



The Archival Spirit, March 1999

Newsletter of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, Society of American Archivists

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From the Chair: Kinga Perzynska, 1997-1999

Most of all I would like to wish the ARCS members a happy and productive New Year! I hope that 1999 will be a good year for each of you, and I look forward to seeing you at the SAA/ARCS annual meeting in Pittsburgh. I need to apologize to our readers and members of the ARCS for the delay in producing the November 1998 Archival Spirit. I think that the transition of editorial responsibilities from an editor who was doing her work for many years is not usually easy. Daniel Stokes, the new Editor, is trying to overcome quickly the technical difficulties, and as a result, we are receiving this newsletter soon after the November issue, sent to our members in February.

At the same time, I would like to remind everyone that the production of a really informative newsletter, not only depends on the energetic editor gathering information and putting the newsletter together, but mostly on the individual input of every member of our Section. Having this in mind, remember to send articles and information about your activities, special events and exhibits to the editor or to Robert Johnson-Lally, the present Communication and Publication Committee chair. They would also like to receive photographs from events and information about your publications and presentations on the Web. Information about any regional professional workshops and meetings will be also very helpful to our members. This information will also be included in our future Web site.

The exciting news is the initiation of our Web page. Timothy Driscoll, Web Master, has almost finished his work preparing the page. We will be able to launch it in early April 1999. The page will be hosted by The Archives of the Episcopal Church, USA, and will be linked to the main SAA page. Besides general information about our Section, we will publish our newsletter, list publications, present activities of our committees, and inform members about our cooperation with ICA/SKR and other religious collections archivists in the world. Please send any comments about the page, after visiting it, to Timothy Driscoll, 617-496-5153, timothy_driscoll@harvard.edu

We would like to hear more about your needs regarding the next SAA/ARCS meeting in Pittsburgh. Besides the regular business meeting, we would like to provide some discussion groups depending on the interests and needs of the membership. In the next newsletter, we will inform you about the coordinators of the theme circles and material we would like for you to bring to Pittsburgh to be a part of a discussion group. The Models and Resources Committee will propose coordinators, and results of group discussions will provide material for future Committee work. Please contact L. Dale Patterson, Committee chair, 973-408-3189, Dpatterson@gcah.org, if you have any questions or proposals for the group themes.

GET INVOLVED IN ONE OF OUR COMMITTEES' WORK, AND SUBMIT YOUR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION PROPOSALS!!!

Nominees Selected for Annual Meeting Election in Pittsburgh

The Nominations and Elections Committee has placed into nomination the following individuals to be considered for the offices of Vice Chair/Chair Elect and at-large member of the Steering Committee.

The following two individuals have been nominated to serve as Vice Chair/Chair Elect:

Kate McGinn - Archivist, Fuller Theological Seminary

I have a master's degree in European history and one in library science. For the last four years I have served as Archivist to Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, where I work to promote the archive in secular circles as well as religious ones. My activities within the archival community of California include participation on the program and local arrangements committees for various Society of California Archivists annuals meetings, efforts to develop a group of archivists of religious collections in the state, and involvement in the Western Archives Institute. At present, I serve the Religious Collections Section of the SAA as an at-large member of the Steering Committee.

From 1996 to 1998 I served as a reference librarian at California State University and an adjunct member of the faculty, teaching a course in library skills.

During my tenure at Fuller Seminary I have delivered papers and written on various aspects of the material housed in the seminary's diverse collections. My most recent publication is on The Society of Pentecostal Studies (Ecumenism, Fall 1998).

L. Dale Patterson - Archivist/Records Administrator, General Commission on Archives and History of The United Methodist Church

I have been employed by the Commission since 1994. Previously I was Associate Archivist at the University of Louisville Archives. My graduate degree was in American Religious History from Drew University. I became a Certified Archivist in 1989.

I think that communication is the greatest challenge for archivists of religious collections. There is a need to communicate what we have in our collections between ourselves and to the general research public. But in addition we need to communicate to our core constituents. Many in our local communities, churches, or synagogues often call upon us to help them preserve their religious heritage. This is a part of what makes us different from the public archives or the corporate archives in that we have a distinct community, beyond our immediate borders, who often depend and rely upon us. Part of our work in this section can be to help coordinate our resources so that we can all effectively minister to those who look toward us. This can include sharing information about workshops, printed resources and other resources in order that by collaborating, when possible, we can effectively reach out to this larger community. This task of coordination should be one of the continuing concerns of the Steering Committee.

The following two individuals have been nominated to fill one position as an at-large member of the Steering Committee.

S. Mary Serbacki, OSF - Province Archivist, Sisters of St. Francis, Holy Name Province

I received an A.B. from the College of New Rochelle in 1972, and an M.A. in History and Archives Administration from the University of Michigan in 1979. Since 1980 I have also done consulting for other religious archives and have served as Project Archivist at my congregation's generalate in Rome, Italy. My experience includes presentations at national and regional archives conferences and workshops in both the U.S. and Canada. A member of SAA since 1980, I have served as chair of the Women Religious Archives Roundtable, a member of the ARCS Nominating Committee, and a member of SAA's Task Force on Sections and Roundtables. I am also a member of the Academy of Certified Archivists, Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (having served on the national board and as president), the Mid-Atlantic Archives Conference, the Lake Ontario Archives Conference, and the Western New York Archivists.

When the members of an organization are as geographically spread-out as are those of ARCS, it is difficult to develop the sense of belonging and camaraderie so necessary to promoting participation, collaboration, and outreach. The fact that the membership comes together at most once a year only compounds the challenge. The Steering Committee must continue to make the section meetings forums for members to meet and discuss areas of mutual concern. Social events during the annual meeting are also good opportunities for getting to know each other, becoming comfortable with each other, and developing a sense of ownership to the section. Collaboration follows on the heels of knowing each other. If I know someone, I'm apt to call for advice or assistance, to say yes to a request, or even to volunteer!

Participation and outreach follow on the heels of ownership. If I feel a sense of belonging, I want to participate and I am more willing to reach out to other members. Newsletters, Web sites, and e-mail addresses are all means of communication. They can be even more effective when used to keep contact among those who already have a vested interest in the Section.

Wesley W. Wilson - Coordinator of Archives and Special Collections, DePauw University

I have been Coordinator of Archives and Special Collections at DePauw University since 1984. Prior to that I served as a photographic archivist at the Western Reserve Historical Society for three years. I am originally from Columbus, Ohio, and am a graduate of The Ohio State University and Case Western University. I now live in Greencastle, Indiana, with my wife and three children and enjoy hiking, bicycling, and fishing.

As a new member of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section, I believe that the Steering Committee needs to look for ways to reach the Section members with information that will be useful to them and provide members with ways to participate in the Section.

Our Section members come from a variety of backgrounds and include archivists in positions ranging from full-time professional to part-time and volunteer. This poses a challenge to the Steering Committee in meeting the ends of a group with so diverse a range of experience and training.

Our Section members are also more likely to serve clientele that are geographically dispersed. Consequently, more work is required of the Section member to reach his or her clientele with information about the usefulness of the collections and the value of adding to them than would typically be the case for an archivist with a centralized clientele. The challenge to the Steering Committee is to provide information to the Section members on outreach and publicity.

These challenges may never be completely overcome, but some activities may help, such as providing opportunities and information to Section members. This can be done in a variety of ways. Members may take part in workshops designed with their needs in mind and contribute to the Section by sharing experiences with other members during annual meetings. The newsletter can highlight different collections and particular difficulties overcome by the archivist at that institution. An archival question may be asked of the membership soliciting feedback which can be published in subsequent newsletters. Sessions at the annual meeting should continue to be suggested to the SAA Program Committee with Section members ready and able to serve on them.

Archivists of Religious Collections Section Bylaws

(Adopted in 1983; amended in 1986, 1989, 1997, and 1998)

I. Membership

Membership in the Archivists of Religious Collections Section (the Section) of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) is open to any member of the Society with an interest in the records, archives, or historical collections of churches, synagogues, and other religious institutions, religious congregations, and agencies.

II. Objectives

1. To provide a forum for the discussion of religious archival matters;
2. To identify, discuss, and resolve areas of mutual concern and new developments in the areas of religious archives;
3. To encourage and provide communication among Section members and with the Society in general;
4. To serve as an advocate for religious archival interests;
5. To carry out specific functions which have been assigned to the Section in general or to committees or individuals;
6. To integrate new members in the field and to develop leadership in the Section as well as in the Society itself;
7. To recommend to Council actions or positions the Section feels appropriate for the entire Society; and
8. To suggest programs and speakers as well as other activities appropriate for the SAA annual meetings.

III. Officers

A. The officers of the Section shall be the Chair, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Immediate Past Chair, and Secretary.

B. Only members of the Society of American Archivists and of this Section may serve as officers. The Society maintains the list of Section members. The term of office shall be two years. Only the Secretary shall be eligible for reelection.

C. Biennially, there shall be elected a Vice Chair/Chair Elect who shall succeed the Chair upon completion of the Chair's two year term and who shall preside in the Chair's absence or inability to serve.

D. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Section and of its Steering Committee. In addition, the Chair shall also serve as liaison with the SAA in general, its Council and other Sections, shall appoint committees as the need arises, and shall render reports to the Section membership, the Council, and the SAA membership on such matters as deemed pertinent or identified by the officers and the Steering Committee.

E. The Secretary shall record the proceedings of the annual meeting, prepare minutes of Steering Committee meetings, and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Chair. In the absence of a duly elected Secretary, the Chair shall appoint a replacement for the annual meeting.

F. The Immediate Past Chair shall either serve as Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee or appoint a Section member to serve as Chair, and shall assume such responsibilities as may be assigned by the Section Chair.

G. Should any elected officer or board member be unable to complete a term of office, a special election shall be held to fill the vacancy.

IV. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall consist of the elected officers and two other members elected by the Section; these two members must be members of the Section and will serve terms of two years on a rotating basis. The Steering Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Chair, and its members may be assigned specific responsibilities by the Chair. The annual meeting of the Section shall be planned by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee shall appoint a Section member or members to be editor of the Sections's newsletter. The Steering Committee shall review and evaluate the newsletter at each annual meeting.

V. Standing Committees

A. The Chair and/or the Steering Committee may appoint committees as needed, and shall define the role of any committee. Only members of the Society of American Archivists and the Section may be appointed committee members. Committees shall report to the annual meeting.

B. In the event that a special committee discovers that its task has extended beyond the bounds of Section authority or that it will require a separate budget to carry out its assignments, the committee shall report this to the annual meeting of the Section with the request that the Section approve the formation of a separate task force. The Section may then recommend to the SAA Council that such a task force be formed.

VI. Election of Officers

A. There shall be a Nominations and Elections Committee comprised of the Immediate Past Chair or his or her appointee and two members appointed by the Chair of the committee at the close of the annual meeting. The Committee shall propose two or more nominees for each position to be filled.

B. Nominations shall be solicited in the first issue of *The Archival Spirit*, the Section's newsletter, published after the annual meeting, and a final listing of nominees will be announced in the last newsletter issued before the annual meeting.

Only members of the Society of American Archivists and the Section may be nominated as officers. All members of the Section may vote. Voting at the annual meeting shall be by secret ballot. Any members of the Section who will not be able to attend the annual meeting may request an absentee ballot from the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee six weeks before the annual meeting. All such ballots must be returned to the Chair of the Nominations and Elections Committee one week prior to the annual meeting. A majority of votes cast shall be required for election as a Section officer.

C. The Nominations and Elections Committee shall be responsible for tabulating and announcing the results of the elections. This will be done during the annual meeting. Elected officers shall assume office at the conclusion of the annual meeting.

D. Should a special election become necessary to fill a vacancy, the Nominations and Elections Committee shall receive nominations and propose candidates. As with regular elections, the committee shall be responsible for tabulating the ballots and announcing the results.

VII. Meetings

A. The Section shall meet annually at the time and place of the SAA annual meeting at a time determined by the SAA Program Committee.

B. Special meetings may be called by the Chair with the advice and consent of the Steering Committee. The content and nature of such a meeting shall be determined in advance and shared with the membership.

VIII. Amendments

A. Any members of the Section may propose amendments to these bylaws in writing to the Chair at least six months prior to the annual meeting. The Chair shall circulate the proposed amendments to the Steering Committee for their consideration. If a majority of the Steering Committee concurs with the proposals, they shall be submitted to the membership at the annual meeting. In that case a majority vote of those present at the annual meeting shall be necessary to amend the bylaws.

B. In the event that the majority of the Steering Committee does not approve the proposed amendments, the petitioner may still present his proposals at the annual meeting, which shall then require a two-thirds majority vote for adoption.

IX. Enactment

The original bylaws became effective immediately upon their adoption by majority vote of the members of the Religious Archives Section* at the annual meeting in 1983. The Chair and Secretary in office at the date of enactment shall continue in office until the expiration of the term for which they were elected. A Vice Chair/Chair Elect shall be nominated and elected at the meeting at which these bylaws are adopted, and shall succeed to the Chair upon the expiration of his/her term.

Amendments to these bylaws become effective following passage at the annual meeting.

X. Dissolution

The Section, noting failing interest or lack of accomplishing its objectives, may vote to dissolve by a majority. The SAA Council may also dissolve this Section if, in its opinion, it is no longer meeting the specified goals and objectives of the Section.

**The Section voted September 27, 1991, at the annual meeting in Philadelphia, to change its name from the Religious Archives Section to the Archivists of Religious Collections Section.*

United Methodist Church Archives Survey Project

The United Methodist Church Archives is initiating a survey project for the denomination's regional (called conference) archives. These 66 conference archives are spread around the U. S. The goal of the project will be to create a guide to the collections in all of these conference archives. The guide will be published both in paper and on the Web. Twelve workshops are planned over the next two years to instruct the conference archivists how to participate in the survey. The workshops will cover basic descriptive practices. For more information contact: Dale Patterson, United Methodist Church Archives - GCAH, P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940; Dpatterson@gcah.org

Survey of Our Resources

If you haven't responded to the ARCS Resources Survey, there is still time. We are doing a survey this year on the types of resources our members offer from their archives. The purpose of the survey is to help us be aware of what each of us offer and are doing, and if possible to be able to share resources. For example, if three groups are conducting a workshop for lone arrangers in the same area, they might wish to pool their resources and have one big workshop. We will end up creating a document which can be circulated among ARCS members and perhaps even placed on the Web which will list what types of resources we all have available. So, take a moment and read the survey and send your responses in to me.

- 1 What type of literature does your organization produce for the public? Leave out finding aids, but include how-tos, bibliographies, biographical/historical pamphlets, etc.
- 1 What types of workshops do you regularly offer?
- 1 What special resources, such as videos and preservation work, does your organization offer?

Return your responses to: Dale Patterson, United Methodist Church Archives - GCAH, P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940, or Dpatterson@gcah.org

U.S. Catholic Documentary Heritage Project Update

The U.S. Catholic Historical Society (USCHS) announced the opening of the U.S. Catholic Documentary Heritage Project Web site, the aim of which is to provide an online guide to repositories and collections of primary sources documenting the history of Catholicism in the United States. This Web site places directory type information on Catholic archival repositories and collections on the Internet via the cooperation and assistance of Catholic Online with the guidance of Catholic archivists.

Phase I of the U.S. Catholic Historical Society's Catholic Documentary Heritage Project was officially opened on September 30, 1998. The USCHS's URL is www.catholic.org/uschs. The project can be accessed at www.catholic.org/uschs/usatholic/index.htm. As of September 28, 1998, 203 replies had been received.

Religious congregations lead with a total of 103 responses to date. Diocesan archives have a total of 68 responses, 12 Catholic colleges/universities have replied and there are 4 unclassified others. While this response from Catholic archives is encouraging, there still are Catholic repositories which have not yet participated in the project, especially those of Catholic male religious, as well as Catholic colleges and universities, hospitals and other independent organizations. We hope to reach as many of them as possible and will include any of them wishing to join Phase I of the project even after its official close.

Thanks to a \$35,000 grant from the Catholic Communications Campaign, the project will be moving on to Phase II. The second stage involves the addition of more detailed information about the collections found in Catholic archival repositories, such as descriptions of record groups, lists of collections held by repositories and finding aids for individual collections. Other possibilities include brief organizational histories or timelines and/or sample images of documents found in collections without detailed finding aids, such as photographs of people, places and events connected with Catholic history. Phase II is being developed by the Archival Committee in conjunction with major Catholic archival organizations such as the Association of Catholic Diocesan Archivists (ACDA), the Archivists of Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR), and Catholic colleges and universities.

Anyone wishing further information about the project should contact Joseph Coen at (718) 229-8001 ext. 475 or FXMLIB2@concentric.net, or, for religious congregations, Sr. Dolores Liptak at (860) 232-8602 or sdlrsm@aol.com

Archivists of Religious Institutions to Meet

The Archivists of Religious Institutions will hold its Spring Meeting on Wednesday, April 14, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, at the Sisters of St. Joseph in Brentwood, NY. The presenters for the meeting will be Judith Johnson on "Getting the Most From Your Database" and Joseph Coen on "The U. S. Catholic Documentary Heritage Project."

For information and to register contact: Sr. Edna McKeever, CSJ, St. Joseph's Convent, 1725 Brentwood Rd., Brentwood, NY 11717-5587; (516) 273-1187, ext. 24; (516) 273-1345 (FAX)

Editor's Notes

The Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. For membership information, contact SAA at: 527 South Wells, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60607; (312) 922-0140; FAX: (312) 347-1452; e-mail: info@archivists.org.

The Editor would like to include in future issues your local news or newsletter information, items of interest in your area, and comments on current or recent projects. Send this information to: Daniel A. Stokes, Program Officer, National Historical Publications and Records Commission, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 111, Washington, DC 20408-0001; (202) 501-5610; FAX: (202) 501-5601; e-mail: daniel.stokes@arch1.nara.gov

NEXT DEADLINE: May 15 for July 1999 issue

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