About the Project

RICHES Mosaic Interface™ 3.0 *https://richesmi.cah.ucf.edu* is the interactive and innovative digital platform for the Regional Initiative for Collecting the History, Experiences, and Stories (RICHES™) of Central Florida, an interdisciplinary project housed in the History Department at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

The mission of RICHES MI is to enable users to:

- *Search* the database using natural language, tags, topics, and categories to maximize their search results
- *Analyze* the results of their search using the "Connections" module to show the relationship between the returned item and other items in the digital archive using a RICHES™-developed algorithm
- *Visualize* results through digital exhibits, map overlays, and visualizations
- *Learn* regional history and historical methods as teachers and students use the RICHES™-produced digital modules and source sets.

Combining multiple search and analytical tools in an interactive database offers a more effective approach to historical analysis and more closely approximates the process that historians traditionally use in research projects.
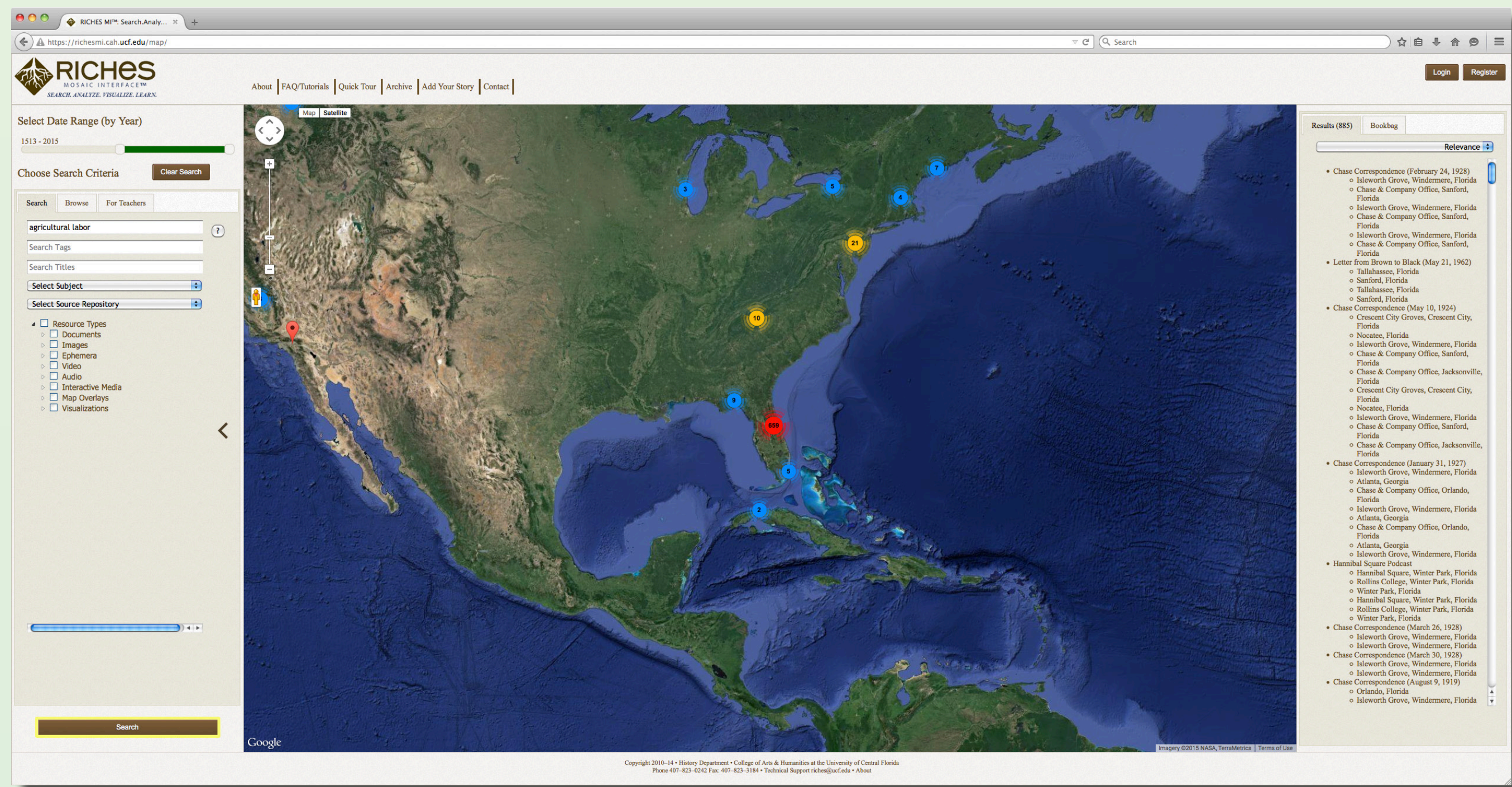
Search using date, text, tags, titles, subject, repository and resource type.

Interface Framework
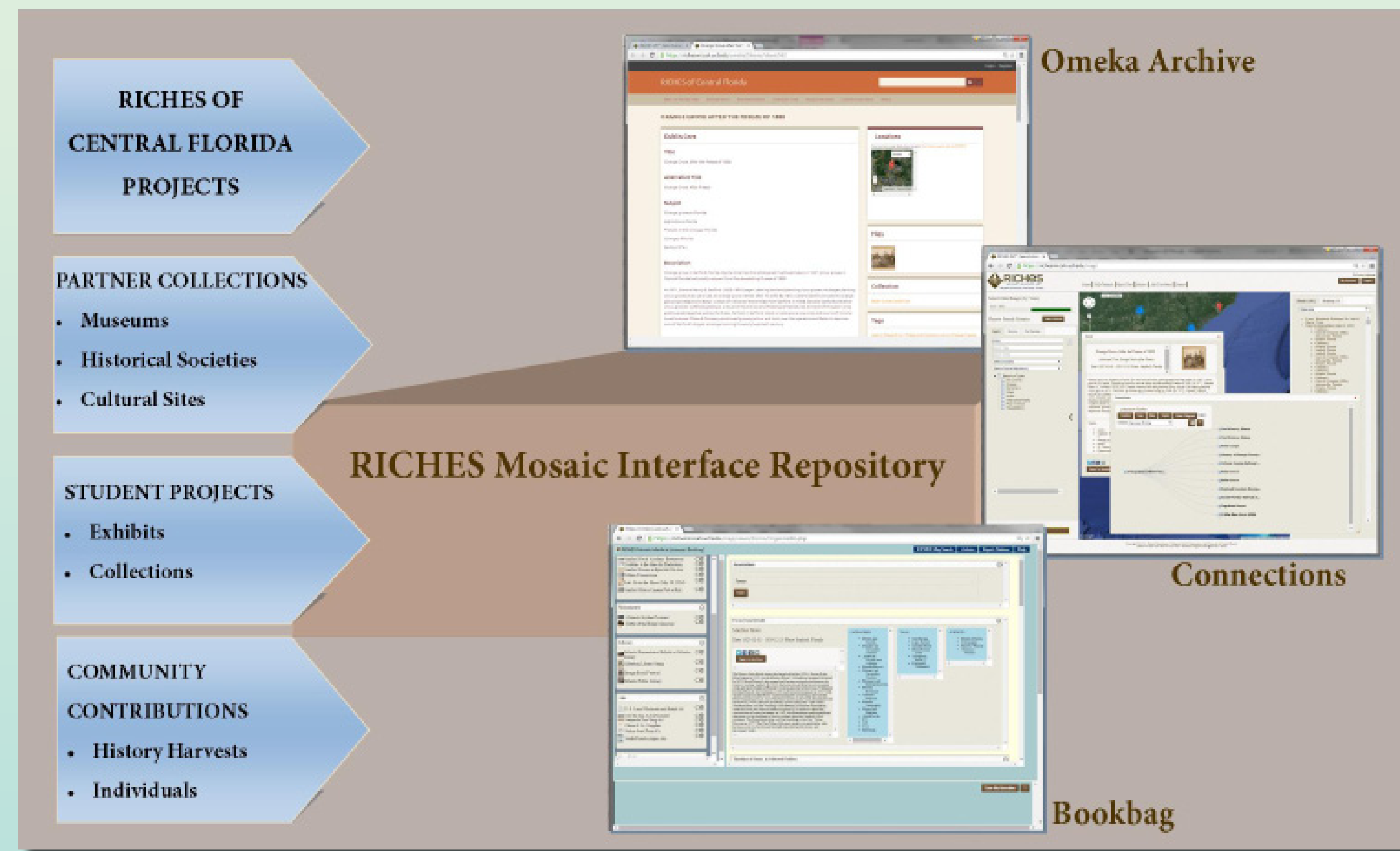
The repository consists of items added through projects, partner collections student exhibits/collections and community contributions. Users can view items in the archive, discover connections in the database and analyze findings saved to the Bookbag.

SEARCH. ANALYZE. VISUALIZE. LEARN.

Using Multiple Strategies to Find Connections in Digital Archives: Making Sense of Historical Data

Dr. Connie L. Lester
University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida

Problem

As historians moved into digitization of archival collections, the initial excitement of having ready access to rare documents and images took precedence over search and analysis problems that also accompanied this undertaking. Recent conference presentations and white papers demonstrate acknowledgement of these problems and advance solutions that call for greater collaboration between historians and archivists to write more detailed metadata and offer textual analysis tools for understanding larger datasets.

Historians have followed the lead of digital literature scholars in the utilization of data mining and text analysis tools [Nelson, Torget, Nesbit, 2012], but we believe that historians need to view the results of such tools in context with other documents in order to gain insight into their broader meaning.

The Intersection of Scholarship and Sensemaking

RICHES MI addresses a number of issues previously raised by digital historians and moves into the realm of analysis through the Connections tool. Still in its early stages of development, Connections intersects with scholarship on sensemaking that is most frequently associated with intelligence analysis and journalism [Pirolli and Card 2005 and Pirolli and Russell, 2011]. In the model advanced by Pirolli and Card, "the sensemaking process is organized into two major loops of activities. . .a foraging loop. . .[and] a sensemaking loop."

Our system seeks to address some of these challenges posed by the search for relationships between data and apply leverage to some key points of the sensemaking processes.

Sensemaking and Connections
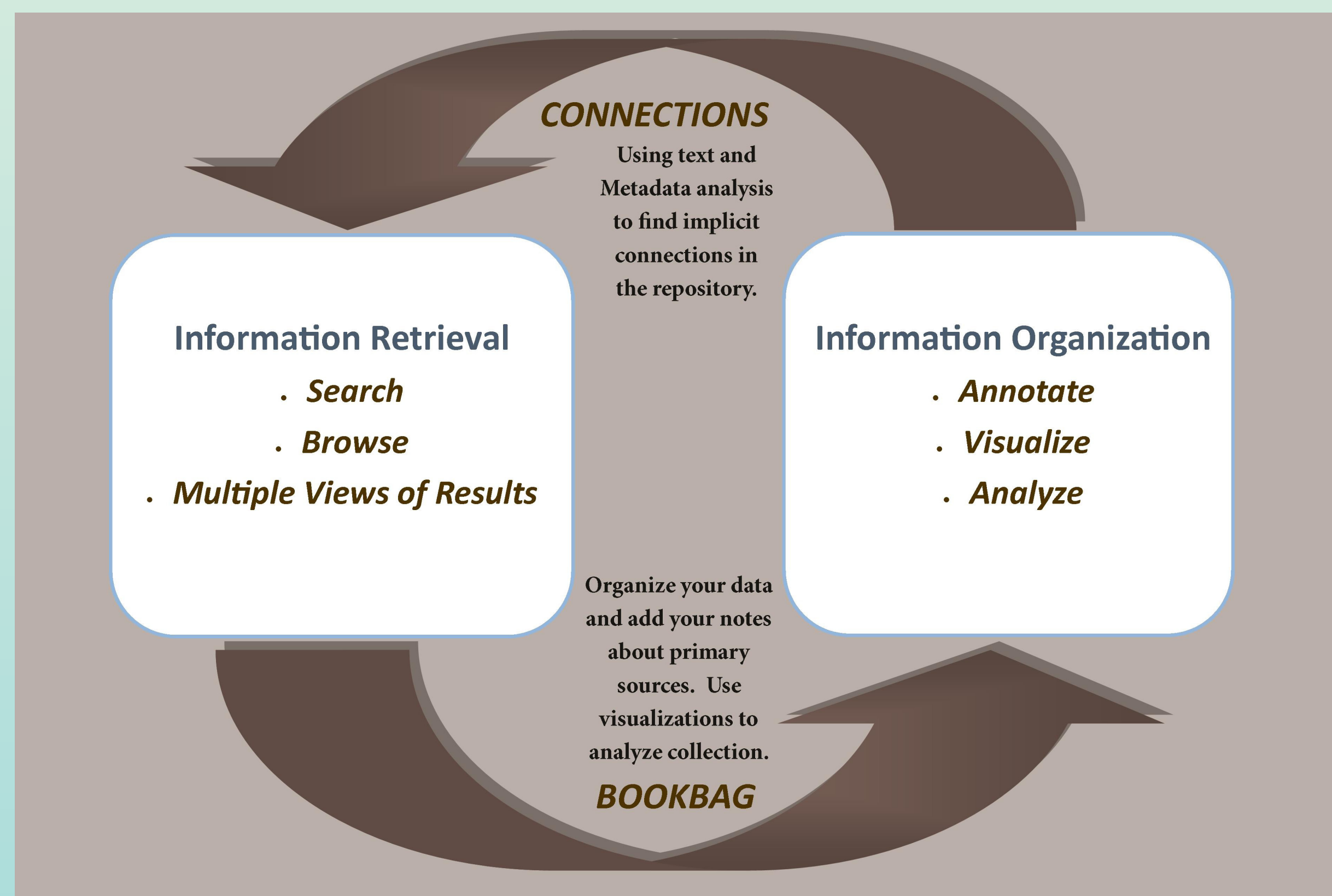
RICHES Mosaic Interface implements multiple information seeking and sensemaking processes and theories.

Finding Connections

The Connections tool (which can be used in the Search and in the Bookbag) provides users with a tree diagram of related items and enables them to visualize the connections by time, location, tags, and topics. Finally, users can save selected items to a Bookbag, where they can organize the items into folders and annotate them.
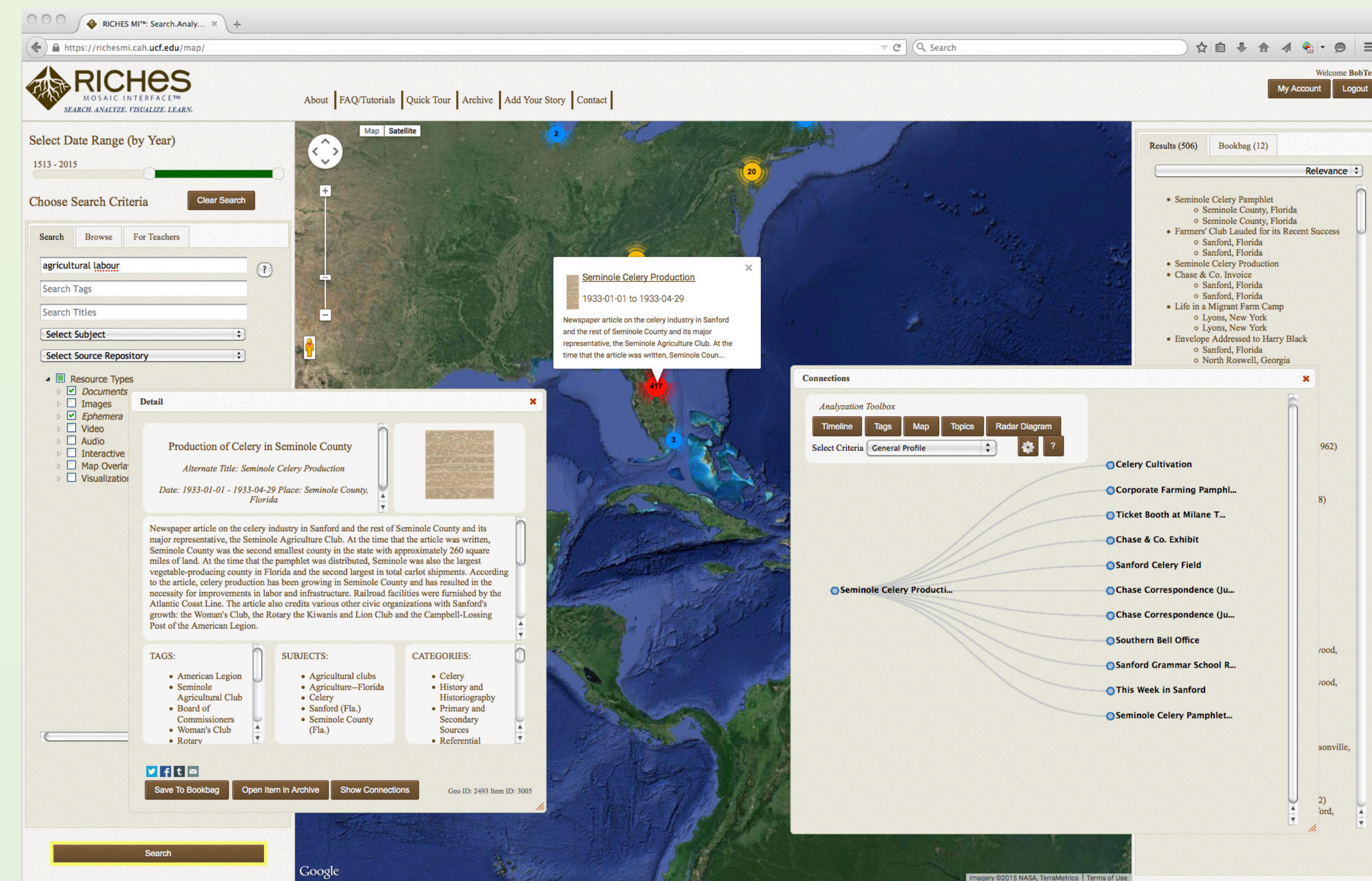
View selected item in greater detail and find connections in the database using time, tags, map, topics and a radar diagram.
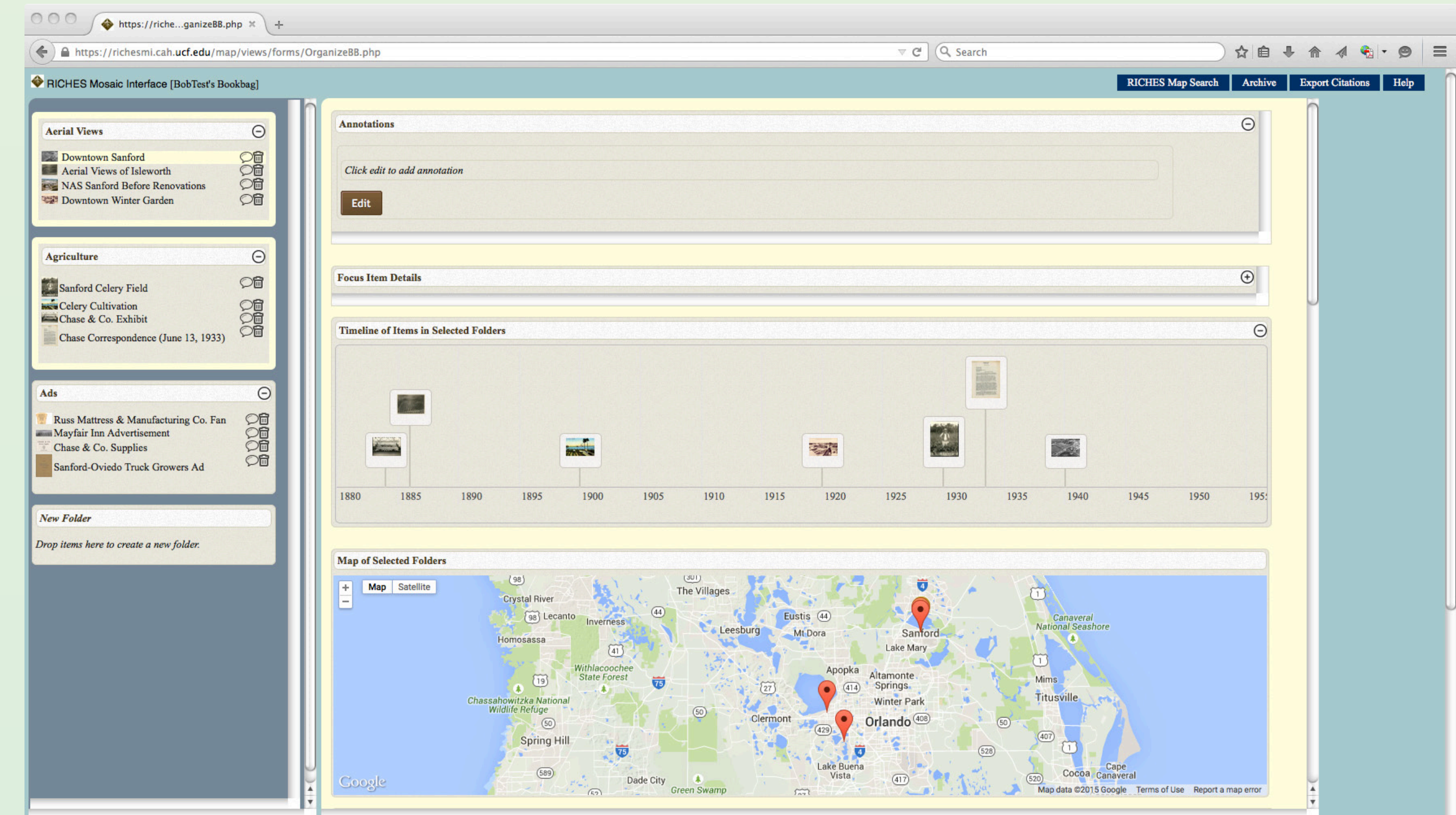
Users can analyze and annotate items saved to their bookbag. Visualizing their saved items on a timeline or map helps to contextualize their documents.

Summary

By following well-known sensemaking processes, our system supports digital research that more closely replicates the archival experience across multiple collections and large data sets.

REFERENCES

1. Rutner, Jennifer, Schonfeld, Roger C. "Supporting the Changing Research Practices of Historians", Final Report from ITHAKA S+R, 2012-12-10

2. Robert K. Nelson, et. al., "A Conversation with Digital Historians," Southern Spaces: An Interdisciplinary Journal About Regions, Places, and Cultures of the U.S. South and their Global Connections https://southernspaces.org/2012/conversation_digital_historians

3. Daniel J. Cohen, et. al., "Interchange: The Promise of Digital History," Journal of American History Vol. 95 no. 2 (Sept. 2008).

4. Pirolli, Peter, and Stuart Card. "The sensemaking process and leverage points for analyst technology as identified through cognitive task analysis." Proceedings of International Conference on Intelligence Analysis. Vol. 5. McLean, VA: Mitre, 2005.

5. Peter Pirolli & Daniel M. Russell "Introduction to this Special Issue on Sensemaking", Human–Computer Interaction, Vol.26:1-2, 1-8, March 2011.

The journey begins at *richesmi.cah.ucf.edu*