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San Francisco Changemakers: A PCC Wikidata Pilot Project

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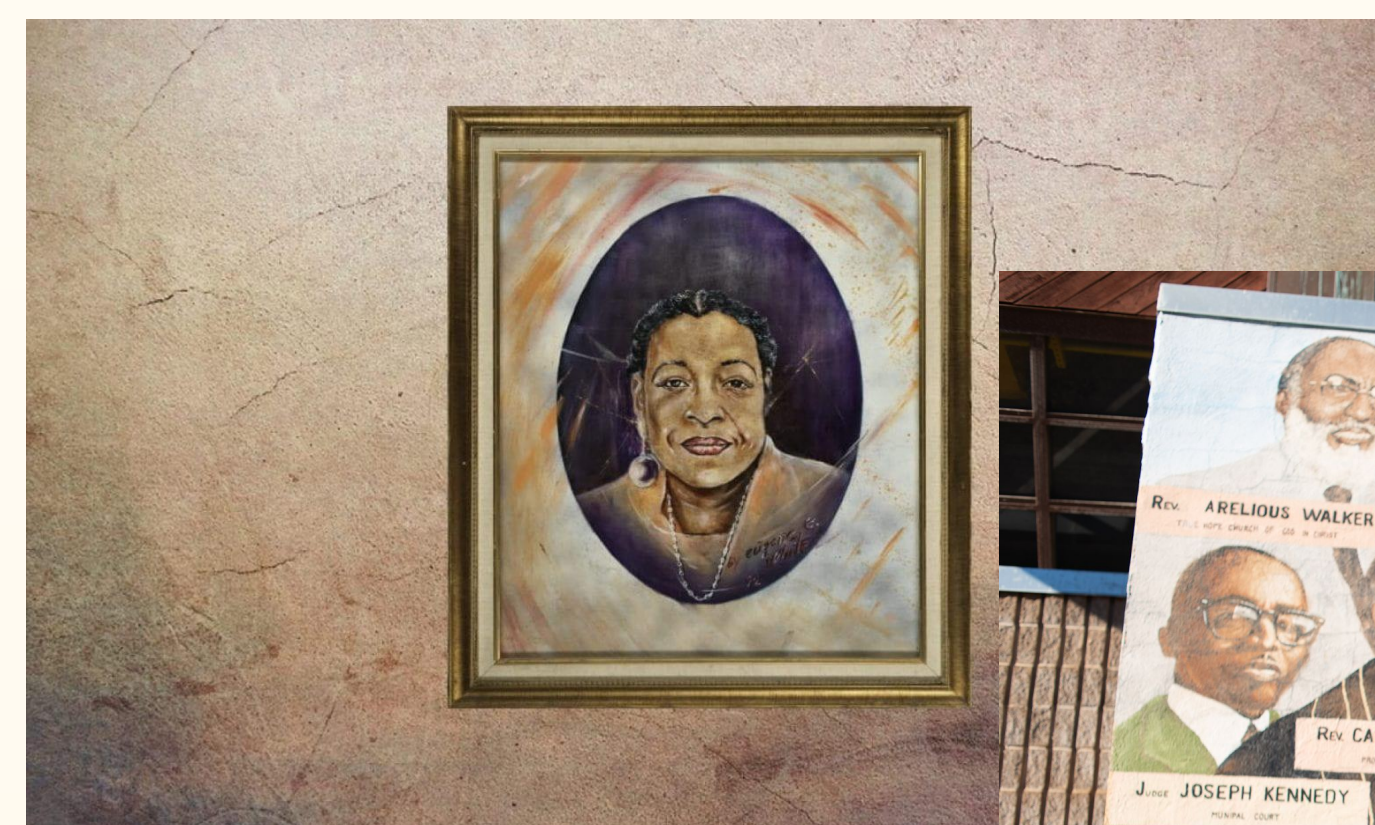**UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO** | Gleeson Library | Geschke Resource Center

Linked Data Working Group: Elisa Rodrigues, Gina Solares, Annie Reid, Debbie Benrubi, Justine Withers

Inspired by the 96 people whose images appear on San Francisco's Ella Hill Hutch Community Center murals, students in the University of San Francisco Martín-Baró Scholars and Esther Madríz Diversity Scholars programs (2015-2019) wrote and edited *Changemakers: Biographies of African Americans in San Francisco Who Made a Difference.* The biographies within celebrate Black excellence and honor the legacies of African American educators, community activists, politicians, sports figures, pastors, doctors, entertainers, artists, and parents in San Francisco.

In 2020, the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) issued a call for participation in a pilot project to explore Wikidata community practices and establish relationships between Wikidata and library authority files. We chose to create or enhance Wikidata items for the 96 persons listed in the Changemakers book and created a project webpage. The list gave us a discrete set of identities and offered the potential to tie into existing Wikimedia/Wikipedia projects/articles and collaborate with campus centers and students.

Photograph of Southeast corner of the Inspiration murals by Brian Brooks @underdogfilmlab

Changemakers Book Cover: Portrait of Ella Hill Hutch, painted by Eugene E. White, 1992.

Goals

❑ Create and enhance Wikidata items and related entries in authority repositories representing local people, places, and events of significance to USF, with an emphasis on underrepresented communities
❑ Increase staff capacity and understanding of linked open data models and practices
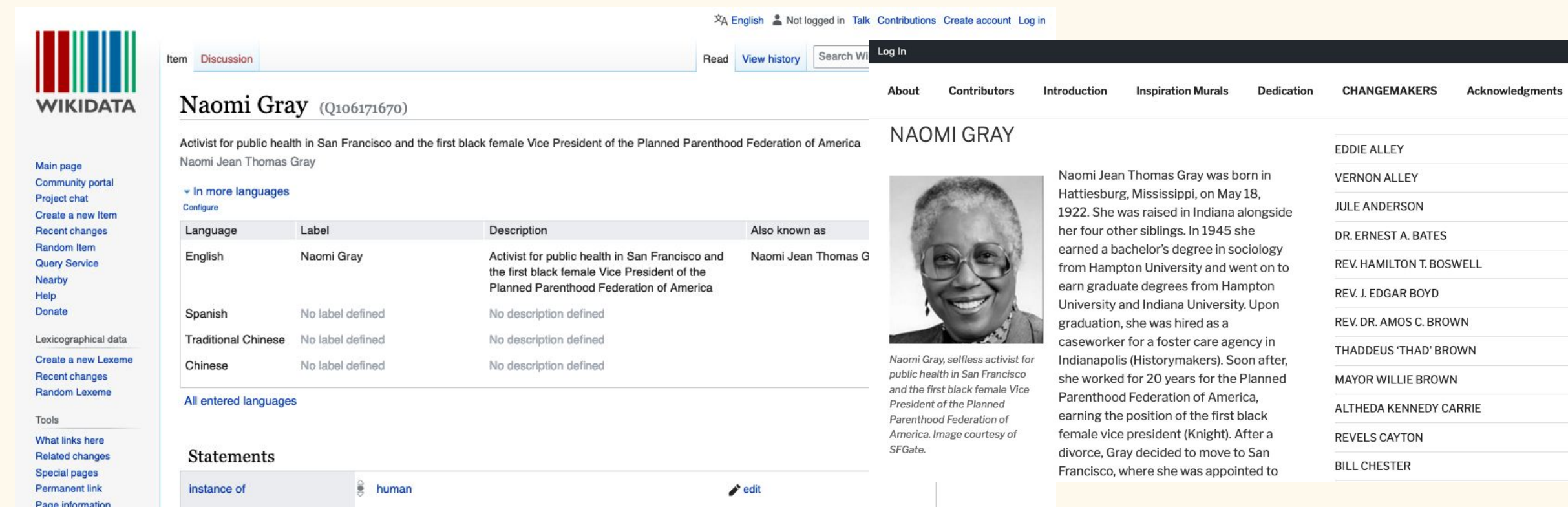❑ Explore the opportunities that Wikidata offers for creating new and more flexible workflows for authority control

Workflows

Deliberately and thoughtfully matched biography characteristics to entity schema:
❑ Developed a list of "required" properties, adapted from Wikidata:WikiProject Archives Linked Data Interest Group/Describing People
❑ As resources allowed, we added further "optional" properties such as occupation (P106), educated at (P69), notable work (P800), field of work (P101), or residence (P551) for example
❑ Created additional Wikidata items for references and related entities as needed

Challenges

❑ Collating from multiple sources Wikidata community norms for property usage
❑ Inconsistency in community standards, definitions, and use of similar properties
❑ Conflicting information found in varying reference sources
❑ Representing the unique, notable biographical aspects of each person using the available Wikidata properties
❑ No direct way to represent a person in Changemakers "first in their field" status. Wikidata editors discussed a "historic first" property proposal in 2019, but it was not adopted by Wikidata editors

Reflections

❑ Data and description are not neutral and we need to consider our positionality and biases in the language and properties we choose to use in Wikidata items
❑ Property:P21 sex or gender posed issues for our working group around preference and authority and we created a statement on why it was not used to describe the people in Changemakers
❑ The need to consider carefully the purpose and potential outcomes when creating open, linked data about people

Perceived Impact

❑ Potential for exploitation and harm when adding data representing historically marginalized communities. Who does the data represent and who will be using that data?
❑ Since most people in Changemakers would be considered 'out of scope' for LCNAF, and might not meet Wikipedia "notability" criteria, adding them to Wikidata might provide more visibility
❑ Potential for increased interest and visibility of USF scholarship

Future Steps

❑ Community review process for creating new Wikidata properties that could better capture the work and lives of the people in Changemakers
❑ Repurpose Wikidata items as "lite" authority records
❑ Add Inspiration mural images to Wikimedia Commons
❑ Test our workflow on a similar project, like student work for the Fillmore Activist Project and other USF collections

Current Projects Overview [edit]

Project name	Description	Status	Related queries
	Projects in progress or planning at Gleeson Library		
SF Changemakers	Creating or enhancing items representing the people described in Changemakers: African American Leaders in San Francisco Who Made a Difference (Q99756434)	in progress	Changemakers query · Listeria list
Wasmann Journal of Biology	Creating wikidata items for the articles and authors represented in the Wasmann Journal of Biology (1950-1996)	1950-1977 complete	Scholia display · Listeria list
USF Archival Collections Enhancement	Adding "archives at" property to items for people and organizations for which USF holds an archival collection	planning	Archived at USF
USF Employees LCNAF Enhancement	Adding Library of Congress authority ID (P244) identifiers to people currently or formerly employed at USF	Status April 2021: 298 items in wikidata; 56% (166) LCNAF ID added; 44% (132) no LCNAF ID	People employed by USF at any time with no LCNAF
USF Faculty Enhancement	Adding or enhancing Wikidata items for USF Faculty	planning	Employed at USF · Listeria list

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❑ PCC Wikidata Pilot organizers and participants

University of San Francisco Martín-Baró Scholars and Esther Madríz Diversity Scholars (Eds.). (2019). Changemakers: African Americans in San Francisco Who Made a Difference. University of San Francisco. Retrieved from https://repository.usfca.edu/mccarthy_stu/4/

Ibid. (n.d.) Changemakers: African Americans in San Francisco Who Made a Difference. Retrieved from https://usfblogs.usfca.edu/sfchangemakers/

Reid, A., Benrubi, D., Rodrigues, E., Solares, G., and Withers, J. (2021) Wikidata:WikiProject PCC Wikidata Pilot/University of San Francisco. Retrieved from https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Wikidata:WikiProject_PCC_Wikidata_Pilot/University_of_San_Francisco

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