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A Map Through Time – Virtual Historic Cities: New Ways of Exploring Digital Collections

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A Map Through Time
Virtual Historic Cities

NEW WAYS OF EXPLORING DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
JAMIE ROGERS
Coral Gables – Virtual Historic City & Unearthing St. Augustine’s Colonial Heritage

• What do these projects have in common?
  ○ They were both built upon existing collections and partnerships
  ○ They were initiated by a drive to increase user access through new modes of discovery
  ○ They both reach new audiences through cross-discipline content, discoverable through a single interface
  ○ They were both built on a common software platform, SobekCM (developed by UF), furthering the technical collaboration between FIU and UF
Partnerships

- City of Coral Gables, City Hall and the Coral Gables Historical Resources Department - since 2005

- Florida International University Digital Collections Center (DCC)

- Florida International University Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Department

- Florida International University Department of Landscape Architecture

- University of Florida Digital Collections (UFDC)
Coral Gables – Virtual Historic City

- **Project Background**
  - Project plans to incorporate multiple collections from the South Florida Region
  - Advisory Board consisting of museum professionals, archivists, library professionals, GIS experts, architects, city officials, etc.
  - Coral Gables funding of initial project scope
  - Successes, new partnerships, and expanding the project
    - NEH and IMLS grant proposals have been submitted
History of Collaboration

Coral Gables Memory – http://coralgables.fiu.edu/
The Talking Book

The Talking Book is an online interactive book, which focuses on the people, places, and events that shaped the City of Coral Gables in its early history.

The project has two parts. The first is a narrative telling the story of the City's history. The second is a database of photographs, texts, and ephemera related to the City.
A great benefit of online publishing is the ability for users to make connections with additional information sources.

The majority of the work performed by the Digital Collections Center at FIU is the digitization and dissemination of primary source materials (photographs, rare texts, ephemera, oral histories, etc.)

The talking book provided an opportunity to make these materials available in a way that delivers context for the user, and allowing them to venture on an information discovery path.
## Existing Digital Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collection</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Scope/Description</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th># of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coral Gables Memory</td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Coral Gables Homes</td>
<td>1940s – 1950s</td>
<td>5,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photographs</td>
<td>Historical People/Places/Events</td>
<td>1920s –</td>
<td>180+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ephemera</td>
<td>Postcards, Booklets, Advertisements</td>
<td>1920s –</td>
<td>10+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>Minute Books and other</td>
<td>1925 – 1952</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami Metropolitan Archive</td>
<td>Texts</td>
<td>Zoning, Development, Advertising, Housing</td>
<td>1930s –</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Architecture
Aerial Views
Historic Landmarks
Local History
Popular Culture
Fashion
Postcards

M5:—BILTMORE HOTEL, CORAL GABLES, FLA.
MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF
THE CITY COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY
OF CORAL GABLES - MAY 1ST, 1925.

The City Commissioners of the City of Coral Gables, met pursuant to the provisions of the municipal charter, incorporating said city, at the Administration Building, in the city of Coral Gables, Florida, which was temporarily designated as the City Hall. Said meeting was held at 12 o'clock noon, the 1st day of May, A.D. 1925.

All of the members of the City Commission were present.

George E. Merrick
Edward A. Hammers
Relfair Knight
L. F. Baldwin
F. W. Webster

Mr. George E. Merrick was nominated and unanimously elected as temporary chairman of the meeting. Mr. Edwin W. Bishop was requested to perform the duties of clerk.

The Chairmen announced that the first business to come before the meeting was the election of a mayor for the new City of Coral Gables. And thereupon with due formality and in compliance with the provisions of the said city charter, Mr. Edward A. Hamers was nominated as mayor of the City of Coral Gables, Florida. Upon motion duly made and unanimously carried, it was moved that the nominations be closed and the clerk passed the unanimous ballot of the City Commissioners for Mr. Edward A. Hamers as mayor. This having been duly accomplished, Mr. Merrick resigned the chair to Mr. Edward A. Hamers, who assumed the duties of mayor.

The mayor thereupon announced that it was now in order to formally accept the city charter incorporating the City of Coral Gables. Mr. Bishop, as clerk, was thereupon directed to read same for the information of the commissioners. This having been done, said city charter was duly accepted and adopted as a city charter for said City of Coral Gables.
## New Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Quantity Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create audio narratives for the Coral Gables Virtual Tour, which include information about the city’s historic landmarks</td>
<td>48 landmark descriptions and associated audio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add geospatial metadata and standardize temporal metadata of existing collection (Kerdyk residential photographs as well as other digital objects)</td>
<td>5000+ records, 10000+ files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitize content for the collection (photographs and other ephemera) held at the Coral Gables Historical Resources Department as well as textual materials</td>
<td>732 photographs, 1000+ files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitize maps held at the University of Miami</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitize aerials from 1920s and on</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test load items into current beta digital repository system</td>
<td>100 records</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## GIS Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Historical Aerial Photographs</td>
<td>1920’s – 2010 at 25 Year Intervals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanborn Maps</td>
<td>1899 – 1924 Property Parcels, Streets, Building Outlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Maps (with Streets and Landmarks)</td>
<td>1880-1920 Landmarks and Streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation Data</td>
<td>1820’s – Vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Historical/Municipal Boundaries and Census Boundaries</td>
<td>Census Places; Census Tracts from 1970 On</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOAA Historical Hurricane Data</td>
<td>1926 -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audience

- urban planners
- entrepreneurs
- environmental analysts
- community
- policy administrators
- educators
- businesses
- architects
- historians
- k-16 students
- sociologists
- south florida
Functionality

- **Temporal tool**
  - sliding time bar

- **Spatial tool**
  - display of search results on Google maps
  - geo-locate all historic archive items

- **Overlay tool**
  - scanned and rectified historical maps can be dragged onto Google Maps interface
  - transparency can be adjusted to see changes take place over time

- **Virtual tour**
  - routing tool connects one or more historic landmarks, which has audio, text and photos imbedded

- **3D models**
  - historic landmarks
Search & Discovery
3D models
Virtual Tour
A Map Through Time

Future Directions

1) Crowd-sourcing tools for populating content
2) Incorporation of quantitative data (e.g. historical census data) within the virtual city
3) Inclusion of a bicycle/pedestrian route planner for visiting historic sites
4) Expansion of the Virtual City to other historical cities in Florida or US
Contact Info

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Unearthing St. Augustine’s Colonial Heritage

An Interactive Digital Collection for the Nation’s Oldest City

Funded by a National Endowment for the Humanities grant.

John R. Nemmers, University of Florida  Society of Florida Archivists, May 2013
UF and St. Augustine

- Long history of UF working with city (archaeology, architecture/historic preservation, etc.)

- Management of state-owned properties (38 buildings and 23 parcels managed by UF)
Digitization of St. Augustine Holdings

• Given importance of city and research demand, UF has been scanning items over the last 15+ years (mostly internal funding)

• UF Digital Collections (UFDC, http://ufdc.ufl.edu)

• UFDC uses the UF-developed open-source SobekCM software (http://ufdc.ufl.edu/sobekcm)

• 2009 Historic St. Augustine project (http://ufdc.ufl.edu/hsa1) – scanned Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board block/lot files

• Two Grant-Funded Projects:
  • Saving St. Augustine’s Architectural Treasures (2010-2012)
  • Unearthing St. Augustine’s Colonial Heritage (2012-2014)
Architecture, Archaeology & History
Project Partners

- University of Florida (UF) George A. Smathers Libraries
- City of St. Augustine Heritage Tourism
- City of St. Augustine Archaeology program
- St. Augustine Historical Society
Collections

• Government House – maps and overlays of the city, architectural drawings of historic structures, etc.

• St. Augustine Historical Society – Spanish Colonial documents, transcriptions and English language translations

• St. Augustine Archaeology Program – records, photographs and site summaries for 100 excavations

• Herschel Shepard Collection (UF Libraries - Architecture Archives) - drawings, photos and documents related to Shepard’s preservation, restoration and reconstruction of colonial buildings

• P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History (UF Libraries) - maps and historical documents.
Supports Diverse Research

- Architecture/historic preservation
- archaeology
- Florida and U.S. history
- Spanish & British colonies
- Native Americans
- slavery
- exploration
- social and economic development
- urban planning
- missionary work
- military defenses and warfare
- etc.
Identifying Structures/Sites

- Structure/site name(s)
- Street address(es)
- Florida Master Site File number, City Archaeology number, Plat book number, etc.
- Lat/Long coordinates
- Township/Range
- Block-Lot number

Example: Segui-Kirby Smith House aka Segui-Smith House aka Old Public Library

6 Artillery Lane or 12 Aviles Street

Aviles Street = Hospital Street
Search Elements/Facets

- Archaeological sites (well, building foundation, trash pit, defensive wall, etc.)
- Building’s architectural style
- Building structural system (wood, stone, etc.)
- Dates of construction
- Principal historic period (1\textsuperscript{st} Spanish Colonial, British Colonial, 2\textsuperscript{nd} Spanish, Territorial, etc.)
- Significant renovation/reconstruction dates
- Historical use (residence, worship, government, business)
- Street address
- National Register?

+ PLUS +

- Object-specific metadata (e.g., creator, subject, date, etc.)
Google Map-based searching/browsing
Ability to create/save maps
Overlay Maps/Images
Source: http://www.philaplace.org
Future Directions

- Expanding scope (non-Colonial St. Augustine)
- Crowd-sourcing to generate descriptive content/geospatial metadata
- Investigating new methods allowing researchers to control how they interact with digital resources
- New partnerships (e.g., St. Augustine Historic Preservation & Special Projects Planning – mobile tours)
Unearthing St. Augustine's Colonial Heritage

http://ufdc.ufl.edu/usach

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• What is the long-term significance of these projects?

  • More resources available online, of course (and more diverse types too)

  • New/better ways for researchers to discover/use/interact with our resources (geographical, temporal, etc.)

  • Both projects can serve as models for other cities/regions in Florida/Caribbean/worldwide.

  • Not only methodology, but also technology (e.g., open-source SobekCM)
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Questions / Comments?