Audience Embedded Final Project:
A Digital History Website with Two Supporting Programs
12/8/18

What and when

Create an online history project in English and Spanish that uses as its core element a chronological map[1] (timeline) of Puerto Rican experiences in Philly and is accessible through Taller's and HSP's websites. Content will focus on the grant themes of neighborhoods, migrant experiences, and economics, pointing to parallels in the experiences of Puerto Ricans and other groups/neighborhoods. The website, therefore, becomes a virtual highway between the two organizations and their collections for anyone wishing to mine the history of Puerto Rican neighborhoods in particular or migrant experiences in Philadelphia in general. Digitized oral histories[2], documents from HSP's and Taller's collections, and responses to prints or other art work[3] can be linked to the timeline as well as live in separate sections of the website.

One public program at Taller (early March) will be a chance for additional members of the public to see the website in progress and offer their opinions and create new video components as they reflect on the meaning of the content for their lives. A second program at HSP in June will unveil the website with a PAZ panel discussion on the grant process followed by a party celebration of the project.

For whom?

The website will be aimed at an adult audience of people like those in the PAZ who are interested in Philadelphia history and Puerto Rican experience, but also will be used in 2019-2020 school year as the backbone of a new high school curriculum (written outside of the grant period). The programs will be for constituents of the traditional audiences of HSP and Taller, per the grant.

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[1] At the fall PAZ meetings, one of the three programmatic themes was a chronological mapping or timeline of events that impacted (im)migration patterns and a particular neighborhood or community's evolution over time. Suggestions included overlaying the Puerto Rican migration with the more widely known Great Migration of the African American community and mapping where "work" was available to Puerto Ricans over time to show a picture of their economic impact. Discussion also touched on how program audiences can bring their own stories to be added to the timeline, which can be accomplished with people being interviewed about the content during program 1. Moving to a web platform, rather than an exhibition format, allows for longevity of the material and the ability to interweave content currently on HSP's and Taller's websites.

[2] The PAZ has great interest in revisiting oral histories in Taller and HSP collections - digitizing them, transcribing them, and even updating them for current times. The idea to have high school students interview the high school students who conducted the original oral histories in Taller's collection is too resource-laden for the grant project, but we can have PAZ members respond to the oral histories they chose to link to the timeline, thus providing contemporary commentary on the content raised in the oral histories.

[3] Similar to Taller's 25th anniversary exhibition, where community members choose and commented on prints that meant something to them, PAZ members can select prints from both HSP's and Taller's collections that go with the timeline theme and be videotaped responding to them and/or selecting prints to be used as visual material throughout the website.

How?

Create a smaller working group of PAZ members with the addition of 2-3 new youth advisors to work with project team on developing web content. They will help to choose themes for timeline as a selected number of archival documents, artwork, and oral histories to link to the timeline. In addition, they (and others during program 1) may be filmed reflecting upon these items as additional content for the website.

Why?

By developing a website, all three topics identified by the PAZ can be incorporated, showing the relationship of oral histories and video (e.g. lived experiences) to historical documents and artwork. The use of the web also allows for dissemination of the information more broadly (especially into schools and other venues that serve additional audiences to those identified in the grant, such as youth) and over a longer window of time than site-specific programs can. The website content will become fodder for future programs and can have the ability to have new additions made as resources allow. In addition, the grant called for an online guide for other cultural institutions wishing to develop programs with their audiences, using audio and video created during the PAZ process. This guide can become a section of the larger website.

Timeframe
- Dec-early Jan: Arranges for expertise needed (PAZ, consultants, vendors); HSP identifies online exhibit tool; marketing creates theme (logo, tagline, etc.)
- Jan-March: Identify the content for the website; oral histories digitized; documents chosen, etc.; new video in response to oral histories and artwork is created
- End of Feb/beginning March: Program 1 at Taller allows public to help hone this content
- April: Creation of new structure; writing of framing content; translation
- May: Uploading to website
- June: Program 2 at HSP celebrates grant completion and unveils website