
MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

Newsletter of the Museum Archives Section
Society of American Archivists

September 1991

Volume 5 Number 2

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

The year has come to a close and it's time again for the annual meeting of SAA's Museum Archives Section. This year's meeting of the Society of American Archivists is being held in Philadelphia. Section members have worked hard to offer you some special features and activities that museum professionals can enjoy. Hope to see you in about one month!

Philadelphia Fun: Museum Archives Section Meeting

The section meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 27 from 8-10 A.M. This is a year in which numerous business items will be discussed as we decide the group's structure, composition, leadership and overall section goals.

The preliminary agenda for the meeting includes:

- * review and adoption of by-laws for the section (see the proposed by-laws in this issue of *Museum Archivist*)

- * distribution and review of the section's three year plan.

- * annual review for 1990/91 from the education, membership, outreach and publications committee chairs and annual review for 1990/91 from the section chair.

- * election of officers for the 1991/92 term.

- * preliminary discussion of session proposals for the SAA 1992 meeting to be held in Montreal.

We hope to reserve some time for meeting attendees to divide into education, outreach and publications discussion groups, led by their respective committee chairs. I encourage all section members to contact me or a committee chair concerning agenda items they want to add to the section meeting. We need to hear from you so that the annual meeting can address everyone's concerns and needs!

If the proposed section by-laws are adopted by the membership, we will choose a chair-elect at this meeting. It is anticipated that the chair-elect will help to plan and coordinate section session proposals for the 1992 SAA annual meeting in Montreal. The chair-elect will become section chair at the close of the section's 1992 annual meeting. Please start thinking now about nominating a colleague for this position!

Hurrah! A Museum Archivist Directory

As we go to press, the Museum Archivist Directory is in the mail. Please send your thanks and praise to Directory "guru" and editor Alan Bain for putting together what promises to be a most useful publication. And thanks, too, to the Smithsonian Institution for absorbing the costs associated with the directory. (Cont. on p.2)

ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

(From the Chair, cont.)

*Keeping Up with the
American Association of Museums*

This has been a year of active involvement with the AAM. Its 1991 annual meeting in Denver featured three sessions on museum archives and related topics, one organized by Theresa Rini Percy (Outreach Committee chair) and two others by Kris Haglund (Education Committee chair). In addition, the section's Publications Committee chair, Maygene Daniels, updated our "Museum Archives Bibliography" for the AAM meeting Sourcebook. Further details on all of these initiatives will be given at the annual meeting by each committee chair.

Due in part to the great success of these sessions, section members are working on session proposals for the 1992 AAM annual meeting in Baltimore. We will hear brief reports on these proposals as well as other important AAM initiatives of interest at our meeting next month.

*Extra! Extra!
Read All About Us in Museum News*

The November/December 1991 issue of Museum News will feature a series of articles on museum archives. Those of you with good memories will recall that the last time this AAM journal featured articles on archives was in 1983. This is a wonderful opportunity to update museum colleagues on what has occurred in the last decade with museum archives programs.

Keep In Touch!

The next issue of Museum Archivist will include a summary of the section's actions and meeting discussions in Philadelphia. As always, I hope that many of you are able to attend our Museum Archives section meeting. In the meantime, please contact me or any section officer with your questions and concerns.

Kathleen Hartt
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

is issued twice a year by the
Museum Archives Section of SAA.
News, letters to the editor, and comments welcome.
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

This issue of *Museum Archivist* comes to you with an index. We've been in publication now for five years and it seemed high time. We hope that it will prove helpful.

If you read the proposed by-laws carefully, you'll see that an Assistant Editor is mentioned. This is good news! The help of a

ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

(From the Editor's Desk, cont.)

hard working person with lots of energy, ideas, and contacts would make this job a lot easier.

As you'll see in this issue, there's lots going on in museum archives--as usual. What's not all that usual is the news that has been reaching me about the effects of the recession: loss of an assistant here, reduced hours there, archival programs endangered and threatened by the devastating budget cuts that many cultural institutions are facing this year. It's not a pleasant topic to think or write about, but we have everything to lose by keeping our heads in the sand. Keep us posted.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with news, ideas for articles, and reports about your projects or those of your researchers. It takes all of us to make this a useful and interesting newsletter.

Deborah Wythe
Brooklyn Museum

SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS ANNUAL MEETING

Philadelphia, September 26-29, 1991

MUSEUM ARCHIVES RECEPTION Thursday--5PM

Start off your Philadelphia stay by joining fellow section members for a special reception in the Dinosaur Hall of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. A selection of hors d'oeuvres will be served and a cash bar will be open for your enjoyment, thanks to generosity of Archivart, Conservation Resources, the Smithsonian Archives, and University Products. The reception is by invitation only (your invitation accompanies this newsletter); please let Karen Stevens of the Academy know if you will attend. A wonderful time is guaranteed to all!

SECTION MEETING Friday--8AM

Make sure that you attend the Museum Archives Section meeting on Friday, September 27th, 8AM. (We must have a reputation for being early risers!) It's a great chance to get caught up on what's going on--and to get involved for the next year.

And--did you remember to check Museum Archives as your institutional section on your renewal form? It's our first chance to make an official mark on the Society.

PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION Friday--7PM

Museums are wonderful places for social events. Don't miss this one, at the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania.

VISUAL MATERIALS/MUSEUM ARCHIVES TOUR Saturday--1:30PM

Here's a chance to see for yourself what some of your colleagues are doing. Organized by Douglas Haller of the University Museum Archives, the tour will include the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the University Museum Archives.

SESSIONS

As usual, there are several sessions of special interest to museum archivists--here are the ones that caught your Editor's eye. Unfortunately the time blocks tend to overlap. Find a partner (or two) and meet later to compare notes.

On Thursday at 1:15PM, Joseph Carvalho discusses the development of Connecticut Valley Historical Museum's archival program. The "Institutional Self-Study" session on Friday at 1:15 includes a discussion of the AAM accreditation process by Harold Skramstad of the Henry Ford Museum.

The Section-sponsored session, "Yours, Mine and Ours: Collection Definition and Acquisitions Policies in Institutional Archives," is on Saturday at 1:15PM. Kathleen Hartt will chair the session, which features speakers from university, museum, and discipline history center archives.

ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

(SAA meeting, cont.)

In the same time block, "Beyond Paper: Documenting Museum Collections with Video" will focus on video artifact documentation, videohistory interviews, and videohistory collections.

And, finally, at 9:00 on Sunday morning, investigate the relationship between archivists and curators at "Records and Objects/Archivist and Curators: Part of a Common Agenda?"

A REMINDER

Have you written a particularly good finding aid? Entries are being solicited for the SAA Finding Aids Fair in Philadelphia. We'll know that museum archives have really come of age when our finding aids start turning up there. Maybe this year? For further information, contact Penelope Krosch, University of Minnesota Archives, 10 Walter Library, 117 Pleasant St. S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455; 612 624 0562.

DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION BYLAWS OF THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES SECTION

Bylaws, Museum Archives Section, Society of American Archivists.

July 17, 1991

Article 1. Name.

The name of this section shall be the Museum Archives Section of the Society of the American Archivists (SAA), hereinafter referred to as the Section.

Article 2. Objectives.

The Section will provide a forum for dialogue on any issue or event relating to museum archives; promote the interests of museum archivists with SAA through annual meetings, publications, and a newsletter; and informally disseminate knowledge to those concerned with museum institutional records, personal papers, and special collections.

Article 3. Membership.

Membership is open to any SAA member who elects to join the Section.

Article 4. Officers.

A. The Section shall be guided by a Chair, Chair-elect, Recording Secretary, and an Editor.

B. Terms of Office.

1. Only members of the Section may serve as officers.

2. The Chair-elect shall serve a term of one year, and then shall succeed the Chair. All other officers shall serve a term of two years.

3. Except for the Chair and the Chair-elect, all other officers may succeed themselves.

4. The Chair, Chair-elect, Recording Secretary, and Editor shall assume office at the close of the annual Section meeting in which they are elected, and, except for the Chair-elect, shall serve until their successors have taken office.

C. Nomination.

1. Nominations for Chair-elect shall occur one year after the Chair has been in office.

2. Nominations for the Recording Secretary will be held at the annual meeting of the Section after the Recording Secretary has been in office for two years.

3. Nominations for Editor will be held at the annual meeting of the Section after the Editor has been in office for two years.

4. Nominations may be made by any Section member, including officers.

5. The nominee must give her/his consent to be eligible for election to office, either in writing, which is to be read at the meeting, or orally.

D. Vacancies in Office.

1. Chair.

In the case of vacancy in the office of the Chair, the Chair-elect, when in office, shall assume the duties of the Chair. The Chair-elect completes the vacancy and then takes on the regular two year term. When no

ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

(Bylaws, cont.)

Chair-elect is in office, the Recording Secretary shall assume the office and duties of the Chair, and shall appoint someone to carry out the duties of the Recording Secretary until a Chair is elected. Election of a new Chair shall, in that case, occur at the next annual meeting of the Section.

2. Chair-elect.

In the case of vacancy in the office of the Chair-elect, the office will remain vacant. Election of a Chair shall occur at the next annual meeting of the Section. The election of a new Chair-elect will not occur until the annual meeting following one year in office by the Chair.

3. Recording Secretary.

In the case of vacancy in the office of the Recording Secretary, the Chair shall appoint a member of the Section to take over the duties until the next Section meeting, at which time election of a Recording Secretary will occur.

4. Editor.

In the case of vacancy of the office of the Editor, the Assistant Editor will assume duties of the office until the next Section meeting is held when election of an Editor will occur. In the absence of an Assistant Editor, the Chair will appoint an Acting Editor, who will carry out the duties of the office until the next Section meeting.

E. Duties of the Officers.

1. Chair.

The Chair shall preside over Section meetings and shall direct the Section's activities. The Chair will appoint a Membership Coordinator, Committee Chairs and Liaisons; is responsible for all communications and submissions to SAA Council and the SAA Executive Office, either directly, or through delegation, after conferring with Section officers and Section members, as needed, for appropriate action.

2. Chair-elect.

The Chair-elect shall have no specific duties, but rather will be assigned tasks by the Chair.

3. Recording Secretary.

The Recording Secretary shall record the proceedings of the annual meeting, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chair. Minutes of the meeting will be provided to the Chair, and a copy shall be published in the Section newsletter in the first issue following the meeting.

4. Editor.

The Editor is responsible for preparing, reviewing, and publishing the Section newsletter twice a year. At the Chair's discretion, the newsletter will be reviewed by others before publication. In consultation with the Chair, additional issues may be published. The Editor shall appoint an Assistant Editor, and regional editors as needed. The Editor selects the mode for production of the newsletter, with SAA being one option.

Article 5. Business.

A. Meeting Times.

The Section shall meet at least once a year at the time of the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists. The time of and agenda for this meeting shall be announced in the newsletter immediately preceding the meeting.

B. Other Meetings.

Additional Section meetings may be scheduled during the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists. Such meetings shall be announced in the newsletter preceding the annual meeting or before the end of the annual Section meeting.

C. Voting.

All decisions of the Section shall be determined by a majority of members voting at any meeting. All officers except the Chair may vote. The Chair votes only to break a tie. Where there is no majority vote, particularly in the case where more than two members are up for election for a given office, selec-

ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

(Bylaws, cont.)

tion shall be made through a second ballot between the two members who received the most votes on the first ballot.

Article 6. Committees.

The Chair may appoint or dissolve committees as needed. Each committee shall have a written charge and a specified period of service. Committees shall report on their activities at annual Section meetings.

Article 7. Parliamentary Authority.

Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall govern the proceedings of the Section, except as otherwise provided for in these bylaws, or in the constitution, bylaws, or special rules of the Society of American Archivists.

Article 8. Amendments to the Bylaws.

A. Notice and form.

1. An amendment to these bylaws may be proposed by any Section member.
2. Amendments must be submitted in writing to the Section Chair, with a copy to the Editor.
3. The proposed amendments shall be published in the next two newsletters. If the annual meeting is held before publication in the second newsletter, discussion at the annual Section meeting shall take the place of publication in the second newsletter.

B. Adoption of amendments.

1. After the appropriate notice has been given, amendments shall be voted on at the annual Section meeting.

Article 9. Dissolution.

This Section, noting failing interest or lack of accomplishment of its objectives, may vote to dissolve.

Please review the bylaws for discussion at the Section meeting on September 27, 1991. If you cannot attend the meeting, mail comments to Kathleen Hartt, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

Section member Mary Elizabeth Ruwell was recently appointed Director of the National Anthropological Archives at the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. While it's too early for a report yet, we'll look forward to hearing from her about plans and activities in the future. Welcome back to museum archives work!

As of July 1991, the National Anthropological Archives resumed regular research hours. It will be open Monday through Friday, 9AM to 5PM. The Collections Management Unit is temporarily maintaining its afternoon schedule. If you have questions about researcher policies, please call the Archives at 202 357 1976 or the Collections Management Unit at 202 357 2483.

JOBS!

ARCHIVIST: AMON CARTER MUSEUM

NHPRC-funded position. Archivist sought to plan and implement the institutional archives of the Museum and related collections, including the papers of Amon G. Carter, Sr., Eliot Porter, and Laura Gilpin: process and preserve archival material; enter records in RLIN; provide reference service; and work with photography curatorial staff in coordinating requests for archival material. A clerical assistant will also be hired.

Qualifications: advanced degree in American history, library science or related field; certified or receive certification from the Academy of Certified Archivists within one year of employment; minimum of two years experience with an archives; demonstrated administrative, organizational, and supervisory skills; familiarity with MARC/AMC format; active membership and participation in professional archival organizations; computer literate. Competitive salary; excellent benefits.

Send letter of application and resume to Kathy Goodale, Personnel Services Coordinator, Amon Carter Museum, P.O. Box 2365, Fort Worth, TX 76113-2365.

NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

1991: AN ARCHIVES ODYSSEY MUSEUM ARCHIVES INSTITUTE

The 1991 New England Museum Association and Old Sturbridge Village Museum Archives Institute, held on April 19-20, 1991 at Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, Massachusetts, offered its participants the opportunity to boldly go where no archivist has gone before. This year a space theme enveloped the institute. More and more, archivists are not seen as creatures from outer space but as important members of the captain's crew. Archivists are eagerly accepting this mission, which often means exploring the unknown worlds of undiscovered and unprocessed records and encountering Klingons who cling desperately to their over-stuffed files and backlogged records.

The institute's introductory program is a two-year course of comprehensive and in-depth lessons. This year the curriculum included sessions on management, reference and access, preservation, photographs, development and membership, records management and appraisal, arrangement and description, automation and contracts/privacy. Instead of the introductory program, participants may select the special topic program that changes every year. This year's subject was planning for automation.

The professional crew of the starship INSTITUTE included many well-known members from all over the galaxy: Alberta Sebolt George, Penny Holewa, Mary Brandt, and Theresa Rini Percy from Old Sturbridge Village; Katherine Kane, Colorado History Museum; Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, formerly of the Northeast Document Conservation Center; Laurie Baty, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, Alan Bain, Smithsonian Institution; David Horn, Boston Edison Company; Deborah Wythe, Brooklyn Museum; Barbara Williams, Houghton Mifflin; Nancy Lyon, Yale University; and Ben Fuller, consultant.

Fifty participants attended from as far away as Hawaii and responded very enthusiastically to the program with such comments as: "A very enjoyable experience! Glad I came!"; "Another informative, helpful, and fun two days. I look forward to learning of next year's topics!"; "Great program, great faculty, great time!"

Registrants were also able to tour the museum and take advantage of shopping in the gift shop and bookstore. Friday night offered an optional dinner at a nearby restaurant and provided an opportunity to network and consult with faculty.

Reserve April 10 and 11, 1992, for next year's institute. If you would like to receive a program brochure and/or need additional information, please contact Theresa Rini Percy, Director, Research Library, Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA 01566. (508) 347-3362.

Theresa Percy
Old Sturbridge Village

PUBLICATIONS

Special **BULLETIN** series
MFA, Houston

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, *Bulletin* (Winter-Spring 1991) is the first of two issues devoted to the museum's architectural history. The second volume will be available in the fall. The *Bulletin*, written by Anchorage Foundation of Texas fellow Stephen Fox, is profusely illustrated with photographs, drawings, plans, and documents from the museum archives. Museum Archivist Kathleen Hartt researched and assembled the photographs.

A limited number of copies are available through the Museum Archives free of charge. Otherwise, the publication may be purchased for \$8.00 from the Museum Bookstore, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, P.O. Box 6826, Houston, TX 77265; 713 639 7365.

SAA REACHES OUT TO "OTHER SAA"

Museum personnel from the the Society of American Archaeologists and the Society for Historical Archaeology are receiving help in dealing with the records of archaeology from the Society of American Archivists. As we saw last year, new Federal regulations require that such records be cared for professionally. In order to assist in that effort, the SAA has provided workshops at SHA and (other) SAA annual meetings to introduce archaeologists, collections managers, curators, and others to the theory and

NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

("Other SAA," cont.)

practice of archival work. Julia Marks Young and Frank Bowles gave a preconference workshop in New Orleans that will be repeated at an upcoming meeting in Jamaica. The University of Nevada cosponsors the workshops through its continuing education division. For further information, contact Jane Kenamore, Education Officer, Society of American Archivists, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605

GRANTS

NHPRC ANNOUNCES 1991 MUSEUM GRANTS

At its July 1991 meeting, National Historical Publications and Records Commission announced the award of several grants to support the development of museum archival programs.

The Maine Maritime Museum, Bath, Maine, received up to \$6225 to hire archival and conservation consultants to develop a plan of work to make the collections more accessible, improve or stabilize the condition of the materials and prepare for future automation and physical expansion.

The Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth, Texas, was awarded \$58,548 to implement an archival program and process the papers of several prominent American photographers. (See job announcement, p.6.)

The Nelson Gallery Foundation of Kansas City, Missouri, also received an implementation grant. The \$85,776 will fund establishment of an archival and records management program for the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

On the special collections side of museum archives, the Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, Connecticut, was awarded \$27,511 to arrange describe and catalog 19th- and 20th-century ship drawings and gore books, which contain information on sail plans of vessels. Also, the Shaker Museum and Library received \$11,400 to arrange and describe Shaker records from 1740 to the present.

Congratulations! We're looking forward to meeting a few new Section members.

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EXPERIENCING BUDGET DISASTER AT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON (YOU LIVE & YOU LEARN)

Like many cultural institutions, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, is currently facing severe financial problems. In response to this, the Board of Trustees required the Director to make \$1.7 million in staff cuts. One of the positions cut was the Museum Archivist line--which, since the Archives was a one-person shop (plus volunteers), meant that the Archives itself was axed. There seemed to be nothing that could be done, and Maureen Melton headed off to look for a new job.

That was in early June. Then the response: curators realized that they couldn't work without access to the records of their departments and, in a meeting with the Director, convinced him that eliminating the Archives was a mistake. A commitment was made to raise funds to endow the position of Archivist. The Archives program cannot be fully reinstated until the funds are raised, but Ms. Melton was hired as a consultant to provide reference service two days a week during the transitional period.

Some valuable lessons were learned. Curators were the archives' most important constituency, acted on its behalf, and their actions were successful. Administrators did not have a concept of the archives as something distinct from the library (of which it is a part) and assumed that the library staff had the training to do archives work. Being part of a larger department, which gave the perception of increased clout and protection, in reality decreased the archives' visibility and inhibited perception of its unique qualities and requirements.

Some of the fallout: although reference service will be available, it will of necessity be limited and weighted toward the requests of staff; accessioning and processing activities will stop; 90% of the time donated by the eight archives volunteers will be lost, because the archivist will not be available to supervise; interns will no longer be able to receive training and provide assistance for the same reason; a brochure about the archives will not be completed; and a group

REPORTS

(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, cont.)

of nearly-ready RLIN records will not be entered into the database.

The future: with an endowment, the archives will be more stable and will not be subject to financial downturns or arbitrary administrative actions. Understanding of its importance to the institution is now overt, rather than hazily perceived, and its position within the museum may be reevaluated. The Archives of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, can look forward--eventually--toward becoming an even stronger, more vital department than it already is. We can hope that the seedling that germinated in 1987 from NHPRC seed money will weather this painful drought and continue to flourish. And we can look at what happened and learn.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MUSEUMS ANNUAL MEETING AT DENVER, COLORADO May 19-23, 1991

Archival records are essential to the documentation of museum collections. In an era when computers and software are more generally affordable, linking collections records to archival records has become an exciting possibility in the minds of many. Systems are being developed almost everywhere you look--from the collections level to the nationwide network. This trend prompted the development of two panel sessions for the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums meeting held May 19-23, 1991 in Denver, Colorado.

"Changing Perspectives on the Documentation of Collections, Parts I & II," were chaired respectively by Patricia E. Williams, Director of Accreditation of the American Association of Museums, and Kristine A. Haglund, Archivist & Head of Library/Archives at the Archivist & Head of Library/Archives at the Denver Museum of Natural History. As a testament to the timeliness of this issue and the increasing awareness of the importance of museum archival records, standing-room-only attendance at each of the sessions was counted at more than 120.

Part I explored archival methodology (Maygene Daniels, Chief Archivist, National Gallery of Art), the importance of archival records to collections (George M. Davis,

Curator of Malacology, Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia), and areas of difference and conflicts that can develop between archivists and those responsible for the documentation of museum collections (Katherine Kane, Director of Collections Services, Colorado Historical Society).

Part II highlighted the efforts of three national initiatives to promote awareness of the importance of archival records, develop closer integration of archival records with museum collection information management, and provide standardization and systems to help unite archives and museum collection information on common data bases. Speakers were K. Elaine Hoagland, Executive Director of the Association of Systematics Collections; Margaretta B. Sander, Director of the American Association for State and Local History's Philadelphia Documentation Project; and Alan Tucker, Associate Director for Project Analysis of the Research Libraries Group.

Tapes of both these sessions are available from: Chesapeake Audio/Video Communications, Inc. 6330 Howard Lane Elkridge, Maryland 21227 Credit card orders: phone (301) 796-0040 FAX (301) 379-0812. If ordering by mail, make checks payable to "Chesapeake A/V., Inc." Ask for tape numbers 020 and 140. Cost is \$8.00 per cassette, plus \$3.00 postage and handling for 1-2 cassettes.

The November issue of *Museum News*, the journal of the American Association of Museums, will be devoted to museum archives. Some of the talks from these AAM meeting sessions will be developed into articles for that issue.

Kristine Haglund
Denver Museum of Natural History

ON EXPERIENCING AN ANNIVERSARY

At approximately 10:15 p.m. on March 17, 1941, a bitterly cold Monday evening, President Franklin D. Roosevelt stepped to the podium to accept the newly completed National Gallery of Art as a gift to the nation. Fifty years later, the National Gallery marked this moment with the opening of an archival exhibition about the architecture and origins of its West Building, part of a year-long anniversary celebration. Preparing for a major museum

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(Anniversary exhibition, cont.)

exhibition required full-time attention of much of the staff of the National Gallery's archives. At the same time, other anniversary projects, including an hour-long motion picture about the National Gallery, a heavily illustrated three hundred page book about its history, a detailed report of corporate support for the museum, and special press kits and video coverage, all depended heavily on archival resources and staff. Normal non-anniversary reference and service demands also had to continue as well. The result was a time of frantic activity for the Gallery Archives, which may have lessons of interest to other museum archivists facing similar events in the future.

The Gallery Archives was established in 1984, at least in part with a view to the anniversary that lay ahead. At that time, although many of the Gallery's oldest records had survived in the museum's attic storeroom and elsewhere, the documents were completely unprocessed and no space or even archival boxes were available for their care. The first priority of the Archives therefore was to obtain an archival facility to ensure the long-term preservation of valuable materials and to arrange and describe the records so that they could be available for use. Annual reports, press releases, and exhibition catalogues were brought together, architectural records were organized, and key files were given priority attention.

Although many more recent materials awaited attention, by the time of the anniversary the oldest files had been processed and proved to be the essential foundation on which all the anniversary projects were able to depend. At the same time that standard archival practice was the necessary base on which all the projects came to rest, the anniversary, and particularly the exhibition, forced archival staff to undertake many decidedly unarchival tasks as well.

Under ordinary circumstances archivists provide records to researchers, who gather information and conclusions on their own. In the pressure of anniversary events, however, the line between archivist and historian

became entirely blurred and archival staff found themselves performing more and more research and providing information and interpretations that they ordinarily would have left to others. It proved to be difficult, if not impossible, to suggest to a reporter facing a deadline or to a harried museum official that he or she should take the time to study the written record. Archival staff had to field frantic inquiries and provide essential facts on the run.

As a result, chronologies, fact sheets, summary biographies, and issue papers prepared in advance proved to be extraordinarily useful and efficient ways to convey data to many callers who urgently needed information. In hindsight, the archives would have been better served by more of fact sheets reflecting research on the predictable topics of the dedication ceremonies, founding donors, building statistics, and the like. Lacking this data in advance, archival staff sometimes were forced to struggle to catch up with the rapid course of events.

Overtime demands for fast answers also created beguiling temptations to ignore normal housekeeping practices in the archives. Out-cards sometimes were neglected, xeroxes made without necessary citations, and refiling set aside in the face of more urgent pressures. Almost without exception, such short-cuts created later confusion that should have been avoided. Archival self-discipline became a constant--but not always achieved--goal as the anniversary progressed.

The anniversary also placed extraordinary demands on visual resources in the archives. Photographs were important for all of the projects, and the searchers were interested in the image, not the nuances of context from which it came. Staff members became accustomed to requests for "interesting photographs of people" or "a view of the museum at the time of the dedication." Such requests left much to individual judgment, and, in responding to them, it proved to be necessary to set aside archival niceties of context and source in order to provide interesting historical photographs as expeditiously as possible.

Because every publication and news story was on a tight deadline, the Archives also received many demands for permission to

REPORTS

(Anniversary exhibition, cont.)

borrow unique images for exceptional circumstances, such as special studio photography or filming. After much trial and error, it became clear that there simply is no satisfactory way to meet such demands and that the best policy is to be inflexibly firm in declining. In retrospect, despite the cost, the archives would have been very well served by a collection of copies of the most commonly used images which could simply be given away.

Serving as curators for a full-blown exhibition also carried with it valuable lessons. In particular, developing an understanding of the dynamics of one of the museum's key functions--exhibitions--will serve the archives well in evaluating and appraising Gallery records in the future. The exhibition, "John Russell Pope and the Building of the National Gallery of Art," was a hybrid, developed with a very short deadline and intended, as befits an art museum, to help visitors understand the West Building as a work of art within the contexts of the city of Washington and career of its architect. The exhibition was an anniversary event as well, intended to illuminate the museum's origins and to celebrate the contributions of Andrew Mellon and others to its history and development.

Balancing these competing elements was intellectually challenging and immersed the archives staff in the compromises demanded by exhibition format and design. Detailed record-keeping proved to be a surprisingly key element of this effort, and knowledge of the nuances of permissions and copyright was extremely useful. Perhaps most important, archival staff organizing the exhibition became the most intensive archives users, depending constantly on knowledge of archival practice and the contents of the records. At the same time, virtually every aspect of the distinction between archivist and researcher completely disappeared.

The anniversary gave the Gallery Archives an extraordinary opportunity to be major participants in a high-profile museum enterprise and an intriguing chance to test the usefulness of archival practice. In retrospect, the archives would have weathered the storm more gracefully had more written data on the Gallery's history been on hand for instantaneous response to the inevitable quick succession of demands. The archives also certainly would have been better served had rules for use and loan of records been rigidly followed throughout. Nonetheless, little doubt remains that basic archival work bringing together and processing valuable historical records was the very best possible preparation

for the anniversary, and that continues to give us great satisfaction.

Maygene Daniels
National Gallery

ARCHIVAL AND LIBRARY MATERIALS FEATURED IN NATIVE AMERICAN EXHIBITION

From October 4 to December 29, 1991, The Brooklyn Museum will present a major exhibition of Native American Art, "Objects of Myth and Memory: American Indian Art at The Brooklyn Museum." Objects illustrating the richness and diversity of the native arts of the Southwest, California, Northwest Coast, and Plains will be exhibited along with selections from the Museum Library and Archives. Organized as a history of collecting, the exhibition will focus on the large and uniquely well-documented collection that Stewart Culin, the Museum's founding Curator of Ethnology, acquired between 1903 and 1911. Convinced that the Indians were vanishing, Culin set out to preserve their past, acquiring more than 9,000 objects, and documenting both the objects and the process of collecting. Presented from the vantage point of the collector, the exhibition raises important questions about the objectivity of ethnological collections and early Museum representations of Native American cultures. The exhibition also aims to dispel the still popular myth of the vanishing Indian and to promote a better understanding of a vital and continuing part of our national artistic heritage.

This will be the first major exhibition in the Museum's recent history to include items from the collections of the Library and Archives. During his tenure as Curator of Ethnology (1903-1929) Culin amassed a large and varied personal research collection. After his death, the Museum acquired Culin's library and archives, including 7,000 books and pamphlets, 28 expedition reports, documentary photographs, sketches, and paintings, correspondence and

REPORTS

(Native American exhibition, cont.)

research files, manuscripts, and clippings. The exhibition's object and wall labels will be drawn primarily from Culin's expedition reports, which describe exactly how and why the objects were acquired. Seldom has the public been given such a comprehensive look into the mind of one of the century's great ethnologists and collectors.

Selections on Native American art and culture from Culin's Library and Archives will be displayed in cases on the second floor outside the entrance to the Museum Library as well as at the entrance to "Objects of Myth and Memory." The visitor can track Culin's progress in the field by reading his vivid narratives in the expedition reports and his acquisition and documentation procedures in chapbooks, catalogue cards and labels. Photographs, sketches, manuscript materials and books collected by Culin will also be displayed. Highlights of the display will include documentary photographs by Ben Wittick, a sketch by pioneer ethnologist Frank Hamilton Cushing of a Zuni game, and a letter from trader John Hubbell concerning the purchase of the Navajo shield installed in the exhibit. The exhibition of selections from the Culin Library and Archives has been partially supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibition catalog, co-published by The Brooklyn Museum and the University of Washington Press, features many illustrations from the library and archival collections. "Objects of Myth and Memory" is scheduled to travel to The Oakland Museum in 1992 and The Heard Museum in 1993.

In conjunction with the exhibition and the reinstallation of the permanent collections in the Hall of the Americas, the Museum will host a symposium on October 26th. Speakers will examine the intellectual and ethical questions raised by the exhibition and provide an overview of Culin's documentary research collection.

Deirdre Lawrence
Brooklyn Museum

LATE NEWS

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART RECEIVES NEH ORAL HISTORY GRANT

This just in from the *Oral History Association Newsletter*: The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded a grant to the Museum of Modern Art for the production of forty interviews documenting the history of MOMA and entry of cataloging records for the interviews into RLIN. Congratulations!