

## **Northeast Kansas History: Baskets of local history, culture and genealogy**

Kete - Maori for “basket” - The Horowhenua Library Trust sponsored development of kete software as a “community built digital library of arts, culture and heritage resources.” We will explore how ketes are being used worldwide and how we envision using ours, as well as local history grant opportunities.

This has morphed into the story of what NEKLS has done and is doing to provide opportunities to libraries to digitize local collections. As Gwen Glazer says, “Libraries no longer need to prove that they should be digitizing their materials; they just need to find a way to do it.”

Outline:

- Background: ALA whitepaper from Office for Information Technology Policy
- Early prototypes and needs assessment
- Kansas Memory collaboration idea
- Heritage Grant and Pilot project
- Need for “Parallel Approach” - which lead to...
- Ketes in New Zealand and the US
- Our Northeast Kansas History Kete
- Plans for this ‘beta’
- Ideas for future development

Outline idea:

- Libraries and Local History - books and readers, cats and clean laundry
  - Mission of public libraries to “keep local history alive and connect it with its greater context.” According to Gwen Glazer in “Digitizing Hidden Collections Public Libraries”
- We all have Hidden Collections that need to be discovered and protected -
  - Hidden Collections - materials that are not ‘discoverable by scholarly users either through digital or analog means.’
  - These are at risk, inaccessible, vulnerable to theft and neglect
  - That box of photos, those birth/death/marriage card files, those yellowing photos in a display case, diaries donated to the library, even old Library Minutes
  - “Materials that are inaccessible electronically are simply not used.” = invisible.
  - Collections to un-hide: photos, genealogy records, local newspapers, handwritten letters, scrapbooks
- Why bother? What are the Benefits -
  - Provide Access to the formerly inaccessible - make the invisible, visible.
  - student use of primary sources on ‘major events from local perspective.’
  - historians and researchers,
  - genealogists’ (and general public interested in their local community - as well as family historians).
  - connecting people with archives of library and other cultural institutions benefits community and nation. Connections = Strengthen community
  - Personalize history, support genealogists, and link students with research materials
  - You just might learn something...
- Challenges?

- Difficulties: fragile, variety of formats, lack of funding, but... **“Without taking the vital step of increasing users’ access to public libraries’ hidden collections, we risk losing our own history.”**
- no money, time, staff, access to expertise and technology for large-scale techie projects & difficult to promote the project when done...
- Only 35% of public libraries offer special collections (letters/docs) online, says ALA.
- Possible Solutions discussed in the White paper...
  - Creative solutions include statewide consortia - Ohio Memory and Digital Amherst (add to that Kansas memory and Orlando memory)
    - LSTA Grant by Ohio Memory to digitize photo collection of 800 prints from Defiance - “Bronson Collection” - Tapped by community
  - “These collections and many others contain historically valuable materials that should not exist in isolation.”
  - Link in a larger project = increase usefulness exponentially.
  - Grant-funded pilot projects (like Rossville), join national initiatives like the NEH/LoC National Digital Newspaper Program - extend to smaller communities
  - “Incorporating smaller institutions in programs of state-level organizations or regional consortia.” - We’ll be discussing how NEKLS is pursuing both of these...

NEKLS Needs a Local History Repository - Hearing this since 2008.

- David LaCrone - 2009 Tech Day presentation “Digitization on a Shoestring” (No takers)
- Attempt 1 - Gallery (2010) - Need - way to put Wellsville cemetery headstones online for searching. Required web hosting (\$10 a month), configuration, domain name, a way to incorporating into your Web site. Benefits - inexpensive, open source, decentralized, interactive (comments and able to download the images). Feedback - too expensive and time intensive for NEKLS staff to set up individual galleries
- Attempt 2 - Nov 2010 met with Michael Church after Fall Assembly at the Historical Soc.
  - Kansasmemory - [www.kansasmemory.org](http://www.kansasmemory.org)
    - “rich content--letters, diaries, photographs, government records from the State Archives, maps, museum artifacts, and historic structures in Kansas. We will be adding additional content continually”
    - NEKLS regional content already in there in some cases
  - Grant opportunity
    - Heritage Grants from Humanities Council
    - 6 page narrative, involves consultants, ‘contract’ with KHS, \$3500 grants
  - Rossville Community Library
    - Great content, organized/efficient staff, local demand, willingness to work on the grant
    - Awarded \$2546 to digitize and store 300 artifacts/400 images. Total expense \$5000 with 50/50 split between grant and ‘in kind’ support (local funds, staff time, etc.)
  - Great opportunity, but...

## NEKLS Needs its OWN Local History Archive

- Brief History of Kete, or “Why we need something along side Kansas Memory...”
  - some who want a
    - database of cemetery headstones (genealogy),
    - no-frills database (to scan copies AND original photos),
    - easy-to-use and search User interface and
    - Ability to have a local brand.
  - Parallel approach.
    - Work with the Kansas Historical Society and [kansasmemory.org](http://kansasmemory.org) to preserve ‘unique’ and ‘fragile’ artifacts and also use one our spare servers to host a ‘knowledge basket’ like [Joanne’s kete](http://Joanne's.kete).
    - Everything and the dog photos going into a regional kete, with the really cool stuff going into [kansasmemory.org](http://kansasmemory.org).
    - There are more hoops to jump with [kansasmemory](http://kansasmemory.org), but if a library has some artifacts of interest to a state-wide audience, I think the hassle would be justified. Interview of Joann by Kathryn about the Kete Horowhenua
      - Unused KLOW Server sitting in the office collecting dust.
- Kete YouTube- straight from Joanne Ransom at Horowhenua (birthplace of kete and koha)
- Ketes of interest:
  - Kete Horowhenua - <http://horowhenua.kete.net.nz/> - Culture (quilt clubs, tractor shows)
  - Kawerau District Library Swimming Pools - Local Histroy
  - Kete Selwyn - Soldiers of Selwyn - Local History and Genealogy
  - Orlando Memory - <http://dc.ocls.info/>
    - 2,900 images, 199 audio files, 459 documents and 521 topics.
    - Tweaked the NZ boilerplate terms and conditions, which we borrowed.
- Why we went with this (for our first attempt):
  - [history.nekls.org](http://history.nekls.org) - lybrarian/!4ndyc4t5Kete
  - Open source
  - Community built with maximum interactivity
  - Ease of use (wiki-style where user interface matches live site)
  - Able to accommodate both community-contributions and unique library collections, through baskets
  - Creative Commons license and boiler plate Terms and Conditions
  - House Rules
  - Ability to link articles (Topics) with images, videos, audio, documents and discussions
- Policies and Best Practices
  - House Rules -
    - “Privacy: Please respect the privacy of others. You should only refer to other people in a manner that you are sure won’t cause them any offence or embarrassment. Don’t reveal things about them they would rather keep

private. It is your responsibility to get permission if you are writing about a person who is still alive. You should also think carefully before entering personal information about yourself.”

- Kansas Historical Society Guidelines
  - Scan, archive and rely on digital file
  - Details = 800 dpi (or higher)
- David's "Digitization on a shoestring"
  - Schema – title, description, subject headings.
    - Simple Dublin Core
  - Controlled vocabularies – LCSH
  - File naming – unique identifiers for each artifact

- Other options - Start with Kete, may look to Omeka as an alternative. - <http://www.digitalamherst.org/>, <http://omeka.org/showcase/> (not as interactive)
  - Here to get your reactions
  - Worth a try?
  - Who is interested in the next round of Heritage Grants?
    - FALL:
    - Project Outline (1 copy) - Due September 2, 2011
    - Final Application (10 copies) - Due October 7, 2011
    - Notification by KHC - By November 11, 2011
    - Projects can begin after - November 23, 2011