A TURBULENT YEAR, AND A TRIBUTE TO CLIR’S STAFF

President’s Message for the 2020-21 Annual Report

In looking ahead, institutions and organizations often choose a guiding metaphor to characterize recent accomplishments and infer more of the same advancement in the years to come. “A beacon for change,” “a new road taken,” “a compass for the next decade” are typical descriptions of the symbolic navigational tools, highways, and methods of enlightenment we use to characterize our efforts. This rhetorical strategy requires a working environment over time that has a predictive continuity and familiarity to sustain such comparisons.

In this respect, the past two years confound expository practice. We are just beginning to grasp the immediate and longer-term effects and the adjustments needed to manage the likely sweeping changes ahead. But the effects will be deeply transformative on a global scale, requiring a more exacting accounting of what is under way and a more explicit reassurance of how our achievements can be carried forward into an opaque future.

CLIR, like other organizations, has sought meaningful responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and the inspiration of voices committed to social justice, broadly defined as a core tenet of the Black Lives Matter movement.

In so doing, the flexibility, dedication, and insight of CLIR’s staff have been indispensible.

As the pandemic surged and confounded our national and international working environment, the exuberant professional colleagues who administer and manage our programs took early responsibility to keep them functional in a world where physical conferences and face-to-face social networking vanished overnight. In solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the systemic inequities confronting our colleagues who are Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), CLIR’s staff were similarly constitutive in accelerating our efforts to identify and reveal historically marginalized resources, archives, records, and stories, striving to integrate those voices into the larger national narrative, and providing nuance and complexity for a more accurate understanding of our historical context. Acknowledging their roles, it is to the Council’s staff that this annual letter is dedicated.

THE PANDEMIC

As the COVID-19 virus surged, it was understood that CLIR’s meetings and events had to become exclusively virtual. These included the review panels of Recordings at Risk and Digitizing Hidden Collections.

The panelists for these programs have always met in person: Building trust among the reviewers is critical, and social contact has been an expedient way to promote a sharing of ideas and perspectives. With thoughtful adjustments to the schedule and additional time allocated for topical challenges, the online formats proved efficient and well received. The largest, most complex undertaking has been to move the entire DLF Fall Forum online.
This entailed transposing a quarter-century tradition of in-person collaboration to a virtual space. With help from dozens of working group members and volunteers, the 2020 DLF Forum was fully accessible in its premier virtual instantiation, as was the adjacent NDSA Digital Preservation conference and 5 for 5: Conversations on Five Years of Digitizing Hidden Collections, which were also originally designed as physical gatherings. More threatening personal circumstances emerged as the pandemic closed borders and airports. Many CLIR fellows are working on dissertations in remote countries with limited connections. Staff worked diligently with funders to redirect grant resources that could safely extend each scholar’s stay and assist them in traveling home once the borders reopened.

Black Lives Matter

As protests grew and drew broader attention to the pervasive, entrenched racism in American life and culture, from the blatant murder of people of color by white law enforcement agents to the more subtle codes of class hierarchies and the terms used to perpetuate them, a nation—or an encouraging cross-section of our nation—stirred. At CLIR, work begun in previous years to build programs that reveal and sustain historically marginalized voices that can then be heard and studied became especially timely.

Earlier internal conversations exploring the possibility of formalizing Digitizing Hidden Collections to focus on marginalized cultural expression were invigorated. In February 2021, a new iteration of the program, called “Amplifying Unheard Voices,” was announced. Similarly, our partnership with the HBCU Library Alliance was created in part to seek support for projects that would expose a wealth of rare archives and collections sequestered in selected HBCU libraries. These collections, traditionally inaccessible, are pertinent to the African-American communities and to a more nuanced historical narrative. We are in a planning phase to prototype a hidden-collections-structured approach for neglected and suppressed resources intrinsic to our national identity, with HBCU library resources as the cynosure.

Mission and Values

In May 2021, CLIR began a vigorous review of our mission, purpose, vision, and values. We expect this effort, involving CLIR’s staff, board of directors, and many supporters and alumni of CLIR’s programs, to span much of the next year. We will assess our current circumstances and consider the more tumultuous landscape we are likely to tend in the next 5 to 10 years. The discussions will shape our evolving response in ways that exemplify our commitment to an ethical, just, and equitable commonwealth of shared knowledge. Such a review is requisite for any organization’s health and sustainability while acknowledging that our reflections and final recommendations are today particularly urgent and consequential.

While no organization can claim to plot a predictive course in this era of uncertainty, we can affirm that CLIR’s dedicated, empathetic personnel uniquely position us to continue to thoughtfully assess and manage the range of challenges, complexities, and opportunities we confront. We will continue to adapt, adjust, pivot when necessary, and anneal on behalf of our global community to arrive together, strengthened and wiser, in what will inevitably be a new place of different metaphors and signposts we will learn to follow.

Charles J. Henry, President
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**Sponsors, Members, Funders, Governance, and Staff**
The annual Forum, DLF’s signature event, took place Nov. 9–10, 2020. Because of the pandemic, the Forum was held virtually for the first time. Stacey Patton, journalist and professor at Howard University and Morgan State University, opened the event with a keynote, “Do Black Lives Matter in Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums?”

Two days of presentations, panels, tutorials, and lightning talks followed, covering topics that ranged from creating accessible and inclusive content to using geographic information systems tools for engagement.

The Forum was open to anyone who registered, free of charge, broadening the audience while benefiting those who were furloughed, unemployed, or without funding. More than 1,200 people from over 30 countries participated during the Forum’s scheduled video releases and social events and via Slack chat channels. Recordings and transcripts for all Forum sessions are openly available on CLIRDLF’s YouTube channel.

New this year was the presence of 11 community journalists—attendees from various backgrounds who were given stipends to share their voices and experiences on the DLF blog. NDSA’s Digital Preservation 2020: Get Active with Digital Preservation followed the Forum on November 12.

In June 2021, Jennifer Ferretti joined CLIR as DLF senior program officer, filling a leadership position that had been vacant since the departure of Bethany Nowviskie in 2019, and following the tenure of Louisa Kuasigroch as interim senior program officer. Formerly a digital initiatives librarian at the Maryland Institute College of Art on Piscataway land in Baltimore, she is also founder and principal of We Here, a community dedicated to supporting Black, Indigenous, and people of color in library and information science professions. In 2018, she was named a Library Journal Mover and Shaker.
In November 2020, DLF’s Born Digital Working Group received the Software Sustainability Institute Award for Research and Innovation in recognition of the working group’s document, Levels of Born Digital Access. The document provides a tiered set of format-agnostic practices to facilitate and improve access to born-digital materials across five areas: accessibility, description, researcher support and discovery, security, and tools.

DLF’s 12 working groups represent a community of practitioners who collaborate year-round to solve problems in a variety of digital library subfields, from project management and assessment to labor and accessibility.

Working groups are organized across institutional and geographical boundaries, and participation is open to anyone, regardless of institutional affiliation.

The following exemplify the range of activity undertaken by the working groups:

- In late 2020, the DLF Digital Library Pedagogy group issued a call for proposals for its #DLFteach Toolkit 2.0. The toolkit focuses on lesson plans to facilitate disciplinary and interdisciplinary work engaged with 3D technology. The first instructional resources were shared in October 2021.

- The Digital Accessibility Working Group is creating a how-to manual for accessible information technology policies and workflows.
In March 2021, CLIR announced the award of just over $4 million to 16 projects proposed during the 2020 award cycle of the Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program. The program supports digitizing collections of rare and unique content in collecting institutions. The awarded projects cover subjects ranging from hip-hop, fashion, and public media to plant specimens and whale reproduction. Announcement of the awards, typically made in early January, was delayed until spring because of the pandemic’s impact on application and review activities.

Workplace and service closures caused by the pandemic also created challenges for projects that had been funded in recent years but were not yet completed. In response, staff designed and launched an opportunity to apply for small emergency relief supplementary grants. The grants provided funds to adapt project plans to accommodate remote and other safe working conditions. CLIR awarded $122,281 to 18 organizations in December 2020.

In March 2021, CLIR launched a new iteration of the grant program, called Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives: Amplifying Unheard Voices (DHC-AUV). The program focuses on projects to digitize materials that deepen public understanding of the histories of people of color and other communities and populations whose work, experiences, and perspectives have been insufficiently recognized.

The new program expands eligibility to include Canadian nonprofit institutions, which were previously allowed to participate only as supporting partners to US-based institutions. Recipients of the 2021 award cycle will be announced in April 2022.

Following the new program’s launch, CLIR commissioned two researchers to conduct an external assessment of the DHC-AUV initiative. With expertise in digital archives and community-based research, the team will help CLIR create inclusive, equitable, and broadly accessible regranting initiatives that serve a diverse range of organizations. The study will run concurrently through the first full application and review cycle as researchers gather data from applicants, reviewers, and staff.
Currently in its fifth year, CLIR’s Recordings at Risk grant program supports the digital preservation of rare and unique audio, audiovisual, and other time-based media of high scholarly value.

In April 2021, CLIR awarded $552,905 to 17 projects that preserve materials ranging from radio and television broadcasts to oral histories, music recordings, films, and performance videos.

As in the Digitizing Hidden Special Collections and Archives program, staff designed and launched an opportunity for grant recipients who were adversely affected by the pandemic to apply for small emergency relief supplementary grants.

The grants provided funds to adapt previously approved work plans to accommodate remote and other safe working conditions. CLIR awarded $20,991 to seven recipient organizations in December 2020.
In late 2020, fellows initiated a new CLIR Postdoctoral Fellowship writing project focusing on the possibility of a third library—a space within or outside institutions that challenges what we have come to know about the libraries of the past. The project, which encompasses podcasts, essays, and a visualization, will be published in early 2022.

In summer 2020, CLIR welcomed eight postdoctoral fellows as the seventeenth cohort in the Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.

Fellowships offer recent PhD graduates the chance to develop research tools, resources, and services while exploring new career opportunities at host institutions that include libraries, archives, and museums.

In academic year 2020–2021, fellows worked in one of three areas: (1) data curation for African American and African Studies funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; (2) data curation for the energy social sciences supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; and (3) digital humanities and digital scholarship funded by individual host institutions.

In January 2021, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded CLIR $2.01 million to extend Data Curation Fellowships in African American and African Studies. The funds support current fellows whose work was negatively affected by the global pandemic by enabling them to extend their time at host institutions by up to two years.

On September 1, 2020, CLIR appointed program alumni Jennifer Garcon and Emily Beagle as co-faculty for the 2020–2021 Postdoctoral Fellowship Program. Both previously held fellowships created with the support of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

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The report was based on a virtual symposium held in April 2020 that engaged stakeholders from institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean in a discussion of strategies for digital archiving and cultural preservation and identification of common areas of need. The report is available in English, French, Haitian Kreole, Portuguese, and Spanish.
They have worked with original materials of every sort, from handwritten and illuminated manuscripts, ancient pottery, and medieval paintings to early films and vinyl LPs; from medical, corporate, and prison records to political pamphlets from flea market bins.

In pursuit of their research, these scholars have traveled the globe, becoming experts in scholarly research both in the United States and across national borders, often working in settings with very different approaches to cultural heritage and information management.

To celebrate and reflect on the program’s two decades, CLIR will host a symposium for alumni in early 2022 to share lessons learned through the dissertation research fellowships. The symposium will focus on the evolution of original source research since the program’s inception and consider what the future may hold for archives and researchers.

Fellows will discuss how broad global changes have affected original source research and the risks facing researchers and collections today. They will also consider the role that archives and archival research will play in addressing the social, political, and environmental challenges of the coming decades.
In July 2019, CLIR and the HBCU Library Alliance announced a long-term partnership to foster awareness of and access to the history and collections held by HBCU institutions.

In late 2020, the two organizations received a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a project to identify common values, priorities, and needs for describing and managing special and archival collections for HBCU Library Alliance members.

In spring 2021, three researchers began conducting interviews and focus groups to help the HBCU Library Alliance envision how its 76 member institutions can work together to preserve, describe, and digitize their unique collections. Final reports are expected in early 2022.

At the 2020 virtual DLF Forum, during two partner sessions, staff who work in and with HBCU libraries spoke about ongoing digital library and archives work, initiatives, and programs. The sessions, which featured six presentations, were co-organized by the HBCU Library Alliance and DLF.
The Leading Change Institute (LCI), cosponsored with EDUCAUSE, brings together information sector leaders, including deans, librarians, and information technologists, who seek to advocate for and advance change in today’s rapidly evolving higher education environment.

Each summer, a weeklong residential institute is held for a new cohort of participants who learn from and discuss current events with colleagues from academia, associations, grant-making agencies, industry, and government. After attending the institute, participants join other alumni in monthly chats.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced postponement of what would have been the 2020 LCI.

In response, deans Joanne Kossuth and Elliott Shore increased the frequency of the monthly LCI alumni Zoom meetings to once per week and invited members of the 2020 class to participate. This helped to engage the new class and served as a way for alumni from all years to support one another and exchange strategies for leading their departments during a challenging time. With the rise in vaccinations and the loosening of restrictions in Washington, DC, CLIR was able to hold an in-person institute July 12–16, 2021.

In July 2020, CLIR and Stanford Libraries announced the release of a public, open platform for the Digital Library of the Middle East (DLME), which aims to become one of the world’s largest online archives of Middle Eastern and North African artifacts.

A partnership with Qatar National Library, the DLME aggregates, through an ongoing program, digital records of published materials, documents, maps, artifacts, audiovisual recordings, and more from the Middle East and North Africa region.

Since the launch, the portal has grown to more than 150,000 objects in over 100 collections from 35 institutions from around the world. It also provides an array of applications, tools, and descriptions that enrich the content and facilitate browsing, searching, and interpretation.

Glazed crouching lion
Iraq, ca. 1500 BCE
The Penn Museum
In 2020, CLIR signed a memorandum of understanding with the US Department of State to collaborate on an enhanced exhibit and related activities built around the story of Jews in Iraqi society and how, in diaspora, they carried their Iraqi heritage with them around the world.

Although COVID paused much of the momentum for planning a traveling exhibit and website redesign, a meeting was held in March 2021 to discuss the future of the physical collection.

Organized by the State Department and the American Jewish Committee, the meeting brought together key stakeholders to discuss the concerns of the members of the Iraqi Jewish diaspora.

CLIR outlined its current draft prospectus, developed with the State Department for a traveling exhibit of the collection, as well as ideas for refocusing the current site (https://ijarchive.org) and expanding the content with lesson plans, additional oral histories, and more content to tell the history of the Jewish community in Iraq.

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CLIR establishes collaborative relationships and cross-institutional initiatives with organizations that have similar missions in the pursuit of common goals. The affiliates program allows CLIR to serve as a fiscal or administrative home for mission-aligned organizations that may not need to be independent legal entities.

Affiliates have their own governance and mission, while CLIR provides integrated services and access to tools, platforms, research, and expertise to reduce costs, create greater efficiencies, and enable affiliates to better serve their constituencies.
In fall 2019, CLIR launched season one of a new podcast, Material Memory. In theme-based seasons, Material Memory explores the effects of our changing world—from digital technologies to the climate crisis—on our ability to access the record of our shared humanity, and the critical role that libraries, archives, museums, and other public institutions play in keeping cultural memory alive.

**SEASON ONE**

Season one celebrates the United Nations-designated Year of Indigenous Languages. In each of six episodes, host Joy Banks speaks with people involved in the work of restoring audio and audiovisual recordings of indigenous languages and their often-Herculean efforts to make these recordings accessible to the communities they represent.

**SEASON TWO**

Season two, released in November 2020 and hosted by Nicole Kang Ferraiolo, explores the impact of the climate crisis on communities and their cultural heritage. The eight episodes take a critical look at the role of information and cultural heritage professionals in responding to the crisis and consider how different approaches to preservation can help or harm affected communities.

**SEASON THREE, LAUNCHING IN 2022**

Season three, planned for release in early 2022, will spotlight people and collections in libraries at six HBCUs and offer insights on these cornerstones of culture and historical knowledge.
In June 2021, CLIR issued a call for proposals for a new publication series, "Pocket Burgundies," modeled on its “burgundy reports,” so named for their cover color.

The series invites ideas on topics relating to established areas of CLIR publication—digital libraries, preservation, emerging technologies, and trends in information use—as well as proposals on topics in the information field(s) relating to social and racial justice, labor, accessibility, sustainability, building and maintaining community, and more.

The series will depart from CLIR’s traditional reports in that they will be shorter; the ideas will be generated by the community; and submissions will be reviewed by an editorial committee. Four proposals will be funded in the first year and will be announced in December 2021.
REVENUE AND EXPENSES

REVENUE SOURCES

- Grants and Contracts: $7,279,746 (75%)
- Sponsors and Members: $1,322,809 (13%)
- Affiliate Fees: $966,202 (10%)
- Miscellaneous: $239,808 (2%)

EXPENSES

- Program services: $9,358,777 (93%)
- Administration: $663,353 (7%)
# Statement of Financial Position

## As of June 30, 2021

### Current Assets

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### Total Assets

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### Total Liabilities

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### Total Liabilities and Net Assets

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The following provide crucial financial support for the activities and programs of the Council on Library and Information Resources. Institutions are invited to sponsor CLIR and/or join DLF at any point in the year.

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Iowa State University*
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Jisc
Johns Hopkins University*
Kenyon College*
Lafayette College*
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Michigan State University*
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Montana State University*
Mount Holyoke College*
National Archives and Records Administration*
National Gallery of Art*
National Library of Medicine*
New York Art Resources Consortium+
New York Public Library*
New York University*
North Carolina State University*
Northeastern University*
Northwestern University*
Oberlin College*
Occidental College*
Oregon State University*
Peabody Essex Museum Phillips Library*
Pennsylvania State University*
Philadelphia Museum of Art*
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Princeton University*
Purdue University*
Qatar National Library*
Reed College*
Rhode Island University*
Rochester University*
Rockefeller Archive Center*
Rockefeller University*
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
San Diego State University
Science History Institute*
Sewanee, The University of the South
Skidmore College*
Smith College*
Smithsonian Institution*
Southern Methodist University*
St. Olaf College
Stanford University*
Stony Brook University*
Swarthmore College*
Syracuse University*
Temple University*
Texas Christian University
The Catholic University of America
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University of Minnesota*
University of Nebraska–Lincoln*
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University of North Carolina at Greensboro*
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University of Oxford*
University of Pennsylvania*
University of Pittsburgh*
University of Richmond*
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University of South Florida*
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University of Texas at Austin*
University of Toronto*
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University of Virginia*
University of Washington*
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University of Wyoming*
Urisnus College
Vassar College*
Villanova University*
Virginia Commonwealth University
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Wake Forest University*
Washington and Lee University*
Washington University*
Wayne State University*
Wellesley College
Wesleyan University*
West Virginia University*
Whitman College*
Williams College*
Wilson College
Yale University*

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The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
David Rumsey
EDUCAUSE
Institute of Museum and Library Services
Library of Congress
Samuel H. Kress Foundation

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* CLIR sponsor and DLF member
+ DLF member only
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