

DOCUMENTING THE WAR: AMERICAN LIBRARY COMMUNITY SUPPORTS UKRAINIAN COLLEAGUES

THE BEGINNING

- As Russia marched on Ukraine on February 24th, 2022, Ukrainians feared for the future of their beautiful country. Librarians were forced to abandon their institutions as they fell to Russian forces.
- As of 700 public and university libraries have been damaged or destroyed and more than 4,000 are under occupation.
- In 2023, the Ukrainian Library Association began collecting images of ruined libraries. It agreed to partner on the creation of an America-based space to house and archive these images.
- The project started with 114 images shared from multiple libraries shared via email.



Kherson Regional Universal
Scientific Library, Kherson
November 2023

CHALLENGES

- Language** - Should the collection focus primarily on English or Ukrainian?
- Metadata** - What schema is most accessible to Ukrainian librarians?
- Copyright** - Is it safe for the photographers to be named in the archive? What do we do when images are donated to the library with no contact information?
- Hosting** - What platform is most accessible to Ukrainian librarians? Who will be responsible for the archive's ongoing hosting and upkeep?

THE PROJECT

2024 marked the official start of the archive. **Dr. Ulia Gosart** assembled a team from institutions across the United States to document, catalog, and share information about damaged and destroyed Ukrainian libraries. The team is made up of **volunteers** who are passionate about this unfunded project.

Goals:

- This project seeks to document and quantify the damage caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This archive will collect images and narratives about these libraries and librarians to share them with the greater community.

Logistics:

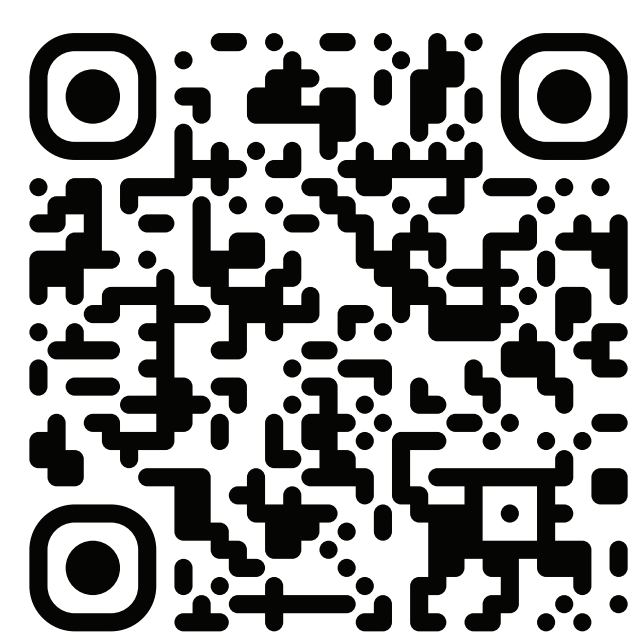
- Team meetings were conducted online via **Zoom** where the group could discuss project details and confirm roles.
- Discussions on strategies for the successful implementation of a secure, accessible, digital repository resulted in the choosing of Omeka.net and the utilization of Dublin Core metadata schema in English and Ukrainian.
- Current workflows utilize shared drives in Western locations for the security of donated files.



Library of Shandrigolove
Village, Donetsk
Picture by Pogorelov, O.



Regional Youth Library,
Chernihivska



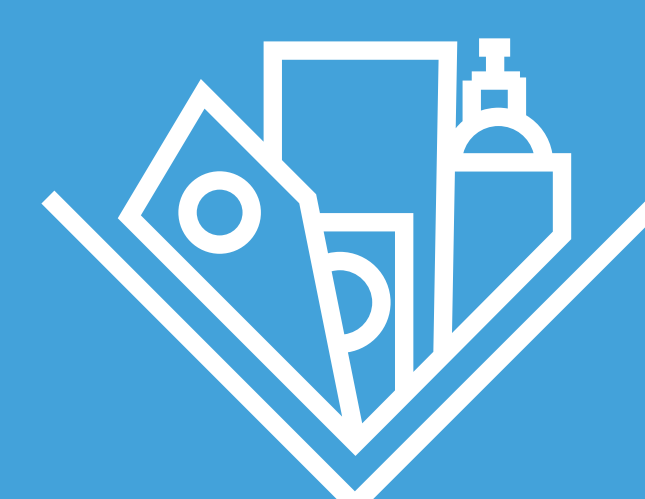
THE PRESENT

- Currently, the team is creating a metadata mapping resource to allow for the use of Dublin Core consistent with best practices in the West and Ukraine
- Additionally, the creation of the Omeka site provides for both individual image cataloging and interpretation of each library context through the use of exhibits.
- Throughout project site construction, the enduring goal of documenting the loss of culture and information resources provides guidance for the team.

THE FUTURE

- This project is currently made up of only **5 USA-based members** and **14 libraries** in Ukraine. However, solicitation of further materials from Ukrainian libraries is ongoing.
- The ultimate goals will be to provide training and to transfer ownership of the project site to Ukrainian library leadership so that local librarians can update their materials in real-time.
- Such goals will require further **funding** and a larger network. Future efforts will be dedicated to grant writing, and networking.

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ARCHIVE OF
UKRAINIAN
LIBRARIES