

Archives Book for General Public

Proposal developed by Tawny Ryan Nelb and the SAA Publications Board

v. 2, January 20, 2016

The SAA Publications Board proposes to create a book for the general public. The goal is to sell it through the NARA bookstores, National Park Service outlets, and other historical museums and bookshops. People visiting these sites are already interested in history and cultural resources, and may be thinking about their own family history and records. The book could also be sold through Amazon or other online booksellers.

The book would provide useful information to help people in organizing and preserving their personal archives and family records, and would also advocate for the preservation of archives. It could include information on using archives, for the benefit of people who may wish to work with an archivist to preserve their records, but this latter topic would not be the main focus of the work.

The book must be highly readable, written for the intended audiences, 'entertaining,' well-illustrated, and possibly include checklists or other take-aways for the users. It should have a significant digital component/focus (perhaps that goes without saying) and address both what folks should be doing now to ensure preservation as well as how to preserve the formats/materials that they may have inherited from other members of their families.

We believe that the book would benefit greatly from line images drawn specifically to illustrate key points in an engaging way.

Brevity is an imperative and the book should not be more than 100 pages in length, including illustrations/line art. The following topics could be treated, but the final structure and content should be worked out by the editor/author(s) in conjunction with review by the Publications Board:

1. Discussion of the importance of archives both for families and society
2. Basic filing strategies
3. Instructions for preserving the records including proper housing.
4. A list of conservation suppliers with their contact information
5. Offers the SAA brand as a major resource for such information.

6. Booklet could also direct people to our website for additional books of interest.
7. Helps the general public understand archives, plus advocates for archives.
8. Basically, provide the general public with useful, inexpensive advice (pricing TBD based on production and ROI, but ideally less than \$20).

Ultimately, with a low price and tremendous potential for sales, this would not only provide useful information and advocate for archives to the general public, but could also serve to raise awareness about SAA, thus addressing a strategic goal of the association.

The following people have been suggested as potential authors/editors:

- Laura Millar
- Kathy Marquis
- Stephanie Vaillant (archives fiction contest winner)
- Sonia Yaco
- Pam Hackbart Dean

And as potential illustrator:

- Rebecca Goldman

Title TBD and suggestions welcome!

- *Keeping Your Family's History Alive: A Guide for Families and Genealogists*

To Do List:

1. Discuss this document at January 2016 Publications Board meeting.
2. Check with NARA regarding potential interest in distribution.
3. Prepare version of this proposal for sharing with potential editor/author(s).
4. Shop proposal to potential editor/author(s).
5. Once editor/author(s) on board, secure an illustrator.