

<b>Memoria</b>	<b>Mémoire</b>	<b>Hap`iqay</b>	<b>Qaahal</b>	<b>Geheugen</b>
<b>Memory</b>	<b>Memória</b>	<b>Mandu`a</b>	<b>Memwa</b>	<b>Nasundaa`wa</b>

The newsletter of the Latin American & Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives Roundtable,  
Society of American Archivists

Volume 1, number 1 (Winter 2008-2009)

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**LACCHA – Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritages Archives Roundtable**

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### **Message from LACCHA's Co-Chair, Marisol Ramos**



Welcome all to the first issue of Memoria/Memory/Mémoire/Memória, the official newsletter of LACCHA (Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives) Roundtable. I hope you enjoy our first issue and that you also consider submitting articles, news and anything else you want to share about managing, preserving, and providing access to archival collections from Latin America, the Caribbean and their Diaspora communities in the United States of America.

#### **From Idea to Action: The LACCHA Story**

When I sent my first post to the Archives & Archivists list in July 23, 2007, I was barely into my first month working at the University of Connecticut Library (Homer Babbidge) as a subject librarian and as curator for the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. As the Latin American and Caribbean subject specialist at UCONN, I found myself in need of help. I am in charge of a huge Latin American and Caribbean archival collection that ranges from 19th century newspapers to Mexican pamphlets during the Independence Wars, to modern materials from the 1960s-1980s, including refugee records from a non-profit organization in the US. Although SAA already has two

roundtables that indirectly deal with my concerns and questions, namely the Archives and Archivists of Color (AAC) and the International Affairs Roundtables, I felt that neither of these roundtables directly addressed my concerns about Latin American and Caribbean materials housed in the US. I felt the issues I confronted needed a focused space for discussion. So I naturally did what most archivists and other information specialists do – I went out and looked for other kindred souls with the same interests and questions about how to manage, preserve and provide access to not only local users but users from the countries where the original material was created.

I was greatly gratified by the amount of support my idea received. I received many emails in response to my request. By August 2007, I had gathered enough people to set up an informal meeting with interested people wanting to start a Latin American roundtable. Our first meeting was quite a success, about 20 people attended, and it was clear that many archivists and librarians wanted to see such a roundtable formally established in SAA. They not only wanted to talk about Latin American and Caribbean archival materials in the US but also about the archival collections of immigrants groups coming from these regions into the US, and to establish relationships with fellow archivists in these regions dealing with similar issues.

From August to December of 2007, we used a Yahoo! Group mailing list to discuss issues about preservation, access, languages (English, Spanish, Creole, Quechua, Guarani, etc...), Diasporas, memory and cultural heritage and how they all intersect in the Americas and how this new roundtable can serve as the forum to further discuss these issues and to create collaborative projects with other roundtables in SAA and archivists from those regions as well. Many people were active participants in these discussions and helped me bring to fruition my little dream of LACCHA, but I want to give credit to the following members for their direct support and work to make this roundtable a reality. Maria Estorino was my main support, as my interim co-chair, she researched and wrote the draft for our roundtable guidelines and kept me on track on what needed to be done. Tomaro Taylor brought in her experience from AAC roundtable and helped me shape the final form of the roundtable title. She suggested the use of Cultural Heritage as the binding element between Latin America and the Caribbean and their Diasporic communities in the US. LACCHA, or the Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives is an all inclusive roundtable going beyond the idea of just Spanish language countries or immigrants and acknowledging the presence of other traditions and languages that comprise the Americas. Patrick Stawski was another supporter who gave us his time to put together a panel to jump start the group before we were even applied to the SAA Council. Although his panel was not selected for the main conference program, we were able to use his efforts at our first business meeting in San Francisco. Without the support and faith in my idea, by all the people that signed up to LACCHA, I don't think I would have gone forward to create this new roundtable. When I received the news from the SAA Council that our roundtable was unanimously voted into SAA as their newest roundtable, I felt honored and humble that they were making my dream come true.

We are now in the perfect moment to launch many initiatives and collaborative projects with fellow archivists in SAA, and outside the US with colleagues from the Caribbean and Latin America in new ways, using the tools of the Internet to bridge the distances among us. With my new co-chair Susan Laura Lugo from the U.S. Virgin Islands, we hope to attract new partners in and out of SAA to help us to find ideas and solutions to common problems with these kind of collections.

### **Help make LACCHA better – volunteer!**

We have many ideas of projects and initiatives we would like to sponsor to bring our community together and offer valuable services. Consider volunteering for one of the projects below, or suggest a new one:

- 1) Web-Based Directory/Portal of Latin American & Caribbean Cultural Heritage archives and archival collections in the United States, including immigrant collections and collections from Latin America & the Caribbean
- 2) Web-Based dynamic calendar of upcoming events of interest to our group, drawing on events beyond the archival universe to include libraries, museums, community groups and more.

### Leadership of the Latin American & Caribbean Cultural Heritage Archives Roundtable

**Co-Chairs:** Marisol Ramos and Susan Laura Lugo

**Marisol Ramos** is the Liaison Librarian for Latin American & Caribbean Studies, Puerto Rican/Latino Studies & Spanish language and literature at the University of Connecticut at Storrs. She is also Curator for the Hispanic History and Culture Collections at the Dodd's Research Center. Her website is: <http://www.lib.uconn.edu/using/services/liaison/Ramos.html>

**Susan Laura Lugo** is Territorial Coordinator for Archives for the Government of the Virgin Islands, Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums. She is also President of the Caribbean Genealogy Library, Inc., a non-profit entity, [susanlauralugo@gmail.com](mailto:susanlauralugo@gmail.com)

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*A very special thanks goes to Maria Estorino, who served as provisional co-chair before the first meeting of LACCHA in San Francisco! Maria Estorino is Deputy Chair & Chief Operations Manager at the University of Miami's Cuban Heritage Collection, Richter Library.*

### LACCHA at SAA meetings!

As noted in the introduction, LACCHA began in 2007 with an informal gathering. Since then we have grown and grown. At the 2008 San Francisco SAA



meeting, more than 30 people came to our meeting to carry out the administrative tasks necessary to begin the roundtable, brain-storm about future initiatives and collaborations with other groups, and plan for SAA 2009 in Austin. Outgoing SAA president Mark Greene also stopped by to celebrate the roundtable's founding and offer high hopes for our future. Full minutes from the meeting will be available at our website shortly – <http://tinyurl.com/3gmpzb>. The meeting ended with an abbreviated panel featuring presentations by Gabrielle Toth, Chicago State University Library, **Latino Metropolis: Archival Resources for the Study of Latinos and Latin Americans in and around Chicago**; Patrick Stawski, Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University, **Latin American Human Rights Collections at Duke University**; and Susan Laura Lugo, **What a Pistarckle! Access to Caribbean Records for Family History Research**. During the regular SAA program, Salvador Guereña of the California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, University of California – Santa Barbara, also spoke in a session on Ethnic Archives: Collecting Within Cultural Contexts.

### LACCHA at SAA 2009, Austin

In its inaugural year, LACCHA got off to a running start by organizing, submitting and sponsoring two panel proposals for the upcoming SAA Annual Meeting scheduled for August 11-16, 2009 in Austin, TX. We are very pleased and proud to announce that BOTH panel proposals have been accepted for the 2009 SAA program! There is always great competition for SAA panel presentations and for an upstart, very new roundtable to have both its proposals accepted by the program committee is very unusual. These efforts will go a long way to help focus attention on the diverse collections of Latin America and the Caribbean. Be sure to plan to attend these sessions, in

addition to attending our annual roundtable meeting!

Here is a description of each panel and panelists:

*(Note: The following abstracts are drafts, and subject to change before the SAA meeting in Austin in August)*

### **Panel Number 1: Lest We Forget! Lest We Forget! Challenges and Opportunities to Achieve Sustainability of Memory**

**Panel Description:** As Rudyard Kipling warned in "Recessional," there is huge danger in forgetfulness. Archives in former colonies face the challenge to disentangle and rescue natives and colonized voices that were smothered by the "official" discourse, ignore or disperse far from their place of origin. These papers address these issues by identifying the challenges and offering unique and viable solutions to give access and preserve the memories of former colonies in the Caribbean and Hawaiian Islands

#### **Panelists and their abstracts:**

1) Bertram Lyons, Dissemination/Project/Collections Manager, Alan Lomax Archive/Association for Cultural Equity: "Sharing Cultural Resources / Sharing Responsibility / Sustaining Memory"

Intellectual and intangible memories of cultures from around the world line many archives' shelves in the forms of sound recordings, still images, and moving images—all vibrant documents of cultural expression. The moniker of anthropologist and sociologist Michael F. Brown's influential book, *Who Owns Native Culture?*, rings true for archives today just as it has and does in museums throughout the world. Who does own culture? And, how should archives negotiate the ethical and legal rights issues associated with their collections, especially those of an ethnographic nature? Although there is no clear solution to the above dilemma, this presentation will detail efforts at the Alan Lomax Archive (the Association for Cultural Equity) to develop, implement, and maintain projects that use the benefits of digital technology to repatriate ethnographic documentation. Alan Lomax coined the term "cultural feedback," by which he meant reinforcing the world's diverse expressive traditions and aesthetic systems by a variety of means, including the basic method of returning documentation to the places, people, and cultures from whence it came. Advances in digital technology make it possible for repositories to work together both to safeguard intangible cultural heritage and to circulate it widely. In 2005, the Alan Lomax Archive (the Association for Cultural Equity), in collaboration with the Center for Black Music Research at Columbia College in Chicago, began a program to donate high quality digital copies of sound recordings and photographs to regional cultural repositories in the Caribbean. These documentary materials, originally collected during a pan-Caribbean survey by late ethnomusicologist, Alan Lomax, represent one of the earliest comprehensive collections of field recordings from the Caribbean region. This process of repatriation adds valuable primary information to archival collections in regional Caribbean repositories. Included in these relationships are stakeholders from local and national governments, historians, archival staff, and community members. To date, the Association for Cultural Equity, in collaboration with the Center for Black Music Research has completed dissemination projects with the Nevis Historical and Conservation Society in Nevis & St. Kitts, Folk Research Centre in St. Lucia, and Mediatheque Caraibe in Guadeloupe.

2) Helen Wong Smith, Librarian, Hawaiian Collection/Mookini Library Archivist Edwin H. Mookini Library - University of Hawaii at Hilo: "Preserving Hawaii's Many Cultures Through Five Governments"

How do you preserve the memories of an orally-based native culture who have been ruled by five distinct governments? Add to this challenge the diversity of immigrants who have significantly impacted the cultural fabric of the islands? Since Western discovery in the 1778 the Hawaiian Islands have been governed by a monarchy, provisional, republic, territory, and state. Like Native Americans, Native Hawaiians maintain cultural protocols regarding the preservation and access to their cultural memories. There is no consortia to preserve or present the multitude of collections which hold their and the cultural memories of other ethnicities in Hawaiian. How do the archival professionals address these challenges in deciding selection, acquisition, arranging, and access to our diverse cultural past?

3) Gayle Williams, Latin American & Caribbean Information Services Librarian, Florida International University: "The Digital Library of the Caribbean: A Collaborative Model for Preservation, Sustainability, and Cultural

## Memory"

Since its inception in 2005, the Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) has served as a repository for unique materials housed in the archives, libraries and other institutions of the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean. US partner efforts in building a technical infrastructure and providing training make it possible for partner institutions in Haiti, Jamaica, Guyana, the Dominican Republic, the US Virgin Islands, and other areas to build and maintain virtual collections. At the same time, dLOC faces other challenges in terms of future planning, ongoing partner participation, and technical upgrades.

## **Panel Number 2: Brick by Bricolage: Sustaining Caribbean Archives in the 21st Century**

**Panel Description:** A Caribbean museum, university and government reveal universal perspectives on constructing new paradigms for archives in the face of physical, cultural and economic barriers. These archives must re-cast and re-build themselves, brick by bricolage, embracing innovative solutions to surmount one or more of these barriers. Will sustainable public-private partnerships and a view towards sustainable development within the global context of the 21st century be the right tools to overcome a traditionally devalued documentary heritage?

### **Panelists and their abstracts:**

1) Helena Leonce, University Archivist, University of Trinidad and Tobago (formerly, the Archivist for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago): "Sustainability of the Documentary Heritage of Trinidad and Tobago" My paper will focus on the sustainability and preservation of the Documentary Heritage of Trinidad and Tobago. I will give a brief history of the archives situation in Trinidad and Tobago and the challenges faced in trying to develop the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago. I will highlight the control mechanisms or preventive mechanisms that the National Archives have in place to preserve its collections and what they are still trying to accomplish. The constraints that are experienced during this whole exercise will also be discussed. I will end my presentation by giving a brief outline of my plans for the University's archives.

2) Neal V. Hitch, PhD, Director, National Museum of the Turks and Caicos Islands: "The Single Survivor of Disaster: the Turks and Caicos National Museum"  
On September 7, 2008, the eye wall of hurricane Ike came across the islands of Grand Turk, in the Turks and Caicos Islands, as a category 5 hurricane with sustained winds of 165 miles per hour and tornadoes gusting to 265. Published reports estimated that between 80 and 90% of the buildings on Grand Turk sustained significant damage. Owing to planning and procedural operations, the Turks and Caicos National Museum sustained no loss to collections, artifacts, or archives. The storm made clear, however, that is at stake in the Turks and Caicos is the total loss of the private archival collections, which make up much of historical information that is left in the country. The problem of sustaining archival collections is that the museum is a young institution and most collections in the Turks Islands are in private hands. One of the agendas of the museum is to educate on the importance of heritage preservation. But the importance of long-term preservation does not run very deep in the current culture of the islands. During the recent storm event, many private collections were damaged or lost. The importance of pre-storm planning and the development of sustainable partnerships, so that private collections can be protected during emergencies, is now at the forefront of the museum's agenda. Prior to the storm, the museum was working with two private owners of historical collections to get archival collections scanned and cataloged. The museum is using the latest disaster as an example of why more resources should be put behind these efforts. This paper will discuss the museum's efforts to sustain private archival collections and will discuss the illusive "government archive" which is an at risk archival collection.

3) Christopher Varlack, Government Archivist, Archives and Records Management Unit, Deputy Governor's Office, Government of the Virgin Islands (UK): "Juvenile Pragmatism: A Virgin Islands Legacy and the Archivist's ultimate weapon in the fight for Information Management in a media centric global village."

The practical approaches to national development in the Virgin Islands (UK) reflect the prudence of creatively sustainable development guided by imperatively honest concerns for life, liberty and the pursuit of property. Now gaining international acceptance, particularly among Generations X and Y, these virtues are understood as essential to mitigating global poverty and environmental decay and should become part of the prescriptive tools of Caribbean Archivists seeking innovative development of their respective remits.

## Part 2: Feature articles

### **TEAM México within the InterPARES Project: Seeking for knowledge useful for the preservation of digital records**

by Alicia Barnard

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#### **Introduction**

The instability and volatility of digital environments can create serious obstacles for records and archives preservation. This concern has been historically articulated by national archives and/or record offices of different countries, as well as by international initiatives such as the Council of International Archives, UNESCO. Also involved in this discussion of digital environments are researchers who have conducted different investigations, such as the International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems Project (InterPARES). This last project produced knowledge and methodologies for the long term preservation of digital records and archives. The purpose of this paper is to offer backgrounds on TEAM Mexico's participation in the InterPARES Project.<sup>1</sup>

Through the proposal of Professor Luciana Duranti, Director of InterPARES, UNESCO, in the context of the “Memory of the World” program, granted funds to support the dissemination and adaptation of the Project findings to the Caribbean and Latin America countries.

As a result, five scholars of said region visited the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies at the University of British Columbia (UBC) to learn about the InterPARES research methodology, products and findings of phases 1 and 2, to bring back to our countries the knowledge generated in the context of the Project. Each country committed matching funds to support various forms of dissemination of the InterPARES research. The scholars were Anna Schleger from Argentina, Rosely Rondinelli from Brazil, Arien Gonzalez from Cuba, Alicia Barnard from Mexico and Aida Luz Mendoza from Peru. The group was named CLAID (Caribbean and Latin America InterPARES Dissemination) Team. Claudia Lacombe from Brazil participated also with funds from the National Archives of Brazil.

Training was received by two visits to UBC, each one for two weeks, first in November, 2005 and again in February 6, 2006. During the second visit the CLAID TEAM also took part as observers of the InterPARES plenary research workshop. The CLAID Team had a last meeting in March 2006 in Mexico City with the participation of Isidro Fernandez Aballi representing the “Memory of the World Programme” of UNESCO. During that meeting the Team shared and assessed their achievements. There was also a roundtable organized by the General Archive of the Nation (AGN), where every member of the CLAID Team presented a paper relating to electronic records preservation issues. Those presentations were published by AGN after the meeting.<sup>2</sup>

#### **Dissemination of the InterPARES Project in Mexico**

Since October 2005 through March 2006, there many presentations about InterPARES were given to different audiences.<sup>3</sup> Also an interview that the Columbian Society of Archivists made to Professor Duranti in March 2006<sup>4</sup> was translated into Spanish. Finally during a course on Records, Archives and Accountability organized by the Metropolitan Autonomous University in the context of the module “digital archives and its preservation” the InterPARES Project findings were included.

1 For more information about the InterPARES Project go through <http://www.interpares.org>. Offices of InterPARES are at the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, University of British Columbia (UBC).

2 Archivos en Formato Electrónico. Equipo CLAID, proyecto InterPARES. Ed. Archivo General de la Nación. México, 2006

3 Translation into Spanish from Professor Duranti's Presentation to the CLAID Team on November 2005, is available at <http://www.agn.gob.mx/proyectos/interpares/interpares.html>

4 Interview in Spanish is available at [http://www.sociedadcolombianadearchivistas.org/foro/ENTREVISTA\\_LUCIANA\\_DURANTI.pdf](http://www.sociedadcolombianadearchivistas.org/foro/ENTREVISTA_LUCIANA_DURANTI.pdf)

A visit of Professor Duranti to Mexico City took place on March 2007. There were different events to disseminate the findings of InterPARES 1 and 2 as well as to promote a possible third phase. She gave two lectures. The first one, organized by the AGN, had as its the audience (around 500 persons) mainly records managers, archivists and students of the School of Library and Archivonomy. The second one was organized by the Ministry of Public Function, and the audience profile (around 400) was communications and information technologies officers belonging to different agencies of the Federal Government. The conferences were also translated into Spanish.<sup>5</sup> There were other events such as a meeting with officers of Bank of Mexico (Central Bank of our Country), an interview at the Access to Public Information Federal Institute and a videoconference for officers and record managers of health services across the Country.

As Professor Duranti points out there were important lessons learned from the CLAUD Team:

- Inadequacy of simple translations into local languages
- Need for interpretation of findings based on local culture
- Inability of workshop audiences to apply what they have learned in their own organization
- Concern about the products' downward-scalability and their relevance to small and medium sized archival organizations and to organizations with limited resources
- Need for direct discovery and testing of concepts and methods
- Action research and implementation
- Need for products providing criteria and parameters rather than direct answers<sup>6</sup>

Among other issues, the above ones were significant for the InterPARES third phase that began on September 2007 with the following main goal:

*to enable small and medium-sized public and private archival organizations and programs, which are responsible for the digital records resulting from government, business, research, art and entertainment, social and/or community activities, to preserve over the long term authentic records that satisfy the requirements of their stakeholders and society's needs for an adequate record of its past.<sup>7</sup>*

As a result, Mexico joins the IP3 project by establishing a TEAM the name of which derives from the specific title given to this third phase of the Project, Theoretical Elaborations into Archival Management (TEAM): Implementing the theory of preservation of authentic records in digital systems in small and medium-sized archival organizations.

TEAM Mexico is comprised of a director Dr. Juan Voutsás, Researcher of University Librarian Research Centre of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, academic researchers as well as practice researchers from the National Autonomous University (UNAM), AGN and Bank de Mexico. The TEAM has meetings on a regular basis to review literature on InterPARES methodology and findings as well as to look for the progress of the case studies, translations and mobilization activities.

To this date, the team has directed our efforts to translate documents into Spanish, mobilization activities, and to carry out case studies, in accordance with the three main components of IP3: research, training and mobilization.

Translation into Spanish of IP3 documents was a first concern so as to be able to carry out case studies and work with test bed partners. As of now the following document has been translated into Spanish:

- Glossary first batch. The translation of IP Glossary into Spanish is one of the General Studies of IP3 so

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5 Professor's Duranti Conference in English and Spanish is available at <http://www.agn.gob.mx/proyectos/interpares/interpares.html>

6 Duranti, Luciana: June 15, 2007 – "The Future of Our Digital Memory: The Contribution of the InterPARES Project to the Preservation of the Memory of the World," presented at the Meeting of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Advisory Committee. Pretoria, South Africa

7 To learn about InterPARES 3 visit [http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3\\_index.cfm](http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3_index.cfm)

that every TEAM, in the context of its own environment, may have the most appropriate translation of the concepts in its own language, thus enabling the exchange of knowledge among the different TEAM's. The first batch is being reviewed and will be further published in the TEAM website page.

The following working papers have also been translated into Spanish, they are not only useful for case studies but also dissemination and training activities:

- Template for Diplomatic Analysis
- Template for Case Study Contextual Analysis
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Policy Case Studies
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Recordkeeping Systems Case Studies
- Questions that the researchers should be able to answer with respect to Records Case Studies
- Case Study Report Template

As for dissemination activities there have been four conferences and one lecture.<sup>8</sup> In addition we are carrying out two case studies, one involving the long term preservation of records of UNAM students and another designed to assist in the development of policies for the long term preservation of Records of the Bank of Mexico (Central Bank in Mexico).

One may say that, since the activities carried out within the CLAUD Team began, preservation of digital records and archives in Mexico became a more important issue among groups of interest such as records managers, archivists, archival institutions, communication and information technologists, public servants and access of information officers. Notwithstanding it has been a slow walk mainly due to the lack of articles, papers or books in Spanish, which results in the lack of programs for training and professional curricula. Also there still prevails the idea that information and communications technology is going to solve the troubles of preservation. It has been hard to convince others that the solutions must come from records and archival procedures rather than technology. On the other hand, there is not a government policy or guideline for digital records preservation. Even though the guidelines for organizing and preserving records and archives<sup>2</sup> state that they must be applied also to digital records, said guidelines do not state how to do it. Meanwhile a lot of e-government actions have been launched possibly lacking in preservation procedures or methodologies for those documents being created by the interactions of agencies with citizenship, thus risking the evidence of government actions and therefore accountability.

By participating in IP3, TEAM Mexico, expects to go ahead in the preservation of digital records by using the resources and products that the InterPARES Project has developed for nearly 10 years.

### **Upcoming event: FORO, the Transborder Library Forum**

FORO is a conference that focuses on librarians and library services in the border regions between the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. This event will be jointly hosted by CETYS Universidad and San Diego State University.

**What:** 15th Transborder Library Forum/FORO Transfronterizo de Bibliotecas

**When:** March 4-6, 2009

**Where:** Camino Real Hotel Conference Center in Tijuana, Baja California Conference

**Theme:** Exploring Common Interests: Expanding Opportunities

The organizing committee invites all interested presenters, exhibitors and participants to visit the FORO web page at: <http://foro.cetys.net>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.agn.gob.mx/archivistica/lineamientos/lineamientos.html>

<sup>9</sup> The papers and conference reference may be found in the presentations section at [http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3\\_dissemination.cfm?proj=ip3](http://www.interpares.org/ip3/ip3_dissemination.cfm?proj=ip3)



## From the early Founders to the present: Los Bexarenos Genealogical and Historical Society

by Rafael Castillo  
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The history of the presidio of San Antonio de Bexar has not been lost to the members of Los Bexarenos Genealogical and Historical Society. The organization gets its moniker from the name of the first capital of Texas, namely, San Antonio de Bexar.<sup>1</sup> Beginning every first Saturday of the month, the intrepid members of the society meet to discuss the latest in their genealogical searches and listen to speakers who cover a wide range of topics, from the Lipan-Apache settlements before the founding of Bexar in 1730, to following the footsteps of Fray Juan de Padilla through 16<sup>th</sup> century archives in Spain and Mexico.



**Jose M. Pena, author of *Four Winds of Revilla*, Rafael Castillo, and Jose Lopez, author of *The Last Knight* at the October 2008 meeting of Los Bexarenos Genealogical and Historical Society**

Founded in 1983 by Gloria Cadena and a coterie of friends who felt San Antonio, Texas needed an archival support network that would engage in ancestral research and genealogy within the Latino community, Los Bexarenos has grown to more than 250 dues-paying members. The first meeting held in September of 1983 yielded some 35 members and the first issue of the Los Bexarenos Newsletter was launched.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the newsletter has become *Los Bexarenos Genealogical Newsletter*. The group gets its name from the Canary Islands settlers who established San Fernando de Bexar of San Antonio. Before the organization, few libraries contained books and references dealing specifically with Hispanic genealogy, and whatever few books existed, the reference librarians kept them hidden from public access for fear of further deterioration or because they wanted to reserve them as referential materials for scholars, historians, and archivists. Records from the Bexar County Courthouse and the Catholic archdiocese of San Antonio contained an impressive early Spanish collection of material dating to the founding of San Antonio when it was part of the royal colonies. To say the least, it was a treasure trove of archival material. One member who has benefited greatly from the archives has been Mr. Jesse Rodriguez, who was the first member to publish a book for Los Bexarenos and has since authored six books. Quite fitting, of course, is the fact that Mr. Rodriguez is a direct descendant of Capital Santiago Ximenes of Monclova, Coahuila, Mexico, one of his ancestors who moved with the Alarcon Expedition to the presidio of San Antonio de Valero. The 30-member publication committee is actively engaged in archival research and members, since 2000, have published over 70 books, making it one of the most prolific genealogical societies in Texas.

Membership is open to anyone willing to pay the \$30 membership fee, which includes the quarterly register and a catalogue of archival researched material compiled by its members. Most of the membership belong to other societies such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Canary

<sup>1</sup> See Gilbert R. Cruz's *Let there be towns: Spanish Municipal Origins in the American Southwest, 1610-1810*. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1988, pp 52-80.

<sup>2</sup> See George Farias's "Gloria Villa Cadena: Hispanic Genealogy Researcher par excellence" *Los Bexarenos Genealogical Register* Volume 24, No. 4. December 31, 2007.

Islanders Association, Sons of the Republic of Texas, Los Granaderos de Galvez, the Spanish Cultural Heritage Society, El Patronato, Texas Tejano Association, Alamo Defenders Descendants Association, and international links with archival groups in Mexico and Spain. Membership in Mexico cultivates alliances through archival and historical groups in Saltillo and Monterrey with other genealogists and archivists.

Speakers in the past have included Dr. Felix Almaraz, Jr., a Texas Borderlands scholar and professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio, and authors Jose A. Lopez, whose book, *The Last Knight*, covers the life of Don Jose Bernardo Maximiliano Gutierrez de Lara, one of the precursors of the Texas Revolution, and his cousin, Jose M. Pena, who lectured about his book, *Inherit the Dust from the Four Winds of Revilla*, which covers the ancient Mexican town of Villa del Senor de San Ignacio de Loyola de Revilla (now destroyed and known as Guerrero Viejo).

Request for membership should be mailed to: Los Bexarenos Genealogical Society, Post Office Box 1935, San Antonio, Texas 78297. [www.losbexarenos.org](http://www.losbexarenos.org) is the official website and is updated monthly with the current research activities of its members and a downloadable primer on Hispanic Genealogy written by Jesse Rodriguez.

### **Call For Papers: New SAA Publication—Archives Diversity Reader**

One of the most important issues facing the archival profession today is the challenge of building a more diverse workforce and ensuring that the historical record and its use and users reflect the diversity of society more fully. Indeed, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) recently identified diversity as one of three primary strategic concerns requiring special attention as the profession anticipates its future.

To help archivists develop a deeper understanding of this complex issue, SAA has recently approved the production of an Archives Diversity Reader. Its purpose is to provide readers with a new, wide-ranging selection of writings and presentations that examine a range of questions, including: Why does diversity matter? What do we mean when we speak of diversity or lack of diversity in the archives? What do (and perhaps should) workforce diversity and diversity of archival collections and perspectives look like? And in what ways can diverse communities records, perspectives and needs be reflected in archival holdings, programs, and practices?

The editors seek to compile a product whose content and organization is ultimately shaped by the archival community itself, including practitioners, users, and educators. We encourage contributions in a variety of formats including essays, interviews, case studies, and non-traditional formats. Contributions to this publication may address a wide spectrum of issues related to diversity (broadly defined) and the profession and should go beyond baseline descriptions of individual initiatives and collections. Contributions should problematize both diversity and archives. Diverse viewpoints are strongly encouraged.

Expressions of interest consisting of an abstract of the proposed contribution (300-500 words) must be received by January 31, 2009.

Send expressions of interest and questions to the co-editors: Mary Caldera at [mary.caldera@yale.edu](mailto:mary.caldera@yale.edu) or (203) 432-8019 OR Joel Wurl at [jfwurl@gmail.com](mailto:jfwurl@gmail.com) or (202) 606-8252

The Advisory Group consists of Joan Krizack (SAA Publications Board Liaison), Brenda Banks, David George-Shongo, Anne Gilliland and Roberto Trujillo.

Deadline for complete manuscripts is May 2010. Final submissions undergo editorial and peer review.

## Searching for Latina/o archives in Michigan

by Lois Moreno,  
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*(Note: This article was published in NEXO Newsletter, Fall 2007,  
<http://www.jsri.msu.edu/RandS/nexo/F07/%20NexoFall2007t.pdf>)*

When conducting research on Chicanos, Mexicans, and Latinos in Michigan, you can find a number of excellent secondary sources on Michigan and the Midwest. For example, there is Dennis Valdes' *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* and Juan Garcia's *Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900-1932*. Beyond secondary sources there are many important primary sources (i.e. archives) located throughout the state of Michigan.

Therefore the real question becomes, "where in Michigan are those archives?" Most, notably, are at the state's communities of high learning.

Michigan State University (MSU) is the depository for many collections on Chicanos, Mexicans, and Latinos at MSU, Michigan and the Midwest. One of those collections is the Julian Samora Papers, which are housed in the University Archives<sup>1</sup> and contain organization files of the Centro de Estudios Chicano Investigaciones Sociales (CECIS). The CECIS files include information on Chicano, Mexican, and Latino culture and history in the Midwest. In addition to the Samora papers, MSU holds — at the University Libraries — the multi-disciplinary and multi-format José F. Treviño Collection. It focuses on archiving and documenting the Chicano, Mexican, and Latino activism at MSU and Michigan. The Treviño Collection is composed of the papers of MEChA/MEXA, Juana & Jesse Gonzales, Pedro & Diana Rivera, Dionicio Valdes, the Xicano Development Center, and others activists and grassroots organizations.

University of Michigan (UM) is the location of two important collections, the Latin American Solidarity Committee (LASC) and the Michigan Migrant Ministry, which are housed within the Bentley Historical Library. The LASC Collection is composed of press releases, posters, flyers, and other types of documents which supported progressive causes in Latin America and the United States. An important part of this collection are the files on the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), which organized farmworkers and migrant workers in Michigan and the Midwest. The Michigan Migrant Ministry Collection is composed of correspondence, staff reports, and other documents. This collection is important because of the information on the types of crops, numbers of migrant workers, and the activities of the community of laborers in the state of Michigan.

Wayne State University (WSU) is home of the Walter P. Reuther Library (Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs), which is the official depository of the United Farm Workers (UFW) papers. The UFW Collection is composed of manuscripts, audio-video materials, oral histories, and other related collections. This collection is important because of its unique relevance to FLOC and the agricultural migrant worker in Michigan.

The collections that have been highlighted are only a handful of archives that tell the story of Chicanos, Mexicans, and Latinos in Michigan and the Midwest. Like a detective, you have to navigate through those collections or find new or emerging collections that chronicle the history of Michigan's Chicanos, Mexicans, and Latinos.

For more information on archives, visit:

MSU Special Collections - <http://specialcollections.lib.msu.edu/index.jsp>

UM Bentley Historical Library - <http://bentley.umich.edu>

WSU Walter P. Reuther Library - [www.reuther.wayne.edu](http://www.reuther.wayne.edu)

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<sup>1</sup> MSU has only a portion of the Julian Samora Papers. Other portions are housed at UT-Austin and at the University of Notre Dame.

## Report on the 2008 International Oral History Conference in Guadalajara, Mexico

by T-Kay Sangwand

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In September of 2008, over four hundred oral historians from five continents and thirty-six countries convened at the University of Guadalajara School of Social Sciences and Humanities (UDG CUCSH) in Mexico for the International Oral History Association's (IOHA) fifteenth biennial conference, "Oral History: A Dialogue with our Times."<sup>1</sup> The four day conference, organized in conjunction with the Mexican Oral History Association, UDG CUCSH, Jose Maria Luis Mora Research Institute, Historical Studies Section of Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History, University of Guanajuato's Center for Humanistic Studies, and the Zapopan City Council, featured sixty-three panels comprised of hundreds of diverse and thought-provoking presentations spanning a wide gamut of themes, projects, as well as pedagogical, methodological and ethical issues. During a casual lunchtime discussion, then current IOHA President Alistair Thompson stated that, in comparison to previous years, the 2008 conference boasted an exceptionally high number of presentations. A third of the participants hailed from Latin American and Caribbean countries, such as Argentina, Mexico, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Chile, Panama, Venezuela, Uruguay, Guatemala, and Cuba. Over two-thirds of the presentations were by Latin American oral historians or about Latin America, which speaks to the enormous and unprecedented interest in and practice of oral history within a Latin American context.

The conference presentations centered around themes such as memory spaces, migration, gender, work, politics, family, war, violence, temporality, oral history and visual images, and theory and methodology of oral history. Although each project took place in a very distinct geographic, temporal, and cultural space, all the projects shared an underlying objective and/or outcome – to give agency to its subjects. Indeed, oral history has played a very cathartic role in dealing with national traumas such as dictatorships and state terror. The "Memory and Politics" panel featured presentations that used oral history to better understand U.S.-Spanish solidarity during the Spanish Civil War (Ileana Gadea Rivas, United States) and political conflict in post-Revolution Guanajuato, Mexico (Armando Sandoval Pierres, Mexico), revolutionary memory in Chile (Alondra Peirano Iglesias, Chile), the 1984 student conflict in Colombia (Rosario Arias, Colombia) and the internal workings of the guerrilla in Argentina (Vera Carnovale, Argentina). The latter presentations are representative of the types of oral history projects taking place in Latin American countries that are contending with their collective history in a post-dictatorship era.

Other presentations highlighted how oral history enabled communities to exercise agency in the re-articulation of the meaning of home after leaving one's homeland under political and economic duress. The "Migration: Exile, Integration, and Migratory Processes," panel examined the experiences of migrants from Atenguillo, Mexico to the United States (Maria de Lourdes Garcia Curiel, Mexico), migration's impact on family structure in Juarez, Mexico (Martha Beatriz Cahuich Campos, Mexico), and the Museum of London's Refugee Communities History Project, which features life histories of refugees and includes a large number from Latin American countries (Zibby Alfred and Sofia Buchuck, England).

Through the use of photographs, video and oral testimony, the "Gender: Resistance, Struggle, and Power" panel spoke to the power of women's agency and organizing with the Zapatista Army of Mazahua Women's struggle for their community's access to water (Anahi Copitzi Gomez Fuentes, Mexico) and women's lives under socialism in the Czech Republic (Alzbeta Polzova, Czech Republic).

Surprisingly, few presentations directly addressed archiving collected oral testimonies for long-term preservation. The one exception was the panel, "Archiving Memory," which focused on oral history archives such as Story Corps (Nadja Middleton, United States), Oral Archive of Open Memory (Alejandra Oberti and Vera Carnovale,

<sup>1</sup> Conference attendance figures are estimates made by the author based on the conference program schedule and are not official figures from the International Oral History Association (IOHA). Author's figures are estimates because not all participants listed in the program actually presented at the conference. At the time the article was written, no official figures were available from the IOHA.

Argentina), and the Oral Sources of the Andalusian Workers Commissions Historical Archive (Marcial Sanchez Mosquera and Isabel Antunez Perez, Spain). However, the discussion only focused on archival practice within the context of specific projects but not as an integral component of oral history methodology. This gap holds the potential for fruitful collaboration between oral historians and archivists. The intersection of oral history and archives is ever more important as evidenced by the increased number of oral history projects taking place worldwide, particularly within Latin America and among its diasporic communities.

The next IOHA conference will be taking place in summer 2010 in Prague. For more information, visit [www.iohanet.org](http://www.iohanet.org).

Links to projects mentioned in article:

Atenguillo, Jalisco, Mexico: <http://www.atenguillo.com/>

Museum of London Refugee Communities History Project: <http://www.refugeestories.org/>

Oral Archive of Open Memory: <http://www.memoriaabierta.org.ar>

Oral Sources of the Andalusian Workers Commissions Historical Archive:

<http://www.archivoshistoricos.ccoo.es/fondos09.htm>

Story Corps: <http://www.storycorps.net/>

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## Preserving Hispanic History and Memory

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*(Prepared for the Conference of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, April 8-12, 2009. A version of this paper was presented as "The Who, What, Where, When, and How of Preservation in the Information Matrix" at the Conference on Rescuing our Heritage: Policies for Preservation in the Southwest, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, April 29, 1993 (see Proceedings). A subsequent version was presented as "Whose Texas? Preserving Multicultural History and Memory—Are Texas Librarians and Archivists Adequately Collecting the Memory of all Texans?" Annual Conference of the Texas Library Association, Dallas, Texas, April 3, 1998.)*

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 The title

The title of this essay engenders two explanations. The first reflects my interest in preserving Hispanic history and memory, particularly the history and memory of Hispanic Texas where a branch of my mother's family settled in San Antonio in 1731; and the second explanation grows out of my concern that while libraries and archives are ostensibly repositories of multicultural memory they do not preserve records that tell the story of all the people. While many historians capture the spirit of various states and their people, most do not capture the spirit of Hispanics in those states. Often, because they don't know that spirit or have never considered that Hispanic zeitgeist as important.

#### 1.2 On the purpose of this paper

The preservation and conservation of our deteriorating written and recorded history are imperative if future generations are to view, study, and appreciate not just their national heritage but their Hispanic heritage as well. Librarians and archivists must have the means to ensure that the jobs of preservation and conservation are carried out in an orderly and professional manner. It is the purpose of this presentation to inform members of the preservation community, who are instrumental in providing that support, of the urgency of preserving and conserving these important demographic resources. It is also the purpose of this presentation to inform the Hispanic community that it is an important partner in the preservation of Hispanic history and memory.

## 2. History and Preservation

We know that preservation and conservation of records existed before 3000 BC (Johnson 18), and we are fortunate that some of the works of past civilizations have been preserved in the soils of ancient earth. The clay tablets of Sumeria are records of such an ancient nation.

And what a record it is, thanks to the stories in the stones--the clay tablets Sumerians used to record their activities. But the record that impresses us about the Sumerians is their King lists. C. Leonard Woolley (1965), the notable archaeologists and scholar of the Sumerian chronicles, describes the making of that record as follows:

*“About 2000 BC, after the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur, Sumerian scribes took [stylus] in hand to record the glories of the great days that had passed away. They must have had at their disposal a mass of documentary evidence, and from this they compiled on the one hand the political history and on the other the religious traditions of the land. Their histories have perished, or survive only in excerpts embodied in Babylonian chronicles of much later date, but there do remain contemporary copies of the schematic lists of kings which they drew up as a framework [for] their narrative.” (27).*

Indeed, the records of other people and other times of antiquity have been unearthed and studied extensively by contemporary scholars and researchers, but many records have perished. For example, of the twenty-eight public libraries reported to have existed in Rome during the fourth century AD, none have survived. We only know that they existed because they are mentioned in Roman records. The great library at Alexandria perished in the fifth century. Again, the record tells us that. The great library of Ashurbanipal exists only as a note in the record of Babylon. But it existed because there is a reference about its existence in the record.

### 2.1 Libraries as repositories

Everywhere, libraries are full of the documentary heritage of countries and their people. How libraries as repositories of archival materials came to be is dimmed by time. But we can postulate that their beginning must coincide with the advent of literacy as a means of preserving the spoken word and of extending human memory. For as Robert L. Wilken (1972) has pointed out, "A people without a historical memory is like a country with no roads to guide the traveler" (190). We should, however, bear in mind that the map is not the territory.

### 2.2 Libraries and History

Thus, the history of a people, of a nation, early on was conserved for its future generations. The ligatures between libraries and history seemed natural. And as a people's sense of themselves grew, so did their histories and their repositories.

The ancient libraries of Egypt, Phoenicia, Babylon, Alexandria, Athens and Rome attest to the importance of preserving cultural memory. While some of the artifacts of that ancient memory may reveal only a people's penchant for inventories, many of them shed significant light about a people's foibles and travails, their glories and successes, and sometimes about their failures.

### 2.3 The Medieval Library

Preservation in the medieval library in *The Name of the Rose* (Eco 1984) meant not circulating the material illuminated over the centuries by monks of the abbey who fiercely maintained the books laboriously collected through the dark ages of ignorance. In his recollection of that library, Adso, squire to William of Baskerville who has been sent to the abbey to investigate certain irregularities, explains: If the learning housed in the library of the abbey "were to circulate freely outside those walls, then nothing would distinguish that sacred place any longer" (215).

As the preserve of learning, the abbey could maintain that learning unsullied only if it prevented its reaching anyone at all. Then, Adso, who, as the persona narrating the story, is remembering the abbey in his later years, compares the library to a dress: "Learning is not like a coin, which remains physically whole even through the most infamous transactions; it is, rather, like a very handsome dress, which is worn out through use . . . . Is not a book like that, in

fact? Its pages crumble, its ink and gold turn dull" [with use] (215-216).

In Eco's abbey, the library was not an instrument for extending learning but for hoarding it. There in that medieval fortress cum library, the collective social memory of the past lay static in a labyrinth enfolding within itself and consuming all who were part of it. In the end, the passion that preserved it destroyed it. As a learned writer, Eco's injunction here serves as a caution.

#### **2.4 Preservation of the Book**

Incredibly, the book was regarded as the enemy of the intellect. Jorge of Burgos, the blind librarian in *The Name of the Rose* feared the book. Nurtured in the oral tradition, Jorge of Burgos "saw" that the book augured the demise of *memoria*. It is not strange, then, that the monks of Eco's abbey hoarded books not because they were fearful of disseminating their contents but because they saw books as signs of the end of the memorial tradition, the book renting the mnemonic architecture of that tradition.

Interestingly, Socrates thought little of books, grumbling that he would never write one. And, as we know, he never did. Plato was the scribe. Ostensibly, that is. The early book was thus a conceit of things to come. Memory was its own storehouse. Books, on the other hand, had to be stored. Books required guardians and keepers, catalogs and librarians and schemes for finding them in their repositories. Scrolls required titulas for locating them; books required titles on their spines to identify them and to place them on some shelf according to some classification scheme. Eidetic memory would become a lost talent.

Perhaps that's what Socrates feared about books. For him, books were "dead things." In part, this is the point of departure of contemporary semioticians, Umberto Eco for one, who tell us that books are mute until the reader brings them to life in the reading.

#### **2.5 Existential Importance of Records**

There is more to preservation than paper and ink, just as there is more to carpentry than boards and nails. The point is that a people transmit themselves across the generations via the agency of materials collected and preserved for that purpose. Though we may find little of real historical value in the 60,000 papyri that have been preserved for us, still they shed some light on the activities of those who left us the records. There is an existential importance to a record.

The meanings of those records are extrapolated as history. As is the meaning of metal plates we have unearthed that made up part of the Mesopotamian documentary system. While we cannot necessarily decipher the sacral outlook of ancient mentalities, we can speculate as to the meaning of their records in light of our knowledge of their ancient legal and scribal traditions.

What is the value today of those ancient texts which influence no generation of Mesopotamians? They are for us reliquaries of an ancient time, significant for us not because of their content but because of their deed-- their existential value.

#### **2.6 Implications of the Records**

The implications of records are myriad for the post- modern world. Principally: Is the outcome of preservation worth the effort? In 3000 years what of American archives? Those that survive into that far future? Will the record be valuable? As valuable as the records found in the Qum-'ran caves? Or will their value lie in the process that leads to their discovery in that distant age? Will their value lie solely in the fact that they are, that they exist? Or should we now be alert to preserving them so they are valuable?

#### **2.7 Uses of the Past: Records and Invention**

The point is that archives are more than nests for antiquarians. They are a vital part of history, more than "bones" interred in the labyrinths of libraries. And, yet, they are "bones"--of the past upon which we "forensically" add flesh

in the form of history. Norman F. Cantor (1991) tells the story of John Morris, the Arthurian scholar, who out of the records and artifacts of the Germanic invasions of Roman England created a five-hundred page volume about The Age of Arthur (361). These are the uses of the records, the archives. One is tempted to say "recreating" the past. While not necessarily inaccurate, one can view the uses of the past by scholars as invention. No one really knows what The Middle Ages were like, that thousand year period from Rome to the Renaissance. And certainly the people who lived during those centuries had no idea they were living in The Middle Ages.

The nomenclatures (taxonomies) we use for talking about bygone periods are of relatively recent origin. "At least half our present knowledge of the classical and other ancient worlds was a legacy of the nineteenth century" (Cantor 28). From the volume of extant records, we have "reconstructed" (invented) The Middle Ages.

And just as 20th century views of The Middle Ages differ from 19th century views of The Middle Ages, so too will 21st century views of The Middle Ages differ from 20th century view of The Middle Ages. Each age interprets the past according to its zeitgeist.

But the views are all based on the records and their readings in point of time. Thus, Umberto Eco's medieval world in the Name of the Rose was an invention, created from the records Eco had access to. In the hands of a master storyteller like Eco the records come alive.

### **3. Why Preservation?**

Preservation is the heart of the mnemonic imperative, the need to pass on to the future the story of our presence, of human existence. In all cultures there is some form of historic preservation either orally or in print. In some cultures, this mnemonic imperative is so urgent that history has a better perspective of those cultures in light of what has been preserved, what our ancestors thought important about their lives.

#### **3.1 The Past and the Present**

The purpose of this presentation speaks clearly to the question of . "Why preservation?" Indeed, if future generations are to view, study and appreciate their cultural heritage, then the material parts of that heritage must be preserved. What we know about the ancient past comes to us from ancient records unearthed by archaeologists. Those records were certainly not left there, in the earth, for future generations to find? We have found them by accident. Surely that is not good preservation policy?

#### **3.2 Preserving the American Record**

When Robert Connor, first Archivist of the United States, resigned in September of 1941, a post he had held since October of 1934, President Roosevelt wrote: "You have not only laid the foundation but have built the structure of an extremely important and permanent repository of American historical source material."

Connor had, indeed, pioneered the principles and procedures for collecting the American record. For more than 150 years no one had thought to collect and organize that record nationally. But as a traditional historian, Connor was committed to preserving the record of the intellectual elite, the record of national institutions. This is not to say that the record is faulty--merely that it is incomplete.

#### **3.3 Widening the Aperture**

To preserve the present for the future is a worthy effort. But a more compelling reason, it seems to me, considering the fate of Sumerian records, is that a policy of preservation, sound in its inclusion of people, contributes in the "now" to a powerful and cohesive national spirit, a zeitgeist of participation in national goals and objectives.

The physical records we preserve today may not endure the vicissitudes of time--not even electronic records may survive. What is important about preservation--the 'why?' of preservation--has more to do with the present than the chance encounter with our survivors in some distant future. The work of preservation, involving all of us, gives us hope that in some dim tomorrow our records will tell the story of our efforts at diversity. That no one was asked to



drink the hemlock in the name of democracy.

### **3.4 Identity and the Public Record**

Why preservation? Because ultimately materials we preserve help us reflect on who we are and who we were. And sometimes it's important to preserve even those records that may appear to have doubtful value because their worth may not reveal itself to us until some time in the future, remote as that future may appear. Just as when I was a kid I didn't realize I was living amidst antiques. We will not, for example, know the full significance of the Chicano Movement until some time in the future when we recollect the activities of that movement in tranquility, examining its source documents. But who has collected them? Those source documents. Have mainstream archivists recognized the primary sources of that movement and made efforts to collect them and to preserve them? No full fledged effort has been undertaken that I am aware of in this regard by the National Commission on Preservation. Nor by the Library of Congress. Here and there are nominal efforts to collect and preserve those source materials.

### **4. What is to be preserved? Who decides?**

What is to be preserved? That is the question. Whether 'tis nobler to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous preservation, or by opposing them suffer the death of ignominy? That is the question. I have taken shameless liberty with Shakespeare, I fear, but to make a point. Albeit an ideological point.

While the question is indeed "What is to be preserved?" The real question is: "Who decides what is to be preserved?" Is that decision a communal one? A collegial one? Or is it arbitrarily an idiosyncratic decision based on personal biases? Just as testing is not neutral so, too, deciding what is to be preserved is not a neutral act.

### **4.1 Collection and the Canon**

By and large, American library collections reflect the canon and what is popular in the culture. Some libraries have "special collections" that reflect particular interests like The Black Experience in America, Women's Studies, Chicano Studies, *inter alia*. Oftentimes the scope of those collections is limited.

### **4.2 Chicanos and Collection**

Many libraries have begun to collect the works of Chicano writers, for example. But only those works that have been reviewed in traditional reviewing sources. That's just the tip of the iceberg.

For every Chicano work that makes it into libraries or collections as a consequence of a review in a traditional reviewing source, thousands go unnoticed. As has been the case historically, much Chicano material is [has been] produced ephemerally, coming from presses organized for a particular work. I have not mentioned Chicano archival material which remains equally unnoticed.

And so the question looms large: What is to be preserved and who decides? There are few Chicano gatekeepers in authority to make that decision, as Cheryl Metoyer-Duran (1992) informs us. For example, Gilda Baeza-Ortego was appointed in December of 1992 as Director of the Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and the Division of Learning Resources at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. That was a momentous decision. A breakthrough, really. One for which the leadership at Sul Ross State University deserves considerable credit. For Gilda is now not only the highest Hispanic line administrator on campus but the first Hispanic (male or female) to head an academic library in a Texas state university. I cite her case because she's one of the few Chicanos / Chicanas in a position to make collection development policy--within the parameters of the University's mission, of course. And that's the crux of the preservation problem: who decides? Who makes the decision about what is to be preserved; and how to go about that preservation?

### **4.3 Who Decides?**

My point is that someone has to decide on what is to be preserved. In a 1981 article in *The American Archivist*, Linda Henry of the National Council of Negro Women pointed out the existence of racial bias in repositories which concentrate on personal and family papers of the wealthy and socially prominent. In other words, the family papers

of wealthy and socially prominent black Americans **are** not solicited by mainstream archivists (Miller 117-118). The same is true for Chicanos. Their materials are not solicited by mainstream archivists.

When Albert Bustamante, U.S. Representative from the 23rd Congressional District of Texas, left office in January of 1993, the Sul Ross State University Archives solicited his congressional papers since the University is in District 23. To our knowledge no other archives in that district asked him for his papers. And currently, Sul Ross State University is soliciting the family records of a wealthy ranching family in the Big Bend area. There are many Hispanic family records in the Sul Ross State University service area that have not yet been solicited.

#### **4.4 What Should be Preserved?**

What should be preserved? Patently, we cannot preserve everything. But there needs to be a good faith effort to preserve a representative part of the public record. And just as war is too important a social decision to be left to the generals only, so too preservation is too important a public activity to be left only to the archivists.

This is not to diminish their significance in the process of preservation, but the exclusive nature of archives thus far can be [must be] changed by bringing more of the people who make up the American mosaic into the decision-making process, in order to make reality of H.G. Jones' assertion of guaranteeing that the American story will be told and told accurately and objectively." 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished' as Hamlet put it. But there must be more than wishful thinking to bring it about. A start would be having more Chicano archivists dedicated to the collection of Chicano materials.

#### **5. When Shall Preservation be Carried Out?**

This is a key question in what sometimes appears to be an arcane discipline—historic preservation. But the discipline is far from arcane. It's an age-old practice that transmits cultural values across the generations.

##### **5.1 Sooner than Later**

The pace of preservation should not be colored by the fact that it took the United States more than 150 years to get its preservation act together. Given the chemical fragility of documents, the preservation process cannot begin soon enough.

Preservation consciousness has hastened the introduction of acid-free paper. We know that if the preservation process is not initiated at an appropriate time, the likelihood of loss of records is considerably increased, irreversibly at times.

##### **5.2 Two considerations**

The 'when?' of preservation hinges on two considerations: the chronological age of the items and the currency of events that produce prospective archival materials. For example, should the Sul Ross State University archives be collecting the papers of State Representative Pete Gallego, Jr. now, while he's a freshman legislator and on the rise? Or should the archives wait until he's become a stellar figure later in his life to begin collecting his records retrospectively?

##### **5.3 Astute archivists and smart librarians**

Astute archivists were those, for instance, who collected the materials of the Chicano Movement *as* the event took place and unfolded. The University of Texas at Austin started collecting Chicano archival materials some time after the events of the Chicano Movement and has paid dearly for them. Having learned a lesson, the University of Texas Mexican American Archives is now collecting the LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) records continuously, not waiting for some day in the future to begin.

In 1978, Caravel Press (a small publishing enterprise of the type I cited above) printed *The Tejano Yearbook: A Chronology of the Hispanic Presence in Texas 1519-1978* by Felipe de Ortega y Gasca and Arnoldo DeLeon, a work not reviewed by a traditional reviewing source and consequently little noticed by libraries. In 1978 the work sold for

\$4.50. In the rare book market today, the work sells for more than \$100. The smart librarian and astute local history archivist bought the work for \$4.50. Unfortunately, few library schools offer courses in Archives and Records Management. Fewer still would offer a course in the historic preservation of minority archives.

## **6. How Shall Preservation be Carried Out?**

In the broadest sense of the word we are all historic preservationists. We should all be engaged in the practice of saving some part of our present for our progeny. Saving archival material is not rocket science. It should come to us as second-nature.

### **6.1 The Practical Approach**

The archival approach to the 'How?' of preservation would be to carry out the preservation process with state-of-the-art techniques. However, these techniques are expensive, labor intensive, and require special training. Formidable considerations, indeed. But not insurmountable.

But there are practical approaches to collection and preservation, approaches which do not always require large expenditures of money. A truism in negotiations informs us that the details need not be obstacles in achieving goals, that details impede the achievement of goals. Volunteerism, for example, can be a practical approach to preservation. A donated building can house community archives. Educating different population groups about the importance of family archives.

### **6.2 Some Archives are More Equal than Others**

But the upshot is that, unfortunately, some (perhaps many) archivists are forced to take short-cuts in the preservation process. Consequently some archival materials do not receive equal preservation treatment.

At one university I know with Chicano archives, the material is in sad repair. In some cases, the Chicano archives are left in the care of less experienced archivists while the collection deemed more valuable receives the attention of the more experienced archivists. This is not to say that all Chicano archives are perceived in this manner nor that all Chicano archives are maintained in such sad repair. However, one neglected Chicano archive is one too many.

### **6.3 The Interests of the Nation**

In *The Records of a Nation*, the eminent archivist, H.G. Jones (1969) recommended that the National Archives be governed by a Board of Regents under whose authority the work of preservation would be carried out. His recommended list of Regents is a Who's Who of white America. That list of recommendations was engendered by Jones' perspective of reality--a reality in which, for him, folks other than white just didn't come to mind. Is that racism? No doubt. But it's more a question of exclusion than racism. This doesn't mean Jones didn't harbor racist sentiments. We won't know the answer to that question until some record of those sentiments surface. But that is beside the point here.

Jones concluded that such a group of Regents would serve the best interests of the nation (264). That's like saying the Justices of the Supreme Court of 1896 served the best interests of the nation in their ruling on *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Grand as Jones' scheme was, there was little room for inclusion of non-whites just as for the Supreme Court of 1896 there was little room for inclusion of blacks in mainstream American society.

We can see that how national memory shall be preserved--the practice and the process--is a difficult consideration but, as I have said, not insurmountable if, indeed, we keep in mind the best interests of the nation. That's why we must bear in mind that the best interests of the nation are those interests that include all of us--the whole ethnic/color spectrum.

## **7. Where Shall the Materials be Preserved?**

There seemed to be no question about where the documentary heritage of the United States should be housed.

### **7.1 Access to the Documentary Heritage**

In the question of location--where shall archival materials be preserved? In Washington, DC of course. The National Archives are in Washington, DC and in select sites across the country, not easy places for general public access.

### **7.2 Situating the Community Heritage**

Where shall our community heritage be preserved? The public library? The college library? The local museum? Perhaps by fomenting a Community Preservation Movement, a community Hall of Records could be established where, indeed, the entire community would be represented, not just part of it. Unfortunately, the historical record bears out that only the records of particular groups have been preserved as the records of a community.

### **7.3 Archival Gatekeepers**

By default, perhaps, or by design, universities have become repositories of our documentary heritage. For many of our citizenry these are still forbidding places. In one archives some years ago, dressed like one of Cesar Chavez' *campesinos* I was asked for proof of identity. Producing my university I.D., the person blurted, "You're a professor?" astonished, perhaps, to come face-to-face with a Chicano professor. There weren't many of us in those days. How intimidating would that kind of incident have been for someone less experienced?

### **7.4 Facts or Artifacts?**

Important to remember, though, is that archives are really organic by nature. One way to look at archives is to view them as a puzzle in process on a board. We know what pieces are missing to complete the picture; we just need to find them among the tiles spread out before us as we contemplate the entire picture. This process is not unlike that of archaeology.

But the question emerges: How should archives be treated: as facts or artifacts? This is an important consideration. Surveying the national perspective, we see archives as material akin to books and journals in the information matrix, requiring thus the same handling for storage, retrieval and use. There are those who think otherwise, that archives are for viewing not for touching and rummaging through them for clues to the past.

The key word is **use**. And that's why nationally (actually internationally) archives are repositied in libraries, managed by specialists in the information matrix. This is not to say that at times archives may not be viewed as artifacts. If, for example, archives were considered as artifacts in museums, their access--use--would be severely curtailed. But the protocols for archives--as they have developed--place them in libraries where they can be accessed and used as source and research materials rather than in museums for static display.

This is not to say that museums are incapable of dealing with preservation of the word. But museums are entities of mentalities different from the mentalities of librarians and archivists. Despite who handles them or administers them, archives are part of the public record, meant to be available to the public for information about the past. And certainly meant to be available to researchers pursuing historical chimera whose presence flits before us in archives.

## **8. Who pays? Who owns material preserved? And who benefits from it?**

In the abstract we all pay for historic preservation and in the abstract we all own the materials preserved. Who benefits from it is a matter of perspective.

### **8.1 Who pays?**

There is no doubt that preservation requires money. But the question is: Who pays? In the preservation of public records, the public pays. Everyone pays in tax-supported enterprises.

### **8.2 Who Owns the Material Preserved?**

If the burden of support for our documentary heritage falls upon the people, then who owns the preserved materials? One would presume that ownership of the records would be vested in those who pay for their upkeep.

That's all of us. We are all the owners of our documentary heritage--except for privately held caches of records.

### 8.3 Who Benefits from Preservation?

I am making my way to the question: Who benefits from preservation? A response would be: everyone benefits from preservation. But is that true? It would appear--mind you, I said, "it would appear"--that historians benefit most from preservation. Historians who, unfortunately, do not always tell the stories of the documents accurately, despite H.G. Jones' belief.

The Alamo is a good case in point, as David J. Weber (1988) has pointed out in "Refighting the Alamo: Mythmaking and the Texas Revolution." Referring to the reluctant use by some historians of particular evidence suggesting that Davey Crockett was captured or may have surrendered at the Alamo, Weber writes, "Strong evidence suggests that Mexican troops captured Davey Crockett and a half a dozen others (they may even have surrendered), and Santa Anna ordered them executed. The evidence for this comes from Mexican sources" (137).

The implication here is that Mexican sources are suspect. But Weber explains that that evidence has not won widespread acceptance "for it seems to tarnish a hero" (137). Indeed that's the sentiment that keeps some records at bay. And why some biblical literature has made its way into the Bible and some has become apocryphal. Thus the story of the Alamo is told from the bias of the teller.

### 8.4 Recapitulating the Question

My question is still: Who pays, who owns the materials preserved, and who benefits from them? If we expect the public to pay for pre-servation, then the public needs to be a partner in the enterprise. Save for spiritual consolation, I for one despair of paying for things that yield me no benefit. That is not a political condition. It is, rather, a perspective rooted in the strong work ethic instilled in me by my parents and my culture.

### 8.5 Demographic Imperatives

In not too many years distant, 65% of the Texas state population will be Hispanic and only 25% of that population will be Anglo. The Census Bureau projects that about that time, one in five of the country's population will be Hispanic. These are powerful demographic imperatives.

If we are to succeed in rescuing our heritage, then *Tejanos* and other Hispanics of the state and throughout the nation need to be brought into the enterprise as working partners--not silent partners.

## 9. The 'Which?' of Perservation

That brings me to the 'Which?' of preservation. The 'which' differs from the 'what' of preservation in one significant respect. The former asks: Whose of the latter shall be preserved? In other words, of the 'what' to be preserved shall it be the black 'what' or the Hispanic 'what' or the white 'what'? It seems to me 'which?' is the most crucial question in "rescuing our heritage" for preservation.

### 9.1 Clarifying the Question

Just as victors claim the spoils of war, so too ruling majorities determine which archives are to be preserved for posterity. It's not a question of "what?" needs to be preserved. Every group may preserve whatever it deems significant about its group history. The "which?" of presser-vation determines the priority group.

### 9.2 Archives as a Strategy of Continuity

At the beginning of this presentation I reviewed some of the reasons for the 'Why of Preservation?' citing the record since antiquity to explain that down through the ages preservation was a strategy of continuity for a people, a way of extending themselves across the generations. But which records have been preserved? This is the most crucial question of this inquiry. For it seeks not just to reveal the gate-keeping protocols of selection and exclusion but where the decision-making power lies.

### **9.3 The Records of Antiquity**

For the most part we note that the records of antiquity are those of regal families. Of courtiers sufficiently powerful to warrant preservation of their records. Records of those of lower classes were not deemed sufficiently significant for preservation. In fact, in the Sumerian record not a single Semitic god found his way into the official record. Everything Semitic had been sedulously excluded from the Sumerian record.

Woolley tells us that the records of the Sumerians assured their immortality, however long they lay in the earth, undiscovered. Thanks to the records, there has been a literary resurrection of the Sumerians. Their curious marks on clay tablets have transmitted their messages to us across the generations. We do not know about other people. We know only about those who created records.

### **9.4 Selecting the Archives**

At the beginning of the National Archives the crucial question was--Which materials are deserving of archival preservation? Earlier, in 1836, the American Congress wrestled with the question of which materials would be represented in the Smithsonian Institution? The initial consideration favored preserving there the records of the intellectual elite since the \$500,000 bequest of James Smithson was to establish in Washington, DC an institution for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." It was argued that this of course meant the intellectual elite.

### **9.5 The Archival Point of View**

As it turned out, Rufus Choate's notion of "organic nationalism" carried the debate, arguing that the Smithsonian's collection policy should be sufficiently eclectic so that the works of the learned therein would stimulate the growth of the American mind--enriching thus the whole culture of the country. For decades thereafter--well into our own time--the elite point of view has been dominant at the Smithsonian Institution.

### **9.6 American Hispanics and the Smithsonian Archives**

In a 1982 meeting between leading American Hispanics and the Secretary of the Smithsonian the question was asked: Where in the Smithsonian's collection and exhibits were the Hispanic contributions to the nation? Offended by the question, the Secretary terminated the meeting.

But our talk with him had some effect, for the next year he appointed a young Guatemalan woman to direct the Smithsonian's Hispanic Initiative. There were two flaws in the Secretary's response. The first was conceptualizing American Hispanicity in terms of hemispheric Hispanicity; and the second (exacerbated by the first) was thinking that in choosing a Guate-malan to direct the Smithsonian's Hispanic Initiative he had chosen someone who understood and could relate to the national experiences of U.S. Hispanics--principally Mexican Americans who constitute two-thirds of the U.S. Hispanic population and Puerto Ricans who constitute almost three-tenths (counting the island) of the U.S. Hispanic population. For a U.S. Hispanic population almost 90% Mexican American and Puerto Rican, hiring a Guatemalan director for Hispanic Initiatives was a faux pas. Adding insult to injury was when the Guatemalan director called me for help and information in mounting a 16th of September program.

### **9.7 Current Archival Practices**

Frederic Miller (1981) put it well in his seminal article on "Social History and Archival Practices" wherein he said that "current archival practices still derive from..... formalized political and economic institutions and the lives of the prominent" (113). From an Hispanic point of view, the heightened social consciousness of the last 30 years seems to have had nominal effect on preservation policies anent American Hispanics. American Hispanic scholars have urged preservation of U.S. Hispanic materials as part of the heritage of the country. It appears, however, that the lives of Hispanics in the United States are still not considered "prominent." Though no doubt politics plays a major role in that decision.

The University of Texas at Austin, the University of California at Santa Barbara, and Stanford University have each

undertaken archival and preservation projects anent American Hispanics. At the University of Texas at Austin, the Mexican American archives have grown significantly since 1982. But preservation of Mexican American materials at those institutions is not the result of a charitable or altruistic impulse. Preservation projects at those institutions came into being after agonizing travail between the universities and Mexican Americans who saw their exclusion in preservation as racism. Not only were Mexican Americans excluded from the historical and literary texts of the nation but they were denied a place in the archival crypts of the nation. Who would know that Mexican Americans ever existed?

The issue is as Michael Frisch stated it: "How to transcend the limits of conventional sources and the myopia of conventional historians in order to retrieve the experience and, hopefully, the consciousness of those long excluded from a central place in American historical processes" (358). For scholars, the trick is to transcend the conventional documentary bias of archivists. But this is easier said than done. Looking for and finding the historical record of American Hispanics is a formidable task. Not insurmountable, just daunting. Scholars of the Hispanic record in the United States must be doubly prepared to seek the records and to read them, once found, in a Spanish now archaic and to render them into contemporary English.

## 10. Conclusion

For some of us the notion of preservation is irrelevant, knowing "our" materials receive short shrift and scant attention in the process.

### 10.1 Exclusion and Relevance

Without our presence in them, many of us believe that archival holdings are almost useless in research about the American experience. For American Hispanics have been sedulously excluded from those records just as the presence of Semites was sedulously excluded from the records of the Sumerians.

### 10.2 Personal Value of Libraries and Archives

I must say that libraries and archives have been of inordinate value to me in my work and research. I am grateful for the preservation of the materials I found. But my work on *Backgrounds of Mexican American Literature* (1971), for example, would have been hastened had I found the records of Mexican Americans as meticulously preserved as the records of the dominant culture.

Finding the records for my work in Chaucer and Shakespeare was easy enough, but finding the records of my people and their experiences in what is now the United States from 1492 to the time when I undertook *Backgrounds of Mexican American Literature* (the first work in the field) was an arduous process.

### 10.3 Archives and the Information Matrix

Searching any archive can be an arduous process, except where the records are machine readable and one can search by subject access. Provenance notwithstanding, we need to move the archival processes into the information age since preservation is an integral part of the information matrix.

### 10.4 Ya es Tiempo!

Ya es tiempo! I exult in the proposition of "rescuing our heritage" and, above all, providing access to that heritage. I trust that the word "our" means all of us. And that "our" libraries are not mock institutions like Jorge Luis Borges' *Library of Babel* overseen by a demonic librarian.

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