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LIS 590 A

## Narrative

### **I. Description of Host Site and Work**

My host site was the Celtic Arts Foundation (CAF), and I had a very positive experience there. The Director of the CAF, Skye Richendrfer, was very welcoming and accommodating. Whenever I had a question to ask him about his organization or about how he wanted CAF's collections to appear on a public-facing platform, he made himself available. Elena Bianco, my supervisor for the project, was likewise very open to helping me and to answering questions whenever I had them. Overall, I found the experience to be collaborative and dynamic, which encouraged me about taking part in collaborative endeavors in my future career.

Throughout this DFW, Elena and I have been committed to making CAF's collections accessible to its respective community. Being a non-profit organization, CAF's resources are limited, and it is, therefore, difficult for CAF to expend resources to preserve and showcase their organizational history for the public to see. I was happy to work in an unpaid role for this work, as I feel that CAF's history is worth preserving and is an integral part of the local history of Mount Vernon, Washington, and surrounding areas. Contributing my time and skills to this project allows CAF's community equitable access to part of their local history that could have otherwise been lost. With that, the CAF is strongly committed to sharing music and culture with their community, and these missions are supported by ensuring the accessibility of their organizational history materials. This is the case because, if they can show their stakeholders and

donors the impact they have had in their community over the years, their organization can continue to flourish and obtain proper funding to operate for many years to come.

Also, in each step of my process, accessibility principles for archives and the web were applied consistently throughout. One example of this is the Dublin Core Metadata added to each asset in Preservica, which increases the likelihood that people will be able to find what they are looking for when accessing the collection. Adding Optical Character Recognition OCR to each PDF asset was also a conscious effort to increase collection accessibility.

## **II. Self-evaluation**

Starting out this project, I felt unsure of my ability to apply my knowledge from library school. However, Elena played a huge role in helping me have confidence to try my best all the way through the experience. She has been nothing but encouraging and helpful. She also knows so much about this field and inspired me to be passionate about preserving the history of the CAF as well as preserving history more generally. Learning from her has been the most valuable aspect of this experience, as she is exactly what I think a good information professional should be. I see a lot of professionalism and kindness in the work she does, and I would like to have the same traits in my career. She also inspired me to continue seeking out learning opportunities throughout my career, as she is constantly looking for new ways to improve her skills in the field.

On a different thread, I feel that this experience has taught me that digitizing documents is not as scary as I thought it was before. Towards the beginning of the project when I was doing something I was more comfortable with, inventorying, I feared for the day when I would have to

start digitizing documents, as I had never done this on the scale that the project required.

Admittedly, a lot of the reason why this was a lot simpler than I thought it would be is because Elena arranged for CAF to obtain a Fujitsu ScanSnap during the quarter. I started out digitizing documents using the traditional scanner that the CAF had in-house, but then quickly transitioned to using the ScanSnap after it arrived at the Foundation. Having this experience has made me much more comfortable working with digitization projects, which I am certain will come in handy throughout my career.

I should also add here that, had I not been concurrently working for the Gates Archive as an Intern, I would have run into many more blockers that I would have otherwise, as I was learning at the Gates Archive how to accession and process physical and digital records. This knowledge from my job outside of the Directed Field Work (DFW) gave me so much confidence working with the archival materials at CAF. It also is what helped me discover my recommendations for digital preservation that I was able to give to CAF. Had I not been having these experiences simultaneously I think my work for the CAF would have looked much different and probably would have been much more challenging for me.

Moving forward, I have a deeper interest in topics surrounding digital preservation and am hoping to use this experience as a springboard to expand my knowledge of digital preservation techniques and best practices. I also have a deeper appreciation for the contributions that non-profits make within their communities and, no matter what career path I end up taking, I would like to follow Elena's example and volunteer my time and skills to organizations such as the CAF, or organizations that have a positive impact on their community.