

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
May 7–9, 2018
Chicago, Illinois**

***American Archivist* Editorial Board
Report: November 2017–May 2018
(Prepared by Christopher (Cal) Lee)**

Editor Transition Phase

Between the day when I signed the agreement with SAA to serve as editor (June 26, 2017) and the day when my term as editor began (January 1, 2018), we took a variety of steps to set the groundwork for the transition. I was grateful to have open and active lines of communication throughout this period with Gregory Hunter, the previous editor, as well as Teresa Brinati and Abigail Christian at SAA. I also began communicating with prospective authors about possible future submissions, as well as participating in discussions about the proposed podcast series (see below). On July 26, I attended the *American Archivist* Editorial Board meeting in Portland; this was a great way to learn about current processes and priorities of the journal, as well as gain insights from Greg and the members of the board.

On October 10-11, I meet with SAA staff (Teresa, Abigail, and Nancy Beaumont) in Chicago. This was an extremely valuable visit, in which we discussed SAA governance, the web presence (SAA microsite, Allen press journal site, and reviews portal), the journal production process, the peer review process, marketing/promotion, the role of the Editorial Board, meeting plans, activities for the SAA Annual Meeting, and the journal budget.

In December, I also completed a written “interview” for the January/February issue of *Archival Outlook*, in which I responded to questions posed by Abigail Christian. This piece, which appeared online on January 19, allowed me to convey my experiences with *American Archivist*, advice for first-time contributors, and thoughts about pressing issues that journal articles could address in the future.

I also took steps related to the administration of the editor’s online accounts. On November 6 and 8, 2017, I engaged in PeerTrack training with representatives of Allen Press. Beginning on November 29, I took on the editor role within PeerTrack and updated the various boilerplate messages within the system to reflect my name and voice. I took over the editor email account (americanarchivist@archivists.org) in January 2018.

Editorial Board Meeting

On February 11-13, 2018, we held an Editorial Board meeting at SAA headquarters in Chicago. This was a productive event, in which we discussed priorities and strategies for all aspects of the journal. We left this meeting with a strong collective sense of future direction and 26 identified action items.

Selected highlights of this meeting include the following:

- There was consensus around the value of Editorial Board members taking a more active role in both recruiting new content and promoting existing content of the journal. We will be sharing information about professional venues that we each engage in, as well as taking on “shepherd” roles for published articles. We also plan to take a more active role in soliciting content for the journal during the SAA Annual Meeting. Teresa Brinati has created a promotional flyer for Editorial Board members to distribute at conferences and events they are attending.
- We agreed that one annual meeting during the SAA conference is not sufficient. We plan to hold quarterly meetings, with our first conference call scheduled for April 30.
- We are considering implementation of a new internal distinction between article submissions that require major revisions versus those that require minor revisions. In the case of the former, we will ask the original reviewers to consider whether the revisions have addressed their concerns.
- We will be updating the editorial guidelines and editorial policy so they are consistent in the types of submissions they elaborate, as well as to better promote the journal’s types of content (case studies, perspectives and reviews versus just research articles) to encourage a broader range of submissions.
- We are investigating a relationship with the Odum Institute for Research in Social Science, so that they can provide (1) support to authors on reporting of statistical findings in articles and (2) deposit of datasets related to articles when the authors do not have a local repository for doing so.
- We are actively pursuing prospects for special sections (as opposed to entire special issues) of the journal. Plans are currently underway for a special section related to state archives. Two members of the Editorial Board are taking the lead on putting out calls for abstracts for special sections focused on music archives and design archives.
- We will be exploring several channels for better promoting international contributions to the journal.

Hidden Content Project

Barbara Gombach, intern assigned to the Editorial Board, has provided the valuable service of inventorying “hidden” content on *American Archivist* online. This includes materials that were combined into large PDF files during the digitization process, rather than being treated as individual items. As opposed to the main articles, this hidden content is not easily discoverable by users who are navigating the site. Based on Barbara’s work, we can set priorities for how and when to break this content into separate items within *American Archivist* online.

Quality Control Issues

Separate from the issue of hidden content is that of quality control. I have identified a significant number of issues with *American Archivist* online materials. This includes both problems with the PDF files of articles (hand annotations, crop marks, corrupted files, inclusion of ad content) and problems with metadata (author names missing or incomplete, articles inappropriately assigned to sections, front matter presented after articles). It is my hope that we will be able to address these issues.

Editorial Board Policy and Editorial Policy

We have made some minor changes to the *American Archivist* Editorial Board policy. These have included clarification that board member duties include “encouraging submissions” as well as “promoting content from current and recent issues.” We have also revised the editorial policy by removing “particularly in North America,” in order to better reflect the international scope of the journal. As indicated above, we have plans to make further revisions to the editorial policy to better reflect current practices regarding submission and evaluation of different submission types.

<in-context>: The Podcast on Archives and the People Behind Them

Representatives of the Editorial Board and Publications Board have put together a proposal for a podcast series, called “<in-context>: The Podcast on Archives and the People Behind Them.” This will initially highlight journal and book authors. Episodes will be released once per month, with the Publications Board and Editorial Board alternating months. Six episodes are currently planned. The Editorial Board strongly supports this proposal, and we hope that it will be underway soon.

Production of Volume 81.1

The Spring/Summer 2018 issue is in the final stages of production. At the time of this report, we had recently sent corrected page proofs to Allen Press. There are 12 articles in this issue, including my introductory piece and Nancy McGovern’s presidential address. There are also 11 contributions to the reviews section, along with a thoughtful summary introduction by Reviews Editor Bethany Anderson.

Production of Volume 81.2

Work on the Fall/Winter 2018 issue is well underway. I have accepted two articles for publication, and many others are at various points in the review and/or revision process.