The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion

Making Miami's History and Present More Accessible

Katie L. Coldiron, Florida International University, USA
Julio Capó, Jr., Ph.D., Florida International University, USA

Abstract

This is a work-in-progress report of Miami Studies, a curricular, research, and collections-focused initiative housed at the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab (WPHL) at Florida International University (FIU). Miami Studies represents a unique approach to Latina/o/x studies in the Greater Miami region and at one of the country's largest Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI). The rationale, framework, and historical context for a Miami Studies school of urbanism are described in detail. This is followed by an explanation of the WPHL's digitally focused initiatives: the digitization of a now-defunct newspaper titled *Miami Life* and the Mellon Foundation-funded Community Data Curation post-custodial project. Also referenced is the Díaz Ayala Collection of Cuban and Latin American Popular Music, housed at FIU Libraries.

Keywords: community partnerships; digital humanities; Latinx; Miami; post-custodial archiving

Publication Type: special section publication

Introduction

Along with several other programs at Florida International University (FIU) and in collaboration with numerous community partners, the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab (WPHL) is working to build a robust program in Miami Studies. The WPHL is FIU's hub for humanistic inquiry that bridges the scholarship and resources of the university to the broader South Florida community and beyond. Designated a Carnegie Mellon R1-rated research institution, FIU is Miami's only public research university, and, with nearly 60,000 students enrolled, it is also one of the largest Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) in the United States. Although over 60% of FIU's student body is Hispanic or Latina/o/x, the university does not currently house a program distinctly dedicated to understanding the Latina/o/x experience in the United States. Thus, the need for a Miami Studies Program—especially one housed in the city's public research university—is dire.

Incorporated as a city in 1896, Miami is one of the most influential cities in the United States and the Americas. Its history, culture, politics, and overall significance, however, are still largely caricatured through myth, stigma, and hyperbole, all of which are deeply rooted in the region's layered past and relationship to colonial processes and empire (Capó & Friedman, 2021; Read, 2009). For example, it is still common for people's general knowledge of the region or its past to be drawn from representations in popular culture and media. From the glamor presented in scripted TV shows like *Nip/Tuck* or reality TV shows like *The Real Housewives of Miami*, or even the ubiquitous "Florida Man" headlines found in newspapers across the county, representations of Miami, its past, and the people who call it home are far too often superficial, reductive, or altogether inaccurate.[1] For instance, many people's understandings of the Mariel boatlift of 1980

ISSN 2574-3430, https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

and the thousands of Cubans who entered the United States during one of the most controversial episodes of U.S. immigration history often originate from fictional retellings and misinformation, such as the storyline of the 1983 film *Scarface* that starred Al Pacino as Cuban mafioso Tony Montana. While the film itself acknowledges in one of the opening scenes that the majority of Cubans who entered the United States during this period were not criminals, Montana's violent storyline helped perpetuate the myths of criminality, deviancy, and undesirability that many people still associate with this episode in Cuba-U.S. history—one that is still frequently cited as one of the United States' most notorious immigration blunders (De Palma, 1983; Bustamante & Manzor, 2021).

Although the city remains seriously understudied and poorly understood, recent years have seen a significant push in scholarly work and attention on the region.[2] As those and countless community-based works demonstrate, Miami's geography, culture, and history have critically shaped national and international conversations for decades. The Greater Miami area has been influential, if not centrally embroiled, in many of the nation's most significant and often controversial issues. This runs the gamut from determining presidential elections (e.g., the 2000 election; Sutton, 2000); setting the tone for foreign policy (e.g., opposition to Latin American and Caribbean authoritarian regimes, such as Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro; CBS Miami, 2019); seeing the growth of mass incarceration (e.g., Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department currently operates the eighth largest jail system in the United States; Pérez, 2016); institutionalizing anti-Black violence (e.g., Miami Police Chief Walter Headley's influential mandate from 1967: "when the looting starts, the shooting starts;" Capó, 2020); reporting and containing outbreaks and disease (e.g., reports that Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis's administration misled the public on data about COVID-19; Ariza et al., 2020); recovering from and responding to natural disasters (e.g., the devastating effects on the region of Category 5 Hurricane Andrew in 1992; Feito, 2022); experiencing the results of climate crises (e.g., the climate gentrification of Miami's Little Haiti, where elevation is substantially higher than other areas; Green, 2019); spurring debates on immigration and detention (e.g., the Mariel boatlift of 1980 and the for-profit Homestead Temporary Shelter for Unaccompanied Children that closed in 2019; Burnett, 2019); and so many others.

As more people look to Miami to better understand these and many other pivotal contemporary issues, a new school of urban thought seems in order. Indeed, much like the formation of a Chicago School in the early 20th century and a Los Angeles School in the late 20th century, this work envisions a Miami School of urbanism that is specifically designed for a multicultural city of the Americas. A brief genealogy of schools of urbanism is helpful here. The Chicago School represented the work of social scientists in the early 20th century based out of the University of Chicago, which helped create new methods and paradigms of applied research in urban studies by viewing the city of Chicago as a social laboratory that could help us understand and explore social and cultural responses to the urban environment (Turner, 1998). Architects, urban planners, and others inched away from modernism, as with the controversial 1972 publication of *Learning from Las Vegas*, which seriously assessed the Las Vegas Strip on its own terms and sought to take the general public's tastes and desires in urban spaces more acutely into account (Venturi et al., 1972). Indeed, by the 1980s, the Los Angeles School had emerged, encompassing several scholars whose research focused on Southern California, especially Los Angeles and its social and economic underpinnings. It represented a shift from an ordered and modernist city (e.g., Chicago) to the Los Angeles urban studies paradigm, which was at once postmodern in its conception and reflective of a more fragmented and decentralized form of urban planning and growth (Caves, 2004). By the late 1980s, a New Urbanism had developed too, one that sought to

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

break "from both the modern and postmodern principles of design and planning," in effect "[r]ejecting the sterility of the one and the relativism of the other" (Beauregard, 2002, p. 182).

Miami Studies builds on these and other urban paradigms, drawing inspiration from models that cross physical and disciplinary boundaries. Indeed, inspired by what Sassen has called the "global city" (2002, xix), Miami Studies also looks to the rise of global studies urban programs (e.g., Global Urban Studies programs at Rutgers University and Michigan State University) and projects (e.g., The Global Urban History Project) that have made clear the need for global, transnational, and translocal methods and analysis—ones that transcend traditional boundaries, including municipal, national, and disciplinarian—to better study and improve the lived experiences within built environments.[3] In addition to size, diversity, and complexity, a global city "makes new norms" (Larsen, 2010). As Sassen detailed in her 2010 interview with *Foreign Policy*, where she discussed Miami's apparent status as a global city:

> …[Shifts in international trade and real estate development] coincided with the opening of Latin America. In the 1990s and early 2000s, firms from all over the world—the Taiwanese, Italians, Korean, French, all over—set up regional headquarters in Miami. In the 1990s, there was also deregulation, so Miami became the banking center for Central America. Then the art circuit, the designers' circuit, and other things began to come into the city. Large international corporations began to locate branches there, forging a strong bridge with Europe that doesn't run through New York. That mix of cultures—in such a concentrated space, and covering so many different sectors—created remarkable diversity and complexity. Of course, the Miami case is rather exceptional (Larsen, 2010).

Indeed, Miami is a city not only of and by "The Americas," but one with distinct socio-economic histories. It was never foundationally planned for significant industrialization, for instance. It aggressively turned its attention to Latin America and the Caribbean for its economic success, most concertedly so by the 1970s. Similarly, from its earliest days to the present, the city grew almost instantaneously, explaining how it received its moniker of the "Magic City" in the early 20th century, recognizing how the city had a distinct power, as if by magic, to transform overnight. In broad strokes, rather than "mature" over time, its growth often occurred exponentially in spurts, especially in population, texture, and world renown. Its economic structures and patterns are similarly indicative of this. This includes the city powerbrokers' successful push in the late 1970s to pressure the State of Florida and others to change banking laws to accept foreign deposits to the much more recent claim in 2021 by Miami Mayor Francis Suarez that he would accept his salary paid in bitcoin (Crooks & Mills, 2022). So too, is the international art fair and extravaganza known as Art Basel, which has become a symbol for the city in many ways since its introduction there in 2002.

For as much as it takes its lead from urban studies, Miami Studies is also heavily inspired by and draws knowledge from the formation and development of ethnic studies programs in the United States, formally since the 1960s. Inspired by and a manifestation and product of the transformative movements of the era—especially movements for the rights and liberation of Black, women, Chicanx and Latinx, Asian American, Indigenous, LGBTQ, and other communities, as well as broader anti-war and anti-imperialist sentiments—the formal academic and curricular establishment of ethnic studies occurred in 1968. That's when a coalition of students of color and ethnic studies groups in higher education staged a student strike demanding courses that reflected their lived experiences and provided more diverse perspectives than the dominant white and Eurocentric narrative they found in their classrooms. While the formation of ethnic

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

studies began in what is today San Francisco State University and the Berkeley and Santa Barbara campuses at the University of California, these student-led efforts quickly inspired the establishment of such programs across the nation (Hu-DeHart, 1993). While there have been countless attacks on ethnic studies and programs over the decades—from Arizona's 2010 ban on Tucson's Mexican American studies program (*González v. Douglas*, 2017) to attacks on the new racial boogeyman broadly construed as "critical race theory" in multiple states throughout the country—demand for such curriculum and community engagement remains high, especially with renewed calls for Black liberation (e.g., including the Black Lives Matter movement) following high-profile murders of Black women and men at the hands of police, such as George Floyd in 2020. In this vein, Miami Studies pushes traditional disciplinary boundaries and helps prepare students for today's job market by emphasizing several competencies and skills that can serve the community: digital mapping to oral history, to podcasting and exhibition curation. Miami Studies critically engages in urban studies, cultural studies, Black studies, Indigenous studies, Latina/o/x studies, ethnic studies, digital studies, and feminist, gender, and queer studies to make a unique program that reflects the multicultural and multilingual experiences, values, and histories of our South Florida community.

Without a standalone program of Latina/o/x studies at FIU, Miami Studies is designed to push the boundaries of what constitutes traditional Latina/o/x studies by centrally integrating ethno-racial communities—inclusive of native and Indigenous communities—that traverse this land. By engaging the transcultural experiences of race, ethnicity, nationality, and class in Greater Miami, this school of urbanism is also thoughtful of integrating diasporic communities that are not traditionally represented or included in Latina/o/x studies, such as Haitians, Bahamians, Jamaicans, and Brazilians, for example. Today, South Florida houses the largest diasporic communities in the United States of Haitian Americans, Nicaraguan Americans, Cuban Americans, Bahamian Americans, and Venezuelan Americans. The region also boasts large and increasing populations of Uruguayan Americans, Colombian Americans, Argentine Americans, Jamaican Americans, and Brazilian Americans. Miami Studies does not observe the strict borders of fields and disciplines and rejects narrow and strict municipal, regional, and national borders. Exploring "Miami" as a conceptual modality requires that we zoom out and be inclusive of the histories and experiences in neighboring counties, such as those in neighboring Broward County (e.g., Fort Lauderdale), as well as the interconnected and transnational experiences of Latin America and the Caribbean, such as those in Haiti, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, and beyond.

This unique approach to a Latina/o/x studies curriculum benefitted from multiple initiatives to build physical collections and research depositories and enhance the reach and breadth of digital humanities scholarship at FIU, South Florida, and across many borders. This involves numerous processes and decolonial methods in digital archiving, including post-custodial methods that allow communities to keep and steward their archives rather than have them taken to FIU or institutions like galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAM). The Society of American Archivists defines post-custodial archiving as those collaborative archival initiatives in which creators maintain custody of their records. In contrast, archivists provide management oversight (Society of American Archivists, 2022). Over the past decade, especially, for example, multiple collaborative initiatives have sought to collect oral histories of Latina/o/x individuals and communities, which are then stored in digital archives. Some of these initiatives include the Voces Oral History Center (University of Texas at Austin), the 100 Puerto Ricans Oral History Project (Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College), and Recovering the Hispanic Research Collection (University of Houston), among several others. FIU is also moving in this direction. It

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

counts among its collections select oral histories with Cubans who entered the United States in the early 1960s through the U.S. government- and Catholic Church-sponsored *Operación Pedro Pan*, or Operation Peter Pan (FIU Libraries, 2022b).

Similarly, over the past decade, multiple collaborative initiatives between U.S.-based entities, particularly universities and partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, have blossomed to preserve and digitize archival materials. This includes the Latin American Digital Initiatives (LADI) Project (University of Texas Libraries), the International Digital Ephemera Project (University of California, Los Angeles Library), and multiple initiatives of the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) (FIU and the University of Florida). While all these initiatives are integral to shaping Miami Studies, there remains much work to be done to preserve the varied stories of South Florida's many communities and their role in shaping the region and its history.

With all this in mind, below we briefly introduce three other initiatives at FIU (two specifically initiated by WPHL staff) that broadly speak to these methods and the overall vision for Miami Studies. The three initiatives include the recovery and digitization of a now-defunct newspaper *Miami Life;* the cataloging, archiving, and digitization of one of the largest collections of Caribbean and Latin American popular music at FIU Libraries; and a partnership with eight local cultural institutions called Community Data Curation that collaboratively preserves, creates, and narrates community stories from historically underrepresented or marginalized voices.

Miami Life and the Díaz Ayala Cuban and Latin American Popular Music Collection

Partially funded by a community grant from Florida Humanities, the WPHL and FIU Libraries' Digital Collections Center completed the digitization of special issues of *Miami Life* in the Summer of 2021. For decades, this alternative weekly newspaper had been thought entirely lost to researchers. Over a decade ago, while researching Miami's LGBTQ past, Julio Capó, Jr. tracked down a descendant of the newspaper's last known owner, Reubin Clein. That process, in part, helped Capó complete his first book, *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940* (2017). Select bound copies of the newspaper were in the descendant's possession and have since been digitized through this initiative. They have been made text-searchable with Optical Character Recognition (OCR). The following issues are now freely available on FIU Libraries' public-facing digital repository, dPanther: January–December 1927; January 1928–October 1929; September 1934–September 1935; and January–December 1949. Since its digitization and promotion, new leads from community members have emerged, which we hope will lead to the recovery, preservation, and accessibility of even more issues of this once-thought-lost newspaper.

The digitization of special issues of *Miami Life* has led to significant community discussions about the city's past and present. As an alternative press that highlighted its editor's perspective and tabloid that often experimented with stylistic devices such as jokes, poems, and rumors, these issues of *Miami Life* often convey a greater sense of the city's pulse during the first few decades of its existence. These issues, often inadvertently, touch on a wide range of topics, including economic downturn and recovery, immigration, anti-Semitism, anti-Blackness, and gender and sexual politics. According to Clein family lore, Jewish pugilist Reubin Clein won the weekly *Miami Life* during a game of cards in 1931 (while that is most questionable, it too has become part of the source's mythic lure). Clein used *Miami Life* to challenge or reaffirm existing power structures in Florida. While stylized as a beacon of honesty, Clein also regularly adhered to some of the era's long-held beliefs of anti-Blackness (especially racial segregation), xenophobia, and homophobia. Among many things, the newspaper is a snapshot of life in the Jim Crow U.S. South.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

In March of 2022, the WPHL hosted its inaugural Miami Studies Symposium. These were among the central topics and themes of the day's panels, which included one on the recovery and retelling of complex and often violent stories from the city's past, as well as the long history of community-based efforts to preserve the city's Black history and sites of memory and significance.

As this might suggest, even just a cursory search of the digital collection reveals what these issues of *Miami Life* may yield in our collective understanding of the city's changing urban cultural landscape, including the experiences and contributions of its racial and ethnic minorities. For example, in addition to its feature stories on residents or visitors, advertisements for local nightclubs and revue shows regularly spotlighted Latin American and Caribbean-descended musicians, performers, and entertainers. These advertisements reveal musical and cultural shifts and changes in urban culture and demographics. These *Miami Life* advertisements publicized acts by well-known musicians, such as Xavier Cugat, and those lesser known today, such as the DeCastro Sisters and Alzira Camargo.

The digitized issues of *Miami Life* will likely offer new insight into how ethno-racial identities were constructed in the New South city of Miami. Influenced by the prevalence of Jim Crow laws, especially racial segregation, one report published in the December 1949 issue of *Miami Life*, for instance, tells the story of a mixed-race woman named Mildred Williams who was arrested for vagrancy for working "in a Negro bar" (Bond, 1949, p. 3). Because she was light-skinned, the arresting police officer believed she was white and deemed her workplace "no place for a white woman" (Bond, 1949, p. 3). Williams, however, stood before a judge at the Court of Crimes and explained that she was also Black. The news feature editorialized that Williams "could easily have been regarded as a Latin or a white person. But there was the tinge of Negro blood" (Bond, 1949, p. 3). Similarly, other so-called "vagrants" and people who were criminalized under this system were thus being adjudicated by a Miami judge for petty crimes—a common occurrence for Black and Brown people in Jim Crow Miami. While three "trespassers from Puerto Rico" received fifteen days in prison, "eight Negroes were dismissed...on claims of loitering" (Bond, 1949, p. 3).

While the FIU Libraries have been active in promoting digital scholarship via Digital Humanities workshops, comprehensive LibGuides for digital scholarship, and a readily available Digital Scholars Studio for student and faculty use with software and other equipment for Digital Humanities work, Miami Studies has the potential to merge technical skills with historical methods and practice. Imagine the possibilities for recovering the lived experiences of Miami's Black, Indigenous, Latina/o/x and other communities if even fragmental knowledge yielded from *Miami Life* were corroborated with, or complemented by, other readily available primary resources.

For example, FIU's Green Library houses one of the world's most substantial collections of Caribbean and Latin American music, with a particular strength on music and culture from Cuba. Donated in 2001 by author, collector, and producer Cristóbal Díaz Ayala, the Díaz Ayala Cuban and Latin American Popular Music Collection consist of roughly 150,000 items. This includes 45,000 LPs; 15,000 78 RPMs; 5,000 pieces of sheet music; 4,500 cassettes of radio interviews and programs, music, and other material; and thousands of CDs, photographs, videocassettes, and paper files (FIU Libraries, 2022a). Select images and word-searchable metadata for this massive collection have also been added to dPanther. In 2016, the Latin GRAMMY Cultural Foundation funded a project to preserve and provide controlled access to select 78 RPM sound recordings

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

from the Díaz Ayala Collection. In 2021, the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) awarded one of their "Recordings at Risk" audio preservation grants to FIU Libraries to digitize and migrate to digital formats, create metadata, and provide access via dPanther to materials from the Díaz Ayala Collection originally recorded as 78 RPMs and stored on cassettes. Efforts to enhance digital access to the Díaz Ayala Collection are currently spearheaded by Verónica González and Ximena Valdivia of FIU Libraries.

Figure 1. Machito and Graciela performed at the Glen Island Casino in New York in July 1947 (Gottlieb, 1947).

These materials can also help researchers better understand the experiences of racial and ethnic minorities in the United States and abroad. For instance, the lyrics of "Miami Beach Rhumba," released in the 1940s by famed bandleader and artist Xavier Cugat speak toward a U.S.-Cuban experience. With lyrics such as "I found the charm of Old Havana in a rhumba at Miami Beach" the song reminded his audience that a version of Cuba existed in Miami—long before the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and the exile of thousands of Cubans who fled the island, most of whom settled in Miami (Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra, 1958). Cugat's bilingual 1941 song "¡Viva Roosevelt!" assured Spanish-speakers that U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt "es nuestro amigo" ("is our friend") (Cugat et al., 1941). While rallying the troops for World War II, even before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the song implored Cugat's primary audience, clearly imagined as Latina/o/xs, to "get in the conga line of defense!" (Cugat et al.,1941). From the images featured in the sheet music to the song's bilingual lyrics to the same musical performance, this source yields essential insight into Latina/o/x contributions to war and American society, political and cultural citizenship, and even Latin American-U.S. foreign relations (e.g., the Good Neighbor Policy). Similarly, a wealth of resources in these archives allows a deep analytical comparison of the varying experiences of commercial appeal and success of artists such as Cugat, who was white and born in Spain, and other musicians, such as Afro-

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Cuban jazz artist Machito or his stepsister Graciela. Indeed, the Díaz Ayala Cuban and Latin American Popular Music Collection at FIU is doing critical work in digitizing and preserving this rare and fragile material, much of which is not readily available elsewhere.

Building Digital Collections in Miami Studies through Post-Custodial Initiatives: Community Data Curation

Since the Miami Studies initiative is built on amplifying diverse, marginalized, and forgotten or erased voices, it should be no surprise that its collection approach is rooted in non-extractive and decolonial methodology. We similarly recognize that the cultural heritage field is increasingly entering the digital space, thus democratizing access to materials and ensuring that physical materials are not pressured into leaving their places of origin. The collection-building efforts, including the digitization of *Miami Life*, have been mainly post-custodial and digital. Executed by the WPHL in collaboration with eight community partners around South Florida, "Community Data Curation: Preserving, Creating, and Narrating Everyday Stories," represents a large-scale, local, and post-custodial digital initiative that we hope inspires new works in the public humanities at large.

In 2020, the Mellon Foundation awarded the WPHL a three-year, $1 million grant to support oral history collection, digitization of archives, and capacity building in partnership with eight community partner organizations across Miami-Dade and Broward Counties. The project is spearheaded by Rebecca Friedman, Julio Capó, Jr., Katie Coldiron, and Enrique Rosell. It is inspired by deep engagement and discussions with Hadassah St. Hubert, a historian and former postdoctoral researcher at FIU, dLOC and current program officer at the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The initiative's eight partner cultural institutions include the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU (Miami Beach), Sant La Haitian Neighborhood Center (North Miami), Historic Hampton House Museum & Cultural Center (Brownsville-Miami), Museum of Graffiti (Wynwood-Miami), African American Research Library and Cultural Center (AARLCC), Broward County Library (Fort Lauderdale), Stonewall National Museum & Archives (Fort Lauderdale), World AIDS Museum and Educational Center (Fort Lauderdale), and Vizcaya Museum & Gardens (Miami). All but one of the community partners are GLAM institutions. The other, Sant La, functions primarily as a social service center for Haitians and Haitian Americans in South Florida. The partners represent a mosaic of South Florida voices, with a keen eye to voices traditionally absent from the historical record.

Additionally, the partners had different experiences and ambitions for digitization and oral history collection. AARLCC and Vizcaya, for example, had already been digitizing paper materials and operating their digital repositories. Therefore, they have used the resources made available through this grant to support their internal projects. In the case of AARLCC, this has included collecting oral histories focused on Black voices in Broward County, as well as digitizing the papers of South Florida's Dr. Niara Sudarkasa, a significant figure, scholar, and educator who became the first Black professor in the University of Michigan Department of Anthropology. Meanwhile, Vizcaya had focused on researching the indigenous origins of the land that their museum and gardens sit on, with the hopes of creating an institutional land acknowledgment statement and expanding the well-known history of Vizcaya to include the indigenous stewards of the land long before the tycoon James Deering built the famous estate in the 1910s.

Launched simultaneously with the NEH-funded Miami Studies Program, at its core, this work represents a non-extractive collaboration and redistribution of community and public resources.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Among the resources the grant funnels to each institutional partner is institutional compensation for the labor of communicating with FIU and working with trained student interns, new technologies for digitization and oral history collection, a public programming budget, and a paid and trained student intern from FIU. The key deliverables of the grant are 10-12 oral histories from each partner, which will be stored on FIU Libraries' dPanther repository and, collectively, provide a kaleidoscope of South Florida voices and experiences at the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability. Additionally, all partners are given access to additional space on dPanther to store digital materials from their existing collections should they elect to do so. The partners work with the Digital Archivist (Coldiron) and the Program Manager (Rosell), who was hired with grant funds to work on this project. The Digital Archivist works with partners at whatever stage they are at in the digitization process, including but not limited to, ordering digitization equipment and training interns and other personnel on how to use it, consulting on metadata creation for digital materials, and ultimately coordinating the ingest of materials into dPanther with FIU Digital Collections staff. The Program Manager's duties include coordinating the FIU student interns, payment for institutional liaisons, public programming and communications, and much of the day-to-day operation of the grant. Rosell also uses his extensive background in audiovisual production to aid partner institutions in recording oral histories and other such needs.

As of this writing, all partners, represented as different thumbnails, have been set up on the dPanther homepage. Two of the eight partners have already contributed some digital content that is live on dPanther. All eight partners have elected to utilize the additional dPanther space to store some of their digital materials for various reasons. Some have expressed that they prefer to avoid managing their public-facing digital repository, while others have cited its high cost. Others have noted that appearing in the publicly accessible dPanther depository at FIU could expand their reach and audience. Regardless of their decisions, we support our partners in implementing or further implementing sustainable processes that will live beyond the grant's lifetime. These future deliverables include documentation of digitization and oral history collecting processes created by the Digital Archivist, Program Manager, and FIU Digital Collections staff that will be compiled into an all-encompassing manual, as well as offering support to see partners create an internal system that works for them to manage the digital content they are creating or stewarding. We are also creating training videos for our partners on using oral history and digitization equipment, with two already live on YouTube and archived in a WPHL-specific collection in the FIU Digital Commons. Similarly, coinciding with the Miami Studies Program, regular workshops are offered that discuss theory, methods, and practice for a wide range of relevant skills and competencies, from conducting oral histories to curation to archiving. In this vein, the vision of a community-driven and community-curated method in public humanities insists on non-extractive and decolonial practices (Caswell et al., 2021).

As to be expected, many of the collections of the community partners are direct reflections of the diversity and texture of South Florida. This includes Latino/a/x voices from within the Miami community, such as that of Pedro Zamora, a Cuban-born immigrant who settled in Miami during the Mariel boatlift and later starred in MTV's *The Real World* as an openly gay and HIV-positive man. In these and many other capacities, Zamora dedicated much of his short life to advocating for people with HIV/AIDS and other important causes (Gave, 2022). The World AIDS Museum recently hosted an exhibition of materials related to Zamora's life and activism. It worked with the Zamora family to digitize these materials, hoping to make them available through dPanther.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Two other community partners, the Historic Hampton House Museum & Cultural Center and the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, have already conducted and uploaded oral histories to dPanther. The Historic Hampton House was a key site featured in the *Negro Motorist Green Book,* the guidebook first published by a Black postal worker and writer named Victor Hugo Green, who listed safe, or safer, places for Black people to eat and sleep in the face of racial segregation and violence. Today it is a museum and community space, saved from demolition in the early 2000s by the efforts of Dr. Enid Pinkney, the first Black president of the Dade Heritage Trust, and other community members who shared her vision for preserving the site and the stories and lessons cemented into its structure. More recently, the historic site has garnered new attention with the success of the Regina King-directed 2020 film *One Night in Miami,* which narrates a fictional meeting of Malcolm X, Cassius Clay (later Muhammad Ali), Jim Brown, and Sam Cooke in one of the motel's rooms. To commemorate Clay's infamous win over Sonny Liston on February 25, 1964, the Historic Hampton House teamed up with the WPHL for the multi-day "The Greatest Weekend" that included panels, performances, reflections, and other community-oriented events held in February 2022. As part of this, we welcomed photojournalist Bob Gomel, who captured the iconic photographs of Malcolm X taking a photo of Clay and others sitting at a counter in the Hampton House Hotel. The team recorded an oral history of Gomel recounting his experiences at the site as a *Life Magazine* photographer. He described how he found a ride from Miami Beach, where the heavyweight fight took place, to Brownsville, where the Hampton House Hotel was located, and remembered how he had to stand on the counter of the hotel café to capture some of those famous images (Gomel, 2022). Also contributing an oral history at this event was Dr. Khalilah Camacho Ali, the former wife of the late Muhammad Ali. In her testimony, she recounted her time spent as a guest with Ali and their children at the Hampton House Hotel and Villas, which was documented in a photo spread in the April 1969 issue of *Ebony* magazine (Camacho Ali, 2022).

The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU launched a project to collect oral histories from South Florida's Jewish community and its experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic. With the support of the Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM), Museum Educator Luna Goldberg and Gabriela Garcia Acevedo, an FIU student intern, collected powerful stories about how people navigated different aspects of their identities during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, FIU student Brian García (2020) discussed his family's background, which includes Spanish and Moroccan Jews who then "sort of mingled in Venezuela" before coming to South Florida (García, 2020, 00:00:49). As an enrolled undergraduate student when the pandemic started, he relayed how he was on a Birthright trip to Israel when news reports began to emerge about the outbreak in China, and how the pandemic ultimately rendered most of his undergraduate career as taking place off campus (García, 2020).[4] While only these two partners have uploaded oral histories to dPanther as of this writing, the next few months will no doubt yield more critical stories at the intersection of South Florida's many communities and experiences.

Conclusion

Preserving individual voices and lived experiences helps provide the rich texture needed to understand better the entangled ways that race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and ability have historically coalesced—and often continue to do so—in this urban space and, indeed, beyond. These digital contributions to the public humanities are necessary for moving us forward, healing, and shifting course.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Endnotes

[1] See Capó (2022) and Capó & Gillespie (2022).

[2] For examples, see Capó (2017), Castillo (2022), Connolly (2014), Green (2017), Mas (2022), Peña (2013), and Rose (2015) among several others.

[3]Also see Portes (2020).

[4] The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU also stewards collections related to Cuban Jews in South Florida and beyond. For more on this topic, see Levine (1993) and Behar (2009).

Acknowledgments

We wish to thank our other colleagues at the WPHL: Rebecca Friedman and Enrique Rosell. We also wish to thank Jamie Rogers, Rebecca Bakker, Kelly Rowan of the FIU Digital Collections Center, and Isabel Brador of The Wolfsonian Museum-FIU. Most importantly, this work is only possible with the many individuals and community partners who generously welcomed us and trusted us with this work. We also wish to thank Gayle Williams, the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Librarian at FIU Libraries, whose insights from her time at FIU and in Latin American and Caribbean librarianship have been extremely valuable. We are forever grateful to Hadassah St. Hubert, whose voice and vision for digital scholarship, community engagement, and collaboration fuel many of the WPHL's ongoing projects.

References

Ariza, M., Fleshler, D., & Krischer Goodman, C. (2020, December 3). *Secrecy and spin: How Florida's governor misled the public on the COVID-19 pandemic*. South Florida Sun-Sentinel. https://www.sun-sentinel.com/coronavirus/fl-ne-coronavirus-florida-desantis-spin-ss-prem-20201203-tyjmgkos6bd7vo7vnripqliany-htmlstory.html

Beauregard, R. (2002). New Urbanism: Ambiguous Certainties. *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research*, *19*(3), 181-194.

Behar, R. (2009). *An island called home: Returning to Jewish Cuba*. Rutgers University Press.

Bond. (1949, December 17). Call the next case: White or colored? *Miami Life*. http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpanther/items/itemdetail?bibid=FI21052701&vid=00051

Burnett, J. (2019, February 13). *Inside the largest and most controversial shelter for migrant children in the U.S.* NPR. https://www.npr.org/2019/02/13/694138106/inside-the-largest-and-most-controversial-shelter-for-migrant-children-in-the-u-

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Bustamante, M. J., & Manzor, L. (2021). Mariel@40: An introduction. *Anthurium*, *17*(2). https://doi.org/10.33596/anth.476

Camacho Ali, K. (2022, February 26). *Oral History Interview with Khalilah Camacho Ali*. Interviewed by Coldiron, K. dPanther Digital Collections Repository; The Historic Hampton House Museum and Cultural Center. http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI22051201/00001

Capó, J., Jr. (2017, February 17). *Best Picture winner 'Moonlight' is a window into Florida's past*. Time. https://time.com/4684596/moonlight-florida-history/

Capó, J., Jr. (2017). *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940*. University of North Carolina Press.

Capó, Jr., J. (2020, June 1). *The police chief who inspired Trump's tweet glorifying violence*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/01/police-chief-who-inspired-trumps-tweet-glorifying-violence/

Capó, J., Jr., & Friedman, R. (2021). Why we need a Miami School of Urbanism. The Metropole: The Official Blog of the Urban History Association. https://themetropole.blog/2021/03/31/why-we-need-a-miami-school-of-urbanism/

Capó, J., Jr., & Gillespie, T. (2022, September 14). The 'Florida Man' is notorious. Here's where the meme came from. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2022/09/14/florida-men-are-notorious-heres-where-meme-came/

Castillo, T. (2022). *Working in the Magic City: Moral economy in early twentieth-century Miami*. University of Illinois Press.

Caswell, M., Douglas, J., Chow, J., Bradshaw, R., Mallick, S., Karthikeyan, N., Jules, B., Solis, G., Field, J., Robinson, M., Gonzales, P., Rodriguez, K., Saldaña Perez, J. A., & Robinson-Sweet, A. (2021). *"Come correct or don't come at all:" Building more equitable relationships between archival studies scholars and community archives* [White paper]. UCLA. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7v00k2qz

Caves, R. W. (2004). *Encyclopedia of the city*. Routledge.

CBS Miami. (2019, February 18). *Trump confronts Maduro regime in strong-worded speech from Miami's FIU campus* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUMB1k09IZs

Connolly, N. D. B. (2014). *A world more concrete: Real estate and the remaking of Jim Crow South Florida*. University of Chicago Press.

Crooks N., & Mills, M. (2022, May 24). Miami Mayor Suarez tells Davos he still takes salary in bitcoin. *Bloomberg*. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-24/miami-mayor-suarez-tells-davos-he-still-takes-salary-in-bitcoin

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Cugat, X.; Valdes M.; Stokes, L.; Pola, E; Steininger, Fl; Waldorf-Astoria Orchestra; Cugat Chorus. (1941) ¡Viva Roosevelt! [Song]. Columbia. Retrieved from http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpanther/items/itemdetail?bibid=FIDA007104&vid=00001

De Palma, Brian. (1983). *Scarface*. Universal Pictures.

Feito, M. (2022, September 1). Hurricane Andrew changed preparedness forever. *WLRN*. https://www.wlrn.org/news/2022-09-01/hurricane-andrew-changed-preparedness-forever

FIU Libraries. (2022a). *The Díaz-Ayala Cuban and Latin American Popular Music Collection*. https://diazayalacollection.fiu.edu/

FIU Libraries. (2022b). *Operation Pedro Pan*. https://library.fiu.edu/c.php?g=160117&p=1048033

García, B. (2020, October 13). *Oral history interview with Brian Garcia*. Interviewed by Goldberg, L. dPanther Digital Collections Repository; Jewish Museum of Florida. http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI22032101/00023

Gave, M. (2022, April 26). Call me Peter: 50 years of Pedro Zamora at World AIDS Museum. *OutClique*. https://www.outclique.com/call-me-peter-50-years-of-pedro-zamora-at-world-aids-museum/

Gomel, B. (2022, February 25). *Oral History Interview with Bob Gomel*. Interviewed by Colyer, J. dPanther Digital Collections Repository; The Historic Hampton House Museum and Cultural Center. http://dpanther.fiu.edu/dpService/dpPurlService/purl/FI22051200/00001

González v. Douglas, 269F.Supp.3d 948, (D. Ariz. 2017). https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/23/us/document-Gonzalez-v-Douglas.html

Gottlieb, W. P. (1947, July). Portrait of Machito and Graciella Grillio, Glen Island Casino, New York, N.Y., ca July 1947 [Photograph]. Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/gottlieb.13791/

Green, N. (2019, November 4). As seas rise, Miami's black communities fear displacement from the high ground. *WLRN*. https://www.wlrn.org/news/2019-11-04/as-seas-rise-miamis-black-communities-fear-displacement-from-the-high-ground

Green, S. (2017, January 30). Tracing black racial and spatial politics in South Florida via memory. *Journal of Urban History*, *44*(6), 1176-1196. https://doi.org/10.1177/0096144216688467

Hu-DeHart, E. (1993, September). The history, development, and future of ethnic studies. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, *75*(1), 50–54. https://www.jstor.org/stable/20405023

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Larsen, C. (2010, August 27). Swoons Over Miami. *Foreign Policy*. https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/08/27/swoons-over-miami/

Levine, R. M. (1993). *Tropical diaspora: The Jewish experience in Cuba*. University Press of Florida.

Mas, C. (2022). *Culture in the clinic: Miami and the making of modern medicine*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Peña, S. (2013). *¡Oye loca!: From the Mariel boatlift to gay Cuban Miami*. University of Minnesota Press.

Pérez, F. M. (2016, December 11). *The crucifixion of Colored Town: Mass incarceration in Miami* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8OlRySjAco

Portes, A. (2020, October 16). A tale of three cities: The rise of Dubai, Singapore, and Miami compared. *Sustainability*, *12*(20), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12208566

Read, G. (2009). Many Miamis: The theatre of public space. In A. T. Shulman. (Ed.), *Miami modern metropolis: Paradise and paradox in midcentury architecture and planning*, (pp. 103–123). Balcony Press.

Rose, C. N. (2015). *The struggle for black freedom in Miami: Civil rights and America's tourist paradise, 1896–1968*. Louisiana State University Press.

Sassen, S. (2002). *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (2nd ed.). Princeton University Press.

Society of American Archivists. (n.d.). Postcustodial. In *Dictionary of Archives Terminology*. Retrieved August 20, 2022 from https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/postcustodial.html

Sutton, J. (2000, November 22). Miami-Dade narrows hand recount in presidential election. *CNN*. https://www.cnn.com/2000/ALLPOLITICS/stories/11/22/election.miami.reut/index.html

Turner, J. (1988). The Mixed Legacy of the Chicago School of Sociology. *Sociological Perspectives*, *31*(3), 325-338. https://doi.org/10.2307/1389202

Venturi. R., Scott Brown, D., & Izenour, S. (1972). *Learning from Las Vegas*. MIT Press.

Xavier Cugat and His Orchestra. (1958). Miami Beach rumba [Song]. On *Cugat Cavalcade*. Columbia.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943

Katie L. Coldiron (kcoldiro@fiu.edu) is the Digital Archivist of the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab at Florida International University. She holds an M.S. in Information Studies from the University of Texas at Austin and an M.A. in Latin American Studies from the University of Florida. Her research and professional interests include Latin America and the Caribbean (with emphasis on Cuba and Colombia), South Florida, digital humanities, public-facing scholarship, and postcustodial partnerships. She is also a PhD student in FIU's Department of History.

Julio Capó, Jr., Ph.D. (jcapo@fiu.edu) is Deputy Director of the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab and Associate Professor of History at Florida International University. He is a transnational historian with a distinct emphasis on the United States' relationship with the Caribbean and Latin America. Capó's publications, grant-funded projects, curated exhibitions, and other public-facing works heavily focus on recovering voices and stories that have, by design, been systematically erased or marginalized. His first book, *Welcome to Fairyland: Queer Miami before 1940* (UNC Press, 2017), received five book awards. It highlights how transnational forces—especially migration, trade, and tourism to and from the Caribbean—shaped Miami's queer past. A former journalist, his work has also appeared in *Time*, *CNN*, and *The Washington Post*, where he now serves as an editor for its Made by History section.

ISSN 2574-3430, jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/index
DOI: 10.33137/ijidi.v6i4.38943