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# Building 9066 Archive into Wikipedia: A Case Study of Digital Scholarship, History and Activism at Fresno State

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## Abstract

On February 19, 1942, U.S President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed and issued the Executive Order 9066 to create designated military zones that would lead to internment camps for Japanese Americans. From February 1942 to March 1946, the United States incarcerated and relocated over 100,000 Japanese-American civilians into internment camps during the height of World War II. This kind of atrocity and mistreatment of Japanese Americans created an enormous trauma in U.S. history. Fresno County, a county in Central California was one of the cities that had many internment camps.

To remember this part of history (in the 71st anniversary), Fresno State's Special Collections Research Center (SCRC) launched a public exhibition called 9066 from February 9 to April 30, 2017. The exhibit commemorates the searing part of U.S. history. It showcased artifacts that were used or made in the campus in the display. The project also focused on preserving papers of Central Valley families who endured the internment period. Preserving these objects and ensuring that this is part of Fresno's history is not forgotten.

To build on this effort, SCRC partnered with the first year student success librarian to launch the first Wikipedia-Edit-A-Thon on this topic in March 2017. The Wikipedia workshop was opened to all community members. Participants created and edited Wikipedia entries by citing and using the content from the exhibitions and from archival materials. Participants were able to engage with historical sources, library reference materials and share their new knowledge of digital scholarship and activism. The purpose of this program was to bring community users interested in disseminating the library's efforts to commemorate 9066 and its aftermath. The exhibition included furniture to archival documents from internment camps that raised attention but also expanded the local history and genealogy of the victims of 9066.

This paper uses Fresno State as a case study to demonstrate how special collection materials and library exhibits can serve as important research materials to be shared, cited and preserved in an online space such as Wikipedia. The role of outreach and collaboration in creating community partnerships to support this kind of learning environment is evident in this Wikipedia-Edit-A-Thon. The event welcomed historians, scholars, students, researchers and the general public to engage with exhibit and the content. The paper will cover best practices to integrate special collection materials into Wikipedia; the paper will explore opportunities and challenges in hosting a Wikipedia-Edit-A-Thon event covering historical themes to engage with the community in digital scholarship and digital activism, and emphasizes how libraries, particularly the library's special collections and research services can

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add new value and knowledge into the web to preserve and share historical materials and traumas of this particular period.

**Keywords:** wikipedia, collaboration, outreach, special collections, reference, digital humanities