SNAC June 2020 Newsletter

From the Operations Committee

The SNAC Operations Committee would like to voice its condemnation of police brutality and murder, systemic racism, and white supremacy; and its support of Black Lives Matter.

We recognize the role that archives and archival professionals have played and continue to play in perpetuating white supremacy and systemic racism that harms Black, Indigenous, and People of color (BIPOC). Archives often remember (and valorize) the people and institutions that have oppressed others while forgetting, obscuring or silencing the people they oppressed. Given that most of the data in SNAC was extracted from existing descriptions, it currently reflects this bias.

Archival practices continue to fail in representing the voices and experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of color, as well as other historically oppressed communities. We believe that SNAC, though built on past description, can assist in addressing and combating this reality by serving as a means to remember individuals and groups that are largely underrepresented or absent from the historical record, and to make audible the voices of those who have been silenced. SNAC is currently engaged in several activities in this regard. We are working with The HistoryMakers to incorporate more than 3000 descriptions of African Americans with links to accompanying oral histories. We are also working with a researcher in Maine to add descriptions of more than 40,000 Algonquin Indians. SNAC is hosting an "editathon" with over 60 volunteer editors to enhance description of Indigenous North American peoples and related anthropological records. SNAC is also collaborating with the Enslaved.org project at Michigan State University to add thousands of enslaved identities. Finally, we are collaborating with a descendant of enslaved workers and an expert on enslaved research to develop best practice guidelines for description of the enslaved that will better enable researchers to identify enslaved individuals from the fragmented and dispersed records.

Though we believe all of the activities mentioned are significant, correcting past practices and properly remembering the underrepresented will take many focused projects and many years to ensure that our collective memory is fully representative of all people. We welcome your project ideas for how to realize this vision. Please feel free to contact snac.cooperative@gmail.com.

SNAC Stats

As of reporting time (May 27, 2020), there were 3,735,658 constellations and 2,090,499

resource descriptions in SNAC. In the past month, SNAC had over 48,600 users and referred over 4,600 visitors to holding institutions sites.

Working Group Updates

Communications:
Faith Charlton, Chair (faithc@princeton.edu)

The Communications Working Group is reviewing the results of the SNAC Newsletter survey and will be preparing a report for the Operations Committee. We are also continuing to work on updating and adding content to the About section of the SNAC website.
We would love to add more members to our group! If you're interested in joining, please email faithc@princeton.edu.

Developer's Update:
Joseph Glass, Lead Developer (jhg2v@virginia.edu)

The External SameAs relationships have been updated to use authoritative domains and URLs. As part of this process, we've updated all Wikipedia page links to use the more persistent Wikidata identifiers. The External SameAs form will now auto-generate the URL when you choose an external CPF authority and enter the entity's ID.

SNACSchool and the NARA Liaisons Team:
Jerry Simmons (jerry.simmons@nara.gov) and Dina Herbert (dina.herbert@nara.gov), Co-chairs

NARA's SNAC Liaisons Team presented another "National Archives-only" SNACSchool on May 20th, which welcomed 18 new editors from several NARA branches and presidential libraries. Another NARA-only event is set for June 10th.

There are still spaces left for a full SNACSchool training Wednesday, June 24. Please email [Dina Herbert](mailto:dina.herbert@nara.gov) to reserve a spot.

Technology Infrastructure:
Alex Duryee (alexanderduryee@nypl.org) and Iris Lee (ilee@amnh.org), Co-chairs

The Technology Infrastructure Working Group is finalizing its comments on the ArchivesSpace Agents module redesign and will send its remarks to the ArchivesSpace team in the coming weeks.

TIWG is continuing its survey of SNACSchool participants regarding the usability and features of SNAC and has passed results on to the SNAC team.

Editorial Standards:

Susan Pyzynski, Chair (pyzynski@fas.harvard.edu)

Minutes to our April 28 meeting can be found here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rT6-onHUHYGMftrZ7UVuYkdBrMA-Y0KvM4iLhpDQsHk/edit.

Daniel and Bernetiae Reed are putting together a small taskforce to work on a standard for formulating enslaved persons' names.

The next ESWG meeting is June 9, 3:00ET.

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Social Networks and Archival Context

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