Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017

BY THE NUMBERS

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 2016-2017, the center secured funding for new projects focused in two areas of its work: six sources are aimed at creating digital collections and exhibits; and five will allow us to provide training and professional development in the areas of software development and online teaching resources. The center also announced a new annual one-day conference and online peer-reviewed publication, *Current Research in Digital History.* [More on pages 2 & 3]

RRCHNM launched several projects in 2016-2017. Beta versions of two new software packages were released: *Omeka S,* a new web-publishing platform designed to enmesh materials in the linked open data ecosystem, with the ability to launch, monitor, and upgrade many sites from a single installation; and *Tropy*, software for organizing digital photographs of research material, using customizable metadata templates, tags, lists, and notes. A 1.0 version of each software package will be released late in 2017.

A variety of new teaching resources also went live. *The Amboyna Conspiracy Trial* (http://amboyna. org) is an educational website, created with Adam Clulow of Monash University in Australia, which asks users to evaluate evidence and come to a verdict in a legal proceeding, while helping them understand European expansion in Asia, the race for spices, and the politics of torture and waterboarding. We also delivered *Through the Doors of Stratford* to the Arlington Public Schools. It offers online modules on school desegregation in Arlington County, Virginia, and is designed for students of history and government. The modules ask students to analyze photographs, maps, cartoons, court decisions, and video interviews with participants and scholars to learn their own community's past, and how to understand it in the context of Virginia and United States history and government. The Eisenhower Memorial Commission's website now features lesson plans created by center staff and George Mason University professor Christopher Hamner, related to seven pivotal events in Eisenhower's life, as well as content for an interactive timeline (http://www. eisenhowermemorial.org/).

At the center, we said goodbye to two valued staff members. Sharon Leon, director of the Public Projects division, departed for a position in the history department at Michigan State University. Sharon spent 13 years at RRCHNM, at the heart of award-winning education, public history, and software projects, and was a member of our senior leadership for almost a decade. [More on page 3]. Eric Olsen, the outreach coordinator for *Press Forward*, who facilitated our work with scholars in the sciences, moved on to a position with ORCID, Inc.

NEW PROJECTS

Diplomacy in Action

Discover Diplomacy

Students negotiate and build alliances with others in a series of diplomatic simulations on topics such as nuclear crises, fresh water, refugees, HIV/AIDS, and endangered animals such as the pangolin. Teachers and students from 10 countries are testing the simulations, which will be available for free on the U.S. Diplomacy Center website late in 2017.

(U.S. Department of State; PI Kelly Schrum)

Sustaining and Extending the Papers of the War Department

omeka s

We are migrating an online documentary edition, comprising nearly 43,000 digital early federal documents, to Omeka S to provide for long-term preservation and access. The user interface will also be redesigned to enable greater use and discoverability of the documents, and the existing metadata will be connected across the semantic web as linked open data. Four learning modules will be developed for use in upper-level high school and introductory undergraduate courses.

http://WarDepartmentPapers.org/

(American Council of Learned Societies; PI Sheila Brennan)

Creating Local Linkages

INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Introduce approximately 300 public librarians to a range of historical research methods and digital history skills through online courses and in-person workshops, to help them in developing public programming that engages their patrons in creating digital local histories that will benefit their communities at large. In support of those training opportunities, the project will develop and launch curricula of open educational resources that can be used, reused, and remixed by any other organization or individual.

(Institute of Museum and Library Services; PIs Sheila Brennan and Stephen Robertson)

Arguing with Digital History

A workshop for twenty-four historians with expertise in a range of digital history methodologies and different historical periods, which will identify the reasons that digital historians have been slow to make arguments, and write a group-authored white paper on general principles for integrating digital tools and methods with the arguments and historical interpretations at the core of academic history. A session will discuss the white paper at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 2018.

(Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PIs Stephen Robertson and Lincoln Mullen)

Hearing the Americas

Planning a project to increase understanding of the transnational roots of American jazz, blues, and country music. Working with Mason historians Matthew Karush and Michael O'Malley, the project will research the digitized music collections available in the Library of Congress's National Jukebox and the University of California at Santa Barbara's Cylinder Audio Archive; conduct audience research; test with different user groups; and produce a design document that will lay out how the project will proceed in future phases.

(National Endowment for the Humanities; PI Sheila Brennan)

Training & Teaching

As the culmination of the **Understanding Sacrifice, WWII in the Pacific** workshop, a collaboration with the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC), National Cemetery Administration (NCA), and National History Day, eighteen teachers undertook a field study in San Francisco, Honolulu, and Manila to see first-hand the places that influenced the outcome of the war. This year's cohort included social studies, English, JROTC, theater, visual arts, special education, and STEM teachers who come from 12 states. Each teacher selected an individual to research who is buried or memorialized in a cemetery they visited, and created a lesson plan that incorporates ABMC and NCA resources to teach about an aspect of the war. This is the third year of the Understanding Sacrifice program. The first two years focused on World War II in Europe.

The first of two three-day **Networked Curator** workshops was held in August 2017. A collaboration with the Association of Art Museum Curators, with funding from the Samuel H. Kress and Getty Foundations, the workshop aimed to expand the digital literacy of more than two dozen curators so they better understand what is possible on the web and in digital environments, and have the tools to communicate and collaborate within their own communities in order to become more integrally involved in planning and implementing digital projects. The second workshop will be in February 2018.

The first cohort of students in the online **Graduate Certificate in Public Digital Humanities** completed the internship that forms the final element of the course. Students had internships in the U.S. Department of Education, and in social media at the Smithsonian Libraries, in Smithsonian Archives, with the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and at Smithsonian Magazine. A second cohort of students completed the three program's online classes and will undertake internships in the coming year.

New Conference & Peer-Reviewed Online Publication

In 2017, RRCHNM and Mason's Department of History and Art History announced *Current Research in Digital History* (CRDH), an annual one-day conference that publishes online, peer-reviewed proceedings. Its primary aim is to encourage and publish scholarship in digital history that offers discipline-specific arguments and interpretations in conversation with the scholarly literature for an academic audience. There are currently few examples of this form of digital history. A format of 10-minute presentations provides an opportunity to make an argument on the basis of ongoing research in a larger project. After revisions, presentations will be published in a peer-reviewed online open access journal that accommodates the dynamic visualizations and narratives that are an increasingly core element of digital scholarship. To acknowledge the labor involved in peer review, honorariums are provided for the program committee and session commentators. Also, four $200 stipends are available to support the participation of presenters who have to travel to the event.

The first *CRDH* conference, organized by Stephen Robertson and Lincoln Mullen, will take place on March 17, 2018; a portion of the sessions will be devoted to the history of slavery. Submissions are due by September 29, 2017; and the first issue of the *CRDH* publication will appear on August 27, 2018.

Sharon Leon moves to Michigan State University

At the end of summer 2017, Sharon Leon departed RRCHNM to join the history department and the Critical Diversity in the Digital Age initiative at Michigan State University. As she leaves, we want to acknowledge Sharon's 13 years as a valued member of the center and as a crucial part of its leadership team. Beginning as a postdoc and ending as director of the Public Projects division and a tenured member of the Department of History and Art History, Sharon was at the heart of 36 different projects, ranging from education projects such as *Historical Thinking Matters* and *Objects of History*, to public history projects such as the *Bracero History Archive* and *Histories of the National Mall*, to the *Omeka* family of software projects, to professional development for faculty, graduate students, curators, and librarians. Several of those projects have won awards; all have engaged communities and fostered communities of practice. This body of work is testimony to Sharon's commitment to the center's mission and how much she will be missed.

ENDOWMENT REPORT

2016–2017 Gifts to the Endowment
$15,330

RRCHNM Endowment
$3.267 MILLION

2016–2017 Endowment generated Income
$77,600

1 The Director of Strategic Initiatives and Associate Directors are senior staff members 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, in combination with indirect income, 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, 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.

2016-2017 Endowment Expenditures

1 2016–2017 Salary for Associate Director & Director of Strategic Initiatives **$24,682**

$77,600

2 2015–2016 Salary for Grants & Systems Administrators **$52,918**

2016–2017 Gifts to the Directors Fund (current use)
$18,810

Directors Fund Balance
$32,450

3 Salary for designers to create an online platform for the Current Research in Digital History publication: $14,529

Directors Fund Expenditure
$15,529

3 Current Research in Digital History is a new signature annual event for RRCHNM (see page 3). *Additional expenditure of $8,840 will support the first event in March 2018 by providing stipends for the peer reviewers and participants in the plenary roundtable, as well as four travel stipends for presenters, and summer salary for the organizers. The Department of History and Art History is providing summer wages for a graduate student to help prepare the publication. Going forward, RRCHNM has committed $10,000 to support the conference.

4 The RRCHNM Annual Report provides a means to make the activities of the center more visible and transparent to donors, supporters, and the broader community.

4 Design and printing of RRCHNM 2016-17 Annual Report: $1,000

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As **RRCHNM** continues to thrive, the endowment is still recovering from the financial collapse of 2008, and is 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.