**Recommendations on the Development of an Archival History Section**

**Publication Infrastructure**

Report prepared by the Archival History Section Publication Working Group

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***Summary***

This document provides the Archival History Working Group’s recommendations to the Archival History Section Steering Committee regarding the development of a publication strategy, the role that publication can fulfill in supporting the AHS’ goals and objectives, and immediate questions to consider in implementing a publication plan. The recommendations provided in this document are evidence based, derived from the Working Group’s review of existing data, and drawing on the expertise of the group’s expertise.

***Form and Structure***

1. A sustainable beginning point to consider is the establishment of a web platform that could house and communicate content. WordPress was identified as a usable and reliable mechanism.

2. Specific content areas identified by the working members include:

a. News, events, and announcements.

b. Updates on current research in archival history.

c. Brief essays (biographical and institutional notes).

d. Oral histories and interviews.

e. Obituaries/remembrances.

f. Serve as a site for distributing the existing AHS Archival History Bibliography. An interactive platform might also permit the addition of interactive elements.

Initially, the most effective means for gathering content would be to solicit individual contributions. Once the platform matures, content could be by invitation and through calls for contributions.

3. This publication would serve multiple purposes:

a. Strengthen community around archival history through the creation and maintenance of an interactive and regularly updated publication. Relationships can be strengthened through the sharing of news, the regular publication of timely content, and increased membership opportunities to participate in the creation of content.

b. Provide greater visibility to ongoing archival history research. This will be accomplished by publishing regular summaries of research activity (publications, presentations, calls for papers, and conference activity).

c. Provide an avenue for supporting the publication of documentary/biographical work. This will assist in the preservation of the profession’s intellectual history. Historically, the *American Archivist* once published regularly obituaries, noting the passing of members of the archival community. This activity has ceased and the AHS’s publication could address this gap.

d. Provide an avenue for supporting the dissemination of preliminary/introductory findings. By publishing brief essays/notes the platform would provide an entry point for publishing preliminary work as well as scholarship not best suited for publication through traditional formats.

e. Serve as transition point to an independent, peer-reviewed, archival history publication. The Working Group acknowledges that the production of a formal peer-reviewed journal is a longer-term goal, which could be supported by this publication strategy.

4. Members expressed agreement that there would be value in establishing a peer-reviewed publication. However, this is a long-term project, informed by a number of cautions and sustainability concerns. These include:

a. Identification of authors willing to submit work for its initial

volumes.

b. Identification of editorial/support personnel (editors, editorial board members, reviewers).

c. Reputational status.

d. Sustainability issues will be critical in the early life of the publication, in particular, as they relate to the development of a regular stream of work and the infrastructure required to support the publication process.

***Secondary Activities to Strengthen Archival History***

1. The Working Group also identified additional practices that can support archival history work:

a. Contact editors of archival journals to advocate for the placement of archival history pieces in their journals on a regular basis. Such journals include, but not limited to, the *American Archivist, Archival Issues, Archivaria,* and the *Journal of Contemporary Archival, and Provenance*.

b. Contact the editors of newsletters/magazines to advocate for placement of news items related to archival history. These include *Archival Outlook* and state and regional newsletters. A regular (biannual) column might be of value.

***Recommended AHS Action Items***

1. Gather additional information from AHS stakeholders. This information includes:

a. Content areas of interest?

b. What information would audiences find useful?

c. Compile a list of potential authors/writers.

2. Conduct a survey of archival educators.

3. Conduct a survey of all SAA sections.

4. Engage the resources of SAA’s Publications Board. An initial discussion with the Board’s publication editor, Chris Prom, should be held. In recent years SAA has experimented with innovative digital publication approaches. Dr. Gregory Hunter, editor of the *American Archivist,* would also serve as a valuable source of input.

5. Establish relationships/engage in dialog with editors of related newsletters and journals (*American Archivist, Archival Issues, Archivaria, Journal of Contemporary Archival and Provenance*, and appropriate professional newsletters).

6. Consider issue of editorial responsibility. If the recommendation of moving forward with a digital platform is adopted, who will be responsible for maintaining/developing this structure? Would the Working Group stay remain on as an advisory board/editorial board?

7. Consider the future of a peer-reviewed publication. If this is agreed to be a viable and admirable long-term goal, how does this process proceed? Does this remain a task of the work group, a subcommittee of the working group, or an additional body?