

**MUJERES ESPIRITISTAS
EN PUERTO RICO
(1880-1920)**

CLARA ROMÁN-ODIO, PHD



**SPIRITISM by PUERTO RICAN WOMEN:
FROM REMARKABLE PIONEERS TO
CONTEMPORARY HEIRS**

**Prof. Clara Román-Odio
GLCA Center for Teaching and Learning
December 2, 2021**

***Fiat Lux* (1915)**

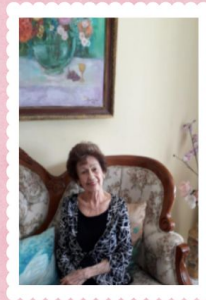
**Spiritist Assembly, Variedades Theater
Bayamón, P.R., July 3-5, 1915**

Research Focus



Remarkable Pioneers (1880-1920)

Research Focus

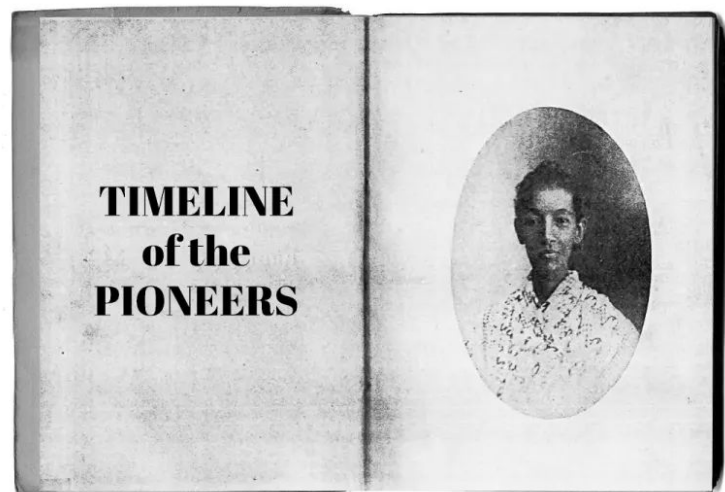


Contemporary Heirs

Origin of the Study

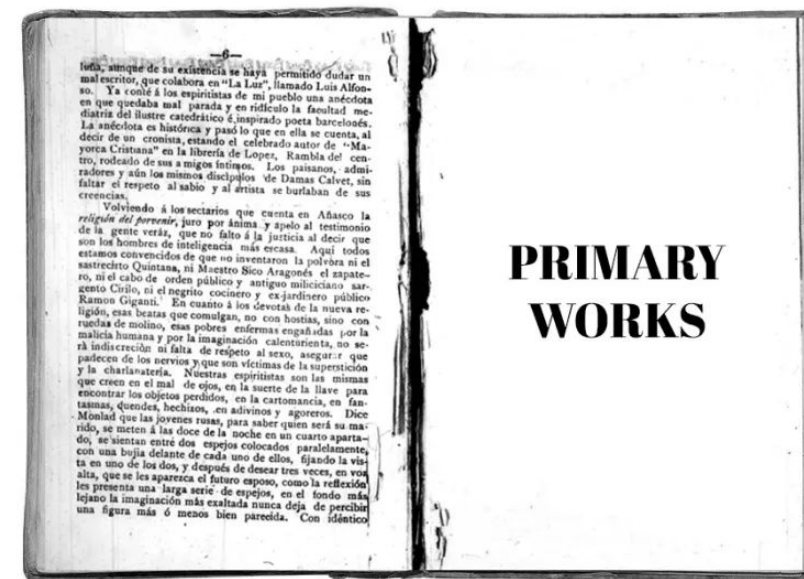


My family (1965)

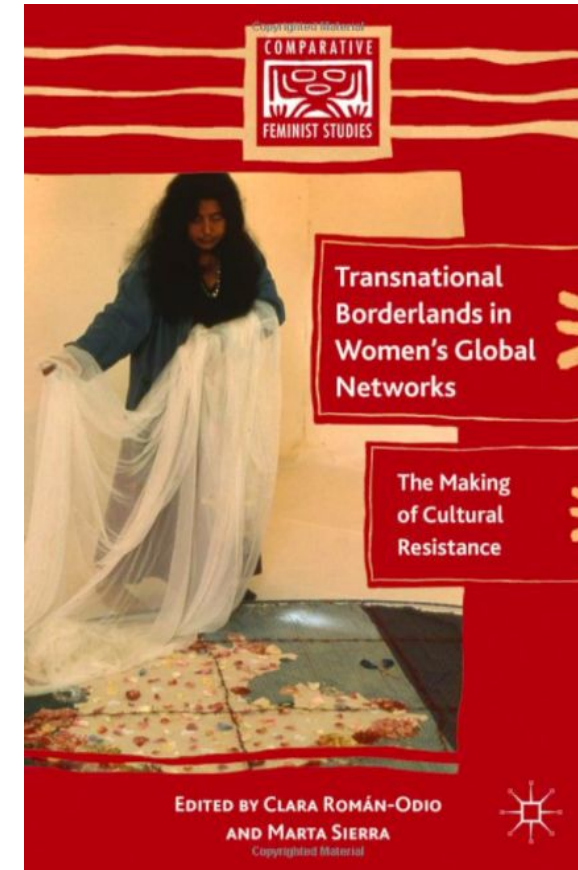
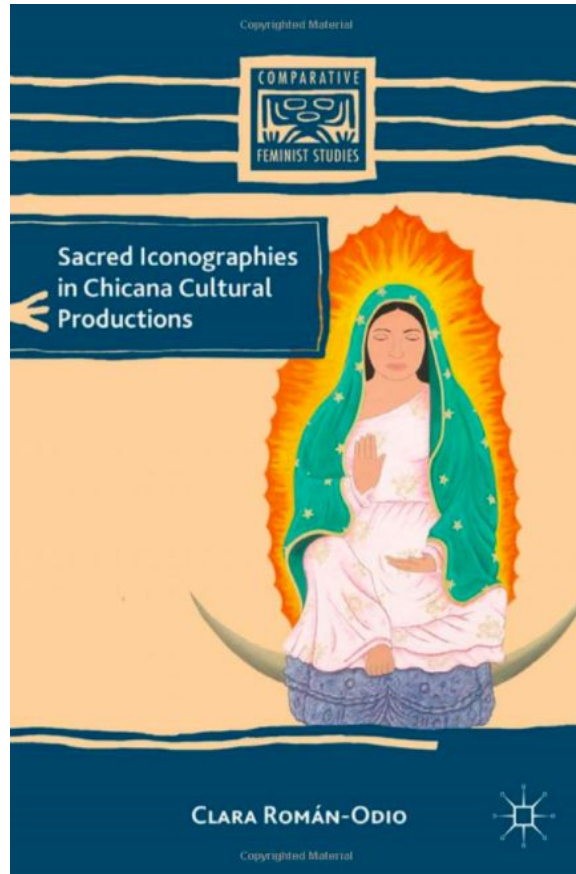


Origin of the Study

What did I find, initially?




The Theme of Spirituality & Women

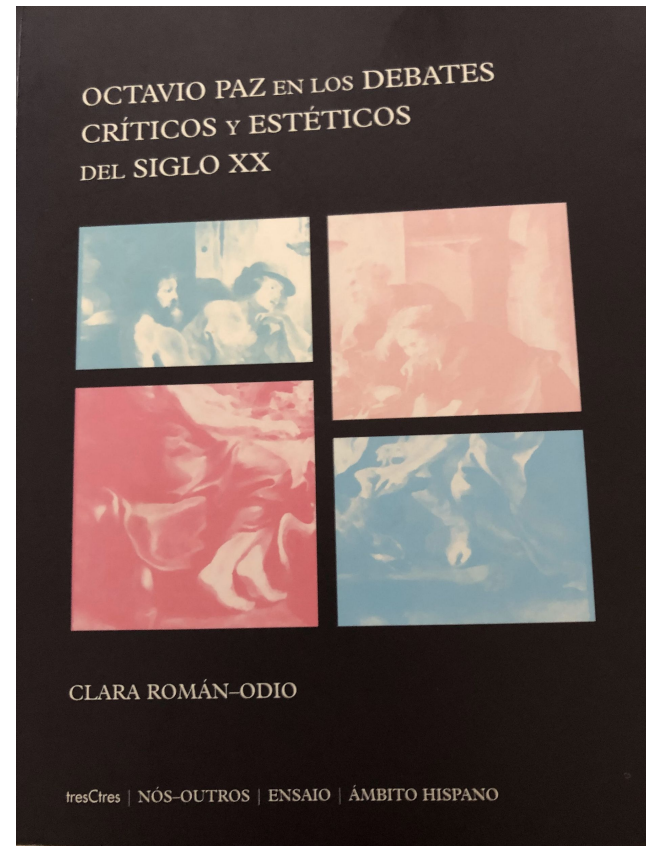




Methods

- Based on historical research
 - Focuses on analysis of the primary works
 - To trace power dynamics, I ask:
 - Who speaks in the text and with what purpose?
 - How do these texts challenge dominant social narratives?
 - How does literature change as an institution?
 - Oral history
 - Pedagogies with communal reciprocity
- 

How are texts constructed and how do they connect with other narratives in society?





Outcomes

Digital Bilingual Collection

<https://espritistaspr.kenyoncip.org/en/>



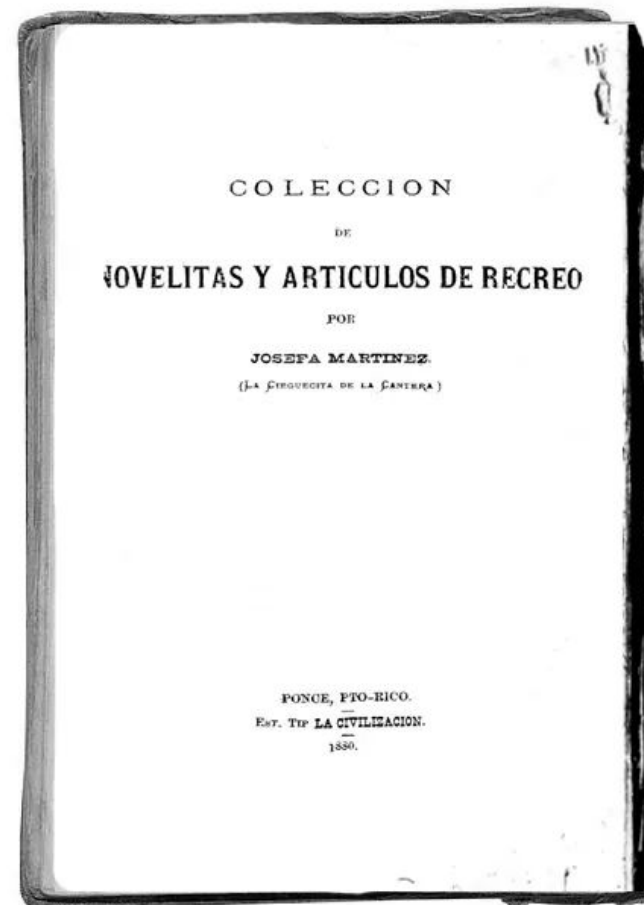
MUJERES ESPIRITISTAS EN PUERTO RICO (1880-1920)

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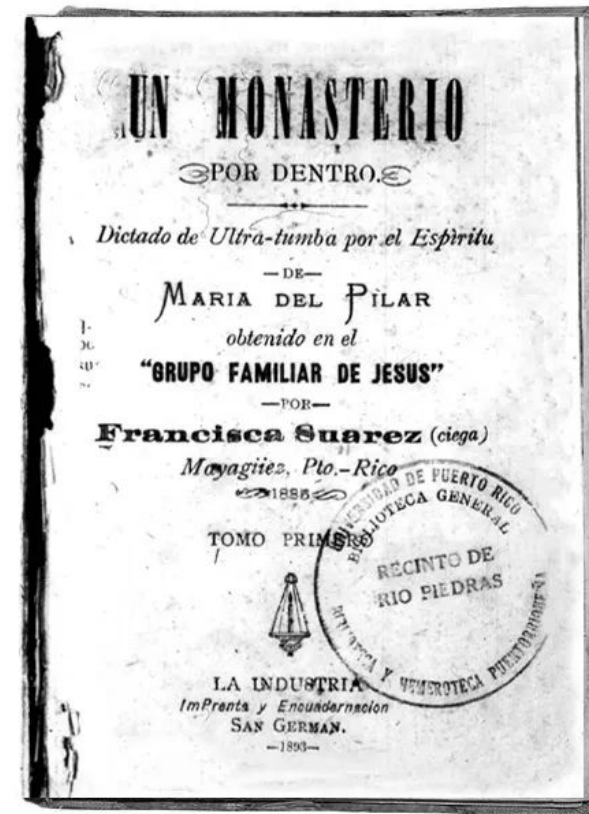


Origin and Content of the Book

Josefa Martínez Torres (1862-1881)



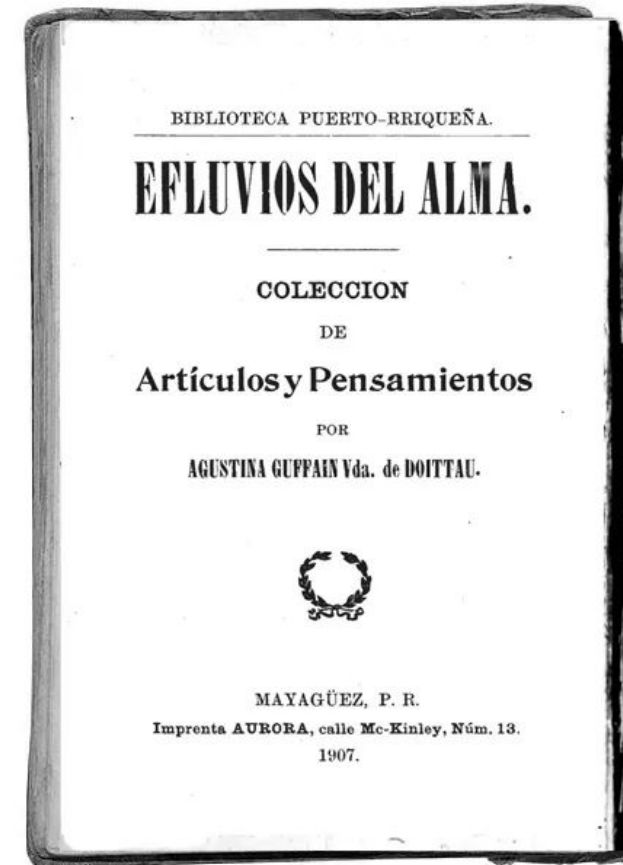
Francisca Suárez González (1861-1925)



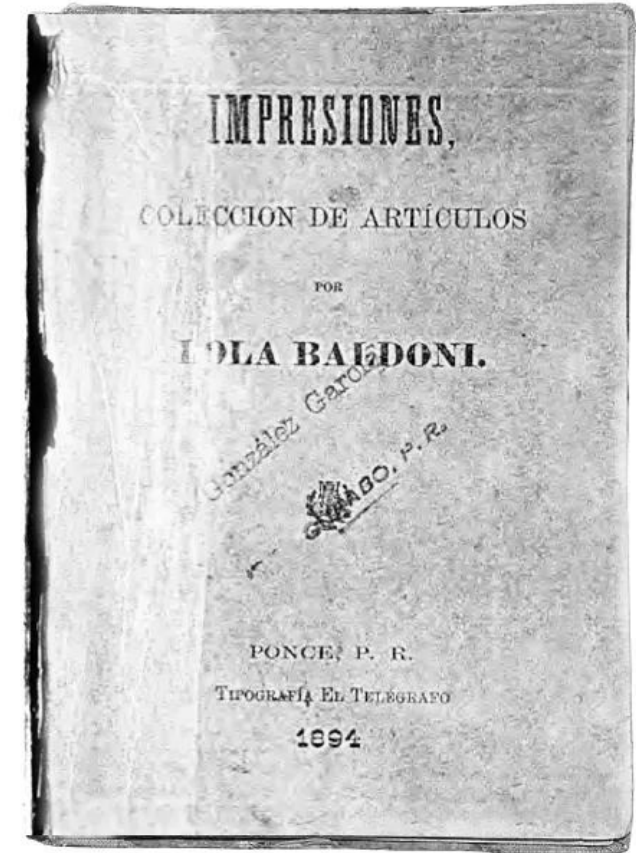
Simplicia Armstrong de Ramú (1863-1909)



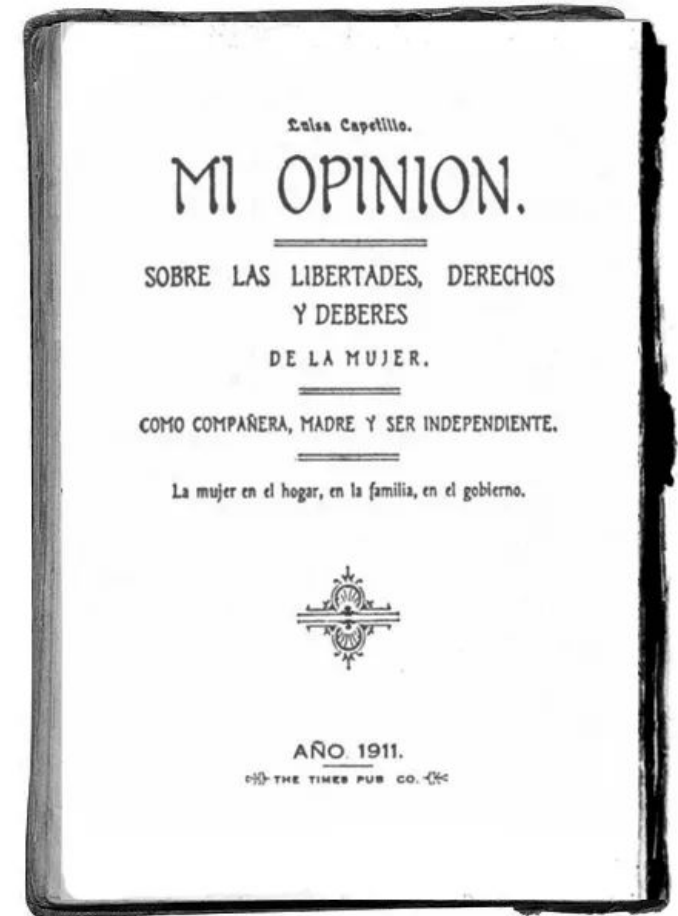
Agustina Guffain Vda. de Doittau (1870-1929)



Lola Baldoni Pérez (1871-1939)



Luisa Capetillo Perón (1879-1922)



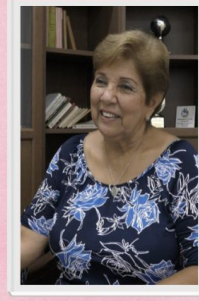
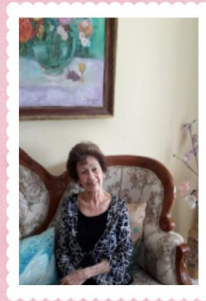
Guillermina Massanet (1892-1994)



Clara Cardona (1906-1988)



Part II. Epilogue: The Contemporary Heirs



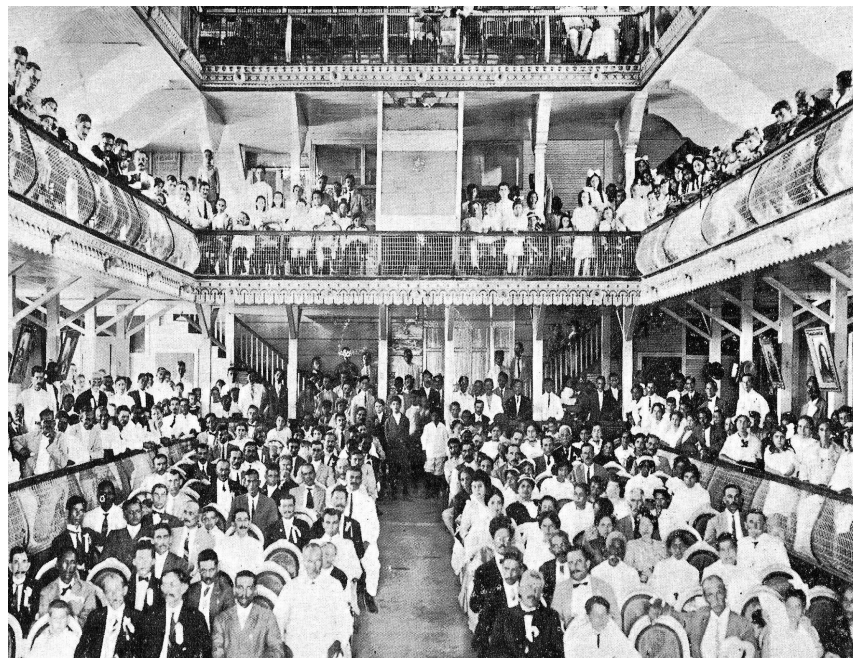


Part II. Epilogue: The Contemporary Heirs

- Do they continue the legacy of the pioneers?
- How have they adapted Spiritism to the present day?
- <https://espiritistaspr.kenyoncip.org/es/historias-oraes/>



Findings of the Study





Findings of the Study

1. Spiritism is a philosophy that studies, proposes and demonstrates that there exists a relationship between human Spirits who are disembodied and Spirits in the flesh (like you and me).
2. From that relationship a teaching is received and codified into a moral philosophy that affirms:
 - gender equality,
 - social justice, and
 - personal responsibility for the transformation of the human consciousness.






Findings of the Study

3. This code offered our women pioneers a conceptual framework that enables freedom of thought to observe their society critically and transform it, culturally and socially.

4. The textual reality that my book analyzes demonstrates that our Puerto Rican pioneer spiritists conceived and put into practice feminist ideas about gender relations, social justice, and women rights that precede by decades ideas that in the 60s were considered feminist innovations.






Findings of the Study

- These were extraordinary women who faced the complete oppression of women, considered inferior by law and religion.
- Daughters of a colonial, patriarchal, and misogynistic system; without voice or vote
- They fought for their rights and the rights of those most oppressed.
- Women who thought and acted with freedom and who placed the issue of women's emancipation in their own hands





Learnings

1. The project was a vehicle that reconnected me with my personal roots and my homeland.
 2. The archival research gave me the extraordinary opportunity to rescue those valuable texts and share them with interested readers.
 3. The power of true collaboration, where we all offer our best gifts to get benefits for all
 4. The preservation and inclusiveness that digital technologies allow are immensely valuable to me because they affirm an essential academic principle: the indiscriminate cultivation of knowledge for the good and benefit of all.
 5. At a personal level, this work has transformed how I view time and freedom; it returned me, in its most pragmatic dimension, to the ideas of free will and personal responsibility. These ideas will guide me as never before.
- 



digital.kenyon.edu



Jenna Nolt (she/her)
Digital Initiatives Librarian



From Front to Back: Designing for Archiving

- Built on a successful history of collaborations, working together from the start
- Project design was essential to the success of the archive:
 - Collecting and backing up interview and photo data as created
 - Scanning fragile archival data
 - Sharing project data online
 - Managing collaborator contributions within existing structures
- No software is designed for this kind of project, so workflows have to be





Can We Break it?!

- Hosted in Digital Kenyon (digital.kenyon.edu) on Digital Commons platform
- First fully bilingual collection in Digital Kenyon
- Designed around the women of Spiritism rather than content format
- Behind the archive, the tech stack:
 - Using TimelineJS for navigation
 - Project management in Google Drive
 - Captioning and transcription





In Retrospect

- Flexibility is essential to the success of a project like this (especially during a pandemic!)
- Communication needs to be continuous
- Bilingual is hard, technically and people-wise
- This project was successful and rewarding, but also intensive. Important to be realistic about needed investment of time, technology, and funds
- Relationships are the foundation of collaborative projects



Digital Media Creation Support

- Preliminary Planning for Digital Media Creation
- Ongoing Discussion, Workshopping with Clara and Students
- Educational Technology and Digital Media Creation Workshops for Students
- Technical Oversight of Students



Ashley Butler (she/her)

Digital Media Instructional Technologist

Digital Media Creation Support

- Preliminary Planning for Digital Media Creation
 - Selecting appropriate platforms for creation and administering accounts
 - Advising on visual artifact collection (resolutions, formats, etc.)
 - Advising on content as needed (i.e. how to organize and consolidate information for digital media objects)
 - Discussing timelines, goals, and deadlines



Sofia found this one!



Digital Media Creation Support

- Ongoing Discussion and Workshopping with Clara and Students
 - Attended weekly faculty/student meetings, as needed, from September 2019 to February 2020
 - E-mail workshopping with students about production value & troubleshooting
 - Overall point person for all things technical when it came to digital media creation





Digital Media Creation Support

- Educational Technology and Digital Media Creation Workshops for Students
 - WeVideo Training (January 2020)
 - Digital Storytelling Training (January 2020)*
 - Captioning Training (February 2020)
 - Digital Storytelling Workshop with StoryCenter*

*Sofia only; Scout already had extensive Digital Storytelling training through her participation in Clara's SPAN

381: First Gen and Latinx Experiences course – See: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/celspan381videos/4/>





Lessons Learned

- I agree with Jenna here—history of successful collaborations was a great starting point and both workflow and faculty ownership was everything
- Every single person was pivotal in their own way to the success of this project
- Internal labor vs outsourced labor...when can we spare the labor, when should we outsource?
- Tools aren't always compatible – building in time to find workarounds and alternate tools to complete a task is necessary





Joe Murphy (he/him)
Director of the Center for
Innovative Pedagogy

Kenyon

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Digital Storytelling Grants

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Digital Storytelling Initiative

A Mellon-supported program to increase faculty members' experience with teaching and communicating scholarship through digital narratives, and to increase Kenyon's ability to support them.






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Including

- Bridge funding for staff
 - Project Funds
 - Summer Digital Scholars
 - Digital Storytelling Summer Workshops
- 

Q & A

Thank you!

