

Findings of Texas

Exploring Linked Data by Mapping Places, Events and People

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Background

The Buildings of Texas project has transformed the way our team from the University of Texas Libraries (UTL) thinks about **place, people, and events** in managing **archival collections**.

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Data were collected by a team of researchers studying architecturally significant buildings for the two-volume publication, **Buildings of Texas**. The research materials were donated by architectural historians, Gerald Moorhead and Mario Sánchez, to the **Alexander Architectural Archives**. Naming ambiguities, vague building location descriptions, and repeated references to people and architectural firms that were difficult to interpret and interconnect were among some of the challenges we faced.

We have used this dataset as a test-bed for exploring data models, geolocating built works in Texas, and mapping our Architectural collections as we develop **map-based digital exhibitions** and **finding aids** for archival material.

Methods

We explored a variety of data models as we moved from a flat spreadsheet into a collection of inter-related datasets.

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We needed to be able to **manage** this dataset flexibly, to move easily between **spatial** and **non-spatial** visualizations, and to refer to concepts and typologies defined in **widely-used ontologies**.

We are contributing our data to both the **Getty vocabularies** and **Wikidata**, as a means to broaden representation and allow for multivocality and multiplicity. We have purposely challenged traditional modes of archival description, being mindful of contributing to but also looking beyond perceived authorities

Results

We turned address information contained in the dataset into coordinate pairs through **geocoding**.

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We spent an **enormous amount of energy** moving from a collection of spreadsheets, through **OpenRefine**, to a relational database implemented in a geodatabase within **PostgreSQL**. Along the way we experimented with document (MongoDB) and graph database (Neo4J) technologies and learned a ton.

RDBMS technologies turned out to be much easier for **mapping and managing** the data with GIS software, though the graph data model was more expressive of the **linkages and interconnectedness** of the people, places, and events in the data.

Future Work

This project has launched broader efforts to geolocate and map our architectural collections. We look forward to deepening the connections between the people, places, events, and artifacts in other archival collections at UT Libraries.

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Additional Contributors

We are building on the work of Gerald Moorhead, Mario Sanchez, and a team who conducted research for *Buildings of Texas*. We are especially grateful to Grace Hansen, who began data cleanup and geocoding, and Irene Lule, who researched the use of GIS for architectural archives. We also want to thank the UT Libraries GIS stakeholder group, the UT Libraries IT developer team, and our colleagues at the Alexander Architectural Archives.

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Entry	Current Name	Historic/Original Name	Street Address	City	County	Zip	Date	Architect	Photo	Notes
AU1	Texas State Capitol		1111 St. at Congress Ave.	Austin	Travis	1888	1888	Elijah E. Myers	XSD	1882-1888
AU1m		Rolunda Lobby Floors				1936	1936	Jessen and Jessen	S	
AU1m		Capitol Restoration				1935	1935	Ford, Powell and Carson	S	
AU1	Capitol	Expansion				1993	1993	30/International	S	
AU2	Capitol Visitors Center	General Land Office Restoration	112 E. 11th St.	Austin	Travis	1856	1902	Conrad Strenne	X	
AU2m	Texas State Library and Archives			Austin	Travis	1961	1961	Adams and Adams		
AU2m		Restoration				2009	2009	Bailey Architects		
AU3	Dewitt C. Greer State Highway Building		E. 11th St. at Brazos St.	Austin	Travis	1933	1933	Adams and Adams	S	
AU4	Governor's mansion		11th St. at Colorado St.	Austin	Travis	1856	1856	Richard Payne, Abner Cook, bldg	X	
AU4m		Restoration				1948	1948	Jessen, Jessen, Millhouse and Greven		
AU4m		Restoration				1982	1982	Burson, Hendricks and Walls		
AU4m		Carriage house and improvements				1995	1995	Carter Design Associates		
AU4m		Rehabilitation				2008	2008	Vois and Associates		
AU4m		Restoration				2011	2011	Ford, Powell and Carson		
AU5	Westgate		1122 Colorado St.	Austin	Travis	1965	1965	Edward Durell Stone and Feis and Granger	S	
AU6	Travis County Courthouse		1000 Guadalupe Ave.	Austin	Travis	1930	1930	Page Brothers	S	
AU7	Central Christian Church		1110 Guadalupe St.	Austin	Travis	1928	1928	Robert L. White, Ralph Cameron, and Samuel C.P. Vosper	S	
AU8	Texas Supreme Court		200 W. 14th St.	Austin	Travis	1916	1916	Page/SutherlandPage,	S	

