SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS
ANNUAL REPORT
FY2005: July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005

Information…. Education…. Advocacy…. 

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SAA Publications: The Resources You Need for Professional Growth

Years of development came to fruition in FY2005 as five new book titles joined SAA’s library of professional resources:

- Museum Archives: An Introduction edited by Deborah Wythe (July 2004)
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- The SAA Publications catalog grew to represent more than 200 titles, and a total of 8,754 books were sold from inventory in FY2005.
- An online catalog with “shopping cart” functionality made it easier than ever to shop for SAA publications.

Periodicals

The American Archivist

Volume 67, Number 2, Fall/Winter 2004, presented Emily Darlington’s Fellow’s Ernst Posner Award-winning article entitled “Privacy Rights and the Rights of Political Victims: Implications of the German Experience”; Sara S. Hodub’s “In Secret Keep, In Silence Shared: Privacy in Letters of Authors and Colleagues”; and China Prouty’s “User Interactions with Electronic Finding Aids in a Controlled Setting.”

Volume 68, Number 1, Spring/Summer 2005, presented Tim Ericson’s Award-winning article entitled “Interactions with Electronic Finding Aids in a Controlled Setting.”

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Strategic Planning

What challenges does the archives profession face in the years ahead? In FY2005 SAA Council members identified and refined three primary challenges that were posed to the general membership for reaction and discussion. Intentionally phrased in provocative terms, the statements were:

The Archival “Radar Screen”

Technology: Changing information technology challenges archival principles, practices, and competencies, threatening to diminish the relevance of archives.

Diversity: The relevance of archives to society and the completeness of the national record large part on the profession’s success in ensuring that its members and the holdings of American repositories reflect more fully the diversity of society as a whole.

Public Support: Although the public values history, it does not connect archives with historical knowledge and therefore does not support archival programs.

Member comments on these and other critical issues are always welcome!

The 2004 – 2005 SAA Council

Randall G. Jimerson, President
Western Washington University

Richard Pearce-Moses, Vice President/President-Elect
Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records

Fynnette L. Eaton, Treasurer
Arizona State Library Archives and Public Records

Peter J. Wosh
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Christopher Ann Paton
Central Michigan University

Elaine Engst
Archives of the Episcopal Church USA

Christopher E. Welke
Cornell University, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections

Alanna D. Finkel
Executive Office of the President

Peter Gottlieb
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Kathleen M. Head
San Diego State University, Malcolm A. Love Library

Christopher Ann Paton
Georgia Archives

Peter J. Wosh
New York University

Joel F. Wurl
University of Minnesota, Immigration History Research Center
SAA Advocacy: Serving Your Interests Through Collaboration and Awareness

SAA was at the table and in the news in FY2005, advocating for archivists’ professional concerns in critical alliances with other organizations. Some examples:

- Perhaps most prominent was SAA advocacy on behalf of funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, whose budget was axed out in White House plans but was rescued thanks to the efforts of allied groups and hundreds of individual archivists and friends of archives from around the country who called to make a difference for this vital federal agency.
- SAA joined with several public interest organizations to file an amicus curiae supporting public access to information about the makeup of the National Energy Policy Development Group convened by Vice President Cheney in 2001. The amici expressed their conviction that broad access to government records protects values that are essential to representative democracy and promotes public participation in public policy.
- And SAA collaborated with the American Library Association to file an amicus curiae in an attempt to allow “Unabomber” Ted Kaczynski to donate his journals to the University of Michigan’s special collection of materials on radical social and political movements in order that the materials could be protected from destruction or deterioration and could be publicly accessible to researchers.

Position Statement on Diversity...

The Society of American Archivists is committed to integrating diversity concerns and perspectives into all aspects of its activities and into the fabric of the profession as a whole. SAA is also committed to the goal of a Society membership that reflects the broad diversity of American society. SAA believes that these commitments are essential to the effective pursuit of the archival mission “to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of the nation’s historical records.”

FY2005 Activities...

SAA Diversity Committee developed several recommendations that were adopted by the Council, including: 1) that an update on diversity initiatives be included in the reporting requirements for Council; the SAA staff, and all SAA units; 2) that the President-Elect and Appointments Committee report to Council on the demographics of appointed groups and indicate what was attempted to seek diversity among members; and 3) that the Annual Meeting Program and Host committees address diversity issues by incorporating appropriate programming and local arrangements activities into the meeting experience.

Tribal archivists were invited by President Tim Ericson at Boston 2004 to present a special presidential session entitled “Native American Perspectives on the Treatment and Usage of Tribal Materials in Archives.” And SAA applied for and received an NHPRC grant, entitled “Strengthening Tribal Archives Programs,” that would bring 15 tribal archives scholarship recipients to New Orleans 2005 to learn, teach, and network.

Workshops and Seminars

A total of 1,015 attendees benefited from SAA’s wide array of seminar and workshop offerings throughout the year and around the country. With 44 programs from Atlanta to Seattle and Boston to Tucson—including five brand-new topics—there was something for everyone! New in FY2005:

- IT Training Series for Practicing Archivists (a 6-part, mix-and-match education opportunity!)
- Designing Charitable Websites
- Preserving Digitally Signed Documents
- Describing Archives: A Content Standard
- MARC According to DACS: Archival Cataloging to the New Descriptive Standard

And for those who couldn’t travel, SAA offered “Security in the Archives Reading Room” as a Web seminar, broadcast to 42 sites with a total of 335 attendees. Ninety-five percent of attendees indicated that they would participate in another Web seminar, and one exclaimed: “Excellent session on an important topic! The virtual seminar format made our participation possible. Thanks!”

Membership

SAA’s membership increased 10 out of 12 months in FY2005, reflecting the hard work of the Membership Committee and Key Contacts and a growing interest in the “collective voice” of archivists nationwide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>July 2003</th>
<th>July 2004</th>
<th>July 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>3,112</td>
<td>3,415</td>
<td>3,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>3,820</td>
<td>4,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAA Education: Helping You Build Knowledge, Skills, Connections

BOSTON ’04

Boston 2004 was no ordinary tea party! More than 1,600 attendees enjoyed 65 education sessions… a dynamic opening plenary featuring challenging explorations of government secrecy by ACLU President Nadine Strossen and SAA President Tim Ericson… outstanding social and networking events at the Children’s Museum and Fenway Park (home of the 2004 World Series Champions!)… an exhibit hall packed with fresh ideas and new products… and more!
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SAA weighed in on “orphan works,” urging the US Copyright Office to clarify the status of works for which no copyright holder can be identified or located. Media coverage included articles in the Los Angeles Times, The Kansas City Star, and Associated Press on the “Unabomber” case; and Associated Press on NARA’s Electronic Records Archive project. The Kansas City Star published an op-ed by archivist Pak Hon Kwan on NARA’s opening of selected military records at the St. Louis Personnel Records Center; the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette on the appointment of Allen Weinstein to the position of Archivist of the United States; and the Federal Computer Week on NARA’s opening of military records.

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- Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories by Michael Kurtz (July 2004)
- Lester J. Cappon Reader by Richard Cox (October 2004)
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