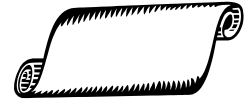


Descriptive Notes



The Newsletter of the Description Section of the Society of American Archivists

Winter 2007

FROM THE CHAIR

Jane Rosario

I hope the New Year finds everyone well. This fall has been a relatively quiet one for the Description Section. Steering Committee member Mary Lacy has continued to keep Description Section leadership apprised of the progress of *Resource Description and Access* (RDA), which is the successor to *Anglo American Cataloging Rules* (AACR2). Mary continues to do an excellent job as liaison between the Joint Steering Committee working on RDA and the Description Section, and it is clear that the voice of the archival community has been heard in this process. We owe much gratitude to Mary's continued good work in this area. (For more information about the Joint Steering Committee, see <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/>.)

This year for the first time, sections were limited to endorsing only two session proposals. The Program Committee accepted both endorsements from the Description Section, "More Product-Less Process Comes Home to Roost: Applying the Greene-Meissner Recommendations Broadly Across an Institution" and "Rethinking Access and Descriptive Practice." We received several excellent proposals, however, and it was difficult to be limited to only two choices. We hope this policy is rethought in future. (Can archivists ever tire of discussing descriptive issues? We think not.)

December saw the much anticipated release of Archivists' Toolkit Version 1.0. The project also received another award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to support a second phase of development. Congratulations to Brad Westbrook and his team who worked so hard to bring this to fruition. We look forward to using the Toolkit to make archival life more streamlined, thorough, and efficient.

This year, as chair of the Description Section, I have the honor of serving as an *ex-officio* member of the C.F.W. Coker Award sub-committee. The Coker Award recognizes those who have had a substantial impact on the art of archival description by setting national standards or representing a model for archival description. The deadline for nominations is February 28, 2007. For more information, please consult the SAA web site: <http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/section12-coker.asp>.

In the meantime, it is business as usual. Vice-chair Mark A. Matienzo will be preparing the Description Expo, and we will meet in Chicago at the end of August. If you have any items for the meeting agenda, or any topics or issues you would particularly like to discuss, please let me know.

I must acknowledge the help and support I have received from the members of the Description Section leadership, namely Kathy Wisser (past chair), Diane Ducharme (web liaison), Mary Lacy, Michelle Light (*Descriptive Notes* editor), Mark Matienzo (vice-chair), Claudia Thompson, Chris Burns, Jerry Simmons, and Ben Primer (Council liaison). Kelcy Shepherd's (past-past chair) advice has also been invaluable.

I hope that you will be inspired by the work of your colleagues detailed here in *Descriptive Notes*. Please continue to share your work with us!



FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Mark A. Matienzo

SAA Description Expo 2007

It's that time of year to begin planning for the Description Expo at SAA 2007! This year's Expo will have no set theme, but I'm encouraging all Description Section members to consider submitting description projects that involve Web 2.0 technologies. These include user-contributed tagging, social collaboration, and blog and wiki-like systems for archival description. Similar trends are occurring in the library world, and it would be great if we can begin sharing our ideas to develop even more groundbreaking systems. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [mmatienz\[at\]aip.org](mailto:mmatienz[at]aip.org).

2006-2007 LEADERSHIP LIST

Jane Rosario, Chair
Mark A. Matienzo, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect
Diane Ducharme, Web Liaison
Michelle Light, Newsletter Editor

STEERING COMMITTEE/MEMBERS AT LARGE

Christopher Burns
Mary Lacy
Kelcy Shepherd
Jerry Simmons
Claudia Thompson
Katherine Wisser



DESCRIPTION SECTION MEETING MINUTES

SAA Annual Meeting

Friday, August 4, 2006, 12:15 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

I. Section Reports

•Newsletter Editor: Michelle Light

Send submissions of 300 words or less for inclusion in *Descriptive Notes*. Michelle also seeks to develop longer (500 word) analytic pieces about how archivists engage with descriptive standards. Submissions will be accepted any time.

•Description Expo: Jane Rosario

There were eight submissions this year; and the Expo is in Booth #318. The Expo will be up on the SAA web site shortly after the meeting. Members are encouraged to think of a more original name for the event.

•Chair Kathy Wisser acknowledged the Steering Committee members and encouraged interested parties to email her or Jane if interested in serving on the Steering Committee. Kathy acknowledged the work of Description Section intern Jesse Brown also.

II. Reports from SAA Committees, Liaisons, and Related Groups

•SAA Council Representative: Ben Primer

Extended greetings from Council. There is a proposal under review in Council to rethink the work of sections and roundtables. Leadership will be asked for feedback.

•Program Committee: Adriana Cuervo

Members are encouraged to submit creative proposals on any ideas, workshops, and new experiences. The deadline is October 9, 2006, and proposals may be submitted via the web. If you experience problems, contact the Program Committee co-chairs. Sections and roundtables may endorse only two proposals.

•*American Archivist* Editorial Board: Susan Hamburger

Any programs ideas proposed but not accepted are of interest to the *American Archivist* Editorial Board. The Board is interested in practice-based articles, not just theory. Editor Mary Jo Pugh is also interested in people who want to review manuscripts for publication.

•EAD Working Group: Kris Keisling

It has been a relatively quiet year. The Working Group is releasing a schema for broader testing. There may be changes to the DTD and another version of EAD (200X) is a possibility. The Working Group is meeting at 9 a.m. this Sunday in the Military Room and is open to all. The official EAD web site and help pages were updated very recently. In April the third European EAD/EAC conference will be held in Berlin

(<http://www.bundesarchiv.de/instada/de/program.html?lang=de>).

- ALA Committee on Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information Committee (MARBI): Kris Keisling
This ALA committee meets twice a year and is responsible for approving all changes to MARC format. This year there has been nothing terribly pressing from the archives community. There is an interesting study conducted by Bill Moen at the University of North Texas that is analyzing MARC content use (<http://www.mcdu.unt.edu/>). The final report is expected to be ready by the end of August. In June there was a proposal to create language for access restrictions to digital materials, which came from the Digital Library Federation. There was a discussion paper to create 16 new subfields in the copyright field for digital materials, but it was not anticipated that the information would be maintained. It was felt that not providing information is better than providing it and not maintaining it. Further discussion will be held at ALA Mid-Winter, including the basic question of whether MARC is even the right place to put this information.

- DACS: Kris Keisling

Describing Archives: A Content Standard was approved on March 29, 2005. Since then, 12 DACS workshops have been given. Interest in DACS is high. The workshop, MARC According to DACS, was given six times. Publishing an edition with an index is being discussed, as well as producing an online version. It was suggested from the floor that members let SAA know that these issues are important to the membership. There was a question as to when DACS will replace APPM on Cataloger's Desktop? Currently, it is postponed by licensing negotiations between SAA and Library of Congress.

- ALA Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA): Mary Lacy

It was a busy year. The revision of *Resource Description and Access* (RDA) (formerly AACR3) was released in December 2005 for constituency review. SAA's first preference was to remove basic practices and insert references to archival standards, which was not accepted, but pointers to archival standards were accepted for inclusion (e.g., DACS and ISAD(G)). The review process is now more open. A prototype is available at <http://www.rdaonline.org/>.

- ICA Section on Professional Standards and Best Practices: Michael Fox

This committee has been dissolved. Currently there are two working groups, one focusing on an international standard describing functions and activities of corporate bodies as records creators (ISAF: International Standard on Archival Functions) and one for a new standard for archival institutions including a reference code element (ISIAH: International Standard on Institutions with Archival Holdings). (See <http://www.ica.org/body.php?pbodycode=CBPS&plangue=eng>.) Currently no SAA members are involved; does any one want to be a corresponding member? Claire Sabille, ICA/CBPS Secretary/Secrétaire, spoke about the working group on records creators functions.

- Technical Subcommittee on Descriptive Standards (TSDS): Chris Prom

TSDS submitted comments on RDA revisions. Comments may be obtained from Chris (prom [at] uiuc.edu). A draft charge to the EAC working group will be made. SAA Council recommended that TSDS take charge of revisions to DACS. Until SAA makes collaborative, web-based tools available, this cannot be undertaken. A process must also be in place for commentary and review.

- Archivists Toolkit: Brad Westbrook.

The project received a no-cost extension from Mellon to extend it to December 31, 2006. Release version 1.0 may be out as early as November 17, 2006 or as late as December 15, 2006. Currently it is 90% built, including an import process for legacy EAD finding aids. A de-accessioning model must be built. The specifications are being revised as needed. An administrative meeting was held at New York University (NYU) in June. The two principal investigators agreed to trademark and release the application under a GPL (General Public License), or an open source license. NYU and University of California, San Diego will support the application until 2010. This fall, the beta version will be released and tested thoroughly. (On Tuesday, functional testing of the beta version with partners will begin.) In late summer, a proposal for the second development phase will be drafted, with the goal of making the Toolkit "multi-threaded," refining its collection management functionality, supporting non-English languages, designing and building new functional areas (including appraisal, user registration, and tracking), and addressing digital repository

applicability. Other goals include hiring a business consultant to come up with a more robust business plan to make the Toolkit more self-supporting, developing a robust user community and process, and developing a contributors' community. Eventually, the Toolkit will accommodate EAC as an output, and will be made available to users outside the United States.

•Encoded Archival Context (EAC) Working Group: Daniel Pitti

An EAC working group is to be formed to bring EAC from beta to full-blown version. TSDS will be charging such a group, which Kathy Wisser will chair. The Working Group began negotiation with two major repositories in Europe with respect to their co-hosting EAC. The first order of business is to write a grant proposal for support of the working group efforts.

•Research Libraries Group: Merrilee Proffitt

On July 1, 2006, RLG became part of OCLC. There are two components to the "coming together." One is services. The RLG union catalog and Archive Grid are being migrated to the OCLC environment. OCLC has its own MARC records, so this will make it a much richer resource. It will be better supported, and is now available for subscription. The other component is that the 12 staff from the RLG Programs Group will join the Office of Research at OCLC, which has 30-35 people and a 25 year history. This is the new division of Programs & Research. Furthermore, OCLC members will remain separate from RLG members. RLG members are now RLG Program Partners; things will continue to work as before. OCLC members will continue as in the past. This Saturday morning, Merrilee will speak on the future of finding aids based on usability studies on Archive Grid. She will focus on those aspects of description that users find most valuable. Merrilee encouraged us to support EAC and bring together large EAC records here in the United States. RLG is hoping to work on archive registries in United States and link to Archives Grid. RLG has also partnered with the Web Archive; most technological issues are fairly resolved, leaving a plethora of other issues to be solved. They will form a work plan to go forward. Next summer, the focus will be creating efficiencies in digitizing special collections. In spring, RLG will sponsor a "future of discovery and delivery" symposium. RLG is also exploring issues around digital preservation; there is a huge range of activities having to do with research libraries and museums. RLG will publish and disseminate the results.

III. New Business

•Election: Mark A. Matienzo was elected vice-chair/chair-elect.

•Ideas for Next Year's Description Section meeting:

The following ideas were discussed as possibilities for next year's Section meeting: EAC; the changing nature of online catalog, given that there are extensive discussions about this in the library world; the impact of "more product, less process" on user access; sessions not accepted for this year's conference.

•Announcements:

- Chris Prom announced Archon Project (<http://www.archon.org/>); it is similar to the Archivists' Toolkit. He is giving a demonstration immediately following the Section meeting.
- Adrian Cunningham spoke regarding Australian descriptive standards. 2006 is the 40th anniversary of Peter J. Scott questioning the record group concept. The Association of Australian Archivists (ASA) is publishing *Describing Archives in Context*, which will appear at the ASA web site (<http://www.archivists.org.au/>). Peter Scott is working with ASA in compiling a collection of his writings, which is expected to be out in 2007.
- Gerald Stone of the Library & Archives Canada gave a brief update on Rules for Archival Description (RAD) II. The Canadian Committee on Archival Description has had a change of membership and a new chair. A report is available on the web site (<http://www.cdncouncilarchives.ca/archdes.html>). Stone reported that the comments were mixed, which makes next steps difficult.
- Mark Matienzo announced that the American Institute of Physics compiles a survey of repositories holding history of physics collections every two years. August 15th is deadline to respond this year.

IV. Program

“Usability Testing as a Tool for Evaluation of Online Archival Access Tools,” Elizabeth Yakel, Associate Professor, School of Information, University of Michigan



NEWS & NOTES

International Standard on Activities/Functions of Corporate Bodies (ISAF) – Call for Comments

After ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF), the Committee of Best Practices and Professional Standards of the International Council of Archives (ICA/CBPS) intended to develop a new international standard providing guidance for preparing descriptions of functions and activities of corporate bodies associated with the creation and maintenance of archives (ISAF: International Standard on Activities/Functions of Corporate Bodies). Brazil, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland are currently involved in this project.

Like ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF), the future standard will be available in English and in French, and it will include about 20 descriptive elements, organized into information areas. The draft of standard (<http://www.ica.org/news.php?pnewsid=384&plangue=eng>) also comprises two chapters giving recommendations for establishing links between descriptions of functions/activities and archival descriptions compliant with ISAD(G) or with authority records compliant with ISAAR(CPF). The appendix contains examples of applications in different languages.

Comments should be sent to Claire Sibille, ICA/CBPS secretary (claire.sibille [at] culture.gouv.fr) by March 31, 2007. The committee has planned to hold a meeting in May 2007 in order to integrate the comments received between January and March 2007 into the text of the standard. The definitive version of ISAF will be presented in the international congress of archives at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) in 2008. Thereafter, a revision of ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF) should be engaged during the next four-year program in 2008-2012. We are at your disposal for any further information. Thank you in advance for your reactions and comments.

NARA Publishes Guide to Federal Records Relating to Civil Rights in the Post-World War II Era

Lisha Penn, Initial Processing/Declassification Division (NWMD), National Archives and Records Administration

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) will soon release a new finding aid publication, *Reference Information Paper 113, Federal Records Relating to Civil Rights in the Post-World War II Era*, compiled by staff archivists Walter Hill and Lisha Penn. RIP 113 describes pertinent civil rights-related records of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal government. It covers textual records in NARA's holdings in its Office of Records Services - Washington, DC; the Office of Regional Records Services; and the Office of Presidential Libraries. RIP 113 contains series and item-level descriptions of records of the White House, Supreme Court, and the Congress; the Departments of Justice (including the FBI and U.S. Marshall Service), Labor, Education, Commerce, and Transportation; the U.S. Civil Rights Commission; and the U.S. Army records.

RIP 113 supplements other NARA finding aids that provide information about African Americans in its holdings. These finding aids include: *Black History: A Guide to Civilian Records in the National Archives*; *Reference Information Paper 105, Records of Military Agencies Relating to African Americans from the Post-World War I Period to the Korean War*; *Reference Information Paper 108, Black Family Research: Records of Post-Civil War Federal Agencies at the National Archives*; *Reference Information Paper 112, Federal Records Pertaining to Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*; *Selected Documents Pertaining to Black Workers Among the Records of the Department of Labor and Its Component Bureaus, 1920-1969*; and *Select Audiovisual Records: Pictures of African Americans During World War II*.

Resource Description and Access (RDA) News

Mary Lacy, SAA liaison to ALA's Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access (CC:DA)

The Joint Steering Committee for the Revision of AACR (JSC) met in October 2006 to discuss comments received from the constituency review of part I (Resource Description) and concerns expressed by ALA regarding the RDA development process. The outcome of the meeting is available at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/0610out.html>. ALA had recommended that the JSC adopt a top-down development approach for RDA; that AACR2 should not be the only source of ideas and practices for RDA; that the development time line should be revised, allowing an opportunity to review RDA as a whole; that additional support was needed for the development of RDA; and that the decision-making authority and responsibility for RDA should be clarified. In response, the JSC and editor have prepared a scope statement for RDA to articulate more clearly the role of the FRBR (*Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records*) and FRAD (*Functional Requirements for Authority Data*) models as the basis for RDA parts A and B respectively; this document is available at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/docs/5rda-scope.pdf>. The development outline has been revised to allow for a review of the complete draft of RDA in July-September 2008, with RDA to be released in early 2009. The responsibilities of the JSC, the editor, and the editorial team were confirmed. A straw poll of ALA representatives confirms widespread dissatisfaction with the JSC response, and discussion of the most productive issues to press with JSC will form part of the CC:DA meeting at ALA Midwinter in Seattle on January 21 and January 23. The JSC also discussed issues raised in constituency review of Chapters 3 (Carrier Description), 6 (Related Resources), and 7 (Persons, Families, and Corporate Bodies Associated with a Resource). Revisions to Chapter 3 and 6-7 will be made available for constituency review in March and July 2007 respectively, before Part B is released for review in December 2007.

Archivists should note the JSC's decision concerning an extensive list of specialist cataloging manuals prepared by ALA for RDA; this list (<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/5ala3.pdf> and its follow-up <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/docs/5ala3-alafolup.pdf>) include manuals such as DACS for archival resources, as well as those appropriate for other formats, languages, and specialties. JSC and the constituencies agreed that a combined list would be a valuable resource and should be maintained on the JSC web site after the publication of RDA, rather than included in the text itself. The JSC has not yet acted on proposals regarding authorized forms of family names.

For further information on RDA, please consult the JSC site at <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/jsc/rda.html>, as well as the CC:DA site at <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/tas/jca/ccda/>.

Processing Project Started at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute

Lacy Schutz, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute

Work has begun on a two-year project to describe, house, and preserve the permanent records of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, the personal papers of Sterling Clark, and other important collections acquired by the Clark. The Clark is an art museum and center for research and higher education located in Williamstown, MA.

The project will establish an institutional archives and records management program for the Clark by appraising, describing, and rehousing the permanent records, and adopting an archives and records management policy. The project will include creating finding aids that will be accessible to researchers through the library's online catalog and other appropriate databases. At present, a work plan has been created; the bulk of the correspondence and realia series of Sterling Clark's personal papers have been evaluated, sorted and described; and an initial finding aid is being written.

This project is made possible by grants from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation. The project team includes a full-time archivist, a full-time archives assistant, and two part-time interns. A more detailed outline of this project can be found at http://clarkart.edu/library/archives_project.cfm.

Archivists' Toolkit™ Version 1.0 Available for Download

Bradley D. Westbrook, University of California, San Diego Libraries

The University of California, San Diego (UCSD), New York University (NYU), and the Five Colleges, Inc. have released the Archivists' Toolkit™ (AT) Version 1.0. It is available for download at <http://www.archiviststoolkit.org/>. The Archivists' Toolkit™ is being offered under an Educational Community License (ECL).

The AT is the first open source archival data management system to provide integrated support for accessioning, description, donor tracking, name and subject authority work, and location management for archival materials. The effort to build this application has benefited tremendously from the interested guidance of the archival community and was made possible through the generous funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Key Features:

- Integrated support for managing archival materials from acquisition through processing:
 - Recording repository information
 - Tracking sources / donors
 - Recording accessions
 - Basic authority control for names and topical subjects
 - Describing archival resources and digital objects
 - Managing location information
- Customizable interface:
 - Modify field labels
 - Establish default values for fields and notes where boilerplate text is used
 - Customize searchable fields and record browse lists
- Ingest of legacy data in multiple formats: EAD 2002, MARC XML, and tab delimited accession data
- Rapid data entry interface for creating container lists quickly
- Management of user accounts, with a range of permission levels to control access to data
- Tracking of database records, including username and date of record creation and most recent edit
- Generation of over 30 different administrative and descriptive reports, such as acquisition statistics, accession records, shelf lists, subject guides, etc.
- Export EAD 2002, MARC XML, METS, MODS, and Dublin Core
- Support for desktop or networked, single- or multi-repository installations

The Archivists' Toolkit™ Version 1.0 has been released with the following known issues, which will be addressed quickly:

1. The user manual is not completely up to date with the current version of the software, as testing and development have continued up to the point of release. Therefore, some chapters will have outdated screen shots, or no screen shots. The user manual is serviceable, however, and will be brought completely up to date very soon.
2. All exports are valid, but some may be imperfect. For example, MARC XML output is not in MARC tag sequence order. These minor improvements will be addressed shortly after the release.
3. The Archivists' Toolkit™ currently accepts non-valid EAD, allowing poorly structured data to be imported into the application. This will not be possible in subsequent releases. In the meantime, archivists can mitigate the issue by validating their EAD files before importing them into the Toolkit.
4. Targets are not created for references in exported EAD files. Thus, internal links in an EAD file will not work.
5. The source code has not yet been made available generally. If you would like the source code, please contact info [at] [archiviststoolkit.org](http://www.archiviststoolkit.org).

The release of the AT application concludes 30 months of development and followed immediately by 12 weeks of comprehensive testing of the beta version by over 60 testers at 20 institutions, including Georgia Institute of Technology, Getty Research Institute, Harvard University, Princeton University, and the University of Michigan. A report of the beta test is available on the project web site.

At nearly the same time as the release of version 1.0, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation generously granted funding to support a second development phase. The project will continue to be a collaboration among the Five Colleges, Inc., NYU

Libraries, and the UCSD Libraries. Project staff will be located at each of the institutional sites, although some change in project personnel is anticipated. The second development phase, a 24-month period, will begin on February 15, 2007, immediately after the close of phase one. Details of the second phase will be posted to the Archivists' Toolkit web site shortly.

The second development phase will have three key objectives:

1. Refine the performance and functionality of AT Version 1.0, including enriching records to support export of assessment data to the Archival Metrics group (<http://www.si.umich.edu/ArchivalMetrics/>), establishing a one-to-many relationship from name-to-name contact information so that multiple contact data can be recorded for each name; promoting digital object records to a primary level; supporting tracking of temporary locations; redesigning the subject module to include more subject types and support faceted headings; including more data entry time savers, such as the Rapid Data Entry Screen and Repository Default Values already present in Version 1.0.; and supporting batch import and export processes.
2. Introduce new functionality, including support for user registration / use tracking, rights management, appraisal, and making the AT application interoperable with user authentication systems and digital repository applications.
3. Formulate and implement a business plan, in collaboration with an expert business consultant. Likely aspects of the plan will include implementing a community governance model for the application, developing a user community, and establishing an effective process for supporting use and development of the application, as well a sufficient staffing model.

Collections Online Web Site Offers New Access to Archives of American Art Collections

Mary Schlitt, Archives of American Art Collections, Smithsonian Institution

The Archives of American Art has launched Collections Online, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collectionsonline>, a new web site providing free access to the completely digitized collections of selected American artists, art galleries, collectors, and other art world figures. The web site is a key component of the Archives' five-year, \$3.6 million grant from the Terra Foundation for American Art to scan and make available online a substantial cross-section of the Archives' most important holdings. The site will eventually host more than 100 archival collections selected for their scholarly significance and broad-audience appeal.

The initial launch features the personal papers and archival records of painters Romare Bearden, Winslow Homer, Eastman Johnson, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, and Olive Rush, as well as such artists and promoters of American art as Holger Cahil, Alexander Calder, Joseph Cornell, and Walt Kuhn, whose papers include the records of the legendary 1913 Armory Show. Varying in size from the Eastman Johnson papers (29 digital files) to the Joseph Cornell papers (32,775 digital files), these collections are presented in their archival context and linked to detailed finding aids. Visitors to the site can examine letters, postcards, sketches, exhibition and sales records, diaries, and other unique documents from each collection with easy-to-use navigation, search, and viewing tools.

Highlights include:

- the diaries of Joseph Cornell, which span his career as an artist and record his day-to-day experiences and his reflections on his various art projects and creative activities;
- numerous personal photographs of Alexander Calder, including many of Calder at work in his studios; and
- 26 letters from Winslow Homer to art collector and friend Thomas B. Clarke, discussing Homer's artwork, exhibitions, sale of his work, and his family.

Creating a Processing Manual at the Penn State University Special Collections Library

Doris Malkmus, Pennsylvania State University Special Collections

Greene and Meissner's article, "More Product, Less Process," initiated a new look at archival processing at the Penn State University (PSU) Special Collections. Investigation of an increasing processing backlog resulted in PSU choosing a flexible, tiered system of processing and description that is elaborated in a new processing manual.

PSU Special Collections was recently formed from three previously independent archival units—the University Archives, Historical Collections and Labor Archives, and Rare Books and Manuscripts. Each unit had different processing practices, materials, and user bases. All three had significant backlogs.

As the new processing coordinator, one of my first tasks was to create and implement uniform procedures and descriptive practices. This required acquiring detailed information from each unit about their accessioning, processing, and description procedures. Open communication helped settle on procedures that each unit was willingly to adopt; however, introducing "More Product/Less Process" standards required allowing unit heads to have the flexibility to choose which collections and parts of collections would receive folder, series, or item-level processing. Adopting flexible procedures was necessary for acceptance of the new standards and practices. This flexibility has since proven successful for collections, access, and the reduction of the backlog.

PSU Special Collections has defined four levels of processing—box inventories, series-level processing, folder-level processing, and item-level processing. The first level reflects the practice used with the PSU Archives and consists of inventories of folder titles with minimal rearrangement and with special formats shelved separately. The second level, series-level processing, permits grouping of homogeneously arranged and/or labeled files to be entered under a collective folder title, for example, "Correspondence A-Z, 35 folders." The next level, folder-level processing, requires refolding all materials, supplying titles and dates, and listing box and folder numbers and accession numbers on each folder. Item-level processing usually applied to subsets of collections—graphic or media series, for example, but includes preservation photocopying, removing rusty fasteners, and unfolding papers.

Series and subgroups may have different levels of processing, with the most flexibility allowed for series-level description. A decision tree in the processing manual guides the choice between listing folders individually or collectively. The criteria for choosing aggregate description was fairly simple—if listing each folder adds no significant new keyword/access terms, AND if retrieval is not severely impacted, labeling folders in the aggregate is deemed adequate. Folders with proper names or other subject terms are entered individually. This change in practice was readily adopted by staff. It requires more deliberate training to teach staff to create series descriptions that provide good access to collections and for staff to consider which keywords a researcher might use.

The processing manual also includes chapters on basic archival theory and terms, accessioning procedures, a ready reference to DACS and capitalization style, and standards for entering information into the database. For more information about the manual, contact Doris Malkmus at [djm51 \[at\] psulias.psu.edu](mailto:djm51[at]psulias.psu.edu).

University of Maryland Libraries Forms DACS Committee

Jennie A. Levine, Archives and Manuscripts Department, University of Maryland

The Special Collections at the University of Maryland Libraries recently formed a DACS committee to evaluate current descriptive practices among various units and to work on a plan to bring University of Maryland archival description into compliance with DACS. The committee consists of curatorial and cataloging staff. The committee will create a framework to ensure that new description is completed consistently. The committee will also devise a plan to revise legacy MARC and EAD records when feasible.

The Archives at the University of Pennsylvania Law School Evaluates the Google Custom Search Engine Tool

Jordon Steele, University of Pennsylvania Law School

The Archives at the University of Pennsylvania Law School has implemented and continues to evaluate the Google Custom Search Engine tool (<http://www.google.com/coop/cse/overview>). I first learned of this new application while reading a recent issue of Google's *Librarians' Newsletter*. I chose to explore the possibilities of this tool based on the following aspects of the Archives at Penn Law:

1. The Archives consists of almost 1,000 cubic feet of a wide range of legal history materials, including the records of the American Law Institute, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Law, and the National Bankruptcy Archives. I needed to bring together information contained in the finding aids of these disparate collections.
2. The library (of which the Archives is a unit) shares its IT department with the law school. Therefore, it is difficult to coordinate ambitious projects, such as the design of a customized search engine for the Archives' finding aids. The Archives needed a simpler solution.
3. The Archives is run by me, a lone arranger. Thus, it was important that a search engine be quick to create and easy to maintain.

The finding aid for the records of the American Law Institute (ALI) was used as the pilot project to test the search engine. The ALI Archives is one of the most important and the most trafficked finding aid on the library's web site. Furthermore, the current design of the finding aid makes it difficult for researchers (and the archivist) to search the 400-plus boxes of records represented therein.

The Google search engine was very easy to create. The search engine wizard requires you to identify which web pages the search engine should crawl. Then, metadata descriptors are requested to help the search engine "learn" the content of the pages. Finally, Google generates a search engine based on your choices and provides HTML code for you to paste into your web page. Further customization options are available.

The ALI Archives search engine (<http://www.law.upenn.edu/bll/collections/ALI.html>) debuted in December 2006. The Archives has reached the following conclusions regarding the search engine's usability that may be helpful to other archives interested in this tool. First, a search engine is only as good as the finding aid it is searching. If anything, I realized that in order for the search engine to be truly effective, I should enhance the series' scope and content notes dramatically because the contextual understanding provided by the finding aid is no longer relevant in the decentralized list of search results. Second, the search engine appears to rank based on keyword hits and not on EAD or metadata tags that may privilege certain types of information over others. Finally, despite the limitations of the search engine, the Archives has decided that the search engine is a practical option for a small department with limited IT support that wants a basic level of searchability of its web-based content. In other words, the Google search engine may not be perfect, but it is better than having nothing.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Reopens its Archives

Meaghan Buchanan, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, a Southern Baptist Seminary located in New Orleans, is proud to announce that the first three collections in its Archives are finally ready for viewing. Currently, the Archives has finding aids for the Dr. W.W. Hamilton Collection, the Dr. Roland Q. Leavell Collection, and the Dr. John T. Christian Collection. All three men were instrumental in the development of the Seminary, Southern Baptist history, and general theological history. Other collections will be processed as time permits.

Houghton Library Completes Conversion of Manuscript Catalog

Leslie A. Morris, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Houghton Library's cataloged manuscript collections are now fully web-accessible through HOLLIS (<http://hollis.harvard.edu>), with the finding aids available in RLG's ArchivesGrid and in OASIS (<http://oasis.harvard.edu>), Harvard's finding aids database. The five-year project to migrate the manuscript card catalog to an electronic format saw the conversion of some 1,519 typescript collection finding aids to EAD 2002 (43,618 pages) and the creation of 5,717 MARC records (916 new collection-level records and 4,801 new single-item manuscript records). Completed last month, the conversion project was funded by Harvard University's Library Digital Initiative, with matching funds from the Harvard College Library.

“If researchers can't find a description of it online these days, it doesn't exist,” commented Project Director Leslie A. Morris, Houghton's curator of modern books and manuscripts. “This project was essential to bring the library into the modern digital research environment, and to provide easy access to Houghton's unique manuscripts worldwide. Additionally, it gives us the bibliographic infrastructure on which to build digital content easily, further improving access to our collections.”

Houghton's manuscript collection is diverse, with material in more than 40 languages, and ranging in date from ostraca from ca. 300 BCE to the latest novel by John Updike. The retrospective conversion project focused on material in Western languages, for which at least minimal descriptive information existed. This included material in Breton, Catalan, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Latin, Norwegian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Welsh; as well as Ethiopic, Hebrew, Oriya, Pali, and Sanskrit. For all materials, scope and content notes were added where needed; each single-item manuscript was examined and its physical description verified; old subject headings were standardized to conform to Library of Congress forms, and standard genre and form headings (such as diaries, galley proofs, seals, etc.) were added.

In addition to Morris, the project team included a project coordinator (first Jackie Dean, then Diane Booton) who created MARC records, performed quality control on finding aids returned from vendors, and coordinated the work of the 31 students employed by the project over the years who did rekeying, enhanced markup, and provided additional language expertise. Additionally, the grant funded a 15-month project cataloger (initially Diane Booton, then Susan Wyssen) to include the single-item manuscripts not part of collections.

“All projects throw off additional work to regular staff,” acknowledged Morris, “and we could not have made such rapid progress without being able to off-load difficult finding aid conversion problems onto senior manuscript cataloger Bonnie Salt, whose years of experience with Houghton manuscript cataloging made easy what, to temporary project staff, was difficult.” Houghton music cataloger Morris Levy contributed records for manuscript music, and manuscript cataloger James F. Coakley created records for Syriac and Department of Printing and Graphic Arts manuscripts, adding close to 1,000 records to the above totals.

Historical Society of Delaware Adds Search Function to its Web Site

Ed Chichirichi, Historical Society of Delaware

The Historical Society of Delaware (HSD) has recently added a search function to its web site (<http://www.hsd.org>). Internet visitors can now access in just a few seconds many of the HSD library's collections. Family historians with ties to Delaware and/or the mid-Atlantic region can access two recently completed online catalogs: the Society's Family Folder Collection and its outstanding collection of published and privately printed family history books, all of which are listed alphabetically on the HSD web site. Extensive additions to the HSD online catalog are planned and will be implemented on a regular basis as time allows. These additions will cover book, periodical, microfilm, and newspaper titles; genealogical resources; manuscript collections; photographs; and historic maps. A classic, comprehensive, “old fashioned” card catalog is still holding its ground at the HSD library. It can be accessed free of charge directly by the public during a visit or through a staff member with an email, letter, or phone call.

Indiana University Archives Launches Board of Trustees Minutes Web Site

Ryan K. Lee, Office of University Archives and Records Management, Indiana University-Bloomington

The Indiana University-Bloomington Office of University Archives and Records Management is pleased to announce it has launched a new web site to allow access to digitized versions of meeting minutes from the Indiana University (IU) Board of Trustees. These minutes includes official acts, resolutions, policies, agreements, and other business records pertaining to the governance of IU. Since November 1987, the Administrative Action Reports of the IU have been approved with the minutes. These monthly reports include the major administrative actions relating to construction, fiscal matters, personnel, and real estate. The new web site includes all minutes and Administrative Action Reports from 1982 to the present.

The IU Board of Trustees minutes web site is the result of a cooperative project between the IU Digital Library Program, Office of University Archives and Records Management, and the Board of Trustees Office to provide access to a growing number of meeting minutes on the web. The minutes are encoded in XML using the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) Guidelines (version P4). The TEI Guidelines allow for encoding of the document structure with specific document features, such as resolutions, policies, tables, and dates. Using the open source Extensible Text Framework (XTF) developed by the California Digital Library, this site allows full-text searching as well as searching within specific sections of the minutes, such as policies and resolutions.

The IU Archives houses the official paper copies of the minutes from 1835 to the present, except 1859-1883 which were destroyed in a campus fire in 1883. While the current web site includes only the past 25 years of minutes, the site will be updated periodically as encoding progresses, with a goal to encode all available minutes documenting the majority of IU's history. This digitization project will allow increased and more efficient access to a large body of historical records that will likely be valuable to both researchers and IU administrators.

The official URL of this web site is: <http://www.dlib.indiana.edu/collections/iubot/>. Feel free to visit the site and contact the IU Archives with comments or questions about the project: (812) 855-1127, archives [at] indiana.edu.

University of California Launches Calisphere Web Site

Calisphere (<http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu>) offers educators, students, and the public access to more than 150,000 images, documents, and other primary source materials from the libraries and museums of the University of California (UC) campuses and cultural heritage organizations across California. Calisphere's primary sources include photographs, documents, newspapers, political cartoons, works of art, diaries, transcribed oral histories, advertising, and other cultural artifacts that reveal the diverse history and culture of California and its role in national and world history. The site also provides a single entry point to more than 300 UC-created web sites on a wide variety of subjects.

Calisphere's primary source sets include overviews that provide historical context. The site's special features include:

- Themed collections: Primary source materials are organized into historical eras, from the Gold Rush to the 1970s, and aligned with California Content Standards for K-12 use.
- California Cultures: California's multicultural heritage is revealed through photographs and documents selected from UC's libraries and special collections relating to African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans. The collection also features teacher-created lesson plans. California Cultures was funded through an appropriation from the U.S. Congress through the Library of Congress American Memory program.
- Japanese American Relocation Digital Archives: More than 10,000 personal and official images and documents bring educators inside the story of Japanese-American internment during World War II.

Calisphere is a public service project of the California Digital Library (<http://www.cdlib.org>).

Progress Made in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Digitization Initiative

James Roth, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum

The Archives staff at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum is beginning to plan and develop the workflow processes, standards, and management issues associated with building a digital archives. Announced on June 9, 2006, the digitization initiative is the result of a gift that the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation received from the EMC Corporation. The initiative to digitize, index, and archive millions of presidential documents, manuscripts, photographs, and audio/visual recordings is a complex undertaking and will change the duties and processes of the Archives as a whole. The Archives staff has established three working groups to oversee its development: the Core Group, the Metadata Working Group, and the Document Preparation Working Group.

The Core Group acts as the steering committee that oversees the entire process. The Core Group has developed criteria of duties and responsibilities for the personnel structure needed to support the work associated with building a digital archives. The John F. Kennedy Foundation has begun the process of hiring two metadata catalogers, with the possibility of hiring more catalogers and an assistant digital archivist in the near future.

The Document Preparation Working Group has developed standards for the removal of fasteners to ease scanning of documents, for identifying types of materials, and for intellectual control over associated materials by physical grouping (Archival Information Packets). These standards will allow materials to be safely scanned and their original order to be retained throughout the scanning process. The Working Group has created a basic guide to document preparation, based upon these standards.

The Metadata Working Group has developed standards for description to provide the best access to materials and to ensure that collection information is of high quality and meets the general standards available in the larger arena of digital access. Core metadata fields have been identified and discussed, with discussion centering on whether each identified field would be mandatory in order to save a file, and what substance each identified field will contain. The core identifiers in the Kennedy Library DAMS process will map to Dublin Core and to mandatory ARC (NARA's Archival Research Catalog) fields that do not already map to Dublin Core. The group is creating a standardized vocabulary for metadata tagging and descriptive input by developing an internal thesaurus with controlled terms drawing from authorities, including NARA, Library of Congress, University of Minnesota, and others.

Furthermore, the application software packages have been installed, and the group has been creating ways to input metadata, descriptive information, and databases for documents, images, moving images, sound files, and in the future, for three-dimensional objects.

The first collection selected for digitization is the President's Office Files, which consist of the working files of President Kennedy as maintained by his personal secretary, Mrs. Evelyn Lincoln, in the Oval Office of the White House (81 feet).

Stephen Phillips House Receives Processing Grant

The Stephen Phillips House, the newest property of Historic New England, has recently received grant funding from the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) to process the papers of Stephen Willard Phillips (1873–1955). The grant funding will provide for an archivist to process approximately 75 linear feet of archival material belonging to Stephen Willard Phillips, lawyer, philanthropist, and Hawaiian scholar. The project will culminate with a finding aid accessible via the Phillips House Web site and associated collections at the Peabody Essex Museum and the Phillips Library.

Smithsonian Directory of Airplanes Now Available Online

The National Air and Space Museum Archives and the Smithsonian Institution Research Information System now offer online an expanded version of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum Directory of Airplanes, Their Designers and Manufacturers. Available for free at <http://siris-thesauri.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=planes> and edited by former museum archivist Dana Bell, the guide serves as a single authoritative listing of aircraft names organized by designer and manufacturer.

Museum efforts to process and describe its aircraft reference files led to creation of the directory, which is a valuable resource for any institution or private collector involved with cataloging aviation material. Previously there was no single reference of its kind to serve the needs of the museum's archives. The directory covers human-carrying, heavier-than-air vehicles that are supported primarily by dynamic lift. Included are airplanes, gliders, hang gliders, helicopters, autogiros, and ornithopters. The directory does not include lighter-than-air craft (such as balloons and dirigibles), missiles, rockets, spacecraft, and any aircraft designed to fly as a remotely piloted or unmanned aerial vehicle.

Features of the online expanded directory include: more than 34,000 individual aircraft and more than 6,600 aircraft manufacturers; the ability to search by model or manufacturer using full or partial names; additional background notes frequently provided with search results; and cross-references to assist in finding entries more easily.

National Archives and Footnote Launch Project to Digitize Historic Documents

Archivist of the United States Allen Weinstein and Footnote, Inc. CEO Russell Wilding announced an agreement to digitize selected records from the vast holdings of the National Archives. The 4.5 million pages that have been digitized so far are now available at <http://www.footnote.com/nara>.

This non-exclusive agreement, beginning with the sizeable collection of materials currently on microfilm, will enable researchers and the general public to access millions of newly digitized images of the National Archives' historic records on a subscription basis from the Footnote web site. By February 6, the digitized materials will also be available at no charge in National Archives research rooms in Washington D.C. and regional facilities across the country. After an interval of five years, all images digitized through this agreement will be available at no charge through the National Archives web site.

"This is an exciting step forward for the National Archives," said Professor Weinstein. "It will immediately allow much greater access to approximately 4.5 million pages of important documents that are currently available only in their original format or on microfilm. The digitization of documents will also enhance our efforts to preserve our original records."

"The partnership with the National Archives will expand significantly the content we are able to offer professional and amateur researchers," said Footnote CEO Russell Wilding. "We will continue to add millions of original documents and images monthly."

The following represents a portion of the millions of historic documents that will be made available as part of the National Archives - Footnote Agreement.

- *Papers of the Continental Congress (1774-1789)*. The papers of the Continental Congress include journals of the Congress, reports of its committees, papers submitted by state governments, and correspondence of its Presidents and other officers with diplomatic representatives of the United States abroad, officers in the Continental Army, state and local officials, and private persons. Among the papers are copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Northwest Ordinance, the Constitution, and other documents instrumental in molding the new government. Also included are drafts of treaties and commercial agreements, papers relating to expenditures and loans, reports of military progress during the Revolution, and papers relating to Indian treaties and tribes.

- *Mathew B. Brady Collection of Civil War Photographs*. One of the largest and most frequently researched bodies of Civil War photography anywhere, this series originated with some 6,000 glass plate negatives acquired by the War Department from Brady in 1874-1875. Encompassing images by the enterprising Brady and more than a dozen other photographers, including Alexander Gardner and Timothy O'Sullivan, directly or indirectly associated with him, the series ranges from Brady Gallery portraits of leading military and political personalities of the 1850s-1860s to views of units, battlefields, ruins, landscapes, camps, hospitals, prisons, fortifications, bridges, and railroads from Fredericksburg to Chickamauga to Atlanta.
- *Southern Claims Commission*. In the 1870s, some southerners claimed compensation from the U.S. government for items used by the Union Army, ranging from corn and horses, to trees and church buildings. The claim files contain a wealth of genealogical information and consist of petitions, inventories of properties lost, testimony of family members and others, reports, and certificates submitted by claimants to the Southern Claims Commission as proof of loyalty to the federal government and value of property damaged or lost during the Civil War. The materials are arranged by state and thereunder by the name of the claimant
- *Name Index to Civil War and Later Pension Files*. Pension applications for service in the U.S. Army between 1861 and 1900, grouped according to the units in which the veterans served. The name index to the Civil War and Later Pension Application Files contains over 3 million index entries documenting the applications of soldiers, sailors, and their widows. The index is the entry point for one of the most significant bodies of federal records documenting the lives of volunteers who served in the Civil War, the western Indian Wars, and the Spanish American War.
- *Investigative Case Files of the Bureau of Investigation, 1908-1922*. The Bureau of Investigation investigated real and perceived threats to the nation and its citizens before it became the FBI. The materials compiled by the BOI from 1908 to 1922 consist of an index to the investigative case files, general investigative records, investigative records relating to German aliens from 1915 through 1920, investigative records relating to Mexican neutrality violations from 1909 through 1921, and investigative records transferred from the Department of Justice from 1920 through 1921. The records are arranged alphabetically by the name of the person or organization investigated.

Founded in 1997 as iArchives, Inc., Footnote is a subscription based web site that features searchable original documents that provide users with an unaltered view of the events, places, and people that shaped the American nation and the world. At Footnote.com all are invited to come to share, discuss, and collaborate on their discoveries with friends, family, and colleagues. For more information, visit <http://www.footnote.com>.

Draft of Standards for Processing of Archival Music Material Available

Matt Snyder, New York Public Library

The Working Group on Archival Music Materials for the Preservation Committee of the Music Library Association has made available a draft version of *Standards for Processing of Archival Music Material*. The manual outlines basic archival theory and practice for music librarians not familiar with them, offers pre-processing/cataloging advice, provides general guidelines and examples on how to deal with music scores in the context of a finding aid, and offers references to published manuals on how to deal with other materials commonly found in archival collections. The manual is offered as a companion content standard to DACS. To obtain a copy, contact Matt Snyder at [msnyder\[at\]nypl.org](mailto:msnyder[at]nypl.org).

WANTED: YOUR PROCESSING MANUALS

Members of the Description Section are interested in reviewing processing manuals from institutions around the country. Please send copies, questions, or comments to Michelle Light at [michelle.light\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:michelle.light[at]gmail.com).

Submit news items to Michelle Light ([michelle.light\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:michelle.light[at]gmail.com))