Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
August 3, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Report of the *American Archivist* Editor, May-July 2020
{Prepared by Christopher [Cal] Lee)

In addition to reviewing submissions and producing forthcoming issues of the journal, the *American Archivist* Editorial Board has been engaging in a variety of activities to refine and enhance our processes.

Submission Pipeline

The active professional engagement of the Editor and other members of the Editorial Board has been paying off in terms of growth in the number of submissions to the journal during my term as Editor since January 2018.

Year	Article Submissions
2017	23
2018	32
2019	30
2020	37 (to date), 63 (projected)

The projection for 2020 is based on a similar rate of submission for the remainder of the year. The true number is likely to be somewhat different, but the trend of increased submissions is clear.

Composition of the Board

I am grateful that the Council approved an increase in the size of the Editorial Board to twelve by adding two members in September: Sumayya Ahmed and Shadrack Katuu. In addition to adding talented reviewers, I am also excited about the valuable perspectives and international reach of our new Board members.

At the Annual Meeting, we will be welcoming four new Board members: Eric Hung, Jessica Lacher-Feldman, Kathryn Puerini, and Sylvia Welsh. We will also be joined by three new early-career members: Asa Espanto, Bridgette Hammond, and Grace Moran; they will be supporting activities of the Board, especially our work on the "hidden content" project that we have discussed in previous reports.

I would like to recognize the valuable work of four members who will be rolling off the Board: Adriana Cuervo, Josh Schneider, Heather Soyka, and Karen Trivette.

Journal Style Guide

Our copyeditor, Meg Moss, maintains a style document to guide her work for *American Archivist* articles and book reviews. The document evolves over time, as we make new decisions. It reflects a variety of specific conventions that we have identified over time (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, hyphenation, some specific word choices, and citation details). We are planning to post this style guide to the website with the understanding that it is a living document that we will revise over time. Our approach has been to stick to the conventions as much as possible for consistency, while also recognizing that authors may have specific reasons to break from those conventions in some cases.

Bethany Anderson, Meg Moss, and I have had discussions recently related to the representation of different groups of people. These include capitalization of White, Black, and Indigenous as well as use of people-first language (e.g. "person with a disability" rather than "disabled person"). Another set of conventions that I have proposed we adopt are expressed in the [Archives for Black Lives guidance](#), which includes several recommendations such as use of "enslaver" rather than "slave owner" and "enslaved person" rather than "slave." The Board will make several updates to the style guide and then post it publicly.

Updating PeerTrack Classifications

We are working to update the list of topical categories in PeerTrack that authors and reviewers can use to characterize their submissions and areas of interest/expertise, respectively. These categories are a vital resource for assigning reviewers to given manuscripts, but the current list (48 categories) is quite limited.

[*American Archivist Online*](#) has keywords for articles beginning with Volume 76, Issue 1 (Spring/Summer 2013). We are analyzing the 405 keywords that authors have assigned to articles from 76.1 to 82.2 (Spring/Summer 2020) to identify terms to add to the PeerTrack categories. We have already added one new category – "design records" – to support peer review for our forthcoming special section on that topic (see below).

Proposal for a Strategy to Address Professional Mediation, Facilitation and Conflict Management

In consultation with other members of the Board, Katharina Hering and Bethany Anderson composed a "Proposal for a Strategy to Address Professional Mediation, Facilitation and Conflict Management," which the Council has received as a separate document in preparation for the August 3 meeting. The document recommends that the SAA Council form two independent task forces: one on professional mediation, facilitation, and conflict management and another on publication ethics.

Pool of Peer Reviewers

We continue to strive for a broader set of reviewers for submissions to the journal. Since my post to *Off the Record* on September 11, 2019, in which I encouraged people to sign up as reviewers, 138 additional individuals have registered as peer reviewers in PeerTrack, for a current total of 301.

Production of Volume 82.2 (Fall/Winter 2019)

The issue includes 12 articles, 12 book reviews, and three letters to the editor (from Christine George, Dani Stuchel, and Lae'l Hughes-Watkins). This was the first issue for which we were able to implement an "online first" approach, with content appearing on the web site before final production of the print edition was complete. Final versions of all articles and reviews are now available online and have been distributed in print.

Production of Volume 83.1 (Spring/Summer 2020)

I have accepted seven articles for publication in 83.1. We will move to production of page proofs at the end of August.

Special Section on Design Archives

Karen Trivette is serving as guest editor for a planned special section on design records. We have set up Karen as a guest editor in PeerTrack, and I have been providing her guidance on how to administer the peer reviews. The projected timeline is:

- July 2020: All articles due.
- July/August 2020: Trivette reviews submissions / may return to author for revision before sending to peer reviewers.
- Sept 2020: Trivette assigns peer reviewers to articles.
- Oct/Nov 2020: Peer reviewers read and submit feedback.
- Dec 2020: Trivette compiles peer review feedback, makes decisions about publishing of articles, and returns articles to authors for revision.
- Jan/March: Authors work on revisions, due April.
- April-May: Trivette reviews final submissions, then sends to SAA to begin copyediting.
- June 2021: All articles submitted to SAA for copyediting.

We received eight submissions by the deadline. We are currently ahead of schedule, because we only had one problematic submission that the authors needed to correct before inviting reviews (needed to remove names to ensure a double-blind review).