

Name of Section/Roundtable: Manuscript Repositories Section
Date: November 29, 2011

Officers:

- Elizabeth Russey Roke (Chair) 8/27/2011 - 8/10/2013
- Christopher Burns (Vice Chair) 8/27/2011 - 8/11/2013
- Fernanda Perrone (Immediate Past Chair) 8/27/2011 - 8/11/2012
- Jacqueline Dean (Steering Committee Member) 8/27/2011 - 8/10/2013
- Ellen Doon (Steering Committee Member) 8/11/2010 - 8/12/2012
- Renna Tuten (Steering Committee Member) 8/11/2010 - 8/12/2012
- Anke Voss (Steering Committee Member) 8/11/2010 - 8/12/2012
- Melissa Watterworth Batt (Steering Committee Member) 8/27/2011 - 8/10/2013
- Elizabeth Wilkinson (Steering Committee Member) 8/27/2011 - 8/10/2013

Report from Annual Meeting:

Number of attendees: approx. 100

Election results: Christopher Burns: Vice Chair/Chair Elect

Jacqueline Dean, Melissa Watterworth Batt, Elizabeth Wilkinson: Steering Committee

Summary of meeting activities:

Section Meeting Minutes

August 25, 2011

Chicago, IL

Section Chair Fernanda Perrone convened the meeting at 3:30 p.m. She introduced the section leadership and thanked the outgoing members of the Steering Committee. Nominations Committee Chair and Immediate Past Chair Sammie Morris announced the winners of the Steering Committee elections and thanked the Nominating Committee. Morris noted that participation increased over last year; there were 118 ballots cast out of 974 eligible. Section members are encouraged to submit ideas for increasing participation in elections to the chair or section leadership. The following individuals were elected:

Chris Burns, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect

Jackie Dean

Elizabeth Wilkinson

Melissa Watterworth Batt

Announcements

Tom Hyry and Bill Landis, SAA Council Liaisons, reported on the following developments:

- This is Tom's last year on SAA Council; Bill Landis is taking over as Council Liaison for next year.

- Tom encourage section members to attend the annual business meeting because of the referendum to allow online voting on ballot [note: this referendum was passed]
- An Annual Meeting task force has been created in response to the Chicago hotel labor dispute and to look at the current annual meeting model. [note: SAA sent out a call for participants in September]
- SAA has completed its Core Values document and it is now up on the website [<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/core-values-of-archivists>].

Nancy Melley from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) provided an update on the Grants Program. She noted that the organization does expect to exist next year, but they are uncertain about the amount of money available. There is a new grant program for next year, called Documenting Democracy; it will fund projects focused on basic and detailed processing, description conversion, etc. It will also fund digitization projects for processed and nationally significant collections that need no metadata and can be made publicly online after digitization for free. Contact NHPRC for help in putting together a project.

Jennifer Schaffner from OCLC Research gave an update on the ALA/ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Activities. She is serving as a representative to this committee to get communication moving between it and SAA. RBMS is working on security guidelines that are archives friendly. Also, new Guidelines for Borrowing and Lending Special Collections for Research Use and Exhibition [http://www.rbms.info/committees/task_force/borrowing/index.shtml] have been approved by ACRL and ALA and will go to SAA Council for endorsement. There is also a task force that is looking at manuscript and rare book collection programs.

Jennifer also provided an update on OCLC Research Activities. The goal of the new Born Digital Special Collections project is to explore the array of skills and expertise held by special collections librarians and archivists that are crucial to effective management of many types of born-digital materials; describe how those areas of expertise do or don't pertain to various types of born-digital materials; and outline some of the most basic steps that a library can take to begin to exert minimal control over born-digital materials.. The Collection Assessment project will investigate management and assessment of archival collections. Finally, Archives Grid is under study and will be expanded and be made freely available to the public.

Jackie Dean, from the Working Group for Data-Driven Decision-making in Processing and Public Services provided a summary on the survey of More Product, Less Process (MPLP) and the repositories who use it. The goal of the survey is to inform the development of tools, best practices, and guidelines for implementing MPLP. The Chairs of the Working Group are Dan Santamaria and Shannon Bowen Maier.

A representative from the SAA 2012 Program committee announced that the theme for the Annual Meeting is Beyond Borders. They are looking for panels and sessions that

address innovative collaborations across borders of the allied professions (Libraries, Museums, etc.). One thing that is new this year is that people may not be on more than one proposal. The deadline for submitting proposals is October 3 [note: this was changed to October 11].

Program

L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin, University of Delaware, introduced Timothy D. Murray, Head of Special Collections, University of Delaware Library who spoke on “Managing Print Materials – Books and Otherwise – in Manuscript and Archival Collections.”

- Printed material that's intrinsic to the collection (maps, pamphlets, etc.). Archivists should ask themselves, "is it important? And how do we provide access?"
- Approaches: extreme librarian or extreme archivist at the ends; many approaches to take, most often depends on institution (resources, etc.); possibilities include removing material for cataloging and adding a note to the record; catalog, but retain material with archives; retain without catalog record; or employ a combination of approaches.
- Murray introduced a case study involving papers of a playwright Barrie Stavis. Stavis wrote plays based on historical events. His collection includes research files and "stuff" he was interested in back to the Spanish Civil War. Stavis' writing process included collecting historical materials on those topics. For instance he wrote a play on Joe Hill and collected genealogical materials and information on Mormonism in connection. He also collected original labor and communist pamphlets, (Russian, union, US) and labor magazines, in connection with his writing. Lots of this material is interesting outside the context of Stavis' work. How do we keep this material connected with the original collection yet make it visible to scholars interested in those topics?
- How do you decide what to catalog? If not catalog, what do you do with it? How do you decide what materials get cataloged ahead of the rare books? Is it even doable to catalog on an individual basis? Do you tell researchers that material has been cataloged or even discarded? Do you provide lists?

Break-out Group Discussions

The Section then broke out into 3 small groups for further discussion on the problems of print material in archival collections. The following is a summary of topics these groups discussed:

- Literary manuscripts and the purchase of collections. How do we work with donors so we don't get libraries of books that duplicate general collection?
- Cataloging of ephemera, random newspaper collections
- How do you help people to find material either cataloged or in manuscript collections?

- Item level indexing and cataloging - it seems to depend on the mission of the institution and its patrons. How will they look for the material? Cross-references between the finding aid and catalog record and access points are powerful.
- MPLP considerations. Specificity of finding aid helps in the research experience.
- Making lists of materials cataloged seems like a lot of work. Important step is connecting with donors to be sure we get what we want and not extraneous material.
- Could you create individual MARC catalog records for all the printed material yet physically keep it in the collection? The decision to catalog depends on nature of collection and how it relates to creator, and also repository resources.
- Time, MPLP considerations, and institutional past practice tends to dictate how repositories deal with print material in collections.
- Donor relationship issues--what happens when archives are required to maintain materials? How do we work with donors to keep this from being a requirement?
- Improved search and discovery systems may be a solution to some of the decisions of whether to catalog or not.

Completed projects/activities:

Web site

Thanks to Web Liaison Laura Carroll, the section Web site has been successfully moved to Drupal. Past newsletters, annual reports, and section bylaws have been added to the site. In addition, a new resource on creating section proposals has been added.

Newsletters

Published three issues on the section Web site, and publicized them on the Archives and section listservs.

Annual Meeting

Presented a program on Managing Print Materials – Books and Otherwise – in Manuscript and Archival Collections.” Tim Murray, Head of Special Collections at the University of Delaware was the featured speaker, followed by break-out sessions.

Ongoing projects/activities:

Section History

Former chairs Amy Cooper Cary and Sammie Morris and Immediate Past Chair Fernanda Perrone decided to work together on the section history project. Some material about the section history seems to be missing, and the group is considering how to fill in the gaps. There is also discussion over what form the history should take.

Help for Session Presenters

The Section Steering committee is creating resources to help section members develop SAA session proposals. We continue to develop the Web page and will distribute a listserv message in late spring offering help in putting proposals together/connecting presenters. There was also interest in providing space during the Section meeting to connect possible presenters.

New projects/activities:*Session Endorsements*

We reviewed nine session proposals and voted to endorse two:

1. Removing Borders: Towards Seamless Connections Between Born-Digital and Hard-Copy Records
2. Rules of Engagement: The Politics and Pleasures of "Living Archives"

Section Projects: At the Steering Committee meeting, we agreed to concentrate on the theme of electronic records for the next two years and will focus specifically on acquisition and ingest in 2012. We will reach out to groups who are developing policies related to e-records to present/help lead the section program. The Steering Committee expressed interest in inviting other conference presenters with topics related to e-records to attend the section meeting and give a brief plug/summary of their sessions.

A second initiative is related to updating the SAA brochures (located at: <http://www2.archivists.org/publications/brochures>). Most of these brochures are over 10 years old, and do not mention electronic records. Steering Committee members were interested in developing a possible task force with members drawn from the general Section membership to try to involve those outside the Steering Committee in the project.

Strategic Priority - Technology initiatives:

Our two year initiative on electronic records in manuscript repositories supports this initiative.

Strategic Priority - Diversity initiatives:

We plan to seek a diverse slate of candidates for this summer's section elections.

Strategic Priority - Advocacy/Public Awareness initiatives:

None at this time.

Questions/concerns for Council attention:

We would like to know if we can receive advance information on the following year's (2013) annual meeting theme to be able to start thinking about session proposals well in advance.