
Manuscript Repositories Newsletter

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

Spring 2015

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From the Chair

Elizabeth Wilkinson
Georgetown University

Greetings from the nation's capital where the cherry blossoms will soon be in bloom and the Metro will soon be crowded with tourists. Our Section meeting is scheduled for Friday, August 21, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. We look forward to seeing you in Cleveland!

The Steering Committee issued a call for a third round of participants to take part in *Jump In 3 / Third Time's the Charm*, 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. This time around we have 22 archivists from 14 different institutions signed up. Please look for the results of their experiences to be posted on the section website in May. The first part of the program at the Section's annual meeting will be devoted to panel presentations from selected 2015 participants and updates from project alumni from the last two years.

As you are already aware we conducted a brief survey a few weeks ago asking for your input regarding how to structure the second half of the Section meeting and what topics you are most interested in hearing about. The top five topics were: processing digital collections, using social media in special collections, faculty outreach, appraisal, and working with a development officer. The presentation preference was lightning-talks. If you are interested in presenting a lightning-talk on one of the above listed topics at the second half of our Section meeting please send me an email at ew543@georgetown.edu with a short description, 50 words or less, of your presentation, and list two or three learning objectives/take-away, from you presentation.

Please send in your proposals by **May 4, 2015**.

In Section news, Tara Laver and the Nominations Committee are beginning to prepare a slate of candidates for Section office. If you are interested in becoming more involved with the work of the Section, please consider running for office—self nominations are most welcome. The list of candidates will appear in the next Section newsletter and on our website.

Steering Committee Nominations

Tara Laver, Immediate Past Section Chair
Louisiana State 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 2015 meeting through the 2016 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 2016-2017; 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 2015 meeting through the 2017 meeting; serve on the Nominations and Election Committee for 2016; assist in planning for the 2017 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 Cleveland, August 16-22, 2015, 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:

Tara Laver: tzachar@lsu.edu
Jennifer Cole: jmcole01@gmail.com
Elizabeth Novara: enovara@umd.edu
Ashley Todd-Diaz: atodddia@emporia.edu

The deadline for nominations is **May 1, 2015**. Thank you for participating!

News from Members

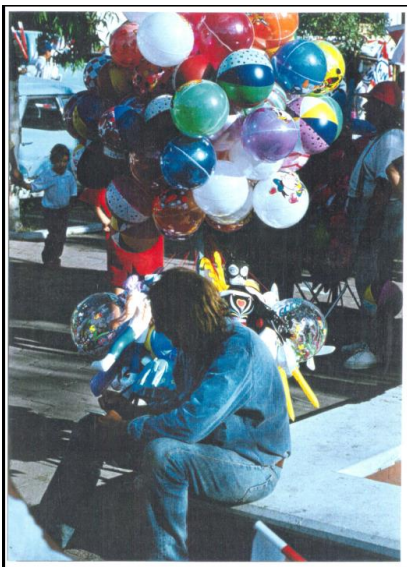
Border Writer Charles Bowden

Lauren Goodley, Archivist

Southwestern Writers Collection, Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Held at the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University, the papers of literary journalist Charles Bowden document his prolific writing career. The collection is 50 linear feet and dates from 1947-2007 (bulk dates 1970-2007). The majority of the materials are arranged by work, and include correspondence, notes, research, photographs, drafts, and published materials.

Charles "Chuck" Bowden (1945-2014), literary journalist, was born outside of Chicago, and was raised in Tucson, Arizona, where he lived until 2009. He was the author of over twenty-five books; contributing editor for *GQ*, *Esquire*, and *Mother Jones*; and contributor for many other newspapers and magazines, including regional, national, and international publications. Bowden wrote and published widely and extensively on topics related to social justice and border issues, including the environment, political corruption, drug crime, and violence on the U.S.–Mexico border. He is perhaps best known for "While You Were Sleeping," *Harper's Magazine*, Dec. 1996, which broke the story of violent deaths of women in the border town of Juárez, Mexico in the U.S. English-language press.



Charles Bowden writing in a notepad in a Mexican park, circa 1990s.
Charles Bowden Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Bowden received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1979, was a Pulitzer finalist in 1984, participated in the Lannan Residency Program in 2001, and was awarded the PEN First Amendment award

in 2011. It was not until after he abandoned academia for the newsroom in his mid-30s that he discovered reporting, which changed his life and career. Bowden believed in writing with a purpose: for social justice and change, and ecological awareness and responsibility. Known for both his stream-of-consciousness introspection and his thorough research, Bowden seamlessly wove the subjective and objective together.

In 1981, Bowden landed a job as a reporter at the *Tucson Citizen*, where he reported on sex crimes and violence—jobs others refused to take. He and his friend Dick Vonier later founded and edited a weekly rag, *City Magazine*, which covered local issues from a progressive point of view. An avid hiker and outdoorsman, Bowden also wrote extensively about the environment and championed causes such as the Sonoran Desert Park Project. Two memoir-type books, and several photography books for which he wrote essays, came out of this connection with the land of the Southwest. After "While You Were Sleeping," Bowden collaborated with street photographers who were covering crime scenes for daily Juárez papers for *Juárez: Laboratory of Our Future* (1998). During this time he made friends and contacts that helped him write on drugs and violence on the U.S.–Mexico border for the next eighteen years, including several books and numerous magazine articles. Bowden interviewed citizens, major drug cartels, DEA agents, and people whose lives crossed those lines daily. At a Wittliff event in 2013, John Phillips Santos recalled that while traveling in Chiapas, he caught sight of Bowden and "quickly got out of there," knowing Bowden's tendency to seek out dangerous situations.

For more information, please consult the finding aid on TARO (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/tsusm/00085/tsu-00085.html>), or on the Wittliff website (<http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/a-z/bowden.html>), or contact Lauren Goodley at lgoodley@txstate.edu or (512) 245-3229.

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

Nicole Topich, MLIS, Archivist
Harvard University

The Digital Archive of Massachusetts Anti-Slavery and Anti-Segregation Petitions was released through the Harvard Dataverse Network in February 2015. This searchable online database includes almost 3,500 petitions with nearly 282,000 signatures (of which at least 81,500 are women) sent to the Massachusetts colonial and state legislatures from the years 1649 to 1870, now located at the Massachusetts Archives. Each petition image is annotated with detailed information, and the dataset provides web-based browsing, searching, and filtering, along with images of the digitized documents. The database covers topics such as black military service from the 17th century through the Civil War, women's rights, religion, education, slavery, racial discrimination, Native American connections, and many national anti-slavery issues, such as protests against the fugitive slave laws or slavery in Washington D.C.

Libraries, the Institutional Development Initiative, the Institute for Quantitative Social Science, the Center for American Political Studies, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and Professor Daniel Carpenter, the principal investigator. An exhibit on Lewis and Harriet Hayden is now on view at the Massachusetts state museum with documents from the project. Any questions on the database may be directed to the project archivist, Nicole Topich, at ntopich@fas.harvard.edu.

Architecture on Film at the Alexander Architectural Archives

Stephanie Tiedeken, Graduate Research Assistant
University of Texas at Austin

The Alexander Architectural Archives at The University of Texas at Austin (UT) would like to highlight the establishment and continuation of their film preservation project. The project's key goals have been to construct a comprehensive workflow, create a detailed inventory, assess the collection's condition, rehouse the films into archival storage, conduct minor preservation work, and provide digital access to select materials. Collaboration with the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, also located at UT, and the Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) has been integral to the success of this venture. The project began in September 2013, with an extensive inventorying process of all of the Alexander's 163 films from nine collections using an excel spreadsheet specifically created to gather together in one document all of the initial information and subsequent data that was to be collected about these films. Inventorying the film holdings included gathering descriptive information about the materials from titles, dates, and creators indicated on the item or its housing. Physical condition, gauge, soundtrack type, film base, and copyright status were also documented. Finally, all films were A-D tested to determine their level of deterioration. This comprehensive inventory also revealed that the majority of the films captured research, design and building projects of prominent architects represented in the Alexander's collections or associated with The University of Texas School of Architecture.



Films were removed from original rusted cans, rolled onto 3" archival quality cores, and then placed into inert polypropylene film cans.

Following the inventory process, the project's goals shifted to rehousing all 163 films onto archival quality cores and into inert polypropylene film cans. All films, predominantly 16mm and

8mm, were housed in their original metal cans or cardboard boxes and on metal or plastic reels. One 16mm film winder, split reels, and other equipment were graciously loaned from the film collection at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center. Films were evenly rolled onto 3” cores and individually placed into archival quality film cans. In addition to rehousing, leader and tails were placed on all films for protection, with the title and item number clearly indicated. The inventory process revealed that twelve significant films from the Charles Moore Archives were in such poor condition that they needed special rehousing in the archive’s freezer. Anoxic Marvelseal® pouches were crafted for each film before being relocated to cold storage.

From the beginning, the archives desired to provide viewing access for a portion of the films. Due to the preservation risks involved in projecting films for patrons, digitization was the suitable option for access. The University of Texas Libraries does not currently digitize film; therefore the Alexander needed to look elsewhere. Twenty-five films were selected by myself and other members of the Alexander’s staff to be digitized by the Texas Archive of the Moving Image (TAMI) in March 2014. TAMI is a non-profit organization that preserves and provides access to moving images concerning Texas. The films nominated for digitization were selected based upon TAMI’s criteria, physical condition, and proposed research interests of our patrons. Currently, four of the Alexander Architectural Archive’s films can be seen on TAMI’s [website](#) and more are on the way. The digitized films can also be viewed on [The University of Texas Digital Repository](#). Presently, the archives has plans to digitize more of its film holdings in partnership with TAMI.



Ancient Egyptian columns captured in Charles Moore's home movie Karnak, Egypt 1950.

The twenty-five films that have been digitized thus far represent the diversity of our collections. Travel has always been an essential component of an architect's education and architects document their travel visually with sketchbooks, photographs, slides, video and film. These visual resources are highly valued by researchers using the collections to make connections between the architect's travels and their designs. A highlight is famed architect Charles Moore’s home movie from his trip to the Egyptian ruins at Karnak in 1950. By watching this film, one can

see the influence of ancient Egyptian architecture on many of Moore's designs. This film was in particularly poor condition, increasing the need for immediate digitization. Another interesting item is a short documentary film entitled *One Third of a Dream* (1971) about low income housing in an East Austin neighborhood. The poignant documentary was filmed and produced by then graduate student Neill D. Hicks from The University of Texas Department of Radio, Television, and Film, as part of his graduate thesis project. The written thesis provides interesting insight into his entire creative process from the documentary's original conception, production, and end result. Hicks's thesis even details the origin of the exact print held at the Alexander, a first answer print without color correction.

University of Texas School of Information masters student Stephanie Tiedeken, whose work history includes internship and volunteer positions at both the Texas Archive of the Moving Image and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center's film collection, carried out the Alexander's film preservation project with assistance from the full time archives staff. The Alexander Architectural Archives looks forward to having more of its film holdings digitized and accessible to patrons interested in architecture on film.

For additional information please contact the [Alexander Architectural Archives](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/apl/aaa)
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/apl/aaa>

Arkansas and the Great War: a New WWI Resource

Stephanie Bayless

Butler Center for Arkansas Studies

World War I, the first major conflict of the 20th century, lasted more than four years, involved fifteen nations, and resulted in the deaths of more than 8.5 million soldiers worldwide. July 28, 2014, will mark the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the war, and the Butler Center is pleased to announce that it has launched *Arkansas and the Great War*, an online resource for researchers interested in learning more about Arkansas's involvement with the war.



Butler Center for Arkansas Studies. *Arkansas and the Great War* Online Collection. <http://www.butlercenter.org/arkansas-and-the-great-war/>

Approximately 200,000 Arkansans registered for military service after the United States entered the war in 1917. Arkansas was also home to Camp Pike (now Camp Joseph T. Robinson) in North Little Rock, and Eberts Training Field in Lonoke County, where soldiers from around the country trained for military duty. Camp Pike began the war as the home of the 87th Infantry Division and later served as replacement training facility after the division deployed to France while Eberts Field was one of the leading aviation training bases in the country.

Highlights of our collections include letters from a World War I Marine, correspondence from a soldier who served in a balloon company as well as correspondence of a soldier who served in a field hospital, photographs and materials from Camp Pike and Eberts Field, draft registration records, and a wealth of secondary materials related to the war.

“The new website provides quick access to the finding aids for all of our materials related to World War I,” says Brian Robertson, manager of the Research Services Division of the Butler Center. “A number of the primary materials have been digitized and placed in the site’s digital gallery,” Robertson adds, “which allows researchers from around the world access to portions of our collections.” The site also includes additional information such as links to related articles from the online *Encyclopedia of Arkansas History & Culture*, a listing of pertinent microfilm holdings, as well as assorted other print and online resources. You can view this exciting new resource at <http://www.butlercenter.org/arkansas-and-the-great-war>.

Arkansas and the Great War joins *Forgotten: The Arkansas Korean War Project* and *A Nation Divided: Arkansas and the Civil War*, two award winning websites created by the Butler Center to develop a better understanding and appreciation of Arkansas’s military history.

Section Leadership

Elizabeth Wilkinson, Chair
Anke Voss, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect
Tara Laver, Immediate Past Chair
Laura Carroll, Web Liaison
James Roth, Council Liaison

Steering Committee Members

Joseph Anderson
Jennifer Colre
Elizabeth Novara
Cheryl Oestreicher
Laura Starratt
Ashley Todd-Diaz

The deadline for the Summer Newsletter is **June 1, 2015**.