"Thank you, once again, for assisting humble far flung independent researchers like me under all this duress. It is notable, and appreciated!"

Overview

University of Oregon Libraries Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA) provided over 61,000 free scanned images to researchers from around the world during the first phase of the pandemic (March 2020 - August 2021). During this time, a campus lockdown blocked all researchers from accessing any non-digitized SCUA materials. Recognizing the impact of a closed reading room on accessibility to primary sources, public services and collection management staff quickly pivoted from in person services to remote access via an ad hoc scanning service.

Workflow

The Public Services Librarian worked with researchers to refine their inquiries and identify portions of collections (up to 5 folders) integral to their research. The Collections Manager managed retrieval of identified materials from secured storage and remotely supported student workers in accessing SCUA during lockdown.

Undergraduate student workers (normally in public facing roles) were reassigned to perform digital capture on idle KIC Bookeye scanners transferred from the main library.

Student workers were trained remotely on image capture and upload of PDF files to the department server. Microsoft Teams served as the platform for remote communication and assignment of scanning tasks..
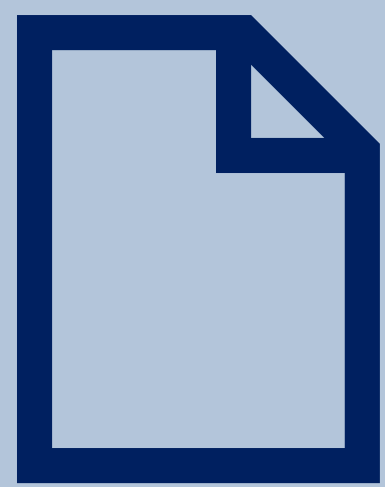
All PDF files (200dpi) were sent to researchers using WeTransfer
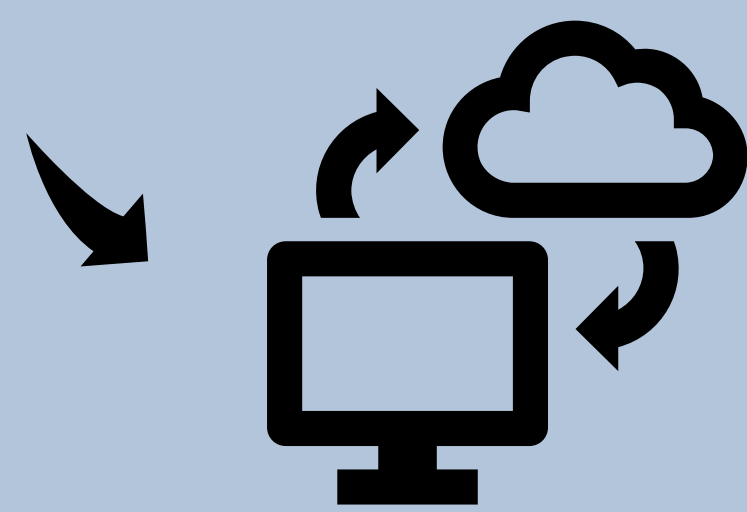
Lauren Goss, Public Services Librarian
Austin Munsell, Collections Manager

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON | Special Collections and University Archives

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Distribution of Researchers who Received Scans Worldwide

"I am bowled over! This is so incredible, beyond what I could have hoped for. So much incredible information. I am so grateful for your generosity and assistance in scanning these documents. My sincerest gratitude!"
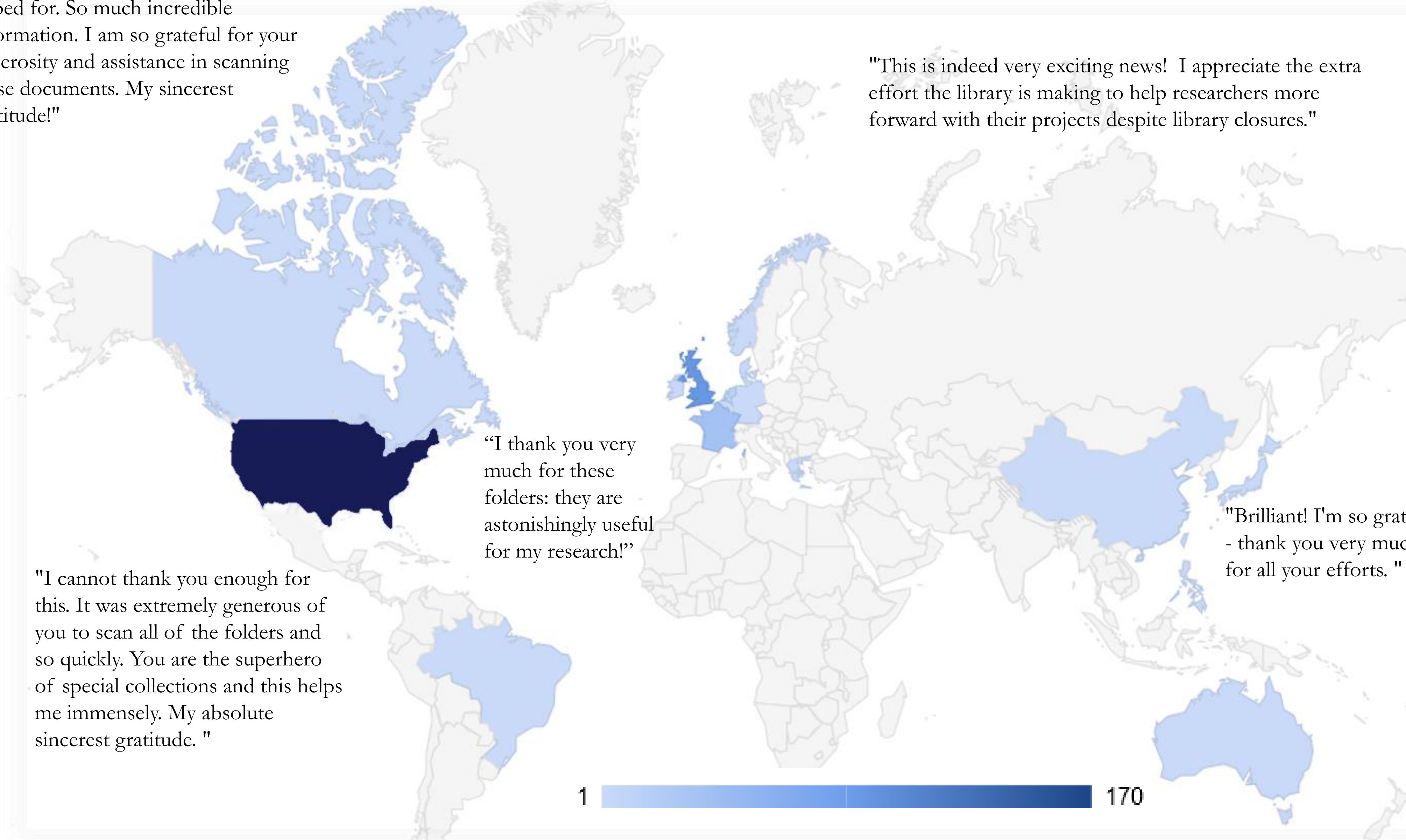
"This is indeed very exciting news! I appreciate the extra effort the library is making to help researchers more forward with their projects despite library closures."

"I thank you very much for these folders: they are astonishingly useful for my research!"

"Brilliant! I'm so grateful - thank you very much for all your efforts. "

"I cannot thank you enough for this. It was extremely generous of you to scan all of the folders and so quickly. You are the superhero of special collections and this helps me immensely. My absolute sincerest gratitude. "

1 ———— 170

Distribution of Researchers who Received Scans in the United States

"Thanks to you and your students for this, this is an incredibly helpful service right now!"
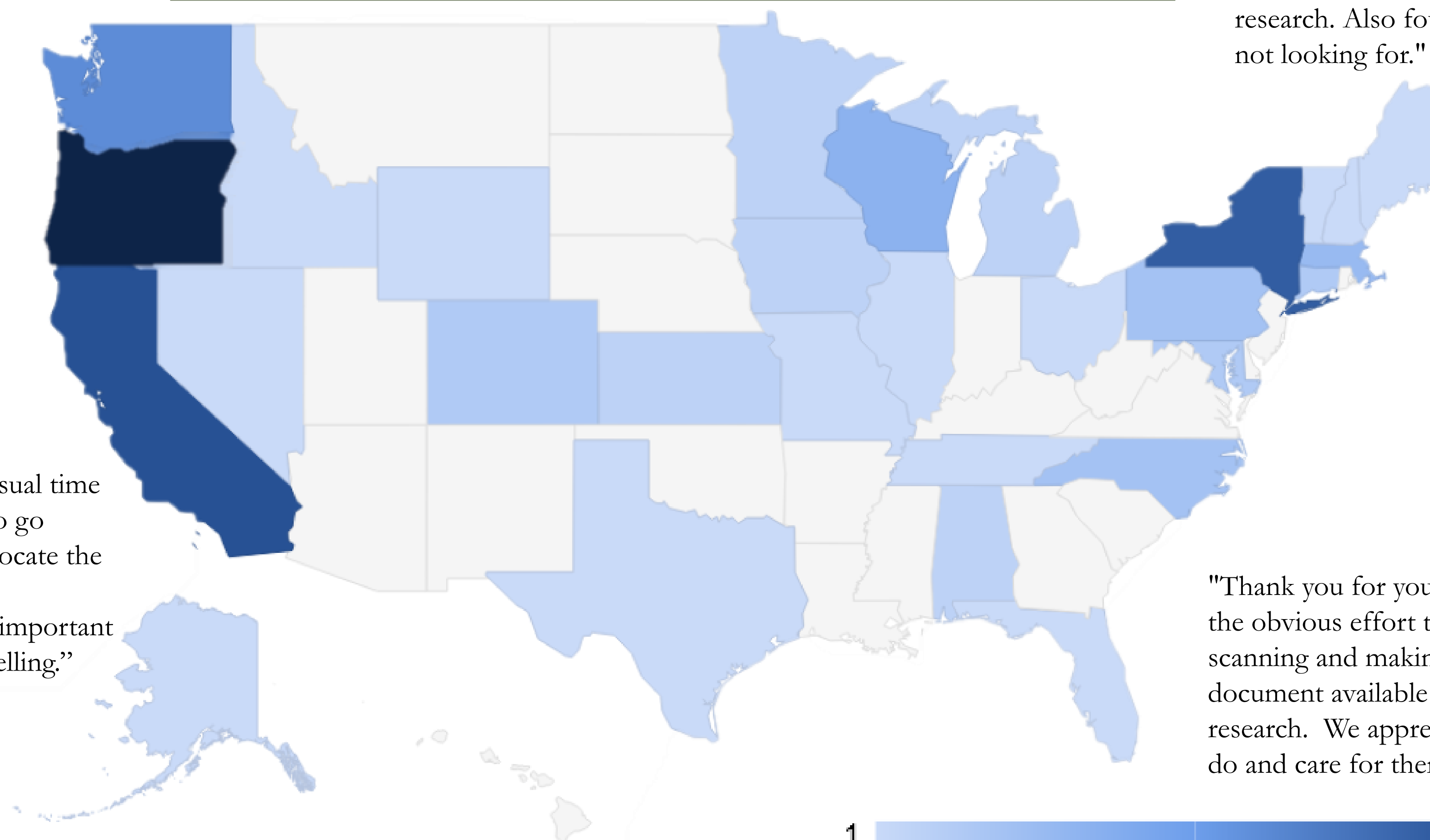
"Thank you for scanning the documents. It was useful in my research. Also found a 'gem' I was not looking for."

"I know this is an unusual time and your willingness to go above and beyond to locate the document is so much appreciated. It fills an important hole in the story I'm telling."

"Thank you for your time and all the obvious effort that went into scanning and making these priceless document available for our research. We appreciate all that you do and care for there."
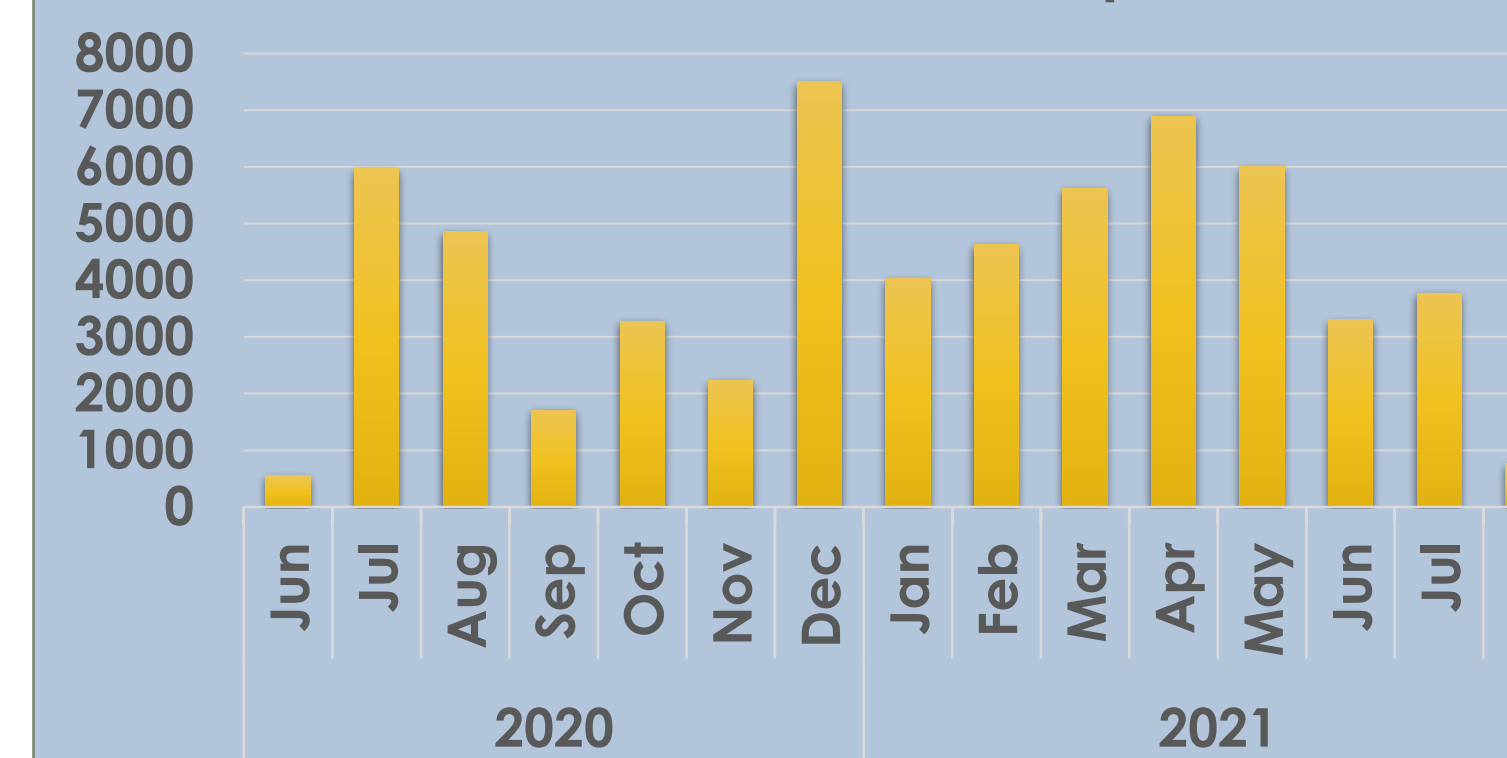
1 ———— 80

Output

- 61,000+ pages scanned and delivered to over 200 researchers worldwide (17 countries)
- 571 folders scanned from 163 collections
- 11 day average turnaround time from request to delivery
- 55 messages of appreciation received
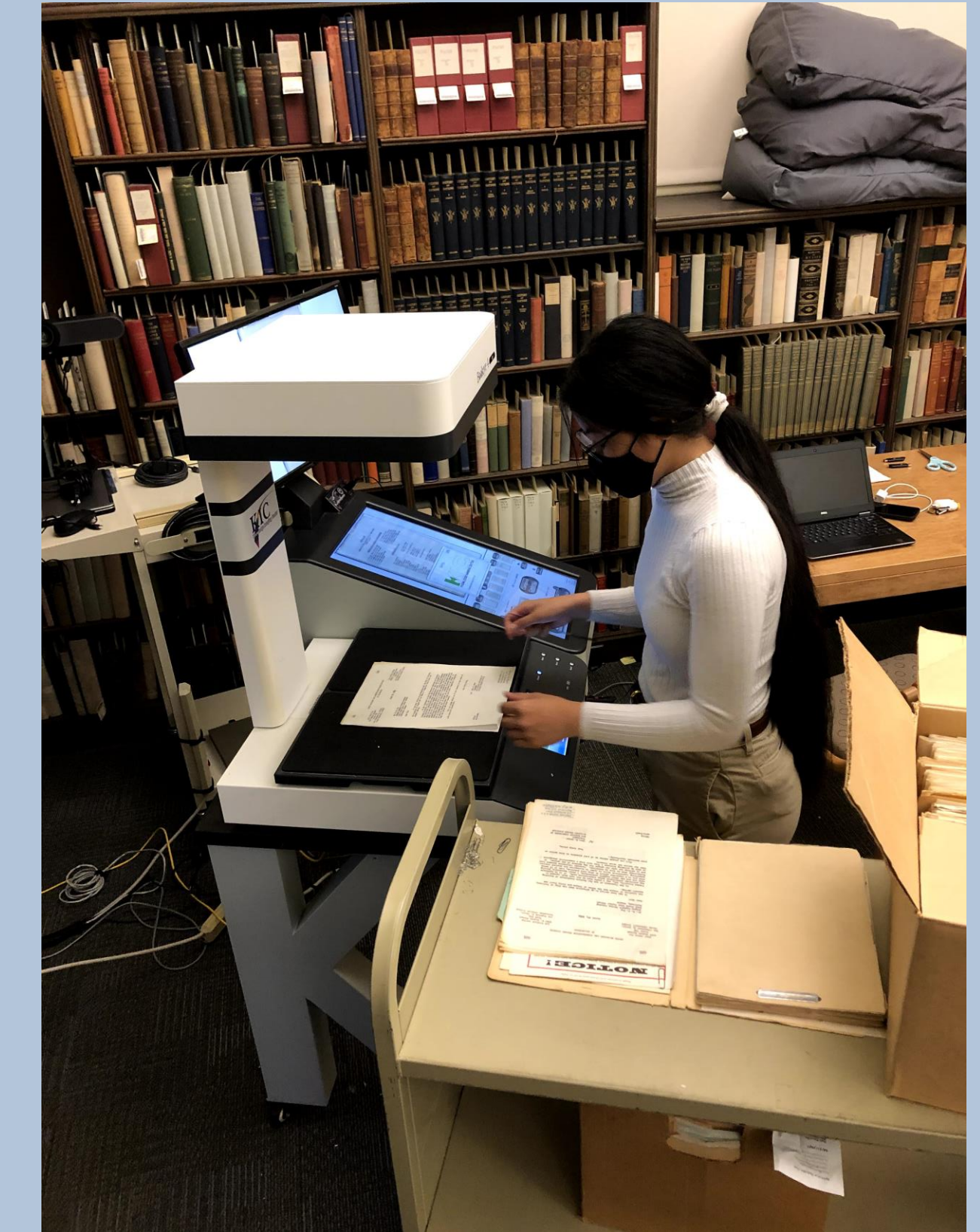
Student worker, Shantelle, fulfilling scan orders

Number of Scans Delivered per Month

2020 — 2021

Outcome

Researchers were appreciative and grateful for access to materials vital to their research interests. Access to these primary sources meant they could proceed with writing articles, dissertations, and books regardless of geographical constraints. The end of the program coincided with the reopening of the library to the general public and the return of the scanners to use in public areas. Staffing and budgetary constraints prevent SCUA from continuing a similar scanning service in conjunction with the reopened reading room. However, this program serves as an exemplar of a potentially more equitable model of future access to primary source materials stood up with minimal resources, providing access for all researchers regardless of ability to travel for an in-person research visit.