

Brown-Geoffrey-20050307093004

To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

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From: Geoffrey Brown
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Comment:

I have a small retirement business re-publishing on CD-ROM books and papers related to local history. In doing this, I try to add value to the old material being republished in such ways as creating an index where there had been none or supplementing the original work with added material. My CDs represent a lot of work, and are not what one occasionally sees where someone has just run a book through a sheet-feed scanner.

Although most things I republish are old enough to be safely in the public domain, occasionally that brochure or pamphlet that adds much to the completed product in terms of context and historical perspective is not -- even though it may be quite old. My usual practice is to try to contact possible copyright holders, and I have to say that more often than not my efforts in this direction are nothing but a waste of time.

Yet I recognize that someone with a claim to copyright could always come out of the woodwork and at very least destroy what had taken me months to create.

Local history has always tended to be published in very small quantities by non-mainstream publishers. Not only does this exacerbate the problem of contacting any possible copyright holders, but it also results in making any local history written in the last 75 years largely inaccessible.