

## MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

Newsletter of the Museum Archives Section Society of American Archivists

September 1998, Volume 12 Number 2

### FROM THE CHAIR....FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS!

Every so often, something comes down the pike that makes you sit up and take notice. In this case, it was more of a rumble in the distance--maybe a convoy of trailer trucks? In May, I attended the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference meeting in Saratoga Springs. A session on Nazi gold looked intriguing, though I didn't really think it would be particularly relevant to my own shop. Wrong.

Greg Bradsher and his National Archives colleagues provided a timeline of their work with researchers looking for evidence documenting Nazi actions related to gold--and insurance--and works of art. Kathleen Williams and I looked at each other and started paying close attention.

NARA staff has been dealing with several teams of researchers who all want to look at absolutely everything relating to WWII property. It has become a full-time job for several staff members. According to Bradsher, when these teams finish going through the records at NARA, he expects them to fan out across the country, doing the same thing at other repositories. I took this as a wake-up call and fair warning to get ready to deal with at least a minor onslaught.

Seeing the Section as the perfect forum for this issue, I began working, with Kathleen's help, to see what we could do. We talked to Greg Bradsher, who was willing to meet with the Section's Wednesday working group at SAA in Orlando and to help find other speakers to bring us up to speed as a group. You've already received a mailing about the changes in the working group agenda.

Returning home, I did some minor conscious raising to alert our staff to the fact that we may need to deal with researchers looking into the provenance of particular works or even of all the works donated or purchased from the late 1930s on. I had a good talk with our legal officer, who had just attended a conference sponsored by ALI-ABA where he heard a talk by Constance Lowenthal of the Committee for Art Recovery of the World Jewish Congress. He and our department head agreed with me that we should work with these researchers on exactly the same terms as all other researchers. I talked to our Collections Manager about ways of compiling a list of all European works acquired between, say, 1938 and the present.

So, what does all of this have to do with the Section? First of all, it's nice to know that we're not alone. There are others--in this case, art museum archivists--who share the same concerns. If we work together in the Section, we can share our knowledge and come up with solutions. It's easier and (frankly) the solutions carry a bit more weight. How to make the Section work for us when things do start rumbling down the pike? Well, in this case the old saying, "It's good to be Queen (or Chair)," holds true. I saw a

need--I made something happen. Pretty speedy process. If you're not in charge, you can still set things in motion with a telephone call or an email. Do you see something coming down the Natural History Museum pike or the Science Museum superhighway? Let's keep working together and making things happen!

Deborah Wythe

Brooklyn Museum of Art

## SECTION BUSINESS

### FROM THE EDITOR

Only June and it's already been a long summer! I hope everyone is having a productive yet relaxing time.

This is an outstanding issue of MUSEUM ARCHIVIST. Some very informative and interesting articles have been submitted. Exciting things are happening in museum archives, and my thanks go out to all the authors for sharing information.

I am looking forward to this year's annual meeting. The working groups on appraisal of exhibition records and preparing for art restitution researchers promise to make for some lively discussions.

The Section meeting is Friday, September 4, 8:30 am–10:30 am. Come prepared to discuss sessions for next year's meeting! Make suggestions! Volunteer! Participate!

Remember that The Canadian Heritage Information Network currently is hosting the newsletter on its website. You can access it at [. The newsletter remains in "Feature Articles" for 15 days after it is loaded and moves to "Newsletter" under "Resources" after that.](#)

And, finally, I can't miss this opportunity to thank Deb. Her inspiration and counsel have been invaluable. She's finished her term as Section chair, but I know she'll find many more opportunities to contribute to the Section. THANKS, DEB!!

Paula Stewart

Amon Carter Museum

## MUSEUM ARCHIVES MANUAL RECONSIDERED

The Section has long talked about the need for a new, up-to-date manual to replace Bill Deiss's MUSEUM ARCHIVES, which was part of the original SAA Basic Manuals Series. The SAA Publications Committee has indicated an interest in such a project. Long discussions among many Section members over the last few years have come to naught. How best to proceed?

My opinion (after all this talk) is that, for anything to actually happen, we need a single interested, excited, driven individual to take on the task of general editor. That person,

perhaps with the assistance of a small task force, could plan the volume, solicit other writers as needed, and oversee completion of the project. Are you that person? Do you have a topic you're dying to write about? Do you have hot ideas about what the manual should be? Are you good at galvanizing others to achieve success, fame, and fortune (or two out of three)? Now's the time to step forward (don't wait for a push).

Please give me a call if you fit any of these profiles--let's see if we can get this project moving!

Deborah Wythe

Brooklyn Museum of Art

#### LISTSERV TEMPORARILY OUT-OF-COMMISSION

All subscribers to SAAMUS-LIST have been unsubscribed while the list owner works with tech services to fix a mail bounce problem. Unfortunately, three of the subscribers have accounts on (non-Harvard) servers that are programmed in such a way as to bounce any internal error messages back to the list. Since those persons can't fix their servers, the only short-term solution is to suspend the list until further notice. The list manager will contact those subscribers with "problem servers" about these issues. This problem is not uncommon with listservs in general. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Sarah R. Demb

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University

SAA ANNUAL MEETING, ORLANDO, FLORIDA AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 6, 1998

The following meetings and sessions may be of interest. See your program for complete details. If you need a program, contact SAA at 312-922-0140; 312-347-1452 fax; or .

Wednesday, September 2

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm Museum Archives Working Group

Friday, September 4

8:30 am – 10:30 am Museum Archives Section meeting

Saturday, September 5

10:30 am – 12:00 pm 41. Architectural Records and Institutional Profiles: Assessing Changes as Organizations Evolve

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm 53. Diamonds in the Rough: Documenting the Collection of Fine Art

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm 55. Archives for Champions

MUSEUM ARCHIVES GUIDELINES

At last year's meeting, the Section decided to "review the draft guidelines for museum archives' with an eye towards revising and publishing them with the Section's endorsement." These guidelines were drafted at a conference on museum archives sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution and the Archives of American Art in 1979. They were revised by Kris Haglund and Alan Bain, both Museum Archives Section members, for the Association of Systematic Collections.

A committee headed by Polly Darnell and consisting of Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, Paula Stewart, and Deb Wythe reviewed both versions.

While the guidelines presented here are substantively the same as the earlier ones, they have been somewhat revised, particularly in the way they are organized. They are presented here to give everyone an opportunity to consider and comment upon them. At the Section meeting in Orlando, we will consider endorsing and publishing them. Please contact any of the committee members with your comments.

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Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, Pikes Peak Auto Hill Climb Museum, 1262 Hofstead Ter, Colorado Springs, CO 80907-4011; 102504.2742@compuserve.com

Deborah Wythe, The Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11238; (718) 638-5000 x311; bklnmus1@metgate.metro.org

Paula Stewart, Amon Carter Museum, 3501 Camp Bowie, Ft Worth, TX 76107; (817) 738-1933 x267; paula.stewart@cartermuseum.org

## ARCHIVES GUIDELINES

### 1. DEFINITIONS AND SCOPE

A museum's archives preserves and administers records of permanent value (legal, fiscal, research) not in current use. Records are documents in any form - paper, tape, film, etc. A museum's archival records would include:

- a. Institutional records, in particular those which relate to administration at all levels. For example: board minutes, administrative documents, financial records, departmental files, architectural plans, and documentary photographs.
- b. Collection records, such as object files and records of exhibitions and installations.
- c. Acquired records, such as papers of individuals and organizations, which relate to subject areas (e.g., science, anthropology, natural history, art, history) of particular interest to the museum.

### 2. MISSION STATEMENT

The archives should have a mission statement, approved by the director of the institution and ratified by appropriate governing bodies, which defines the authority of the archivist

within the organization, and the parameters of the archival program. The statement should explicitly recognize the archivist's role in the institution's records management program. All general policy statements concerning the archives should be in writing and approved by the appropriate authority.

### 3. STATUS OF THE ARCHIVES

The archives should be an entity within the institutional administrative structure, supervised by an individual having custodial and related authority delegated by the director of the institution. When practical, the archives should be a separate department.

### 4. PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVIST

The museum should have a professionally trained archivist. If resources do not permit this level of commitment, expert advice in the development of the institution's archives should be sought and archival training provided to the staff member made responsible for them. The functions of the archivist are to acquire, arrange, describe, preserve, and make available the records of the institution and collections of related records acquired from outside the institution.

### 5. INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS AND PERSONAL PAPERS

The institution should have a statement of policy which clarifies the difference between the official records of the museum and documents which might be considered the personal property of curators, directors, members of governing bodies, etc. This is to discourage such persons from taking, as their own property, records that are truly part of the institution's archives. Donation of personal records to the institution's archives is strongly encouraged in order to promote the preservation of significant records not created by the institution itself.

### 6. ACQUISITION POLICY FOR COLLECTED RECORDS

The museum should define and make public the scope of the archives through an archives acquisition policy that defines the collecting of records other than those created within the institution itself. The acquisition policies of other institutions should be taken into account. The policy should describe the conditions and procedures for authorizing, accessioning, and deaccessioning documents and collections that are not official records of the museum.

### 7. CRITERIA FOR RETENTION OF MUSEUM RECORDS

The archivist must be involved in the determination of how long and under what conditions particular records are to be kept. The criteria for permanent retention include:

- a. Evidence of the administrative structure and evolution of the institution.
- b. Legal and fiscal value.
- c. Research and informational value.

## 8. CURRENT RECORDS

The advice of the archivist should be sought to avoid the creation of unnecessary records, to promote effective record keeping, to protect permanently active records of archival value, and to recommend disposal of those records that do not have permanent value.

## 9. LOCATION AND CONDITIONS

a. The archives should be located in a separate and secure area with adequate protection against fire, flood, vermin, theft, and other hazards.

b. Temperature and humidity should be controlled, preferably at 70 degrees F and 50% relative humidity. Certain records may have special requirements.

c. To prevent flood damage, archives should not be placed below ground level.

d. If neither suitable accommodation nor adequate staff can be provided for the archives, the institution should consider:

i. Placing records in a nearby archival repository willing to administer them on a continuing basis.

ii. Forming or joining a consortium whereby several institutions cooperate to ensure that their archives receive adequate care.

iii. Contributing to cost in the above choices.

## 10. ARRANGEMENT, DESCRIPTION, AND PRESERVATION OF THE RECORDS

a. The archivist organizes records in keeping with the principles of provenance and the sanctity of original order whenever possible.

b. The archivist produces written descriptive inventories, guides, and other finding aids in accordance with accepted archival standards and makes them generally available.

c. The archivist implements basic preservation measures such as the use of acid-free folders and boxes.

## 11. ACCESS

Subject to reasonable restrictions on the grounds of fragility or confidentiality, records should be available to staff members, scholars, and other persons demonstrating a need to consult the material for research purposes. Access policies and restrictions should be in writing and applied equally to all researchers.

## NEWS, NOTES, & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES “NEWS IN BRIEF”

The Smithsonian Institution Archives (SIA) invites all interested persons to visit its website at [http://www.sia.si.edu](#). From this main site, users can link to the home pages of three of SIA's

divisions: the Institutional History Division, including the Joseph Henry Papers Project; the National Collections Program; and the Archives Division. Visitors can explore selected finding aids to our collections, review the Institution's collections statistics for the previous year, take a nineteenth-century tour of the Smithsonian, review a selection of Smithsonian historic photographs, find out about the first Secretary of the Institution, or simply confirm our location and hours of operation. Please visit us and let us know what you think!

SIA has produced its FISCAL YEAR 1997 ANNUAL REPORT, covering the period 1 October 1996 - 30 September 1997. The report is available on the SIA website, or hard copies of the 33-page publication may be obtained at no cost to interested individuals and institutions while supplies last. Back copies of previous annual reports also may be requested. SIA also has available the 1995 brochure, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVAL, MANUSCRIPT, & SPECIAL COLLECTION RESOURCES, a comprehensive overview of the Smithsonian's numerous archival, manuscript, and special collections repositories. To request copies of any of these free publications, please contact Kathleen Williams ([williamk@osia.si.edu](mailto:williamk@osia.si.edu)) at Smithsonian Institution Archives, A&I Bldg, Rm 2135, MRC 414, Washington, DC 20560. Please provide complete mailing address information when making your request.

The Archives Division recently has produced a number of new finding aids to collections. These include A GUIDE TO THE RECORDS OF THE ANIMAL BEHAVIOR SOCIETY, 1965-1993 (RU7334), 45 pp.; OFFICE OF EXHIBITIONS, NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, EXHIBITION RECORDS, 1966-1977 (RU361), 105 pp.; and OFFICE OF PROGRAM SUPPORT, NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, RECORDS, 1956-1981, WITH RELATED RECORDS FROM 1947 (RU321), 100 pp. The latter includes documentation on post-WWII U.S. overseas art exhibitions, an initiative first developed by USIA and taken over by the Smithsonian in the 1960s. Copies of these finding aids may be requested by contacting the Reference Coordinator ([osiaref@osia.si.edu](mailto:osiaref@osia.si.edu)) at the mailing address given above.

SIA Director Edie Hedlin is pleased to announce that the 1996 publication, GUIDE TO THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION ARCHIVES, is now available to interested individuals and institutions for only the cost of postage while supplies last. The GUIDE contains 800 pages of collection-level descriptions of over 1100 separate collections in the Smithsonian Institution Archives. The GUIDE is of special interest to students and scholars of American history, especially the development of museums and museology, the history of Western exploration, the history of science, and the evolution of scientific research into its present-day complex forms. An extensive name and subject index is included.

Postal rates for the GUIDE are as follows: for domestic U.S. mail postage, \$3.24 per copy; for Canadian mail postage, \$8.80 per copy; Great Britain mail postage, \$29.91 (first class air mail) or \$14.76 (surface) per copy; and Australia mail postage, \$33.76 (first class air mail) or \$14.76 (surface) per copy. All other foreign destinations should contact SIA first to determine applicable postal fees. SIA can accept only U.S. currency in the form of checks, money orders, and institutional purchase orders, payable to the

Smithsonian Institution. To order a copy of the publication, contact Michael Willens (willensm@osia.si.edu) at Smithsonian Institution Archives, A&I Bldg, Rm 2135, MRC 414; Washington, DC 20560. Please provide complete mailing address information when making your request.

Kathleen Williams

Smithsonian Institution Archives

## CCAHA CONTINUES ARCHITECTURAL RECORDS WORKSHOPS IN 1998

The Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) announces two day-long architectural records workshops, "Have You Got the Blues? Architectural Records: Their Identification, Management, Storage, and Treatment." The workshops are partially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The workshops will be co-sponsored by the site institutions

### WORKSHOP #1

Date: Thursday, September 24, 1998

Location: The University of Texas at Austin, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Austin, Texas

Presented in cooperation with AMIGOS Bibliographic Council, Inc.

### WORKSHOP #2

Date: Friday, November 6, 1998

Location: The Historic New Orleans Collection, New Orleans, Louisiana

Presented in cooperation with the Southeastern Library Network (SOLINET).

**AUDIENCE:** The workshops are intended for architectural historians and architects, as well as library, archives, and museum professionals who have architectural records, drawings, or other oversize paper-based materials in their care or collections.

**SUBJECT:** The speakers will address the problems of caring for the diverse materials of an architectural records collection. The workshops will help participants identify different original media and reproductive processes; consider options for management and organization of architectural records; recognize storage problems and options; and discuss basic collections care methods and remedial treatments that can be safely accomplished in-house.

### SPEAKERS:

Lois Olcott Price, Conservator of Library Collections, Winterthur Library

Joan Irving, Conservator, CCAHA



COST: \$80.00 Members CCAHA, AMIGOS, or SOLINET; \$90.00 Non-members

The workshop agenda will also include a presentation by a speaker from the host site, who will address management issues related to their unique collections.

The workshops will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Enrollment will be limited to 30 participants. The registration fee includes supplementary materials and lunch.

For further information and a registration form, please contact Susan W. DuBois, Preservation Services Representative, Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA), 264 S 23rd St, Philadelphia, PA 19103; 215-545-0613;

215-735-9313 fax; [ccaha@hslc.org](mailto:ccaha@hslc.org); <<http://www.ccaha.org>>.

## COMMENTARIES TO THE GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE OF THE AIC

[The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works takes documentation of object treatments seriously, and the subject is covered in sections 24-28 of the AIC's Guidelines of Practice. Awareness of the Guidelines will help museum archivists with their justification for including conservation records, including those of private conservators treating museum objects on contract, within the archival program. Conservator Nancy Schrock provides the full text of Section 28 here. Complete information can be found in The Code of Ethics and Guidelines of Practice, which appears in the annual Directory of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (1717 K Street NW, Washington DC 20006; ).]

### Introductory Remarks

These Commentaries, created by the AIC membership and approved by the AIC Board of Directors, are intended to amplify the Guidelines for Practice and to accommodate growth and change in the field. They are designed to define current accepted practice for the conservation profession and to provide recommendations that will assist conservation professionals in pursuit of ethical practice. The Commentaries also serve as an educational tool, and as an informational resource for improving professional practice. While the Commentaries strive to accommodate variations in requirements for the different areas of specialization, the level of detail may not fulfill the need for guidance in all cases.

### Commentary 28 - Preservation of Documentation

Documentation is an invaluable part of the history of cultural property and should be produced and maintained in as permanent a manner as practicable. Copies of reports of examination and treatment must be given to the owner, custodian, or authorized agent, who should be advised of the importance of maintaining these materials with the cultural property. Documentation is also an

important part of the profession's body of knowledge. The conservation professional should strive to preserve these records and give other professionals appropriate access to them, when access does not contravene agreements regarding confidentiality.

## RATIONALE

Documentation is an integral part of the conservation process; therefore, it must be preserved so that the information it contains is available to conservators and others. It may be used for a specific documented property to:

Evaluate its present condition;

Plan its further treatment;

Expand appreciation and understanding of it;

Study it even if it is lost or destroyed.

More generally, the documentation may be used to:

Evaluate treatment methods and materials;

Support scholarly research;

Provide a record of current accepted practice;

Study the history of the conservation profession and the thought processes and rationales applied to the care of cultural property.

Availability of the information reduces the need for direct intervention (e.g., sampling, handling, pre-treatment testing) when future study and treatment are undertaken.

Documentation serves as an important educational tool for owners/custodians, students, scholars, and the general public.

Preservation of documentation enhances the credibility of the conservation profession by setting a positive example for allied professionals and the public.

## MINIMUM ACCEPTED PRACTICE

Documentation must be produced on and with permanent, stable media, be legible and be readily accessible in the short and long term. Storage on electronic media only is unacceptable. The most permanent photographic systems reasonably available must be utilized for the photographic component of the graphic documentation.

Records should be organized and maintained to insure their preservation and rapid retrieval. They should be stored under the best environmental conditions feasible.

Two copies of the documentation must exist: one with the owner/custodian (curatorial office or registration department in an institution), the other with the conservation professional. The conservation professional should retain an original photographic record (e.g., negative or original color transparency) so that the highest quality graphic information is available. The conservation professional should stress to the owner/custodian the importance of storing these records properly and maintaining them with the cultural property even if ownership changes.

To guarantee access to the documentation without violating confidentiality, the owner/custodian should sign a written agreement governing access to the information by conservation and allied professionals and future owners/custodians.

When requested, copies of documentation should be provided to future owners/custodians or conservation professionals in a timely fashion.

#### RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Written and graphic documentation other than photographic should be executed on paper that meets ANSI Standard Z39.48-1992.

Electronically or magnetically recorded documentation and documentation requiring the use of other specialized retrieval apparatus can be useful adjuncts to the permanent record, but should not be relied upon as permanent records.

Recommendations should be made to the owner/custodian regarding the maintenance and use of the documentation.

Attaching a summary of critical information (e.g., name of conservation professional, i.d. or job number, treatment summary) to the cultural property may be a useful way to insure that documentation accompanies the cultural property over time.

Within institutions conservation documentation should be regarded as part of the institutional archives, and conservation professionals should work with archivists and records managers to develop sound policies for their permanent retention. Private practitioners should maintain documentation during the lifetime of their practice. If ownership of a practice changes hands, the documentation should be included in the transfer. If the practice closes, the conservation professional should make an effort to place documentation in an institutional archives. (AIC provides information on how to identify archives and place collections.) If this proves impossible and records must be discarded, their final disposition should be reported to AIC for future references.

The conservation professional should strive to keep informed about and to follow practices for the preservation and organization of records currently recommended by archives professionals.

#### SPECIAL PRACTICES

Non-permanent materials (e.g., color Polaroid, blueprints) may be used in certain situations when no substitutes are available. Efforts should be made to transfer the information to a more permanent medium.

It is advisable, when establishing records policies, to obtain legal and other professional advice.

Nancy Schrock

Harvard College Library

## REPORTS

### PEABODY MUSEUM ARCHIVES PRESERVATION PROJECTS

#### Grant for Re-Housing of Accession Files

The Peabody Museum Archives (Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University) completed a sixteen-month grant from the Institute of Museum Services in February. This grant has enabled us to re-house the Museum's 100 linear feet of accession files, many of which date back near the museum's establishment to 1867. The grant also has allowed us to reformat the Museum's catalog cards, which date back to 1932 and contain unique data and metadata relating to the Museum's acquisition history.

Staff and researchers continue to use the accession files and the catalog cards daily

The accession files contain vital provenance information such as correspondence and field notes from the expeditions that collected the PM's vast archaeology and ethnology holdings. The catalog cards track the Museum's acquisition process. Both files and cards are crucial to staff and researchers, although a separate project to migrate the card information to a database is underway. To date, Harvard University's Imaging Services Department has microfilmed all of the 49,000-plus catalog cards. The accession files have been refolded from acidic envelopes to archival quality folders and placed in archival document boxes in new powder-coated cabinetry. Fragile items are sleeved in Mylar, and some items have been transferred to the archives from the Collections Department Reading Room. New and/or improved finding aids to the accession files are being produced, and folder and box labels have been generated from a FileMakerPro database. Under the IMS grant the Archives hired 2-3 work-study students per term for the duration to re-house materials under the supervision of the Archivist, Sarah R. Demb, who worked in tandem with T. Rose Holdcraft, a Peabody Museum Conservator. Without these students, the project would not be the success that it is. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to everyone who made it possible! Special kudos goes to Heidi Miller and Sean Perrone, work-study student and casual on the project.

#### Steps To Preserve Vital Accession Ledgers

In the 1980s, it became apparent to the Peabody Museum Collections and Conservation Departments staff that the Museum's historic accession ledgers were in dire condition. The ledgers date back to 1866 and keep a proper record of all items and collections acquired by the Museum. This record provides vital documentary evidence and information required by many collections staff in their daily work. Over the 132 years of the Museum's history, these ledgers had been consulted by many staff and later by researchers, and unfortunately had begun to show the strain of this use. By the 1980s, it was apparent that in order to protect the ledgers themselves and the information contained within the volumes, the Museum would need to find some type of data migration system. The ledgers were microfilmed in black and white and Harvard's Imaging Services Department made 2 use copies. One microfilm copy resides at the Tozzer Library next door to the Museum, and the other is reserved for staff use at the Museum.

The NAGPRA repatriation mandate of 1990 increased the need for consultation of ledger information in both original and microfilm form. It was clear that the microfilm copies were not of sufficient quality to meet the needs of repatriation efforts and increased researcher scrutiny. An attempt at producing black and white photocopied versions of the ledgers proved that the missing "metadata" contained in different colored inks and other types of writing media was crucial to current research. In the spring of 1997, the PM committed funds to have bound, color photocopied surrogate volumes made for collections, repatriation, and other staff research use. (We respectfully ask that unless outside researchers need to see the writing media and/or color inks, etc. that they use the Tozzer Library microfilm copy.) Of the 35 volumes that need to be copied, 24 will have been finished by May 15, 1998. The Museum expects the remainder to be completed by this spring. The original ledgers had expert conservation work done to repair crumpled pages and damaged edges by the Northeast Conservation Document Center in Andover, Massachusetts. They then were shipped in groups of 4 to Acme Bookbinding in Charlestown, Massachusetts to be copied. The surrogates are copied on archival quality acid-free paper and bound in tough over-sewn library bindings. The originals have been unbound and will be stored in the Museum Archives with their original bindings in custom phase boxes made by the Harvard College Preservation Office. The surrogate volumes allow staff to see the original information, media, and format without danger of further damage to the original ledgers. As vital Museum records, it is important that the originals sustain no further wear and tear unless absolutely necessary. By keeping consultation of the original ledgers to a minimum, the Museum is able to preserve these volumes and the information they contain for future use under protected conditions. Much of the ledger information has been migrated to a database, but some metadata will never make that leap. The surrogate volumes ensure access to that information while preserving the original artifacts for future generations of Museum staff and researchers.

#### 1998 Vital Records Preservation Project

The PM Archives also is pleased to announce the start of the Letterbooks Project in February 1998, an effort to make the early directorial correspondence (1866 - 1879) of the Museum accessible to staff and researchers. Currently, the items in the letterbooks are too fragile to be handled. The curatorial and administrative information the letterbooks contain is crucial to the registrar and repatriation offices of the Museum, as well as to other staff and outside researchers. The Project will make black and white copies from microfilm available to museum staff and will plan for conservation treatment and color preservation photocopying if warranted after the initial inventory, evaluation, and sleeving of materials disbound from the four volumes.

Additional information on the Peabody Museum can be found in *SYMBOLS* (Spring 1998; pp 27-29), which is published by the Peabody Museum and the Department of Anthropology, Harvard University.

Sarah R. Demb

Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY REPORTS

Since I last submitted a report to MUSEUM ARCHIVIST, the New York Zoological Society began "doing business as" the Wildlife Conservation Society. The new name was adopted to better suggest the organization's worldwide activities, which include more than 300 wildlife conservation projects in more 40 countries, in addition to four zoos and one aquarium in New York City and one endangered wildlife breeding center on St. Catherine's Island, Georgia.

#### New York Department of Education Grant

In the summer of 1997, the New York State Program for the Conservation and Preservation of Library Research Materials awarded the Society \$18,494 for the preservation microfilming of the correspondence, 1898-1926, and scrapbooks, 1906-1936, of William Hornaday, first director of the Bronx Zoo. The New York State Department of Education administers this discretionary grant program, established in 1984 to preserve significant research materials in libraries, archives, historical societies and other agencies within the State of New York, by conducting surveys, improving collection storage environments, reformatting or treating collections, and supporting other preservation activities. The products of this project are 35 millimeter microfilm master negatives, second generation duplicate master negatives and third generation service microfilms, all produced to Research Library Group standards for preservation microfilming of archival materials. The records filmed include:

William Hornaday's far reaching activities as first director and general curator of the Bronx Zoo are reflected in forty-one thousand pages of outgoing correspondence, 1898-1926, contained in 75 volumes of letter copy books. Hornaday's correspondence is a chronicle of the development of zoo exhibitions in the Bronx and elsewhere, the importation of wild animals, the saving of the American Bison, and the worldwide activities of the New York Zoological Society. Since 1979, when the Society's archives were formally organized, these records have been most used of all the Society's archives. The records occupy 41 rolls of microfilm, each reel containing one thousand to fifteen hundred page images.

Sixteen thousand pages of William Hornaday's outgoing correspondence on wildlife conservation, contained in 24 volumes of bound letter copy books, tell the story of his campaigns to protect wildlife by establishing parks and preserves, limiting the sale and importation of animals and animal parts, and restricting hunting seasons. The volumes also relate the activities of the Permanent Wild Life Preservation Fund, an organization Hornaday established to finance a century of wildlife conservation activities. The filmed records occupy 15 reels.

Although Hornaday's Documentary History of Wildlife Protection and Extermination primarily consists of clippings from magazines and newspapers, this collection of 14 volumes also contains material not commonly associated with scrapbooks: correspondence to and from prime movers in government and the conservation movement and Hornaday's own handwritten commentaries. Subjects include the founding of the national bison herds, creation of Elk River Game Preserve, British Columbia, the Bayne law ending market hunting of wild animals, game sanctuaries in national forests,

the bag limit campaign, and the saving of the fur seal industry. The scrapbooks occupy 16 reels of microfilm.

As part of the project, the New York State Documentary Heritage Program office agreed to update the RLIN archives database entries for these records to show the existence and availability of the microfilm editions. Records in the RLIN archives database may be freely searched via the Library of Congress gateway at . Although the Wildlife Conservation Society is not an RLIN member, catalog entries for our Society archives and for many other institutions in New York State, were added to the RLIN database by the New York State Historical Documents Inventory in the 1980s.

As of May 1998, microfilming was completed. Microfilm vendor for the project was Hudson Microimaging of Port Ewen, New York. I am now pre-occupied with completing technical inspection of three generations of 35mm silver halide microfilm for compliance with Research Library Group standards for archival microfilming. Following completion of inspection and any required refilming, the master negatives and duplicate master negatives will be stored off site at National Underground Storage (NUS) in Boyers, Pennsylvania. NUS is used by many research libraries and archives for storage of microfilm master negatives and original archival records.

Although the largest microfilming project I have undertaken, this project was similar to previous, smaller projects undertaken over the past ten years. On each project, the bulk of my work has consisted of preparing bibliographic and other "targets" filmed along with the collection, reviewing the records to be microfilmed, writing detailed instructions to camera operators, and inspecting completed film for completeness and errors in filming or processing.

As this project draws to its end, I offer the following suggestions to fellow museum archivists considering a preservation microfilming project.

First, obtain, read, and follow the directions in RLG ARCHIVES MICROFILMING MANUAL (Research Library Group, second edition, 1994). Agencies that fund preservation microfilming expect you to adhere to the guidelines in this manual. Cite the manual's guidelines in your grant proposal, along with advice from Lisa Fox's PRESERVATION MICROFILMING: A GUIDE FOR LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS (American Library Association, second edition, 1994). Both publications are available for purchase from SAA.

Second, in advance of filming, allow plenty of time for reviewing the collection folder by folder or volume by volume and writing directions for the camera operators. If your written directions tell the vendor exactly what you want, the vendor will not have to engage in mind reading or creative thinking when questions arise.

Third, take a do-it-yourself approach to composing and printing targets for bibliographic records, finding aids, and master negative storage numbers, rather than giving this work to the vendor. This will give you much greater control of the results.

Fourth, allow plenty of time for technical inspection of the completed film and obtain the equipment you will need for inspections. Unless your vendor has a track record which passes RLG guidelines (read the manual!), you will have to review every roll of every generation of film to ensure compliance with technical specifications and absence of errors in filming or spooling of the documents.

Equipment needed for inspection of the film includes two film rewinds, a light box, a 10x loupe, white gloves, and a densitometer. Film rewinds and the lightbox are used for examining the master negative and duplicate master negative. These first two generations of microfilm should not be viewed on standard microfilm readers due to danger of scratching. The densitometer is a relatively expensive instrument you may be able to borrow from another institution or your vendor. Without the densitometer, you cannot finish the inspection.

### Renovation and Mobile Shelving

In 1997 the Wildlife Conservation Society capital projects program approved renovation of the archives storage room. In addition to replacing a water damaged wall and eliminating the leaky pipe that caused the damage, the project replaced 900 linear feet of steel utility shelving originally installed in 1979. SpaceSaver Corporation of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin manufactured the new system, with a capacity of 1600 linear feet. Installation of shelving was completed in February 1998 by Innerspace Systems of Brewster, New York. Cost of the installed system was \$23,200.

The SpaceSaver system consists of three mobile carriages, 30 inches deep and 21 feet long, and two stationary units, one 15 inches deep and one 42 inches deep. The shelving is corner post type designed to accommodate standard record center cartons and archives boxes. One stationary range provides 8.5" inch high openings intended for flat storage of scrapbooks and letterpress books. The 42 inch stationary range provides "double deep" storage of less frequently accessed records. The system provides a single movable aisle 42 inches wide. The new "moving aisle" is a

significant change from the 24 inch wide aisles of the former, stationary shelving system. The shelving is moved by SpaveSaver's manual assist method.

In selecting a mobile shelving system for library or archives use, I recommend manually powered systems where feasible, due to their inherent simplicity compared to electric systems. I also recommend using a vendor with extensive experience in site preparation and installation of mobile systems. For correct operation of a system, a flat surface must be created on which to install rails and raised flooring.

The archives room mobile shelving system was the fifth such system installed at the Bronx Zoo. SpaceSaver Systems were previously installed in the Science Resource Center Library Stacks room, Publications Department Storage Room, Media Services Department Photo Library, and Media Services Department Film Library.

Please feel free to contact me at 718 220-6874; 718 220-6874 fax; [sjohnson@wcs.org](mailto:sjohnson@wcs.org) if you have questions or comments on these project reports.



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### MOMA EXHIBIT: FROM THE ARCHIVES: LÉGER

The Museum of Modern Art Archives recently organized its first exhibition, FROM THE ARCHIVES: LÉGER, which focused on the artist's relationship with the Museum and illustrated various aspects of his career through primary source materials. The exhibition ran concurrently with the major retrospective FERNAND LÉGER (February 15 - May 12, 1998) and displayed the Archives role not only in documenting but also in supporting the work of the institution.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: LÉGER displayed parallels with works of art and themes elucidated in the Museum exhibition, as well as introduced topics less explicitly covered in that show. For example, the Museum's first Guestbook (1929 to 1944), which Léger signed when he visited the Museum on the occasion of his 1935 retrospective, was displayed. The visitor also could learn from the Guestbook that Léger's first visit to the Museum was in 1931 when he viewed HENRI MATISSE (November 2, 1931- December 6, 1931), the first exhibition that the Museum devoted to a foreign artist.

A letter from Alfred H. Barr, Jr. (the Museum's founding director) to Fernand Léger, November 9, 1942 illustrates that Barr and Léger corresponded about the title of the artist's painting THREE WOMEN, originally titled LE GRAND DÉJEUNER. This painting was included in the Museum exhibition, and from this letter we learn that Barr was partially responsible for giving the work a new title.

Regarding the American reception of work by Léger, a copy of the Congressional House Record dated August 16, 1949 from the Barr Papers elucidates a popular belief of the time, namely that modern art was part of a communist conspiracy to corrupt American moral standards. The Record reads, "Léger and Duchamp are now in the United States to aid in the destruction of our standards and traditions. The former has been a contributor to the Communist cause in America; the latter is now fancied by the neurotics as a surrealist."

Additionally, FROM THE ARCHIVES: LÉGER exhibited items from the Museum Archives Twentieth-Century Manuscript Collections, documentation previously under the auspices of the Library's Special Collections and recently transferred to the Museum Archives in an effort to consolidate primary source research materials; these collections were created by outside sources but reflect the work of the institution. Examples of this material include an autograph letter from Fernand Léger to Léonce Rosenberg (Léger's most important dealer in the 1910s and 20s), August 23, 1918, in which Léger expresses excitement about his "acrobats" and writes about "un projet de cirque énorme [a plan for a huge circus]... vera-t-il le jour? [will it ever see the light of day?]" . Indeed, his idea was brought to fruition: the Museum exhibition included Léger's book of lithographs, LE CIRQUE, from 1950 that is devoted to the theme of the circus.

In a letter from Katherine S. Dreier (the President of the Société Anonyme and an important modern art collector) to Frederick P. Keppel (of the Carnegie Corporation), February 8, 1929, Dreier appealed to Keppel for assistance in the Société Anonyme's efforts to exhibit and advocate modern art. Léger is one of the artists mentioned as being an important example of this new art movement.

Film stills, photographs, invitations, and circulating exhibition itineraries also were displayed. A checklist describing each item was compiled and offered to visitors to the show.

FROM THE ARCHIVES: LÉGER, on view for three months, was open to the public in an exhibition space in the Library's reference area, a section of the Museum open to staff and researchers. The Museum Archives staff looks forward to organizing more exhibitions in the future and to a time when an exhibition area for primary resource materials will be located in closer proximity to the Museum galleries.

Michelle Elligott

The Museum of Modern Art

MUSEUM ARCHIVIST

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

NEXT DEADLINE: DECEMBER 18, 1998

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