Complicating a "Great Man" Narrative of Digital History in the United States

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Edward Ayers. Stephen Brier. Joshua Brown. Daniel Cohen. Roy Rosenzweig. William Thomas. These are the names associated with the major projects cited in the few available accounts of the development of digital history in the United States. Despite nearly thirty years of active digital history work, narratives that recount the emergence of the field are sparse, and those that exist are almost totally devoid of women. For over a decade now scholars have begun their search for the roots of digital humanities with the opening essay in Schreibman and colleagues' 2004 collection *A Companion to Digital Humanities.* Susan Hockey's "The History of Humanities Computing" offers an origin story that is deeply steeped in computational text analysis and text processing. It begins with the initial effort of Italian Jesuit Roberto Busa and IBM to create a concordance of Thomistic writings, and continues through the founding of key scholarly associations, the development of the Text Encoding Initiative, and the launch of thematic source collections on the Internet. Hockey's narrative leans toward the literary and linguistic, with little attention to how those with disciplinary commitments in fields such as history, archeology, or anthropology might have found their way to the digital humanities. Those stories are saved for subsequent individual essays from the collection that deal with the various disciplines.[1]

As a result, curious or aspiring digital historians are likely to turn to Will Thomas's essay "Computing and the Historical Imagination" in search of a background on how their fellow historians came to employ digital approaches. Thomas's chapter traces the birth of digital history back to the quantitative history movement of the 1960s and 1970s, signaled most vividly and controversially by Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery* (1974). Various social history projects brought statistical and computational analysis to the fore of historical investigation, and for some that route brought them to a more expansive interest in historical methods. As computing technologies became more affordable and easier to work with, historians embraced the use of databases

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to track and analyze source materials. Access to the World Wide Web in the early 1990s offered another set of possibilities for expanding access to historical sources and combining them in new ways for scholarly, educational, and public audiences. Thomas suggests that there were vast possibilities for new modes of presentation of historical scholarship, and new tools of analysis to be applied, with historical geospatial work garnering the most energy and attention at the point of his writing in the early years of the twenty-first century. While it offers a familiar story that deals with methodological shifts in the practice of history, Thomas's version of the emergence of digital history methods neither includes nor cites any digital historians who are women. Anne Kelly Knowles, who is a geographer rather than a historian, is the sole woman mentioned who is engaged in digital ventures.[2]

Published shortly after the *Companion,* Dan Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig's *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past* (2005) offers a more practical approach to the field of digital history. It too includes an introduction to the history of the field—one that is slightly more inclusive than Thomas's in its treatment of genres and approaches. This is a democratic and capacious vision of the history web that does not hew to narrowly cast definitions of historical scholarship. Rather, it includes examples that are designed for public audiences and that which targets the K12 educational fields. Yet, Rosenzweig and Cohen managed to point to the digital work of only one woman: Kathryn Kish Sklar, who with Thomas Dublin developed *Women and Social Movements, 1600–2000.*[3]

With so little literature available, more recent reviews of the field tend to reproduce these oversights, suggesting that the history of digital history is a settled one—one that is devoid of women. For example, in her 2014 attempt to puzzle through the complexities of the interdisciplinary that characterizes so much digital scholarship, Julia Thompson Klein lays out a set of definitions of digital humanities and a summary of how digital work has played out in core disciplines. While English comes in for extensive discussion, Klein offers only three paragraphs each on history and archeology. For history, Klein turns in bulk to Thomas's narrative, with some highlights from a 2008 interchange in the *Journal of American History* and a brief article from the American Historical Association's *Perspectives Magazine* by Douglas Seefeldt and Thomas. Again, no women feature in Klein's gloss on the history of digital history.[4]

Yet, a brief survey of the contemporary digital history scene quickly surfaces a large cohort of women—some tenure-track faculty, but many non-tenure-track faculty and staff—who are doing exciting work and taking major leadership roles, both tenure track and non–tenure track. Consider, for instance, the work of Nicole Coleman and Paula Findlen at Stanford University's Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis or Miriam Posner and Janice Reiff at the University of California Los Angeles's Center for Digital Humanities.[5] The leadership at George Mason University's Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media (RRCHNM) in 2017 was half women: Sheila Brennan, Jennifer Rosenfeld, and Kelly Schrum.[6]

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Numerous women historians outside of major digital humanities centers are also pursuing field-changing work. Kalani Craig is using text mining to investigate conflict in medieval episcopal biography. Sharon Block is using computational analysis to interrogate sources related to early American gender history. Jennifer Guiliano has taken a lead in professional development training. Erika Lee is leading a broad digital collecting project to gather the stories and experiences of Minnesota's recent immigrants. Michelle Moravec is using corpus linguistics to investigate the politics of women's culture and is writing about that research in real-time in public. Kathryn Tomasek continues her long-standing work on using text encoding with financial records.[7] In the public history universe, major projects can boast leadership from Anne Whisnant in North Carolina, Elissa Frankle at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Priya Chhaya at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and many, many others.[8] These women and their digital history projects are just a small sample of the innovative work that is underway all over the world.

Between 2006 and 2015, the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) offered a Digital Innovation Fellowship for scholars who sought a year of support to work on a major digital project. During that period, ACLS awarded fellowships to fourteen historians, five of whom were women.[9] In 2007, both Patricia Seed and Anne Sarah Rubin received fellowships for historical geospatial work. In 2010, Abigail Firey received an award to work on the Carolingian Canon Law Project. The next year, Ruth Mostern's geospatial work on the Yellow River and imperial engineering in North China was funded. And, most recently, Kim Gallon received support for her work on the black press.[10] This range of work suggests the breadth and depth of the ways that women are bringing digital theories and methods into their historical work.

These individual historians are not anomalies. In 2013 and 2015 Bryn Mawr College's Albert M. Greenfield Digital Center for the History of Women's Education, under the direction of Monica Mercado, hosted the Women's History in the Digital World Conference, bringing together dozens of women doing digital women's history work.[11] The population of female graduate students doing digital history also continues to grow.[12] Furthermore, female historians are overrepresented among the cohort of midcareer scholars who want to learn new digital methods. Of the applicants for RRCHNM's summer institute, Doing Digital History (2014), which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 71 percent of the applications for participation came from women, and 65 percent of the selected participants were women.[13] In sum, the contemporary cohort of female digital historians is robust, and it looks to remain that way.

All of this raises the question, why are there so few women in the history of digital history?

Knowing that Thomas, Cohen, Rosenzweig, Seefeldt, and Klein are all careful scholars, none of whom has a willful desire to overlook women's efforts, one might reasonably come away with the impression that digital history was a field with

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no women. Obviously that is not true. In fact, women have played essential roles in shaping the digital history, and researchers can find them if they know where to look. But, in addition to undertaking the task of recovering women's contributions to the field, the community of digital historians has an obligation to question the conditions that have contributed to their erasure, and to consider what systems and conditions become visible when we return them to the origin stories for the field. If digital historians refuse to interrogate them, then these origin stories will solidify in a way that distorts the history of the field but also in ways that shape the field disadvantageously for women going forward.

Just as the contemporary cohort of female digital historians is vibrant, women were integral collaborators in the work from the beginning. In the United States, the NEH has been the most substantial source of public funding for digital history through the years at universities and cultural heritage institutions. While the Office of Digital Humanities was established in 2008, digital history work has been funded at the NEH through the wide range of programs and divisions since the mid-1990s. A comprehensive search of the grants database for digital history projects yields 586 individual grants funded between 1994 and 2016. A review of those results showed that women served as principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on three hundred projects, or 51 percent of the awards.[14] As the PI or a co-PI for a particular project, these individuals assumed the responsibility for meeting the deliverables proposed in the application, and fulfilling the terms of the funding set out by the NEH. A close examination of the NEH funding data for this fifteen-year period reveals that of the three hundred projects for which women served as PI or co-PI, only 127, or 42 percent, were associated with colleges or universities. Furthermore, the projects led by these women cover the full range of funding opportunities offered by the NEH, not just those administered by the Office of Digital Humanities. Thus, the distribution of funded projects provides some hints at the kinds of work being led by these principle investigators:

- Eighty-nine projects (30 percent) were funded by the Division of Preservation and Access.
- Eighty-six projects (29 percent) were funded by the Division of Public Programs.
- Thirty-nine projects (13 percent) were funded by the Division of Education Programs.
- Thirty-six projects (12 percent) were funded by the Office of Digital Humanities.
- Twenty-five projects (8 percent) were funded by the program for Federal/State Partnerships, which includes grants for state humanities councils.
- Twenty projects (6 percent) were funded by the Division of Research Programs.
- Five projects (2 percent) were funded by the Office of Challenge Grants.

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Given that the bulk of the projects were funded by the Divisions of Preservation and Access, Public Programs, and Education Programs, it is possible to surmise that these ventures were associated with the work of libraries and archives, museums and public humanities, and teaching and learning.

The relative gender parity among PIs and co-PIs of NEH-funded digital history projects suggests that there are factors preventing us from recognizing this work. One possible reason scholars in the field have not recognized the significant leadership of women in digital history is the generally pervasive gender bias in citations. Study after study shows women's scholarship simply gets cited less than men's in many, many fields.[15] That research cannot be discounted here, but once scholars recognize that women were there as active agents and innovators, guiding and shaping the early work of digital history, it becomes clear that there are other power differentials in play here. Thus, researchers must look deeper and further afield to reclaim the history of women in the digital history—to learn who these women are, what kinds of positions they hold, and what kind of work they have done. Then, we can begin to understand the structural forces in the academy and in cultural heritage institutions that facilitate the erasure of women's influence.

Significant structural factors in labor conditions have combined to perpetuate a "great man" theory history of digital history: status, access, flexibility, and authorizing and credentialing systems. First, structures within the academy have historically slowed women historians' advancement, inhibiting their recognition as leaders in major digital projects. Second, a narrow focus on project directors causes us to overlook the vast contributions of women in other roles on projects. Third, limiting our attention, digital work done within the halls of academe excludes the work of women who land in nonacademic positions. Furthermore, the ways that public history organizations represent their work can make it difficult to identify women's labor on these projects. Together these conditions make it easy for historians of digital history to perpetuate the impression that the pioneering work in the field was done by men. Once researchers go looking for the women who innovated in digital history, those who were present to shape the early projects, a broader picture of historical practice appears, one akin to what Rob Townsend refers to as the "historical enterprise," one that is wider than the halls of academe, filled with many more actors than the tenured few.[16]

Beyond the Senior Faculty

Academic labor practices, conditions, and structures have conspired to mask or reduce women's roles in digital history. A number of studies prove that women achieve senior status in history departments at much slower rates than men. Without the benefits of tenure, women are much less free to take on principal investigator or project director roles. Also, history departments have been slow to recognize digital work as authorized scholarly activity for promotion and tenure review, so much

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so that as late as April 2015 the American Historical Association (AHA) organized a cluster of articles debating the concept of "History as a Book Discipline" in *Perspectives.*[17] This methodological conservatism could combine with the structural sexism at work in the academy to doubly disadvantage women who sought to pursue digital work. Finally, large-scale collaborative digital history has been deeply dependent on contingent faculty and staff, many of whom are women, and many of whom fail to receive meaningful recognition for their contributions to these projects.

Concern about the professional status of women in history is long-standing. In 1969, the AHA formed the ad hoc Committee on the Status of Women, which then was institutionalized as the Committee on Women Historians in 1971. The ad hoc committee produced a report, known as the "Rose Report," in 1970 that serves as a baseline for understanding the position and experiences of women in the field. The findings were not promising. In the 1960s, the top ten history graduate programs granted about 15 percent of their degrees to women, but the faculties in the same departments were 98 to 99 percent men. Moreover, while 16 percent of the full professors in history in coeducational colleges had been women in the 1959–1960 year, by 1968–1969 only one woman remained at that rank. Summarizing the state of the field, the authors explained, "In history as in other academic areas, our sample of thirty institutions indicates women are employed primarily in non-tenured ranks. Moreover, far from abandoning their professions for pure domesticity, their very eagerness to work has made women vulnerable to exploitation. Their readiness—and sometimes their need—to accept irregular and part-time positions has led to their exclusion from participation in the main stream of academic rewards and preferment."[18] The situation has gotten somewhat better in intervening years, but slowly. The results from the AHA's survey in 1979–1980 put the percentage of women history faculty at 13.3, while women constituted only 5.9 percent at the full professor rank, 11.6 percent at the associate level, 25.3 percent at the assistant level, and 40.6 percent at the instructor rank. By 1988 things had improved slightly, with women making up 17.1 percent of the history faculty, and 8.2 percent at full, 14.2 percent at associate, 38.9 percent at assistant ranks, and 37.3 percent as instructors. With the 1998 survey, women had risen to 55 percent of history faculty at the assistant level, but only 18 percent of faculty at the full professor level.[19]

In 2006, the Committee on Women Historians (CWH) published *The Status of Women in the Historical Profession, 2005,* based on a survey sent to all the women members of the AHA, which yielded 362 responses. The report provides a fascinating qualitative snapshot of the sexism and discrimination in the field. Time to promotion and salaries continue to lag behind. Women bear an inordinate brunt of the burden of service. Assumptions about gender powerfully shape subjective, if standardized, evaluations of research, teaching, and service. Women shoulder a disproportionate responsibility for child and eldercare, which can disrupt early and midcareer advancement. The survey results prompted the CWH to issue a statement on best practices in supporting gender equity in the workplace.[20]

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These findings echo the classic work of sociologist Arlie Hochschild, whose 1989 book *The Second Shift* articulated the way that women are hindered by bearing the brunt of domestic responsibilities while also working to maintain a productive professional life.[21] This bind can be especially difficult for women in academe who may face the impact of child bearing and child rearing at exactly the time when their careers require the most concentrated scholarly progress in the years leading up to tenure review. Not all women find themselves in this position, but enough do to contribute to the slowing of forward motion on the promotion track for women in the sector overall.

Furthermore, the structures of academic advancement in history have been slow to recognize digital scholarship for promotion and tenure, disadvantaging all scholars working in the field, but especially women whose promotion can be slowed by other factors. While the Modern Language Association (MLA) has had guidelines on evaluating digital scholarship since 2000, the historical profession had no such guidance until recently.[22] As a result, those hoping to build and support tenure cases for digital historians had to rely on the example of the MLA and adapt the 2010 report of the Organization of American Historians–National Council on Public History–American Historical Association's Working Group on Evaluation of Public History Scholarship, "Tenure, Promotion, and the Publicly Engaged Academic Historian."[23] The AHA recently has adopted a set of guidelines, raising the hopes of those who want to put digital methods at the center of their careers.[24]

Even with these pressures, women were prime movers in some of the earliest digital history projects. As early as 1992, Marsha MacDowell at Michigan State University was at work on *The Quilt Index,* which, given its focus on domestic material culture, barely registered with the larger field of digital historians.[25] By September 2000, *Common-Place: The Interactive Journal of Early American Life* published its first issue.[26] As its founding editors, Jane Kamensky and Jill Lepore embraced the possibilities of the web for creating community and conversation around history early in their careers. Kamensky was a junior professor at Brandeis, not yet the director of the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study. Similarly, Lepore had yet to take up her role as a staff writer for the *New Yorker,* or assume her current position as Harvard College professor.[27] *Common-Place* represented one of the first attempts to create a fully digital publication for the historical community. Each issue included feature columns, reviews, a teaching section, a focus on material culture, and an author interview. Now sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society and the University of Connecticut, the journal continues to publish quarterly.[28]

Between 2001 and 2015, the *Journal of American History* published reviews of over three hundred digital projects, covering a wide range of types, including digital collections, exhibits, teaching and learning projects, and many other hybrid projects.[29] The first website to be reviewed by the *Journal of American History* in 2001 was an outgrowth of women's history produced by women, and it was reviewed by

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a woman, Jane Kamensky. *DoHistory* was the companion site to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich's prize-winning 1990 book, *A Midwife's Tale,* and Writer-Producer Laurie Kahn-Leavitt and Director Richard Rogers's film, which dramatized both the historian's process and the life of the eighteenth-century midwife whose diary was at the heart of the story. Created by the Film Studies Center at Harvard University, the site allows visitors to explore Martha Ballard's diary, the historical investigations that went into piecing together Ballard's story, and the book and film that followed.[30]

By 2012 women made up 37.7 percent of the history faculty at four-year institutions, but that growth in numbers does not necessarily indicate an easing of the conditions that slow women's advancement.[31] And advancement matters deeply to the ways that the story of digital history gets told. This slow penetration of the upper ranks of the profession contributes to the erasure of women from the representation of leadership in digital history. One key reason is the ways that federal grant requirements are structured. For the most part, securing federal funding requires applicants to provide a significant amount of cost-shared resources from their university, often representing an amount equal to the requested funding. For women who are slower to advance to tenure and through the ranks of promotion, the resulting differential in salary can make generating that cost-share required to lead these projects very difficult. (Cost-share requirements are designed by funders to demonstrate the institutional investment in a project by eliciting a pledge of institutional resources. Thus, the higher a person's salary, the lower a percentage of commitment required to meeting the dollar amount threshold set by the funding agency.) Similarly, struggling under the additional responsibilities of service that are foisted upon women and people of color can make it remarkably difficult to make time for outside research projects that involve a level of service and management of their own that far exceeds that required to produce a single-authored monograph.

Beyond the Principal Investigator

Frequently the attribution of credit for digital work stops at the top of the masthead, so to speak, with the principal investigator or the project director. Even if this practice is simply a result of convenience, a shorthand, it contributes to the historical erasure of women from the field. While the funding agencies do not generally set terribly restrictive policies, each applicant organization sets the terms by which an individual can serve as a principal investigator. In many colleges and universities, individuals who hold staff positions are not eligible to hold the role. In other institutions, one must have a doctoral degree to serve as a PI. Those who have a doctoral degree but who are funded by sponsored research projects cannot offer any salary cost-share to the budgeting process, so they are frequently not named as principal investigators on projects, despite playing primary roles in the work. Given these restrictions, a true review of the history of digital history requires that we investigate the full breadth of the collaborative groups that have produced digital

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history in the past. Looking past the project directors to the project managers, the researchers, and the staff reveals that women were major contributors to this work at all stages along the way.

The University of Virginia's *The Valley of the Shadow* project, begun in 1991 and launched on the web in 1993, stands as the quite possibly the most visible digital history project in the field, winning the AHA's James Harvey Robinson Award for outstanding teaching aid in 2002 and the MERLOT (California State University's Multimedia Educational Resources for Learning and Online Teaching) History Classics award in 2005, among others.[32] While the project is often framed as the work of Edward Ayers and William G. Thomas, the list of integral coeditors also included Anne Sarah Rubin and Andrew Torget, both of whom have gone on to have significant careers in digital history. Rubin was a graduate student when she served as project manager for the project between 1993 and 1996, and she took off the 1995–1996 school year to work full time on the *Valley.* In 2000, she was coauthor with Edward Ayers of *The Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in The American Civil War; Part I: The Eve of War.*[33] Rubin went on to earn an ACLS Digital Innovation Fellowship that contributed to the production of *Sherman's March and America: Mapping Memory,* the geospatial site that accompanied her 2014 book *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman's March and American Memory.*[34]

By the late 1990s, a collaborative team from the American Social History Project—Center for Media and Learning at the Graduate Center/City University of New York and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University embarked on *History Matters: the U.S. Survey Course on the Web.* The leadership team for the project was evenly split between men and women, with Pennee Bender, Stephen Brier, Joshua Brown, Ellen Noonan, Roy Rosenzweig, and Kelly Schrum guiding the work that produced over one thousand edited and annotated primary sources, hundreds of website reviews, and a cluster of multimedia guides to analyzing various types of historical evidence.[35] In 2005, *History Matters* won the American Historical Association's James Harvey Robinson Prize for its contribution to the teaching and learning of history. In the years after *History Matters,* Bender, Noonan, and Schrum have produced dozens of digital history projects, many centered on pedagogy, from their respective roles at the American Social History Project–Center for Media and Learning (ASHP/CML) and RRCHNM.[36] As groundbreaking as this work was, the focus on "research" productivity in the authorizing structures of academe has tended to undervalue projects focused on teaching and learning.

Nonetheless, this initial work on the *Valley of the Shadow* and on *History Matters* took place in conjunction with the creation of some of the key institutions that supported the growth of digital history. Founded in 1981 by noted labor historian Herbert Gutman and Steven Brier, the American Social History Project (ASHP) was the first of the organizations to embrace digital means to develop and distribute their work. In 1990, ASPH became a research center at the City University of New York, known as the Center for Media Learning (CML). Joshua Brown took over as

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the executive director in 1998. ASHP/CML has always had a staff with many women in leadership positions, with current associate director Andrea Adas Vásquez joining in 1989, current associate director Pennee Bender joining in 1992, and Ellen Noonan joining in 1998. Each of these women has been integral to the development and success of a host of digital history projects over the last twenty-five years.[37]

A close collaborator with the ASHP/CML team, Roy Rosenzweig founded the Center for History and New Media within the History and Art History Department at George Mason University in 1994. RRCHNM also has always had women in key positions. Elena Razlogova joined Rosenzweig immediately, and served as programmer, system administrator, historian, and postdoctoral fellow until she departed to take up a position in the History Department at Concordia University in 2005. Kelly Schrum came to RRCHNM as a postdoctoral fellow in 2001 and has served as the director of Educational Projects since 2005. Stephanie Hurter joined the group as a research assistant in 2002 and worked as a web designer until she departed for the U.S. State Department in 2006, and she completed her doctorate in 2010. Amanda Shuman worked as a web developer from 2003 until she went to pursue a doctoral degree in Chinese History at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 2006. Joan Fragaszy Troyano joined the center as a research assistant in 2003, worked on history of science projects until her departure in 2005 to pursue a doctoral degree in American studies at George Washington University, and returned to the center between 2011 and 2014 to oversee the PressForward project. This author joined the group in 2004 as associate director of Educational Projects, and served as director of Public Projects from 2007 to 2017. Sheila Brennan joined the center as a research assistant in 2005 working on a wide range of public history projects, completed her doctorate in American history in 2010, and currently serves as the director of Strategic Initiatives. Finally, Jennifer Rosenfeld joined the group in 2010 and is the associate director of Educational Projects. This cohort of women only begins to scrape the surface of the people who have actively shaped the well over seventy projects undertaken by RRCHNM since 1994.[38]

Finally, much of the labor on the *Valley* project took place in the context of the Virginia Center for Digital History (VCDH), which Ayers and Thomas founded in 1998. VCDH produced many projects, and included a number of women in key leadership roles. For example, Kim Tryka served as assistant director, and made major technical, structural, and information architecture contributions to a host of projects. Tryka went on to be a data research librarian at the National Library of Medicine. Alice Carter also served as associate director, supporting teaching and learning programs. The staff alumni list includes women in project management, programming, and designing roles. Finally, the VCDH list of seventeen individual project directors includes only one woman, but the list of student alumni includes many, many women.[39]

All of these early projects and foundational centers suggest that women's work on digital history projects can get buried if researchers only pay attention to the

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founders and the individuals who are listed as principal investigators. In 2011, Tanya Clement and Doug Reside gathered a group of digital humanists at the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities to discuss issues surrounding professionalization in digital humanities centers.[40] The conversations at that meeting recognized the significant degree to which digital humanities labor is performed by contingent faculty and classified staff, often who fail to receive sufficient credit for their efforts on projects. The two-day gathering resulted in a full report with clear recommendations and the creation of the "Collaborator's Bill of Rights." The recommendations call for academic institutions to allow for scholarly staff to serve as principal investigators on grant-funded work and strongly emphasize the need for each digital project to have a full and explicit credits page that accounts for everyone who has worked on the project.[41]

Making concerted progress on these factors related to authority and credit is essential in surfacing women's work in digital humanities and in digital history specifically, but it is not enough. As historians, digital and otherwise, watching the changing contours of our field, once these acknowledgments are made, researchers need to actually read the credit and about pages that accompany digital history projects, and to grapple with the range and significance of the contributions of the entire project team. Doing so will quickly surface the important work of the large numbers of women in digital history.

Furthermore, digital history project teams need to write explicitly about their work, about both the process and its scholarly implications. Over the course of his career, Roy Rosenzweig wrote enough articles and essays to fill an edited collection on digital history. In 2003, Edward Ayers and Will Thomas published one of the *American Historical Review*'s only hybrid digital articles based in the corpus of materials provided through the *Valley of the Shadow* project. Dan Cohen published numerous articles on his experiments in computational methods in historical research. Stephen Brier and Joshua Brown wrote about the preservation challenges surrounding the *September 11 Digital Archive* for the tenth anniversary of those tragic events. Cumulatively, these publications represent mark a lasting place in the authorized scholarly record.[42] For contingent faculty and staff being paid out of grant funding that requires the assignment of all of their labor to particular projects with no latitude for their own exploratory work, producing these kinds of peer-reviewed articles can be nearly impossible to do given the timescales and constraints of project deliverables. Unless the analytical writing is built into the grant or the project plan, it is extraordinarily difficult to fit in, and the review and revision cycles for traditional scholarly publishing can outlast the period of performance for the project. Nonetheless, digital historians must take this step so that the work gets recognized in the organs that perform the authorizing work for the field, even if those publications have historically published many fewer women than men within their issues.

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Beyond the Academy

Another way to get a better sense of the significant work of women in digital history to is to widen the scope of the work held up as representative of the field to include the larger "historical enterprise."[43] Digital history continues to be represented in digital humanities in very narrow ways, often overlooking work that takes place outside the academy within the bounds of public history institutions such as libraries, archives, and museums. Even when historians of digital history recognize significant projects from libraries, archives, and museums, they fail to acknowledge the ways that collaborative efforts are represented as institutional products in those venues. This practice masks the individual contributions and achievements of all who labor to produce it, including women.

This situation is borne out in the way that the more than three hundred digital history projects reviewed in the pages of the *Journal of American History* cite the work under examination. Of the reviewed projects, sixty-eight (22 percent) explicitly list individual producers. A review of the names and some research suggests that of those with individual producers, twenty-eight projects (9 percent) listed women (often in conjunction with men) and the other forty projects (13 percent) listed only men. The remaining 239 projects point to some sort of institutional or organizational body as the producer: libraries and archives (31 percent), public history organizations (26 percent), universities (15 percent), and commercial entities (6 percent).[44] The general practice of these cultural heritage organizations is to recognize the organization, rather than the individual, as the creator/producer, which means that researchers need to do a little bit of digging to surface the ways that women have contributed to these projects.

Researchers need a broader definition of digital history work to surface the involvement of women employed at nonacademic organizations. An examination of the workforce in cultural heritage organizations suggests that women will continue to lead the way. Though no data exist specifically for history museums, the American Association of Museums reports that as of 2009, the field as a whole was almost evenly split between men and women, with women representing 47.5 percent of a workforce that totaled just over four hundred thousand employees.[45] The 2006 census data about the archival profession reported that 65 percent of the respondents were women. This gender balance represented a complete reversal of the ratio in the profession in 1956. Furthermore, there were almost twice as many women as men employed in academic archives. Finally, the trend in the field suggested an even more dramatic swing toward being dominated by women: nearly four out of five respondents under the age of thirty were women.[46] These individuals perform appraisal, selection, and description work that provides access to the body of evidence that historians rely upon to do their research. All of this is interpretive work that shapes the contours of our understanding of the past. Finally, the available data on public historians also suggest that the field is heavily female. While

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women represent roughly 40 percent of the historians in academic settings, a 2008 survey of public historians reports that women constitute nearly 65 percent of the staff in that field. Like the situation with the archivists, this number represented a complete reversal of the status in 1980, when women accounted for only 36 percent of the field.[47]

Libraries and archives pioneered digital work to provide access to historical materials. One of the earliest and most recognizable digital history projects was the Library of Congress's American Memory project.[48] Growing out of the National Digital Library Program (NDLP), American Memory eventually brought over nine million digitized sources related to U.S. history and culture to the public.[49] Martha Anderson was integral to that work. She joined the library staff in 1996 to work on the NDLP, and served as the production coordinator for American Memory. This pioneering project changed the field by dramatically increasing access to cultural heritage resources. Anderson went on to take a leadership role at the National Digital Information Infrastructure Preservation Program, shepherding over a decade of work on digital preservation and stewardship until her retirement in 2012.[50] Anderson was joined in this effort by many women who have become leaders in the field of preservation and access, such as Abby Smith Rumsey and Abbie Grotke.[51]

Documentary editing projects—often housed at universities but staffed by non-tenure-line scholars—also embraced digital means of production and distribution quickly. One of the first ventures in historical documentary editing to do so was the *Model Editions Partnership,* which was funded by the National Historical Publication and Records Commission at the National Archives in 1995. The partnership brought together seven major documentary projects to experiment with creating digital editions using a subset of the Text Encoding Initiative markup.[52] The key initial partners included the *Documentary History of the First Federal Congress,* edited by Charlene Bickford; the *Papers of Margaret Sanger,* edited by Esther Katz and Cathy Moran Hajo; and the *Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony,* edited by Ann Gordon. Eventually, the *Papers of Eleanor Roosevelt,* edited by Allida Black, joined the partnership. Together, these editors formed a significant portion of the leading edge of documentary editing practice, and transformed the workflows that govern the production of scholarly editions today. At the University of Virginia, similar efforts were afoot with the *Dolly Madison Digital Edition,* edited by Holly C. Shulman, which published its first installment online in 2004.[53] Shulman, who served as the director of Documentary Editions at VCDH, went on in 2007 to join forces with Susan Holbrook Perdue to found Documents Compass, a nonprofit organization that was part of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, to assist and advise documentary editors on the creation of digital editions.[54]

Experimentation with digital forms also infiltrated public history work, as museums and historical societies developed complex interpretive projects. One of the first of these began before there was a graphic web to be browsed, when in the late

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1980s a coalition of members of the Society for the History of Technology applied to the National Science Foundation for a curriculum development grant to bring the history of science and technology into the social studies classroom, attracting women and minority students to the topics. Shepherded by Susan Smulyan and Bruce Sinclair, a large collaborative group of scholars, teachers, and public historians produced eight units that focused on textile technology in American History, drawing on the collections at the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, and the expertise at the Center for Children and Technology. Three of the eight modular curriculum units in the *Whole Cloth* project were published on the web in 1998.[55] Subsequently, Smulyan, from her position at Brown University, has spearheaded a number of collaborative cross-cultural and student-centered digital history projects. Since 2014, she has directed the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage.[56]

While some were at work creating curriculums that brought together collections and new approaches to digital history, others were attempting to translate physical museum exhibits into the web environment. In October 2001, the National Museum of American History (NMAH) launched the website *A More Perfect Union: Japanese Americans and the U.S. Constitution*.[57] Jennifer Locke Jones, who is now chair and curator of the Division of Armed Forces History at NMAH, began her career at the museum working on the *A More Perfect Union* museum exhibit, which debuted in 1987. Then, she went on to be the online exhibit curator for the website, undertaking the task of creating a digital project that represented the complex issues and themes highlighted in the museum exhibit. Jones was joined in this venture by Judith Gradwohl, who was the web program director at the time, and a large team of collaborators at NMAH and at Second Story Interactive Studio.[58] The site won widespread praise, including taking the gold award in the history and culture category of the 2002 American Alliance of Museums' Media and Technology Professional Network's "Muse Awards" for work that best uses digital media to enhance the galleries, libraries, archives, museums (GLAM) experience.[59]

Innovative digital public history work was not solely concentrated at the Smithsonian Institution. One of the most advanced projects in digital public history at the time was the *Raid on Deerfield: Many Stories of 1704* from the Memorial Museum and the Potumtuck Valley Memorial Association. The site brought together collaborators from Native American and French Canadian cultural organizations to provide the multiple perspectives that five cultural groups (English, French, Wendat [Huron], Kanienkehaka [Mohawk], and Wobanaki) had on the conflict that took place in Deerfield, Massachusetts.[60] Led by Timothy Neumann, Lynne Spichiger, Angela Goebel-Bain, Barbara Mathews, Juliet Jacobson, and Don Button, the project brought together primary sources, personal narratives, composite characters, artifacts, and timelines on its website to illustrate the conflicting understandings of this deeply important historical moment that touched the lives of Native peoples, French

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Canadians, and English colonial settlers.[61] The site won a number of awards, including second place in the 2005 Museums and the Web, Best of the Web: Online Exhibit category; a 2005 American Association of State and Local History Award of Merit; and a 2007 MERLOT History Classics Award.[62]

These few examples highlight both early exemplary projects and the key women who led that work. Unfortunately, for the majority of digital history projects from cultural heritage institutions, institutions that employ remarkable numbers of women, it will be very difficult to clearly identify the individuals who participated in their planning and development, since the majority of that work is identified as the work of the institution—the library, archive, museum, or historical society. Thus, dozens of other women who have produced extremely significant digital history work will remain nameless. Perhaps in the future, regardless of whether or not their positions demand that their work be "work for hire," the librarians, archivists, curators, editors, and public historians who collaborate on these projects will adhere to the recommendations put forth in the "Collaborators' Bill of Rights" and create full and explicit credits and acknowledgments for the work so that all of the contributions can be clearly known.

Even the most cursory survey of the contemporary digital history landscape reveals that the field is populated with many, many women who are doing important work directing projects, following new lines of inquiry, experimenting with innovative theories and methods, and pushing the field forward. If the fact that the quality of this work is on par with that of men's is evident, then we digital historians must ask ourselves why the stories we tell about the birth of the field include no women. If there is a groundswell of women doing exciting digital history work now, where did they come from? Were they there from the beginning? The recovery of the work of women on the first decade of the digital history web argues strongly that they were present and productive in this field from its earliest days. Ayers, Brier, Brown, Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Thomas undeniably shaped the field that current digital historians have inherited, but they were joined by a cast of women historians who also labored to mold digital history into the field we recognize today.

As with all systems that have been historically beset by unequal access to resources, opportunities, and power, the academy maintains structures that digital historians need to deconstruct so that the field can move forward. All practitioners must work purposefully to recognize the contributions of the underrepresented—those whose work is masked by inequity. Then, all members of the field must consciously revise our origin stories to be inclusive of these individuals and their influence. This essay tries to take small steps toward accomplishing this recovery and revision.

Yet, digital historians must also grapple with the systematic and structural factors that have resulted in the erasure. Returning women to the story is not enough. We have to continue to work to revise the academic systems that have slowed women's advancement to the senior ranks of the discipline of history. The field must

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dedicate itself to working for full and fair representation of all of the contributions to collaborative digital projects—from those of the principal investigator, to those of the contingent faculty and postdocs, to those of the project managers, to those of the staff, to those of the graduate and undergraduate research assistants. Finally, digital historians have to be willing to look further afield than traditional scholarly homes to recognize the major work that is occurring in the cultural heritage organizations where so many women are employed doing digital history work. Once the field begins to do this work, we will find ourselves much closer to being able to craft a more accurate and representative history of digital history.

Notes

1. Hockey, "History of Humanities Computing."

2. Thomas, "Computing."

3. Cohen and Rosenzweig, *Digital History.*

4. Klein, "Defining." See also Cohen et al., "Interchange," and Seefeldt and Thomas, "What Is Digital History."

5. At the Center for Spatial and Textual Analysis at Stanford University, Nicole Coleman is the research director of the Humanities+Design Lab, http://hdlab.stanford.edu/contact/index.html, and Paula Findlen is a PI on *Mapping the Republic of Letters,* http://republicofletters.stanford.edu/index.html. At the Center for Digital Humanities at the University of California, Los Angeles Miriam Posner is the DH Program Coordinator, UCLA Center for Digital Humanities; Miriam Posner and Janice Reiff are core faculty, http://www.cdh.ucla.edu/roles/faculty/.

6. RRCHNM Staff, http://chnm.gmu.edu/chnmstaff/.

7. Kalani Craig, http://www.kalanicraig.com/; Sharon Block, http://www.faculty.uci.edu/profile.cfm?faculty_id=5301; Jennifer Guiliano, http://jguiliano.com/ and Humanities Intensive Learning and Teaching (HILT), http://www.dhtraining.org/hilt2016/; *Immigrant Stories Digital Archive,* Immigration History Research Center & Archives, http://immigrants.mndigital.org/; *Mapping Slavery in Detroit,* http://mappingdetroitslavery.com/; Michelle Moravec, http://michellemoravec.com/; Kathryn Tomasek, http://kathryntomasek.org/.

8. *Driving through Time: The Digital Blue Ridge Parkway,* http://docsouth.unc.edu/blueridgeparkway/; Frankle's most recent project is *History Unfolded: US Newspapers and the Holocaust,* https://newspapers.ushmm.org/; Priya Chhaya, http://priyachhaya.com/ and https://forum.savingplaces.org/people/priya-chhaya.

9. American Council of Learned Societies, "ACLS Digital Innovation Fellows."

10. Anne Sarah Rubin's *Sherman's March and America: Mapping Memory,* http://shermansmarch.org/; Abigail Firey's *Carolingian Canon Law Project,* http://ccl.rch.uky.edu/; Ruth Mostern's *The Digital Gazetteer of the Song Dynasty,* http://songgis.ucmerced.edu/; and Kim Gallon's *Black Press Research Collective,* http://blackpressresearchcollective.org/.

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11. Materials from both conferences are available from Bryn Mawr's institutional repository, http://repository.brynmawr.edu/greenfield_conference/.

12. Of the graduate students doing digital work that I advise in some way, five of six are women (Jannelle Legg, Amanda Regan, Sasha Hoffman, Jeri Wieringa, Erin Bush, Spencer Roberts).

13. Doing Digital History (2014): Women applicants = 50/70 (71 percent); participants 15/23 (65 percent), http://history2014.doingdh.org/about/participants/.

14. I queried the NEH database of funded projects (https://securegrants.neh.gov/publicquery/main.aspx) for the keywords "history" and "digital" or "online" or "website." I then aggregated the results, de-duplicated them based on application identification number, and coded them for the sex of the named principal investigator, or co-PI. This process is obviously an imprecise one based on assumptions about the sex characteristics associated with particular given names, and the gender presentation of subjects visible in images publicly available on the web.

15. For a sampling of these studies, see Savonick and Davidson, "Gender Bias in Academe."

16. Townsend, *History's Babel.*

17. Denbo, "Forum: History."

18. Rose, Graham, Grey, Schorske, and Smith, "Report." Quotation from American Historical Association, "Part Three."

19. Robert B. Townsend, "The Status of Women and Minorities in the History Profession," *Perspectives on History* (April 2002): http://historians.org/publications-and-directories/perspectives-on-history/april-2002/the-status-of-women-and-minorities-in-the-history-profession.

20. Lunbeck, *Status of Women*; American Historical Association, "CWH Statement; current AHA committee on women historians, American Historical Association, "Committee on Gender Equity."

21. Hochschild with Machung, *Second Shift.*

22. Modern Language Association, "Guidelines." The guidelines were originally adopted in May 2000 and were revised and approved in 2012.

23. Working Group on the Evaluation of Public History Scholarship, "Tenure, Promotion."

24. American Historical Association, "Guidelines," adopted June 2015.

25. The Quilt Index.

26. *Common-Place.*

27. Jane Kamensky, Harvard University, http://history.fas.harvard.edu/people/jane-kamensky; and Jill Lepore, Harvard University, http://scholar.harvard.edu/jlepore.

28. *Common-Place.*

29. The new Metagraph section sometimes includes digital scholarship and sometimes includes digital reviews. Otherwise, the reviews are listed in the individual *JAH* issues tables of contents as Digital History Reviews. The reviews conducted through June 2014 have also been reproduced on the *History Matters* website (http://historymatters.gmu.edu/

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webreviews/). To conduct this analysis, I scraped the entries from the *History Matters* page and supplemented them by hand with the reviews that had been published between June 2014 and December 2015. I then hand-coded the entries by cited producer and/or creator.

30. *DoHistory*; Ulrich, *Midwife's Tale*; Kahn-Leavitt, *Midwife's Tale*; Kamensky, "Review of Do History"; and Jaffee, "Review of DoHistory."

31. White, Chu, and Czujko, *2012–13 Survey,* 87.

32. *Valley of the Shadow*; "Awards and Press Coverage."

33. "Project Staff and Background"; "Story"; Rubin and Ayres, *Valley of the Shadow*.

34. Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie*; Rubin, Bailey, and Bell, *Sherman's March and America*.

35. *History Matters,* http://historymatters.gmu.edu and http://historymatters.gmu.edu/credits.html.

36. *American Social History Project—Center for Media and Learning,* http://ashp.cuny.edu/; *Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media,* http://chnm.gmu.edu/.

37. "Who We Are."

38. *Celebrating 20 Years of Digital History @CHNM,* http://20.rrchnm.org/.

39. VCDH Staff, http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/index.php?page=Staff.

40. "Off the Tracks: Laying New Lines for Digital Humanities Scholars," http://mcpress.media-commons.org/offthetracks/.

41. "Recommendations," http://mcpress.media-commons.org/offthetracks/part-one-models-for-collaboration-career-paths-acquiring-institutional-support-and-transformation-in-the-field/a-collaboration/recommendations/ and "Collaborators' Bill of Rights," http://mcpress.media-commons.org/offthetracks/part-one-models-for-collaboration-career-paths-acquiring-institutional-support-and-transformation-in-the-field/a-collaboration/collaborators%E2%80%99-bill-of-rights/.

42. Rosenzweig, *Clio Wired*; Thomas and Ayers, "Overview"; Thomas and Ayers, "Differences Slavery Made"; Cohen, "History"; Cohen and Rosenzweig, "Web of Lies"; Cohen, "From Babel to Knowledge"; Brier and Brown, "September 11 Digital Archive."

43. The term "historical enterprise" is borrowed from Townsend, *History's Babel.*

44. Total: 307, 100 percent; Commercial: nineteen, 6 percent; Women: twenty-eight, 9 percent; Libraries and Archives: ninety-four, 31 percent; Men: forty, 13 percent; Public History Organizations: eighty-one, 26 percent; Universities: forty-five, 15 percent.

45. American Association of Museums, "Museum Workforce."

46. "Archival Census," statistics from pages 333–51.

47. Dichtl and Townsend, "Picture of Public History."

48. *American Memory.*

49. "About the Collections."

50. Ashenfelder, "Digital Pioneer."

51. Rumsey, *Rumsey Writes*; Grotke, *LinkedIn,* https://www.linkedin.com/in/abigail-grotke-378b808.

52. *Model Editions Partnership*; "Prospectus"; and Chesnutt, "Model Editions Partnership."

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53. Shulman, *Dolly Madison Digital Edition.*

54. *Documents Compass,* https://web.archive.org/web/20170517164911/http://documentscompass.org/.

55. The website for *Whole Cloth: Discovering Science and Technology through American History* has not been maintained by the Lemelson Center, but it is preserved by the Internet Archive: https://web.archive.org/web/20060923075417/http://invention.smithsonian.org/centerpieces/whole_cloth/index.html. For an account of the early project work, see Smulyan, "Curriculum Development Report."

56. Susan Smulyan, Brown University, https://vivo.brown.edu/display/ssmulyan.

57. *More Perfect Union.*

58. Jones, "Curator Statement"; and "Credits."

59. "2002 Muse Awards."

60. *Raid on Deerfield.*

61. Spichiger and Jacobson, "Telling an Old Story"; Spichiger and Sturm, "Digital Deerfield 1704."

62. "About, Honors."

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