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Project Title: American Languages: The Nation's Many Voices On-Line

2003 IMLS National Leadership Grants

University of Wisconsin-Madison (Max Kade Institute)

“American Languages: The Nation’s Many Voices On-Line”

Abstract

The Max Kade Institute for German American Studies (MKI), in partnership with the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC), *The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*, and the University of Wisconsin Libraries, proposes a three-year project aimed at digitizing, interpreting, and making accessible important audio collections capturing a variety of American languages and dialects. We will also devise culturally sensitive permissions procedures that protect language communities such as Native peoples, toward the goal of making available on the Web appropriate audio clips of Native languages.

Project goals include:

- Digitizing more than 900 hours of cassette, reel-to-reel, 78 rpm disc, and rare SoundScriber recordings, selected from three distinctive sound collections: the MKI North American German Dialect Archive, the *DARE* fieldwork collection, and the Mills Music Library ethnic music collection, which will be stored on hard drives for future use and for additional archival purposes.
- Creating a database with appropriate metadata describing items within the audio collections. We estimate 3,000 entries in this database, which will be housed on the UW Libraries server and will be part of the UW electronic library.
- Developing an accompanying website on the CSUMC server that links to the database and that provides interactive maps and interpretive essays, illustrated by 60 hours of audio clips selected from the 900 hours of digitized material.
- Strengthening relationships and establishing workable procedures for securing permissions, guided by tribal laws and restrictions, concerning culturally sensitive Native language recordings. The aim here will be to disseminate information on our experiences in an effort to aid other researchers involved in similar projects.

We anticipate that “American Languages” will result in increased awareness and understanding of American linguistic diversity. “American Languages” will serve as a model for the presentation of other important but technically challenging materials. Additionally, our efforts should generate guidance for developing collaborative permissions policies that will take into account concerns of communities that have generated cultural property, and will offer reciprocity and protection to such communities as they consider making cultural property available to a wider public.

American Languages: The Nation's Many Voices On-Line

Narrative

INTRODUCTION

This proposal comes from a number of units within the University of Wisconsin-Madison, all working on a project involving dialects of American English, immigrant languages, and Native languages. We aim to increase awareness of and access to audio collections by digitizing selected recordings; by creating an on-line database/finding aid and interpretive website; and by devising excellent permissions procedures that protect language communities. We request support for three years, for three simultaneous tracks of work: 1) the digitization of important American languages audio collections, for increased accessibility and preservation; 2) the creation of a website to make selected, appropriate excerpts of these collections available both to scholars and to a more general audience through brief interpretive essays and contextual information; and 3) the development of a culturally sensitive method for gaining permissions for appropriate materials and establishing collaborative relationships with ethnic/cultural groups who have vested interests in specific collections (most prominently, tribal entities and the descendants of American Indian speakers who have been tape-recorded in the past).

Increasing awareness of American languages and dialects as well as increasing access to audio collections is important for a number of reasons: to encourage preservation of dying languages; to help educators and others demonstrate the variety and richness of immigrant, native and regional cultures in the United States; and to assist scholars and a broad public in their research. Philosophically, we proceed from a conviction that the ever-evolving languages and grassroots cultural expressions found within the United States are fundamental means by which people create, contest, and comment upon their invariably complicated, changing notions of self and others, within local, regional, and national contexts. We are convinced that the scrutiny of languages, folklore, and other forms of cultural expression offers a significant means of understanding the engagement of our country's peoples with larger economic, technological, political, environmental, and social forces that affect their lives, their communities, and their stories. In keeping with the larger "Save Our Sounds" initiative of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, we are also committed to conserving fragile sound recordings of diverse cultural expressions. Indeed since the mid-1990s we have established several sound laboratories to clean and digitize older recordings in any format.

Institutional Collaboration: Units directly involved in American Languages include the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC), the Folklore Program, the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies (MKI), the staff of the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*, and the Mills Music Library and the Digital Content Group (DCG) of the University of Wisconsin-Madison General Library System. The Folklore Program, as a teaching unit, offers a number of courses focused on American cultures, and in particular cultures of the Upper Midwest. The Max Kade Institute promotes research on the experience of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants within the broader context of cultural contact in North America. Just as important as research are the various programs sponsored by the MKI aimed at educating the general public about American immigration; these outreach programs include but are not limited to public lectures, workshops and conferences, and the development of on-line curricular material for teachers. The Center for the Study of Upper

Midwestern Cultures is the umbrella organization for Folklore and MKI, and as such extends both the Folklore Program's teaching mission through distance education, and MKI's outreach mission through a broader concern with all Native and immigrant groups. An important subunit within CSUMC is the Indigenous Languages Preservation and Promotion group (ILPP), created to assist the region's tribes in language preservation. ILPP serves as a clearinghouse, making university resources available to the tribes (e.g., analysis of linguistic data, development of pedagogical materials, video production, and the preservation of audio materials). *DARE* has been described as "one of the glories of contemporary American scholarship" (John Gross, *New York Times*, October 8, 1985); its staff has just published volume 4 and continues to work on volume 5 of this important reference work. The Mills Music Library is foremost among university libraries in its holdings of commercially recorded songs, skits, and spoken word performances by and about America's diverse immigrants, and it has been active in conserving those materials and making them accessible in digital formats. The Digital Content Group of the UW General Library System is experienced in creating, standardizing and organizing on-line collections of material available within the University of Wisconsin. They act as a liaison between project owners and the Library Technology Group (LTG), which handles the technical aspects of making projects available on-line. The DCG is responsible for the reformatting of materials and for the encoding required to access materials in a digital environment. To this end, they work with project owners to help them assess the collections they wish to digitize and collect the information (metadata) they need to make their digital collections searchable.

Project Goals: We seek funding to reach the following goals:

1. During this three-year project, we plan to digitize more than 900 hours of cassette, reel-to-reel, 78 rpm disc, and rare SoundScriber recordings, selected from three distinctive sound collections: the MKI North American German Dialect Archive, the *DARE* fieldwork collection, and the Mills Music Library ethnic music collection.
2. From these digitized materials, 60 hours of audio clips will be selected to place on a website.
3. We will also create a database/finding aid, which will be housed on the UW libraries server, with appropriate metadata for each work. We estimate 3,000 entries in this database.
4. We will develop a separate website housed on the CSUMC server that highlights selected audio clips and that provides valuable contextual information.
5. In the case of Native American languages, our primary goal will be to develop constructive relationships with tribes in the Upper Midwest (Menominee, Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Oneida and Ho-Chunk, among others) and to establish workable procedures for securing permissions, guided by tribal laws and restrictions on culturally-sensitive materials. The aim here will be to disseminate information on our experiences in an effort to aid other researchers involved in similar projects.

NATIONAL IMPACT

American Languages will have significant national impact largely because of its varied content and broad scope. While many projects make language materials widely available on the Web, most focus on a single language (indeed on the standard version of a given language) and few consider complex shifts in language amidst cultural change. This project will provide scholars and citizens with unprecedented access to important dialect collections and—through audio clips, images, texts, and contextual commentary—will demonstrate the relationship between the many voices of our nation's people and larger currents in American life. American Languages, in particular, will provide new access to

materials for members of the many communities whose language is on the verge of being lost forever as the last speakers pass on. Furthermore, by integrating dialect and language materials into existing on-line courses at UW-Madison, and by alerting librarians, museum curators, and teachers (especially those involved with languages, ethnicity, history, folklore, and American Studies) we will reach a wide national, indeed international, audience.

American Languages will serve as a model for other institutions seeking to make the many voices of our nation's people more accessible. Just as the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress has offered the country's traditional songs and music to the world, inspiring similar efforts in turn, we hope to stimulate libraries, museums, historical societies, and individual scholars to undertake related projects with collections currently languishing in obscurity. Within our region, we will work actively to facilitate such work and, further afield, we imagine offering technical assistance, links to, and even homes for kindred efforts as they emerge.

ADAPTABILITY

American Languages will become part of a larger initiative, the UW Libraries Electronic Library. Throughout this project, we will be working with the DCG of the UW-Madison General Library System to assure that the records in our database, the digitized audio clips and accompanying images, and searching and navigation capacity are compatible with the widest possible number of systems. The UW Libraries are committed to providing open access to important digital resources. They have developed a powerful technical infrastructure for supporting digital resources in many different formats. Their digital resources are based on national standards, guidelines and best practices. Data will be exposed eventually to metadata harvesters, making it available to larger-scale initiatives. Interoperability is insured by the use of standards and best practices for creating such resources. We plan to use the most broadly applicable and migratable software architecture.

Furthermore, we see real value for other institutions emerging from our development and documentation of a flexible, collaborative permissions policy that will take into account concerns of communities that have generated intellectual property, and which will offer reciprocity and protection to such communities as they consider making intellectual property available to a wider public.

We also believe that the processes and outcomes of our project will have potential applications in other settings, particularly as we build our website. Making scholarly materials more understandable and useful to the general public through interpretation and contextual information can indeed serve as a model for presentation for other scholars of important but technically challenging materials.

Finally, in the future, this project might serve as a home for similar collections held by smaller institutions that lack the resources or guidance for making those collections accessible.

DESIGN

Audience: The three primary collections that make up the focus of this project all have an astonishing usefulness and appeal both to scholars (including linguists, historians, and other cultural studies scholars) and to the general public.

Since the publication in 1985 of Volume I of *DARE*—which went into five printings within a year of its publication—staff members have regularly assisted more than a hundred scholars each year, with requests from colleges and universities all across the country and around the world. Numbers of requests for the tape recordings vary, but in the last three years the staff has filled requests totaling 157 tapes. Altogether, *DARE* has received and filled orders for more than 500 tapes since the collection was

duplicated so that copies could be made available to others. Past requests for the *DARE* tapes have been made by dialect coaches for Hollywood films and local theater productions, voice software developers, linguists, oral historians, and other scholars of American folkways. In addition, the *DARE* website (<http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dare/dare.html>) has received hundreds of responses to its on-line queries, and staff members answer dozens of questions from the public each year.

The recordings in the MKI's North American German Dialect Archive have been used by researchers from across North America and Europe as the basis for research in history and linguistics, among other fields. Material from these recordings is also regularly incorporated into outreach presentations devoted to showing how language data reveal the social and cultural experience of speakers. There are also a number of groups and communities interested in the preservation of dialects spoken in the United States who enthusiastically support the maintenance of (and would love to see increased accessibility to) the collection as a way to not only preserve but also promote the maintenance of these dialects.

The collections of Mills Music Library have served ethnomusicologists, folklorists, linguists, historians, members of tribal communities, and others, and received attention from a wide variety of enthusiasts for ethnic music. Scores of Mills recordings aired in the 1990s on Wisconsin Public Radio's popular "Down Home Dairyland" show.

Our database and website will expand the audience interested in American languages and dialects. For example, secondary educators and their students in language studies, history, and social studies all could use these materials to supplement and breathe life into conventional texts.

Needs: For all three collections, greater accessibility has been indicated as a real need. Digitization offers the best solution to that need. Preparing materials for the website will be especially important for the general public, since it will provide contextual information and interpretation to guide them. The development of a database that can act as a finding aid is also important, as it will make these materials more accessible and help stimulate interest in these collections. We are viewing digitization more as an access than a preservation tool at this time, although the process offers a reserve format of value for many resources that would otherwise be inaccessible and, in some cases, lost.

Relevant work done to date: The informant list in the front matter of Volume I of *DARE* includes an itemization of each of the *DARE* consultants, with the name of each community, the age, sex, race, and level of formal education for each person interviewed, the community type (from urban to rural), and whether that person made an audiotape recording. This serves as a basic catalogue of the recordings. *DARE* already has in place a policy for the use of their field tapes; it requires that the tapes be for scholarly use only, that identities of consultants and others mentioned on the tapes be kept confidential, that tapes not be used for commercial purposes, and that they not be broadcast, duplicated, or transcribed for publication. The staff has also prepared a preliminary subject index for the tapes, itemizing those in which each topic is addressed.

Since 1997, selected tapes from the MKI North American German Dialect Archive have been digitized in the MKI sound laboratory. A good amount of this digitized material has formed the basis of research projects for linguistics and German graduate students working on theses and dissertations, as well as visiting scholars from North America and Europe. This research could be incorporated into the audio essays on the website.

For the last two years, CSUMC has been working on a major project, "Cultural Maps, Cultural Tours." Building on a number of pre-existing cultural surveys, this project involves creating an on-line database of images and information about traditional cultural activities in the Upper Midwest. It also

supports educators and students in documenting their own local culture and preparing virtual “cultural tours” posted on the CSUMC website. Work from this project could help provide contextual information for the “American Languages” website. CSUMC has also begun researching the issues involved in obtaining new permissions in order to place older collections of field tapes and other fieldwork on the web.

The Mills Music Library, as part of the UW-Madison General Library System, has already been involved in digitizing materials for the UW Electronic Library. See the Helene Stratman-Thomas Collection <http://webcat.library.wisc.edu:3200/MillsSpColl/>, for example. This work will also be useful for contextual information and the audio essays being developed for the “American Languages” website.

Project Design: Initially, we will be working with three major collections (described below) held by *DARE*, MKI, and the Mills Music Library. Selected audio clips from these materials will be supplemented by short interpretive essays and contextual information on the project website. Eventually, we hope to also include on the website, as judged appropriate, language clips from tribes within Wisconsin. Resources for audio clips of Native languages include the field tapes of linguists such as Macaulay, recordings held by the tribes themselves, and earlier recordings such as the Wisconsin Native American Language Project (WNALP) records located in the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee archives. However, native languages have come to embody the importance of cultural property issues, and it would be premature at this time to lay plans for dissemination of any such materials on the Web. Therefore we will undertake, in collaboration with the Language and Culture Programs of the various tribes, to review appropriate materials and establish clear, community-driven guidelines for how to deal with more as well as less culturally sensitive materials.

The first track of work will be the digitization of selected sound recordings from the collections of *DARE*, MKI, and the Mills Music Library. The *DARE* tape collection includes 1,592 hours of open-reel original field recordings in approximately 32-minute segments, made during 1965-70 by 1,843 individuals across the United States. Fieldworkers had consultants read a passage designed to elicit specific pronunciation variants, and also recorded free conversation on topics as diverse as local history, cooking, logging, mining, railroading, folk remedies, and children’s games. A set of tapes was made in the early 1990s to use as preservation and duplication masters, and, as mentioned above, an in-house Subjects Category Listing was created, as was a system indexing audio footage by subjects discussed on the tapes. Because the index is keyed to a time track (on one set of the tapes, a second track was put in to indicate time increments), and because this effect can be duplicated by putting in track minutes in one-minute intervals on the digitized materials, the indexing system will continue to be usable. However, digitizing the tapes will both assist preservation efforts by securing the tapes in another medium, and increase the tapes’ accessibility to scholars and others who have found this seminal research on American dialects useful for a number of purposes.

The MKI sound archive includes several thousand hours of recordings of immigrant languages, mainly German dialects spoken across North America from the mid-1940s down to the present day. These include “SoundScriber” disk recordings recently discovered and donated to the Institute, reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, and, most recently, digital recordings. Aside from Pennsylvania German, the vital language of a growing number of Old Order Amish and Old Order Mennonites, these recordings come from communities in the last stages of language death. In selected communities, we are currently recording the youngest and last fluent speakers as well as some semi-speakers, creating a real-time sound corpus covering over one half century. This collection helps document the history of linguistic diversity in the U.S. and a significant piece of American immigrant history.

The Mills Music Library’s special collections include more than 10,000 78-rpm recordings on the various “foreign” series of such American labels as Edison, Columbia, and Victor. Produced for the nation’s diverse communities—for example, Norwegian-, Croatian-, Finnish-, Polish-, Slovak-, Italian- and Yiddish-speaking peoples—largely in the first half of the 20th century in the urban East and Midwest, these recordings include many songs, skits, and commentaries on the American immigrant experience: the journey to the new world, finding work, efforts to maintain old world traditions, and encounters with both fellow immigrants and American customs and institutions. Their dynamic verbal repertoire includes varieties of old world languages affected by contact with English, as well as forms of English that show the influence of their European linguistic heritage. Because these studio recordings largely predate the field recordings of American dialect scholars, they provide unique and otherwise unavailable insights into the continuity and change of language communities at a critical juncture in our nation’s history. At the same time, these rare and fragile 78s have been largely inaccessible to scholars, members of ethnic communities, and the general public.

The first step in our project, already underway, is to prioritize within the collections the recordings most important to preserve and access through digitization. Toward that end, we will create a database to serve as a finding aid. This comprehensive record of the various collections we are planning to digitize will be available to the public. Since the size of these three important collections precludes digitizing all the material within them, we have established several principles for prioritizing particular materials. From these digitized works, portions would be made available on-line. In general, the following principles will be observed as we prioritize tapes and recordings: focus on the most fragile materials; strive for a representative sampling of recordings according to dialect, date of recording, and age of consultant; work within particular collections or geographical areas to complete digitization of these collections or areas. Staff from *DARE* (specifically, Joan Hall and Luanne von Schneidmesser), from the Mills Music Library and the Folklore Program (Geraldine Laudati, Steve Sundell, and James P. Leary), and from MKI (Joseph Salmons and Mark Loudon; CVs appended for all) will take responsibility for prioritizing. The project coordinator, Kevin Kurdylo, will oversee the digitization efforts done by trained students, and, with advice from DCG, will assure that the appropriate metadata is collected to make the digital collections searchable.

Track two of the work we intend to perform is to create a website, to be housed on the CSUMC server, that highlights these important materials by placing them within context. This part of the project will be coordinated by Ruth Olson, who will be responsible for soliciting interpretive materials from faculty involved in this project. A qualified graduate student will help prepare the materials for the website, such as interactive maps that link specific materials to appropriate American regions. We envision interactive maps that will enable users to quickly retrieve audio essays and contextual information for states or regions of choice.

Track three will focus on strengthening relationships with tribes, working with those communities to develop policies to determine what materials could be made available on the Web and whether or not such materials should be posted with restricted access, and to secure permissions in such cases (Monica Macaulay [Linguistics] with the assistance of a qualified graduate student). While “strengthening relationships” may appear to be amorphous, it is difficult to underestimate the importance of this activity, and the need to progress very slowly in decision-making about such delicate issues and valued materials. As the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas (<http://www.ssila.org/>) indicates, “The rights to linguistic material fall under the general issue of intellectual property rights. These are currently being debated in relation to indigenous culture for music, dance, and visual arts as well as for language material. In all these domains, there are many unanswered questions. ... [I]t is imperative that Web archivists have an explicit ethics policy in place. It needs to

cover the known issues, but also be flexible enough to accommodate the developments that we know are going to take place in the realm of indigenous intellectual property rights.”

Quality Control: (please also see “Specifications for Projects Involving Digitization,” Question 5). While the digitization of audio materials in the cultural heritage community is a relatively new area of activity, some quality assurance practices for contractors have been specified by the Audio-Visual Prototyping Project of the Library of Congress and endorsed by the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage (NINCH). We are guided by these recognized standards: “Quality review of audio shall include, but is not limited to, the following criteria: 1) complete item has been captured; 2) re-recordings are not flawed by noise or distortion beyond that present in the source recordings; 3) all files open and play properly; 4) re-recordings meet specifications for resolution, sampling frequency, and other formatting requirements; 5) recorded calibration tone sets meet requirements for reproduction quality.”

We will practice standard QA methods such as random selection of sample files for inspection and playback by a human, as well as other QA methods developed for digital images.

Metadata and Product Delivery: (please also see “Specifications for Projects Involving Digitization,” Question 7). Application of intellectual metadata will be coordinated with DCG, based upon the Dublin Core metadata standard and utilizing existing information as supplied by the collections’ owners. The database will reside on the UW-Madison Libraries’ server and will be available through their website access to e-books, e-texts, and multimedia resources. The project will utilize existing database architecture tested and implemented by the UW-Madison Library, which has been designed to allow upgrades when new technology developments have been widely accepted among libraries.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The three individuals carrying the largest responsibility for this project—PI Loudon, Olson, and Kurdylo—bring with them differing areas of expertise, all of which insure the successful completion of the project. Kurdylo is experienced in working with diverse collections containing images, audio, ephemera as well as textual information. He will be responsible for overseeing the creation of the database/finding aid and the digitization of materials that have been selected by faculty experts. Kurdylo will also assume responsibility for the collecting of metadata for the database records. Olson has successfully managed the resources—including money, equipment and supplies—for several previous grant-funded projects; she will oversee the financial management of this grant. Olson will also be responsible for soliciting the contextual material for the website; in the past, she has worked as part of a team to successfully build the “Cultural Maps, Cultural Tours” website. Loudon already administers the MKI North American German Dialect Archive. Most of his published research has been devoted to Pennsylvania German and the social situation of its speakers. In fact, all of the scholars involved in this project—Salmons, Leary, Macaulay, Hall, von Schneidmesser—bring the benefit of many, many years of research directly related to this particular project. Much of the material that will make up the audio essays and contextual information on the website can be mined from these scholars’ books, articles, essays, and from their students’ dissertations and theses.

Furthermore, the General Library System’s Digital Content Group (DCG) at the UW-Madison has significant experience seeing complex projects to completion; consultation with DCG will enable us to

effectively organize and achieve all steps of the digitization process from selection to database construction and metadata insertion to Web-based presentation.

We will use a combination of trained undergraduate students to digitize selected audio materials; and graduate students to check digitized materials for quality control, to assist in the creation and completion of records for the database/finding aid, and to help in the preparation of the materials for the website.

Both the Max Kade Institute (MKI) and the Mills Music Library already have superb digitization facilities in place, and previous experience with digitizing audio recordings has resulted in knowledgeable staff, who are currently writing procedures that will aid student workers in the process. While the database and the 60 hours of audio clips selected for the website will be housed at the UW General Library System, the website containing audio essays, interactive maps and other contextual information will be housed on the CSUMC server. The digitized recordings will be stored as WAV files on additional hard drives at the MKI.

CONTRIBUTIONS (please also see BUDGET JUSTIFICATION, p. 16).

As progress to date shows, all of the units involved in this proposal have already invested considerable resources toward this project. If we receive funding, cost sharing will include the time of faculty experts for both selection of materials for digitization and the preparation of short essays and contextual information for the website. Contributions will also include 10% of Ruth Olson's position; and some time from DCG of the UW General Library System, who will provide advice and access to resources will also be included as cost sharing. In addition, the work of a graduate student in German each spring will be devoted to this project.

PERSONNEL

Joan Hall, Ph.D., is Chief Editor of the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*. She is an accomplished linguist and lexicographer, and is President-elect of the American Dialect Society.

Lee Konrad is head of the Digital Content Group (DCG) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's General Library System and oversees the digitization of materials, the creation of metadata, and the encoding of textual materials. He provides overall planning for the digital content creation, and is experienced in managing multiple, complex projects.

Kevin Kurdylo holds an M.A. from the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is currently the Librarian/Archivist for the Max Kade Institute for German-American Studies (MKI) and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures (CSUMC). His tasks include developing the online digital database for the "Cultural Maps, Cultural Tours" project.

Geraldine Laudati is the Director of the Mills Music Library and curates several of its special collections. As part of her commitment to preserving and improving access to audio materials, she has been instrumental in the development of the library's media streaming facility and e-reserves for sound.

James Leary, Ph.D., is currently Professor of Folklore and Scandinavian Studies and Director of the Folklore Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and serves as Co-Director of CSUMC. He has focused his research on the folklore of the Upper Midwest's diverse peoples.

Mark Loudon, Ph.D., is Associate Professor of German and Jewish Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and is the Director of MKI. He is the Chair of the Editorial Board for the *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*. Most of his published research has dealt with linguistic and sociolinguistic questions relating to Pennsylvania German.

Monica Macaulay, Ph.D., is Professor of Linguistics and an affiliated faculty member of the American Indian Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She specializes in the morphology of American Indian languages. Her current work involves Menominee, and she is assisting with the tribe's language preservation and maintenance program.

Ruth Olson, Ph.D., is a faculty associate in the Folklore Program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is the Associate Director of CSUMC. Her research focuses on narrative and material culture within the Upper Midwest, and she has worked with many community groups to document and present local culture through media such as festivals, oral history collections, websites, and printed and virtual cultural tours.

Nolan Pope has been Associate Director for Technology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's General Library System since 1985. He has overall responsibility for library use of technology for delivery of services and resources, and manages both the Library Technology Group and the Digital Content Group.

Joseph Salmons, Ph.D., is Professor of German and of Linguistics at UW-Madison, Co-Director of CSUMC, editor of *Diachronica* and associate editor of the *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*. His research focuses on language change, phonology, as well as German dialects spoken in the US and language shift.

Luanne von Schneidmesser, Ph.D., is Senior Editor at *DARE*. Her academic specialization is in German linguistics and linguistic geography. Her research presently focuses on German influence on American English, and regional vocabulary usage and change. She administers the Dictionary Society of North America, is the chair of the Conference of Administrative Officers of the American Council of Learned Societies, and is a member of the ACLS Board of Directors.

Steve Sundell is Assistant Director of the Mills Music Library and curates the Wisconsin Music Archives. He also oversees the library's Audio Preservation Studio.

PROJECT EVALUATION

To evaluate the progress that we have made toward our project goals, as stated in our introduction, we plan the following measures:

1. To assess the feasibility of digitizing 900 hours of audio material, we will document the process of digitization and maintain annual records of the number of hours of material we have produced. This will influence our future planning, as well as act as a guide for other institutions with similar projects.
2. To assess the functionality of our database, we will follow General Library System staff evaluation procedures, as we are guided by the DCG. Every new database added to the UW Electronic System is provided at various phases of development to staff for intensive, multiple-simultaneous-user tests and for critical comments and suggestions. Such procedures in the past have led to significant improvements in electronic products before they are offered to the public.
3. To assess the usefulness and functionality of our website, we will include a response tool on the website, so that users can send comments and questions to us. We will document these responses and use them as the basis for an annual evaluative report on the website. We hope this will provide better service to and increased participation by our constituents.
4. To assess our progress toward strengthening relationships with the tribes and establish workable procedures for securing permissions, we will annually ask the directors of the various tribal Language and Culture Programs for their feedback on both our procedures and our value to the tribes. We hope this will result in the posting of appropriate clips of native languages on our

website, increased education for the general public about cultural property issues, and confidence from the tribes that our first priority is to assist them in language preservation and promotion.

DISSEMINATION

If this project were undertaken, we would give notice of the availability of the website and digitized material and the finding aid/database through the journals of the American Dialect Society, the Linguistic Society of America, the American History Association, the American Studies Association, the American Folklore Society, and other appropriate organizations.

Already, the websites of MKI, CSUMC, *DARE*, the Folklore Program and the Mills Music Library have considerable traffic. Links from these existing sites to the “American Languages” sites will direct even more viewers to the new site, in particular the folks for whom this information will be the most relevant.

SUSTAINABILITY

We build on an existing base of similar work. Because this project dovetails with CSUMC’s “Cultural Maps, Cultural Tours” project, resources devoted to sustaining that database and website can easily be used to sustain “American Languages.” CSUMC has funding that will be used to sustain and continue developing both websites. We are committed to the development and dissemination of cultural information for academic researchers, independent scholars and the general public. Thus, maintaining websites such as “Cultural Maps, Cultural Tours” and “American Languages” ranks among our highest priorities. Furthermore, the UW-Madison’s General Library System has a long history of maintaining collections, and since they have agreed to work with us on storage issues, we are assured that this information will continue to be available in the face of any technological change.

Since the faculty and staff carrying primary responsibility for this project—Mark Loudon, Ruth Olson, and Kevin Kurdylo—are permanent, their involvement in the project will continue beyond the grant’s end date.

The General Library System at UW-Madison has a proven track record in linking resources through its Electronic Library, and will be carrying out the responsibility of maintaining the “American Languages” database and website as part of the permanent Electronic Library.