

Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative



Sevier County
Archives & Heritage Services

*Gather · Preserve · Share
Your 'History Hub'*

Presented by
**Sevier County Archives
and
Heritage Services
Board of Directors**

Elaine Wayland, Genie Nielsen,
Tooter Ogden, Carol Lee Johnson and
Jennifer Nackowski

Questions? (435) 896-6312

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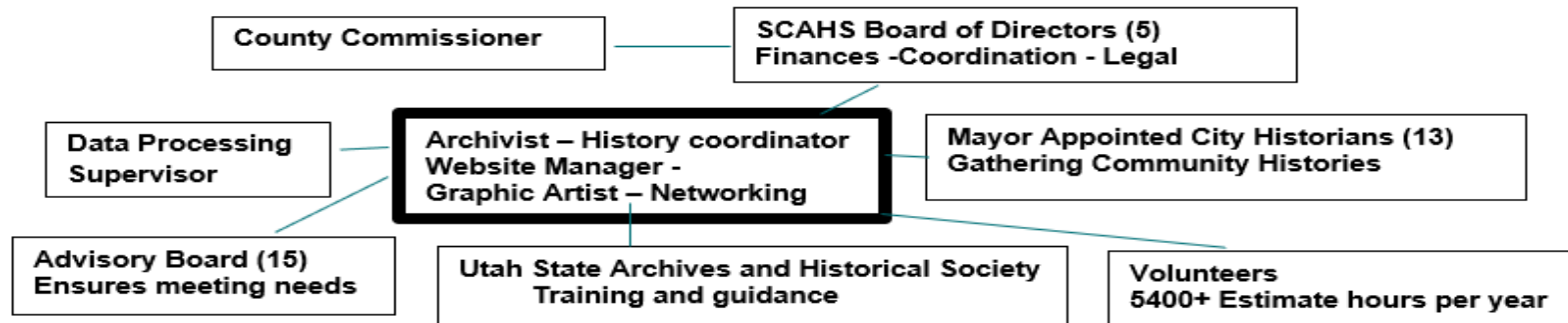
<https://www.seviercountyhistoryhub.org>

Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative

A focused effort to engage state leadership and funding authorities in assessing, securing, and strengthening financial support for the preservation, documentation, and public access of rural history and archival programs.

PREPARED BY: Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services (SCAHS)

- Sevier County citizens, concerned about the preservation of their community history, have united in creating an organization, SCAHS, that addresses the gathering, preserving and sharing of their treasured stories.
- It is important in rural communities to unite all resources, people and organizations. Limited 'people power' and finances must be focused together to accomplish important and needed projects.
- SCAHS is organized as a 'history hub' that unites all community history entities in a project that gathers, protects/preserves and shares.
- Archiving and History are combined in one department. Under the umbrella of the county, offices have been established in the Sevier County Administration Building, two part-time employees have been hired.



Problem/concerns of Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services (SCAHS)

As experienced in the forming of SCAHS, we are acutely aware that **ONGOING FUNDING IS NEEDED FOR A HISTORY COORDINATOR IN EACH COUNTY,**

to supplement rural county budget support and local donations.

This is not only a Sevier County problem but is shared by most rural counties.

For rural counties, this is not a minor concern but a serious, statewide problem that requires attention.

The following survey will show evidence of this rural county concern.

Recommendations and Funding Strategies

**An annual, state funded grant program
to support the sustainability, validity and security
of historical and archival organizing in Utah rural counties.**

(For defined recommendations see 5. Conclusions/Evaluations/Recommendations of this report)

Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative Survey of Utah's Nineteen Rural Counties

Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services, has conducted this statewide survey of Utah's rural counties to better understand how historical materials are collected, preserved, and made accessible to the public.

As part of this effort, each rural county in Utah (19) has been contacted to gather information about how they manage historic collections, how their community history is gathered and preserved and what level of archival and records management practices are being employed.

In addition, this survey explores how these activities are funded, including presence of dedicated county budgets, state support, grant support, or community donations.

The Utah legislature has assigned classes, according to the county population numbers, to distinguish between more urban and rural areas,
**THE FOURTH, FIFTH AND SIXTH CLASSES IN THIS DESIGNATION ARE CONSIDERED RURAL.
19 OF TH 29 COUNTIES IN UTAH ARE CONSIDERED RURAL.**



The purpose of this survey is to raise awareness of this issue among state officials responsible for budgetary oversight.

17-50-501. Classification of counties. (Counties in

(1) Each county shall be classified according to its population.

(a) A county with a population of 1,000,000 or more is a county of the **first class**.

(b) A county with a population of 175,000 or more but less than 1,000,000 is a county of the **second class**.

(c) A county with a population of 40,000 or more but less than 175,000 is a county of the **third class**.

(d) A county with a population of 11,000 or more but less than 40,000 is a county of the **fourth class**.

(e) A county with a population of 4,000 or more but less than 11,000 is a county of the **fifth class**.

(f) A county with a population less than 4,000 is a county of the **sixth class**.

In this survey, counties are numbered in the order of population, the least to the greatest. The second number is the population class of that county.

Class and Order	County	Population	Gathering (G-)	Preserving (G-)	Sharing (S-)	Funding (F-)
1- class 6	Daggett	956	2	1	1	1
2- class 6	Piute	1,534	1	1	1	1
3- class 6	Wayne	2,608	2	1	1	1
4- class 6	Rich	2,652	1	1	0	0
5- class 5	Garfield	5,290	1	1	1	0
6- class 5	Beaver	7,424	1	1	1	1
7- class 5	Kane	8,525	1	1	0	1
8- class 5	Grand	9,788	1	1	1	1
9- class 5	Emery	10,161	3	3	3	2
10- class 4	Morgan	13,093	3	3	3	3
11- class 4	Juab	13,297	1	1	1	1
12- class 4	Millard	13,572	1	1	1	1
13- class 4	San Juan	14,601	2	1	1	1
14- class 4	Carbon	20,613	1	1	1	0
15- class 4	Duchesne	20,803	3	2	2	2
16- class 4	Sevier	22,520	3	3	3	2
17- class 4	Sanpete	30,732	1	1	1	1
18- class 4	Wasatch	37,858	1	1	2	1
19- class 4	Uintah	38,307	3	3	3	3

INTERVIEW AND CHART CODES KEY

Gathering (G-)

- 0. No gathering
- 1. Informal uncoordinated efforts
- 2. Centralized location
- 3. Organized and sustainable

Preserving (P-)

- 0. No preservation
- 1. Protecting from loss or damage
- 2. Organized accession and care
- 3. Digitizing and archiving

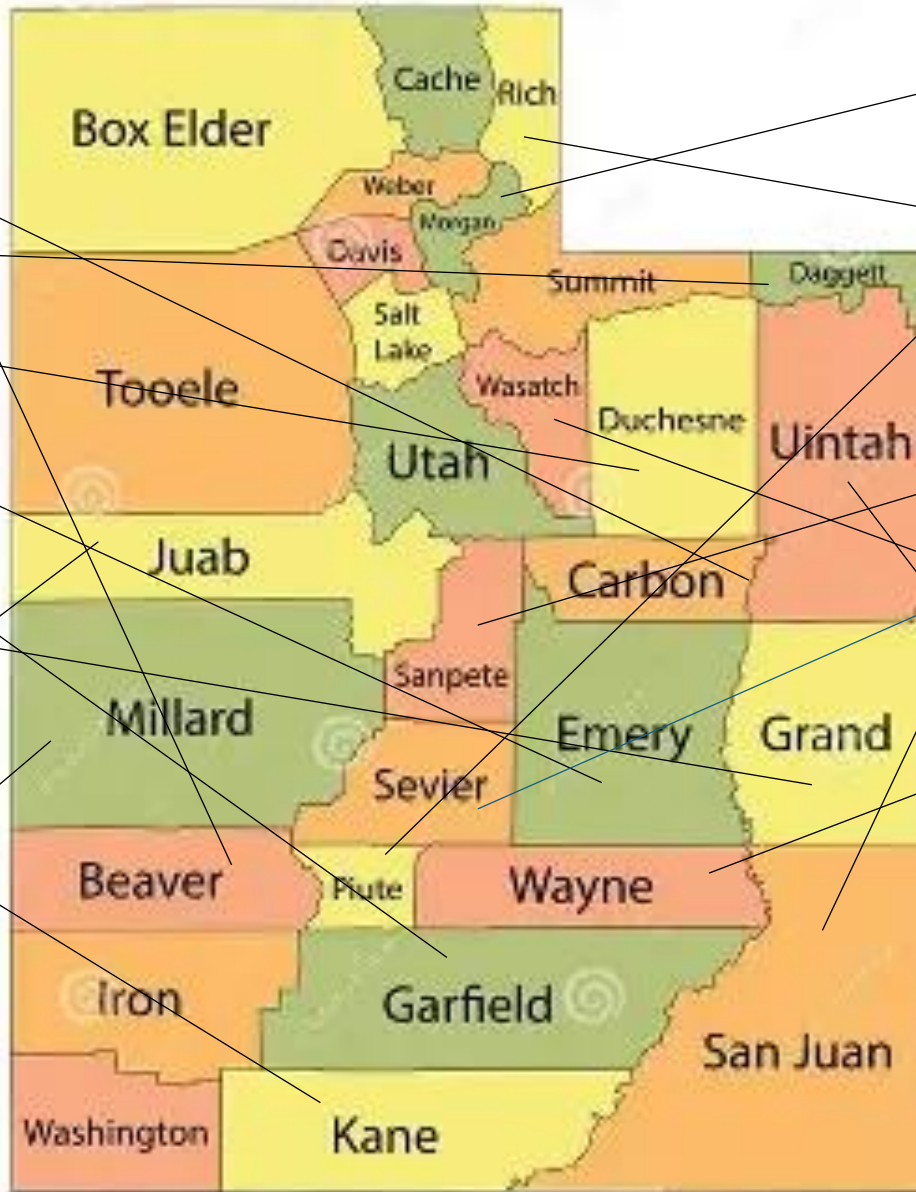
Sharing (S-)

- 0. Store but not accessible
- 1. Organized onsite access
- 2. Active website
- 3. Exhibits and educational outreach

Funding (F-)

- 0. No funding
- 1. Partial funding
- 2. Fully funded
- 3. Secure funding

Beaver
 Carbon
 Daggett
 Duchesne
 Emery
 Garfield
 Grand
 Juab
 Kane
 Millard



Morgan
 Piute
 Rich
 San Juan
 Sanpete
 Sevier
 Wasatch
 Wayne
 Uintah

County's Map
 Click or Touch County Name to go to County Survey

1-6. Daggett County – Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**Rating: G-2, P-1, S-1, F-1****Person Interviewed and Contact Information:** Peggy White 435-784-3218 ex.134 -PO Box 219 Manila, UT 84046**Title/responsibility:** Co-Director of Economic Development and Tourism**Gathering:** They had volunteer group of six women working to organize history gathering and preserving efforts, but it disbanded because of age related issues.**Preserving:** Are using an old schoolhouse for a museum and storing historical information. No archiving being done.**Sharing:** The old schoolhouse museum is open seasonally for public visit.**Funding:** Peggy has been communicating with the state museum people, trying to get ongoing funding for a part-time museum/history person.**NOTES:**

Peggy White's concerns are: No library, limited opportunities, losing valuable histories, time is critical, volunteers available but need a leader.

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Daggett County Jack Lyle County Commissioner,

Jack says they do have a museum, and it is owned by Daggett County, and they do not do any historical preservation.

[Return to county map](#)**2-6. Piute County – Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26****Rating: G-1, P-1, S-1, F-1****Person Interviewed and Contact Information:** Milo Medley 435-201-9933**Title/responsibility:** Community historian concern with history preservation**Person interviewed and Contact Information:** Rick Dalton 435-231-1223**Title/responsibility:** Junction City Mayor and School Board member**Gathering:** No organized gathering**Preserving:** No organized preservation**Sharing:** No organized sharing other than museum collections**Funding:** Donations from the Medley family for Marysvale project – Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area – Highway 89 helps with funding two docents for the Marysvale Museum.**NOTES:** Individuals and groups gathering and writing and preserving buildings but not coordinated. McVoy Barben collected Marysvale history for years. Before she died, she gave her collection to Milo. He has it housed in a building he owns and is funding any upkeep. It is open to the public and has a few museum items. No archiving being done. Individuals in the county are working on histories but not coordinated and county-wide.**Tooter Ogden interview 11/2024****Piute County: Sam Steed ,County Commissioner,**

They have Butch Cassidy, Homestead and Miners Park.

They do not fund either one of these parks. They have no money to use for historical preservation.

Milo Medley has a lot of the history for Marysvale and surrounding areas.

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3-6. Wayne County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Lauralee Williams 801-824-5500

Title/responsibility: Supervisor of DUP Cabins

Person Interviewed: James Anderson (Nan) -435-425-3554

Gathering: No organized gathering – Individuals and groups gathering and writing and preserving buildings but not coordinated

Preserving: No organized preservation -

Sharing: No organized sharing other than museum collections -

Funding: DUP Museums are funded for general upkeep by a Mining grant?

NOTES:

James Anderson is concerned that there are so many islands of history gathering and projects, but there is no coordination or plan for professional collecting, digitizing/ archiving and sharing (Website) He can see the importance of a county history coordinator. Ken Williams, state Archivist, (801-530-93764) is from Wayne County and he would be a good connection.

Steve Taylor, Fremont, is the caretaker of treasured history. He needs to pass this on to someone.

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Wayne County Dennis Blackburn County Commissioner,

They have the Grist Mill historical site. They do not contribute to any historical preservation, nor do they have any money with only 3% taxable land in their county.

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GPSF4-6. Rich County Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-0,F-0

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Maydi Eastman -435-793-2005 meastman@richcounty.gov

Title/responsibility: Works in the Rich County Recorder's Office

Gathering: No organized gathering

Preserving: No organized preserving

Sharing: No Organized sharing

Funding: None

NOTES: Maydi can see the importance of a county history coordinator. Many important histories are being lost because people don't know the proper procedures or even available resources. She would help to support this initiative in her county.

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5-5. Garfield County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1, F none

Person interviewed: Elaine Baldwin 435-676-3498

Title/responsibility: Personal community historian, DUP Member, Past Editor of the Garfield County Newspaper

Gathering: spotty gathering encouraged by DUP members -

Preserving: Elaine is recording current events and publishing them in a booklet in the DUP Museum

Sharing: Public can access histories in binders at the museum

Funding: Elaine Baldwin is personally funding all this work.

NOTES: Elaine Baldwin is working to collect past histories and has focused on recording current events in the county that need to be documented. i.e. Historical research for the monuments at Fort Sanford.

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6-5. Beaver County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person interviewed: Paula Spencer 435-438-6464 pspencer1959@gmail.com

Title/responsibility: Director/manager of the Beaver DUP Museum

Gathering: No organized gathering

Preserving: No organized preserving

Sharing: No Organized sharing

Funding: None

NOTES:

Paula is concerned because people bring important history 'items' are brought to the museum. They keep them but don't know how to correctly care for them. She is very positive about our funding initiative as a way to have professional guidance.
(Tried to contact Tammy Pearson for a follow-up from Tooter's interview in November 2023 - Couldn't reach her.)

Interview by Tooter Ogden 11/24

Tammy Pearson, Beaver County Commissioner

Tammy says they do have a museum. It's a DUP museum. They took out a loan, and they are paying this all out of county budgets.

She says the person that is over the museum

Would be a good resource and they could give us a lot more information of what they are doing.

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7-5. Kane County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-0, F-1

Person interviewed and Contact Information: Emily Bentley 678-779-8980 -Kanab City

Title/responsibility: Director of two municipal museums – feels responsible for county history but focus' on Kanab City – is working through grants and city salary.

Person interviewed: Kelly Stowell 435-899-0443

Title/responsibility: Kane County Economic Development Director

Gathering: No organized county history gathering

Preserving: some historical papers are kept at Kanab museums

Sharing: Museums are open to the public

Funding: Grant funding and city support

NOTES:

Ken Stowell states that there is no organized county history organization. He connects individual projects with Emily Bentley.

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Kane County Clerk – Chamill Lamb 435-644-2534

They have nothing in the county, but they have a museum in Kanab that has a historical preservation board. Need to contact that board to see what they are doing.

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8-5. Grand County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Tara Beresh 435-355-0915 tara@moabmuseum.org

Title/responsibility: Director of Curation and Exhibits – Moab Museum

Gathering: Informal, uncoordinated efforts

Preserving: Protecting from loss or damage – Moab Museum is digitizing

Sharing: Museum exhibits and exhibitions

Funding: Funding for the Moab Museum through Grant writing, donations. Funding locally is impossible.

NOTES:

Tara said the county rents their building through the RAP Tax program. She can see a great need for a state supported history coordinator in their county!

Interview by Elaine Wayland 11/24

1) Grand County Deputy Clerk – Dana Vanhorn – 435-259-1378 dvanhorn@grandcountyunah.com

They have nothing organized to preserve historical documents. Many things collected but nothing organized. She is very concerned.

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9-5. Emery County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-3,P-3,S-3,F-2

Person interviewed and Contact Information: Suzanne Anderson 435-609-9757**Title/responsibility:** County Historian/Archivist**Gathering:** Has been established for 23 years as a department in the county**Preserving:** Offices are in the Emery County Administration Building – Digitizing and Archiving**Sharing:** Website and offices open for public information**Funding:** Minimal funding from Emery County**NOTES:** Emery County History and Archiving Department is a Multi-Regional Repository for Emery, Grand and Carbon Counties (The San Rafael Area)**Interview by Elaine Wayland 11/24**

Emery County – Susanne Anderson, Archivist.

Emery County has History and Archive Department that is part of the county organization. It is located in the county building. The county funds this program and they have received grants through the years for projects. They have an active Historical Society that is sponsored by them. They are considered a state/county repository. They have been organized for 23 years

[Return to county map](#)**10-4. Morgan County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**

Rating: G-3,P-3,S-3,F-full

Person interviewed and Contact Information: Tyler Clark 801-821-2760**Title/responsibility:** Archivist of the Morgan County Historical Society**Gathering:** Open donations and a collection policy**Preserving:** Digitizing and scanning and having a climate-controlled area in the basement for archive boxes etc.**Sharing:** Open to the public and have a website shared with the Morgan County website.**Funding:** Fully funded through the county library budget and the old Railroad Building is owned by the city (they have a 5 year grant from the Morgan city to use the building with the museum. Tyler is one of two part-time employees.**NOTES:**

The Morgan County history department was in the Morgan County Library but outgrew the area and moved two years ago to the Old Railroad Museum. Now, The Morgan County Historical Society is housed in the Morgan Utah Union Pacific Depot. This society preserves archival materials (photos, diaries, local documents) and is the primary contact point for historical research in the county.

Morgan County Library offers local historical and genealogical resources and can help connect you with historical materials and aid researchers.

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Morgan County, Blaine Fackrell County Commissioner,

They collected a tax of .0000114%. It pays for the operation and maintenance of the County Library. They also have a historical Railroad Museum.

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11-4. Juab County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Andrea Peterson 435-623-1312**Title/responsibility:** librarian for the Juab City Public Library**Gathering:** No organized community gathering. The library is in the old high school. They have a Special Collections area. Collecting yearbooks.**Preserving:** Some items in the library. No organized digitizing or archiving.**Sharing:** Special Collections are in the library for the public to access.**Funding:** City funding as part of the library budget.**NOTES:**

People often bring historical items to the library.

[Return to county map](#)**12-4. Millard County- Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Carl Alrich 435-743-5316**Title/responsibility:** Manager of the Fillmore State House**Gathering:** Informal uncoordinated efforts**Preserving:** Some areas being protected from loss or damage**Sharing:** Organized onsite access**Funding:** Partial – some state, some county, some local**NOTES:** There are three amazing museums in Millard County; the State House, Topaz, and The Great Basin Museum. But there is no coordination between them as they each focus on different areas of history. Individuals and groups working but not countywide organization.

Carl Alrich could see the value in county coordination of

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Millard County, Dean Draper former county commissioner,

Dean said that they have the Great Basin Museum and the Fillmore Territorial House. They do not have anything put in place to preserve historical documents.

Dean said the best place to get historical information is from the newspaper morgue.

Dean would be a great resource for historical information in Millard County.

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13-4 San Juan County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**Rating:G-2,P-1,S-1,F-1****Person Interviewed and Contact Information:** Talia Hansen 435-485-8502 thansen@sanjuancountyut.gov**Title/responsibility:** Director – San Juan County Economic Development Dept.**Gathering:** no coordinated gathering plan. Individuals are writing histories.

However, San Juan County's historical and cultural resources remain widely dispersed across small museums, five county-funded libraries, two tribal community libraries, local arts spaces, chapter house collections, and private family archives. Much of this material is held in informal storage conditions, with limited archival infrastructure, outdated equipment, and inconsistent cataloging or digitization practices.

Preserving: At present, San Juan County lacks dedicated archival equipment and a secure cloud-based platform to properly preserve and provide access to county historical records. Many materials remain in physical storage and are not digitized, and there is no centralized system to ensure long-term protection or public accessibility. Baseline investment in scanners, audiovisual digitization tools, secure storage systems, and a cloud-based archival platform would allow the county to responsibly preserve its own public records while also creating shared capacity to support libraries, museums, tribal partners, and private collectors

Sharing: community can access by visiting locations – no history website or digitizing**Funding:** Funding is provided more in providing places to store histories than money. County funded libraries have special collections.

NOTES: Talia has a vision of the importance of hiring a part-time history coordinator in their county. She is sending more information. **(Included at the end of this report in the Conclusion Section)**

San Juan County includes 2 Reservations: Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Navajo Nation that includes 120 Chapter Houses.

[Return to county map](#)**14-4. Carbon County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26****Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-0****Person Interviewed and Contact Info:** Lori Perez - 435-630-0679 – mailing address 398 N 600 E Price UT 84501 lori.perez@carbon.ut.gov**Title/responsibility:** Works in the Carbon County Clerk/Auditors Office – will retire in July - was referred because of her involvement in county history.

Gathering: Helper Museum has an organized photo collection that people contribute to and is on Facebook- with great success and are also collecting historical records.

Preserving: They are protecting the items they have and working towards digitizing.

Sharing: Sharing through the Helper Museum and the Briner Museum but not county coordination.

Funding: No funding for gathering history, preserving or sharing

NOTES: Not coordinated in Gathering, Preserving and Sharing in the county. Lori worked for 7 years on a Data Base and when she passed it on they lost it.

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15-4. Duchesne County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**Rating: G-3,P-2,SF-2****Person Interviewed and Contact Information:** Lori Potter 435-738-1547 - lpotter@duchesne.utah.gov**Title/responsibility:** Director, Duchesne County History Center**Gathering:** They have developed a Deed of Gift format, calling for information and collecting photos**Preserving:** Are organizing a digitizing and archiving process**Sharing:** Using Facebook to share photos (1,000 followers) – Are using the county website**Funding:** Funding through the county library budget**NOTES:****Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24**

Duchesne County Irene Hansen County commissioner,

Duchesne has a history center and two libraries. It has a small tax on residence.

Irene didn't think they were doing anything for historical preservation.

[Return to county map](#)**16-4. Sevier County – Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26****Rating: G-3,P-3,S-3, F-2****Person Interviewed:** Tonia Lewis 435-893-0484 Sevier County Administration Bldg. 250 North Main Richfield UT 84701**Title/responsibility:** Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services Archivist**Gathering:** Have a Collection Scope that states what will be gathered. Not a museum but a history hub for the county that insures all recorded history is safely preserved and where it can be accessed by the public. City and County Historians inventory their communities as to what has been recorded, where it is located and that it is secured and preserved. They also determine what needs to be recorded. Oral histories, etc**Preserving:** All gathered histories are digitized and physically archived (stored) or the location is identified or linked.**Sharing:** Website: seviercountyhistoryhub.org - using the ArchivEra archiving and website managing system.**Funding:** Partial – County provides offices and operating costs. Donations and volunteers provide the rest. Lacking funds to hire a part-time coordinator/archivist/historian**NOTES:**

SCAHS Board of Directors has gathered funding to pay for the part-time coordinator of the program from community donors and applied for and received a one-time appropriation of \$50,000.00 from the Utah State Legislature in 2024. Without an ongoing (government) funding source the future of this important community service is in jeopardy.

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17-4. Sanpete County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-1,F-1

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Kevin Christensen 435-835-4321**Title/responsibility:** Sanpete County Travel and Tourism Director**Person Interviewed and Contact Information:** Erma Lee Hansen 435-680-9349**Title/responsibility:** Past Director of the Fairview City Museum**Gathering:** No countywide coordination**Preserving:** No countywide coordination**Sharing:** No countywide coordination**Funding:** No county funding – The Fairview City Museum holds yearly fund raisers with many faithful donors and applies for grants.**NOTES:**

The Fairview City Museum has successfully digitized portions of their collection and operated a robust online presence, supported by an active historical society. It functions effectively within the city and maintains strong collaborative relationships in the northern part of the county, though engagement and visibility beyond that area remain limited. Erma Lee could see the value in having a county history coordinator and having state participation.

Interview by Tooter G. Ogden 11/24

Sanpete County Scott Bartholomew County Commissioner,

They are not contributing to any historical preservation.

[Return to county map](#)**18-4. Wasatch County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26**

Rating: G-1,P-1,S-2,F-1

Person Interviewed Contact Information: Luana Nielson 435-671-2040 lnilson19@yahoo.com**Title/responsibility:** Director, Wasatch County DUP Museum**Gathering:** Each town is working to try to gather and preserve their histories, but there is no coordinated effort.**Preserving:** Different groups starting to digitize**Sharing:** Several different areas not a website.**Funding:** Different partial funding sources.**NOTES:** There are two groups in the county that are working to preserve community stories: Family History Center – working with digitizing and a committee that is writing the 2nd volume of Wasatch County History[Return to county map](#)

19-4. Uintah County - Interviewed by Elaine Wayland 2/26

Rating: G-3,P-3,S-3.F-full

Person Interviewed and Contact Information: Nicole Zamora-Wilson - Uintah Regional History Center – 435-789-6276 Vernal, Utah

Title/responsibility: Supervisor of the Uintah Regional History Center

Gathering: Organized and Sustainable – Collection Scope

Preserving: Professional Digitizing and Archiving

Sharing: Website, Exhibits and Educational Outreach

Funding: Fully funded by the county, grants and an interest earning account

NOTES: URHC supervisors have been willing to advise and help in every way to encourage historians from other rural counties to organize history gathering, preserving and sharing their stories. They work in the county under the county library board and in conjunction with their museum.

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20-3. Summit County

21-3. Box Elder County

22-3. Iron County

23 -3. Tooele County

24-3. Cash County

25-2. Washington County

26-2. Weber County

27-2. Davis County

28-2. Utah County

29-1. Salt Lake County

Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative Survey Report Summary 2/26

By Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services Board of Directors
(Elaine Wayland, Genie Nielsen, Tooter Ogden, Carol Lee Johnson and Jennifer Nackowski)

This survey represents subjective data, drawing on the personal viewpoints and experiences of the respondents. This could be considered a subjective survey because it was based on personal feelings, opinions, beliefs or perspectives of the people interviewed,

Identifying the appropriate person to interview proved challenging. The process often began with county offices and relied on referrals to determine who had a comprehensive understanding of how historical work – such as gathering, preserving, sharing and funding - was organized and coordinated within each county.

Report on survey results

Category A: Model Programs (Sustainable)

- 2 counties (Uintah and Morgan)
- Demonstrate strong, coordinated practices for gathering, preserving, and sharing
- Have an ongoing, reliable funding source

Category B: Strong Programs with Funding Challenges

- 2 counties (Emery and Sevier)
- Lack a stable or sufficient funding mechanism, limiting long-term sustainability

Category C: Emerging Program with County Support

- 1 county (Duchesne)
- Program is recently established
- Clear trajectory toward excellence in gathering, preserving, and sharing
- Supported by county-level funding or infrastructure

Category D: Limited or Fragmented Capacity

- 14 counties
- Historical materials are scattered, uncoordinated, or inconsistently managed
- Preservation is inadequate, and access/sharing is minimal or unorganized

Summary Table of Counties

Category	Number
Model and Sustainable	2
Strong but Underfunded	2
Emerging	1
Fragmented/At Risk	14

Narrative Interpretation

Survey results indicate significant variation in county-level capacity for gathering, preserving, and sharing historical resources. Two counties currently function as model programs, demonstrating coordinated practices supported by ongoing funding. An additional two counties show strong programmatic activity but face sustainability challenges due to limited funding. One county is in the early stages of program development but shows strong potential, supported by county investment. In contrast, the majority of counties (fourteen) report fragmented and uncoordinated historical efforts, with materials either inadequately preserved or managed in a disorganized manner, placing these resources at risk.

Proposed Solution

A potential solution is the establishment of a state-level funding program dedicated to county historical preservation.

Under this model, county historians would be eligible to apply for or request annual funding to support **a part-time county history coordinator**. These coordinators would be trained, supported, and aligned with the State History Department, ensuring consistent standards for gathering, preserving and sharing historical materials.

This structure would promote secure stewardship, professional validation, and long-term sustainability of historical resources at the county level while allowing counties to tailor implementation to local needs.

What would a history coordinator in each county do?

Part-time local coordinators in participating rural counties would be responsible for on-the-ground inventory, digitization support, volunteer coordination, community engagement, and preservation assistance **tailored to local collections and needs**. This structure, in which rural communities have both centralized expertise and localized capacity to protect and sustain their historical resources.

Comments: Tooter Ogden (past Sevier County Commissioner) 11-24 -after interviewing county commissioners from eight rural counties: Millard, Morgan, Piute, Daggett, Wayne, Beaver, Sanpete, and Duchesne.

“They all think it would be a great idea to have money from the state for the historical preservation of documents. They all felt it would be very difficult to get any ongoing money. Commissioners have tried for many years to get ongoing funding for the Emergency Management Service across the state of Utah. I’m certain that would take priority over any other project.

I feel we need to work with our Historical State agency and look for another approach. I still think there is a way to make it work.”

Tooter Ogden

Conclusion: Archiving Initiative & Statewide Coordination Model 2/26
By Talia Hansen – Director, San Juan County Economic Development Dept.

To address this statewide gap, the Archiving Initiative proposes a strategic legislative investment built around a coordinated statewide model that supports both leadership and local implementation.

Statewide Coordination and Local County Capacity

The initiative would establish:

One full-time/part-time statewide program coordinator, housed within a lead organization, responsible for managing the overall initiative, providing technical support, coordinating training, maintaining statewide partnerships, and ensuring consistency with archival standards.

Part-time local coordinators in participating rural counties, responsible for on-the-ground inventory, digitization support, volunteer coordination, community engagement, and preservation assistance tailored to local collections and needs.

This structure, in which rural communities have both centralized expertise and localized capacity to protect and sustain their historical resources.

Baseline Infrastructure Investment

Many rural counties do not currently have the archival equipment, secure digital storage, or cloud-based archive platforms required to digitize, catalog, and responsibly maintain records for long-term access. Grant funding or local donations could provide baseline investments in:

Scanners and digitization tools

Audiovisual and film preservation equipment

Secure storage systems

Cloud-based archival platforms that improve accessibility and protection

Grant Leverage and Long-Term Sustainability

While training opportunities exist through state and national partners, rural communities often cannot fully participate because foundational capacity is missing. This initiative fills that gap by pairing staffing and infrastructure with professional development.

Both the statewide lead coordinator and local county coordinators would be trained as grant writers and resource navigators, enabling communities to pursue federal, foundation, and corporate funding streams. Legislative seed funding can also serve as a match, unlocking larger competitive grants and supporting long-term sustainability.

Partnership and Expanded Rural Support

This initiative will be strengthened through partnerships with chambers of commerce, nonprofits, libraries, tribal entities, museums, and local governments. In addition, increased support for organizations such as Utah Arts & Museums would expand statewide capacity by providing most rural areas lack the staffing, equipment, and systems necessary to preserve these resources to professional standards.

To address this statewide gap, the Archiving Initiative proposes a strategic legislative investment built around a coordinated statewide model that supports both leadership and local implementation.

Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative and Survey Authorship

My Name is Elaine Wayland and I am the author and researcher behind this initiative and survey. I undertook this research with a clear purpose and a genuine personal investment in the topic. My background in education administration and my lifelong residency in our Sevier County rural community has given me both the knowledge and the motivation to explore this subject thoughtfully, responsibly, and professionally.



My passion and motivation were ignited in 2016 when I was preparing a presentation on the history of education in Sevier County for the Sons of Utah Pioneers. There were several community history books that I knew had been written and needed for reference. I went to our public library and was very concerned (horrified) that there were a few of these valuable books, some had not been returned and the couple on the shelf were in terrible condition. A public city library not having a special collections area of valuable community histories that were properly cared for really concerned me. I couldn't locate my needed books anywhere.

I thought, "Why isn't someone doing something about this?!" And then I realized I was retired, had the time, and the background and concern about our community history. I made a proposal to our Richfield City Council as to the need for a Richfield City Historian and that I would volunteer to take on that responsibility to explore what our needs were. They agreed and gave me an office in the basement of the city building. Mayor David Ogden worked with me, and we organized a team of volunteers that worked for several years. We didn't have any professional guidance and did not know the resources that were available to help us. We gathered but did not know how we should preserve our collections.

Then COVID came and put us on hold. About that time, in meeting with Wade Allison from Emery County, we shared what we were trying to accomplish. After listening, he said that what we were trying to do needed to be a county endeavor. I called Lyman Forsythe, a respected community historian, and asked if he would join Mayor David and me in designing a proposal for our Sevier County Commissioners for the forming of a Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services. We worked for over a year to prepare that proposal and presented it in 2023.

The commissioners accepted our proposal, and we have worked for the last two years developing a county-wide state-of-the-arts gathering, preserving, and sharing organization. We have offices in the Sevier County Administration Building, and the county is providing operating costs. We have an endless number of volunteers, but we have to hire a part-time coordinator/archivist to manage the program. The person we hired is vital to our organization. She is currently being paid by community donations. With all the investment of time, money and equipment purchases, we cannot risk not having her salary secure. **This is the reason, the main reason, that we are proposing this funding initiative for insuring a secure and continuous county historical preservation program.**

We observed that other rural counties were struggling to adequately preserve their irreplaceable historical assets. By demonstrating that this challenge extends beyond a single county and reflects a systemic issue affecting rural communities statewide, we believed state leaders needed to be informed so they would recognize the urgent need for coordinated investment and support for historical preservation across Utah's rural counties.

Our solution was to bring this concern to our state leaders' attention by preparing The Rural History and Archives Funding Initiative and Rural County Survey .

NOTE:

I would like to add a few of the many horror stories that have occurred in our Sevier County in the past to let you know we have deep emotional reasons for not losing any more valuable community history. Our SCAHS (Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services) Board of Directors is committed to being caretakers that ensure we do not lose any more history treasures.

The many past losses of precious history (buildings and written) could have been averted if the community was aware of who to contact for direction. Our 'history hub' provides this service and we are working to spread this information.

- The Richfield Preservation Committee, during the 1980's, was organized by George V. Peeterson, Jr, Neal Busk, Marianne Kirkoffer and Revo Young. They were registered with the state and prepared vast amounts of information about homes and buildings in Richfield for SHPO. They worked with the Ralph Ramsey family to donate their historic home for 'The Ramsey House Museum.' The museum was becoming a community treasure. When through moves away from Richfield, death and illness of the committee members, they presented the need for preservation of the museum to Richfield City. Richfield City did not want that responsibility. The committee didn't know where to turn so the building was returned to the Ramsey family and later demolished for a parking lot.
- A county building custodian contacted Lyman Forsythe when he saw old maps being thrown into the dumpster and knew that Lyman valued history. (They were valuable historic maps.)
- Sevier County Historical Society was active through the 70's and 80's but discontinued when the main leaders died.
- As director of the Fremont Indian Park and instrumental in its origination, Gordon Topham was very upset when he handed his responsibilities over to a new director and the collected history information was thrown away.
- History books from past organizations have been lost because there was no collection place.
- All the libraries in our county have been approached by people wondering what to do with historical items.

- When historians in the community were trying to save the old courthouse on main street.

There are many more.

7. Acknowledgements

This initiative and accompanying survey report would not have been necessary without the establishment of our Sevier County Archives and Heritage Services.

The very creation of our Archives and Heritage Services would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and generosity of many individuals and organizations in our county. We extend our sincere thanks to all those who contributed their time, expertise, historical knowledge, archival materials, and financial donations, helping to bring this history and archiving project to fruition.

Thanks to: SCAHS Board of Directors, Sevier County Commissioner Scott Johnson, Utah State Representative Carl Albrecht, Don Peterson, McKay Chamberlain, Jeanna Ogden, 13 City Historians, a 15-member Community Advisory Board, 54+volunteers and most of all, the heart of our SCAHS organization, Archivist Tonia Lewis and Data Processor Vienna Lewis.

We are also grateful to those who assisted specifically with the development of this report, offering valuable insights, review, and editorial support that strengthened its clarity, accuracy, and overall quality.

Thanks to: Genie Nielsen and Jeannie Martin for editing, advice and encouragement.

Finally, we wish to express our special appreciation to our **IT** specialist, whose technical expertise, problem-solving, and sustained support were instrumental in shaping the digital framework of this project. His contributions were essential in transforming the project's vision into a functional, reliable, and sustainable archival resource.

Thanks to: IT Specialist Robert Herbstritt for making us “common folk” look professional!

8. SCAHS WEBSITE

<https://www.seviercountyhistoryhub.org>