Slide 1

Issues in telling the story of "leaderless" social justice movements

Howard Besser
Moving Image Archiving & Preservation
New York University
http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/howard/Talks/

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Slide 2

Issues in telling the story of "leaderless" social justice movements-

- History from below
- How will scholars write the History of today's movements?
- Challenges from the types of "records" created by these movements
- Archiving the Occupy Movement

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Slide 3

History from below-

- Conventional History
- Voice to the Voiceless
- Recent movements

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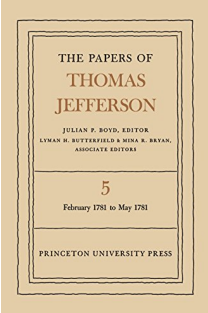
Slide 4

Conventional History

- Dead White Men or Historic Events
- "History is written from records left by the privileged" – Zinn
- It's difficult to write histories using dispersed ephemeral records
- Historians rely on formal archives containing records of organizations or prominent individuals-
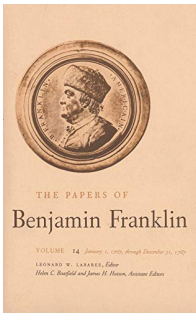
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Slide 5

History of the founding of U.S.

THE PAPERS OF
THOMAS
JEFFERSON

JULIAN P. BOYD, EDITOR
LYMAN H. BUTTERFIELD & MINA R. BRYAN,
ASSOCIATE EDITORS

5
February 1781 to May 1781

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Slide 6

History of the founding of U.S.

THE PAPERS OF
Benjamin Franklin

VOLUME 14 · January 1, 1767, through December 31, 1767
LEONARD W. LABAREE, Editor
Helen C. Boatfield and James H. Hutson, Assistant Editors

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History of the founding of U.S.

Besser-Bioneers 2023   7
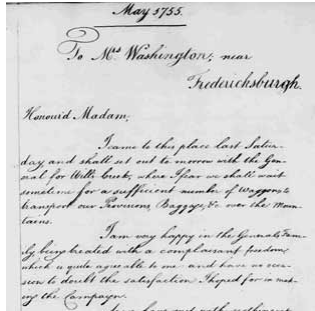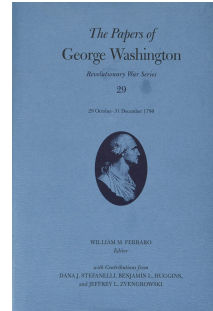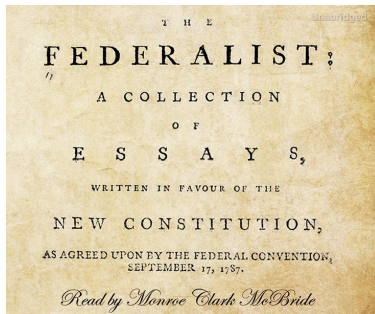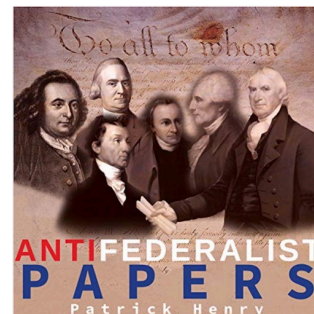
History of the founding of U.S.

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History of the founding of U.S.

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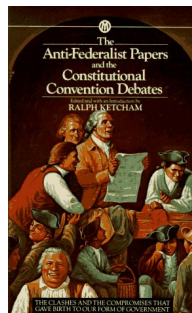
History of the founding of U.S.

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History of the founding of U.S.
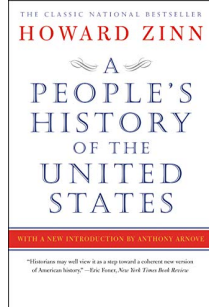
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Voice to the Voiceless

- Slaves, Native Americans, deserters, textile and factory workers, unions, immigrants, working poor, …
- Movements: Civil Rights, Anti-Vietnam War

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People's History

THE CLASSIC NATIONAL BESTSELLER
HOWARD ZINN
A
PEOPLE'S
HISTORY
OF THE
UNITED
STATES
WITH A NEW INTRODUCTION BY ANTHONY ARNOVE
"Historian may well view it as a step toward a coherent new version of American history." —Eric Foner, *New York Times Book Review*

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RECENT SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS

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Arab Spring

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Arab Spring

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Extinction Rebellion

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Occupy

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Occupy

Occupy

Occupy

Occupy

Occupy

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter

Farmers in India
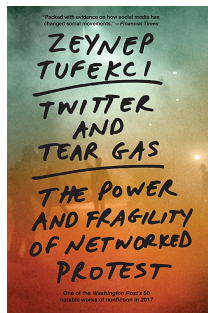
Water Protecters

Recent Movements

- Arab Spring
- Occupy
- Extinction Rebellion
- Black Lives Matter

- All without "leaders"
  - Grassroots
  - Consensus-driven
  - Diverse and diffuse
  - Organized through Social Media-

Revolution through Social Media

Revolution through Social Media

How will scholars write the history of today's movements?

- "History is written from records left by the privileged" – Zinn
  - Records of today's movements are primarily on Social Media
  - Vast number of records; dispersed and fragile
  - They are scattered under each individual, even with hashtags

Leaflets, Pamphlets & other Ephemeral

Videos of police actions

George Floyd

GENERAL PROBLEMS OF THIS TYPE OF BORN-DIGITAL CONTENT

In the analog world

- Traditionally, we have come to understand social movements (and other types of histories) by scholars studying their papers/ photos/films in Special Collections and Archives
- But how does an archive gather these in the Digital Age?

Stages of the Digital problem

- Stage #1: People record on digital media instead of analog
- Stage #2: People no longer store their digital works in places over which they have absolute control
  - Email services (gmail, yahoo)
  - Cloud storage for documents (google docs)
  - Social network services (Vimeo, YouTube, Instagram)

Stage #1 Issues-digital replaces analog

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Stage #2 Issues-content no longer on hard disk

- Rise of Online Services and Social Media is changing where this content resides (and is imposing TOS restrictions that go beyond the rightsholder)

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Much Content is on Facebook

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Identitarian Platform only on Web

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Core Multi-location Problems

- It's difficult enough when someone's photos or movies are spread throughout their hard disk. But today some images are there, but others are on **their phone(s), YouTube, Vimeo, Instagram, Flickr, Facebook**, in **Tweets**, etc.
- Similar problems plague email
- Most Social Network TOS policies prohibit the owner from giving their password to anyone else (even Library)

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Documenting Protests

-photo from Activists Guide to Archiving Video

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When aggregated, many different personal collections form an important picture of the social movement

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And we know from past works that aggregations create new meanings

- Aggregating all the photos and home movies of the Digital Diaspora (http://1world1family.me/ddfr-roadshows/) is hugely more meaningful than a set of one person's photos-
- One tweet says very little, but thousands of tweets can show trends or depict a particular event or day

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44

And we know from past works that aggregations create new meanings

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But aggregating items from disparate sources causes significant problems

- Vast quantity of user-contributed material
- Rights Issues
- No easy way to control for quality, file format, metadata (not even any consistency for any of these)-

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Every Movement participant has a Different Approach

- Different file-naming conventions
- Different file formats
- Different compression schemes
- Different metadata
- Stored in different arrangements/hierarchies
- Stored in different places (cellphone, personal hard disk, YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook, …)

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IMPORTANT LESSONS FROM ACTIVIST ARCHIVISTS (& OTHERS)

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Activist Archivists
http://activist-archivists.org/ (use Wayback Machine)
https://www.facebook.com/ActivistArchivists/

- NYU MIAP students and grads originally working on archiving media from the Occupy movement
- Guidelines both activist creators and archives
- Developed newer low-impact methods

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How Occupy material resembles what Archivists will be facing in the future

- Vast quantity of user-contributed material
- No easy way to control for quality, file format, metadata
  - no enforcing guidelines as with organizational records
  - no semi-consistency as in a single individual's personal records
- Much of the material can most easily be found on Social Networks
- …need to find smart ways to harvest metadata and analyze files, as well as to influence behavior of potential contributors

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Activist Archivist Website

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Activist Archivists Projects-

- "Why Archive" postcard & video
- 7 Tips to Ensure Your Video Is Usable in the Long Term
- Study of metadata loss through uploading to services
- Best Practices for Creators/Collectors
- "Toolkit" for Occupy archiving
- Coordinating discussions among various groups archiving different parts of Occupy
- Exploring methods for obscuring identities

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Lessons Learned for Archivists-

- Communicate well with your future Contributors
- Develop Cooperative Relationships
- Make it easy for future contributors to create "archival-friendly" works
- For Cooperative Projects, allow for instructions not being followed
- Find smart ways to deal with Scale
- Handle Privacy & Security responsibly
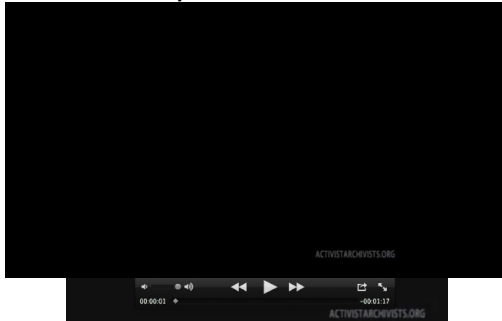
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Archivists need to Communicate well with their future Contributors-

- Learn to speak their language
- Help them to realize the importance of archiving

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"Why Archive" video

"Why Archive" postcard

- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Archives collect evidence that can hold those in power accountable.
- **SELF-DETERMINATION.** We define our own movement. We need to create and maintain our own historical record.
- **SHARE.** Archives are a point of entry to our movement's rich record. We can use them to ensure transparency, generate discussion, and enable direct action.
- **EDUCATE.** Today's videos, flyers, web-pages, and signs are material for tomorrow's skill-shares, classes, and mobilizations.
- **CONTINUITY.** Just as past movements inspire us, new activists will learn from the experiences we document.

- **R E C O R D & C O L L E C T** what's happening around you.
- **P R E S E R V E** the record.

Develop Cooperative Relationships-

- Try to better understand what their aims are; get involved in their activities
- Develop partnering relationships

participated in Self-help activities:

Skill-shares for Occupiers

Workshop: OWS Archive Share Day

View Repeats

Event Type: talks
Start Date: Mar 31, 2012
Hours: 3PM-6PM
Cost: Free
Venue: Eyebeam

0 tweets

Collage by Taeyoon Choi

At this free event, the public will be invited to explore and archive the many views of democracy. Anyone wishing to present their work in art and activism can sign up for a short time slot. Email taeyoon [at] eyebeam [dot] org to reserve your slot now.

OWS Archive Share Day is presented in collaboration with OWS Archives members Anna Perricci and Christine O'Heron, in conjunction with 'Speakers' Corners,' an exhibition by Taeyoon Choi currently on view at Eyebeam.

Make it easy for future contributors to create "archival-friendly" works-

- Low-hanging fruit
- Easy instructional material that appeals to what they think is important
- Instructions for redundant metadata collection (to make sure that it is captured)

Low-Hanging fruit

- Turn GPS on
- Develop strategies for automating a profile and uploads (our ideal App)

7 Tips to Ensure Your Video Is Usable in the Long Term

- Collect details while filming
- Keep your original raw footage, unaltered
- Make your video discoverable
- Contextualize it
- Make it verifiable
- Allow others to collect and archive
- Or archive it yourself

Best Practices for Content Creators

- Security
  - Hidden camera laws, parties' consent laws
- Capturing Content
  - Highest quality, set date and time-stamps, note location
- Offloading Content
  - Raw files directly onto computer, keep material organized
- Uploading Content
  - Importance of tagging, review of diff services
- Depositing with an Archive
- Copyright

Occupy Archiving Kit

- Why Archive?
- What is an "archive"? How do I create an archive?
- Creating archiving-friendly content
- How can I collect materials for the archive?
- What should I save?
- How should I organize my materials? How do I get it into the archive?
- Description/Metadata
- Media Management
- Storage & Preservation
- Access
- Exhibition and Presentation/Outreach
- Rights and Re-Use

WITNESS: Activists' Guide to Archiving Video, Yvonne Ng

http://archiveguide.witness.org/

Find smart ways to deal with Scale-

Collecting Streaming Media
The NYU Mellon Composers Project

- Traditional Web Crawlers (Heritrix) follow links and capture most web content. But they are less successful with streaming video and dynamic content executed in the browser (like JavaScript).
- NYU collaborated with IA to create a combined crawler and browser-

"browser" | "crawler" =
BROZZLER

Logo: Noah Levitt · Besser-Bioneers 2023 · 67

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Tamiment YouTube collecting

- Tamiment Archive was selectively browsing through YouTube Occupy videos, trying to choose which ones to keep, then cataloging them with
  - Title, Creator, Creation Date, Upload Date, Description, URL, Youtube Username, License, Format, Codec, Source Media, On Internet Archive, CC License type

- But they didn't realize that this wouldn't scale!

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March 24, 2012 YouTube stats
(just 6 months after start of movement)

- "#Occupy" 169,000
- "Occupy Wall Street" 98,400
- "Occupy Protest" 70,500
- "Occupy Movement" 54,800
- "#OWS" 50,300
- "Occupy Oakland" 13,400
- "Zucotti Park" 6,690

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Alternative approach to YouTube Selection process

- Develop categories of important YouTube videos
  - Celebrity visits, Internal workings (library, kitchen, media), Confrontations with police, Labor, Housing, etc.
- Have Occupiers fill in an online form listing the 5 most important videos in each category

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Advantages of YouTube Collaborative Filtering Selection Process

- Scalable and manageable
- Consistent with Occupy ideas of inclusiveness and of managing own story
- Tamiment can still choose to be selective in collecting only a portion of what is voted in, but the total set for review is a manageable scale

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Handle Privacy & Security responsibly-

MELVILLE HOUSE   BOOKS   GIFTS   ABOUT   SUBSCRI

May 22, 2018

Police in Berlin have raided an anarchist library

by Ian Dreiblatt

Unpleasant news from **Berlin**, where, in the culturally simmering neighborhood of Kreuzberg, the **Kalabal!k** anarchist library has been raided by police. The library is part of **Reiche 63a**, a left-wing housing collective run by the **Self-Governing Comradeship of East Berlin**.

Constanze Nauhaus reports for *Der Tagesspiegel* that the raid on Kalabal!k was one of a wave of searches executed across the city last Wednesday morning, leading to the seizure of some illegal weapons, the confiscation of an unspecified number of flash drives, and two arrests for defamation, stemming

Photo by Daniel Tiffany. Used with permission and thanks.

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UCLA Deed of Gift template

"In an effort to **protect the privacy and personal safety of contributors to the Iranian Green Movement Collection, DONOR and UCLA Library agree to work together** to develop methodology and an approach and will redact the email addresses or other personally identifiable information from broad public presentation."

For more see library.ucla.edu/service/scl/rights-toolkit

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Promoting Privacy Protection Example from WITNESS

- "ObscuraCam is a visual privacy app for photo and video, that gives you the power to better protect the identity of those captures in your photos, before you post them online"

- Developed by Guardian Project in conjunction w/Human Rights group WITNESS-

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ObscuraCam

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Discuss issues around commercial services with Creators/Recorders-

- Disappearance of embedded metadata from YouTube & Vimeo
- More general Rights issues
- Give archives the IP right to download

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Study of metadata loss through uploading to services

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Even with good records, Rights Issues remain
1999 WTO Seattle Protest 20th anniversary Video Preservation

Even with good records, Rights Issues remain
1999 WTO Seattle Protest 20th anniversary Video Preservation

Even with good records, Rights Issues remain
1999 WTO Seattle Protest 20th anniversary Video Preservation

YouTube User Agreement

- 5B "You shall not download any Content unless you see a 'download' or similar link displayed by YouTube on the Service for that Content."

Creative Commons Guidance

- Creative Commons lets you mix-and-match four different conditions:
  - Attribution: You let others copy, re-use and distribute your video, but they must credit you.
  - Share-Alike: You let others copy, re-use and distribute your video, only if they do the same with the work they create.
  - Non-Commercial: You let others copy, re-use and distribute your video for non-commercial purposes only.
  - No Derivative Works: You let others copy and distribute your video, but not to create new works using it.
- You can use these conditions in different combinations to share your work in a controlled way. Creative Commons licenses are legal tools that depend on pre-existing copyright laws. Having a Creative Commons license on your work may give you legal recourse, but it may not actually prevent people from downloading and re-using your video illegally.

Marking Creative Commons licenses

- There are a few ways to mark your video with a Creative Commons license. One way is to include a Creative Commons "bumper" or text card in your video. Creative Commons has created some with graphics that you can download from their website. This method is useful if your video is going to be shared offline (e.g. on DVD, live screenings), as the license information is attached to the video itself.
- Another way to mark your video with a Creative Commons license is to publish your video on platforms that are Creative Commons-enabled, such as YouTube, Vimeo, or Internet Archive. These platforms allow you to easily select a license during the upload process. This method is useful because the license is machine-readable. A search engine, for example, can detect the license.

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Tips for Archivists on Outreach to Communities

- Build trust
- Speak in their language (not archive-speak)
- Identify ways you can meet needs they already perceive
- Approach projects as <u>collaboration</u> whenever possible
- Don't only focus on content and metadata, but also <u>rights</u> that can be an impediment to preservation

Other Projects to monitor-

- Documenting the Now
  https://www.docnow.io/
- International Digital Ephemera Project
  http://idep.library.ucla.edu/

Documenting the Now
https://www.docnow.io/

- Documenting the Now responds to the public's use of social media for chronicling historically significant events as well as demand from scholars, students, and archivists, among others, seeking a user-friendly means of collecting and preserving this type of digital content. Documenting the Now has a strong commitment to prioritizing ethical practices when working with social media content, especially in terms of collection and long-term preservation. This commitment extends to Twitter's notion of honoring user intent and the rights of content creators. The project is a collaborative effort between Shift Design, Inc., the University of Maryland, and the University of Virginia.

International Digital Ephemera Project
https://idep.library.ucla.edu/

Issues in telling the story of "leaderless" social justice movements

- Participants need to be aware that their recordings are an important part of history
- They need to be more careful with what format they use to make their recordings, where they post them, what hashtags they use, creative commons tags, etc.
- They need to realize that history is made up from the participation of ordinary people

Issues in telling the story of "leaderless" social justice movements

- http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/howard/Talks
- http://idep.library.ucla.edu/
- http://activist-archivists.org/ (use Wayback)
- http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/tam_630/
- https://www.facebook.com/ActivistArchivists/
- https://archive.org/details/personaldigitalarchiving
- http://www.docnow.io/
- http://blogs.loc.gov/digitalpreservation/2015/08/report-on-the-personal-digital-archiving-2015-conference/

NYU UCLA

Issues in telling the story of "leaderless" social justice movements