

## Chapter 8

# Topaz Japanese–American Relocation Center Digital Collection: A Case Study

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### ABSTRACT

*The Topaz Japanese-American Relocation Center Digital Collection was a digitization project carried out by the Digital Initiatives Department of Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library. This case study provides a background on Utah State University, Merrill-Cazier Library, and Digital Initiatives. The mission, technology acquired, consortium involvement, and organization of Digital Initiatives are discussed. A description of the case provides an overview of the Topaz digitization project, which includes background on the Topaz collection, project assignments, technology components, technological issues, and organization considerations. The technological and organizational issues stemmed from the CONTENTdm software, image quality, standardized file naming format, and collaboration with Mountain West Digital Library, other institutions, and library departments within Merrill-Cazier Library. The current status of these issues and continued improvement of these issues are discussed.*

### ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The Topaz Japanese-American Relocation Center Digital Collection was digitized by the Digital Initiatives Department at Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library. Utah State University (USU) is a public research university located in Logan, Utah. Originally, when USU was founded in 1888, it was called the Agricultural College of Utah. USU is a land-grant university since it was established from the Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act, which provided federal funding to create colleges that emphasized practical learning. USU receives most of its funding from contracts, grants, and federal appropriations followed by state appropriations, tuition, auxiliary enterprises, and private donations (USU Public Relations &

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Marketing, 2012). USU offers 168 undergraduate degrees and 143 graduate degrees from their eight colleges: College of Agriculture, Jon M. Huntsman School of Business, Caine College of the Arts, Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services, College of Engineering, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, College of Natural Resources, and College of Science. As of Fall 2011, USU had a total enrollment of 28,994 students (USU Public Relations & Marketing, 2012).

Merrill-Cazier Library seeks to meet the needs of those 28,994 students and their faculty. The Library has new facilities that were built in 2005 to combine two libraries, the old Merrill Library and the Cazier Science and Technology Library. Some of the services it provides are information commons with computers and study rooms, reference services, information literacy instruction, subject librarians that act as liaisons for faculty and students to various departments, interlibrary loan, and course reserves (Merrill-Cazier Library, 2011). The Library offers a large and varied collection of books, journals, databases, and special collections. It is also a regional depository of United States government publications and documents (Merrill-Cazier Library, 2011). The vision statement is:

*The Merrill-Crazier Library is the intellectual center of Utah State University. As both a physical and virtual destination, we create collaborative, engaging environments for learning and scholarship. We embrace innovation and continually adapt to changing user needs. Applying our expertise in collecting, organizing, managing, preserving and providing access to human knowledge, we are an integral partner in the academic enterprise. (Merrill-Cazier Library, 2006, Vision, para. 1)*

The Digital Initiatives Department at Merrill-Cazier Library helps to fulfill the library's vision by digitizing collections to provide students, faculty, and the public with open access to "one-of-a-kind or rare materials" (USU Libraries, Digital Initiatives, 2013, What we do, para. 1). In addition to digitization efforts, the Department coordinates the Institutional Repository and the USU Digital Commons. The mission of Digital Initiatives states:

*The Digital Initiatives Department creates, organizes, preserves, and maintains open access to digital resources that reflect USU's curriculum, research, unique resources, and achievements. Individually and in collaboration with other educational and cultural heritage institutions, this unit of the USU Libraries contributes to the pool of scholarly digital resources accessible to users worldwide. (USU Libraries, Digital Initiatives, 2013, Mission statement, para. 1)*

Digital Initiatives is one of 60 organizations from Utah, Nevada, Idaho, and Hawaii that collaborate with the Mountain West Digital Library (MWDL), a program of the Utah Academic Library Consortium (Mountain West Digital Library, 2012). MWDL hosts 370 collections, including the Topaz Japanese-American Relocation Center Digital Collection from USU (Mountain West Digital Library, 2012).

## **SETTING THE STAGE**

Currently, there are 43 digital collections available through Merrill-Cazier Library's Digital Collections Web page. The collections contain various items such as photographs, letters, diaries, maps, reports, music, and oral histories. The digital collections cover a wide range of topics, from local history to folklore to science. Many of the collections are related to local history, such as the Cache Valley Diaries, the Frances

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