

THE ROWING HISTORY PROJECT:

A CASE STUDY IN DIGITIZING COLLECTIONS

CONSERVATION
CENTER
for Art & Historic Artifacts



Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts

In a typical year:

- Preservation Services specialists complete over 50 survey projects.
- Approximately 60 CCAHA-sponsored workshops, conferences, webinars, and training sessions are presented.
- The Digital Imaging Services staff digitizes thousands of pages of fragile archival documents, books, and photographs.
- Conservators assess and treat more than 6,000 individual artifacts, from over 400 clients.
- Housing & Framing Services house approx. 75% of the artifacts treated (folder, sleeve, box, mat and frame, or sealed package).



FLAGS OF THE SCHUYLKILL NAVY.



COMMODORE



VICE COMMODORE



1ST CLASS CHAMPION



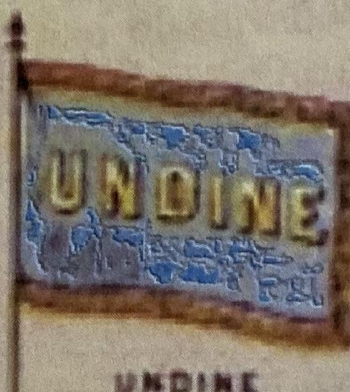
2ND CLASS CHAMPION



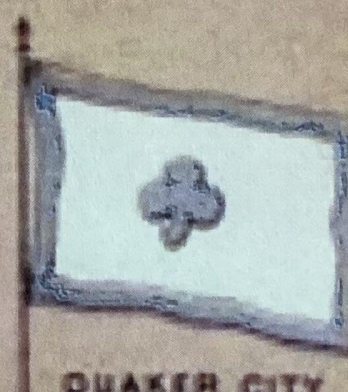
3RD CLASS CHAMPION



UNIVERSITY



UNDINE



QUAKER CITY



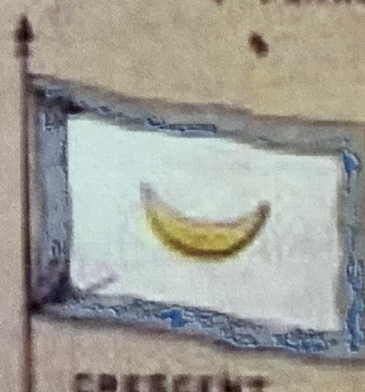
PENNSYLVANIA



PHILADELPHIA



MALTA



CRESCENT

CLUBS UNATTACHED TO THE NAVY.



BACHELORS



PACIFIC



VESPER

FAIRMOUNT PARK

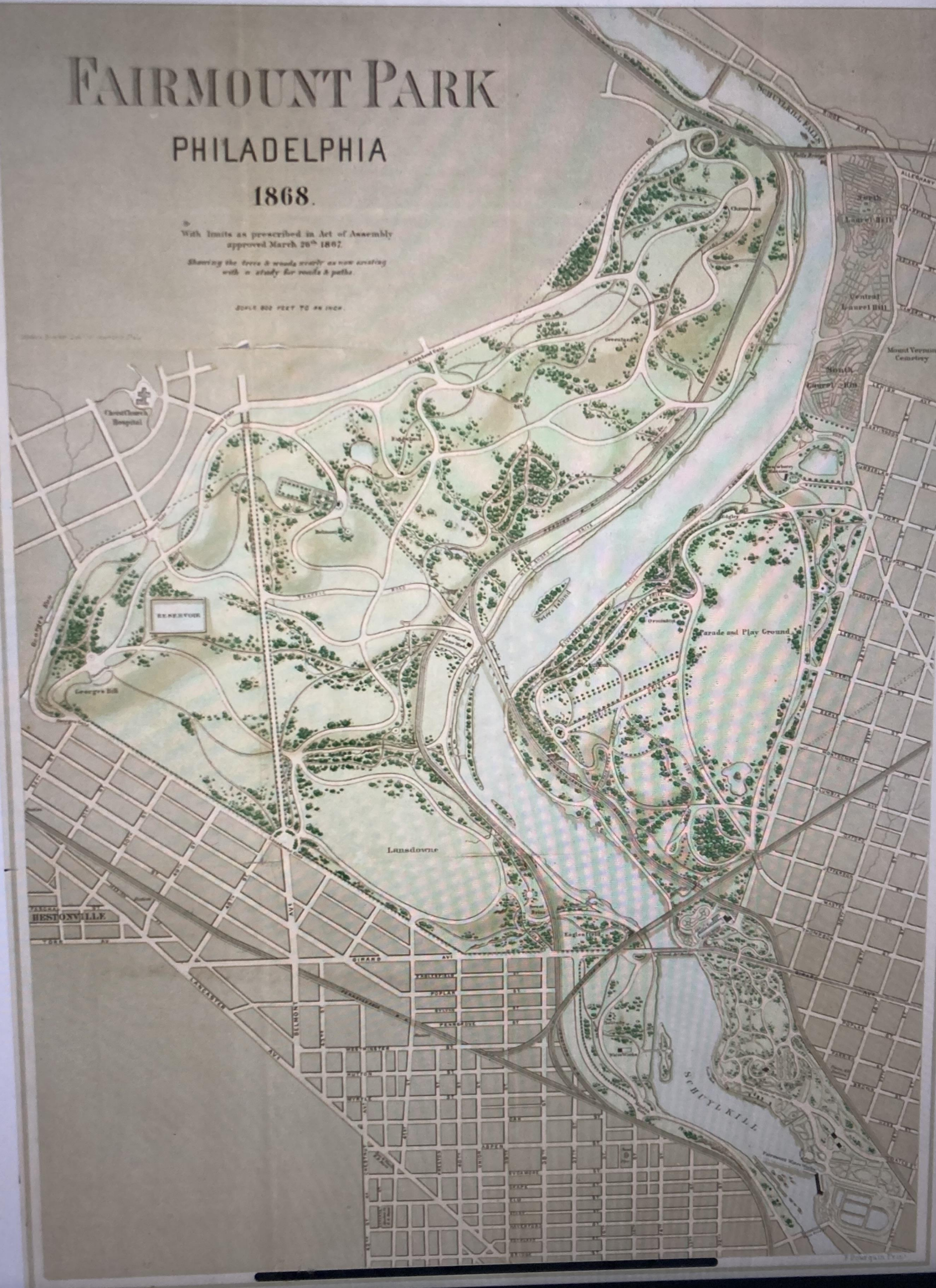
PHILADELPHIA

1868.

With limits as prescribed in Act of Assembly
approved March 26th 1867.

Showing the trees & woods nearly as now existing
with a study for roads & paths.

SCALE 800 FEET TO AN INCH.







Tom's Message to Rowing History Project

"One of the most useful roles this entity could play, which would underpin the linked communities function, would be to have a searchable meta-database into which all of the archives/collections of the members could be entered. Such a database could provide, at an elemental stage, a checklist of rowing art, artifacts, literature, images, etc., and at some more divine level of aspiration, a digital catalogue with descriptions and pictures of the constituent elements which would constitute an online museum/library/research facility."

Tom Weil 1948-2024





Our mission is to
preserve and display
America's rowing legacy
and share its rich history
with the public.

Why a Digital Rowing Museum?

What is being lost is not just a history of the sport. Also disappearing are stories of Philadelphia's social history as seen through the culture of the rowing clubs.

Nationally, many rowing clubs – focused on winning races in the future, not preserving what’s in their past – face the same challenge.

Showcase their collection on the Rowing History Project's digital museum

Available Services: Consulting Archivist and Omeka Developer

 rowingarchives@hosr.org



We have spent over two years researching & developing what we believe is the most user-friendly & least expensive platform to host and showcase a digital rowing museum.

Explore Vesper's Collection

orious crew
ivors Japan

Showing 1 to 7 of 7 results

View as: Grid | List

The Rowing History Project Artifacts and

Trophies and medals

Showing 1 to 25 of 303 results

View as: Grid | List

OMEKA-S

Customizable User Interface

Geolocation

Universal viewer

PLATFORM

Searchable Database

ABOUT US

TRHP team has developed a list of suggestions for individuals, schools and clubs who wish to preserve and digitize their important rowing records and artifacts. For more information, contact us at rowingarchives@hosr.org.

The Rowing History Project

About RHP

Artifacts and memorabilia

Stories

Resources



Our mission is to
preserve and display
America's rowing legacy
and share our rich history
with the public.

Learn more



1936 Schoolboy Rowing Association medal with blue/white ribbon



Place

The background of the image is a close-up photograph of water with fine, concentric ripples. The water has a teal or turquoise hue, and the ripples catch the light, creating a shimmering effect. Overlaid on this background is a large, horizontally-oriented white oval. Inside this oval, the text "One History, Many Collections" is written in a bold, dark grey, sans-serif font. The text is centered both horizontally and vertically within the oval. A thin, white circular line is also visible, framing the white oval.

**One History,
Many Collections**

Designing for Subject Expertise

Contributors provide:

- What they can observe
- What they know from club experience
- Names, events, relationships, and context

Project staff provide:

- Descriptive structure
- Standards and controlled vocabularies
- Data cleanup and normalization



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of water with fine, concentric ripples. The water has a teal or turquoise hue, and the lighting creates a shimmering effect with highlights and shadows across the surface. A large, white, horizontally-oriented oval is superimposed over the center of the image. The text 'Designing the Inventory' is centered within this oval in a bold, dark grey sans-serif font.

Designing the Inventory

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1	Designed by The Rowing History Project				Archival Consultant: Kaitlyn Pettengill, Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, Philadelphia, PA					
2		QA Check	Item ID	Do Not Publish on Site	Old ID (if any)	Digital File Link 1	Title (if none, a short description)	Author / Creator	Date	Phy (Pa
3	Example	☐	RHP_0003	☐	SN-74-2	RHP_0003_1.jpg	Minutes of the Women's Rowing Committee	Philadelphia Rowing Association	1973–1980	1 bo p.)
4	Example	☐	RHP_0004	☐		RHP_0004_1.jpg	Letter from James J. McKenna to Club Members	McKenna, James J.	1925-04-04	1 let
5		☐		☐						
6		☐		☐						
7		☐		☐						
8		☐		☐						
9		☐		☐						

C23								Summarize th
	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	facts, Philadelphia, PA		Key: Green = Required, Purple = Recommended, Red = Optional					
2	Date	Physical Description (Pages, Folders, etc.)	Description / Summary	Subjects / Topics	Individuals / Entities Referenced	Item Type	Usage Rights	Source or Donor
3	1973–1980	1 bound volume (200 p.)	Meeting minutes documenting the activities and decisions of the Women’s Rowing Committee, including race planning and membership updates, 1973–1980.	Rowing clubs Associations, i...	Schuylkill Navy (Philadelphia, Pa.); Women’s Rowing Committee (Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia); Philadelphia Girls’ Rowing Club (Philadelphia, Pa.)	Minute books	In copyright	
4	1925-04-04	1 letter : typescript	Typed letter from James J. McKenna to club members about organizational matters and upcoming rowing events, 1925.	Rowing Regattas Associations, i...	McKenna, James J.; Schuylkill Navy (Philadelphia, Pa.	Correspondence	Public domain	Gift of James J. McKenna Family, 1
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								

[+](#)
[≡](#)
[Published Materials](#)
[Archival Materials](#)
[Objects & Artifacts](#)
[Vocab Data](#)

C23

fx

Summarize th

	W	X	Y	Z	AA	AB	AC	AD
1								
2	Date Entered	Related Records	AV Access Link [External]	Digital File Link 2	Digital File Link 3	Digital File Link 4	Digital File Link 5	Digital File Link
3	2025-10-08			RHP_0003_2.jpg	RHP_0003_3.jpg	RHP_0003_4.jpg	RHP_0003_5.jpg	RHP_0003_6.jpg
4	2025-10-08			RHP_0004_2.jpg	RHP_0004_3.jpg	RHP_0004_4.jpg	RHP_0004_5.jpg	RHP_0004_6.jpg
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								

Consistency Across Collections

**Controlled where consistency matters
and flexible where local knowledge
matters.**

- Shared fields and formatting
- Dropdowns for repeatable terms
- FAST and other controlled vocabularies
- Project-specific names and terminology
- Central review and normalization

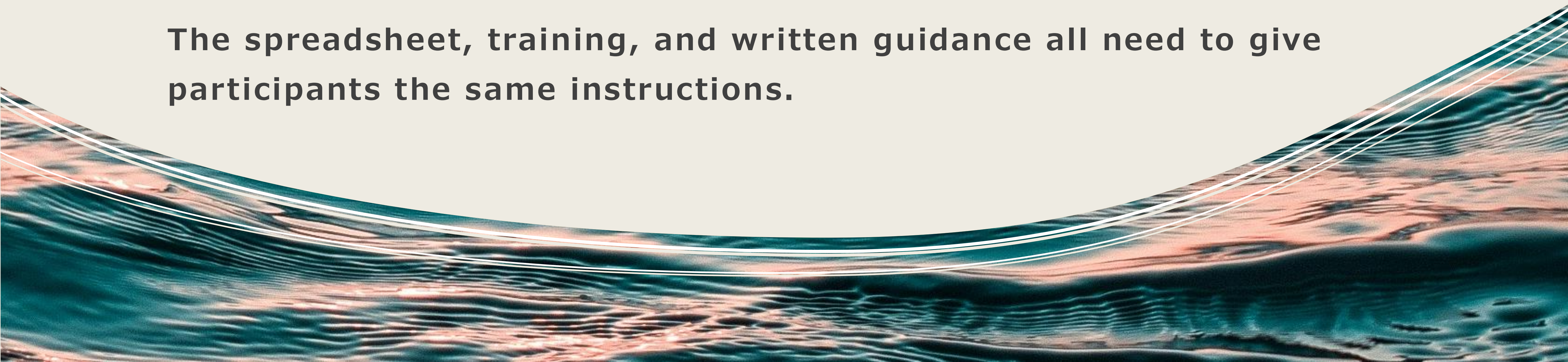
J K L M			
n = Required, Purple = Recommended, Red = Optional			
Description (e, etc.)	Subjects / Topics	Individuals / Entities Referenced	Item Type
8 cm	Boathouses Rowing Pennsylvania--...	Vesper Boat Club (Philadelphia, Pa.); Philadelphia Girls' Rowing Club (Philadelphia, Pa.)	Books
8 cm	Rowing Regattas Boathouses Pennsylvania--...	Schuylkill Navy (Philadelphia, Pa.); Penn Athletic Club Rowing Association (Philadelphia, Pa.)	Periodicals
Q Associations, institutions, etc.--Membership Awards Boatbuilding Boathouses Boats and boating Coaches (Athletics) Coaching (Athletics) College sports--Coaching			

Building a Training Ecosystem

The template can't stand on its own.

- Illustrated inventorying instructions
- Video training and examples
- Records management and retention guidance

The spreadsheet, training, and written guidance all need to give participants the same instructions.



Trophies and medals

Showing 1 to 25 of 303 results



Page

1

View as:  Grid |  List

"Presented by the Schuylkill Navy to the Vesper Boat Club in commemoration of the Victory achieved by their Eight Oared Shell Crew in the XVIII Olympiad, Tokyo, Japan, October 15, 1964" plaque



"To the Olympic Championship Crew in recognition of their Magnificent Victory at the XVIII Tokyo Olympiade 10-15 64"



"[??] Regatta, Junior Eight Oared Shell plaque"

From Individual Collections to Shared Discovery

Physical collections stay with the clubs that care for them.

Their descriptions and digital surrogates come together online.

- Shared metadata
- Cross-collection discovery
- Connections across organizations

A Model for Collaborative Digital Collections

Shared standards don't require shared custody.

A model that can extend beyond traditional collecting institutions:

- Community and membership organizations
- Historical and cultural groups
- Other organizations with related collections held in many locations

