

MUSEUM ARCHIVIST
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The editors wish to thank the following individuals who contributed to this issue: Kristine Kaske, Laura Peimer, Bernadette Callery, Bart H. Ryckbosch, Joseph M. Ciccone, Mark Kahn.

From the Chair:

So much has happened since we saw one another in New Orleans at SAA's 69th Annual Meeting. No one would have thought that just 8 days after our meeting the city which we enjoyed so much would be devastated. We have all been saturated with the news coverage of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and now Wanda. On September 21, 2005 the Society of Southwest Archivists and the Society of American Archivists created the SSA-SAA Emergency Disaster Assistance Grant Fund, <http://www.archivists.org/news/katrina_fund.asp>. This fund provides grants to archival repositories affected by Katrina and Rita. The website explains how much funding is available and how recipients are selected. It also links to the giving page. Please note that SAA is responsible for the financial administration of the fund.

This is the time when we as an archival community need to come together. I would ask that you please take a look at this program and give. I did.

Best,
Kristine L. Kaske <kaskek@si.edu>

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

MUSEUM ARCHIVES SECTION, Society of American Archivists Annual Conference, Friday, August 19, 2005, 8:00 am
Hilton Riverside, New Orleans, Louisiana

Officers: Kristine Kaske, chair; Laura Peimer, recording secretary; Polly Darnell and Molly Wheeler, newsletter co-editors.

Introductions

Kristine Kaske brought the meeting to order. She thanked Daniel Alonzo and Paula Larich for their work as webmasters this past year

and Deborah Wythe for her work as editor on the Museum Archives Manual.

Museum Archives Manual

Deborah Wythe, editor of the Museum Archives Manual, 2nd ed., announced that as of June 30, the Manual is in second place in SAA publication sales.

Museum Archives Directory

Kristine announced that she and other members of a committee are continuing to work on the museum archives directory, which will be a resource on the SAA website. They will be sending out a survey to institutions to obtain the following information for the online directory:

- Museum name
- Name of archives
- Title (contact)
- Location
- Phone/e-mail/URL
- Type of collections
- Free text section

SAA Update

SAA has created a Diversity Committee. The committee's goal is to increase diversity within SAA, including diversity of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexual orientation. Through their work, the committee hopes to increase membership, attract applicants for minority scholarships, and enhance participation in SAA's educational offerings. Discussion ensued over what the section can do to increase diversity. Maygene Daniels suggested that diversity can include people with disabilities and should pertain to researchers and users, as well.

Kristine opened the floor to discussion about the SAA Strategic Issue Statement (currently in draft form), which includes references to issues of technology, diversity, and public awareness. During discussion, some members noted that the tone of the statement was negative.

Session Proposals

Marissa Bourgoïn announced that she will be on the program committee for next year. Next year's SAA conference will be a joint meeting with NAGARA and Council of State Archivists in Washington, DC (7/31-8/6/2005). Marissa noted that the committee is not accepting formal endorsements from sections and that there will be no theme for the conference. Proposals are due by October 7.

Kristine suggested a possible session on connections between Federal and state funding organizations and archives. The session could include representatives from archives who have received Federal or state funding as a means to support archival projects and programs. Additionally, there could be discussion regarding WPA projects.

Bernadette Callery suggested a session on acquisitions, focusing on materials collected on federal lands or WPA works housed in museums.

Deborra Richardson spoke briefly about the Committee on Archives, Libraries and Museums and CCO (Cataloging Cultural Objects) and suggested a program concerning digital asset management systems. She also suggested a session on the perceptions or images of archivists, librarians, and museum professionals.

Other session suggestions:

Archivist as fundraiser.

The early days of institutional archives. Many of these archives were started with NHPRC or NEA grants. How have these programs progressed?

Election of Officers

Marissa Bourgoïn was nominated and elected to be the new chair-elect. Kristin Parker was nominated and elected to be the new recording secretary.

Report of the Working Group Meeting of the Museum Archives Section, Society of American Archivists, New Orleans, August 17, 2005
25 members in attendance

Following introductions, the session began with a discussion of "demanding donors." While written acquisition policies can protect the archive from unreasonable demands, the archives does not always the final say in whether or not to accept a gift. Several people mentioned that curators will sometimes press for an acquisition, especially for exhibition purposes. Missing or inadequate documentation on the acquisition, such as the case with "old loans" in the museum, presents problems, particularly if you wish to deaccession the items as being out of scope for your collection. There was a discussion of whether other family members (other than the specific donor) should be notified if the collection - or parts of it - are deaccessioned.

Even if the collection was a bequest, you are not obliged to accept it and you can always use space limitations as a reason for greater selectivity.

If you do acquire the collection, remember to specifically ask the donor about restricted access, as the donor may have mistaken assumptions that they can control access remotely and in perpetuity.

Not all access restrictions are imposed by the donor. Some museums have the practice - and sometimes the policy - of allowing curators to "publish first" thus effectively restricting access to other researchers for some period of time.

Discussion of scholarly access led to a discussion of physical access and some members mentioned difficulties with curators and even former curators with keys who continue to consider the archives as libraries, with borrowing privileges.

Another discussion dealt with the retention of exhibition-related material, such as audio guides, bound copies of press releases and the text of exhibition labels, particularly if there is no exhibition catalog. In the case of the latter, it is important to maintain the spatial relationship between the exhibition labels, associated wall text and the exhibited material. Photographs help in this. Retention of related educational material was also discussed and the cost of storage of that material was considered as opposed to reproducing new copies when needed.

The second major discussion was one dealing with fees, specifically reproduction vs. use charges. Traditional arguments in support of such fees was to control the actual use of images and to maintain quality control over reproductions. Such fees have also been used to

support staff or to pay for conservation supplies, particularly in archives that have few other possibilities for revenue generation. Be careful about using copyright statements, unless you are certain that your museum actually does hold those rights. While credit lines are an important publicity tool as they indicate museum ownership of a particular collection of items, they do not replace a clear statement of copyright.

There was a discussion of how to justify fees for use of photos of objects donated to a public museum. This is a specific example of the general question of how to justify fees charged for items for which your museum does not hold copyright.

There was some discussion about cost-benefit analysis, with the reminder that the American Memory project chose not to charge for the use of material it displays on its website. Another discussion was on fee schedules for local media, with the majority agreeing that such images are usually provided without charge, as fees would undermine the benefit of promotion and publicity of the collection.

If the mission of the archives is to provide access to its collections then use fees shouldn't prevent use by the intended community of users.

With the increased demand for digital images, archives are creating policies for the provision of such images. The majority of those present at the meeting said that they were continuing to provide centralized reproduction services as a means of controlling the quality of the resultant images and restricting on-site photography by users. Several museums mentioned that the first person requesting an image in a new format pays the fee for the conversion, but subsequent users do not.

Bernadette G. Callery, Museum Librarian
Carnegie Museum of Natural History
4400 Forbes Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4080
Phone: 412-622-8870; FAX: 412-622-8837
Email: calleryb@CarnegieMNH.org

News Items

Numismatic Oral History Project Started
Joseph M. Ciccone, J.D., C.A.
Archivist
American Numismatic Society

In late spring 2005 the American Numismatic Society (ANS) began its first oral history project—the only known oral history project being conducted with professional numismatists. Located in lower Manhattan, the ANS is the largest museum in the Western Hemisphere dedicated to the study of coins and currency.

2008 marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the ANS. To help with its efforts to commemorate this august occasion, the ANS hired an archivist in February 2004 and formally established an institutional archives. Much of 2004 was spent organizing the archives and assisting the ANS with its relocation from its former headquarters to its current one. This past spring, however, the archival staff began an oral history project with former staff and Board members of the ANS.

To date, the ANS archivist has conducted more than thirty-five hours of interviews with fourteen individuals. These interviews—mainly, but not exclusively, with former curators and officers—have helped expand the Society's body of knowledge of its history. In addition, they have provided richer detail to events which were only known previously through either token references in meeting minutes or institutional lore (e.g., "Did you ever hear the story about...?")

Fortunately, staff tenures at the ANS tended to be rather lengthy, so the candidate field is fairly limited. Four more interviews are scheduled for later this year, with another six anticipated for 2006. All interviews are being transcribed and edited.

To learn more about the history of the ANS and its archival program, please visit: <http://www.amnumsoc.org/archives/>.

Newly processed collection at NASM

Richard Porter Collection (Acc. No. 1997-0037)

Richard Porter (1913-1996) was an electrical engineer and expert in the fields of rocketry and space travel. In 1937, the General Electric

(GE) Company hired him as a student engineer after receiving his Ph. D. from Yale University. This was the start of a very long affiliation between Porter and the corporate giant. During World War II, he was directly involved in the U.S. effort to identify and debrief top German rocket scientists. He was also instrumental in evacuating these rocket specialists to the U.S. - an undertaking known as Operation Paperclip. In 1953, GE placed Porter in overall charge of the company's guided missiles department. From that time onward, he stayed heavily engaged in the rocketry field. This included heading a panel of scientiststasked with developing a U.S. space program in time for the International Geophysical Year (IGY) of 1957-58.

This collection consists of correspondence, memoranda, meeting minutes, reports, notes, speeches, photographs, brochures, pamphlets, programs, magazines, newsletters, papers, articles, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous materials. Collection size is 7.56 cubic feet.

Mark Kahn

Archivist

National Air and Space Museum

Smithsonian Institution

Kahnm@si.edu

The National Anthropological Archives' latest online exhibit, Lakota Winter Counts (<http://wintercounts.si.edu>), provides unprecedented access to the world's largest collection of Lakota (Sioux) winter counts. Winter counts, or *waniyetu wowapi*, are pictographs of memorable events created by Lakota Indians to mark the passage of time. The online exhibit features 16 of these Native American calendars from collections in the Smithsonian's National Anthropological Archives (National Museum of Natural History) and the National Museum of the American Indian.

The heart of the exhibit is a timeline of images showing the events that Lakota winter count keepers recorded in their communities from 1701 to 1905. Pictographs representing the same year in ten different winter counts are displayed side by side, allowing viewers to compare

how different historians illustrated the same year and, occasionally, the same event. One of those events — “The Year the Stars Fell” — was widely known to non-Lakota people as the Leonid Meteor Storm of November 1833, providing a base to correlate the winter counts with the Western calendar. The pictographs provide a point of entry to an interactive database of historical explanations by 19th century winter count keepers, supplemented with additional commentary by the Smithsonian.

The online exhibit also features video interviews with six Lakota men and women with personal connections to the winter-count-keeping tradition. They provide contemporary perspectives on the winter counts in more than four hours of streaming video interviews, relating the indigenous calendars to a wide range of historical and contemporary concerns, both local and global. Their narratives illustrate the range of knowledge still held about winter counts and the diversity of perspectives about their meaning. Other features in the exhibit provide background about Lakota history, culture, and environment, richly illustrated with historic photographs and drawings from Smithsonian collections. A 33-page Teachers' Guide (available in Adobe PDF format) provides curriculum materials and suggestions for enhancing K-12 classroom instruction with primary historical sources.

Lakota Winter Counts has received a Webby Award from the International Academy of Digital Arts & Sciences for Best Cultural Institution web site as well as the prestigious World Summit Award, an international competition involving 168 nations. Archives director Robert Leopold and Candace Greene, the exhibit's curator, will accept the award at the U.N. World Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia on Nov. 16. Lakota Winter Counts was produced by the National Anthropological Archives (<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/naa>) with generous support from the Smithsonian Women's Committee, the Dakota Indian Foundation, and the South Dakota Humanities Council. It was designed and developed by the award-winning, Minneapolis-based Web strategy and design firm, INVIONI (<http://www.invioni.com>).

Articles

The Art Institute of Chicago Archives: The On-Line Exhibition Catalogue Project.
Bart Ryckbosch

Project Description

The On-Line Exhibition Catalogue Project is digitizing a unique archival collection of more than 1,000 Art Institute exhibition catalogues dating from 1883 to 1930, making their content available to scholars, students, teachers, and other researchers on the Ryerson Library Web site. The catalogues document the earliest exhibitions of many important artists who studied or worked in Illinois, such as Walt Disney, William A. Harper, Archibald J. Motley, Jr., Georgia O'Keeffe, William Edward Scott, and Grant Wood.

The total project budget is \$27,485, of which \$15,000 (55%) in support was received through a 2005/2006 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant.

Needs Assessment

Currently, the Ryerson Library and Institutional Archives respond to an estimated 1,000 requests per year from individuals who visit or contact us to research the Art Institute's exhibition catalogue archive. The majority of these patrons are from the Midwest. However, a substantial number of requests originate from other regions of the United States, and approximately 10% are received from abroad.

Before 1997, the general public had limited on-line sources for conducting research on the artists who have studied, worked, or exhibited in Illinois. On-site visits to specialized libraries, such as the Ryerson Library or university collections, were often necessary but frequently complicated by access restrictions.

In 1997, the Art Institute of Chicago was among the first art museums in the country to make its exhibition history available on-line. The accessibility of this information has generated an avalanche of interest from a variety of people: scholars who study or teach about Midwestern artists; private individuals who own art by artists on whom very limited information is readily available; art galleries and auction houses that research specific works of art or artists with early exhibition activity at the Art Institute; curators attempting to reconstruct the careers of certain artists; genealogists looking for information on a long-deceased family member once active in local artistic circles; and Illinois historians working to identify and document significant artists from a specific region.

The Art Institute of Chicago's on-line exhibition history listing includes email and phone information for further inquiries, through which the Archives receive an average of roughly 18 requests per week. Web users often find the page by chance or referral, or via Google or another search engine, and are researching more detailed information beyond the exhibition title and display dates.

As special exhibitions are of a temporary nature, published catalogues are frequently their primary means of documentation. At a minimum, each contains a complete listing of the specific art and artists exhibited, and the dates of exhibition. Many from 1883 to 1930 also include line drawings or black and white photographs of selected art works, as well as curatorial essays. Other related exhibition ephemera, such as publicity posters, photographs, and press clippings, are often extremely scarce or difficult to locate. Most of the Art Institute of Chicago's catalogues from this era were published in fairly small numbers, and the holdings of the Art Institute Institutional Archives represent the only known surviving copy. In the case of an unpublished catalogue, i.e. a curatorial checklist, the copy held by the Archives is likely to be the only one that ever existed.

Due to the advanced age of the archive, many of the catalogues are very brittle and fragile and have required extensive conservation treatment. Their delicate condition often demands increased access restrictions, i.e. no Inter-library loan opportunity, with severely limited hands-on use. These restrictions make frequent photocopying, even on the most advanced machines, inadvisable.

The Art Institute Archives Department now faces the challenge of balancing public demand for access to this invaluable archive with the need for its responsible preservation. Informing the general public, via the museum's institutional Web site, of the existence of this resource, has resulted in an immense increase in interest. However, easy access to the books would gravely jeopardize their condition and continued existence. Providing on-line access to digital images poses the best solution for serving the public, while being mindful of the preservation and conservation needs of the original items.

Access

The On-Line Exhibition Catalogue Project creates three main points of access by which patrons can find the digitized catalogues: 1) via the Illinois State Library (the granting authority) Web site, anticipated upload around Fall of 2006, 2) via the Art Institute exhibition listing on

the museum Web site (for an example with existing hotlinks to a few catalogues see:

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/musarchives/eh/archhist1883-1889.html>), 3) via the on-line catalogue of the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries. The main catalogue for the libraries is available for consultation via the museum Web site, and is also linked to other library networks via the Consortia catalogues such as the Union Catalogue of RLG (Research Libraries Group), WorldCat, and others.

In the short term, this digitization project will allow easy, off-site and on-line access to the content of the catalogues, reducing for patrons the expense and effort of traveling to the Art Institute to view and photocopy books in the Archives. This immediate impact will be measurable by monitoring the number of times certain documents are opened or downloaded from the Web site, as indicated in Web log statistics.

Implementation

The main project task is to scan and make available on-line all exhibition catalogues from 1883 until 1923, including those published by the Art Institute of Chicago and by outside entities in conjunction with exhibitions held at the museum. All of these works have entered the public domain. In addition, the Archives Department intends to scan all catalogues from 1923 through 1930 that were published solely by the Art Institute. The projected total number of books to be digitized within the nine-month grant period amounts to 1,162. The project period is October 2005 – June 2006.

In the interest of defining the scope of this project, catalogues with a publication date later than 1930 have not been included, although this is certainly a goal for the future. The use of color photography in more recent publications raises the complex issue of maintaining color parity with original artworks, requiring increased image control and digital memory space. Another issue is copyright ownership of reproductions by living artists, as well as the general publication copyright restrictions and public domain considerations.

The Archives recruited two temporary, part-time positions to prepare and scan the catalogue pages: an Archives Assistant and an Archives Technician.

Upon being hired, the assistant and technician received an intensive training in all aspects of the project, by a succession of working

sessions with the following units: first, a general library orientation, mandatory for all new library and archives staff; second, an introduction to archival handling and procedures; third, a hands-on practicum on paper conservation, including the handling of brittle books and conducting needs assessments; and, finally a step-by-step session on the project's digital scanning workflow.

Workflow

All exhibition catalogues are currently organized chronologically in acid free folders and in Hollinger boxes, in the climate-controlled environment of the Archives Department's workspace. In cases when more than one copy of a catalogue exists, the archives assistant assesses the best copy for scanning, in consultation with the archivist and Library Conservation staff if necessary.

Catalogues that were published as part of an annual series of exhibitions, such as the Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture by American Artists and the Annual Exhibition of Works by Artists of Chicago and Vicinity, are treated slightly differently from the monographic catalogues of single venues. These are kept together as a series, rather than integrated in the chronological sequence of exhibition catalogues. It is therefore necessary to use a master listing of all exhibitions, annual as well as one-time venues, to ensure that every catalogue is scanned. The best and most logical master list is the exhibition history used on the Art Institute's Web site.

Apart from the obvious scanning duties, the archives assistant is also responsible for the preparation of all catalogues for scanning. Conservation staff will be consulted prior to any disbinding, staple removal, or other treatment, which may interfere with the physical condition of the original paper source copy.

The Archives' scanning workstation is equipped with a Macintosh computer and an Epson flatbed scanner. The software used in the project consists of Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat, and Epson Scan.

The archives technician creates a new desktop folder for every scanned catalogue. Conforming to newly developed conventions, the name of this folder reflects in abbreviated form the institution, followed by the year and title of the publication. The catalogues are scanned page-by-page, front cover to back. The standard settings established for this project are an image type setting of 16-bit grayscale, with a resolution of 180 dpi (dots per inch). Every page is

scanned individually, assessed for detailed image quality, and saved as a PDF file. Preference has been given to PDF over other formats based upon studies on long-term viability and cross-platform usability.

Once all catalogue pages have been scanned as separate files, each image is carefully cropped to the appropriate standard size, and subsequently combined, or "bound," with the other pages in the original sequence into one PDF file. Via an Advanced Adobe process, "PDF Optimizer," the size of the document is slightly reduced to achieve optimal use of memory space. The average file size of a ten-page catalogue in PDF format is roughly four megabytes.

After the scanning and digital rebinding, the technician proofreads the document and codes the PDF file with its corresponding metadata. Appropriate keywords and the exact name, derived from the on-line Ryerson Library catalogue, are entered into the Document Properties fields of the Adobe Reader application.

Each time a total of 50 catalogues have been scanned and metadata have been entered, the files are burned onto two identical DVDs. One copy is forwarded to the Art Institute Systems Librarian, who will download the data onto the museum's Web site. The other copy will be sent to the Illinois State Library for adding the data to its Web site after completion of the project.

Sustainability

With the guidance of the Systems Librarian, the Archives will develop a plan to ensure that the image files created during the project will remain accessible on-line to the public indefinitely. This will require a strategy to periodically migrate the raw data of the exhibition catalogues' image files to updated software and hardware standards. The same will be done with the Internet accessible data, which will be upgraded with each new Web site edition.

Following the project period, the existing library and archives staff, assisted by interns and volunteers, will gradually digitize exhibition catalogues dated later than 1930. The files will systematically be added to the established digital library collection.