

The Archival Spirit

December, 2014

From the Chair

As Thanksgiving approaches, I find myself thinking about how thankful I am that I chose a profession I enjoy so much. I have a challenging job with wonderful colleagues. Beyond my day-to-day work, I am also very thankful for working with archivist colleagues from around the country in ARCS and other professional organizations. At the 2014 section meeting, I appreciated hearing from diverse organizations on the topic of *"Consolidating, Downsizing, and Renegotiating Relationships: Feats of Archival Agility in Religious Repositories."* Faced with diminishing resources, religious repositories have found successful methods of becoming more agile, often through collaboration.

I have heard from some members that archival collaboration is a topic they would like to learn more about. Based on responses to our section meeting and other conversations with members, how to better collaborate appears to be a major issue for archivists, with special concerns for religious repositories. We are considering how we can approach this topic, possibly by submitting a workshop proposal for a new SAA workshop.

Please send any thoughts you have about ARCS and how we can help you to annera23@gmail.com

*Anne Thomason, Section Chair
Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, IL*



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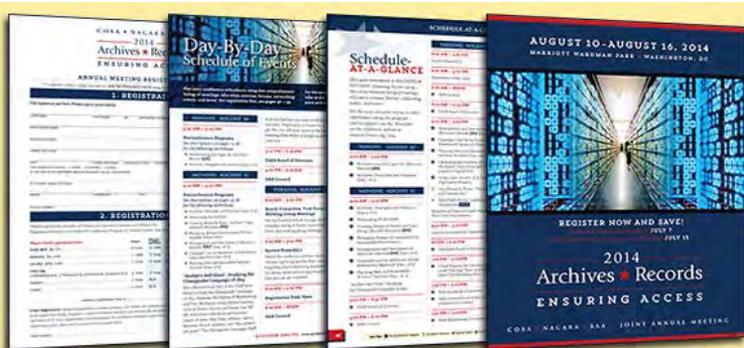
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ARCS Section Meeting, August 15, 2014



Anticipated ARCS Meeting, Cleveland, 2015

Welcome and Call to Order – 12:20pm (Anne Thomason)

2013 Meeting Minutes – Approved as presented (Anne Thomason)

2015 Program Committee (Jennifer Graham)

- In the Cleveland Convention Center; no program theme set yet
- Seeking session proposals with broad audience appeal and applicability
- No need to favor traditional formats; “pop-up” sessions are a new style.

Council Update (Lisa Mangiafico)

- Council is in the process of drafting a HIPAA policy brief
- Council is open to future joint meetings and has already written to principals of other organizations on this subject
- IMLS is considering support for continuing education in libraries, to include records management and archives administration
- SAA will continue to host the A&A listserv – membership will not be restricted solely to SAA members; the overall issue will be reviewed at the Council’s May, 2015 meeting.

From the floor

- Please recruit for [Sr. M. Claude Lane Award](#) nominees (David Kingma)
- Please consider joining the International Council on Archives (ICA) [Section for Archives of Faith Traditions](#). (Lee Leumas)

Section Election Results

- Officers: Paul Daniels, Secretary, and Wesley Wilson, Vice Chair
- At-Large: Kathy Hertel Baker and Dee Gallo.

Vice Chair’s Report (Anne Thomason)

Anne described this year’s section program and the reception afterward.

Chair’s Report (Colleen McFarland, read by Dee Gallo)

- This year’s steering committee goals were outlined; ¾ were completed
- The section newsletter is now redesigned; submissions to it are needed.

Program: *Consolidating, Downsizing and Renegotiating Relationships: Feats of Archival Agility in Religious Archives*

- “Cooperation between the Twin Cities Catholic Archivists” (Ann Kenne, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN)
- [“Inter-faith Partnership Preserves Notable Dallas Radio Sermons”](#) (Timothy Binkley, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX)
- “Collaboration in an Archives Mall!” (Russell Gasero, Reformed Church in America, New Brunswick, NJ)
- “(Re)Negotiating Relationships: Reflections on the Charity Federation Archivists” (Dee Gallo, Daughters of Charity Provincial Archives, Emmitsburg, MD)
- “The Catholic Research Resources Alliance” (Maria Mazzenga, American Catholic History Research Center, Washington, DC)

Adjournment to ARCS social reception – 2:00pm

Dear ARCS Friends,

SAA’s ARCS Meeting seems a long way off, but it’s not too early to think about a program for our meeting. The Steering Committee has tossed around a few ideas and I would like to pursue one that relates to digitization projects. Some topics might include:

- Privacy issues among the faith traditions represented in ARCS as they relate to digitization projects in our repositories
- Members’ perspectives on the use of outside vendors, like Ancestry.com, in exchange for “free” access to the digitized records
- Cooperative digitization projects with larger digital initiatives, such as state or university projects
- The benefits and potential pitfalls of grant-funded digitization projects
- Digitization planning based on user data.

If any of these, or related topics touch on your digitization experiences, would you please consider sharing them with us in the form of a 10-20 minute presentation at our next ARCS meeting? We can all gain by learning from your repository’s projects, and it’s just plain fun to hear how other ARCS repositories have handled digitization.

Hope to hear from you,

Wes Wilson, Vice Chair

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From the Members



SAA '14 Community Service Project

◇DC Central Kitchen – August 12◇

At the Washington meeting the third annual community service project took place at DC Central Kitchen (DCK). DCK serves food to thousands of needy people all over Washington, but it is not a traditional soup kitchen. DCK takes in thousands of pounds of surplus food from a variety of sources around the city, uses it to prepare meals made from scratch (over 5,000 meals every day), then distributes the meals to partner agencies such as homeless shelters and schools in poor neighborhoods around the city. Volunteers work alongside DCK staff in preparing the meals.

I was the Host Committee member tasked with finding a site for the service project, recruiting volunteers, and seeing the project through to completion. I was also one of the participants. DCK was a perfect choice for this year's project because it was well-established, reputable, had a strong volunteer program, and could work around the schedule for the meeting. The site was also easily accessible from the conference hotel, just a few Metro Stops away.

Twelve archivists spent the morning at DCK. The participants represented a wide variety of institutional settings, including religious (I was the lone religious archivist), college/university, presidential libraries, U.S. Senate, NASA, students from Drexel and students from Drexel and Simmons, and one person from the Northeast Document Conservation Center. When we arrived we watched a short orientation video, met other volunteers who would be working with us, and met DCK's volunteer coordinator, Pertula George-Redd, who talked to us about the work we would be doing and about the mission of DCK. On the morning we were there we worked alongside a group of high school students who were spending their summer doing service projects up and down the East Coast. Following the orientation we were given hairnets, gloves, and aprons, and went right to work. The actual work took place in DCK's main kitchen. We were assigned to different work stations where we spent the morning chopping and peeling different kinds of food. There was little downtime and the three-hour shift flew by. Following our shift we were invited to stay for lunch – a nice opportunity to get to know people a little better.

As a religious archivist working for a community that serves the poor, it was especially meaningful to have served on this project. I'm pleased to report that the service project, initiated three years ago by our section, has now become a model for other organizations. After the Washington meeting I was contacted by a representative from ACRL's Rare Books and Manuscripts Section, who was interested in planning a similar service project for the 2015 ALA meeting in Oakland. The Host Committee for SAA in Cleveland has contacted me as well, asking for tips and advice. As an ARCS member, I'm proud that the project we began has become a vital part of the annual meeting. Now, on to Cleveland!

*Carole Prietto
Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louise
Emmitsburg, Maryland*

The staff of Providence Archives, Seattle -- the repository for records of the Sisters of Providence Mother Joseph Province and Providence Health & Services -- took part in a meeting hosted at the Providence International Centre in Montreal this past June. The meeting convened nearly 30 staff from museums, archives, causes & communications departments of the Sisters of Providence (SP) international congregation. While the meeting had a broad focus, the Providence Archives staff were especially excited to collaborate with the other archivists of the international community. Traditionally, the secretary of each province was charged with keeping and organizing the records of her province; today, professional lay archivists

have been hired in some provinces and at the General Administration but there are still two provinces without professional archivists. Discussion at the meeting revealed that although the repositories represent the same religious community, there are variances in processes and procedures across the different areas.

This joint meeting had two main objectives: 1) Promoting the SP mission, values and charism through our work of managing, preserving, utilizing and developing the SP heritage; and 2) Fostering collaboration and effective and efficient communications among and between entities. The entities represented at the meeting included the General Administration (based in Montreal) and Émilie-Gamelin (Montreal), Bernarda Morin (Valparaiso, Chile), Holy Angels (Edmonton, Alberta) and Mother Joseph (Seattle) provinces. The archives departments of the General Administration and the Western provinces had previously met on two occasions but this meeting included all of the entities of the community and the addition of the other related departments. It should be noted that the meeting was made possible by a group of professional translators constantly interpreting using the official languages of the community: English, French and Spanish.

Over the course of the three-day meeting, we shared information about our work, outreach and projects through individual and group presentations, panel and plenary sessions, and small group discussions, and had the opportunity to tour the museum and archives there at the International Centre. These sessions brought to light differences among the entities in terms of professional backgrounds, staffing levels and reporting structures, use of technology and methods of communication. In spite of these differences there was an atmosphere of unity and excitement in finally meeting the people whom we knew by name only, if at all, who are engaged in similar work across two continents. A morning prayer led by the Chilean delegation culminated in the creation of a beautiful mandala which symbolized our common purpose and desire to work together. Clearly, there is much to be shared in terms of ideas, projects and expertise.

The general feeling of the meeting was excitement and an urgency to find a concrete way to work together. However, it was agreed that communication between entities needs to be improved before we can commit to collaborative projects. All agreed that the first step toward this goal will be a survey of each entity to more specifically pinpoint its needs and to determine how to better communicate. The Mother Joseph Province Archives staff volunteered to design and distribute the survey and the results.

The survey is now awaiting translation, but it will hopefully serve to highlight areas where we can collaborate and help one another, or at least solidify our shared goals so that we can continue the conversations we started in June. In the meantime, some of us have already made connections through Facebook by way of both our professional and personal pages. These are the first small steps of collaboration.

For any questions or more information, contact us at archives@providence.org.

Montreal, June 9-11, 2014



*Emily Hughes Dominick
Providence Archives
Seattle, Washington*

Preservation and Collection Care Issues at Small Religious Studies and Theology Collections

Library and archives staff at smaller institutions or those who care for collections that constitute a small percentage of an institution's holdings often face significant challenges. Information about these challenges is often anecdotal, particularly for collections that focus on a narrow subject area. The results of a recent survey conducted by the American Theological Library Association now provide more concrete information on current practices and challenges in collections specifically focused on theological and religious studies organizations.

Last year, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded the American Theological Library Association (ATLA), the Catholic Library Association (CLA) and the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) a National Leadership Grant for the project "In Good Faith: Collection Care, Preservation, and Access in Small Theological and Religious Studies Libraries." A report on the project's main activity, a 2014 survey on preservation and collections care issues at small libraries and archives based at theological and religious studies organizations, has just been published and is now available [online](#).

The Spring 2014 survey was targeted to organizations with staff sizes of less than 5 full time equivalent, and budgets under \$500,000. In addition to ATLA, CLA, and AJL members, the project partners reached out to other religious libraries and archives. The resulting 235 responses represented one of the largest surveys on preservation and digital practices in theological and religious organizations which has ever been completed.

Responses were received from a wide variety of organizations, including those which are part of educational institutions, organizations affiliated with churches, synagogues, or other houses of worship, independent libraries and archives, and various other types of theological and religious based collecting organizations.

The partner organizations, working with nationally-recognized consultants Tom Claeson and Liz Bishoff, defined the survey's target audience as cultural heritage organizations which are part of a formal or established organization, have a library, archive, or other research collection which includes religious and/or theological materials, have religious and/or theological historical or rare materials as part of the library, archive, or research collection, and have at least one contact person (volunteer or salaried, full-time or part-time) responsible for the care/management of the research collection that could serve as the contact for the survey.

Key findings of the survey included:

- A lack of policies for preservation and digitization, although the number of organizations which include preservation in their mission statements and those with collection policies was high
- The need to develop disaster plans, digital collection plans and policies, and environmental monitoring and control procedures
- A need to conduct preservation needs assessment surveys of collections, policies, and buildings;
- A majority of those institutions with budgets below \$100,000 did not have the staff, financial, or policy resources to devote to preservation activities or a preservation program. There is a strong need to improve overall financial and staff support for preservation
- Expanding capacity for collection processing, cataloging and finding aid development to increase discoverability of collections and their usage is also a strong need.

While the "In Good Faith" survey spotlighted some areas of good preservation practice among the libraries and archives at small theological and religious studies organizations, particularly the inclusion of preservation in mission statements, the presence of collection policies at the majority of the organizations, and good practice in some areas of digital practice including backup of collections, there are many areas of preservation activity where improvements can be made.

In these difficult budgetary times, it may not be easy to increase the numbers of staff at religious-oriented libraries and archives, or to increase the time current staff spends on preservation and digitization activities, even though these are obvious needs. Additionally, growth of budgets for library and archival activities overall, and particularly budgets for preservation activities, are needs which may take many years to answer.

Areas for action in the near term are preservation planning, including conducting preservation needs assessment site surveys which allow local organizations to determine the preservation needs of their institutional collections. Site surveys can be a key step in helping the organizations develop preservation action plans to protect their collections. The “In Good Faith” partner organizations should explore opportunities to secure funding to assist their member libraries and archives to perform self-surveys, or have consultants survey their collections; this could help a large number of the organizations that participated in the survey.

The survey also found that a lack of environmental controls was a major problem for survey respondents. Education and information programs focused on developing environmental monitoring programs, and suggesting improved methods of environmental control could meet the needs of organizations that responded to the survey. Development of an environmental monitoring kit loan program, sponsored by the professional associations and targeted to theological and religious libraries and archives is an important step in the next 2-3 years. Models for this type of effort have been developed by a number of IMLS “Connecting to Collections” statewide preservation planning programs.

Efforts to emphasize the importance of Disaster Plan development are also needed, as more than half of the organizations surveyed (116 or 51.79%) **do not** have a written emergency or disaster plan that includes collection materials. This is especially true of libraries and archives with smaller paid staff sizes.

To address these findings, follow-up efforts being considered by the partner organizations focus on:

- Providing training and information on preservation and digitization topics, so that religious and theological libraries and archives can discover best practices and good resources to help them address their specific organizational preservation and digital problems
- Development of several workshop series, including topics such as disaster planning and environmental monitoring and control
- Development of a program which allows organizations in this religious and theological library and archival community to have preservation needs assessment surveys performed on their collections, with a goal of development of institutional preservation plans
- Exploration of new, non-traditional funding sources to support preservation activities
- Identification of best practices and policies to assist organizations in building digitization and digital preservation programs
- An advocacy and awareness-raising effort on the need for additional resources to build preservation and digitization programs at theological and religious studies organizations.

For more information on the survey project, please contact Brenda Bailey-Hainer, ATLA Executive Director at bbailey-hainer@atla.com.

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From the Editor

Newsletter Working Group

Looking for a good New Year’s resolution?!
The call for volunteers in the [previous issue](#) of *Archival Spirit* is still in mint, original condition.

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(From “The Handsome Heart”)

‘But tell me, child, your choice; what to buy
You?’ — ‘Father, what you buy me I like best.’
With the sweetest air that said, still plied and pressed,
He swung to his first poised purport of reply.

What the heart is! *Gerard Manley Hopkins*