



A MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL, INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL LIBRARY

dLOC

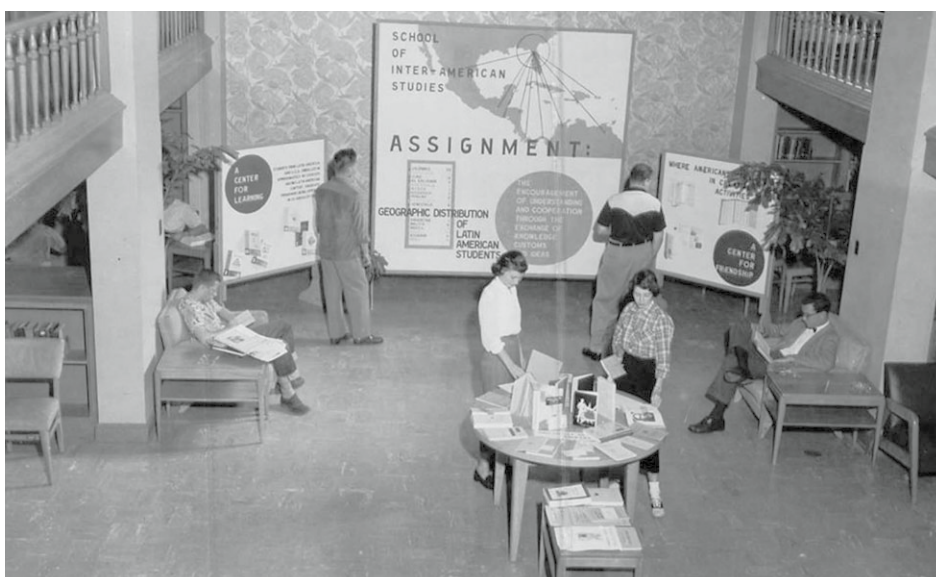
DIGITAL LIBRARY OF THE CARIBBEAN

From its founding, the Digital Library of the Caribbean was developed to provide access to collections, as well as a collaborative network to support partners, scholars, educators, and broader publics.



Nadjah Ríos Villarini and Mirerza González Vélez, chairs of the dLOC scholarly advisory group, work closely with local community archives and students at the University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras to process and digitize materials at Vieques Historic Archive and Casa Pueblo Historic Archive.

AT UF, WE ARE A CARIBBEAN LIBRARY



In 1949, IIAA offices were relocated into Smathers Library.

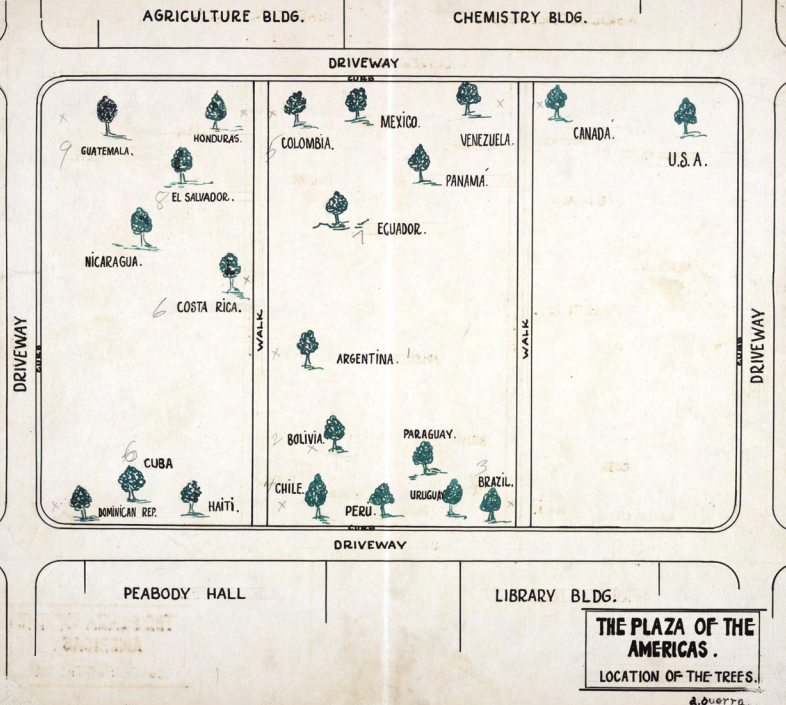
Many people have heard at least one story of how the Digital Library of the Caribbean, or dLOC, came to be. I have shared the story, time and again, with different details to provide context for different audiences.¹ Normally, I start the story in 2004, with the planning meetings of Caribbean librarians and archivists, where Judith Rogers, who was then the director of the University of the Virgin Islands Libraries, led the discussion to envision a digital library about, by, and from the Caribbean. This meeting led to dLOC's creation. However, the full story goes back much further to nearly a century ago with deep relationships and collaborative collection-building work undertaken by the full community of Caribbean libraries, of which the University of Florida is one.

¹ To see another version of this story: <https://dhdebates.gc.cuny.edu/read/3053f997-7fc5-40cb-b3c3-de5db1274c59/section/41994680-0006-4b60-a7ef-5bf2030339a0#ch09>

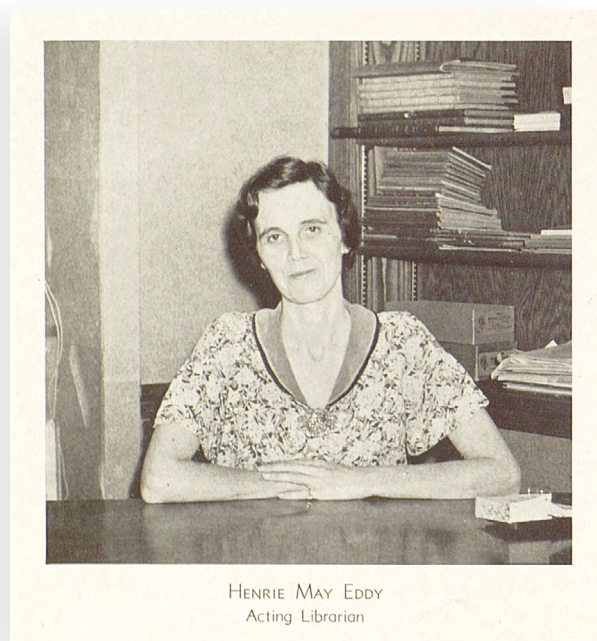


LAURIE TAYLOR /

Associate University Librarian for Collections & Discovery at the University of Connecticut Library. Laurie joined UConn after working at the University of Florida as Senior Director for Library Technology and Digital Strategies, the Editor-in-Chief of the *LibraryPress@UF*, and the Digital Scholarship Director of the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC). In 2018, Laurie was awarded the Caribbean Information Professional of the Year by the Association of Caribbean University, Research, and Institutional Libraries.



IIAA inaugural conference, Feb. 1931, after the closing ceremony the Plaza of the Americas was dedicated—21 live oaks were planted, one for each of the republics of the Americas at that time.
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00002846/00001/citation>



HENRIE MAY EDDY
 Acting Librarian

1939, acting librarian Henrie May Eddy.
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00022765/00030/citation>

Here, I share the story, as I know it, focusing my understanding of the perspective of the University of Florida. **I am writing this as an invitation, to ask others to please share if they have lived experience or greater knowledge of the long history of the Libraries at UF and the Caribbean.**

As I have heard it told, our Libraries have always self-identified as being part of the community of Caribbean and Latin American Librarianship. Indeed, one of the early library leaders at UF, Henrie May Eddy, passed away in 1939 when she was on a collecting trip to grow the Latin American & Caribbean Collection and her plane crashed (<https://communications.uflib.ufl.edu/at-a-glance/smathers-library-history/wartime-era-1937-1946/>). One of the hallowed stories of the Smathers Libraries tells of when UF sent a librarian on a boat in the 1950s and 1960s to the Caribbean to acquire cultural and historical materials using microfilm, perhaps most importantly including newspapers of most countries in the region. This fantastic story is all the more wondrous when uncovering the truth.

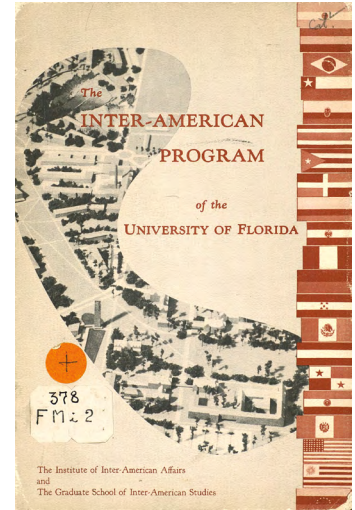
There was not one, but many librarians, who all traveled extensively to support collaboration and collecting. For example, in 1955, UF's Library Director Stanley West wrote to colleague David Eastman, Librarian for the Caribbean Commission in Trinidad, sharing the good news of a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation which would support sending Annetee Liles, UF's Humanities Librarian, to focus on collecting materials from the British Caribbean. This was far from the first collaboration.

From librarians on boats and planes, to building new communities for library collections, to developing new technologies of the day such as microphotography and digitization, UF undertook what we now call collaborative and collective collection development, post-custodial collection building, reciprocal collaborative practices, and library publishing.

Much of UF's Caribbean collaborative collection work dates back to the early vision of UF as a leading research institution, recognizing its unique position and role in Florida.

THE CENTER FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

In June 1930, UF President John Tigert created the Institute for Inter-American Affairs (IIAA). In 1962, UF’s School of Inter-American Studies was awarded Title VI funding as a National Resource Center. The School was subsequently renamed to the Center for Latin American Studies in 1963. The Center has received funding continuously since (<https://www.latam.ufl.edu/about/history/>). The National Resource Center Program is incredibly prestigious, providing “grants to establish, strengthen, and operate language and area or international studies centers that will be national resources for teaching any modern foreign language.”² From this robust Center for teaching, scholarship, and service, the Libraries at UF cultivated a preeminent collection in parallel.



1950 Publication. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00002846/00001/citation>

THE ERA OF THE FARMINGTON PLAN

Following the start of World War II, research libraries in the United States realized that they needed to proactively and cooperatively acquire foreign materials for use in the US, or risk losing access to materials during wartime. The Farmington Plan began in 1942, with the meeting of an advisory committee in Farmington, Connecticut. Archival records for Stanley West showed how UF worked diligently to become and maintain the mission as a designated depository library in 1951 under the Farmington Plan for the Caribbean area (<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00037232/00001/pdf/0>).

² <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/iegpsnrc/nrcpresskit7july2021.pdf>



University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies sign and Facebook #givingday post, Feb. 16, 2023.

The archival records are a treasure trove of stories for this era. Many names can be found in the files, documenting their efforts in collaborative Caribbean collection development, spanning the print and microphotography technologies of their time. From UF, we see names of travelers to collect and microfilm materials: Annette Liles, Vivian Prince, Ada S. Corbeau, Maurice de Young, Curtis Wilgus, Marian Youngs, and Margaret Knox. From the Caribbean and beyond, we learn of collaborators building collections and sharing new publications: David Eastman from the Caribbean Commission in Trinidad; Enid Baugh from the US Virgin Islands; E. L. Walcott from the Bridgetown Public Library in Barbados; Neville Connell from the Barbados Museum and Historical Society; and John Harrison as the Associate Director of the Rockefeller

Foundation, who sent a book of poems by Derek Walcott, a novel by V. S. Naipaul, and a series of Caribbean plays to UF, along with administering the grants.

The files illuminate the robust network of collaborators across Caribbean libraries, with different libraries and countries sharing bibliographies, sending copies of books, and sharing information to ensure that together they could preserve and provide access to the history and present of Caribbean collections.

In addition to providing UF's own funds, UF pursued grants to fund building collections. By 1958, UF knew the skills and expertise in the Caribbean. Enid Baugh from the US Virgin Islands proposed that UF train a member of her team in microfilming, and then would share microfilmed materials with UF. UF asked the funding agency for permission to cover costs for a member of the US Virgin Islands team to come to UF and train in residence. By 1961, UF had been awarded many Rockefeller Foundation grants for Caribbean collection development, including to fund the microfilming of materials, and where UF provided copies of the positive microfilm to the holding libraries in the islands.



salalm.org

1956, UF was one of the founding members of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM) with the first meeting hosted by UF at Chinsegut Hill Manor House in Brooksville, Florida.

The founders of SALALM created it to address collection needs for Latin America and the Caribbean. Since then, SALALM provides an important community of practice and has published significant materials related to library collections.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seminar_on_the_Acquisition_of_Latin_American_Library_Materials

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES

UF flourished in its role as a member of the community of Caribbean libraries and embraced the responsibility for acquiring materials from the Caribbean area. It was “the policy of the University of Florida Library to acquire one copy of every major publication in any of the countries in this area. By 1950 this acquisitions program had become of enough significance to justify an annual publication of the list of books acquired from the area. This publication is used as a reference book and buying guide by institutions in both the United States and Europe” (Stanley West, archival files).

When faced with the revolution in Cuba and the need to collect materials across the Caribbean

with many political and social changes, UF requested funding for a new project to hire a full-time Caribbean librarian to travel from country to country collecting materials and to send another person to France, to microfilm materials held there about Haiti, for ease of access from UF and Haiti, to then support others in accessing the materials. In a letter from Stanley West to Alfred Hayes, President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, on May 21, 1963, West explains UF's critical responsibility for collecting and preserving materials published in the Caribbean region, and then lending materials to others in the US. West then asks for assistance in obtaining permissions to purchase books from Cuba:

“We have been somewhat at a loss to know what to do about this program since the enactment of the law prohibiting trade with Cuba. The other research libraries in the country depend on us. [...] We feel that it is important to have in this country at least a few copies of the books which are being published currently in Cuba. I have been advised that the Federal Reserve Bank in New York is the agency which furnishes advice as to how to proceed to secure permission to purchase books and to carry on exchanges in Cuba.”



1963, Stanley West, Director of Libraries and Lilly Carter, Acquisitions Head look at millionth volume. <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00032818/00001>

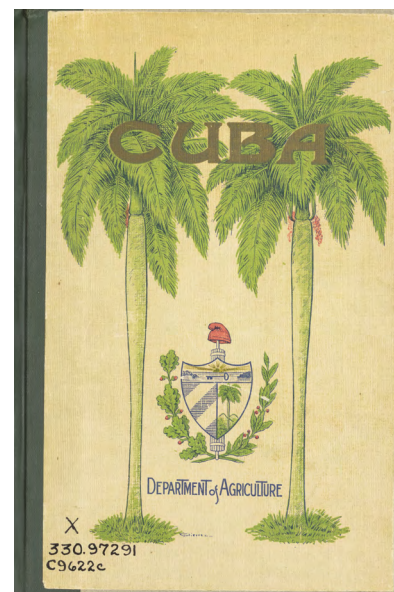


UF continued on, across decades, learning how to collaborate across the Caribbean library community in order to ensure UF had materials from Cuba and the rest of the Caribbean, to preserve and share with the world.

Over time, the Farmington Plan ended. However, UF's commitment and role remained unchanged as the international leader for collecting Caribbean materials for preservation and access.

Left
192-, Santiago De Cuba. No. 58. Calle Jose A. Saco. Jose A. Saco Street. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/UM00000033/00001>

Right
1915, *Cuba, What She Has to Offer to the Investor or the Homeseeker*, Havana, Cuba. <https://ufdc.ufl.edu/aa00063412/00001>





US CARIBBEAN FLORIDA

Digital Newspaper Project

<https://ufndnp.domains.uflib.ufl.edu/>



Dawning of the Digital Age

With UF's role for microfilming materials from Florida and the Caribbean for preservation and access, the opening of the Digital Age in the 1990s brought new opportunities. From 1996 to 1999, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded the Caribbean Newspaper Imaging Project. The project tested means and methods for digitizing historic Caribbean newspapers from microfilm to then distribute on compact discs (CDs), focusing on three titles: *Diario de la Marina* (Cuba), *Le Nouvelliste* (Haiti), and *The Port of Spain Gazette* (Trinidad and Tobago). This intensive work on materials in the Latin American and Caribbean Collections (LACC) led in 1999 to the founding of UF's Digital Library Center, which is now the Digital Services unit. Digital Support Services continues to digitize materials locally as well as ingesting materials digitized by partners.

Alongside this experimental work in digitization, in 1998, the Association of Research Libraries and the Mellon Foundation undertook a study of LACC because of their uniqueness and the degree of their importance to the United States for providing access to materials via interlibrary loan (<https://dloc.com/UF00100867/00001/pdf/0>). Interlibrary loan incurs costs for preparing, sending, and receiving materials, as well as lost opportunity costs where only researchers who know how to use interlibrary loan have access, and that access requires time. UF recognized the potential for the Digital Age, seeing that in the future, the Internet could enable worldwide access to unique materials at UF, and that eventually this



could deliver this improved benefit at a lower cost to UF.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS ENVISIONED A NEW FUTURE

The University of the Virgin Islands also observed the potential of the Internet. In 2000, they received a National Leadership grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services for preservation and digitization. With that grant, the University of the Virgin Islands Library Director Judith Rogers partnered with the Virgin Islands Division of Libraries, Archives & Museums, Erich Kesse at the University of Florida, and Catherine Marsicek at Florida International University. Together, they created the Virgin Islands Heritage Collection, which digitized funeral booklets, historical photographs, newspaper articles, materials for K-12 education, and research reports and papers from the Agricultural Research and Cooperative Extension units. The project was envisioned as a collaboration to support all in their goals and needs for preserving and providing access to Caribbean materials, where UF contributed technological support for hosting, Florida International University supported outreach, and the University of the Virgin Islands provided content and digitization (<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/4165239.pdf>).

ASSOCIATION OF CARIBBEAN UNIVERSITY, RESEARCH, AND INSTITUTIONAL LIBRARIES (ACURIL)

As the leaders for digital Virgin Islands Heritage Collection, Judith Rogers, Erich Kesse, and Catherine Marsicek were in contact for collaboration thanks to the Association of Caribbean University, Research, and Institutional Libraries (ACURIL). ACURIL began in 1969, as a library association for and by Caribbean libraries. Naturally, UF was a member.

In addition to leading the University of the Virgin Islands Libraries, Judith Rogers led the Information Technology group within ACURIL. It was during the ACURIL annual conference in May 2004 that Judith Rogers, along with Erich Kesse and Catherine Marsicek, presented the vision for the Digital Library of the Caribbean (<https://dloc.com/AA00069592/00001/pdf/O>). ACURIL is thus the birthplace of and mother to dLOC. Later in 2004, those interested held a pre-planning meeting in Puerto Rico, the home location of ACURIL, to create the Digital Library of the Caribbean (<https://dloc.com/UF00093611/00006>).

OFFICIAL BEGINNINGS AND THE MOVE FROM PROJECT TO PROGRAM

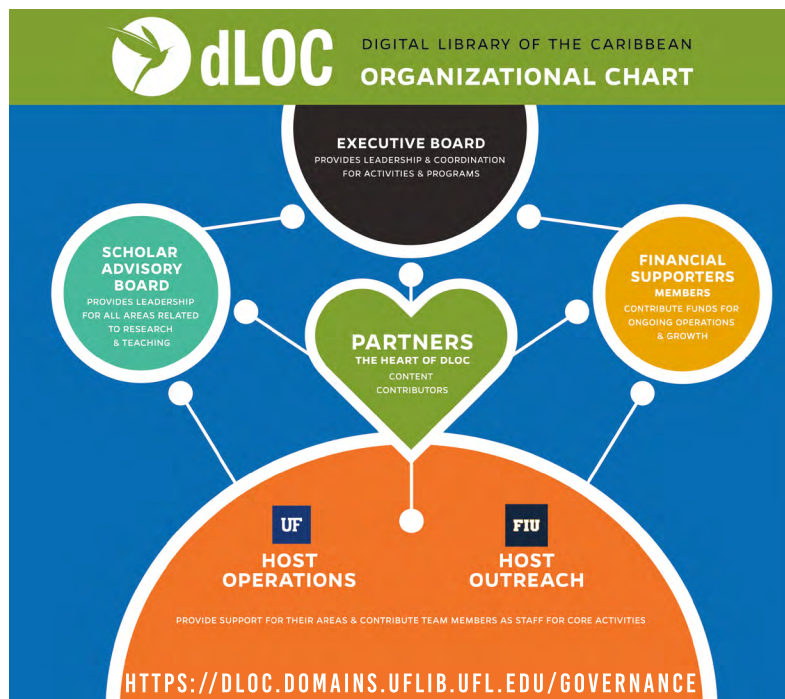
In 2005, the leaders who created the vision and name for the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) received a major grant from the US Department of Education for creating dLOC. At this point, dLOC had nine founding partners: Archives Nationale d’Haïti; Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARICOM); National Library of Jamaica; La Fundación Global Democracia y Desarrollo (FUNGLODE); Universidad de Oriente, Venezuela; University of the Virgin Islands; Florida International University; University of Central Florida; and the University of Florida.

In the first years, the team faced a multitude of challenges. While 2005 is relatively recent, if we remember, technology radically differed. Then, computers possessed less processing power, and this was a time before iPhones, widespread wifi, or functional videoconferencing.

The situation remained difficult in 2008 when applying for a new grant. By this time, I (Laurie Taylor) had joined the team, replacing Erich Kesse at UF, and Brooke Wooldridge had replaced Catherine Marsicek at FIU. The partners and team had great joy when the US Department of Education funded a second grant, focused on Caribbean newspapers. The team and partners recognized that dLOC needed to be an ongoing program. Together, everyone

focused on growing dLOC and value optimization to be sure that dLOC could be maintained without grants, to then use grants for faster growth. In evaluating the costs and benefits, UF leveraged dLOC to pursue optimization for all digitization and digital library hosting activities. The team evaluated various areas, including cost savings and added value for lending, the need for digitization as necessary for preservation, and the comparison costs of buying collections instead of sharing together. The analysis of the costs and benefits to have collections be fully open is one that libraries overall continue to move further on, with potential support from new open access community funding programs. dLOC served as a leader for de-locking content by opening for all, and at reduced costs for UF.

The team began this work even before the second grant award. This was fortuitous. While the grant was awarded for four years, with the Great Recession, in 2011, the US Department of Education cut the grant funding after only two years and stopped that particular grant program. At this point, UF and FIU stepped up to take on costs for dLOC. These roles have evolved and in 2022, the dLOC community voted to officially recognize those changes, designating UF as the Operations Host and FIU as the Outreach Host.



Many Strong Winds

UF's history with dLOC expands across many related initiatives and programs. Over the many years since dLOC's official formation, UF has pursued various activities. I will mention four of my favorites here: collections, training, scholarly community, and infrastructure.

1. Collections. After nearly a century of building Caribbean collections at UF, in some cases, UF is the only place in the world to find some materials, with other copies lost to environmental conditions over time. UF continually seeks to fulfill the spirit of agreements originally made in print and microfilm, working now to digitize these materials for access in the places of origin and worldwide. In 2018, the Council on Library and Information Resources awarded UF and the University of Puerto Rico nearly \$500,000 to digitize 800,000 pages of newspapers from the anglophone Caribbean and Puerto Rico. Reviewers noted the revolutionary nature of this project in scale and scope. This builds on a series of grants that UF has been awarded for the digitization of Florida and US-Caribbean newspapers from Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.



Three Peasant Women from Southeast Managua, Nicaragua, Estus H. Magoon Collection.
<https://ufdc.ufl.edu/ca90003870/00001>

2. Training. Notably, UF has facilitated a robust training program, spanning onsite training sessions in the Caribbean and at UF, as well as virtual training sessions. For example, in the summer of 2019, UF hosted a prestigious Advanced Digital Humanities Training Institute funded

by a competitive award from the National Endowment for the Humanities. In the summer of 2021, UF co-hosted the dLOC as Data program, providing online training for data intensive research. In 2023, UF will bring the prior programs together into a more coherent ongoing summer series. Locally, UF has leveraged these

programs to grow community and capacity at UF for digital and data research practices.

3. Scholarly Community. Like the community of Caribbean libraries, the scholarly community for Caribbean Studies can best be defined as generous, kind, compassionate, and driven. My first interaction with the scholarly community came in working with Dr. Leah Rosenberg. She is now one of the four co-chairs of the Scholarly Advisory Board. For our first collaboration, she shared her ideas for creating teaching resources that would bring people to dLOC and support people in teaching Caribbean literature. This work has continued since. Additionally, over the years, our community of scholars and librarians across the years and continents have shared their own publications in dLOC, shared their expertise to identify materials for digitization and obtain rights, used dLOC in their teaching and research, and overall used dLOC as part of all aspects of Caribbean Studies. Importantly, dLOC has hosted two brilliant Postdoctoral Fellows, Dr. Hadassah St. Hubert and Dr. Crystal Felima. Collections and scholarship exist in harmony, and growing collections requires complementary actions to foster scholarship.

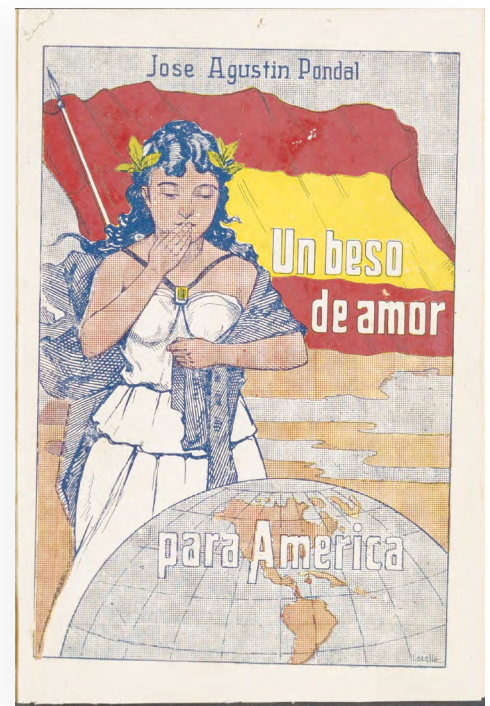
4. Infrastructure. In the same way that we better understand our own knowledge when we teach others, UF's hosting of dLOC has informed and expanded our capacity for digital collections and preservation. In technology, we often speak of defining a problem to determine the solution space. Because of dLOC, UF has a greater understanding of problems, which improves our solutions for digital operations and the UF Digital Collections, including enabling UF to launch the separate portal for the Florida Digital Newspaper Library.



REVITALIZING dLOC

<https://dloc.domains.uflib.ufl.edu/revitalizing/>

As of 2023, the Digital Library of the Caribbean is undergoing revitalization. In 2022, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded \$2 million to UF for revitalizing dLOC. This is the largest grant in the history of the Libraries. The grant funds an array of activities. The team leading the grant is based in the Digital Partnerships & Strategies department, which is also the LibraryPress@UF team, with this group emerging in response to the unique needs associated with coordinating large partnerships like dLOC, *Celebrating Cuba!*, and library publishing in collaboration with the UF Press.



Beso De Amor Para América, 1920 and 1929, Casa Editorial Prado.

Again, UF and dLOC move together in a virtuous cycle for existing excellence (infrastructure, training, scholarly work, and collections), as well as for new areas. Three of my favorite newer areas are:

1. Open Educational Resources (OER).

(<https://dloc.domains.uflib.ufl.edu/oer/>)

Types of OER include: textbooks, class readers, curated and contextualized data sets, syllabi, recorded lectures, and more. UF officially started developing OER in 2007, with dLOC. OER has grown dramatically into a major role in the Libraries, and dLOC continues to be a leading light.

2. Library publishing and publishing community of practice.

For the grant, we will reinforce existing assistance and coordination services, and grow into new areas. One of the exciting areas is publishing. This will be in two forms. First, the team will collaborate with the LibraryPress@UF to publish several handbooks for current practices, as well as formally publishing OER. Additionally, the team will foster the Caribbean community of practice for library publishing. Many partner institutions are publishing books, journals, and digital scholarship. Partners use common tools like

Open Journal Systems and Omeka. However, partners are not yet connected to the community of practice for library publishing, which tend to be more US-centric. As part of this grant, UF will serve as a bridge to connect partners and scholarly publishers with the larger community of practice, adding support for policies, practices, and expanded dissemination. In the same manner that the University Press of Florida has stood out for publishing on smaller Caribbean islands, the LibraryPress@UF has a role to play in ensuring support for publications from the Caribbean.

3. Rights Advisory Network. The grant supports creating the Rights Advisory Network, which is comprised of international experts: librarians and archivists; legal scholars; and Caribbean Studies researchers. They will address practical, day-to-day questions, as well as broader needs of dLOC partners and users. The Rights Advisory Network will provide sustained, collaborative assistance for topics relevant to copyright, ownership, and ethical uses of dLOC materials. As a complement to responding to day-to-day reference questions, the Network will develop web-based resources, and host virtual meetings on more complex issues, like the rights and ethics of ownership in



In addition to activities specific to dLOC, UF has many Caribbean partnerships. Two large partnership examples are the *Celebrating Cuba!* Initiative with the National Library of Cuba and the Panama Canal Museum Collection.

The *Celebrating Cuba!* Initiative seeks to create broad and deep open access to digital collections that celebrate Cuban patrimony, so that Cuba can tell its own story. The Panama Canal Museum Collection in UF's Special & Area Studies Collections is a leading research collection for the study of the American era of the Panama Canal. The collection documents activities and experiences in the Panama Canal Zone and in the country of Panama. When the Panama Canal Museum at Seminole, Florida, closed in 2012 after fourteen years, it transferred its collections to UF because UF is home to one of the largest and most respected Latin American and Caribbean repositories in the US and so we are uniquely qualified to steward the collections.

<https://pcmc.uflib.ufl.edu/>

oral histories. This work is vitally important to dLOC and to UF, for understanding how we support international copyright, ethics, and other rights for materials as we work to ensure more materials can be both preserved and accessible to all.


In addition to these areas, UF will continue ongoing excellence in collaborating for digitization, digital curation, and collections. I am eager to see how UF deepens and enriches its own operations thanks to learning from the engagements with partners. For that learning, UF has four new team members: Dr. Stephanie Chancy, Caribbean Partnerships Librarian; Tania Ríos Marerro, Project Coordinator; Katharine Lemessy, Program Assistant; and Kat Nguyen, Communications Assistant. As dLOC and UF continue to grow, we will create new stories.

GIVING THANKS

As I share this story of dLOC and UF, I am also sharing my own story. UF and dLOC have taught me what it means to be a librarian: generosity of spirit, solidarity, and joy.

I will close this near to where my own story in the Libraries began. In 2008, I visited Curaçao for a meeting of Dutch Caribbean libraries. There, I met a retired librarian who told me

she wanted to see me as “the librarian from the University of Florida because when I was a little girl, a librarian from the University of Florida came and met my mother, and so I met the librarian then, and I wanted to see who had come this time.” How many collections are preserved thanks to UF’s work as a Caribbean library and part of dLOC? How many people have become librarians or scholars because of this? How many communities can see themselves and their histories? I am delighted to not have the full answers to these, and to know that these answers will come over time as others share their stories of Caribbean libraries and dLOC.

To the many people who comprise dLOC and UF communities now and in the future: thank you.³ 



archipelagos

A JOURNAL OF
CARIBBEAN DIGITAL PRAXIS

³ Again, this is one of many stories. archipelagos, the top journal of Caribbean Studies and Digital Scholarship, released a special issue on dLOC. This special issue includes many other voices, stories, and names to recognize. Thanks to all named there, here, and to be named in future tellings.

[HTTPS://ARCHIPELAGOSJOURNAL.ORG/
issue06/editors-intro.html](https://archipelagosjournal.org/issue06/editors-intro.html)

go.ufl.edu/dloc



#DLOC20