

PixStori and Material Collections

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Overview

How can historians incorporate community collaboration into the curation of material collections? My project explores this question with a sampling of the collections of the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly, North Carolina.

How could asking visitors to share their personal stories about these objects increase the information available to museum staff and increase their feeling of ownership in the museum itself?



Methods

- PixStori - a unique combination of photo sharing and verbal commenting that made it the only platform to use for this project
- Photos of a sampling of artifacts were uploaded to a collection and metadata from a previous digitization effort were added to individual item pages
- The collection will be available on a kiosk within the museum's gallery where visitors can browse the artifacts and comment on an item's page with a personal story or information about that object and its significance

Discussion

PixStori proved to have many limitations on its ability to fulfill the collections management aspect of this project. Nevertheless, the platform can serve as a means of collecting stories linked directly to artifacts.

This project demonstrates that the question of community co-curation of material collections should be considered further. Future projects should aim to incorporate community knowledge into the process in a way that elevates it to equal importance with more technical metadata, deepening the reality of a shared authority between museum staff and community members.

