A Marriage of Convenience
Partnering for Digital Access

Cara Randall, Librarian
California State Railroad Museum

Society of California Archivists AGM
Berkeley, California 2013
CSRM Library + Ancestry.com

• How it began: the courtship
• How we digitized: the great ledger shuffle
• What we didn’t expect: the bad times
• What went well: the good times
• Now that it’s over: would we do it all again?
Inside Dope

65 Market
How it began: the courtship

• Ancestry.com staff contacted CSRM Library
  – March 2008

• CSRM staff selected materials to digitize
  – Created list of “digitization priorities”

• MOU signed
  – Dec 2008

• Ancestry hired staff to digitize
  – April 2009
Genealogy at CSRM Library

What we have:
CSRM Collections

What people ask for:
Reference by type

Useful for genealogy
All others

Genealogy reference requests
All others
Digitization Priorities for the ancestry.com project

• Does it support our mission?
• Is it original manuscript material?
• If published, will we violate copyright or duplicate efforts?
• What is the condition of the original?
• Are we likely to publish it online elsewhere?
“A proud part of California State Parks”
2010.12.2 LICENSING THE USE OF A DPR-OWNED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHT ASSOCIATED WITH A MUSEUM OBJECT

The Superintendent may license (i.e., grant permission) individuals or groups for the nonexclusive use of a DPR-owned intellectual property right associated with a museum object under his or her jurisdiction on a case-by-case basis. He/she may charge a fee for such use, provided that all of the following factors are taken into consideration:

1. The potential for furthering the educational goals of DPR or the park through products and services offered by non-DPR sources.
2. The security of the objects to be photographed, imaged, replicated, or otherwise used.
3. The redirection of staff time away from the care of the collections and/or other public services to accommodate the use request.
4. The quality and accuracy of the product or service for which the use is requested.
5. The financial value of the specific intellectual property right licensed.
6. The public image of DPR.

Licensing for exclusive use requires the approval of the Deputy Director of Park Stewardship.
California State Parks
Museum Collections online
Online pre-MOU vs. post-MOU
How we digitized:
the great ledger shuffle

• To digitize on-site or off-site?
• Originals housed in multiple locations
• A tale of two bindings
Ancestry’s digitizing workstation

Jeannie’s home away from home
Sierra Railroad payroll ledgers

the “good” ledgers
Southern Pacific payroll ledgers
Process: unbinding
Google Docs

Photographer input

CSRM staff edits

Ancestry off-site supervision
This is Miss Julia Evans, Librarian with Southern Pacific for many years.
CSRM Library record description

Gives a general overview of the records digitized from CSRM Library.
Search for First Name “Julia” Last Name “Evans”

14 results, 1916-1919
Nifty features!
Zoomed in on Julia Evans.
What we didn’t expect: the bad times

• Staffing changes
  – 2 camera operators from ancestry.com
  – 2 separate project numbers to track

• Time commitment
  – Total duration of project start to finish

• Staff/volunteer commitment
  – More helping hands, please.
What went well: the good times

- Shipping files on hard drive via FedEx
- Crowdsourcing!
- We learned good lessons for the next round...
Would we do it again?

- Researcher response has been great
- Access is vastly improved
- Preservation of originals also improved
The end.

Thank you.
Questions?
Email: cara.randall@parks.ca.gov