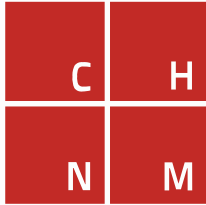


FALL 2023 - SUMMER 2024



Roy Rosenzweig Center
for History and New Media

ANNUAL REPORT



Celebrating 30 Years

Since 1994, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media has been democratizing history. This year, as we celebrate our thirtieth birthday—a major milestone, for a person or an organization—we intentionally focused on four pillars of how we make history in 2024.

1. We create K-12 educational materials for U.S. and world history.
2. We produce interpretative histories through podcasts and interactive scholarly works.
3. We generate data-driven histories that reveal the past through visualizations.
4. We train the next generation of digital historians through our graduate programs.

To do this significant work, we have a team of over 50 staff, students, faculty, and affiliates dedicated to Roy Rosenzweig's mission to democratize history through new media.

In the following pages, you'll get a glance at our successes in these areas and more over the past academic year.



chnm@gmu.edu

New Faces, New Roles

Fall 2023 marked an important period of transition for RRCHNM. In August of 2023, executive director Mills Kelly passed the baton to Lincoln Mullen. At the same time, long time RRCHNMer Nate Sleeter became our Director of Educational Projects.

That fall we welcomed two new graduate research assistants, Alexandra Miller and Savannah Scott, and Wouter Kreuze joined us as the German Historical Institute postdoctoral research fellow.

Two new staff members also joined the team this year. Donna Baker became our new Grants Administrator and Kristin Jacobsen became our Digital Projects Coordinator.

Affiliate faculty member Deepthi Murali rounded out the year with a promotion to Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Art History.



Donna Baker
Grants Administrator



Kristin Jacobsen
Digital Project Coordinator



Wouter Kreuze
Postdoctoral Research
Fellow



Alexandra Miller
Graduate Research
Assistant



Deepthi Murali
Affiliate Faculty



Lincoln Mullen
Executive Director



Savannah Scott
Graduate Research
Assistant



Nate Sleeter
Director of Educational
Projects

New Funders & Partners

12
New
Grants

Things have been looking up at RRCHNM, and not just because we had a good view of the Great North American Solar Eclipse this spring (pictured below).

RRCHNMers have been successful securing grants and donations to support their work.

\$1,178,414
In New
Grant Funding

Grants awarded this past year include support for production of season two of *Worlds Turned Upside Down* and support for the digitization of Civil War graffiti in collaboration with seven local partners.

\$122,355
In New
Donations

Our podcast studio also received several significant donations from the David Bruce Smith Foundation, from the John Carter Brown Library, and from the McCormick Center for the Study of the American Revolution in support of its work.



Democratizing History Through Outreach

RRCHNM creates history for many audiences. Our work is for K-12 educators, fellow academics, and the public. This past year to ensure maximum reach we implemented something new for RRCHNM: center-wide outreach goals.

Led by our Community Engagement Coordinator, Bridget Bukovich, we worked together as a center to ensure we were democratizing history where it matters most to us in 2024.



135%

Increase in newsletter subscribers year over year



91%

Increase in social media followers year over year



107%

Increase in total podcast downloads year over year

K-12 Education

Now more than ever teaching history is fraught, and resources that acknowledge the particular difficulty prospective history teachers face in teaching contested topics are vital. For this reason, RRCHNM's Director of Educational Projects, Nate Sleeter, has for the past two years worked with several RRCHNM graduate students and the Library of Congress to develop guides on difficult-to-teach subjects.

In Fall 2023, the guides focused on Indigenous histories of the United States. The topics of the guides are the History of Education and Indigenous Americans, Native Women and Suffrage – Beyond the 19th Amendment, Comanche Nation and “Manifest Destiny”, and Rethinking “Westward Expansion.”

These free online resources feature activities for students to engage with rich Library of Congress primary sources to better understand topics in history that can be especially challenging for teachers new to the profession.

The guides provide activities centered on analyzing primary sources and model the historian's approach of understanding people in the past through evidence they left behind — including personal narratives, material objects, newspaper articles, photographs, posters, video interviews, and more.

Prior guides focused on the history of religion in America. Upcoming guides for 2024 will look at social issues in post 1970s United States history.

Comanche Nation and "Manifest Destiny": A Guide for Pre-Service Teachers

What is it?

"Manifest Destiny" — the idea that the U.S.-Americans had a religious certainty that would settle the breadth of the North American continent from coast to coast — has become a kind of shorthand for explaining the expansion of the United States. This notion has also been reinforced by many U.S. History textbooks. The reality, as is often the case with history, is quite a bit more complicated. This guide provides resources to help teachers support students as they consider Manifest Destiny more critically. Not only did territorial expansion have many causes and motivations, it was not destined in any sense.



Key Points

- The activities outlined here will take one 90-minute period or two 45-minute periods. It is appropriate for a high school U.S. history classroom, but can be modified for a variety of learners.
- Students will analyze, interpret, and evaluate primary sources.
- Students will learn to critically analyze the term "Manifest Destiny" and learn more about the history of Comanche people in the American Southwest.



History Podcasts

RRCHNM's R2 Studios has had an incredibly successful year. Not only have our shows far surpassed the 300,000 downloads mark over the past year, but two new high quality narrative history podcasts have also been released.

Worlds Turned Upside Down, a podcast that tells the story of the American Revolution as a transatlantic crisis and imperial civil war through the lives of people who experienced it, launched its first season in September 2023. Written and narrated by Jim Ambuske, and executive produced by Jeanette Patrick, *Worlds* has already proven itself to be highly popular, especially in anticipation of America's 250th birthday. With season 1 about to wrap at nearly 60,000 downloads and season 2 already in pre-production, it is clear that *Worlds* is poised to continue to top the history podcast charts.

Antisemitism, U.S.A.: A History was released in June 2024. This limited podcast series examines the long, complicated, and often overlooked history of antisemitism in the United States. *Antisemitism, U.S.A.* is written by historians John Turner and Lincoln Mullen, and narrated by Mark Oppenheimer. Our lead scholar is Britt Tevis. Since its release, the series has received praise from historians and Jewish organizations for how the show tackles this difficult topic.

Both *Worlds* and *Antisemitism, U.S.A.* are prime examples of R2 Studios' mission: to explore history through podcasts to tell stories based on the latest research and to connect listeners with the past.

Deeply researched and thoughtfully produced, RRCHNM's podcasts are further core to RRCHNM's overarching mission of democratizing history through digital media. Going into the 4th year of the studio, we're excited to say new shows are already underway.



Data-Driven History

Turning historical collections into datasets and visualizations is the primary focus of several projects at RRCHNM. These data-driven historical projects allow us to tell social histories in digital media, thus telling the stories of people who entered the historical record only as numbers.

Death by Numbers is turning the plague mortality statistics from seventeenth century London—known as the Bills of Mortality—into datasets and visualizations. Under the guidance of Jessica Otis, graduate students on the project have created so many visualizations for different conferences, RRCHNM now has a “Wall of Death” displaying these visualizations.

This year the *American Religious Ecologies* project team, led by John Turner and Lincoln Mullen, completed its digitization of 232,154 records from the 1926 Census of Religious Bodies, which will form the basis for the most comprehensive dataset for American religious history before WWII that can be created from extant sources.

Deepthi Murali began *Connecting Threads*, her art history project that explores the influence of under-represented actors in global fashion history. By investigating the consumption of Indian and Indian-imitation fabrics by communities in the global south, this project is bringing together collaborators from around the globe.



“Wall of Death” display of *Death by Numbers* visualizations by RRCHNM graduate students



Graduate Student Education

Graduate students can connect with RRCHNM during their studies at George Mason University as graduate research assistants (GRAs), graduate affiliates, or as digital history interns. Through these avenues, RRCHNM trains the next generation of digital historians through our graduate programs.

Working alongside RRCHNM's faculty and staff, graduate students create groundbreaking, rigorous dissertation research. They also often develop personal digital history projects beyond their dissertation work.

One such project is "Out and About in Old Town: Uncovering LGBTQ History in Alexandria, Virginia." This digital walking tour that makes visible the LGBTQ+ history in Alexandria, Virginia was developed by RRCHNM GRAs and graduate affiliates Hannah LeCompte, Alexandra Miller, Savannah Scott, and Ashleigh Williams.

Their work was presented at this April's National Council of Public History's annual meeting, and the team of students are determined to continue to develop the project throughout their graduate studies.

We are proud of each of them—and all of our graduate students—for their determination and passion for digital history work.



New Publications



Three of RRCHNM's own published books this spring! In celebration, each author gave a brief book talk and then proceeded to eat their work (in cake form).

Check out *By The Numbers: Numeracy, Religion and Quantitative Transformation of Early Modern England* by Jessica Otis.

Learn about *Silicon Valley and the Environmental Inequalities of High-Tech Urbanism* by Jason Heppler.

Read *Harlem in Disorder: A Spatial History of How Racial Violence Changed in 1935* by Stephen Robertson.

Hosting DH2024: Reinvention & Responsibility

For over 35 years, the annual Digital Humanities Conference, organized by the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO), has been a vital platform for fostering dialogue, sharing knowledge, and advancing digital research and teaching across various disciplines.



In August 2024, RRCHNM hosted DH2024, coinciding with the center's 30th anniversary. Since its establishment, RRCHNM has championed the democratization of knowledge through innovative uses of digital media and technology. This mission aligns well with ADHO's diverse international membership and wide range of disciplinary perspectives.

Under the theme "Reinvention & Responsibility," RRCHNM hosted about 850 attendees—70% in person at our Arlington campus and 30% online. The hybrid model facilitated 334 papers, posters, roundtables, and workshops, with participants from 44 countries and 6 continents engaging as presenters, attendees, and volunteers.

Hosting, planning, and executing DH2024 has guaranteed our involvement in international scholarly production.

Thank You



Thank you for reading our Fall 2023 - Summer 2024 annual report! Stay in touch with us during the year by following us on social media or signing up for our newsletter to stay up to date on everything the faculty, staff, and graduate students at RRCHNM are working on.



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