

Application for Funding for David Livingstone 200 Events and Activities

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Livingstone's Letters in South Africa

The proposed project, "Livingstone's Letters in South Africa," will be a ten-month project to digitise 88 of the 102 surviving letters by David Livingstone held in eight South African repositories. Beginning in June 2013, our project team will arrange for these letters to be scanned as archival-quality digital images, will transcribe the letters into XML (a digital language that enables online display), and will produce a substantial scholarly essay. The essay will set out a broad analysis of the South African letters and contextualise them through a discussion of Livingstone's memorialisation in South Africa from the nineteenth century to the present. The foregoing phase of work will be completed by the end of December 2013. We will develop the essay in January and February 2014. Finally, the project will conclude with public talks in March 2014. The talks will be delivered at the David Livingstone Centre, the National Library of Scotland, and the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. As a result, the proposed project will broaden public access to these original Livingstone letters and will establish the basis for further collaboration between the participating South African repositories, the three British institutions involved, and *Livingstone Online* (<http://www.livingstoneonline.ucl.ac.uk/>), the digital archive that will eventually publish and provide free worldwide access to the digital images, transcriptions, and essay as part of its ongoing expansion.

Jared McDonald (University of Johannesburg) will direct the project and be responsible for its development. Christopher Lawrence (University College London) and Adrian S. Wisnicki (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) will co-direct the project and provide strategic support. All three individuals are affiliated with *Livingstone Online*: McDonald is a research assistant; Lawrence and Wisnicki are co-directors of the site. University College London will hold and administer the grant. Digital images of the letters and publication permission will come from the eight repositories involved in the project: 1) National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Campus; 2) Jagger Library, University of Cape Town; 3) Kimberley Public Library; 4) Graaff-Reinet Museum; 5) Cory Library, Rhodes University; 6) Brenthurst Library; 7) Cullen Library, University of the Witwatersrand; 8) Natal Archives, Pietermaritzburg. McDonald has already made contact with each of these repositories and has made arrangements for their participation in the project. McDonald is currently based in Johannesburg, so funding is requested to cover his travel expenses to five of these repositories (three in Cape Town and two in Durban), his travel to the UK to lecture on his findings, and the costs of acquiring digital copies of the manuscripts. The time required for collecting the digital images, creating the transcriptions, and producing the scholarly essay will be provided as an in-kind contribution by McDonald, Lawrence, and Wisnicki.

Livingstone Online is the leading open-access internet resource for the primary writings of David Livingstone. To date, *Livingstone Online* has worked with a number of repositories across the UK and elsewhere around the world to digitise and transcribe their Livingstone holdings to the highest scholarly standards. The excellence of the site and the affiliated *Livingstone Spectral Imaging Project* has been recognized through grants, favourable peer reviews, educational museum exhibits, and public interest. In addition, the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has just awarded the site a grant for three years to develop and expand its core digital collection. Jared McDonald is not named or funded through the NEH grant, and the “Livingstone’s Letters in South Africa” project falls outside the scope of the NEH grant. Nonetheless, the proposed project will contribute to and complement this larger initiative. Through the proposed project, *Livingstone Online* will gain its first opportunity to publish Livingstone primary materials from Africa. Such publication will digitally unite a collection of Livingstone manuscripts otherwise scattered across South Africa. In many cases, digital publication of the letters through *Livingstone Online* will also represent the first time that these letters have been made available to the general public. Moreover, study of the letters will be enhanced by the opportunity to read the text of the letters alongside high-resolution images. As a result, the proposed project will ultimately help promote the legacy of David Livingstone long into the future and, by providing free worldwide access to the manuscripts, will ensure that academics, students, and other interested individuals are easily able to consult and study these historic documents in a dynamic manner that combines text and image.