
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friends of Buncombe County Special Collections Launches Crowdsourcing Campaign to Build Digital Archive on Tropical Storm Helene's Impact in Western North Carolina

Asheville, NC – January 22, 2025 – The Friends of Buncombe County Special Collections are proud to announce the launch of a new crowdsourcing campaign aimed at building a comprehensive digital archive to document the impact of Tropical Storm Helene in Western North Carolina. Through the newly launched platform, *Come Hell or High Water*, the public is invited to share personal stories, photos, videos, audio recordings, and other digital materials related to the storm.

In addition to the crowdsourced materials, *Come Hell or High Water* will feature scientific and environmental data, media coverage of the storm, and a collection of historic photos of past significant weather events in Western North Carolina. These resources will provide a deeper understanding of Tropical Storm Helene's impact, by offering data driven and historical context to individual experiences.

"As 21st century archivists, we have the opportunity to document our community's experiences in a way that was not afforded to victims of past disasters. By crowdsourcing materials, we can ensure that future historians have access to a more comprehensive and equitable group of resources when they tell the story of how we weathered this storm," said Katherine Calhoun Cutshall, Buncombe County Special Collections Manager.

The **helenehistory.omeka.net** portal is open to anyone who wishes to contribute. Whether it's a personal story, photographs, or a video, or audio file, all submissions will be considered.

"We're inviting everyone who lived through Tropical Storm Helene, from long-time residents, those new to the area, as well as people who were displaced by Helene to share their unique memories and experiences of the storm," said Emily Cadmus, project coordinator. "Our hope is that by building this archive, we will create an opportunity to reflect on our shared trauma, and create a space for community healing."

"In the months following Helene, many members of the public have reached out to us with interest in contributing to a community-driven memory project. It is a tremendous responsibility and honor to be entrusted with such a project—to create a resource that will hold our collective stories and shape how our history is remembered," said Carissa Pfeiffer, BCSC Librarian.

Members of the public are encouraged to upload photos, videos, written testimonies, and audio files at helenehistory.omeka.net. For assistance or further information, please contact friendsbcsc@gmail.com