

Volunteers in Archives: Management and Ethical Case Studies

Informal Proposal for SAA Publication Board

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Archives of all kinds use volunteers in various capacities. Many archivists need and want input regarding volunteer management. In the past five years, archival literature reflected this need through increased journal articles; a joint NARA-SAA publication *Resources for Volunteer Programs in Archives* (2012); and SAA's document *Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives*, approved by Council in 2014. In addition, a panel presentation, "Best Practices for Volunteers in Archives" at SAA 2015, yielded a significant amount of audience participation in a discussion of volunteer related issues at individual institutions. The library and museum fields contain material regarding volunteer management (including a [just published handbook for volunteer management in museums](#)), however, volunteering in an archives differs substantially from those two environments.

What is missing from the archival literature is a book of case studies that covers the breadth and depth of archives: private, public, big, and small. The authors envision a book that provides tips and hints along the lines of "this is what I did and how it works or doesn't work." Just as importantly, the case studies would enable the profession to tackle ethical issues such as: using volunteers in place of paid staff and navigating providing volunteers with a meaningful experience.

The authors are uniquely qualified to edit such a book. Adam Speirs volunteered alongside contract work for nearly a year after obtaining an MLIS while seeking a permanent position, and now supervises ~20 volunteers in a public library archives/special collections, most of whom are retired (some of whom are retired library professionals). Nancy Freeman previously served as a member and Co-Chair of the SAA Committee on Ethical and Professional Conduct and also supervises volunteers, all of whom have been graduate or doctoral students in such fields as public history, library science, and women's history.