

Discoveries in the First Year of New Jersey DOT's Digitization Project

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The Project

In early 2023, the NJDOT's Bureau of Research started to digitize materials in multiple formats (primarily print materials, but also videotapes and microfilm) that tell stories about transportation in the state. This project is funded and supported by the Transportation Research and Connectivity Pooled Fund [study number TPF-5(442)].

About the Pooled Fund

The Transportation Research and Connectivity Pooled Fund [TPF-5(442)] provides support for digitization, as well as ADA/accessibility support (section 508 compliance), research guides, and networking.

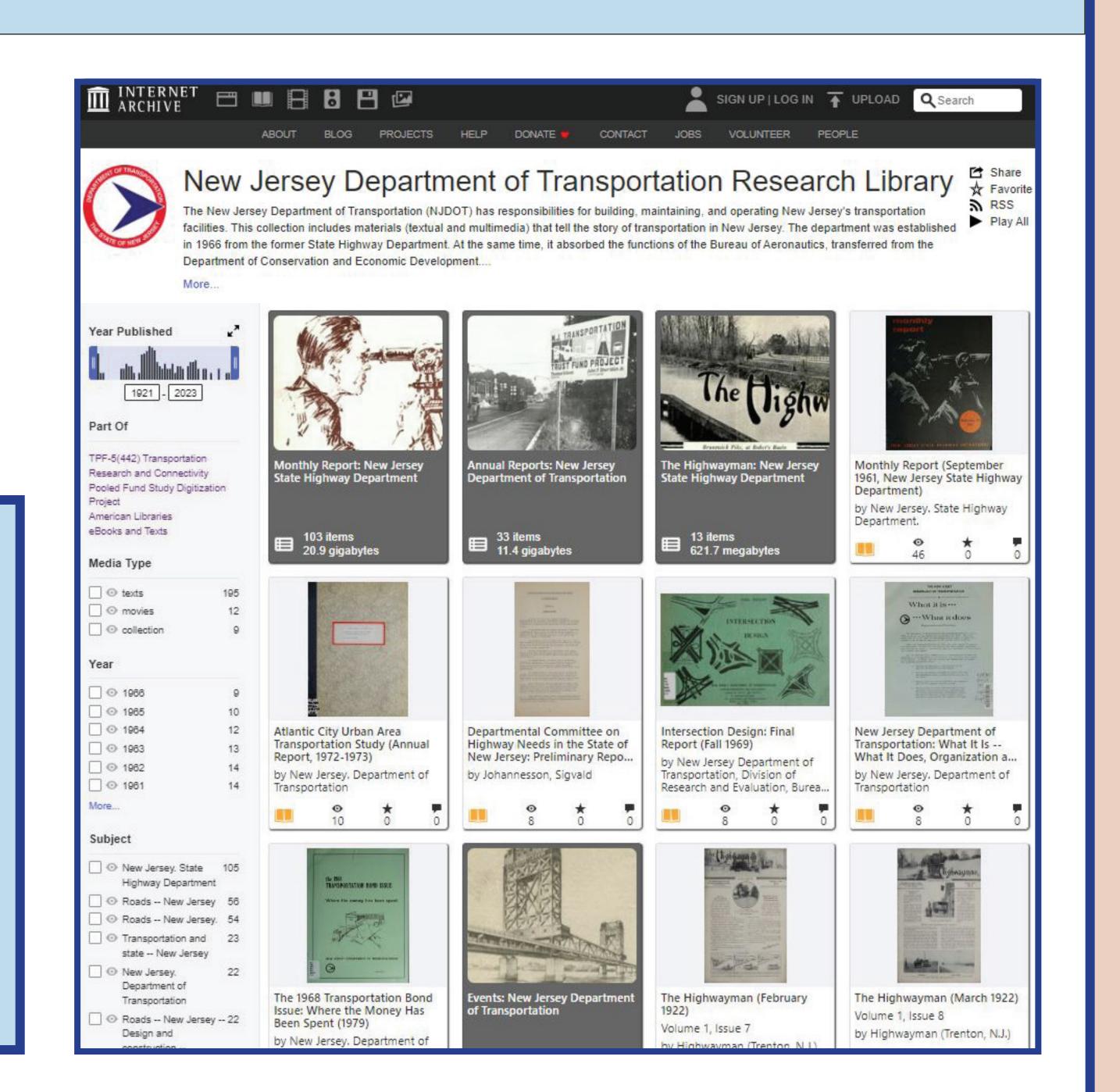
It also has produced a Transportation Librarian Toolkit (bit.ly/tpf5442tk).

Examples of Digitized Materials



MOTOR VEHICLE

1918 PASSEN



Our Internet Archive

Collection Includes:

Annual Reports

New Jersey Maps

South Jersey Transportation

• The Highway (1942-1950)

Transporter (1967-present)

The Highwayman (1921-1922)

General

Digitization Project Informs NJDOT's Annual Remembrance Ceremony





The New Jersey Department of Transportation holds an Annual Remembrance Ceremony honoring those who were killed in accidents or who died heroically while they were on the job. NJDOT built a memorial wall in 1999-2000 and has added name plaques in recognition of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

Research for the digitization project led to the discovery of five employees who had died while working in the 1940s. The stories of these five men — Arthur Reinhardt, Walter Eckert, Jeremiah O'Brien, William Kays, and Joseph Platt - were published in an employee newspaper of the Highway Department when they died. However, their names

had never been added to the memorial wall. The names of the five men were added to the wall in 2023.

The unveiling of these names occurred during the NJDOT 23rd annual remembrance ceremony and 22nd anniversary of 9/11. The Research Librarian spoke at the annual ceremony about the archival process and the lives of the

Photos courtesy of Glenn Catana, NJDOT Office of Communications



The Process

Getting Started:

- 1. What is the goal/mission of your archival project?
- 2. Will you partner with other organizations?
- 3. Do you have funding and project champions within your organization?

Cataloging/Indexing:

- 1. Are you cataloging/indexing pre- or post-processing? Will you point to the digitized items on your website or website of a partner (e.g. Internet
- 2. Level of metadata attached to each item.
- 3. Metadata/item logging system.
- 4. Promotion of materials.

Materials Processing:

- . Are materials fragile, in binders (tightly bound), in non-print media, or otherwise challenging to digitize?
- 2. What do you need to do to preserve/prepare the items for shipment and digitization? Any special archival glue, tape, boxes, folders?
- 3. Do you need to take special care with images, charts, etc., so they read correctly when scanned?
- 4. Shipment to, and return from, digitization partner.

Post-Processing

Our Partners

- . Promoting archival materials, internally and perhaps with external
- 2. Are the materials of use to any special audience (leadership team, operations, communications, organizational historian, internal/external researchers)?

Preservation and Repair



Tattered front page of the first issue of an employee newspaper, The Highway (August 1942).

Selection of Materials

The materials we are digitizing tell a story about transportation in New Jersey. For print materials, we are prioritizing materials about significant eras or events, or with photos or charts. Generally, we are not digitizing very dense or technical reports, with some exceptions, for example, the annual reports from 1939-1948.

Videos: We had a cabinet drawer full of videotapes with minimal labeling and no equipment to play them. We made educated analyses based on those labels and then selected material once it was digitized.

Microfilm: We had minimal information on the labels and no equipment to view the reels. However, the New Jersey State Library was able to review the reels for cataloging. We are working with the Internet Archive facility in Indiana, which is the only IA scanning center which can digitize microfilm.

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PASSENGER MILES TRAVELED IN U.S.*

THE MOTOR VEHICLE 527 BILLION M

- Capitalize on any funding available such as the pool-funded program [study number TPF-5(442)] and advocate for its continuation.
- Engage with your indexing/cataloging team early in the process, and ideally, catalog each item before digitizing it.
- Maximize the utility and findability of the material by having it reindexed in your library's online public catalog or in other repositories, such as the Digital Public Library of America, National Transportation Library (ROSA P), and/or the Transportation Research Board (TRID).

Lessons Learned

- Keep your eyes open to what the digitized documents reveal and how that information may meet the organization's goals and objectives.

- Keep a master spreadsheet of all information needed for each partner and for your own processing. Use Excel formulas such as "textjoin" and "concat" to copy and merge text fields.

Internet Archive (IA): A non-profit library of millions of free books, movies, software, music, websites, and more. IA's website freely makes available about 39 million e-books and texts, including 4 million items in the American Libraries collection. NJDOT materials are in a subcollection of American Libraries.

IA works with more than 1,000 libraries, galleries, museums, and cultural heritage organizations to scan and digitize their materials. Materials may be uploaded by the organization or sent to IA for non-destructive color digitization. IA charges a small fee for each item it digitizes; there is no charge for users to upload items (archive.org/scanning).

New Jersey State Library (NJSL): The New Jersey State Library provides services for NJ libraries, the state legislature and government employees, Thomas Edison State University staff and students, and registered borrowers. NJSL's Digital Collections database, hosted on the DSpace platform, addresses the long-term preservation and access requirements of electronic government publications and other digital material (njstatelib.org).

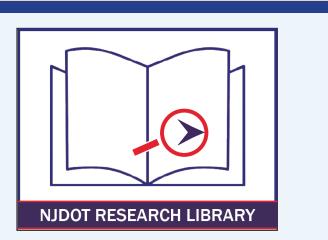


INTERNET ARCHIVE

After digitizing items with the IA, the NJDOT Research Library sends a PDF/A (archival) copy of each item to the NJSL's New Jersey documents librarians for uploading to DSpace and linking the item to the NJSL online catalog. NJSL, in turn, is a partner with the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA; website: dp.la). This means that the NJDOT digitized materials also will be available via DPLA, but this process may take a number of months.

NJDOT Research Library

The NJDOT Research Library provides knowledge resources to transportation professionals in New Jersey so that they can plan, design, construct, and maintain a high-quality transportation system.





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