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Preserving Diverse Voices and Conserving Their Heritage : Lessons Learned in the Tampa Bay Region

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Panelist in “Documenting Diversity in Florida’s Historical Record”
2014 Annual Meeting of the Society of Florida Archivists

Name: James Anthony “Jim” Schnur, University Librarian, Special Collections and University Archives,
Nelson Poynter Memorial Library, University of South Florida St. Petersburg.

Co-panelists include: Tomaro Taylor (Florida Mental Health Institute, USF), Burt Altman (FSU), and
Myrka Don Fred (Broward County Libraries)

In sending this document, I affirm my commitment to attend the 2014 annual meeting of the Society of
Florida Archivists and to present my portion of this session if my presence on the panel is approved.

Session title on panel:

“Preserving Diverse Voices and Conserving Their Heritage: Lessons Learned in the Tampa Bay Region”

Brief description (203 words):

Archivists and special collections librarians often find themselves taking on the role of reacting (sometimes, almost in the form of an “archives ambulance”) when others bring collections to us or notify us of materials that face imminent destruction. Through our talents as educators and our public outreach efforts, we may also grow into the role of becoming proactive curators rather than reactive “paramedics” of the historical record. Schnur describes a number of examples of diverse collections in the Tampa Bay region, at academic libraries such as the University of South Florida Tampa Library and the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library at USF St. Petersburg, as well as other venues, such as Heritage Village in Largo. He offers some first-person examples of how outreach with students, faculty, and members of various communities may open doors, even if it means that we may have to step on the other side of the reference desk or leave the repository. This portion of the presentation will complement some of the specific examples offered by other panelists, building upon their efforts by explaining how some of our best treasures come from contacts we can establish directly, rather than through second- and third-party arrangements brokered by history faculty or others.

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