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From the Spanish Atlantic Archives to the Classroom in the Arctic: Perspectives on Linking Digital Projects and Undergraduate Research in History

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Cover Page Footnote

We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this essay and Dean John Mouracade, Dr. Eric Murphy, Dr. Jill Flanders-Crosby, and Wilfredo Benitez. We also extend our gratitude to Khafani Abel, Perla Richerson, Joy Wannamaker, Erika Coker, and Michael Sentner.

From the Spanish Atlantic Colonial Archives to the Classroom in the Arctic: Perspectives on Linking Digital Projects and Undergraduate Research in History

**Rachael Ball, Caroline Streff, Brittney Anderson, Lauren Caraghar,
John Macy**

Over the course of a year, the authors of this article engaged in endeavors that wedded digital humanities with archival and undergraduate research in a number of different ways. Together, a history faculty member and a small team of undergraduate research assistants created a digital archive housed by the ePortfolio system used by our university. Then, students enrolled in an upper level history course on Latin America to 1800 utilized [the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive](#) for a series of assignments, including research papers focused on Cuba and the wider Iberian Atlantic World. This article discusses the creation and the use of this digital archive from the perspective of a faculty member, who specializes in the history of the early modern Spanish World, and those of undergraduate students. The student authors of this essay include members of the digital team, who aided in the development of the website's content, and students who piloted the digital archive as a resource for assignments and research papers. We make the case for using digital tools to broaden access to materials and to help students understand historical research methodologies. These linked projects confirm the high-impact potential of undergraduate research and of digital humanities. In the process, we discuss some of the challenges and rewards of doing digital history and of faculty-student collaboration.

Origins and Overview of the Project: Rachael Ball

In September of 2016, Wilfredo Benitez, the Executive Director of the Fundación Ludwig, a nongovernmental arts agency in Havana, visited the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). He came to my Modern Latin American class to give a presentation on Cuban arts, culture, and daily life.¹ One of the focal points of that course was Cuba, so it worked well to have his presentation to refer to later in the term during discussions of Ada Ferrer's *Freedom's Mirror* and of the long histories of slavery and imperialism on the island. We also spent a week focused on neocolonialism, US intervention in Latin America, and the global cold war. Mr. Benitez's talk provided fascinating points of contrast and parallels with

¹ Wilfredo Benitez, "The Role of Culture and Arts in Contemporary Cuban Society" (presentation, Modern Latin America from University of Alaska Anchorage, Anchorage, AK, September 20, 2016).

that week's assigned reading: a graphic novel focused on a Cuban artist's gradual disenchantment with Fidel Castro's consolidation of power.²

Another benefit of Mr. Benitez's visit was the development of new undergraduate research opportunities for students. The University Honors College and Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship partnered with Fundación Ludwig to create competitive small grants that enabled those selected to travel to Cuba. There, they undertook research projects focused on the idea of resilient communities. Because the partnership was with an arts agency, the preference was to fund students using arts-based methodologies in their research. The students (two in 2017 and two in 2018) who have won these grants have been majors in the following disciplines: International Studies and English, Dance, Modern Languages and Education, and Theatre. They had access to on-the-ground mentorship in Havana and institutional support from the Fundación Ludwig. Award recipients also had supervision and mentorship from a UAA faculty member before and after they did their on-site research. Each student presented a creative component of their projects at events hosted by the Anchorage Museum during the fall following their trips to Havana. These presentations have included reading original poems, choreographed dances, an art installation related to families separated by Operation Peter Pan and Alaska Native Boarding Schools, and an art installation of found materials to be used in theatrical productions.

In the late fall of 2016, I began mentoring Caroline Streff, one of the students in the class visited by Mr. Benitez, when she began to formulate her grant proposal. She was an English and International Studies major and a History minor. Streff had also taken my course on Latin America to 1800 the previous spring. She sought to examine the intersections of Cuban poetry, education, and the social roles of poets and to produce a number of new works of poetry during her time abroad. Her application was successful, and she received a grant to travel to Havana in May of 2017. The process of mentoring her project was a catalyst for my own interest in conducting research in Cuban archives and libraries and led to the incorporation of items from their holdings into my research and teaching and creative writing. It also led to other partnerships with students.

I applied for and received a small grant from my institution that provides funds for faculty who want to facilitate the expansion of undergraduate research into a particular course. I proposed to conduct archival research in Havana for a two-week period during July of 2017 and to create a digital archive of primary sources focused on colonial Cuba and/or generated in Cuba into my Latin America to 1800 course. Certainly, some primary sources related to Cuba were already

² Ada Ferrer, *Freedom's Mirror: Cuba and Haiti in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) and Inverna Lockpez and Dean Haspiel, *Cuba My Revolution* (New York: Vertigo, 2010).

available to students in English translation.³ However, many of these documents, including most of those published in *The Cuba Reader*, come from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴ I wanted to provide a range of sources on topics and issues from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries for UAA students. I also collected a number of modern documents and digitized copies of modern documents for use in my class on Modern Latin America.

The Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive brought unpublished documents and other materials that are not easily accessed by undergraduates into an Alaskan classroom at an open enrollment institution thousands of miles away from the Cuban and Spanish libraries and archives. In the process of building and developing the website, there were numerous opportunities to partner with undergraduate researchers. This digital archive is the product of teamwork and shared labor.

The project's scope continues to expand. In the future, it will provide more coverage of other aspects of early modern Spanish colonial and Cuban history. However, the immediate goal needed to be achievable on a short timetable of only a few months. The digital team focused its efforts in the fall of 2017 on making some of the colonial Cuban documents available through transcription, translation, and contextualization for use in my course on Latin America to 1800 taught in the spring term of 2018. Using Digication, our university's ePortfolio system, we featured some images of the manuscript and printed documents. The site provides English translations of the primary source materials. It also contains a number of supplementary materials created and curated by the team's undergraduate researchers. These include brief introductions to the documents, timelines, and bibliographies for further scholarly investigation.

Students enrolled in a Latin America to 1800 class taught during the spring semester of 2018 piloted use of this digital archive. All students in the course read some of these documents for in-class discussions. They all used a selection of documents for a short analysis assignment that required them to put primary sources into context and to use them to consider change over time. Additionally, some students incorporated these primary sources into research papers focused on Cuban history. Others drew upon these documents for evidence in thematic research papers, such as those focused on Spanish imperial bureaucracies, conventual and monastic life in the Spanish Atlantic World, piracy, slavery, and colonial economies and systems of forced labor.

³ Take, for example, Juan Francisco Manzano, *Autobiography of a Slave*, trans. Evelyn Picon Garfield (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996) and Miguel Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave: Fiftieth Anniversary Edition*, trans. W. Nick Hill (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2016).

⁴ Aviva Chomsky, Pamela Maria Smorkaloff, and Barry Carr, *The Cuba Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

Embedding Archives and Digital Projects into Undergraduate Research in History: Rachael Ball

Numerous studies demonstrate that undergraduate research opportunities are transformative experiences for students. When personally or intellectually invested in original research, they take ownership of their questions and findings. Students improve critical analysis as well as written and oral communication skills. According to a seminal study undertaken by Mabrouk and Peters in 2000, 98% of surveyed undergraduates undertaking an immersive research inquiry would recommend undergraduate research to peers.⁵ That particular case examined students in science disciplines, but comparative work in other fields also highlights undergraduate research's benefits, including retention of knowledge and skills. These experiences can be especially beneficial to first-generation and other "at-risk" student populations.⁶ There are correlations between involvement in undergraduate research and the successful completion of degrees.⁷ Undergraduate research and experiential learning can help integrate students into a community of scholars. In other words, students can benefit significantly from the opportunity to play an active role in scholarly inquiry.

Unfortunately, in spite of a growing body of scholarship on the ways undergraduate research can make learning more visible and tangible for all parties, history has lagged behind other disciplines in providing opportunities for students to undertake undergraduate research outside of research papers written within the context of a class. This is part of a broader trend in that more undergraduate research opportunities exist in the sciences than in the humanities and fine arts.⁸ Our home institution has exemplified these trends. For many years, humanities students were underrepresented at the annual Undergraduate Research Symposium and in application for grants from the Office of Undergraduate Research. In 2017, more humanities students sought grant-funded undergraduate research opportunities than usual (around 5%). However, they still only made up 7.7% of the awardees for grants.⁹

⁵ Patricia Ann Mabrouk and Kristen Peters, "Student Perspectives on Undergraduate Research Experiences in Chemistry and Biology," *Council on Undergraduate Research Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (2000): 25-33.

⁶ John Ishiyama, "Does Early Participation in Undergraduate Research Benefit Social Science and Humanities Students?" *College Student Journal* 36, no. 3 (2002): 380-386.

⁷ Chris Craney, Tara McKay, April Mazzeo, Janet Morris, Cheryl Prigodich and Robert de Groot, "Cross-Discipline Perceptions of the Undergraduate Research Experience," *The Journal of Higher Education* 82, no. 1 (2011): 92-113.

⁸ Christopher Corley, "From Mentoring to Collaborating: Fostering Undergraduate Research in History," *The History Teacher* 46, no. 3 (2013): 397-414.

⁹ We are grateful to Dr. Eric Murphy, former Director of Undergraduate Research at UAA, for providing these statistics.

A number of structural factors contribute to this. For one thing, research and capstone papers written in history courses already require a high level of information literacy and research proficiency, so many faculty may reasonably prefer to focus on student success there.¹⁰ In the United States, many historians still tend to see inquiry and writing as solitary pursuits. Faculty in some subfields may well assume that most students do not have the knowledge base or disciplinary skills (language, paleography, statistical fluency, etc.) in order to undertake in-depth, original research projects.¹¹

Archival research can also be financially burdensome for students. Tuition and fees have increased while middle-income earnings have declined. Most undergraduate students work, and they may not be able to afford time off.¹² At our open enrollment institution, many students are non-traditional and have childcare and elder care responsibilities. A significant percentage cannot afford travel to archives or take other study abroad opportunities because they are housing and food insecure. A recent pilot study on food insecurity conducted by faculty in Public Health and Social Work indicates that hunger is a common concern for our students, with 69% of surveyed students reporting that they ran out of money for food during the thirty days prior to the survey.¹³

These trends are troubling. However, history faculty can still find fruitful ways of incorporating high-level research and writing into their courses and mentoring research projects beyond the classroom.¹⁴ Some faculty have teamed with students to create undergraduate research journals or edited volumes.¹⁵ This essay focuses on two other potential avenues: digital humanities and the integration of archival sources into the undergraduate classroom through a series of scaffolded assignments.

The archives at UAA's Consortium Library house many items of interest for undergraduates doing research in modern US and Alaskan history. However, physical, logistical, and language barriers exist for the majority of UAA students who are also interested in archival materials related to other areas of world history.

¹⁰ Corley, "From Mentoring to Collaborating," 410.

¹¹ Robert Stephens and Josh Thumma, "Faculty-Undergraduate Collaboration in Digital History at a Public Research University," *The History Teacher* 38, no. 4 (Aug., 2005): 525-542.

¹² Sara Goldrick-Rabb, *Making Ends Meet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 103. She notes that in 1960 about a quarter of full-time college students worked and now "national statistics show that over 70 percent of undergraduates are working."

¹³ Kathi Trawver and Travis Hedwig, "Food and Housing Insecurity Among College Students: A Pilot Study" (presentation, Society for Social Work and Research, January 12, 2018).

¹⁴ Kathleen W. Jones, Mark V. Barrow, Robert P. Stephens, and Stephen O'Hara, "Romancing the Capstone: National Trends, Local Practice, and Student Motivation in the History Curriculum," *The Journal of American History* 98, no. 4 (2012): 1095-113.

¹⁵ Robert P. Stephens, Kathleen W. Jones, and Mark V. Barrow, "The Book Project: Engaging History Majors in Undergraduate Research," *The History Teacher* 45, no. 1 (2011): 65-80.

This includes the history of Spain and the Spanish Atlantic World. In the absence of accessible archives, digital tools can be helpful. Roger Martinez Davila has recently overviewed some of the important digital collections for historians of Spain and Latin America and shown how these are portals to important collections. He compellingly demonstrates the potential for using Massive Open Online Courses to crowdsource the transcription of archival materials.¹⁶ Rwany Sibaja and Lily Pearl Balloffet have observed in their broad overview of digital approaches in Latin American studies, technology, such as Omeka and Zotero among others, can amplify engaged teaching methods and help share collections and research.¹⁷

One example of this type of sharing for research is the [Biblioteca Digital del Patrimonio Iberoamericano](#). It enables investigators to search the catalogs of digitized materials of a number of Iberian and Latin American National Libraries. Another is the [History of Science in Latin America and the Caribbean](#) virtual archive directed by Julia Rodriguez. This ambitious digital project, which had funding from the National Science Foundation, covers a vast array of topics and is broad in its chronological scope as well. However, it does not currently provide transcripts or translations of the materials; unfortunately, this limits the archive's potential use in many history classrooms in the United States. Vanderbilt's [Slave Societies Digital Archive](#) provides a number of images of selected archival documents from Cuba along with Brazil, Colombia, and Florida. It also provides transcriptions of some of these manuscripts. As translating technology improves, students who do not speak or read Spanish or Portuguese may also be able to undertake research into the sources that these platforms make available online.

Like physical ones, digital archives can also emphasize the reality that history does not materialize from a vacuum. Agustina Martínez-García and Louise Corti have made the case that student researchers can become producers of knowledge when mentored by faculty to “undertake projects, build portfolios of their own work and contribute to knowledge-building communities, they also need to be supported in contributing to archives and engaging with the same challenges as other researchers face.”¹⁸ We conceived the Cuba in the Classroom Archive as a way to present sources that would not otherwise be available to students as well as a way to provide some context for those sources. We also conceived of it as a way to give students at our institution more exposure to and experience with our institution's ePortfolio system, which the university has been considering

¹⁶ Roger L. Martínez-Dávila, "Forum: Spanish Online Resources for Spanish and Latin American History," *Bulletin for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies* 41, no. 1 (2016): 92-122, <https://doi.org/10.26431/0739-182X.1217>.

¹⁷ R. Sibaja, and L. P. Balloffet, "Digital Approaches to Research and Pedagogy in Latin American Studies," *The Latin Americanist*, no. 62 (2018): 99-116.

¹⁸ Agustina Martínez-García and Louise Corti, "Supporting Student Research with Semantic Technologies and Digital Archives," *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* 21, no. 2 (2012): 276-277, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475939X.2012.704320>.

mandating as a degree requirement for students. Digital team members with Spanish fluency worked to translate the documents. Other undergraduate research assistants took lead roles in providing introductions to the primary source documents and in using the web-based application Sutori to create timelines that complement sections of the digital archive. They also undertook secondary research to provide bibliographies.

Digital projects underscore process and methods. In creating this archive, we sought to highlight how historical scholarship can be challenging and rewarding for the next set of students engaging with the archive: students in my class focused on early Latin America. This group of students undertook source analyses and research projects making use of the archive materials. They could see that reading many original documents requires specialized skills, such as paleography.¹⁹ Digitized documents can emphasize what certain genres of evidence look like. For instance, undergraduate users might note, as they did in my class discussed at greater length below, how some contemporary readers of manuscripts annotated their margins and how certain documents followed formulaic constructions. Students also observed that some documents would have been challenging to read in their entirety due to rips and tears in the pages even if they knew Spanish and had paleographical training. Paradoxically through making a digital version of a document available, students can appreciate the difficulties researchers face in accessing the original, physical document on several different levels.

Projects like this one can help to fill gaps in the educational experience of undergraduates in the discipline of History. Sherman Dorn has noted that “allowing an audience to work with evidence that is less directly accessible in a fixed, bound presentation” can also help demonstrate the work that goes into creating interpretations and arguments.²⁰ Digital team members created interpretations. They developed skills in historical fluency as they considered how to present evidence to other undergraduate users. The translators worked to make the documents accessible in English to twenty-first century students all while attempting to capture syntax and diction from the early modern period. In order to provide the timelines and bibliographies, as well as to have the necessary background to write introductions to documents, the other researchers needed to do deep dives into secondary literature on particular topics. They also made decisions

¹⁹ Literary scholar Margaret Boyle has undertaken early modern transcription projects with students in her Spanish courses at Bowdoin College. Her students’ observations support the benefits of allowing students to engage with original documents or digitized versions of manuscripts. Margaret Boyle, “Teaching Transcription and Recipes at a Liberal Arts College,” early modern recipes online collective, December 2017, <https://emroc.hypotheses.org/1521>.

²⁰ Jack Dougherty, *Writing History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 27.

about what to include and what to exclude in the creation of these resources. They made aesthetic and stylistic choices as well as organizational and analytical ones.

Into the Physical and Digital Archives: Rachael Ball

Prior to my trip, I consulted guides to archival collections of Cuban manuscript sources.²¹ I searched on the Portal de Archivos Españoles (PARES: <http://pares.mcu.es/>), in order to use some of the digitized Cuban-related holdings in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville and to pinpoint themes and topics that I would continue to pursue while in Archivo Nacional de Cuba and the Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí. These included issues of urban governance in colonial Havana; the workings of imperial bureaucracies trying to regulate production and trade and burdened with jurisdictional conflicts, war, and piracy; and religious life. I also worked with staff at Fundación Ludwig to secure a research visa and began communicating with Cuban historians, such as Yosvany Montano Garrido.²²

I spent two weeks in Havana doing research. My goal was to collect at least forty documents for eventual use on the digital archive. I read dozens of documents related to both the colonial and modern history of the island. However, there were some setbacks. At Cuba's National Archive, I was not able to access certain collections because they were restricted due to privacy concerns. Some of the documents I requested were in a state of severe deterioration, making me hesitant to handle them. In many cases, I was unable to obtain digital or physical copies in a timely manner or at all. For instance, staff at Cuba's National Library told me they were unable to provide physical or digital copies of manuscripts. Consequently, I transcribed a number of documents, especially those from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, directly while on site. In some ways, this presented a failure in my initial objective to acquire print or digital copies of all documents so as to enable students to get a better sense of what all the original sources looked like.

Fortunately, I was able to photograph some items, including many periodicals at the Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba, and to use digitized documents available from the Archive of the Indies. Additionally, more digital images of the nineteenth and twentieth-century materials that will be added to the site and used by my Modern Latin American classes in future semesters. These photos are currently being stored in Dropbox, Google Drive, and a USB flash drive. I also visited several museums and archeological sites, including sugar plantations in the

²¹ One of the most comprehensive of these is Louis A. Pérez Jr. and Rebecca J. Scott, eds., *Archivos de Cuba* (Havana: Ediciones Unión, 2003).

²² Yosvany Montano Garrido, *Debatir en Revolución: Otras formas de hacer, otros modos de ser* (Oceansur, 2018).

Valle de los Ingenios and acquired some published materials at book stalls and heritage sites.

Upon my return from Cuba, it quickly became apparent that, with the semester approaching, I would only make glacial progress organizing and translating documents and creating reference materials for this project. I needed help. Through a combination of internal grant funding and strategic use of my department's internship program, I was able to offer two paid internships and hire one student worker in the fall semester of 2017. I hired one student worker and used two unpaid internships in the spring semester of 2018.

The initial members of the digital team included interns, Khafani Abel and Caroline Streff, and student worker, Joy Wannamaker. Abel and Streff had taken Latin American history courses with me before. Abel had also taken my course on early modern Iberia. Additionally, I had previously mentored both of these students when they did undergraduate research projects focused on Latin America or the Iberian Atlantic World.²³ Joy Wannamaker had taken lower-level coursework with me and was a dual Spanish and Nursing major. She had also recently spent a semester studying abroad in Chile.

UAA was transitioning to an upgraded version of Digication, so we opted to delay the creation of the archive site until winter break when we would have full access to the revamped platform. In the meantime, during the fall semester the digital team used a shared Google Drive to add and share our work. This system enabled us to work in tandem on translations, introductions, and other components of the archive. We could easily track and share edits and comments we made minor adjustments in form and diction to some of the translations and revised document and section introductions and bibliographies. It allowed for transparency in the process and for any team member to raise questions or concerns.

One happy challenge to integrating undergraduates into faculty research agendas is that students graduate. As the fall semester came to an end, the research team was in transition. Abel and Wannamaker were no longer available to work on the project. However, Streff continued working on the project. We brought on another researcher through the internship program. Brittney Anderson was a History major, who also was taking my Latin America to 1800 course in the spring, and became a coauthor of this essay. I also began seeking another student worker with fluency in Spanish to assist with translations. Perla Richerson, a native Spanish

²³ Khafani Amundson, "Portugal and the Atlantic Slave Trade: The Building of Brazil" (presentation at the annual meeting of the 2016 Northwest Regional Phi Alpha Theta History Conference, Bellingham, WA, April 8, 2016) and "Brazil: from Slavery to Freedom" (presentation at the annual meeting of 2017 Northwest Regional Phi Alpha Theta History Conference, Spokane, WA, April 8, 2017); Caroline Streff, "Island of Poets" (presentation at the University of Alaska Undergraduate Research Symposium, Anchorage, AK, April 20, 2018).

speaker and Languages major, joined us in the middle of the spring term. She had previous undergraduate research experience in the Humanities.²⁴

By the beginning of the spring semester of 2018, the digital team had made over twenty of the selected documents and other resources focused on Cuba and the Spanish Atlantic World available. These included fifteen documents from the meetings of Havana's *cabildo*, two documents about convents and monasteries, two documents related to the history of slavery, two documents about a seventeenth-century attack on Spanish ships by corsairs, and two documents related to bureaucratic regulation of the colonial economy.

As students in the faculty member's course began to use these documents in assignments, behind the scenes digital team members continued to work on translations of other documents and other supplemental materials that will be added prior to the next time the course is taught. We have also begun working on translating and preparing documents to be used in the Modern Latin American and other courses. Due to Richerson's interest in using gender as a methodological lens, she has focused largely on translating periodicals marketed toward Cuban women. Her continued work into the fall semester of 2018 has ensured that we will be able to add more documents to the archive in the near future. We have also initiated the process of having other subject-area experts provide feedback on sections of the digital archive.

Archival Creation and Curation from an Undergraduate Researcher's Perspective: Caroline Streff

I first engaged Cuba as a subject of research during the Summer of 2017 when I represented UAA on an undergraduate research grant in Havana. My investigation was initially geared towards the role of poetry as an ideological state apparatus, integrated into the physical organization of public life in Havana. I examined the conversion of state-approved poets' former private homes into public cultural and semi-private collaborative spaces (those of Dulcemaría Loynaz, José Martí, Nicolás Guillén, and others) and the preservation of Communist party values, as well as a distinctly *Cuban* identity, defined by its self-identification as unique in the known world. Ultimately, my project required critical restructuring, after plans for multiple interviews with university instructors proved impossible to achieve. I compensated by redirecting my research to local libraries and by producing two dozen original poems reflecting on Cuba from my perspective as a student, early childhood educator, and artist. The project found its culmination in a collaborative performance with Katie O'Loughlin, another inaugural grant recipient, which integrated dance and poetry in a cohesive partnership, reflective of

²⁴ Perla Richerson, "Necropolitics and Gender: The Case of Cinematographic Representations of Femicides in Mexico" (presentation at the University of Alaska Undergraduate Research Symposium, Anchorage, AK, April 20, 2018).

the very codependency between art forms we had discovered in Havana. In my case, as a student literary historian, the cohabitation of objective investigation and the artistic generation of personally significant material, in the same period, solidified (in my mind) the nature of history's essential vitality and reverberation in the "stuff" (artistic, academic, and mundane) produced daily by actors, conscious or unconscious of their participation in history's vibration.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, I assisted in the creation of a student friendly digital archive of documents from Cuba. The ultimate goal was to make the archive available to all students enrolled at UAA and potentially to the general public. The archive would be comprised chiefly of primary sources with lists of suggested scholarly resources and reputable online platforms where students could find reliable sources for their research papers. Participating in the project essentially mandated that I take part on two fronts, first as a student and second as a historian.

Documents were translated and transcribed by Dr. Ball and other student workers, while another student and I focused on writing contextualizing introductions and constructing timelines of key events with bibliographies and recommendations for additional research. Previous courses with Ball, all focusing on the history of Latin America, grounded me in knowledge about some of the key social, environmental, economic, and political features of early colonial society, and I was familiar with some preferred sources and scholarship that would contribute to a student's firm grasp of the field. I chose to highlight texts in my bibliographies that I knew came from established scholarly authorities. Research methods are rarely intuitive, so I also provided a list of online archive and digital library resources, with accompanying blurbs that could give students a snapshot of the resources available to them. As I brainstormed various features that could be added or what ought to be simplified for the greatest student benefit, I reflected on what had been my personal stumbling blocks, as a student whose primary discipline was not in fact History, but rather Literature and Political Science. Those challenges being, essentially, a limited familiarity with *doing* history, particularly in the context of a regional concentration, preoccupied with shifts of policy and social behaviors.

In light of those reflections, I considered what the use of an archive would mean to a student still in the initial stages of their research proficiency. Ball, Abel, Anderson, and I spoke frankly about not wanting students to feel managed, or as though their projects had already been picked for them. We decided to frame the archive as a tool to facilitate student investigations. In short, the archive should be something more like a utility belt than a manual. Following that philosophy, the Sutori timelines were created as entry-points into research where I provided graphics (portraits of key figures, maps, photographs of key locations, etc.) defined key terms, and highlighted events that were either not discussed in the original documents or that were less likely to have been focal points of lectures.

Throughout the process, I found myself challenged on a personal, professional, and academic level. I worried about letting my supervisor and fellow digital team members down. To pair faculty research projects with student workers and collaborators requires careful and open communication on both ends. This was best accomplished by the institution of weekly or biweekly meetings that allowed me to check in with my supervisor, where I felt, strangely enough, freer to be open about my struggles than over email. These meetings allowed me to mature as a researcher and contributor, as I made suggestions and proposed resources that were generally well received and encouraged. This led, in time, to the construction of resources and web portals that could launch student research into exciting directions. I became more confident that there were indeed scholarly conversations for them to access. Meetings gave me an accurate barometer of my own capabilities -- and areas for improvement -- as a researcher. Where I lacked language fluency and familiarity with graphology, I had other research experiences to draw on and area knowledge to contribute. Through my involvement with the archive, I have reflected on the need for roadmaps that at least gesture in the direction that will lead other students to ethical and historically sound conclusions.

The construction of the archive also provides students a valuable insight into the role and importance of academic research in the lives of faculty. One of the primary benefits of integrating Dr. Ball's research into the archive was that it allowed students to be exposed to research avenues they might not have come across on their own. This held true for me as well, and I found myself developing a budding expertise in various particular, but no less vital, research interests in the history of Cuba. One of these areas was the conventual history of the island. The long process of the proposal, approval, construction and consecration of the Convent of Santa Clara in Havana was fraught with delays, lukewarm promises, and the peculiar social anxieties of wealthy colonial subjects attempting to secure a religious vocation for their accomplished -- but practically unmarried -- daughters.²⁵ In the introductions to these documents, and ones that recorded the quotidian expenses and activities of the women who lived in these religious communities, I emphasized the role of convents as anchor points for local social structures, as well as ideological state apparatuses that kept the overseas dominions in touch with Peninsular values, a function that became especially relevant in the period of the Bourbon reforms.²⁶ To highlight Cuba's circuitous journey towards the establishment of the Santa Clara Convent in La Habana in 1643, nearly one hundred years after the consecration Nuestra Señora de la Concepción in Mexico

²⁵ Susan Migden Socolow, *The Women of Colonial Latin America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 98.

²⁶ John James Clune, "A Cuban Convent in the Age of Enlightened Reform: The Observant Franciscan Community of Santa Clara of Havana, 1768-1808," *The Americas* 57, no. 3 (2001): 313.

City (1540), I chose to use the timeline software, Sutori. The Sutori timeline is ideal for the visualization of the disparities in development between colonial settlements.

While the archive's focus was primarily on political and social history of Cuba, I used the Sutori software to construct a holistic portrait of the conventual history of Latin America, while emphasizing Cuban history in a bibliography of suggested sources. I was careful to spotlight appropriate sources — both general introductions, somewhat akin to encyclopedias and surveys, as well as monographs — within these introductions to guide students into viable research lanes. For instance, Clune's inquiry into the role of convents in Cuba during the period of the Bourbon reforms, paired with Van Deusen's focus in Lima and Lavrin's investigation into the roles of indigenous women in colonial religious community, provides a rich and cohesive portrait of daily religious life, and, to novice researchers, an accessible and engaging entry point into more in-depth reading.²⁷ Additionally, I found it important to dispel the myth of the convent as an equalizing space, where women of various social strata commingled and interacted on terms of equality. Instead, I highlighted the legacy of slavery within convent walls, and the careful pains women of stature took to maintain their privileged existence even within the bounds of a life of poverty.²⁸

Scaffolded Assignments and the Digital Archive: Rachael Ball

History faculty want their students to develop skills in close reading, information and digital literacies, and cogent writing.²⁹ We might see these as linked skills that can be developed by practice. Being digitally literate “requires the development of a set of key skills that are technical, cognitive and social emotional” in order to use technology, participate in online communities, and to be able to “search, identify and assess information effectively for the purposes of research and content learning.”³⁰ Research into these linked literacies clearly indicates that

²⁷ John James Clune, *Cuban Convents in the Age of Enlightened Reform: 1761-1807* (Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2008), Nancy Van Deusen, *Between the Sacred and the Worldly: The Institutional and Cultural Practice of Recogimiento in Colonial Lima* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University, 2002), and Asuncion Lavrin, "Indian Brides of Christ: Creating New Spaces for Indigenous Women in New Spain," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 15, no. 2 (1999): 225-260.

²⁸ Asunción Lavrin, *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 166-170.

²⁹ Jeffrey Kenton and Barbara Blummer, "Promoting Digital Literacy Skills: Examples from the Literature and Implications for Academic Librarians," *Community & Junior College Libraries* 16, no. 2 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02763911003688737>.

³⁰ Wan Ng, "Can We Teach Digital Natives Digital Literacy?" *Computers & Education*, 59 no. 3 (2012): 1068, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.04.016>; Karen Markey, Chris Leeder, and Charles L. Taylor, "Playing Games to Improve the Quality of the Sources Students Cite in Their Papers," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2012): 123-35.

students improve these skills with repeated opportunities to engage and assess content.³¹

Allison Lenhardt has noted that developing such fluency can be a challenge at institutions that lack large research libraries.³² Like her small, private university, the library holdings at our open enrollment university can be quite limited, depending on subject area. Due to budget restraints and further cuts, our institution lacks subscriptions to a number of helpful databases and other resources that colleagues at better-financed institutions may take for granted. Moreover, different disciplines apply different definitions to types of sources. At times this results in library staff, who often have to cover multiple subject areas at smaller institutions, making recommendations to undergraduates that do not align with faculty expectations. Students might be tempted to just Google answers when the answers are not immediately apparent in a quick search on the library home page. Google can be a useful tool to find background information and some references, including sometimes quite excellent primary sources in the public domain. However, an overreliance on simple Internet searches often produces essays that are too dependent on information from Wikipedia and blogs.³³ Assignments can be scaffolded to build upon literacies so that students gain the skills they need for larger research projects and so they go beyond Googling.

Early in the semester, we devoted class time to reading and parsing primary sources in translation. Because my department designates most upper level History courses as writing intensive and caps them at twenty-five students, I could take advantage of the relatively small class size to have in-depth discussions. We talked about the different lenses and approaches historians can take. We also spent time walking through how to login to the Digication site and through the various sections of the archive project. I encouraged students in the course to spend some time on the ePortfolio system in order to become familiar with the platform and more comfortable and competent in using it. In order to maintain a level of familiarity with the digital platform as well as to highlight certain issues, topics, and perspectives, I assigned several of the documents from the Cuba in the Classroom Archive as readings for discussions throughout the course of the semester. In these sessions we spoke about the content of the documents, what they showed us about particular contextual concerns, authorship and formulaic conventions related to

³¹ Meilan Zhang, "Prompts-Based Scaffolding for Online Inquiry: Design Intentions and Classroom Realities," *Journal of Educational Technology & Society* 16, no. 3 (2013): 140-51, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/jeductechsoci.16.3.140>.

³² Allison K. Lenhardt, "Digital Literacy and Undergraduate Humanities Research," *CEA Critic* 76 no. 3 (2014): 336-42.

³³ For fascinating insights on the potential use of Wikipedia and interesting observations about Wikipedia users' understanding of original research see Robert L. Nelson and Heidi L. M. Jacobs, "History, Play, and the Public: Wikipedia in the University Classroom," *History Teacher* 50, no. 4 (2017): 483-500.

types of documents, and some of the translation choices we had made. Students brought up some questions and insights about the sources that the digital team had not considered previously.

One of the assignments, due about a third of the way through the course, was a short paper that asked students to work with documents from the digital archive. Students picked three documents and then analyzed them. They could choose documents from either a single section or from across sections of the site. The assignment asked them to do close readings of documents, to unpack their content, to consider who authored them and why, and to think about what historical approach (politics, economy, gender, environment, race, etc.) each of the documents seemed to lend themselves to. Students were then asked to draw connections between documents that provided evidence for continuity or change over time and to generate some potential research questions from the body of evidence. Finally, this assignment asked them to do a bit of preliminary library research in order to explore the viability of investigating that topic for their research paper. Could they find credible secondary sources about the topic or issue? This component of the assignment directed them to the library catalog, WorldCat for interlibrary loan resources, and journal databases such as JSTOR. Although students were not locked into continuing their research on the issues or topics they did the source analysis assignment on, it gave them experience in a number of the areas required for a successful research paper.

All students in the class then submitted short proposals and preliminary research bibliographies for their chosen topics. This assignment asked them to explain their research question, outline a tentative argument, and begin to outline how one of their primary sources would fit into their assessment. I did not require that their bibliographies be annotated, but I did set out the expectations that they would format it according to the Chicago Manual of Style and that it would contain at least the minimum number of sources required for their research papers. At this juncture, we spent more class time discussing library resources and further emphasizing the importance of tools such as interlibrary loan and JSTOR. We also talked about refining search terms and mining the footnotes of other scholars for potential sources. I highlighted some of the resources available on the digital archive, including the bibliographies created by the digital team.

Although it was not the final assignment due during the semester, the research paper asked them to use all the skills they had been building: grappling with arguments of other historians, assessing primary source materials, thinking contingently, and synthesizing materials. The assignment required students to undertake substantive research into their topic by demonstrating engagement with at least four scholarly, secondary sources. One of these had to be a monograph. They also had to use at least three primary sources (in Spanish or in English translation).

As previously mentioned, students were not required to use the documents from the Cuba in the Classroom archive for their research papers. However, a number of students embraced the opportunity to work with sources they could not get from the UAA library, through interlibrary loan, or via a Google search. In a class of sixteen students, eleven used these archival documents in writing their final research papers. Of the five who did not, only one wrote a paper that had apparent connections to some of the material on the digital archive. The others wrote on geographically-focused topics that would have made integrating the documents on the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive a stretch.

Some aspects of using and working with digital sources are scalable to larger sections, such as those offered at the lower level at my institution. Using social media platforms like Twitter, online discussion boards, and comment features on Digication itself can work well for conversations about sources in both larger courses and those offered online rather than face-to-face. If I were to teach a similar upper level course with a large group of students and without the assistance of TAs or graders, I admit that a longer research paper might not be a feasible assignment with a class size larger than sixty students. However, there are some smaller assignments that can help students in larger classes develop research skill sets. These include short analysis and process papers like the one described above, comparison papers that focus on two to three articles on the same topic, and book reviews that direct students to put a secondary source into conversation with historiography through the use of other reading and examining other book reviews. Truly enthusiastic students might then be mentored through undergraduate research processes to seek funding and do additional research.

Student Perspectives on Using the Digital Archive: Lauren Caraghar

The Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive was hugely beneficial in my undergraduate research efforts, and it enhanced my overall educational experience. I initially intended to examine religious syncretism in the wider context of colonial Latin America. Having access to this material and encouragement to use it helped focus the direction of the project. I narrowed the geographic region and, while syncretism remained a component of the paper, religion was considered in a broader context. My final paper explored the ways in which religion presented both challenges and opportunities for persons held in slavery in the colonial Caribbean. I used three different documents from the Cuba in the Classroom archive. They were a letter written by a priest in 1706 describing the baptism of a slave girl, a section of the advertisements from a Havana newspaper in 1792 where slaves were listed for sale, and an excerpt from a town council meeting in 1610 registering complaints about gatherings of slaves and free blacks, which may have been an

example of a *cofradía*, or slave aid society.³⁴ The documents were extremely helpful in illustrating points about the intersections of religion and slavery.

It would have been difficult for a student in Alaska to incorporate much primary source material on my topic without the Cuba in the Classroom. The only other relevant, translated and accessible primary source material I found came from two document anthologies: *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550-1812* and *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*.³⁵ Greater access to primary source material was conducive to forming a stronger argument and the variety made the research process more interesting.

Having completed an internship in a local archive, I do not believe most people realize how unusual it is to view the type of content available in Cuba in the Classroom. As the resource evolves, a brief orientation to what is involved in archival research in general, what has been necessary for this specific project and why it is valuable, how the records displayed were chosen and more clearly labeling citation information might help users better engage the material. From what I understand, there are a number of interesting stories tied to the project. These could be conveyed on an “about” tab through participants interviewing each other about their experiences (video or podcast format) or short blog-style posts and a few photographs. This type of background information would be especially beneficial for students considering graduate work and careers in humanities fields that involve archival research.

For me personally, Cuba in the Classroom made history come alive in a way books and lectures cannot. For example, most of us know persons held in slavery were legal property that could be bought and sold at will by their owners. However, that truth became much more real when reading an actual newspaper advertisement where people, including a six-year-old girl, were offered for sale alongside furniture and other household goods.³⁶ The routine nature of this material made it striking. Consumers regularly scanned ads looking to purchase other human beings the same way those of us in modern society might search Craigslist for a used car. The

³⁴ Copy of a Certificate of Baptism, C.M. Perez No. 564, Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí; “Papel Periódico de la Havana,” Domingo 8 de Julio de 1792 (Sunday 8 July 1792), No. 55, Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí; and “Acts of the Council of Havana,” 22 October 1610, C.M. Perez, No. 9, Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí, translated and made available by the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive, <https://alaska.digication.com/cuba-in-the-classroom-archive-hist-a336/slavery>.

³⁵ Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo J. Garofalo, *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550-1812* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2009) and Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham, eds. *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002).

³⁶ Domingo 8 de Julio de 1792 (Sunday 8 July 1792), No. 55, Biblioteca Nacional de Cuba José Martí, translated and made available by the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive, <https://alaska.digication.com/cuba-in-the-classroom-archive-hist-a336/slavery>.

memory of reading those advertisements from a Sunday paper published long ago will stay with me long after my university experience has passed.

Student Perspectives on Using the Digital Archive: Brittney Anderson

During the Spring 2018 Semester at the University of Alaska Anchorage, I was privileged to have access to the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive both as a student in a course and as a research assistant on the project. This resource was beneficial in helping me to learn about colonial Latin America in many different ways, including providing more complex insights into events and encouraging me to research information to be used both on the archive and in writing my own academic papers.

As a student, it is important for me to have visuals, whether those visuals are in the form of a slideshow, a book, or a digital archive. Since I was not able to physically hold and see the documents that make up the digital archive, it was helpful to me that there were pictures. When I read something, I am aware that someone wrote it. When I see those images of the primary source documents, it becomes more real; it makes that period in history come alive.

Having this archive available to me was also helpful when it came to researching and writing papers for my class. As a historian in training, it is crucial that a certain number of primary sources are consulted when writing papers, especially research papers. At the beginning of the semester, I wrote a comparison piece that focused on women and the Church in Cuba using the documents available to me via the digital archive. I was able to use those documents to better understand the roles of women in colonial Latin America and how Spanish settlers in Cuba were worried about what they would do with their daughters. They requested financial aid from the Spanish Crown to establish convents for their daughters since there were no eligible men for them to marry.

At the end of the semester, I wrote my research paper on piracy in the Caribbean, focusing it primarily during the Golden Age of Piracy, which occurred from 1691-1724. There were a couple of documents in the digital archive that I was able to utilize for that paper. The documents that I used described the pirates that had attacked the ship, led by “the corsair Diego who is a *mulato* [person of mixed race]” and listed some personal items that the pilot had on board a ship that were stolen as plunder.³⁷ I intend to revise this paper and submit to present it at a Phi Alpha Theta conference.

As helpful as the archive was, there were only two documents on piracy that had been uploaded. One of my tasks as a research intern was to read different primary and secondary sources and create an annotated bibliography to add to the

³⁷ Cartas de Gobernadores, Santo Domingo, 102, R. 2, N.4, Archive of the Indies, translated and made available by the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive, <https://alaska.digication.com/cuba-in-the-classroom-archive-hist-a336/piracy>.

archive to help future students find sources that they could use for their own projects, including ones focused on piracy. I think that this archive can be more beneficial to students as it is expanded over time, with more documents being translated and uploaded. As more documents are added, students will be able to utilize the archive for their own research endeavors into a larger variety of topics.

Student Perspectives on Using the Digital Archive: John Macy

In addition to class assignments, which required use of the “Cuba in the Classroom” digital archive, I also used documents in the archive as primary sources for my research paper. I wrote about the economic relationship between Spain and Havana, so I found the documents focused on trade and navigation to be especially helpful. The documents I used were mostly trade communications between Spain and Havana, which sparked an interest in trade bureaucracy and communication between the colonial city of Havana and the Spanish mainland. I used secondary source materials to flesh out the context of the colonial Spanish trade bureaucracy and demonstrated how primary sources from the archive fit into the historical context.

The greatest strength of the digital archive is that it helped me to understand the work that actual historians are doing, whereas my other undergraduate classes felt more like I was simply reconstructing work that had previously been done. As a student at UAA, the potential to do hands on research with documents from Latin America is pretty slim. For the most part, research on these subjects available at a university so far away is limited to secondary sources and published anthologies of primary sources. However, the digital archive allowed us undergraduate students to benefit from overseas research done by our professor and by our colleagues. The digital archive allows students to get a feel for what professional historical research looks like by having them engage with previously unanalyzed documents. Engaging with these documents allowed me to consider particular aspects which I may not have had access to in an edited collection; for example, one of the documents I used for my research paper contained a marginal note which provided additional clues about the experience of Spanish maritime travelers in the colonial era.³⁸

While the use of digital archives such as this one can provide beneficial research experiences, they also must be tailored to be accessible to undergraduate students. Typically, when a historian seeks out to do archival research, they do so with background knowledge in their area of study as well as familiarity with the language in which they are researching. In order to make up for the fact that many

³⁸ Expediente de concesión de licencia para pasar a La Habana a favor de dos frailes franciscanos, Indiferente General, 2074, No. 20, Archive of the Indies, translated and made available by the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive, <https://alaska.digication.com/cuba-in-the-classroom-archive-hista336/convents-and-monasteries>.

undergraduates may not have this background, the documents in the digital archive had to be translated into English and sometimes accompanied by explanations of the context relevant to the document. For the most part these steps were done well, but they also present some significant challenges for digital archives. For example, translations are always somewhat subjective, and different translators bring different perspectives to the translation of a document. In fact, a Spanish-speaking undergraduate student in our class actually contested one of the translations in the archive. Additionally, small blurbs which provide context for documents should be written with care, for they could skew students toward a particular stance on a historical argument, or perhaps prevent them from making discoveries on their own. If the digital archive continues to grow and add more documents, the compilers need to be aware of how much their translations and assessments of context are shaping the research experience.

After using the Cuba in the Classroom digital archive, I feel as if I would appreciate it if digital archives became more prevalent in undergraduate classrooms. They allow for hands on historical research that feels like it is adding something to the discipline. While writing my own research paper, the use of unpublished primary sources helped me to feel as if I was adding something to a historical discussion, however small my addition was.

Overall Impressions and Considerations for Sustainability: Rachael Ball

Technology amplified successes and failures. On the one hand, as the students have noted, working with the sources on the site gave them a greater feeling of authenticity as historians. On the other hand, some students reported frustrations with using the digital archive. There were occasions when certain links did not work in all browsers; Anderson remarks that some students wanted more documents in certain sections; sometimes members of the class observed chronological gaps in coverage; some students even deemed particular documents “boring.” Caraghar indicates that there were times when students were unsure of how to cite the material on the archive. In an effort to address this shortcoming, we have since added information about preferred citation methods to the site.

The Digication platform has not always been the most intuitive or easiest with which to work. There were technical difficulties in getting one of the student researchers added to the ePortfolio as an editor, and she had to be manually added by our institution’s IT department. It could be a frustrating process to add new documents to the archive. Although documents can be resized and moved around, this is a cumbersome process. Digication is aware of these issues and is in the process of developing ways to incorporate jump links, more robust embedding, and a streamlined organizer tool. We will be able to take advantage of these aesthetic and other changes in the coming semesters in order to incorporate the transcriptions

of some of the manuscripts, to highlight other supplemental materials, and to make the sections more consistent and user-friendly.

Another issue we had to consider was the condensed timeline and thus real constraints in piloting the initial use of the archive in the classroom. It could have created problems for students working on assignments if we moved things around too much once the semester started. Thus, we decided that, while some translation and transcription work could continue behind the scenes, we would not add new materials to the site after the second week of the spring semester of 2018.

In spite of these challenges, using Digication had some advantages. Foremost, we did not need to accrue additional project costs because we used a platform for which a high degree of internal institutional enthusiasm already existed. Indeed, the use of ePortfolios has been deemed a high-impact teaching practice by our university. Having Digication continue to host the site seems the most viable option for the immediate future. In the unlikely event of UAA parting ways with Digication, we could convert to a private account and maintain the site for a small monthly fee. During the site's initial construction, the platform's tools allowed us to control access, so that it was only visible to users in the university system or only to those with the link and a password for access. We acknowledge that our site is still a work in progress. Nonetheless, it is currently open to the public.

Over the summer of 2018, the digital team augmented several sections of the archive. It now includes more documents, such as a royal cedula related to compensating the Convento de Santa Clara for requisitioning grain in the 1760s, and more documents about the early sugar industry and slavery. We have also created and are in the process of creating and expanding a new section on early modern medical practices. Future sections of this digital archive will span Cuba's long colonial and neocolonial periods, and one will examine women's lives and magazines.

In the coming semesters, the Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive will likely become one of several linked sites focused on Spain and its empire during the early modern era. I plan to acquire more digital versions of manuscripts from archives in Spain during the coming year. Through continued collaborative efforts over future semesters, the digital team will add transcriptions of the manuscripts, English translations, and supplemental materials that can be used by students in other courses, such as Early Modern Iberia, Themes in World History, and Senior Seminar. We have also begun soliciting feedback from experts in particular subject areas on sections of the site in order to improve the readability and style of the translations and to improve the introductions and supplemental materials.

Based on feedback from students involved in this project, I may also incorporate a digital assignment into future semesters. This would serve as another bridge between use of the site and final research assignments and would allow more

students to create content.³⁹ Although a high percentage of students are nontraditional, many are increasingly skilled in creating and parsing online content and digital artifacts and the creation of online content can be another mechanism for students to grapple with sources and solve problems.⁴⁰ Students in some of my previous classes have successfully used blogs and Wikis. Indeed, one of the other assignments in the class that piloted the archive's use was a Blackboard Wiki project related to *Lieutenant Nun*.⁴¹

I will consider ways to tie such assignments to the archival sources and to further developing the site itself.⁴² The ways Digication allows users to make copies of material and submit them to a course directly for grading while also maintaining their content in another location may prove advantageous for graded projects that could otherwise create potential concerns about students' rights to privacy. Another possible future step will be to give students the option of submitting their final research papers to the site. However, the digital team members have discussed how this might limit student opportunities to publish in undergraduate and other research journals, and this reality should be communicated to students and taken into consideration by faculty undertaking these types of projects.

As we wrote this article, it provided another opportunity for all of us to reflect on using the archive and for the digital team members to consider some of its strengths, failings, and gaps and make some adjustments. We had some face-to-face meetings, but, due to summer travels and scheduling conflicts, much of our communication was digital. We used a shared Google Drive and Google Documents to exchange drafts of sections and to comment and provide feedback. This provided another chance for faculty mentorship, as I modeled the importance of revisions in my sections, as well.

Collaborative Conclusions: Rachael Ball, John Macy, Brittney Anderson, and Laura Caraghar

Forming collaborative partnerships with undergraduate researchers can be time consuming and may present real challenges to balancing faculty workloads. However, forming partnerships with student researchers can pay dividends in

³⁹ Jorge Reyna, Jose Hanham, and Peter Meier, "A Taxonomy of Digital Media Types for Learner-Generated Digital Media Assignments," *E-Learning and Digital Media* 14 no. 6 (2018): 309-322.

⁴⁰ T. Mills Kelly, *Teaching History in the Digital Age* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), 7.

⁴¹ Catalina de Erauso, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, trans. Michele Stepto and Gabriel Stepto (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

⁴² For examples in other disciplines, see Jay Campisi and Kevin E. Finn, "Does Active Learning Improve Students' Knowledge of and Attitudes toward Research Methods?" *Journal of College Science Teaching* 40, no. 4 (2011): 38-45 and Bridget Draxler, Haowei Hsieh, Nicole Dudley, and Jon Winet, "Undergraduate Peer Learning and Public Digital Humanities Research," *E-Learning and Digital Media* 9, no. 3 (2012): 284-297.

student and faculty success alike. The integration of undergraduate research into their classes and service duties can also create opportunities for faculty.⁴³ Many faculty members who support this high-impact teaching practice have reported that mentoring revitalizes and re-energizes them. Universities should support these practices.

Certainly, I have benefited from learning more about Cuban history and archival holdings. I gained technological knowledge as we worked to create the digital archive. My own scholarly endeavors benefited in other ways as well: I have been able to draw upon and cite some of the documents we placed on the digital archive in a forthcoming article about festivals and identity in the early modern Spanish world and am in the initial stages of a research project involving the Convento de Santa Clara in Havana. I plan to find ways to continue dovetailing my own research and the mentoring and teaching of undergraduates.

Working with students on this article has given me fresh perspectives on student learning both in and out of the classroom. The students who helped create and who used the digital archive in the context of an upper level history course gained expertise into particular topics. They also felt a greater level of engagement with the materials. It is only fitting that they have the final word here.

John Macy

Due to volatile sources of funding and demanding workloads for faculty, students may feel that large undergraduate institutions are becoming more like bachelor degree factories instead of providers of legitimate opportunities for hands-on research and student development. After taking Latin America to 1800, I see digital archives as an opportunity for History professors to harness modern technology to provide beneficial research experiences to all of their undergraduate students. Although the approach certainly brings unique challenges, the benefit of broad accessibility makes the project, in my opinion, worthwhile.

Brittney Anderson

The opportunity to work with a faculty member in an undergraduate research setting was extremely beneficial in my training as a historian. Prior to becoming a member of the digital team, my experience in research thus far in my degree progress was probably mediocre. Being approached by Dr. Ball to participate provided me an opportunity to work with materials that I would never have come across on my own as an undergraduate history student. This opportunity

⁴³ Tammy Allen, "Mentoring Relationships from the Perspective of the Mentor," in *The Handbook of Mentoring at Work: Theory, Research, and Practice*, eds. Belle Rose Ragins and Kathy Kram (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007), 128-148 and Joy Myers et al, "Making Time and Creating Space for Undergraduate Research," *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 18, no. 1 (2018): 136-149, <https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v18i1.22348>.

broadened my training and allowed me to become a better researcher and writer.

Lauren Caraghar

The Cuba in the Classroom Digital Archive is a great resource for democratizing access to information. That students from an open, public university in a sparsely populated and remote state in the midst of a fiscal crisis had access to records generated in early modern Cuba is remarkable. This will only be enhanced as it becomes available to the general public. The digital archive is clearly a labor-intensive project with numerous obstacles to overcome, but the opportunity it provides for more than just a narrow population of scholars to utilize this type of material is very worthwhile.