Letter from the Incoming Chair

Dear Lone Arrangers Section Members,

I am so excited to serve as the 2023–2024 chair for the Lone Arrangers Section. As we celebrate our section’s twentieth anniversary this year, it is wonderful to see how it continues to respond and evolve to better serve its diverse membership. I look forward to sharing our new ideas for member collaboration and exchange that will be launched over the next few months. I hope that you will find this section to be a valuable resource and a welcoming forum to discuss issues relevant to the solo archivist.

My experience on the Steering Committee has been invaluable. As vice chair and regional representative, I have seen how important, and sometimes tricky, it is to bring a large, diverse group together. The work that the Steering Committee accomplishes each year to bring members an array of activities and resources to help them connect and learn amazes me.

I want to thank our wonderful outgoing chair, Micaela Terronez, who coordinated the 2022–2023 member survey. We now know far more about members’ interests, resource needs, and how best to foster community within the section. I also would like to personally thank Micaela for her support and mentorship during my year as vice chair.

I want to also thank our outgoing SOLO editor, Katy Sternberger, who has taken the newsletter to new heights of professionalism in its tenth year of publication. During her term, Katy showed the utmost dedication to ensuring the content of SOLO has been interesting, useful, and a great way for members to share their experiences.

It is truly a privilege to be chair during this exciting year of change and new beginnings and I look forward to sharing it with you!

Julie Yamashita
Archivist
Lanterman House Museum and Archives
lantermanarchives@gmail.com
Letter from the Outgoing Chair

Dear LAS Members,

It was a wonderful opportunity to serve on the Steering Committee as chair this past year. From the membership survey to the annual section meeting in June, I enjoyed getting to know the variety of solo archivists who are part of this community as well as engaging in conversations with one another about our profession.

I want to extend my gratitude to the Steering Committee members (Katy, Julie, Hilary, Rebecca, and Shaun) for their hard work and guidance over the last year. I am very much looking forward to seeing the team take new steps forward within their prospective responsibilities, and I especially wish good luck to Julie Yamashita as she leads the team this upcoming year as chair. I also want to thank Katy Sternberger, our outgoing newsletter editor, for the time and energy that went into creating the resourceful SOLO newsletter. I hope the membership continues to develop in the coming year with new initiatives hosted by the 2023–2024 leadership team.

Second, I want to acknowledge how grateful I am for the section members. The section continues to prioritize professional growth, especially as archivists experience limited budgets and resources. Though the Steering Committee provides the framework for activities, it is because of dedicated members that we are able to develop together as a community. Whether it was an archivist offering suggestions via the listserv or a relevant presentation from a section member, I appreciate folks who are willing to lend a hand to a fellow solo archivist or new practitioner. Thank you for your continued support, and I hope that you’ll continue to find community in this section.

Micaela Terronez
Special Collections Librarian and Instructor
Augustana College
micaelaterronez@augustana.edu
Celebrating Our Section’s 20th Anniversary

The Lone Arrangers Section is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2023! Many thanks to the founding members of this group, including cofounders Nancy Freeman and Russell Gasero, who initiated a community space for solo archivists to feel less alone in the archives field.

In addition, SOLO is celebrating its tenth anniversary. The first issue of the newsletter appeared in February 2013, edited by Russell Gasero. After a change to the section’s standing rules in 2021, the newsletter editor became an elected position on the section steering committee, ensuring the continuity of SOLO, which has served as an important resource for our section over the last decade.

There are currently more than 750 members of the Lone Arrangers Section. Our group is consistently listed as one of the most active sections in SAA Connect, noted by the high amount of activity on our listserv. It is so great to see our community regularly reaching out to one another and sharing advice, just as we’ve done for the last twenty years.

During the section’s annual meeting held on June 12, 2023, we recognized this milestone by raffling off a copy of Christina Zamon’s new book, *Alone in the Stacks: Succeeding as a Solo Archivist*, which was graciously donated by SAA. Annual meeting attendees shared how many years they have been involved with the section, and then the steering committee randomly selected a lucky winner: Anton Sherin, a first-year member of the section.

Also during the annual meeting, our SAA Council liaison, Derek Mosley, reported that our section is in good health. Indeed, we are still a vibrant and growing section. The steering committee will continue to respond to the needs you expressed in the 2022–2023 membership survey and welcomes your ongoing input!
Highlights
Share what you’ve been up to with your fellow lone arrangers!

Name
Jim DaMico

Position title
Archivist

Institution
Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center

What kind of institution do you work at?
Medical archives

What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?
This is a toss-up between our Portable Infant Incubator, which was invented by John L. Prager and patented in 1949, and our early patient history records. Both examples show how technology improved the care of children and how that care was recorded. No longer do nurses hand carry high-risk infants to Children’s Hospital in a taxicab. Instead, high-risk infants are transported in state-of-the-art Mobile Intensive Care Units. The evolution of medical recordkeeping is also represented in the collection, from handwritten ledger entries to the Kardex system of recording patient medical records to the implementation of electronic records. Our collection includes three-dimensional objects, art, oral history interviews, books, newsletters, annual reports, hospital records, photographs, and architectural elements.

What’s your major accomplishment in the last year?
The medical center, originally named the Hospital of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Southern Ohio, was started in 1883 by a group of concerned Episcopalian women. At
the end of 2021, I became the first full-time archivist at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center. This is my first archives job in healthcare and as a solo archivist. I never thought I would work in the healthcare field, but here I am. In the first six months of this role, I created the first website for the Cincinnati Children’s Archives using LibGuides, developed collections management forms, and did my first oral history interviews. Since my start, I have collected born-digital documentation; tackled the disposition of a set of stained glass windows (ongoing); written a weekly Throwback Thursday blog post that is shared with the internal hospital community; and managed, along with our Space Planning Committee, the development of a public history walk for employees, families, and patients.

Name
Sidney Louie

Position title
Archivist

Institution
Palama Settlement

What kind of institution do you work at?
Corporate archives

What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?
Photographic prints, lantern slides, film negatives, and transparencies.

What’s your major accomplishment this year?
I am ten months into my current job as the full-time solo archivist at Palama Settlement. Although the institution was founded in 1896, the archives opened to the public in 2010. At the time, Jacqueline Jacobs Rath, Palama Settlement’s first archivist, processed more than 40,000 primary source records that documented the institution’s activities, programs, and services from its inception to 1980. Following the arrangement schema of 17 series and 500 subseries and file units, she rehoused 174 linear feet of records into 126 acid-free boxes.

The Royal Hawaiian Band performs at the Palama Settlement Jamboree, June 20, 1952, 17_01_01-0063. Courtesy of Palama Settlement Archives.
the photographic collection, she arranged and filed approximately 5,000 photographic prints, slides, and film and glass negatives and rehoused them in Mylar sleeves in 43 binders and in acid-free boxes.

Tasked with launching the digitization project for the collections circa 1896–1980, I created a digitization manual to train volunteers. Recently I set up the online catalog using ArchivesSpace and the digital repository using Omeka S. The descriptive metadata has been challenging, as over 85 percent of the photographic collection are portraits with little or no personal names accompanying them. The most popular reference request is genealogy, and I have difficulty finding photos of the researchers’ families who participated in the programs at Palama Settlement. To this end, I am developing a photo identification project that includes a prospectus for funding.

Name
Esther Bley

Position title
Creator/Founder

Institution
Queer Animation

What kind of institution do you work at?
Self-employed

What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?
While there are many interesting films in the database, the short *Krazy Kat Goes A-Wooing* (1916) is currently the earliest example I know of that depicts an explicitly queer character in animation.

What’s your major accomplishment in the last year?
Launching my website! I officially made Queer Animation public in June 2023.

Screenshot of the Queer Animation database, launched in 2023 and created using Omeka. Courtesy of Esther Bley.
Shaun Kirkpatrick  
Corporate Archivist  
Chubb

**What kind of institution do you work at?**  
Corporate archives

**What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?**  
One item that didn’t make the cut in my “UnBOXed” presentation of “treasures” in 2022 is a certificate of insurance for passenger baggage on the *Lusitania* that was probably on the ship when it was torpedoed! The certificate is crumpled in a way that seems unlikely otherwise. It belonged to Mary and Laura Ryerson, a mother and daughter (ages 56 and 23) from Canada who took out $500 of “war risk” insurance on their “personal effects” before boarding the *Lusitania* in New York in 1915. After the torpedo struck the ship, Mary and Laura boarded a lifeboat, but it capsized. Mary was lost. Laura swam to a raft and eventually another lifeboat, from which she was rescued hours later—likely with the certificate in her possession!

Mary and Laura Ryerson

Katy Sternberger  
Archivist  
Portsmouth Athenaeum

**What kind of institution do you work at?**  
Research library

**What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?**  
I had a fascinating time researching the Athenaeum’s 1782 ledger documenting a smallpox inoculation program that transpired on a small island off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire. One of the hospital’s four physicians recorded the names of 365 patients of various ages and races who received inoculations and then quarantined on the island for at least three weeks. A rare relic that provides insight into late-eighteenth-century medical practices, the inoculation ledger also includes important genealogical information. The finding aid is available in the Athenaeum’s online catalog, and I published an article with a transcription of the 365 names in the
Spring 2023 issue of the *New Hampshire Genealogical Record*.

**What’s your major accomplishment in the last year?**
I am grateful to have been elected to serve on the Lone Arrangers Section Steering Committee for the last two years. I helped lay a foundation for the future of the *SOLO* newsletter, which celebrates its tenth anniversary in 2023. It has been a pleasure working with everyone on the leadership team, who has been so committed to improving connections among lone archivists. Thank you to the section members for voting in this year’s election, approving a section name change. I look forward to seeing the Steering Committee’s vision continue to unfold.

**Name**
Julie Yamashita

**Position title**
Archivist

**LAS Leadership: Chair**

**Institution**
Lanterman House

**What kind of institution do you work at?**
Historic house museum and archives

**What’s the most interesting thing in your collection?**
The Frank D. Lanterman Political Papers of California State Assemblyman Frank Lanterman, who grew up and lived in the Lanterman House in La Cañada Flintridge. The collection consists of photographs, awards, clippings, reports, and correspondence. He was a significant figure as a champion of water rights for unincorporated communities in California and is well known for his work relating to mental health and the rights of the handicapped. He was also instrumental in California, becoming the first state to have motor vehicle emission standards in 1966.

**What’s your major accomplishment in the last year?**
I gave my first lecture at the Lanterman House, which was very daunting for me. I spoke about the architect of the Lanterman House, Arthur Haley, now a relatively unknown figure. During the early twentieth century, however, Haley was very well known as a builder of apartments, residences, and skyscrapers in downtown Los Angeles. The Lanterman House is unique in that, when it was completed in 1915, it was constructed of reinforced concrete and was hailed as being both fire and earthquake proof. I was invited to turn my lecture into any article by the *Southern California Quarterly*, and I am very pleased that it will be in the Fall 2023 issue.
Expanding the Reach of the Archives through Instruction

By Katherine N. Banks | University Archivist & Information Resources Librarian, Milligan University

I have always enjoyed learning about history. As a child, I was enthralled with ancient Egypt, Lewis and Clark, and acting out whatever I had learned about in history class. I was fortunate enough to have a father who obtained his master’s degree in history while I was a child and who shaped my history lessons since my parents homeschooled me. Thus, it was no surprise that I was a history major in college who wanted to pursue work in archives.

However, most of my exposure to archives came through volunteering at archives at my public library and my college, Milligan College (now Milligan University) in Tennessee. I more or less accidentally stumbled into the field and even realized that I had been using primary sources in various research projects but had had no real guidance. In my graduate school program in archives at Indiana University, I selected an internship at the Wylie House Museum, the historic house of the university’s first president. During my internship, I focused on outreach and instruction, contributing to curating an exhibit and assisting the archivist with instruction.

Instruction in primary sources has become one of my interests in the field, so when I came back to Milligan University in 2018 as the university archivist, I was able to pursue that interest with the support of my colleagues. Milligan University has about 1,100 students, and I am the sole archivist for the school, but even with the small demographics and man...
other responsibilities I have, my library staff have been supportive of developing a primary source literacy instruction program.

When I started my position at Milligan, the previous archivist, Lindsay Kenderes, had already provided archives instruction to a couple of classes in the past. One of these classes was a humanities class in interdisciplinary research methods, which was a wonderful springboard for developing primary source literacy instruction. Over the years since I started, I have added several more classes, thanks to being proactive about reaching out to faculty and through friendships with them. I have continued working with the humanities class, evolving the activities and approaches to better serve the students. I have also taught sessions for art, journalism, composition, gender studies, and history classes.

One area that I am slowly working on is the second semester of our required composition core. Currently, I have offered sessions to one professor’s in-person sections and another professor’s online section. I would like to have a primary source literacy instruction session in every section. Our instruction librarian is already heavily involved with the composition core classes, and I hope to see primary source literacy instruction become embedded in the core as well.

This past academic year, I reached seventy-five students across eleven sessions, including graduate students. This is still a small percentage of the campus population and a small number overall, but given that I have many other demands and that we are a small university, I am proud of how far we’ve come just in the past five years to offer sessions on primary sources to a range of students.

Several resources have been helpful in shaping my instructional practice. One is a course I took through Library Juice Academy on primary source instruction by Robin Katz. This was an outstanding course and helped define what I was doing. It gave me a better structure for designing my lesson plans and made me better verbalize my goals for instruction sessions. I have also become active in the TPS (Teaching with Primary Sources) Collective, a free, virtual group made up of anyone who teaches with primary sources in some way. I know that if I have questions regarding primary source instruction I can reach out to this group for ideas.

Going all the way back to graduate school, I have read a lot of the literature on the topic and frequently try to read any new literature that I see in the American Archivist or other similar publications. Two books I keep on my office shelf that have also been useful are Past or Portal? Enhancing Undergraduate Learning through Special Collections and Archives by Eleanor Mitchell, Peggy Seiden, and Suzy Taraba and Using Primary Sources: Hands-On Instructional Exercises by Anne Bahde, Heather Smedberg, and Mattie Taormina. Even though some of these resources may be geared for larger schools, I have still found many useful pieces of information to help shape my instruction.

When I teach archives instruction sessions, I usually start with a brief lecture covering the basics of primary sources and archives. This has evolved over the years, and I have actually been paring down the information I share during the lecture so as not to overwhelm the students,
most of whom have very little concept of primary sources and archives. Most of the instruction session time is spent on the students experiencing items from the archives firsthand. The exact format and items change with the content of the class with which I am working, but it typically involves the students examining one or more items and writing down the answers to some questions about it.

I have developed a couple of teaching collections for easy use in these classes. One is my standard teaching collection, which contains a wide variety of items that can be used in a class with a variety of students. Items such as pamphlets, photos, articles, and letters make up this collection. I also have a collection geared specifically for a history of photography class. This collection includes a variety of historic photographic media, which prove interesting for the students to hold and examine in the midst of learning about these formats. While students are examining the items in the session, I try to circulate around the room and interact with them one-on-one, answering questions and providing more history or context as the situation requires. I usually wrap up the sessions by asking some (or all, depending on the size of the class) students to share what they learned. It is always fascinating to see what students find interesting or what grabs their attention.

Milligan University may be a small school and I may be the solo archivist, but I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to reach more and more students over the years about primary sources and how to use them. My hope is that this is an interesting and unique experience that they have while attending the university that will help inform their research in their current classes, future classes, or even future graduate work.

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**Letters to Sam-san: Uncovering and Archiving My Grandparents’ Letters from Japan**

By Mary Katherine Kearns, CA | Assistant Archivist, Nicholls State University Archives and Special Collections

In 2016, I set out on a path that directed me toward my current role as an archivist. Having just earned my bachelor’s degree in fine arts in December 2015, I faced a dilemma encountered by many graduates: *What comes next?* I was undecided on pursuing a master’s degree, and, if I chose to, what would I study? While contemplating my next step, my maternal grandmother, Anne Kennedy Wilson (1931–2016), passed away unexpectedly, leaving behind a home filled with her and my late granddad’s belongings. Being the only grandchild living close by with time to spare, I took it upon myself to organize and arrange their belongings. I did not know it at the time, but I was taking the first step toward my decision to pursue my career as an archivist.
A house and adjacent garage, every space filled with a lifetime of belongings, was no small undertaking. Before I understood the terminology of arranging and accessioning, I performed a rudimentary version with my grandparents’ belongings. My first step was dividing the home by rooms and sections, gradually working through them until I reached the garage. My granddad would fill the garage with paintings, paints, gardening tools, and homemade canned tomatoes; after his passing, however, it became more of a general storage area. While beginning to organize, one wooden box stood out. It was dusty and worn, but inside were treasures no one in my family knew existed: documents and memorabilia from his service in the United States Air Force during the Korean War.

Having been subjected to Southern Louisiana heat and humidity, one could anticipate the condition of the items. Upon opening the box, a powerful and unpleasant odor of dust, mold, and mildew permeated the air. Silverfish had found a dark, cozy spot inside, feasting away on everything. As a result, the materials were so fragile that most documents disintegrated with a single touch. The first of the treasurers uncovered were multiple small service members’ paperback pocket travel books. Then a newspaper from Japan, various small folded pieces of paper, keepsakes, and the most precious items of all, letters. The newspaper and a few paper books were too heavily deteriorated for preservation. Only a few papers and these letters were in relatively good condition. Excited to learn what was inside the letters, I carefully opened and scanned every one. I never could have predicted the importance of these letters. Many of the letters were correspondence between my grandmother and granddad during his overseas deployment in Japan. Others were from colleagues and children in a Japanese orphanage. Most of the letters were addressed to Samuel Burt Wilson, but the letters from Japan were different; these letters were to Sam-san.

Dear, Sam-san
At last, we must say good-bye, it is hard to part with you, but I should say, wish you joy for your going back to the States. For long time, you are very kind for orphan, really I can never thank you enough.
-Ninomiya, Noriyuki and Kiya, Sachiko

Holding these letters, I remembered a story told to me by my great aunts about their brother, my grandad, as a young man deployed to Japan working with the children in an orphanage. A flood had been approaching that area, and the children had to be evacuated. As the story goes, all of the children in the orphanage only trusted my granddad to move them and keep them safe, which he did. Remembering this and seeing these letters, I knew they had to be from that family story. These children trusted my granddad with their lives, and he earned their affection and friendship. Realizing the importance of the letters and curious to learn more, I grabbed a sealable bag and carefully placed them inside. This discovery provided a one-of-a-kind experience to read my grandparents’ thoughts and desires from a time when they were just a young married couple and first-time parents. Wanting to know more about my granddad’s time in Japan and the orphanage, I studied these letters for clues to begin researching.
But before that research could begin, preservation was the main focus. Once home, I placed the letters on a flat, clean surface, and began working. Envelopes, letters, fronts, and backs—everything was gently brushed, cleaned, photographed, and uploaded to my computer. I would use these photographs to transcribe and conduct research, but transcribing a portion of the letters proved to be an arduous task due to the language barrier. Letters written in English were easily transcribed. Having difficulty reading and translating handwritten Japanese, I was forced to place transcribing these letters on hold. My research would have to progress with the letters I was able to transcribe.

I began with a small piece of paper, a notice stating:

*The 58th REMCO is sponsoring a trip to the zoo in Fukuoka for the children of the REMCO Orphanage on Sunday, 20 September. G I’s are needed to ride in the trucks with the children. Anyone interested in going contact A/1C Wilson in Strip Supply.*

A/1C is the third enlisted rank in the United States Air Force, so the notice referred to Airman First Class Wilson, my granddad. This information was easy to uncover, but the details about his time in the service while in Japan were more complicated to track down. An unassuming folded paper shoved at the bottom of that box provided me with the much-needed information to research my granddad’s time and service in the Korean War.

Envelopes proved to be an unexpected wealth of information that I otherwise would not have uncovered. One envelope indicated a change in ranking from airman first class to corporal. Later, in a separate part of the estate, I would find his uniform patches and pins, confirming his rankings and overseas service during the Korean War.

The other letters I wanted to study further were the ones sent from my granddad to my grandmother while he was at the orphanage. Included were stationery from the orphanage, the names of the children, and a few messages in Japanese from the children to my grandmother. As much as I wanted to know what the children wrote, it would have to wait until a translator became available. Some of the letters from his colleagues in Japan were written in English, which I could transcribe quickly. These letters conveyed how much they appreciated and missed him and hoped he and his family were well. No one could have possibly known how much this young family would grow.

While information was limited, the few key features I gathered from these pages were enough to begin my ongoing research. I never would have imagined uncovering such treasures in such an unassuming box. This experience directed me toward my path as an archivist and helped my family learn more about our grandad, known to the children in the orphanage as Sam-san.

Thank you, Samuel Burton “Burt” Wilson III (February 26, 1930 – August 13, 2004), for your time and service in the United States Air Force from 1951 to 1955. To your students, you were
Professor Wilson; to your friends, you were Burt; and to your thirteen grandchildren, you will always be our grandad.

Notes
1. Noriyuki Ninomiya and Sachiko Kiya to Samuel Burt Wilson III, “Dear Sam-San” (Fukuoka City, Kyushu: Japan, n.d.), 1. This is the opening paragraph from a letter sent to Samuel Burt Wilson III. The full address of the persons who sent the letter are:
   Ninomiya, Noriyuki No. 457, Terukuni-cho, Ropponmatsu, Fukuoka City, Kyushu, Japan.
   Kiya, Sachiko No. 57, 3 - chome, Kego-hondori, Fukuoka City, Kyushu, Japan ℅ Koyama.

Resources Consulted


Lone Arrangers Section Steering Committee
2023–2024

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<td>Shaun Kirkpatrick</td>
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Email the Steering Committee

Connect with LAS Online!

*solo archivist*

*n. ~ an individual who is the only staff member or the only formally trained archivist working in an archives*