C H N M Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media

Annual Report 2017-2018

BY THE NUMBERS

17 New Projects

$2.56 million New Funding

RRCHNM Staff & Students 7 New; Total 40.

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 2017-2018, the Center secured funding for new projects across all facets of its work: three to develop software, making up the bulk of the funding; eight to develop and maintain online teaching resources; two to create digital collections; and two to deliver training and professional development. [More on page 2]. In addition, the College of Humanities and Sciences at George Mason University provided a significant increase in its ongoing support to the Center, ensuring the sustainability of our infrastructure. [More on page 3]

RRCHNM completed the initial development of two new software packages in 2017-2018, launching version 1.0 of both *Omeka S* and **Tropy**. *Omeka S* is a new generation web-publishing platform, which allows the creation and management of multiple sites from a single installation of the software and the publication of items with linked open data to connect them to the broader semantic web. A redesigned Omeka.org site distinguishes and showcases the Omeka

Classic, Omeka S, and Omeka.net platforms. *Tropy* is desktop software for organizing digital photographs of research material, using customizable metadata templates, tags, lists, and notes. Since October, Tropy has been downloaded more than 15,000 times. Work on Tropy 2.0 begins in October [More on page 2]. The ongoing development of *PressForward*, the WordPress plugin that centralizes digital media into a single online resource, reached version 5.0, adding a new statistics API.

Additionally, a variety of new resources went live this year. In November *Eagle Eye Citizen* launched, which offers middle and high school students the chance to solve and create interactive challenges about Congress, American history, civics, and government with Library of Congress primary sources. Additional material on World War II in the Pacific was added to the **Understanding Sacrifice** site, the work of teachers who participated in an 18-month professional development program offered in partnership with National History Day, the American Battle Monuments Commission, and the National Cemetery Administration. **Doing Digital Scholarship**, a set of online modules offering digital novices a self-guided introduction to digital scholarship, developed for the Social Science Research Council, debuted in August. **Mapping Early American Elections** released its first two set of maps, more than 150 county-level visualizations of the first two decades of US Congressional elections. Finally, the white paper produced by the **Arguing with Digital History** workshop was published in November. Participants expanded its anticipated scope to elaborate the arguments made by different forms of digital history and to address the obstacles to professional recognition of those interpretations.

The Center said goodbye to three highly valued and long-serving staff members: Kelly Schrum, the director of the Education Division, a central figure in the work of the Center since 2001, moved full-time to the Higher Education Program here at George Mason; Sheila Brennan, most recently director of Strategic Initiatives, and previously associate director of Public Projects, joined the Office of Digital Humanities at the National Endowment of Humanities as a program officer; and Patrick Murray-John, developer and developer outreach coordinator for Omeka, joined the Digital Scholarship Group at Northeastern University Library.

At the same time, the Center is bringing on board an exciting new generation of leaders and staff. In August 2018, we welcomed two new directors: Jessica Otis, director of Public Projects, a scholar of early modern Britain comes to us from the Carnegie Mellon University Library and Lincoln Mullen, director of Computational History, has been an assistant professor of American religious history at Mason since 2014. [More on page 3] There will also be two new postdoctoral fellows at the Center for the coming year: Nate Sleeter, who completed his PhD at GMU, a postdoctoral fellow in Digital Teaching and Learning, funded by the Center's endowment; and Jens Pohlman, who completed his PhD at Stanford University, our second postdoctoral fellow hosted in collaboration with the German Historical Institute and supported by the Gerda Henkel Foundation. In 2018 we also welcomed Akiko Turhanogullari in the key role of Systems Administrator.

# NEW PROJECTS

Tropy 2.0
https://tropy.org

A freely licensed and open-source software tool that allows researchers to collect and organize the digital photographs they take in their research and makes it possible for them to group photos into documents and add annotations, custom tags, and notes. The next stage of development, Tropy 2.0, will enable personal storage and remote access of research images, metadata, and templates. It will also significantly expand the range of media supported by Tropy, beyond .jpg files, to include pdfs and other formats. Training workshops to introduce and demonstrate Tropy and its new features to a variety of audiences at regional centers of higher education in the United States and Europe are also part of this project.

(Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PIs Sean Takats & Abby Mullen)

World History Commons

An Open Educational Resource providing high quality, peer-reviewed resources for teaching and research in world and global history developed in partnership with the World History Association and Associate Professor Adam Clulow of Monash University (Australia). World History Commons will introduce new humanities scholarship and pedagogy while preserving and enhancing widely-used resources from World History Matters, RRCHNM's award-winning, NEH-funded collection of world history websites, and the Global History Reader, a collaboration between scholars at Monash University and Warwick University (UK).
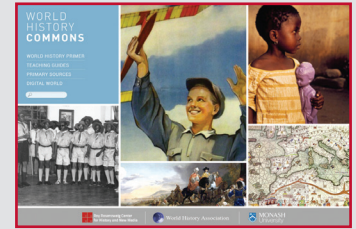
(National Endowment for the Humanities; PIs Kelly Schrum & Jessica Otis)

Arguing with Digital History: Models of argument driven digital history

A series of workshops to help a group of authors create digital history articles that make arguments addressing disciplinary conversations. These articles will be published as a special issue of the Journal of Social History. In addition, a freely available site will present annotated versions of the articles that explicate their argumentative practices to make them more accessible as models for other historians.
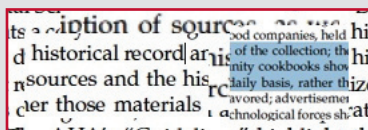
(Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; PIs Stephen Robertson & Lincoln Mullen)

The Pilbara Aboriginal Strike

A collaboration with Bain Atwood and Anne Scrimgeour of Monash University in Australia, this digital project is part of the first major scholarly study of the 1946 strike by Aboriginal stockworkers. The website will detail the events of the strike and its historical context, the co-operative movement that emerged in its aftermath, and the commemoration of the strike through today. It will feature oral histories of the Aboriginal people of the Pilbara region.
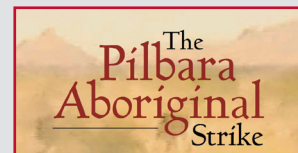
(Monash University; Project Manager Sara Collini)

For Us the Living
https://forustheliving.org/

A website for the Veterans Legacy program that encourages high school students to explore American history through the stories found in Alexandria National Cemetery. Each module is aligned with national standards and uses primary and secondary sources, including photographs, maps, legislation, diaries, letters, and video interviews with scholars, and offers an optional digital activity and service learning project.

(National Cemetery Administration; Project Manager Jennifer Rosenfeld)

Throughout 2018, Kelly Schrum and Digital History fellow Jessica Dauterive worked with faculty and students at Mason, the University of Virginia, and Virginia Tech to bring WW1 sheet music to life through contextual essays, recordings, and live performances for the project *(Re)Sounding the Archives*. The project culminated in a symposium on April 24 at the University of Virginia that featured presentations by an interdisciplinary group of students on each of the 17 songs, with performances of each piece by students from Mason and VT. When the site launches this fall, all sheet music and recordings will be available for download under a Creative Commons license and freely available for educational use (https://resoundingthearchives.org/).

Two Digital History Fellows, Brandan Buck and Corinne Wilkinson, join our team of graduate research assistants in fall 2018, as the first of three cohorts supported by new funding awarded to the Department of History & Art History by Mason's Provost. This is the third round of funding for the *Digital History Fellowship* program, which provides five years of support for graduate students, including at least two years spent at RRCHNM for a practicum class and as a research assistant. For 2018-19 the practicum class has been revamped to focus on collaborative digital humanities and project management (http://chnm.gmu.edu/courses/fellowship/).

The second three-day *Networked Curator* workshop took place in February at the Getty Research Center. It offered another cohort of twelve curators the opportunity to gain a better understanding of what is possible on the web and in digital environments, and increased knowledge of best practices for publishing research online. This project wrapped up with a panel discussion at the Association of Art Museum Curators Conference in May (http://networkedcurator.doingdh.org/).

In 2018 RRCHNM continued its successful online teaching, offering two recertification courses for Virginia teachers, *Hidden in Plain Site* (https://hipshistory.org/) and *Virginia Studies* (http://virginiastudies.org), and supporting the three courses that make up the Department of History and Art History's *Graduate Certificate in Digital Public Humanities* (http://masononline.gmu.edu/programs/digital-public-humanities-graduate-certificate/).

Additional support from Mason's College of Humanities and Social Science

In 2018, the College of Humanities and Sciences (CHSS) at George Mason University provided a significant increase in its ongoing support to the Center beginning in FY 2019. This commitment ensures the sustainability of the Center's infrastructure by fully funding the salaries of RRCHNM's systems administrator and grants administrator (CHSS already provides funding for the Center's office manager). Although they are crucial to maintaining RRCHNM's computer hardware and web sites, managing multiple grant-funded projects, and supporting staff and events, these positions are not eligible for grant funding. In recent years the Center has relied on endowment income and reserves to support these positions. The College's commitment provides more stable and sustainable funding and frees the Center to use its endowment for strategic initiatives. We are grateful to Interim Dean Robert Matz and the senior leadership of CHSS for this investment in RRCHNM's future.

Two New Directors join RRCHNM

Jessica Otis, director of Public Projects, is a historian of early modern Britain who received both a MS in Mathematics and a PhD in History from the University of Virginia. Subsequently, she was a CLIR-DLF Postdoctoral Fellow in Early Modern Data Curation working on the NEH-funded Six Degrees of Francis Bacon at Carnegie Mellon University. She also co-founded the dSHARP digital scholarship center and the PGH|DH regional digital humanities group. Jessica's research focuses on the cultural history of mathematics, cryptography, and plague in early modern England.

Lincoln Mullen, director of Computational History, is a historian of American religion who received his PhD from Brandeis University. Since joining the Department of History & Art History in 2014, he has played key roles in two projects at RRCHNM, Mapping Early American Elections and Arguing with Digital History. His digital historical work has also spanned legal history, including a 2018 article in *American Historical Review* co-authored with Kellen Funk on the spread of the Field Code. Lincoln's first book, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America,* was published by Harvard University Press in 2017. His current digital project, *America's Public Bible*, is under contract with Stanford University Press.

New Conference & Peer-Reviewed Online Publication Launched
http://crdh.rrchnm.org/

The first *Current Research in Digital History* conference, which aims to encourage and publish scholarship in digital history that offers discipline-specific arguments and interpretations, took place on March 17, 2018. The publication containing the presentations launched on August 27 and featured seventeen essays on topics ranging from language borrowing among Indian treaties and agency and authenticity in the 1960s American folk music revival to social reading in Old Regime France, war camps and wayward girls in Virginia, and Herblock cartoons. Lincoln Mullen and Stephen Robertson edited the publication, with the help of graduate editorial assistant Greta Swain, and invaluable input from the program committee: Kalani Craig, Jessica Marie Johnson, Michelle Moravec, and Scott Weingart.

The second *CRDH* conference will take place on March 9, 2019. It will feature two panels sponsored by the African American Intellectual History Society and the Colored Conventions Project.

ENDOWMENT REPORT

2017-2018 Gifts to the Endowment
$8,371

RRCHNM endowment
$3.64 million

2017-2018 Endowment Generated Income
$77,600

1. The Director of Strategic Initiatives and Associate Director 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. Endowment funds, in combination with indirect income, are used to pay 10% of their salaries in support of these responsibilities.

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. The Center depends on endowment income to pay the remaining salary (starting FY19 these positions will be fully funded by the college).

3. *Teaching History* <https://teachinghistory.org> is the Center's most visited site. Upgrading the site to Drupal 8 improves its performance, security, and sustainability.

4. *Current Research in Digital History* is a signature annual event for RRCHNM *(see page 3)*. Stipends for the peer reviewers and participants in the plenary roundtable, as well as four travel stipends for presenters, summer salary for the organizers, and summer wages for the graduate editorial assistant.

5. 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.

2017-2018 Endowment Generated Expenditure
$77,600

1. 2017-2018 Salary for Associate Director & Director of Strategic Initiatives: **$24,682**

2. 2017-2018 Salary for Grants & Systems Administrators: **$52,918**

$18,185
Gifts to the Directors Fund (current use)

$26,915
Directors Fund Balance

$24,210
Directors Fund Expenditure

3. Salary for developers to upgrade Teaching History site: **$9,385**

4. Salary and stipends for Current Research in Digital History: **$13,225**

5. Design and printing of RRCHNM 2016-17 Annual Report: **$1,600**

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 your commitment as RRCHNM works to use new generations of technology to present and interpret the past. Those who have renewed their support of the Center are acknowledged on the Supporters page of our website: https://rrchnm.org/supporters/.