Descriptive Notes *Winter 2003*

From the Chair *Chris Prom*

Maynard Brichford, a former president of SAA (and retired archivist at my institution), once commented that archivists tend to regard every inventory as preliminary. Likewise, descriptive standards — and the work of the Description Section — are always a work in progress.   At the heart of this evolution lies the work undertaken by SAA, its staff and, in particular, the members of the Description Section.

I was recently reminded of SAA's fundamental role in this process while contemplating an oversight on my part, the fact that I have not yet ordered my copy of SAA's reissued edition of Muller, Feith, and Fruin's *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives.* (In spite of procrastinating, I will have ordered it by the time you read this.) We rely on SAA to provide us the tools we need to do our jobs, whether they are classic texts or new tools.

But we cannot afford to take a passive role in SAA. As members of a voluntary professional organization, we must get involved. We must use SAA to build on the foundations of descriptive theory and practice laid down in our seminal descriptive standards. After all, these standards — MARC-AMC, APPM, and EAD — were themselves developed largely through work undertaken in SAA. Today, we must actively participate in the Description Section and associated bodies like the EAD Working Group, the EAD Round Table or SAA committees. Volunteers in these bodies and elsewhere develop and make available the tools which pay dividends in our day-to-day work. When people say "SAA should do this," or "SAA should do that," they are welcome to try.

There is no better way to try than by getting involved in the projects discussed in this issue. So much of this work builds on what I would like to call the three S's: Standardizing, Simplifying, and Sharing. They are at the heart of descriptive evolution.

We are all aware (or should be aware) of how important it is to use appropriate descriptive standards in describing archives and manuscripts. If you are interested in advancing the mission of standardization, you'll be interested to note the impending publication of a new standard to replace APPM, tentatively titled *Describing Archives: A Content Standard.* The US contingent of the CUSTARD group has made considerable progress in revising the draft and hopes for publication during 2004. Other work, more specialized but also fundamental, is also underway, as seen in the NACO and College and University Archives Thesaurus Projects discussed below, or the National Library of Medicine Project described on page.

Unfortunately, budgets and clocks undermine our best attempts to consistently apply standards. But several pending projects should be of some help in simplifying the process. A new version of Michael Fox's EAD Cookbook is forthcoming, and there is some hope — although no specific news to report at this time — that a general purpose markup tool may be developed over the next few years.

Of more immediate import, the EAD Round Table and Description Section are requesting your help. Amy McCrory and Kathy Wisser are updating the Round Table's help pages to include a long-needed tool repository. By sharing your expertise and your code, you can make this a rich, open-source, repository of stylesheets, scripts and macros.

Happy describing!

Your Section Leadership for 2003-2004

Chair
Chris Prom, University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign

Vice-Chair/Chair Elect
Kelcy Shepherd, University of
Massachusetts Amherst/ Five
Colleges Finding Aids Project

Members-at-large
Ann Hodges, University of Texas-Arlington
Jerry Simmons, NARA
Tara Zachary, Louisiana State University

Newsletter Editor
John Rees, National Library of
Medicine

Web Liaison
Diane Ducharme, Yale University

Annual Meeting Notes

After a hearty welcome from outgoing Section Chair **Brad Westbrook**, **Kris Kiesling** started the morning reports with news from the **EAD Working Group**, announcing the EAD Applications Guidelines revision was nearly complete and that an EAD Schema was also being developed for 2004.

 Michael Fox next reported on some 2003 **MARBI** activities. Lots of work on MARCXML was accomplished this year for distributing LC materials. Libraries can no longer get materials on tape, only via FTP or XML. Progress on IFLA's Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) also continued over the past year, specifically the re-writing of AACR2 Chapter 25 and deployment of the FRBR Display Toolkit [FRBR's goal is to depart from our *a priori* understanding of what a catalog record should be an instead develop of a cataloging framework that identifies and clearly defines the information users of our records expect and use.] Finally, he stated the work harmonizing UKMARC with MARC21 that was begun in 2002 was still ongoing. **Fox** also reported from the **ICA Descriptive Standards Section** that the ISAAR:CPF DTD (International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families) revision cycle will now coincide with that of EAC/EAD (Encoded Archival Context/Encoded Archival Description).

News from OCLC included a description of CONTENTdm, their new digital collection management tool. There was also news about their ongoing collaboration with the **DLF** in the digital preservation arena.

There was lots of news from **RLG. Merillee Proffitt** described the new **Archival Resources** web interface, wherein the initial search results set will now include catalog records along with any extant finding aids. Also, RLIN is to be migrated to XML and moved from Stanford to RLG's own servers. The old RLIN user interface will also disappear. Beta testing will begin at the end of 2003. RLG is also exploring a new technology called "automatic exposure" whereby technical metadata from digital camera images is automatically captured for use in preservation activities. And finally, with RLG's finalized EAD Application Guidelines comes a new validation service.

Your finding aids in **Archival Resources** can now include a **Web Bobby-like report card** to tell users how closely your markup follows the guidelines.

Dennis Meissner, reporting for **TSDS**, informed us that during 2003 the group reviewed a 2nd edition draft of ISAR (CPF) and that a revision of SAA's **Descriptive Standards Manual** was forthcoming. Dennis was also happy to report that he and **Mark Greene** were awarded a grant to benchmark physical processing of large collections. The proposed outcome will be a qualitative and quantitative report on the resources needed for physical processing. One of the project's goals is to create a reputable source for evidence grant applicants can use in their proposals.

Reporting from the **CC:DA committee, Sue Hamburger** informed us that a revision of AACR2's electronic resources chapter is coming and that a complete revision of AACR is planned for 2006. The process is already underway and we should look for lots of terminology and structural changes. For the full report see http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/jsc/newedann.html.

Kris Kiesling had the unfortunate duty of announcing the death of the **CUSTARD** project in its original manifestation due to major irreconcilable differences between Canadian and American practices. However, the U.S team's work will result in a new content standard to replace APPM, with the inclusion of pertinent EAD issues. Fear not though, the two groups will continue working together on the important goal of a unified archival standard, just not in the form of CUSTARD.

Lastly, from SAA, **Elaine Engst (Cornell University)** replaces Jackie Dooley as the Section's Counsel Liaison and beginning in the summer of 2004 SAA proposes to have all newsletters available only in electronic form. Despite previous objections from our membership, SAA feels this plan will provide wider access to all Section newsletters, as well as reduce increasing mailing costs and delivery delays. Access will be via a members-only web portal where all SAA members can login and read all section newsletters. And from **Diane Ducharme, Section Web Liaison,** all Section web sites will soon be templated for uniform look and feel and to facilitate easier editing. More links will be added as will a set of FAQ's on descriptive practices.

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News Notes

NARA Archivists train for NACO participation

In October 2003, seven archivists from the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, received the training for participation in the Name Authority Cooperative (NACO). Bill Getchell, James Mathis, Madeline Proctor, Sara Schlanger, Jerry Simmons, Gary Stern, and Pamela Wright, all Archives Specialists working on NARA's ARC (Archival Research Catalog) information system, received a three-day course from Anthony Franks, Authorities Librarian and NACO representative from the Library of Congress. Franks presented a specialized training program, tailored to the needs of NARA staff for creating person and corporate name headings for the Library of Congress Name Authority File. Carah Smith, a member of the library staff, represented NARA's ALIC (Archives Library Information Center) during the training. ALIC has been a long-time member of NACO, and will now team up with authority catalogers from the archival program to contribute names from NARA's holdings.

The purpose of NARA's participation in NACO is twofold: First, to provide a serious reinforcement of authority cataloging techniques and AACR2 cataloging rules for the archivists, and second, to provide an opportunity for NARA to participate in a larger arena of national and international description standards. ARC is NARA's online catalog of its nationwide holdings in the Washington, D.C. area, Regional Archives and Presidential Libraries, and is the agency's first serious authority control project. ARC provides for application of access points (person and corporate names, geographic place names, topical subject headings, and genre terms), controlled from centralized authority files built into the system. Catalogers need only search and select from authority files within the client-server software on their desktops.

At the end of the NACO training session, NARA archivists were able to input new authority records directly into OCLC via the new Connexion web interface. By November 2003, NARA archivists had successfully contributed forty-five new headings to the Name Authority File.

College and University Archives Thesaurus Project

Kate Bowers and other members of the College and University Archives Section have begun work on a thesaurus of topical and form terms. So far, the project has gathered terms from several colleges and universities, has grabbed terms from LCSH, and is working to incorporate terms from a variety of indexes. A prospectus has been

sent to the SAA publications editor for review.

View the work in progress at http://hul.harvard.edu/~kate/thesaurus.htm, or contact Kate Bowers, Harvard University Archives (kate_bowers@harvard.edu).

EAD Help Pages Update
http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/ead/

The SAA EAD Roundtable is planning a revision of the EAD Help Pages. One area we'd like to expand is the collection of "helper files." These can be bits of code (XSLT, Perl, word processing macros, or whatever you use) that speed up processing of EAD files; recommendations for best practices; or accounts of how you developed your processes and procedures, and what you learned that others may learn from. If you have anything to contribute, please e-mail it to Amy McCrory at The Ohio State University, <mccrory.7@osu.edu>. Keep in mind that any code you share should be general enough to use in different types of finding aids, or should include an advisory that the code will have to be adapted for local use by somebody who can edit in the applicable language.

We're hoping to build a resource that helps everyone in improving their EAD creation, so please participate if you can! Many thanks in advance.

State Library of Massachusetts Receives Grant
www.mass.gov/lib

The State Library of Massachusetts has received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in the amount of $19,985 to fund the Alexander Parris Digital Project. Grant funds are provided through the federal government's Library Services and Technology Act and administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. Alexander Parris was one of the most prominent architect-engineers of Massachusetts in the first half of the nineteenth-century, responsible for designing and or superintending the construction of many important buildings in the Commonwealth, including Quincy Market, Massachusetts General Hospital, and the ropewalk at the Boston Naval Shipyard at Charlestown. The project will produce digital surrogates and transcriptions of Parris documents held by the State Library and six other Boston repositories (Boston Athenaeum, Boston Public Library, Boston National Historical Park, Massachusetts General Hospital, Massachusetts Historical Society, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities) that will be available for study on the State Library's website in June of 2004. Materials to be reproduced include correspondence, accounts, specifications, and architectural drawings. For more information, contact Betsy Lowenstein, Chief of Special Collections, State Library of Massachusetts, 617 727-2590; betsy.lowenstein@state.ma.us.

Queens Borough Public Library, Long Island Division

The Long Island Division of the Queens Borough Public Library (LID) is proud to announce the coming availability of two of the largest bodies of records in its possession: the Long Island Division Ephemera Collection and the Frederick W. Weber Collection. Their combined size and scope cover the breadth and depth of this island's varied cultural, political, physical, economic, religious history from the mid 1800's to the present.

LID's ephemera collection began in 1911 as a component of this new division's collecting policy. The unofficial objective of this collection was to acquire the transient documents created by people and organizations around Long Island. It has expanded greatly in the intervening years with major accretions in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1990s to include over 10,000 pieces. Piecemeal cataloging and incomplete processing characterized the collection's descriptive state. However in 2003 the division's staff created a formal definition of ephemera and applied new processing procedures to them. As of this writing the collection is 45 cubic feet and ranges in date from 1845-2003. It contains material from geographic Long Island's clubs - charity, fraternal, political, and sports - its churches, artists, businesses, wrestling events, concerts, artists, weddings, businesses, schools, and real estate development, in an array of formats including tickets, bulletins, posters, prints, cards, envelopes, stamps, etc.

Processing of the Frederick J. Weber Collection is also nearing completion. This collection consists of photographs taken by professional photographer Frederick J. Weber, who for more than sixty years operated his studio in Jamaica, Queens. Among Mr. Weber's clients were the Long Island Railroad, Jamaica High School,

several trolley and bus companies, and numerous schools, churches and other institutions throughout Queens, Brooklyn and suburban Long Island. The collection contains over 7,200 images, including street scenes, group portraits, and architectural views. In both size and scope, the Weber Collection represents one of the most comprehensive photographic documents of life on Long Island during the first half of the 20th century. Weber's images have been used by many researchers including Vincent Seyfried and William Asadorian, for their book *Old Queens, New York in Early Photographs*, Ron Ziel in *Steel Rails to the Sunrise*, F. Donnie Forde's *Caribbean-Americans in New York City*, and Carl Ballenas and Nancy Cataldi's *Richmond Hill*. At present, all of the standard sized prints and negatives are processed. All that remains are oversized panoramic views which Weber made with a Cirkut camera.

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New Web Sites

Oregon Health and Science Library

OHSU Historical Collections & Archives is pleased to announce the launch of its new Web site, at http://www.ohsu.edu/library/hom/
The redesigned site includes expanded descriptions of the collections, detailed policy and contact information, and wonderful images from the Historical Image Collection and the Digital Resources Library. You can find up-to-date information on current exhibits and upcoming History of Medicine Society Lectures. Or, take a visual tour down memory lane with the History of the OHSU Library Pictorial Timeline. For those interested in finding out more about the history of medicine, the site also offers improved and updated information on locating related materials in print and on the Web.

If you are interested in visiting the OHSU Historical Collections & Archives, please contact Sara Piasecki, History of Medicine Librarian, at 503-418-2287 (piasecki@ohsu.edu) or Karen Peterson, Senior Research Assistant, Archives, at 503-494-3239 (peterska@ohsu.edu
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Charles Weever Cushman Photograph Project, Indiana University
http://ww.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/cushman

The Indiana University Digital Library Program has unveiled a groundbreaking digital collection of 14,500 color images of everyday life in the middle of the 20th century. Taken by amateur photographer Charles Weever Cushman between 1938 and 1969, the images document an amazing cross-section of American and international subjects, from inner-city storefronts and industrial landscapes to candid portraits and botanical studies. The collection is part of the Indiana University Archives.

The richly saturated Kodachrome slides add color to an era primarily recorded in black and white. Deteriorating colors in some of the slides, however, led IU's image specialists to consult with experts at the University of Basel in Switzerland, who have researched fading patterns of film dyes. Technicians there recreated mathematically what the dyes on the slide might have looked like at the time of processing and used this information to generate color-corrected versions of about 250 of Cushman's images in both film and digital formats.

"We would never have undertaken this project without Mr. Cushman's detailed recordkeeping," says Kristine Brancolini, director of the Digital Library Program. "We used his notebooks, which have been digitized and linked to the photographs, to create a rich descriptive database and sophisticated searching."

In 1972 Charles Cushman bequeathed to the university the notebooks, some of his photographic equipment, and his entire collection of photographs, neatly packed and labeled in suitcases. The slides were rediscovered by a university archivist in late 1999. The project was funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Five College Finding Aids Database Now Available
http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/

The Archives and Special Collections of Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Amherst are pleased to announce the availability of the Five College Archives & Manuscript Collections web site. This searchable database features over 700 finding aids from the five institutions.

The manuscripts and archives of the Five Colleges are a rich and diverse resource for researchers from a variety of disciplines. These collections are particularly strong in the following areas: women's history, social history and activism, African American studies, business and labor history, Western Massachusetts history, the sciences, politics and diplomacy, religion and missionary work, arts and literature, book design, and education. The collections are not limited to these areas, however, and new uses and interpretations of the materials are continually being discovered. Over 200 additional finding aids will be added to the database over the next six months.

The Five College Archives & Manuscripts web site is a product of the Five College Finding Aids Access Project, funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project was designed to improve access to the primary sources of the Five Colleges by publishing finding aids from these institutions online, using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard. The site utilizes the Cocoon XML publishing framework and Lucene search engine. The project has also included the creation of MARC records for collections that were previously uncataloged; these records will appear in OCLC and the Five College catalog and will link to the finding aids online.

For more information, please contact the Project Director, Kelcy Shepherd: kshepher@library.umass.edu

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Metadata and Web Archiving Initiative at NLM
by John Rees, Associate Curator
Archives and Modern Manuscripts, National Library of Medicine

After a long and arduous process, The National Library of Medicine's Library Operations Division implemented an initiative to add descriptive metadata elements to its web resources. Over the past several years, committees spearheaded by Margaret Byrnes, Head of Preservation and Collections Maintenance, 1) defined a set of document categories with concomitant Permanence Levels; 2) created a metadata element set using qualified Dublin Core and local elements; and 3) developed a system for embedding those required metadata elements within web pages.

The project has multiple goals. One major expected outcome is to increase web discoverability of NLM's internet resources by general search engines such as Google. Another important goal is to inform the public about the reliability and permanence of the sites they discover. This goal is accomplished by categorizing each web site according to a predefined set of document categories that also carry with them a suggested permanence level. A permanence level of unchanging content, stable content, dynamic content, or permanence not guaranteed will tell the user how much informational change they can expect from a resource from day to do and whether NLM commits to preserving the web site in perpetuity. Other required metadata elements define titles, authors, publication/revision/last update dates, content responsibility, rights, and language. Web creators are also encouraged, but not required, to enter subject keywords or Medical Subject Headings (MeSH). For all sites defined as Permanent, the NLM cataloging section will create a bibliographic record for the resource along with expanded MARC data that will be incorporated into the existing web site metadata. MeSH headings will also be added, or validated if already extant.

The current model uses the templating feature of our web management system for entering these metadata. Programmers edited the current templates that control the generation of departmental headers and footers. Fields for entering the required metadata were added. Click buttons, drop down pick lists, and constant data phrases were used wherever possible to ease the workload now expected of our 60+ web page creators.

There are many challenges involved with this project, outside of the time and effort put into developing the metadata set and encoding system. Many of our web sites do not use the templating feature of our web management system PDF/A and XMP offer some hope, but any robust tool for imbedding metadata into PDFis still a ways off. We are unable to add metadata to PDFs or images, as we chose to imbed metadata within the

resources rather than use a side-car system. Many of our web creators are paraprofessionals and face with a somewhat steep learning curve with the task we now ask of them. The archives team is now a part of the web promotion and validation workflow, as we are responsible for approving document categories and permanence levels before web pages get mounted to the live site. And finally, the infant archiving processes is still a manual one, requiring significant hands-on manipulation of existing pages before they can be replaced with new ones.

The experience has been fruitful thus far and we look forward to full implementation and the next challenges ahead.

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View the Description Section Home Page at:
http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/descr/index.asp