Digital Exhibits with Minimal Infrastructure: Using Wax to Build Digital Projects

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Follow along: https://tiny.sjsu.edu/wax-presentation

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Wax for Digital Exhibits: A Pilot

- Why Digital Exhibits and Digital Projects?
- Wax and Minimal Computing: A Genuinely Brief Introduction
- Two Pilot Projects
  - Betita Martínez: A Memorial Exhibit
    - https://sjsu-library.github.io/betita/
  - The Unionist Unified: Connecticut's First Immediate Abolitionist Newspaper
    - https://sjsu-library.github.io/unionist/
- Informal Assessment and Next Steps

Why Digital Exhibits and Digital Projects?

SJSU has an institutional repository **AND** a digital collection management system - **why** do we need different tools for digital exhibits and digital projects?

- **Flexibility**
  - Design and user experience
  - Information architecture
  - Metadata implementation
  - One-off integration with external tools
- Work with collections from outside SJSU
- Work with objects that "don't fit"
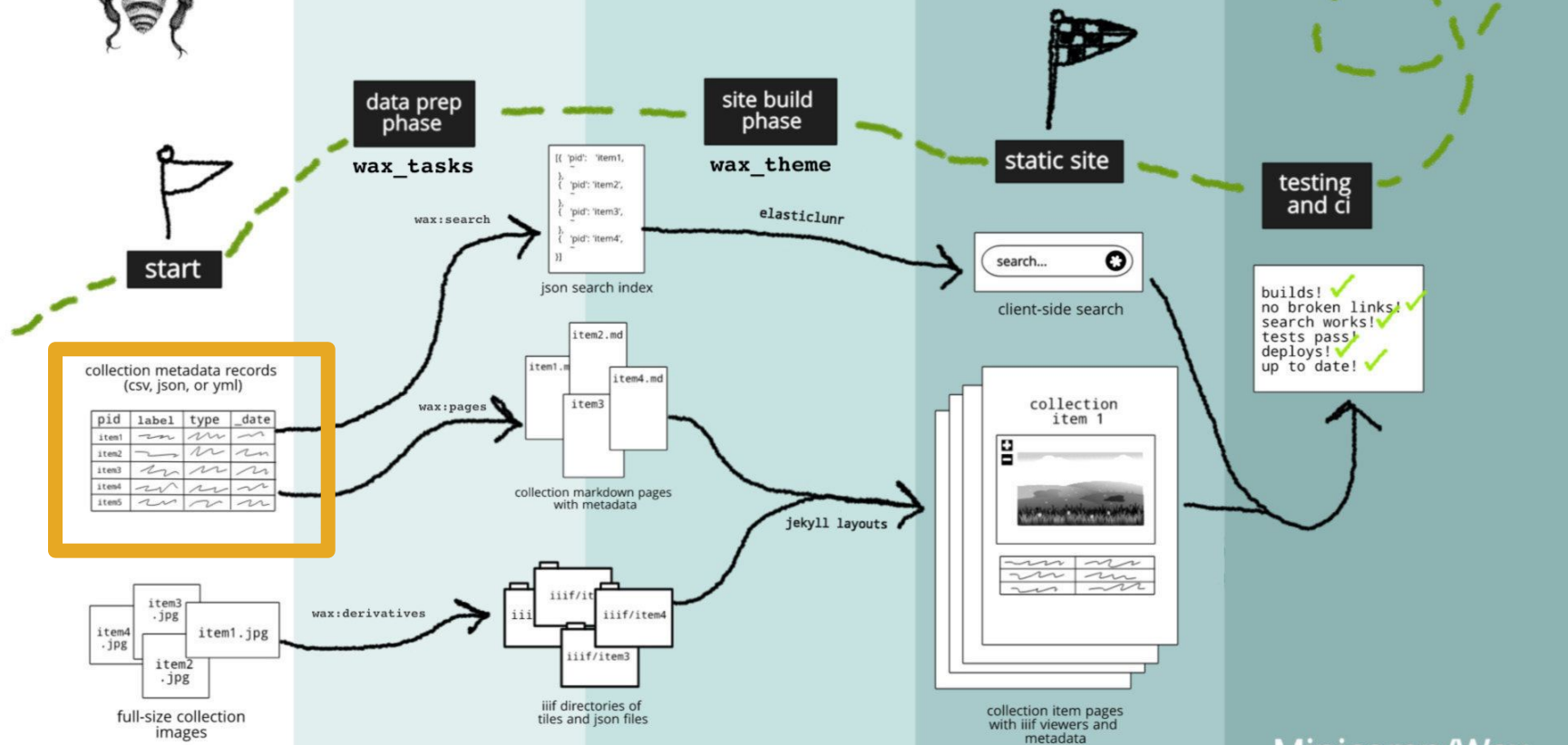 - Transcriptions
  - Excerpts

Piloting Wax

- Compared to other available platforms, Wax is unique in adopting **minimal computing** principles
- **Wax** starts with the static site generator **Jekyll** and adds features specific to digital exhibits and digital humanities projects
- Wax sites can be built on a laptop or desktop and hosted for free on GitHub Pages, or on other available server space

Wax Workflow

data prep phase

`wax_tasks`

site build phase

`wax_theme`

static site

testing and ci

start

wax:search

[{ 'pid': 'item1',
},
{ 'pid': 'item2',
},
{ 'pid': 'item3',
},
{ 'pid': 'item4',
}]

json search index

elasticlunr

search...

client-side search

builds! ✓
no broken links! ✓
search works! ✓
tests pass! ✓
deploys! ✓
up to date! ✓

collection metadata records
(csv, json, or yml)

pid	label	type	_date
item1			
item2			
item3			
item4			
item5			

wax:pages

item2.md
item1.md
item3
item4.md

collection markdown pages
with metadata

jekyll layouts

collection
item 1

item3.jpg
item4.jpg
item1.jpg
item2.jpg

full-size collection
images

wax:derivatives

iiif/it
iiif
iiif/item4
iiif/item3

iiif directories of
tiles and json files

collection item pages
with iiif viewers and
metadata

Minicomp/Wax

Key Workflow Elements

- Subject matter experts can create metadata in spreadsheets
- Interpretive materials can be edited in Markdown (like a Wikipedia page) and can include collection items

[Betita Martínez: A Memorial Exhibit](#)

With Kathryn Blackmer Reyes, Faculty Director of Academic & Community Engagement & AAACNA Center, SJSU King Library

Betita Martínez
A Memorial Exhibit

About Explore ▾ Browse Search Reuse

Memorials

A collection of tributes, obituaries, and memorials

Bibliography

S elections from Betita Martínez's prolific writings

Memorials Page

- https://sjsu-library.github.io/betita/explore/memorials/
- Simple script using Masonry JavaScript library to display obituaries and memorials in a more organic way
  - https://github.com/sjsu-library/betita/blob/main/_includes/memorials.html

The Unionist Unified: Connecticut's First Immediate Abolitionist Newspaper

With:
- Jennifer Rycenga, Professor, Humanities Department
- Sharesly Rodriquez, User Experience Librarian, SJSU King Library

Connecticut's First Immediate Abolitionist Newspaper

The Unionist was established in 1833 in Brooklyn, Connecticut to serve as a local voice in support of Abolition,

Essay Page

Above: **Double Portrait of Mary Joseph Marshall Lyons and Albro Lyons, Jr**

The Trial of Frederick Olney

Home>**Essays**>**Race**>The Trial of Frederick Olney

Race - Essays in this Section

The Trial of Frederick Olney   **African-American Presence and Absence**   **Missteps in The Unionist**

‹ **See Previous Essay**   **See Next Essay** ›

Item Page

BROOKLYN, CONN.

Trial of Frederick Olney (Part Three)
The Unionist 1834-04-10

W H. & C. C. BURLEIGH,

UNIONIST CONTENT   FEATURED ITEM ★

Transcription

[Concluded from our 34th number.]
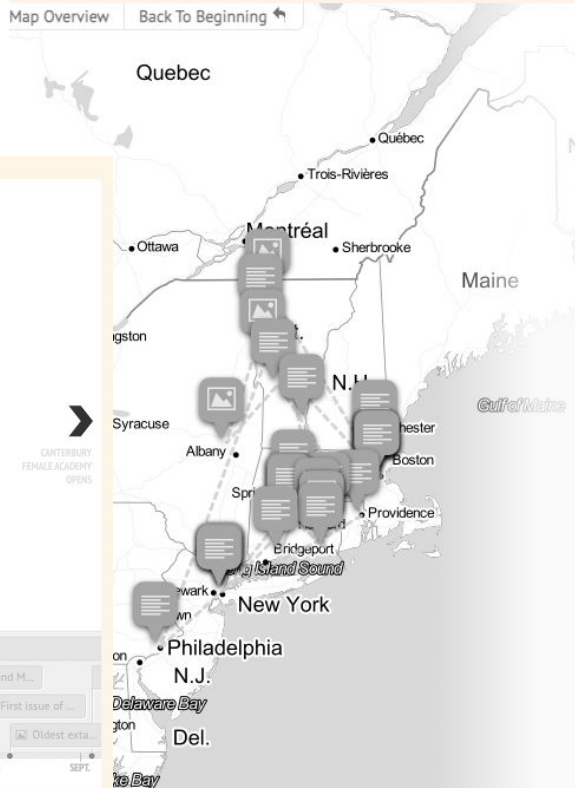
[Reported for the Unionist.]

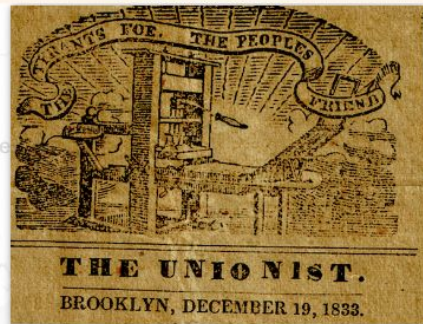TRIAL OF FREDERIC OLNEY. (

Map and Timeline

Map The Unionist's Influence

Map Overview   Back To Beginning ↩

Masthead and Slogan of The Unionist, December 19, 1833 Published in Brooklyn Connecticut

MAJOR EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE UNIONIST

The Unionist functioned in the environment of the Canterbury Female Academy, a bold Abolitionist venture in higher education for Black women that took place over eighteen months in 1833-1834.
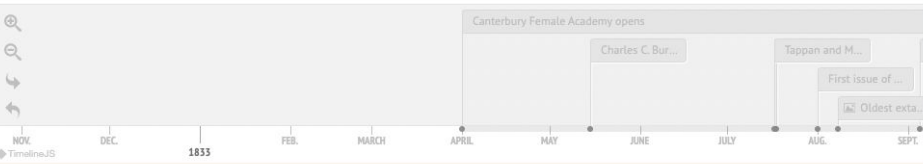
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Charles Burleigh, editor of The Unionist, ca. 1845

CANTERBURY FEMALE ACADEMY OPENS

NEWSPAPERS WHICH INCLUDED UNIONIST CONTENT

The Unionist was a short-run newspaper, established by Samuel J. May and Arthur Tappan in 1833, and edited by Charles C. Burleigh and

Canterbury Female Academy opens

Charles C. Bur...

Tappan and M...

First issue of ...

Oldest exta...

NOV.   DEC.   1833   FEB.   MARCH   APRIL.   MAY   JUNE   JULY   AUG.   SEPT.

TimelineJS

Informal Assessment of Wax

- Flexible and fun to work with
- Provides a helpful workflow that enables the separation of technical and subject expert work
- Can be challenging to teach and workshop due to system requirements

Next steps

- Continuing to work with Wax while piloting Omeka S as a campus service for digital projects
- Creation of a Wax site template with local customizations
  - https://github.com/sjsu-library/sjsu-wax-template
- Moving forward with support for digital projects and exhibits

Resources

- Wax: https://minicomp.github.io/wax/
- Knight Lab Tools (map and timeline): https://knightlab.northwestern.edu/projects/
- Introduction: The Questions of Minimal Computing by Roopika Risam and Alex Gil: http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/16/2/000646/000646.html
- Minimal Computing: a working group of GO::DH: https://go-dh.github.io/mincomp/
- SJSU Library on GitHub: https://github.com/sjsu-library