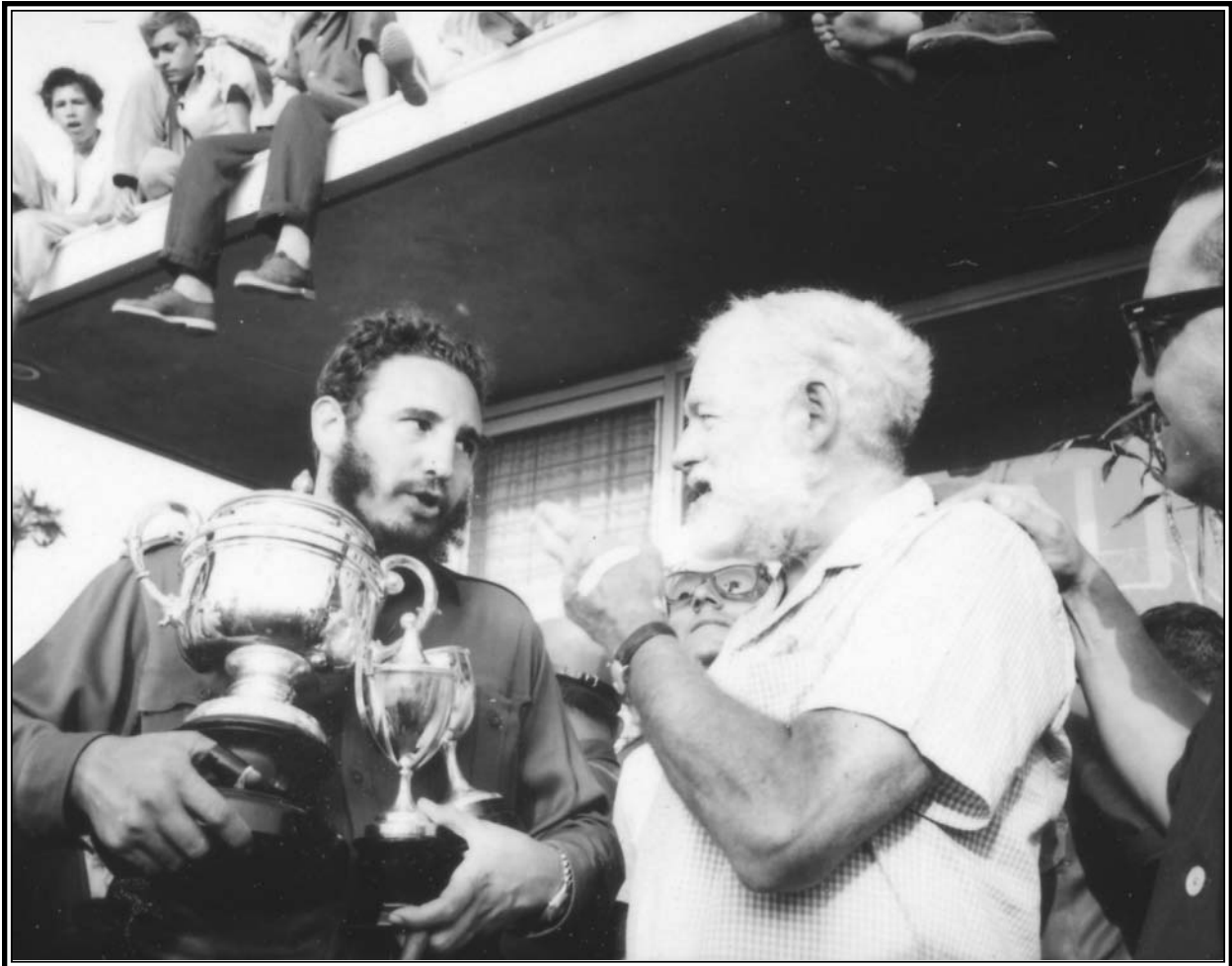


N E A N E W S L E T T E R

Volume 34, Number 2 • April 2007



C O V E R — From the Cuban Revolution Collection: Ernest Hemingway and Fidel Castro trading fishing stories at the Hemingway fishing tournament in Barlovento, Havana in 1957. Photograph by Andrew St. George. *Courtesy of Manuscript & Archives, Yale University Library, Yale University.*

I N S I D E — Martha Mahard's "Why I Teach" (*Archival Insight*, page 4); Tom Hyry's "Our Man In Havana" (*Open Forum*, page 20).

N E A

New England Archivists

TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

WPI Archives and Special Collections
Gordon Library
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<www.newenglandarchivists.org>

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Dues of \$30/year (\$40 for institutions) should be sent to: Rodney Obien, WPI Archives and Special Collections, Gordon Library, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609.

Notices of archival events should be sent to: NEA c/o WPI Archives and Special Collections, Gordon Library, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609, or electronically to <michael.forstrom@yale.edu>.

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Articles and **News** of interest to archivists, historical society members, historians, and other NEA members should be sent to: *NEA Newsletter* Editors, c/o WPI Archives and Special Collections, Gordon Library, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609, or <newsletter@newenglandarchivists.org>.

Contributions to the NEA Web site should be sent to: <webcoordinator@newenglandarchivists.org>.

Deadlines for submitting materials are:

November 15 for January issue
February 10 for April issue
May 15 for July issue
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From the Editors

- Michael L. Forstrom

I would like to stretch the facts and suggest that this April 2007 issue of the *NEA Newsletter* had grand ambitions: there is a call for standardization in cataloging, there is discussion of the spread of XML-based standards, there is a profile of archival practice in a place outside of New England. Alas, the contents of the issue owe as much to chance as to design. Nonetheless, this issue does offer reflections, impressions, and evidence on the growth of international standards in descriptive practice and collaboration in our profession.

In *Archival Insight*, Martha Mahard, Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, reflects on her three-plus decades of professional experience in the Harvard libraries, in such positions as Curator of Historic Photographs in the Fine Arts Library, and on her "second career" at Simmons as an instructor of such courses as "Cataloging Photographs for Librarians and Archivists." Mahard's article, entitled "Why I Teach," provides a brief history of the changes and peculiarities to control of visual materials from the 1970s to date: catalog cards, MARC VM, format integration, controlled vocabularies and name authorities, and federated searching. Mahard shows how different cataloging

practices lead records down separate rabbit holes, a warning shot if you will, and concludes by emphasizing the value of standardization and collaboration in our practice.

In a special *Open Forum* feature, Tom Hyry, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, provides a glimpse at archival practice in neighboring Cuba. Along with Yale faculty and other Yale University Library staff, Hyry had the privilege of making a professional trip to Cuba this past year to continue work on the Cuban Revolution Collection, a collection in Yale's Manuscript and Archives documenting Cuba in the 1950s and 1960s. Hyry's article, entitled "Our Man in Havana," offers impressions on archival practice in Cuba, touching on holdings, international standards, processing, access, and preservation.

In complementary pieces to these articles, there are reviews by Matthew Mason and Michael Rush for *Photographs: Archival Care and Management* (2006) and *Encoding Across Frontiers: Proceedings of the European Conference on Encoded Archival Description and Context (EAD and EAC)* (2005) respectively. Finally, in the President's column, Nora Murphy discusses the organization's recent efforts to develop new conference and educational opportunities through changes to the meeting formats (coming fall 2007) and workshops. ☺

☺ NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS ☺

Announcing the New England Archivists Fall 2007 Conference

Dialogues: New Directions for College, University and School Archives

**October 12-13, 2007
Dodd Center, University of Connecticut**

The Fall 2007 New England Archivists meeting will explore the new and old challenges facing college, university and school archivists in the rapidly changing world of higher and secondary education. Come and join colleagues in discussions about new directions in our archives, how these directions affect us, how we are handling current struggles, and what shape our archives will take in the future.

For further information, please contact
Elizabeth Slomba, Program Chair <eslomba@cisunix.unh.edu>

Archival Insight

Why I Teach

Martha R. Mahard, Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science

I have been teaching at the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science for fifteen years now, having started with the course on the History of Visual Communication and the following year adding the Management of Photographic Archives. Over the years I've added Art Documentation, Moving Image Materials in Libraries and Archives, and Introduction to Preservation Management to my repertoire. I occasionally take to the road for SAA, giving workshops on Describing Photographs, and I have given similar short workshops for various local organizations, including NEA. I can hear you asking yourself, "How did she get so lucky?"

Well, it turns out to be a great second career for me and I welcomed the invitation to share a few thoughts about it with you. During my thirty-five years at Harvard I had the opportunity to work with rare books, manuscripts, photographs and negatives, prints and drawings, playbills, posters, ceramic portrait statuettes, ephemera of all kinds, and, of particular interest to me, theatrical promptbooks. Out of this experience came my passionate interest in the use of visual materials as documents.

A promptbook, generally combining a printed text with manuscript annotations, may record details of how a director or an actor plans to move through a scene. For scholars seeking to verify or amplify what is found here, further evidence must be sought. Typically newspaper clippings of first night reviews, diary entries, and visual doc-

uments all combine to provide a researcher with a better understanding of what all those obscure markings add up to. When I first started working with these fascinating documents I gave little thought to how scholars located such necessary evidence: I worked in a world-renowned special collection that had over a million playbills and several hundred thousand prints, drawings, and photographs of theatrical performers. Materials were arranged in what we would now describe as "self-indexed" collections, that is, alphabetically by performer's name, alphabetically by name of play, alphabetically by state, city, and name of theatre for the playbills and so on. Scholars came from around the world to discover what we had. While most researchers wrote ahead to let us know that they were coming and what they wanted to see, some simply appeared and had no idea whether or not they would find something relevant to their study. Knowing what I know today, I can truly say that the mind boggles!

Still, the experience makes a useful object lesson when I am teaching. My students have little difficulty in seeing the many problems that inhere to such a situation, the very least of which is the amount of extra handling involved in locating any one item.

After finishing my M.L.I.S. in 1988 my second job at Harvard took me to the Graduate School of Design, where I was in charge of a medium-sized collection of 35mm slides, lantern slides, and historic photographs, as well as maps and plans. Working with a col-

lection of teaching slides is probably one of those circles of Hell that Dante failed to visit. In addition to multiplying in the night, the little devils require mounting, labeling, and cataloging; they are seldom the right view for the particular faculty member standing in front of you, or they have faded to a nasty shade of magenta since you last saw them. I think my experience there reached a nadir when a graduate student came in, looked around and asked, "Are these arranged in any order?"

Funny that you should ask me that! When I arrived at the GSD one of the first things I was asked to do was to set up an automated cataloging system for the slide collection. Great! A chance to put my newly-minted degree to work. I had learned my lessons well and went about laying the groundwork for a simple system that would grow and, after more than ten years labor, evolve into Harvard's image cataloging utility, known as OLIVIA. We made lots of mistakes along the way and we also learned a lot, but more than anything else it is this experience that I draw on in my teaching. I worked in collaboration with faculty, with technical computer support people, with colleagues in other disciplines, and with administrators at all levels.

Starting out as I did in 1970 my career spanned the transition from the manually created card catalog era to the OPAC and the wonders of the web and all things digital. Visual materials are a natural for the online environment – so many things that have been

neglected or little used because they were not known to exist outside of some curator’s memory now are receiving new life and a chance to be of use to vast numbers of scholars and researchers world-wide.

But wait a minute, there’s a snag – well, you knew there had to be one, right? Right. Because we did not have the kind of cataloging records that made the transfer from the card catalog to the OPAC possible, we found ourselves at a disadvantage. Many visual resources professionals sought solutions through tools more appropriate to textual materials, forcing awkward and seldom satisfactory results. We struggled with the MARC VM format and then “format integration.”

But the data structure standards were only part of the picture. The real heart of the matter came when we considered terminology for populating these fields. As was the case with the archival community, the visual resources folks were unaccustomed to sharing data about their collections. Collections were considered to be idiosyncratic at least, if not unique, and the notion of shared data took some time to sink in. True, we shared lists of accepted terms and abbreviations through our publications, but strict adherence to these projects was unenforceable. Many collections that were used as teaching resources rather than as special collections were in the position of accommodating faculty whim when using discipline specific terminology. The arrival of such wonderful tools as the Getty *Union List of Artists Names* (ULAN) and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT) combined with LC’s *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials* (TGM) made standardization of vocabularies and name authorities a

reality for the VR community.

We have the tools, but we are still not using them to their best advantage. Just as it took a lot of us a long time to stop using our computers like typewriters, we have not completely found the means to take the masses of legacy data (plus the negative mass of no data – remember my self-indexed files) and put them through the standards sieve.

My great hope in teaching is that I am training a new generation to go out and put these standards into practice. In the service of our users we will never be able to make the best use of the available technology without spending the human time to address the issue of standardization. Where “local practice” once meant tailoring your work to meet the known needs of a small but predictable user group, it can now be a pathway to obscurity.

Sharing data across visual collections still seems like an unreachable grail. Even with widespread acceptance of standards we have an enormous challenge ahead as we seek to establish best practices for their application.

The world-wide-web has presented us with a formidable challenge that I hope will force some new thinking about cross-repository collaboration. Among other things, the web has

obscured the lines between different types of repositories — at least for the user. Researchers may not grasp the difference between a photograph in a museum and one in an archive, but the differences in cataloging practice may mean that the researcher finds only a small subset of available material. Let me give you an example from my own experience.

The Harvard Portrait Collection includes a portrait of Herman Melville by American painter Joseph Oriel Eaton. The portrait is catalogued and reproduced in the VIA catalogue.¹ Searching options in VIA allow the user to limit their searches such that, if someone looking for this painting performs a search limited to “names” for Herman Melville, they find the following record in Figure 1 (below).

This search yields a record for the slide, but no record for the original painting. Alas, the reason for this lies in the differences in cataloging practice. In order to locate the painting itself one must search the name as a keyword (or “anywhere”), which yields the following record in Figure 2 (page 6).

Museum practice includes the name of the subject only in the title and provides no indexed searching for this information, forcing the user to rely on the imprecision of the “any-

Figure 1

| Work | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Title: | Portrait of Herman Melville |
| Classification: | 382 Ea 82 5 Me (Harvard Fine Arts Library, Visual Collections - Slides and Digital Images) |
| Work Type: | painting |
| Creator: | Eaton, Joseph Oriel (1829-1875), United States |
| Date: | 1870 |
| Dimensions: | 25 1/2 x 21" [67.2 cm. x 54.4 cm., sight] |
| Associated Name: | Melville, Herman (1819-1891), United States |
| Topics: | portraits; authors; beards |
| Materials/Techniques: | oil on canvas |
| Note: | General: Credit line: Gift to Houghton Library of Mrs. Henry K. Metcalf |
| Repository: | Harvard University Portrait Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States H585 |

where” search. Further comparison of the records reveals additional oddities which only serve to emphasize my point. This is but one small example from one large collection. Similar infelicities abound. Not because we are bad catalogers, but because we have not been able to bring our standards into line. It is essential that our tools serve our users in locating the resources they need. We do them no service by clinging to practices that obscure rather than illuminate. Collaboration and compromise will enable us to move forward, but it is my hope that by training a new generation to under-

Figure 2

| Work | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Title: | Herman Melville (1819-1891) |
| Item Identifier: | H585 (Accession Number) |
| Work Type: | Painting |
| Creator: | Joseph Oriel Eaton ((Newark, Ohio, 1829 - 1875, Yonkers, N.Y.)) |
| Date: | 1870 |
| Dimensions: | 67.31 cm x 54.61 cm sight |
| Nationality/Culture: | American; American |
| Materials/Techniques: | Oil |
| Note: | Gift of Mrs. Henry K. Metcalf to the Houghton Library, Harvard University, 1961 |
| Repository: | Harvard University Portrait Collection |
| Record Identifier: | HUAM633 |

stand the complexities of what has gone before we can anticipate a future when our inter-disciplinary differences have become transparent to all. ☺

¹ http://via.harvard.edu:9080/via/deliver/full-RecordDisplay?_collection=via&inoID=31772&recordNumber=3&fullgridwidth=5&method=view&recordViewFormat=grid.

Announcing New England Archivists Fall 2007 Educational Workshops

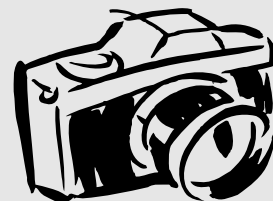
The Education Committee will be offering a series of regional workshops to complement the Fall 2007 NEA conference.

Topics, instructors, and locations to be announced in the coming months.

For further information, inquiries, or if you are interested in instructing an educational workshop, please contact Jaimie Quaglino, Chair, NEA Education Committee at <jaimie.quaglino@nara.gov> or 617.514.1577 or Chris Burns at <Chris.Burns@uvm.edu>.

Please visit us online at
<www.newenglandarchivists.org>
for more information about
becoming a member of NEA

Attention Amateur Photographers!



The Public Relations Committee seeks to compile a list of photographers to be made available to all NEA committees. Individuals with high quality digital cameras can help document the NEA organization by taking photographs of members, keynote speakers, leadership and committees at bi-annual meetings, special events, etc. To join the list of photographers, contact Tracy Messer at: <tracy.messer@crotchedmountain.org>. ☺

Inside NEA

From the President

- Nora Murphy



As archivists we constantly look for ways to share information about what we're doing and to learn how others are solving (or at least coping with!) the myriad of issues involved in the care of archives and manuscript collections. Over the course of the past year or so the NEA Board has been trying to 'think outside the box' about ways to provide opportunities for members to gather so that there can be more substantive discussion on specific areas of concern to archivists. This year the board decided to experiment, with the result that the meetings and workshops will be slightly different in format and content than usual.

The spring meeting (which will have taken place by the time you read this) will be the more traditional format, but the Fall 2007 Meeting will focus on issues of particular concern to anyone working with college, university, and school archives. Many of the program offerings will also be of interest to those working in other types of repositories, and we hope that no member is discouraged from attending – different perspectives on a question would enrich the discussions. The format will be a day and a half of sessions, rather than a single day, and the cost will be higher than normal because of the extended format. The meeting, entitled "Dialogues: New Directions for College, University and School Archives," will take place on October 12-13, 2007 at the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut.

In addition, the Education Committee is planning workshops with a broader appeal in several different venues in the region. More information about the workshops will be posted on the Web site as it becomes available.

Meetings and workshops provide more than educational opportunities – they are a chance to see colleagues we don't always have the chance to see otherwise and to network with friends, new and old, about how we carry out our work. Please don't hesitate to contact me, incoming NEA President Chris Burns, or any member of

the NEA Board with ideas about how we can work together, support each other in our work, and advance archival theory and practice. ☺

Executive Board Meeting Report

- Elizabeth Slomba



The business handled at the January 22, 2007 meeting of the Executive Board is summarized below. All **VOTING** is in bold. Complete minutes are available on the NEA Web site or from the secretary.

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. by Nora Murphy. Minutes from the October 20, 2006 Board Meeting were presented. **All members voted to accept the October 20, 2006 Board Meeting minutes as amended.**

Officers' Reports

Vice-President

Chris Burns discussed the plans for the Fall 2007 Meeting and workshops and possibilities on where to hold the Spring 2007 Meeting. **All members voted to appoint to the Fall 2007 Local Arrangements Committee Kristin Eshelman, University of Connecticut, chair; Tara Hurt, Eastern Connecticut State University; Betsy Pittman, Steve Showers, Otis and Melissa Watterworth, University of Connecticut; and to the Fall 2007 Program Committee Elizabeth Slomba, University of New Hampshire, chair; Karen Adler Abramson, Brandeis University; Daria D'Arienza, Amherst College; Ed Desrouchers, Phillips-Exeter Academy; Tom Rosko, MIT; Melissa Watterworth, University of Connecticut; and Nanci Young, Smith College.**

Immediate Past President

The Nominating Committee has found candidates for the open board positions and the candidate statements will be out in the newsletter and on the Web site. There was discussion about whether to reevaluate the mailing of full candidate statements since the statements appear in the newsletter and on the Web site.

Treasurer

Lois Hamill reviewed the final budget for the Fall 2006 Meeting and the current financial balance statements. She mentioned the effect that outstanding bills from fiscal year 2006 have on fiscal year 2007. She also discussed how NEA had a profitable year in 2006 due to having fewer expenses and more income than budgeted.

The board reviewed the proposed 2007 budget. There was discussion about the higher cost of postage, funding membership's work on the online membership directory, various committee requests, the impact of outstanding bills on the budget, and accounting for membership dues. The board discussed at length the benefits of online membership renewal and conference registration, how to enable online renewal and registrations, the cost to NEA, and what purchasing a security certificate would mean. The board would like to see proposals for handling online renewals and registrations before making a decision to implement online purchasing. The board also discussed how to budget better for conference expenses and income. **All members voted to approve the 2007 Budget as amended with expenses of \$47,488.**

Meetings

Spring 2007 Program and Local Arrangements Committees

The program for the Spring 2007 Meeting has been set and the schedule includes NEA committee meetings, which will be open to the membership.

Jane Ward discussed the planning and the budget for the spring conference. She went over the various anticipated expenses for food and other items and their effects on the overall budget. **All members voted to set the registration fee for the Spring 2007 Meeting at \$60 for members, \$90 for non-members, and \$30 for students.**

Fall 2007 Program and Local Arrangements Committees

Planning for the fall conference is under way. The conference will be at the University of Connecticut from October 12-13, 2007. The title will be "Dialogues: New Directions for College, University and School Archives." The board discussed publicity for this conference and the workshops to be held throughout the region this fall.

Committee Reports to the Board

Education Committee

All members voted to appoint Jay Gaidmore, University Archivist, Brown University to the Education Committee for a term of 3 years to run February 2007 to February 2010. Jaimie Quaglino reported on the forms for workshop instructors developed by the committee for use in scheduling future workshops. She discussed the workshops to be held at the Spring 2007 Meeting and the committee's planning for the fall 2007 workshops.

Membership Recruitment and Retention Task Force

The task force submitted a report looking at retention of members. The committee designed a survey to be sent to non-renewing members to determine why they were not renewing. Information from this survey is expected to inform the task force why members leave NEA and how the organization can retain members. The task force would also like to compare the past membership with the present membership. They also would like to gather information about what types of archives and institutions members work in so they can determine what types of members are leaving. There was a lengthy discussion about whether requiring non-members to pay for NEA membership when registering for conferences or workshops was detrimental to retaining members or having correct membership numbers. The committee will send out their survey after the spring meeting.

The task force was concerned that the membership hears little from NEA beyond the newsletter in the months



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dating back to January 2002.

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online exclusively to NEA members.

between conferences. In response to this concern, they are looking at ways to supplement NEA conferences with local, roundtable, and other informal group meetings in order to create community feeling through the year.

The committee also suggested online renewal on the Web site and review of the timeline of when the renewals come up, with the possibility of changing the date of renewal. There was additional discussion of why those in the profession should be members and how to mentor potential members into joining NEA.

Web Coordinator

All members voted to appoint Krista Ferrante, American Antiquarian Society, as Web Coordinator, to serve a term of 3 years to run from February 2007 to January 2010. Krista Ferrante requested pictures of archivists for the Web site.

During the discussion of the Web Coordinator appointment, it was mentioned that it was awkward to discuss someone's appointment when that person was in the room. **All members voted that when the board is voting on a candidate for an appointment to a committee and said candidate is present, the candidate shall leave the room during the discussion and voting.**

Membership Secretary and Membership Committee

Rodney Gorme Obien discussed membership numbers, renewals, and determining eligibility to vote in NEA elections. The Membership Committee is still working on the online membership directory and hopes to get it up and running this spring.

Old Business

Nora Murphy acknowledged the receipt of reports needing no action. The newsletter editors are evaluating the just-received proposed designs for the newsletter redesign. The Fall 2006 Program received very positive evaluations.

New Business

Brenda Lawson mentioned the publicity for the Haas award and the committee's hopes for more applications. If there are no applications, the committee will review the use of the award and look for other ways to use the award money to benefit the records management community.

There was a very brief discussion about whether to continue the student representative position and the need for input about the usefulness of the position from past student representatives.

Next Meeting Date

The next Quarterly Board Meeting will take place at the Radisson Hotel, Chelmsford, Massachusetts, March 30, 2007, from 1 to 5 p.m. ☺

Please visit us online at
<www.newenglandarchivists.org>
 for more information
 about becoming a member of NEA

New Members

- Rodney Obien

Yvonne Fraser
 Simmons College

Individual Members

Donna Albino
 Simmons College

Howard P. Lowell
 National Archives

Nanette K. Balliot
 Roger Williams University

Veronica Martzahl
 Simmons College

Robert Balliot
 Ocean State Library

Lacy Schultz
 Clark Art Institute

Heidi Benedict
 Roger Williams University

Jennifer Sharp
 University of Michigan

Dorothy Codington
 Codington History &
 Archives

Institutions

Tom's of Maine

Town of Westford, MA

Nicole DeAngelo
 Suffolk University Archives

Please visit us online at
<www.newenglandarchivists.org>

Reviews

Encoding Across Frontiers: Proceedings of the European Conference on Encoded Archival Description and Context (EAD and EAC), Paris France, 7-8 October 2004. Stocking, Bill, and Fabienne Queyroux, eds. Binghamton, NY: The Haworth Press, 2005. 287 pp. \$49.95 (Hard cover). \$27.95 (Soft cover).

- Michael Rush, *Processing Archivist / EAD Coordinator, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*

*E*ncoding Across Frontiers echoes the names of two standards, Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Encoded Archival Context (EAC). It is an apt description of the spread of XML-based standards throughout the international archival community. Since EAD emerged a decade ago, it has been adopted widely not only in the United States, but also across Europe and elsewhere. The release of EAD 2002 was prompted in part by a need to better accommodate international practice and EAC was conceived as an international effort from its inception. Encoding archival descriptions is truly happening across frontiers, and this book captures the gamut of EAD and EAC related activity in Europe.

The book compiles eighteen selected presentations from the European Conference on Encoded Archival Description and Context (EAD and EAC), which was held in Paris in October 2004. It is organized into seven sections: "Introduction," "EAG," "Implementation of EAD in Europe: Issues and Case Studies," "Using EAD," "Publishing with EAD," "EAD Conclusion," and "EAC." Contributions come from Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Sweden, and the United States.

The brief section on EAG, or Encoded Archival Guide, introduces a DTD developed in Spain for encoding information about archival repositories. The sections on EAD document how repositories across Europe tackled the problems of accommodating past practices, training staff, describing various formats, creating encoded finding aids, publishing them on the Web, etc. A paper by Kris Kiesling, "The Influence of American and European Practices on the Evolution of EAD," provides a nice summary of EAD's development and impact to date.

The four papers on EAC discuss the theory, related stan-

dards, and development process involved in creating a structured method of capturing information about the context in which records are generated. Two examples of EAC applications provide models of access centered on records creators.

I recommend *Encoding Across Frontiers* to archivists looking for an introduction to the benefits and challenges of EAD and to experienced hands interested in a different perspective. It is a more technologically up-to-date companion to *Encoded Archival Description: Context, Theory, and Case Studies*, edited by Jackie M. Dooley, which compiles early articles about EAD and its implementation in the United States. For archivists looking for an introduction to EAC, *Encoding Across Frontiers* is an excellent starting point for gaining an understanding of its purpose and potential applications. *Encoding Across Frontiers* neatly captures the international impact of encoding standards on archival practices and conveys enthusiasm for continued development of new models of providing access to archival collections.

Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn, and Diane L. Vogt-O'Connor, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006. \$84.95.

-Matthew D. Mason, *Archivist, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University*

This volume is an overdue follow-up to *Archives & Manuscripts: Administration of Photographic Collections* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984). Its essays offer practical guidelines for individuals handling photographic materials from appraisal and accessioning through arrangement, description, and public access. Veteran conservators and archivists Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor contribute the majority of the essays and are consequently the dominant voices. Two revised essays from the earlier edition are reprinted in this collection: "Photographs in Archival Collection," by Margery S. Long and Ritzenthaler, and "History of Photographic Processes" by Gerald Munoff and Ritzenthaler. A few of the remaining essays integrate information from the former edition.

Several essays focus on the acquisition, arrangement, and description of photographic materials. In her essay,

“Reading and Researching Photographs,” Helena Zinkham provides an introduction to visual literacy and strategies for uncovering informational context for photographs. Vogt-O’Connor presents invaluable advice for archivists developing photographic collections in her essay, “Appraisal and Acquisitions.” Brett Carnell supplies suggestions for arranging photographic materials in “Accessioning and Arrangement.” Zinkham fills a void in the archival literature in her essay, “Description and Cataloging,” by giving guidelines for describing photographic materials with particular emphasis on data elements that incorporate principles from *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACs) (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004).

Two essays by Ritzenthaler address the preservation of photographic materials. In these essays she reorganizes and expands on information from the previous edition, wisely removing descriptions of invasive or complicated conservation procedures. In “Preservation,” she emphasizes environmental storage conditions and discusses preservation of digital photographic media. She supplements this discussion with the ensuing essay, “Integrating Preservation and Archival Procedures,” which proposes guidelines for the continual maintenance of photographic collections.

Several essays discuss issues related to user access to photographic collections. Vogt-O’Connor provides a welcome addition to this volume with “Reference Services and the Research Room,” which addresses challenges of serving photographic materials to users. She also offers a cogent essay, “Legal and Ethical Issues of Ownership, Access, and Usage,” which deftly discusses copyright issues. Ritzenthaler expands on an essay in the earlier edition by discussing the matters involved in setting up an institutional copying program in “Copying and Duplication.” Kit A. Peterson describes the benefits of digitization programs for photographic materials in “Digitizing Photographs,” and provides planning and technical guidelines for establishing a program. Finally, Vogt-O’Connor discusses a bevy of programs that a repository can develop using photographic resources in her essay, “Outreach: Public Programs, Public Relations, and Fund Raising,” which ranges from exhibitions and publications to fundraising and public relations.

In addition to an inclusive glossary and extensive bibliography, appendices compiled by Ritzenthaler and Vogt-O’Connor include lists of recommended supplies and suppliers, suggestions for outfitting a workspace, sources for

funding projects, and institutions that offer training. An additional appendix offers a concise essay by Sarah Demb about negotiating with stakeholders regarding access to culturally “sensitive” photographic materials.

Overall, the content of the essays in this volume warrants its acquisition by any repository that administers photographic collections and by professionals who work with these visual materials.

James, Henry, *The Aspern Papers*. Various editions.

- David E. Horn, Head Librarian, Archives and Manuscripts Department, Burns Library, Boston College

All archivists and manuscripts curators will enjoy reading *The Aspern Papers* by Henry James. *The Aspern Papers* is available in many editions, sometimes with one or two other tales, sometimes in thicker volumes of collected stories or collected works. In the Penguin Classics edition (1984), the text runs for about 100 pages.

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Please heed this advice: do not read any preface, introduction, after-word, summary, or commentary until you have finished reading the story. There is some suspense in this story, some uncertainty about the outcome, and every editor and commentator (including James himself) seems determined to give away the ending. Even this short tale drags in places, and the suspense keeps one going.

It is hard to tell exactly who the narrator is in this story. He is a man of letters. He is not a writer, perhaps not a scholar, but he is interested in the location and acquisition of literary manuscripts. He hears a report that a woman friend of an American poet is living in seclusion in Venice. The fictitious poet, Jeffrey Aspern, died many years before, and it is possible that this one-time mistress has some of his papers.

Some questions are answered quickly: the woman, Miss Bordereau, does exist, and a friend of the narrator's knows where she lives. Answers to other questions are sought throughout the tale: does Miss Bordereau have any of Aspern's papers? If so, are there letters, important letters? Are there only a few or are they voluminous? Has the owner destroyed any letters? Might she destroy others?

There is also the story of the narrator, the seeker of the manuscripts: how honest is he? What will he do to earn the confidence of Miss Bordereau and her niece? How far will he go to obtain the papers?

After you have read the story, you may wonder whether the narrator of this tale has conducted himself in a way that is typical of people on the great quest for manuscripts.

You may also read commentaries on the tale. In the edition (Penguin, 1984) I usually use, there is a sixteen-page preface by Henry James. *The Aspern Papers* was first published in 1888, and James wrote notes and prefaces that are reprinted in the standard edition of his works from 1907 to 1909.

Leon Edel, for example, is as famous for his multi-volume biography of Henry James as the latter is for his voluminous output. In *Henry James: the Middle Years, 1882-1895* (Lippincott, 1962), Edel discusses the Aspern tale, its setting, and its place in James's work. Edel describes *The Aspern Papers* as "the most brilliant of all of James's tales."

Enjoy the story – and then enjoy the notes and commentaries! ☺

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Internet Tidbits

- Susan Martin

Earlier this year, the National Archives and Records Administration announced a major new digitization effort. According to a January 10 press release (www.archives.gov/press/press-releases/2007/nr07-41.html), NARA has entered into a non-exclusive agreement with the private Utah-based company Footnote, Inc. to create digital copies of select archival documents and images. Millions of pages have already been digitized at www.footnote.com/nara, and more will be added monthly. After five years, all of the digitized documents will be available free of charge on the NARA Web site. While the contract does not affect access policies at NARA facilities, the deal has generated some controversy on archives and history-related listservs and blogs because access is fee-based and limited to adults. However, it's worth evaluating the Footnote Web site on its own merits.

The papers that have been digitized on footnote.com are some of the most significant in American history. Among the selected materials are the papers of the Continental Congress (1774-1789), including copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and other important founding documents; the Matthew B. Brady collection of Civil War photographs; papers of the Southern Claims Commission; a name index to Civil War and later pension files, consisting of over 3 million entries; and investigative case files of the Bureau of Investigation (1908-1922), later the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Footnote blog highlights newly added documents and special features.

The Web site's browse function is a little complicated; items are organized into groups and subgroups, and researchers may have to click through several levels to find what they're looking for. If you opt for a search instead, the search results page is also initially confusing. Listed in the

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left-hand column are bibliographic descriptions for items retrieved in your search. When an item is selected, the description on the left and the corresponding thumbnail on the right are highlighted by a single blue frame. But researchers can view only one thumbnail at a time, and as you scroll down the page, the thumbnail travels with you, which, in my browser, meant that some of the bibliographic information disappeared off the screen or obscured other text. The search and browse pages could also be more visually consistent.

Footnote.com has no advanced search feature; as more documents are added, the search function will have to be refined, or users will be overwhelmed by the number of documents retrieved. But the Web site presents some interesting opportunities for collaboration. Researchers can save, organize, and annotate documents; collaborate with other users through a personalized member page; and upload their own original source material. However, to take advantage of these features, they will have to buy an annual or monthly all-access subscription for \$99.99 or \$9.99 respectively, or pay to read individual documents at \$1.99 per page. Only a small number of documents are available free of charge. ©

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News and Notes

CONNECTICUT

The Dana Collection Digitization Project at the New Haven Museum & Historical Society

In the 1930's and 40's Arnold Guyot Dana devoted himself to compiling a 150 volume scrapbook collection which he called "New Haven Old and New." This unique resource contains original photographs, maps, booklets, and manuscripts. It is arranged both by geography (with seven volumes for Chapel Street) and by subject (businesses, schools, clubs, churches, etc.). The scrapbooks contain many items not available anywhere else.

This collection has been a part of the Whitney Library for many years. Mr. Dana's daughter, Mrs. Philip English, arranged to have the scrapbooks microfilmed and his grandson, James D. English, spent much time in the 1980's indexing the collection. It is used almost daily by researchers.

It was determined that another approach to the collection needed to be found. Not only were the originals used too often, but the quality of the copies made from the microfilm is poor. The Dana/English family continued their involvement with this collection and agreed to fund the digitization of the scrapbooks.

The rationale for this approach was three-fold:

1. Security – the originals and the microfilm were both stored in the same building. Scanned, the material can be kept on disks and stored offsite.
2. Preservation – the originals were overused, and we could not expect them to hold up under such use.
3. Access — copies can be made from the digital versions that are superior to those available from the microfilm. Indeed, photograph quality copies can be made with this new technology. In addition, there is the possibility of additional enhancements in the future, even online accessibility.

The library obtained the services of Spalding Office Systems in Monroe, Connecticut to do the digitization job. P.

Morgan from Spalding did the work and provided significant advice to the library about the project.

A new computer and a high-quality laser printer were secured and are now to be found in the Reading Room. Many patrons have already begun to make use of the new format.

Historic Document Preservation Program

On December 8, 2006 the Office of the Public Records Administrator and the Connecticut State Archives awarded 48 Cycle 2 targeted grants for a total of \$381,000. One hundred grants were awarded in Cycle 1 for a total of \$1,094,670. In FY2007, 148 grants were awarded for a total of \$1,475,670. Since the grants inception in FY2002, \$6,868,727 has been awarded.

The Office of the Public Records Administrator and State Archives held two half-day grant training workshops on January 11th and 18th, 2007. Topics covered included the new grant application procedures for FY2008, the differences between targeted and competitive grant applications/projects, and guidance for completing a competitive grant application.

For more information about the grant program, go to <www.cslib.org/publicrecords/histdoc/grantforms.htm> or call LeAnn Power, Public Records Grant Program Specialist, at (860) 566-1100 ext 301 or email <lpower@cslib.org>.

MAINE

Archival Traps at Bowdoin

Yankee ingenuity has yielded an innovative storage solution at the Hawthorne-Longfellow Library at Bowdoin. Lobster trap wire, usually relegated to the ocean depths, has reached lofty new heights, specifically, the George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives on the library's third floor.

Archivists recently approached campus carpenter Mark Donovan about creating a shelving unit to hold large, rolled up architectural drawings, blueprints, and maps. The challenge: Make it airy – and not out of wood (due to concerns

that moisture absorption could create moldy conditions).

Donovan, himself a former lobsterman, went into his personal archives and surfaced with plans of his own. He got large sheets of the sturdy metal mesh used to make traps, or “pots” as they’re known among lobsterman, from a supplier in West Bath and, in no time, configured them into rows of orderly cubbies. Says Donovan, “It’s satisfying to give the college what it needs and do it in such a cool way.”

Maine Historical Society Announces Exhibitions

Tuesday, February 27, 2007 marked the 200th anniversary of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s birth. As a tribute to the poet, Maine Historical Society organized a new exhibit exploring the lives of Longfellow and his family through the art they created. Based on thousands of sketches, drawings, watercolors, and doodles, the exhibit, entitled “Drawing Together: The Arts of the Longfellows,” presents a survey of this family’s remarkable art.

Through the achievements of some twenty individuals, including Henry, his aunts and uncles, siblings, children, and nieces and nephews, the exhibit offers a fascinating exploration of the family’s history. The poet himself was a prolific artist, sketching scenes to illustrate poems, record a family outing, or teach and entertain his children. Drawing skills were vital to the lives of Henry’s son, Ernest, a professional artist, and the poet’s niece, Portlander Mary King Longfellow, an accomplished watercolorist.

The exhibit features a large number of little-known works ranging from drawings of Tripoli made in 1804 by Henry Wadsworth, the poet’s namesake, to sketches made by Henry himself for his children. “The Longfellows, keen observers of the world around them, created compelling works with the rudimentary pencil and pen and ink,” notes MHS curator John Mayer. “The objects in this exhibition reveal not only how drawing, painting and other artistic pursuits were central to their daily lives, but also reflect the rise of educational training in nineteenth-century America.”

“Drawing Together” features over sixty works from the collections of Maine Historical Society, the Longfellow National Historic Site in Cambridge, the Houghton Library

at Harvard University, and others.

In conjunction with the yearlong celebration of Longfellow’s 200th birthday, Maine Historical Society will display “Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: America’s Song King.”

From the mid-19th century until of his death in 1882, composers, famous and obscure, young and old, were moved by Longfellow’s poems. The enormously popular American poet received copies of original music written by composers working in cities around the world. For decades after his death, composers sent music to his family.

“Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: America’s Song King” presents a few of those scores and introduces a few of those composers. This display touches the surface of the world of Victorian song as it was influenced by Longfellow, dubbed “America’s Song King,” by American composer Thomas Lorenzo Jephson in 1879.

The exhibition runs from Friday, February 23 through Sunday, June 3, 2007.

MASSACHUSETTS

From Chaos to Clarity: Processing the Records and Papers of Charles William Eliot

The Harvard University Archives is pleased to announce the availability of online finding aids for the presidential records (<nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:hua05006>) and personal papers (<nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.ARCH:hua03006>) of Charles William Eliot, president of Harvard from 1869 to 1909. These finding aids are the result of an 18-month retrospective processing project to reorganize and catalog the two collections, which encompass over 130 cubic feet of material dating from 1807 to 1945.

Charles William Eliot, the longest-serving president in Harvard’s history, was one of the most influential educators of his day. The records of Eliot’s forty-year presidency (1869-1909) document Harvard’s transition from a small college to a modern university and reflect the emerging role of higher education in American life. Eliot’s papers recount his student days and teaching careers at Harvard University (1858-1863) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(1865-1869) and illustrate Eliot's roles as educator, social reformer, and populist philosopher. The collections include biographical materials, family papers, correspondence, writings, teaching materials, photographs, letterbooks, shorthand notes, and scrapbooks.

A major goal of this processing project was to separate Eliot's presidential records and his personal papers. The records and papers were intermingled in two overlapping collections and had been arranged in a variety of ways by HUA staff. Until the completion of this project, a paper shelf list and two collection-level bibliographic records were the only points of access to the collections.

As these collections have received extensive research use over the course of the past seventy years, one of the biggest challenges during this project was the establishment of a method to track the changes to series titles, folder titles, and box numbers. Accordingly, the processing archivist created a spreadsheet to relate old and new call numbers, box numbers, and folder titles. This information is now included in the finding aids.

With retrospective processing of the Eliot records and papers now complete, the Harvard University Archives has online finding aids for the records and papers of Harvard presidents from the seventeenth century through the mid-twentieth century presidency of James Bryant Conant. For a list of presidential finding aids, see <hul.harvard.edu/huarc/presidents.shtml>.

Papers of Jean Valentine Now Open at Schlesinger Library

The papers of poet and author Jean Valentine (Radcliffe A.B. 1956) are newly processed and open to research at the Schlesinger Library. Documenting her personal and professional life, the papers consist mostly of correspondence, especially with other well-known poets. Also included among the 2.5 linear feet of documents are drafts and proofs of poems, examples of prose, reviews of her published books, and audiovisual material. Processing of the collection was made possible by a gift from the Radcliffe College Class of 1956. The finding aid can be found at <nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:RAD.SCHL:sch00369>.

Papers of Richard H. Randall, Jr. Donated to Harvard University Art Museums Archives

The Harvard University Art Museums Archives has received a gift from Lilian M.C. Randall of the papers of her late husband, the scholar and museum curator and director, Richard Harding Randall, Jr.

Randall's interests varied widely, but he is best known for his work with medieval ivory carvings, arms and armor, and European and American Decorative Arts. He wrote extensively, publishing over 100 articles and books on topics ranging from the furniture of H.H. Richardson to medieval ivory crosses to Chinese porcelains.

Born in 1926 in Baltimore, Randall completed his secondary education at Pomfret School (Conn.) and went almost immediately thereafter to serve in Europe during the Second World War. While in Europe, he was exposed for the first time to the great works of Western art, and his career path was established. After completing his studies at Princeton and Harvard, he served as a curator at the Cloisters, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the Walters Art Gallery before being appointed director of the Walters in 1965.

Randall's legendary wit and boundless energy served him well in his administrative positions in museums, and he was both well-respected and well-loved as a mentor, scholar, and friend. The papers now in the Art Museums' Archives include drafts of his writings, hundreds of photographs and slides of works of art, and "The Museum Observed," an unpublished autobiographical work documenting his experiences as a museum curator and director. Materials docu-

The Friends of the Boston City Archives is seeking a new president. The president leads the organization in fulfilling its mission of creating public support for the Archives.

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menting Randall's personal life include photographs and other biographical information, a scrapbook of his time in the army, and humorous stories, poems, and tributes to his friends and colleagues.

WGBH MLA Launches New Web Site

The WGBH Media Library and Archives (MLA) has launched Open Vault, a new Web site to the MLA collection at <openvault.wgbh.org>. Open Vault incorporates historical programs from three existing MLA sites and adds new interview content from WGBH's award winning series, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age* and *Vietnam, A Television History*. Open Vault provides extensive documentation about 879 WGBH programs and is embedded with 523 streaming video clips from original programs and interviews.

There are finding aids to the following series: *New Television Workshop*, an experimental video series with selected programs broadcast between 1968 and 1983; *Say Brother*, an African American public affairs series with programs from 1968 to 1982; and *Ten O'Clock News*, a Boston-based nightly news program with on-line access to stories from 1974 to

1991. New to the site are 44 interviews from *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*, a 13-part documentary series originally broadcast in 1989. Five years in the making, *War and Peace in the Nuclear Age* examined the origins and evolution of nuclear competition between the United States and the Soviet Union.

During the series' production, extensive interviews were conducted with national and international politicians, diplomats, journalists, scientists, and social leaders. Forty-four of the original 252 interviews are now available on the site, including interviews with German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, U.S. presidential advisor Paul Nitze, author Norman Cousins, and Agha Ibrahim Akram of the Pakistani Army.

In 1983, WGBH presented its documentary called *Vietnam: A Television History*. Open Vault includes the series' interview with Harry McPherson, special counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson, who provides an intimate portrait of the White House during the 1968 Tet offensive. There is a full interview transcript and a video clip of McPherson talking about Johnson's internal struggle over the Vietnam conflict.

Support for the Open Vault project was made possible through a generous grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The IMLS Open Vault project was managed by Media Library Director Karen Cariani, with archivists Karen Colbron and Helen Brady.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

“Moose Plate” Grants Announcement

The New Hampshire Department of Cultural Resources is pleased to announce the launch of this year's “Moose Plate” Grants application period. The grants are administered through three divisions within the department: The State Library, Division of Historical Resources, and the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts.

In 1998, the New Hampshire General Court passed the Conservation License Plate or “Moose Plate” initiative as a way to supplement existing state conservation and preservation programs with funding through voluntary public purchases of the plates. The Conservation License Plate sup-

ports the protection of critical resources in New Hampshire, from scenic lands to historic sites to wildlife. Revenues from the sale of the plate are distributed through five state agencies. The Department of Cultural Resources distributes a portion of its share of these funds through its three divisions (Arts, Library, and Historical Resources) as cultural conservation grants.

The grants are available to non-profit or public institutions for the preservation and conservation of publicly owned cultural resources. Grants are awarded for activities that will enhance access to resources and safeguard rare or endangered treasures.

Applications were due on March 30th, 2007 and the grants will be awarded in June 2007. More information can be found at <www.nh.gov/nhculture>, or you may contact the divisions directly at the State Library <www.nh.gov/nhsl/moose>.

RHODE ISLAND

Naval Historical Collection, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island Acquisitions

The Naval Historical Collection recently acquired thirteen World War II scrapbooks, containing photographs, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia, through a gift from Charles Barber of Greenwich, Connecticut. Barber joined the Navy in 1942 and served as flag secretary to Admiral Raymond A. Spruance from 1943 to 1945. Albums containing clippings were assembled by his parents, who followed the progress of the war in the Pacific. The U.S. Navy photographs, including many of Spruance, were collected by Barber and used by author Thomas Buell in his biography of Spruance, *The Quiet Warrior*.

Barber was interviewed on his naval service, with a focus on his reminiscences of Spruance, for the Naval War College oral history project on World War II veterans. The interview is open to researchers.

VERMONT

Johnson Revolutionary Papers

The Revolutionary War-era papers of the Johnson family of Newbury, Vermont have been donated to the Vermont Historical Society library by the Tenney Memorial Library in Newbury. The Johnson Family Papers include considerable material from Thomas Johnson (1742-1819) and his son David Johnson (1778-1865). Thomas Johnson, originally of Haverhill, Mass., settled in Newbury in 1762. During the Revolution, he was captured by the British and served as an agent. His letters form a significant part of the acquisition. Thomas Johnson's papers include two journals detailing his 1781 captivity and copies of letters to George Washington and several British and Tory contacts.

Vermont Historical Society Catalog Now Online

This winter the Vermont Historical Society library, in conjunction with the Vermont State Colleges libraries, made its catalog available to researchers on the World Wide Web. The catalog, accessible at <catalog.vermonthistory.org>, includes records for about 750 manuscript collections (a portion of the library's manuscript holdings), in addition to records for books, maps, broadsides, sheet music, and other library materials. The catalog includes links from MARC records to the full text of finding aids for over 100 of the society's most important manuscript collections.

The catalog, running on the Unicorn system by Sirsi/Dynix and hosted by the state colleges, provides access to collection information through author, title, subject, and keyword searching. An additional feature of the catalog allows researchers to create bibliographies online and to print them out or e-mail them.

According to VHS librarian Paul Carnahan, the unveiling of the online public access catalog is a significant milestone in the history of the VHS library. "This is the second most important thing to happen to the VHS library in the last 20 years. The first was our move to the History Center in Barre in 2002. That move ensured that our materials would be preserved. This development ensures that researchers around the world will know what is here."

Please visit us online at
<www.newenglandarchivists.org>

OTHER NEWS

NELINET Introduces New Technology Sandbox

NELINET announced the launch of its Technology Sandbox service, a new online lab where members can learn about and experience using emerging information technology systems, applications, and software. The first test system to be added to the Technology Sandbox is DSpace, the open-source institutional repository software developed by Hewlett-Packard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Members who want to experiment with bringing their digital content online can access the DSpace test site via NELINET's Technology Sandbox at www.forums.nelinet.net/sandbox/.

NELINET plans to add new technologies to the Sandbox on a monthly schedule. In January 2007, wiki and blog applications were added, followed by balloting and voting software. Later this year, NELINET's Information Technology staff plan to add open-source federated searching and open URL linking solutions as well as a student portfolio management program. Discussions are also underway with some commercial companies to provide access to their products in a test mode on an unlimited basis.

Members interested in registering for an account on NELINET's Technology Sandbox should contact Kathy Courcy (<courcy@nelinet.net>) at 1.800.NELINET, ext. 125. If you have suggestions for future Sandbox implementations, please contact Siobhan Ross (<ross@nelinet.net>) at 1.800.NELINET, ext. 1923.

NELINET is a non-profit membership cooperative of nearly 650 academic, public, and special libraries in the

six New England states. NELINET works collaboratively with members to shape the future of New England libraries in the evolving information environment. NELINET invites museums, archives, and historical societies to become members. ☺

People

Heidi Benedict is the new university archivist for Roger Williams University in Bristol, RI. Heidi has worked in various archival settings, including the Missouri Historical Society, Arizona State Library Archives, and Chester County Historical Society in Pennsylvania. She has processed state documents, created finding aids, transcribed 19th century diaries, inventoried and cataloged photographs, and performed many other archival duties. She was formerly an elementary school teacher and a school librarian. Heidi graduated from Franklin and Marshall College, earned an MS from the University of Pennsylvania, and an MLS from Southern Connecticut State University. ☺

It's Your Newsletter: Contribute!

The *NEA Newsletter* always needs news from your archives and other archives in New England, about NEA members, and about upcoming events. We also need people to write reviews, long articles, and session reports for NEA meetings. The editors have prepared information for contributors to help potential writers. If you have any ideas for articles, etc., please contact an editor.

Promote your photograph collections by sharing an image of an historic event, place, or person with the NEA community.

The *NEA Newsletter* is seeking submissions from repositories in New England for back cover pictorial features in *This Season in New England History*. Send submissions in JPG or TIFF format, along with a caption detailing the subject of the photograph, to: <sheila.spalding@childrens.harvard.edu>. Photographs must be scanned at 600 dpi or better.

Open Forum

Our Man in Havana: An Archival Odyssey in Cuba

Tom Hyry, Head, Manuscript Unit, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library

When the bright lights went on, I suddenly realized that I was about to have my fifteen minutes of fame, appearing on television in a country only ninety miles from American shores but cut off almost completely from the United States in political, economic, social, and even cultural terms. I had come to Cuba to work on an archival description project and to provide a gift of copies of original films of the Cuban revolution from my university to Cuban scholars. The films would be given to the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, a government-run research institute with library and archival holdings that provided me with the necessary research visa to support my work in Cuba. Initially, I thought the gift would be a modest affair, but the week before my trip I learned that there would be a press conference marking the gift, at which I would be expected to make a short speech. This episode, as well as the entire trip to Cuba, made for a rare professional experience, at least for me. Given the opportunity, what can one say in a brief address to an audience of Cuban archivists, librarians, historians, and even two members of the Central Committee, Cuba's main governing body? Before answering, it's probably a good idea to give some background on the project and my trip.

Since 1970, Manuscripts and Archives in the Yale University Library has housed the Cuban Revolution Collection, a rare set of photographs, films, papers, and ephemera documenting Cuba during the late 1950s

and 1960s. The collection consists primarily of the records of two individuals, the photographer Andrew St. George and the filmmaker David C. Stone. The St. George photographs provide dramatic documentation of the revolution during the late 1950s, when the revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro were waging a guerilla war against the fascist regime of Fulgencia Batista, through the early 1960s, when the revolutionary government was in place. St. George gained Castro's trust and was given access to rebel strongholds, which he photographed extensively. The collection consists of over 5,000 negatives and contact sheet prints that document the activities of Castro, his brother Raul, Che Guevara, Celia Sanchez, Camilio Cienfuegos, and many other figures of the revolution. The St. George materials also include a handful of films from the late 1950s. The David C. Stone materials consist of the outtakes from the film *Companeras y Companeros*, released in 1969. Stone traveled with his wife Barbara to Cuba to film the revolution in action. The nearly 50 films document Cuban family, school, and social life. Together, the collections of St. George and Stone provide an invaluable resource for the study of the Cuban revolution.

Though under-described, the St. George photographs have been available to researchers since the collection was established at Yale. The Stone films had been completely inaccessible, however, as they consisted of original film and sound reels that had not been synched. Moreover, no use

copies had ever been made of the films. In 2003, we applied for an NEH grant to fully process the collections, restore the films, and digitize the photographs. NEH passed on the grant, but in 2004 we made a connection with Lillian Guerra, an energetic assistant professor in the field of Latin American history who was working on a book on the imagery of the Cuban revolution. Professor Guerra's research required access to the films and she and Cesar Rodriguez, Curator of the Latin American Collection at Yale, successfully acquired a grant from the Seaver Foundation. The grant provided money for two research trips to Cuba for Professor Guerra's research, along with funds to preserve and digitize the films and photographs. In return, Yale committed to process the collection, including providing descriptions of each film and records for each photograph contact sheet, to accompany images in our digital image database.

The resulting work consisted of a true collaboration between a faculty member and different units of the library, including Manuscripts and Archives, the Latin American Collection, and the Preservation Department, who oversaw the film preservation and digitization component of the project. We relied on Professor Guerra to provide descriptions and she in turn needed to consult with contacts she had made in Cuba to properly identify various individuals, places, events, and activities documented on the film. She planned to spend the month of June in Cuba and would work on this project during part of that

time. The project required an archivist skilled in descriptive methods to join her in Havana to perform the technical component of the work; I was thus fortunate to take the professional trip of a lifetime. In addition to describing the films, I also took digital copies of the films with me to Cuba to donate to the Instituto, as Professor Guerra felt we had an obligation to share the products of our work with Cuban scholars. The professional and research nature of my trip allowed me to travel to Cuba as an exception to the travel ban that exists as part of the U.S. trade embargo with Cuba.

With one suitcase filled with my own belongings and another filled with more than sixty DVDs, I arrived in Havana for six days of work and research on the eve of Tropical Storm Alberto. While the storm rained down upon us, I used the first two days to do the description work, hunkering down over a table with Professor Guerra and Jorge Macle Cruz (a Cuban archivist and expert on the revolution). Sipping sweet coffee, they wrote brief abstracts of the films, while I edited and encoded the descriptions in EAD. Though time constraints prevented us from completing everything we had hoped to accomplish, we learned things about the contents and contexts of the films through our consultation with Macle that would have been unavailable had we stayed in the United States.¹

With the formal archival work behind me, I spent the next three days visiting Cuban libraries and archives with Professor Guerra, touring facilities and meeting with staff. These included the library and archives of the Instituto de Historia de Cuba, the Archivo Nacional, and the Biblioteca

Nacional. In general, I came away very impressed with the colleagues I met in these institutions. What they lacked in resources, they made up for with a commitment to the work and ingenuity in getting things done in extraordinary circumstances. While I hesitate to proffer any absolute truths about Cuban archives, particularly since my Spanish is only rudimentary and I am certain to have lost much of what was told to me in translation, I can offer the following observations:

- Holdings in the Archivo Nacional are richest for the colonial period. Records of the revolutionary government are spotty at best. A 2001 law requires most ministries (the exceptions being the Ministries of the Interior and the Armed Forces and the State Central Committee of the Communist Party) to consult with the archives before disposing of records, but prior to that, ministries kept their own records, generally recycling them after five years. A commission including archivists and members of the various ministries now reviews records and decides which should be preserved.
- When touring the Cuban National Archives (Archivo Nacional) I learned that Cuban archives rely heavily on international standards for archival description, particularly ISAD(G) and ISAAR(CPF). My guide at the Archivo Nacional had attended the International Congress of Archives along with several of his colleagues, and the institution has taken many steps to do their work in accordance with international principles and standards.
- Like most archives and special collections in the United States, Cuban

archives have materials described at different levels, ranging from item to accession and collection level control. Also, like many American archival repositories, the Archivo Nacional holds large backlogs of unprocessed materials. My conversations revealed that they are in the process of moving away from earlier techniques of item or file level processing towards container or even accession level control, reflecting the current shift in American process best articulated by the Greene/Meissner study on backlogs and processing methodology.

- Access to archives in Cuba remains a major and fundamental problem. Records of the revolutionary period, where they exist, are restricted to party members and government loyalists. It should come as no surprise to anyone to learn that the complete lack of open government in Cuba extends to a careful protection of the records. In this sense, the archival world in Cuba is no more democratic than the political one.
- All three archival settings I visited had active conservation programs and facilities in which the professional archivists and conservators take great pride. Preservation and conservation of library and archival material has been a focus of programs such as the Social Science Research Council's Working Group on Cuba, and several of the conservators I met spoke of having taken workshops with American and European instructors. The major issue faced by the conservation and preservation professionals was a lack of supplies, made difficult to obtain because of cost and the trade embargo with the United States.

I found the Cuban archivists and librarians I met to be passionate advocates for the preservation of history who face unimaginably steep odds in achieving their goals due to a lack of resources and political and bureaucratic hurdles. Despite the deep distrust that exists between the governments of Cuba and the U.S., every professional I met welcomed me, treating me with warmth, respect, and generosity. One colleague summed our interactions up best by saying that although our governments remain bitter enemies, as individuals and as professionals we could find common cause in the pursuit of history.

When given the opportunity to address my new colleagues at the press conference, I stressed this very point, that the study of history should know no boundaries. By giving copies of the films, we intended to support scholarly pursuits in Cuba, with the hope that this small gesture would lead to future collaboration towards shared goals. I then stressed that the project showed

what we could do through collaboration and emphasized how much I had learned from my Cuban colleagues. I also advocated for greater funding for the archival endeavor in both countries. And most importantly, I pushed for greater access to records. While this continues to be a growing concern for public archives in the United States, it remains an overwhelming problem of immense proportions in Cuba. Open access to government records should be the rule in every society in the modern world.

I hope to travel to Cuba again one day, to renew professional acquaintances and make new connections, to learn more about Cuban archives, libraries, history, and culture, to contribute my own expertise where it could be helpful, and perhaps to smoke another cigar and drink a mojito or two. Moreover, I hope others are able to travel there to make similar connections and that such travel becomes easier through reform of existing government policy towards

Cuba. The trade embargo between the two countries serves only a slim minority on both sides of the line. Were travel to Cuba not so difficult, it would be easier to assist archivists there, providing supplies for preservation and other activities and know-how in other areas. Moreover, it would allow an exchange of ideas that would benefit professionals in both countries. ☺

¹ After returning from Cuba, I assumed new responsibilities at Yale, as Head of the Manuscript Unit at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. While I continued to consult on the processing of this collection, the work was completed by Professor Guerra and my colleagues in Manuscripts and Archives, Christine Weideman, Mary Caldera, Christine Connolly, Stephen Yearl, and Bill Landis. The finding aid for the collection can be found at: <mssa.library.yale.edu/findaids/eadHTML/mssa.ms.0650.html>. Digitized versions of Andrew St. George's photographs can be accessed in the Manuscripts and Archives Digital Image Database: <mssa.library.yale.edu/madid>.



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Calendar



Press releases and other announcements of upcoming activities to be published in the *Newsletter* should be sent to NEA, c/o WPI Archives and Special Collections, Gordon Library, 100 Institute Road, Worcester, MA 01609, or sent via e-mail to <Michael.forstrom@yale.edu>. Please provide the date, time, place and a brief description of the event and the name, address and telephone number of the person to be contacted for information.

April 12 - 13, 2007. SAA Workshop, "Understanding Photographs: Introduction to Archival Principles and Practices." St. Meinrad, IN. Co-sponsored by St. Meinrad Archabbey. For details and registration information see <www.archivists.org/prof-education/workshop-detail.asp?id=1906>.

May 10 - 11, 2007. SAA Workshop, "Copyright: The Archivist and the Law." University Park, PA. Co-sponsored by the Paterno Library, Pennsylvania State University. For details and registration information see <www.archivists.org/prof-education/workshop-detail.asp?id=2021>.

June 17 - 29, 2007. 21st Annual Western Archives Institute. San Diego State University, San Diego, CA.

June 18 - 19, 2007. SAA Workshop, "MARC According to DACS: Archival Cataloging to the New Descriptive Standard." Paterno Library, Pennsylvania State University. For details and registration information see <www.archivists.org/prof-education/workshop-detail.asp?id=2020>.

June 19 - 22, 2007. 48th Annual RBMS Preconference, "From Here to Ephemerality: Fugitive Sources in Libraries, Archives and Museums." Baltimore, MD. For details and registration information see <www.rbms.info>.

July 11 - 15, 2007. Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) annual conference, "Open the Book, Open the Mind." Minneapolis, MN. Co-sponsored by the University of Minnesota. For details see <www.cce.umn.edu/conferences/sharp/>.

Aug 27 - Sep 2, 2007. SAA Annual Meeting. Chicago, IL. For details and registration information see <www.archivists.org/conference/index.asp>. ☺

NEA is always looking for ideas for sessions at the fall and spring meetings. Your suggestions are invited!

Please complete and send this form to:

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This Season in New England History



This cartoon supporting the Women's Suffragist Movement was drawn by William Ourcadie, a pseudonym for Frederic W. Freeman. It was published by the Suffrage Referendum League of Maine, circa 1917, in the *Daily Eastern Argus*. *Image courtesy of the Maine Historical Society.*