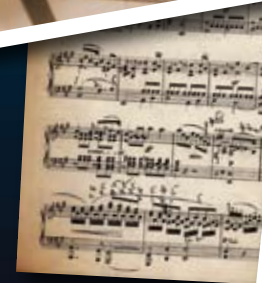


SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

American Archives Month

October 2008



Celebrating
the American Record
Public Relations Kit

OCTOBER IS AMERICAN ARCHIVES MONTH!

Celebrating the American Record

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CARE AND MANAGEMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHS	

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AS SEEN ON THE COVER:

The Ohio Historical Society recovered this government document, "Replevin Order Jenny, a Negro vs. Williams, 1800," via a bid on eBay. Replevin orders are generally issued by courts when the party having the right of property cannot simply invoke self-help and take the property back. The order commands the sheriff of Ross County to take custody of three children then in the possession of Ewell Williams and deliver them to Jenny. "The order is significant because by allowing an African-American woman the opportunity to file the complaint, Edward Tiffin [the clerk of the Ross County Common Pleas Court who would later serve as Ohio's first governor] and Thomas Worthington [the presiding justice who would later be called the "Father of Ohio Statehood" and serve as its sixth governor] were clearly demonstrating their opposition to slavery and their commitment to keep slavery banned from what would become Ohio," says State Archivist Jelain Chubb. (Image courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society)

Picture This!

Dear Colleague:

Our goal in promoting American Archives Month (AAM) — and in "Celebrating the American Record" — is to raise awareness among key audiences of the value of archives and archivists. Those audiences may include policy makers, "influentials" within our communities, resource allocators, prospective donors, researchers, future archivists, the media (including community relations departments within our own institutions), and, of course, the general public.

This *2008 American Archives Month Public Relations Kit* provides basic materials that will give every archivist the opportunity to make his or her archives program more visible... and more appreciated. In fact, although this kit is developed especially for American Archives Month, I encourage you to consider using its suggestions year round to increase the visibility of your repository — whether to external or internal audiences. We hope that your state, regional organization, or repository will be stimulated by the ideas and tips presented here (and in supplementary materials on the SAA website) to schedule an event, issue a press release, set up a media prospect list, or take some other step — however small — toward enhancing public awareness of your capabilities.

Visual materials play an important role in documenting the American record, and that's why we've chosen to highlight in this third annual kit the care and management of photographs. For the Special Section in the center of the kit, we've called on the archival experts who (literally) wrote the book for their quick tips on caring for photos. This section also includes a tip sheet for the general public ("Lasting Impressions: Tips for Preserving Your Family's Photos") that can be downloaded from the SAA website for distribution to your repository's visitors — or attendees at your next speaking engagement!

We're especially grateful again this year to Lockheed Martin Corporation for its support for development and distribution of the *2008 Public Relations Kit* and poster.

SAA believes that there is strength in numbers, and that the collective voice of archivists can be more powerful than individual voices. We hope that you'll set aside some time in October to "Celebrate the American Record" using the tips and tools provided in this kit to educate your community about the *power* of archives!

Mark A. Greene
SAA President, 2007-2008

P.S. SAA is always available as a resource. We like to hear your ideas and are happy to answer your questions about conducting American Archives Month activities. Please contact us (toll-free) at 866-722-7858 or at archivesmonth@archivists.org.

Picture This! Contest

Is your 2008 American Archives Month or Archives Week poster a design sensation?

Do you have a great idea for an American Archives Month activity? Or have you already implemented a successful campaign for Archives Month? SAA wants to hear from you! If you're willing to show off that poster or spread the word about your campaign, you could win a \$250 prize – and fuel the imagination of the archives profession!

Best Poster to Promote 2008 Archives Month/Week

What to submit: Submit your 2008 poster (mounted on foam core), along with information about the intended audience, the quantity printed, and your distribution plan.

Criteria for judging: Submissions will be judged based on the quality of the message for the intended audience, the quality of the design and composition, and the distribution plan.

For examples of past Archives Month / Week posters, visit the Council of State Archivists' website at www.statearchivists.org/archivesmonth/AAM-posters.

Best "Astonishing Idea" -OR- Best "Successfully Implemented Campaign"

What to submit for "Astonishing Idea": A description of up to 500 words that addresses your intended audience(s), message(s), and distribution medium(s). (Hint: See "Communication Planning 101" on page 5.) Include an explanation of how this idea, when implemented, would have a positive impact on public awareness of archives and archivists.

Criteria for judging "Astonishing Idea": Submissions will be judged based on creativity, viability of concept, and potential impact on public awareness.

What to submit for "Successfully Implemented Campaign": Show us what you did! Your submission may be formatted as a poster or a notebook, and it should include sufficient documentation that the judges can determine what you did and how successful your campaign was. Your campaign must have been conducted in 2005, 2006, or 2007 to be eligible for a prize.

Criteria for judging "Successfully Implemented Campaign": Submissions will be judged based on the quality of the campaign, the quality of the presentation, and the measurable impact on public awareness.

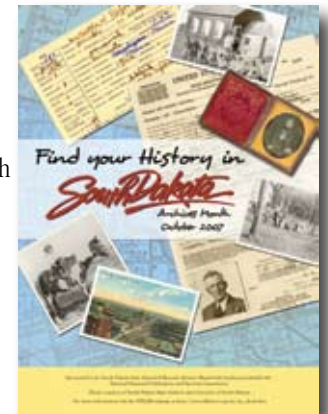
DEADLINE: *Entries must be received by SAA by Friday, July 25, 2008.*

Send to:

Society of American Archivists
Attn: Picture This! Contest
17 North State Street, Suite 1425
Chicago, IL 60602

The Selection Committee, a subgroup of the American Archives Month Task Force, will judge all entries during ARCHIVES 2008, the Society of American Archivists' Annual Meeting at the Hilton San Francisco, August 26-30. Entries will be displayed in a prominent area adjacent to Registration. The winners (one for each category*) will be announced on Friday, August 29, at the SAA Awards Ceremony. You need not be present at the meeting to enter the contest.

* SAA reserves the right not to select a winner in each category.



A Baker's Dozen:

13 Ideas for Reaching Out to Your Community



1 Organize a workshop or other program and advertise it via a community calendar. Design your workshop to be of interest to your primary audience. Workshops for the public might cover researching your family history on the web, digitizing family photographs, or learning the history of your house.

2 Sponsor a lecture by a researcher who has used your collection. If the researcher has published a book, consider doing a book signing and sale, and ask the author to donate a portion of the proceeds to your repository.

3 Call your local schools and volunteer to speak to students.

Use American Archives Month as an opportunity to build an interest in a career in archives among 6th or 8th or 10th graders. Tell them about the hidden treasures in your repository – and what fun you have as an archivist. (For more, see the SAA website at www.archivists.org/news/AMKit_2007.pdf for “Celebrating the American Record: Ideas for Reaching Out to Students in Elementary Through High School.”)

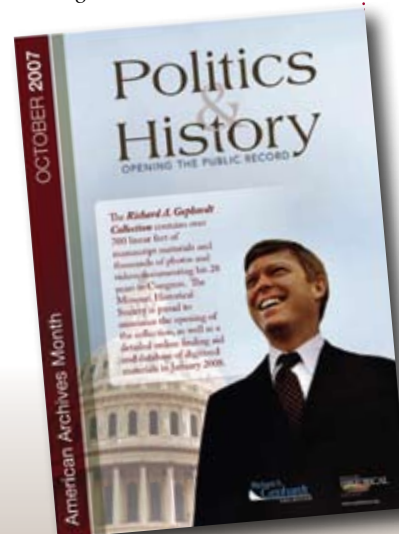


4 Volunteer your organization as a resource for students preparing National History Day projects.

SAA endorses this year-long, nationwide effort whose objectives include providing students with the opportunity to work with and analyze historical documents and other primary source material. Many state archives participate in National History Day. See www.nationalhistoryday.com for more information.

5 Contact your state archives to determine how your repository might participate in an established statewide program.

6 Approach your institution's newsletter editor or community relations department with an article idea for American Archives Month. Hold an open house or tour of the archives. Engage staff throughout your organization by inviting them to participate in a trivia contest on your internal website.



7 Invite your local media representatives for a tour of your repository. American Archives Month is an opportunity to begin a relationship that can last throughout the year.

8 Organize a walking tour of a neighborhood documented by your repository.

9 Write letters to the editors of your local newspapers about the importance of access to public records, or another topic that will allow you to tie in a message about the value of archives and the work of archivists.



10 Invite your governor, federal and state legislators, and local officials to participate in your Archives Month event(s). Arrange for a gubernatorial or mayoral proclamation in advance, and submit photos of the presentation to newspapers and newsletters.

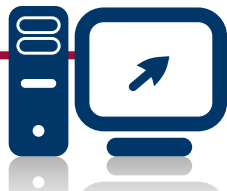
Communication Planning 101

As you consider how to participate in American Archives Month, draft a simple communication plan by asking yourself the following questions – always beginning with “Who?”

11 **Broadcast your archives message** on a local radio or cable television station.

12 **Schedule appointments with your members of Congress during district visits** to discuss the importance of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the “Preserving the American Historical Record” Act. For more information on the agency and the proposed initiative, see www.archivists.org/advocacy or www.statearchivists.org.

13 **It's an election year!** Do you know where the candidates stand on issues related to access to public records? Become an “activist archivist” – ask them!



Visit www.archivists.org “early and often” to learn about what your colleagues are doing to celebrate American Archives Month. And as you complete your own events, please send photos and a brief description of your efforts to SAA at archivesmonth@archivists.org so that we can share them!



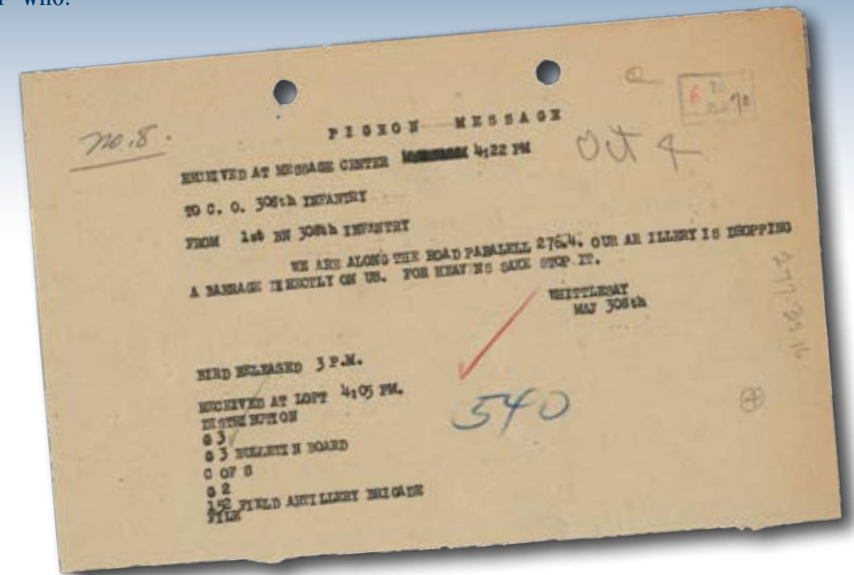
Who?

The target audience (the “who”) is the group of individuals whose thinking or behavior (or both) you want to influence.

Most archives have a range of potential audiences. You could decide to mount a broad effort to make American Archives Month reach as many people as possible, or you could select a cluster of individuals (eg, policy makers, resource allocators, high school students, or even staff within your own institution). Begin by identifying all potential audiences, then narrow your list to one or two priorities. Be as specific as possible, because this improves the chances of creating a meaningful and powerful message that is likely to catch the attention of your target audience.

What?

The message (the “what”) is the key information or idea(s) that may serve to influence the target audience's thinking or behavior. This is the hard part—and it's all about keeping it simple. A simple message is more likely to be memorable. See “Say What? Talking Points on the Value of Archives” on page 6 for some ideas to get you started.



How?

And the medium (the “how”) is the method used to communicate the message to the target audience. We typically think of publications (newspapers, newsletters, magazines) and the Internet when we think of mediums. But mediums may include paid ads, blast e-mail, your repository's website, wikis and blogs, a good old-fashion letter, a keynote address or session at a community or professional meeting, a presentation to a local high school class, and many others. Consider what will be the most effective way to present your key message(s) to your key audience(s). **And keep in mind that a picture really *may* be worth a thousand words!**

Say What?

Talking Points on the Value of Archives

Imagine yourself on an elevator with a friendly stranger who innocently inquires what you do for a living. You say with enthusiasm, “I’m an archivist!” The stranger gives you “that” blank look and you know she’s thinking, “Say what?” Seizing the opportunity to evangelize, and knowing there are precious few seconds left before the elevator arrives at your floor, you eloquently explain your professional calling....



Lisa Lewis took her boss’s advice and entered SAA’s “Best Elevator Speech” Contest conducted in celebration of American Archives Month 2007. The associate archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge says it was easy to compose her 28-word entry because she had already developed a simple explanation to help anyone who is unfamiliar with the profession to understand what she does for a living.

Her winning entry:

“Archivists bring the past to the present. They’re records collectors and protectors, keepers of memory. They organize unique, historical materials, making them available for current and future research.”

Honorable mention honors went to Jacquelyn Ferry of the Wisconsin Historical Society for her entry:

Archivists acquire, manage, preserve, and help patrons identify and use historically significant collections of unique materials, such as government records, manuscripts, photographs, films, and sound recordings.

Your repository probably already does outreach. But does it tell the broader story of archives and archivists? Add to your ongoing efforts some

simple language that describes what an archives is, who uses archives, why archives are important, and what archivists do.

Lisa and Jacquelyn give you permission to use their “elevator speeches” for starters!

Here are some other talking points:

- In the course of daily life, individuals, organizations, and governments create and keep information about their activities. Archivists are professionals who assess, collect, organize, preserve, maintain control of, and provide access to the portions of this information that have lasting value. Archivists keep records that have enduring value as reliable memories of the past, and they help people find and understand the information they need in those records.
- These records, and the places in which they are kept, are called “archives.” Archival records take many forms, including correspondence, diaries, financial and legal documents, photographs, video or sound recordings, and electronic records.
- An archives serves to strengthen collective memory by creating a reliable information bank that provides access to an irreplaceable asset — an organization’s, government’s, or society’s primary sources.
- Archival records are essential to support society’s increasing demand for accountability and transparency in government and public and private institutions.
- Archival records protect the rights, property, and identity of our citizens.
- Archivists play a key role in ensuring that the digital records being created today will be accessible when needed in the future.
- American Archives Month is a time to focus on the importance of records of enduring value and to enhance public recognition for the people and programs that are responsible for maintaining our communities’ vital historical records.

American Archives Month

October 2008

CELEBRATING THE AMERICAN RECORD WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

Ideas for Reaching Out to Your Community Using Photo “Treasures”

This special section of the 2008 American Archives Month Public Relations Kit will help you “spread the good word” about your archives using photos in your collection – and your knowledge of how individuals might preserve their own family’s “treasures.”

Provided here are ideas and resources for you to use in educating the public – and refreshing yourself! – about proper care and management of photographs, including:

- Ideas for building an outreach program based on photographs,
- “Lasting Impressions: Tips for Preserving Your Family’s Photos,” information geared toward the public that you can download from SAA’s website and distribute to your repository’s visitors (see pages 2 and 3), and
- A quick reference guide for archivists (prepared by the experts!) highlighting the key factors in prolonging the life of the photographs in your care.

“A Picture’s Worth a Thousand Words....”

For many, a picture really may be worth a thousand words! Photographs can play a powerful role in attracting new audiences – from school children to researchers to major donors. An intriguing photograph in your repository’s collection could be the inspiration for a successful exhibit and/or fundraising effort.

When building a photographic outreach program, consider focusing on:*

- One type of image, such as stop-action photography, direct positive images (eg, ambrotypes, daguerreotypes, and tintypes), or stereographic travel images.
- Photographs from a particular collection, donor, or record group.
- Photographs from a particular era, such as Victorians at work or the Roaring Twenties in your community.
- Photographs on a particular topic or event, such as images of the great San Francisco

earthquake, harborscapes showing great American schooners, or identity photographs from nineteenth-century immigration documents or passports.

- Unidentified images that community members could examine and caption on a form.
- The work of a group or school of photographers, such as Pictorialists or the Studio 323 photographers.
- The work of local photographers in a remote place, such as expatriate photographers from your state working in Istanbul or on expeditions to Africa.
- The work of a particular photographer, culture group, or studio, such as African-American photographers documenting their own culture or women photographers documenting men.

When Dean Weber of the Ford Motor Company Archives learned that new Chief Marketing Officer Jim Farley has a family connection to Ford (his grandfather was a long-time Ford employee), he wasted no time in making contact. After completing required privacy procedures, Dean pulled granddad’s 1918 employee identity card (with photo) and forwarded the information to Farley. In interviews with Business Week and the New York Times, Farley cites his “visit to the archives” when explaining Ford’s new marketing campaign featuring a more personal touch – interviews with employees who have responsibility for a car.

From the Archives

* Adapted from *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O’Connor, with Helena Zinkham, Brett Carnell, and Kit Peterson. Chicago: SAA, 2006.

Lasting Impressions:

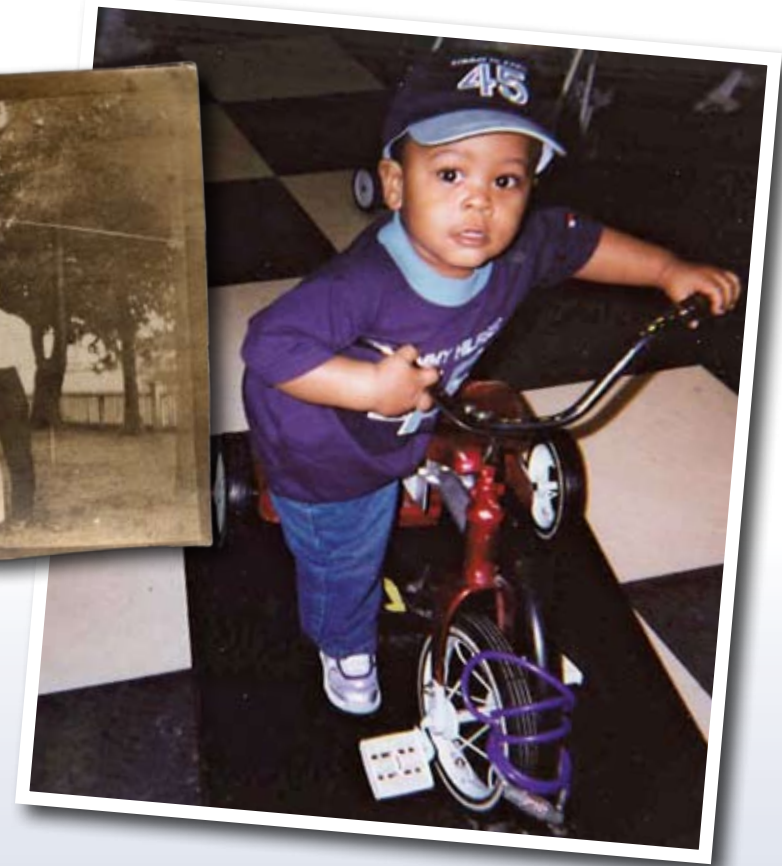
Tips for Preserving Your Family's Photos



If you've visited your local historical society, state archives, or even the National Archives in Washington, then you know that archives – and the professional archivists who work in them – make sure that all important records are preserved and made available for research by generations to come. Those records include photographs, which are a rich source of information about our individual heritage and collective history.

Your family photos are part of that history, too. No doubt you'd like them to last a lifetime and longer. . . . With proper care and storage, you can achieve that goal. Here are some helpful tips from archivists for making sure that the photos you cherish today will make lasting impressions!

- **The best protection for your photographs and papers is a cool, dry, stable environment** (ie, moderate temperature and relative humidity with relatively little fluctuation, clean air and good air circulation, no natural or fluorescent light, and good housekeeping).
- **Don't store your valuable paper collections in an attic or basement**, which commonly are subject to excessive heat and/or moisture. Avoid storing materials beneath or close to such water sources as washing machines, bathrooms, or air-conditioning equipment. And be sure to consider what is in the room above your collection.
- **Heat causes damage.** Don't hang valuable photos over radiators, heating ducts, heat-producing appliances, or fireplaces. Books, documents, or photographs with long-term value should be housed away from heat sources.
- **Light causes fading and other damage.** Keep photos in the dark as much as possible; don't put them in direct sun or bright light. Hallways or other rooms without windows are best. Install shades and/or heavy curtains where you can't avoid windows. If you must display a photograph in direct sun or bright light, consider obtaining a high-quality scan of the photo and displaying the digital print instead.
- **Indoor pollution rapidly damages paper** and is a growing problem in energy-conscious spaces with good insulation. Any valuable photo on display should be protected by a preservation-quality mat and frame. The glass or plastic covering, which protects the item from pollutants and dirt, should contain UV filtering.
- **Photos, letters, clippings, and other family documents should be stored unfolded** because folding and unfolding breaks paper along the fold lines. Storing photos and documents in folders rather than envelopes is recommended because envelopes can cause damage as items are removed and replaced.
- **To preserve wedding pictures** (or photos of any important family event) as long as possible, be sure the photographer takes a roll of black-and-white film. Although technology improvements have extended the life of color prints and negatives, color materials still do not last as long as traditional black-and-white photos and negatives.



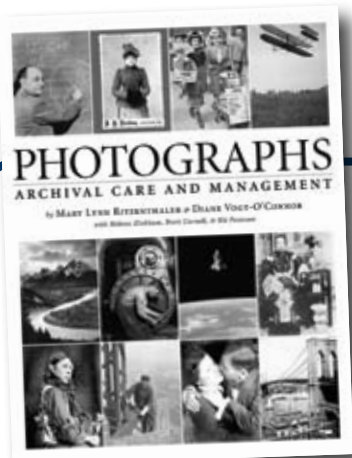
- **If you produce color photo prints at home from an inkjet printer**, these prints are not considered to be preservation quality, and no standards govern their longevity. To maximize the quality and durability of this type of color print, it's best to use the inks and photographic paper recommended by the printer manufacturer rather than third-party inks or papers.
- **When considering whether to use paper or plastic enclosures for your photos**, select enclosures that pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). This test ensures that the enclosure will not react chemically with your photos. Supplier catalogs should indicate whether a photographic storage product has passed the PAT. To read more about the PAT, see the Image Permanence Institute's "Archival Advisor" web page at <http://www.archivaladvisor.org/>
- **When storing photos in an album**, use "photo" or mounting corners (available from preservation suppliers), not "magnetic" pages (which actually contain adhesive that can stick to or react with your pictures). Choose a photo album with buffered or neutral, good-quality paper and/or polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene pages – not vinyl or PVC.
- **Make multiple backups of all digital photos and other valuable media.** Videotape, magnetic disks (hard drives and floppy disks), CDs, and DVDs have a limited life expectancy and are subject to both gradual and catastrophic failure.

For more information, contact an archivist at your local historical society, a college or university, or your state archives. Or visit the Northeast Document Conservation Center's website at www.nedcc.org. There you'll find more tips on preserving documents, photos, and other materials.

The Society of American Archivists thanks the Northeast Document Conservation Center for its permission to adapt NEDCC materials for this article.



SAA is the national professional organization that represents more than 5,200 individual archivists and their institutions. Archivists are professionals who acquire, manage, preserve, and help patrons identify and use historically significant collections of unique materials, such as government records, manuscripts, photographs, films, and sound recordings.



Photographs: Archival Care and Management

by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor with Helena Zinkham, Brett Camell, and Kit Peterson Chicago: SAA, 2006

An essential tool for custodians of photographs in archives, libraries, historical societies, and similar repositories who manage photographic materials. This guide provides pragmatic techniques for each aspect of managing collections of images – from appraisal and accessioning through arrangement, description, and research use.

Presented from an archives perspective, the book focuses on systematically working with collections of photographs, regardless of their age, size, condition, or usage levels, and addresses archival management of photos, the history of photography, preservation issues and techniques, interpreting photographs, legal issues, digitizing, and using photos in outreach and educational efforts.

Illustrated with nearly 300 images, it also includes an extensive bibliography and information on funding sources and professional organizations that have a special focus on photographs.

Resources to Note



Northeast Document Conservation Center

www.nedcc.org

NEDCC is a nonprofit, regional conservation center specializing in the preservation of paper-based materials. It serves archives, libraries, museums, historical societies, and other collections-holding institutions, as well as private collections. The organization provides conservation services, imaging services, surveys and consultations, workshops and conferences, disaster assistance, and preservation resources, including "Preservation Leaflets" on a wide variety of topics with supplier contact information and links to additional resources. The leaflets may be downloaded at no cost. The Field Service department provides free preservation advice to institutions and individuals worldwide.

Image Permanence Institute

www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org

The Image Permanence Institute is a university-based, nonprofit research laboratory at Rochester Institute of Technology that supports the preservation field through research, publication, educational activities, products, and services. IPI publishes media storage guides for "collection care professionals" as well as The Archival Advisor, an online "guide for the family photo collector, the genealogist, and the scrapbook maker."

www.archivists.org

Educating members of your community about how to preserve their family photos is one important way that you can help contribute to the completeness of the American record.

Visit the SAA website at www.archivists.org for a free download of "Lasting Impressions: Tips for Preserving Your Family's Photos" (pages 2-3 of this Special Section). Print multiple copies of the article (preferably on a color printer) and make it available to your repository's visitors. Or take it with you to distribute to students on your next career day visit!

Lasting Impressions: Care and Management of Traditional Photographs

Photographs increasingly are viewed as important resources for unique information about many facets of public and private life, as well as the natural world and the built environment. Whether your repository houses vast collections of photos or just a few "treasures," you're sure to benefit from tips from the experts on care and management of traditional photographs.

You can significantly prolong the life of the photographs in your care by:

- Keeping them in cool, dry, dark, and clean storage environments,
- Applying safe handling techniques, and
- Using appropriate-quality housing materials

For a quick reference guide highlighting the key factors involved in implementing these strategies, see www.archivists.org/archivesmonth. SAA is grateful to Diane Vogt-O'Connor, Helena Zinkham, Dana Hemmenway, Adrienne Lundgren, and Andrew Robb of the Library of Congress for distilling their expertise on photo conservation and management into this simple checklist.

Tried and True!

Ideas from Your Colleagues for “Celebrating the American Record”

Archives throughout the country participated in American Archives Month in 2007. Here are some examples of what they did. (For more information about these efforts – and for even more ideas – see the SAA website at www.archivists.org and the Council of State Archivists website at www.statearchivists.org.)

The National Library of Medicine’s History of Medicine Division devoted a page on its website (www.nlm.nih.gov) to “Celebrating the American Record of Health and Medicine,” with links to the online 2007 American Archives Month Public Relations Kit.

Nevada Governor Jim Gibbons proclaimed October “Archives Month.”

The Chicago Archives Fair on Saturday, October 20, at the Newberry Library featured archivists from 19 area repositories who offered expert tips to researchers, high school students seeking ideas for Chicago Metro History Fair projects, and college and university students looking for research seminar topics.

The Mississippi Department of Archives and History offered lunch-time events focusing on the diverse heritage of the state, including a presentation on “Tracing Your African American Ancestors” and an exhibit featuring photos of “the many faces of Mississippi.” Collections throughout the state also were highlighted: The **Columbus-Lowndes Public Library** featured an exhibit titled “Now Playing: Tennessee Williams”; the **Lauren Rodgers Museum of Art Library and Archives** displayed a photo exhibit titled “Labor Pains: Hard Work

Builds a Community”; the **University of Mississippi Department of Archives and Special Collections** hosted “Preserving Your Family Memories”; and the **Yazoo Library Association** provided a workshop on “Creating a County Archives” for those interested in learning “first-hand from experienced archivists what is involved with preserving county records. . . .”

Washington State celebrated Archives Month statewide with “Waters of Washington,” featuring more than 15 events ranging from the “River of Memory: The Everlasting Columbia” exhibit throughout the month to a workshop for the public on “Using Washington State Maps for Genealogy and Other Research.”

The Cape May, New Jersey, County Clerk’s Office celebrated American Archives Month with a workshop featuring three historians who accompanied attendees on a walking tour of the First Baptist Church of Cape May Cemetery. The workshop concluded with a tour of the County Clerk’s Hall of Records and Archives guided by archivist Diana Hevener.

The University of Hawaii celebrated its Centennial and Archives Month with an extensive exhibit of the Charters of the University as well as documents, photos, and memorabilia.

The University of Kentucky Archives mounted six exhibits at the Young Library celebrating its Archives Week theme of “leisure,” including “Mustaches of the 19th Century” and “The W.B. Griffin Circus Photographs.”

The *Daily Texan* reported on a panel session, sponsored by the **University of Texas Student Chapter of SAA** in celebration of American Archives Month and Austin Archives Week, that featured three speakers addressing “how politics collides with archival work.” The panel discussion addressed the recently declassified tapes of the Lyndon B. Johnson presidency, recently acquired documents from the Woodward and Bernstein investigation of the Watergate scandal, and concerns about Bush Administration records policies.



In future American Archives Month Public Relations Kits, we’d like to feature what your organization did to celebrate. Please send photos and brief descriptions of your efforts to SAA at archivesmonth@archivists.org.

The Artesia (New Mexico) Historical Museum and Art Center was featured in the local press with an article that stressed the importance of preserving family records and that highlighted the Council of State Archivists’ “Closest to Home” project.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference coordinated region-wide activities based on the theme “Exploring New Worlds: Archives in Our Lives.” For more information, see the MARAC website at www.marac.info.

The Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists published its “Archives Week Action Guide,” with tips on planning events, undertaking local outreach activities, and encouraging individual archives and archivists to “make the most of this time of celebration – their way.”

The *Sacramento Bee* gave great coverage to the **California State Archives’** free behind-the-scenes public tours of the archives, which featured “a 66-foot long map that famed railroad engineer Theodore Judah sketched out in 1961 as a proposed template for the Central Pacific Railroad crossing of the Sierra Nevada. . . . It [took] 14 tables to hold the four sections of the map.”

Open your doors! Exhibits, lectures, information fairs, open houses, tours – any of these ideas can introduce key audiences to your repository’s treasures and help raise awareness about the important work of archives and archivists.

National Treasures:

How to Use Prized Items in Your



Whoever your key audience is, keep in mind that people love stories. Tailor your story to that audience, demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for your archives and your work, and you'll leave a positive – and lasting – impression.

Your “elevator speech” (see page 6) is vital for those occasions on which you have a short time to present a compelling explanation of archives and archivists. When you have a bit more time to communicate, share a story. . . .

What are the most interesting stories in your archives? Do you have a document, photo, or artifact in your repository that always “gets ‘em”? You know, the photo of immigrant settlers in your region, or the book that absorbed a bullet and saved someone's life, or the letter from a soldier to his young wife that reveals what it was really like on D-Day? Do you have a story about a visit to your collection that changed forever someone's understanding of his or her family history?

Peter Gottlieb, state archivist of Wisconsin and chair of SAA's American Archives Month Task Force, set about to collect stories from the Wisconsin Historical Society staff that could be used to advocate for the state archives. Here – to stimulate your own ideas – are several of those stories.

Changing Lives

“The Wisconsin Child Center was a state orphanage. Perhaps the most striking example of the impact created when people use these records is the case of two brothers placed at the Center in the 1930s and then ‘indentured’ to families in different parts of the state. One brother came to see the records and through them not only learned of the family situation that led to the placement, but also was able to locate and be reunited with his brother. . . .”

Protecting Rights

“The Archives responds routinely to requests from individuals who need information from school records, court case files, and naturalization volumes in order to secure social security, get a passport, or prove citizenship. We received an inquiry from a recently widowed elderly woman now living in Oregon. She was naturalized under her maiden name in Dane County in the 1940s, and needed to document her citizenship to receive certain Medicare benefits. We were able to provide a certified copy of her naturalization in the Circuit Court for Dane County.”



Collection to Tell Your Story

Connecting People With Their Past

"A researcher came to the Archives Research Room seeking information on his father, who was the first journalist killed in New Guinea during World War II. The researcher was one year old when his father was killed. He wanted to use the Lewis Sebring Collection because Sebring had been a journalist in New Guinea during the war. In the collection was a series of photographs documenting the father's funeral."

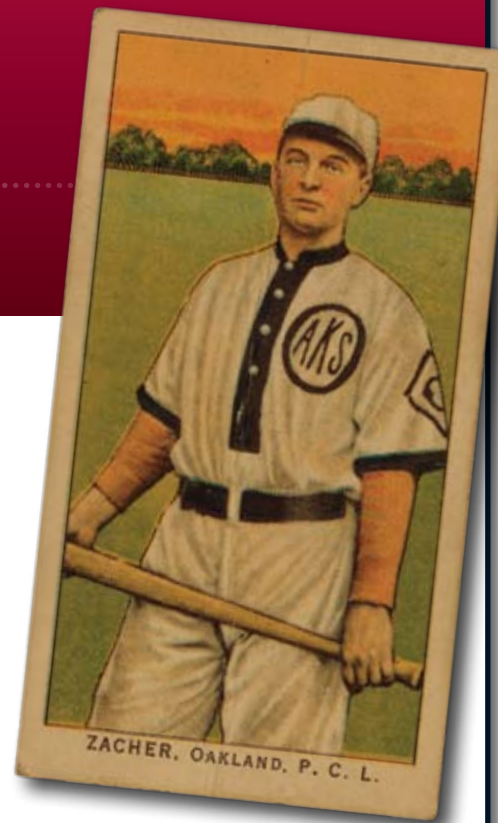
"Through a Google search, a man from Colorado learned that we have an oral history interview with his grandfather, whom he had never met. The caller identified himself as a pilot, and the interview concerns the grandfather's barnstorming career in the LaCrosse area. He ordered a copy of the interview on CD to share at his family's Christmas gathering."



Making History Possible

"The thing we call history is created by individuals conducting research and writing about their findings. The ongoing preservation and conservation work of the Library/Archives makes it possible to write the history of many people, places, and events. The Historical Society not only preserves the materials necessary for individuals to connect with their personal pasts, but preserves the raw material that is essential to writing the histories that society needs to understand its past, present, and future."

"The Historical Society has the diary of the only member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition to die during the journey. It's a true national treasure. Because of its value and fragility, the original was seldom accessible to researchers. Following careful conservation, we scanned the diary, produced an impressive facsimile, and placed it on the Web. The original diary was available for display in several major exhibits during the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial; the facsimile is readily available to researchers at the Historical Society, giving them the same experience as handling the original; and now anyone in the world can access the diary on the Web."



An Ongoing Need

"A Native American researcher was working in the Government Publications stacks investigating potential topics for her dissertation. She caught a volume that serendipitously fell from the shelf. It was a copy of the Robert La Follette hearings on the condition of Native Americans in Wisconsin. As she caught the volume, it fell open to her grandfather's testimony before La Follette's Senate committee. This experience led to her dissertation based in part on these published hearings. She not only found her topic, but she recognized that the volume was deteriorating rapidly and brought the problem to staff attention. It has now been repaired and digitized for future generations."

Photo/Image Credits

On the cover: Check purchasing the Alaska territory for \$7.2 million in 1866, signed by Secretary of State William H Seward (National Archives and Records Administration); electrician Fred Brusati atop the Golden Gate Bridge during construction (Labor Archives and Research Center, San Francisco State University); "Replevin Order Jenny, a Negro vs Williams, 1800" (Ohio Historical Society); Pennsylvania delegation at the 1912 Republican National Convention, Chicago Coliseum, Chicago, Illinois, June 18-22 (Library of Congress).

Page 3: Archives Month/Week posters courtesy of the state archives. To view state archives posters, go to the Council of State Archivists website at www.statearchivists.org.

Page 4: Eighth-grade students from Bexley Middle School assist Ohio Historical Society staff in sorting 1864 Soldiers' Ballots. (Ohio Historical Society)

Page 5: This message was sent from behind enemy lines during World War I. It was carried by a pigeon. (National Archives and Records Administration)

Page 8: "Going to town on Saturday afternoon, Greene County, Georgia, 1941," Jack Delano, 1914 - (Library of Congress); "Cowboy apparently reading a letter to his horse," Charles J Belden, 1887-1966 (American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming); "Rural school children, San Augustine County, Texas, April 1943," John Vachon, 1914-1975 (Library of Congress).

Page 9: "Original Journal of Sergeant Charles A Floyd, 1804," Lewis and Clark Expedition (Wisconsin Historical Society); "Zacher, Oakland, Pacific Coast League, 1911," Baseball card from the Benjamin K Edwards Collection. (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division).

Special Section: From the Johnson/Rohrer, Perkin, and Spears family collections.

Acknowledgments

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www.archivists.org

Planning an event?
You'll find an Event Planning Guide at
www.archivists.org/archivesmonth

1: Create Your Media List

Media coverage helps get the archives message to a mass audience, and an essential part of event planning is to invite the media to attend. Your media list should include individuals who cover the humanities, human-interest features, and/or community events in newspapers or magazines and for radio and television stations. (Remember to include community newspapers and local cable channels.)

To find local media telephone numbers and addresses, use the online directories at www.usnpl.com, www.newslink.org, or www.newsdirectory.com. Once on the media outlet's website, use the "contact us" link to scan the list of editors and reporters. You may also call the outlet's main line and ask the receptionist for contact information for the assignment editor of the section to which you are sending the information and the community calendar editor. Also consider targeting the legislative or business media contacts, depending on your topic.

When you call a radio or TV station, ask for the names of the news director, the assignment editor, and the public service director, as well as the producers of specific locally produced talk shows.

To develop and maintain your media list, create a simple Excel spreadsheet that includes columns for Media Outlet and the reporter's

5 Easy Steps for Ensuring Media Coverage of Your Archives Month Event

First Name, Last Name, Email Address, Phone, Fax, Mailing Address, Preference for Receipt of Information (ie, email, fax, mail), and Comments. The last column is where you'll track contacts with the reporter and any need for follow-up.

2: Send Your Media Alert

The media alert (or fact sheet) is an abbreviated version of the news release. This one-page, at-a-glance reference sheet contains the basics of your event: who, what, when, where, why, and how. (See the example at www.archivists.org/archivesmonth.)

Send your media alert via fax, email, and/or mail to all of your media contacts (and particularly those responsible for community calendar listings) up to three times: four weeks before your event, the week before your event, and the morning before your event.

Tip: Don't send your media alert as an email attachment. Instead, cut and paste the text of the alert into your email message. Many media outlets don't allow their employees to receive email attachments due to the problems of spam and junk email.

Some media outlets have online community calendars that allow you to enter your event information online. Once your listing is reviewed, chances are good that your event will be posted.

3: Write Your Press Release

The press or news release is the basic and most accepted method of conveying information to the media. A news release may announce a special event, meeting, speech, award, appointment, research report, or any other information that you consider noteworthy.

Reporters receive hundreds of news releases each week, so your challenge is to make yours stand out. Ideally you should talk to the reporter first, then follow up with a release.



Send your release to the appropriate editor or news director two to three weeks in advance of the event. (Weekly and monthly publications should be notified one to three months in advance.) Call the news outlet to confirm deadlines. For daily newspapers and electronic media, call one week to 24 hours before the event to confirm receipt of your release. The call serves as a reminder of the event and as a second chance to promote it.

For statewide events, distribute the information to media contacts in as many cities and towns in your state as possible. Wire services and news bureaus (such as Associated Press, Crain's News Service, and Gannett News Service) may be interested in statewide and other large events, but don't rely on these alone.

Local media are most interested in stories with hometown appeal. "Localize" your release as much as possible, citing names of current or historic local people, places, and events. Also, look for a local perspective on a national story. Tying local activities to national events or controversies may give your story more importance in the eyes of both the readers and the media. Be creative with current events. Look for an archives angle on something that is happening in your town or region. One spin-off from the hometown high school team's victory season, for example, could be a profile of a hometown hero from another era.



Despite the advent of online submission of news releases, it's important that you also mail your release and that you apply the following general “rules” to your submission:

- The first paragraph (the “lead”) answers the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?
- Limit your lead to 30 words, and make sure it gives the reader a clear idea of the story.
- Present the facts in the order of their news value (inverted pyramid style).
- Identify any people mentioned in the release by title and/or organization. Do not assume that the reader knows anyone's affiliation.
- Stick to the facts. Opinions should be expressed only with attribution (ie, when quoting someone).
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Stick to your main topic.
- Use words with which the public is familiar. Avoid jargon. If you must use acronyms, spell out the full proper name with the first mention and indicate the acronym in parentheses.
- Include your contact information (name, email address, telephone number) in the upper right corner of the first page, and in the upper left corner type the release date (the date on which the information may be disclosed). If the information can be published upon receipt, indicate “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.”
- Try to limit your release to one page. Double-space your copy and provide wide margins so that the reporter can make notes. If you must go beyond one page, type “More . . .” at the bottom center of the first page and include a brief identifier and page number at the top of page 2.
- At the end of the release, include a sentence or short paragraph that explains what your organization is and does: “Founded in 1936, the Society of American Archivists is North America's oldest and largest national archival professional association. SAA's mission is to serve the education and information needs of more than 5,200 individual and institutional members and to provide leadership to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of records of enduring value.” End the release with “####” or “30” centered at the bottom.
- Print the release on your institution's letterhead.
See www.archivists.org/archivesmonth for a sample.

www.archivists.org

You'll find a sample press release that you can adapt for your use at
www.archivists.org/archivesmonth

Visit www.archivists.org/archivesmonth

4: Take Digital Images

Be sure to ask your media contacts if they would be interested in post-event photos. (Many local newspapers will run photos after an event.) Have a photographer on site during your event to capture any VIP visits or graphic shots. Provide a caption that – very briefly – tells the story of who, what, when, and where.

Here are some tips for making the most of your photographs:

- Ask about the publication's or website's photo requirements. Most prefer high-resolution digital images.
- Compose your picture in a manner that gives the viewer the most information possible. Avoid “mug shots” against a bare wall and drinks in hand. If possible, include a banner, enlarged photo, or “cool” things from your collection as a backdrop to provide context and enhance interest.
- Add depth by shooting at an angle rather than head-on. Candid shots that avoid a posed look are best.
- If using a digital camera: Set the resolution at a minimum of 300 dots per inch (DPI) for photographs that will appear in print, and at a minimum of 72 DPI for online photos.
- Avoid damaging photos with labels and paper clips, and don't write on the back! Type your caption on a separate piece of paper and carefully tape the edge of the photo to the paper. Your caption should identify individuals in the photo and describe any action or location that it portrays.
- Newspapers rarely return photographs, so don't send your only copy!

5: Secure an Official Proclamation

Ask your governor, mayor, or local elected official to declare October as “Archives Month.” Call the official's office first to find out the preferred procedure for such requests. Send a sample proclamation (see the example) with a cover letter indicating the importance of Archives Month within your community/state. If your official does not have a standard proclamation form, suggest that the sample language be typed on the state, city/town, or county letterhead.

Arrange for a photographer and representatives from your repository or organization to be present for the proclamation signing. Send a captioned photo to local media representatives, along with a news release detailing your Archives Month celebration.



www.archivists.org

Go to www.archivists.org/archivesmonth for a proclamation “template” and request letter that may be adapted for your use.



Changing Channels



New online tools can provide even more opportunities for communicating about archives and archivists. Don't limit yourself to traditional media; try changing channels!

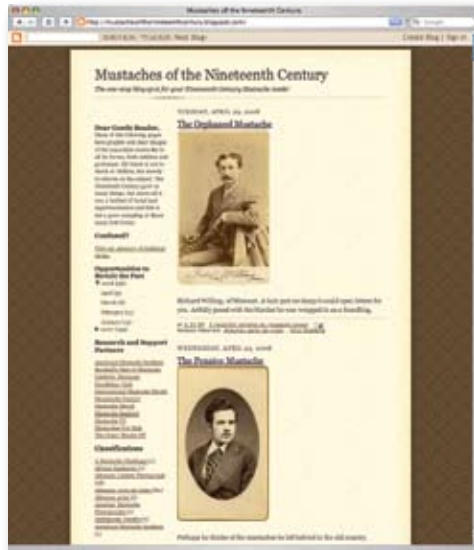
Social media. Social networking. Photo sharing. Blogs.

RSS feeds. It's a deluge of new media! Wrapping your head around how these online communication tools work can be daunting – but it can also be fun and useful . . .

“Social media” encompasses various activities that integrate technology, social interaction, and the construction of words, pictures, videos, and audio. These Web-based mediums are by nature dynamic, interactive, and flexible. They do more than push out content to an audience (like a regular Web page does). They use content to engage people by enabling their participation in the flow of information.

If you're a novice in the world of social media – which is all about sharing information and experiences – here's a quick reference to help you distinguish among the social media buzz words (source: Wikipedia at www.wikipedia.org). Also provided are examples of how the archives profession is already using these tools to help raise awareness about archives, archivists, and archival issues.

A **wiki** is a piece of server software that allows users to create and edit Web page content using any Web browser. It's a composition system, a discussion medium, a repository, a mail system, and a collaboration tool. (“WikiWiki” is Hawai'ian for “quick.”) One example of a popular wiki: Wikipedia.



A **blog** (from web log) is a website where entries are written in chronological order and commonly displayed in reverse chronological order. Many began as personal online diaries; many more are evolving into very large and active digital communities. The ability for readers to leave comments in an interactive format is an important part of many blogs. To learn more about setting up a blog: Blogger or Google Blog. Examples from the archives community:


University of North Carolina: A View to Hugh: Processing the Hugh Morton Photographs and Films at www.lib.unc.edu/blogs/morton/

University of Kentucky: Mustaches of the 19th Century at mustachesofthenineteenthcentury.blogspot.com/

Photo sharing is the publishing or transfer of a user's digital photos online, thus enabling the user to share them with others (whether publicly or privately). This functionality is provided through both websites and applications that facilitate the upload and display of images. In addition to being a popular website for users to share personal photos, the photo-sharing website Flickr (www.flickr.com) is widely used by bloggers as a photo repository. Examples of popular photo-sharing sites: Kodak Gallery, Flickr, and Snapfish. Examples from the archives community:

Library of Congress:
www.flickr.com/photos/Library_of_Congress/;
project description at www.loc.gov/rr/print/flickr_pilot.html

National Museum of Health and Medicine, Otis Historical Archives:
flickr.com/photos/99129398@N00

RSS feeds  are Web formats used to publish frequently updated content (such as blog entries and news headlines). The RSS (Real Simple Syndication) document, which is called a feed, contains either a summary of content from an associated website or the full text. Feeds permit instant distribution of content and the ability to make it “subscribable.” For an introduction to how RSS feeds work: Feedburner. Examples of popular feeds: BBC News Headlines, Amazon.com, and Yahoo! Examples from the archives community:

Wisconsin Historical Images:
www.wisconsinhistory.org/whi/subscribe/

National Coalition for History:
feeds.feedburner.com/historycoalition

Like all new processes, using social media can have a flipside. Be cautious about copyright and remember that information conveyed via social media is *very* public. Projects should be monitored carefully and evaluated regularly due to the evolving nature of the ‘Net.

