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East Carolina University

Digital Collections

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DRAFT - Digital Collections User Survey Report 2024 Summer & Fall

Survey Questions

ECU Digital Collections would like to learn more about the visitors to our website. This survey has 5 multiple-choice questions and should only take a few minutes to complete.
Thank you for your feedback!

1. What are you using our site for? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Genealogy
- ☐ Casual browsing
- ☐ Homework assignment/Class Instruction
- ☐ Job related
- ☐ Academic research (Please list your research topic)

- ☐ Personal research (Please list your research topic)

- ☐ Other (Please describe)

2. How did you get to our website? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Search Engine (Examples: Google, Bing, etc.)
- ☐ Library Catalog
- ☐ Typed in the URL
- ☐ A link was sent to me
- ☐ Digital Public Library of America or another aggregate site
- ☐ Social Media

3. How do you describe yourself?

- ☐ Student Educator
- ☐ Library Employee
- ☐ Museum Employee
- ☐ ECU Affiliated
- ☐ Other (Please describe)

4. Please rate your interactions with the ECU Digital Collections website.

	Needs Improvement	1	2	Average	3	4	Excellent	5	Not Applicable
Rating									☐

Please provide any suggestions to improve our website.

5. Did you find what you need?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (Please explain)

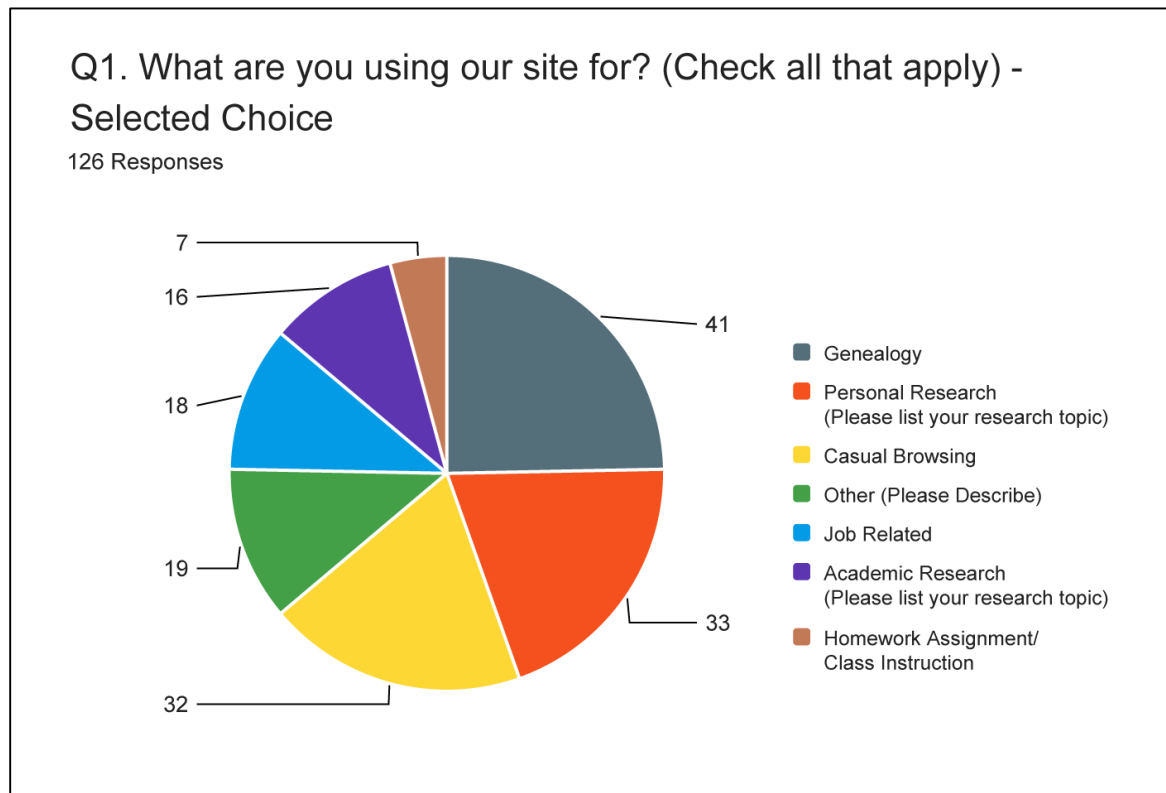
- ☐ Not Applicable

DRAFT - ECU Digital Collections 2024

User Survey Analysis

Throughout the summer and fall of 2024, the ECU Digital Collections Team conducted a user survey to better understand the motivation and experience of visitors to our website. The survey aimed to capture insights not readily available through quantitative tools like Matomo analytics, such as user demographics, reasons for visiting, and intended use of site resources. This survey included five multiple-choice questions with optional open-ended sections. The link to the survey was available on the majority of the Digital Collections pages in the gold sub-header. Additionally, the header remained fixed to the top of the browser as the user scrolled down the page. The survey ran for 7 months, with 138 completed submissions, exceeding the initial goal of 100. Results for responses may not add up to 138 because respondents were not required to answer every question on the survey. Also, totals could have exceeded the response count because of the option to “Check all that apply”. Of particular interest, survey responses generally decreased with each question. For future surveys we may want to reduce the question count or create multiple smaller surveys to increase the response counts per question. These results revealed key trends in how our users engage with ECU Digital Collections, what we have done that is successful, and highlighted some areas for improvement. The complete survey results can be found at the end of this document.

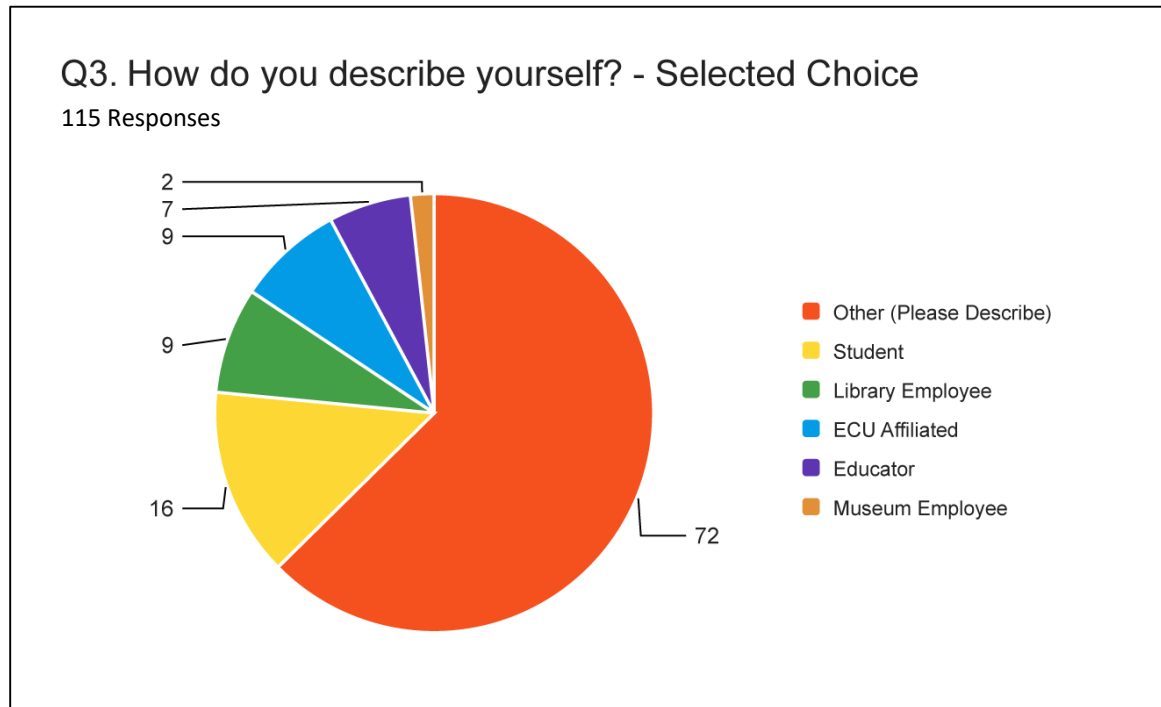
Purpose and User Demographics



The survey revealed that users engage with ECU Digital Collections for a wide range of purposes. Genealogy emerged as the most popular use, cited by 41 respondents (25%), followed closely by personal research with 33 responses (20%) and casual browsing with

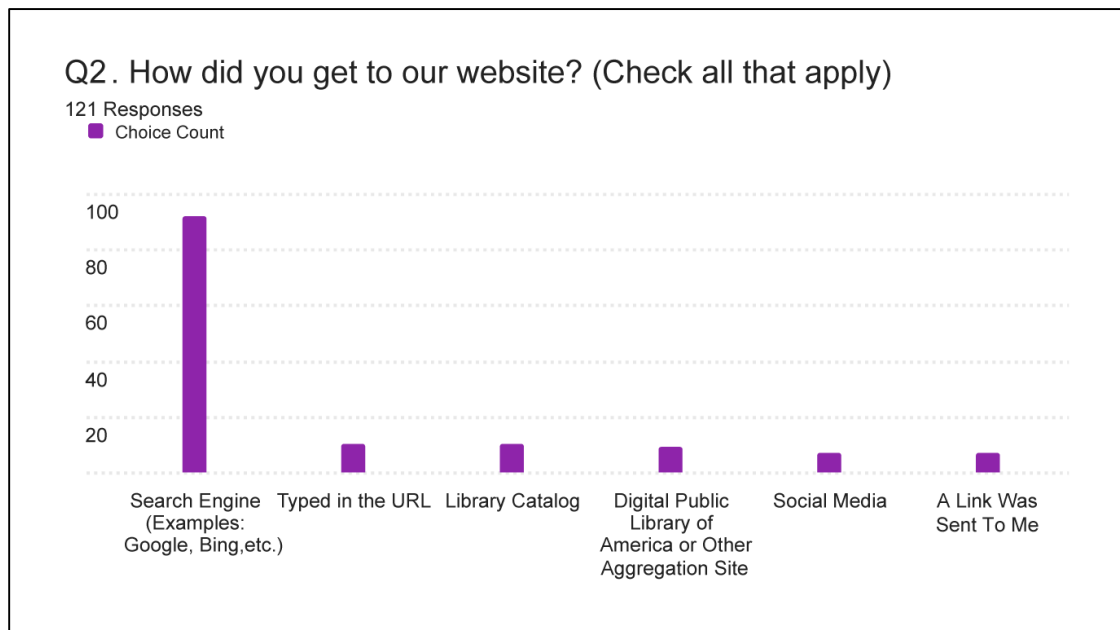
32 responses (19%). The next three categories were closely grouped in response counts. The choice "Other," had 19 responses (12%), which included purposes such as nostalgia, museum projects, and exploring historical flood levels. Job-related use was nearly as common, with 18 responses (11%). Academic research accounted for 16 responses (9%), covering topics such as women's history, local landmarks, and historical fiction projects. The remaining category, homework assignments or class instruction, garnered 7 responses (4%). This variety in responses highlights the site's broad appeal as both a scholarly and personal resource.

Who Are Our Users



The data from the survey question "How do you describe yourself?" reveals a diverse group of respondents with varied backgrounds and interests. Of the 115 responses to this question, the largest segment, comprised of 72 individuals (63%), chose "Other" and provided personalized descriptions. These ranged from "casual researcher," "amateur historian," and "genealogist" to specific connections such as being a "relative of Ms. Sills." This category reflects a wide array of motivations and roles among respondents. Students made up the second-largest group, with 16 individuals (14%). Both "ECU Affiliated" and "Library Employee" categories were equally represented, each with 9 responses (8%), suggesting some institutional and library-related interest. Additionally, 7 respondents (6%) identified themselves as educators. The smallest group, consisting of just 2 individuals (2%), were museum employees.

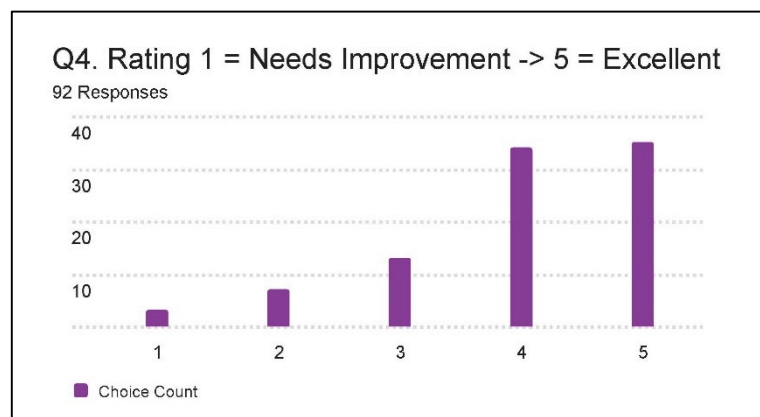
How Users Get to Our Site



The most common method was through search engines such as Google or Bing, accounting for 92 responses (69%), which indicates that search engines are the dominant entry point for the website. The library catalog and typing in the URL each contributed 10 responses (7%), showing they are each equally utilized, but are not nearly as popular as search engines. Access through aggregators like the Digital Public Library of America comprised 9 responses (7%). Links sent to users and access via social media both accounted for 7 responses each (5%). These findings highlight the importance of maintaining strong search engine optimization while also identifying opportunities to improve visibility through social media and partnerships with aggregators like the Digital Public Library of America.

User Experience and Satisfaction

Respondents were asked to rate their interactions with ECU Digital Collections on a scale from 1 (Needs Improvement) to 5 (Excellent). The data reveals that a majority of users were satisfied, with 35 (38%) giving the highest rating of 5 and another 33 (37%) rating the site a 4. Together, these categories account for 75% of responses, demonstrating a strong endorsement of the site's functionality and resources. Many users praised the site for being intuitive and helpful, with comments such as "It worked great for me" and "So far, so good." A smaller group of 13



A smaller group of 13 responses (14%), rated the site as average with a score of 3, while only 7 (8%) and 3 (3%) of users provided ratings of 2 and 1, respectively. Respondents highlighted specific areas for improvement. These included enhancing search functionality, technical issues, including image loading failures and difficulties downloading materials. Users also expressed a desire for niche materials like historic train depot photographs and specific regional documents.

Success in Meeting User Needs

When asked if they found what they were looking for, 64 respondents said “yes”, while 28 indicated “no”. A few of those reporting “no” included additional information about partial success. Users who struggled to find desired content mentioned issues such as missing archives, technical barriers, and navigation difficulties. Some were unable to locate specific items, such as older newspaper articles or local flood history data. These responses suggest there is room to improve content discoverability and provide additional means for the user to request content not currently digitized.

To enhance the user experience and broaden the site’s appeal, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Improve Search Functionality:** Implement more intuitive full text keyword searching and highlighting, more precise filtering options, and better date sorting.
2. **Address Technical Issues:** Resolve reported problems with image loading and download functionality to ensure a smoother experience. - The issue of the image server downtime has been addressed with an automated service that will restart the viewer when it goes offline. Previous to the update, the image server required a manual restart, which would not have likely occurred in the middle of the night or on the weekends.
3. **Increase Visibility:** Strengthen social media engagement and partnerships with aggregate platforms to attract a more diverse audience.
4. **Create Documentation:** Develop and make available some basic resources on the site's functionality.
5. **Additional Means of Follow up:** Find some additional ways to follow up and interact with users that are interested materials not currently represented on the site. This could be accomplished by an additional survey that allows users to provide their email for follow up purposes.

Conclusion

The results of this survey demonstrate the significant impact ECU Digital Collections has on individual users, particularly genealogists and personal researchers. The platform’s ability to support a wide range of interests, from academic to personal, is a testament to its value. By addressing technical challenges, enriching content, and strengthening outreach efforts, ECU Digital Collections can continue to grow as an invaluable resource for the local and worldwide communities. This survey provided useful data that has helped the Digital Collections Team better understand the site’s user base. Additionally, the results will help the team create more informed plans for future projects that better address users' needs.

Digital Collections User Survey Results

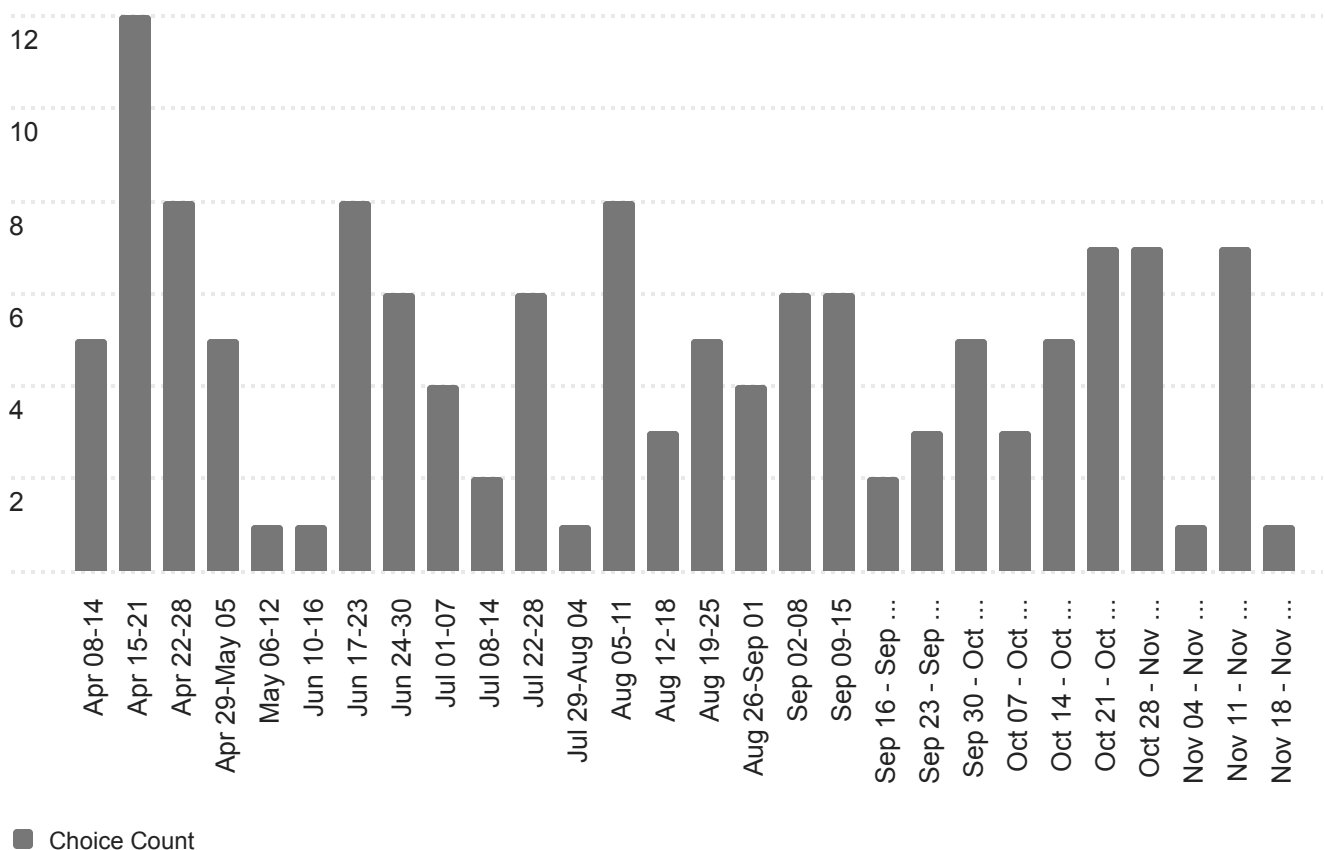
11/18/24

In the summer and fall of 2024, the ECU Digital Collections team conducted a user survey to gain deeper insights into the motivations and experiences of website visitors. Unlike analytics tools such as Matomo or Google Analytics, this survey was designed to gather qualitative data, including user demographics, reasons for visiting, and intended use of site resources. This survey features five multiple-choice questions with optional open-ended sections for more detailed feedback.

Response Count

138 Submitted Surveys (100 responses the project goal)

Recorded Date



Q1. What are you using our site for? (Check all that apply) - Selected Choice

126 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Genealogy	41
Personal research (Please list your research topic)	33
Casual browsing	32
Other (Please describe)	19
Job related	18
Academic research (Please list your research topic)	16
Homework assignment/Class Instruction	7

Q1_TEXT - Personal research (Please list your research topic) - Text

Personal research (Please list your research topic) - Text

Interested in historic photos

Family research

1ST GENERATION FROM SLAVERY

Women's history

I'm writing a book

Family

Maneys Neck Twp (Como, NC)

Miami History

History of the stethoscope

Dad's oral history

paternal grandparents

Many, but currently taverns in Edenton

Sailing History

Great grandparents

self improvement

Fereby/Ferebee family (I'm writing a work of historical fiction.)

Newspaper archive

details on mom

Higgin's LCVP 36' WW II

History of Washington, NC

A. B. Ellington

Settlers on White Oak River, Onslow Co., NC

WH Robinson Union school

92 peach bowl

Jerry Dillon 1992 Peach Bowl highlights

1968 graduates w h Robinson union

I retired from the military in Raeford and have always wanted to know and understand the history.

Onslow County NC

Looking up class mates

USCG Auxiliary history

Q1_TEXT - Other (Please describe) - Text

Other (Please describe) - Text

Quora.com AfrAm Hist

thank you for justice and sharing with us peace and love

looking at your survey!

just remembering my first assignment Army 67- 68

Emma Dupree materials

I'm searching for my ancestors through ancestry and I'm curious to know if my ancestors were slaves

I want to make a 1/6 scale model for the museum I volunteer with.

Nostalgia; I played the piano there at a wedding there in the early 1970's

CLASS MATES

ECU alum, want to look at the Buccaneers I have photography in.

1 to 11 grade

Winterville nc

Trying to find s ok specific information about flood levels where I live Anderson Road, Greenville NC, during Floyd.

Student Search

Born there, parents worked there. They moved back to Hillsville Va 1963

To fill in some blank spots in family tree

Searching for social media post topics.

Q1_TEXT - Academic research (Please list your research topic) - Text

Academic research (Please list your research topic) - Text

I use digital collections to help find resources for patrons

Civil War in NC

history of government

History of Pepsi

History

enslaved women in north carolina

Local history of Edenton

1993 Spring Calendar

William Herritage

Edward Southworth Fitz

History of eastern NC

Charles Chesnutt and his NC background

Metal detecting

Guadalcanal

Q2. How did you get to our website? (Check all that apply)

121 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Search Engine (Examples: Google, Bing, etc.)	92
Typed in the URL	10
Library Catalog	10
Digital Public Library of America or another aggregate site	9
Social Media	7
A link was sent to me	7

Q3. How do you describe yourself? - Selected Choice

115 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Other (Please describe)	72
Student	16
ECU Affiliated	9
Library Employee	9
Educator	7
Museum Employee	2

Q3_TEXT - Other (Please describe) - Text

Other (Please describe) - Text

Casual researcher

Interested in history

RETIREE

Community Research

wanna be writer

Family Researcher

information

Amateur Historian

Enjoying reading

A relative of Ms Sills

family historian

I was raised in Como, NC, and personally know the photographer.

advocate

Amateur genealogist

Researcher

Realtor

History buff

history of medicine scholar

Historian/Researcher

Government

retired military

Daughter of Pearl Harbor survivor

genealogy research

I do research on local history and southern decorative arts as a hobby.

Family Researcher

HJ C, daughter

New resident of Edenton

Casual Study

Family Researcher

DAR

genealogist

Former UNCP student

I attended UNCP now conducting research for personal interest

Writer.

Greenville native

I am a Genealogist! I have been doing this for the past 25 years. My Heritage is Mallette and Hadley where both family ancestors served for the South as well as the North during the Civil War. Colonel Peter Mallette was in the 7th NC Regiment with his brother

Retiree

Curious about life in the past

Carpentwr

person

Individual

Retired

relative of kia airman

Amateur genealogist

person

Public servants

county resident

Alumni

Old Lady in Texas

Museum Volunteer

interested person

Just an old person, looking at my past

Friends

ECU alum

Cemetery/History project researcher

genealogist

Genealogist

Retired, Genealogist

Senior citizens

ECU Maintenance Technician.

Lovesick searcher

Descendant of Wm herritage

Genealogy nut, love the history

Private citizen

Amateur historian/writer

Private genealogy retired individual

GM of Cross & sword

Lawyer

USCG Aux member

City government employee

Q4. Rating 1 = Needs Improvement -> 5 = Excellent

91 Responses

Field	Choice Count
5	35
4	33
3	13
2	7
1	3

Field	Median
Rating	4.00

Q4_Text Please provide any suggestions to improve our website.

Please provide any suggestions to improve our website.

Most things worked as expected

EASIER NAVIGATION

Overall pretty good, but I the date sorting seemed to be a little unreliable.

i wish that you had more pictures of the old train depots or if there was one or more than one.

first try

Sort by credited photographer

it is hard to open up and make the words bigger

Just beginning the use of this resource. So far so good.

website errors

Can't think of one, sorry!

Always looking for more information

Could not find actual transcript of interview

pictures of the early days of the county

exact search on subject

It worked great for me

No Suggestions

Images not loading for items using Google Chrome and Firefox.

Wanted to print 2 pages, never could figure out how to just show the page;

None - if it ain't broke, don't fix it, lol!

I was stopped from putting information on my ancestors

Not sure how to download some of the images.

When I typed a name and filtered with dates, 3 suggestions popped up. None of which included the name I entered. It would be helpful if the text I type in was highlighted in the material that pops up. So I don't have to read a whole book just to find out the name isn't in there.

Great!

forget your captcha effort. Unreadable and insulting

Put slaves documents up

As a first time user of this site, I think there should be a tutorial or walkthrough of some sort that will help navigate the website. I was not able to find what I was looking for. The links just seemed to take me to topics that were outside of my search.

Shocked, and amazed, as to how interesting your site is. THANK YOU!

website failed to fetch results only 1/4 of the way through my moms Bucaneer record (1955)

Needs a visual flow path of the these collections.

I would like an easier way to read books, journals, etc.

Add more pictures of the Candlewick Inn

Files won't open

I could not get a size that was readable. No instructions, there was a lot of information I wanted to read, but did not find it easy to adjust the images/pages. Found not instructions.

It was so nice to be able to actually read the pages and go to different sections without the the text jumping around. Being able to enlarge was very helpful. Liked having access to the WHOLE book,. Thanks you, Kitty

Get more information about our town

I haven't used it yet but will let you know as soon as I do.

Need to show more information

None

Improve our website

I have just started using website

Bless you for doing this.

It took me a bit to figure out how I could word-search a document, because the search is attached to the transcription far below the images. Just a visual prompt to guide me to the search symbol would have been useful. Fantastic image quality, thank you.

Have not gotten past general reading to see what references are given to comment.

Some pages don't respond

improve date browse

Q5. Did you find what you need? - Selected Choice

92 Responses

Field	Choice Count
Yes	64
No (Please explain)	28

Q5_TEXT - No (Please explain)

No (Please explain) - Text

One picture.

realtive, but not quite. seeking historical information on the the land the became croatan nf

Needed transcript

names not included

Still looking

not yet

Images not loading.

Still looking

No

I was looking for an archived article from the Daily Reflector newspaper published in 1976. I didn't see anything close or did I know whether I was in the right place on the site to find it.

couldn'd get to her pictures/details of graduation

Can seem to locate if the you have dwgs and if they are digitized for online viewing.

Files won't open

Found nothing as I could not read or navigate your program

Your survey request popped up before I had a chance to use the site.

Looking to see exactly how high Hurricane Floyd water level got in my immediate neighborhood.

Didn't find student.

Yes and no. Found some sources needed, found others closely related but not exact.

Beyond learning why Quakers migrated from Chester, PA to N.C., I was hoping to find more meeting minutes to find relatives.

The survey was the first thing I saw when I looked at the website. I need some time to find what I need.
