
Manuscript Repositories Newsletter

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

Spring 2014

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From the Chair

Tara Laver

Louisiana State University

Greetings from Ireland, home of one of the most famous and beautiful manuscripts, the Book of Kells. I'm spending part of the academic year here while my husband is lecturing at the National University of Ireland at Maynooth on a Fulbright scholarship. While in Ireland, I am working on a documentary editing project, telecommuting to my job at Louisiana State University (thank goodness for digital projects!), and, best of all, volunteering at the OPW-NUI Maynooth Archive and Research Center at Castletown House, an Irish country estate dating from 1729 and run by Ireland's Office of Public Works. It has been such a treat to meet and work with fellow archivists in Ireland and to have the opportunity to process a small collection of papers, especially since back home my administrative duties largely keep me away from that particular pleasure.

As you probably already know, the Steering Committee issued a call for a second round of participants to take part in "Jump In, Too/Two," a continuation of the initiative first launched in 2012 to encourage and assist archivists and their institutions to stop waiting and "jump in" to managing born-digital content. The response to and interest in the project was so positive that we decided to organize a second round of the initiative. As of the pledge deadline of January 15, 46 archivists from 35 different institutions have signed up. They represent repositories that range from the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago and historical societies to a film archive and special collections at colleges and universities of all sizes. Look for the results of their experiences to be posted on the section website in May. Part of the program at the Section's annual meeting will be devoted to lightning round presentations from selected 2014 participants and updates from project alumni. Continuing the theme of at risk and under-described formats, Megan McSeha of the Archive of American Art will present on the

processing approach her institution is developing to describe media-rich manuscript collections that aims to keep audio-visual materials from becoming a hidden backlog. The Section will meet Friday, August 15, 12:30 pm – 2:30.

Another effort with which the Section has been involved is a proposal to Council to develop a standard for quantifying materials in special collections and archives. In October of last year Martha Conway, Director of Special Collections at the University of Michigan, contacted me on behalf of RBMS to ask if the Manuscript Repositories Steering Committee would consider proposing the standard since SAA procedures require that requests for new standards come from a component group and we were a logical choice. The RBMS representatives had very helpfully already drafted the proposal, and in early November I submitted it. Council approved the idea at its January meeting, and shortly there will be a call for volunteers to serve on the forthcoming joint SAA-RBMS task force. SAA Vice-President Kathleen Roe will make the appointments.

If you have ideas or suggestions you would like the Section to consider undertaking, please don't hesitate to contact me or one of the other Steering Committee members (listed on the last page).

Steering Committee Nominations

*Chris Burns, Immediate Past Section Chair
University of Vermont*

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 2014 meeting through the 2015 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 2015-2016; 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 2014 meeting through the 2016 meeting; serve on the Nominations and Election Committee for 2015; assist in planning for the 2016 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 Washington DC, August 10-16, 2014, 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:

Chris Burns: chris.burns@uvm.edu

Cheryl Oestreicher: cheryloestreicher@boisestate.edu

Laura Starratt: lstarratt@gmail.com

R. Joseph Anderson: janderson@aip.org

***The deadline for nominations is
May 1, 2014.*** Thank you for participating!

News from Members

Governor Murphy J. Foster Papers Added to Special Collections

Tara Z. Laver, C.A.

Curator of Manuscripts

Louisiana State University

Through generous donations from the descendants of former Governor Murphy J. Foster, Special Collections has acquired a significant collection of the papers of this central figure in Louisiana politics of the late 19th and early 20th-centuries.

A native of Franklin Parish, La., Foster served as a state senator (1880-1892), governor (1892-1900), and United States senator (1900-1913), and he was an active participant in local and state Democratic politics. During his career he focused on outlawing the Louisiana Lottery Company, efforts to protect sugar growers, flood control, and the regulation of railway rates. Many of these issues gained national attention, in part thanks to his efforts. After losing his bid for re-election to the Senate in 1913, President Woodrow Wilson appointed him collector of customs in New Orleans. He died at his home on Dixie Plantation in 1921. His grandson, Murphy "Mike" Foster followed in his footsteps, serving as governor 1996-2004.

The recent donations come from two sources, the estates of Routh Trowbridge Wilby and Elizabeth T. Henslee, sisters who were granddaughters of Murphy J. Foster. The group originating from Routh Wilby will be added to family papers she donated in 1998.

The new Wilby materials, which date approximately 1881-1921, primarily are comprised of correspondence received by Foster during his terms as governor and U.S. senator. Topics include favor or patronage in appointments, sugar policy, flood control, state and local politics, and commutation of sentences. Also found are a few speeches--among them his inaugural address, some personal financial records, and scrapbooks that contain clippings about his

career, the lottery, the state constitution, and budget surpluses, as well as letters and financial statements related to state eleemosynary institutions.

The materials from Elizabeth Henslee's estate include a cache of correspondence from Foster's years as senator and associated ephemera, a cased ambrotype of him as a young man (about 1875), and a photograph of Rose Ker and Murphy Foster. In addition, the group contains items more directly related to Elizabeth T. Henslee and her family. Among these are albums of family photographs (circa 1920s through 1940s), newspaper clippings, and a small group of 20th c. Louisiana political ephemera that she collected, including promotional material for Mike Foster and Edwin Edwards and ephemera from the presidential campaigns of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton.

"Of course it's well-known that Louisiana has colorful politics, and the time spanning Foster's tenure in his various offices was no exception," said Curator of Manuscripts Tara Laver. "Shifting alliances, challenges to the balance of power, and political maneuvering among the 'Bourbons' (a term for Democrats who sought to roll back social, economic, and political changes wrought during Reconstruction) and other factions within the Democratic party that opposed them characterized the time, and these activities are reflected in the correspondence found in these wonderful new additions."

Pearl Harbor Nurse Papers Processed

Brittany Strobel

Wisconsin Veteran Museum

Recently, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum (Madison, WI) acquired the collection of Rhoda Ann Weller, née Ziesler, a Manitowoc, Wisconsin resident who served in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II and was stationed on Oahu during the attack on Pearl Harbor. This collection is now processed and open to researchers.

Ziesler joined the Army Nurse Corps in 1939, and arrived at Schofield Barracks Hospital a month prior to the attack. The collection includes Ziesler's diary, letters, photographs and several scrapbooks. In her diary, Ziesler covers the events of December 7, 1941 and her impressions of the day. Ziesler describes hearing and seeing the planes, not knowing that there was an actual attack until 10 AM when the first victims from nearby Wheeler Field arrived in her hospital. Of particular poignancy is a photograph of Ziesler taken December 9, 1941, when she finally arrived home after being on duty since early in the morning on December 7. She wrote on the back of the photo that she had put a surgical gown over her uniform to cover the mess from treating Wheeler Field casualties.



These three pictures
were taken Dec. 9, 1941 -
I was as dirty as dirt
and tired - Had a
singlet gown over
my uniform to cover
up the mess - Had not
had it off since the
seventh - Giguere took
these at rear door of
our quarters -
Guess I was sort of
slap-happy because
I am grinning like
an old cherry cat -

OTC

The rest of Ziesler's collection conveys impressions and images from her time in the service, and the impact of the attack on Pearl Harbor on the rest of her life. Her scrapbooks are full of cards and messages from friends and family, as well as souvenirs picked up all over Hawaii. Also found in her collection are several sound recordings, including recorded messages Ziesler sent to her family and an interview Ziesler and three others did with a nationally broadcast radio program called "Hawaii Calls".

For more information about this collection, please contact the Wisconsin Veterans Museum at reference.desk@dva.wisconsin.gov, 608.267.1799, or www.wisvetsmuseum.com.

The Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution announces the exhibition *Monuments Men: On the Front Line to Save Europe's Art, 1942-1945*.

Submitted by Barbara Aikens

Chief, Collections Processing

Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

During World War II, an unlikely team of soldiers was charged with identifying and protecting European cultural sites, monuments and buildings from Allied bombing. Officially named the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section, this U.S. Army unit included art curators, scholars, architects, librarians and archivists from the United States and Great Britain. The unit quickly became known as the Monuments Men. Towards the end of the war, their mission changed to one of locating works of art that had been looted by the Nazis. The Monuments Men recovered some of history's greatest works of art hidden across Germany and Austria—some in castles, others in salt mines.

The Hollywood film *The Monuments Men*, starring George Clooney is an adaptation of the true story of the Monuments Men. Three of the central characters in the movie were inspired by real people. The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art holds the personal papers and oral history interviews of several key Monuments Men, including George Leslie Stout, James J. Rorimer, Walker Hancock and Thomas Carr Howe.



Walker Hancock, Lamont Moore, George Stout and two unidentified soldiers in Marburg, Germany. June 1945. Thomas Carr Howe papers, Archives of American Art.

This exhibition presents original photographs, official military records, and letters that chronicle this extraordinary mission. Also, visitors will be able to hear the voices of Monuments Men through excerpts of interviews from the Archives' Oral History Collection.

Original correspondence illuminates art conservator George Stout's efforts to establish a national war-time Conservation Corps and the challenges and hardships of working on the frontline of war. Historical records and photographs document the magnitude of the Nazi looting, including the collection of stolen artwork amassed by Nazi Germany's second in command, Hermann Göring. The exhibition also documents the heroic efforts of James Rorimer, one of the Monuments Men who located and removed France's great art treasures from the magnificent Neuschwanstein Castle deep in the Bavarian Alps. Rorimer worked with Rose Valland, a French art curator who spied on the Nazis at great personal risk. Compelling photographs reveal how Monuments Men George Stout and others recovered treasures like Jan and Hubert van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece and Michelangelo's famous Bruges sculpture *Madonna and Child* from the Altausee salt mines in Austria.



Lt. Daniel J. Kern and Karl Sieber examining the Ghent Altarpiece in the Altausee mine, 1945. (Above)

Stephen Kovalyak, George Stout and Thomas Carr Howe transporting Michelangelo's sculpture *Madonna and child* out of the Alt Aussee salt mine, 1945. (Below)

Both photographs from the Thomas Carr Howe papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.



The online component of this exhibition can be viewed on the Archives of American Art's website (<http://www.aaa.si.edu/exhibitions/monuments-men>) and includes links to finding aids, related blogs, and audio excerpts from oral histories with several of the Monuments Men. This exhibition complements a current grant project to enhance access to collections at the Archives that support World War II art provenance research funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Gallery talks about the exhibition will be held on March 13 and 28 at 1 p.m. in the Lawrence A. Fleischman Gallery, located at the Smithsonian's Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture on Eighth and F Street, N.W. in Washington, D.C., and open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. *On the Front Line to Save Europe's Art, 1942-1945* will be on display through April 20 in the Lawrence A. Fleischman Gallery at the Smithsonian's Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture in Washington, D.C.

Georgetown University Begins Special Collections Research Center Renovation

from press release

The Special Collections Research Center on the fifth floor of Lauinger Library is undergoing an extensive renovation and expansion. The project started in March 2014 and the Center is due to reopen in the spring of 2015. The project is made possible entirely through the generous philanthropy of the Georgetown community. We are extremely grateful for their support.

Creating the 21st Century Special Collections Center



Rendering of the reception area in the new Special Collections Research Center.

As we move deeper into the 21st century, the Special Collections Research Center will become ever more important as it preserves and protects unique items for future generations. While more and more library collections are held in digital form, the ability to provide access to rare primary resources will help set apart a library and a university. The Georgetown University Library is dedicated to providing the safest possible home for the treasures of Special Collections while making them available to students and researchers for generations to come.

The Special Collections Research Center is home to the University Library's [rarest and most valuable collections](#), including rare books, manuscripts, the University Archives and the University Art Collection. It is in Special Collections that students and scholars conduct primary source research utilizing the Library's unique materials. Notable treasures include a first edition of St. Ignatius's *Ratio Studiorum* (1586); Mark Twain's original handwritten manuscript of *Tom Sawyer* (ca. 1873-1876); 20,000 volumes on the history of intelligence and espionage; the University's founding documents; and much more.

The staff of Special Collections will continue to [offer services](#) from their temporary space during the renovation project, but ask that you [contact them](#) in advance for your research needs. While we do not anticipate many service interruptions beyond Special Collections, we do know that the project may require periodic closings of portions of Lauinger's fifth floor. Construction may be noisy and dusty at times and we apologize for the inconvenience. Library staff will do their best to communicate disruptions in advance to minimize any effect on our users. Information and updates will be posted regularly at library.georgetown.edu/special-collections/renovation.

The new Special Collections Research Center creates a state-of-the art, environmentally controlled, secure shelving area and vault; a classroom dedicated specifically to teaching with special collections; an enhanced reading room for researchers; a separate reception area; improved exhibition spaces; and collaborative workspace for faculty, staff and students. These new features will allow Special Collections to expand its impact on the Hilltop and around the globe.

Section Leadership

Tara Laver, Chair
Elizabeth Wilkinson, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect
Chris Burns, Immediate Past Chair
Laura Carroll, Web Liaison
William Landis, Council Liaison

Steering Committee Members

R. Joseph Anderson
Kate Colligan
Cheryl Oestreicher
Mario Ramirez
Laura Starratt
Florence Turcotte

The deadline for the Summer Newsletter is **June 2, 2014**.