

Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media

ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016

Since its founding in 1994, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM) has pursued its mission of using digital media and computer technology to democratize history by developing online teaching resources, digital collections and exhibits, open-source software, and training in digital literacy and skills.

In the academic year 2015-2016, the Center secured funding for a series of new projects across all facets of its work: five in the area of software development; two for online teaching resources; five to create digital collections and exhibits; and five providing training and professional development. *[More on pages 2 & 3]*

RRCHNM also brought several projects to fruition in 2015-2016. The three online courses we built for the Department of History and Art History's new graduate certificate in

Digital Public Humanities were taught for the first time. *A Liberian Journey: History, Memory and the Making of a Nation* launched (liberianhistory.org). This digital public history and community-sourcing site focused on a 1926 Harvard expedition to Liberia. It was developed with partners in Liberia and the US, and funded by the National Science Foundation. The publication of *Building Histories of the National Mall*, a comprehensive guide to the creation of the award-winning *Histories of National Mall*, signaled the end of that digital public history project (mallhistory.org/Guide/).

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At the Center, new servers and a new website came online. Renewed funding from the Provost brought another pair of History PhD students on Digital History Fellowships to the Center. Two further cohorts will follow in coming years. We added to our staff two developers and a designer, working remotely, and an on-site project manager and grants administrator. Funding from the Gerda Henkel Foundation will also bring a postdoctoral fellow to the Center in 2016-17.

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BY THE NUMBERS

17
New
Projects

\$3.49
MILLION
New
Funding

34
MILLION
VISITS
17.8
MILLION
VISITORS
RRCHNM SITES

THREE
MILLION
USERS of
RRCHNM
Software

RRCHNM
STAFF
& STUDENTS
7 NEW
TOTAL **47**

NEW PROJECTS



tropy.org
TROPY

A desktop app to allow archival researchers to collect and organize the digital photographs that they take in their research. Users can associate metadata with images by applying templates, edit individual items or groups of items, and export both photographs and metadata to other platforms. The project also involves promoting collaborations in which researchers share their photographs with the libraries and archives in which they took them.

(Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PIs Stephen Robertson & Sean Takats)

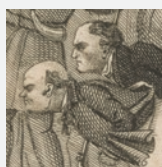


pressforward.org
PRESSFORWARD3

Phase 3 of the ongoing development of a plugin for the WordPress platform

to aggregate, select, discuss, curate, and disseminate scholarship from across the web. Eleven new partners in the sciences will adopt PressForward, and outreach workshops and trainings will demonstrate the plugin for scholarly communication communities.

(Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; PI Sean Takats)



MAPPING EARLY AMERICAN ELECTIONS

A site that uses the New Nation Votes dataset, the only comprehensive record of elections in existence for the early American republic, to create interactive maps of selected local, state, and national elections from 1788 to 1825 as well as materials that will allow individual researchers to generate their own maps.

(National Endowment for the Humanities, PIs Sheila Brennan & Lincoln Mullen)



EAGLE EYE CITIZEN

An online and mobile-friendly interactive for K-12 students focused on Congress and civic participation, that draws students into careful analysis of Library of Congress resources, including Congress.gov and Chronicling America. The project includes outreach to teachers and students, a national contest, and teacher professional development opportunities in partnership with National History Day.

(Library of Congress; PI Kelly Schrum)



github.com/omeka/omeka-s
OMEKA S

Omeka S is a new software package designed with medium and larger libraries, archives, and museums in mind. It provides the ability to administer many sites from a single installation, a fully functioning API, JSON-LD as the native data format so as to enmesh the materials in the Linked Open Data universe, and modules to aid integration with digital repositories such as Fedora and DSpace.

(Institute for Museum and Library Services & Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, PI Sharon Leon)

TRAINING & TEACHING

As has been the case for the last two years, this summer RRCHNM led a series of professional development workshops, institutes, and field studies. **DOING DIGITAL HISTORY**, a two-week NEH sponsored summer institute introduced twenty-four mid-career American historians to digital history scholarship, methods, and tools relevant to their own research and teaching.

As the culmination of the **UNDERSTANDING SACRIFICE, WWII MEDITERRANEAN** workshop, a collaboration with the American Battle Monuments Commission and National History Day, twelve teachers undertook a field study in Europe. Having researched the life of an individual buried in one of the ABMC WWII cemeteries, the group visited those sites, battlefields, and museums. On their return, they completed their service member profiles and developed an interdisciplinary lesson about WWII.

Finally, two one-week NEH Landmarks of American History and Culture workshops took thirty-six K-12 teachers to three Virginia **GRAFFITI HOUSES**, to investigate the signatures and drawings that Civil War soldiers left on those buildings. Groups of teachers then each researched a graffiti soldier at National Archives, visited Gettysburg where he fought, and created an online exhibit telling his story.

Over the course of 2015-2016, the Department of History and Art History taught the first iteration of its new **ONLINE GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PUBLIC DIGITAL HUMANITIES**. Three online courses on digital humanities, digital public history and teaching in the digital age were custom-built in Drupal by the Center, funded by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The final component of the certificate is a virtual internship at a Smithsonian affiliated museum.

The Center also taught a hybrid graduate course, **TEACHING HIDDEN HISTORY**, using both online components and in-person tele-meetings. Funded by 4VA, and based on the Center's highly successful online professional development course for teachers, Hidden in Plain Sight, this course provided students at

George Mason and Virginia Tech with the opportunity to conduct research using primary and secondary sources to develop online history modules using an open-source platform.

SEE MORE:

Doing Digital History: history2016.doingdh.org

Understanding Sacrifice: abmceducation.org

Graffiti Houses: graffitisoldiers.org

Public Digital Humanities: masononline.gmu.edu/programs/digital-public-humanitiesgraduate-certificate/

NEW WEB SITE

A new RRCHNM website launched in Fall 2016, with a new url: rrchnm.org. A key focus of the redesign, the first since 2008, was to present a clearer picture of the Center, and how to work with us. Visitors can now employ faceted search to explore our projects and get to know our staff, and use a form to contact us about collaborations and contract work. The new site was designed by Kim Nguyen, building on initial work by Chris Raymond.

NEW SERVERS

In 2016, with funding from George Mason University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences, RRCHNM is upgrading the servers that host its projects. The three Dell R530 servers will bring increased speed, allow for a configuration that make our sites more stable and secure, and provide capacity for future projects.

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

In 2015, RRCHNM partnered with the German Historical Institute in Washington, DC, to secure funding from the Gerda Henkel Foundation for a postdoctoral fellowship for a scholar based in Germany to spend a year at the Center developing a digital history project.

The 2016-17 fellow is Gabor Toth, from Universität Passau, who will be developing a computer assisted analysis of interviews with Holocaust survivors.

ENDOWMENT REPORT

2015–2016
**Gifts to the
Endowment**
\$14,019.³⁹

**RRCHNM
Endowment**
\$3.375
MILLION

2015–2016
**Endowment
generated Income**
\$76,900

1 The **Director of Strategic Initiatives** and **Associate Directors** are senior staff who play leading roles in multiple funded projects, from which they draw their salaries. They also play a crucial role in representing the Center in public presentations nationally and internationally, developing new projects, and writing grant and contract proposals. To provide support for those responsibilities, endowment funds are used to pay 10% of their salaries.

2 The **Grants Administrator** and **Systems Administrator** are crucial to the Center's activity, managing respectively its budget, and its computer hardware, and the maintenance of Center sites. Neither position can be included in grant funding. Two thirds of the salaries are paid with funds provided by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. We have to draw on endowment income to pay the remaining salary.

2015-2016 Endowment Expenditures

1 2015–2016 Salary for Associate Director & Director of Strategic Initiatives **\$24,682** ↘

\$76,900

2 2015–2016 Salary for Grants & Systems Administrators **\$52,218** ↗

2015–2016 **Gifts to the Directors Fund**
(current use)
\$17,000

**Directors Fund
Balance**
\$30,080

**Directors Fund
Expenditure**
\$15,021

3 RRCHNM's **website** is the Center's main public face, and the point of contact for those seeking to understand the Center and to explore working with us. It was last redesigned in 2008. The available funding enabled work focused on simplifying the site, and making more prominent information on collaborating with the Center.

3 2015-2016 Salary for designers to create the new Center website

As RRCHNM continues to thrive, the endowment is still recovering from the financial collapse of 2008, and not generating the funds we need to both cover salary commitments, and support efforts to conceive new projects and enhance our rich legacy of digital history sites. We are seeking to increase philanthropic support to grow the endowment to provide a sustainable future for the Center. To that end, we are redoubling our efforts to reach out to past supporters and find new donors committed to our mission of using digital technology to democratize the past. We are grateful for your past support and hope you will renew that commitment as RRCHNM works to use new generations of technology to present and interpret the past.