Description Section Business Meeting
Meeting Minutes

Saturday, August 3, 2019
Austin, Texas
3:15 pm-4:30 pm
Note-taker: Secretary, Sarah Jones

I.   **Welcome / Introduction (Elizabeth Wilkinson)**

II. **Election Results (Sarah Jones)**
   - Katie Duvall, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress: Vice Chair/Chair Elect
   - Helice Koffler, Schubert Archives: Member at Large

III. **Updates**
Processing Manual Portal (Rachel Searcy and Scott Kirycki)
   - Began as a portal for resources related to archival description; now broadened out to any documentation (processing manuals, instructions for specific resources/formats, cataloging documentation)
   - Make sure any links are open/not restricted to within an institution
   - Received 10-12 resources already; portal will be built out of the microsite and resources will be available soon
   - Please send any resources or documentation to Scott Kyricki (email:)

SAA Council Liaison report (Audra Eagle Yun)
   - Published a statement canceling the American Archivist brown bag lunch that was scheduled for August 4;
   - Approved the resource kit developed by the Tragedy Response Initiative Task Force (forthcoming on the SAA website);
   - Approved a petition to form the Accessibility and Disability Section of SAA;
   - Approved revisions to the Guidelines for Standardized Holdings Counts and Measures in Special Collections and Archives;
   - Approved proposed revisions to the rules and the name of the Collection Management Tools Section, now named the Collection Management section;
   - Formed a task force to review and recommend revisions to the criteria for the selection of SAA Fellows.

Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards [TS-EAS] (Karin Bredenberg)
   - Publication of revision of EAC-CPF phase 1
   - Looked into shared schema to create connections between (what is common between EAD, EAC, and CPF)
   - GitHub streamlining
   - Committee: three people cycling off, three cycling on; now includes one early career member

- What is next? EAC-CPF revision phase 2 (topics based upon the GitHub issues; setting up a handbook for the group and user manual for GitHib site; EAC-F (based on ISDF based on Functions/Activities); plan to work to align with EAC-CPF revision based on shared schema
- Need to define the similarities/differences between the two groups and streamline the developments between them
- Slides available here: https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BypGctQyWvPoSEZvemxZWFc1emVIVHVycUhzN3NkZnVueXE4

Technical Subcommittee on DACS [TS-DACS] (Dan Michelson, co-chair of TS-DACS)
- Approvable of SAA council of the new principles for archival description; on the TS DACS GitHub, not in print or on the website. Getting this printed/on SAA website is a priority for next year
- Past versions of DACS are now all assigned version numbers; utilized funding from SAA to hire a graduate student to do the bulk of this work
- Early versions of DACS Part II workshops were piloted this year
- A lot of work went into providing feedback to the MLA appendix to DACS recommended from MLA
- Twitter account - follow, tweet, ask questions: @ts_dacs

Toward a National Archival Finding Aid Network planning project update, confluence.ucop.edu/display/NAFAN (Adrian Turner/Jodi Allison-Bunnell)
- Many aggregators are struggling to update their platforms; OAC was last updated in 2009 and wanted a refresh/need for modernization. LSTA funding for 1 year.
- Could large-scale collaboration create efficiencies, increase effectiveness for end users and participants, and be more sustainable?
- SNAC, ArchiveGrid, History of Medicine Finding Aids Consortium are the three mega-aggregators
- Analyze and Understand: Profile based on interviews and surveys from all aggregators/mega-aggregators
  - aggregators have increased the visibility of collections and exposed connections between them
  - aggregators have strong shared ethics around open and equitable access
  - many are under-resourced and few have stable funding
  - few aggregators have invested in understanding their user audiences and how they are changing
  - current resources are scare; sources lack diversity (often single host institutions)
  - have a deep commitment to providing persistent, high quality access to archival collections; need to be more end user-centered and consider how we can work together toward a robust, sustainable infrastructure
- Decide Why and Whether to Act: full day symposium with partners
- Make it Tangible

- planning for next steps that will influence near- and medium-term steps to achieve the long-term goal of the grant project

IV. **Presentations**

Talk #1: Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia's Anti-Racist Description Resources, presented by Kelly Bolding, Project Archivist, Americana Manuscript Collections, Princeton University Library and Faith Charlton, Lead Processing Archivist for Manuscripts, Princeton University Library

Abstract: Members of Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia's working group on anti-racist archival description will discuss their progress over the past two years on compiling and devising resources to support archivists' efforts to create anti-oppressive description and audit legacy descriptions for racist language.

- A4BLiP: responding to issues raised by BLM movement with the aim to push white archivists to create anti-oppressive description
- Identified priorities and formed working groups around these areas
- Three major goals with value statements and action items in statement on website
  - 1. Collect, support, and lift up Black history narratives
  - 2. Work to make archival spaces more inclusive
  - 3. Education and advocacy for appropriate policies around police records; speak truth to power as stewards of records
- Anti-Racist Description Working Group
  - created a set of metadata guidelines/recommendations for archival professionals to combat racist structures inherent in archives
  - also created an Annotated Bibliography of sources
  - See also "Ethical Questions in Name Authority Control" publication for an article by group members Katy Rawdon and Alexis Antracoli
- Predominately white group sought input from black archivists, fundraised to support honoraria for reviewers, currently incorporating feedback received via Google documents
  - Expected to publish Fall 2019 on website
  - Seven groups of recommendations:
    - Voice and style: unlearn "neutral" voice of traditional archival description
    - Community collabs and expanding audiences: expand the range of audiences considered
    - Auditing legacy description and reparative processing
    - Handling racist folder titles and creator-sourced description
    - Subjects and classification
    - Transparency about the work of archivists
    - Describing Slavery Records
- Challenges/Lessons
  - Communities are not monoliths
  - Authority to implement institution-wide changes
  - Terminology changes, so we're never done (iterative work)

- Contact info: archivesforblacklives.wordpress.com/a4blip@gmail.com
- Slides available here:
  https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1vsTTZSSfS_YSFcE-toc8ZLtQfj1k-5SF1WRhsb-1mB4/edit?usp=sharing

Talk #2: Implementing Named Entity Recognition in Description of Born-Digital Materials, presented by Linda Sellars, Head of Technical Services for Special Collections, NC State University Libraries and Emily Higgs, NCSU Libraries Fellow

Abstract: In the NC State University Libraries Special Collections Research Center, staff have developed scripts to run Named Entity Recognition on born-digital text collections upon ingest. We will present the main points of these scripts and how we integrate the output into archival description in finding aids.

- 25,000 LF 12 FTE, student employees, graduate students do most of the processing
- 95% of collections are available online via cataloging record or finding aid, but born-digital materials are in hybrid collections were lacking
- Currently uses Digital Assets of Enduring Value (DAEV) to accession born digital material, but does not describe the digital media below the object level. These practices allow to give considerable information about the records, but content description is limited to file names and any labelling on the object itself.
- How do we describe large digital collections quickly and efficiently?
  - Struggle with descriptive capabilities of DAEV and how can the content be described
  - Named Entity Recognition labels sequences of words in a text which are the names of things such as person and company names.
  - Define directory → walk directory for text files → extract text → process and NER → data cleaning → ranked output of entities (people, organizations, etc) in a CSV file
  - Include the top five entities and include it in the Scope and Content Notes "The following names appear frequently in this material:"
  - Future Extensions:
    - Developers are taking this work and turning it into an API
    - Code available on Github (Emily Higgs)

Q&A
Q: Since you started using this entity recognition: how have researchers reacted?
A: Have only used it on one large collection; provide a large list of entities to researchers that they can also reference (that weren't necessarily in the scope and content note
Q: Was this a one time Jupyter Notebook exercise? (for Emily/Linda)
A: Experimented with topic modeling and natural language processing, but plan on expanding the Jupyter notebook into a stand alone application particularly for Digital Initiatives Librarian.
Q: How has the parsing of the reparative work into all other duties so it has devoted time?

A: Well resourced at Princeton but still challenging. Identifying collections to perform data clean up; processing team has developed an inclusive description group but need internal guidelines and a statement for website, also need to find a way to receive feedback from communities. Incorporating this in day-to-day work, as it is continuous and iterative (like all archival work) but on a case-by-case basis and challenging.

Q: Has anyone done a project to use Name Entity Recognition to identify racist language?

A: code4lib had many presentations this year on this topic, including by Dominique Luster and Noah Geraci; see their site.

Q: When will the guidelines be ready for review for the A4BLiP?

A: Hope to publish them this fall.

V. Elizabeth thanked panelists and outgoing members, and welcomed Cyndi Shein as the incoming Chair.

VI. Adjourn at 4:22pm.