. Narrative: The focus of this objective is to complete the conversion of catalog information for the manuscript collections, library periodicals and older library books into the MARC electronic format.

A.2. Procedure: Existing library catalog cards will be converted into MARC by OCLC, Inc., the largest national bibliographic utility. OCLC has already successfully converted over 40,000 of the Society's records under previous projects. Further information on periodicals will be added locally to these records through the PALS system's new MARC Editor software after the initial conversion has been completed. Three existing published guides to manuscript collections have been optically scanned. This catalog information will be edited and loaded directly into the PALS system.

A.3. Budget: \$ 180,000.

A.4. Timeline for Tasks:	Jul 91	Jan 92	Jul 92	Jan 93	Jun 93
Complete conversion of library books				
Add periodicals information to database				
Convert manuscript collections				
Maintain PALS system				

A.5. Status: As of July 1, 1993.

The conversion of 60,128 library catalog records into electronic form was completed as of June 30, 1992 by our vendor, OCLC, Inc. Unfortunately, OCLC increased its fees significantly for this service just prior to the beginning of this, the last phase of the database project. As a result, the Society was unable to complete all the work with project funds. Because of the priority nature of the project, Society staff have been reassigned to completed those titles not done by OCLC. They have converted 8,342 titles to date; 4,247 remain. In all, 97.5 % of the books now have been added to PALS. The remainder will be finished by December 31, 1993. All new books and journals are added routinely to the catalog.

Detailed information about the Society's holdings for the 2,719 periodicals currently received has been added to the database. This includes more specific data about issues that have been received. As time allows, existing staff will build on this base by adding similar information for titles that are no longer published.

The addition to the database of records for the Society's manuscript collections has enhanced their usefulness for research. The published guides listing the manuscripts collections were last updated in 1977 and have long been out of print. During this project, staff edited, converted into electronic form, and added to the database entries for 1,719 collections. This included all collections received since the last printed guide was published. During the biennium, staff also added 301 entries for newly-received collections. Staff will continue to add catalog records for all new materials and will recatalog some smaller collections that were never included in the printed guides.

The PALS network continues to be an effective means for providing statewide access to detailed information about the Society's collections. During this biennium, 63,218 records were added to the PALS database. It now includes 169,272 entries describing materials in the library, archival, and museum collections. These are important and often one-of-a-kind resources for the study of Minnesota state, local and family history. Over 129,911 (77%) of the records describe materials unique to the Historical Society's collections; no other institution in the network holds them. Minnesotans are taking advantage of this resource. Use of the system, both locally and statewide, continues to increase dramatically. The number of searches has grown steadily each month since our records first appeared in PALS in 1988. There has been a dramatic increase since the opening of the Minnesota History Center. Just during FY93, the average number of searches at the History Center alone has increased from around 53,000 to over 103,000 per month.

Previous phases of this project supported the Society's involvement in the development of national standards for cataloging museum collections. This activity was necessary before we could begin to add information about our artifacts collection into the database. This background work began to pay dividends during this biennium though it was not directly a part of this phase of the Historical Records Database project. Our previous experience in this area was cited in the National Endowment for the Humanities' award of \$125,000 for a national pilot project to begin to add records for the museum collections to PALS and two national databases. This project began in October, 1992 and has already added over 3,300 entries for museum artifacts to the PALS database.

A.6. Benefits:

- a) Permits statewide access to the Society's library and manuscript collections through the PALS network.
- b) Provides patrons at the Society with quicker and more comprehensive access to all relevant materials on a subject.
- c) Gives users detailed information about the Society's holdings of periodicals to facilitate retrieval and inter-library loan requests by other Minnesota libraries.

IV. Evaluation:

The program will be evaluated by an assessment of its completion of the specific, quantifiable tasks enumerated above. The electronic catalog records will be compared to the existing card files to insure that all records have been converted and that the contents thereof have been properly transformed into the correct structure.

V. Context:

- A. Current and previous projects have completed transfer of 2/3 of the catalog records into electronic form. Currently, there is no access online to the remaining records.
- B. This project will complete transfer of the remaining 1/3 of the records.
- C. The Society has already converted catalog records for its state and local government archives through grants from the federal government. Conversion of library records has been funded by LCMR as part of two previous projects. This project will complete that process.
- D. Historical Records Database: F.Y. 90-91 \$100,000.
- E. Historical Records Database - Final Phase: F.Y. 92-93 \$180,000.

VI. Qualifications:

1. Program Manager:

Michael Fox
Head of Processing
Division of Library and Archives
Minnesota Historical Society

The program manager directs cataloging operations for the Minnesota Historical Society and has managed the previous two phases of the Historic Records Database Project. He has seventeen years experience in the cataloging of library and archival materials and has been a program manager for the past ten.

VII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual status reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1992, July 1, 1992, January 1, 1993 and a final status report by June 30, 1993.