

MANUSCRIPT REPOSITORIES NEWSLETTER

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

FALL 2016

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FROM THE CHAIR

*Jackie Dean, Head of Archival Processing
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

It was fantastic to see so many of us at the annual meeting in Atlanta! After our business meeting, we had a terrific program: Tamar Chute and Ellen Swain joined us to talk about their recently published book *Teaching with Primary Sources*, the latest installment in SAA’s Trends in Archives Practice series. We had an excellent discussion about the issues surrounding using archives and manuscripts in K-12 and undergraduate instruction. I look forward to continuing this conversation and to seeing how our section can support these efforts.

During the discussion in Atlanta about *Teaching with Primary Sources*, several members indicated that they are finding that students are increasingly having difficulty interpreting cursive writing and this can be a serious impediment to their engagement with archival material. The steering committee will explore creating a resource – perhaps an online video or brochure – that begins to demystify cursive script for K-12 students and undergraduates. There is some precedent here; it was the Manuscript Repositories Section who initially created and then revised and updated the [SAA brochures](#) *Donating*

Your Personal or Family Records to a Repository, Donating Your Organization's Records to a Repository, and A Guide to Deeds of Gift.

The steering committee is set to meet right about the time this newsletter hits your inbox. Please feel free to get in touch with me (jdean@email.unc.edu) or any steering committee member if you have questions or suggestions for us.

Minutes from the annual meeting and the meeting of the steering committee are included below. Many thanks to our members at the Beinecke Library at Yale University, the Brooklyn Historical Society, and Santa Clara University for sending in news and interesting announcements. I hope you enjoy the newsletter!

MANUSCRIPTS REPOSITORIES SECTION ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

Hilton Atlanta, Salon B

Friday, August 5, 2016

1:00-2:30 pm

Approximately 42 attendees.

Welcome and Introduction – Anke Voss, Section Chair

Reports

Nominating and Elections Committee – Elizabeth Wilkinson, Immediate Past Chair

Immediate Past-Chair Elizabeth Wilkinson reported on the work of the elections committee. In total, 151 votes were cast in the election for steering committee members.

Ashley Todd Diaz was elected incoming vice chair/chair elect. Lori Birrell and Jillian Cuellar were elected to the steering committee. A run-off election was held between Rory Grennan and Carol Waggoner-Angelton. Rory Grennan was elected to the steering committee.

By-Laws Referendum – Anke Voss

Chair Anke Voss reported on the results of a bylaws referendum. The section membership voted to amend the bylaws and eliminate the web liaison position. Web publishing duties will be distributed across the steering committee membership

Virtual Attendance – Sean Benjamin, Steering Committee

Steering committee member Sean Benjamin reported on his investigation of whether steering committee members should be allowed to participate virtually. Sean found that no subgroup in SAA encouraged or disallowed virtual attendance. He also found that SAA leadership encourages virtual attendance. We invite continuing conversation and discussion about this issue.

Council Liaison report – Amy Cooper Cary for Michelle Light

- Change to affinity groups. SAA is transitioning to a new structure in which the roundtables will become sections. SAA members may join as many sections as they want. Non-members may be on up to three discussion lists. The minimal requirements to be a section is standardized bylaws. Sections will be required to submit to SAA about the section meeting at the annual meeting by March 1, conduct an online election by June 1, and submit an annual report by September 1.

New sections can be formed as they always have been. Council is continuing to investigate how to conduct and support online communities.

- Council approved an information brief on archives and the environment.
- Council approved a few changes on the statement on diversity and inclusion. They are trying to pull together resources on diversity; we'll see more of this in the coming year.
- Council approved a group consisting of representatives from various sections led by Mark Matienzo to work on an environmental scan of SAA's offerings on digital curation and metadata practice.

Teaching with Primary Sources Unconference – Recap - Elizabeth Wilkinson, Immediate Past Chair and Ashley Todd-Diaz, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

Ashley Todd-Diaz and Elizabeth Wilkinson recapped the second annual Teaching with Primary Sources Unconference sponsored by the Reference, Access, and Outreach section. The unconference brought together archivists and educators for set workshops in the morning and unconference sessions in the afternoon. The unconference will happen again next year in Portland. Their website, teachwithstuff.org., has the schedule for the day and links to all the notes documents.

Other Affiliated Groups

OCLC Research - Jackie Dooley, Program Officer

Jackie Dooley reported on several recent OCLC Research projects including efforts to remove the barriers for the use and reuse of finding aids by taking out copyright statements and using a Creative Commons license; a working group to compile best practices for capturing metadata for archived websites; and a data element usage study of archival MARC.

SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Task Force on the Development of Standardized Statistical Measures for Public Services in Archival Repositories and Special Collections Libraries – Amy Schindler, Co-Chair

Amy Schindler reported on the work of this joint task force and encouraged the membership to submit substantive comments on the standard by August 22. There will be an open session on the standard at ALA midwinter. Information about the task force can be found here:

<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/saa-acrlrbms-joint-task-force-on-public-services-metrics>

SAA/ACRL-RBMS Joint Task Force on Primary Source Literacy – Bill Landis, Co-Chair

Bill Landis reported that the joint task force, charged with developing guidelines for primary source literacy, has a draft framework document available for feedback and they will have meetings about it at RBMS and ALA. They will take feedback at any time but they will start working on a second draft by the end of August in time for ALA midwinter. Information about the task force can be found here:

<http://www2.archivists.org/groups/saa-acrlrbms-joint-task-force-on-primary-source-literacy> Comments can also be sent to primarysourceliteracy@gmail.com

Acquisitions and Appraisal Section Subcommittee on Best Practices for Collection Development Policies - Bill Landis

Bill also reported on this subcommittee's work to develop and share relevant resources about collection development policies. They are seeking policies to create a body of samples to analyze and develop suggestions for institutions without written policies. Samples can be submitted at the section's microsite.

Program

Tamar Chute and Ellen Swain facilitated a discussion of the newest book in the SAA series, *Trends in Archives Practice: [Teaching with Primary Sources](#)*. Edited by Christopher J. Prom & Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe; featuring modules by Tamar Chute, Doris Malkmus, Sammie Morris, Ellen D. Swain, and Elizabeth Yakel.

A few notes from the discussion:

- The scope of the book is meant to include the one-off class visit through being embedded in a semester-long course.
- The book addresses how to overcome fear of the archives, how to explain the inner workings of archives to students, and how to talk about browsing materials. It includes sample assignments and is designed to help a reference archivist find something and use it fast. It also highlights existing projects.
- As field trip funding is cut, many archivists are going to classrooms. Many archivists are seeing a surge in home schooled kids visiting and using materials.
- Many repositories are finding that they have issues with students understanding cursive writing; this is becoming a barrier to these students engaging with primary sources.

Following the program, Anke closed the meeting.

MANUSCRIPTS REPOSITORIES SECTION STEERING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Hilton Atlanta

Friday, August 5, 2016

4:00-5:00pm

Present: Sean Benjamin, Alison Clemens, Jackie Dean, Rory Grennan, Elisa Ho, Ashley Todd-Diaz, Anke Voss

Absent: Lori Birrell, Jillian Cuellar

Virtual attendance. We recognize that attending the meetings held at the conference can be a deterrent to serving on the steering committee. We discussed changing our by-laws to explicitly state that steering committee members could attend the meetings virtually. At this time, we decided we would not institute a formal vote or change in the by-laws, since virtual attendance is not addressed or prohibited.

Change to affinity groups. We are expecting that our membership will grow when SAA members are allowed to belong to unlimited affinity groups. We discussed sending out a survey after the transition to assess the needs of the new membership.

Goals and projects for 2016-2017. During the discussion in the section meeting, several section members spoke about the impediment that cursive writing poses to researchers who haven't learned to read it. It was suggested that the section could create or compile resources to assist manuscript repositories' staff in helping researchers interpret handwriting. We talked about providing a brochure or PDF, along the lines of the brochures created by the section several years ago on Donating Papers to a Repository, Deeds of Gift, etc., or creating a video tutorial. We decided our first steps would be to see what exists in

this area. A former steering committee, Jennie Cole, had begun to compile a list of cursive resources. Jackie will follow up with her. Alison will reach out to the Teaching with Primary Sources task force to see if there is an opportunity for collaboration there.

Questions for SAA Council.

We compiled a list of questions for Council liaison Michelle Light. They are the following:

- Has there ever been any talk of recording section meetings and making them available?
- Does SAA have a conference call set-up that we could use for steering committee meetings?
- When will the new affinity groups start? When will people be able to sign up for their new groups? We anticipate that we'll gain new members when the restrictions are lifted and would like to keep this in mind for our programming.

Finally, we determined that we would hold steering committee meetings in early October, early December, early February (before the deadline for contributing information to the annual meeting program), April, and in late June.

NEWS FROM MEMBERS

Brooklyn Historical Society Opens Everett and Evelyn Ortner Papers and Photographs

John Zarillo, Archivist

Brooklyn Historical Society



EVELYN AND EVERETT ORTNER, CIRCA 1980; EVERETT AND EVELYN ORTNER PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ARC.306; BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Brooklyn Historical Society announces the opening of 51 linear feet of papers and photographs from the estate of Everett and Evelyn Ortner to researchers. The Ortners married in 1953 and lived in the Brooklyn Heights neighborhood of Brooklyn in the 1950s and early 1960s. In 1963 the couple purchased an 1882 four-story brownstone at 272 Berkeley Place in the Park Slope neighborhood of Brooklyn. This would be the catalyst for their involvement in the "Brownstone Revival" movement.

The Ortners soon became active in a variety of community organizations. They lobbied local banks to provide mortgages to prospective Park Slope home-buyers at a time when lenders had "red-lined" the neighborhood. According to the Park Slope Civic Council, "they also encouraged the Brooklyn Union Gas Co. (now National Grid) to purchase and transform a dilapidated brownstone on Berkeley Place into a modern two-family home featuring a variety of gas appliances." These buildings became known as "Cinderella homes" and were used in advertising to entice new residents to the neighborhood.

The couple were also a leading force in the designation of the Park Slope Historic District in 1973. The Ortner were the recipients of numerous awards and honors, including the Brooklyn Union Gas Company's Cinderella Award (1978), the Preservation League of New York State's Excellence in Historic Preservation Award (2002), and the New York Landmarks Conservancy's Lucy G. Moses Preservation Leadership Award (2005). Evelyn Ortner died at 272 Berkeley Place on September 19, 2006 at age 82. Everett followed on May 22, 2012, at age 92. The collection contains the papers and photographs of Everett H. Ortner and Evelyn G. Ortner, dating from 1873 to 2012. It documents the Ortner's personal and professional lives, especially their involvement in the historic preservation movement and Brooklyn cultural organizations.

Statement of Everett H. Ortner
President, Brownstone Revival Committee of New York
230 Park Ave., New York, NY 10017

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the City Planning Commission. I am Everett H. Ortner, president of the Brownstone Revival Committee of New York, an organization of 2000 persons dedicated to saving the old ~~neighborhoods~~ townhouses and townhouse neighborhoods in New York by living in them.

I do not think that anyone here is opposed to increasing the budget and expanding the operations of the Landmarks Commission. The question is whether it ~~is~~ ^{is} as important for city money as other needs that compete with it/and are seemingly more urgent.

I am here to tell you that in our judgment the Landmarks Commission must be given the money it needs to carry out its work. For these reasons:

- * Preservation of our housing stock. The importance of landmarks designation and enforcement to the preservation of old houses and neighborhoods cannot be exaggerated. And I am not talking here merely about preserving pretty facades. I am talking about saving houses from deterioration and demolition. ~~and preserving living neighborhoods.~~
- * Stabilizing neighborhoods. The process of saving houses also saves the middle class for the city. Fine houses are a magnet for the kind of people the city has been losing in the past, and is only now beginning to ~~come~~ ^{will} back. The effect of the return to the city of a vigorous middle class is being felt in a dozen or more communities in the city. It has restored them to life.

BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DRAFT OF A SPEECH DELIVERED BY EVERETT ORTNER TO THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION, CIRCA 1970; EVERETT AND EVELYN ORTNER PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ARC.306, BOX 26, FOLDER 12; BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



PARK SLOPE BROWNSTONES, CIRCA 1973; EVERETT AND EVELYN ORTNER PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ARC.306; BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



RESTORED BROOKLYN TOWNHOUSES, CIRCA 1980; EVERETT AND EVELYN ORTNER PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, ARC.306; BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A complete inventory of the collection is now available online:

http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/bhs/arc_306_ortner/

Yale's Beinecke Library Reopens After 16-month Renovation

Beinecke Library Staff

Beinecke Library, Yale University

The Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University reopened to the public on Tuesday, September 6, following a 16-month renovation that upgraded the library's climate-control system, expanded its classroom space, and restored the building's architectural details.

The bulk of the renovation project concerned replacing the library's mechanical infrastructure — its plumbing, electrical, heating, and cooling systems — much of which was original to the building, which opened in October 1963. Machinery in the building's sub-basement, including room-sized air handlers and chillers, was replaced with new equipment. The building's security and fire-suppression systems were also upgraded.

Library staff members continued to serve patrons in temporary spaces during the renovation, and staff members are particularly excited about the newly renovated classroom areas. The renovation doubled the number of classrooms in the library from two to four, and one of the new classrooms will function as a lab space in which students will have the ability to study the physical structures of books and experiment with inks, papermaking, and printing.



STACK TOWER DURING THE RENOVATION

The building's architectural features — its exterior grid of granite and Vermont marble panels, six-story glass stack tower, and sculpture garden by sculptor Isamu Noguchi — have been refurbished to fully preserve architect Gordon Bunshaft's modernist building.

Exhibitions are back in place and open to the public, and Yale's copy of the Gutenberg Bible and John Audubon's "Birds of America" have returned to permanent display.

Two temporary exhibitions are on view for the coming months. The "Recent Acquisitions" exhibition showcases recent additions to the library's collections, including medieval manuscripts, early and contemporary photography, and the papers of celebrated writers. Items on display include photographs of Abraham Lincoln from the Meserve-Kunhardt Collection of 19th century American photography, a collection of letters from James Baldwin, additions to the Ezra Pound papers, and selections from archives of playwright Paula Vogel and writer David Rakoff.



STACK TOWER

The "Destined to be Known: the James Weldon Johnson Memorial Collection at 75" exhibition celebrates the 75th anniversary of Yale's collection of African American arts and literature named for civil rights advocate and man of letters James Weldon Johnson. Founded in 1941 by Carl Van Vechten, the collection contains the papers, works, and memorabilia of African American writers and artists from the 18th century through modern times. It features the archives of Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, and Zora Neale Hurston, among other luminaries.

New Exhibition at Santa Clara University

Erin Louthen

University Archivist

Santa Clara University Library's Archives & Special Collections is pleased to announce our latest exhibit, **To Trace the Course of Wisdom: The Prophetic Spirituality of Sandra M. Schneiders Illuminated Through *The Saint John's Bible*.**



This exhibit invites visitors to journey through the life of Dr. Sandra M. Schneiders, and includes materials from Schneiders' collection of professional papers, which chronicle a Spirit-filled life committed to the pursuit of God and manifested in prophetic obedience. Chronological highlights of Schneiders' career document the emergence of key themes in her spirituality. Art from *The Saint John's Bible* illuminates the motifs that organize the narrative of this exhibit.

The exhibit runs from June 27th, 2016 - March 21st, 2017 in the Archives & Special Collections gallery.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.scu.edu/library/asc/exhibits/schneiders/>

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR SECTION LEADERSHIP

Immediate past Chair, Anke Voss, serves as the chair of the nominating and elections committee for the 2017 election. The Section is seeking nominations for three Steering Committee members and a new Vice-chair/Chair-elect. This is a great opportunity to get involved! Please feel free to contact any member of the Steering Committee with questions about the activities of the Section and the Steering Committee. We welcome and encourage self-nominations! Please send your nominations to Anke Voss (avoss@urbanafree.org).

SECTION LEADERSHIP

Jackie Dean, *Chair*

Ashley Todd-Diaz, *Vice Chair/Chair Elect*

Anke Voss, *Immediate Past Chair*

Michelle Light, *Council Liaison*

Steering Committee Members:

Sean Benjamin

Lori Birrell

Jillian Cuellar

Alison Clemens

Rory Grennan

Elisa Ho

THE DEADLINE FOR THE SPRING NEWSLETTER IS 1 MARCH 2017.