

Appendix A Maria Wood Journal Assignment

History 230
U.S. Women's History to 1869
Wheaton College
Fall 2004

Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Project Assignments

Over the course of the semester, students will undertake a project that is part of a larger Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) currently underway in several liberal arts colleges in the United States. We will transcribe and edit the journal of Maria Wood, an ordinary white woman of the middle class and daughter of a minister, as a way to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of gender ideology, race, religion, education, work opportunities, and other elements in women's lives. We will spend portions of several class sessions on instruction for the TEI project.

Transcribing and tagging Maria Wood's journal will give students a new opportunity to learn about primary sources in the study of U.S. women's history. Primary sources, in the form of legal and political texts, speeches, interviews, and excerpts from letters and diaries, have always been an important part of this course. But students in this course have never before had the opportunity to encounter a handwritten primary source, transcribe and interpret it in the way they will this semester.

By participating in the digitization and encoding process, students in my classes will learn and hone many of the skills important both to a student of history and to a participant in Wheaton's new curriculum. By keying manuscripts into the computer, students will be learning and practicing their ability to read manuscripts. In encoding the text, students will necessarily have to think about them analytically, because encoding a document is analogous to creating a critical edition of it. Students will, therefore, improve their skills in reading and understanding primary sources and will learn the necessity of close reading for comprehending them.

In addition, this encoding project will provide students with the opportunity to experience the process of editing primary sources for broad distribution. This is an important process for History majors, in particular, to learn early in their careers at Wheaton, because it will prepare them for research projects that they will undertake in senior seminar. And this will make all students (regardless of their major) more sophisticated readers of such sources in print or on the Internet.

Finally, this project ties into the new curriculum by infusing technology into this course and by using materials focused on "issues pertaining to... people" (in this case, American women) who have been traditionally "neglected by Western scholarship."

Student assignment for TEI Project: Maria Wood Journal—Fall 2004

This project consists of four (4) steps, each of which includes interaction with the text of Maria Wood's journal and a written reflection on the process.

* Step 1: Transcription

- o Goal: To produce a digital transcription of a portion of the manuscript that represents the original as accurately as possible.
- o In addition to typing the words of the manuscript into a digital file, students will attend to such details as capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and such features as wormholes and inkblots.
- o Students will track the time spent on transcribing and checking the document.
- o Students will have access to scanned copies of the journal through the computers in the Woolley Electronic Classroom and hard copies of the pages they will transcribe.
- o Each student will submit a preliminary transcription to Kathryn Tomasek's electronic dropbox by noon on Friday, September 24.
- o Students will check their transcriptions and discuss the process in groups to be established in class on September 9.
- o Each student will submit a final transcription to Kathryn Tomasek's electronic dropbox by noon on Friday, October 1.
- o Each student will submit a short paper of 2-3 pages (500-750 words) about the process of transcription and checking, along with a statement of the time spent in the process. This paper is due in hard copy to Kathryn Tomasek's office, Knapton 323, by 5 p.m. on Monday, October 4.

* Step 2: Tagging Names, Dates, Places

- o Goal: To produce a digital copy of the Maria Wood Journal that has been tagged to identify dates, names, places, and organizations.
- o Students will receive a list of tags to use for dates, names, places, and organizations found in the journal.
- o Students will work in groups of three (3) to tag dates, names, places, and organizations found in sections of the journal to be assigned.
- o Students will track time spent on tagging the document.
- o Each group will submit their section of tagged text to Kathryn Tomasek's electronic dropbox by noon on Friday, October 29.
- o Each student will submit a short paper of 2-3 pages (500-750 words) about the process of tagging, along with a statement of the time spent in the process. This paper is due in hard copy to Kathryn Tomasek's office, Knapton 323, by 5 p.m. on Monday, November 1.

* Step 3: Interpretive Encoding

- o Goal: To produce a digital copy of the Maria Wood Journal that has been encoded to identify ideas about the history of women in the nineteenth-century United States.
- o A full copy of the text will be available to students in the Woolley Electronic Classroom by Tuesday, November 16.
- o Students will receive a list of interpretive tags for ideas from the course that may be found in the journal.
- o Students will work in groups of two or three (2 or 3) to tag these ideas in sections of the journal to be assigned.

- o Students will track time spent on encoding the document for interpretation.
- o Each group will submit their section of tagged text to Kathryn Tomasek's electronic dropbox by noon on Friday, December 3.
- o Each student will submit a short paper of 2-3 pages (500-750 words) about the process of tagging, along with a statement of the time spent in the process. This paper is due in hard copy to Kathryn Tomasek's office, Knapton 323, by 5 p.m. on Monday, December 6.

* Step 4: Written Analysis of Maria Wood Journal.

- o Goal: To give students an opportunity to reflect on and write about Maria Wood's journal in the context of historical ideas about women in the nineteenth-century United States.
- o Part of the final exam for this course will include a paper of 6-8 pages (1500-2000 words) about the relationship between the Maria Wood Journal and issues in the history of women in the nineteenth-century United States.
- o This paper should address such questions as the following:
 - + How does the Maria Wood Journal add to our understanding of the position of women in the United States by 1875?
 - + Does the Maria Wood Journal challenge historical ideas about women in the nineteenth-century United States?
 - + What issues of the course seem most important in light of the Maria Wood Journal?
 - + What issues of the course are not addressed in the Maria Wood Journal?