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From the Chair...

I hope that all of you are having a good winter. The climate in Washington DC for the archival profession has grown chilly. President Bush released his FY2006 budget and it calls for zeroing out the **National Historical Publications and Records Commission**. NHPRC is a very important part of the archival community and the assistance that they give is invaluable. The following is the exact wording from the proposed budget from page 1190 under the National Archives and Records Administration, Federal Funds,

“National Historical Publications and Records Commission Grants – This program provides funding for grants that the Commission makes, nationwide, to preserve and publish records that document American history. The Budget proposes no new grants funding for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in 2006”.

You will find several links below that will lead you to information about NHPRC, the proposed FY 2006 budget, National Archives and Records Administration’s press release and the responses of SAA and other like minded professional institutions. Please take the time to read about this dilemma and do what you can to help out. More information on NHPRC will be sent out via the Museum Section Listserv. If you are not a member of our listserv, please join at <http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/museum/listserv.htm>.

Kristine L. Kaske

**National Historical Publications and Records Commission**  
<http://www.archives.gov/grants/index.html>

*Their Mission: The National Historical Publications and Records Commission promotes the preservation and use of America's documentary heritage essential to understanding our democracy, history, and culture.*

**The White House’s Proposed FY2006 Budget** [www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/)

This enormous document is online and can be searched. Here is how I got there.

- Go to [www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/](http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/)
- Click Simple Search (on the left column)

- Click Budget for the U.S., FY2006 and write “historical publications” in the search field.
- Press Submit.
- The information should come up as the second match as “[06 Budget Appendix] NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION”.
- You can then open it as a text of pdf file.

**National Archives and Records Administration’s Press Release regarding FY 2006 Budget proposal [http://www.archives.gov/media\\_desk/press\\_releases/nr05-36.html](http://www.archives.gov/media_desk/press_releases/nr05-36.html)**

**Responses from Professional Organizations:**

- SAA <http://www.archivists.org/news/nhprc-FY2006.asp>
- National Coalition for History <http://www.h-net.org/%7Ench/nhprc.html>
- Council of State Historical Records Coordinators <http://www.coshrc.org/issues/NHPRC-NARA-06budget/index.htm>

**ARTICLES**

**Roman Bronze Works Records at Amon Carter Museum Archives**

Paula Stewart  
Amon Carter Museum

**‘S’ is for Spurious - A Short history of The Lincoln Museum’s Vertical File**

Carolyn Texley  
The Lincoln Museum

**Roman Bronze Works Records at Amon Carter Museum Archives**

Paula Stewart  
Archivist  
Amon Carter Museum  
Fort Worth, Texas  
Paula.stewart@cartermuseum.org

In keeping with its mission to support art history research, the Amon Carter Museum Archives oversees not only the institutional archives but a number of special collections as well. One of these collections is the business records of the Roman Bronze Works Foundry, which documents the work of hundreds of sculptors who had pieces cast at the foundry throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Roman Bronze Works was one of the United States’ leading fine-arts foundries during the first half of the twentieth century. Riccardo Bertelli established the firm in Brooklyn, New York,

in 1899, to cast art sculpture. From approximately 1920 to 1948, the foundry operated as a subsidiary of the General Bronze Corporation. While it continued to cast art sculpture, the company also produced more commercial pieces, including such architectural elements as floor registers, door jambs, window casings, lamps, and sconces. In 1948, the Schiavo family, which had been associated with the foundry since 1904, bought the company from the General Bronze Corporation, and the foundry returned to casting primarily art sculpture.

The records acquired by the Carter include those from the foundry's period of greatest activity: approximately 1902 until the mid-1960s. The collection encompasses a wide array of materials, including:

- general ledgers dating from 1902 through 1977
- order books documenting orders placed from 1928 through 1958
- card indexes of clients
- business operations files
- job files that record pieces cast from 1927 through 1977; these files may contain correspondence, invoices, artist's sketches and drawings, photographs, and small architectural drawings
- a plaster model index that lists the 1948 inventory of plaster models at the foundry
- a Conrad Schmitt Studios sample book, a photograph album of decorative elements and fixtures manufactured by General Bronze Corporation for the Schmitt Studios
- 791 oversize architectural drawings (primarily blueprints) illustrating decorative elements and fixtures and their placement in ten buildings constructed in Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, New York, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC between 1931 and 1941

Years of storage throughout the foundry building—in filing cabinets and boxes in offices, in a basement with a window open to the East River, behind furnaces—had left the records covered in dirt and soot. When the records arrived in Fort Worth, we first stabilized them and then had Mary Todd Glaser from the Northeast Document Conservation Center conduct a conservation assessment. Using Glaser's recommendations and an internal evaluation of the most useful records, we developed a work plan and obtained funding from the Getty Grant Program for cleaning, arranging, and describing the job files. Because of the amount of labor involved in processing the job files...and the need to suspend this work while we participated in planning, building, and opening a renovated and greatly expanded museum...the processing begun in 1997 was only completed in 2003.

The most time-consuming task was the development of a database listing every piece of sculpture represented in the job files. Job file titles sometimes indicated only the gallery or the patron for whom the piece was being cast but not the artist and many times more than one piece was documented in a job file; therefore, a database from which we could generate reports would improve access to the contents of each file. This was the first database developed in the archives, and although it is very simple, it has been extremely useful and already justified the extra time required developing it.

Some work remains: we must finish the finding aid and consider whether or not we want to make parts of the collection available electronically or on the Web. However, the collection is

currently open to researchers. Users so far have included owners and dealers looking for information to authenticate pieces in their possession, museums wanting documentation for object files, conservators requiring information on a sculpture's composition and original patina, and of course, art historians.

We anticipate that increased access to the information in these records will encourage new scholarship, expanding what we know about sculpture and bringing to light new sculptors and pieces. Indeed, a recent request for information has done just that. In December 2004, Dr. Sandra Underwood, Professor of Art History, Emerita, at St. Mary's College in Maryland, contacted me. Dr. Underwood is preparing a manuscript on Sylvia Shaw Judson's *Bird Girl*, a sculpture made famous by its appearance on the cover of John Berendt's book *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* and in the movie based on the book. The sculpture now resides at the Telfair Museum in Savannah. The Telfair Museum had contacted the Carter in 1997 to find out if the Roman Bronze Works' records included information on the *Bird Girl*. Since the collection was unprocessed at that time, we were unable to locate records for the sculpture. Dr. Underwood wanted to know if we had found any information while processing the collection. Happily, we *had* found records and Dr. Underwood discovered new information about the piece, including that *Bird Girl* was not the sculpture's original name.

The museum hopes that this will be just one of many such stories. For additional information on the collection, please contact Paula Stewart at [paula.stewart@cartermuseum.org](mailto:paula.stewart@cartermuseum.org) or 817.989.5077.

### **'S' is for Spurious - A Short history of The Lincoln Museum's Vertical File**

Carolyn Texley  
Director of Collections  
The Lincoln Museum,  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

I found the following article teaser from the inside cover of the Feb. 1957 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*: "The Lincoln Cult!" was the headline. "Many millions of Americans still actively love our 16<sup>th</sup> president – Abraham Lincoln – and follow him eagerly through fact and legend. This week in The Saturday Evening Post you will read about a leader of the "Lincoln Cult", a man who knows more about Lincoln than Mary Todd ever did! He's Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, director of the foundation sponsored by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company in Ft. Wayne, Ind. He'll tell you how to bake Lincoln's favorite cake and how to start your own hobby of Lincoln studies."

This ad expresses two important aspects of documenting (or collecting) Lincoln at The Lincoln Museum: Lincoln's appeal to people of all varieties – (by no means limited to professionals or academics), and that the Lincoln Museum provides information on all aspects of Lincoln to those audiences. Our vertical file includes many items created by those Lincoln hobbyists. Their scrapbooks, carefully compiled collections of newspaper clippings and images of Lincoln, also include prints, photographs, as well as coloring book pages and paper dolls of the Lincoln

family. Research use of these scrapbooks has been limited up to this point, but with the other more encyclopedic aspects of the vertical file, we can provide future researchers with abundant resources for studying the social history of many aspects of collecting Lincoln.

The Museum was organized in 1928 by the Lincoln National Life Insurance Corporation as the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation. The Corporation board members (most of whom were avid Lincoln collectors) hired Louis A. Warren as its first director. A noted writer and speaker on Lincoln, Warren was especially noted for his work on Lincoln's early life (in Kentucky and Indiana until the age of 21) and genealogy. Warren brought his research files, including 19<sup>th</sup> century newspaper clippings, and copies of local public records related to early American Lincoln ancestors, which became the basis for the Museum's vertical file.

As a clearing house for reliable information on Lincoln (many outrageous myths were circulating at the time) the Foundation's mission was to disseminate accurate Lincoln information to the general public. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a lot of unsubstantiated myth about Lincoln accepted as fact. Warren began publishing a weekly one page journal in April, 1929 (*Lincoln Lore*) intended as a cumulative encyclopedia on Lincoln. He covered a broad range of subjects in the early issues: the route of Lincoln's funeral train, details of Lincoln's nomination in 1860, Lincoln memorials, Lincoln's three treasurers, etc. *Lincoln Lore* issues were mailed out (by the life insurance corporation) as press releases, and Warren incorporated them into his research subject files – a natural consequence of keeping the journal to a single, limited aspect of the Lincoln universe. Research requests arrived immediately, and all research correspondence was added to the growing subject filing system. The Corporation also provided Warren with the use of a Lincoln-related clipping service on current Lincoln articles. All of these elements were combined in a single local topical subject file – the Lincoln Museum vertical file was born. It now occupies 30 five drawer legal size filing cabinets.

Other elements included were ephemeral items such as programs, invitations and announcements from Lincoln related celebrations, symposia and events held nationwide. Small prints and engravings, and some photographs were also interfiled, as well as correspondence related to building the Museum's library and artifact collection. The 'Collections' section of the files covers a wide variety (most if not all) of major individual and institutional collectors, at least through the 1960s. Warren and his successors had the funding available for aggressive and consistent collecting in all areas of Lincolniana, during a long period (ending in the 1970s) when Lincoln items were much more affordable. Each director (there were only three between 1928 and 1992) added a different perspective and expertise to the collection which was also reflected in the vertical file. The Museum's collection was described in that 1957 Saturday Evening Post article as 'catholic without being indiscriminating,' which is also a good description of the vertical file materials.

Revealing the character of each director's administration, the vertical file offers much to the understanding of the institutional history of the Museum. I was able to use it effectively in writing the text for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibit mounted in 2003. The background on how the Museum has developed was enhanced by the consistency and organization of the files. Warren's original subject headings (not Library of Congress Subject Headings, but very useful in their

very focused Lincoln way) have remained intact, although occasionally expanded as research interests in Lincoln evolved.

The compilation of often misattributed quotes is one well-used section of the vertical file. Much of our reference involves providing and validating Lincoln quotes, and the first place we go is 'Informal writings - Quotations – Spurious Quotes'. (The Collections Dept. staff have discussed "S is for Spurious" t-shirts.) The files are detailed enough that researchers will see who did write/say the quote in question, as well as when and how it was assigned mistakenly to Lincoln. Lincoln's popularity with all varieties of viewpoints and issues led to assigning him authorship of many pithy quotes, which rightly belong to others (Horace Greeley and P.T. Barnum being two of the more popular).

Other categories of vertical file materials are 'Manuscripts' (two drawers of unpublished plays, biographies, and other imaginative Lincoln related manuscript material), and 'Artists', including printmakers, photographers, and other artists whose work includes Lincoln as a subject. A well-used, very detailed and one of the largest sections is the general category 'Personality', subdivided by '- Physical Description'; '- Habits', '- Recreation', '- Sociability' and so on. Included in this general area is the very popular category of the Lincoln family's personal possessions 'Curios and Relics' – everything from socks to pocket watches to locks of hair. This particular section crosses over into information about artifacts in the Museum's own collection. Seventy-six years of research questions have built up quite a trove of material. Newspaper articles and clippings from auction or dealer catalogs with information on who owns (or sold) what, which frequently includes a useful image and some description of the item's provenance. Again, correspondence between the Museum Director, various collectors, prospective buyers and sellers is also included in these files.

The Lincoln Museum's vertical file is well known in the Lincoln research world. In the mid-1980s the entire file was photocopied for Brown University's Lincoln Room. I am planning to incorporate at least descriptions of the series in our library system (Dynix's Horizon ILS software), but all is currently analog. Another more daunting challenge is that many of the clippings do not have any citation – no date, no place, no newspaper/publication. This limits the usefulness for some of our researchers, but they can still be used as a good starting point. We try to verify information from the vertical file with other sources whenever possible, and include that information or other supporting citations in the file.

We appreciate both the institutional history inherent in the organization and composition of this unique resource and its usefulness to a wide variety of researchers. Our vertical file serves to begin the task of organizing the mountain of Lincoln information, and also provides insight into the methods employed by our predecessors.