

Hunter Library's Digital Collections at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee was honored with the North Carolina Preservation Consortium (NCPC) Award for Preservation Excellence at the 2015 NCPC Annual Conference. This award recognizes institutions in North Carolina that have demonstrated an exceptional commitment to the preservation of tangible and intangible heritage of enduring value. The NCPC Board of Directors selected Hunter Library's Digital Collections for preserving the history and culture of our state's western region. These collections support education, research, and humanities programs.

Anna Fariello, Associate Professor for Digital Initiatives, accepted the award on behalf of Hunter Library at the NCPC annual conference held at the William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education at UNC Chapel Hill on November 20, 2015. She remarked that, "Hunter now has 15 collections archived online. These range from small, library-held collections, like the Civil War, to large partnered collections, like Great Smoky Mountains: A Park for America. We created new positions; a head of technology, a digital initiatives librarian, and several digital production technicians. Hunter Library has gone from case-by-case digital projects to a truly sustainable digital preservation program."

"Much of our local history is not housed in large institutions with institutional capacity; instead, many of western North Carolina's historical treasures are located in small archives. While these are doing a great job in terms of holding items for the future, for the most part, before working with Hunter Library, documents and photographs sat in storage with limited public access," said Fariello. Heather South, archivist at the Western Regional Archives, said, "The partnership established by the library with both the National Park Service and the State Archives of North Carolina Western Regional Archives, has now opened up research to thousands of previously locked away images and created digital preservation and access that would have never happened otherwise...For us, the project has opened up our collections to a wider audience as well as provided us with much needed preservation scanning of records and images that we just were unable to do on our own."