

**Who, when, where?
Using an online book club to
enhance access to a local
history collection**

**Emily Jaycox, Miriam Whatley, Kelly Brown
SLRLN Tech Expo 2021**

Who we are



Emily Jaycox

Librarian

Missouri Historical Society



Miriam Whatley

Assistant Branch Manager

St. Louis County Library



Kelly Brown

Acquisitions Librarian

Missouri Historical Society

What we'll talk about



Emily Jaycox

Project
background



Miriam Whatley

Project design



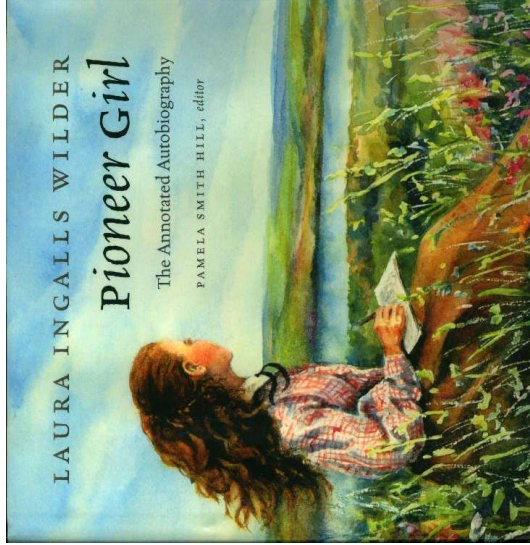
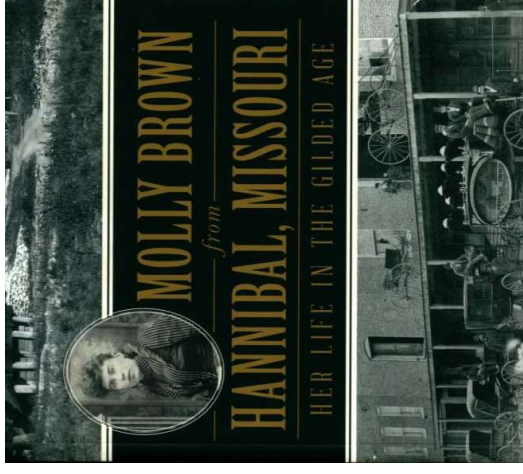
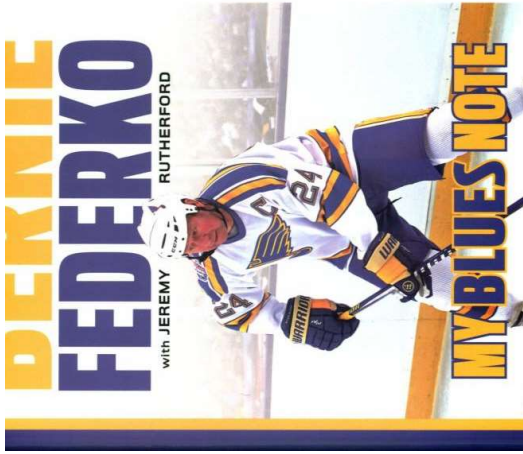
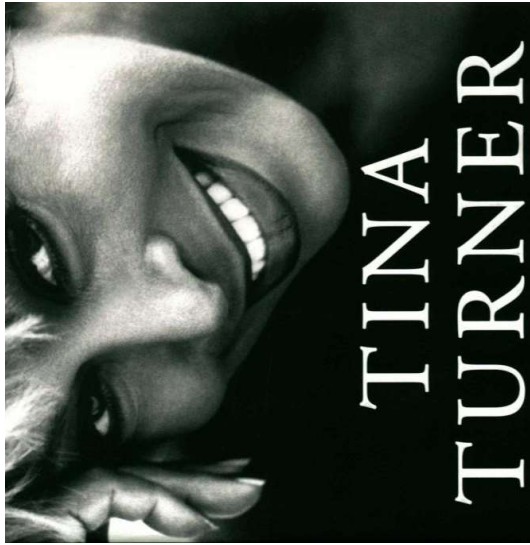
Kelly Brown

Project
implementation

2018: Collection
development
opportunity

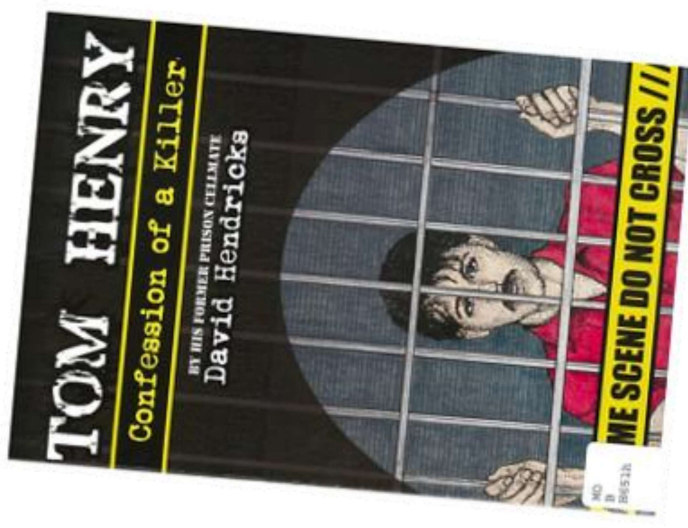
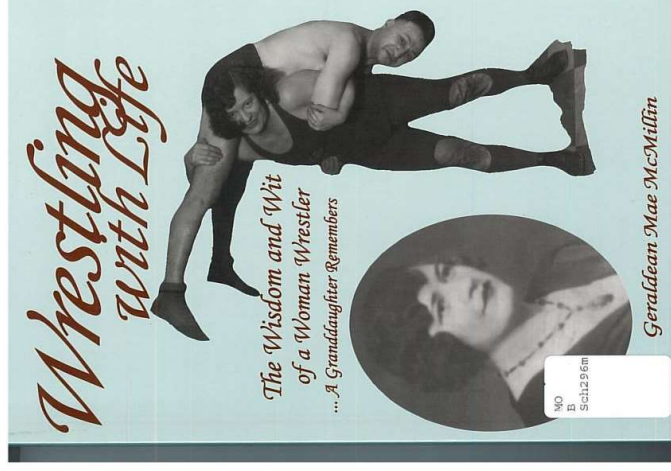
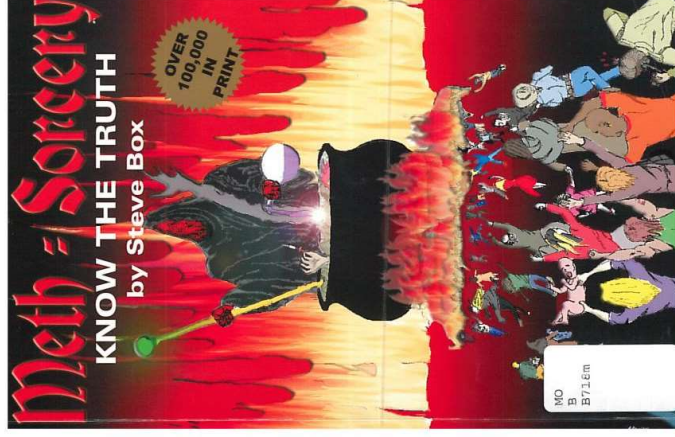
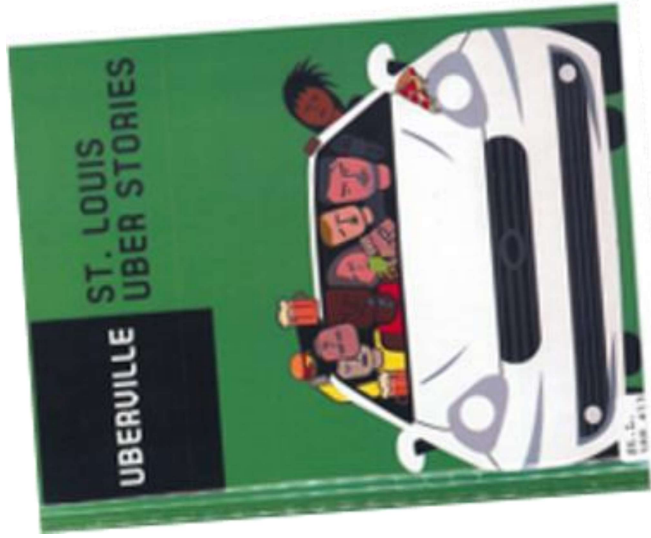
Project
background





Biography, memoir,
letters + diaries

Well known....



...and not so well known

*Five laws of
library
science -
S. R.
Ranganathan*

Books are for use.

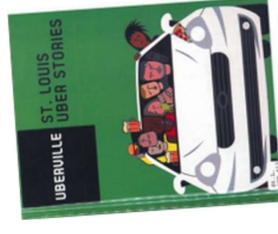
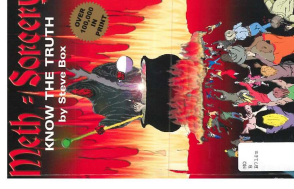
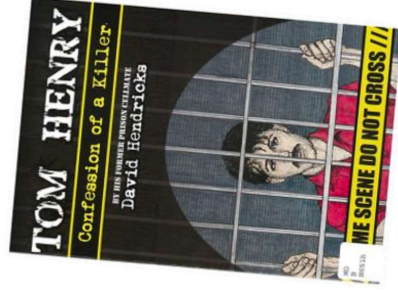
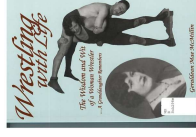
Every reader his or her book.

Every book its reader.

Save the time of the reader.

A library is a growing organism.

- **Compelling (we hope!) narratives deserve readers**
- **Volunteers want directed reading projects**
- **Memoirs are underused sources for local history**



Always
seeking
firsthand
accounts of....

- How a family survived the Great Depression
- Accounts of specific military conflicts
- Descriptions of local:
 - Landmarks, neighborhoods
 - Shopping districts
 - Night life, entertainments
 - Schools, clubs, churches

- Precedent project to help readers and books find each other
- ✓ Hundreds of sources indexed
 - ✓ 500,000+ names referenced
 - ✓ Started with a giant Excel spreadsheet.

The screenshot shows the website for the Missouri Historical Society's Genealogy and Local History Index. The browser address bar displays "Not secure | genealogy.mohistory.org". The site header includes the Missouri Historical Society logo and a navigation menu with links for "Main", "Names", "Addresses", "Businesses", and "Sources". A large banner features the text "Genealogy and Local History Index" over a background image of a woman's portrait. A yellow informational box contains the following text: "The Genealogy and Local History index provides access to the extensive genealogy and local history holdings at the Library and Research Center. The index contains references to personal and corporate names (primarily St. Louisans and St. Louis businesses) that appear in selected library, archives, and photograph collections. If you find a reference in the index, you may request a photocopy of the item. Please note: This index does not direct you to a digital image of the indexed item." Below this box are four search options, each with a right-pointing triangle icon: "Personal Name Search", "Business/Corporate Name Search", "Street Address Search", and "Search by Source".

Could we adapt
the Genealogy
Index
concept... and
help books and
readers meet?

Books are for use.

Every reader his or her book.

Every book its reader.

Save the time of the reader.

A library is a growing organism.

2019: Practicum project
Project design



Starting points:

Original Goal (6/2019)

The goals of the program are to improve the usability of the LRC's biography collection and to create a deeper connection between the community and the LRC.

What:

- A public program that engages volunteers to read the Weil Biography Collection and complete a digital form detailing topics covered in the books that are likely to be of interest to researchers.
- Discussion groups, online and/or in-person, for people to share their findings and talk about what they're reading.

Why:

- Engagement with the materials and the institution creates a sense of connection to that institution and to their collection.
- Make the collection more usable for researchers by increasing the amount of data known about each text.
- Increase interest in the LRC and its collection.

Form Builder Tools

The screenshot shows the Cognito Forms web interface. The browser address bar displays the URL: <https://www.cognitoforms.com/forms/biographybookgrouptest/build>. The page has a dark blue header with the Cognito FORMS logo and navigation tabs for 'Build', 'Publish', and 'Entries'. A search bar and 'Upgrade Now' button are also visible. The main content area is titled 'Biography Book Group - Test' and contains the following form fields:

- Form Settings:** A list of settings with toggle switches: 'Encrypt Entry Data?' (Off), 'Limit Form Availability?' (Off), 'Share as Template?' (Off), 'Allow Entry Link Sharing?' (Off), 'Developer Mode?' (On), and 'Analytics & Tracking?' (Off).
- Description:** A text area with the placeholder text: 'Please complete the following questions about the person or people who is the subject of your book.'
- Title:** A text box containing 'Biography Book Group - Test'.
- Book Title:** A text box with a placeholder '(A) Textbox (Single Line)'.
- Type of Book:** Radio buttons for 'Memoir' (selected) and 'Autobiography'. A note below reads: 'An autobiography focuses on the the entire life while a memoir covers one specific aspect.'
- Did the book have multiple subjects?:** A dropdown menu with 'No' selected.
- Author(s):** A text box with a placeholder '(A) Textbox (Single Line)'.
- Subject's Name:** Text boxes for 'Title', 'First', 'Middle', 'Last', and 'Suffix'.
- Birth Date:** A text box with a placeholder '#Number (Integer) 4 digit year'.
- Death Date:** A text box with a placeholder '#Number (Integer) 4 digit year'.
- Military Service?:** Radio buttons for 'Yes' (selected) and 'No'.
- Highest Rank Achieved:** A text box with a placeholder '(A) Textbox (Single Line)'.
- Birth Location (if available):** Text boxes for 'City', 'State / Province / Region', and 'United States'.
- Subject's Name (Subject 2):** A text box with a placeholder '(A) Textbox (Single Line)'.

At the bottom right, there are buttons for 'Preview' and 'Save'. The footer includes 'Form Settings', 'Payment: Off', 'Submission Settings', 'Users', and the URL <https://www.cognitoforms.com/forms>.

- Free
- Conditional Logic
- Well Reviewed
- Easy to Use

Coordinating all Parties

- ✓ Meet with volunteer coordinator.
- ✓ Take idea and initial work to IT to make sure our plan for the data was feasible.
- ✓ Recruit initial participants from existing volunteers to test the program.
- ✓ Make improvements based on participant feedback.

2020: Ready or not,
here we come!

Project implementation





Getting things
going in a hurry



Is this possible?

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Frederic L. Billon's masonic memorar	Author	Publication info.	More pub. info	On SLPL ebook	On SLPL physical	On STLCO ebook
2	The Booker T. Washington papers.	L Washington, Booker T., 1856-1915.	Urbana, University of Illinois Press [1972]-c1989.		Not Found	Yes	Not Found
3	The papers of Thomas Jefferson.	Ret Jefferson, Thomas, 1743-1826.	Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2004-		Not Found	Yes	Not Found
4	Nobody said not to go : the life, love	Cuthbertson, Ken.	[Boston] : Faber and Faber, 1999.		Yes (Hoopla)	Yes	Yes (Hoopla)
5	A boy from Missouri : my life story /	Haines, Gerry	New York : Universe, Inc., c2007.		Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
6	90-pound heavyweight : the life and	Barnes, Angela, 1949-	Fairview Heights, IL : Heart Spoken Words, LLC, [2015].	Å©2015"	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
7	Small glories : a memoir of southern	Brown, Daniel T.	St. Charles, Mo. : Howell Foundation, [2003]		Not Found	Yes	Not Found
8	Ellen / by Loretta Washington ;	edits Washington, Loretta.	[St. Louis, Mo.] : The NITT Company, [2008].	Å©2008"	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
9	The Buchmann family from Rosenwi	Miller, Rose Marie Buchmann Roach,	[St. Louis, Mo. ?] : R.M.B.R. Miller, [2008].	[Morr N.C.] : Lulu,"	Å©2008"	Not Found	Not Found
10	Retelling Vietnam : true stories of	th Greenwood, Peggy Thomson.	[St. Louis, Mo.] : Vagabond Information Services, N.C.] : [Lulu.com]		Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
11	The life story of Isadore Levinson.	Levinson, Isadore, approximately 186	[United States] : The Joshua Smolinski Trust, [20] N.C.] : Printed and bound by Lulu,"	Å©	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
12	Precious memories of Mae, 1910-19	Laska, Mary Alice Wyatt, 1947-	[Missouri?] : Maridy Laska, [2009].	[Morrsville N.C.] : Lulu,"	Å©2009"	Not Found	Not Found
13	The road home / compiled and writt	Applegate, Susan.	[Oregon] : Susan Jane Applegate, [2007].	[Morr: N.C.] : Lulu.com,"	Å©2007"	Not Found	Not Found
14	The revenant : some incidents in the	Cooke, Philip St. George, 1809-1895.	[United States] : Enhanced Media, 2016.		Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
15	William Marion Gosney : a Missouri	Karch, Olin.	[Kansas City, Mo. ?] : [Olin Karch], [2012].	[Morr: N.C.] : Lulu.com,"	Å©2012"	Not Found	Not Found
16	The life and times of Colonel Henry	L Holtman, Chery Carr.	[Missouri?] : [Holtman Haus Studios], [2015].	[M N.C.] : [Lulu]"		Not Found	Not Found
17	The 1854 diary of William Fletcher	S Short, William Fletcher, 1829-1909.	Jacksonville, Fla. : Bluefish Books, Cowart Communications, [2009].	Å©2009"	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found
18	The life of John W. Meyer / Brad Me	Meyer, Brad.	[Missouri] : [Brad Meyer], [2013].	[Morrissville N.C.] : Lulu"	Not Found	Not Found	Not Found

Yes, this is possible!

- Total Titles: 848
- Titles with something available: 316
- Titles with a digital option: 154
 - SLPL: e-books: 85 physical: 215
 - StLCoPL: e-books: 40 physical: 132
 - Google Books: 14
 - Internet Archive: 55
 - DPLA: 0

Recruiting volunteers



- Like to read
- Good at summing up information
- Attention to detail
- Comfortable with e-books
- We currently have 23 volunteers-11 signed up specifically for the remote project!



The reading process



Book reports

- Fifty-three book report entries
- Forty-seven unique titles
- Only five book titles were done by more than one reader. Only one book had three reports.
- Reporting survey does not record user-We can't tell how many readers contributed reports





First meeting of the Biography Book Club

2021 and beyond...

Next steps



- Using the results
- Planning a public interface

conito FORMS

Biography Book Group - Test

Build Publish

All Entries (55) Columns Sort 1 Filter Save

A... Does the subject identify... S... Is the book an immigration narrative? Did the text describe life for.

African American			African American
African American			African American
African American			African American
Bosnian	▼		Bosnian
French			French, Native America
French			
Greek	▼		Greek, African American
Italian			
Jewish			
Jewish			
Jewish			
Jewish			Jewish
Jewish			Jewish

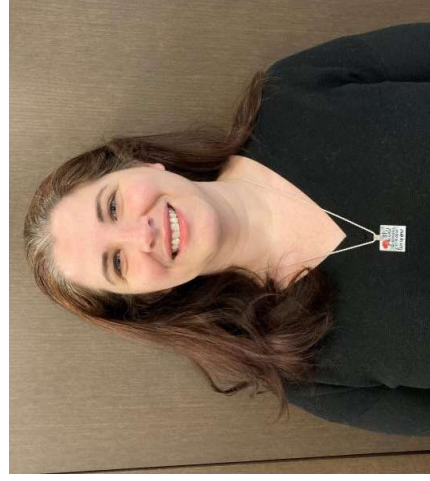
Get in touch!



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BONUS SLIDES

EXAMPLES OF INFORMATION CAPTURED THUS FAR

Did the subject experience any of th...	Did the subject experience any of the following 20th century events:-
	1917 Influenza Epidemic, Great Depression, Prohibition...
	Civil Rights (general)
Emancipation, Gold Rush, Trails ...	Civil Rights (general)
	Civil Rights (general), Civil Rights: Housing including ...
	Civil Rights (general), Korean War, World War II, World ...
	Civil Rights: School Segregation, Civil Rights (general)...
	Gaslight Square, Korean War
	Great Depression
	Great Depression
	Great Depression
	Great Depression, Tornado of 1959
	Prohibition or Prohibition Repeal

Did the text discuss of these ...	Did the text cover any of the following types of plac...
The Fox Theater	Nightclubs, Concert Venues, Theaters
Busch Stadium (1966-20...	Nightclubs, Concert Venues, Schools (K-12...
Busch Stadium (1966-20...	Restaurants, Schools (K-12)
Busch Stadium (1966-20...	Sporting Venues, Concert Venues, Restaur...
Sportsman's Park	Sporting Venues, Restaurants, Universities...
Union Station	Schools (K-12)
	Schools (K-12), Geographic Features, Rest...
Union Station	Stores, Restaurants, Hotels, Theaters