

# MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

Newsletter of the Museum Archives Roundtable, Society of American Archivists

April 1987

## SPECIAL REPORT: THE SOBY PAPERS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN NEW YORK

When James Thrall Soby died in January 1979, he bequeathed his entire art collection to the Museum of Modern Art.\* A year later the Museum received Soby's papers as gifts from two sources - his estate and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur A. Cohen, antiquarian booksellers. Even before this material was processed, the Museum received numerous letters and telephone calls requesting its use; moreover, during the past few months almost 150 different items have been consulted by Museum staff and outside researchers. Nevertheless, many people ask, "Exactly who was James Soby?"

James Thrall Soby (1906-1979) was an author, art critic, editor, seasoned connoisseur, distinguished collector and patron. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, he attended Williams College where he became interested in illustrated books especially those done by artists of the School of Paris. He left Williams at the end of his Sophomore year and in autumn 1926 went to Paris where he began collecting contemporary pictures. Upon returning to Hartford he became active on the staff of The Wadsworth Atheneum working under A. Everett ("Chick") Austin in the years 1928-38, when that museum, the oldest in America, was in the vanguard of the modern movement. He continued to collect modern art and began to write articles and books about living artists. Beginning in 1940 he also

lived in New York City where he became involved in activities at The Museum of Modern Art, serving on various committees and in such important positions as Trustee (1942-79), Acting Director (1943), Director of Painting and Sculpture (1943-79) and director of over 15 major exhibitions.

### *Soby Prolific Writer*

Aside from collecting, his main activity was writing; he wrote a monthly art column for the *Saturday Review of Literature*; he was editor of *Magazine of Art*; his principal books include *Arp* (1958), *Bathus*

*continued page 2*

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES ROUNDTABLE TO MEET AT SAA

The Museum Archives Roundtable will meet in New York during the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists on September 3 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. The meeting location will appear this summer in SAA annual meeting literature.

The meeting will include first year reports by Arthur Breton, Roundtable coordinator, and Kathleen Robinson, newsletter editor. The program will feature presentations by Roundtable members who will report on their respective archival facilities. These "works in progress" summaries are expected to be short presentations which may include visual aids such as slides and graphic materials and audience handouts. All Roundtable members are encouraged to participate in this meeting and make a presentation. Contact Arthur Breton, Curator of Manuscripts, Archives of American Art, AA-PG Building, 8th and F Streets N.W., Washington, DC 20560 (202)357-2781.

\*For a description of this collection see *The James Thrall Soby Collection of works of art pledged or given to The Museum of Modern Art: exhibited for the benefit of the Library of the Museum ... as a contribution to the Museum's 30th Anniversary Fund* (at) M. Knoedler ... New York. New York: The Museum of Modern Art; 1961.

(1938), *Contemporary Painters* (1948), *Dali* (1941, rev. 1946), *de Chirico* (1941 and 1955), *Gris* (1958), *Miro* (1959), *Modern Art and the New Past* (1957), *Modigliani* (1951), *Romantic Painting in America* (with D.C. Miller, 1943), *Rouault* (1945, rev. 1947), *Shahn* (1947 and 1957), *Tanguy* (1955), *Tchelitchew* (1942), and *XXth Century Italian Art* (with A.H. Barr, Jr., 1949). These books are models of solid scholarship combined with sympathy based on personal acquaintance with the artists.

The processed Soby Papers include 24 linear feet of correspondence, research notes, ephemera and photographs of works by artists about whom Soby wrote, transcripts, an unpublished manuscript entitled *French Romantic Art*, written in 1959, records relating to The Museum of Modern Art, the Smith College Museum of Art, Williams College and the disposition of the Kay Sage Tanguy Bequest, travel notebooks, diaries and family papers and photographs.

#### *Processing the Papers*

The papers arrived at the Museum in no discernible order. In one instance Soby's file drawers appeared to have been emptied into large grocery boxes so that the contents of file folders had been separated from the folders themselves. In addition, it became apparent that the Estate had invited book dealers to purchase selected items; for example, correspondence with the Neo-Romantics and a letter from Francis Bacon to Soby are missing. A Museum curator, Alicia Legg, who had worked with Soby and had seen his papers neatly organized in file cabinets in his home in New Canaan, Connecticut, was consulted. After reading and sorting, the arrangement became apparent and the papers were divided into five series:

- I. Subject Interest Materials (1930s-60s)
- II. Writings (1930s-69)
- III. Museum Matters (1940s-70s)
- IV. Soby Collection (1930-79)
- V. Personal/Family Items (n.d.)

The papers were processed so that they could be microfilmed and The Archives of American Art has agreed to microfilm Series I and Series II. A finding aid is in preparation; the papers are now available through the RLIN data base.

The Soby Papers are of art historical importance for advanced research in 20th century art. Soby was influential in explaining Surrealism to the American public; his notes, transcripts, early documenta-

tion (photographs, printed matter and ephemera), correspondence with Andre Breton, Mme Apollinaire, Julien Levy, Rene Gaffe, E.L.T. Mesens, Roland Penrose, Gala Dali, Yves Tanguy and Kay Sage (whose estate Soby administered), among others, constitute an important source for scholars, as does his extensive documentation on Bacon, Balthus, de Chirico and Miro.

These papers are also of sociological importance for as art critic of the *Saturday Review of Literature*, a periodical of the American intelligentsia during the 1940s and 1950s, Soby wrote with a liberal mind untainted by politics. Typescripts and notes for many of these articles are included in these papers.

The importance of the Soby Papers to the Museum's history is significant. For example, memoranda and correspondence in Series III clarify Soby's role in the reorganization of the Museum in the 1940s when his sensitivity and expertise were crucial.

Rona Roob  
Archivist  
Museum of Modern Art, New York

*Museum Archivist* is issued twice a year by the Museum Archives Roundtable of SAA. News items, letters to the editor, and comments from the archival community are welcome. Contact Kathleen Robinson, Editor, *Museum Archivist*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, P.O. Box 6826, Houston, TX 77265.

#### Contributors to this issue are:

Pat Adams, *Western Historical Manuscript Collection*, University of Missouri  
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Diane Vogt-O'Connor, *Smithsonian Institution Archives*  
Tony Wrenn, *American Institute of Architects*  
Deborah Wythe, *Brooklyn Museum*



## AIA ARCHIVES SEEKS PAPERS OF WOMEN ARCHITECTS

In 1888 The American Institute of Architects elected Louise Blanchard Bethune of Buffalo, New York, as its first woman member. In 1988 it will celebrate the centennial of her election with both exhibits and publications and has established an *Archive of Women in Architecture* as part of its regular Archives. The intent of the special collection is to collect biographical data on women in architecture, either as practicing architects, or in fields relating to architecture, to locate research holdings concerning women in architecture and artifacts of the work of such women. If your museum archives contains data, or if your museum has in its holdings any work by a woman architect, please communicate with Tony P. Wrenn, Archivist, The American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20006, (202)626-7496. A fact sheet on the AIA Archives, one on the *Archive of Women in Architecture*, and a biographical data sheet for recording information on Women in Architecture are all available from the AIA Archives.

NEW ORLEANS REPOSITORY ISSUES  
NEW BOOK ON LOCAL ARTISTS

The Historic New Orleans Collection is publishing its long-awaited reference book this month, *Artists in New Orleans, 1718-1918*. According to Ralph Draughon, Curator of Manuscripts and Archivist, the book has been more than a decade in preparation. In addition, the Manuscripts Division issued its annual publication, *Manuscripts Update*, in March. The publication is available free of charge.

Among the facility's recent acquisitions are the Soulie Family Papers, the records of an affluent free family of color in antebellum New Orleans and Paris. Included are the records of Norbert Soulie, the builder, who worked with Henry Sellon Bonneval Latrobe. Additions to the Marquilliers of St. Louis Cathedral Papers include much information on the rebuilding of the cathedral in 1849-1852. Among the additions are letters from two free black men in the artistic community; lithographer Jules Lion and marble cutter and sculptor Eugene Warburg.

For more information on The Historic New Orleans Collection contact Ralph Draughon, Curator of Manuscripts and Archivist, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, LA 70130 (504)523-4662.

## NEW ARCHIVES AT BROOKLYN MUSEUM

The Brooklyn Museum established its Archives in 1985 with the assistance of a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. As recently reported by Archivist Deborah Wythe, the Archives preserves and makes available the records of the museum, and also includes materials from the museum's parent organization, the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences (1843-1980), and the Institute's predecessor, the Brooklyn Apprentices' Library (1823-41). The repository has received approximately 300 linear feet of records for processing; Archives personnel have surveyed a further 750 linear feet of material and placed these items in a newly organized records storage area as the museum's records management program gets under way.

Holdings include a complete run of Institute and Museum minute books from 1823; records of the Office of the Director from its creation in 1913; curatorial and exhibition records; architectural plans; scrapbooks from 1899 through the 1970s; photographs of the building and gallery installations; and several unpublished histories of the Institute.

The Archives also holds several special collections: the papers of the museum's first Curator of Ethnology (1903-1929), Stewart Culin, including expedition reports from his travels in Europe, the Orient, and the American West; and his study collections on the influences of non-Western textiles and clothing design on Western fashion. The papers of William H. Goodyear, Curator of Fine Arts (1897-1923), include publications, notes, and photographs from his research on architectural refinements and his *Grammar of the Lotus*.

Special projects now underway include a preservation and microfilming project for the scrapbook collection, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities; and organizing the McKim, Mead & White plans for the museum building.

For more information on the Archives and its holdings contact Deborah Wythe, Archivist, The Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238 (718) 638-5000.

Does your archives have a special collection it recently acquired or processed? Why not submit a description of these papers for MUSEUM ARCHIVIST?! We would love to include it.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

*Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums*

The Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums (MAAM) is sponsoring a one-day workshop on "The Care and Use of Archival Collections in Museums." The workshop will take place on April 24 at the Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington, DE from 9 a.m to 4:30 p.m. Attendance is open to MAAM members for a charge of \$40 which includes lunch. The program includes:

*Overview*

Michael Nash, Curator of Manuscripts,  
Hagley Museum

*Collection Management*

Matthew Hogan, Archivist, The Franklin  
Furnace

*Archival Control-The Word Processing Alternative*

Paul Hensley, Archivist, Winterthur  
Museum

*Care and Storage of Archival Materials*

Evelyn Frangakis, Conservator, Center for  
the Conservation of Art & Historic  
Artifacts

*Preparation for Microfilming*

Marina Pacini, Archives of American Art

*Exhibiting Archival Materials*

Nancy Allyn, National Archives

*Accessing the Collection*

Cheryl Leibold, Archivist, Pennsylvania  
Academy of the Fine Arts

To apply contact Molly Lowell, Executive  
Director, MAAM, P.O. Box 817, Newark, DE  
19715 (302)451-8420.

*Smithsonian Institution Archives*

In September 1987 the Smithsonian Archives is planning a Smithsonian-wide seminar on the management of audio-visual collections. The seminar will focus on the conservation, organization and effective administration of motion pictures, photographs, videotapes and audio-tapes. The seminar will feature lectures, workshops and tours over a two-week period. Open to all Smithsonian staff, the workshop is a follow-up to a popular seminar on the administration of photograph collections offered at The National Museum of American History in 1985. For more information contact Diane Vogt-O'Connor, Smithsonian Institution Archives, A & I Building 2135, 900 Jefferson Drive S.W., Washington, DC 20560.

*New England Museum Association*

The New England Museum Association, with support from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities, is sponsoring a workshop on Organizing and Preserving Architectural Records on May 18 at the Longyear Historical Society in Brookline, MA. The workshop will be presented by professional conservator, Nancy Schrock.

The workshop is an introduction to organizing and preserving architectural records and is oriented toward small to medium-size collections. Topics to be discussed include: "Defining Architectural Records," "Surveying the Content and Condition of the Collection," "Organizing and Cataloging," "Preservation," and "Storage Alternatives."

For more information contact Pam Brusic, Executive Director, New England Museum Association, Boston National Historical Park, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston, MA 02129 (617)720-1573.

*Midwest Archives Conference*

This year's Midwest Archives Conference (MAC) will include a session entitled "Archives in Museums." The session is scheduled to take place May 8 from 1:30-3:00 p.m. at the Art Institute of Chicago. The chair and speakers for the session are:

Catherine Stover, Chair  
Art Institute of Chicago

Jeanine Head  
Henry Ford Museum

Mary Ann Johnson  
Field Museum of Natural History

Peter Michel  
Missouri Historical Society

Participants will discuss the archives' role in institutional missions, where archives fit in the administrative structure and how they affect planning for their institutions, and the differences in collecting museum records versus manuscripts. The first speaker has been part of an NHPRC grant to establish an archives in a museum. The second speaker is a member of The Association of Natural Sciences Institutions (TANSI) consortium on libraries and archives. The third speaker is the chief curator of the library and archives of an historical society that in the past ten years has changed its focus from the archives to museum exhibitions.

*continued on page 5*



The Francis Bacon Library established the Arensberg Archives in 1978 as a permanent repository for the personal papers and related material of Walter Conrad Arensberg (1878-1954) and Louise Stevens Arensberg (1879-1953).

The Arensbergs played a pivotal role in the development and dissemination of modern avant-garde art, literature and music in the first half of the twentieth century. Correspondence between the Arensbergs and artists, architects, collectors, dealers, writers, film, museum and university personnel, and family members, provide a rich and unique source for the investigation of the patronage and acceptance of modern art in this century. An exceptional series of letters spanning almost 40 years between the Arensbergs and Marcel Duchamp, details the relationship between the artist and his foremost collectors.

Archivist Naomi Sawelson-Gorse reports that the Archives is attempting to locate and register all documents relating to Walter and Louise Arensberg. Of particular importance are documents of: the negotiations between the Arensbergs and museums regarding the disposition of their art collection; museum records of loans from the Arensbergs' art collection; and photographs of their collection (*in situ* at their home, individual art items, exhibition records).

To ensure that its registers are complete, the Archives staff would appreciate receiving information from the members of the Museum Archives Roundtable, or their associates, if their archives include any Arensberg-related material.

Contact Naomi Sawelson-Gorse, Archivist, Arensberg Archives, Francis Bacon Library, 655 North Dartmouth Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711, (714) 624-6305.

#### UPDATE: PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART ARCHIVES

The Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives began in 1975 and consists of records dealing with the founding of the Museum (then known as the Pennsylvania Museum of Art) in 1875, up to and including materials relating to the present era. A National Endowment for the Humanities grant to the Archives in 1981 allowed the Archivist time and assistance to compile an *Inventory of the Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives*, as well as in-house *Guides* to the various collections within the Archives. In 1984 the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) awarded the *Inventory's* third

edition an "award of excellence in archival finding aids" in the category of repository guide.

Currently the Archives contains 900 linear feet of materials including Museum Records of the Museum Corporation, Director's Records, Curatorial Records, etc.; Special Collections and Private Papers such as those of Fiske Kimball and George Grey Barnard; and Special Format Records including architectural drawings, scrapbooks of news clippings and photographs.

The *Inventory* and various *Guides* are available for a fee upon application to the Archives. Contact Archivist Louise F. Rossmassler, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, P.O. Box 7646, Philadelphia, PA 19101 (215)787-5419.

#### MEETINGS continued from page 4

Following the papers, the chair will conduct a tour of the Archives of the Art Institute of Chicago. For more information on the session contact Catherine Stover, Archivist, Art Institute of Chicago, Michigan Ave. at Adams St., Chicago, IL 60603.

#### Western Archives Institute

The Western Archives Institute will be held for the first time from July 20-31, 1987. The institute is designed to serve people interested in or working in the archival profession who have had limited academic training in the field. The institute is cosponsored by the Society of California Archivists, the California State Archives and UCLA.

A faculty of more than 30 working professionals will teach courses in a full range of archival administration. Course topics include ethics of the profession, arrangement and description, reference services, records management, conservation, micrographics, photographs and other special records, disaster planning and facilities planning. A limited enrollment of 30 will allow students and faculty to work closely together.

For further information contact the Western Archives Institute, California State Archives, 1020 "O" Street, Suite 130, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916)445-4294.

GARDNER MUSEUM ARCHIVES OFFERS  
UNIQUE "PEEK" AT BOSTON SOCIETY

Isabella Stewart Gardner, one of 19th century Boston's leading socialites and art collectors, incorporated her museum in 1900. The collection of paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, textiles, decorative arts, rare books and manuscripts includes works by Giotto, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Whistler and Matisse. The building is in the style of a 15th century Venetian palace with a central flowering courtyard.

*Scope of the Collection*

Mrs. Gardner had a passion for collecting. She acquired musical and literary manuscripts and letters of writers, artists, composers and presidents. Included are letters of Rousseau, Voltaire, George Sand, Burns, Scott, Dickens, George Eliot, Tennyson, the Brownings, Dostoevsky, Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, Matisse and thirteen U.S. presidents. She gathered photographs of friends and people she admired and received autographed portraits from Sarah Bernhardt, James Whistler, Henry James and Pavlova among others. She filled her travel scrapbooks with photographs which she and her husband John purchased on their exotic trip to Southeast Asia and the Orient in 1883-84.

*Highlights of Gardner Correspondence*

At the heart of the Museum Archives are Isabella Stewart Gardner's personal letters from over 1,000 correspondents including Henry Adams, Ethel Barrymore, Bernard and Mary Berenson, Pablo Casals, T.S. Eliot, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Julia Ward Howe, Henry and William James, George Santayana, John Singer Sargent and James Whistler. Actress Ellen Terry wrote to Mrs. Gardner asking her to intercede on behalf of Isadora Duncan who was banned from dancing in Boston; "You would have a word to say on this matter." Henry James wrote 100 charming letters that span 35 years and were an important source for Leon Edel's biography of the writer. William James and Mrs. Gardner corresponded about their shared interest in the Cambridge Society for Psychical Research. Mrs. Gardner received 464 letters from Bernard Berenson, the eminent connoisseur, collector and art historian. Berenson was a significant force in the art world for over 60 years and the exchange is of considerable interest. As Berenson was Mrs. Gardner's chief advisor on the purchase of works of

art, his letters allow us to trace the development of the Museum collection. The correspondence between Berenson and Mrs. Gardner has been edited by the Museum's director, Rollin Hadley, and will be published by Northeastern University Press in 1987. All of the personal correspondence is available for research on microfilm through The Archives of American Art.

The Museum Archives not only documents the museum's history but also reflects the richness of Mrs. Gardner's life and her wide-ranging interest in art, literature and music. The collection elucidates her friendships, personality and global journeys, and provides a unique view of Boston society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Archives is the source for many of the articles published in the museum's annual report, *Fenway Court*, and since 1979 a continuing series of archival exhibitions has greatly increased the visibility of this behind-the-scenes collection.

Susan Sinclair  
Archivist  
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF  
NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

The Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections is a multidisciplinary organization composed of persons who are interested in the development and preservation of natural history collections. Natural history collections comprise specimens in the fields of anthropology, zoology, botany and geology, and supporting documentation, such as audiovisual materials, labels, library materials, field data and similar archives. Preservation refers to any direct or indirect activity providing continued and improved care of these collections and supporting documentation.

The Society publishes a biannual journal called *Collection Forum*. Membership is open to individuals and dues are \$12 (U.S.) per year. To subscribe contact the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections, Box 6520, Station J, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2A 3Y6.

The Second Annual Meeting of SPNHC will be held May 31 - June 3, 1987 at the Redpath Museum, McGill University in Montreal. For more information on the meeting contact Ingrid Birker, Redpath Museum, McGill University, 859 Sherbrooke St. W, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2K6 (514)392-5997.



## SMITHSONIAN UNDERTAKES PHOTOS SURVEY

NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
ARCHIVES HAS ACTIVE YEAR

The Smithsonian Archives is presently sponsoring a special project whose purpose is to survey all photographs at the Smithsonian at the archival collection level. The five project staff members produce descriptive guides to the collection which provide basic bibliographic, provenance and collection management information. Abstracts of these collection guides will be published by the Smithsonian Press in a five-volume set entitled, *A Finder's Guide to Photographic Collections at the Smithsonian Institution*. A comprehensive data base on all Smithsonian photographic collections is also being developed.

As of January 1987 over 6 million photographs in 1,200 collections have been surveyed. Museums and research bureaus completed by the Photo Survey Project staff include: The Center for Astrophysics; The Cooper-Hewitt Museum; The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design; The Freer Gallery of Art; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden; The National Museum of African Art; The National Museum of American History; The National Museum of Natural History; The National Zoological Park; and The Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute.

Museums and research bureaus in progress include: The Archives of American Art; The National Air and Space Museum; The National Museum of American Art; The National Portrait Gallery; and the Smithsonian Archives. For more information on the project write to Project Director Diane Vogt-O'Connor, Smithsonian Institution Archives, A & I Building, Room 2135, Washington, DC 20560.

## ARCHIVIST SOUGHT AT ST. LOUIS ART MUSEUM

Position available March 20, 1987. No closing date provided.

Responsibilities: Manages Archives and Records Management Program of the St. Louis Art Museum. Supervises full-time Archives Technician and volunteers.

Qualifications: Master's degree in history or library science and 3-5 years experience in the administration of an archives are required. Knowledge of art history or art literature is helpful.

Salary: Commensurate with education and experience. Excellent benefits.

Contact: Send letter and resume to Stephanie C. Sigala, Head Librarian, Richardson Memorial Library, The St. Louis Art Museum, Forest Park, St. Louis, MO 63112.

During the past year the New York Zoological Society Archives received additions to the records of its primary constituents, the operating divisions of the Society. Steve Johnson, Archivist of the NYZS, reports that additions of particular interest include: the records of the director of the Osborne Laboratories of Marine Sciences and the New York Aquarium; curatorial offices of the Herpetology and Ornithology Departments of the Bronx Zoo; scrapbooks and other personal papers of William Bridges, author of *Gathering of Animals: An Unconventional History of the New York Zoological Society*; and special project files.

The Archives also engaged in various activities to improve access to its holdings. Conversion of finding aids to machine readable form continued. Products included a keyword index to NYZS press releases from 1936-69. A summary of animal records in the Archives was produced for the animal records staff. In addition, an early architectural plan of the Bronx Zoo was loaned to the Bronx Museum of the Arts for an historical exhibition, "Building a Borough: Architecture and Planning in the Bronx, 1890-1940." This year's reference work included research for the New York Aquarium 90th anniversary celebration and the history of the giant panda exhibition at the Bronx Zoo.

For more information on the NYZS Archives and its holdings contact Steve Johnson, NYZS, Bronx Zoo, 185th St. and Southern Blvd., Bronx, NY 10460 (212)220-6874.

## PHOTOGRAPHY THESAURUS COMPLETED

David Haberstitch of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History Archives Center and Diane Vogt-O'Connor of the Smithsonian Archives Photo Survey Project have completed a thesaurus of photography terms for descriptive purposes. This two-part thesaurus consists of an alphabetical listing of terms with cross references and definitions, and an hierarchy of terms showing their relationships. These tools are an attempt to create a comprehensive annotated hierarchical thesaurus of photographic forms, genres, processes and process variants. Audio-visual archivists and curators willing to review the thesaurus should contact the Smithsonian Archives, A & I Building 2135, 900 Jefferson Drive S.W., Washington, DC 20560.



## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

*Preserving Field Records: Archival Techniques for Archaeologists and Anthropologists*, by Mary Anne Kenworthy, Eleanor W. King, Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, and Trudy Van Houten.

Provides guidance for researchers who plan projects, create field records and provide storage for documentation during the life of a project and before records are transferred to an archival repository. Reviewed in *American Archivist*, vol. 49, no. 4 (Fall 1986), pp.469-70.

*Smithsonian Institution Archives Annual Report (1986)*.

The year in review, available free of charge by contacting Alan Bain, Associate Archivist, Smithsonian Institution, A & I Building, Room 2135, Washington, DC 20560.

For a book on early American artist Gilbert Stuart, Dorinda Evans would be grateful to hear of any manuscript mentions of him outside the Library of Congress and archives in Boston, New York and Philadelphia. Please contact her at Curator's Office, National Portrait Gallery, F Street at 8th, NW, Washington, DC 20560.

## PHILLIPS COLLECTION UNDERGOES RECORDS SURVEY

During 1986 Alan Bain and William Massa, Jr., Archivists at the Smithsonian, conducted a records survey at The Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C. The survey was initiated by The Phillips Collection staff due to its vast source of documentation in reference to the artworks in The Collection, and its growth in staff size and activity in recent years. The objective of the survey was to review the records kept throughout the museum and to determine if an archives program should be established.

The survey showed that, because the museum did not have an organized records management program, the staff had no procedures established for records retention or disposition of paperwork. Records disposition had become an area of major concern because the level of museum activity had steadily increased the staff's paperwork. The survey also pointed out that many historically valuable papers were being stored in working files because no active archival program existed.

The final report from Bain and Massa gave several options to establish a records management system at The Phillips Collection. The survey was circulated to the administrative staff who will review the report and consider its recommendations.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON ARCHIVES  
RECEIVES CONTEMPORARY ARTS MUSEUM RECORDS

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Archives has recently received the historical records of another of Houston's important art facilities, the Contemporary Arts Museum (CAM). The records document the founding, development and activities of CAM which first opened in 1948. The museum has transferred this spring approximately 55 cubic feet of its records and will continue to deposit its files with the Archives on an annual basis.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston established an archives in 1984 with the help of a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The Archives contains over 850 feet of museum records dating from its founding in 1900 to the present. Holdings include extensive administrative files, exhibition records, museum publications, scrapbooks and newsclippings, and special format records such as architectural records, photographs and slides, and video and audio tapes.

Goals for this year include continuing processing activities, with a special emphasis on the Contemporary Arts Museum materials and the photographic holdings. In addition, the Archives staff will become familiar with computers which will be introduced sometime this summer. For more information contact Archivist Kathleen Robinson, Museum of Fine Arts, P.O. Box 6826, Houston, TX 77265 (713) 526-1361.

## NEW AUTOMATION PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

Archives & Museum Informatics has begun publishing *The Quarterly Update on Archival Informatics: Newsletter and Technical Reports*. The first issue of this publication is set for April. The newsletter will provide news about uses of automated techniques, reports on archiving of automated systems, names of contacts, reports on publications, announcements relevant to archives informatics, and reviews of projects, software systems and new hardware. The technical reports will analyze the state of particular technologies and their potential uses, with an emphasis placed on affordability.

Archives and Museum Informatics (AMI) was formed in 1986 to conduct research, sponsor technical education programs and publish information pertaining to archives and museum information systems and services. For further information contact Archives & Museum Informatics, 5600 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217 (412)421-4638.