

**Society of American Archivists**  
**American Archivist Editorial Board**  
**Zoom Meeting | January 22, 2021**

**MINUTES**

**In attendance:** Amy Cooper Cary (Chair), Bethany Anderson (Reviews Editor), Sumayya Ahmed, Carrie Daniels, Ben Goldman, Katharina Hering, Eric Hung, Shadrack Katuu, Kate Puerini, Alison Trulock, Sylvia Welsh; Asa Espanto, Bridgette Hammond, and Grace Moran (early-career members); Stacie Williams (ex officio, Publications Editor); Mario Ramirez (Council Liaison); and SAA staff Nancy Beaumont, Teresa Brinati, and Abigail Christian.

**Unable to attend:** Jessica Lacher-Feldman.

**I. WELCOME AND UPDATES ON ISSUES**

Cary welcomed Board members to her first official Editorial Board meeting as editor

- A. 83.2 (Fall/Winter 2020):** This issue is coming along despite delays. The digital version will be published in February and print version should arrive in early March. One submission from the previous 83:2 TOC was postponed for the next issue because the revisions had not yet been submitted. This is the last issue of the journal to be published in print.
- B. 84.1 (Spring/Summer 2021):** This will be the first digital-only issue. Cary is working on the backlog of submissions, some of which will be published in this issue. Here is the table of contents to date:
- 2020 Presidential Address, Meredith Evans
  - 2020 Theodore Calvin Pease Award, “‘Nothing About Us Without Us’: Documenting Disability History in Western Pennsylvania” by Bridget Malley
  - “Surveying as Unsettling: The Protocols Alignment Survey...” by Kimberly Anderson and Jessica Maddox
  - “How to Wrangle Multiple Discrete Collections from One Donor: A Case Study of the Subject-based Physical and Digital Consolidation of the Wade Hall Collections,” by Laura M. Gentry, Erin Ryan, Jessica Rayman and Martha A. Bace
  - “Context Lost: Digital Surrogates, their Physical Counterparts, and the Metadata that is Keeping Them Apart” by Donald Force and Randy Smith
  - “Bit Rosie: A Case Study in Transforming Web-Based Multimedia Research into Digital Archives” by Adele Fournet
- C. 84.2 (Fall/Winter 2021):** This issue will include a special section on design records, guest-edited by Karen Trivette. Trivette is working with 7 authors on articles for the section.
- D. Pivot to Digital in 2021:** Cary is working on the “Going Digital” statement and will send to the Board soon for review. SAA has so far communicated this pivot through email campaigns when the new *American Archivist* website was launched, via *In the Loop*, and in social media outlets. This information will also be shared in an insert in the Fall/Winter 2020 issue. Concerns about the transition are that members may feel a membership benefit is being taken away, and that people won’t see the various communications. SAA will continue to communicate widely and clearly about the

pivot, stressing that this change brings opportunity for many benefits, even though it changes how members interact with the journal. Hung stressed that this is an opportunity to consider ways to publish material that is not easily incorporated in print, such as visual material, audio material, datasets, etc. Print workflow will shift over time, and SAA will continue to emphasize the many new features to the digital platform. With regard to accessibility, suggestions included adding alt text to the editorial workflow and verifying screen reader functionality on the new digital platform. Ramirez voiced the concern about digital inequity and the potential barrier that embargos place on accessibility.

**TO DO #1: (Brinati, Christian, and Cary):** Verify that screen readers are compatible with the Meridian platform and revisit editorial workflow to include alt text for photos and images moving forward. Connect with Allen Press about alt text for back issues.

**E. Hidden Content Project Update:** Moran, Espanto, and Hammond reported that they are making progress on this project and have completed examination of issues from the 1930s and 1940s and are now into the 1950s.

**TO DO #2: (Brinati, Christian, Espanto, Hammond, Hering, and Moran):** Schedule Zoom call for a project update.

**F. Status of “Proposal for a Strategy to Address Professional Mediation, Facilitation, and Conflict Management”:** There is a compelling need for the SAA Council to form a working group to devise and implement a work plan on diversity/equity/inclusion/accessibility, which will be reflected throughout the entire association, rather than have the Editorial Board take on this trial project. The Council is grateful for the document that the Board put forward. The one aspect that is within the Board’s purview is developing a Task Force on Publishing Ethics around DEIA in partnership with the Publications Board, Dictionary Working Group and Committee on Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC).

**TO DO #3: (Cary):** Invite representatives from Editorial Board, Publications Board, Dictionary Working Group, and CEPC to help develop description for a Task Force on Publishing Ethics.

## II. DIVERSITY/EQUITY/INCLUSION/ACCESSIBILITY – ONGOING DISCUSSION

**A. Board members discussed professional development activities related to DEI** that they’ve participated in this year. Some examples include:

- reading DEI books, such as Ibram X. Kendi’s *How to Be an Anti-Racist* – though Ahmed believes this book speaks more to white liberals than people of color;
- participating in Rachel Cargle’s 30-day “Do the Work” series and local lectures;
- giving presentations and serving on their institutions’ DEI committees;
- developing a new course on decentering whiteness in library and information science (Simmons University).

**B. Concerns about DEI initiatives:** Ahmed noted that DEI initiatives should move away from only addressing white people and broaden their efforts to address people of color, their needs, and exclusive infrastructure. ([One resource](#) to check out). Williams noted that DEI initiatives haven’t always happened in environments that are respectful or safe for people of color and to have people of

color in decision-making positions. Hung has participated in several lectures—and has received great comments and conversation with others— but has not seen a lot of substantive change afterward.

**C. For the Board to create effective change moving forward,** it needs to focus on what the community needs from the Board, to develop actionable items (beyond reading!) that serves the entire community, and find ways to make the journal’s spaces (submissions process, peer reviewers, contributors, and Board membership) safe for people whose lives are impacted by issues of diversity, inclusion, and access.

**D. Initial ideas:**

- Add a news section with short items on actual DEI actions that institutions have taken (could be a new section in *In the Loop*);
- Add an explicit DEIA statement to the landing page for the *American Archivist* website;
- Highlight articles that are written by practicing archivists;
- Continue to expand SAA’s house style guide to use inclusive language in the journal and publications in general;
- Share web metrics for the journal to highlight from where in the world people are visiting the journal;
- Review list of action items from October 2019 Board meeting:
  - Review and revise Editorial Policy
  - Review and revise peer review rubric
  - Develop guidance/best practices for peer reviewers
  - Update the peer reviewer expert categories in the system to include more areas around DEIA.

**TO DO #4 (Editorial Board): Create a list of 2021 goals for the Board that includes action items from 2019 Board meeting.**