EDITORIAL PRACTICES AND THE WEB

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SEMINAR

NOVEMBER 19, 2010
**DOCUMENTARY EDITING.**

- Documentary editors prepare “editions” of documents such as letters, diaries, essays, etc. that have value as **evidence** for political, intellectual, or social history.

- Documentary editors communicate that value by **contextualizing** the documents: identifying and explaining people, places, organizations, events and ideas.

- Sometimes contrasted with “textual” or “critical” editing, where the goal is often to reconstruct a missing “original” or “ideal” text (e.g. an epic poem) from fragments.
DOCUMENTARY EDITIONS.

- Always have: transcribed texts of the original documents, with lengthy footnotes explaining anything that needs explaining according to the editors’ judgment.

- Usually have: chronologies listing significant relevant events during the period covered by the edition.

- Sometimes have: images of the original documents.

- Sometimes have: standalone articles about people, organizations, periodicals, events, etc. with more information than what can be found in the footnotes.
SOME PROBLEMS.

✧ Limitations of the codex.
✧ Invisible research products, “dubiosa,” and “ephemera.”
✧ Silos and social networks.
✧ “No original research.”
✧ Preservation and legacy.
A PROPOSAL.

- How might the Web be used to address these problems?
- 2-year, Mellon-funded project, started Summer 2010
  http://ecai.org/mellon2010/
- A focus on changing editorial practice, rather than on technology.
PARTICIPANTS.

Emma Goldman Papers, Berkeley. (Major American feminist and anarchist, 1869-1940.)

Margaret Sanger Papers, NYU. (Prominent American feminist and birth control advocate, 1879-1966.)

Stanton & Anthony Papers, Rutgers. (19th-century American social reformers: abolitionism, women’s suffrage.)

Labadie Collection, Michigan. (Oldest special collection of radical history in the U.S., still actively curated.)
One of these things is not like the others.

And yet: special librarians and archivists make much the same effort to put their materials in context.

On the web these can merge with the products of documentary editing.
Your Recent Edits
Charles E. Pengelley to Margaret Sanger, March 30, 1940 2 days ago
Basic ID of Caroline Nelson 16 days ago
List of members of Northern California Birth Control Committee of One Hundred, not dated. 16 days ago
Caroline Nelson to Alice Park, February 3, 1930 16 days ago
Caroline Nelson to MS, February 1, 1930 (LCMSP 124:592) 16 days ago
California Death Index 16 days ago

All your edits

Recently Edited Documents
Goldman, Emma. “Address at the Kate Richards O’Hare Testimonial Dinner. November 17, 1919. Transcript by Convention Reporting Company,
32 Union Square, New York City.

All documents

Recently Edited Topics
Bisbee deportations
Abbott, Leonard Dalton (1878-1953)
Cohn, Michael Alexander (1867-1939)
Cohen, Joseph Jacob (1878-1953)
Cohen, Alex
Cockran, William Bourke (1854-1923)

All topics

Recently Edited Notes
Initial notes on Bisbee deportations
NY Bureau of Legal Advice/First Aid notes
3) find 2 telegrams from Child in 1922 (June or July?) “saying the same thing”
Basic Biography of Harold Child
Harold Child documents
Basic Biography of Leo P. Cotter

All notes
TECHNOLOGY.

- **Django**, the Python web framework.
- **PostgreSQL**, using native support for XML fields.
- **Xapian** for full-text search.
- **South**, for database migrations (**crucial**).
- **Disqus** for discussion threads.
- **Zoom.it** for high-resolution document scans.
CHALLENGES.

- Current vs. existing research.
- Messy research vs. polished products.
- Structure vs. usability (e.g. dates, bibliographic data).
- Workflow, delegation, discussion.
NEXT STEPS.

- Continuing to iterate on the site design, improving usability, navigability, tweaking data model, scaling to more content.

- Integrate with bibliographic databases (BibTeX import/export).

- Faceted search.

- Specialized support for chronologies.
Light and Shadows: Emma Goldman 1910-1916

Search for a place Emma Goldman visited:
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

January 4, 1914
Emma Goldman scheduled to speak on "The Awakening of Labor" at the Labor Temple, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

March 9, 1914

April 29-30, 1915
Emma Goldman spoke on "Billy Sunday" in English and on "The Limitation of Offspring" before a Jewish audience in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

October 26, 1915
Emma Goldman lectured on "Preparedness, the Road to Universal Slaughter" in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania hosted by the Free Speech League with Theodore Schroeder.

October 27, 1915
Emma Goldman lectured on "Birth Control" in Philadelphia.

Late October, 1915
Emma Goldman lectured on "Friedrich Nietzsche, the Intellectual Storm Center of Europe" and to a Yiddish on "Misconception of Free Love" sometime during her Philadelphia tour.

January 10, 1916
Emma Goldman delivered a lecture in Yiddish on "The Right of the Child not to be Born" at Royal Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

January 11, 1916
Emma Goldman scheduled to speak on "Victims of Morality"
FUTURE PLANS.

- Open to the public.
- Mapping topics to external IDs.
- “Facts” as structured and linked data.
- Integration with electronic editions.
- Additional participating editing projects.
THANK YOU

❖ Ryan Shaw ryanshaw@ischool.berkeley.edu
❖ Patrick Golden ptgolden@berkeley.edu
❖ Project info site: http://ecai.org/mellon2010
❖ Project site: http://editorsnotes.org/ (not public yet)