

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

Archives Management Roundtable Newsletter

JULY, 2003

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Roundtable meeting in
Los Angeles
- Institutional Spotlight:
Missouri State
Archives
- *Professional and Insti-
tutional news wanted*

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS 2003 ANNUAL MEETING Los Angeles, California

2003 ROUNDTABLE MEETING TO ADDRESS WELLNESS ISSUES FOR ARCHIVISTS

The SAA Archives Management Roundtable will meet on Saturday, August 23, 2003, 8 AM-9:30 AM, at a location to be announced. The first half of the meeting will include a presentation, "Bend, Don't Break! Workplace Wellness Issues for Archivists," designed to examine proactive strategies for handling job-related stress. Daria D'Arienzo, Amherst College, will serve as commentator, and the speakers will include Nancy Freeman, National Wildlife Research Center, Virginia K. Peterson Rigby, North Harris County Community College, and Casey Edward Greene, Rosenberg Library. The speakers will address such topics as handling a difficult supervisor, coping with personal crises, workplace violence, and special problems faced by Lone Arrangers. The audience will be encouraged to participate in what should be a lively discussion. The second half of the meeting will be devoted to developing session proposals for the SAA annual meeting in 2004.

— Casey Edward Greene

Institutional Spotlight: Missouri State Archives

The Missouri State Archives has been the official repository for state records of permanent value since 1965, and, in 1972, the Missouri General Assembly expanded the mandate to include local government records. Today the Archives is the state's largest repository for historical documents. The Archives' holdings, dating from 1770, enable researchers to find information that brings family histories to life and assist historians in seeing the meaning in our collective past. Currently, the Archives holds more than 150 million pages of paper; 245,000 photographs; 14,400 books; 60,000 reels of microfilm, and 180,000 microfiche. The records include Missouri's history under French & Spanish colonial rule and as a U.S. territory; military records of Missourians from the War of 1812 through World War I; St. Louis' role in the international fur trade; and the part western Missouri towns played in westward expansion, including the Pony Express.

The Archives' Judicial Records Program is a cooperative effort between the Archives and the Office of the State Courts Administrator that preserves on microfilm probate and circuit court records of the county courts. The Program has freed up much needed space for participating counties and has made these records more accessible to researchers. St. Louis Circuit Court has proven to be an exceptionally rich source of information about the westward expansion during the colonial period and early Missouri statehood.

The St. Louis Circuit Court Project includes case files dating from 1804 to 1830 that possess exceptional historical value. The records offer a mixture of colonial legal tradition with American common-law practices and provide a unique look at St. Louis society, including the legal recourse pursued by women and African Americans. The St. Louis Circuit Court Project is an official project of Save America's Treasures, a public-private partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation dedicated to the preservation of our nation's irreplaceable historic and cultural treasures for future generations. This official designation was awarded in July 2000. Students from Washington University at St. Louis, University of Missouri-St. Louis, and St. Louis University work under the direction of professional staff from the Archives to process and digitize case files, stimulating further research within the court documents. An Academic Advisory Committee of historians selects themes from the court cases that have particular significance to regional and state history. The records in these thematic series are then digitized for online access.

Work on the first thematic unit, the court cases of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, was completed during FY02. The case files available online at <http://www.stlcourtrecords.wustl.edu> consist of court actions in which Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, or other members of the Corps of Discovery are defendants, plaintiffs, or play a prominent role. The cases, which date from 1804 to 1833, illustrate the social, commercial, legal, and financial relationships of the era and collectively present a portrait of the lives of some Expedition members after their triumphant 1806 return from the Pacific Ocean.

Geographers from the University of Missouri used land survey records from the Archives' collections to create dozens of maps depicting the original landscape of the Missouri River at the time of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The computer-generated maps render the natural landscape in the days when a vast western frontier was about to be explored, with Missouri as the jumping-off point. Many of these maps are available via the Archives web site: <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/projects/lc-landscape.asp>. The web project also offers an interactive display of each day of travel through Missouri by the Expedition. This historic landscape mapping project captured the public's imagination when it was unveiled in July 2001. Feature articles applauding the project appeared in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *National Geographic*, among others. The exhibit is considered a significant project that adds to the history of the Lewis & Clark Expedition and offers a new way to talk about Missouri's role in the national adventure story, a story that began in Missouri.

In November 1999, at the request of the St. Louis Circuit Court, the documents from the original 1846 Dred Scott freedom suit were brought to the Office of the Secretary of State for conservation treatment. The eighty-two documents in the Dred Scott case are the only extant records of the case as it was heard before the St. Louis Circuit Court. After treatment, the papers were returned to the St. Louis Circuit Court. Through a collaborative effort with Washington University the documents in the case were digitized and placed online in January 2001. They are available at <http://library.wustl.edu/vlib/dredscott/>.

The Dred Scott freedom suit was just one of nearly three hundred legal petitions for freedom filed in St. Louis alone, between 1814 and 1860. They make up the largest corpus of freedom suits currently available to researchers in the United States. Today these petitions are available online at <http://www.stlcourtrecords.wustl.edu/index.cfm>.

With the Dred Scott case increasing the awareness of the many and profound African American contributions to Missouri, the Archives launched the African American History Initiative in October 2001. The online *Guide to African American History at the Missouri State Archives* was the first step in preserving the richness of Missouri's black history. The development of this *Guide* (<http://www.sos.state.mo.us/archives/resources/africanamerican/guide/table>) unearthed a rich collection of records among the Archives' holdings. In December 2001, the Archives announced its first nationally competitive African American History Internship for the purpose of analyzing these records and making them accessible to researchers. When placed in their historical context, they provide a measure of understanding about the lives of black Missourians at different times in our state's history.

The Missouri State Archives uses its documents, photographs, and artifacts to create exhibits that allow patrons to experience Missouri's rich history. Archives' exhibits, which tour the state both physically and virtually over the Internet, are designed to encourage visitors to seek new perspectives and gain an understanding of Missouri's journey from the past to the present. The Archives makes its exhibits available, free of charge, to local museums, libraries, historical societies, and educational institutions throughout the state.

— Submitted by: Dr. Shelly J. Croteau, C.A., Assistant State Archivist

Professional or Institutional News Wanted

Roundtable members are encouraged to submit professional accomplishments and institutional news items for inclusion in this newsletter. Please send submissions to Kerrie A. Cross, University Archivist, Albert Emanuel Hall Room 211, University of Dayton, Dayton, OH 45469-1360, or Kerrie. Cross@udayton.edu.

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