

## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** ATTENTION EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT, NEWS, FEATURES  
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### **RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES RECEIVES GRANT TO DIGITIZE IMPORTANT HISTORICAL NEW JERSEY NEWSPAPERS**

**With \$186,204 grant New Jersey becomes the 44th state to participate in the National Digital Newspaper Program, supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities**

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. – The New Jersey Digital Newspaper Project is a collaboration of Rutgers University Libraries, the New Jersey State Archives and the New Jersey State Library that will make the history of New Jersey known to its citizens and the world. The plan, according to project director and Rutgers University digital archivist Caryn Radick, is to scan existing microfilm from the New Jersey State Archives and to make searchable digital files available through the Library of Congress website *Chronicling America*. Over a two-year period, the project will digitize and catalog at least 100,000 newspaper pages, originally published between 1836 and 1922 and not currently available in digital format.

“Our goals are ambitious,” explains Radick. “We are meeting with the advisory board in September to identify the newspapers that are in greatest need of digitization and hope to have the first batch, encompassing about 25,000 pages, completed by October 2017. We will focus on influential newspapers and historically important news or themes to maximize the benefit to users of *Chronicling America*.”

Newspapers may have been slow to gain a foothold in the colony—New Jersey was the last of the original thirteen colonies to publish its own newspapers—but when they finally appeared they were as energetic as the colony itself, which became a state of many newsworthy “firsts.” In its Constitution of 1776, New Jersey was the first state to prohibit discrimination. The state became a leader in technology and invention, from the first commercially manufactured lightbulb to the telegraph to the drugs streptomycin and tetracycline. New Jersey has also seen its

share of unrest with the bitter strikes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as the 1913 Paterson silk strike.

New Jersey's unique contributions to culture, politics, innovation and society are built into the historical fabric of the United States and digital access to this newspaper heritage is critical to an understanding of the sometimes painful, but always exhilarating growth of the nation. Ron Becker, head of special collections and university archives at Rutgers University Libraries, predicts this material will have a significant impact on new scholarship.

“From the *Whig Papers* to *The Star-Ledger*, New Jersey has a strong tradition of journalism. Prior to this digitization project, historians would travel to the New Jersey State Archives in Trenton or to a similar research institution and scroll through microfilm to find what they need. Having this material at their fingertips in a searchable, digital format will be tremendously beneficial to those who study and write about the history of New Jersey.”

Prior to receiving this grant, New Jersey was one of only eleven states whose newspapers were not included in *Chronicling America*. Other new state recipients for 2016 include Alaska (Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums), Colorado (Colorado Historical Society) and Maine (Maine State Library).

“Rutgers University Libraries is incredibly proud to participate in the National Digital Newspaper Program and to make the state's historical media available to anyone, anywhere in the world,” said Krisellen Maloney, vice president for information services and university librarian at Rutgers University. “Caryn Radick and her colleagues are to be commended for bringing this home for Rutgers and for the state of New Jersey.”

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### **ABOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES**

Rutgers University Libraries support and enrich the instructional, research, and public service missions of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey through the stewardship of scholarly information and the delivery of information services. With more than five million volumes and thousands of digital resources located in 26 libraries, centers, and reading rooms in New Brunswick, Newark, and Camden, Rutgers University Libraries rank among the nation's top research libraries.

### **ABOUT SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES**

Special Collections and University Archives, located within the Archibald S. Alexander Library on the College Avenue Campus of Rutgers University–New Brunswick, collects, preserves, and makes available primary sources of a rare, unique, or specialized nature to support advanced research in the humanities and social sciences, including the largest and most comprehensive collections of materials relating to New Jersey and the region's history and culture. Its four major divisions are the Sinclair New Jersey Collection, the Manuscript Collection, the Rare Book Collection, and the University Archives. The collections are available for use by Rutgers students and faculty, visiting scholars, and the general public. For more information, visit [libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/scua.shtml](http://libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/libs/scua/scua.shtml).