

# MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION NEWSLETTER

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Manuscript Repositories Section of the Society of American Archivists

Spring 2001

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## From the Chair by Kathryn Neal

Le jazz hot provided some distraction from the frigid temperatures in Minnesota this winter when the traveling exhibition *The Jazz Age in Paris, 1914-1940* visited the Elmer L. Andersen Library at my institution, the University of Minnesota. The exhibition chronicles Europe's early jazz movement, its American roots, and the influence of American expatriates on the café and cabaret musical culture of interwar Paris. *The Jazz Age in Paris, 1914-1940* is but one of several major displays available through the American Library Association (ALA)'s Public Programs Office. The traveling exhibition program offers ample opportunities for building partnerships - whether short- or long-term - within and among manuscript repositories, among institutional units, and with our allied organizations. Since developing collaborative efforts is a frequently mentioned topic within the archival profession, I decided to devote my first column to sharing information about this resource. Manuscript repositories can reap benefits from involvement in this program, primarily with regard to outreach but also in terms of acquisitions.

Libraries of all types nationwide are eligible to apply to serve as hosts of the traveling exhibitions. Most loan periods last six weeks and at least two versions of the panel displays travel at any given time. The exhibition organizers provide host libraries with brochures, posters, templates for publicity releases, and other supporting materials. Host libraries are required to host an opening reception for the exhibition and plan other public programs related to the exhibition theme; to display the exhibition in a minimum-security environment, providing on-site security or frequent patrols of the exhibition area; to allow visitors to view the exhibition for free; to provide timely reports, such as program announcements, exhibition condition reports, and lists of local fundraising sources; and to commit a staff member to coordinate the exhibition's visit and accompanying activities and attend a two-day planning seminar.

Partnership building is inherent in the ALA traveling exhibition program. In the case of *The Jazz Age in Paris*, a number of organizations were involved in its creation. According to the exhibition's official credit line, "*The Jazz Age in Paris, 1914-1940* is organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and the American Library Association. It has been made possible through the generous support of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The original version of this exhibition was developed by the Smithsonian

Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and was made possible by Nissan North America. This exhibition is part of *America's Jazz Heritage*, A Partnership of the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and the Smithsonian Institution." Collaborators on other traveling exhibitions include the Newberry Library, the Library of Congress, and the Huntington Library.

From a local perspective, cooperative relationships formed between archival and library units, library departments, university divisions, and external agencies. Even the act of coordination of the exhibition's visit and additional campus activities involved institutional cooperation. I entered the planning process nearly halfway through, initially joining the University of Minnesota's former music librarian as co-coordinator. When she left the university, I invited a colleague, Elisabeth Kaplan, archivist for the Charles Babbage Institute, Center for the History of Information Processing, to become involved. The two of us set forth putting the pieces in place for our two main events: the opening reception and a presentation by a film archivist and historian. We got by with more than a little help from our Friends of the Library and development staff; they guided the production of the opening-reception invitations, jazz-age event calendars, and the reception arrangements. We drew on the talents of two University Libraries reference librarians to design the exhibition web site. One of them also created an elegant guest book and prepared signs for the events. Our facilities management staff members became partners as well, as we called upon them to assist in the arrival of the exhibition, to install it, and to prepare the building for the opening reception.

The exhibition's visit also enabled us to work with other offices on campus and community sources. The University's School of Music coordinated some of the activities offered in conjunction with the exhibition as part of its annual jazz festival. We submitted publicity material to the libraries' liaison in the University Relations Office for distribution to local media sources. For financial backing, we looked to funding sources within and outside the university: both the Friends of the Library and the College of Liberal Arts agreed to serve as sponsors, as did the non-profit organization, the Givens Foundation for African American Literature (which promotes and supports the rare book and manuscript collection that I curate).

Traveling exhibitions present welcome opportunities to highlight our own collections, as the holdings suit the theme. *The Jazz Age in Paris* offered a chance to develop a companion display featuring jazz-related items dating from the 1910s from the Givens Collection of African American Literature, the Children's Literature Research Collections, and the Kautz Family YMCA Archives, each of which is housed in the Andersen Library on our campus. Opening programs and lectures can also serve as showcases for collections. Although only libraries are eligible to host the traveling exhibitions, other manuscript repositories, such as historical societies, could be brought in as partners.

A major goal for a host institution is, of course, to get people to enter the library's doors - a goal aspired to by the staffs of most manuscript repositories. ALA's Public Programs Office stipulates particularly that host institutions must show evidence of having approached members of new and underserved communities about the exhibitions and events. In our case, the University Relation's contact sent out publicity material to the local ethnic and gay press. At the time of my writing this article, we are still determining how effectively the publicity appealed to these audiences. Such efforts can yield positive ramifications for acquisitions efforts. As a blend of traditional, new, and previously underserved groups visit the exhibition and related events, they could be encouraged to learn more about the collections on campus. Ultimately, these visitors could become donors. To learn more about the ALA Traveling Exhibition Program, contact the ALA Public Programs Office at ALA Public Programs Office at (312) 280-5054, x5045 or go to the "Traveling Exhibitions" link on the ALA Public Programs Office home page at <http://www.ala.org/publicprograms/>

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## **Bentley Library Seminar on Archives and Documentation**

During the Fall 2000 and Winter 2001 terms, the University of Michigan has been hosting an international seminar titled "Archives, Documentation, and the Institutions Of Social Memory." The seminar is sponsored by the Bentley Historical Library and the University's International Institute's Advanced Study Center, and funded with a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Seminar's purpose is to investigate "from a range of

disciplinary perspectives the complicated relationships between archives, forms of documentation, and the ways societies remember their pasts. ... We intend to approach archives in various national and other contexts as a complex of structures, processes, and epistemologies situated at a critical point of intersection between scholarship, cultural practices, politics, and technologies." This has not been (it was intended to be) a forum for prosaic discussions of descriptive techniques or outreach, but a discussion within the academy of the ways in which a range of disciplines intersect with and interpret archives, and of the implications of broad intellectual currents on the way archivists may need to interpret their own work.

As a bit player in the seminar, I can offer a brief review. Most of the papers presented at the seminar are posted on the Advanced Study Center's website by date of presentation ([http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/asc/00-01\\_seminar\\_papers/](http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/asc/00-01_seminar_papers/)). The subtext of the seminar is postmodernist philosopher Jacques Derrida's essay "Archives Fever" (published in English in *Diacritics* 25:2, and reviewed by Jim O'Toole in the *American Archivist*). For a good introduction to that subtext, I recommend starting with Verne Harris's (National Archives of South Africa) paper from January 17: "A Shaft of Darkness: Derrida in the Archives" <../Winter2001/Papers/Harris.pdf>. Sets of papers that may be of interest include those on the topic of Archives, Archivists, and the Production of Social Knowledge (September 20), Cultural Conceptions of Artifacts (October 11), Archives and Social Memories in Emerging States (November 15 - this session included two papers on the use of the East German Stasi Archives, which many of us in the Section have heard Elena Danielson speak about), and the first four sessions of the Winter 2001 term. One additional paper that I found particularly fascinating (though no light read) is Carolyn Steedman's "'Something She Called a Fever': Michelet's Dust and Derrida's Mal" (September 13), which plays on Derrida's concept of "fever" to examine literal maladies caused by books and archives.

*Mark A. Greene Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village*

## **The Huntington Acquires Hilary Mantel's Papers**

The Huntington Library has acquired an extraordinary archive of the papers of British author Hilary Mantel. An author whose works, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "offer lessons in life's contrariness, in the tensions between free will, unfortunate accident, and involuntary behavior," Mantel has been praised by the *Literary Review* as "the novelist of her generation who will achieve lasting greatness."

Her novels include *Every Day Is Mother's Day* (1985) and its sequel *Vacant Possession* (1988); *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street* (1988), which drew upon the author's experiences living in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; *Fludd* (1990); *A Place of Greater Safety* (1992), a fiction study of the French Revolution; *A Change of Climate* (1994), rising from Mantel's several years living in Africa; *An Experiment in Love* (1995); and *The Giant, O'Brien* (1999).

Among the awards she has received are the Cheltenham Festival Prize, the Southern Arts Literary Prize, and the Winifred Holtby Award, all for *Fludd*, which she describes as a magical-realist story set in the northwest of England, and whose eponymous main character is the reincarnation of the 16th-century scholar and alchemist of the same name. In 1992, *A Place of Greater Safety* was honored with the Sunday Express "Book of the Year" Award, and in 1996 *An Experiment in Love* received the Hawthornden Prize for Literature.

The archive of Mantel's papers contains material relating to most of her eight novels, including several partial drafts of *A Place of Greater Safety*, and "notes & plans" for that novel as well as for *Eight Months on Ghazzah Street*, *Fludd*, *A Change of Climate*, and *An Experiment in Love*. The correspondence files include letters from her publishers, agent, and fans, and many from such fellow authors as V.S. Naipaul, Auberon Waugh, Elizabeth Jane Howard (whose papers are also at The Huntington), Beryl Bainbridge, Pat Barker, Penelope Fitzgerald, Barry Unsworth, Piers Paul Read, Margaret Drabble, Alan Ross, Joanna Trollope, Selina Hastings, Gavin Ewart, Andrew Motion and Michael Holroyd. A series of 20 bound journals for the years 1981-1999 are a combination of diaries and work books, with occasional drafts of short stories.

The collection is a superb resource for research on Mantel's life and works and will be available for research as soon as detailed processing and cataloging can be accomplished. The archive meshes neatly with the library's

collections in modern British literature, including the papers of Elizabeth Jane Howard, Kingsley Amis and Patrick Balfour, 3rd Baron Kinross.

*Sue Hodson The Huntington Library*

## **Georgia O'Keeffe and the Dominican Sisters of Abiquiu, New Mexico**

In the spring of 1971, Georgia O'Keeffe learned that her neighbors in Abiquiu, New Mexico, were about to be sent away. Since 1946, a small group of Dominican sisters had run the mission school of St. Thomas, teaching, at the end, 73 children from the Abiquiu pueblo and the surrounding area. Distressed at what the sisters' removal would mean for the village, O'Keeffe sent a six-page typed letter to their superior general at St. Mary of the Springs in Columbus, Ohio, arguing that the presence of the sisters had been a stabilizing influence on the community, and that they should be allowed to continue there.

Last November, the Dominican Sisters of St. Mary of the Springs donated O'Keeffe's letter to the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the principal repository of the artist's personal papers and correspondence. Together with the letter came a taped interview with Sister Irma Walker, who recounts her memories of the Abiquiu mission and of O'Keeffe in particular, copies of photographs taken by Sister Irma at Abiquiu between 1947 and 1954, transcribed reminiscences of other sisters, and annals of the mission for 1946-47 and 1970-71.

These materials document the work of the Abiquiu sisters during a time of critical transition for the rural village, when the designation of nearby Los Almos as a nuclear research center had accelerated the encounter between Native and Anglo cultures. The letter and accompanying background materials also document an aspect of O'Keeffe's life in Abiquiu that has remained largely unknown to her many biographers. O'Keeffe's 1971 appeal to the Mother Francis de Sales, O.P., failed to stay the recall of the sisters from St. Thomas Mission in Abiquiu, but her eloquent letter records their accomplishments over more than two decades as well as her own understanding of the community she had chosen as her home.

*Karen Spicher The Beinecke Library*

## **Important Developments at the University of South Carolina**

The Special Collections departments at the University of South Carolina made the headlines of Columbia's *The State* newspaper twice over a four-day period, contrasting good with ill news.

On Jan. 31, the University announced the acquisition of the papers and library of Ernest Hemingway's attorney and friend, Maurice J. Speiser (1880-1948). Hemingway scholar Matthew J. Bruccoli stated the collection "could very well turn out to be one of the major Hemingway archives used for research, teaching, and studying." Speiser's collection includes important correspondence with Hemingway and other leaders in the arts of the period such as William Faulkner, Lillian Hellman, D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Carson McCullers, and John Steinbeck, as well as typescripts of several works, and a complete collection of Hemingway's writings, many bearing personal inscriptions. The collection, valued at \$1,800,000, was received as a gift/purchase from the Speiser family, partially funded through a generous contribution from retired Atlanta Exxon executive Edward Hallman.

On February 4, the newspaper reported that the University's South Caroliniana Library was among the victims of thief Gilbert Bland. According to the new book *The Island of Lost Maps* by freelance reporter Miles Harvey, Bland stole maps and rare papers from nineteen university libraries. It is believed Bland razored six maps from volumes held by the Caroliniana, and another from a volume at the University's Thomas Cooper Library. The article noted, "For USC, which is desperately striving to be among the nation's best public universities, it was a sad irony that it took a thief to demonstrate that USC had hit the big time - at least when it comes to rare books." The University is seeking admission into the Association of American Universities and designation as a Carnegie Research I university. The U.S.C. Library system ranks 47th in the country in overall quality, up from 54th in 1997. Its strong special collections units have contributed significantly to this improved ranking.

*Herb Hartsook The University of South Carolina*

## **Simpson Institute at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming**

A generous gift of \$500,000 by an anonymous donor has been used as seed money to establish the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership. The donor, a friend of Alan and Ann Simpson, has also established a \$1 million bequest to permanently endow the Simpson Institute. The Simpson Institute will focus on collecting, processing and cataloging the papers of prominent individuals and organizations that have provided leadership in Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain region. In addition to acquiring and maintaining historical collections, the institute will provide a wide range of programs, including publications, classes, symposia, and lectures.

A major component of the institute will be the papers of the Simpson family. The Simpsons have served Wyoming throughout the 20th century. William "Billy" Simpson (1868-1940) was a prominent attorney in Cody. His son Milward, (1897-1993) served Wyoming as governor and the U.S. as senator. Milward's sons have also served Wyoming and the nation. Alan, served in the Wyoming legislature and then the U.S. senate. Pete, also a Wyoming legislator, later served as vice president for institutional advancement at UW. Work has already begun on sorting through the 200 cubic feet of material from Wyoming Governor and U.S. Senator Milward Simpson, who was a UW all-star athlete and later a trustee. The Milward Simpson papers alone will provide hundreds of topics for scholarly research. Simpson had an important role in many Wyoming issues including ranching, grazing rights, the development of Yellowstone Park, and the Shoshoni irrigation project.

For decades the American Heritage Center has actively collected the papers of Wyoming and western leaders. The AHC has the papers of territorial governor and U.S. Sen. Francis E. Warren, former congressman, Secretary of Defense, and Vice-President Richard Cheney, Governor Clifford Hansen, and Governor Nellie Tayloe Ross, America's first woman governor. The AHC also holds the records of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, the American National Cattleman's Association and materials related to numerous businesses and cultural organizations, as well as the archives of the University of Wyoming. The Simpson Institute will serve as a cornerstone of the AHC's historical resources. For more information, please contact the Simpson Archivist, Kim Winters at: Kim Winters, Simpson Archivist, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, P.O. Box 3924, Laramie, WY 82071, 307.766.2594, kimain@uwyo.edu.

*Mark Shelstad University of Wyoming*

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## **Spring 2001 Calendar**

April 15: Deadline to apply for the Annual Western Archives Institute. Contact: Administrator, Western Archives Institute, 1020 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814.

April 16: Deadline for NEH "Extending the Reach" public program consultation grants. Program descriptions, guidelines, and applications are online at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/extending.html>.

May 14: Workshop on "Be Prepared...Conducting a Vulnerability Assessment," Washington, DC. Contact: Preservation Services Office, Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, CCAHA, 264 South 23rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, Tel: 215.545.0613, Fax: 215.735.9313, ccaha@ccaaha.org.

May 15: Deadline to apply to take the Academy of Certified Archivists archival certification examination if you plan to take the test in Washington, DC (at the SAA Annual Meeting), Chicago, Illinois, Phoenix, Arizona, Boston Massachusetts, and Dallas, Texas. Contact: Academy of Certified Archivists, 48 Howard St, Albany, NY 12207, 518-463-8644 fx: 518-463-8656.

June 1: NHPRC deadline (for the November meeting). Application guidelines and forms may be requested from the NHPRC, National Archives Building (Archives I), Room 111, Washington, DC 20408. Ph: 202-501-5610,

Fx: 202-501-5601.

June 13: Deadline to apply for American Film Institute preservation grants. Contact: National Center for Film and Video Preservation, American Film Institute, P.O. Box 27999, 2021 North Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027 Tel: (213) 856-7637 Fax: (213) 856-7616, [tgonzalez@afionline.org](mailto:tgonzalez@afionline.org).

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#### MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES SECTION

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

Next deadline: June 1, 2001

Send to Peter J. Blodgett ([see address below](#))

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