

Alexander Scott

2014 PBRC Research Grant Report

Pacific Basin Research Center

During July and August of 2014 I used funding provided by the PBRC to conduct a digitization project with the Sherman Indian Museum of Riverside, California while living in the city of Los Angeles. Once a week I would commute from Los Angeles to Riverside where I would work in the museum's archive under the supervision of curator Lorene Sisquoc. Upon allowing me to access the archive, Lorene provided me a small workspace in a backroom of the museum where I worked exclusively with volumes of original letters to and from superintendents of the Sherman Indian High School during the years 1893-1895. Using a Canon t3i DSLR camera and a tripod, I spent an average of six hours per session collecting hundreds of RAW images of the letters (one page per image). Upon collecting a substantial body of images (300 to 400) I would return to Los Angeles and spend the rest of the week developing the images from home, cropping their size and enhancing their readability using Adobe Lightroom software. Despite being a relatively simple procedure, this proved to be an extremely monotonous and tiring process that took an average of 25 hours to complete. After developing images for a specific volume I would convert the files into PDF format so they could be easily stored on a hard drive and easily accessible to future researchers and scholars. During the six week project I collected and developed 1740 images in total, successfully digitizing three 580 page volumes. Since beginning this project in the fall of 2013 I have successfully digitized 5 of the 21 volumes contained in the archive. Although this is only a small portion of the archive, I believe the value of this work is immeasurable in that the museum is completely funded by small private donations and does not possess the financial privilege of many museums in both digitizing and adequately

preserving the historical items they possess. Thus, it is my hope this project will continue and to see all 21 volumes digitized in the future so the history they possess will never be lost. I thank the PBRC for providing me the opportunity to conduct this project and for contributing to the preservation of indigenous cultural history in the United States.