

## **The Garibaldi Panorama: A Tool and Source for Historical Research in the Digital Age.**

Since its arrival at Brown University, the Garibaldi Panorama has become a space for collaborative research between historians, art historians, historians of literature, and computer scientists. Because of its unique characteristic, the Garibaldi Panorama encourages cooperation and “peer production” among different scholars often motivated by different academic and research agendas.

This paper describes my experience with working on and researching the *Garibaldi Panorama*. In particular, I will talk about the work I am conducting on a series of four images that open the second side of the Panorama, describing the 1859 campaign of Giuseppe Garibaldi and the Cacciatori delle Alpi in Northern Italy.

In doing so, I also wish to discuss the implications of gathering and digitizing primary sources for the practice of historical research. In other words, I seek to address some of the broader epistemological questions arising from the encounter between humanities and computer science and its impact on the writing of history. Historians have always been data miners, except that for centuries they have relied on the “analog” work of amateurs, students, and volunteers to gather and sort primary sources. The confrontation with an object such as the Panorama Garibaldi in its digitized form inevitably calls for new tools and strategies for planning, thinking, and writing history.

Through the inclusion of letters and diaries, newspaper clippings, images and sounds, maps, and military and census records, the Garibaldi Panorama project also seeks to invigorate the debate on and about the Risorgimento and its discursive practices. At the same time, a project such as the Garibaldi Panorama wishes to enhance Risorgimento literacy and contribute rigorous scholarship in a time when the meaning and significance of national identity are the subject of heated debates both among historians and politicians.