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# NEWSLETTER

NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS



C O V E R — Rep. Royal Bolling poses with his children at the Freedom House playschool during the rededication of Freedom House in January of 1961. *Courtesy of the Freedom House, Inc. records at Northeastern University Library's Archives and Special Collections.*

I N S I D E — Michael Comeau interviews Gregor Trinkaus-Randall (page 4); NEA President Karen Adler Abramson discusses diversity and inclusion (page 7); NEA members and local repositories share their latest news (page 8); session reports from the NEA Fall Meeting describe conversations and presentations (page 11); the IDC introduces its newest members (page 14); and several reviews of books keep us informed about the field (page 16).

TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

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# New England Archivists

TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

45 Skehan Street • Somerville, MA 02143

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>

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# Table of Contents

<b>From the Editors</b> .....	3
-------------------------------	---

## Archival Insight

Looking Back with Gregor Trinkaus-Randall .....	4
---	---

<b>People</b> .....	6
---------------------	---

## Inside NEA

From the President.....	7
-------------------------	---

## News and Notes

Connecticut.....	8
Massachusetts .....	8
New Hampshire .....	10

<b>Session Reports</b> .....	11
------------------------------	----

## Who's Missing from This Table?

Inclusion and Diversity Committee	
Introduces Four New Members .....	14

<b>Reviews</b> .....	16
----------------------	----

<b>Calendar</b> .....	23
-----------------------	----

<b>This Season in New England History</b> .....	24
---	----

# From the Editors

- Elizabeth Coup

Happy New Year, everyone! This is traditionally a time to look forward and make new plans, and in that vein, we at the *Newsletter* would like to announce some changes we're looking forward to for the future. After some heartfelt thought and many generous survey responses, we recognize that the role of the *Newsletter* has changed over the years. With that in mind, we are going to be transitioning from the inclusion of traditional book reviews to reviews of software, tools, and exhibits related to archives. We are going to be adding a special new "featured member" section which will allow us to get to know one another better and celebrate our many accomplishments. We will also cease publishing the calendar on the last page. Based on our survey results, we will also soon start offering members the option of receiving either a digital or traditional paper copy of the *Newsletter*. We will keep you all informed as we make these changes, and please always feel free to contact us about what you'd like to see in the *Newsletter*. I speak for our editorial team, including our two newest members, when I say that we are excited for the future of the *Newsletter* and appreciate NEA members' dedication to making this a valuable publication that serves us all.

In this issue, Michael Comeau interviews Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, longtime Preservation Specialist for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, who is retiring after more than thirty years of service in the archival field (page 4). Gregor has long been known not just for his service to NEA and the Society of American Archivists, but also for his expertise in disaster preparedness and response.

NEA President Karen Adler Abramson speaks about concerns and considerations relating to diversity and inclusion in the archives field and NEA more specifically (page 7). The reports describing the three sessions and plenary speaker the Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi's talk from the NEA Fall Meeting, *Our Common Code: Ethics in the Archives*, are included as well (page 11).

We have multiple book reviews in this month's newsletter, including reviews of *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century*; *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*; *Archives and Information in the Early Modern*

*World*; *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving*; *Pedagogies of Public Memory*; *Historical Dictionary of New England, Second Edition*; *Creating a Local History Archive at Your Public Library*; and *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research* (page 16). These are some of the final book reviews that will be included in the *Newsletter*, but if you would like to assess or speak to your experience with any software systems, tools, or other programs, we would love to hear from you! Book reviews will continue to be included in NEA's other publication, the *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*.

In this issue's "Who's Missing from This Table," we are introduced to the newest members of the Inclusion and Diversity Committee, including Dorothy Berry, Stephanie Bredbenner, Joan Ilacqua, and Meghan Rinn (page 14). They discuss what brought them to the Inclusion and Diversity Committee, and what their goals are for their coming year of service.

Finally, as always, read all the latest news and announcements from NEA members (page 6) and New England repositories (page 8), and note upcoming meetings and events on our calendar. Best wishes for a wonderful 2019! ■



New England Bishops attend the Third Plenary Council, November 9 to December 7, 1884. Courtesy of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire.



## ARCHIVAL INSIGHT

## Looking Back with Gregor Trinkaus-Randall

*By Michael Comeau*

**T**his past August, Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, longtime Preservation Specialist for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, retired after more than thirty years of service to the archives and cultural heritage communities. To say that Gregor has been a figure of both influence and impact in our field would be an understatement. Among his many leadership positions, he has served as president of both New England Archivists and the Society of American Archivists, and has for the entirety of his accomplished career been a tireless advocate for the importance of the archives profession and those dedicated to it. I have had the pleasure of working closely with Gregor for many years and had the opportunity to see first-hand the full range of his talents. Despite this wide array of capabilities, however, his contributions are perhaps nowhere more keenly felt than in the area of emergency management, where his efforts on behalf of cultural heritage institutions and collections have set a standard for others to follow. As Gregor now approaches the next stage of his eventful life, it seems an opportune moment to catch up with him to look back on his experiences and forward to what may lie ahead.

**You have certainly had a lengthy and diverse career. As you reflect back, were there particular aspects of your work and experiences that stand out? Of what are you most proud?**

I think one thing that stands out, one of the accomplishments of which I am most proud, would be the establishment of a statewide preservation program. In doing this, of course, I recognize and am grateful for the freedom and support I was given to develop it. Creating an environmental monitoring program and securing LSTA (Library Services and Technology Act) grants that support preservation are also efforts in which I take pride. In all of this I was able to work with a wide range of constituencies. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has a general focus on libraries, but I have been able to expand our programs to include other important members of the cultural community, such as museums, archives, and municipal offices, as well as emergency managers. My work here has been satisfying both professionally and personally. Our preservation program is unique, the only one in the country I believe, and has allowed me the opportunity to bring preservation issues to the fore and help public libraries better focus their attention on important local history as well as general collections. Lastly, I'd add what I have also been able to do in regard to cultural security on a national level. I have been told my manual on this topic (*Protecting Your Collections*, SAA, 1995) has been of value and use, which is pretty cool.

**I guess a logical follow-up would be to ask if you had any particular regrets along the way, or if not regrets, then perhaps what might you do differently if given another chance?**

With the benefit of hindsight, I guess I wish I had more time to delve into the background and resources relative to the establishment of a preservation program as a whole. Lack of time, really, was the issue here. Reflecting back, I freely admit I was often spread a little thin and couldn't always focus in-depth on some of the issues that are of interest to me. I suppose maybe that is something I can learn to correct as I approach this next part of my life.

**Professionally, you have long been known for your expertise and leadership in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. How did this become a point of focus for you?**

There were a couple of things, actually, that got me moving in this direction. When I was in grad school I did a little work in this area, but truthfully I didn't think too much of it at the time. Later, while I was participating in a preservation internship at Yale University, I had the opportunity to do some recovery work—if I recall correctly, the music library was flooded—but it still hadn't fully clicked with me yet. It wasn't until a bit later, when I was with the Peabody Museum in Salem that things started to take shape. I had heard at the time of a two-day response and

recovery workshop being held in Worcester. I did some research into this, and, I guess one thing (as they say) led to another, so that later on I became the primary person in a one-day workshop held in Essex County with support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

When I moved on to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, I came to the realization that there was an acute need to provide assistance to public libraries in the area of response and recovery, and we established the Emergency Assistance Program to help them following a disaster. It was around this time that I received a call from Kathryn Hammond Baker about a MEMA (Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency) meeting with members of the Historical Commission. I attended the meeting and within it engaged in a broader conversation on the topic. After that the head of operations at MEMA asked me to come back and give a presentation on this at a meeting of the MEMT (Massachusetts Emergency Management Team, a broad consortium of private and public agencies, institutions, organizations, and specialists who met monthly at MEMA to address emergency management issues). This began for me a lengthy affiliation with the MEMT. While early on I was probably the only one representing the cultural community there—I think at times other MEMT members wondered why I was even there—I was able to grab the attention of federal, state, and local emergency managers and later on expand our foothold by bringing other of my colleagues in as member of the team as well.

**So this really was a passion that evolved gradually for you as a result of increasing exposure to the field in general?**

Yes, absolutely. Given the fact that there was really no one else within the cultural community taking the lead, it seemed obvious to me what needed to be done.

**In dealing with the myriad challenges of disaster prep and recovery for cultural heritage institutions, you have had to navigate between two important but largely disparate constituencies: cultural custodians and emergency managers. By what methods were you able to help them find common ground?**

The key was just educating myself and both communities and keeping focused on the primary objective of elevating our cultural heritage in the broader scheme of disaster

planning, response, and recovery. We are dealing with, as you mention, two disparate communities, but at the end of the day we share common goals. From the perspective of federal, state, and local emergency managers, we have to understand that their concern, first and foremost, is life safety. All else proceeds from there. I knew that it was imperative for those of us in the cultural community to understand the policies, procedures, and protocols of professional emergency managers better to safeguard our collections. Conversely, emergency managers also needed to understand us better, the critical value of what we as cultural custodians do, the unique aspects of the assets we protect and administer, and what we bring to each community in which we operate. That meant forging relationships with higher-ups in federal, state, and local emergency management. This began a lengthy process of introductions, conversations, and presentations to FEMA, MEMA, local EMDs (municipal Emergency Management Directors), and anyone else in the field that could advance our main objective of putting cultural heritage collections on their radar screen and into their planning. This effort helped lead to the first *Alliance for Response* conference in 2003 at the Museum of Fine Arts.

**As I recall, that was really the first large-scale and geographically diverse assembly of the cultural community and emergency managers...**

Yes, and it broadened the conversation dramatically. The *Alliance for Response*, in turn, led to CEMT (Cultural Emergency Management Team), a group of cultural institutions and emergency managers that met regularly at the Boston Public Library to discuss disaster planning and response. These relationships later fostered COSTEP MA (Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness in Massachusetts), an expanded and more robust collaborative that continues today, providing assistance, guidance, and tools by which cultural institutions can connect with their EMDs and emergency management agencies and resources. The important thing to remember is that each group—emergency managers and cultural heritage custodians—must work to understand the other better so that we can work more effectively together.

**Emergency management is both essential and complex. What, in your view, would be the primary element necessary to effectively secure essential collections?**

Networking. As I have said, we need to ensure that cultural heritage is included in the documents, protocols, and

planning of emergency managers. That means inclusion in Town Mitigation Plans and the local CEMP (Community Emergency Management Plan required of each municipality). It's all about building relationships, as one EMD told us; the last place you want to exchange business cards is at the site of an actual disaster. It is imperative that we, as cultural heritage custodians, reach out to first responders and emergency managers to develop a relationship that will pay dividends in the event of a disaster.

**With all of your work in this area, what do you think has been most rewarding for you?**

I would say most rewarding, and possibly also the most difficult in many ways, is getting people to understand and appreciate the value and importance of preservation. This has been especially true with public librarians, who are largely service-oriented. Getting them to see what needs to be done for the long-term viability of their collections, through environmental monitoring, workshops, and LSTA preservation grants as examples, has been important to me. I have been told that, by virtue of spending so much time on the road meeting with people, visiting institutions, and engaging in conversations with such a wide array of organizations, I have been instrumental in publicizing the programs and mission of the MBLC. I take great pride in that.

**I know that mentoring younger professionals is important to you. What is the single best piece of advice you could give to a person in the earlier stages of his or her career?**

Get involved! Broaden your horizons, meet people—and by extension get them to know you. Challenge yourself. Get beyond your comfort zone. Affiliate yourself with professional organizations, volunteer to make presentations, never stop learning. Don't be afraid to reach out to those of us who have been in the field for a while. We can be a valuable resource—use it!

**So, you have put one part of your career behind you—what adventures lie ahead?**

Well, I am now fully engaged in consulting for libraries and archives on preservation from the perspective of collections, facilities, policies, and procedures. I have been most fortunate to have had an interesting and varied career, and continuing as a consultant allows me the opportunity to remain engaged in the field that I love. I am very

proud of all that I have been able to accomplish, and I am forever grateful to all with whom I have had the privilege to work and who have supported me over the years. I had the advantage of receiving invaluable training early in my career, and for that I am thankful. If you can look back on your career and say that you were able to do something you love, that you felt you were good at, and that you were able to make a positive difference, well, that is special. Looking forward, I still feel there is more that I can contribute. Let's just say the story isn't fully written yet. ■

## People

**Barbara Austen** has joined the Connecticut State Archives as a digital records archivist. Previously, she worked at the Connecticut State Library as a reference librarian in the History & Genealogy Unit and as the project archivist for the Governor William A. O'Neill Archives. She was also the archivist at the Connecticut Historical Society for fourteen years, where she oversaw a number of projects funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) involving improving access to key collections, including digitization for access and preservation.

**Mott Linn** and **Gregor Trinkaus-Randall** were the two 2018 recipients of Distinguished Service Awards from the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA).

Linn has served the ACA in numerous capacities, most notably as treasurer and president. He also wrote "Not Waiting for Godot: The History of the Academy of Certified Archivists and the Professionalization of the Archival Field," which appeared in the Spring/Summer 2015 issue of *The American Archivist*.

Trinkaus-Randall is an original member of the ACA and has been involved with the organization in many ways, most recently serving as vice president.

**Katy Sternberger** joined the staff at the Portsmouth Athenaeum in New Hampshire as a research librarian. With a background in the publishing industry, she also serves on editorial boards for the *NEA Newsletter* and the *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* and is a member of the Dictionary Working Group for the Society of American Archivists. She earned her master's degree in archives management from Simmons College (now University). ■

# Inside NEA

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Karen Adler Abramson



I write this column on the heels of attending the Fall 2018 Meeting—and what an excellent, thought-provoking meeting it was. Entitled *Our Common Code: Ethics in Archives*, the meeting explored an array of ethical issues that archivists face daily—issues that inform how

we think about, approach, and engage our work, and that ultimately shape the work we produce. I congratulate the fall program committee, members of the NEA board, and Kennedy Library staff who put together such a thoughtful and well-orchestrated program.

Undergirding the meeting was a recognition that archival ethics are inextricably tied to the need for diversity and inclusion at all levels of our profession. This commitment is both inspirational and complex. It requires, among other things, self-reflection, self-exposure, humility, empathy, and the ability to listen. Carefully.

Such archival mindfulness—like any kind of mindfulness—is labor-intensive, costly, and even risky. Few archives, for instance, have the resources, time, or political support to examine the inclusivity of their descriptive practices; and yet, what is the ultimate cost of not doing so? There are no easy answers here.

I am aware that for some, “diversity and inclusion” has become a nettlesome, trendy buzzphrase signifying little. Still others perceive it as a dog whistle for those with left-leaning political agendas. Not long ago, I was surprised to learn that long time friends and colleagues had left New England Archivists because they felt increasingly out of step with the organization’s growing activist agenda. This news gave me pause, and made wonder if others had left the organization for similar reasons.

In truth, I don’t know what to make of this phenomenon. Of course, people will come and go from organizations for reasons beyond our control; we simply cannot meet everyone’s needs all of the time. In addition, the archives pro-

fession continues to evolve like any other and with it comes fresh perspectives and new approaches to our work. Moreover, we must face the fact that for many years, certain voices predominated at the expense of others and we are obligated to rectify that imbalance. I believe that very strongly.

Nonetheless, I continue to think about this issue.

My question is this: if we are to be truly diverse and inclusive, does that also mean giving voice to archival perspectives different from our own as long as those viewpoints are fundamentally respectful of others? Are we, in fact, already doing that? Perhaps we are. If not, what would it look like to incorporate more traditional or simply questioning archival voices that may cause us discomfort? What are the boundaries of permissible discussion and debate within our profession? These are not rhetorical questions; I honestly don’t know the answers.

One of the many strengths of the Fall 2018 program was the inclusion of session moderators tasked with asking presenters incisive and probing questions about the potential costs and risks of being ethical archivists. I found this approach to be both stimulating and effective in bringing to the surface tensions embedded in our work, even as we strive to be mindful and inclusive in everything we do. We will continue to engage these critical challenges while also striving to embrace our comrades across the archival spectrum, some of whom we may have unwittingly left behind. ■



An outtake from images used in the winter 1955-56 issue of *Vermont Life* magazine, this photograph shows “Mt. Snow’s self-appointed mascot,” a dog, smiling from his very own ski lift ride. This image comes from the Department of Tourism and Marketing photo series, which spans several decades of publicity and promotion in the state. *Courtesy of the Vermont State Archives & Records Administration.*



# News and Notes

## CONNECTICUT

### Connecticut Digital Archive Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

On November 13, 2018, the Connecticut Digital Archive (CTDA) celebrated its fifth anniversary. A joint program of the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut State Library, CTDA is dedicated to the preservation of digital cultural heritage resources for institutions and agencies across Connecticut. With over forty participating community members, the CTDA holds more than one million digital objects addressing local, national, and international history.

The repository launched in 2013 with 28,000 objects from the Thomas J. Dodd Papers at UConn. Today, researchers can access myriad resources, including the P.T. Barnum Digital Collection, a collaboration between the Barnum Museum and the Bridgeport Public Library; newspapers from the Connecticut State Library; physician Arminius Bill's Civil War diaries from the Bill Memorial Library; and pastoral artwork from the Florence Griswold Museum.

Check out the collections at <<https://ctdigitalarchive.org>> or at the Digital Public Library of America. Contact CTDA at <[ctda@uconn.edu](mailto:ctda@uconn.edu)>.

### Keller Lecture Recordings Digitized

The University of Hartford recently completed the digitization of the Keller Lecture recordings. From 1958 to 1976, the university hosted a series of lectures each year that were free and open to the public. The lectures covered a wide range of topics such as social issues, arts, and politics. Many notable figures spoke as a part of the series, including Martin Luther King, Jr., Henry Kissinger, Alvin Poussaint, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Sir Kenneth Clark, Sir Herbert Read, Gunnar Myrdal, and many others.

Nearly 100 recordings of lectures, seminars, panels, and question and answer sessions, most of which were not previously accessible to researchers, were digitized and

are now available. The project was funded by Robert and Anthony Keller with additional support from the Dorothy Goodwin Scholars Program of the Women's Advancement Initiative at the University of Hartford.

To learn more about the collection, see the finding aid at <[tinyurl.com/keller-lectures](http://tinyurl.com/keller-lectures)> or contact Sean Parke at <[archives@hartford.edu](mailto:archives@hartford.edu)>.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Baker Library Special Collections Exhibition on Lehman Brothers

Baker Library's new exhibition, *Lehman Brothers: A History, 1850–2008*, recently opened in the North Lobby of the Baker Library | Bloomberg Center at Harvard Business School. Organized by Baker Library Special Collections and supported by the de Gaspé Beaubien Family Endowment at Harvard Business School, it will be on display through July 12, 2019.

Marking the ten-year anniversary of Lehman Brothers' bankruptcy filing, the exhibit focuses on the 158-year history of the firm—from cotton brokers in the 1850s to one of the world's top investment banks. It draws from the extensive collections in Baker Library's special collections, examining the influence of Lehman Brothers on nearly every sector of the American economy and impact of the firm's collapse. Learn more at <<https://library.hbs.edu/hc/lehman>>.

Contact Baker Library Special Collections at <[special-collectionsref@hbs.edu](mailto:special-collectionsref@hbs.edu)> or 617-495-6411 to request a copy of the exhibition catalog. For more information about Baker Library Special Collections, visit <<https://library.hbs.edu>>.

### Center for the History of Medicine Announces the Archives for Diversity and Inclusion

The Center for the History of Medicine at the Countway Library is pleased to announce the Archives for Diversity and Inclusion. Building on the successes of the Archives for Women in Medicine program, the Archives for Diversity and Inclusion will expand in scope



to include acquiring the professional records of underrepresented faculty of Harvard Medical School (HMS), Harvard School of Dental Medicine (HSDM), and Harvard-affiliated hospitals.

Joan Ilacqua has been named Archivist for Diversity and Inclusion. She will partner with the HMS/HSDM community to diversify the historical record to include populations underrepresented in medicine, including those who self-identify as Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; American Indian or Alaska Native; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander; Asian; LGBTQ; or as a person with a disability. Additionally, she will continue to acquire the records of leading women in medicine. To learn more about the program, email <Joan\_Ilacqua@hms.harvard.edu>.

### Papers and Audio Recordings of Senator Edward M. Kennedy Available Online

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library recently announced the first release of material from the Edward M. Kennedy Senate Files. This collection contains records generated by his official duties as a Massachusetts senator

(1962–2009). The first release of 385 cubic feet consists mainly of constituent case files and project files pertaining to Massachusetts cities and towns. The records reflect Kennedy's daily work in the 1960s and 1970s as a young senator who was learning the ways of Congress and how to best assist the citizens of Massachusetts.

In addition, over 1,900 audio recordings of the *Face Off* radio program, which feature Senator Kennedy debating political and social topics with Republican Senators Robert Dole and Alan Simpson (1986–1993), are now available on the library's website <<https://jfklibrary.org>>. The digitization and cataloging of these two-minute episodes was funded by a grant from the Fund II Foundation. For more information, contact <Kennedy.Library@nara.gov> or 617-514-1629.

### Finding Aids for Old Sturbridge Village Manuscript Collections Available Online

The Old Sturbridge Village Research Library's manuscript collections contain rare and important primary source material, including family papers, business accounts, and town records. These collections span the eighteenth

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through early twentieth centuries and include account books, ledgers, correspondence, friendship albums, diaries, and legal documents.

The research library is in the process of digitizing and adding PDF versions of finding aids to the website. Finding aids will continue to be added, so check back regularly. Along with the finding aids, an incomplete listing of manuscripts that are housed in the collection can be viewed at <<https://osv.org/digitized-finding-aids>>.

For more information, contact Amy Hietala at <[ahietala@osv.org](mailto:ahietala@osv.org)> or 508-347-0204.

## Schlesinger Library Announces #metoo Digital Media Collection

In June 2018, the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study embarked on a large-scale project to comprehensively document the #metoo movement in the United States. The initial phase of this project is funded by a generous S.T. Lee Innovation Grant from Harvard Library.

The material in the #metoo Digital Media Collection will range from social media and personal narratives to press stories, employment manuals, statistical studies, and more. The project will collect material from 2007, beginning with the creation of the "Me Too" campaign by Tarana Burke, and onward. The collection will be made available for research beginning in late 2019.

The collection will be built using a combination of tools, including Archive-It, Webrecorder, and Social Feed Manager. Want to contribute? You may submit URLs, hashtags, and other digital content that you think could be a good fit for the collection. Learn more about the project and nominate content at <<https://schlesinger-metoo-project-radcliffe.org>>.

## Zella Luria Papers Available at Tufts Digital Collections and Archives

Tufts University Digital Collections and Archives recently received the papers of Tufts psychology professor Zella Luria (1924–2018), known for her work on the so-

cial construction of gender roles. She taught at Tufts from 1959 to 2002.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, she conducted a survey on Tufts female students' evolving attitudes toward work, marriage, motherhood, and education. These survey records form part of her papers, which also include correspondence and teaching and research materials such as lectures, notes, syllabi, and exams. Luria's papers document her work about the social formation of children's gender identities and her role as a clinician on the multiple personality case that inspired the film *The Three Faces of Eve*.

The collection is processed and open for research, and the finding aid is available at <<http://hdl.handle.net/10427/015707>>. For more information, visit the Tufts DCA website <<https://sites.tufts.edu/dca>> or email <[archives@tufts.edu](mailto:archives@tufts.edu)>.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### Portsmouth Athenaeum Receives Federal Grant for Space Planning Study

In August 2018, the Portsmouth Athenaeum received a \$49,875 Sustaining Cultural Heritage Collections (SCHC) grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for planning sustainable improvements to the library's historic buildings and preserving its research collections.

The funding will be used to conduct comprehensive space reorganization and create a collections storage plan as well as identify options for upgrading HVAC and fire safety systems, guided by nationally known museum consultants.

The Athenaeum was among fourteen institutions that received SCHC grants totaling \$2.2 million last year. Since 2014, the Athenaeum has raised more than \$80,000 in federal funding for this long-term study project.

The Portsmouth Athenaeum is a historic library, gallery, and museum that contains an extensive collection of rare books, photographs, archival and manuscript collections, artworks and artifacts, and digital collections related to local history and genealogy. For more information about the Athenaeum's collections, visit <<https://portsmouthathenaeum.org>>. ■

# Fall 2018 Meeting Session Reports

## 1: Appraisal and Acquisitions

- Adam Mazel

**Speakers:** Virginia Hunt, Harvard University Archives; Rosemary K.J. Davis, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Christy Tomecek, Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, Yale University

This panel considered ethical issues in archival acquisition and accessioning. Hunt's presentation, "Ethics in Collecting, Donor Relations, and Born-Digital Surprises," asked: should donated materials in an electronic trash folder be preserved or discarded? Should donors be made aware of materials that might embarrass them? In 2007 the daughter of a recently deceased professor donated her father's materials to Harvard University Archives, stipulating that she be notified of any material that would not be preserved. During processing, however, disk imaging revealed a trash folder containing both pornography and evidence of an affair. The Archives then faced an ethical dilemma: notify the donor of this potentially painful content, or protect the donor from it. Ultimately, Hunt notified the donor that material would be discarded but concealed the specifics. They have since developed policies around such situations, but this raised questions about how to handle privacy concerns and donor relations in the digital age.

Davis's presentation, "Obligations and Expectations: Pushing Collections to the Front of the Queue," highlighted the labor of accessioning archivists in order to encourage the improvement of their working conditions. She drew attention to the range of responsibilities that accessioning archivists must manage, from verifying collection contents to drafting legal agreements as well as interacting with donors, researchers, and institutions, all of which require emotional, physical, and intellectual work. To make accessioning more manageable, Davis concluded that archives should focus on facilitating the use of their collections.

Tomecek's presentation, "Ethical Issues in Secondary

Use of Oral Histories / Testimonies in Digital Humanities Projects," considered the ethical challenges raised when oral histories collected in the past serve as the material for digital humanities (DH) projects in the present. While DH collections can widen access to and understanding of archival materials through digital publication and analysis, the use of oral histories in DH projects also raises problems, such as how to ensure access restrictions are honored when the donor agreements were signed before the advent of digital publication, and how to ensure historical contexts are preserved when digital analysis tends to retrieve isolated snippets of text. To remedy these issues, Tomecek advocated that DH projects develop a best practice questionnaire, which can ensure that the abovementioned issues are considered, and that they publish the archived material alongside contextual essays, which can situate the materials historically.

The post-presentation discussion focused on the ethics of archiving materials in trash folders. One audience member encouraged respecting the donor's right to be forgotten, while another considered preserving digital materials via selecting files rather than disk imaging, problematizing the concept of disk imaging for entire digital units.

## 2: Description

- Vanessa Formato

**Speakers:** Jessica Sedgwick, Center for the History of Medicine, Harvard Medical School; Betts Coup, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Jennifer Bolmarcich, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College

The first presentation, "Medical Information: Ethical Considerations for Processing and Description," explored approaches to creating ethical descriptions and access policies for collections containing protected health information. Jessica Sedgwick emphasized the need to balance identifiable individuals' privacy needs with the value of providing health information to researchers. Drawing from her own experiences, she discussed what kinds of health information to restrict, how to document these restrictions, and where archivists should look for health information. She went on to recommend developing researcher agreements, redacting names where necessary, and working with review boards to negotiate access to unredacted records.

In the second presentation, “When Circus Isn’t Enough: Subject Headings and Descriptions for 19th-Century Popular Entertainment,” Betts Coup shared a case study of her efforts to describe materials depicting nineteenth-century sideshow acts, which often centered on the display of people with disabilities and people of color. Consulting relevant scholarship for guidance, Coup leveraged multilevel description options to balance contemporary understandings of race and disability with historical detail. She implemented a system that used modern language at the collection level, original titles at the file level, and subject headings chosen with an attention to making the materials retrievable for researchers without employing dehumanizing terms.

In the third presentation, “Skeletons in Your Closet: Heavy Small Collections,” Jennifer Bolmarcich discussed the challenge of ethically describing the papers of a paleontologist who conducted much of his work on Native American lands. In order to establish a clear context for the collection, Bolmarcich researched dig locations and created a chronology that lists the Native American homelands on which the digs took place and whether and under what circumstances that land had been ceded. Contextual information was also written into the collection’s biographical historical note. Bolmarcich stressed honest description that acknowledges the true cost of scientific discovery as an ethical duty and a tool for dismantling oppressive systems.

Balance emerged as the major theme across all three presentations. All three presenters touched upon challenging situations in which ethical description meant considering the needs of multiple parties, including creators of and third parties depicted in collections, researchers, and their institutions. In many of these situations, multilevel description played to the presenters’ advantage, allowing them multiple opportunities to address ethical concerns while ensuring access. During the questions and answers, there was lively discussion about how to handle the idea of archives as neutral spaces. The presenters emphasized that it is impossible to completely divorce archival description and power dynamics and recommended that keeping this in mind is a key to ethical, balanced description. There was also significant interest in how to avoid using stigmatizing language in descriptions. Panelists suggested using LCSH terms, as well as looking to how members of the community describe themselves. Attendees also recommended submitting subject heading change requests to Cataloging Lab <[www.cataloginglab.org](http://www.cataloginglab.org)>.

## Plenary: Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi

- Will J. Gregg

The Venerable Tenzin Priyadarshi divided his talk on ethics into three sections: ethics and technology, ethics and business, and ethics and education. First, he noted how our solutions to unforeseen problems posed by technology often fall short. In the case of car manufacturers, the traditional model is to recall a car when it is defective. But a technology like self-driving cars, if implemented, would be so widespread that the problems could not be solved with a recall. Therefore technology demands a forward-thinking ethics.

On the subject of ethics and business, the speaker explained how, during the financial crisis of 2008, criticism of business schools arose regarding their claim to be training the next generation of leaders while offering very little ethical coursework. Without it, tomorrow’s leaders and managers are unprepared to think about the long-term consequences of their actions.

Similarly, there is a lack of ethical engagement among students throughout the system of education until their freshman year of college, when many take Ethics 101. This coursework is far removed from their immediate lives. Thus the speaker has begun developing programs for students to exercise their ethical imaginations. Embedded in the term “ethical imagination” is the notion that ethics is not just following a list or code, but using our present lived experience and our knowledge of the past in thinking through the consequences of our actions well into the future.

The remainder of the plenary was a discussion between the Venerable Tenzin and the audience. One question asked was: with technology comes a learning curve and a risk of making mistakes, like putting information online that should have been private. What do you see as the role of mistakes in developing ethics? Venerable Tenzin’s response was, “The cost has to be weighed on a case-by-case basis. The challenge is not only to do with revealing the right information, but making sure the public has the training to process it. Fake news is an example of a lack of training on the part of the public.”

Another attendee commented that she has seen companies put an emphasis on ethics for risk management, and asked about the relationship between the two? Priyadarshi responded, “I see them as separate. Regarding climate change especially, there is compliance with regulations (risk



management), but also there needs to be training that not all ethical decisions can translate to stakeholder costs.”

A final question related to the issue that archives are regularly cash-strapped and need partners, sometimes in the form of ethically dubious companies. The attendee asked: what can guide our choices in this matter? The Venerable Tenzin answered: “There is certainly no such thing as a free resource. Shifting norms and values, for instance generational attitudes toward privacy, inform our choices. In today’s environment, there are very few companies which are entirely ethical.”

### 3: Access

- Hannah Horowitz Yetwin

**Speakers:** Simon Patrick Rogers, John M. Kelly Library, University of Toronto; Jean Moylan, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and Cristina Fontáñez Rodríguez, Maryland Institute College of Art, National Digital Stewardship Residency Fellows; Christina Fitzpatrick, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

The afternoon session opened with a discussion on ethical implications of contentious political archives and strategies in presenting and preserving opposing perspectives, entitled “Marjorie Lamb, Communist Hunter, Patriot, Activist: The Observed and Observers in a Cold War Archive.” Rogers’ experience with controversy in collections was highlighted by the Marjorie Lamb Papers, an anti-communist collection of materials gathered after the Catholic Church sanctioned communist sympathies. This included documentation of communist and anti-communist movements, meetings and, politicians in Canada (and beyond) in the mid-twentieth century. The custodial history of the collection posed ethical issues. Lamb’s collection was moved to the Kelly Library in 1968 and was untouched until 2007, so issues of provenance surfaced: does the library own the collection? Additionally, Rogers was concerned with issues of exposure and privacy concerns for members of the Catholic Archdiocese. Rogers discussed a database solution, Discover Archives, that allows building in access points to other collections; the collection has a lot of cross-referencing, so he maintained original order. Rogers uses this material to showcase thinking about propaganda and media literacy, and hopes to use it in a communism and Catholicism symposium in the future. What started as a virulently anti-communist collection has ended up also being a useful resource for anyone looking into Canadian commu-

nism in this time period.

NDSR residents Jean Moylan and Cristina Fontáñez Rodríguez presented their experience shifting the ways digital media is handled and accessed in “Towards Institutional Access: Promoting Internal Conversations around the Stewardship of Digital Media.” Cristina Fontáñez Rodríguez is working at Maryland Institute of Art to change the workflow of digital, archiving non-traditional art and thesis work. Content creators should have a say in how work is preserved and accessed, and students receive conflicting information regarding proper representation. As digital stewards, we can’t guess what the artists want and need, and we should consider transparency with post-production archival work, open access model concerns, formats, and representation. Jean Moylan is working at the Guggenheim Museum looking into new ways to improve preservation and access infrastructures for all digital audio-visual assets. The museum generates a lot of video content, including exhibitions, symposia, and performances, and these videos represent a small percentage of actual footage in final edited form. Moylan’s role is to raise awareness of the value of these materials for institutional memory and she is demonstrating re-use value that would come from investing in digital stewardship. Both Fontáñez Rodríguez and Moylan believe it our ethical responsibility as archivists to explain the value of materials in concrete, irrefutable terms.

Finally, Christina Fitzpatrick presented “review on demand” as a response to access request for specific closed or unprocessed folders in her presentation, “Deploying Review on Demand to Balance Privacy and Access.” Large quantities of records that contain private information require screening every page, which means large portions of the core collection are hidden and access is hindered. These records were closed at the series level to protect privacy, and there was no way to find individual folders. Researchers didn’t know which files were hidden and archivists didn’t know how to create access to them. Review on demand was implemented as a four-step process: update finding aids, establish workflow, set policy and expectations, and track work. In total, 5,413 boxes were subject to review; previously this material was hidden, and now researchers and staff can identify material they need and request review on demand. Fitzpatrick explained that this has been effective in balancing privacy and access. Implementing review on demand has increased control over holdings and staff feel like there is progress. The impact on staff is to be determined and the process generates large finding aids, but overall has had a positive effect on work at the JFK Library. ■



## WHO'S MISSING FROM THIS TABLE?

About the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, social justice, and diversity within the archives profession and NEA.

Inclusion and Diversity Committee  
Introduces Four New Members

*By the Inclusion and Diversity Committee*

The Inclusion and Diversity Committee has four new members, and we are delighted to introduce ourselves below and begin the work ahead! We come from a variety of different backgrounds and are interested in addressing race, LGBTQ+ issues, disability, decolonization, and labor issues during our committee service. With co-chairs Rose Oliveira and Rosemary K.J. Davis, we will continue to develop robust strategies for embedding inclusion and diversity into the work of NEA, our physical and digital spaces, and the services and resources we provide to create a professional community that is welcoming and accessible to all.

### Q: What is your background?

**Dorothy Berry, Committee Member (October 2018-October 2020):** I am the Digital Collections Program Manager at the Houghton Library at Harvard University. I am quite new to New England, having previously worked as Metadata and Digitization Lead at *Umbra Search African American History* at University of Minnesota, and at the Black Film Center/Archive and Archives of African American Music and Culture at Indiana University. While I am heavily ensconced in digital collections work, my foundation has always been in archives.

**Stephanie Bredbenner, Committee Member (October 2018-October 2020):** I am a processing archivist at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, where I process and catalog Western Americana manuscripts. Previously, I was the project archivist at the San Diego Museum of Man, where I worked to decolonize the museum's archives, which held significant materials belonging to indigenous peoples.

**Joan Ilacqua, Committee Member (October 2018-October 2019):** I am the Archivist for Diversity and Inclusion at Harvard Medical School and the former project archivist for the Archives for Women in Medicine. I also lead the Equal Access Oral History Project, which explores the

history of diversity and inclusion at HMS. Outside of work, I am co-chair of the board of directors of The History Project: Documenting LGBTQ Boston where we are dedicated to documenting, preserving, and sharing LGBTQ history. My educational background is in public history, and I want to ensure that history is for everyone—not just for academic historians. I believe that the same is true for archives and the archives profession—it can and should be for all, and we should all take steps to ensure inclusion.

**Meghan Rinn, Committee Member (October 2018-October 2019):** I am the archivist at the Barnum Museum and assistant archivist at the Bridgeport History Center, both in Bridgeport, Connecticut. While I hold part-time positions at the aforementioned institutions, I was originally hired as a project cataloger, archivist, and metadata specialist for a joint digitization project involving both organizations and focusing on their P. T. Barnum material. Prior to that, I worked part-time at a university archive.

### Q: Why did you want to join the Inclusion and Diversity Committee?

**DOROTHY BERRY:** I have just joined NEA, about a month after moving to Cambridge, MA. I am currently the Chair-Elect of the Archivists and Archives of Color Section of the Society of American Archivists, and wanted to work regionally as well as nationally to increase opportunities and representation for archivists of color. NEA's reputation preceded my move, however, and I knew I would want to be part of such a potent and forward-thinking community.

**STEPHANIE BREDBENNER:** I joined NEA in 2017 and have attended conferences, given a talk, and participated in the mentoring program. In all of my experiences so far, I have been struck by NEA's efforts to hold ourselves accountable to our shared values. I am eager to contribute to this important work by broadening and deepening the scope of inclusion and diversity in NEA and our profession.

For me, archival work has always been about finding and preserving the voices and experiences of people who would otherwise be excluded from the dominant social and historical narratives. However, my work over the past several years has convinced me that archivists cannot even begin to achieve this goal if we do not foster the same values in our profession.

**JOAN ILACQUA:** My career has focused on diversity relating to archival collections both within and outside of higher education. My populations of focus—women, under-represented minorities in medicine, and the LGBTQ community—are historically marginalized in archives, which effectively erases their lives and achievements from history. I want to guarantee that these people have the opportunity to tell their stories through the preservation of their records and via oral histories. Joining the IDC and having an opportunity to continue this work with both collections and the archives workforce seems to be a perfect fit.

**MEGHAN RINN:** Joining the Inclusion and Diversity Committee seemed like the best way to continue the work I did processing and creating the metadata for the P.T. Barnum Digital Collection. I spent a lot of time learning about different disability communities and developing descriptive strategies. But that work wasn't done in a vacuum; it was accomplished by talking to people, listening to what they had to say, and implementing their suggestions. This is a process that requires people and communities outside the archival profession being at the table. Being on the IDC means I can help facilitate these much-needed discussions with people outside the profession, as their perspective is key for furthering any vision that includes inclusion and diversity.

### Q: What do you hope to accomplish during your service on the IDC?

**DOROTHY BERRY:** My work has focused on exploring ways of enriching description to make the materials of marginalized peoples more widely accessible, and troubling the concerns of a majority white-female industry when dealing with descriptive issues around race. I strive to uplift the voices of people of color both as professionals and as archival subjects, whether directly or indirectly. I am also deeply committed to broadening digital access to archives and special collections, a passion I have the opportunity to explore at the Houghton.

**STEPHANIE BREDBENNER:** I am passionate about putting decolonization into practice and providing resources

for archivists developing and revising policies and procedures for stewarding Indigenous materials. I hope that the archives can become a more welcoming and transparent place for indigenous people as researchers, advocates, and archival professionals.

I also hope to bring attention to employment and labor issues that prevent archivists from achieving a stable, fulfilling professional life and fully participating in professional activities like those offered by NEA. One current IDC project I am particularly excited about is exploring possibilities for providing childcare at spring meetings, which will make our conferences more accessible for working parents.

**JOAN ILACQUA:** As a queer archivist, I have committed my career to issues of diversity and inclusion in community and university archives. I am invested in making sure that archives as a field and profession are open and accessible to all people, and hope that my work with the IDC will help NEA continue to build and maintain an inclusive environment that represents the broad diversity of New England.

**MEGHAN RINN:** It is one thing to say “diversity is important,” and another to put diversity and inclusion into action. In serving my one-year term, I hope to develop practical strategies that put inclusion and diversity into action for both the archivists of NEA and the communities that we serve.

The Inclusion and Diversity Committee is always open to questions, feedback, and ideas about how we can better serve NEA's membership. We can be reached at <diversity@newenglandarchivists.org>. Please reach out! ■

### NEA Invites You to Start a Roundtable!

NEA members are encouraged to start a roundtable—a more informal way to get involved with NEA and the archival community, and to connect with others around your interests and needs as a professional. Roundtables organize workshops or events, develop conference sessions, and work with NEA committees on specific initiatives. Take your discussion online through Twitter, Facebook, a blog, or an e-mail list, or make recommendations to the NEA board based on the experience of roundtable members.

## Reviews

**Knuth, Rebecca. *Libricide: The Regime-Sponsored Destruction of Books and Libraries in the Twentieth Century*. Westport: Praeger, 2003. 296 pages. \$55.00 (hardcover). ISBN 9780275980887.**

—Aliza Leventhal, Librarian/Archivist, *Sasaki*

Genocide, the deliberate killing of a group of people, and ethnocide, the deliberate and systematic destruction of the culture of an ethnic group, were words created to describe the efforts of Nazi Germany during World War II and the Holocaust. Within the context of genocidal and ethnocidal campaigns, this book describes how libricide, the intentional destruction of books and libraries, is a specific act of brutality. The author, Rebecca Knuth, describes how libraries and written texts are perceived by totalitarian regimes as dangerous for their capacity to influence or support opposing perspectives or facilitate free thought, and therefore the violence committed toward these seemingly altruistic and culturally significant spaces can cause a particular type of trauma to its relative or a global community.

Knuth argues that the destruction of cultural institutions, of both the material and intellectual resources, is a weapon of modern warfare and an act of deliberate terror. Using examples from over the past seventy years, including Nazi Germany, Ba'athist Iraq, and Communist China, Knuth illustrates how governments have used libraries, librarians, and the larger scholastic community, to carry out absolutist policies of cultural homogenization through censorship and propaganda. Furthermore Knuth argues that shifting the use of libraries or the destruction of libraries and cultural institutions fosters and formalizes a climate of social brutality, especially when committed in tandem with extreme physical violence.

Depicting the gruesome systematic efforts by regimes to eliminate perceived and actual competing, challenging, or disruptive communities and ethnic groups is a challenge that the author has taken on admirably and leaves the reader, especially in the current political and violent-ridden climate, contemplating the strengths and weaknesses of our institutions to prevent such extreme violence from being normalized. Although Knuth provides compelling descriptions and integral context to explain how books and library

spaces have been destroyed in the selected case studies, the text as a whole does not clearly fill a gap in the existing literature of genocides and ethnocides.

The book's most critical shortfalls are the case studies selected, the simplified definition of libraries and their roles in society, and the shallow treatment of cultures that have non-textual historical records. Notably missing from the case studies, though they were tangentially noted, were notorious regimes such as the Communist USSR, which silenced and manipulated authors and literary communities, and Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, which annihilated almost the entire literate society of Cambodia. The author's narrow definition of what libraries are (humanist spaces), how they serve their communities (unbiased and holistic), and how they have been impacted by oppressive regimes (manipulated or destroyed) must be unpacked as there is significant documentation of the continuous and even contemporary censorship of information within public, academic, and special libraries. Finally, the treatment of cultures with oral, artistic, or non-textual traditions, as being unreliable due to colonialism is oversimplified and dismissive.

It is clear that libricide, and variations of it, has been critical to every attempted genocide and ethnocide, as the destruction of a people requires more than physical violence against individuals, but must also include systematic attacks on the institutions, artifacts, and connections a group has to its members and its places. This book demonstrates some of the malicious practices regimes from Europe to Asia have undertaken to achieve their bigoted and cruel goals. It is an important topic for librarians and archivists to be aware of, in order to recognize how their collections reflect the silences and voices enforced and allowed by the political environments they were created within.

**Noble, Safiya Umoja. *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*. New York: New York University Press, 2018. 256 pages. \$28.00 (paperback). ISBN: 9781479837243.**

—Anna Clutterbuck-Cook, Reference Librarian, *Massachusetts Historical Society*

In *Algorithms*, critical information studies scholar Safiya Noble (University of California, Los Angeles) uses the example of Google search to document and theorize the ways



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DIFFERENT THAN WHAT WE  
CAN DO USING OUR VARIOUS  
LOCAL SYSTEMS?

racism and sexism are embedded within systems of online information harvest and delivery by for-profit companies. Noble considers the mechanisms through which results are delivered to those who use Google search, foregrounds the power relationships that shape those results, and challenges readers to denaturalize the process of “Googling it” when we have an information need. A sociologist as well as a critical information studies scholar, Noble weaves a librarian’s understanding of cataloging, classification, and research tools together with a critical Black feminist analysis of interlocking systems of oppression. Often assumed by both developers and the general public to be value-neutral, the algorithmic structures through which human beings create, organize, and access content online are, Noble effectively argues, inescapably shaped by the logics of oppression that shape our interconnected lives.

Chapters one and two walk readers through the basic concepts of algorithmic search and Google’s development of its proprietary algorithmic product, PageRank, and offer illustrative examples of the way Google search results reproduce and amplify harmful beliefs. Not only does the proprietary algorithm encourage searchers to engage with for-profit content, but searches including the word “Jew,”

for example, produce a high proportion of anti-Semitic content (42); image searches for “doctor” return pictures of mostly white men, while image searches for “unprofessional hairstyles for work” produce pictures of black women (83). As critical consumers of information we must ask—regardless of developer intent—who is harmed by the images and ideas circulated through Google search interactions.

Chapters three and four consider other ways in which Google’s dominance in our online lives further marginalizes the already marginalized. Chapter three emphasizes the social costs of a for-profit internet where there is little incentive to challenge search users to critically examine their own desires or beliefs. Chapter four considers privacy and the right to be forgotten by an internet that never forgets, particularly the way increased visibility may further harm already-vulnerable populations. Finally, *Algorithms* turns toward potential solutions. One key intervention is to increase critical awareness of our digital ecosystem’s biases. Noble also champions a “public search engine alternative” to current commercial options (152), a government-funded check on Google’s troubling monopoly over online information retrieval. Even if that remedy seems politically unrealistic in the near future, it may be worth fighting for.



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*Algorithms* provides a strong introduction, with concrete and replicable examples of algorithmic oppression, for those beginning to think critically about our internet-centric information ecosystem. For those already steeped in the rapidly growing literature of critical librarian and information studies, *Algorithms* will be a valuable addition to our corpus of texts that blend theory and practice, both documenting the problematic nature of where we are and the possibility of where we might arrive in future if we fight, collectively, to make it so.

**Corens, Liesbeth, Kate Peters, and Alexandra Walsham.** *Archives & Information in the Early Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. 326 pages. \$91.00 (hardcover). ISBN: 9780197266250.

—VivianLea Solek, *Archivist, Knights of Columbus Supreme Council Archives*

This volume is the second of two essay collections which were derived from a conference sponsored by the British Academy in April 2014. Titled *Transformation Information: Record Keeping in the Early Modern World*, the conference brought together English and American historians and archivists. The conference and this resulting book explore the nature of archives in the early modern world and how various factors influenced and shaped them. This work is part of the recent increase in the study of the history of archives, which according to Elizabeth Yale, a historian of science and the book in the early modern world, “...seeks to understand archives as subjects of history, not just as its sources.”

As archivists, we often focus on the what is in our collections rather than why or how they were created and shaped through time. The book’s contributors explore why and how archives were created in the early modern world, specifically how the culture and people responsible for them shaped them. The relationship between archives and state formation is addressed, as is the role of human agents on the development, organization, and management of archives. The examples illustrate how decisions leading up to the creation of collections as well as their appraisal, arrangement, description, and storage all contribute to the development of an archive.

One strength of the book is the wide range of time periods, countries, and archival practices that are examined—all in a time when archives as we know them did not exist. A

few of the institutions explored include collections of English Quaker writings and Japanese, Italian, and French government records. Another interesting topic is the material culture of early archives including the filing systems that range from papers threaded on cords to bundles of papers tied with linen tape and stored in boxes, chests, and bags.

Perhaps the only weakness of the book is its sometimes ponderous tone. The topics discussed are fascinating and deserve to be read by a wide audience of archivists and historians. Unfortunately, the writing style may deter less determined readers. The editors suggest that similar works on the history of archives and their practices deserve greater research. This is a very sound recommendation and future authors should write for a broader audience to engender the widest response possible.

Overall, this was an interesting read and would be excellent for students of both history and archives. It is an excellent reminder that, even in our thoroughly modern high-tech world, we, like the archivists of the early modern world, are dealing with fundamental questions of retention, arrangement, access, and use even as we simultaneously strive to understand the archival narrative.

**Marshall, Brianna H., ed.** *The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving*. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2018. 304 pages. \$68.00 (\$61.20 for ALA members). ISBN 9780838916056.

—Lynn Moulton, *Processing Archivist, John J. Burns Library, Boston College*

*The Complete Guide to Personal Digital Archiving* is a strange animal: a guide written by archivists for non-archivist information professionals to help non-archivist patrons in managing their personal or community digital lives as though they were archivists. The guide does a remarkably good job at making this task feel surmountable.

The structure of the guide progresses through four sections, from the concrete and specific to the theoretical, through instructions, examples of institutional programs, and big-picture concerns. The sections work well enough independently to be used by one professional at different points of need or by multiple staff members representing different functions within their institution. While the in-

dividual chapters cover topics that could each be a monograph, if read from beginning to end, they give a rich enough overview to merit the titular use of the term “complete.”

*The Complete Guide* is a collection of works by different authors that all appear to have been written (or heavily rewritten) expressly for this guide, and each chapter references and feeds into others. The many-voices approach not only builds on expertise from across the profession, but it also increases the opportunity for readers to find examples that suit their own abilities, resources, risk-tolerance, and role.

The authors writing on best practices attempt to find balance between providing sufficiently specific guidelines to eliminate confusion for first-time implementers and avoiding tools that will too rapidly become obsolete. The resulting recommendations successfully make the topic feel approachable. However, this part stops short of complete because it does not address audio as a format in personal digital archives.

The middle of the book focuses on case studies, with most ending with a strengthened sense of community through more visible, shared digital content, as well as in-

dividuals with better-developed practical skills. These examples are inspirational in demonstrating how information professionals can implement personal digital archiving programs with enduring impact. Progressing beyond instructional and exemplary, *The Complete Guide* concludes with further considerations, including essays on ownership, privacy, diversity, inclusion, and ethics in personal digital archiving.

While for many this book may be aspirational—institutions have their own professional digital archiving programs to establish before they can take on advising patrons about theirs—it can also be viewed as a path forward. Understanding and testing the concepts put forward in this guide provides a means to build the knowledge and familiarity with tools needed for institutional and personal digital archiving programs alike.

**Greer, Jane and Grobman, Laurie, eds. *Pedagogies of Public Memory: Teaching Writing and Rhetoric at Museums, Archives and Memorials*. New York: Routledge, 2016. 198 pages. \$59.95 (paperback); \$170 (hardcover). ISBN 9781138575745.**

—Sonia Pacheco, Ferreira-Mendes Portuguese-American Archives, UMass Dartmouth

*Pedagogies of Public Memory* provides an interesting framework for those interested in exploring the concept of public memory in an engaging and innovative manner. In their extensive introduction, Greer and Grobman expand on the concepts that form the overarching foundation of the text: the idea that “the creation, maintenance, revision, and destruction of public memory is inherently a multimodal rhetorical process” (1). In addition, they want readers, specifically the students with whom practitioners work, to deepen their understanding of the process and power of remembrance. The editors also emphasize that practitioners and students bring varied understandings due to the resources and perspectives of each individual. The introduction also expands on the differences between history and public memory, and the concept that “memory is a constructive practice that requires negotiation among multiple stakeholders” (4).

The editors included case studies from museums, archives, and places of memorial, but all three chapters have information applicable to all institutions and individuals

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concerned with public memory. There are a few recurring concepts throughout the book, including that public memory remains under continual revision because what is preserved, how it is preserved, who accesses it, information technologies, and the political situation of the institution are always changing. This concept is further explored to include history and memory: both are fragile, fractured, and often contested.

One of the highlights of the book is how different forms of memory are presented and explained. The chapter “Remembering the Children of Lodz” speaks to prosthetic memory, which they define as the creation/production of a memory no one else ever had. “Keepers of Memory” addresses lieux de memoires—sites of memory—which are spaces in which history and memory “creatively interact” to showcase the past and include both the oral and written word. The concept of lieux de memoires closely mirrors sites of memorial, where we are presented with two different types: the vernacular and the repulsive. “In loving memory” expands on vernacular memorials created by individuals as a way to recall loved ones and to make loss and memory visible. The very complex case study titled “Teaching the repulsive memorial” describes memorials that honor abject collective waste or loss that has been erased, denied, degraded, suppressed, or projected, unto others.

Disappointingly, the weakest case study was in the chapter on archives and memory. “Talking Back” explored a project that mirrored traditional primary source research and its traditional purpose in ways that the other projects did not, rather than an innovative exploration of public memory. Sadly this chapter counters the message that most of the other projects described in this volume tried to convey: institutions that collect primary source materials need to be cautious of *how* they do it as this is the record for the future that may otherwise not tell the complete story, or even the story at all. The authors of this chapter spoke of its participants creating documents, to be added to the Center’s archive, that focused on the purpose and intent of the staff of the Center, with absolutely no acknowledgement that they are only half of the Center: there is no mention of trying to capture what the users of the Center wanted or their experiences with the Center.

Overall this is a text that should make the professionals involved in public history and its subsidiaries think about the fact that memory is political and context-driven, and that the secondary sources often used to record history are devoid of emotions and imagination which were experi-

enced by the agents of history. The easily accessed version of history is written for public use and intentionally prevents alternative tellings of what happened. This is a concept not foreign to archivists, for they must be conscious in their act of “preserving” history. We should be asking ourselves: what exactly are we preserving? Whose stories will be told in the future? Whose memories do we consider important? And why do we consider them important?

**Constance Crompton, Richard J. Lane, and Ray Siemens, eds. *Doing Digital Humanities: Practice, Training, Research*. London: Routledge, 2016. 408 pages. \$41.95 (paperback). ISBN 9781138899445.**

—Kate Wells, Curator of Rhode Island Collections,  
Providence Public Library

This work offers an overview of theory and core competencies, case studies and resources to inform a basic understanding of digital humanities (DH) methodology. The editors and contributing authors are all current practitioners of digital humanities and are engaged as instructors in the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.

The book is organized into four main sections: foundational theory, core concepts and skills, technical skills, and pedagogy and practice. Each section includes essays by digital humanities practitioners providing a deeper examination of topics within the field. The inclusion of both history and theory provides an excellent background to the essays on current technological applications and classroom application. It provides an overview of the various skills and approaches that one should be aware of before embarking on a digital humanities project. Because the work includes a wide variety of contributing authors, there is, at times, quite a difference in the assumed reader’s level of engagement with digital humanities. For example, some essays are geared to very technically inexperienced readers while others assume a much more sophisticated expertise. This makes the work as a whole feel a bit disconnected; however, it could provide access to a wide variety of readers.

One notable strength of the book is that it highlights projects which point to the more than fifty-year history of digital humanities and the wide variety of scholarly and creative applications. This widens the scope of how readers

can think about digital humanities applications. Specifically of interest to archivists, the book acknowledges that libraries and archives are sister professions to digital humanities and that there is an increasing interest in applying a DH approach to repositories. As such, this work is an excellent resource for archivists interested in creating contextual understanding of the materials in their collections. Ultimately, the book does not present anything new to the DH field, but should be used as an accessible primer on the topic.

**Holloran, Peter C. *Historical Dictionary of New England*, second edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. 660 pages. \$145 ISBN 9781538102183.**

—Amy Hietala, Librarian/Archivist, Wood Memorial Library & Museum; Library Assistant, Old Sturbridge Village

The *Historical Dictionary of New England* by Peter Holloran is an encyclopedia-type reference book that updates an earlier edition published in 2003. Entries are alphabetical and briefly discuss the importance of the topic. The book begins with a section describing acronyms and abbreviations found throughout the book. A chronology of New England, spanning over twenty pages, details significant events, starting with the last glacier receding in New England, ca. 17,000 BC, and going through the witch trials execution site discovered in Salem in 2016. There is an impressive bibliography at the end that is broken down into subjects and is helpful for additional reading.

The *Dictionary* is easy to follow, appears to be thorough, and contains enough information in each entry to clarify the topic. Each topic contains at least one paragraph with date ranges, birth and death dates where relevant, and a brief description of why the subject is important to New England history. Although most topics are brief, larger categories are expanded and cover more details. For example, “Shipyards” describes multiple locations in New England and spans a full page, while “Economy” is several pages long, touches on historical events, Yankee ingenuity, and topics such as commerce, medical industry, and occupations. Highlighted words appear throughout the book, which signify that those are entries elsewhere in the book.

Entries cover a wide range of New England history, including notable figures from the Bush family and Phillis Wheatley to Metacom, John Cuffe, and John Cabot. The

*Dictionary* has entries for locations such as museums and archives including American Antiquarian Society and Old Sturbridge Village, as well as historical sites such as the Old State House, Walden Pond, and the Hoosac Tunnel. Key points of history such as the Stamp Act, Pequot and Aroostook Wars, and political parties (the Know Nothing Party, for example) are also included.

Although the *Dictionary* is not designed for in-depth research, it would be beneficial in a public or high school library reference section in order to give a brief overview of a topic. It is also helpful for a quick look up confirm birth and death dates, locations of events, or to clarify an occurrence. It is only one volume and a relatively small book but is packed with subjects and locations. Overall, it is a respectable reference to have on hand.

**Phillips, Faye. *Creating a Local History Archive at Your Public Library*. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2017. 176 pages. \$57 ISBN 9780838915660.**

—Daniel McCormack, Archivist/Records Manager, Town of Burlington, MA

Public librarians are increasingly called upon to visualize their institutions as wide-ranging information centers, encompassing nearly every topic that can create or access recorded data. Among the more popular is the creation of a local history archive. Local history rooms fill voids brought about by shifting demographics and other factors, such as the diminution of hometown media. In this work, part of the ALA’s Guides for the Busy Librarian series, Faye Phillips produces a cookbook of sorts for the librarian charged with using and keeping original materials with a local focus.

Phillips is a consultant and former assistant professor at Louisiana State University. She clearly understands the thinking of librarians versus archivists and takes nothing for granted regarding archival skills or consciousness. The book and chapters are organized methodically, starting with basic concepts and working toward more specific examples. Phillips takes librarians through building a collection and organizing materials, creating policies specific for the archives, making archives accessible, and taking care of an established collection. Of particular note, the section on processing lays out a clear and uncomplicated approach that would be suitable for any small institution.

# Calendar of Events



**January 25, 2019.** National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators (NAGARA) Winter Regional Forum in Lynnwood, Washington. Themes include disaster recovery, email management, and information governance. <<https://nagara.org>>.

**January 25–29, 2019.** American Library Association (ALA) Midwinter Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Featured speakers include Melinda Gates and Isha Sesay. <<http://2019.alamidwinter.org>>.

**April 4, 2019.** SAA is offering a preconference course at the NEA Spring Meeting: “Building Advocacy and Support for Digital Archives” (DAS certificate program). For course de-

scription and registration, see <<https://archivists.org>>.

**April 4–6, 2019.** New England Archivists Spring 2019 Meeting at the Hilton Burlington in Burlington, Vermont. With the theme “Together We Can,” NEA’s Spring Meeting will explore how archivists work with both records and users. To see the program and register, visit <<https://newenglandarchivists.org/2019-Spring-Meeting>>.

**April 10–13, 2019.** Biennial Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) Conference in Cleveland, Ohio. To see the schedule or register, visit <<http://conference.acrl.org>>.

**April 11–13, 2019.** Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC), “Working Archives: A Labor of Love,” in Morgantown, West Virginia. <<https://marac.info>>.

**May 9–10, 2019.** New Hampshire Library Association (NHLA) Spring Conference in Meredith, New Hampshire. <<http://nhlibrarians.org>>. ■

Anticipating a disconnect in the thinking of librarians and archivists, she couches her language in terms and with examples that the former group will understand. Notably, she provides corresponding definitions from libraries and archives to clarify how professionals in each field describe materials and activities. Helpful examples, charts, and examples from successful programs illustrate how others created and developed elements of their programs.

Phillips’ straightforward approach provides the basic instruction for a librarian starting and developing their program. How the archives develops, or the significance of archives to a community, is not so much a concern for the author. The first steps to a deeper understanding of archives would come through a subsequent reading of the works in SAA’s Archival Fundamental Series II, specifically James O’Toole’s and Richard Cox’s *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*. That work, along with Christina Zamon’s excellent *The Lone Arranger*, provides a solid path forward for local history librarians wanting to further sharpen their archival working and thinking.

Phillips strives for relevance to a wide range of librarians and assumes only basic existing level of archival knowledge from her audience. Although she intended the book for local history specialists at public libraries, many of those charged

with the initial steps in acquiring and using archival materials are reference or public service personnel. This work will prove helpful to the public librarian with some knowledge of archival principles and concepts, but may prove far too basic for those with solid experience in the field. For the librarian it fills most of the need Phillips perceived and will be a trusted resource for those designated with starting a local history collection or developing a nascent one. ■



A snowy scene in Market Square in downtown Portsmouth, New Hampshire, circa 1865–1875. A portion of the Portsmouth Athenaeum, incorporated in 1817, is visible at the far left. Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.



## THIS SEASON IN NEW ENGLAND HISTORY



### **Viking Studies, 1938**

Perkins School for the Blind lower school students stand in a large Viking boat they made of snow and ice and shaped like a dragon. The students were part of Miss Joyce's class studying the topic of Vikings. The photograph was taken on January 27, 1938. *Courtesy of Perkins School for the Blind.*