

Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing

Editor-in-Chief Noelle A. Baker

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Volume 42 Introduction

Noelle A. Baker, Independent Scholar 

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Our editorial team is delighted to publish Volume 42 of *Scholarly Editing: The Annual of the Association for Documentary Editing*.

With volume 42, the journal continues to expand its topical, geographical, and chronological breadth; amplify the work of diverse voices; and advance all aspects of textual scholarship and recovery. This volume includes a micro-edition that is likely the first scholarly edition of a born-digital interactive work of fiction; conversations with scholars of Indigenous languages and Black heritage spaces; insights into the life of a free Black soldier serving in the US Civil War; experiments that foster empathy and tolerance; the challenges of using generative AI in textual studies and recovery projects; and much more. With this volume we are also pleased to announce that the US Library of Congress is now archiving *Scholarly Editing* and we have begun a partnership with the University of Virginia Press, the journal's new distributor.

The volume opens with “ApertureScience.com: A Critical Edition,” a micro-edition co-edited by Alan Galey, Ellen Forget, and Brendan Allen that features variants of the website ApertureScience.com. Launched in 2006, ApertureScience.com provides a paratext of Valve Software’s wildly popular video game *Portal*. More than just a promotion for the game, ApertureScience.com offers distinctive backstories and “Easter eggs” masked or missing in *Portal*. A subject of fascination to gamers and fans as well as scholars in the first decades of the twenty-first century, ApertureScience.com underwent at least four distinct versions, only to disappear because of its utilization of Flash Player, which Adobe stopped supporting in 2020. “ApertureScience.com: A Critical Edition” will appeal to a wide variety of readers, including scholars of video game history, gaming enthusiasts, and *Portal* fans. All will enjoy what we believe is the first scholarly edition of born-digital interactive fiction.

The next section, “Voices and Perspectives: Interviews and Conversations,” contains two multi-modal interviews. The first is Cheyenne Symonette’s piece, “Archiving the Invisible, Recovering Community: A Conversation with Dr. Andrea Roberts.” Roberts is a University of Texas professor, planning historian, theorist, public humanities scholar, and place preservationist whose work focuses on the preservation of historic Black settlements, known as Freedom Colonies. In this wide-ranging and poignant interview, readers will learn about Roberts’s Texas Freedom Colonies Project and her groundbreaking interactive Texas Freedom Colonies Project Atlas and Study—a “‘prototype for a future portal’ for historical Black settlement data” and a “digital humanities platform that advances the recovery of underrepresented stories.” Roberts describes the ways in which Freedom Colonies have been marginalized and erased in public records, and the importance of collaborative, community-driven “place preservation” frameworks for recovery activism that centers on previously silenced stories, memories, oral histories, and cultural performances—and the cultural resources that can safeguard these vibrant heritage communities and “embodied” places.

The second piece in the Voices and Perspectives section is an interview by Julian C. Chambliss: “Indigenous Legacies and Digital Realities: A Conversation with Drs. Ellen Cushman and Gordon Henry about the Digital Archive of Indigenous Language Persistence (DAILP).” Cushman, a Dean’s Professor of Civic Sustainability and Professor of English at Northeastern University, is a citizen of the Cherokee nation who considers the ways that literacy and language “endure and create change.” Henry, a Professor Emeritus in the Department of English at Michigan State University, is an Anishinaabe poet, novelist, and enrolled member of the White Earth Chippewa Tribe of Minnesota. Together, they discuss the ways in which “collaborative, inclusive, and technology-enhanced practices” can enrich archival methodologies. Their conversation touches on the need to balance “interpretation, curatorial perspective, and community expectation” against “the transformative goal of maintaining Indigenous data sovereignty” and the challenges of preserving and promoting Indigenous language for future generations.

In the journal’s next section, “Uncovering and Sustaining the Cultural Record,” Sharon Roger Hepburn’s “How Private Murray Became Private No More” recounts the author’s discovery and publication of correspondence to and from Private John Lovejoy Murray, a free Black soldier serving in the US Civil War in the First Michigan Colored Infantry. Murray’s writings were likely preserved only because his mother used them to apply for a federal pension for her son’s military service. “At the expense of John Murray’s family and friends who parted with these precious pages from their loved one,” Hepburn observes, “readers today are able to experience the war through the eyes of a literate northern free Black soldier.” These pension records hold personal information that often serve as the sole evidence of ordinary people. Although “Murray’s wartime service was not terribly distinguished in the conventional military sense,” his reflections on camp life and military campaigns provide insight into the daily aspects of wartime service and its impact on the soldiers serving. They are significant because of—and not in spite of—their mundanity.

In the “Essays” section, readers will find “Looking for Merle: Participatory Archiving as *Bridge Work*,” by Mich Ling. Ling details their collaboration with Merle Wood and Wood’s daughter Emily Woo Yamasaki to curate Woo’s papers for donation or sale to an institution that would support them as a digitized, open-access, public-facing resource. Ling contextualizes this collective act of recovery with “friends, students, colleagues, and conspirators,” whose conjoined politics mirror Woo’s life as a “Chinese Korean lesbian socialist feminist teacher and organizer.” Woo was affiliated with Kitchen Table Press and “*This Bridge Called My Back*, the women of color feminist press and 1981 anthology” that includes Merle’s “Letter to

Ma,” a work renowned for its take-no-holds-barred critique of ethnic studies programs in the academy and “Asian American history, homosexuality, and anti-imperialist socialist feminist politics, framed through a confession from daughter to mother of the perils of shame, silence, and assimilation.” Throughout the piece, Ling argues for the radical importance of an ethics of women of color feminism shaped by “self-criticism, generosity, and care.” “Archiving [Woo’s] papers collaboratively is a kind of materialist feminist organizing, or *bridge work*,” Ling argues persuasively, one “that urges more grounded and careful engagement with history and its contradictions, rather than through scarcity-driven models of critique that consider ideas and peoples to be disposable.”

The “College and University Classroom Essays” section contains three contributions. In the first, “Methodologies for Exploring Unknown Archives,” Jean Lee Cole and Elizabeth James recount a decade-long effort to uncover the writings and lives of members of the Woman’s Literary Club of Baltimore (1890–1920) from a collection held at the Maryland Center for History and Culture. This “unknown archive” is “so minimally described” in the library’s catalogue—likely because of the marginalized status of female authors in early twentieth-century America—that club members are rendered nearly “invisible” to would-be researchers. Fortunately, however, and aided by a team of students, librarians, archivists, and digital humanists, Cole and James have created a robust digital primary source: the [Woman’s Literary Club of Baltimore Archive](#). In this essay, they report vivid pathways to recovery and highlight “the possible methodologies available for engaging students in the work of uncovering and restoring access to collections treating marginalized groups.” Together, the editorial team has resurrected “a formerly unknown and highly significant body of literature written by Maryland women” whose contributions to literary history had been effaced, while also documenting and contextualizing with ongoing exhibits and research projects the club’s troublesome alliance with a Southern-styled literature “that worked hand in hand with white supremacist Lost Cause ideology.”

The second piece is “Teaching Tolerance and Empathy through Digital Documentary Editing,” Clayton McCarl’s description of the powerful pedagogical impact of collaborating with students to publish local historical documents online. Importantly, as these empowered students produce digital documentary editions, they are directing their own learning and contributing substantively to scholarly communications while also developing a heightened sense of ethical responsibility, empathy, and tolerance for their community’s cultural histories. Further, this pedagogical practice effectively counters lawmakers who seek to efface race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity from US archival records. Educators can “continue to help students engage with topics related to inclusivity, justice, and the appreciation of difference without jeopardizing their own professional futures.”

The last piece in this section is Sophie Whittle’s “Digital Chaucer Pedagogy and Editing: Probing Generative AI’s Reproduction of Hegemony.” In analyzing a prototype of a digital pedagogical edition of Geoffrey Chaucer’s the “Pardoner’s Prologue and Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales* (part of the *C21 Editions* project), Whittle illustrates the process of uncovering “marginalized stories within ‘canonical’ texts,” such as that of Chaucer’s Pardoner, a preacher whose sexuality and gender have been regarded both as fluid and therefore also as a challenge to “the normative structures of the medieval Catholic church.” The *C21 Editions* experimental editorial curation employs generative artificial intelligence (AI) based on large language models (LLMs) that process patterns in the text. Problematically, however, these responses are compromised by homogenic and heteronormative defects in the way these LLMs address marginalized

narratives within canonical texts. Whittle argues, however, that when aided by queer and intersectional interpretive praxes, AI’s “reproduction of hegemony” can be countered “within the environment of a digital edition, . . . [by] empower[ing] students to make decisions about their use within pedagogical spaces” through close readings based on “human cognition” that interrogate and move beyond LLM data scrapes.

The volume closes with three reviews, two of which reflect the life and writing of women celebrated for their outsized accomplishments. The third “tells the story of [a Civil War] archive” on a vast scale. In the first, June Howard examines *The Case of Lizzie Borden and Other Writings: Tales of a Newspaper Woman* by Elizabeth Garver Jordan, edited by Jane Carr and Lori Harrison-Kahan (Penguin, 2024). Howard finds Carr and Harrison-Kahan’s selection of Jordan’s writings—and their contextualization of Jordan’s groundbreaking roles as a journalist, editor, author, and women’s rights advocate committed to ending sexual harassment—a “cause for celebration” and an overdue acknowledgment of Jordan’s commitment to women’s rights and concerns.

Next, Fontana Micucci reviews *Her Truth and Service: Lucy Diggs Slowe in Her Own Words*, edited by Amy Yeboah Quarkume (Columbia University Press, 2024). Micucci lauds the many and diverse accomplishments of Slowe, whose “firsts” included founding the first historically Black sorority, serving as the first president of the National Association of College Women, serving as the first Black woman to hold the position of dean at an American university, and becoming the first Black woman to win a major title in any sport. “Slowe’s vision for Black women in the United States can be felt throughout every chapter” of this edition, Micucci suggests, producing a “deeply rewarding and thought-provoking” experience.

In our final review, William M. Ferraro assesses *War on Record: The Archive and the Afterlife of the Civil War*, by Yael A. Sternhell (Yale University Press, 2023). Sternhell documents the lengthy and complicated history of an extensive edition of Civil War Union and Confederate records, a narrative that Ferraro adumbrates, while also highlighting its similarities with contemporary, large-scale editing projects with which he is familiar.

On behalf of the editorial and advisory boards, I hope readers enjoy the diverse works of recovery presented in this volume of *Scholarly Editing*. We believe that in these challenging times for free speech, artistic freedom, and intellectual inquiry, our work—and our readers’ engagement with it—is of critical importance.

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