

FROM THE CHAIR

Molly Marcusse, Assistant Archivist for Reference, American Heritage Center



Happy New Year Description Section! I hope that you are all getting settled into 2017 by now.

While reflecting on what to say for our winter newsletter, I've found myself thinking broadly about how description serves all other aspects of archival work. This was probably on my mind partly because I do not do much descriptive work in my current position.

Shortly after becoming Vice Chair/Chair-Elect of the Description Section, I transitioned into focusing exclusively on reference work due to institutional needs and a significant change to staffing patterns at my university. Even though I remain strongly interested in descriptive aspects of archival work, it has at times felt like a challenge to serve as Chair of the Description Section while transitioning into a position that does not so obviously relate to description. More recently I've been connecting the dots. I keep noticing how quality description of materials allows me to provide reference services more efficiently. More importantly, I see how researchers are able to better discover items that have been described well without needing an archivist to help them navigate through the discovery points. I am an expert in navigating the descriptive systems of my repository, but researchers are experts in their subject and are more qualified than I am to identify possibly relevant resources. Archival description is our most powerful tool to empower researchers to discover materials relevant to their needs. What are our strengths in facilitating researcher discovery? What can we do differently to better serve the research needs of our users and potential users? I'm excited that many of the current developments in descriptive standards are seeking to improve the researcher's ability to discover and identify relevant materials.

IN THIS ISSUE

From the Chair	1
Feature Articles: Free DACS Educational Videos Available Online!	3
Feature Article: Oral History Description at the Reuther Library.....	4
News & Notes	6
Calls for Authors, Speakers, & Posters	8
Upcoming Conferences & Workshops	9

I had the pleasure of meeting many of you at our annual section meeting in Atlanta during SAA 2016. For those who were unable to attend the annual section meeting, the minutes are available in this newsletter and also on the Description Section website:

<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/description-section/description-section-minutes>. We heard announcements from Jackie Dooley on a few projects at OCLC, our SAA Council Liaison Michelle Light spoke briefly about changes to sections and roundtables that are still being implemented, and Diane Ducharme, our liaison to the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials Manuscript Working Group of ALA, gave updates on that committee's work. The bulk of the meeting consisted of two fascinating presentations. First, Anila Angieli spoke about a French project using EAC-CPF and RDF to create an interactive web interface of authority records from several institutions. Second, Allison Jai O'Dell gave an overview of the work of the Task Force to Explore Data Elements for Rare Materials Description; this is a task force of the Bibliographic Standards Committee of the Rare Books & Manuscripts Section of ALA.

The steering committee will be pulling together the agenda for our meeting at SAA 2017 in Portland over the next few months. If you have any suggestions for speakers or other ideas of what you want out of this meeting, please feel free to contact me at mmarcuss@uwyo.edu. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

I would like to use this opportunity to thank our steering committee members for volunteering their time, energy, and knowledge to the Description Section. Martha Bace, Jennifer Mitchell, Cyndi Shein, Javier Ruedas, Alexandra Orchard, Meghan Lyon, Karen Spicher, and Michelle Light thanks for everything that you do!

For any of our members who are looking for opportunities to be more involved with SAA, I encourage you to consider running for one of our upcoming steering committee positions. Elections will be held in the spring. The Description Section will have openings for Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Member-at-Large, and Council Liaison. I will send out a formal call for nominations in the near future, but please feel welcome to submit nominations to me at any time.

FEATURE ARTICLES

Free DACS Educational Videos Available Online!

Elise Dunham, Data Curation Specialist, Research Data Service (RDS), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The SAA Technical Subcommittee on *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) is pleased to announce the release of freely-available educational videos that teach the basics of DACS: <http://www2.archivists.org/dacs-primer>.

The DACS videos were created as a part of an overarching effort to revise the Introduction to DACS workshop run by SAA. Our goal was to redesign the in-person workshop so that it focuses less on the “nuts and bolts” of DACS and more on hands-on exercises that empower students to practice archival judgment in accordance with the guidance that DACS provides. We worked with colleagues in the SAA community to develop videos that cover the basics of DACS—such as the history of DACS, the definition and principles of archival description, the DACS elements, and more.

The new approach to DACS education means that workshop attendees learn the nuts and the bolts prior to traveling to their in-person workshop. The time they spend with the instructor and other DACS learners is therefore optimized because it is focused on applying basic concepts and working collaboratively through challenging aspects of archival description. This new approach also means that anyone with an internet connection can freely access the educational videos that teach the basics of DACS.

The following members of the SAA community donated volunteer time and excellent thinking to the revision of the DACS workshop:

Elise Dunham	Sarah Bost	Jennifer Mitchell
Maureen Callahan	Maristella Feustle	Cate Putirskis
Jackie Dean	Emily Gonzalez	Laura Romans
Cyndi Harbeson	Amelia Homes	Rachel Searcy
Adrien Hilton	Tal Hurwitz	Anneliese Warhank
Susan Luftschein	Chris Marino	Katrina Windon

TS-DACS would also like to acknowledge Solveig De Sutter and Brianne Downing of SAA Education for all of the work they did to prepare the debut of the revised Introduction to DACS workshop in July 2016.

Oral History Description at the Reuther Library

Alexandra A. A. Orchard, Technical + Metadata Archivist, Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI

In 2014 the Walter P. Reuther Library received a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant to enhance the description and accessibility of its oral history holdings over the course of two years. At the time, description and findability of the oral histories was limited to a PDF document on the Reuther Library's website listing collection titles and interviewees, with an additional internal-only spreadsheet providing physical locations. This was in vast contrast to the comprehensive descriptive practices for Reuther's manuscript materials, whose arrangement and description followed one of three processing levels and complied with collection-level DACS. To achieve the NHPRC project's goal, both individual resource records on the Reuther's ArchivesSpace instance and MARC records in the Wayne State University Library catalog would be created for over 1,600 un(der)described oral history collections, ensuring full description and accessibility.

Overseen by Project Supervisor, Audiovisual Archivist Deborah Rice, project work began as Technical and Metadata Archivist, Alexandra Orchard, transitioned the Reuther Library to ArchivesSpace. This changeover in finding aid creation provided an ideal environment for exploring how a different content type, oral histories, could fit (or not) into the Reuther Library's manuscript materials processing and descriptive procedures.

Oral history description started with needs analysis and comparison with manuscript materials. Oral History Project Archivist, Rebecca Bizonet, worked with Rice and Orchard to review ArchivesSpace resource record fields, using Orchard's resource record manual and ArchivesSpace template, both specific to the needs of the Reuther's manuscript materials. The group resolved that the same resource record fields were necessary for oral history collections, however, given the special characteristics of oral history collections, numerous field values differed.

Initial changes included fields that held descriptive values unique or prevalent to oral history collections. One particular challenge was describing extents for non-manuscript materials. While digital materials extents were already accounted for in the procedures because hybrid collections are common at the Reuther Library, audiovisual materials were not separated into their own extent fields. However, given that some of the oral history materials contained only audiovisual materials, and that access to the oral history materials is based on the audiovisual format (e.g., cassette, CD, film, etc.), this information was important to convey to users. While ArchivesSpace provides the option to add values to controlled value lists, rather than do so,

“item” was used for consistency. Specific media types were indicated in the Container Summary and Physical Details fields.

Similar tweaks were made to notes like citation style, modified for oral history collections with multiple interviewees,¹ and for oral histories of the same person conducted at different times which required adding the year to the citation to distinguish between the oral histories, as the titles were otherwise the same.

Another difference between oral histories and manuscript material description arose with the Use Statement. The Reuther Library utilizes two use statements, applied based upon the collection’s processing level. If a collection is processed at a level 1 (lowest, most detailed level of arrangement), the basic use statement referring users to our Rules for Use of Archival Materials is applied. If a collection is processed at a level 2 or 3 (higher, less detailed levels of arrangement), the second use statement, indicating to users that they may encounter sensitive materials is added. However, for oral histories, an additional use statement is needed per oral history standards to indicate to users that materials should not be used to infringe on privacy rights and that usage must be in accordance with U.S. law regarding libelous statement and slander. Additionally, some oral history materials require permission from the interviewee(s) or their heirs or assigns to publish or quote content. For oral histories found in papers collections, application of all three statements may be necessary.

The largest issue was not apparent until several collections were processed. As part of the Reuther’s ArchivesSpace initiative, agent records are created for individuals and corporate entities related to collections and linked to their associated resource record(s). To enhance description, it was initially decided to add each interviewer and interviewee in an oral history collection as an agent. However, many oral history collections contain numerous interviewees, making the process unwieldy, because agent records include a full name, birth or active date(s), and a unique ID.² This process is time consuming between the necessary research and data entry. Additionally, given the types of oral history material collected at the Reuther Library (labor, urban affairs, university), many interviewees are only found in one collection. Therefore, including these individuals as agents in ArchivesSpace did not add the assumed benefit of linking collections, but instead created additional maintenance. It was alternatively decided a better solution was for collections with three or more interviewees to list interviewee names in

¹ Example: “[Collection Title], [Interviewee Name], Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University”

² We use NACO names when available. When there is no NACO name, Reuther follows DACS and keeps a list of names in the “Reuther Agents List,” each with its own Unique ID, with the long-term plan to export EAC-CPF records.

the Scope and Content note, thereby ensuring the interviewees' names are still searchable, but not adding to our agents list.

As the processing and descriptive work of the oral histories is completed, and quality checked, the final step is completed by the Metadata Librarian, Amelia Mowry. Mowry uses ArchivesSpace's MARC export function and MARCedit to create each oral history collection's MARC record. These records are then uploaded into the Library's catalog. Prior to the NHPRC project, the only MARC records available for Reuther Library collections were outdated, and often inaccurate. The workflow for these new MARC records is the model for Reuther Library collections (regardless of content type) moving forward.

In addition to the reusable MARC workflow, the oral history procedures, both for ArchivesSpace and description were revised based on the project. These documents will be included in the Reuther Library's manual, although kept as separate documents (rather than integrated into the manuscript version) given the significant differences in description needs for the two content types. Later this spring at the project's completion, links to the individual oral history resource records will be available on the Reuther's website enhancing the accessibility of the Reuther Library's oral history collections and ensuring these stories are findable.³

NEWS AND NOTES

TS-DACS to Hold Meeting to Revise DACS Statement of Principles

Cassie A. Schmitt, Program Manager, Orbis Cascade Alliance

The Technical Subcommittee on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (TS-DACS) has received funding from SAA Council and generous support from the Beinecke and Lewis Walpole Libraries at Yale University to hold an in-person meeting on March 14-17, 2017 at the Lewis Walpole Library in Farmington, Connecticut to prepare a draft revision of DACS Statement of Principles.

The descriptive rules in DACS are based on a series of principles about the nature of archival holdings, the relationship between arrangement and description, the nature of archival description, and the creators of archival description. At the time that these principles were drafted, these principles were considered to be a set of generally accepted and foundational principles guiding archival description.

³ This is a temporary solution until the Reuther Library's ArchivesSpace public interface is fully launched and promoted.

The principles have not been revised since the first edition of DACS was released in 2004. DACS principles came out of a particular period of compromise born of work on the CUSTARD project, and had not been substantively amended from that group's work. However, archival theory and practice have changed significantly since then. In light of recent discourse within the profession around diversity and inclusion, transparency of archival interventions, an international conceptual model for archives, and extensible processing for backlog management, the subcommittee thinks it prudent to discuss with the community the changing nature of both our theory and practice. The goal of this effort is to assess whether changes in archival theory and practice in the past twelve years are adequately reflected in the DACS principles.

To evaluate the adequacy of the current DACS principles, TS-DACS gathered a group of experts representing diverse perspectives at the 2016 annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) in Atlanta. Participants at this meeting came to resounding consensus that many of the principles do not speak to current thinking or practice in the field.

The upcoming March meeting will build on the momentum generated at the annual meeting. TS-DACS plans to produce a draft revision of the Statement of Principles at the end of the four-day work meeting. After the meeting, TS-DACS will share this draft widely within the archival community (in accordance with the normal DACS revision process) to provide an opportunity for all who use DACS to engage in the discussion about the proposed changes. After community input is considered and, as appropriate, incorporated into the draft, TS-DACS will send it to the Standards Committee for discussion and eventual approval by Council.

Proposed Level 1 Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures – Open for Comments (Due: March 3, 2017)

Emily R. Novak Gustainis (SAA) Harvard Medical School, on behalf of the SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries

The SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures for Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries is pleased to invite comments on its proposed "Level 1 Count" for quantifying and sharing information about the holdings of archival repositories and special collections libraries. Comments are due on or before Friday, 3 March 2017.

The document is available both online and as a pdf on this SAA website:
<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/saa-acrlrbms-joint-task-force-on-holdings-metrics/proposed-level-1-guidelines-for-standardize>

Comments should be directed to either or both of the Task Force co-chairs:

Martha O'Hara Conway moconway@umich.edu (for RBMS)
Emily R. Novak Gustainis emily_gustainis@hms.harvard.edu (for SAA)

You do not need to be a member of RBMS or SAA to comment on the proposed "Level 1 Count."

CALLS FOR AUTHORS, SPEAKERS, & POSTERS

***Archival Issues*, Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference, Seeks Submissions (Ongoing)**

Alexandra A. A. Orchard, Editor, Chair of the Editorial Board

Archival Issues, one of the premier publications of archival literature is accepting submissions. The Editorial Board of the Midwest Archives Conference strives to publish articles that will interest and educate a broad range of information professionals. Acceptable topics for articles cover the full range of archival activity.

Although *Archival Issues* publishes contributions from well-established professionals, the Editorial Board particularly encourages submissions from archivists who have not published previously. Editorial Board reviews of articles are conducted in a blind review process, and authors are usually informed of publication decisions within six weeks.

Please send submissions and questions to Alexandra Orchard, alexandra@wayne.edu.



Dolores Huerta speaking at a Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) meeting, circa 1980s. Photographer: Cliff Kalick Photography. When this material is shared, credit shall read: Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University.

14th International Conference on Digital Preservation (iPres) 2017

(Deadline: April 15)

Kyoto, Japan September 25-29, 2017

Kyoto University is delighted to announce that the 14th International Conference on Digital Preservation (iPRES) will take place from September 25th (Mon.) to 29th (Fri.), 2017 in Kyoto, Japan.

The iPRES 2017 hosted by Kyoto University will contribute to promotion of researches and development of technologies and services of digital preservation. Like previous iPRES conferences, iPRES 2017 will serve as an

international forum for the global community of digital preservation, and, in particular, it will contribute to Japanese and Asian communities of digital preservation.

The main objectives at iPRES 2017 will be cultural resources in various domains and from various viewpoints. Academic societies in the areas of digital humanities and information resource management are the main communities to support this conference in Japan. This conference will be organized in collaboration with major memory institutions in Japan. Kyoto University has strong relationships with Asian countries through their area research activities, which will add new features to the iPRES conference series.

The theme of the coming conference is: Keeping Cultural Diversity for the Future in the Digital Space — From Pop Culture to Scholarly Information. We invite contributions that present original work about research initiatives and innovative practices in digital preservation and expect that the contributions will be:

- Leading edge
- Innovative
- Effective in informing and promoting the digital preservation debates.

The conference program will be structured around two key strands – research and innovative practice. Contributions are invited for both strands.

Submission Deadlines:

Papers & Posters:

Full papers, short papers and posters due: **March 10, 2017**

Notification of acceptance: May 5, 2017

Camera ready: June 12, 2017

Workshops, Tutorials, & Panels:

Workshop, tutorial and panel proposals due: **April 3, 2017**

Notification of acceptance: May 5, 2017

Final workshop, tutorial, panel descriptions: May 15, 2016

Source: <https://ipres2017.jp/>

DC-2017: Metadata and Ubiquitous Access to Culture, Science and Digital Humanities (Deadlines: March 15; May 13; July 15)

Washington, D.C., October 26-29, 2017

Source: <http://dcevents.dublincore.org/IntConf/dc-2017>

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

Mid Michigan Digital Practitioners (MMDP) Spring 2017 Meeting

Detroit, MI March 23-24, 2017

Source: <https://midmichdp.wordpress.com/>

New England Archivists (NEA) Spring 2017 Meeting

Hyannis, MA March 23-25, 2017

Source: <https://newenglandarchivists.org/Spring-2017>

Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) Annual Meeting 2017

Omaha, NE April 5-8, 2017

Source: <http://www.midwestarchives.org/2017-mac-meeting>

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Meeting (MARAC) Spring 2017

Newark, NJ April 20-22, 2017

Source: <http://www.marac.info/upcoming-conferences>

Research Data Access and Preservation (RDAP) Summit 2017

Seattle, WA April 19-21, 2017

Who should attend?

The Summit is relevant to the interests and needs of data managers and curators, librarians who work with research data, and researchers and data scientists. A wide range of disciplines from the life sciences, physical sciences, social sciences, and humanities will be represented. The Summit will bring together practitioners and researchers from academic institutions, data centers, funding agencies, and industry.

Why attend RDAP16?

RDAP17 offers attendees the unique chance to interact with and learn from practitioners and researchers working in a variety of fields on research data management, access, and preservation issues. The Summit provides a forum for reaching across disciplines and institutions to work on common solutions to issues surrounding research data management. Participants will have



Courtesy Leslie Hutchison, Archivist Cheshire Academy. The Cheshire School Annual (aka, Episcopal Academy of Connecticut), Volume 1 of 1, 1912, Page 73, The Cheshire Academy Archives.

multiple opportunities to expand professional networks and acquire practical knowledge and skills that can be applied to their own work and projects.

Program Chairs

Brianna Marshall, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Yasmeeen Shorish, James Madison University

Code of Conduct

RDAP is an inclusive, cooperative environment where all practitioners and interested non-practitioners are welcomed, open dialogue is encouraged, and all perspectives are appreciated. Please read our full Code of Conduct: <http://www.asis.org/rdap/code-of-conduct/> for more information.

Source: http://www.asis.org/rdap/?_ga=1.229615512.560248398.1452974160

Preserving Voices of the West: CIMA/NWA 2017

Boise, ID May 17-19, 2017

Source: <http://northwestarchivistsinc.wildapricot.org/Annual-Meeting-2017>

Society of Southwest Archivists (SSA) 2017 Annual Meeting

Fayetteville, AR May 24-27, 2017

Source: <https://societyofsouthwestarchivists.wildapricot.org/annualmeeting>

**Interested in
Contributing?**

Contact the newsletter editor:

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