

# Beyond Bullet Points: Exploring Context and Connections in an Online Exhibit

KATE DUNDON

**Abstract:** I am currently charged with creating an online exhibit on an American writer and reporter for Occidental College in Los Angeles, California. Bill Henry's life is often discussed, both in print and in the collective memory of his alma mater, as a series of professional roles: a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, news broadcaster for CBS and NBC, historian of the Olympic Games, and aviation enthusiast. I think archivists tend to understand individuals and families in this compartmentalized fashion because we arrange and describe records in the context of the activities in which they were produced. Henry's professional roles provide a clear method of organizing an exhibit, but I think something larger can be gleaned from these aspects of his life. He was more than a man working and living in 20<sup>th</sup> century Los Angeles. He was part of a larger social framework that experienced massive political, cultural, and economic change.

Rather than presenting the life of this man in isolated segments, which suggest that his professional identities are not connected, I will discuss Henry in the contexts of the rapid economic development of Los Angeles, and the transformation of American news media during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, rather than exhibiting the parts of this man's life, and speculating on how he impacted his time and place, I would like to explore how the social context of his time can be understood through particular documents in his collection. For this research forum poster, I will present a brief discussion of my experience conceptualizing, researching, curating, and designing the Bill Henry exhibit.

## About the author:

*Kate Dundon* is a Contract Project Archivist at Occidental College, where she manages the Bill Henry Collection and Library. Her previous places of work include Princeton University, New York University, the Museum of Sex, and the New York Public Library. Her research interests focus on gender and sexuality, and she completed her Masters thesis at NYU on pornography archives in 2011. She earned an MLIS from Long Island University, and an MA in Archives and Public History from NYU. She lives in Los Angeles, and is open to new professional opportunities. Find her on Twitter @kdundun.