

# *MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION NEWSLETTER*

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Manuscript Repositories Section of the Society of American Archivists

Fall 2001

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## **From the Chair**

**by Kathryn Neal**

When I contemplated writing my final column as section chair following the SAA annual meeting in Washington, D.C., I anticipated simply sharing highlights of this year's section business meeting for those of you could not attend. The good news will follow, but I first would like to offer my deepest sympathies to those who were affected by the September 11 attacks. Words can barely express the immense personal and cultural tragedies that these events have produced. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read SAA President Steve Hensen's insightful message on behalf of the organization that is now posted on the SAA web site ([www.archivists.org/news/tragedy.html](http://www.archivists.org/news/tragedy.html)) and the report on the September 18 meeting of the National Task Force on Emergency Response ([www.archivists.org/news/emergencyresponse.htm](http://www.archivists.org/news/emergencyresponse.htm)). The report briefly reminds us how we, as archivists and manuscript curators, can and should be prepared to lend our professional expertise in disastrous times.

The annual section meeting was very well attended (with an audience of more than 175) and featured a stimulating and thought-provoking program on archival ethics. Many thanks to outgoing steering committee members Beth Bensman, Cynthia Pease Miller, and Craig Wright for organizing such an outstanding program. Speaker David E. Horn, head of Archives and Manuscripts at Boston College kicked off his engaging presentation with an overview of the history of SAA's Code of Ethics. From 1977 to 1980, Horn served as a member and chair of the SAA Committee on Ethics in the Archival Profession and has since served two additional terms on the ethics committee. During his talk, he addressed the challenges of writing and implementing the code of ethics, as well as its inherent shortcomings.

Following the presentation, the audience broke up into small groups to discuss case studies that Horn introduced, which are based on those included in the forthcoming SAA archival ethics manual by Karen Benedict. Each case focused on a particular ethical issue that we might face as archivists and manuscript curators: handling sensitive material, dealing with donor descendants, purchases v. gifts, divided collections, and ethical responsibility. Case 1 involved the discovery of risque photographs in the collection of a well-known author who had been killed in a car accident; the materials had been included in the donation that her elderly

parents had made. Case 2 concerned the arrival of the granddaughter of a former university president who demands the return of correspondence between the president and his wife before they were married. The third case posed the situation of a prospective donor threatening to place her papers elsewhere if your special collections department (which occasionally does make such purchases) does not agree to buy them. Case 4 involved being presented with a donor who has already given a portion of his family papers to another institution but approaches both your repository and another about depositing the rest. Finally, case 5 centered on the discovery of possibly revelatory information about a former faculty member in the papers of a deceased former university president. Horn provided questions to guide the discussions, such as how we would resolve the situations presented, what the code of ethics says about these issues, what principles apply to the case and are they immutable, and should our practices be influenced by the possibility of current or future access to finding aids or documents on the Internet? Given the quality of the group summaries, it appears that provocative discussions took place. Horn took note of the issues, questions, and suggestions for revision raised by the various groups, while reminding us that these rules of conduct are not infallible. As an additional discussion group, incoming section chair Peter Blodgett facilitated a brainstorming session to develop proposals for the 2002 annual meeting.

Work continues on an online resource for new archivists that will be accessible through the section web site. Karen Spicher, Mark Shelstad, and Craig Wright are developing this gateway to provide new archivists and curators with links to helpful sites in fundamental areas of archival practice. The efforts of past section members and leaders also continue to bear fruit, according to a report from Council liaison Mark Greene. The three brochures *A Guide to Donating Your Personal or Family Papers to a Repository*, *A Guide to Donating Your Organizational Records to a Repository*, and *A Guide to Deeds of Gift* continue to occupy top spots on SAA's publication sales list. The first two hold the number one and number two spots, while the deeds of gift brochure is now at number six. Although SAA sells these brochures in bulk and at cost primarily as an outreach tool, their successful sales (despite their availability online) nonetheless reflects the significance of the section's role in creating them. Congratulations to those who were involved in the development of these "best sellers."

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to Karen Spicher for continuing to do such a great job of maintaining the section's home page. I also send much appreciation to Peter Blodgett for his tireless efforts to produce the newsletters and for the great insight he brings to the work of the section. As he assumes the role of chair, the section will continue to benefit from his contributions. It has been both a pleasure and an honor to serve as section chair, and I give final thanks to the section leaders and steering committee members—such a sharp and enthusiastic crew—for helping make my term such a good one.

*Kathryn Neal*  
*University of Minnesota*

## **Northeastern University to Preserve the Historical Records of Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion (IBA)**

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the history of Boston's Latino community is available for the future, Northeastern University Library's Archives and Special Collections Department has reached a formal agreement with Inquilinos Borcuas en Accion (IBA) to preserve the organization's historical materials.

IBA was founded in 1968 by the mainly Puerto Rican residents of Parcel 19 who were threatened by Boston's urban renewal program. The residents lobbied for the right to control the redevelopment process of their community, which resulted in the creation of Villa Victoria, a 895-unit low- to moderate- income neighborhood. Today, IBA fosters the well being of Villa Victoria residents, advocates for Latinos throughout the city, and perpetuates the rich Latino cultural and artistic heritage.

*Kathryn Jacob*  
*Schlesinger Library/Radcliffe Institute*

## **Emory Awarded Grant from Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for Joint Project with Boston College**

The Robert W. Woodruff Library of Emory University has been awarded a grant totaling \$120,000 to provide online access to major Irish literary archives at Emory University and Boston College, two primary repositories of Irish literature in the United States. The Library will digitize collection descriptions from the two universities using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard and develop a searching interface that will allow scholars to quickly find relevant materials.

The grant will provide a gateway to some of the most important Irish literature collections held in the U.S., and will significantly enhance the ability of scholars to efficiently and effectively discover relevant materials within these collections. Eventually, other repositories holding Irish literary collections will be invited to add their own research aids to the website, enabling the resource to continue to grow in size and scope.

These collections will form the foundation for what will become an increasingly comprehensive site for scholars and students in the field. Moreover, the project will model the role of technology in facilitating the use of primary resources.

According to Stephen Enniss, curator of literary collections at Emory, “the collections of Emory and Boston College are an extraordinary resource for the study of twentieth-century Irish literary culture. Electronic access to the Irish literary finding aids of these two extensive collections will not only create a vast combined resource for Irish literary scholarship, but will reunite electronically a number of companion collections that are currently held in the two institutions.” For example, Emory and Boston College hold complementary Abbey Theatre, Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon and W.B. Yeats collections. Emory’s Irish literary archives range from the Irish renaissance to the present. They include correspondence, manuscripts and related papers of W.B. Yeats and his circle, including the Abbey Theatre collection, the Gregory family papers, and the Maude Gonne collection, as well as the literary archives of many of Ireland’s finest contemporary writers. These include the papers of Thomas Kinsella, Michael Longley, Derek Mahon, Paul Muldoon, Edna O’Brien and an important Seamus Heaney collection.

The Irish collections of Boston College include literary figures Samuel Beckett (including the Barney Rosset and Alan Schneider collections), John Deane, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, Sean O’Casey and W.B. Yeats. They also include important ancillary collections documenting the experience of the Irish in America.

Susan Potts McDonald, head of technical services in special collections, and Stephen Enniss, will plan and provide oversight and consultation for the work. Naomi Nelson, director of digital archives in special collections, will assist in planning for the encoding, the search and retrieval interface and gateway design.

The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation supports excellence in scholarship and the performing arts, particularly projects that promote wide access to research library collections and institutions that transmit our cultural heritage.

*Susan Potts McDonald*  
*Emory University*

## **The Karl Weigl Papers Open for Research in the Yale Music Library**

An exhibit titled “Karl Weigl: Composer and Teacher,” on view at Yale University during September-October 2001, marks the opening of the Karl Weigl Papers for research in Yale’s Gilmore Music Library.

Karl Weigl (1881-1949) lived and worked at the heart of Viennese musical life in the early twentieth century. A student of Alexander Zemlinsky and protégé of Gustav Mahler, Weigl built a distinguished career as a composer and teacher, producing widely-performed works praised by musicians such as Mahler, Richard Strauss, and Wilhelm Furtwängler, and exerting considerable influence on European and American students. These successes were cut short by the Second World War, when Weigl was swept into a wave of dislocated European musicians

arriving in the United States in the 1930s. Although Weigl composed and taught in the United States through the end of his life, much of his later music remained unperformed at his death. Weigl's influence was deeply felt by students and colleagues who continued to promote his music, resulting in revival of his works during the 1970s and 1980s and renewed interest in his life and career.

The Yale Music Library's Karl Weigl Papers consist chiefly of manuscript music, published music, and correspondence, with smaller amounts of writings and notebooks, concert programs, clippings, photographs, recordings, and other materials. The bulk of the collection dates from Weigl's years in the United States, documenting his work as a teacher and composer during 1939 through 1949. Also present are papers concerning his career in Vienna, the Weigl family's emigration to the United States, and programs and reviews of performances of Weigl's music after his death in 1949 and through the 1980s. Annotations on much of the music in the collection document use after Weigl's death by his wife Vally Weigl and other musicians. Also present are papers of Vally Weigl concerning her life and work, her involvement with the Karl Weigl Memorial Fund, and efforts by her and other musicians to preserve Karl Weigl's memory and promote his music. The collection builds on the Library's strengths in American music and German music between the World Wars, complementing collections such as the Papers of Kurt Weill and Lotte Lenya, Paul Bekker, and Franz Schreker.

*Karen Spicher  
The Beinecke Library*

### **Schlesinger Library Acquires Papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois**

The Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America and Harvard University's W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research announce the acquisition of the papers of Shirley Graham Du Bois (1896-1977). An intriguing woman and influential artist and activist, Graham Du Bois was a composer, playwright, biographer, teacher, civil rights champion, left-wing activist, American Communist Party member, participant in the African liberation struggles, and proponent of Maoist China, as well as longtime friend, then partner and wife of W.E.B. Du Bois during his last 12 years. The collection documents her work and personal life through personal and professional correspondence, drafts of articles and books, music scores, and photographs.

*Kathryn Jacob  
Schlesinger Library/Radcliffe Institute*

### **Historic Records Project is Funded**

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded \$195,000 to The Herndon Home for the cataloguing of one of the most extensive collections of Black insurance records in the nation. More than 300 linear feet of Atlanta Life Insurance Company and Herndon family papers dating from 1895 to 1980 are to be processed in a ground-breaking collaborative effort of three Atlanta repositories: Auburn Avenue Research Library on African-American Culture and History, Emory University's Robert W. Woodruff Library, and The Herndon Home, the project sponsor. "We are extremely gratified by the opportunity this project offers to ensure that our history will be preserved," said Charles Cornelius, president and chief executive officer of Atlanta Life Insurance Company. "We are painfully aware of the challenges facing the Black insurance industry, and we support heartily any efforts that will document the very important role that Black insurance companies have played in the development of Black enterprise. That is why we have donated some of our historic papers to The Herndon Home and to Auburn Avenue Research Library." Cornelius heads one of the few African American insurance companies in business today. "Of approximately sixty Black insurance companies operating in the 1950s," he said, "less than fifteen are operating in 2001."

The two-year project will arrange, describe, and make accessible to a broad public the Atlanta Life-Herndon family manuscript collections at Auburn Avenue Library on African-American Culture and History, Emory University's Robert W. Woodruff Library, and The Herndon Home. Bibliographic records will be created in two national databases and a combined guide to the collections will be encoded and mounted on the World Wide

Web. The project evolved from the activities of the Atlanta Area African-American Archives Group, an organization of local librarians, scholars, and museum professionals who seek to address common problems, share resources and information, and develop programs that further the preservation of and access to African-American archival materials.

Atlanta Life Insurance Company, which was founded by Alonzo Herndon in Atlanta in 1905, is one of the largest Black insurance companies, second only to North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company in Durham. Carole Merritt, director of The Herndon Home and project director for the grant, observed that companies like Atlanta Life were an important force in the Black economy in the South. "They offered not only protection against sickness and death, but also professional employment alternatives to teaching and the ministry, extending opportunities in sales, clerical work, and management to a people who had been largely excluded from white-collar occupations."

The community viewed Black business enterprise as one of the most promising strategies for racial uplift. It represented economic cooperation and a means to fund the larger capital investments that would have greater impact on Black life. By mid-century Atlanta Life's mortgage loans to individuals, churches, and businesses had fostered revitalization in Black neighborhoods in Atlanta and other southern cities. Through its contributions and those of the Herndon family to schools, churches, orphanages, and civic organizations, the company rightfully assumed philanthropic leadership in Atlanta's Black community. Moreover, Atlanta Life was the major corporation in the Deep South that financially supported voter education and other civil rights activities during the 1950s and 1960s. Ironically, with gains in civil rights, Black insurance companies declined, having gradually lost much of their market to White insurers eager to compete for the Black dollar. As Black insurance companies lose ground, it becomes imperative to preserve their records and make them accessible to as broad a public as possible.

*Susan Potts McDonald*  
*Emory University*

## **Manuscript Dealers Sought for 2002 Archives Expo**

In an effort to broaden the scope of products and services offered to annual meeting attendees, SAA is soliciting the participation of manuscript dealers for the 2002 International Archives and Information Technology Exposition to be held in conjunction with the 2002 annual meeting in Birmingham, AL, August 21 - 24.

The Manuscript Repositories Section Steering Committee has been working with the SAA office to explore the possibility of expanding the exposition to include manuscript dealers. The Manuscript Repositories Section is one of SAA's largest with 688 members. An action plan is being developed which includes a call to section members for recommendations. Dealers recommended by section members will be invited to participate as well as those identified through the Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America. Any section member with a recommendation for a manuscript dealer should contact Debbie Nolan, SAA meeting director, at [dnolan@archivists.org](mailto:dnolan@archivists.org).

Approximately 1,000 archivists representing a variety of institutions are expected to attend SAA's 2002 annual meeting in Birmingham, AL. The program committee met during the first weekend in December to review and select session proposals. Proposers and chairs of accepted sessions will be notified by the end of December. Stay tuned to SAA's web site, [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org), for the most current information on the 2002 annual meeting and International Archives and Information Technology Exposition.

*Debbie Nolan*  
*Society of American Archivists*

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## **Winter 2002 Calendar**

Jan 12: Deadline for NEH Division of Public Programs grants ("Projects in Museums and Historical Organizations, planning/implementation;" "Projects in Libraries and Archives, planning/implementation;" and "Special Projects"). 202-626-8267, publicpgms@neh.fed.us, <http://www.neh.fed.us>

Jan 18-23: American Library Association (midwinter); New Orleans.

Jan 29 - Feb 8: The Modern Archives Institute, sponsored by the National Archives and Records Administration, in cooperation with the Library of Congress. <http://www.nara.gov/arch/profdev/mai.html>

Feb. 8-10: Extension Course in Document Imaging - Document Management; Los Angeles World Trade Center. NOTE: Persons who cannot attend the class may obtain all of the printed class materials for free at <http://www.ArchiveBuilders.com>.

Feb 15: Deadline to apply for the Society of California Archivists James V. Mink scholarship of \$350 to assist with the expense of attending the SCA annual meeting. <http://www.calarchivists.org>

Feb 28: Deadline for Colonial Dames Scholarship award, enabling two archivists each year to attend the Modern Archives Institute at the United States National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC. <http://www.archivists.org/recognition/dames.html>

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#### MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION

News items, articles, letters to the editor, and comments are welcome.

Next deadline: March 1, 2002

Send to Susan Potts McDonald ([see address below](#))

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