

Hayner Library Hosting “Mobile Memory Lab” To Digitize Local Historic Items

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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ALTON - If you have a piece of local history - an old photo, a diary, or another small historical object - the Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library in Alton is one of only three select libraries hosting a “Mobile Memory Lab” this Saturday, where you can have your items “digitized” and uploaded to the Illinois Digital Archives to digitally preserve them and share their stories with the public.

The Mobile Memory Lab “Digitization Day” will be held at the library this Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with time slots every half hour - however, time slots are limited and are now only available from noon to 4:30 p.m. Call Lacy McDonald with Hayner Public Library at (618) 433-2859 or email genealogy@haynerlibrary.org to register for an available time slot.

McDonald said certain items may not be allowed due to copyright issues, but most material published prior to 1923, as well as newspaper clippings pre-1978, would be old enough to include. But just as important as the items - if not even more so - is the story behind them.

“It doesn’t have to just be a picture, it can be a personal item that has a story,” McDonald said. “The important part is what we call the ‘provenance,’ the story behind something - where it came from, how people used it, why it’s important.”

Once items are scanned or photographed, patrons can provide the date, location, and story accompanying each item via a web form. Staff members will be on-site to offer any technical assistance needed. Patrons can also provide contact information to receive an email copy of all digital files, and they will be given archival supplies with tips for storing items at home.

McDonald added that this is the perfect opportunity for people who want to share their historical items and their stories without donating them, so they can take their piece of history back home. Those who submit personal items should take note that they will be viewable by the public.

“We take donations of items, but a lot of times, people want to keep it and just want to have it preserved,” McDonald said. “This is a way for people that want to keep the item but would like to be able to share it, can bring it in, have it digitized, and then it’s for everyone.

The Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library is one of the first participants in the Mobile Memory Lab pilot program offered by the Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS). McDonald said the IHLS has applied for a grant which would allow this program to become permanent if the pilot program proves successful.

The library is located at 401 State St. in Alton. Call (618) 433-2859 or email genealogy@haynerlibrary.org to schedule a time to digitally archive your historic item this Saturday for the Mobile Memory Lab.

More information about the Mobile Memory Lab is available [here](#), and the full interview with McDonald is available at the top of this story or on Riverbender.com/video.