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DIY History and Participatory Archives

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University of Iowa
DIY|History & Participatory Archives
DIY|History & Participatory Archives

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Participatory archives

Citizen science, citizen scholars

Questions and discussion
DIY History & Participatory Archives

Introduction

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DIY|History & Participatory Archives

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military guard appeared at the gate, the officer in command stating that his orders were to arrest all parties attending the funeral. The attendants, to the number of nineteen, were then taken under escort to the Gilmore House, and placed in a room in the second story, adjoining Gen. Tyler's headquarters. The officiating clergymen named above were not arrested, they having left the ground after the chapel services. It is stated that the services in the chapel were confined strictly to those for the burial of the dead, and that no eulogistic discourse was spoken. The body was clothed in the suit which the deceased wore on the field of battle, although statements had been made that a new Confederate uniform had been procured and placed upon it after reaching Baltimore. The gentlemen arrested were kept under guard until about nine o'clock, when Colonel Cheesborough, of General Schenck's staff, appeared, and informed them of the circumstances which led to their arrest. Information had been received by the military authorities that the body of Captain Brown had been dressed in Confederate uniform, after its arrival, and kept here several days, for the purpose of allowing parties to view it.

The reading of the above paragraph can not fail to occasion the deepest indignation in the public mind. Permission having been
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Crowdsourcing transcriptions

Select an Item to Begin Transcribing:

- Clara Barton letters to cousin Len., 1863-1864
- Bean family letters, 1845-1869
- Bean family letters, 1862-1863
- Bean family letters, 1858-1858
- Miles Reay letters, 1852-1863
- Miles Reay letters, 1893
- Oliver Boardman letters, 1861-1863
- John C. Brown diary, 1864
- Anson R. Butler letters, 1861-1900
- Letters to Hattie Smith Cree, 1863-1865
- Andrew F. Davis letters to wife and daughters, 1861
- Andrew F. Davis letters to wife and daughters, 1862
- Andrew F. Davis letters to wife and daughters, 1863
- Laura Gilson letters to mother, 1863
- Iowa Cavalry, 1st Regiment, letters, 1861-1862
- Frank Malcolm letters, 1864
- Mann family letters, 1851-1856
- Byron McClain letters, 1863-1864
- McDowell family letters, 1857-1863
- Mead family letters, 1861
- Mead family letters, 1862
- Mead family letters, 1863
- Mead family letters, 1864
- Mead family letters, Jan.-Mar. 1864
- Mead family letters, Mar.-May 1864
- Mead family letters, June-July 1864
- Mary A. Mead letters, 1864

Rediscovering Voices

Thanks to the development of "crowdsourcing" or collaborative transcription of manuscript materials, libraries are now able to use the knowledge and interest of the general public to meet goals that they would never have had the time, financial, and staff resources to achieve on their own. Please help us improve access by transcribing the hand-written pages in this collection.

Simply select an item and enter the text as it appears on the digitized image.
Crowdsourcing transcriptions

Shelton family papers, 1864-1936

Enter transcription in the box below.
Copy the text exactly, including misspellings, abbreviations, and punctuation. Indicate illegible text in square brackets: ['?] or (town?). Hit the return key to indicate a new paragraph.

Transcription:
Saturday April 23rd
This has been a day of some excitement. The surgeon in charge and several other soldiers were called early in the morning. We had to go out to 400 miles to fill out their needs. We were so young and almost all of us. And he did not know when we could get to work and go on the attack. We had a profession of wisdom that we felt like nothing. We had to leave us. I shall not forget the two girls and the little devil this day, they put us to work on the armored car. The girls demanded to come and see the war.
Saturday, April 23d

This has been a day of some excitement. The surgeon in charge and executive both called early in the morning. Miss Hagan and I were not quite ready to go out so [unclear?]. He had to talk with them alone. Dr. Byrd was sarcastic and almost insulting. Said he did not know when we could get to work and from the whole manifested a contemptuous indifference that we felt like asking him to leave us. I shall not forget the vile filthy beds in which they put us to sleep nor the refusal to let us have an ambulance. The girls [walked? to town and raised the indignation of our friends. They brought clean bed clothing and provisions. Also a [hr?] for a toilette. Before they went we sent for Dr. [78]. He came and while here informed...
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Crowdsourcing transcriptions

Collections

- Civil War Diaries and Letters
- Szathmary Cookbooks and Manuscripts
- Iowa Women’s Lives: Letters and Diaries
- Building the Transcontinental Railroad
- Nile Kinnick

Over 40,200 pages transcribed
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Crowdsourcing transcriptions

Public agenda
To make historic artifacts accessible by enhancing catalog records with full-text search capabilities.
DIY History & Participatory Archives

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Cooking Up a Crowdsourced Digitization Project that Scales

By Meredith Schwartz on October 22, 2012

If the NYPL Labs’ crowdsourced menu transcription project only whetted your appetite, now the University of Iowa Libraries is taking it to the next level with a similar project for transcribing, among other things, recipes.
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Participatory archives

Thanks to the University of Iowa Libraries, curious culinarians can transcribe a vanilla wafer recipe from a 1920s American cookbook.
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Participatory archives

Even better than one’s own diaries are other people’s diaries. So when I found out that the University of Iowa needs us all to spend a little time poking through other people’s diaries, I said Sign me up! That is, I said it to myself, since you don’t actually have to say it to the University of Iowa. You just go to the website and start poking through a bewildering line-up of fascinating documents. And here’s the thing — it’s not nosiness, it’s scholarship. Disguising nosiness

Crowd-Sourcing Private Life, plus free recipe for Biskit Pudin (with Suckit!)

"I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read on the train."
— Oscar Wilde

Even better than one’s own diaries are other people’s diaries. So when I found out that the University of Iowa needs us all to spend a little time poking through other people’s diaries, I said Sign me up! That is, I said it to myself, since you don’t actually have to say it to the University of Iowa. You just go to the website and start poking through a bewildering line-up of fascinating documents. And here’s the thing — it’s not nosiness, it’s scholarship. Disguising nosiness as scholarship — my modus operandi!

It works like this. Archives with piles of unedited material post the photos online, and civilians like you and me do the transcription. To give it its official description, the transcription is crowd-sourced. The people who do this work

DIY History

Help build the historical record by doing it yourself!
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Hidden agenda

To engage the public to interact with primary source materials in new ways, fostering personal connections with 19th Century British chefs, Iowa women pioneers, and Civil War soldiers.
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secondary sources

→ primary sources

→ untold narratives
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*Galaxy Zoo*

- Photos of hundreds of thousands of galaxies
- Volunteers classify them and find anomalies

“If you have enough humans, you retain the possibility of serendipitous discovery. We would never have written a program to look for green blobs.”
The Galaxy Zoo volunteers who discovered the Green Peas—and who call themselves the “Peas Corps” and the “Peas Brigade”—began discussing the strange objects in the online forum. (The original forum thread was called “Give peas a chance.”)
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The Peas Corps

- Rare galaxies: out of 1m photos, 250 peas
- None had training beyond H.S. science
- Recruited a programmer through forum
- Reinvented signal-to-noise, spectrum analysis
DIY History & Participatory Archives

Citizen science, citizen scholars

• Surveyed 10,000 of the most interested volunteers and asked their motivations.

• About half of responded said their primary motivation was their desire to help scientists with their research.

One Million Volunteers
Tips for engaging citizen scholars

1. Telling people about the purpose of the research and about its context is important. You have to convince them that what they’re doing is helpful to research.

Dressing it up as a game is counterproductive.
Tips for engaging citizen scholars

2. Treat participants as collaborators, not as subjects. Every paper published from Galaxy Zoo research has a footnote to the “complete” list of 350,000 authors.

Community outreach is not public engagement.
DIY History & Participatory Archives
Citizen science, citizen scholars

Tips for engaging citizen scholars

3. Don’t waste people’s time. People are investing in your project, so you must be very sure that what you’re asking is a research problem.

Don’t use the illusion of participation without meaning.
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CRL 2013 Primary Source Award Recipients

2013 Award for Access
Jennifer Wolfe, Digital Scholarship Librarian, University of Iowa
Nominated by: Paul Soderdahl, University Librarian for Information Technology, University of Iowa

For her efforts in the development of University of Iowa's crowd-sourcing DIY History initiative, which features five collections, beginning with "Civil War Diaries and Letters."

DIY|History
Help build the historical record by doing it yourself!
Special thanks to the staff of the University Libraries and Digital Research and Publishing, especially:

- Jen Wolfe
- Shawn Averkamp
- Matthew Butler
- The Crowd
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