

Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media



2022 | 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

Annual reports like this one usually focus on the many things we've accomplished over the past year. We'll get to that in a bit. But first, we want to focus on the future. Why is that?

We're about to celebrate our thirtieth anniversary.

For almost thirty years, RRCHNM has paved the way for the field of digital history. What began in an alcove outside Roy Rosenzweig's office, then moved to the tiny Pohick module with its fleas and mice, eventually became the RRCHNM we know today. From the very beginning, we've been an incubator for great ideas and for projects that change the way people access and interact with historical content

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

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– from the digital textbook *Who Built America* to projects like the World History Commons, our work has blazed new paths in digital history. And we're in a real office building (with no fleas).

Over those thirty years, smart, diverse, and talented people have come to RRCHNM to learn, to grow, and to do digital history. Today, our alumni are scattered across the U.S. and beyond, continuing to extend the work Roy founded the Center to do. He would be so happy to see what everyone associated with RRCHNM has accomplished.

Thirty years is a long time but it's only the beginning. Going forward from here, we will continue to focus on one of our core values—the place where our work began in 1994: education in the broadest possible sense of the term. We will continue creating educational opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, developing resources for K-16 educators, and engaging with our many audiences who care about the past and what it can teach us about the present. As you read through this report, we ask that you consider how you can join us as we carry forward the goals and values that Roy founded the Center to promote.

NEW FUNDS & PARTNERS

5
NEW GRANTS

\$555K
NEW
FUNDING

\$44,000
IN DONATIONS
FROM 66
DONORS

Our upcoming thirtieth anniversary has prompted some exciting moments for RRCHNM. The first was a complete website redesign. Led by Bridget Bukovich, our Community Engagement Coordinator, this undertaking has elevated our online presence and brought our website into the 2020s. If you haven't yet, check out rrchnm.org to see our new look.

Also motivated by the thirtieth anniversary was a large presence of nearly twenty RRCHNMers at the 2023 American Historical Society's annual meeting in Philadelphia. Graduate students, faculty, and staff displayed the diversity of their work in several panels, roundtables, and poster presentations. Also at the annual meeting, we hosted a reception to kick off the thirtieth anniversary in style. Center alumni, partners, board members, and friends of Roy were all in attendance to help us begin our celebration. And if the energy at the reception was any indication, our next thirty years will be very, very bright indeed.

BON VOYAGE

We are pleased to share that the plan to establish an international exchange with the Luxembourg Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH) has been put back into motion after a lengthy COVID delay. This fall we opened applications to our graduate students for a spring exchange, and we are excited to announce that long time graduate research assistants Laura Brannan Fretwell and Caroline Greer were selected to inaugurate the program. Most recently, Laura has served as the project coordinator and Omeka S trainer for the HBCU History Culture and Access Consortium project with the Smithsonian's Office of Strategic Partnerships, and Caroline has served as the project manager for American Religious Ecologies. We will miss them around RRCHNM, but are excited to see all that they learn and accomplish working at and with our colleagues at C2DH over the next three months. Likewise, we are excited for the students and faculty from C2DH to join us for a few months to enrich RRCHNM further.



Ph. D. Students Jessica Dauterive and Jayme Kurland present their research at the AHA.

New Work, New Directions

EXPANDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Thanks to a planning grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Humanities' Division for Preservation and Access, RRCHNM is collaborating with Fairfax City's Office of Historic Resources at Historic Blenheim and the Brandy Station Foundation on a new project. Off the Wall: Digital Preservation of Civil War Graffiti Houses. The goal of the project is to produce an eventual implementation grant that will fund a project that will digitize and contextualize the graffiti and associated ancillary materials held by Historic Blenheim and the Brandy Station Foundation and will include several other Civil War graffiti houses in the Northern Virginia region.

As a research center at a public research university based in Fairfax, VA, we are so pleased to be collaborating with these community partners down the road from campus in Fairfax and Culpeper, Virginia. This project is a first and important step toward building stronger linkages between our three organizations that will benefit our students and the communities we serve.

NOW PRODUCING

Our podcast studio, the premier studio for narrative history podcasts, continues to push forward our efforts to democratize history for new audiences interested in exploring stories from the past. One year in, R2 Studios is in the midst of releasing the second season of *The Green Tunnel*, an environmental history podcast about the Appalachian Trail. In February, the studio team began production on *Worlds Turned Upside Down*, a podcast on the history of the American Revolution as seen through the lives of those who lived through the era. Next up is a podcast on the history of American antisemitism funded by the Henry Luce Foundation.

DH2024 IN DC

Led by Dr. Jessica Otis, Dr. Amanda Madden, and Bridget Bukovich, RRCHNM successfully put together and won the bid to host the international conference DH2024 at George Mason University. Announced this past summer at DH2022 in Tokyo, this is not only the first time we will be hosting this conference, but it is also the first time an institution from the United States has been selected to host the event since 2013. DH2024, hosted by RRCHNM in collaboration with the Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations (ADHO) will bring hundreds of scholars together from around the world to the Washington Metro Area. Themed "Reinvention and Responsibility," the conference will invite attendees to present and discuss key issues in the digital humanities community. There is much more to come on this, but be sure to pencil DH in DC onto your calendars for late July 2024!



Multispectral imaging work at Historic Blenheim in Fairfax, Va

SUSTAINING AND GROWING

This year has been one of significant growth for many of the projects that we have been buzzing about for a while now. With funding from the Library of Congress, Dr. Nate Sleeter launched new teaching guides for pre-service history teachers on teachinghistory.org. Created through a collaboration with the Library of Congress, these guides are aimed at supporting future teachers who will be teaching the history of religion. Often a difficult subject to teach, these guides and guides still in development will serve as a valuable resource for K-12 educators who are seeking to teach history as it was.

We continue our close collaboration with Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and five HBCU partners. Over the summer our Graduate Research Assistants, Timmia King and Laura Brannan Fretwell, and Dr. Deepthi Murali kicked off a series of Omeka S workshops with our partners and since then have been working with the various campus teams to build out the database of sources from the special collections and archives at the five campuses. When the project is complete it will be a true showcase of the riches from their collections.

Community engagement and public history continue to be a major focus. Dr. Amanda Madden and members of the RRCHNM team are working with a local philatelist to create an online digital exhibit and platform for WWII postal materials from the Netherlands called the Arnhem Postal History project. Highlights of the collection include materials on the battle of Arnhem and materials on the Holocaust in Holland.

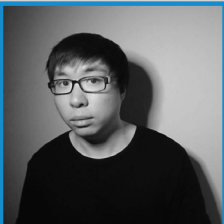
NEW FACES



DR. JIM AMBUSKE is a Historian and Senior Producer at R2 Studios, the podcast division of RRCHNM, where he develops narrative history podcasts. Jim is a historian of the American Revolution and the British Atlantic world. Before joining R2 Studios, Jim directed the Center for Digital History at the Washington Library where he designed and executed several digital research and public history projects in addition to co-creating and co-writing the eight-part podcast docu-series *Intertwined: The Enslaved Community at George Washington's Mount Vernon*. Jim holds a BA and MA from Miami University (OH) and a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia.



DR. DOUGLAS MCRAE is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media. At RRCHNM, Douglas coordinates educational outreach and support for the digital research tool *Tropy* in the Americas. Douglas is an urban environmental historian and has researched the history of water and sanitation in São Paulo, Brazil. Douglas holds a BA from Middlebury College and an MA from Georgetown University in Latin American Studies, and a Ph.D. in History from Georgetown University. He is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Peru 2008-2011).



TONY TRINH is RRCHNM's systems administrator. Tony graduated from George Mason University in 2014 and after a career in federal contracting, he has returned to Mason to work for RRCHNM. He supports all of the center's existing projects as well as any new projects to be deployed in the future.



HERNÁN ADASME is a second-year history Ph.D. student and joins us as a graduate research assistant at RRCHNM for the *Death by Numbers* project after spending a year as a graduate affiliate. Hernán received a master's degree in history from the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. His research focuses on the convergence of the Workplace and Modern Sports in early twentieth-century Latin America. His research interests include Digital History, Cultural History, and Labor History as well.



AMBER PELHAM is a first-year Ph.D. student in history and graduate research assistant at RRCHNM for the HCAC project. She received her M.A. in public history from New York University, where her work centers around the historical preservation of rural African American communities in the Carolinas. Her recent research focuses on locating and commemorating disembarkation sites of enslaved Africans in North Carolina. In addition, she is involved in creating community-oriented resources, such as an exhibition discussing disembarkation and its relation to the larger story of enslavement in North Carolina.



RACHEL WHYTE is a first-year Ph.D. student and graduate research assistant at RRCHNM for the Religious Ecologies project. She received an M.A. from the University of Central Florida in Anthropology with a concentration in Archaeology. Her studies up to this point have focused on finding new ways to present information to the public and finding analytical techniques that do not damage museum artifacts.

GRADUATE AFFILIATE PROGRAM

Last year, we launched a graduate affiliate program to open our doors, resources, and community to more MA and Ph.D. students interested in participating in our Center's community. Unlike graduate research assistants, our affiliates are not required to log hours working on a specific project but opt to participate in center-wide meetings, workshops, and collaboration. This year's affiliate cohort has doubled in size to 22 students, most of whom are using the opportunity to develop their digital history skills in service of their own research projects. Several also work as research assistants.

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

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