
Best Historical Materials 2014

RUSA CODES History Section Historical Materials Committee

RUSA History Section Historical Materials Committee contributing members: Sue A. McFadden, Susan L. Malbin, Alexa L. Pearce, Paul Victor Jr., Mary Wilke, and Matthew J. Wayman, editor and chair.

Each year, the RUSA/CODES History Section Historical Materials Committee selects an assortment of resources that reflect the best resources for historical research. The 2014 list follows. All resources received a final review on November 29, 2014.—*Editor*

Europeana 1914–1918

www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en

Europeana 1914–1918—Untold Stories and Official Histories of WW1 offers substantial digital materials regarding the First World War. The site's news release claims it is the culmination of "three years of work by 20 European countries." Included are 400,000 rare documents, 660 hours of film, and 90,000 personal papers. The home page has three primary options: a search box, "Add Your Story," and "Browse." "Add Your Story" allows users to submit their own materials. Simply attach a digital version of the document you wish to submit and add any additional data, along with information on how you came across it. "Browse" allows navigation via "Type" (letters, diaries, photographs, etc.), "Subject," and "Fronts" (Italian, Home, Eastern, and Western). Search results display thumbnails with title and source. Clicking on items provides an individual record showing title, alternate title, description, language, type, medium, linked subject terms, and places. The site's greatest asset is also its primary drawback—documents have been submitted from so many different countries that many are in foreign languages. An excellent, diverse collection of World War I materials, Europeana 1914–1918 offers significant content with the promise of continued growth.—*Matthew J. Wayman, Penn State Schuylkill*

Mapping Gothic France

<http://mappinggothic.org>

The Mapping Gothic France project is a collaboration between the Media Center for Art History in the Department of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University, the Visual Resources Library at Vassar College, and the Columbia University Libraries. It attempts to depict Gothic space via an online, interactive 3D experience. Stated goals include establishing links between the "architectural space of individual buildings, geo-political space, and the social space of the interaction (collaboration and conflict) between builders and users." The site developers want users to see the relationship of hundreds of Gothic buildings in terms of sameness and difference within a defined historical period of French history. The visuals are spectacular, as are the 360-degree rotational images. The three main tabs, "Space," "Time," and

“Narrative,” offer ways into the site. “Space” leads to a map with sites in France and Great Britain, on which crosses identify churches. The “Time” button takes one to a dynamic map purporting to show the growth of Gothic France. Although available content only goes up to the year 1223 (the death of Philip Augustus), future development will build out the later Gothic. The link to “Narrative” leads to subsections or subchapters on individual essay themes. Future development will fill out all of the sections as well as that of the Kings of France. Across the top left are four small icons. The one with the S is “Stories and Essays”: a three part subdivision, one of which relinks to the “Narrative” section, and a second, “Stories of France,” contains some book excerpts of interpretations of how France became France. More development will flesh out the criteria for selection as well as the criteria for scholars of the Gothic. The “Comparison” icon leads to a fun little feature with varying sets of tiles that can be stacked or capered in many different ways. In sum, the site is lovely to look at, and the visuals give insight into the space and size of Gothic France.—*Susan L. Malbin, American Jewish Historical Society*

1914–1918 Online: International Encyclopedia of the First World War

www.1914-1918-online.net

The second web site appearing during the one-hundredth anniversary of World War I's opening days, 1914–1918 Online is an “English-language virtual reference work on the First World War.” This open access project claims more than one thousand participants from over fifty countries. The encyclopedia provides tabs for “Themes,” “Regions,” “Articles A–Z,” “Index,” “Bibliography,” “Contributors,” “Timeline,” and “About.” “Themes” and “Regions” display thumbnails of articles broken into categories for “Survey Articles,” “Regional Thematic Articles,” “Encyclopedia Entries,” and “See Also” for additional related items. Articles are lengthy and contain their own hyperlinked tables of contents, notes, and bibliographies. The writing is informative, objective, and at a level appropriate for a reference source with wide appeal. The “Timeline” is interactive and rather complex, with links to articles on the topics that appear. The primary flaw is that a number of items the timeline links to are listed as “In preparation” and are therefore not yet available. The substantial bibliography provides over four thousand items in a number of different languages. A useful site covering a broad range of themes, this is a welcome reference source on World War I.—*Matthew J. Wayman, Penn State Schuylkill*

Lowcountry Digital History Initiative

<http://ldhi.library.cofc.edu>

The Lowcountry Digital History Initiative is a digital public history project that consists of a series of high-quality online exhibitions folded into scholarly contextual narratives. Launched in 2014, the project is hosted by the College of Charleston's Lowcountry Digital Library, in partnership with the College of Charleston's Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and the Program

for the Carolina Lowcountry and Atlantic World (CLAW). Exhibitions cover a range of topics and time periods, from the origins of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in “African Laborers for a New Empire: Iberia, Slavery, and the Atlantic World” to coverage of race and labor in the twentieth century in “Charleston's Cigar Factory Strike, 1945–1946 and The Charleston Hospital Workers Movement, 1968–1969.” Across all exhibitions, there is prominent emphasis on exploring underrepresented histories of race, class, gender, and labor within the Lowcountry region. Each exhibition is authored and receives additional editorial input by scholars and graduate students from multiple institutions. Each exhibition includes a bibliography of source material, many of which cite and link to recorded oral histories in addition to textual sources. As readers move through exhibitions, they encounter high-quality scans of archival documents, images, and photographs with detailed captions and credits. The narrative essays are organized into chapters, which are conducive to use in undergraduate and high school courses. In addition to the essays and digitized documents, some exhibitions also include interactive features, such as maps. The organizational structure of the site is quite easy to navigate, both within and among exhibitions. Taken together, the range of archives consulted for each exhibition is impressive, as is the level of collaboration demonstrated by scholars from various institutions. In its production, the site is an excellent model for the collaboration and outreach opportunities afforded by digital history while in its presentation the site shows excellent potential for learning and teaching at multiple levels.—*Alexa L. Pearce, University of Michigan*

Darwin Online

<http://darwin-online.org.uk>

Imagine going on a scientific voyage for five years and knowing that the books you bring along are the only ones you will have access to during the trip. What books would you bring? Darwin Online brings together in one place Charles Darwin's complete publications, private papers, and manuscripts, along with reviews of his works and works about him. With the recent completion of the Beagle Library Project (2012–14), one can see on Darwin Online the works that Darwin could not do without on his voyage. Invaluable reference works, such as *Werner's Nomenclature of Colours*, and those he brought for his own pleasure, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, are available through Darwin Online. According to the website's “What's New” section, the Beagle Library Project doubled the searchable text on Darwin Online. While the site's aesthetics seem dated, it is easy to navigate. Additionally, as the intent is to “assemble a complete collection of every edition and variation of Darwin's published works in English and translations in 30 languages in both electronic text and scanned image forms,” the site is still expanding. A must for anyone studying Darwin or evolutionary biology or whose imagination is captured by the idea of the Beagle's voyage, Darwin Online is an enjoyable journey into Darwin's work.—*Mary Wilke, Center for Research Libraries*

Freedom Summer Digital Collection

<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p15932coll2>

From the Wisconsin Historical Society, this collection contains over one hundred digitized manuscript collections on the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project of 1964. The 25,000 pages available online contain official records, personal papers, memos, letters, diaries, newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, press releases, and magazine and newspaper articles. Future plans include the addition of more materials. The two primary links enable users to “See Freedom Summer Original Documents” and “See Freedom Summer Images.” Either leads to a list of search results, which may also be generated by typing terms into the internal search engine. Results may be further narrowed by clicking the drop-down menus for “Subject,” “Type,” “Personal Name,” “Author/Creator,” or “Place” on the left side of the page, each of which provides a further set of hyperlinked terms for sorting. Each item in the results list contains a thumbnail and information on the source and page text. Clicking any entry brings up a page with further descriptive data, which at times can be quite detailed. Images are clear and detailed, and users may easily zoom, rotate, download, and print. An alternate tab for articles provides a clearer, more readable version of the text appearing in the image. Overall, the Freedom Summer Digital Collection is a valuable contribution to the history of civil rights.—*Matthew J. Wayman, Penn State Schuylkill*

Densho Digital Repository

<http://ddr.densho.org>

The Densho Digital Repository contains historic photographs, documents, newspaper articles, letters, and other primary sources documenting Japanese-American life before, during, and after World War II. Prewar photographs focus on immigration to the United States and aspects of Japanese-American life, such as leisure, business, and other everyday activities. The World War II-era materials center on what life was like in various internment camps throughout the (mostly) Western United States. Post-World War II collections focus on the late twentieth century (1990s onwards) with pictures of Japanese-Americans attending reunions, visiting internment camp historic sites, or giving interviews of their experiences in the camps during the war. Most of the collections within the site come from the Densho Digital Repository itself, but the Densho site has also received materials from similar organizations such as the Japanese-American National Museum (five collections) and the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (one collection). One noteworthy collection has

been donated by the Library of Congress and consists of fifty-four photographs taken by Ansel Adams showing life in the Manzanar camp in 1943. Methods of searching the collection include keyword searching or browsing by topics, collections, or facilities. The topic search offers an extensive list of subjects to choose from. The only drawback however is that many of the subtopics that are linked in do not contain any information. It is therefore recommended that the searcher browse by major categories or keyword search to find their particular topic. The photographic collections in this repository complement the Densho sister site (<http://densho.org>) that contains more than 800 visual histories (1,600+ hours of recorded video interviews) of Japanese-Americans in internment camps during World War II.—*Paul Victor, Jr., Eastern Washington University*

The Roaring Twenties

<http://vectorsdev.usc.edu/NYCsound/777b.html>

The Roaring Twenties: An Interactive Exploration of the Historical Soundscape of New York City is a delightful collection that provides visitors with an intriguing interactive experience with the urban soundscape and human responses to industrial, human, and transportation noise. Thompson and Mahoy have created an original method of disseminating and connecting soundscape history and human responses to noises. The city noise prior to technological changes was a nuisance. The din of carts, horses, vendors, and over a hundred-thousand people in a city with tall buildings was a new stimulant to endure. After technology added mechanical noise in the form of loudspeakers, motor vehicles, and radios, the city dwellers responded with complaints to the city when the sound became unbearable. The collection looks at a brief period of sound complaints in New York City from January to June 1930. The simple, visual image presented on the initial webpage uses basic colors, simple circles, and text to encourage the user to explore. At the bottom of the screen, interactive links provide an introduction, a visual of the offensive sounds linked to descriptive information, maps of complaints with links and suitable images, a timeline, and a historic narrative with additional information, credits, and a bibliography. Supporting features such as complaints, documents, official responses, articles from the New York Times, newsreels, laws, and Noise Abatement Commission (NYC) responses provide context to the historic view of the soundscape. The Roaring Twenties provides historians, students of history, and the public with an innovative way to study comparative points of view for nuisance and human response.—*Sue A. McFadden, Indiana University East*