

# MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION NEWSLETTER

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Manuscript Repositories Section of the Society of American Archivists

Fall 2003

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## From The Chair: Parting Words

*By Susan Potts McDonald, Emory University*

What a memorable SAA meeting in Los Angeles! The 2003 Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committees did a superb job in providing a wonderful experience to members old and new. We especially owe a debt of gratitude to all the folks at the Getty Institute who provided such a delightful Friday evening - illuminated manuscripts and a glorious sunset - what a combination!

The Manuscript Repositories Section had over 120 members in attendance at this year's business meeting. **Karen Benedict** and **Gregor Trinkaus-Randall's** thought provoking presentation on the USA Patriot Act led to a lively discussion on how SAA should respond as an organization to help members better understand how the Act impacts archives and manuscript repositories. As a result of the presentations, the Manuscript Repositories Section along with the Reference, Access & Outreach Section and the Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable have crafted a [statement to the SAA Council](#) for consideration. In addition, plans are underway for our Section to sponsor a full-fledged session on the Act at next year's meeting in Boston.

**Tad Hershorn**, Acquisitions and Appraisal Section Chair, announced that they are still collecting names of qualified and reliable manuscript appraisers to compile a list which will be available in either printed form or through the SAA website. I hope you will send your suggestions to Tad at [hershorn@andromeda.rutgers.edu](mailto:hershorn@andromeda.rutgers.edu)

**Karen Spicher**, our SAA Web Liaison, reported on the Task Force on Electronic Publication's recommendation to discontinue production and distribution of hardcopy Section newsletters. Our section currently distributes the Section newsletter by mail and also mounts it on the Section's website. SAA plans to cease hardcopy mailings of Section newsletters in the spring of 2004 - the newsletter will then be available via the SAA website. Karen will shepherd this process and has graciously agreed to continue serving as our liaison with SAA.

Congratulation to our new Vice Chair/Chair-Elect **Cynthia Pease Miller**, as well as to the new members of our Steering Committee **Tom Hyry** from Yale University, **Theresa Salazar** from the University of California, and **Stephen Sturgeon** from Utah State University. We say goodbye to our Steering Committee members - **Jodi**

**Allison-Bunnell, Cynthia Ghering, and Kathryn Allamong Jacob** - who served us so ably. I particularly want to thank our Past Chair **Peter Blodgett** and new Chair **Pam Hackbart-Dean** for all their words of wisdom and support.

It has been a pleasure to serve you over the past two years and I hope that you too, will consider participating in a SAA leadership role. You will find great pleasure in forging new friendships while serving our wonderful and generous profession.

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## **Patriot Act Statement**

October 6, 2003

Dear SAA Executive Council Members:

As chairs of three sections concerned with users of archives and donors of archival materials, we request Council to address the issues of the USA Patriot Act as they pertain to our profession. As Americans, we condemn terrorism and support the right of the United States to defend itself. As a democracy, part of that defense, however, should be the protection of civil liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights of the U.S. Constitution. As members of the archival profession, we are most interested in upholding freedom of speech and protecting against unreasonable searches and seizures. Regarding those rights, both the present USA Patriot Act and proposed legislation to strengthen it have negative ramifications for archivists, users of archives and related repositories, donors to archives and related repositories, and third parties. Our Code of Ethics recognizes an archivist's responsibility to protect the confidentiality and privacy rights of donors and third parties.

The American Library Association (ALA) has thoroughly outlined privacy concerns for librarians and library users, most of which apply to archival settings. We request Council to concur with the resolutions adopted by ALA Council on January 23, 2002, and January 29, 2003, and to support ALA to uphold the privacy and confidentiality of user records and condemnation of the USA Patriot Act [[see attached ALA resolutions](#)].

However there are several areas where library guidelines do not cover all of the concerns that may arise in archives and manuscript repositories:

### 1. Records documenting use of archives and manuscript repositories

While libraries recommend deleting patron records as soon as an item is returned, for security reasons many archival institutions keep patron records indefinitely. These records allow staff to check who last used a collection in case of theft or damage. These records, if retained, could be subject to examination under the USA Patriot Act. While libraries advocate short retention periods for patron records, archivists have differing opinions and many believe the security concerns outweigh the potential breach of patron confidentiality. If present legislation stands, it is recommended that archivists alert potential researchers that their record of collection use may be subject to disclosure under the USA Patriot Act.

### 2. Records of donors to archives and manuscript repositories

Most archivists consider correspondence and agreements with donors confidential. Again these records could be subject to examination under the USA Patriot Act. If present legislation stands, it is recommended that archivists alert donors that their correspondence and agreements may be subject to disclosure under the USA Patriot Act.

In conclusion, we do not oppose legitimate attempts to improve the security of the United States, but we believe that provisions of the USA Patriot Act overreach themselves and have the potential to violate the constitutional rights of archival users and donors. The Manuscript Repositories Section, the Reference, Access, and Outreach Section, and the Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable respectfully request that SAA Council review these concerns and issue a resolution opposing the USA Patriot Act as it negatively affects archivists, donors to archives and related repositories, and users of archives and related repositories.

Sincerely,

Pam Hackbart-Dean  
Chair, Manuscript Repositories Section

Ellen Swain,  
Chair, Reference, Access & Outreach Section

Tim Pyatt,  
Chair, Privacy and Confidentiality Roundtable

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### **Language For a Proposed SAA Resolution - A Draft**

Whereas we as Americans condemn terrorism and support legitimate attempts to improve the security of the United States,

Whereas we believe the defense of our democracy should include the protection of civil liberties guaranteed in the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution,

Whereas as archivists we uphold freedom of speech and protection against unreasonable searches and seizures,

Whereas our Code of Ethics requires us to protect the confidentiality and privacy rights of donors and third parties,

Whereas our colleagues in the American Library Association (ALA) have thoroughly outlined privacy concerns for librarians and library users, most of which apply to archival settings, in ALA Council resolutions adopted on January 23, 2002, and January 29, 2003,

Whereas unlike libraries, many archival institutions keep patron records indefinitely for security reasons, thus subjecting them to examination under the USA Patriot Act,

Whereas most archivists consider correspondence and agreements with donors confidential and many are concerned about them being examined under the USA Patriot Act,

Therefore, be it now

Resolved, that the Society of American Archivists joins the American Library Association in condemning certain provisions of the USA Patriot Act as breaching the privacy and confidentiality of user records,

Resolved, that the Society condemns these provisions also as breaching the privacy and confidentiality of donors and third parties represented in our collections,

Resolved, that as long as these provisions of the USA Patriot Act stand, archivists are recommended to alert potential users that their records of collection use may be subject to disclosure under the Act,

Resolved, that as long as these provisions of the USA Patriot Act stand, archivists are recommended to alert donors that their correspondence and agreements may be subject to disclosure under the Act,

Resolved, that the Society communicate its concerns to the President of the United States, Attorney General, and to appropriate committees and members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

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### **Update on the Northwest Digital Archives/Northwest Archives Processing Initiative**

Work continues on the Northwest Digital Archives (NWDA) and Northwest Archives Processing Initiative (NWAPI) projects in Oregon, Washington, Montana, and Idaho, a cooperative Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and metadata improvement project for thirteen institutions in these states. By June 2004, the consortium will have constructed a database of more than 2,200 finding aids from thirteen academic, historic, and state institutions across the Northwest. Many institutions are performing in-house EAD conversion, and seven institutions have just chosen ArchProteus of Vancouver, BC, to do conversion of 12,000 pages of legacy finding aids to EAD.

The projects are funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The project website can be found at <http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/holland/masc/nwda/>.

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## **NEDCC Posts Self-Survey Guide On-Line**

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) announces the on-line availability of its latest publication, *Assessing Preservation Needs: A Self-Survey Guide*. This exciting multi-media project was funded by a Library Leadership Grant from The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). NEDCC also receives major funding for its Field Service Program from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

An empowering and important new resource, the purpose of this guide is to help small to medium-sized institutions with limited preservation experience and budgets to design a program ensuring that their historical collections survive in usable condition as long as possible. In an effort to make this important information available at no cost to anyone at anytime, NEDCC has posted the text on its Web site at [www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org).

Working in partnership with NEDCC, Amigos Library Services, Inc. of Dallas Texas, has also produced a 30-minute video entitled: *The Preservation Survey: A First Step in Saving Your Collections* which highlights the themes of this new publication. Available now through Amigos, the video vividly illustrates both the dangers to collections and offers best practices in examining an institution's policies for preserving its general and special collections materials. Information about ordering the video can be found on Amigos' Website, at [www.amigos.org](http://www.amigos.org).

To order the hardcopy edition of *Assessing Preservation Needs: A Self-Survey Guide*, send a check made out to NEDCC for \$15.00 to, Juanita Singh, Northeast Document Conservation Center, 100 Brickstone Square, Andover, MA 01810; The cost includes UPS Ground shipping and handling within the continental U.S. Faster shipping is available at cost. All payments must be made in U.S. dollars. Include your name, mailing address, and email address, or use the order form that is now available at [www.nedcc.org](http://www.nedcc.org).

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## **From Moonshine Kate to the Sunshine Boys: WSB and Atlanta Country Music, 1922-1950**

Atlanta was an early hub of country music that has been called a "pre-Nashville Nashville." The advent of WSB radio in 1922 delivered, for the first time, hillbilly music over the airwaves. In later years, the WSB Barn Dance was a fixture on Saturday nights. WSB's signal strength and an abundance of local talent made the region a country music stronghold.

From Moonshine Kate to the Sunshine Boys features sound recordings and sheet music from the library's Popular Music Archives. The exhibit was created by archivists Laura Botts and Mary McMahan. This online exhibit can be viewed at <http://www.library.gsu.edu/spcoll/exhibits/wsboxhibit.htm>.

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## **Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers On-Line**

*Archives listserv*

The Library of Congress is pleased to announce the release of the online collection of the Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers available at the American Memory Web site at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wrighthtml/>.

The online presentation of The Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers at the Library of Congress, comprising about 10,121 library items or approximately 49,084 digital images, documents the lives of Wilbur and Orville Wright and highlights their pioneering work which led to them making the world's first powered, controlled, and sustained flight. Included in the collection are correspondence, diaries and notebooks, scrapbooks, drawings, printed matter, and other documents, as well as the Wrights' collection of glass-plate photographic negatives. The Wright Brothers' letters to aviation pioneer and mentor Octave Chanute, from the Octave Chanute Papers, were also selected for this online collection. The Wright Papers span the years 1881 to 1952 but largely cover 1900 to 1940.

This online presentation of the Wright Papers contains the most significant and best portions of the original collection. The Wrights' diaries and notebooks are among the most important of the papers because they record many of their glides and powered flights at Kitty Hawk and elsewhere, as well as their scientific experiments and data. Because Wilbur and Orville corresponded extensively with their family, especially their father, Bishop Milton Wright, and their sister, Katharine, the Wright family correspondence is included. Also found in the online collection are letters from many correspondents who are significant in the field of aeronautics, including Octave Chanute, Charles Lindbergh, and Amelia Earhart. Charts, drawings, scrapbooks, printed matter, and other materials covering the Wrights' research, work, and business pursuits were also selected for digitization.

As noted, the Wrights' letters to Octave Chanute in the Chanute Papers are also included in this online collection. Chanute, a civil engineer and aviation pioneer, was the Wrights' mentor and friend. These letters give a first-person account of their problems and progress in inventing the airplane.

Among the Wright Papers acquired by the Library of Congress were 303 glass plate negatives, most taken by the Wright brothers themselves between 1896 and 1911 to document successes and failures with their new flying machines. The collection provides an excellent pictorial record of the Wright brothers' laboratory, engines, kites, gliders, powered machines, flights, and even their accidents. The collection also contains individual portraits and group pictures of the Wright brothers and their family and friends, as well as photos of their homes, other buildings, towns, and landscapes.

The Wilbur and Orville Wright Papers and the Octave Chanute Papers are housed in the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress. The glass plate negatives are housed in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library.

American Memory is a gateway to rich primary source materials relating to the history and culture of the United States. The site offers more than 8 million digital items from more than 120 historical collections.

Please submit any questions you may have via the American Memory webform at: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-memory2.html>.

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## **New Collections at the Library Of Congress**

### *SGA Newsletter*

The papers of Herbert L. Block, the famous Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist "Herblock" of the Washington Post, were given to the Library of Congress on March 11, 2003. The material includes 14,000 original sketches and drawings, as well as correspondence and photographs. The library plans to eventually

digitize the drawings and make them available on the Internet. On April 21, 2003, the Library announced it had acquired a collection of 72 handwritten essays by Ayn Rand. The 1281 pages represent all of Rand's nonfiction output for the "Ayn Rand Letter" from 1971 to 1974. The essays, with extensive corrections by Rand, are an important addition to the complete manuscripts and typescripts of her four novels, which were given to the Library in 1992.

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**Manuscript Repositories Section**  
**[Leadership list](#)**

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

**Next deadline: March 1, 2004**

**Send to [Cynthia Pease Miller](#)**

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