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# MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

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Newsletter of the Museum Archives Section  
Society of American Archivists

February 1991

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## FROM THE CHAIR

Greetings, fellow museum archives enthusiasts! As the new chair of the Museum Archives section I want to take this opportunity to say hello, update everyone on a few of the section projects currently underway, and encourage you to participate in section activities.

*Committee Work:* The section has formalized its goals by adopting a three year plan of activity. For anyone who does not have a copy of the current plan and would like one, just contact me for a copy through the mail or by fax. Descriptions of the current work of the three section committees that were formed at the last SAA annual meeting appear elsewhere in the newsletter. I encourage everyone to support the work of these committees by becoming involved in any or all of them. We need your help with the section's often glamorless but always rewarding work. So please contact a committee chair and sign up today!

*SAA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia:* The section has sponsored two session proposals for the next annual meeting (Philadelphia, September 24-28, 1991). We hope to receive a favorable response on both proposals. Look to the next issue of *Museum Archivist* for final details on annual meeting sessions of interest.

*Museum Archivist Directory:* The eagerly awaited *Museum Archivist Directory* will be completed and mailed sometime in 1991. Start looking for it in your mail boxes sometime this spring. The directory (*cont.*)

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This *Museum Archivist* comes to you with heroic proportions. Section members have responded wholeheartedly and at length to the call for articles that I made in Seattle. A series of articles solicited by Alan Bain from members of the Association of Systematics Collections will bring us up to date on activities in the natural history world. (A similar effort on the part of botanic garden and zoo archivists would be of interest. Any takers?) As a result of the growing size of the newsletter, I have taken the liberty of resorting to a more dense format here and there and hope that this will not try the eyesight of too many members. Your comments will be welcomed. To save space, addresses and telephone numbers of Section officers are printed in the contributors' column, rather than with their respective article(s).

Several people have indicated that an index to past *Museum Archivist* articles would be helpful. I'm happy to say that one is underway, with about half of the issues entered into a small database. We'll keep you informed on its progress and availability.

Don't be shy! Keep me posted on your news and views. Next deadline: June 15. Happy reading!

Deborah Wythe  
Brooklyn Museum

## MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

is issued twice a year by the  
Museum Archives Section of SAA.  
News, letters to the editor, and comments are welcome.  
Next deadline: June 15, 1991.

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## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

*(From the Chair, cont.)*

ing ably assembled and edited by Alan Bain,  
Smithsonian Institution Archives.

*Let SAA Know Your Section Affiliation:* Speaking of  
directories, those of you who are members of SAA  
received a national directory survey in December  
1990. The survey asked you to indicate a "sectional  
affiliation" within the national organization. That  
means us!! If you did not indicate an affiliation or  
want to change yours to the Museum Archives  
Section, please contact me or the SAA office. We  
can help straighten out the paper work.

*Section By-Laws:* I have asked Maygene Daniels,  
National Gallery of Art, and Alan Bain, Smithsonian  
Institution Archives, to form a working group on  
by-laws for the section. Maygene and Alan will  
select up to three other individuals to work with  
them. They intend to have a draft set of by-laws  
ready for review by section members as soon as  
possible.

*Newsletter Milestone:* Did you know that 1990  
marked the fifth year of publication of our  
newsletter, *Museum Archivist*?! Congratulations  
and many thanks to all of you who have contributed  
to the newsletter over the years. (Shame on those  
of you who have not submitted anything - now is  
your chance!) The biggest thanks must go to our  
hearty editor, Deborah Wythe, who skillfully puts  
together a consistently informative and helpful  
publication. Thanks, Deborah, for all your hard  
work!

*Final Thanks:* A final thanks must go to former  
section chair, Theresa Percy of Old Sturbridge  
Village. Theresa did an outstanding job as chair of  
the roundtable/section for the 1988-1990 term. She  
guided the section through important efforts such  
as the creation and adoption of a three year plan  
and was the driving force behind the groups'  
elevation to section status. Fortunately for all of us,  
she will remain active in section affairs by chairing  
its Outreach Committee. Thanks from all of us,  
Theresa, for guiding us through these and other  
efforts with skill, quiet determination and grace.

Kathleen Hartt  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

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### MINUTES OF THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES SECTION SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

The first meeting of the newly-designated Museum Archives Section convened on Saturday, September 9, 1990 at 8:00 A.M. Theresa Percy, outgoing chair, introduced her fellow officers: Kathleen Hartt, incoming chair; Deborah Wythe, newsletter editor; and Alan Bain, membership secretary. Cheryl Liebold, secretary, was absent due to illness. Theresa Percy welcomed the 45 members present to the first meeting of the section as a section and introduced the chairs of three standing committees: Kristine Haglund, Education; Maygene Daniels, Publications; and Theresa Percy, Outreach. Each person present was then asked to introduce him- or herself. Copies of the section's three-year plan were distributed.

Maygene Daniels, National Gallery of Art, explained to the members the distinctions between the old status as a roundtable and the new status as a section. For the purposes of the SAA, a roundtable consists of at least thirty people with a special interest, but it is loosely organized, has little time on the annual program, and receives little support from SAA. A section is a formal part of the SAA structure: the SAA keeps a mailing list of the members of each section, a member may belong to only two sections, and you must be a member of SAA to be a member of the section (but you may receive the newsletter whether a member or not). The Museum Archives Section is a "shining example" of the way an interest group is supposed to grow into a roundtable and then into a section. There was a brief discussion of the confusion in SAA about the membership and activities of the various sections. It was noted that the SAA's computer is part of the problem and that SAA members will be asked to designate their sections on their next renewals.

Theresa Percy noted that our section needs by-laws to cover such items as length of the chair's term. She asked Maygene Daniels and Alan Bain to establish a task force to make recommendations for the by-laws.

Deborah Wythe reported on the state and progress of the newsletter. She thanked Alan Bain warmly for his help in maintaining the mailing list and reproducing and mailing the newsletter. She noted that SAA would only cover mailing costs for a section newsletter if the mailing list remained small, so that our section is able to reach many more museum archivists by virtue of the Smithsonian doing the mailing. Wythe asked that members send her more material for the newsletter, particularly notices of any grants and projects and news of staff changes. She asked that several people in different sections of the country volunteer to accumulate museum archives news items in their regions to send to her. The following persons volunteered: Mary Ann Johnson, Field Museum, middle US; Sharon Bennett, Charleston Museum, southeast US; and Sharon Stewart, Amon Carter Museum, western US. Wythe said that she will call to remind the volunteers of their duties.

Wythe then stated that the newsletter needs to provide a forum for the discussion of various issues concerning museum archivists. Repatriation is such an issue for the archivist, but it may need to be debated in the *American Archivist*. Other appropriate issues for the newsletter include working with curators and administrators, automation, and records management. Other material suitable for the newsletter includes repository descriptions, job announcements and hires, grants, projects, and interesting items of research by users. The deadlines are December 15 for February 1 and June 15 for October 1 (or before the SAA meeting). At least six weeks is needed for editing submissions. Submission of a diskette is preferred, with the name of the program used. The group then gave a round of applause for Wythe and the newsletter.

Theresa Percy next asked Alan Bain to discuss the progress of the membership directory. Bain reported that there were software problems but that work on the directory is continuing. It will have around 150 pages and will include a name index, an institution index, a subject index, and photographs. He showed an example and noted that completion is scheduled for 1991. Bain asked that anyone not on the mailing list complete a sign-up sheet.

Next David Bearman discussed CIMI, the Committee on Computerized Information, (*cont.*)

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

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(Minutes, cont.)

formed by the International Conference of Museums. CIMI is an effort by the international museum community to define a format for the exchange of information on such things as loans, shipping, exchanges, exhibits, etc. Headed by John Perkins in Halifax, CIMI has representatives from such groups as the American Association for State and Local history, the Association of Systematics Collections, and the Research Libraries Group. Bearman invited the participation of the section. Next Bearman announced that he will be the chair of the International Conference on Hypermedia and Interactivity in Museums, meeting in Pittsburgh, October 14-16, 1991. He distributed brochures for the meeting and asked that the members publicize the event in their respective museums.

Theresa Percy next introduced Joan Schwartz, the SAA liaison for the Program Committee for the 1991 meeting. Schwartz noted that the deadline for proposal submissions is November 1, 1990. The Program Committee will rate the proposals according to their relevance, interest, utility, meaningfulness, and availability and commitment of participants. Proposals should be submitted on the SAA proposal form. She said that Tim Erickson had completed a study of SAA meeting topics for the last fifteen years. The study showed that little had been done in the following areas: record keeping systems, inter-institutional cooperation, physical facilities, archival training, management of archives, and social and cultural utility of archives. Schwartz, of the National Archives of Canada, can be reached at 613-996-7777. Percy announced that Cheryl Liebold will coordinate our section's ideas for the 1991 meeting.

The participants then divided into three informal groups based on each of the standing committees: education, outreach, and publications. Upon reassembly, the committee chairs presented reports [found elsewhere in this newsletter, Ed.].

The meeting closed with the introduction of the incoming chair, Kathleen Hartt.

Susan W. Glenn  
Smithsonian Archives.

## CHAIR'S REPORT: EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The following are possible projects proposed by the Education Committee at the Society of American Archivists' meeting in Seattle:

1. Organize workshops to be presented at meetings of the Society of American Archivists, the American Association of Museums, and in other appropriate forums. Suggested topics include: Selling a museum archives program to museum administrators and staff. Long-range planning. Grantsmanship. Budgeting and finances. Marketing. Special collections. Records management. Relating museum objects to archives and manuscripts. Outreach, including exhibitions. Conservation. Changing technologies (basic level). These are needs that were apparent to the committee--there are probably others. Since it would be well to prioritize needs, a needs assessment survey will be done early in 1991. Appropriate programs will be developed in cooperation with the Society of American Archivists' education office.

2. Work to incorporate archives instruction into museum management programs. Topics of instruction, possible speakers, and strategies for approaching curriculum managers of museum administration programs will be discussed at the 1991 SAA Philadelphia meeting.

3. Explore ways to encourage cooperation between archives and museum organizations, especially at the local and regional levels. Suggested possibilities: Collaborative workshops to discuss common or overlapping issues. Archives organizations providing consultants to members of museum organizations. Discussion of the role the Museum Archives Section can play in facilitating this cooperation will take place at the 1991 SAA Philadelphia meeting.

The Education Committee will work with the Section's Outreach Committee as appropriate in developing and implementing these and other education projects.

Kristine A. Haglund  
Denver Museum of Natural History

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

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### CHAIR'S REPORT: OUTCRIES FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

As part of the Museum Archives Section's three year plan, the goal of the Outreach Committee is to continue to expand ties with relevant national and regional museum and archives professional organizations, in order to spread the word about the importance of archives to museums. As committee chair, I can report that a proposal was accepted by the American Association of Museums for their annual meeting in Denver next May 1991. The session is chaired by Alan Bain, Smithsonian Institution and focuses on providing introductory information on the components of a well developed archival program for maintaining museum records, where to find funding, and how to integrate the program and its ideas into the museum community. Other program participants are Kristine Haglund, Denver Museum of Natural History, Laurie Baty, National Publications and Records Commission, and Alberta Sebolt George, Old Sturbridge Village.

Other committee projects include exploring the possibility of forming an AAM committee on archives and libraries and working out a strategy to expand our membership base particularly with historical societies. Therefore I am asking for a few good volunteers to assist with the work of this committee. If you feel inspired to offer your services please drop me a note. If I don't get a response a few lucky individuals will be selected for service. I look forward to working with you as we move towards accomplishing our goals!

Theresa Percy  
Old Sturbridge Village

### CHAIR'S REPORT: PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Museum Archives Section established a Publications Committee to evaluate archival literature and to encourage publications which serve the needs of the museum archives community. The Committee met during the section meeting in Seattle and recommended a number of actions for the coming year.

The Committee noted that the SAA Basic Manual, *Museum Archives*, written by William Deiss, provides an excellent foundation for understanding museum archives, but that it is now out of date. The Committee recommended and the Section approved that the SAA Editorial Board be asked to consider revision of the manual, with a particular view to promoting understanding of the concept of archives among museum administrators and curators.

The Committee also noted that many of the most valuable publications relating to administration of museum archives had been published in journals with limited circulation, including *The Museum Archivist*. With this in mind, the Committee recommended that the Section propose a "Museum Archives Reader" which could reprint the most relevant articles and make them more easily available. The volume would not be intended to duplicate existing basic publications, but instead to include articles that would help explain the particular concerns and policies affecting museum archives. A subcommittee was appointed to develop a plan for this proposal.

The Committee also recommended that the Section continue to analyze the coverage and accessibility of literature relating to museum archives administration. Many members noted that an index to *The Museum Archivist* would be particularly useful to improve accessibility to this important source.

The Committee also agreed to continue to update and make available the preliminary bibliography of museum archives literature, prepared for the meeting. The bibliography was based on published sources with important contributions from Alan Bain and David Bearman. Copies of the updated bibliography are available from the chair.

Maygene Daniels  
National Gallery of Art

## LATE NEWS -- ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

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As of January 24th: Our session proposal, "Yours, Mine & Ours," collection definition and development in institutional archives, has been accepted for the Philadelphia SAA meeting.

## NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### NHPRC UPDATE

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission grant of \$80,096 for the establishment of an archival and records program at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, awarded contingent on the availability of FY 1990 funds, has received final approval.

### JOBS!

#### ANDY WARHOL MUSEUM

The Andy Warhol Museum, a joint venture of The Carnegie Museum of Art, Dia Center for the Arts and The Andy Warhol Foundation, seeks an experienced archivist to oversee development, assessment, and departmental operation of an extensive archival collection of Warhol material. Responsibilities include staffing of assistants, coordination with architect on architectural development of libraries/archives, establishment of reference and collection policies and procedures, collaboration with curator for exhibitions and use of archives, and overall management of archives collection. MLS required and PhD preferred with significant archival experience. The position will be located in New York City until approximately Spring 1993, then will move to Pittsburgh. Send resume to Mark Francis, Director of The Andy Warhol Museum, The Carnegie Museum of Art, 4400 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

#### LOUIS ARMSTRONG ARCHIVES

Archivist sought to administer the Louis Armstrong Archives, which include sound collections, scores, personal memorabilia, photographs, notebooks, and scrapbooks. Responsibilities: with assistance of part-time personnel, organize collections, input descriptive information into local and national databases using the MARC/AMC format. Identify materials for preservation. Develop finding tools. Work with scholars, students, and members of the community. Qualifications: formal training in archival management and methods. Substantial familiarity with the jazz repertory and American musical history, experience in archival preservation methods and in music cataloging required. MLS

and/or formal degree in musicology required. Twelve month appointment. Excellent fringe benefits. Salary to \$40,000. Send letter of application, resume, and names of three references to Professor Matthew Simon, Chief Librarian, Rosenthal Library, Queens College, City University of New York, Flushing, NY 11367.

#### ARCHIVES SESSIONS AAM ANNUAL MEETING DENVER, COLORADO, MAY 1991

"Changing Perspectives on Documentation of Collections," is a double session that will appear on the program of the AAM annual meeting in 1991. The session will deal with the relationship between museum collections and archives and manuscripts.

Part I of the session will be chaired by Patricia E. Williams, AAM Director of Accreditation. The importance of archives to collection documentation will be emphasized, and the differences between archival and curatorial approaches to information access and control will be examined.

Speakers for Part I are: George M. Davis, Curator and Chairman, Dept. of Malacology, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Dr. Davis will discuss documentation of collections from a curator's perspective, emphasizing the importance of archival records. Maygene F. Daniels, Chief Archivist, National Gallery of Art. Ms. Daniels will define the nature and functions of archives within museums in order to show the contribution archives can make to documentation of collections. Katherine Kane, Director of Public Service and Access, Colorado State Historical Society. Ms. Kane will elaborate on proprietary issues which can create adversarial situations between curators or registrars and archivists.

Part II will be chaired by Kristine Haglund, Archivist and Head, Library/Archives, Denver Museum of Natural History. Speakers will examine national initiatives seeking to strengthen the bond between archives and museum collections. Linking information in archives with the records of museum collections is an issue being addressed throughout the United States at all levels, from individual collection to consortium. This session will give the audience a national (cont.)

## NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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(AAM Sessions, cont.)

overview, which can stimulate new insights.

Speakers for Part II are: K. Elaine Hoagland, Executive Director, Association of Systematics Collections. Dr. Hoagland will discuss the program initiated by ASC to assist natural history museums in starting or improving formal archives programs. Margaretta B. Sander, Project Coordinator, American Association for State and Local History, Philadelphia Documentation Project. Ms. Sander will discuss the AASLH Common Agenda Project, particularly the Philadelphia Documentation Project. The question of how to link the information of archives and library collections to history museum objects is being explored by the Documentation Project through the mechanism of consistent information management and automation possibilities. A representative of the Research Libraries Group will discuss the Archives and Museums Information System. AMIS is being designed to provide sophisticated local control of information for the intellectual and physical management of archival materials and museum collections, while integrating appropriate elements of the locally-stored data into the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), a national database.

"Changing Perspectives on Documentation of Collections (Parts I & II) will take place on Monday, May 20, 1991, 9:00-11:45AM

Kristine Haglund

Denver Museum of Natural History

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES INSTITUTE

The fourth New England Museum Association and Old Sturbridge Village Museum Archives Institute will be held at Old Sturbridge Village on April 10-20, 1991. The Institute has expanded into a two-year program, to allow a more concentrated and in-depth approach to the topics. Participants may join the program either year. The sessions are geared for the beginner and include such topics as records management, appraisal, arrangement & description, reference & access, legal issues, preservation, management, automation, fund raising, exhibits, photographs, and outreach.

In addition to the basic program, the Institute will offer a concurrent special topic focussed on automation. This segment will deal with the planning process as well as the latest developments and future directions of museum archives automation. The Institute offers a different special topic program each year.

Institute faculty is made up of museum and archives professionals who share a national reputation. Both the basic and special topic programs last two days, with limited registration and a fee of \$95 each. For information, contact Theresa Percy.

### FIRST CIMI MEETING

The CIMI (Computer Interchange of Museum Information) Committee held its first meeting on October 8-9, 1990, in Richmond, VA. Thirteen representatives of American museum associations and other interested organizations met to establish goals, objectives, and a process through which to carry out the agenda and identify key issues for discussion. CIMI was proposed in 1988 by the Museum Computer Network as a first step in its effort to support the development for standards for the automation of museum collections, thereby encouraging exchange of museum information. The coordinated development of a common communications standard for museum information is critical now, while the field is in its relatively early stages.

The CIMI Committee will meet twice a year over the next three years to develop the technical framework for communication of museum information. At the first meeting, the committee ratified its major goal to create a communication protocol for the interchange of all types of museum information. Issues related to this objective were discussed and strategies for continuing discussion were presented. An electronic conferencing system is being established through the Telecommunications Cooperative Network to allow extensive discussions with a widely dispersed group in a very short period of time. Interested parties may become part of this system, to follow or become part of the discussion. Information: John Perkins, Project Manager, 5659 Merkel St., Halifax, NS B3K2J1 Canada 902 454 4077.

## NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### SOCIETY OF COLORADO ARCHIVISTS

The Society of Colorado Archivists (SCA) and the Colorado-Wyoming Association of Museums (CWAM) have formed a partnership to assist museums in managing archives and manuscript collections. Currently, CWAM offers free consultants on issues of museum practices to museums with budgets under \$50,000. An agreement between CWAM and SCA finalized in early 1990 will allow SCA to provide consultants under the CWAM project to CWAM members.

Small museums, often repositories for local history collections, are frequently unaware of professional practices which govern the management of these collections. They are even unaware of archives organizations. This program will provide them with specific recommendations, as well as make them aware of the helpful resources that the archival community can provide.

In addition, this program affords archives consultants opportunities to stress the importance of the records of museums and the need to establish formal archives programs to manage them. Currently, the Society of Colorado Archivists is developing policies and procedures which will direct the SCA's contribution to this important consultant project.

Kristine A. Haglund  
Denver Museum of Natural History

### REPORTS

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#### BUFFALO MUSEUM OF SCIENCE ESTABLISHES MUSEUM ARCHIVES

In January 1989, the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences undertook a major archives project with grant funding of \$32,848 from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The goal of the project was the establishment of a historical records program for the BSNS, the administrative organization of the Buffalo Museum of Science and Tiff Nature Preserve.

Project Archivist Steven J. Ourada immediately familiarized himself with the history and organization of the BSNS, founded in 1861 for the

study and promotion of natural history. While an initial records survey estimated the amount of archival material at 600 linear feet, the actual total transferred from curatorial and administrative departments rose to over 900 linear feet. As the number of accessions grew, the need for additional time to process the material became more apparent and the NHPRC extended the grant to June 1990 and provided an additional \$3,384.

Establishing a formal archives has accomplished much more than just processing over 125 years of records. The Society has acknowledged the value of archives and made a continuing commitment to the maintenance and growth of a historical records program. Under the direction of the Archives Committee (the Project Archivist, Research Librarian, Registrar, and Buffalo Museum of Science Director), a statement of purpose was adopted, retention and access policies established, a procedures manual compiled, and a guide published and distributed.

A team of nearly a dozen Museum volunteers were trained to process records, prepare scrapbooks for microfilming, and produce finding aids and scope and contents notes. Volunteers proved invaluable in sorting and rehousing over 40,000 photographic prints. Retrieval of photographs is aided by subject lists with cross reference to available negatives. Another 10,000 prints will be incorporated into the collection. A comprehensive collection of 76 scrapbooks of newspaper clippings (1892-1988) was micro-filmed as a preservation measure. The most fragile volumes were filmed by the Northeast Document Conservation Center and the remaining volumes by a local firm.

By Summer 1990, approximately 80% of accessioned material had been processed and housed in a newly renovated area adjacent to the Research Library. The Archives will come under the control of the Library when both relocate to new climate controlled facilities. Ultimately, the merger will improve the availability of the Archives for research. Both Museum staff and visiting researchers have already presented the Archives with a variety of questions. A significant increase is anticipated as the *Guide to the Archives* is distributed and the collection more extensively promoted.

Lisa Seivert  
Buffalo Museum of Science



## REPORTS

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### AN AUTOMATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR BLUEPRINTS AND ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

The blueprints and drawings of an institution can be the single most important collection documenting the growth and change of the physical plant that an archives will manage. Integration of the Blueprints and Drawings Collection into the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art Archives has been accomplished with an in-house automated system that, by means of detailed item-level descriptions, facilitates the greatest access and convenient arrangement.

The project described here was part of a two-year NHPRC grant to establish a Museum Archives at the Ringling Museum. The grant called for a professional archivist to appraise, arrange and describe approximately 800 linear feet of materials that were identified in a 1987 survey conducted by the Florida State Archives. The materials fell into three broad categories: Museum records, John Ringling personal papers, and circus history materials. The circus materials were collected by the Museum and are not all Ringling-related. Archives policy includes only the advertising materials and documentary artifacts in the Museum Archives.

As the project archivist, my approach was to provide broad narrative descriptions at the collection level for a published guide and for general access. More in-depth access to the materials at the subgroup and series level was attained by automated descriptions using Marcon software. Marcon allows significant access through its custom and shared field systems as well as its ease of use.

The overall project plan included an in-depth survey of each office followed by the transfer and processing of archival materials. Once the Museum materials have been completed the Ringling and the Circus materials will be processed. Since the completion of office surveys, most of the Museum archival records targeted as permanent and inactive have been transferred to the Archives, and at this writing less than twenty percent remain to be processed. The majority of the materials in the Museum Archives are standard-sized records and photographs that require standard-sized archival materials and descriptive approaches.

The survey of the Buildings and Maintenance Department, responsible for the maintenance of the

six major buildings on the estate and various support buildings and structures, resulted in the transfer of over nine linear feet of textual materials, as well as the entire Blueprints and Drawings Collection, more than 500 items. Items range in quantity from one to more than sixty pages per set and in size from 8"x10" sketches to 39"x59" blueprints.

The collection consists of plans and drawings of original construction as well as of additions and renovations to all of the buildings on the estate including the Museum, John Ringling's residence (Ca'D'Zan), the Circus Gallery (a separate building from the Art Museum), and the theater building, which contains the 18th-century Asolo Theater. The materials date from 1922 to the present. Because many of the buildings in the complex are considered historically significant and must be treated and maintained accordingly, both the head of the Buildings and Maintenance Department and I agreed that the Blueprints and Drawings Collection really fell into both the active and inactive categories. These materials were equal in their documentary and historical significance; therefore, access and preservation had to be considered at the same level of importance.

The conditions these materials were found in were wholly unacceptable. Oldest and the newest records were mixed together; delicate oversized blueprint negative prints from the 1920s were crammed into the same drawers with recent as-built plans. More than half of the materials were not in flat files, but strewn throughout a small area near the two blueprint cabinets. No finding aid or accessioning system was ever implemented for these materials: access was by the 'browse' method.

In 1982 the Buildings and Maintenance Department had a set of working duplicates made of some of their most pertinent and highly used drawings. Unfortunately, were all made to the same size (to fit into binders), so none are to scale. Although this set serves as a convenient reference tool, the original must still be consulted for true specifications.

It became increasingly clear that the collection would need some individualized attention. Three things were needed immediately: arrangement that would result in greater and less harmful access, safe and accessible housing, and an accessioning system. Unlike all of the textual collections that I had processed so far (which had been described at the subgroup and series level), the materials required item level access. Since the collection remained active/inactive records, **(cont.)**

## REPORTS

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(Blueprint Collection, cont.)

staff users are most often members of the Buildings Department and access points needed to be tailored to their needs.

With these criteria in mind I established a separate database in Marcon for the Blueprints and Drawings, working closely with the Head of the Buildings and Maintenance Department to select appropriate fields for maximum in-depth description. We established standardized terms for building names, document formats, and types of items, and selected fields that would quickly manage this backlog and facilitate entry of future materials.

The following sixteen fields are used in this database: ID Number, blueprint(s) title, quantity, building, project title, date, formats, item size, scale, project #(s), sheet #(s), architect/designer, drawing descriptor(s), location, restrictions, notes. Drawing descriptor(s) serves as the authority file, providing the major subject access to the collection. Using a combination of the descriptive terms taken directly from each piece and from the Art and Architecture Thesaurus, I am designating local subject headings for the collection.

Working with an assistant, data entry sheets facilitate quick and accurate entry into the computer. I call out the information from each piece as the assistant fills in the field. Data from the sheets is then ready to be entered. The hard copy back-up is an excellent resource in establishing a consistent database. Since my assistant has become more familiar with the data-base and because of the close physical proximity between the flat files and the computer, we occasionally enter directly into the computer at the point of processing, bypassing the data entry sheet completely.

After data is recorded, each item is labeled, foldered, and arranged in the flat files. Physical arrangement is by building, with each building forming a series in the Blueprints and Drawings subgroup of the Buildings and Maintenance Department Records. No attempt has been made to arrange the materials in chronological or project-number order since the database provides access to the materials.

The majority of the collection is housed in flat files in the secure Archives area. Three new banks of flat files were purchased and are in place for the

expansion and safe storage of newly processed materials. By placing the units back to back, an expansive work and study surface has been created.

The bulk of the collection is housed in lig-free folder stock and polyester. Ideally, one piece would be placed into each folder but due to cost and space, we are currently placing five and six pieces in one folder. Original plans (pre-1929) have been encapsulated and custom foldered. Oversized materials (larger than 45"x33") are rolled and stored in lig-free tubes.

Because no attempt has been made to arrange the materials other than by building, access to individual items relies solely on the automated descriptions. Hard copy indexes by subject (drawing descriptor) with corresponding item numbers will be supplied to the Buildings and Maintenance Department. Future accessions will be arranged by building and project number, which will allow greater ease of use.

The guide to the Museum Archives will have a single narrative description for each collection; the in-house database will provide the in-depth access needed to service researchers. A description of the Blueprints and Drawings Collection will be submitted to National Union Index to Architectural Records. This collection, along with descriptions of many of the other processed collections, is also targeted for MARC AMC formatting.

With item level identification, description, and corresponding arrangement in place the collection is in a good position to be reproduced for microfilm or other optical media accessing systems. This type of enhanced retrieval would greatly reduce handling of the collection, thereby increasing the life of the materials.

Processing this collection required nearly 80 hours over a four month period. This includes formatting the fields in MARCON, encapsulation, foldering, and actual processing. My technical assistant spent nearly 36 hours entering data, typing labels, and transcribing information. The new flat files were purchased from the state at a reduced cost; archival supplies have cost less than \$900 to date.

The beneficial results of this project have been numerous: first and foremost are the new measures taken to insure the protection, preservation, and longevity of the materials. The intellectual access to these historically significant materials and the development of authority lists for present standardization and future description of (*cont.*)

## REPORTS

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(Blueprint Collection, cont.)

archival materials are in keeping with the scope and mission of this Archives.

The item level descriptions that the automated system provides result in an inventory to these materials at more levels than was ever possible before. Searching can be done by date, by building, by project name or number, etc.. Access has been increased while the wear and tear on the materials has been eliminated. The new housing, safe environment, and centralized study location will ensure their preservation. The ease of use and access for staff that might otherwise not consider using historical collections has increased the visibility of the Archives within the institution.

Despite the awkward size and the unwieldy quantity, the type of objective documentary information that the original blueprints and drawings render to researchers cannot be overlooked as one of the most valuable sources of historical information in an institutional archive. The cost of maintaining these collections in time, supplies and space should always be factored into the formation of any new archives. The effort of providing item level descriptions for blueprints and drawings is justified by the enhanced access and preservation the new system provides. This aspect of the archival project was never specifically identified in the grant here at the Museum--it evolved from the obvious need for care and management that the collection exhibited.

Waneta Sage-Gagne  
Ringling Museum

### REPATRIATION & MUSEUM ARCHIVES

As a result of the recent federal legislation concerning the "repatriation of Native American group or cultural patrimony," curators in museums that have archaeological collections may need to do research in their archives to ascertain the acquisition background of archaeological collections or to verify the circumstances of burials and associated artifacts. A museum archives has a variety of documents, such as archaeological permits and archaeological project files, which may include contracts, correspondence, field notes and analysis data, that are useful in providing information on the museum's collections. Museum archivists may need to assist curators in searching archaeological permit files or project contracts to determine the acquisition background of collections, or in using archaeological project documentation to identify burials.

Archivists may also experience an additional demand on their time through requests for lists of documentation for collections recovered from Federal, State or tribal lands. Because the archaeological collections that are curated in an institution like the Arizona State Museum are often the property of State or Federal agencies, situations could arise when collections are recalled by such an agency or when the agency requests an inventory of collections from a particular land unit such as a National Forest, or related to a specific Native American culture.

The Arizona State Museum, for example, is a designated repository for archaeological resources located on State, Federal and Indian land. Since enactment of the 1906 Federal Antiquities Act, those resources located on Federal lands have been protected by law. The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 further strengthened the legal basis for this protection. Similar legislation in the form of the Arizona Antiquities Act of 1960 was enacted to protect archaeological resources on land owned or controlled by the State of Arizona. These laws require that archaeological collections from Federal, State and Indian lands be curated at an appropriate repository; artifacts removed from Federal lands remain Federal property and the appropriate government agencies are responsible for their protection and preservation.

Museums also curate collections from tribally owned lands, which are the property of tribes, as well as culturally related materials from other lands. Recently the role of museums in collecting cultural property such as human remains and sacred objects has been called into question by Native American activists concerned about issues of self-determination and conflicting cultural values. Some Native American tribes have requested the repatriation of sacred objects, such as the Zuni war gods, or the reburial of human remains and associated grave goods.

Native American concern about these issues has resulted in the enactment of 1990 Federal legislation, H.R. 5237, which states that "the ownership, control, or right of possession of Native American human remains and funerary objects which are excavated or discovered on Federal or tribal lands after the date of enactment of this Act" shall be in order of priority: the lineal descendants; the tribe on whose land the objects or remains were found; or the tribe with the closest cultural affinity. In addition, this legislation requires Federal agencies and museums in **(cont.)**

## REPORTS

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(Repatriation, cont.)

possession of Native American human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony to compile inventories of these remains and objects and identify their geographic and cultural affiliation.

Due to the complex circumstances involving museum curation of collections, as well as the new legislation, there will be an increased demand for access to museum archives. I will describe a few cases in which documents in the Arizona State Museum Archives have been useful in answering curators' questions about acquisition background such as might arise in regard to repatriation requests. Then I will explain how the inventories of selected document collections have been produced in response to requests from Federal agencies or tribal entities.

Recently we received a request from the National Park Service for return of collections recovered in the 1960s by Arizona State Museum archaeologists working under contract to the Park Service. Museum records that had just been transferred to the Archives contained contract correspondence showing that the Museum had been authorized to retain the artifacts. While the Museum may ultimately decide to return these artifacts to the Park Service, it is important that this decision be based on accurate information regarding the original agreement.

In 1987, a tribe requested repatriation of human remains and associated artifacts excavated during a particular archaeological project. The Curator reviewed project records and discovered that the land from which the excavated materials were recovered had been allotted and was now essentially owned by a large number of individual Native Americans rather than by the tribal entity. University lawyers required that the individual allottees would have to sign an agreement on the disposition of these materials before anything could be released by the Museum. To resolve this problem, the tribe arranged to legally indemnify the Museum, protecting it from accountability to the allottees and enabling it to release the materials to the tribe.

Another sort of problem that may occur more frequently due to the new legislation involves the identification of burials and associated grave goods and accounting for burials when the public reports don't correspond to actual collections. In some cases, a burial may have been recorded in the field but not recovered. Perhaps a pot is found in what seems to be a burial feature but there are no associated human

remains. Should artifacts be considered grave goods if they are not associated with human remains? The field investigator's notes may explain why a feature was identified as a burial or why the remains were not recovered.

One recent case affected by the new legislation concerns a request received by the Heard Museum from the Hopi tribe for repatriation of a sacred shield. In this case, the Museum's Board of Trustees unanimously voted to relinquish ownership "in recognition that it was a communally owned object" (Art-Talk). In other situations, a museum may need to research the object's history through field notes or other archival documents to determine that it has in fact been used in sacred ceremonies and is necessary for the continuation of those ceremonies as defined in the law.

In the event that inventories are requested by a tribe or Federal agency, museum archivists must be able to provide lists of relevant documentary collections. As the Archivist of a museum that is a major archaeological repository, I have received two such requests for inventories. The first request, which came from the Tonto National Forest, asked for a complete inventory of collections taken from Tonto National Forest land. A Museum archaeologist identified which archaeological sites occur within Tonto National Forest, using the Museum's site survey cards, USGS quadrangle maps with plotted sites, and published land ownership maps. These records were not always sufficient to verify site location as on or off the Forest, but a reasonably accurate listing of site numbers was produced.

Thus, through this research, lists of site numbers on Forest land were generated by the computer. I then used these lists to check Archives' subject indices. At that time, the Archives had a computerized subject index, but many site numbers were not listed in this index or were inconsistently formatted. I had to manually check the inventories to our archaeological project collections, which are organized in three separate record groups, for site numbers or project names. Since our indexing is quite thorough, I was confident that the resulting inventory was complete. However, I realized that in the future it would be much easier to produce these inventories if all of the site numbers were consistently entered into our database. This was finally completed last year. My next task will be to enter accession numbers into the database in a field created for this purpose. Until recently the Archives was separate from the Collections Division and did not use Museum accession numbers. Now that our databases contain information in similar formats, the (*cont.*)

## REPORTS

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(Repatriation, cont.)

various types of collections resulting from an archaeological project, such as artifacts, photographs and documents can be more fully integrated through use of a common accession number.

We recently received a request from the Navajo Nation Historic Preservation Department for an inventory of Navajo cultural resources in the Museum's collections. This request was handled by providing a computer-generated list of Navajo subject headings from the Archives' index. This inventory is undoubtedly not complete in terms of records related to early archaeological activities on Navajo lands (the majority of which involve Pueblo rather than Navajo cultural remains) but it does provide a listing of ethnographic, governmental and other resources of value to the Navajo Nation.

Most museums that are affected by the new repatriation legislation understand and ethically support the desire for Native American tribes to be involved in determining the disposition of ancestral human remains and sacred objects. The major issue now facing these institutions will be how to comply with this legislation given limited finances and staff. Inventories of archival collections will be less complicated to produce than inventories of burials or sacred objects, where the Museum may need to research the background of these collections as in the cases described earlier. It is perhaps in the area of providing support to collections' research, that museum archivists will most experience increased demand as a result of the new legislation.

References: James Duffus, III, *Cultural Resources: Problems Protecting and Preserving Federal Archaeological Resources* (Wash. D.C.: U.S. GAO, 1987). Lynne Goldstein & Keith Kintigh, "Ethics and the Reburial Controversy" (*American Antiquity* 55(3) (1990): 585-591). Phyllis Mauch Messenger, *The Ethics of Collecting Cultural Property: Whose Culture? Whose Property?* (Albuquerque: Univ. New Mexico, 1989). Donna Michaels, "Heard Prepares to Begin Repatriation of Indian Artifacts" (*Art-Talk*, December 1990).

Jeanne Armstrong  
Arizona State Museum

## THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM DISASTER PLANNING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

As early as 1984, South Carolina institutions began planning for disasters on the community level. Individual institutional plans were tested on several occasions in Charleston, located in the East Coast "hurricane alley." Based on the premise that there is strength in numbers, tri-county institutions met and established the disaster-planning consortium CALM--Charleston Libraries, Archives & Museums. Supplies were stockpiled, professional and support service lists compiled, and a phone tree created. CALM also met with fire, police, and emergency preparedness departments, informing them of the special needs and importance of collections. To improve response, surveys were scheduled so that personnel could familiarize themselves with physical layout and sensitive collections.

The advance planning paid off in September 1989, when Charleston was hit with a category 4 storm. Using a 3-phase alert system (watch, warning, alert), institutions began securing collections four days before projected landfall on Friday. On Monday, computers were backed up and copies distributed to several locations, supply stockpiles checked. By Tuesday, vulnerable collections were being moved inland. By Wednesday most institutions were secured, allowing staff time to evacuate or prepare their homes.

Hugo made landfall on Thursday, 12 hours early. With sustained winds of 135 mph, it cut a path of devastation far greater than expected. Buildings were flattened as a 17-foot storm surge pounded the shore. Remarkably, few cultural institutions sustained any severe damage; what did occur was unavoidable and did not involve collections.

Immediately after the storm, institutions that had little or no damage came to the aid of those that were harder hit and helped secure collections. Careful planning and quick recovery efforts helped to minimize the damage.

Sharon Bennett  
Charleston Museum

## WORTH READING

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The Spring 1990 issue of *Library Trends*, "Intellectual Access to Graphic Information" (Mark E. Rorvig, ed.), focusses on computerized systems that can handle images and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*.

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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### ARCHIVES IN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS: REPORTS FROM THE ASSOCIATION OF SYSTEMATICS COLLECTIONS

At the Association of Systematics Collections (ASC) annual meeting (Richmond, VA, August 7-8, 1990), a symposium and workshop was conducted on archives within natural history institutions. Participants included directors, curators, research scientists, librarians, collections managers, information resource management staff and archivists. Below is a summary of the meeting, abstracts of the presentations, and a summary of the group discussions: Group I, archives development and assistance; Group II, building an institutional niche for archives: the relationship of donors and users to archives; and Group III, databases and standards, cross-referencing archives, manuscripts and museum collections.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to K. Elaine Hoagland, Executive Director of ASC, for her cooperation, which made this article possible, Amy Y. Rossman, Editor, ASC Newsletter, who provided the abstracts on disk for reprinting, and to the discussant leaders, who provided me with a summary of their group's activities.

Alan Bain  
Smithsonian Institution

#### FROM THE ASC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The ASC workshop on Archives in Natural History, held at the 1990 Annual Meeting, was organized in recognition of a need to inform the directors and curators in natural history museums and botanical gardens of their responsibilities towards archival materials and the value the archives could be to them in their daily work. Many museums are considering starting a formal archives program or just want to know how to improve the way they handle archives. One session of the workshop was designed to develop guides for these institutions that could be distributed by ASC. Another purpose of the workshop was to discuss the need to cross-reference natural history collections and archival materials related to them, such as maps, photographs, field notes, letters, and annotations on preservation methods. Several members of ASC's Computers and Networking Task Force participated in the Archives workshop in order to insure that ASC's evolving computer standards document will include reference to these archival materials and that archivists and librarians are also aware of this need.

The workshop served to increase commitment to archives in natural history museums. It improved communication between archives programs at different institutions and between archives and collections resources within institutions. Plans for post-workshop activities include preparation of a packet of information that ASC can distribute to natural history institutions that wish to start or improve an archives. The report of the computer section of the workshop will facilitate user access by developing information requirements and data standards in conjunction with the communities of curators, outside users, archivists, and librarians.

K. Elaine Hoagland  
Association of Systematics Collections

#### NATURAL HISTORY ARCHIVES SURVEY

In Spring 1990, ASC institutional members responded to a survey to identify which natural science repositories maintained a formal archives and which did not. It was not intended to provide a comprehensive profile of existing archives programs in natural history institutions. The survey also sought to evaluate the accessibility of any archival or manuscript materials as well as non-current records maintained for administrative use. Finally, the questionnaire allowed institutions interested in starting or improving their archives to indicate their special needs and the type of assistance they required. This summary report analyzing the responses to the survey presents some basic information on the extent of archives development in ASC member institutions.

The survey was sent to 80 representatives of ASC institutional members along with a cover letter from K. Elaine Hoagland, ASC Executive Director. The letter explained the mission of ASC relating to increasing the awareness of funding agencies to the needs of natural history museums and university collections and to developing programs for the improvement of member institutions. Dr. Hoagland further explained the symposium and workshop on "Archives in Natural History Museums" and the formation of an ASC Task Force on Archives. Recipients were encouraged to respond to the survey as a means of eliciting information about natural history archives in their institutions and about the institutional needs in their efforts to retain and maintain records in the course of everyday business. In order to capture as wide a range of information as possible, the survey also was sent to 20 university archivists.

The survey elicited an excellent response. Of 100 questionnaires mailed, 64 were returned (64%) (*cont.*).

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Survey, cont.)

Two of the returns came from institutions in Canada, one in Mexico, one in Hawaii and the remainder from the mainland U.S. There were three sections to the survey with all respondents filling in Section A which asked for basic identification. This included name and address of institution; name and phone number of respondent; the category that best described their type of institution (i.e. university, free-standing, etc.); and whether or not the institution maintained a formal archives program. Those who answered in the affirmative proceeded to Section B, the negative, to Section C. Several institutions, being in a transitional condition, debated over their status; but all, correctly, opted for Section C.

Responses indicate that 31 institutional members do not have formal archives programs in their department collections or museums, while 31 members do maintain organized archives. (The discrepancy in the total is due to two responses from two institutions.) Of the collections and museums without archives facilities in-house, only two are free-standing. The remaining 29 are either government agencies, state/provincial museums or university departments with access to the parent institution archives and, with the exception of a handful of university members, have transferred records to those repositories under mandate of a records management program. Despite this available service, 16 of these respondents, along with the two free-standing institutions, have plans to develop archives programs in-house.

For those cases where both a university archivist and an ASC representative received a survey, in only two instances did both return their forms. There were nine university archivists who responded when the institution representative did not. At least five of those institutions were natural history museums. Conversely eight ASC representatives, whose universities are known to maintain well-organized archives, replied when the university archivist did not, with seven of these institutions being museums. In all of the above universities, the department or museum did not have an archives in-house.

Half of all respondents with formal archives (15) are free-standing, natural history/natural science museums whose archives are physically and administratively located in the library. Of these, the archives is staffed by a librarian who doubles as the archivist in nine; by a full-time archivist in four; and by a part-time archivist or volunteer in the remaining two.

The respondents with parent organizations are divided among government agencies (9), universities (5) and research institutions (2). Location and staffing patterns are similar, with the exception that individual curators and departmental staff acting as archivists outnumber the professional archivists. In fact, one-third of all the above respondents noted that, in addition to the centralized archives, separate administrative/curatorial departments also maintained historical and non-current records relating to the collections. In reality there appears to be more than one staff member responsible for maintenance of archival records in more than one location for most of the institutions responding.

Although these institutions record that they maintain an archives, less than 40% report that they have an archives committee, archives policies, records management programs or have conducted records surveys in the last five years. Only four of the archives have separately identifiable budgets. All of the above are key components of formal archives programs. This trend may indicate that administrators/directors do not view the archives program as an ongoing administrative service, but as an ad hoc component of the institution and/or its library. (Two respondents indicated that they desire ASC assistance in improving their archives program by filling out Section C as well as B.)

In terms of the nature of the various facilities, the majority appear to be small operations in inadequate spaces. It is not useful to include the responses of four National Museum of Natural History Divisions since they are in a class by themselves. The square footage ranges from 12 to 2500 with 17 out of 27 repositories smaller than 1000 square feet. Not all were able to respond to the above question as well as to the question on total volume of holdings. Of those who did, the range fell between 25 and 2,218 cubic feet with 18 repositories providing figures under 1000. Nearly all indicated a lack of space to carry out archives functions, a serious problem which equaled that of funding for staff.

A major purpose of the survey was to gather raw data concerning the use of automation for providing access to a archival records. Responses show that 19 archives have computers which all use, primarily, for generating reports, word processing (13), and finding aids (11) to archival records. In addition, nine respondents use automation tools to carry out arrangement/description functions. Only nine repositories use the MARC/AMC format for cataloging archives and manuscript collections; four subscribe to the bibliographic utility OCLC (On-line Computer *(cont.)*).

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Survey, cont.)

Library Catalog) and five to RLIN (Research Libraries Information Network). Seven respondents use another bibliographic format to describe collections. Of the above 19 respondents, only eight cross-reference archives records to records of specimen collections and bibliographic collections in-house, or to other institutions' collections. It is significant that these repositories are among those with extensive holdings. Although two-thirds of the respondents use automation techniques to carry out the routine functions of their work, only half of that group use automation to provide access to the records in their collections, either in-house or through a bibliographic network.

The survey did not elicit a clear picture of research and staff use of the respondents' archives. Not all were able to provide an inclusive counting of users for a variety of reasons: mail and phone request statistics were not kept, staff use was not recorded or users were not tracked at all. There were no responses on six returned forms. Of those who did answer the question, the range of the number of users for 1989 fell between a low of three and a high of 300, with 13 archives serving fewer than 100 users; five, between 100 and 200, and three, between 200 and 300. There appeared to be no significant correlation between volume of holdings and number of researchers.

Finally, the survey clearly identified institutions that are making strides in instituting archives programs and are actively seeking information and support from professional organizations. Of the 31 ASC institutional members without archives who responded, 21 were ASC reps and 10 were university archivists. For the purpose of analyzing members' in-house archives needs, it is not useful to take into account the archives of the parent institution. The majority of the institutions (16) have set aside space to store historical and non-current records in a variety of locations. Further, all 21 institutions have assigned staff members with the responsibility of maintaining their records, none of whom are librarians or archivists. The three most immediate needs expressed by the institutions are personnel (15), space (15), and funding to establish an archives program (12). Information about archives management and ASC assistance to address these concerns was eagerly sought by nearly all respondents. Eighteen requested packets on museum archives forms and policy statements and a museum archives manual. While some are in the early stages of planning, others are ready for contact with a task force member (8).

In conclusion, it is accurate to say that the state of natural science archives in North America, though far from desperate, is a good deal less than desirable. Potential users, whether staff or scholarly researchers, will more often than not discover that the records they need will require time and effort to locate. Institutions with archives programs are making some effort to organize their historical records for research use, while those without programs recognized the need to care for records created in the course of their activities. While their all ASC institutions appear to understand the merit of preserving records with enduring value, few have resources and institutional commitment to provide adequate maintenance or establish archives and records management programs where needed. ASC is to be commended for taking the initiative to offer support to the natural history community and to assist institutions with archives development. It is significant that the natural history community seeks to support this initiative by enlisting the expertise and cooperation of the archives profession.

Karen Stevens

Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia

### AN ARCHIVIST'S PERSPECTIVE

Natural history institutions maintain documentary evidence as valuable to the understanding of our culture as are the artifact and specimen collections. This is not just a reflection on research information, field notebooks, photographs and baseline data, but includes such diverse material as administrative correspondence, memoranda, personal diaries, transportation forms, and daybooks. This material provides information on the role of the institution within its region, its growth and development in the museum community, and its contributions to the world of learning.

Unfortunately, in too many cases, museum staff, including curators, librarians, and administrators, concerned only with immediate and specific aspects of an institution's activities, have culled records from the office files of others, thereby obscuring or destroying evidence of another offices' mission and activities. Curators discard predecessor records not directly related to current research interests or hoard materials that will never see the light of publication. Registrars pull correspondence and memoranda from across museum activities in order to document the acquisitions, thereby losing information on expeditionary work, an individual's research effort, or valuable comments about a colleague (*cont.*).



## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Archivist's Perspective, cont.)

To avoid these problems, it is important that the records of the institution be cared for by an archivist, whose approach to records keeping is pan-institutional, not bounded by preoccupations of selected subject matter. Intellectually, the archivist gathers information on records, regardless of where they reside, leading scholars to any record for information documenting a particular facet of the institution's past.

From records under the archivist's care, information can be provided on past decision-making efforts needed for current administrative actions. It can be used to assist in the development of increased membership funding and capital planning or to document the details of hidden building areas for modern heating and electrical installations; gathered to assist in the reinstallation of a permanent exhibition; or selected to be part of an exhibition.

For the archives program to work effectively, the archivist must be given the responsibility and authority for deciding on the eventual disposition of the institution's records. Strong support for the program must come from the director, who must have an understanding of the historical importance of the institution and a desire to preserve its history. The archivist brings to the program a responsibility for getting funds for the program and space for housing the records, mostly through the good services of the director. The archivist must show a propensity for negotiation in order to work with museum staff on deciding the fate of institutional records, and be willing to support the administrative and research needs of the institution strongly without violating archives ethics and the need to provide security over the materials entrusted to his or her care.

Alan L. Bain  
Smithsonian Institution

### A CURATOR'S PERSPECTIVE: HOW ARCHIVES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO RESEARCH

Curators of natural history collections have a mandate to pursue original research while at the same time being responsible for maintaining and adding to collections. These collections exist for the purposes of documenting the world's biota and for research. My experience over the past two decades is that the majority of curators do not think about archives

seriously and are surprised when one raises the topic as important relative to their activities. However, not only are archives essential to the curator for many ends, the curator should be aware of the role he or she plays in providing good documentation for the future.

My experience with collection-related archives stems from two activities: 1) being chairman of the Archives Committee of the American Malacological Union, whose archives are maintained in my department 2) curating one of the largest zoological collections of any kind (400,000 cataloged units, 11 million specimens) in a department that has been active for 178 years. During that time the department has always had a chairman. There have been six of us. These individuals have always played an active role in research and expeditionary work that contributed significantly to the collections and to archives.

Two aspects of archives are of importance to the curator: 1) historical archives of individuals deceased or retired from the field; 2) active archives of ongoing programs. Following is a list (not intended to be exhaustive) of items pertinent to both categories to be conserved in perpetuity: field work (notebooks, marked charts and maps, diaries, photographs and slides); correspondence (especially dealing with substantive issues relative to scientific discourse or matters that would be of value to historians in the future); manuscripts and publications (drafts, revisions, final manuscripts, marked galley proofs, original illustrations, original data); personal items (photographs through time, curricula vitae, taped interviews, video cassettes, etc.); memorabilia (items unique to a collections or individual); collections (unique containers, original labels, etc.).

I have provided one example of the extraordinary value of a well-maintained archive center in a institution which has direct importance to research. Other examples will be provided in the talk. A year ago we uncovered nine crates of a land snail collection made by a Mr. Oswald from throughout Hawaii between 1911 to 1946. Each crate contained 24 shirt or underwear boxes. Each box contained 49 small square boxes in which there were round pill boxes and slips of papers within the boxes. This collection contains an estimated 16,000 lots of extinct, rare and/or endangered species--an extraordinary collection. What was needed were detailed locality data. Fortunately, the Academy had recently hired an archivist. While unearthing piles of archival material, she found the Oswald notebooks that give extremely precise detail, even to distances lowered by rope down (*cont.*).

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Curator's Perspective, cont.)

certain cliff faces, etc. Without the archivist and without the Oswald records, the collection would be two orders of magnitude less value for the systematist, biogeographer, ecologist, evolutionary biologist and conservationist.

The above example has clear implications for research problems in ecology, biogeography, and systematics. Archives have helped me to examine original data that have been of immense value to supplement specimen label data in the collections. The added data have been at times ecological and/or have supplemented precise locality data. Notes and original anatomical data have aided me in assessing why a certain curator made various decisions concerning the description of new taxa and the discussion of evolutionary relationships. Hand-written marginalia on published papers have given me insight into opinions changed or modified post publication. The list of examples of the use of archives for the research scientist is exceedingly long.

George M. Davis  
Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia

### ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS

All natural history museums have archival materials, and, the older the museum, the greater will be the amount of such documents. The most common categories are old correspondence, collections and accession records, field notes, financial data and the minutes and records of trustees and boards. For large museums such materials can easily occupy hundreds of feet of shelf space.

All museums use archival material regularly. They are the basic records that are consulted in curating specimens, preparing exhibits and developing educational programs. A director will utilize them regarding actions of former directors and staff, board decisions and fund raising to name a few. Administrators rely upon archives to answer requests by governmental agencies and for audits. Yet important as they are, few museums have an archives as a distinct entity. Records are usually scattered throughout the museum or frequently placed within the already overworked museum library with no index to their contents. The need for assistance is great.

Within the last decade there has been growing recognition of the unique materials comprising museum archives and a realization of their importance. Yet they are often viewed as just another

collection which must be curated, conserved, and made available. In fact they are an integral part of the museum's holdings and its information base. They are the means of connecting the institution with its collections.

For a successful museum archives program it is extremely important to plan early and carefully. Archivists and curators have different backgrounds and different views concerning what constitutes archives and how they are used. Questions about control of the archives pose serious problems for curators who consider such documents the working papers and records of their collections. However, archivists are usually trained to manage single collections and the diverse interests and records of a museum. Museum archives are basically a number of many smaller single topical archives from museum departments and their collections. The most important point is that if a museum has not started to plan, it must begin now. Old papers and records have a way of getting lost. With the poor quality of paper that was common in the past many of these valuable documents are literally rotting away on shelves.

James E. King  
The Carnegie Museum of Natural History

### A CURATOR'S PERSPECTIVE: NATURAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS, ARCHIVES, AND DATABASES

Curators need to acquire an understanding of archives from the perspective of the entire institution to which they belong. On the other hand, archivists need to acquire an understanding of the kinds of data and physical items that exist in conjunction with natural history collections so that responsible decisions on retention, storage, indexing, and retrieval of archival records can be made. Information at a given institution may be relevant and important to other institutions. For example, an expedition may have collected specimens from many different groups of organisms and these specimens may now be distributed among a large number of institutions while the expedition records remain at only one. Thus, retrieval of data from natural history collection archives needs to be considered on a global scale. The distinctions between natural history collections, archives, databases, and current records are not sharp. All deal with information but, functionally, natural history collections and archives contain data that are intended to be preserved indefinitely, whereas databases and current records contain data that are undergoing active management and modification (*cont.*).

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Curator's Perspective: Databases, cont.)

Natural history collections include large numbers of documents and records whose permanent preservation is desired i.e., archives. In addition to correspondence and business records, these include specimen labels, field and preparator's catalogs and notes, accession records, museum catalogs, notes and raw data from scientific study, manuscripts, photographs, loan and exchange records, documentation of specimen histories, and other items. The decision to retain a document or record is determined by the uniqueness of the physical item relative to each datum it contains, and the importance, in terms of eventual use, of each datum. In general, the earliest recording of a datum is important to include in the archives.

The establishment of computerized databases has, if anything, increased the volume of archives; many documents previously kept as current records, such as collection catalogs, have now been replaced by magnetic media. Both magnetic and written copies of the magnetic files may need to be retained. In addition to decisions on what should be kept and where it should be housed, an archival system for a natural history museum must address the following: where are the lines drawn between current records and archives or between library materials and archives; who needs access to a given document. This directly affects the data retrieval system. How can the association between natural history specimens and archival data be maintained, especially if the specimen is not physically housed at the institution? Ultimately the goal of an archives is to preserve information that is of potential use and make retrieval of this information possible and efficient.

Scott Wood

The Carnegie Museum of Natural History

### ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM STANDARDS

The past decade has witnessed a revolution in archives and museum information standards which anyone planning to automate archival finding systems or museum holdings and their archival documentation must take into account. The opportunities presented by adherence to the new standards are those of scholarly information exchange and of achieving management efficiencies. This paper will review the major developments in archives and museum automation, including the introduction of MARC cataloging, new vocabulary controls, and specimen to habitat databases. In exploring the standards which

are currently in place and under development, it will assess the present actors in the standards-making arena, and examine opportunities for natural history museum archivists to play a role in developing these standards to meet their special needs. It will explore future prospects for the major standards already in place and under development, and identify areas of standards development of concern to natural history research collections that remain to be defined. The author will suggest how this standards agenda could be used by the natural history museum archives to enhance their stature within their institutions and increase their centrality for natural history research.

David Bearman

Archives and Museum Informatics

### GROUP DISCUSSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Group I. Archives Development and Assistance.**

Awareness of the importance of archives to museums and natural history collections drives the development of formal archives programs. In promoting such awareness, Group I recommends the following: 1. A brochure calling attention to the importance of archives, and providing information on sources of help for beginning and developing archives programs. To be mailed to the members of the ASC, the Association of Science Museum Directors, for example. 2. A packet of informational materials on archives management, available for a nominal fee from the ASC. 3. Appoint qualified archivists across the country to provide follow-up and consultation. 4. Encourage membership in the SAA and the Museum Archives Section. 5. Encourage the AAM to strengthen their emphasis on archives in their Museum Assessment and Accreditation programs. Contact: Kristine A. Haglund, Denver Museum of Natural History.

#### **Group II. Building an Institutional Niche for Archives: the Relationship of Donors and Users to Archives.**

Group II was charged with exploring three particular component parts of an archives program: the archives' institutional niche; relationships with donors and users; and providing access to archives and manuscript collections. The discussion focused primarily on the roles of the various participants involved in maintaining an archival program, including the board of trustees, chief administrative officer, curator/scientist, archivist, user/researcher and donor. All members agreed that written institutional directives and policies are essential to assure common understanding of the obligations and responsibilities of the staff, donors and users. In addition, the group recognized the merit and endorsed the validity, with only minor caveats, of **Archives in a Natural Sciences Institution Draft Guidelines** (8/27/86) out- (cont.).

## REPORTS FROM ASC

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(Discussions, cont.)

lined by the Associated Natural Sciences Institutions (TANSI). Two particular issues of significance deserve serious discussion in individual institutions: ownership of records created by staff members during the course of research activities and reasonable access to, and fair use of, institutional records.

Because Group II's discussion overlapped much of that reported by Group I, that group's guidelines will probably incorporate the suggestions and conclusions elicited by Group II in their session. The emphasis will be on recommendations for institutions struggling with the space, staff and financial requirements of an archives and making decisions on how to set up a well-organized program that serves specific archives and records management needs. Members of Group II will also participate in assembling a packet of informational materials that offer practical solutions to questions that will arise during the planning process for an archives program. Contact: Karen Stevens Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia.

**Group III. Databases and Standards; Cross-Referencing Archives, Manuscripts and Museum Collections.** The discussion group represented a broad array of backgrounds related to natural history collections, their archives and their use: curators, archivists, librarians, administrators, data processing specialists. Although primarily focusing on links between archives and collections, the discussion inevitably included discussion of bibliographic data and standards as well. It was recognized that archival sources of information (defined broadly as textual/numeric information or other audiovisual information which is not formally published) is the essential source for the added information which gives our specimen-object collections their distinctive--in fact, unique--value.

The discussion explored a variety of topics including the need for standards for both data structure (record and field structures) and descriptive content (authority controls/controlled vocabularies), the suitability of various existing data standards for archives and manuscripts and specimens/objects, and practical, political issues concerning strategies for development of standards which will serve the entire systematics community. Certain data elements, such as geography, dates, taxonomic (or descriptive) name, collector's name and institutional location of the specimen/object, were seen to be common to all three major classes of collections, but it was recognized

that an exhaustive description of common data elements was probably required.

Consideration was given to standards which will: 1) support user-required applications; 2) incorporate already existing standards wherever possible; 3) be extensible to include new applications; and 4) have well designed and defined data elements which will support both current applications and the transfer of information into other systems (present and future). The group fully recognized the need to develop standards which are based upon the needs of the systematics community generally, both users and data collectors, and which can serve to link the different types of primary collections in the systematics community: specimen/object-based collections; archives and manuscripts; and libraries/bibliographic collections. It was recognized that there are existing standards for data in specimen-based collections (albeit loosely and informally defined) which transcend individual disciplines and that both archival and bibliographic data had well defined, already existing standards.

The group recommended ASC develop a proposal to support the development of draft standards and submit it to NSF. The proposed process should include a broad inclusive survey of the systematics community to identify the full range of community goals and objectives with respect to standardization; circulation of the derived goals and objectives for discussion and consensus; circulation of draft standards for full community review and approval. Contact: Tom Moritz, California Academy of Sciences.

## LATE NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Archives for the Arts will be the topic of an upcoming session at the spring meeting of the New England Archivists. The NEA meeting will be held at the Massachusetts State Archives on April 26-27, 1991 and will focus on archival reference. The arts session will emphasize the importance of creating archives to document cultural activities and the research potential of such collections.

The session will be chaired by Helen Samuels, MIT Archives, and will feature Robin Baker of the Handel and Haydn Society and Maureen Melton of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts as speakers.