

Nuestros Senderos / Our Journeys and Our Lives in Holyoke ~ On the Road 2016-2017 ~

Guidelines for Scanning Events for Groups and Organizations

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Nuestros Senderos: Our Journeys and Our Lives in Holyoke is a project of the Holyoke History Room and Archives (Holyoke Public Library), funded by a Common Heritage Grant of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The goal of the project is to begin preserving and sharing local Puerto Rican and Latino family and community history. The project's Community Archiving Days create opportunities for community members to share their family photographs and documents. We make digital copies of these items and collect the personal memory associated with each item. Participants may then take back their originals.

Why this focus? Although Holyoke was and is an important site of the Puerto Rican diaspora, there are few materials in the History Room's collection to tell that story. There is also little material in the archives that describes the experience of local Latino immigration. Materials that are digitized in the course of the project will form the core of a new Puerto Rican and Latino community archives at the History Room that will be available for research use by students, scholars, and community members.

The project also raises awareness of **the need to preserve family history materials**. Family photographs and documents usually have great personal value, but they can also contain significant information about family life, migration, community life and organizations, neighborhoods, businesses, and more. This is particularly the case when the individual who has a connection to the item is able to share the story behind it. We are interested in collecting the entire arc of a family's history or just a part of it. In other words, while the emphasis is on local history, participants are welcome to contribute images of their birthplaces, ancestral homes/ hometowns, or extended family members, even if these were taken outside Holyoke.

Groups and organizations of all sorts may ask to have the Nuestros Senderos Project come to them.

There is no charge for this service. We will bring a portable flatbed scanner and computer to your meeting place, along with forms on which to collect the stories behind the items being scanned. Each person who contributes materials will need to complete and sign a form giving the History Room permission to include that material in the archives. If participants aren't sure which photographs or documents to share, we encourage them to bring their collection with them so that we can help them decide.

Our arrangement with each group will depend on the group's size and needs. The list below answers some general questions about what a scanning event for a small group might look like. Please take note of the items in italics, which indicate ***what your organization needs to provide*** in order to make the event a success.

Preparing for the visit:

- The date of any scanning event needs to be determined in consultation with the Project Director Eileen Crosby and be set **at least 2 weeks in advance**.
- The group needs to be introduced to the project in advance of the actually scanning day. If scheduling permits, Eileen can visit your group in advance to talk about the project and respond to questions. For a small group, **at least five members will each need to commit to bringing in several original photographs, photo albums, or documents on the scanning day. For larger groups, the minimum commitment from your group should be determined in advance in consultation with the Project Director Eileen Crosby.**
- If some participants prefer to communicate in Spanish, **we will need a few volunteers from your organization to act as interpreters.** The forms are all bilingual, but the History Room staff available on the day of your event may not be.
- The scanner can be set up in any clean area on **sturdy table about 5' long, near an electrical outlet.** If your organization has a portable projector with a VGA port, we can project items on the wall as we scan them. Then the whole group will be able to view what is being scanned.
- If you want to your group to participate, but do not have a suitable space for this kind of event, space at the Library can be booked for your event. Please contact Eileen Crosby.

How much time does it take?

- Scanning 3 or 4 items from one person, and collecting information from that person, takes about 20 minutes. Multiple people can move through this process at once, so material from several people or families could be scanned in the course of one hour. We expect most small group events to last about 2 hours. If you expect to have more than 20 people participate in a session, we will need to work with you/your volunteers to make sure we have the staffing and equipment to move participants through the process efficiently.

What if not all group members have photographs or documents to contribute?

- If the entire group cannot or chooses not to contribute photographs and documents, some members who are not contributing may participate by acting as 'volunteer staff' on the scanning day, asking questions about participants' stories and helping them complete registration and information forms. Project Director Eileen Crosby will need to meet with these volunteers in advance of the event.
- Some individuals may have three-dimensional objects that they want to share, like handcrafted items or family heirlooms. These can be captured by taking a good photograph of the student with his or her item(s) and writing down the story behind it. We need to know in advance if your participants want to share objects by being photographed with them.
- If your group members would like to have short oral histories recorded, instead of or in addition to scanning photographs and documents, please let Project Director Eileen Crosby know. We are equipped to make audio recordings, but this kind of event requires a quiet space and potentially more staffing.
- If your group has only one or two members with items to share with the Nuestros Senderos Project, please put us directly in touch with them and we will arrange a private session at each person's convenience.

Privacy/Sensitivity:

- We encourage participants to share only those portions of their family's stories that they are comfortable sharing with the public. Our forms ask participants to give us their permission to share their contributions with others, including online. If a participant has stories to share with us that cannot be shared with the public, please consult with Eileen in advance.