

Content Partner Case Study

Sauk City Public Library, [Sauk City Property Histories](#) and [Pionier Presse Translations](#)

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About the collection

Myrtle Cushing was a passionate local historian who collected material and pictures documenting the history of Sauk City, Wisconsin. In 1992, her work was translated into the book, *Lives Lived Here* by Michael Goc. As part of our digitization project, her book and very detailed notes she compiled about the history of Sauk City houses, were scanned, digitized and indexed, including seven three-ring binders of notes and pictures of the houses. In addition to what are referred to in local parlance as "Myrtle's Notebooks," we digitized a six-binder collection of carefully translated and hand-typed local news from Sauk City's German language newspaper, the *Pionier Presse*, from the years 1854 to 1929, when the paper switched to English as its publishing language. Our digital collection also includes text and pictures of the 1914 Sauk City Pageant, with an accompanying article from Harper's magazine.

Selection and digitization process

Digitizing these resources not only renders them more searchable and accessible to the public but also acts to preserve the increasingly delicate pages. "Myrtle's Notebooks" were created in the late 1970's through the early 1980's and were never intended to last forever. They were compiled in a series of three-ring notebooks on plain paper, some held together with cellophane tape and are decidedly showing their age. The *Pionier Presse* transcriptions are hand-typed on regular bond typing paper. The digitization project presents this resource, typos and all, in its original form and makes it searchable to increase usefulness. Digitizing and sharing these materials online also reduces the possibility of theft of the originals, one of which had disappeared previous to our digitization project.



The Spellman Monument Building file includes a first-person account of the Sauk City Library location.

We used a flat-bed scanner to digitize "Myrtle's Notebooks" and the *Pionier Presse* translations, and scanned the Pageant script, notes, and magazine article using the library's Lexmark copier. Items were then indexed using an Excel spreadsheet designed by South Central Library System (SCLS) digitization specialist, Tamara Ramski. The items are stored and backed up on three three-terabyte hard drives, one of which is retained by Ramski and the project, with two back-ups stored at our library. Items were indexed using [Library of Congress subject headings](#), a proscribed vocabulary of terms, and utilizing standard descriptions of house styles from an official architectural dictionary. The project took approximately 8 weeks with one librarian scanning content for six hours each day.

Use and benefits

We've had nothing but positive feedback about the content and ease of use of these materials. Local historians who previously pored over the notebooks, as well as remote users who no longer need to travel to access these materials are delighted to have them available online. Because the house histories and newspaper articles are searchable, genealogists are easily able to find family names. We hope to continue digitizing some of the more delicate materials in our local history collection including Myrtle's index and a pictorial record of the local cemeteries. This project was a fascinating undertaking and we are thrilled to have this very important local resource more readily available and more useful to our public.