RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
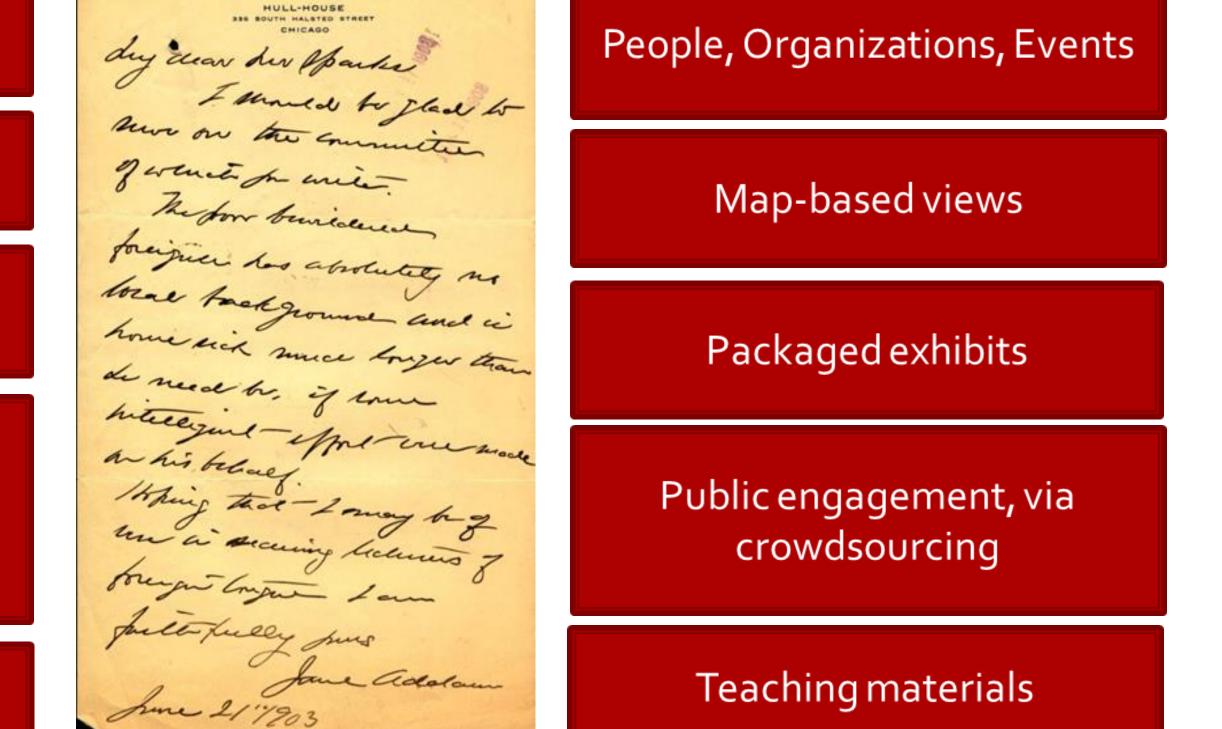
Designing a Database-Driven Digital Edition with Omeka

Dr. Cathy Moran Hajo, Editor/Director Jane Addams Digital Edition (https://digital.janeaddams.ramapo.edu/)
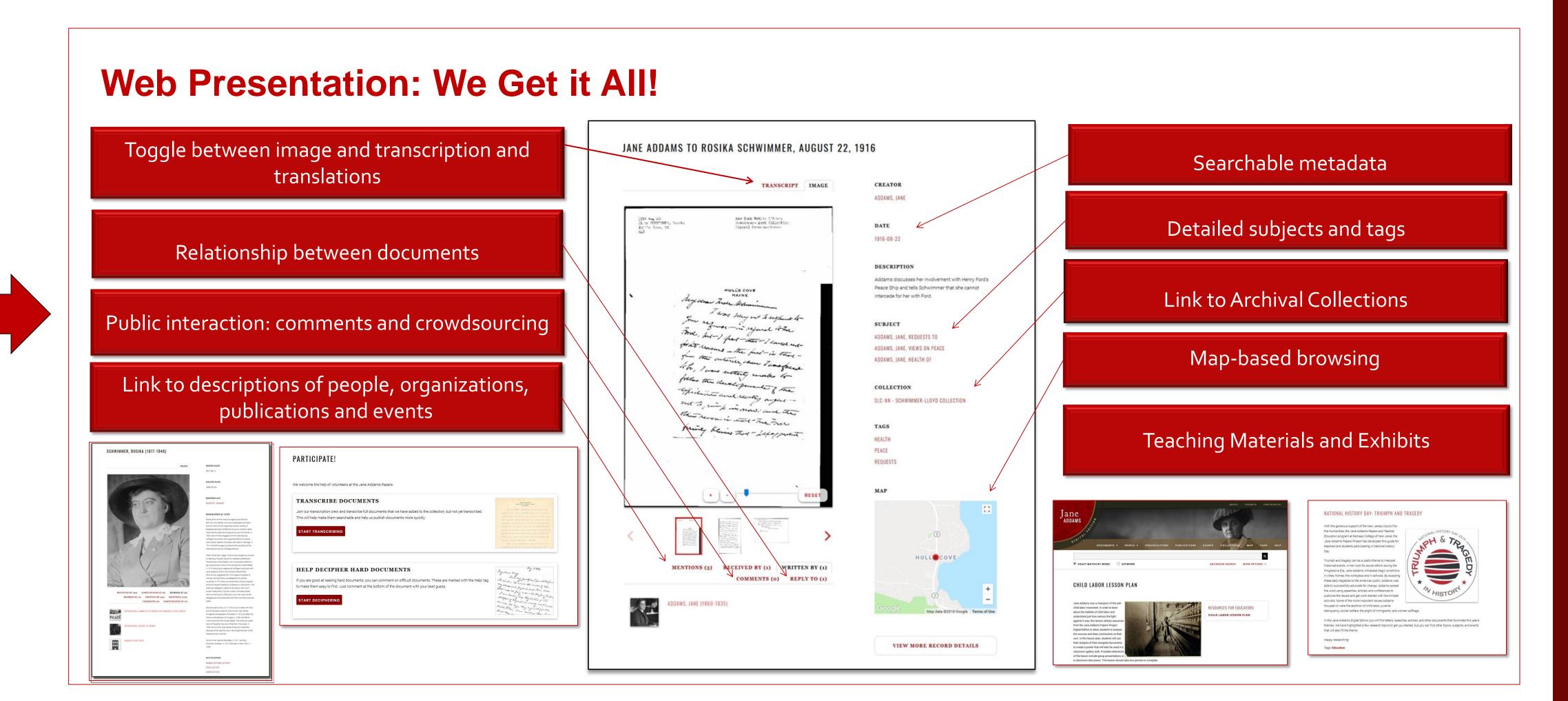Ramapo College of New Jersey, Mahwah, NJ, 07430 (chajo@ramapo.edu)

Digital Edition Design: We Want it All!

- Transcriptions
- Translations
- Relations between docs
- Search and browse by date, subject, type, author, etc.
- Archival Collections

- People, Organizations, Events
- Map-based views
- Packaged exhibits
- Public engagement, via crowdsourcing
- Teaching materials

Web Presentation: We Get it All!

- Toggle between image and transcription and translations
- Relationship between documents
- Public interaction: comments and crowdsourcing
- Link to descriptions of people, organizations, publications and events

- Searchable metadata
- Detailed subjects and tags
- Link to Archival Collections
- Map-based browsing
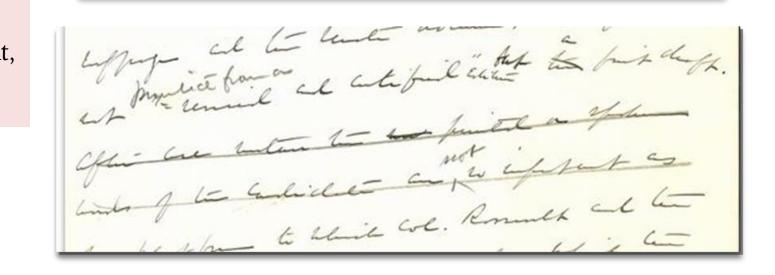- Teaching Materials and Exhibits

Metadata *Instead* of Encoding

Using a database-driven digital edition means that most of your editorial work is captured in metadata. Editors store information in fields, entered in a consistent and precise manner. We create relationships between data fields to build a complex description of our documents and other data. What do we give up?

Encoding allows editors to create exceptionally detailed documents with the capacity to encode every letter in word. It allows powerful analysis of complex texts. But. . . do you need it? If you or your users are more interested in reading the texts than running text analysis, and if you are comfortable providing the same level of transcription we provide in a print edition, consider using a database for your digital edition.

In an Omeka-based edition, the transcription is contained in one field ("text") and we use HTML styling to provide editorial markup. Combined with an image of the original document, this is usually sufficient for most editions.

newspapers that the sentence should be [omitted] <eliminated.>. His spoken address was most unequivocally in favor of woman's suffrage and the Senate document therefore was not <printed from a> "revised and certified" <edition> but the <a> first draft. After all mention his not printed or spoken words of the candidate are <not> be so important as the platform to which Col. Roosevelt and the new party was pledged and upon which the campaign must be made. <Mrs. Harper admits was most satisfactory in its advocacy of equal suffrage [page 2]
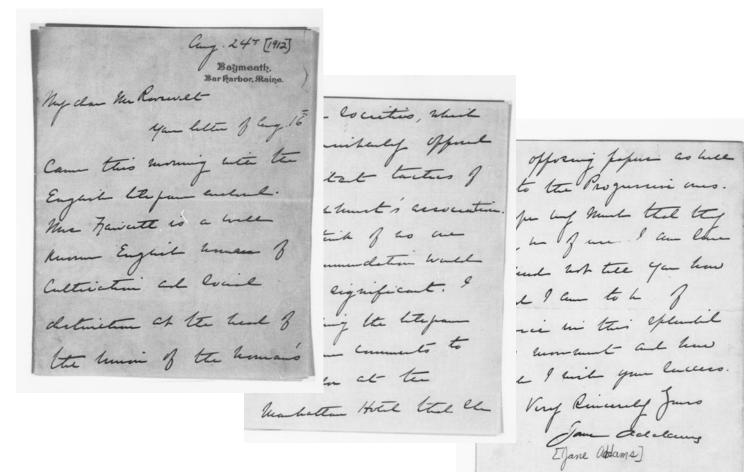
Identifying People with XML Encoding

Encoding every mention of a personal name in the letter gets you to the exact spot it appears. They are then linked to a "personography," an XML file with all the names.

That silly man
<name ref="http://www.example.com/personography.xml#DPB1" type="person">David Paul Brown</name> has suffered

Using Omeka Item Relations

A database tracks the relationships to other documents, people, organizations, events, and publications. It doesn't track where in the letter the name appears.

Item Relations

Here you can relate this item to another item and delete existing relations. For descriptions of the relations, see the Browse Vocabularies page. Invalid item IDs will be ignored.

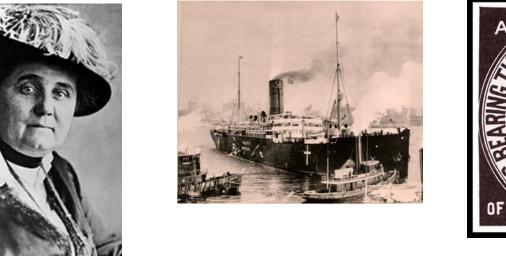| Subject	Relation	Object	Delete
This Item	Written by	Johnson, Clara Sturges (?-?)	☐
This Item	Received by	Addams, Jane (1860-1935)	☐
This Item	Mentions	Wilhelm II of Germany (1859-1941)	☐
This Item	Mentions	Wilson, Woodrow (1856-1924)	☐
A Soldier's Testament	Enclosed in	This Item	☐

Designing Metadata

Think about the things that you need to track for each document, whether for administration, research, organization. These should be discrete data fields.

- Author/Recipient
- Dates
- Titles
- Types of documents
- Repositories
- Locations
- Subjects and tags
- Names mentioned
- Organizations mentioned
- Places mentioned
- Events mentioned
- Relationship between documents, drafts and enclosures

Which fields are important for people, organizations or events? Repository collections? Metadata can be tailored to the type of item you are describing.

- Name(s)
- Birth and death dates
- Biographical data
- Occupations
- Tags
- Rights data
- Locations
- Bibliographic data or links
- Images

Metadata can also keep track of the status of a digital item in your edition. At the Jane Addams Papers, we track transcription, metadata and research status, copyright permission and repository rights, so that we know when a document is ready to be published. We also track the names of the staff members who work on the records.

Transcription Status

- Starts as Pending.
- Student or editor enters it (Complete)
- Proofreader proofreads it (Proofread)
- Editors check it (Ready to Publish)
- Editor decides to publish. (Published)
- "Restricted" prevents us from publishing it.

Benefits of Administrative Metadata

- We can get figures on document status.
- We can search for documents ready for publication.
- We can find documents that have some hindrance to publication to work on.
- We have the option to publish metadata record, image, and transcription independent of one another.
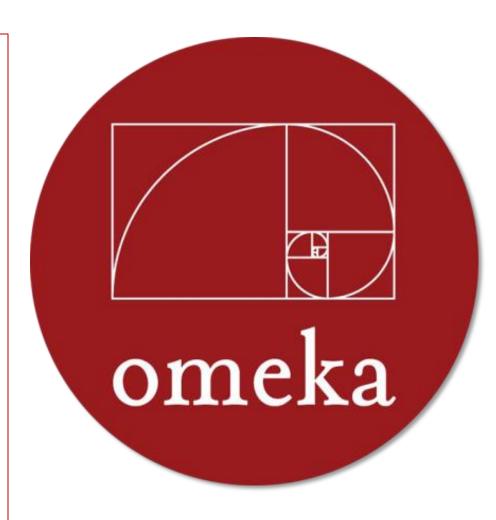
About Omeka

Omeka Classic is a web publishing platform for sharing digital collections and creating media-rich online exhibits. It allows editors to create complex narratives and share rich collections, adhering to Dublin Core standards.

Omeka S is a next-generation web publishing platform for institutions interested in connecting digital cultural heritage collections with other resources online. Create and manage many sites with a streamlined installation, publish items with linked open data, and describe items with DPLA-ready resource templates.

Omeka was developed by the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. It is server based, open-source, and free to use.
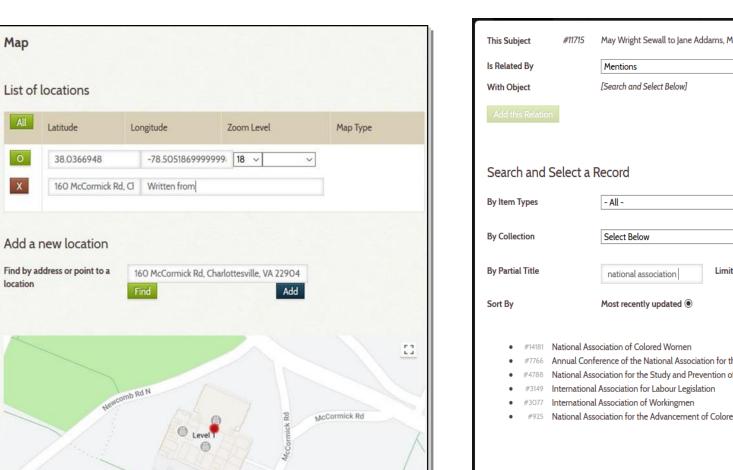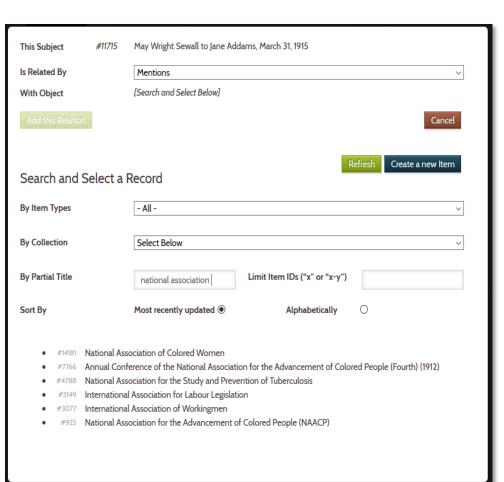
HTTPS://OMEKA.ORG/
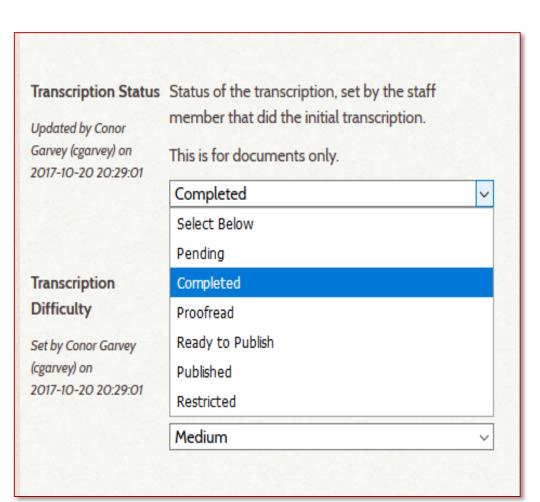
To see digital sites built on Omeka, see:

https://omeka.org/classic/directory/

Plugins Expand Capacities

You do not have to re-invent the wheel. Omeka has a number of plugins that can add functionality to your edition. If you want to display documents on a map, use the **Geolocation** plugin; if you want to add crowdsourcing, use **Scripto**; to create digital exhibits, install **Exhibit Builder**. Designing a new plugin, or improving one that is already available enables us to share improvements and new development with others.

The Jane Addams Digital Edition uses **Geolocation** (left) to map documents, people, organizations, publications and events. This enables a map-based view of the edition. **Item Relations (center)** serves as a way to link items together -- the names of people mentioned in a letter, the organizations that a person is a member of, a document that was enclosed in another. **Curator Monitor** allowed us to track the status of work on an item.