



Congressional Papers Section

N E W S L E T T E R

Society of American Archivists

Summer 2023

Message from the Chair

Mary Goolsby

Welcome to Summer! On June 15, we met online for CPS Day, with a great program. Many of us struggle with even the basics of acquiring and processing digital or born-digital records. To help us out, Keri Myers (Deputy Archivist, Senate Historical Office) and George Apodaca (Senate Digital Archivist) presented, "Writing Effective Digital Processing Plans and Workflows." The second program was a presentation by Sara Stefani (Modern Political Papers, Indiana University Libraries) and Kate Gregory (Mississippi Political Collections, Mississippi State University) on "Hidden Treasures" found in our archives. Many thanks to our presenters for taking their time to prepare and share their expertise and experience with us.

Another thank you to those who are stepping up to volunteer to take on leadership roles. Be sure you vote!

See you soon!

Mary Goolsby

American Congress Digital Archives Portal Project

Danielle Emerling

[West Virginia University Libraries](#) and partner institutions received a nearly \$350,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in April 2023 to expand the [American Congress Digital Archives Portal](#), the first-ever online portal bringing

In this Issue:

Message from the Chair	1
ACDAP Update	1
Technical Supplement Update	1
Senate Update	2
House Update	2
Institutional Updates	
Ohio Public Policy Archives	3
University of Delaware	4
CPS Day Recap	5

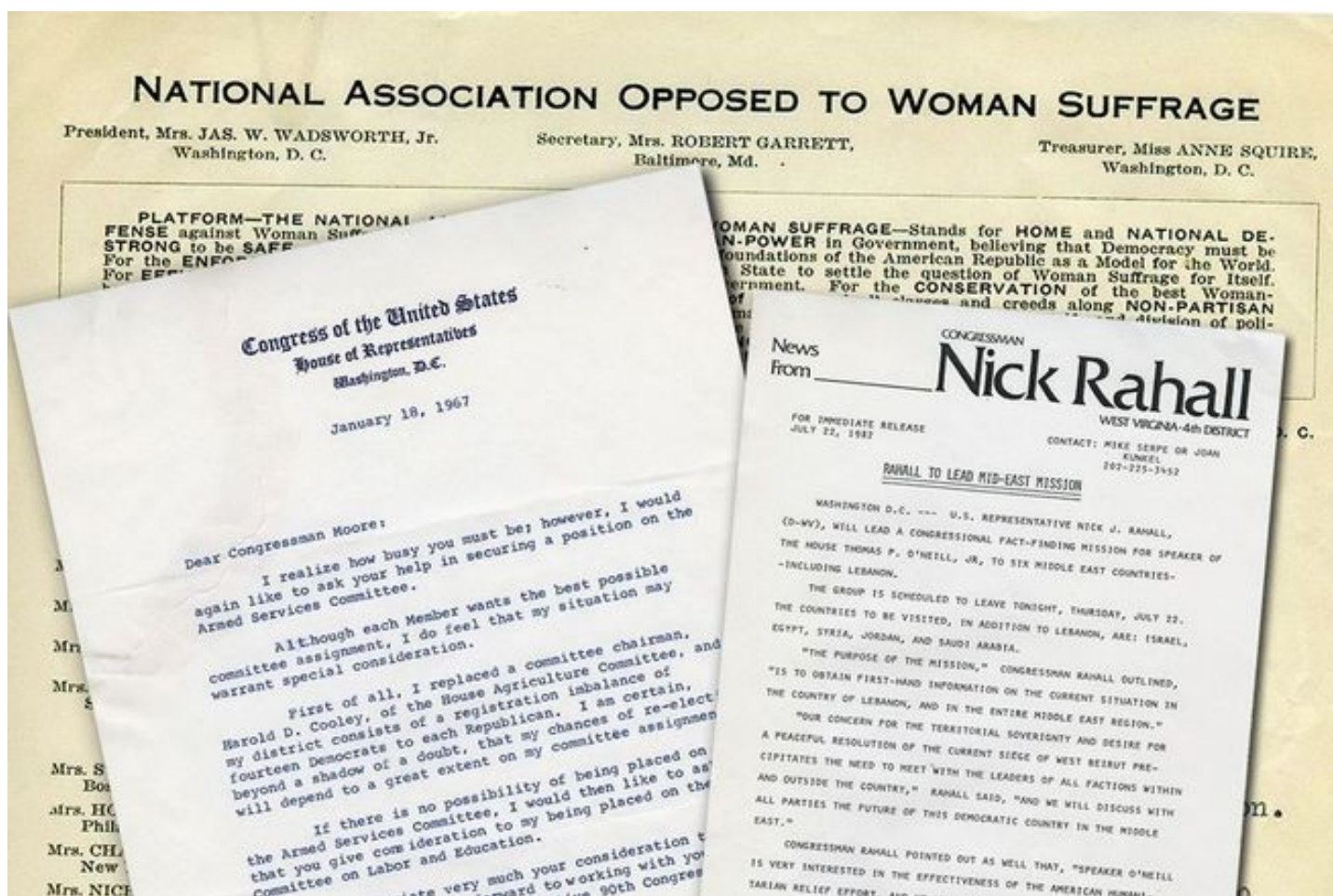
together congressional archives from repositories throughout the United States.

As the next phase of the project progresses, partners will be sharing regular updates, as well as information about how more institutions can contribute archives to the Portal.

"The personal papers of members of Congress are vitally important for understanding Congress as an institution, public policy development, and the many diverse stories that comprise the American experience," Danielle Emerling, Congressional and Political Papers archivist at WVU Libraries and project director, said. "We are honored to have support from the NEH to make more congressional archives available to everyone."

(Continued on page 2)

Portal, cont.



The NEH awarded WVU Libraries the initial grant to launch the project and create the portal in 2021. WVU Libraries is partnering with other institutions that hold congressional archives, including the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center at the University of Oklahoma, the Dirksen Congressional Center, the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas, the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at University of Georgia, and the University of Hawai'i Congressional Papers Collection. The project also includes an advisory board composed of leading individuals in the areas of congressional archives and scholarship.

The project addresses many practical access barriers to using congressional archives. Unlike presidential papers, which are centralized in one location, congressional collections are geographically dispersed

across institutions large and small. For researchers, collections may be difficult to use, both because of a lack of travel funding and varying levels of description in congressional archives.

“This project will specifically address the critical needs of rural and geographically isolated regions of our country to make national records available to all citizens,” Dr. Kelli Nakamura, associate professor of history at the University of Hawai‘i, said. “It will also highlight the connections that exist between members of Congress and illuminate the collaborative efforts that often ensure the successful passage of legislative bills and initiatives.”

The project will include a breadth of materials dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first century and support civic and history education

(Continued on page 3)

Technical Supplement to *Managing Congressional Col- lections* Update

Carly Dearborn

In previous issues of this newsletter we updated the section on the ongoing work to publish an official guide to working with born-digital congressional collections. To briefly recap: a 2020 working group identified the necessary content for a publication, largely modeled after the structure of Cynthia Pease Miller's *Managing Congressional Collections*. Based on this work and in partnership with the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress, CPS submitted a proposal to the SAA Publications Board. Earlier this year Publications Board members voted in favor of the proposal with suggested revisions. The project leads and co-editors (Hope Bibens, Robert Lay, and Carly Dearborn) took a brief break from the project this spring to focus on other priorities but are currently in the process of incorporating peer reviewer suggestions and preparing to resubmit. Please feel free to reach out to them with questions or comments.

Portal, cont.

initiatives that help connect the past to the present. "Without question, the Portal will allow teachers at all levels to introduce students to the work of Congress," Sean Q. Kelly, political science professor at California State University Channel Islands, said. "Using documents from House and Senate collections, teachers can animate the challenges of representation, the value of compromise, and the power of popular sovereignty invested in the most powerful legislature in the world."

This grant project builds on an NEH foundations grant awarded in 2021, which resulted in a prototype portal and included archives from WVU Libraries, the Dole Institute of Politics, and the Robert C. Byrd Center for Congressional History and Education. The

project has also received support from LYRASIS and the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress. The NEH's Humanities Collections and Reference Resources program supports projects that provide an essential underpinning for scholarship, education, and public programming in the humanities. The project was selected for funding, in part, by a new agency-wide special initiative, "American Tapestry: Weaving Together Past, Present, and Future," which invests in humanities projects and new programs that support civics education, foster civic engagement, increase media and information literacy, and examine threats to America's democracy.

WVU Libraries' [West Virginia and Regional History Center](#) holds archives of West Virginia's congressional delegations from the founding of the state in 1863 to the present. Resources from several collections will be included in the portal.

Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Senate Archivist's Report

Karen Paul

It is a pleasure to bring you up to date on Senate archiving during the past six months. We have focused on helping our new archivists define their priorities and goals, introducing them into established and evolving routines, and supporting their smooth integration into the Senate recordkeeping environment. I extend heartfelt thanks to Elisabeth Butler Seelinger, Deputy Archivist for Accessioning and Processing, for her invaluable support in these efforts.

In December, I introduced Deputy Archivist for Senators' Offices Keri Myers and Deputy Archivist for Archival and Records Management Training and Services Dina Mazina. In January, George Apodaca joined our team as Deputy Archivist for Digital Ar-

(Continued on page 4)

Senate, cont.

chives. Following my report, each deputy archivist will present on a topic of special interest.

Since our last meeting, we have continued to administer the \$5 million McCain Collection preservation partnership grant at Arizona State University established in December 2020. The Senate will issue final grant funds to Arizona State University in 2024, at which time the university's final report will be due. Quarterly reports from this project continue to offer many insights into preserving, processing, and making available such a collection, the most noteworthy to date being the high cost of such a project.

We began administering five additional Preservation Partnership Grants funded at \$10 million, with individual grants not to exceed \$2.5 million (*Public Law 117-103, Division I and Explanatory Statement for the Legislative Branch Appropriations Bill, 2022*). These grants were awarded by seniority of the senators donating collections. The University of Alabama, Oklahoma State University, University of Vermont, University of Delaware, and Stanford University are grant recipients.

Senators' Office Assistance

Our new archivists have enabled us to increase assistance to senators' offices. Deputy Archivist Keri Myers has streamlined record shipments of the closing offices and established a program for senators' use of temporary storage at the Federal Record Centers. While I can report this in a sentence, it was no small achievement, requiring several months of negotiations and ironing out of many kinks in the process. Thanks to the persistence of Keri and Andrea Scherer, Account Manager, National Archives and Records Administration, we now have a whole new reimbursable storage program in place that we hope will encourage senators to preserve their records.

Keri also is systematically reaching out to senators' offices, and will tell us more about that.

A collaboration among Keri, Dina, and the design staff at Printing, Graphics, and Direct Mail resulted in the creation of a new Historical Office logo as well as office templates for emails and invitations, newsletters, and PowerPoint presentations. We now have a toolkit of images, fonts, and color schemes to help unify our archival and records management messaging.

At the request of several committees, we have recently established a Shared Staff Working Group to study and address the management and capture of records created by staff serving simultaneously on committees and in senators' offices.

Committee Assistance

Since December we have transferred 95 new accessions, totaling 401 cubic feet, from 18 different Senate committees/offices. We transferred 20 e-records accessions totaling 306 GB from 1 committee, and 4 e-records accessions totaling 1,350 GB from another committee. Additional transfers have been postponed pending completion of upgrades to the Congressional Instance of the Electronic Record Archive. We processed 14 textual loans totaling 51 cubic feet and 2 e-record loans totaling 1,823 files, 8.73 GB.

We conducted end-of-Congress meetings with all committees and have begun to receive their electronic records for the 117th Congress. Transfers have been a little slower than in previous years due to increasing demands on systems administrators' time caused by very large numbers of staff turnovers, office moves, system updates, and proliferation of new systems.

Electronic Records Collaborations

Working with the Sergeant at Arms (SAA), Deputy Archivists Seelinger and Apodaca helped evaluate vendors for archiving OneDrive/Teams and participated in subsequent meetings with the selected vendor AvePoint to help configure a solution on how to effectively and efficiently export/archive data content

(Continued on page 5)

stored in MS Teams and OneDrive. AvePoint is devising a work plan for actual implementation in the Senate environment of widely varying workflows. Other new Senate technologies we are studying are ComNom, an official communications and nominations tracking and management tool; AirTable, an application to track amendments for bills, with additional features related to legislative work; and ProForma, an in-house database application developed to manage various committee functions such as hearings, correspondence, and legislation.

Seelinger and Apodaca also are members of a SAA-sponsored working group to assess e-discovery solutions for committees, again evaluating the export and backup capabilities for archiving.

The Congressional Video Preservation and Access Technical Working Group (TWG)

We have been reporting on the progress of the TWG since its inception in October 2021. Deputy Archivist Apodaca has been working on this and will provide an update.

Association of Centers for the Study of Congress Annual Meeting (ACSC)

The Twentieth Annual Meeting of the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress took place May 3–5 at the new home of The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement, The Tom & Ruth Harkin Center, on the campus of Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. This marked the 20th Anniversary of ACSC, which was established to encourage preservation of congressional collections by institutions that focus on congressional history.

A keynote address was presented by Dr. Sean Theriault, University Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. Sean is currently researching the effect of interpersonal relationships within the U.S. Congress and is studying changes in the Senate's social fabric amid the weakening of these relationships.

This theme continued with a presentation by Senate Historian Emeritus Don Ritchie and Director of the Robert Byrd Center Ray Smock, discussing historical changes in the Senate and House affecting sociability

(Continued on page 6)

Preserving a Senator's Legacy: Archiving from Day One to Donation

The Capitol Hill Archivists and Records Managers (CHARM) group invites all congressional archivists to join us in the Senate for an open meeting to discuss and learn about the role of Senators' office archivists and the management of Senators' collections at archival repositories. Come and listen to our two panels of talented archivists and connect with Senate staff. Refreshments will be served.

Panel 1: Senators' Office Archivists

Panel 2: Senate Collections in Archival Repositories

Meet & Greet

WHEN: Tuesday, July 25, 2023, 1 PM- 3 PM

WHERE: Senate Visitor Center, Room 208-209

Please RSVP to Dina_Mazina@sec.senate.gov

Senate, cont.

and levels of camaraderie. Senator Harkin joined the discussion and reminisced about his Senate career. The audience didn't want him to stop. He is a great story-teller.

Other highlights included an architectural tour of the Harkin Center, a building that showcases accessibility design details that go well beyond requirements outlined in the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. It incorporates the use of special colors to aid low vision, braille and audio descriptions for artwork and exhibits, and you guessed it, specially designed rest rooms. This is documented in a book, *All: The Making of the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center*, that has become a go-to design resource for architects.

Other panelists discussed the use of military and veterans' affairs records for exhibits, outreach, and research; congressional records as sources for American Indian history; the use of Representative Patsy Mink's papers to write *Fierce and Fearless: Patsy Takemoto Mink, First Woman of Color in Congress*; and workflows for preserving and making available audio-visual collections. A number of these presentations will be transcribed and available on the ACSC site.

U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Art and Archives: Update on Activities

Heather Bourk

A congressional transition, particularly one in which a change in leadership occurs, offers an opportunity for House Archives staff to connect with departing, new, and current Members and staff about the benefits of records management and the obligation to archive official records. Archives staff have spent the past year tackling a range of projects in support of our primary work supporting the needs of commit-

tees and Members related to their records, as well as other records-focused activities.

Outreach efforts to committees at the end of the 117th Congress and the beginning of this one, have included sending letters and emails to committee chairs and staff offering one-on-one meetings to discuss records management and archiving, providing the *Records Management Manual for Committees* and related guides, and answering specific follow-up questions. Since last summer, staff have met with 21 committees.

During the transition period, Archives staff worked with other divisions within the House's Office of the Clerk on briefings to inform committee staff of the resources offered by the Clerk, including guidance on managing and archiving official records. The hybrid in-person-virtual briefing was recorded and has been routinely offered as a training resource through the House's Congressional Staff Academy. Staff also had an opportunity early in the new Congress to present at a briefing for new majority committee staff hosted by the Committee on House Administration. Topics covered included the committee archiving requirements outlined in House Rule VII, guidance on managing current records and archiving non-current records, and resources offered by our office in support of these efforts. Associate Archivist Alison Trulock has taken the lead on these outreach initiatives to committees.

Outreach efforts to Members during the transition between Congresses included providing copies of the *Records Management Manual for Members* to departing and new Members and reaching out to discuss archiving and managing records in a personal office. Almost 90 Members left the House in the 117th Congress and the House Archives staff met with more than half of them. Staff also participated in monthly departing Member briefings to answer specific questions and offer one-on-one records consultations.

House Archives staff completed a series of companion quick guides that support the guidance provided

House, cont.

in the *Records Management Manual for Members*. The four guides, focused on the frequently-asked-about topics of archiving electronic records, email, and social media in Member offices, along with a general how-to archive Member records guide, published last summer.

One of the biggest projects the department completed last year was the large-scale transfer of accessions from the 114th and 115th Congresses, orphaned records, and records loaned to committees from the House's onsite storage to the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives. After preparing, organizing, and managing last year's transfer of almost 3.5 million pages of textual records, as well as providing a data export of descriptive information from ArchivesSpace, Archival Assistant Alicia Colletti has been working with the Center to schedule more frequent transfers of smaller numbers of boxes. Transfers of loaned and orphaned records are currently underway and sets of records from the 116th Congress are planned for routine transfer throughout the rest of the year.

Following this transfer of textual records to the Center, staff have shifted focus to the transfer of electronic records, including both a backlog of records, as well as records recently received from committees. Electronic Records Archivist Emily Graves has spent the early months of the Congress processing and preparing 5.8 terabytes of electronic records for transfer to the Center. Two transfers are completed and the remainder of electronic records in House custody are slated for transfer by the end of the year.

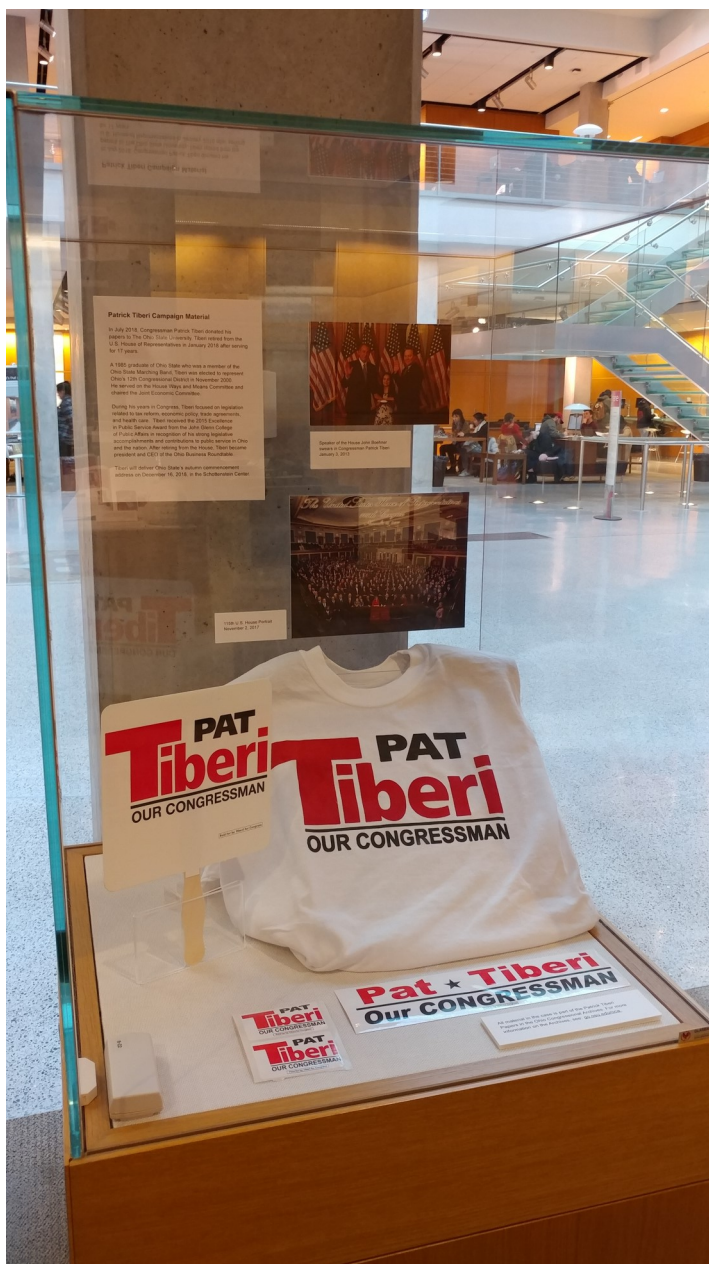
Archives staff spent much of 2022 implementing changes to the [Records Search](#) project. Records Search is an ongoing project to add document descriptions, metadata, and images of official House records to a searchable database on the [History, Art, and Archives](#) website. Staff researched and drafted shorter document descriptions that allowed for the addition of almost triple the number of documents

added in each past update. Almost 60 new document descriptions were researched and written by Archives staff and posted to the site in Fall 2022. They document a variety of topics and record categories, including settlement and expansion, war, statehood, legislation, petitions, and maps. Staff drafted [blog posts](#) to promote the new record descriptions and encourage their use by researchers, students, and teachers.

House Archives staff lead and participate in internal groups focused on education and outreach initiatives. The education group focuses on ways to connect students and teachers with House primary sources, including official records, art and artifacts, and oral histories. The group continues to produce [primary source sets](#) for the [History, Art, and Archives](#) website. These resources feature House records and Collection objects, accompanied by an introductory essay and classroom resources. The most recent primary source set on [Westward Expansion](#) posted to the website in late 2022 and primary sources sets discussing women's suffrage and abolition are currently being researched and drafted.

The education group recently provided an opportunity for local DC high school students to visit onsite for an overview of the work of the Office of Art and Archives and the Office of the House Historian. Next month members of the group will attend the Civics for All of US Institute at the National Archives and host teachers participating in the institute for a tour of the Capitol and for a discussion of the [House's educational resources](#). The team has framed the conversation as a request for feedback from the teachers on existing educational resources and an opportunity to brainstorm ideas for future projects. Archives staff will also participate next month in the Teaching with Primary Sources workshop hosted each summer by the Library of Congress.

If you have questions or would like additional information about any of these projects, please contact Heather Bourk at heather.bourk@mail.house.gov or 202-226-1300.



and was a first-round draft pick for the Indianapolis Colts. After five years in the NFL, Gonzalez attended Stanford Graduate School of Business. Gonzalez was one of 10 House Republicans who voted to impeach former President Trump following the January 6th Capitol riot. Mr. Gibbs served in the House of Representatives from 2011–2023 and represented the 18th and 7th congressional districts. Gibbs is also an alum of Ohio State and graduated from the Ohio State University Agricultural Technical Institute and served as President of the Ohio Farm Bureau. Both donations are primarily digital and will be open for research in 2024 and 2028, respectively.

OPPA is excited to announce that we have completed processing the Patrick Tiberi papers and they are now available for research. See the finding aid here:

<https://library.osu.edu/collections/SPEC.OCA.57.J/>

Tiberi represented Ohio's 12th congressional district from 2001–2018. He served on the House Ways and Means Committee and chaired the Joint Economic Committee. During his years in Congress, Tiberi focused on legislation related to tax reform, economic policy, trade agreements, and health care. After retiring from the House of Representatives he became the president and CEO of the Ohio Business Roundtable .

Senator Baucus's electronic records at the University of Montana

Emily Ahern

Hello friends, my name is Emily Ahern and I'm a recent MLIS graduate. I've been hired short-term as an adjunct electronic records archivist at the University of Montana's Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections. My role is to focus on preserving and making accessible the digital portion of former Montana Senator Max Baucus's collection. Donated to the University of Montana Mansfield library be-

Repository Update: Ohio Public Policy Archives

Carly Dearborn

The Ohio Public Policy Archives (OPPA) at The Ohio State University acquired the congressional papers of former U.S. Representatives Anthony Gonzalez and Robert Gibbs. Mr. Gonzalez served the people of Ohio's 16th congressional district since 2019. Gonzalez attended Ohio State University where he played wide receiver for the Buckeyes (2004–2006)

Baucus, cont.

tween 2014-2018, the electronic records were arranged and partially processed by Natalie Bond and have been lying in wait in the interim. View her wonderful finding aid [here](#).

I have previously worked at UMT's ASC using Preservica to preserve records from a collaborative COVID project with local government. As a result, I became familiar with the platform and began developing workflows for future administrators and users of the system.

A new instance of Preservica was procured for Baucus's collection with 1 TB Glacier storage and 1 TB AWS S3 storage. ASC policy prefers master, preservation, and access versions of electronic records. Because the total ER collection is 864+ GB (1.5 million items), creating preservation and access versions for each record would quickly run us out of space. This requires constant consideration of storage space, making Preservica's automatic ingest/access/preservation workflows more complicated than usual. Ultimately, we would like all restricted materials preserved and stored in Glacier, with unrestricted materials accessible in AWS.

My first task was to stage the records mirroring the finding aid and then prepare them for ingest. Seems simple enough, right? It was, until it wasn't. TeraCopying the records to a new location took weeks to complete, which I hadn't expected. When that process was complete, I did an extensive survey on the file types of the records – ultimately removing some, but leaving most questionable formats in hopes that Preservica will be able to preserve them one day.

Because some materials were processed into SIPs with Archivemata years before, some of the sub-series required some serious de-duplication. With our limited storage space in mind, I removed redundant materials within folders, such as cropped photos (if the original photo existed). If there were two versions

of the same document within a folder, I kept the oldest version. Empty folders were also removed. When these steps were complete, I determined the materials were ready to go and began the process of ingesting the unrestricted materials into Preservica. (Figuring out the best way to do so is a story for another day.)

After ingesting a few of the sub-series into Preservica, I was made aware that I should have stripped the file and folder names of special characters and spaces. So, I used ReNamer to rename all files and folders before re-ingesting them. I was again feeling confident when our department head asked if the records had been OCR'd so they could be fully indexed and searchable. Gulp. I also hadn't considered this. Our Preservica tier does not automatically perform OCR on ingest; and for the second time, I found myself removing the ingests.

Near as I can tell, no tool can tell you if a PDF has been OCR'd without opening the PDF - so began the tedious task of manually attending to and OCRing all materials with text. In another fun twist of fate, our digital forensics workstation hard drive failed and is now under construction!

I am presently running the OCR workflow on restricted materials, Handbraking some of our AV files, and anticipating further work with the CSS data in their original DAT and TAB formats. (Natalie Bond wrote about her experience with the Baucus CSS data [here](#).) There is obviously much more to say about this work and the lessons learned from it, and I plan to expound on my experience in the future. In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any questions and especially advice at emily.ahern@umt.edu.

Currently, all of Baucus's unrestricted electronic records are accessible at libumt.access.preservica.com.

Senate, cont.

CPS Day Recap: Building a Digital Archives Program in a Congressional Context

George Apodaca

For CPS Day that took place on June 15, 2023, U.S. Senate Deputy Archivist for Digital Archives, George Apodaca, presented on “Building a Digital Archives Program in a Congressional Context” to the Congressional Papers Section, and was facilitated by his colleague, U.S. Senate Deputy Archivist for Senators’ Offices, Keri Myers.

The presentation was broken up into three parts. Part I provided a brief discussion on the fundamental similarities and differences between a traditional paper archival program and a born-digital one; Part II explored digital archives praxis by identifying the major phases of a born-digital archives workflow; while Part III delved into the elements that lead to a successful digital processing plan.

In Part I of his presentation, Apodaca touched upon some of the differences between traditional and born-digital archives, most notably the distinction that traditional archival records record information on a fixed storage medium, while electronic records can be understood as “bits,” also commonly known as “ones” and “zeroes,” that are used to re-constitute an electronic record – but, of course, are also word processing documents, digital photographs, video and audio recordings, as well as spreadsheets, emails and the like. Notwithstanding these glaringly obvious differences, Apodaca explained that the fundamental principles surrounding these types of records are nonetheless very similar, such as the importance of provenance, original order, and authenticity. The ability to retain information about a record’s creation, ownership, and any changes or modifications that have been made over time, a desire to maintain records as they were created and used by the records’

creator, as well as a goal to preserve trustworthiness and reliability via the use of checksums and digital signatures is simply the manner by which born-digital archives accomplish these archival principles in a digital context.

To wrap up Part I, Apodaca offered a primer on digital forensics, which is the process of identifying, preserving, analyzing, and presenting digital evidence in a manner that is legally acceptable, and the overlap that exists between this field and the increasing amount of cultural heritage institutions beginning to embark on their own digital archives journey. In short, he emphasized that much like archivists would never alter any record that makes its way through their institution’s doors, digital forensics lays the foundational groundwork for how to prevent this in an electronic environment. This is most commonly accomplished through the use of software and hardware write-blockers that prevent any writing or modification of data on a storage device or networked drive while files are being transferred and/or ingested, as well as by employing checksums to periodically verify the integrity of data against any unintentional changes or the slow deterioration in the integrity of data, also known as “bit-rot.” Most importantly, he explained, is the intersection of digital forensics and digital archives that allows for the preservation and analysis of digital content in a way that is both secure and accessible for future use. With these digital forensics tenets in hand, the integrity and authenticity of electronic records can assuage fears, court donors, and ultimately foment trust within archival institutions.

In Part II, Apodaca shared the four maxims that guide his work, gleaned from the instrumental work, “You’ve Got to Walk Before You Can Run,” published by Ricky Erway in 2012, which include: 1) Do no harm (to the physical media or content); 2) Don’t do anything that unnecessarily precludes future action and use; 3) Don’t let the first two principles be obstacles to action; and 4) Document what you do.

Senate, cont.

Then, he proceeded to break down the main components of a typical born-digital archives workflow into five digestible phases: 1) Pre-Acquisition/Accessioning; 2) Ingest; 3) Digital Processing; 4) Description & Arrangement; and, 5) Preservation & Access.

Generally speaking, the Pre-Acquisition/Accessioning phase emphasizes the benefits of working with a donor as early as possible to identify and prepare for the digital component of a collection, which can be documented in a Born-Digital Acquisition Questionnaire to determine what digital content a donor has, what its context and significance is, as well as identify what, if any, concerns a donor has about it. The acquisition questionnaire can not only help guide negotiations, but will also provide information that will aid in the overall processing, preservation, and access of the digital content. Another step that can lead towards the successful execution of a born-digital archives program is implementing an institution-wide Digital Collection Development Policy that specifically addresses the challenges and nuances of born-digital content. It should supplement the general collecting policy at an institution and include information about: methods used for transfer and/or capture of electronic records; categories of digital materials which the institution is able to preserve, manage, and deliver, with an indicative list of file types and formats; as well as methods for ensuring and demonstrating the ability to retain integrity and authenticity of the digital material. The major takeaway was to have a written statement that the curator and/or archivist may use as a primary point of reference when soliciting born-digital donations. Once the collection has been formally accessioned, the archives can begin to take physical control over the collection by uniquely identifying the media and transferring the records into its electronic infrastructure during the Ingest phase, all the while continuing to work on preserving the content's authenticity and context. This is most often done by employing capture methods that do not alter the original content,

checking the integrity of the content before and after capture via the use of software and/or hardware write-blockers, and checksum generation.

The Digital Processing phase of the workflow is where processing staff explore the digital content for the first time with the same aims and professional guidelines as processing traditional analog material. The archivist is working to determine the arrangement of the content, its context and significance, its relation to the collection as a whole, and is gaining an understanding of the material in order to describe and make available for researchers. How this differs from traditional archives boils down to the need to avail oneself of specialized software to interact with the content, but aside from that, all standard processing policies should be followed.

The fourth phase, Description & Arrangement, entails describing and arranging the digital component of the collection to the desired level of processing for inclusion into the overall finding aid. The descriptive granularity should be heavily influenced by the policies that have evolved at each respective institution, however, the overall aims and objectives of this phase remain unchanged by format. Of note is the level of description possible and/or desirable may vary between traditional and born-digital material, reflecting the variations in available resources to undertake the descriptive and arrangement work, as well as a valid assumption that full-text index or search of the digital material empowers the user, while at the same time, reducing the need for the archivist's descriptive work. Nonetheless, one of the most critical processes involved in the overall usability of a collection's material, regardless of format, is the intellectual arrangement of its contents. The skills and terminology applied to traditional archives should be applied to digital archives, preferably according to non-format specific DACS cataloging standards.

Finally, the fifth phase, Preservation & Access, can be summed up as several methods and techniques to ensure the longevity and accessibility of digital materials, which can include activities like migration, normalization, and in rare instances, emulation. The sali-

Senate, cont.

ent points to take note of at this point are: 1) Are the files physically accessible? Where will they be stored? What formats are they in and what formats would the institution like them to be in? 2) What might need to be converted for preservation and access purposes? If conversion is necessary, what are the important elements to retain? Information? Appearance? Experience? 3) Does the institution have adequate descriptive metadata to contextualize the files for the future? And, 4) Where does the institution want to store the preservation copies? The answers to these questions will allow the archivist to think about how their institution will be providing access to these materials reliably and authentically well into the future.

The final part of Apodaca's presentation, Part III, touched upon how to create a robust Digital Processing Plan for the born-digital component of an archival collection. Digital Processing Plans allow archivists to identify the goals and desired outcomes of any born-digital collection. They should define the systematic approach taken to manage and preserve digital content, and usually involve creating a proposal for how digital materials will be acquired, stored, organized, accessed, and preserved over time. Digital Processing Plans also document the rationale for work performed on a collection, and allows for transparency of practice among archivists and between archivists and users. They can function as internal documentation and provide continuity in times of staff change. Finally, they can assist in the project management of work on a particular collection, and in many cases, research done for digital processing plans can be repurposed in the collection's overall finding aid.

Apodaca further emphasized that a digital processing plan should not only attempt to outline the proposed digital archiving tasks in broad strokes, but also provide the tools and means necessary in order to accomplish said tasks at each stage of the workflow. He focused on recommending a set of practices, in as system-agnostic terms as possible, that should be

carried out at the stages that interface most directly with born-digital content, which are the Ingest and Digital Processing phases, with the hopes that archivists could begin to incorporate some of these practices into their digital processing plans and workflows at their respective institutions.

Message from the Editors

It's not too early to start thinking about the next issue of our newsletter!

To assist with your--and our!--planning, we have implemented a regular annual production schedule:

- **Late May:** Summer issue submission deadline
- **June:** Summer issue published
- **Mid-November:** Winter issue submission deadline
- **December:** Winter issue published

For our winter 2023-2024 issue we invite content in the following categories:

- **Institutional Updates:** Project updates, case studies, significant acquisitions, work in progress, etc. 500 to 1,000 words.
- **Brief Announcements:** Staffing changes, grants awarded, upcoming event/opportunity announcements, new acquisitions, newly processed collections, etc. 250 words or less.
- **Program/Event/Committee Reports, Recaps, and Updates:** 500 words or less.