
Manuscript Repositories Newsletter

A newsletter from the Manuscript Repositories Section of the Society of American Archivists

Spring 2013

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From the Chair

Chris Burns
University of Vermont

When the Steering Committee met in Chicago in 2011, we decided to focus our attention on electronic records issues for a couple of years. At last year's section meeting in San Diego, our program featured a series of lightning talks on this topic, followed by a breakout discussion group centered on how the section could help repositories to begin work in this area. Fortunately, Ricky Erway at OCLC was just releasing "You've Got to Walk Before You Can Run: First Steps for Managing Born-Digital Content Received on Physical Media."

After San Diego, the steering committee decided the time was right to introduce a new action-oriented initiative, what would come to be called *Jump In*, that would encourage archivists to begin taking these first steps of dealing with electronic records in their care. Nancy Beaumont and the staff at SAA were very receptive to the idea, helped us shape it, and agreed to let us offer tuition to a DAS course as an incentive to participate. We also received great assistance and encouragement from our Council liaison, Bill Landis.

When we rolled out the initiative, we had no idea how it would be received. We had a general sense that there were quite a few institutions that just needed to get started, and we hoped that our initiative would give them reason to do so. Our hunch proved to be correct. By the time our pledge to participate deadline passed, 34 institutions had signed up. The results of their work will be featured on the section website beginning in mid-May, and also at our section meeting, which is scheduled for 12:30-2:30, on Friday, August 16.

As one of the individuals who signed their institution up, I can speak firsthand as to what a leap these tiny first steps can feel like, especially if you take your eyes off the immediate task at hand and look down the road a ways. My project is deceptively simple. I'm surveying the contents of the laptop of a poet whose papers we have recently acquired. While a survey is pretty straightforward, the larger questions that inevitably arise are difficult and will require a great deal of time to work out. There are questions about the initial ingest process, whether to use digital forensics tools, where to store the records, how to provide access to the records, how should we adjust our deed of gift, and on and on.

What we hope to achieve with the *Jump In* initiative is to encourage institutions to begin to tackle these big questions by taking one step at a time. We also hope to help build a community of archivists who are confronting these challenges at the same time. We know there are others who have gone before us. There are many resources available that deal with these questions, and we have created a bibliography of some of them on our section website. There are other sections and roundtables that tackle these questions and listservs where active discussions are occurring. There are workshops that SAA and others offer. The role we felt we could play was to provide an incentive and a forum for some repositories to begin tackling these important challenges.

We encourage your input on how we can improve this initiative. Please feel free to contact me or any of my colleagues on the Steering Committee. Another way you can make your voice heard is to get more involved with the section. Elizabeth Russey Roke and the Nominations Committee are currently preparing a slate of candidates for office and would love to hear from interested individuals.

Finally, another important piece of business has also been underway this year. A committee led by past and present Steering Committee members Ellen Doon, Jackie Dean, and Elizabeth Wilkinson is nearing the end of its work to revise the three SAA brochures that explain for potential donors the process of giving personal papers or organizational records to a repository. The current plan is to have these revised brochures available in time for the annual meeting in New Orleans. On behalf of the Steering Committee, I'd like to express our sincere gratitude to Ellen and her hard-working committee for all of their effort on this important endeavor.

Steering Committee Nominations

*Elizabeth Russey Roke, Immediate Past Section Chair
Emory University*

The Nominations and Election Committee is seeking candidates for the following positions:

Vice Chair/Chair Elect: Serves as Vice Chair from the conclusion of the 2013 meeting through the 2014 meeting; serves as newsletter editor; works with the Chair and Steering Committee in establishing an agenda for the year; works to ensure that sessions of interest to Section members appear on the SAA program for the following year; prepares for term of service as Chair in 2014-2015; takes minutes during the annual Section meeting. The Vice Chair/Chair Elect must attend the SAA annual meeting.

Steering Committee (3 members): Serves for two years from the end of the 2013 meeting through the 2015 meeting; serve on the Nominations and Election Committee for 2014; assist in planning for the 2015 annual meeting; participate in Steering Committee meetings at SAA; help set the agenda for the year; and contribute to the newsletter or other activities. Steering Committee members are expected to attend the SAA annual meeting.

Candidates must be members of SAA and the Manuscript Repositories Section. Elections will be held by electronic ballot four weeks before SAA's annual conference in New Orleans, August 11-17, 2013, and winners will be announced at the Section meeting at the conference.

To suggest a candidate (or to nominate yourself!), please send an email to any member of the Nominations and Election Committee:

Elizabeth Russey Roke: erussey@emory.edu
Kate Colligan: kate.colligan@gmail.com
Mario Ramirez: mario.hugo.ramirez@gmail.com
Florence Turcotte: turcotte@ufl.edu

The deadline for nominations is **May 1, 2013**. Thank you for participating!

News from Members

Archives of American Art Completes MPLP Project

Barbara Aikens

Chief, Collections Processing

Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

With a grant from internal Smithsonian Institution collections care pool funds, the Archives of American Art (AAA) has completed a 2.5 year minimal level processing, a.k.a. MPLP, project that achieved the minimal processing of thirteen collections totaling nearly 800 linear feet. The contract archivist's overall processing time averaged 5.5 hours per linear foot.

In addition to addressing stewardship deficiencies in the preservation and access levels of AAA's backlog, the project challenged us to establish minimal level processing standards that synced with our existing workflows and did not conflict with our high standards. Is it really possible to adhere to high standards for processing and finding aids while implementing minimal level processing strategies? The short answer is yes, it can be done.

In order to procure contractor services, we had to clearly define the project deliverables and visualize our final product prior to starting the work. Our contract outlined that an archivist would 1) physically arrange each collection into a logical archival hierarchy of series/files or series/subseries/files; 2) re-house each collection into archival containers and folders; 3) label each folder with series, unit title, and inclusive dates; 4) flag special media and any preservation concerns; 5) create a finding aid that would include narrative historical and scope and content notes, series descriptions, and a box/folder inventory with each folder numbered in the finding aid — in other words, a DACS Multilevel Added Value finding aid; 6) encode the finding aid in EAD, using AAA's suite of encoding tools, which shifted from NoteTab to Archivists Toolkit over the course of the project; and 7) select at least one representative image from the collection for digitization.

But, the above outlined work doesn't read "minimal," does it? So, how did we cut corners?

During processing, existing original folder headings were simply verified with contents and copied onto the new folder. Circa dates were acceptable for file headings. Contents of folders were not put in chronological order or alphabetized. Collection titles were not written on folders. Duplicates were weeded only if easily located. Document flattening, staple removal, and interleaving was minimal or restricted to targeted series, if at all. Folders were not physically numbered within the boxes, only in the finding aid, with the expectation that interns and volunteers will add these later. If we did not anticipate needing the folder numbers for possible future digitization, we would have eliminated them altogether.

We also became more efficient in writing our finding aids. We shortened all narrative descriptive notes as much as possible without losing context. The archivist included only detailed information when she deemed that it was absolutely essential to locating materials within the collection. However, there was one area of description that we enhanced in each finding aid. We added a default statement to the processing note that alerts the researcher that the collection was minimally processed, and in what ways. My thanks to Jennifer Meehan at the Bienecke for this idea.

We're very pleased with the final product and know that this level of processing is probably more accurately defined as "intermediate minimal level processing." It is now the default standard for all new acquisitions and unprocessed collections in the backlog that are not associated with a grant project or scheduled for full digitization. If the national average for minimal level processing projects is 4 hours per linear foot, we feel that the overall high quality of our final product was well worth the extra 1.5 hours per foot.



Screen shot of project finding aid.

You can find examples of our project finding aids on our website at www.aaa.si.edu by searching for any of the following: Fine Arts Federation of New York, Galerie Chalette, Vose Galleries of Boston, Park Place/Paula Cooper Gallery, Doll & Richards Gallery, Architectural League of New York, Kraushaar Galleries (addition), Thread Waxing Space, James Graham & Sons, and Richard York Galleries. Additional finding aids from the project will go online within the next few months.

Launch of the Connecticut Digital Archive and Thomas J. Dodd Papers Digitization Initiative

Betsy Pittman

*University Archivist and Curator for Political Collections, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center,
University of Connecticut Libraries*

Archives & Special Collections at the University of Connecticut Libraries, in collaboration with the Connecticut State Library and the Connecticut State Data, is launching the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA). The CTDA is dedicated to the maintenance, delivery, and preservation of a wide-range of digital resources for scholars, students and the general public. When the CTDA is operational in late 2013, it will provide preservation digital repository services for agencies and cultural organizations in the state of Connecticut.

Archives & Special Collections is currently digitizing the personal papers of Thomas J. Dodd who was executive counsel for the United States during the Nuremberg war crimes trial before the International Military Tribunal from 1945 to 1946. Dodd later represented Connecticut in the US Senate from 1959 to 1971. In response to heavy research demand, documents from the Nuremberg trial will be among the first to be made accessible online to coincide with the launch of the CTDA. News and developments can be found on the CTDA blog at <http://blog.ctdigitalarchive.org> .

For the Defense: Letters of John Brannon from the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal

Hannah Miller

Manuscripts Librarian, Georgetown University Law Library Special Collections

“...I gave my all for the preservation of international justice. Honestly, I think we have performed a service to the whole world in proving how ridiculous it is to attempt to convict a group of men on purely political charges.”

Attorney and Kansas City, Mo., native John G. Brannon penned these words to his brother Bernard on November 14, 1947. Brannon had arrived in Tokyo, May 17th, 1946, about five years after the attack on Pearl Harbor, and General Douglas MacArthur appointed him to defend *Class A* Japanese war criminal Osami Nagano, Chief of the Imperial Japanese Navy General Staff, in his trial before the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal.

The Georgetown University Law Library’s Special Collections has recently acquired over 150 letters written by John Brannon to his brother between 1946 and 1949, along with numerous photographs, manuscripts and two 16mm films. It is a collection teeming with fervent American patriotism, Truman politics and personal reflections of a transitional time in world history. In his letters, Brannon discusses and describes Japanese culture, his defense strategies, the war crimes tribunal, the defense team, mounting U.S. tension with Russia, and the stigma attached to American attorneys defending the Japanese officials. His writing is a vibrant personal view of the inner workings of, and politics behind, an important historic and international trial. The Law Library has recently completed digitizing the letters from the John G. Brannon Papers and they are now available for viewing online at <http://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/555530>.

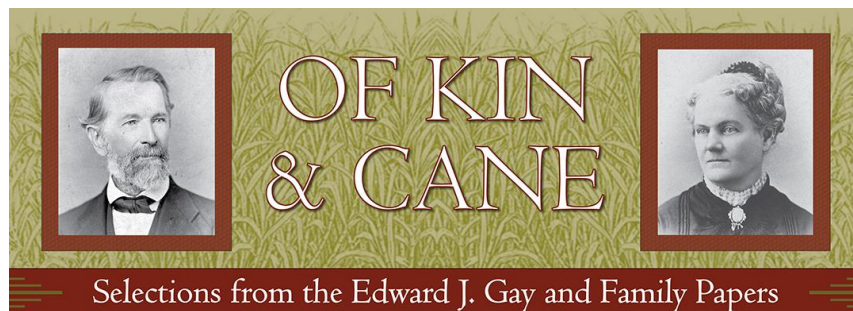
The acquisition of the John G. Brannon Papers compliments the Law Library's George Yamaoka Collection, which was donated by Georgetown Law alumnus George Yamaoka (L'1928). Along with Brannon, Yamaoka was one of the select group of American attorneys appointed by General MacArthur in 1945 to help in the defense of those Japanese accused of war crimes. His collection contains tribunal proceeding transcripts and a multitude of defense documents and exhibits from both the prosecution and the defense, among other interesting items.

Both collections illustrate their creators' zeal and passion toward "the preservation of international justice," as Brannon had termed his work in the November 14, 1947 letter. They are both open for research. Visit www.law.georgetown.edu/library/collections/manuscripts/ for more information on these manuscript collections, or contact Hannah Miller at Georgetown University Law Library Special Collections, 202/661-6602 or email htm@law.georgetown.edu.

"Of Kin and Cane" Exhibit Highlights Papers of Influential Louisiana Family

Tara Z. Laver

Interim Head of Special Collections, Louisiana State University Libraries



Though the ink has long dried on countless pages of correspondence, penned by many hands over several generations in the Edward J. Gay family, the experiences these documents record come to life for the reader even today. The saga of an influential Louisiana family, rooted literally and figuratively in the cultivation of sugar cane for almost two centuries, is explored in the new exhibition "Of Kin and Cane: Selections from the Edward J. Gay and Family Papers," presented by LSU Libraries Special Collections.

The display showcases historical documents ranging from the Louisiana territorial period through the Progressive era that depict multiple generations of the Gay family and reflect their involvement in state and national politics, business, and sugar cane cultivation. It will be on view in Hill Memorial Library on the LSU campus, March 18 to July 6, 2013.

The Gay family collection is one of the most significant groups of papers among Special Collections' archival holdings. It has been used extensively in important works on enslaved and post-Civil War free labor, plantation economy, and the sugar industry, and offers a myriad of potential topics for research. The exhibit will also feature clothing and other artifacts associated with the family that are held by the LSU School of Human Ecology Textile and Costume Museum.

Historical themes such as the spread of settlement from the East to places like Tennessee and Missouri, then to Louisiana, the establishment of plantations and acquisition of land and slaves and the associated plantation society, the development of sugar cultivation and commerce in Louisiana, the coming and

experience of the Civil War and its lingering economic, political, and social aftermath, and the Progressive era and World War I are all illustrated in the story of this family and the documentation they left behind. Besides these weighty events, family joys and sorrows and the human experiences common to all times and places are also found among the papers of this close-knit, very prosperous circle of kin--births, deaths, heartbreaks, weddings, celebrations, travels, financial uncertainty, and familial relationships.

At the center of the collection are Lavinia Hynes and Edward J. Gay. Born in Virginia in 1816 and an established St. Louis, merchant, Gay came to Louisiana as a result of his marriage in 1840 to Lavinia Hynes, daughter of Andrew Hynes, a Nashville merchant who, through his own marriage, inherited part of Home Plantation in Iberville Parish. (Much as Gay would, Hynes played a large part in managing the agricultural and financial affairs of his father-in-law, Joseph Erwin, who had established Home; both Hynes and Erwin and their families also figure prominently in the collection.)

Andrew Hynes died in 1849, and Gay eventually bought out the interests of the other heirs, built a new, grand residence on the place, and changed its name to St. Louis Plantation. He made Louisiana his official residence in 1860, and the Gays spent the majority of the Civil War there, though he, Lavinia, and their six surviving adult children continued to divide their time between St. Louis Plantation in Iberville Parish and the city of St. Louis, Mo., where much of their extended family resided.

A skilled businessman and effective plantation manager, Gay built up a network of real estate and sugar growing, processing, and selling operations that employed his sons and sons-in-law and connected his on-going interests in Missouri, Iberville Parish and the surrounding area, and New Orleans. In 1884, Gay was elected as a Democrat to represent Louisiana's Third District in the House of Representatives, defeating former Reconstruction-era Governor William Pitt Kellogg in a contentious race. He served in Congress until his death in 1889. Lavinia died in 1891.

Edward J. and Lavinia Gay's children and grandchildren carried on the family's tradition of influence and importance in the Louisiana sugar industry, and his descendants continue to farm and advocate for sugar interests to the present day.

A symposium, also entitled "Of Kin and Cane," is planned for March 24, 12:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. in Hill Memorial Library. The meeting offers an opportunity for history scholars and agriculture specialists and practitioners to explore historical aspects of sugar research, technology, and plantation management, as well as current day practices of a family sugar concern that has been in continuous operation for close to 200 years. See <http://lib.lsu.edu/special/about/blogfiles/kincaneschedpark.pdf> for additional details on the symposium and www.lib.lsu.edu/special for general information about Special Collections.

News from the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America

Jenny Gotwals

Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Harvard University

The Schlesinger Library recent received a NHPRC grant to digitize several collections of Blackwell family papers, which span from 1784 to 1981 and detail the activities of members of the Blackwell family who were leaders in abolition, prohibition, health care, women's suffrage, and education. The collection includes correspondence, diaries, photographs, and other materials that record travel, professional work, and civic and reform activities of the members of the close-knit family.



Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, 20022795_1

Among the most well-known Blackwell family members are Elizabeth (1821–1910), the first woman to earn a medical degree, and her sister Emily (1826–1910), also among the first woman doctors. Both fought for public health reform and equal education and medical training for women. Their brother Henry Browne Blackwell (1825–1909), his wife, Lucy Stone (1818–1893), and their daughter Alice Stone Blackwell (1857–1950) are known for their leadership roles in the abolition, women's suffrage, and prohibition movements. Their sister-in-law Antoinette Brown Blackwell (1825–1921), wife of Samuel Charles Blackwell (1823–1901), was the first woman ordained as a minister in the United States and an active speaker on behalf of abolition, women's rights, and prohibition. Additional details about the collection are found at www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/schlesinger-library.

The Schlesinger Library has also recently completed processing of and opened for research two large and especially notable collections—the papers of Catharine A. MacKinnon and the National Women's Political Caucus records.

Feminist law professor Catharine A. MacKinnon's 99.25 linear feet of papers (1946-2008) highlight her research on pornography, sexual harassment in the workplace, and her groundbreaking work on rape as a war crime and tool of genocide. The finding aid is on Harvard University's OASIS website, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.SCHL:sch01413>.

The 160.4 linear feet of National Women's Political Caucus records (1970-2006) document that organization's work to increase the number of women of all parties elected to public office in the United States.



Harvard University, Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, W596589_1

The Caucus (NWPC) is a national feminist organization with state and local chapters founded in 1971 to increase women's participation in the political process and to support pro-choice women candidates for elected and appointed offices at all levels of government, regardless of party affiliation. The records include by-laws; minutes; leadership mailings and internal correspondence; resolutions; convention materials; membership files; files on local, state, and national candidates; press releases; photographs; and memorabilia, much of it campaign paraphernalia from women candidates. NWPC's legislative lobbying and its efforts to promote women's appointments to judgeships and appointive offices at the state and federal levels are well represented. The collection also shows the relationship between the NWPC's party task forces and the two major political parties, as well as the NWPC's collaboration with other women's organizations. The finding aid is available thru Harvard University's OASIS website, <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.SCHL:sch01424>.

Digital Archive of Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions

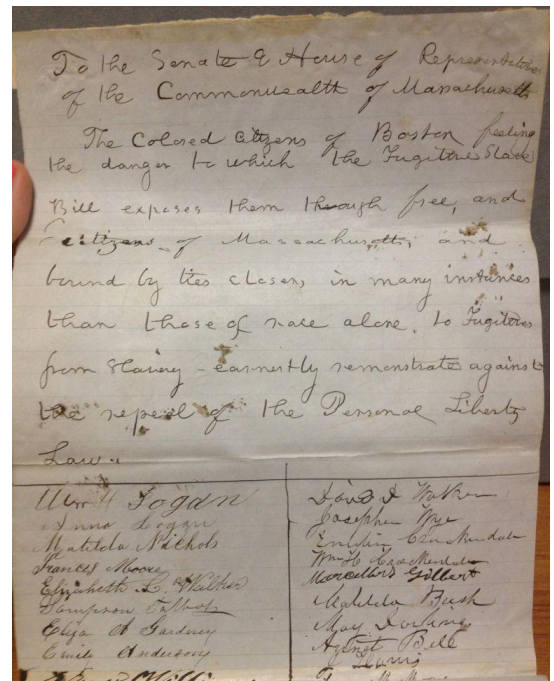
Nicole Topich

Project Archivist, Center for American Political Studies, Harvard University

The Center for American Political Studies at Harvard University received a Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Foundation grant in March 2012 from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The grant funds creation of a digital archive of Massachusetts anti-slavery and anti-segregation petitions sent to the Massachusetts Legislature in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Work on the project, which includes cataloging and digitizing 21,000 pages of petitions, began January 2013. The anticipated release date is June 2015.

Results of the project will include an interactive map with connections to statistical and geographical data, along with transcriptions of signatory names and text. Workshops and tutorials will promote the use of the database by multiple constituencies, including genealogists, local historians, scholars, and students of all ages. Daniel Carpenter, the Allie S. Freed Professor of Government and Director of the Center for American Political Studies, is the project director. Contact him at caps@gov.harvard.edu or 617-384-9810 for additional details.



Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature from "the Colored citizens of Boston" against repeal of the Personal Liberty Law.

The Center for American Political Studies (<http://caps.gov.harvard.edu>) is committed to the interdisciplinary study of U.S. Politics. Governed by political scientists, sociologists, historians, and economists within the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University, CAPS fosters discussion, research, public outreach, and pedagogy about all aspects of U.S. politics.

Trocchi, Wagoner Literary Archives Added to WUSTL's Modern Literature Collection

Joel Minor

Washington University

A pair of extensive, unique collections arrived at Washington University Libraries in recent weeks, their wide-ranging contents anticipated to be of much interest to scholars and others wishing to explore the remarkable literary career of David Wagoner (b. 1926) and Alexander Trocchi (1925-1984).

Both collections contain many decades' worth of drafts, letters, photographs, notebooks, clippings, and more from these celebrated authors. The materials are currently undergoing preliminary organization in preparation for full processing over the next few months. Each of the acquisitions is a significant and appropriate one for the growing Modern Literature Collection, first established at WU Libraries in 1964 and a repository for both Wagoner's and Trocchi's literary papers early on.

For more information about these acquisitions or other holdings of the Special Collections department of Washington University Libraries, visit <http://library.wustl.edu/units/spec> or call 314-935-5495.

Professional Updates

Kathie Johnson has been appointed full-time curator of the History Collections at Kornhauser Health Sciences Library (KHSL), University of Louisville. She previously worked part-time at both UL's University Archives and Records Center (UARC) and KHSL. Since July 1994 she served as Archivist for Manuscript Collections at the UARC, and since 1999, Curator of the History Collections at KHSL. Kathie is the first full-time curator of the History Collections in at least 35 years.

According to Kathie, since starting with KHSL 14 years ago, she has spent the time just barely keeping up with reference, creating exhibits, and accessioning new collections. At one point approximately 80% of the collection was put into storage for six months due to a construction project, and since January 1, 2013, about 10% of the collection had to be moved for another construction project. After spending most of 2012 working on the library's 175th anniversary celebration, Kathie plans to spend most of 2013 refiling, sorting, boxing, reshelving, accessioning, and cleaning up. The director of KHSL has provided support for these endeavours with all new office furniture and a student assistant for seven to ten hours per week.

Section Leadership

Chris Burns, Chair
Tara Laver, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect
Elizabeth Russey Roke, Immediate Past Chair
Laura Carroll, Web Liaison
Bill Landis, Council Liaison

Steering Committee Members

Melissa Watterworth Batt
Kate Colligan
Jackie Dean
Mario Ramirez
Florence Turcotte
Elizabeth Wilkinson

The deadline for the Spring Newsletter is **June 1, 2013**.