Histories of the National Mall
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Reviewing *Histories of the National Mall*, a project of the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media at George Mason University using their Omeka open-source platform, must be done from the point of view of two types of users. The "Using the Site" page states that the site is intended both for mobile users exploring the National Mall in Washington, D.C., as well as desktop users. There are four major sections of the site: Map, People, Explorations, and Past Events.

Mobile users are likely to get the most out of the "Map" function. Using a Google map with various historical layers, the map plots out 345 items on the National Mall and the surrounding area. These items are the same that can be found in a traditional list view under the other main headings. The mobile functionality of the map feature is generally user-friendly. Clicking a pin on the map brings up a small image and the item's title, as well as a "View More Info" icon. "View More Info" takes the user to a larger image and more contextual information on the item. On a phone screen reading this information does require the user to scroll down, while the "Back to Map" link remains at the top of the page. The small inconvenience of having to scroll back up is the main design flaw in an otherwise intuitive and easy to use map.

Both "People" and "Past Events" take users to simple list pages where they can click on an image of a person or event and be brought to a page that contains metadata about the item. These pages are more useful to desktop users. While not as interactive or exciting as the mobile utilities, there is still much to be explored on the site.

"Explorations" offer users two ways of exploring the Mall. One way to explore content is through scavenger hunts of certain sections of the Mall, while another is through various questions related to the Mall's history. Choosing a scavenger hunt for sites like the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, or the Smithsonian Castle gives the user a handful of photographs of objects to look for around the particular building or monument. Clicking on the photo gives the hunter a choice of reading or hearing more about the object in question. The questions take the user to a page answering the question using images and text. Clicking on an image takes the user to a page about the item.

The item-level page includes title and description, as well as the original source for the material. This content comes from the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution Archives, other government archives, and even people's Flickr feeds for more recent images. Links to the original source are provided, when available, to take the user to the holding archival institution. There is no function that allows the user to search by source location, making it impossible for a user to search, for instance, for items from the Smithsonian Archive, or the Library of Congress. While not inherently problematic for most users, if the product is mimicked in other forms it may be useful to include a search by source function.

Histories of the National Mall also maintains a social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr, all of which are linked to at the bottom of each page. These pages are perfect for those curious but unlikely to go further with the project's site. Historical photographs, newspaper headlines, and interesting facts will be delivered straight to your feed, including many that follow a "this date in history" model. Anyone interested in local or national history would benefit from following the project on the platform of his or her choice.

The National Park Service offers its own official app for National Mall visitors with both iPhones and Android phones. The National Park Service also makes no mention of the *Histories of the National Mall* project on its own National Mall website. The lack of integration with the National Park Service, the Smithsonian, the Capitol, the White House, or other high profile Mall occupants makes for a major obstacle in increasing use of the project. This is especially disappointing given how much more informative *Histories of the National Mall* is compared to these other apps that offer similar thematic coverage and may be consulted rather than *Histories of the National Mall*.

Histories of the National Mall is not a project geared towards archivists. Its relevance for the profession comes from showing one possible outcome for archives of working with universities or other organizations to effectively bring their holdings to the public in user-friendly, educational ways. For example, using the Rosenzweig Center-developed Omeka platform to map archival material onto a Google Map is a feasible way of visualizing collections for online exhibitions or for an entire archive. This function proves to be the most relevant for users and archivists alike. An open-source platform, Omeka has been used by libraries, museums, and archives around the world to exhibit material digitally. It offers archivists a free and easy to use opportunity to forge connections between institutions and expand their user base. Though *Histories of the National Mall* does not make the connection with the National Park Service that would benefit both parties, these sorts of partnerships are the greatest potential for archivists using Omeka to display their holdings.

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