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# Manuscript Repositories Newsletter

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

Summer 2011

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## From the Chair

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*Fernanda Perrone*

I hope everyone is enjoying the early summer as we look forward to our section meeting at the end of August. I know that travel budgets are tight, but I still hope to see many of you in Chicago. The Manuscript Repositories Section Meeting will be held on Thursday, August 25 from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. After our regular business meeting, the Steering Committee has planned an exciting program on managing printed materials – books and otherwise – in manuscript and archival collections. I think that all of us have faced the dilemma of how to provide access to books, author's libraries, magazines, pamphlets, ephemeral publications, and other printed material that we receive with manuscript collections. These items may not fit into our repository's cataloging policy (or priorities) or warrant removal from the archival context in the collection where they were found, but they cry out for more description than the ubiquitous "miscellaneous pubs" container list designation. Timothy D. Murray, Head of Special Collections at the University of Delaware Library, will introduce the topic of managing printed materials in archival collections, followed by breakout sessions where we can discuss approaches that we have used in our own repositories. As you know, this year the SAA is celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary, so I hope that we will also have time to reflect on the history of our section - founded in 1989 – and our future directions.

This year's annual meeting promises many sessions, workshops, and tours that will be of interest to section members. Sessions relevant to manuscript repositories include "Doing a 180: Putting Ephemera on the Front Burner," which speaks to some of the same themes as our section meeting program; "Literary Archives 360°: Challenges and Opportunities for National and International Collaboration;" "Design for the Next Larger Context: Exposing Architecture Collections for the Broadest Use;" and "The Giver Who Keeps on Giving: Donor-Assisted Appraisal and Description." Workshops on Describing Archives: A Content Standard; Encoded

Archival Context – Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families; and Implementing “More Product, Less Process,” address evolving descriptive practices and standards. Finally, I have found repository open houses to be a great way of making connections and gaining perspective on my own repository, as a way as seeing “cool stuff.” This year the Chicago History Museum; the Mansouto Library Special Collections, University of Chicago; and the Vivian Harsh Research Center, the oldest and largest African-American studies repository in the Midwest are all offering open houses.

Have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

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### 2010-2011 Section Leadership

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Fernanda Perrone - Chair [[hperrone@rulmail.rutgers.edu](mailto:hperrone@rulmail.rutgers.edu)]  
Elizabeth Russey Roke - Vice Chair/Chair-Elect [[erussey@emory.edu](mailto:erussey@emory.edu)]  
Sammie Morris - Immediate Past Chair [[morris18@purdue.edu](mailto:morris18@purdue.edu)]  
Laura Carroll - Web Liaison [[lcarro@emory.edu](mailto:lcarro@emory.edu)]  
Tom Hyry - Council Liaison [[thyry@library.ucla.edu](mailto:thyry@library.ucla.edu)]

#### Steering Committee Members

Christopher Burns [[chris.burns@uvm.edu](mailto:chris.burns@uvm.edu)]  
Deborah Dandridge [[ddandrid@ku.edu](mailto:ddandrid@ku.edu)]  
Anke Voss [[avoss@tufl.info](mailto:avoss@tufl.info)]  
Ellen Doon [[ellen.doon@yale.edu](mailto:ellen.doon@yale.edu)]  
L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin [[lrjm@udel.edu](mailto:lrjm@udel.edu)]  
Renna Tuten [[rtuten@uga.edu](mailto:rtuten@uga.edu)]

*Do you have questions, ideas, or thoughts about the activities of the Manuscript Repositories Section? Please contact one of the Section Chairs and give us your feedback!*

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### Manuscript Repositories Section Election: Online Voting July 2011

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*Sammie Morris*

Voting for the section election once again will take place online in early July. (Members may request a mail-in ballot by contacting Sammie Morris, Nominating Committee chair ([morris18@purdue.edu](mailto:morris18@purdue.edu) or 765-494-2905). Mail-in ballots must be received by August 1. Election results will be announced at the annual meeting.

Elections are for a vice-chair/chair elect and three steering committee members. This year's candidates are:

*Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect*

Rebecca Bizonet, Benson Ford Research Center, The Henry Ford

Chris Burns, University of Vermont

*Steering Committee Members, 2-year term* [3]

Jackie Dean, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

Chatham Ewing, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign

Nora Lewis, Georgia Historical Society

Dale Sauter, East Carolina University

Melissa Watterworth Batt, University of Connecticut

Elizabeth Wilkinson, Purdue University

Each candidate has provided a statement detailing her/his qualities, strengths, and goals for the Section. These statements, along with additional information on the education, professional experience, and participation of the candidates, are posted on the Section webpage (<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/manuscript-repositories-section/2011-election-information>).

*Thank you to Nominating Committee members Ellen Doon, Renna Tuten, and Anke Voss for their work in compiling this year's slate of candidates!*

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## 2012 SAA Annual Meeting Session Proposals Sought

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*Elizabeth Russey Roke, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect*

This year's Annual Meeting, the 75th Anniversary of SAA, looks to be one of the best annual meetings thus far. I hope that many of you will be joining us in Chicago for the celebration!

Believe it or not, planning for next year is already underway. One of the most important roles of the Steering Committee is to brainstorm, develop, and sponsor session ideas for the Annual Meeting. The Manuscript Repositories Steering Committee is beginning to explore session ideas for the 2012 Annual Meeting, to be held August 5-12 in San Diego, California.

We welcome thoughts, ideas, and full session proposals. Do you have an idea for a session but don't know how to develop it? Let the Steering Committee help! Do you have a creative idea for the Section meeting? Send us your ideas and help us design a meeting that is informative, engaging, and productive! Are you one of those people that's *really* ahead of the curve and already have a session developed or are planning to do so? Please contact the Steering Committee so we can put it on the list of sessions being considered for Section endorsement.

If you are struggling to come up with an idea, consider current projects you are working on, or even thorny issues that you have come across during your day to day work. It may be helpful to browse through past programs to see how to structure your session. Programs going back to 2001 are available on the SAA website. In the past, sessions have ranged from 60-90 minutes and have followed a variety of formats, from traditional panel discussions to the newly-implemented "lightning talks." Look for more information soon about submitting a session proposal in the Annual Meeting section of the website (<http://www2.archivists.org/conference>).

For more information or to submit a session idea, please contact Elizabeth Russey Roke, the incoming Manuscript Repositories Section chair ([erussey@emory.edu](mailto:erussey@emory.edu)).

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## News from Members

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### **Orbis Cascade Alliance Receives National Endowment for the Humanities Grant, “Northwest Digital Archives: Expanding Access to Northwest Archival Collections”**

*Jodi Allison-Bunnell, Northwest Digital Archives Program Manager*

The Orbis Cascade Alliance’s Northwest Digital Archives program, which offers enhanced access to archival collections in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Alaska, and Montana, has received a \$137,756 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to mark up 482 finding aids in Encoded Archival Description and add them to NWDA’s database at <http://nwda.orbiscascade.org/index.shtml>.

Six institutions hold the regionally and nationally significant collections represented by the finding aids. The participating institutions are Montana State University, Western Oregon University, The Evergreen State College, Oregon Institute of Technology, Eastern Washington University, and Boise State University.

The project, which will begin in July 2011 and conclude in June 2012, will add three new members to the NWDA program and provide additional support for three current NWDA members who have been unable to participate fully in the program. The end results will be expanded access to the participants’ collections, skill building, and revisions to descriptive practices and processing workflows that will continue this level of access to their collections in the future.

As of July 2011, Northwest Digital Archives will have 37 members (including three new members from this grant and six new members from a National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant): Alaska State Library, Boise State University, Central Oregon Community College, Central Washington University, Concordia University, Eastern Oregon University, Eastern Washington State Historical Society, Eastern Washington University, The Evergreen State College, George Fox University, Idaho State Historical Society, Montana State University, Lane Community College, Lewis & Clark College, Montana Historical Society, Oregon Health & Science University, Oregon Historical Society, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Pacific Lutheran University, Pacific University, Seattle Municipal Archives, Seattle Museum of History & Industry, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle University, University of Alaska Fairbanks, University of Idaho, University of Montana, University of Oregon, University of Puget Sound, University of Washington, Washington State University, Western Oregon University, Western Washington University, Whitman College, Whitworth University, and Willamette University.

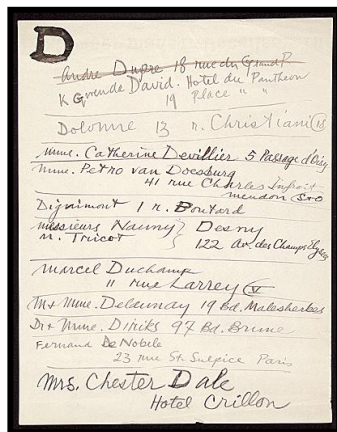
Contact Jodi Allison-Bunnell, NWDA Program Manager, Orbis Cascade Alliance, [jodiab@uoregon.edu](mailto:jodiab@uoregon.edu) for more information.

## Archives of American Art's "Lists" Exhibition travels to the Morgan Library and Museum, June 3 to October 2, 2011

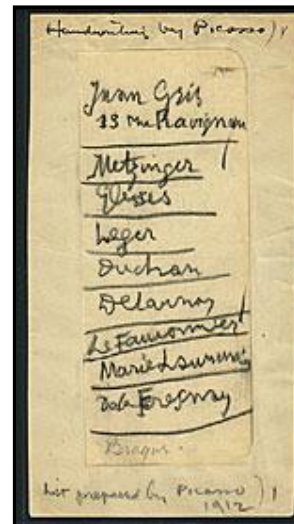
Barbara Aikens, Archives of American Art

The Smithsonian's Archives of American Art celebrates a common document—the list—as a key to the lives of some of the most celebrated artists of the last two centuries in a new exhibit: *Lists: To-dos, Illustrated Inventories, Collected Thoughts, and Other Artists' Enumerations from the Smithsonian's Archives of American Art.*

There are hundreds of thousands of lists in the Archives of American Art. This exhibition includes 40 intriguing examples, from Leo Castelli's to-do lists to Oscar Bluemner's illustrated list of works of art. Whether dashed off as a quick reminder or carefully constructed as a comprehensive inventory, this humble form of documentation provides insight into its maker's personal habits and decision-making processes.



Alexander Calder papers



Walt Kuhn, Walt Kuhn  
family papers and Armory  
Show records



Lists such as Pablo Picasso's itemized recommendations for the 1913 Armory Show and Alexander Calder's address book reveal the who's who of the Parisian avant-garde in the early 20th century. In the hands of their creators, these artifacts sometimes become works of art in and of themselves.

A companion book, published by Princeton Architectural Press, includes an introduction by John W. Smith, director of the Archives, and an essay by Liza Kirwin, the Archives' curator of manuscripts. It is available for purchase through online booksellers.

## **ACS's Historical Collection of Rare Books Achieves New Visibility**

*Susan K. Rishworth, American College of Surgeons*

The *Catalogue of the H. Winnett Orr Historical Collection and Other Rare Books in the Library of the American College of Surgeons*, published by the College in 1960, has long been hidden and known to very few of the College's Fellows or scholars interested in rare book collections in the history of medicine. The Collection, currently housed in the Special Collections, McGoogan Library of Medicine at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, contains over 2000 volumes and archival materials, many extremely rare and dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some authors represented are Vesalius, Avicenna, Galen and other giants in the history of medicine. It also includes a fair amount of materials on orthopedic surgery, military medicine and the history of women physicians. The entire Catalogue is now available as a pdf on the Archives page of the ACS website [www.facs.org/archives](http://www.facs.org/archives), where much more background information about the collection and the donor H. Winnett Orr, MD FACS can be found in the Catalogue's Forward, Preface and Introduction.

## **News from the John Hay Library**

*Jennifer Betts, Brown University*

The John Hay Library at Brown University has begun work on the recently awarded NHPRC Basic Processing grant. The two-year project will expose significant but hidden collections in the holdings of Manuscripts & University Archives. Among the estimated 892 collections are the papers of prominent literary figures, poets, screenwriters, scientists, historians, Brown faculty, and alumni, as well as the records of small presses, literary magazines, and cultural, political, and activist organizations. The project, which began in January, includes a collections assessment, collection-level description of 6500 linear feet of material, the publication of collection-level MARC records and EAD finding aids through local and national databases, implementation of the Archivists' Toolkit, and the development of guidelines and procedures with the express purpose of preventing future backlog. For further information, contact project archivist Christopher Geissler ([christopher\\_geissler@brown.edu](mailto:christopher_geissler@brown.edu)).

## **Papers of 20th Century American diplomat now online at UD Library**

*L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin, University of Delaware*

The papers of an important 20th century American diplomat, George S. Messersmith, have been digitized and are now available for the first time [online](#) at the University of Delaware Library, making them accessible to researchers around the world. Messersmith, known as "Wordy George" at the State Department for his keen observations reported through detailed dispatches, served in ten diplomatic posts on three continents between 1914 and 1947. The efficiency with which he met his duties in pre-World War II Germany and Austria resulted in his being called back to Washington by President Roosevelt to serve as Assistant Secretary of State, where he helped reorganize and streamline the department. He was soon appointed to the ambassadorships of Cuba, then Mexico, followed by a final post to Argentina. Messersmith "retired" from diplomatic service but continued to influence American relations with Latin America through his position as chairman of the board of the Mexican Light and Power



Company.

The Messersmith papers were received by the University of Delaware after his death in 1960, after Messersmith had been convinced of the historical value of his career records by Dr. Walther Kirchner, Dr. Willard Owen Sypherd, and Dr. John Perkins (two UD professors and personal friends, and the university president, respectively). Ruth Alford, a library staff member, completed a 700+ page detailed calendar of the collection in 1973, which remained the primary access tool for use of the collection until this digitization project. Earlier funding supported XML encoding of the calendar prior to the library's adoption of EAD, but full funding for migration to EAD-XML and digitization of the collection was not obtained until the library successfully applied for an NHPRC grant to "digitize democracy" and "repurpose" existing metadata. The legacy calendar was the perfect repurposing and digitization project for providing access to this heavily used collection.



*George S. Messersmith, artist unknown, circa 1940.*

Library staff will miss visits from scholars who traveled from all parts of the world to Delaware to use the Messersmith papers, but look forward to hearing from virtual visitors of the future. Link to the online finding aid, the digital collection, and press releases about the collection are available at <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/findaids/messersmith/index.html>

### **Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library at Emory University Receives Save America's Treasures Grant**

*Laura L. Carroll, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University*

A three-year, \$170,000 matching grant has been awarded to the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory University for the conservation of African American scrapbooks and the creation of digital surrogates to enhance access to the historical materials – the scrapbooks of artists, writers, students, vaudeville performers, preachers, and former slaves. The Emory Libraries will provide the matching amount.

“Scrapbooks have often been treated as the unwanted children or the neglected orphans of the archives. They are difficult to handle, they are often in fragile physical condition, and they are a mix of memorabilia of every description and taste,” says Randall K. Burkett, curator of [MARBL’s African American collections](#). “These scrapbooks give us a glimpse into how these artists and students and former slaves thought about themselves, their families, their work. The funding for this project will allow us to preserve these important memory books.” The project will entail collaboration among MARBL and the Emory Libraries’ preservation department and Digital Curation Center.

Thirty-four scrapbooks have been selected, with dates ranging from 1883 to 1975. They include the scrapbooks of author Alice Walker, vaudeville performers “Jolly” John Larkin and Johnny Hudgins, entertainer and playwright Fournery Miller, Spelman College graduate Virginia Hannon, and former slave and author W.S. Scarborough, who became a professor of classics at Wilberforce University – and eventually its president.



A page in Johnny Hudgins's scrapbook, showing tape stains and browned pages.

The scrapbooks contain items that by nature disintegrate quickly or are easily damaged, such as folded newspaper clippings, pressed flowers, and single-use paper items such as ticket stubs, napkins and telegram paper. The objects usually were attached with adhesives such as cheap tape, pastes or cement glue, also harmful to the archival materials.

Once the project begins, the scrapbooks first will be sent to preservation to be stabilized to prevent further damage. Digital surrogates will be created, which will be used in classrooms and MARBL's reading room, unless researchers request the originals. The work has just begun and will take place over the next three years.

Save America's Treasures (SAT) awarded grants to 61 projects in 23 states and the District of Columbia for 2010. The grant is awarded through the Department of Interior and the National Park Service, in collaboration with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

### **Edwin “Bud” Shrake Papers Open for Research**

*Joel Minor, Archivist, Southwestern Writers Collection*



We are happy to announce the availability of the Edwin “Bud” Shrake Papers for research. Bud Shrake was one of the first contributors to the Southwestern Writers Collection, making his first donation of papers in 1987, and continuing until his death in 2009. He was a prolific writer and a consummate Texan, basing many of his novels, screenplays, periodical pieces, stage plays and non-fiction books, in Texas or on Texans.

Shrake's reach went well beyond the Lone Star State as well. He spent fourteen years traveling the country and the world on writing assignments for Sports Illustrated. His most celebrated novels, *Blessed McGill* and *Strange Peaches*, gained praise from New York literary circles and critics everywhere. Both books remain in print, almost forty-five and forty years later, respectively. *Blessed McGill* is a black-humor western about the first American saint, and *Strange Peaches* is a no-holds-barred tale of Dallas at the time of the Kennedy assassination, largely based on Shrake’s experiences there.

Shrake was also a screenwriter and playwright, producing over 47 screenplays and play scripts. Movies made from his scripts starred Cliff Robertson, Dennis Hopper and Willie Nelson, among others. Shrake may be best known for his non-fiction work, though, co-writing Willie Nelson’s and Barry Switzer’s autobiographies, as well as Harvey Penick’s four golf books, the first of which is still the best selling sports book of all time.

One-hundred of the 152 boxes in the collection relate to Shrake’s writing projects, containing notes, drafts, contracts and other materials that an intimate look into his creative process and the business behind getting his projects published or produced. Among the 20 boxes of correspondence are letters from his many writer friends that go back to the 1950s and show the wit, insight and imagination that Shrake and his pals shared with each other through the years. Also notable are the cards and letters between Shrake and Ann Richards. The two became close companions starting in the late 1980s and are buried next to one another in the Texas State Cemetery in Austin.

The finding aid for the Edwin “Bud” Shrake Papers is available on our website:  
<http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/a-z/shrake.html>.