

TimeMapping a Library of Congress Collection: “Camilo José Vergara Photographs-Tracking Time to Document America's Post-Industrial Cities”

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Background and Research Question: The Library of Congress’ Prints and Photographs Division possesses a collection of time-lapse photographs of individual locations in US inner cities 1970s-present taken by Chilean-American photographer Camilo José Vergara. The time-lapse series are displayed on the P&P website without maps. This project involved attempts to answer the following **Question: How does one optimally take Vergara’s photographs and create timelines to display each sequence of photographs next to a map of the geographic location photographed?**

1. DATA CLEANUP

- Received 978 jpgs and Vergara’s metadata spreadsheet. Reduced to 204 jpgs and 4 columns.
- Used OpenRefine to standardize address/location/dates for the 28 locations selected.

Cluster & Edit column "Modified Description 1"

This feature helps you find groups of different cell values that might be alternative representations of the same thing. For example, the two strings "New York" and "new york" are very likely to refer to the same concept and just have capitalization differences, and "Gödel" and "Godel" probably refer to the same person. Find out more...

Method: key collision Keying Function: fingerprint 11 clusters found

Cluster Size	Row Count	Values in Cluster	Merge?	New Cell Value
4	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alfred at John R (3 rows) Alfred at John R. (1 rows) John R at Alfred (1 rows) John R at Alfred. (1 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alfred at John R
3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E. 149th St. at Prospect Ave (4 rows) Prospect Ave. at E. 149th St. (2 rows) E. 149th St. at Prospect Ave. (2 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	E. 149th St. at Prospect Ave
2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wyse Ave at East 178th St (5 rows) Wyse Ave. at East 178th St. (1 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wyse Ave at East 178th St
2	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 487 Willis Ave. (3 rows) 487 Willis Ave. (1 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	487 Willis Ave.
2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View NE from S. Federal St. towards W. 45th St. (2 rows) View NE from S. Federal St. towards W. 45th St. (1 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	View NE from S. Federal St.
2	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4344 West Madison St. (9 rows) 4344 West Madison St. (1 rows) 	<input type="checkbox"/>	4344 West Madison St.

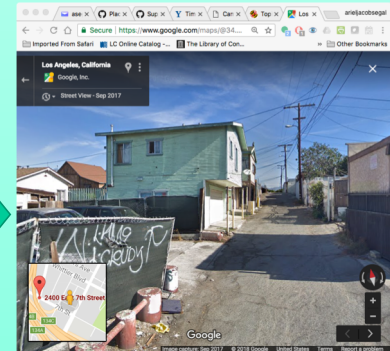
Visualizations on the right: # Choices in Cluster, # Rows in Cluster, Average Length of Choices, Length Variance of Choices.

2. LOCATION GEOREFERENCING

- Used Google Maps/Street View & www.latlong.net to verify exact coordinates for 28 locations
- Put them on 7 Google Spreadsheets (for each city/neighborhood) customized for program TimeMapper.



Vergara Photo in L.A., 2014



Google Street View, 2017

3. TIMEMAPS

- Created 7 TimeMaps for Vergara locations in Harlem, Bronx, NY; Camden, Newark, NJ; Chicago, IL; Detroit, MI; Los Angeles, CA

Camilo José Vergara Photographs: Tracking Time to Document America's Post-Industrial Cities: Harlem, NY by arielsegal using TimeMapper

1977
65 E. 125th St., Harlem, NY

Timeline: 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981

TimeMap of Harlem Locations

CONCLUSIONS

- Keep experimenting (When Neatline installation failed, TimeMapper was acceptable alternative)
- Reach out for help (Contacted Rufus Pollock, co-creator of TimeMapper; suggested refinements for future when funds are available)