

Lunchtime Lecture

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Prof. Kathryn Tomasek, PhD

Professor of History, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts

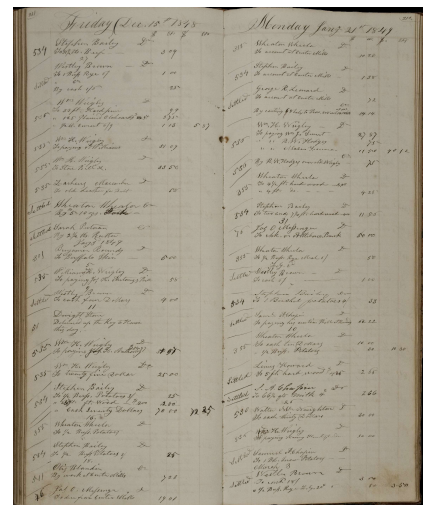
People, Things, and Services in Historical Accounting Data: Collaborations involving TEI/XML, RDF, and GAMS

Abstract

Historical accounting records, a genre of manuscript document that can be encoded in TEI/XML, can be a rich source about local social and economic relationships in the past as well for comparative purposes. With the Digital Edition Publication Cooperative for Historical Accounts (DEPCHA), documentary editors and developers in the United States collaborated with digital humanists at the Zentrum für Informationsmodellierung at the University of Graz to apply a bookkeeping ontology to accounts from the early United States.

The main use cases for this project were the Financial Papers of George Washington, accounting records from a store on the Stagville Plantation in North Carolina, and a day book kept by Laban Morey Wheaton, a businessman who kept a dry goods store in Norton, Massachusetts, between 1828 and 1859.

This presentation focuses on the Wheaton Day Book as a use case for applying the TEI @ana attribute to mark information about transfers of goods, services, and money as part of a workflow for creating linkable data using WikiData and OpenRefine. Since the currency, goods, and services exchanged had contextual meaning in nineteenth-century New England that might be obscure to present-day researchers, future work will focus on mapping information from Historical Statistics of the United States, a long-standing project in U.S. economic history, to the taxonomies based on the digital editions of the primary sources.



Kathryn Tomasek is Professor of History at Wheaton College in Massachusetts and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Text Encoding Initiative Consortium. She has received multiple awards for research on markup of historical accounting records, from the National Endowment for the Humanities in the United States, from the NEH and the DFG, and from the National Historic Records and Publications Commission and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. She has collaborated with Georg Vogeler and others on this work since 2015.