Innovation Funding Project Report and Student Stipend Report
Pamela Klassen

Project Title: *Digital Dissemination, "Story Nations: Media and Missionaries on Indian Land"*

1.   Project Goals

The goal of this project was to develop the tools and content to disseminate the results of my SSHRC-funded research project in a digital format in order to reach a broader audience than conventional scholarly modes of publication. The support of the Religion and Diversity Project for research assistance with digital dissemination has enabled me develop innovative, creative methods for bringing this historical reflection on one of the earliest forms of "religious diversity" in Canada to wider audiences. With the support of a Religion and Diversity Innovation Grant and the University of Toronto, the team has been developing an interactive online space based on the diary of Anglican missionary-journalist Frederick Du Vernet, who visited the Rainy River for eleven days in the summer of 1898.

The team's intention for the digital project is to provide an opportunity for Treaty 3 Anishinaabe, Canadians, and others to take an in-depth look into the history of Christianity and colonialism in early Canada. The diary demonstrates the diversity of interactions one man had with the people and places of *Manidoo Ziibi*, the original Ojibwe name for the Rainy River. Story Nations, as an online space, aims to encourage engagement with how the story of the past is told, considering both who tells the story and how media is used to tell it.

2.   Researchers and Students Involved

The Story Nations team includes University of Toronto Ph.D. students Meaghan Weatherdon, Judith Brunton, and Kaleigh McLelland, as well as undergraduate students Russell Turner, Erin Ray, and Tamim Mansour, all in the University of Toronto Research Opportunity Program.

We have also been working with Kelli Babcock, the "digital initiatives" librarian at the U of T library, as well as Byron Moldofsky a digital cartographer.

3.   Rationale

Bringing a "digital humanities" approach to this research is particularly important and innovative for two reasons. First, this research project provides important training for graduate

students (and for me) in new digital research and dissemination tools. Second, this digital platform creates a version of the book's argument and sources accessible to a broader audience, including classrooms, prompting wider reflection on how religious difference has shaped understandings of the Canadian nation since its beginnings.

4.   Methods

This project works with methods of the digital humanities, in which digital preservation and coding of archival records through the open-source platform of Islandora allows for high-quality and accountable digital cataloguing of sources, that can then be turned into easily accessible digital maps and digital storytelling.

We are also working with community collaboration. We recently returned from a trip to the Rainy River where we were presented the website-in-progress to community members at the Rainy River First Nations. Hosted by Art Hunter and Kylie Hanson of the Rainy River First Nations, the team also attended the annual Pow-Wow and visited the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre, home to the largest concentration of ancient burial mounds in Canada.

5.   Ethics, permissions

Once the website is finalized we need to secure permissions from Archives of any photos we use. We will be opening up the website for editorial suggestions by the Rainy River First Nations by January 2016.

6.   Summary of Activities

We are all very aware—now—that digital dissemination of scholarly work entails a steep learning curve that is both exciting and very time-consuming. We soon realized that we can only focus on the Rainy River diary for this website, and not Du Vernet's journeys in B.C. So this past year, we developed a digitally interactive map of Du Vernet's journey incorporating images, recorded stories, and other markers of the places and people he visited in northern Ontario. We also realized that we needed to share our work with the people of the Rainy River First Nations, and did so this past June.

Moving forward, we will be working collaboratively with the Rainy River First Nations and the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung Historical Centre to curate an online space with a diversity of historical and contemporary stories including those of Ojibwe, settlers, and missionaries.

7.   Provisional Findings

Digital storytelling and digital mapping are increasingly important as both methods and dissemination tools for historical and religious studies research. Telling stories about indigenous-missionary relations in this format has prompted me to use sources differently, and to think more intentionally about the effectiveness of my scholarly analyses and framing when trying to communicate with audiences in the classroom and outside of the academy. Digital dissemination is also very time-consuming, both in terms of the labour involved and of the education and training that it requires. But the time and effort are worth it, as this process challenges scholarly conventions for how we organize and think with our sources, and enables us to turn our research into more accessible, yet still intellectually complex, arguments.

Being at the Rainy River First Nations on National Aboriginal Day, and just a few weeks after the release of the remarkable final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, was a powerful experience for everyone on the team. While religious diversity is often understood as a contemporary issue, Story Nations illustrates how the negotiation of religious difference was at the heart of the creation of the Canadian nation; a creation which first depended on a vision that sought to eliminate Indigenous nations.

8.   Outputs

By August 31, 2015:

- All photos and videos from Rainy River visit coded and stored; "cleaning" of audio files.

- Continued historical research on colonization in the Rainy River region.

- April 2016: With support from the Research Opportunity Program at U of T, the students and I will have a final version of the website to go live in spring. We will return to the Rainy River First Nations to launch the site.

9. Finances

Budget and Student Information				
Breakdown of Expenses				
Student Funding				
	Amount	Name	Dates	Project
Student Research Stipends (These are not related to the Innovation Fund grant).				
	3250	Judith Brunton, Year 1, Ph.D. Supervisor: Pamela Klassen	Sept 1 2014 – April 30 2015	Religious diversity and secularism in Calgary
	3250	Rebecca Bartel, Ph.D. Year 4 Committee member: Pamela Klassen	Sept 1 2014 – April 30 2015	Christianity, credit, and capitalism in Bogota
Research Funding				
	Amount	Project	Dates	Specifics
Funding for Research Costs	9343	Digital Dissemination Project: Story Nations	Sept 2014 – Aug. 2015	
Carry-forward from 2013-	1056.31			

14				
Total	10399.31			
Expenses				
Student Research Assistance Funding		4276.47	Sept 2014 – June 2015 (two months remaining)	Kaleigh McLelland, digital project manager
Undergrad research assistants		1080	July 15 – Aug 31	Russell Turner: historical research on the Rainy River border and water quality issues
		1080	July 15 – Aug 31	Erin Ray: photo cataloguing; video editing
Rainy river trip costs		2235.22		Costs for trip to Rainy River First Nation, where we showed our website to the community, and received feedback
Funding for Administrative/Supply Costs Related to Research		1000	Jan 2015	Audio engineer
		1000	August 2015	Website development (from U of T library)
Permissions		1000	Not yet secured	Permissions for maps, photographs, archival documents
Total	10671.49			
Shortfall (covered by other sources)	-272.18			