



The Archival Spirit, March 2002 (Spring issue)

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

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Greetings from the Chair:

Plan a Trip This Summer

This is the essay I was going to write for the Summer issue. But I decided to do it early. Come to the SAA meeting in Birmingham! There I've said it. While I am on the Program Committee, this request is not just being loyal to the Society line. Because you are a member of ARCS plan to come to Birmingham. And it is not just because of the program. We are going to have a great program. As a member of the Program Committee I went to Birmingham in early December and met with other hardworking committee members as we planned this year's sessions. It is going to be great. But that is not the only reason why I'm asking you to come to Birmingham. While at the committee meeting we heard a report from the Host Committee. The Host Committee has picked the hotel, and planned such things as the tours and receptions. It was during that report that it dawned on me. Come for the meeting, but also come for the tours. For ARCS members Birmingham has some special interests. This year we will have a chance to tour several key sites of the Civil Rights struggles. Places such as the 16th Street Baptist Church, and others. In past years we in ARCS talked, among other things, about how religion has had an impact on society and how we document that impact. In Birmingham we have a chance to see some of those sites. Church leaders using religious language to help motivate social change. As archivists we are in a profession which practices the art of keeping and remembering. As archivists involved in religious institutions or the study of religion, we understand the religious significance memory. At its best religion truly inspires us to a better life, for ourselves and for others. Birmingham is a place which reminds us of that. So, I encourage you to make your plans now, to come to SAA this Summer. Come to Birmingham, for the program and this year plan to take a tour and see some of the story of how religion also affected the country, and the world, for good.

United Methodist Archival Workshops

In early September, Dale Patterson, Archivist for the United Methodist Church, and Dr. Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., General Secretary for the General Commission on Archives and History, conducted a week long workshop on archives in Reutlingen, Germany for the chairs of the conference archives in the United Methodist conferences in Europe. The United Methodist church has conferences (a regional unit like a synod or diocese) in Europe, Africa and the Philippines. In Europe the conferences extend from France, through Germany, Scandinavia, eastern Europe and on into Russia. The week long training, the first conducted by the Archives staff for conference leaders, consisted of an introduction to archives, basic descriptive practices, oral history and local church history. The workshop was conducted at the United Methodist Seminary at Reutlingen. The workshop this Fall completed a three-year project in which the Archives staff has conducted workshops for the conferences in Africa, in the Philippines, and Europe.

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

August 30, 2001

Officers Present: Mark Duffy, Chair; Dale Patterson, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect; Kinga Perzynska, Past Chair/Nominating-Elections Committee Chair; Diane Wells, Secretary; Lucinda Glenn-Rand, Steering Committee At-Large.

Members Present: 65

The Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists met Thursday, August 30, 2001 at the Hilton Washington & Towers Hotel, Washington, D.C. The business meeting was opened at 8:10 AM by the Chair.

Opening Remarks of the Chair:

The Chair welcomed the members of the Section to the meeting and introduced the officers. He then noted that much of his time during the past year had been spent working on the newsletter as an editor had not been found until recently. He then indicated that Bob Shuster, Director, Billy Graham Center Archives, had agreed to act as composition editor for one year and would continue for a second year if he received cooperation from the membership in obtaining articles for the newsletter.

The Chair handed out a participation survey form and stressed the importance of membership participation in the activities of the Section. He asked members to read carefully the form and to indicate the areas where they would be willing to help support the work of the Section. The Chair emphasized the point that the Section depends upon the input and volunteer efforts of its members in order to function. He asked that -- at the very least -- members should communicate something about the work they are doing by writing an article for the newsletter.

The Chair concluded by remarking on the need to generate new leadership within the Section and invited members to attend the Steering Committee meeting that would be held later that day.

Secretary's Report:

The Chair called on Diane Wells, Secretary, who handed out copies of the minutes of the previous meeting, published in the November, 2000 issue of the Archival Spirit.

ACTION: It was moved and seconded that the Minutes of the August 31, 2000 meeting of the Archivists of Religious Collections Section be approved as published. **Carried.**

Bylaws Committee Report:

The Chair called on Sr. Mary Serbacki of the Bylaws Committee, who handed out copies of a proposed revision of the bylaws. The proposed bylaw revision is indicated in bold italics as follows:

Section IV: The Steering Committee shall consist of the elected officers, *chairs of the standing committees*, and two other members elected by the Section

Rationale: Although the present bylaws mandate that the Steering Committee have six members, current practice has evolved to increase the size of the committee to include the chairs of the standing committees. In order to bring the bylaws into conformity with current practice, the first sentence of Section IV should be revised.

ACTION: It was moved and seconded that the bylaws revision be approved. **Carried.**

Models and Resources Committee Report:

The Chair called on Christine Taylor who reported that the Committee had contacted 25 repositories and received 10 responses to requests for resource materials. It appears that most repositories do workshops in-house. She reported that the Committee has a basis for a good directory that they would like to organize by region, denomination and type of repository. In addition she suggested that the membership look at the Billy Graham Center Archives web site: www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/archhp1.html for a listing of resources. She also indicated that the First Church of Christian Scientist puts on records management seminars.

Nominating/Election Committee Report:

The Chair called on Kinga Perzynska, Nominating-Elections Committee Chair, who expressed her appreciation to Nominating-Elections Committee members and handed out the election ballots. She explained the make-up of the Steering Committee and indicated that there were three nominees in this years election: Wesley Wilson, who is nominated for the position of Steering Committee member A- Large, replacing Sr. Mary Serbacki who has stepped down from this position; Diane Wells, who is nominated for the position of Vice- chair/Chair-Elect; and Gwynedd Cannan, who is nominated for the position of Secretary. She then called for nominations from the floor.

Communications Committee Report:

The Chair first called on Robert Johnson-Lally who reported on the Membership Directory. He indicated that 262 of the 381 survey forms had been received and that the draft of the Directory was almost finished and that the

project was near completion.

The Chair then called on Lucinda Glenn-Rand for a report on the section newsletter, The Archival Spirit. She reported that she and Kinga Perzynska were collecting articles for the newsletter and that their goal was to create a newsletter that represented the diverse nature of the section both geographically and by type of repository.

The Chair then reported on the sections web site. He indicated that the new address for the web site is: www.saa-arcs.org. He further indicated that since Tim Driscoll, our Web Coordinator, has left the section, he (Mark Duffy) will continue to support the site but that he is looking for help.

SAA Council Liaison Report:

The Chair introduced Dennis Harrison, SAA Council Liaison, who indicated that he will be stepping down as Council Liaison and that David Haury will be his successor. He reported that no issues had been received by Council from ARCS. He then spoke about the raffle that was being held to raise funds for SAA scholarships and concluded by asking that Council be informed of any ARCS leadership changes.

Sister M. Claude Lane Award Committee Report:

Mark Duffy reported for the Committee, William Brock, Chair, with members Lisa Gibbons and Elizabeth Wittman, that there would be an award made this year and that the recipient would be Kinga Perzynska, current Chair of the Nominating Committee and former Chair of the section. Kinga's dedicated participation over many years on the local, national and international level more than qualifies her for this well- deserved award.

International Council on Archives/Section of Archives of Churches and Religious Denominations:

The Chair called on Kinga Perzynska who reported that the ICA's religious archives section had met in St. Petersburg, Russia in June, 2001 and that several ARCS section members were present at that meeting.

Report on Elections:

Kinga Perzynska reported that the ballots had been tallied and announced the following results: Diane Wells received 62 of 64 votes for Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Wesley Wilson received 56 of 64 votes for Steering Committee At-Large, Gwynedd Cannan received 61 of 64 votes for Secretary. Congratulations to the new officers.

Other Leadership Changes:

At the end of this meeting, Kinga Perzynska's term as Nominating Committee Chair will be concluded. She will be followed in that position by Mark Duffy who is completing his term as Chair. Dale Patterson's term as Vice Chair will be complete and he will assume leadership of the section as Chair.

Kinga Perzynska then presented a symbolic gavel to out-going Chair Mark Duffy, who wielded it with enthusiasm for the remainder of the meeting before presenting it to his successor. The business meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM.

The business meeting was followed by a program featuring two simultaneous group discussions on the topics: *Documenting Faith Communities: Worship and Celebration*, led by Dale Patterson, United Methodist Church Archives and Diane Wells, Diocese of Olympia Archives and *Documenting Faith Communities: Unveiling Issues of Cultural Diversity and Human Sexuality*, led by Christine Taylor, Archdiocese of Seattle Archives and Lucinda Glenn Rand, General Theological Union Archives.

Reflections and Recommendations from Discussion Groups:

Julia Randle, Virginia Theological Seminary, reported on the findings of the Documenting Faith Communities: Worship and Celebration discussion group as follows:

1. It is necessary to educate our faith communities about the importance of documenting and preserving the record of worship in their communities. This can be done through personal contact, workshops, the provision of how to resource materials, etc. The use of videotape to preserve current worship services and the use of oral histories to provide documentation of past oral traditions were also discussed. Celebrations offer an opportunity to develop an appreciation of history and the preservation of historical materials within our faith communities. We can use these occasions to foster the gathering of such materials as well as an encouragement to future documentation particularly if we actively provide the assistance and guidance required.
2. Sensitivity to historical context and changes within the life of a faith community must be taken into account

when attempting to document the worship experience. Faith communities grow and change over time. Some have a long, stable history, others divide, some separate and come together again and still others merge with others to become something new. These changes are reflected in forms of worship and should be documented.

3. Once documentation has been obtained, it must be publicized and made available.

Possible topics for future discussion include ways in which to help faith communities celebrate their anniversaries and notable events; the preparation and use of retention schedules for faith communities; and preservation basics, including the preservation of videotapes, CDs, and other media.

Mark Thiel, Marquette University, reported on the findings of the Documenting Faith Communities: Unveiling Issues of Cultural Diversity and Human Sexuality discussion group as follows:

1. Various differences identified:

- a. Ethnicity
- b. Language
- c. Sexual orientation
- d. Political (liberal/conservative)

Differences both within/outside of faith communities can be barriers to documenting ethnic and gender groups within the faith group.

2. Institutional relationships:

- a. Collaboration with advocacy groups builds trust with related faith group members (e.g. lesbian, gay);
- b. Secular repositories with competing agendas may resist cooperation (e.g. historical societies, universities, etc.).

3. Networking and Collaboration:

- a. Inter-personal and community/parish relationship building;
- b. Communications, appearances;
- c. Trust building results from improving a & b.

4. Appeal to higher authority:

- a. Professional ethics, professional associations.
- b. Relationship building between professionals and institutions.

Possible topics for future SAA sessions include:

1. Diversity & Trust: Networking and Communicating (Lucinda Glenn Rand).
2. Competitive Collecting by Secular Repositories (Christine Taylor).

Announcements: After the discussion reports were concluded, Chair, Mark Duffy announced that of the 65 members in attendance, 48 had returned the participation survey form and of those 48, 33 had volunteered to participate in the section in some way. He noted that the section had received a very nice letter from Sr. Emma Cecilia Busam, a long time member, who announced her retirement.

Installation of Chair: Dale Patterson, United Methodist Church Archives, was then installed as Chair.

Chair, Dale Patterson, then announced that three section members were on this year's SAA program: Elizabeth Wittman would be participating in session # 15, Mercy and Justice for All: Issues and Sources for Documenting Social Missions of American Churches and Kinga Perzynska and Christine Taylor in session #26, Civil and Religious Legal Aspects of Access: An International Perspective. He also noted that he is a member of SAA's 2002 Program Committee and encouraged the submission of session proposals. He further invited members to attend today's Steering Committee meeting to be held at 12:15 PM.

Adjournment

The meeting closed at 10:05 AM

Respectfully submitted by:
Diane Wells, Secretary

CONSULTATION AT WHEATON LENDS HISTORY A HELPING HAND

Thirty-nine archivists, scholars, mission agency administrators, and representatives from schools across the country that train people for Christian ministry, met November 1-3, 2001 at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois with a set of

common concerns -- how to develop, preserve, and make available valuable historic records of Protestant non-denominational missions.

The three-day event at Wheaton's Billy Graham Center was the final activity of the Currents in World Christianity Project, a project for which Dr. Wilbert Shenk of Fuller Theological Seminary served as the North American director. He was the initiator of this consultation which received funding from the Pew Charitable Trust. It was held at the Colleges Billy Graham Center, under the direction of the staff of the Billy Graham Center Archives, headed by Archives director Bob Shuster.

A group headed by Paul Ericksen, associate director of the Archives, prepared a set of guidelines for missions that was distributed to participants before the conference began to provide common reference points for discussion. As participants listened to each other and shared ideas, a set of improved guidelines emerged. The revised are now available on the Internet at: <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/ema/guidelines02.htm> They will soon be available in printed form free through the Billy Graham Center Archives to any interested party.

NONDENOMINATIONAL MISSION AGENCIES have been a dominant force in the American mission movement for many decades, yet because of their strong focus on the present, their historical records have received little attention. It is urgent that their documents be assembled, organized and preserved. Few records documenting their histories have been kept either by the missions themselves or by outside agencies, such as seminaries, or Bible schools or Christian colleges.

In his keynote address David Howard, one of the most influential leaders of American missions and noted author of numerous books and articles on mission related subjects, emphasized the importance of historical perspectives. It is vitally important that the leadership of any mission should understand fully their heritage, he said. In writing the history of World Evangelical Fellowship (the organization Howard took over in 1982), the use of the archives in the Billy Graham Center and other resources, proved to be an absolutely invaluable exercise. Dr. Howard observed that it enabled him to give leadership based on a firm foundation of who we were and where we had come from.

Howard's experience, and that of many others in attendance, all seeking to be responsible keepers of mission history, was summarized in a quote shared by Shuster on opening day. Within the body of Christ, he said, archives serve as memory, not just for utilitarian reasons but as part of the bonds of love and respect that bind us with our brothers and sisters who went before us and will come after.

For further information about the consultation and its proceedings, please contact the Billy Graham Center Archives (bgcarc@wheaton.edu). The website of the Consultation on Nondenominational Mission Archives may be found on-line at <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/consult/consult.html>. A special website that has been created for mission agencies interested in preserving their own archives has been created at: <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/ema/first.htm>

Statements from mission leaders at the Consultation:

I was completely taken by surprise, while attending the Consultation on Mission Archives held by the Billy Graham Center Archives on November 1-3, 2001, by how little I understood relating to the proper care for a mission agencies archives.... I reflected back on my years of administrative services in missions organizations and how I had a blind spot concerning the proper storage and arrangement of papers, that reflected the organizations heritage, and their preservation. Yes, the saying that old dogs can learn new tricks is true and I am now a strong advocate for the importance of mission agencies setting board policies for the preservation of records in an organized archives, in order to protect the vital history of missions.

John E. Kyle - Senior Vice President of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies (EFMA)

In his 1969 presidential address to the American Historical Association, the distinguished Harvard Sinologist John King Fairbank challenged his colleagues. He asserted that the missionary is the invisible man of history. Yet, said Fairbank, the missionary movement is the single-most important intercultural experiment in history. Although Fairbank was no apologist for Christian missions, he saw their significance in cultural history and told historians they ought to pay attention to the rich documentation to be found in mission archives.... The outstanding mission leaders of the past 200 years - Rufus Anderson, Henry Venn, Gustav Warneck, Robert E. Speer and Max Warren - all lead by cultivating a strong sense of tradition. They saw the present and future of missions drawing continuously on the strength and values of the past of their agencies. They kept that past alive by reflection on it and drawing on those enduring values that defined their agencies over the years. Archival records were indispensable to their extraordinary leadership. From the reporting we have heard, it is apparent that one strategic alliance that ought to be encouraged is for educational institutions - Bible colleges, colleges, universities, seminaries - to become repositories where missionary agencies place their archives. The educational potential of these collections is considerable. The institution can provide expert supervision in a proper environment; but the missionary agency thus makes available an important resource for research scholars and students.

Dr. Wilbert Shenk, Fuller Theological Seminary

Anniversary celebrations are wake-up calls to the value of historic documents, photos, and artifacts. I saw these materials come to life when we celebrated CAM [Central American Mission] Internationals centennial. In subsequent centennial celebrations in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and other Central American countries, CAMs archives emerged as priceless treasures. Archives not only review the past; they give guidance in the present and impart vision for the future. Neglect of mission archives is a malady that must be cured. Preserving records of what God has done is high priority. It is His story for His glory.

Dr. Ron Blue, President Emeritus, CAM International

I thank you and all who worked with you to provide the Consultation on Nondenominational Mission Archives. I appreciate the unique opportunity to have been a participant. Im grateful for the people (archivists, historians, representatives of missions and institutions) who attended. Im even more grateful for the expertise that God has given to you who are archivists, historians, etc. and for your willingness to share that expertise and to preserve the wonderful heritage that God has allowed to be ours as Christians.... May the Lord increase your number and may I be faithful as a mission leader to do my part to challenge, encourage and preserve the story of Gods work in our midst for the encouragement and benefit of others.

Carl McMindes, Gospel Missionary Union

On stepping aside as president of the Latin America Mission, I chose to get involved in the archives of the Mission.... What compelled me to become immersed in the minutia and myriad of details in sorting out bits of info and organizing dusty files? Basically, I took up the task because I wanted to assure the continued full and faithful recording of our Missions history under which I served for ultimately 40 years. In a word, we want to be true to our rich inheritance. I am extremely grateful for the recent Consultation on Nondenominational Mission Archives held at the Billy Graham Center and the opportunity to be a part of it. I came away with valuable technical help, with new enthusiasm for our task, and the desire to convince other institutions of the vital importance of initiating and maintaining a well-thought through system of archives.

Clayton L. (Mike) Berg

EDITOR'S NOTES

The Editor would like to include in future issues news items about what American religious archives are doing and would be especially interested in hearing about new projects, notable acquisitions, and opinion pieces. Let us help you connect with others in the field. Send news and notes to Lucinda Glenn Rand lglen@gtn.edu.

Archival Spirit is published three times a year by the Archivists of Religious Collections Section of the Society of American Archivists. Feature pieces as well as announcements of acquisitions and projects are welcome. 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.

[End of document. HTML document version prepared January 25, 2002.]