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# MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

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Newsletter of the Museum Archives Section  
Society of American Archivists

February 1992

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## FROM THE CHAIR

This issue of *Museum Archivist* provides the newsletter readership with reviews of how busy the SAA's Museum Archives section was during 1990-91 and how active we hope to be in the coming three years. I encourage all of you to review the annual report for 1990-91 included below and the section's Three Year Plan which appears elsewhere in this issue. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcome and very much appreciated.

### ANNUAL REPORT 1990-91

*Highlights for the past year include the following items:*

- 1) produced and distributed 2 issues of the newsletter;
- 2) produced and distributed an index (vols. 1-5) to the newsletter;
- 3) produced and distributed a bibliography on literature concerning museum archives;
- 4) produced and distributed a directory of museum archives and archivists;
- 5) petitioned the Editorial Board of SAA to revise and update its manual, *Museum Archives, An Introduction*;
- 6) sponsored one program session at 1991 AAM meeting;
- 7) sponsored one program session and a reception at the 1991 SAA meeting;
- 8) created and adopted section by-laws; and
- 9) engaged in discussions with AAM regarding the formation of an Archives Task Force/Committee.

### Upcoming Meeting Sessions

Once again, section members have put together program sessions for the annual

meetings (1992) of AAM and SAA. We hope to see many of you there, especially museum professionals who are new to AAM, SAA and/or the Museum Archives section. More detailed information concerning these program sessions is available in this newsletter or will be posted in the coming months. If you have an idea for a session proposal for a national or regional meeting, please contact a section officer. We'll be happy to work with you on developing the proposal and identifying speakers in your geographical area.

### THE OFFICIAL MUSEUM DIRECTORY ARE YOU INCLUDED?

The *Official Museum Directory* (OMD), published annually by the AAM, is a useful and steady source of information on all types of museums. In a recent review of the 1991 edition, however, I found that the majority of museum archivists are not included in the parts of entries which list museum personnel. A rough estimate shows that over 60 per cent of us are not mentioned!

There is an easy way to correct this oversight: locate the individual in your museum who completes the OMD entry form (it is sent to museums every year) and ask to be included in that section of the form which lists your institution's personnel. It's a simple but important step in making our archives collections and programs better known and used.

Kathleen Hartt  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

## MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

is issued twice a year by the  
Museum Archives Section of SAA.

News items, letters to the editor, and comments from the  
archives community are welcome.

Next deadline: June 15, 1992.

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## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES SECTION MINUTES SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS 1991 ANNUAL MEETING

The meeting was called to order on Friday, September  
27, 1991, at 8:00 AM by Kathleen Hartt, Section Chair.  
An agenda and draft by-laws were handed to each  
attendee.

The first order of business was the approval of the 1990  
Seattle minutes. The minutes approved, Ms. Hartt  
gave an overview of some of the topics the Section  
needed to discuss. First she noted that there had been  
many contacts with the American Association of  
Museums (AAM) this year. The AAM wants a more  
formal way to handle archives--perhaps an AAM Task  
Force on archives. Kathleen noted that this would be  
very helpful for the Section. She said that we need a  
resource at AAM for joint work; there is also the  
possibility of a workshop on archives, taught by  
museum archivists for museum professionals, at the  
AAM annual meeting. Discussions of this matter are  
ongoing.

She also said that we need to approve the by-laws that  
have been drafted and to discuss the fact that several  
museum archives have closed this year because of  
budget problems. When the Section hears of an  
impending closing, the Chair will ask the president of  
SAA to send an official letter to the museum or its board  
expressing concern and explaining the possible  
damages resulting from cutting archival programs in  
museums. Trudy Peterson responded to the request of  
the Section this year, and Laurie Baty of NHPRC could  
also write letters. We should discuss why museum  
archives are vulnerable to cuts in state and  
federally-funded programs.

Maureen Melton spoke briefly about the Museum of  
Fine Arts, Boston, where the director made a unilateral  
decision to cut the archival program, but the curators  
came forward to demand the restoration of the archives.  
The result was that the archivist returned two days a  
week as a consultant. This is a worrisome precedent.  
Deborah Wythe asked for reactions to the September  
1991 newsletter article on this situation ("Experiencing  
Budget Disaster"), which was

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

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(Minutes, cont.)

written based on the facts as reported by Maureen. Did section members or their supervisors consider the article too negative or reflecting badly on the institution or Section? No negative reactions or effects were noted.

The other officers of the Section then gave their reports. Newsletter editor Deborah Wythe noted that the last issue of newsletter had received fewer than normal submissions and made a plea for more articles for the February issue (deadline December 15) and the September issue (deadline July 15). Wythe also stated that she is looking for an assistant newsletter editor and anyone interested should speak up.

Alan L. Bain reported on membership and the mailing list. He said that there are around 400 on the list and that SAA and others have asked for a copy of the list.

Kris Haglund, reporting on Education, noted that there were three sessions on archives at the AAM meeting in Denver and all were very popular. She and Alan Bain worked together on one of these, "Museum Archives: Gaining Control of Your Institution's Official Records." She is now working with the Association of Systematics Collections to produce a brochure, funded by the ASC, which will be ready by the end of the year. The brochure, called "Are You Meeting Your Public Trust?," gives guidelines on archives and resources. She is also gathering information on museum studies programs so that archives can be incorporated into the curricula.

Theresa Percy, reporting on Outreach, also discussed the AAM sessions on museum archives. These sessions were titled "Changing Perspectives on Documentation of Collections, Part I and Part II." A proposal has been submitted for the 1992 AAM meeting for a session on collection development and competition over resources. John Fleckner and others will do a session on the role of archives in exhibitions for the meeting of the American Association for State and Local History. Percy asked that anyone attending meetings of other groups let her know so that museum archives can make more such presentations. She also announced that the AAM's *Museum News* issue

for November/December will be devoted to museum archives. Bain and Haglund have worked extensively on this. Percy also said that the April 1992 Museum Archives Institute at Old Sturbridge Village will include discussion on beginning an archives.

Maygene Daniels, reporting for the Publications Committee, stated that a top priority that emerged from last year's brainstorming was the need to ask SAA for a revision of *Museum Archives: An Introduction*, by Bill Deiss. The request was made to SAA, but so far the editorial board has made no response. The museum archives bibliography is an ongoing project. Maygene said Section members should let her know of any new publications. She also said that the bibliography was included in the AAM *Sourcebook*, published for the annual meeting. Maygene also said that our newsletter is a great success. She said that it is now available at the Archives and Library Information Center at the National Archives. Discussion then centered on last year's idea for a *Museum Archives Reader* or some sort of package of brochures and other materials aimed at the directors of small museums. Maygene spoke of the need to update the priorities and recommendations of the Belmont Conference on museum archives. This will be a goal of the publications committee this year.

The committee reports completed, Chair Kathleen Hartt introduced Joan Schwartz, a member of the Program Committee for next year's Montreal Meeting of the SAA. Schwartz noted that the theme is "Archives, A Global View." The meeting will focus on the broader relations of archives with others, with users, with the legal profession, etc. She discussed some of the necessities for sections submitting proposals, such as the need to make sure all speakers are available. She noted that proposals should be submitted through the Section. The Program Committee will take an active role in suggesting how sections can make their proposals broader and better. She urged everyone to attend the meeting and take advantage of the opportunity to visit the many museums and archives in and around Montreal. Hartt announced that our Section will caucus after the Section meeting to discuss possible topics for the Montreal meeting.

The next item for discussion was the review and approval of the by-laws. Hartt noted that SAA has established guidelines for Section by-laws. Our goal is to keep our

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

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(Minutes, cont.)

procedures general and fluid. Alan Bain and Maygene Daniels have produced a draft for our by-laws and published it in the newsletter. Discussion on the draft centered on voting and how Section members vote if they cannot attend the annual meeting. Someone else noted that other, larger sections allow members to mail ballots in and then count them at the meeting. Mary Elizabeth Ruwell said that we should accept these by-laws now and discuss the issues of voting and a nominating committee next year. It was so moved that the by-laws are accepted, although they may need some refinement.

The next item of business was the Three-Year Plan requested by the SAA. SAA wants to know the budget needs of each section and what plans each section has so that section goals reflect SAA goals. The Museum Archives Section Three-Year Plan includes discussion of our newsletter, the directory, the bibliography, the update on the Deiss manual, and our desire to work more closely with the AAM. Our 1991-92 plan assumes a positive response from SAA on the manual update and also puts forth our proposal for the *Museum Archives Reader*. The plan must be submitted by January 1 and will be published in the newsletter with comments invited.

Next Hartt called for election of officers. The by-laws will take effect immediately and provide that the vice chair is the chairelect. Deborah Wythe will continue to serve as Newsletter Editor for two more years. Only a Vice-Chair and a Recording Secretary need to be elected at this time. Mary Elizabeth Ruwell nominated Kris Haglund, who agreed to accept the nomination and was so elected. Susan Glenn was elected Recording Secretary.

Hartt thanked everyone for attending the meeting and reminded the members that a caucus on proposals for the 1992 SAA meeting would follow. Several members asked if there would be a Section reception next year in Montreal. It was suggested that we might have a joint reception with the Architecture Roundtable. Hartt thanked Karen Stevens for making the Philadelphia reception a success. It was noted that there had been some problems with the SAA Council regarding our reception. Maygene Daniels gave the group the point

of view of the Council concerning receptions and the problem of getting funding for SAA-wide events if the sections were also asking for funding. Hartt will address this issue with our new Council liaison.

The meeting was adjourned.

Susan Glenn  
Smithsonian Archives

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Outreach Committee has been concentrating its efforts on developing program proposals for the American Association of Museums' annual meeting to be held in Baltimore on April 25-29, 1992. The session, which was accepted, deals with the process of collection development within an environment of limited resources and diverse tensions. It will examine how institutional collection development policies and priorities are balanced by the specialized needs of museum archivists, curators and researchers. The session will be chaired by Alberta Sebolt George, Executive Vice President, Old Sturbridge Village. Program participants include John Fleckner, Chief Archivist, Smithsonian Institution; Steve Germann, Director, Alfred P. Sloan Museum; Jack Larkin, Chief Historian, Old Sturbridge Village; and Thomas C. Battle, Director, Morland Springarn Research Center.

Future plans include working with the SAA Executive Officer to hold SAA basic workshops in conjunction with the 1993 AAM annual meeting. In addition the Outreach Committee will focus on establishing contacts with the six regional museum associations so that it can serve as a resource for archival issues, training, and consultations. The six regional museum associations are: New England Museum Association, Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums, Southeastern Museums Conference, Midwest Museum Conference, Mountain-Plains Museum Associations and Western Museums Conference. If anyone is actively involved in any of these organizations and is willing to assist the committee, please contact: Theresa Rini Percy, Old Sturbridge Village, 1 OSV Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566 (508 347-3362 x203).

Theresa Percy  
Old Sturbridge Village

## ROUNDTABLE BUSINESS

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES SECTION CURRENT ACTIVITY REPORT AND THREE YEAR PLAN

September 1991-August 1992

The section will engage in the following activities:

Publications: 1) produce and distribute 2 issues of *Museum Archivist* and create an annual update to its index (volume 6); 2) produce and distribute an annual update to the bibliography of museum archives literature; 3) work with SAA's Editorial Board on updating and revising the manual, *Museum Archives: An Introduction*.

Outreach and Education: 1) submit program proposals for SAA 1992 meeting and work with local arrangements committee on offering a museum archives tour in Montreal; 2) sponsor one program session at AAM 1992 annual meeting entitled, "The Realities of Collection Development;" 3) work with SAA education officer on establishing a workshop on museum archives to be offered beginning in 1993 at annual meetings of AAM and museum state and regional associations; 4) establish contacts with museum state and regional associations and begin serving as a resource for information on archives programs, issues, training, etc; 5) initiate three-year study of museum studies graduate programs in the U.S. Section seeks to provide students with information on careers in archives and to encourage the incorporation of an archives component into museum studies programs. During 1991-92, the section will create a list of museum studies programs and assemble information on their curricula.

September 1992-August 1993

The section will produce two issues of the newsletter, an index to the newsletters produced, and an update to the bibliography of literature on museum archives.

In addition, the section has petitioned SAA for partial funding for a mid-year meeting to take place in April 1993. The preliminary meeting agenda includes the following old and new business:

Old Business: 1) report on Archives Task Force of the American Association of Museums; 2) report on contacts with museum state and regional associations; 3) progress report on survey of museum studies graduate programs; 4) report on SAA museum archives workshops to be held at AAM and at state and regional museum meetings; 5) report on a revision to *Museum Archives: An Introduction*.

New Business: 1) program proposals for upcoming professional meetings (AAM, SAA, etc.); 2) report on proposal to study museum records appraisal practices - a possible Bentley Library Fellowship for the summer of 1993; 3) report on the feasibility of a publication with the tentative title, *Museum Archives Reader*.

September 1993-August 1994

The section will produce two issues of the newsletter, an index to the newsletters produced, and an update to the bibliography of literature on museum archives. In addition, the section will continue to submit quality program proposals for professional meetings. The section will continue some activities undertaken in the previous year and will complete others during this time period (see above).

September 1994-August 1995

See previous time period. In addition, the section will begin the process of updating the 1991 directory of *Museum Archives and Archivists*.

Kathleen Hartt  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

## NOTES

### CALL FOR INFORMATION

Seeking information on the life and work of American watercolorist Gina Schnauer Knee (1898-1982). Please contact Sharyn Udall, 26 General Sage Drive, Santa Fe, NM 87505; 505 988 1062.

## GRANTS

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### CRANBROOK AWARDED GETTY GRANT

The Cranbrook Educational Community, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, is cataloging nearly 10,000 architectural, engineering, and landscape architecture drawings with the support of a \$45,000 grant from the Getty Grant Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust. The collection includes drawings and renderings by noted Finnish architects Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Albert Kahn, Samuel Yellin, and other architects and designers associated with the development of Cranbrook. Most of the drawings were produced by Eliel Saarinen and draftsmen working under him in the Cranbrook Architectural Office, established in 1926. The collection was assembled from the late 1920s through the early 1940s.

The drawings will be cataloged on the Cranbrook Educational Community's QUIXIS system, computer software designed specifically for itemizing museum collections. After cataloging, the drawings will be stored in acid-free folders in the Archives vault. Long-range plans call for microfilming the documents for easier access.

The plans have been invaluable to architects and contractors working on the Cranbrook property. In addition, the Archives receives several requests for specific plans each month from museum curators, campus planners, landscape architects, historians, and students. Archivist Mark Coir noted that "cataloging the collection will allow us to easily locate specific documents. We will be able to maintain the collection better and plan to report our holding to national computer databases. That will open the collection to even greater scholarly use." Cranbrook's designation as a National Historic Landmark adds to the significance of the project. Cataloging the collection is expected to take one year from its start in summer 1991.

The Cranbrook Educational Community is an internationally renowned center for the arts, education, science and culture. It comprises the Academy of Art and Museum, the Institute of Sciences, the Schools, and other affiliated groups. For further information, contact Mark Coir, Director of Archives, Cranbrook Educational Community, 380 Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48013 (313 645 3154).

### FREER AND SACKLER GALLERY ARCHIVES RECEIVE SMITHSONIAN GRANT

The archives of the Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery has been awarded a generous grant of \$20,000 for preservation, conservation, and access of the Charles Lang Freer Papers. Awarded by the Research Resources Program of the Office of Fellowships and Grants of the Smithsonian Institution, this project will be completed prior to the reopening of the Freer Gallery of Art in the spring of 1993, following a 4-year renovation.

Detroit industrialist Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), who bequeathed his Asian and turn-of-the-century American works to the Smithsonian in 1906, also funded construction of the Freer Gallery, the Institution's first art museum. The Gallery opened in 1923. Freer's papers will be fully processed and a finding aid created. Funding has supported the recent hiring of Wendy Bellion to assist the archivist in processing the papers. Portions of the papers will be microfilmed by the Archives of American Art, selected photographs conserved, and a description of the papers made available through RLIN.

Colleen Hennessey  
Freer and Sackler Galleries

### THE CLOISTERS RECEIVES ARCHIVES GRANT JOB POSTING ANNOUNCED

The library of the Cloisters has received a grant of \$48,000 from the International Center of Medieval Art to process and describe the papers of the noted art historian, Sumner McKnight Crosby. The Cloisters, a branch of the Metropolitan Museum of Art located at Fort Tryon Park in New York City, displays Medieval art collections, including paintings and sculpture, decorative arts, textiles, and Treasury objects. The museum itself is constructed from portions of medieval cloisters and churches brought to New York from Europe.

The Crosby papers include drafts of his book on St. Denis, correspondence, slides, photographs, blueprints, and architectural models. The grant will provide for the 12-month appointment of a professional archivist, travel expenses, supplies, and map cases. In addition, the grant provides funds for a consultant, Dr. Pam Blum, who has extensive knowledge of Crosby's work

## GRANTS

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(Cloisters, cont.)

and published his final book posthumously. The goal of the project is to process the papers, create a finding aid, and hopefully add the records to the RLIN system. The papers will be housed at the Cloisters and will be made accessible to all qualified researchers.

### Associate Archivist sought

Qualifications: minimum 2 years experience in a museum or university archives, knowledge of French, and experience with architectural plans collections required; knowledge of Medieval art, Master's degree in art history, experience with visual collections such as slides and photographs, and familiarity with MARC/AMC format and RLIN desirable. Requirements: arrange and describe Crosby papers, with the consultant's assistance as necessary; select and order supplies and equipment; create finding aid. One-year, full-time temporary position with benefits; salary \$26,000.

Contact Lauren Jackson-Beck, Assistant Museum Librarian, The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park, New York, NY 10040 (212 923 3700, x154).

### ARCHIVIST SOUGHT FOR NEW ARCHIVES PROGRAM AT NELSON-ATKINS MUSEUM OF ART

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, is developing an archives and records management program under a two-year federally funded grant. This general art museum with an emphasis on the arts of Asia, particularly China, opened in 1933. Other collections of special note include English ceramics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, European painting from the Baroque through the nineteenth century and the sculpture of Henry Moore. The institution's records are complete, important, unique, and uncatalogued. Documents detail the amassing of the collections in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Europe, China and the United States, as well as the ongoing development of the institution, which is considered among the ten or twelve most important art museums in the United States.

An archivist and archives technician will be hired. The archival materials, which currently total more than one thousand cubic feet of records, will be consolidated, surveyed, organized and described. Guidelines will be formulated for transferring current museum records to the archives. In addition, the archivist will establish a program to meet the preservation and conservation needs of the materials in the documents collection. Guidelines will be established for public access to these holdings. The Museum is currently involved in intense preparation for the publication of extensive catalogues of the permanent collection.

In addition to the responsibilities noted above, filing terminology will be standardized in order to inventory data into a computer system and produce a printed inventory. Policy statements on the scope and nature of the archives program and on records management issues will be prepared.

Qualifications: MLS or Masters in art history or humanities. Two years experience in established institutional archives. Familiarity with USMARC-AMC. The current call for applications is for the position of Archivist. Applications should be sent to Sondra Taylor, Manager of Human Resources, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, Missouri, 64111.

### AMON CARTER APPOINTS ARCHIVIST

The Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, Fort Worth, Texas, which received a grant of \$58,548 from the NHPRC to implement an archives program, recently appointed Paula Stewart to the position of archivist. Ms. Stewart, already a member of the Section, was previously a curatorial assistant in the photography division at the Amon Carter. She reports that she is looking forward to the challenge of setting up the archives and getting it running. The archives project, which is under the library, is well supported and has generated strong support among administration and staff.

## NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### NEWS FROM THE FRONT

Assistant editor Meg Klinkow reports: a special issue for Fall 1991 of Smith College's *News from the Libraries*, gloomily entitled, "Resignations, Layoffs, and Reorganizations," led to a call to Michael Goodison, museum archivist at Smith's Hillyer Art Museum. Although the whole library system is reorganizing, no definite changes for his department have been scheduled. None of the seventeen library and archives staff lost recently to "voluntary separations, involuntary separations, and coincidence" were in the museum archives.

We also received the following statement from Anita Gilden, Librarian at the Philadelphia Museum of Art: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, due to a budget shortfall, has made several staff cuts. One of which, unfortunately, was its archivist, Alice Lefton. As a result, as of July 1, 1991, the archives has been closed to outside researchers. The library has been endeavoring to help PMA staff in their archival research. The museum regrets this hardship to the community and hopes this difficult period will be of short duration.

Lisa Steele, Director of Public Relations at the Detroit Institute of Arts, reports that the Institute's Archives was discontinued in August 1991. The Records Center function has been retained, with staff having access to their own records and the Center is being managed by a staff member who is part of the Accounting Department. Reference service will no longer be provided, outside researchers will not be served, and no further guides or oral histories will be produced. The Institute hopes to bring back all of its discontinued functions, including the Archives, when the fiscal climate improves.

A call to Historic Rugby, Rugby, Tennessee, for a followup report on their NHPRC-funded archives project revealed that the archivist position could not be continued because of financial constraints.

*Editor's note: Please see the Section minutes for further discussion of the effects of the financial climate.*

### ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN ART NOW ON RLIN

Information about the holdings of the Archives of American Art, a Smithsonian Institution branch, is now available online on the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). More than 6,000 collections were cataloged in the Archives and Manuscripts Control (AMC) format on the Smithsonian computer system, SIBIS, and then uploaded to the national bibliographic network. The project, which began in 1986 in the Archives of American Art Washington office, was completed in June 1991. Records may be found in the AMC file of RLIN under the library identifier DCAW.

The Archives of American Art gathers, preserves and makes available original records of American painters, sculptors, craftsmen, collectors, dealers, critics, and art societies, organizations and museums. Microfilm copies of the holdings are available in regional centers and on Inter-Library Loan.

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES INSTITUTE APRIL 10-11, 1992

The fifth New England Museum Association and Old Sturbridge Village Museum Archives Institute will be held at Old Sturbridge Village on April 10-11, 1992. The Institute has been expanded into a two year program, to allow for a more concentrated and in-depth approach to the topics. Participants may join the program either year. The sessions are designed for the beginner and include such topics as records management, appraisal, arrangement and description, reference and access, legal issues, preservation, management, oral history, automation, fundraising, exhibits, photographs, and outreach.

In addition to the basic program, the Institute will offer a concurrent special topic program focused on space management. These sessions will deal with the planning process, storage options, environment, security, fundraising, and outside consultants. The Institute offers a different special topic program each year.

Institute faculty is made of museum and archives professionals who enjoy a national reputation. Both the basic and special topic programs run for two days. Registration is limited. The fee is \$90.00 for either program. For information, contact Theresa Rini Percy, Director, Research Library, Old Sturbridge Village, 1 OSV Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566; 508 347 3362.



## NEWS, NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### OSV Research Fellowship

Old Sturbridge Village announces its second annual Research Fellowship for a scholar working in the social history and material culture of rural New England, 1790 to 1850. The project need not be limited to rural New England nor to this period, but must relate significantly to the Village's time and place. The fellowship is for a 6- to 12-week period with a stipend of \$2,500. Contact Dr. John Worrell, Director of Research and Collections, Old Sturbridge Village, 1 OSV Road, Sturbridge, MA 01566 (508 347 3362, x302). Deadline: July 1, 1992.

## PUBLICATIONS

### WORTH READING

#### National Trust for Historic Preservation

The July 1991 newsletter, *Education at the Properties* (vol. 2/1) of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, contains a collection of articles written by interns and directors at ten Trust properties. The issue gives information on programs, projects, and the individuals involved with them. It is very upbeat and informative about the ways internships have helped house museum staff, including archivists and librarians. For a copy and information on the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation internship program, contact Lisa Schrenk, Education Director, 931 Chicago Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60302; 708 848 1976.

#### Historic New Orleans Collection

The Historic New Orleans Collection *Newsletter* (Spring 1991, vol. 9/2) features a report from the Research Center, "Collecting Artists Papers." A note to researchers also applies to holdings in other institutions: "THNOC's holdings of artists' papers provide important insights, often overlooked, about an artist's life and work. The materials yield many things. The information may be practical . . .; it may be gossipy; it may document a purchase . . .; and the papers often call up that ephemeral social-artistic event, the exhibition."

### Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art recently published two fascinating volumes on the occasion of its 75th anniversary: *Cleveland Builds An Art Museum: Patronage, Politics, and Architecture, 1884-1916* and *Object Lessons: Cleveland Creates an Art Museum* (both Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1991). The first volume, by Walter C. Leedy, Jr., investigates "the rationale that lay behind the design of [the Museum's] superb building and its location in Wade Park." It traces the history of the development of an art museum for Cleveland, the design process, and the construction of the museum, and contains numerous photographs, site plans, and architectural drawings.

Volume two, edited by Museum Director Evan H. Turner, documents the collections and activities of the museum, with a chapter on the work of each Director (including an "autobiographical" chapter by Sherman E. Lee, who retired in 1983), "Overview" essays to provide a broader context, and a number of short reports on varied topics. Cleveland Museum of Art Archivist Virginia Krumholz provided essential assistance in researching and illustrating the two volumes and is credited in the preface with "repeatedly startling" knowledge of the material and ingenuity in ferreting out new material and photographs.

The two softcover books may be purchased for \$14.50 and \$21.50, respectively, from the Museum Bookstore, Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44106 (216 421 7340).

Editor's note: See a report on the CMA Archives elsewhere in this issue.

#### American Association of Museums

Finally, don't miss the November 1991 issue of *Museum News!* The striking cover and series of articles featuring museum archives brought us much-needed publicity. Associate Editor Donald Garfield reports that although only a few of the "Vantage Point" cards were returned, they showed a broad range of archival programs, from the shoestring to the active and healthy. An update in the "M-Notes" section may be forthcoming.

## REPORTS

### ARCHIVISTS EXCHANGE JOBS

A work exchange program recently took place between archivists John Smith, of the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), and Francesca Franchi, of the Royal Opera House (ROH), Covent Garden, London. The exchange was worked out independently between the two friends with the blessings of their individual institutions. While swapping positions, they continued to receive salaries from their respective employers and paid rent on their own residences. Francesca enjoyed working in a museum and visiting other archives in the Chicago area. She also attended the SAA annual meeting in Philadelphia and was impressed by the large numbers of archivists there.

So how does the American experience measure against British archival work? Both institutions are open by appointment regular hours Monday through Friday, with ROH closed Wednesday. Processing methods are similar, arrangement by medium and then department. Reference service is more stimulating at ROH, where there are many more questions, especially from outside the institution. The patrons at the AIC are more often staff and academics from the School of the Art Institute. In January 1992, the school celebrated its 125th anniversary with an exhibit in the Ryerson Library documenting the school's history, faculty, and students. The exhibition will remain up for eight weeks.

What are the archives of the Royal Opera House like? The collections include many visual images. While there are numerous 18th- and 19th-century prints, the earliest photographs date from 1864. The records of costume and set designs are popular. Just as with any collection dealing with the history of a building, the unexpected artifacts are sometimes the most provocative. The ROH collection now contains some 19th-century woman's stays, shoe buttons, and theater tickets recently found in one of the boxes! The ROH archives staff is responsible for exhibitions in the Opera House and for loans to other institutions.

Despite rains and record cold, Ms. Franchi visited several other Chicago area collections: the Chicago Symphony Orchestra library, the theater collection of the Chicago Public Library, the Chicago Historical

Society's industrial and decorative arts collection, and the research center of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio. Sadly, she found that Chicago's Civic Opera House does not maintain an archives. The staff member whom she interviewed seems to pride himself on periodically purging the building of historic records!

Francesca Franchi is sorry that her time in the United States was only a brief three months. Still, she used her time well to explore Chicago and to inspire those of us stuck at home to thoughts of foreign exchanges.

Meg Klinkow  
Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio

### MUSEUM ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES IN TEXAS

The Texas Association of Museums (TAM) is arguably the largest and most active independent state museum association in the nation. The organization produces an annual meeting and conference, regularly sponsors workshops and seminars, and produces a bi-monthly newsletter and other publications. TAM also supports a number of smaller regional associations around the state.

Perhaps the most significant component of TAM are its affinity groups, such as the Educator's Circle, Women's Caucus, and Natural History Group, which allow museum professionals the opportunity to interact with colleagues in a job-oriented atmosphere. One of the more broad based affinity groups is the Collection Managers Committee (CMC), formed in 1988, which includes curators, registrars, conservators, librarians, exhibit technicians, and archivists. With a focus on collection-related issues and concerns, CMC is extremely concerned about the current state and future of museum archives and libraries.

In 1990-91, CMC sponsored a survey of TAM institutional members to assess the status and control of archives and libraries in Texas museums. The brief questionnaire was not intended as a definitive analysis of museum archives and libraries, but rather to provide basic information on these collections and their managers. Another component of the survey was to allow these individuals the opportunity to express their interests and concerns about archives and library issues. The following brief summary presents the survey findings.

## REPORTS

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(Texas Museums, cont.)

The survey was sent to the 235 TAM member institutions along with a cover letter explaining the interest of CMC and TAM in assessing and improving the lot of museum archives and libraries. [The TAM member institutions represent a good cross-section of museums, from small minimally staffed museums to larger more financially-secure operations.] The letter also emphasized the value and importance of archives and libraries as a component to overall museum operations. The survey was specifically addressed to the attention of the museum archivist or librarian in an attempt to get the questionnaire to the staff member most responsible for the care and management of these materials.

The survey elicited a response of nearly 40%: 88 of the 235 questionnaires that were mailed were returned. The first section of the questionnaire asked for respondent basics such as name, position, institution, address, and telephone number. Surveys were received from 35 directors (40%); 26 curators or registrars (30%); 18 archivists or librarians (20%); 4 office managers (5%); 2 educators (2%); and 3 other positions (3%).

All respondents indicated that their institutions had some type of archival or library holdings. Expectations that museum archives and libraries are often managed or maintained by staff members with other job responsibilities were borne out by the survey. In regard to museum archives, only 10 respondents indicated that the archival holdings of their institution were their primary job responsibility (12%). Another 43 respondents indicated that archives were one of several primary job responsibilities (48%). The remaining 35 respondents stated that archives were a secondary job responsibility (40%).

In regard to museum libraries, only 8 respondents indicated that library holdings were their primary job responsibility (9%). Another 33 respondents indicated that the museum library was one of several primary job responsibilities (38%). The remaining 47 respondents stated that library materials were a secondary job responsibility (53%).

In terms of the management of archives and libraries by museums, nearly one-quarter of the respondents indicated that their museum archives or library functioned as its own department (24%). Many respondents said these holdings were maintained by other museum departments, such as by curatorial staff (16%) or administrators (14%), or as part of an art, education, or history department (6%). But a significant number of respondents stated that these holdings were either jointly maintained by all departments or did not indicate how they were administered (40%).

Possibly the most disturbing element of the survey's findings came in regard to the size of archival holdings. Respondents were asked to estimate the size of their archives: 31 indicated 1-100 cubic feet (35%); 14 stated 100-500 cubic feet (16%); and 8 said 500 or more cubic feet (9%). Responses from 35 survey participants (40%) indicate that their museum had no organized archives or that they didn't know the size of their archives and knew no way to calculate it.

Respondents also were asked to identify the types of materials that were found in their archives. Responses included 77 institutions with photographs (88%); 69 with papers, letters, and diaries (78%); 68 with newspapers (77%); 58 with museum records (66%); 58 with ledgers and journals (66%); 53 with slides (60%); 49 with maps and drawings (56%); 49 with oral history collections (56%); 29 with microfilms/microfiche (33%); 26 with vertical files (29%); and 22 with other materials [i.e. video, scrapbooks, etc.] (25%).

Regarding the size of museum libraries, 30 respondents indicated that their book holdings were 1-500 volumes (34%); 9 stated 500-1,000 volumes (10%); 21 said 1,000-5,000 volumes (18%); and 15 marked 5,000 or more volumes (17%). Another 16 respondents indicated that they did not know the size of their institution's book holdings or that they had no library (18%).

Insight into the educational background of archive and library managers revealed that only 14 had degrees in archives or library science (16%). Other top educational categories included 13 with degrees in art (15%); 11 in history (12.5%); 11 in science (12.5%); 10 in museum studies (11%); and 8 in business (9%). Respondents also were asked if they regularly attended conferences, meetings, and training sessions on

## REPORTS

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(Texas Museums, cont.)

archives, library, or museum issues. Responses show 55 answered yes (62%); 27 marked no (31%); and 6 (7%) said sometimes. Among the groups from which they attended training sessions were a number of regional, state, and national associations such as the Society of Southwest Archivists, Texas State Historical Association, American Library Association, American Association of Museums, and Society of American Archivists.

An important aspect of the survey was to ascertain interest in establishing a separate CMC committee on museum archives and libraries. The response was mixed, with 22 responses for the subcommittee (25%); 52 against (60%); and 14 undecided (15%).

Respondents were then asked to rate a list of possible subcommittee functions. The majority (64%) felt that providing opportunities for continuing education should be a top priority. Other functions that scored well were providing information about other collections (45%) and developing a statewide museum archives/library network (40%).

Finally, survey participants were asked rank a group of possible workshop or training topics in terms of preference from high to low. The order of respondent preference was: preservation and conservation techniques (1); principles of archival management (2); organizing and expanding collections (3); photo storage and retrieval systems (4); developing manuals and guidelines (5); museum library administration (6); organizing and preserving museum records (7); developing a museum archives/library network/newsletter (8); long-range planning (9); disaster management (10); and fundraising and grantsmanship (11).

Besides the more obvious conclusions one can draw from the questionnaire, there are several other important survey results.

First, this study represents an important initial step for the Texas museum community by acknowledging that museum archival issues need attention. For years archivists employed by museums have worked in the shadow of curators and registrars as attention focused on artifacts and objects. But, as this survey has shown, many museums have extensive archival and

library collections, and relatively few museums currently employ regular staff to maintain their archives.

Since many institutions are financially unable to create new archivist positions or establish state-of-the-art archival facilities, museums must adjust to meet the needs and demands of their archival holdings. Whatever changes occur in individual institutional settings, museum archivists must play a key role in fostering better understanding of their place in the museum community and in helping create new training opportunities for themselves and their colleagues. They can fill a terrific void by being active in both archival organizations and museum groups.

Secondly, the survey mentions little concerning the use of museum archives and libraries by patrons, but it can be inferred from the responses that many museums have neglected these holdings for their potential research and educational value. Museums need to evaluate their existing archival and library holdings and make them an asset to the museum's operations.

Given the environmental sensitivity of these types of materials, taking steps to ensure preservation now may provide the institution with new information about the museum and its holdings. Moreover, by simply making a commitment to improve the organization and care of existing archival material, or by examining the feasibility of investing in a regular archives program, museums can realize unexpected benefits in the form of increased constituent and community awareness and support.

In conclusion, this survey demonstrates the need for further education and study. Taken as an overview of the status of museum archives in Texas, one can see that much remains to be accomplished. Few museums appear to have structured archival programs in place. Since in so many museums staff members are called upon to fulfill many different responsibilities, at a minimum personnel need training in the basics of archival theory and practice. If individuals with responsibility for museum archives are unable to define the size of their holdings, how can they hope to identify and cope with conservation and preservation issues? More opportunities for continuing education must be offered at the state and local levels.

## REPORTS

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(Texas Museums, cont.)

The CMC and TAM have started by making a session on museum archives a part of each annual meeting and by sponsoring sessions on archives at regional meetings. Obviously, this is just a beginning, and awareness is just one part of the uphill struggle ahead. Hopefully, by increasing awareness, providing training opportunities, and conducting more in-depth study, a stronger and more vibrant museum archival community can be produced.

John Neilson

Fort Concho National Historic Landmark

### AIHA'S NEW ARCHIVES PROGRAM

The Albany Institute of History and Art (AIHA) is a museum in upstate New York devoted to collecting and interpreting the art, history and culture of the Upper Hudson Valley region. The museum's most important object collections include Hudson River School landscape paintings, Albany silver, early limner portraits and scripture paintings, eighteenth and nineteenth century New York furniture, pewter, ceramics and other decorative arts.

AIHA began operation in 1791 as The Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufacture. The Society provided a forum for New York State legislators and other influential men interested in the dissemination of scientific knowledge to present and publish scientific papers. After changes in geographic location, name and mission, The Society for the Promotion of Agriculture, Arts and Manufacture became the Albany Institute of History and Art in 1926.

The AIHA archives fall under the McKinney Library, a department within the museum. The McKinney Library's collections include books, manuscripts, photographs, maps, pamphlets, broadsides and other ephemera. After 1940 the library also began arranging the papers of the nine institutions which preceded AIHA and catalogued them as manuscript collections in the 1960's. In 1972, a curatorial department volunteer decided to arrange more recent inactive institutional records into an "archives." Parts of these "archives"

were then microfilmed through a grant which provided for an inhouse microfilming program, and the records discarded. After the departure of the volunteer archivist, additional records were not incorporated into the structure devised, but were stored in various rooms and closets throughout the museum's two buildings.

In 1989, AIHA received a New York State Documentary Heritage program grant to hire a consultant to survey institutional records and make recommendations on how to establish an effective archives and records management program. The survey report completed by Mary Elizabeth Ruwell was used by Chief Librarian Prudence Backman to write a National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant to procure funding to begin an archival and records management program.

NHPRC awarded AIHA a grant to establish a formal archives and records management program in 1990. Under the grant a Project Archivist was to write an archives and records management policy statement; conduct a records survey of the estimated 300 cubic feet of records currently in offices; develop records retention schedules; establish procedures to facilitate the transfer of historically important inactive departmental records to the archives; appraise, arrange and describe all historical records; prepare for microfilming thirty-four institutional scrapbooks and the duplication of nine reels of twentieth century microfilm; create a finding aid and notify the appropriate journals of its availability; enter series level records into a MARC/AMC database; and create an archives and records management procedures and policies manual.

I began working as Project Archivist in November 1990. My first task was to survey other museums with formal archival programs for information about their archival and records management policy statements and records retention schedules. Of the 23 institutions surveyed, only six incorporated records management into their total archival program. We were surprised that so few programs were operating a records management program. We saw records management as not only a way to discard unwanted records and free up office space on a timely basis, but also a way of providing for preliminary records appraisal and ensuring that important records arrived at the archives in a consistent and timely manner.

## REPORTS

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(Albany Institute, cont.)

A close study of the six policies and retention schedules revealed they were radically different. These institutions were all similar in basic mission and the types of records they created, and yet had very different timetables for discarding records and structuring their programs. As we completed our own records survey and developed records retention schedules and a program policy statement, we came to understand that institutional culture and internal support (or lack of) for an archival program influenced record retention and disposal as well as the amount of written documentation needed for the program to function efficiently.

At AIHA, acquiring the support and cooperation of the staff was very important since the proposal for the program did not emanate from and was not strongly supported by the administration. To facilitate staff support, the physical survey of the records was also accompanied by an interview with each of the fifty staff members. Staff input was sought for length of time to retain records as well as to provide information on institutional history that would assist the writing of record group, subgroup, and series level descriptions. Staff interviews also revealed an extra benefit in that it was discovered that important areas of museum activity, including Board meetings and building repairs, were not being permanently documented.

The process of developing retention/disposal schedules was a cooperative effort. Recommendations were made by the project archivist and departmental meetings were held to ensure that all staff understood and supported the schedules. Staff suggestions to change schedules were incorporated. To provide the program with extra support, final compromise schedules and the program policy statement were adopted by the Board following the records management model developed by the financial services industry.

The process of developing retention schedules with staff also led to the development of policies which will help the institution mitigate misunderstandings that can occur when staff leave. It was clear after ironing out the retention schedule with the curatorial staff that a need for a policy regarding which records could be

taken or copied by departing staff needed to be developed. As a result we began negotiations with the administration and all departments developing a process for acquiring permission to copy records when staff leave the institution.

While working on the retention schedules and the policy statement, the project archivist also worked on development of archives and records management forms and the purchase of database software to print finding aids and provide search capabilities. We felt *Minaret* software (a MARC/AMC PC-based software) was not user friendly enough to allow for easy input, reporting and searching of data. After lengthy discussions with other archivists and librarians we decided to purchase R:BASE (commercial database software) which was being used for various projects by Old Sturbridge Village, The Brooklyn Museum, The Capital District Library Council and the Schenectady Chemical Company Library. R:BASE, a Microrim product, was chosen because of the ease of developing and printing finding aids from the menu, and the ease of searching words or phrases in lengthy text fields.

After developing databases to input collection information and completing retention schedules, 43.5 cubic feet of inactive records were transferred from offices and 300 cubic feet of inactive stored records were surveyed and appraised. During the appraisal of the records in storage we discovered the "archives" of twentieth century records created by the volunteer in 1972. The records were not arranged chronologically by department, but into a subject order developed by the "archivist." Some of the records, including Director's correspondence, were then microfilmed and discarded. The resultant fifty rolls of 16mm negative film reveal pictures of documents held in place with pencils or pens partially obscuring information. Although money to provide for duplication of the microfilm was written into the grant, the poor arrangement of the records and the concealment of some information may make it unworthy of the effort.

In June 1991, the processing of permanently valuable records began with the help of interns and volunteers. AIHA does not employ secretarial staff and many records were poorly arranged both within files and transfer boxes. Coupled with the extensive reprocessing of the records which had been

## REPORTS

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(Albany Institute, cont.)

arranged into manuscript collections during the 1960s and the "archives" developed in the 1970s the processing has been difficult and time consuming. This made the choice of the R:BASE software even more important. Currently, reports have been set up so that if information is entered into the database through the correct series the computer can sort and arrange it by year or date.

Inactive business office invoices with no historical value are receiving some processing before being discarded. Those relating to capital and collections purchases are being weeded out and permanently retained to build up our documentation in these areas.

Before the conclusion of the project in May 1992, we are hoping to finish processing 150 cubic feet of permanently valuable records, create a finding aid, and assemble forms and procedures into an archives and records management policy manual. Although AIHA does not have the resources to continue to fund a permanent archival position, they have employed a history graduate student experienced in arranging manuscript collections to process the records which will come to the archives through the records management program. The library's long range plan provides for the eventual hiring of an archivist/manuscripts curator to oversee and expand the archival program.

Sheryl Drexelius  
Albany Institute of History and Art

### DO IT NOW RATHER THAN LATER A RESEARCH PROCEDURE TO BENEFIT RESEARCHERS AND ARCHIVISTS

*Editor's note: All of us have experienced the frustration of trying to retrace the steps research assistants, previous archivists, and other collection researchers. The author notes: The following article presents a model which has the potential of reducing the workload of archivists and influencing their relationship with museum researchers by providing a standard format for research results that is adaptable to computerization.*

A private, nonprofit institution located in Albany, New York, with approximately 25,000 objects, Historic Cherry

Hill has been open to the public for tours and special programming since 1964. The full-time staff of a director, education director, and curator is augmented with four part-time staff members. The primary mission of Historic Cherry Hill is the preservation and interpretation of the house as it was furnished and decorated by the last owners, the Rankin family, who lived there from 1884 until 1963.

A large Georgian-style structure, the house was built in 1787 for Philip Van Rensselaer (1747-1798), a relative of the Patroon, or Lord, of the over-500-square-mile Manor of Rensselaerwyck. The house was continuously lived in by five generations of his family--the Van Rensselaers, Elmendorfs, Goulds, and Rankins. During the twentieth century, Catherine Rankin (1857-1948) and two of her children, Emily (1889-1963) and Elmendorf (1885-1961), decorated in the Colonial Revival style, furnishing the house with their ancestors' best objects. The furniture, paintings, and decorative arts on exhibition today are supplemented with the extensive collections, including clothing, textiles, and wallpaper, saved by all five generations of the family.

The goal of a standardized research procedure is the creation of an evidence base comprised of material from primary and secondary sources which will support an expanded historical interpretation of the Cherry Hill family and the museum's collections. The evidence base will also be used to supplement object documentation, provide information for special events, and aid outside researchers. By facilitating an increase in staff knowledge about the Cherry Hill manuscript collection in particular, the system will aid in the continuing development of new education programs, publications, and scholarly symposia.

The potential for continued expansion of interpretation lies in the superb documentation of the daily lives of the Cherry Hill families, and those of their slaves and servants, found in the Historic Cherry Hill manuscript collection. The collection, comprised of approximately 35,000 manuscripts covering over two hundred years, is on deposit with Manuscripts and Special Collections at the New York State Library. The Historic Cherry Hill Collection and the papers of other related families would form the backbone of the sources researched. They would be augmented with

## REPORTS

(Historic Cherry Hill, cont.)

research into public and private documents, legal cases, newspapers, genealogical records, and relevant secondary works. Most recently Historic Cherry Hill used its manuscript collection for two major projects: a 1987 symposium which culminated in 1990 with the publication of *Creating a Dignified Past: Museums and the Colonial Revival* and a seventh and eighth grade educational unit, *Different Voices, Different Truths: The 1827 Murder at Cherry Hill*.

To create an evidence base with a minimum of professional staff time and museum expense, the research procedure should ideally meet several requirements. It should be easy to use, have very specific directions, and be accompanied by instruction in historical research methods because many of the researchers will be volunteers and student interns from a wide variety of backgrounds. At the same time, it is crucial that the evidence recorded, and supporting bibliographic, location and depository information, be complete, uniform, and meet accepted professional standards for quotations and references. If these criteria are met, the correct citation and documentation of evidence, and the retrieval of a primary or secondary source, can be done efficiently and with confidence.

The first draft of Historic Cherry Hill's research procedure is complete and ready for use at the test level. Very simply, it consists of standard forms for the most commonly consulted sources onto which the researcher enters the evidence, and bibliographic and location information. The researcher will also record a complete set of information, such as official name, full address and telephone number, and the names and areas of expertise of staff members, on the government office, institution, or archives holding the source. A guide designed specifically for Cherry Hill researchers defines terminology and explains with examples a standard, agreed-upon use of punctuation. The use of punctuation in quotations and references is based on *The Chicago Manual of Style* and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian.

Easy access to the resulting interrelated evidence base by staff members with different needs will be accomplished by identifying the evidence using three

categories: subject, family name, and object accession number. The identification of evidence will help researchers focus their research efforts and make possible the quick review of recorded evidence by area of interest. The standardized research procedure, along with the assignment of category subheadings, will result in an evidence (data) base that lends itself to computerization.

A manual, subject-based finding system for file cards was developed in the mid 1980s for Historic Cherry Hill's Twentieth-Century Research Project. Covering the personal and social lives of the Rankin family from 1884 through the 1950s, and their decorating and furnishing of Cherry Hill, the evidence was organized so it could be efficiently used by three staff members for a series of oral histories, a scholarly paper, and a historic furnishings study. Forty subject subheadings covering a broad spectrum of family life at Cherry Hill were created and defined. They range from education to household maintenance, from gardening to wallpaper, and from domestic technology to membership in patriotic societies.

The addition of object accession numbers and family names will broaden the value of the proposed system to the curatorial department and development committees. Evidence on furniture, paintings, and decorative objects in the Cherry Hill collection, such as invoices or an estate inventory, would be given the relevant object's accession (museum identification) number. The name category will allow for immediate access to a wide range of personal, social, and business information on the Cherry Hill family, and also provide basic genealogical information on them and related families. The genealogical data will be helpful in locating Van Rensselaer descendants and recruiting their support for the museum and its mission.

It is expected that the consistent use of a standardized research procedure could promote a relationship of mutual respect and cooperation between researchers and archivists. The double pressures of less time and money are forcing museums to quickly produce research-based projects while increasingly relying on volunteers and interns for the research. The result of such a situation, inadequate evidence often incompletely documented and requiring repeated manuscript retrievals, often can create ill will between museum and archives



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(Historic Cherry Hill, cont.)

staff. By aiding in the correct and complete recording of evidence and bibliographic information on the initial visit, the procedure will reduce the number of times archivists must retrieve and search collections for the same material. And if retrieval is necessary, complete bibliographic and location information will ensure that it can be done quickly and successfully. Efficient use of time by both the researcher and the archivist will hopefully result in an intellectually supportive relationship whose goal is the full utilization of the collection.

Historic Cherry Hill is located at 523½ South Pearl Street, Albany, New York 12202; 518 434-4791

Maxine H. Lorang  
Historic Cherry Hill

### DOCUMENTING THE RESTORATION OF THE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT HOME & STUDIO

Editor's note: In the February 1990 *Museum Archivist* (vol.4/1), Meg Klinkow described the work of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation and reported the receipt of a \$35,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant to document the restoration of the site. The report that follows details the work completed, lessons learned, and plans for the future. In addition, it takes us to the next step beyond any archival processing project--making the materials live through outreach to a variety of audiences.

The NEH funded project, "Restoration Documentation of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home and Studio Foundation," has been successful in organizing drawings, artifacts, and other support materials for use by Foundation staff, general public, and the national and international scholarly community. With better access to this primary source material, Foundation education programs, ranging from tours for elementary and high school students to lectures and scholarly discussions, have been increased and strengthened. An unanticipated, serendipitous result of the grant is better formal communication and cooperation among departments within the Foundation. Grant-centered

meetings of the curator, the directors of Education, Public Relations, and the Research Center, the publications committee, and numerous volunteers became forums for discussions of future Foundation work.

### The Processing Project

The first half of the project involved technical processing of materials that document and justify the course of the restoration of the home and studio as well as informing the interpretation of the structure. With careful verification, completion, and processing, materials could then be used as educational tools. Included in the project were small drawings, room histories, bids, and written support material (9 linear ft.); architectural artifacts, including art glass windows, plaster and woodwork samples from each room, and plaster sculptures by Richard Bock; and 897 large drawings, showing each phase of the restoration.

Each entry was made as complete as possible and the records verified. Then the materials were carefully cleaned following a conservator's advice, organized, labeled, and stored in archival quality containers. The processed architectural artifacts are kept on shelving in the basement storage room of the home and studio building. The walls are lined with plastic in some cases to prevent moisture from reaching the storage boxes. Recent climate control work in the museum rooms, intended also to improve temperature and humidity in the storerooms, has imposed duct work and pipes in them and precautions must be taken to prevent any leakage. The drawings and written documentation are kept in the climate-controlled Research Center, also located in the basement.

During processing, blocks of classification numbers were assigned for each group. Originally, the architects proposed a numbering system relying on location codes; this proved bulky and inflexible. It became evident that expansion of the files would make the numbers obsolete, so classification numbers were created which indicate the general medium followed by more specific divisions dictated by the materials being described. Adjustments were made in the processing procedures as described in the grant to what was in reality most practical and efficient.

## REPORTS

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(Wright Home & Studio, cont.)

For the lateral file material (room chronologies, building materials, construction correspondence), classification numbers were assigned to folders and a shelf list and card file index created to cross index the folders. Small drawings were filed by location in the room chronologies section after deciding that further indexing was unnecessary and impractical; where known, date of restoration and materials described were supplied within the folder. The five percent of lateral file materials that had been cataloged under the old system were recataloged. In a future project, drawings and other fragile materials will be copied onto archival paper.

Following the classification numbers chosen by the restoration architect, the large drawings were cataloged in the same way as the lateral file material. The catalog sheets, which are kept in a binder, form the main access to the files. In addition, index sheets were devised for the large drawings and the architectural artifacts. Unfortunately, once these were filled out it was evident that they were too bulky to use easily. The intention was to index the drawings by historic date shown, location, and date of restoration completion. However, this information is generally indicated by the arrangement of the drawings. Main headings are Communications (presentation drawings for each phase of the restoration); Historic Documentation, including existing condition drawings and pre-restoration drawings; Restoration/Construction. The completed index sheets now form a shelf list and indicate position for refiling drawings, acting as a supplement to the catalog binder.

The catalog for the architectural artifacts is arranged by material, then architect and building, or designer. For example, all plaster is kept together and appears together in the catalog. The inventory of 3,469 artifacts fills two large notebooks and is arranged in shelf list order. Photographing, including color slides and black and white prints, of representative pieces from the collection has started. Thirty-five pieces of art glass, many Wright-designed, have been photographed with a color scale and metric ruler included in the image. The

photographs, taken before objects were packed in storage containers, allow researchers to browse through the collection more easily. About thirty-five black and white photos were also made of some of the archaeological finds; a thorough and systematic project to photograph the entire collection will be undertaken in the future.

In summer 1991, the Research Center staff received an IBM compatible computer and specially designed software to catalog object collections for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a co-steward of the Wright Home and Studio. Plans are moving ahead to transfer the data from the catalog and index sheets to the computer.

In addition to materials covered under the above NEH grant, the Wright Home and Studio holds a collection of slides and photographs of the restoration process. Volunteers, including the Chief Slide Librarian of the Art Institute of Chicago and the Managing and General Slide Librarians from Playboy Enterprises, have been assisting staff in cataloging these visual materials. The four to five thousand black and white photographs are being cataloged on a computer available at the latter organization, allowing the volunteers to print labels and place the photographs in mylar sleeves.

In summary, the NEH processing project went very well. The technical assistant hired for this work has continued to work for the Foundation, on a more limited basis, and so continues to process materials as they become available from the restoration architect. The work she has accomplished is of very high quality, going beyond that specified in the grant. Worthwhile projects for the future remain. They include taking photographs and slides of all the artifacts (or at least representative ones); copying all important large and small drawings and other paperwork onto archival-quality materials. The implementation of a computerized processing and retrieval system is an important next step in making this unique and important collection available to the public.

### Educational Programs

In the second part of the grant, the information collected and processed was used to inform and update volunteers, visitors, students, and scholars. A series of twelve Wright Studies outlines (monographs) were prepared by staff and Foundation volunteers. The Teachers' Handbook provided to every visiting school group was updated and

## REPORTS

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(Wright Home & Studio, cont.)

new information, including an illustrated glossary, was added. Over seven hundred of these Handbooks were sent to school groups that were planning a visit or were to watch a video tour as an alternative to an on-site visit. Future supplements will be added in the form of reworked Wright Studies outlines or monographs.

Three specialized tours were developed for school groups: a tour focusing on geometric forms for kindergarteners, a Wright family life tour for middle school students, and a tour which discusses politics, arts, and social and technological changes during Wright's period for high school humanities students. In a change from the original proposal, the age groups were narrowed, creating more focused tours. A student intern, several volunteers, and the Foundation's seventh grade interpreters, who began giving tours as fifth graders, worked on designing the tours, which expand the variety and depth of the Foundation's offering to school age children.

A few other changes in education activities were developed by the foundation's new Education Director, Lisa Schrenk. The scope of the monographs or Wright Studies outlines was revised, expanding the concept from a brief two-page discussion on each of the approximately ten topics relating to Wright and the Prairie School of architecture to a more ambitious and useful product. Staff and volunteers were solicited to write comprehensive outlines of these same topics that later, after scholarly review and comment, might be expanded to in-depth papers. The outlines are being used by the Education Committee for student projects and by Research Center staff to answer reference questions.

In November 1990, a conference brought twelve Wright scholars to the Home and Studio. It opened with a reception at Unity Temple and a lecture by restoration architect Don Kolec on the history of Wright's Oak Park Home and Studio. The following morning the scholars toured the Home and Studio with several junior interpreters. The scholars also explored the holdings in the Research Center and saw first hand the restoration documentation materials. Four public lectures on Wright studies topics were then held at the Oak Park Library: Meg Klinkow spoke on Wright's family life, Elaine Harrington lectured on the decorative objects in the Home and Studio, Lisa Schrenk discussed life in Wright's Oak Park Studio, and John Thorpe explained the restoration of the Home and Studio. These

lectures are now also incorporated into the annual training program for volunteers.

A very lively and inspiring round table session, chaired by architectural historian Jack Quinan, began on Saturday afternoon and continued for three additional hours on Sunday morning. The scholars provided valuable comments and perspectives on the future direction of Home and Studio research efforts, education programs, and publications. They suggested that the Foundation should become an active research organization and stated that the role of scholarship would enhance its position in the community, region, and world. They also felt that the Foundation should consider making its wealth of information more easily accessible to the public through publications and a travelling exhibit on the restoration and emphasized that the Foundation should continue to present Wright's work within the appropriate social and historical context.

The Scholars' Conference itself produced documentation that will be valuable for future reference. All sessions were videotaped and a transcript of the roundtable discussion was typed. A followup questionnaire was circulated and responses summarized. In addition, many of the participants volunteered to help with future publishing projects. A Research Committee has been formed to address the possibilities for future work. The enthusiasm for Foundation endeavors expressed by the scholars and those receiving the new tours and the Teachers' Handbook is a great impetus to future creative educational work.

Meg Klinkow  
Frank Lloyd Wright Home & Studio

### THE ARCHIVES OF THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

*Editor's note: The two Cleveland Museum of Art publications noted above prompted me to contact archivist Virginia Krumholz for information about the Museum's archives. The following article about the new Museum archives (established in 1988) originally appeared in Ohio Archivist (Spring 1990). Our thanks to the author and to Fred Lautzenheiser, Editor, for permission to reprint it.*

As early as 1913, while the Cleveland Museum of Art was still in the blueprint stage, Director Frederic Allen Whiting laid out a philosophical position which continues to be valid today: "[We want] to build the Museum into the life of the community and to make it a vital influence in public and private schools . . . this seems the wise and natural use of the Museum and its collections."

This emphasis on community involvement and education accompanied the Museum's main occupations--intense scholarly activity needed in collecting superlative works of art, the mounting of choice exhibitions and the maintenance of a sparkling new building completed in 1916.

The Cleveland Museum of Art, along with most institutions which set themselves a large task at the beginning, began to realize after a few years that this whirlwind activity had produced a steady flow of recorded information that had to be dealt with. Facing this fact and acknowledging the section of its constitution which calls for the Secretary of the Museum "to keep the seal and archives," it established the archives by action of the Board of Trustees. The author was hired to establish the ongoing archives and to initiate and maintain a records management program.

We arrived in a situation familiar to all archivists: a prechosen space; no staff; no equipment; a grant to be written with a deadline closing in; no preexisting inventories, notices of destruction or records of disposition. However, we also arrived in an atmosphere of goodwill from our staff colleagues and have enjoyed positive and helpful actions both from

Director Evan H. Turner and Assistant Director for Administration William Talbot. We report on a regular basis to Mr. Talbot.

The work of establishing the CMA archives commenced with an office-by-office, file drawer-by-file drawer inventory of the entire facility. This allowed us to introduce ourselves, address any questions the staff might have, and pinpoint areas of priority. We walked through 378,000 square feet of space in three buildings in the company of a knowledgeable employee who could give us some insight into Museum operations.

While this survey was going on, we defined the archives as "the ongoing non-current records of the institution (in whatever form or medium they may occur) whose information content has evidential, administrative, legal, financial and historical value for use in the future." Incidentally, the CMA archives excludes that information which deals with the registration, movement and insurance of works of art. Our registrar has responsibility for this part of museum work. Registrar files (of whatever age) are always current.

About the time this initial phase was completed, we received favorable news on grants from the George Gund Foundation and the S. Livingston Mather Charitable trust. Ruth Reeves Connell arrived as archival processor and Phil Haas began work as archives assistant. We are especially fortunate to have as a valued volunteer Ruth Walter Helmuth, archivist emerita of Case Western Reserve University.

Here is how our space is arranged:

1. A 21 x 20' main room which is at present used for accessions, work space and finished storage. Due to space constraints, we do not maintain a separate accessions room and will never maintain private office space. Our shelving is standard 15 x 42" industrial steel, which will accommodate eight letter-size Hollinger boxes or three records storage boxes. We shelve 8' high. The room is under alarm, keyed the same way as art storage. We enjoy the good, even temperature and humidity characteristic of a museum and have the added benefits of a security force and our own fire brigade.

2. A 12 x 8' auxiliary space. At present, this holds material ready to send for microfilming and less sensitive material such as publications and exhibition files. In this area we shelve 9' high in records storage boxes.

## REPORTS

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*(Cleveland Museum, cont.)*

3. A remote room in an upper curatorial area. This interesting space is a former loft measuring 9 x 21'. Its long, narrow configuration is excellent for a long work table, with shelving arranged around the perimeter.

We have assured the Museum that this is the maximum space for archival needs, now and in the future. Replacement cost for our building runs well over \$100 per square foot. We also hope, by example, to encourage modest and prudent recordkeeping practices in our institution. At every turn, we advocate less records creation.

Although the CMA archives is available to the serious scholar (with the permission of the Director), it is not a public research facility. We concentrate fully on responding to the needs of the Museum itself. For example, within our first month on the job, we were able to retrieve a single piece of information which resulted in savings of over \$40,000 to the Museum and its neighbors in University Circle. The archives staff answered over 75 major requests for information in our first year.

You are all familiar with the general routine of archives work and we have done all of it: inventories, finding aids, reports, negotiations, ordering, accessioning, typing, filing, etc., etc. There are two ways in which we may differ from your operation:

1. We utilize the "in time" process, ordering equipment and supplies only when ready for use, in order to save or precious space. We use the same scheduling when assigning priorities for processing.

2. We do team processing in some instances. Lengthy and complex accession become stultifying and overwhelming at times. Teamwork is both rapid and accurate because there is frequent discussion, including perception checks.

Here are some elements of our work program:

1. Accessioning of about 1,800 linear feet of material. 2. Establishment of a series of repository copies of all Museum publications. 3. Processing of about 200 linear feet. 4. Establishment of a standard

arrangement of exhibition files. We have rallied the information into this format and by presetting the arrangement, we hope to cut down on future processing time. 5. Securing a database of archival photos (using "Nutshell," Nashoba Systems, Inc.) which will allow us to retrieve from five series of photos according to image content. 6. Establishment (with cooperation from the Assistant Director for Finance/Operations and the Museum's legal counsel) the initial retention/disposition schedules for accounting records. 7. Identification and microfilming of the Museum's records which are sequential and self-indexing. We intend to maintain an active microfilming program to save valuable staff and space. Rotary camera work through a vendor is inexpensive indeed. 8. Exploration and identification of format and terms for project indexing a complicated set of Trustee minutes.

Who has sent material to the Archives? Everyone! Our holding range from greenhouse planting records to the Director's correspondence with museums worldwide. One of our colleagues who is taking an MBA at Case Western Reserve University asked us how many different type of information we were responsible for, and we came up with 79.

The Museum will celebrate its 75th anniversary in 1991. The Archives looks forward with zest to responding to the needs of our committees involved in making this celebration a time to remember . . . and to document!

Virginia M. Krumholz  
Cleveland Museum of Art

## FINAL NOTES

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### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Many thanks to the many members who responded to my call for articles and news. Keep up the good work!

Did you know . . . In the throes of an AMC cataloging binge this month, I noticed the LC subject heading "Museum archives." Best "650" I've met in a long time!

And finally, thanks to Porcine Software for the use of their laser printer. I'm sure all who read this issue will appreciate the clearer print quality.