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Reagan Grimsley
Columbus State University

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PROVENANCE

volume XXVI, 2008



**The Coca-Cola Company Archives:
Thriving Where Dilbert, Not Schellenberg, Matters**

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Cover: Courtesy The Coca-Cola Archives. This photograph is of a beverage kiosk near the rowing course at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam, the Netherlands—the first appearance by Coca-Cola at an Olympic Games. Visitors to the 1928 Games found Coca-Cola on sale at all cafes, restaurants, and small shops called “winkles” and at many kiosks outside and around the Olympic Stadium and the Rowing Course. Men wearing Coca-Cola caps and coats sold the bottled drink to the sporting crowds, while soda fountains near the entrances to the Stadium were available to those who preferred Coca-Cola in the glass. Various advertising pieces were on display, including eight Coca-Cola bulletins above each of the eight entrances to the Olympic Stadium. The Coca-Cola bottler at Amsterdam erected Coca-Cola billboards and secured Coca-Cola painted walls along the main canals and streets of the city.

The Coca-Cola Company Archives: Thriving Where Dilbert, Not Schellenberg, Matters

Gregory Markley

It's unlikely that many of the more than one million visitors who experience The NEW World of Coca-Cola in Atlanta every year know that a small team of archivists helped bring the museum to life. Selecting historical materials to display and verifying the accuracy of exhibits are just two of the tasks faced by Coke archivists. In a high-order challenge, the small archives team—just six people, including two from the communications/clerical staff—based at the company's corporate headquarters across from Georgia Institute of Technology is charged with guardianship of Robert W. Woodruff's image of the 123-year-old company. Woodruff, longtime chief executive of the soft drink company, insisted above all that no employee allow his company's good name to be sensationalized, trivialized, or appropriated for uses that would place Coke in a negative light. Working closely with advertising and marketing teams, Coke archivists seek to put a positive face on their company by using historical artifacts in ways that will bolster the company's profits. This article describes how Coke's archives department works and how it presents an image that would make Woodruff proud.

Woodruff's vision even today guides the Coke team. That has been true since soon after he joined the company in 1923 at age 33 and transformed the Georgia business into a global sensation.¹ Woodruff jettisoned any use of Coke that did not comport with the image he wanted for the company. In his manner, his writings, and his reluctance for personal publicity, Woodruff etched out a vision of his company as representative of the best of America, and eventually of the world. A fixture on his office desk was his personal creed: "There is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."²

Woodruff's view is ingrained on Philip F. Mooney, who, although often seen on local and national television, manages to keep the focus on Coke and its history, rather than on himself. It's true that being an archivist is not normally seen as a high-profile position. But the nature of Mooney's job with a legendary corporation forces him to become one of its chief advocates. Still, he guards against his own persona superseding the product and heritage he is promoting. Even with a project as big and meaningful as *The NEW World of Coca-Cola*, Mooney did not mind who got the credit. He and his small archives team researched historical information that would describe the museum's exhibits. They also tracked down items to be displayed, whether artifacts of all shapes and sizes or valuable items from personal papers. Though Mooney had already been very involved with the creation of the original *World of Coca-Cola* at *Underground Atlanta*, which opened in 1990 and closed in 2007, he says the Coke archives department spent years, not months, laying the groundwork for the new museum. He is proud that he and his five employees played a key role in bringing the larger, more spectacular museum into existence.³

¹"Robert Woodruff (1989-1985)," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, <<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp>> (accessed August 18, 2008).

²"The Personal Creed on Mr. Woodruff's Desk," Robert W. Woodruff Foundation, <http://www.woodruff.org/images/rww_quote_1.gif> (accessed August 18, 2008).

³Philip F. Mooney, interviewed by the author, September 21, 2006, The Coca-Cola Company Headquarters, One Coca-Cola Plaza, North Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia.

Visitors to The NEW World of Coca-Cola first view a film highlighting the company's many products and its global influence. The museum is adjacent to the Georgia Aquarium (opened in 2005 on land donated by The Coca-Cola Company) and within walking distance of Centennial Olympic Park (honoring the XXVI Summer Olympiad, in Atlanta). It cost \$97 million to build and doubles the size of the original facility. Business writer Leon Stafford of *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* examined the plans for the upgrade and reported: "The NEW World of Coca-Cola will feature a contemporary glass-and-stainless steel architectural design on one side, dominated by a 27-foot 'frosted' replica of its famous contoured bottle encased in a 90-foot glass cylinder. A glass window will display a smaller version of the lighted, trademarked Coca-Cola swoosh featured in the current building near Underground Atlanta."⁴ There are more samples of Coke products, from water to juices to teas (the company has more than 400 brands worldwide), and more interactive displays to appeal to the computer generations. The old museum attracted on average 750,000 visitors a year; the new museum increased that by a third, to more than a million, in its first year. The space open to visitors has more than doubled, from 23,000 square feet to 60,000.⁵

Mooney has presided over the archives of The Coca-Cola Company since 1977. These archives are located in the sub-basement of the company's international headquarters. Mooney notes that this warehouse on North Avenue is home to more than 100,000 collectibles with an estimated cumulative worth in the tens of millions of dollars. The archives are not open to the public, and Mooney estimated in 2006 that as of 2001, just fifty people and two media outlets (*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *Adweek*) had been granted access. Like his predecessor, Willard G. Kurtz, Jr., Mooney reviews the trove of historical documents and provides information to authors and researchers. Among the treasures at this 8,000-square-foot site are the original watercolor Coke ads by artists Norman Rockwell and N. C. Wyeth, commemorative bottles, and an extensive

⁴ Leon Stafford, "New Coke World Adds Pop," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, April 17, 2006.

⁵Ibid.

selection of ad catalogs.⁶ Mooney says the original advertising catalogs help company lawyers battle false claims by people who say they invented a certain advertising concept.

The Coke archives team is an example of fulfillment of two key concepts described in a 1978 book considered the “bible” in the field of business archives. Veteran business archivist Edie Hedlin’s *Business Archives: An Introduction* identifies two main reasons to establish archives: public services and services to one’s company. Private companies, she writes, should develop their own archives to store records that cannot be maintained in crowded public archives.⁷ Hedlin notes that archives can prove invaluable in marketing, writing a company history or commemorative booklet, and public relations. She does not address the issue of litigation, a reason frequently given by other business archivists for the rise of their archives. Mooney explained that the Coke archives were created in response to the need for records relating to a 1941 trademark case. Hedlin says at minimum, the archives must be staffed by a full-time archivist with a master’s degree or higher in history and archival experience and one or more additional staff members to handle routine tasks. Physical requirements include adequate space, equipment, and supplies; long-term environmental infrastructure; and facility security.⁸

Hedlin’s book still provides a firm grounding for corporate archivists, but Mooney has taken her analysis a step further in a book chapter published nineteen years after her trailblazing book. Mooney wrote that several myths and realities commonly characterize life for a business archivist. One myth is that executives and senior managers routinely use the archives to study past policies and programs so they can increase corporate productivity and achievement. He says the reality is that, “In all probability, the impetus for development of a historical collection was a single, seminal event that required historical documentation for an appropriate execution. However, when the

⁶Mooney interview.

⁷ Edie Hedlin, *Business Archives: An Introduction* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1978), 7.

⁸Ibid., 7-15.

immediate, quantifiable reason for archival support disappeared, so too did the archives.”⁹ A second myth is that companies rely on the archives to define the corporate culture and possible future directions for the company, based on past occurrences. The reality, according to Mooney, is that corporate culture is determined more by consumer trends and technological innovations than historical precedent. The archives must show themselves to be relevant to consumers’ tastes as well as a strong contributor to the company’s financial success. What happened before is only a tangential concern for management and shareholders.¹⁰

A third myth is that the number and depth of corporate archives have grown significantly since the late 1970s, when interest in the subject was so keen that Hedlin’s *Business Archives: An Introduction* was commissioned by the Society of American Archivists. Mooney argues that corporate downsizing and acquisition-driven dislocations have led to closings of many company archives. Even the widely respected collections of Sears, Roebuck and Company, United Technologies, Boeing, and International Harvester (now Navistar) have ceased to exist. Mooney asserts that “The archival community can also play an important role in helping practicing archivists better understand the realities of work life in an environment where Dilbert may be more relevant than Schellenberg.”¹¹

Yet what happened before in archival practice directs Coke archivists in their work. This repository does in many ways follow traditional archival procedures, but the principles are adapted to the unique demands and limitations of a business archives. “We arrange things in ways we can best use them,” Mooney said. “Item-level arrangement and description is inappropriate for us, we go down to the folder level. To classify each letter is just too time-consuming in light of all our other duties.”¹² Ted Ryan, Coke’s manager of collections development, is a former chair

⁹ Philip F. Mooney, “Archival Mythology and Corporate Reality: A Potential Powder Keg,” in *The Records of American Business*, James M. O’Toole, ed. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997), 58.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 61-63.

¹² Mooney interview.

of the SAA business archives section and a Coke employee for fourteen years. Ryan divides his collections into three categories. These include internal company papers, with the archives only keeping and appraising a tiny fraction of all available Coke records; a “very strong” audiovisual component (heavy in advertising and marketing); and three-dimensional artifacts such as vending machines. “We look at how all these artifacts can be used to promote Coke,” Ryan related. “Our holdings are a hybrid. It is all mixed together: original oil paintings, archival collections, etc.” Ryan marvels at how their small archival staff can handle such a volume of materials. “But somehow we get the job done, and we never get tired of handling and assessing Coke records, advertisements, and memorabilia.”¹³

Hedlin writes that as a rule, only between 1 and 3 percent of business records have any enduring historical importance. Ryan told the author the Coke archives retains just 1 percent of the company’s global records. On arrangement and description, Hedlin prefers provenance, or keeping records in original order and allowing for the relationship of a record to others originating from the same source to be obvious by arrangement.¹⁴ Mooney and Ryan stated that The Coca-Cola Company archives are organized according to provenance, as recommended by Hedlin and most other contemporary archivists.¹⁵ Ryan reports that the Coke archives are generally closed to the public, but on rare occasions entry is granted to scholars and journalists. In 2006 Ryan denied a request from a Yale University student because the company archivists were too tied up with other projects to commit to a long-term visitor. “We were in the homestretch with *The NEW World of Coca Cola*, so we could not grant anyone access right then, because we were simply too busy preparing for the museum’s opening,” he said.¹⁶

¹³ Edward (Ted) Ryan, interviewed by the author, November 13, 2006, The Coca-Cola Company Headquarters, One Coca-Cola Plaza, North Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia.

¹⁴ Hedlin, *Business Archives*, 18-19.

¹⁵ Mooney interview and Ryan interview.

¹⁶ Ryan interview.

Mooney explains that as a museum for a private corporation, The NEW World of Coca-Cola does not relive the company's mistakes, real or imagined. "The new Coke museum will have a passing reference to New Coke, for example," he told the author in 2006, in reference to the company's marketing fiasco of the mid-1980s. "But we don't demonstrate every faux pas in the company's history in our displays. We take a definite point of view—people can interpret it as they want. My responsibility is to present a marketing and merchandizing success story."¹⁷ With those comments, Mooney identified a main difference between corporate archives and those in the public sector: The former seek to preserve a company's image and enhance the business's economic vitality, while the latter are public trusts and must put forward historically accurate depictions.

Mark Weiner of Yale University wrote a 1994 journal article criticizing the company's first museum. Weiner described the World of Coca-Cola as being as market-driven as Coke ads. Visitors often labeled it "the Coke museum," but Weiner called that a misnomer: "The World of Coca-Cola may contain museum-like elements, but, as company archivist Philip Mooney has noted, the institution more appropriately should be understood as an 'EPCOT experience,' a subtle combination of Disneyland and the Smithsonian. With a massive neon sign and housed in a 45,000 square foot, three-story structure—a building that reveals every bit of the fifteen million dollars it cost to construct—the World of Coca-Cola has a mission to sell as well as to educate."¹⁸

Weiner points out that controversies such as persistent claims linking The Coca-Cola Company to human-rights abuses in Guatemala, and the popular belief that Coke's name derived its early ingredient cocaine, were found nowhere on the premises of the first museum. Weiner explains that Mark Pendergrast in his 1993 book, *For God, Country and Coca-Cola*, determined that while Coke has not contained cocaine since the early 20th century,

¹⁷ Mooney interview.

¹⁸ Mark Weiner, "We Are What We Eat; or, Democracy, Community, and the Politics of Corporate Food Displays," *American Quarterly* 46 (June 1994): 241.

at one time it did.¹⁹ He cautions: “To deny this, to sweep this particular story under the rug of public relations—especially given that so many consumers are interested in the subject—is not only a violation of intellectual honesty but also undercuts company claims Coca-Cola is ‘owned’ by the public, for the public surely cannot own its present if it does not have full rights to its past.”²⁰ As Mooney’s statements indicate, the company makes no excuses for presenting a “happy face.” Any successful corporation would likely expect their archivists to duplicate Mooney’s approach and company museums would undoubtedly put the proverbial best foot forward to advance the company’s image and thus its financial health.

But dealing with a marketing disaster such as New Coke at a company museum requires finesse and a high degree of tact. In 1985 the company was under a fierce challenge from The Pepsi-Cola Company, which was gaining market share at what Coke executives viewed as an alarming rate. So on the eve of the company’s 100th birthday, Coke’s flavor was changed to make the soft drink taste more like its onrushing rival. The response to New Coke was overwhelmingly negative; most people hated the new sweeter, fizzier stuff. What they really seemed to detest was the audacity of the company changing a traditional drink that they thought epitomized life in America. An 80-year-old woman in a nursing home called Coke headquarters and spoke for twenty minutes with the secretary to Donald L. Keough, head of the domestic soft-drink branch. Keough secretly listened in on the other line, and got an earful. He realized from the woman’s complaints that the company had tampered not just with a type of soda, but with an American icon important to millions of people.²¹

The tens of thousands of letters the company received were mostly from angry customers. One wrote: “Dear Sir: Changing Coke is like God making the grass purple or putting toes on our

¹⁹ Ibid., 246. The book referred to is Mark Pendergrast, *For God, Country and Coca-Cola: The Definitive History of the Great American Soft Drink and the Company that Makes It*. (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Thomas Oliver, *The Real Coke, The Real Story* (New York: Random House, 1986), 154-156.

ears or teeth on our knees”; another said, “I don’t think I would be more upset if you were to burn the flag in our front yard”; and a third wrote: “Monkeying with the recipe is akin to diddling with the U. S. Constitution.... Many of us aren’t interested in caffeine-free, NutraSweet, diet slop, fancy gimmicks or new formulas. After all these years, the original Coke practically runs through our veins.”²²

So how does the company address this marketing and public-relations tsunami in its museum and on its Web site? The answer is with surprising frankness and yet in a way that “spins” the story to make Coke’s decision-makers seem like they were not total fools. As for the first World of Coca-Cola museum, Mooney said there was “a passing reference” to the New Coke saga. The same holds true for the new museum which opened on May 24, 2007, at Pemberton Place, named in honor of druggist Dr. John S. Pemberton who invented Coca-Cola in 1886.²³ The “passing reference” to New Coke at the second museum amounts to a few panels along a long timeline in a large room detailing the company’s evolution since World War II.²⁴

On the company’s “Heritage” Web site, New Coke’s strange short life and unlamented death are given fairly accurate play. The site is maintained by a Web master who works in Mooney’s department. A section on the New Coke episode (“The Real Story of New Coke”) acknowledges that consumer desire for Coke and sodas in general was declining in 1985, that the company took a giant risk changing the formula popular since 1886, and that the risk ended up “spawning consumer angst the likes of which no business has ever seen.” But the section argues that the episode had a silver lining because it signaled to the public and especially the stockholders that Coke executives would be bold in attempting to increase economic value for them. The Web site notes that at a 1995 New Coke commemorative employee meeting CEO Roberto Goizueta said he wanted his employees to recognize that “taking intelligent risks” as he and his cohorts did with New

²² *Ibid.*, 156.

²³ The Coca-Cola Company, “The NEW World of Coca-Cola,” <http://www.the-coca-colacompany.com/presscenter/presskit_nwocc.html> (accessed August 18, 2008).

²⁴ Mooney interview.

Coke was essential for moving the company forward.²⁵ Whether reconfiguring a soda that was viewed by many as an American icon comparable to apple pie and baseball was an “intelligent risk” remains a debatable question.

The most encouraging aspect from a truth-seeking standpoint is that the “Heritage” Web site maintained by the archives department has a link where people can insert “New Coke Stories.”²⁶ This reminds us that the New Coke episode, whether one supported the new formula or not, was a common experience that all Americans shared in the mid-1980s. Allowing Web site visitors to defend New Coke (the minority view) or vent their anger (though after twenty years the anger has subsided) is brilliant marketing. Most contributors just sweetly recount how their life was affected by the soda’s change, and this may lead them to think better of The Coca-Cola Company. Taking a contrary view to Mooney, but echoing Weiner, Constance L. Hays in her 2004 book *The Real Thing: Truth and Power at the Coca-Cola Company* criticizes Coke for hiding its blemishes behind flashy interactive displays and glitzy bottle-filling machines. “The World of Coca-Cola makes no mention of the past or present ingredients in Coca-Cola. There is no mention of the clashes with bottlers, of the lawsuits filed by Coke’s most intimate partners when they felt the partnership being torn out of their hands. It transmits only the story that the company wanted the world to know.”²⁷

Hays has a right to be concerned about The Coca-Cola Company not being forthcoming of its purportedly ugly side, managerial arrogance, and possible negative health impacts. Still, a company museum is not designed to tell a story in the objective way a newspaper should. Instead, it is a mouthpiece of the corporation no less than a press release or company brochure. With regard to the limits of corporate museums like Coke’s: Mistakes and controversies surrounding companies are

²⁵ The Coca-Cola Company, “The Real Story of Coca-Cola,” <http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/heritage/cokelore_newcoke_include.html> (accessed November 23, 2006).

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Constance L. Hays, *The Real Thing: Truth and Power at The Coca-Cola Company* (New York: Random House, 2004), 173.

finessed or go unmentioned as companies recoil from wounding themselves. Thus, Coke puts the best possible face on the New Coke disaster, offers no references to the idea that cocaine was once an ingredient in Coke, and promotes globalization without regard to human rights violations.

Companies like Coke with archives in 2008 can thank Firestone Tire and Rubber Company for leading the way. In 1943 Firestone became the first company in the United States to hire an archivist and establish an in-depth archives program. Firestone executives had decided important records needed to be protected and preserved. William D. Overman, state archivist at the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, was named the first corporate archivist. After Firestone founded its corporate archives, just six companies organized archives during the rest of the 1940s. David R. Smith, founder in 1970 of the Walt Disney Archives, said business archives reemerged in the 1970s because many corporations were celebrating major anniversaries and needed archival records, papers, and artifacts. "The nostalgia craze made instant antiques and 'collectibles' out of the relatively recent products of many of our companies," Smith stated. "Universities were turning out large numbers of history graduates who, finding jobs scarce in the field of education, helped convince some businesses that they could be useful in an archives program."²⁸

Elizabeth Adkins, in her 2003 booklet *A History of the Ford Motor Company Archives*, suggests that other companies may actually have beaten Firestone for the title of first business archives. She found that several insurance and financial-service companies had established archives departments a year or two before Firestone. The forerunner of CIGNA Corporation, INA, set up an archives section in 1942, though the company did not hire a professional archivist for twenty-three years. That archivist earned a place at the insurance/financial services firm after the corporate secretary saw the need for help in preparing for the

²⁸ David R. Smith, "An Historical Look at Business Archives," *American Archivist* 45 (Summer 1982): 130.

company's 150th anniversary.²⁹ Procter and Gamble launched its archives in 1957, but the first archivist with specialized training did not start at the consumer-goods company until 1980. In 1987 an archives program was implemented at Cargill Corporation, an agricultural and pharmaceutical company in Minnesota, but the first professional archivist did not come on board until 2000.³⁰

The 1970s were a good time for business archives to start. Reasons included the U. S. Bicentennial in 1976, which helped make history fashionable again; many companies faced upcoming major anniversaries and needed to produce corporate histories; and the onslaught of civil lawsuits demanded that company lawyers have easy access to historical files to bolster their cases. The 1970s saw sixteen major companies start archives. Among these were Smith's new employer, Walt Disney Productions (1970), Nationwide Insurance (1974), Wells Fargo Bank and Chase Manhattan Bank (both 1975), *The Los Angeles Times* (1978), and the New York Stock Exchange (1979). In all, thirty-four companies initiated archives between Firestone's establishment of its archives in 1943 and the end of the 1970s.³¹ The Coke archives were in existence only on an ad hoc basis until Mooney was installed as the first full-time professional archivist in 1977.

Another major company on par with Coke that established its archives based on an anniversary was the Ford Motor Company. The impetus was the celebration of fifty years of the Michigan automaker in 1953. Within ten years, the Ford archives were being hurt by a negative economic climate. At that point, most of the Ford Industrial Archives' holdings were donated to a nonprofit educational institution, the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village. Remaining holdings stayed at the company headquarters. For more than thirty years, the Ford archives kept a low profile both internally and externally; it had but one employee. As Adkins, Ford's director of Global Information Management, wrote in her company history: "Until 1995, no

²⁹ Elizabeth W. Adkins, *A History of the Ford Motor Company Archives, with Reflections on Archival Documentation of Ford of Europe's History* (Dearborn, Mich.: Ford Motor Company, 2003), 34-35.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

³¹ Smith, "An Historical Look at Business Archives," 127-133.

one took much notice. But the upcoming Ford Centennial—yet another anniversary!—inspired both the executives and the Ford family to revive the archives and enable the historical record to be completed.”³²

In a book chapter, Nancy M. Merz offers a case study of how the archives at Texas Instruments (TI) were established in 1993. Merz, a former TI archivist, recalls that the company began as an oil-exploration company, Geophysical Services, Inc. (GSI). When it began to branch out into integrated circuits and developed innovations such as the first electronic handheld calculator, a need was recognized for an in-depth history. New employees could then better understand their business; institutional memory that was being lost as older employees retired, resigned or died could be captured.³³ Echoing aspects of Hedlin’s booklet from fifteen years before, Merz said an early concern for Texas Instruments was staffing (the average is two archivists and one clerk). Other concerns were placement within the larger company (TI archivists fall under the Corporate Communications and Marketing Group) and the need for a mission statement, which was generated and distributed to all departments so personnel knew the goals and services of the archives. Like the staff at Coke’s archives today, the TI archivists assist corporate staff in providing information for speeches, presentations, litigation support, and public-relations purposes, and for analyses of past events and programs.³⁴

Wilbur G. Kurtz, Jr., a Coke employee who spent a portion of his work day supervising the archives, was known for his encyclopedic knowledge of all things Coke and his steadfast promotion of the company’s image. He served as a bridge between collectors and the company and at The Cola Clan’s Third Annual Convention in Huntsville, Alabama in August 1977 he was given a special gift and honor. Kurtz was presented with a straight-sided bottle reproduction that was limited to only a thousand copies.

³² Adkins, *A History of the Ford Motor Company Archives*, 1.

³³ Nancy M. Merz, “Starting an Archives: Texas Instruments as a Case Study,” in *Corporate Archives and History: Making the Past Work*, Arnita A. Jones and Philip L. Cantelon, eds. (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 1993), 21-25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

An inscription on the diamond-shaped label paid tribute to his thirty-six years of service. An enthusiastic collector from Coke's hometown, Margaret Almond, remarked that "Mr. Kurtz is so dear. We just think the world of him."³⁵

Mooney, who succeeded Kurtz in the archival role in 1977, notes that one individual or another has been tasked to study the corporation's history since the 1940s. This early unofficial archives was absorbed within the public-relations department in 1969, and from there Kurtz built the resources to establish the separate entity that exists today.³⁶ One instance where Kurtz's contributions are clearly seen is in a letter Hugh Waters of Orlando, Florida, wrote to Robert W. Woodruff in May 1974. Waters suggested that The Coca-Cola Company restore the original drugstore where the drink was invented. Kurtz responded for his boss, "According to historical record, Coca-Cola was originated in 1886, a few years before Mr. Woodruff was born, by Dr. John S. Pemberton in his residence at 107 Marietta Street...not in a drugstore. This was accomplished by the constant blending of certain ingredients in a brass or iron kettle stirred with a boat oar. The record further shows that it was at Jacobs' Pharmacy, at the corner of Peachtree and Marietta Streets in Atlanta, that Coca-Cola was first served as a soda fountain drink."³⁷

Thus Kurtz showed that he was actively engaged in historical research, among his many duties. His efforts earned praise: Waters told Kurtz he had just read *The Big Drink: The Story of Coca-Cola* by E. J. Kahn, Jr., "who said he couldn't have written it without your [Kurtz's] help."³⁸ Kurtz was a pioneer at reviewing the maze of documents in the archives and providing information to authors. Mooney, Ryan, and four other Coke staffers operate the same way today.

³⁵ Pat Watters, *Coca-Cola: An Illustrated History* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1978), 287.

³⁶ Mooney interview.

³⁷ Hugh Waters to Robert Winship Woodruff, May 10, 1974, Robert W. Woodruff Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.

³⁸ *Ibid.* The book referred to is: E.J. Kahn, Jr., *The Big Drink: The Story of Coca-Cola* (New York: M. Reinhardt, 1959).

According to Bruce H. Bruemmer, an archivist with wide experience in both business and public sector archives, the main difference between these two kinds of institutions centers on the working environment. “Business archives are the only archival institutions that are in a competitive environment (the corporate desire to outsource), and an environment that is generally hostile (more so than government or academic archives),” Bruemmer wrote in a message to the author.³⁹ Bruemmer is the director of the Corporate Archives at Cargill, Inc., an international provider of food, agricultural and risk management products, and services based in Minneapolis.

Corporations have a small patron base and so interest in what the archives do is minimal, he reflected in a speech at SAA’s annual meeting in Washington, D.C., in 2006. “At Cargill, I got the feeling (to steal a line from the late comedian George Gobel) that the world was a tuxedo and I was a pair of brown shoes. As I became more familiar with the work of other archival kindred spirits in different companies, I realized this angst was not mine alone.”⁴⁰ He noted that Mooney of The Coca-Cola Company has written that success comes only to corporate archivists who are “aggressive self-promoters, seeking every opportunity to sell the use of the archival record for business enhancement.”⁴¹

Bruemmer argued that business archivists face a high risk because, “To paraphrase Calvin Coolidge, the chief business of American corporate archives is business. Ultimately, corporate archives are responsible to the shareholders, and the primary interest of shareholders is to increase their investment. A corporate archive can justify its existence from a number of perspectives, but its survivability is much more assured if it can contribute to the bottom line.”⁴²

³⁹ Bruce H. Bruemmer, email message to the author, November 19, 2006.

⁴⁰ Bruce H. Bruemmer, “Brown Shoes in a World of Tuxedos: Corporate Archives and the Archival Profession,” presented at the Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists held in Washington, District of Columbia, July 31-August 5, 2006.

⁴¹ Mooney, “Archival Mythology and Corporate Reality,” 62.

⁴² Bruemmer, “Brown Shoes in a World of Tuxedos,” 4.

Bruemmer said a key quality that successful business archives share relates to brand. Mooney once commented that the Coke archives are highly valued because they contribute to a multi-million-dollar legacy brand. Bruemmer elaborates: "Where the brand is king, you have companies that understand the reason to spend money to preserve that brand. I'm a bit jealous of my colleagues at Coke, Kraft, P&G, and McDonalds because they have a natural advantage over a company like Cargill which is not generally a consumer brand company."⁴³ Culture is yet another quality that helps determine whether a business archives prospers. Bruemmer touches upon one of Nancy Merz's themes in her chapter on Texas Instruments' archives: some companies attach more value to their heritage, and this is especially true of companies which still have family members heavily involved. The problem is that interest can disappear almost instantly, according to Bruemmer. "H. B. Fuller had a wonderful archive in the Twin Cities, but when a key family board member went off the board, the archives tanked."⁴⁴

An additional quality that successful business archives require is having an archivist with a winning personality. The more engaging and skilled in interpersonal relations the chief archivist, the more likely the archives will be respected, well-funded and staffed, and utilized. Bruemmer sees Mooney as the archetype. "At a workshop Phil distilled his success to one issue: everything you do is marketing," the Cargill archivist said. "Your participation in committees, your dress, your interaction with other company officials, etc. As long as he has been at the Coke job he still is looking for opportunities for the archives."⁴⁵ In 2000 Timothy L. Ericson, then archives program director at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, drafted an award citation for Mooney when he was named a fellow of the SAA.⁴⁶ Ericson identified a key ingredient of Mooney's success as his personality:

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁶ The Society of American Archivists, "SAA Names New Fellows," <<http://www.archivists.org/recognition/denver2000-fellows.asp>> (accessed September 5, 2006).

“I think that anyone who is affable and approachable is ahead of the game in acting as a spokesman for his or her organization and [will] be a successful PR representative. These traits are, I think, a part of being a skilled archivist because promoting one’s program and the value of archival records is necessary to the survival of the program.”⁴⁷

Bruemmer said Coke leads among corporate archives because four essential qualities (profit and loss as well as the just-mentioned relation to brand, culture, and the personality of the archivist) are aligned in such a way that they positively impact the archives department. He wonders: “Why does Pepsi, with the same legacy brand needs, not have a professional archivist? I’ll bet it has to do with culture, personality, and perhaps profit.”⁴⁸

One critical aspect of Mooney’s job is evaluating articles for historical accuracy in media coverage of the company. An example is his memo to Joseph W. Jones, Robert W. Woodruff’s executive secretary, dated July 17, 1984, regarding an article written by Hugh Best that was slated to be published in a special issue of *Debrett’s Peerage on the American Aristocracy*. Mooney caught several errors in the article, including the claim that Coca-Cola creator Dr. John S. Pemberton invented the Botanic Blood Balm (it was developed by Candler family members) and that Asa Candler’s purchase of Pemberton’s interests in Coke has been estimated at \$2,000 rather than the more accurate \$2,300 as stated in Best’s first draft.⁴⁹

Philip Mooney’s long career at The Coca-Cola Company began in 1977 after Willard Kurtz retired. He came south as a thirty-two year-old archivist from upstate New York and became the company’s first full-time archivist. Mooney has carved out a national reputation for himself while making Coke’s repository a model of how a corporate archive should operate. He bridges the gap between making the archives department relevant to Coke’s profitability and supporting external clients such as scholars and journalists. He has developed enduring relationships with

⁴⁷ Timothy L. Ericson, email message to the author, November 14, 2006.

⁴⁸ Bruemmer email.

⁴⁹ Phil Mooney to Joseph W. Jones, July 17, 1984, Woodruff Papers.

the public relations, marketing, and legal departments of the company.

Upon receiving his Master of Arts degree in history from Syracuse University in the mid-1970s, Mooney was undecided as to whether he wanted to continue on for a Ph.D. in history. He heard of a job opening at the university library's Rare Book and Manuscript Division, applied, and was hired. He quickly learned the fundamentals of archival management and found he enjoyed applying his historical-research background to archival operations. His next job was with the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies in Philadelphia and from there he moved to Atlanta.⁵⁰ Mooney has kept active in the archival fraternity, publishing frequently in books and academic journals, teaching workshops on business archives for the SAA, and participating since 1998 as one of the select members of the Corporate Archives Forum. He has been a member of The Academy of Certified Archivists since it was established in 1989 and served as a regent for outreach from 1998 to 2002. For Coke he has conducted scores of television and radio interviews, including three segments on *The Today Show*, and has appeared on The History Channel, the Food Network, and CNN.⁵¹

In an American Historical Association career guide, Mooney explained why his corporation developed its own archives. "At Coca-Cola, the need for documentation in a 1941 trademark case underscored the need for the formal maintenance of a historical collection," he said.⁵² Mooney oversees three professional archivists, a communications manager responsible for the company Web site's extensive heritage section, and an administrative assistant. (This employee strength is roughly equivalent to that of industry giant Ford Motor Company. That archives grew from four people in 1997 to seven in 2007. However,

⁵⁰ American Historical Association, "Careers for Students of History: Profile of Philip F. Mooney," <<http://www.historians.org/pubs/careers/mooney/htm>> (accessed August 27, 2006).

⁵¹ The Society of American Archivists, "Meet Your Instructor: Philip F. Mooney," <<http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/instructor-bios/mooney.asp>> (accessed September 9, 2006).

⁵² "Careers for Students of History."

at the height of a major research project of Ford's role in World War II in Germany, the archives had fifteen employees.⁵³)

Funding for his department varies by year, Mooney said. "One year can be good, another year tough; funding depends on how your business is going," he reflected. "You constantly have to justify and provide a reason for your existence."⁵⁴ Mooney reports directly to the senior vice president of global communications, who is a member of the executive committee of the company. Similarly, at Ford Motor Company the archives (and the rest of Global Information Management including Records Management) reports to Corporate Services. The latter group has adopted an enterprise-wide approach to provide a range of services while keeping an eye on resources so the company can best benefit. Also, the automaker's archives interact well with the Department of Public Affairs, its chief internal customer.⁵⁵ Similarly, the Coke archives are well respected among employees of all departments.

At Ford Motor Company Archives, Elizabeth Adkins, like Mooney at Coke, has turned the archives into a multi-use center of historical and statistical information. The Office of the General Counsel turns to the archives for assistance in developing Ford's responses to litigation and regulatory issues. The staff at the Ford Archives conducts research to help Product Development understand and insert elements of classic design into new vehicles with long historical legacies (such as luxury car Thunderbird and sportscar Mustang). Adkins, a past president of the SAA, has turned the Ford Archives into an example of how diversification of functions can dramatically increase an archives' worth inside and outside the company and thus its chances of survival. In the official history of the Ford Archives, she points out the importance of documenting and reporting on the services the unit provides to a wide spectrum of users. "The Archives has been able to show that the business value of its services continues well beyond the current celebratory year and is, in fact, timeless."⁵⁶ That durability can be said of the Coke archives, as well.

⁵³ Adkins, *A History of the Ford Motor Company Archives*, 33.

⁵⁴ Mooney interview.

⁵⁵ Adkins, *A History of the Ford Motor Company Archives*, 33.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

According to Bruemmer, Cargill's chief archivist, many business archivists spend more time providing "historical services" than handling traditional archival functions like arrangement and description. At one corporation, "almost nobody" from the internal clientele does research at the archives. "It is more of a corporate library environment, where the key is to provide analysis, not just raw research," reported the minutes of the Ninth Annual Corporate Archives Forum (CAF), held in New York City in 2006. The archive referred to at the CAF meeting also conducts many tours, averaging 350-600 people each month. Archivists there have adopted a pro-active approach, promoting and publicizing their services. A second corporate archive was given one year to illustrate its value as an information source worthy of continued funding. According to CAF's 2006 meeting notes, "The archives has to educate new managers and push services to regional operations. They provide private tours and prepare client gifts with an historical theme. They also are developing a traveling exhibit for trade shows."⁵⁷

Assisting the company's lawyers is a significant part of Mooney's job. He also educates managers in the company's history, and about its many brands. Mooney told *AdWeek* that when many people learn about the nostalgia-buff's dream of a job he has, they are envious. "They say, 'What a fun job that would be.' And it is a fun job. But the part that people don't realize is that there's a discipline to it. There's a lot of work involved in doing quality research."⁵⁸ Mooney recognizes that such dedicated effort results in a happier client base and a greater likelihood his archives will not be placed on the chopping block when economic times are rough.

Mooney and the rest of the Coke archives department keep foremost in mind Robert W. Woodruff's instructions of long ago: The product is number one. Just as Woodruff once refused to allow a photo to be distributed of a horse drinking Coca-Cola, so he refused to allow an image of himself on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1950. His longstanding executive secretary Joseph

⁵⁷ Meeting notes, final, for the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Corporate Archives Forum, New York, N.Y., May, 10-12, 2006.

⁵⁸ Kathleen Sampey, "Seldom-Seen Archives Contain a Trove of Vintage Advertising," *Adweek Midwest Edition* 42, no. 26 (June 25, 2001): 18.

W. Jones recalled him saying, “The story’s about the company. It ain’t about me.” The resulting cover was the first in *Time’s* history to feature a product rather than a person.⁵⁹ Mooney and his team have strong corporate support because they are adept at tying in the archives to the company’s profitability. Mooney succeeds because he takes the advice he offered in *The Records of American Business*. There he argued that business archives must be “aggressive self-promoters, seeking every opportunity to sell the use of the archival record for business enhancement.”⁶⁰

Gregory Markley received an M.A. in Education from Auburn University—Montgomery in 2005 and an M.A. in History (archives concentration) from Auburn University in 2008. He interned at the Jimmy Carter Library and attended the Georgia Archives Institute. He assisted with the 2008 NAGARA conference in Atlanta and helped plan the 2008 SGA meeting in Athens. He is a volunteer at the Troup County Archives.

⁵⁹ Frederick Allen, “Mr. Coke, Robert Woodruff: His Power Is Subtle, His Power Is Coke,” *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*, April 16, 1977, 1. The story of the Coke-drinking horse can be founded in Samuel F. B. Morse to Robert W. Woodruff, June 3, 1963, Woodruff Papers.

⁶⁰ Mooney, “Archival Mythology and Corporate Reality” in *The Records of American Business*, James M. O’Toole ed., (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997), 62.

**Archival Allegory? Cultural Studies and
T.R. Schellenberg's *Modern Archives:
Principles and Techniques***

Cheryl Beredo

The archivist's job at all times is to preserve the evidence, impartially, without taint of political or ideological bias, so that on the basis of this evidence those judgments may be pronounced upon men and events by posterity which historians through human failings are momentarily incapable of pronouncing. Archivists are thus the guardians of the truth, or, at least, of the evidence on the basis of which truth can be established.

—Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg,
*Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*¹

INTRODUCTION

President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in 1934, the same year that Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg earned his doctorate in history from the University of Pennsylvania and began a career in archives. Schellenberg slowly and surely climbed the archival ranks, holding federal posts in

¹ T.R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1998), 236.

Washington, D.C., and teaching archival-training courses at local universities; he later lectured on a variety of topics relating to archives in Latin America, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1950 Schellenberg was appointed to the prestigious position of director of Archival Management at NARA.² Schellenberg soon published *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (1956), and in the years before his retirement in 1963 he would go on to publish dozens of works on archival history and practice, both in the United States and overseas. *Modern Archives* is arguably the most enduring of Schellenberg's writings, a kind of textbook for United States archivists that argues the importance and European origins of United States archives, examines the distinguishing characteristics of archival records and institutions, and outlines approaches to primary archival functions, from appraisal to documentary publication. Both records-management and archival-management guidelines are often illustrated by way of contrasting United States principles and techniques with those of other nations, making clear the latter's "essential nature."³ Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that even fifty years after its original publication *Modern Archives* remains canonical reading for United States archivists.⁴

ARCHIVAL ALLEGORY

This essay reviews *Modern Archives* to suggest the possibility of a concept of "archival allegory" that clearly draws from James Clifford's work. In his introduction to "On Ethnographic Allegory," Clifford writes:

²"Schellenberg, Theodore Roosevelt" in *American National Biography* 19 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 365.

³ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, x.

⁴ Since its original publication in 1956, *Modern Archives* has been reprinted several times by the University of Chicago Press. More recently, the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the major professional organization of archivists in the United States, has published the volume as part of its "Archival Classic Reprints" series, the purpose of which is "to re-introduce previously out-of-print classic archival literature."

In what follows I treat ethnography itself as a performance emplotted by powerful stories. Embodied in written reports, these stories simultaneously describe real cultural events and make additional, moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements. Ethnographic writing is allegorical at the level both of its content (what it says about cultures and their histories) and of its form (what is implied by its mode of textualization).⁵

I suggest that archival practice, or the execution of archival techniques, also is a “performance emplotted by ... stories.” Execution of archival techniques, as Schellenberg describes, literally reconstitutes a document into an archive through appraisal, arrangement, and description (i.e., bring a document into an archive, file it in an acid-free folder, and now call it “archival”). Both the content and the form of this reconstitution, of the creation of an archive, are intended to mirror the content and form of the subject (i.e., what a government agency did and how it was organized) that is to be documented. Archival practice is thus a kind of textualization: the archive is a text, the archivist is its author. While Schellenberg’s codification of archival practice may make many “moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements,” this essay will focus on how the “archival allegory” of Schellenberg’s *Modern Archives* makes particular ideological statements about the United States.

To begin a consideration of “archival allegory,” this essay will first outline the conditions and limitations of the archivist, offering a reading of how Schellenberg’s identification of European archives as United States archives’ forebears circumscribes his codification of archival practice. Given that narrative frame of United States archives’ emergence, I will then consider the presence of the archivist, Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg, in the text, a seemingly unremarkable administrative work that benignly attends to details of file naming or classifying methods. This presence is most pronounced in Schellenberg’s discussions of how new

⁵ James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Allegory” in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 98.

technologies of reproduction and order enable the departure of modern archival practice from conventional practice. Highlighting how archival practice is necessarily circumscribed by archival studies' inherited vocabulary, and drawing attention to the author's presence in the text, this essay is a modest attempt to begin a discussion of how students of the archive, broadly defined, may better understand the circumstances and limitations of its formation, as well as its promises.

OVERVIEW OF MODERN ARCHIVES

In T. R. Schellenberg's formulation, government records begin as "current," useful insofar as they document (provide evidence of) a function of a government agency and its interaction with an individual, corporate body, or another government agency. After a "current record" has served its original purpose, the archivist must determine its disposition: a record may be destroyed outright, microfilmed and then destroyed, transferred to a records center (which allows for the postponement of a disposition determination), or transferred to an archival institution.

Disposition renders a "current record" into a "non-current record"; moreover, if a record is transferred to an archival institution, it is then considered an "archival record." Beyond a record's value in documenting the function and transaction of an agency, which Schellenberg calls "evidential value," a record also has "informational value." Schellenberg clarifies: "Informational values derive, as is evident from the very term, from the information that is in public records on persons, places, subjects, and the like with which public agencies deal; not from the information that is in such records or the public agencies themselves."⁶ Once material is held in an archive, the archivist's responsibility is to appraise both the "evidential value" and the "informational value" of the record (which may be considered to be the second round of disposition), preserve the record, arrange

⁶ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 148.

and describe the record, publish the record, and provide access to the record.⁷

Modern Archives describes this process in three parts: First, Schellenberg discusses the origins and importance of modern archives. He also defines the “nature of archives” and the relationships between archives and libraries, and between archives and records management. The second part is devoted to records management: “Essentials of Record Management,” “Production Controls,” “Classification Principles,” “Registry Systems,” “American Filing Systems,” and “Disposition Practices.” The final part of *Modern Archives* focuses on archival management which Schellenberg discusses in seven chapters: “Essential Conditions of Archival Management,” “Appraisal Standards,” “Preservation Practices,” “Principles of Arrangement,” “Description Practices,” “Publication Programs,” and “Reference Service.” Schellenberg’s *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* remains true to its title, describing the origins, structure, and proper administration, or “best practices,” of categorically modern archives.

ARCHIVES BEFORE MODERN ARCHIVES

The proper administration of modern archives is necessarily delimited by the vocabulary—linguistic and conceptual—available to describe those practices. At the center of Schellenberg’s account of the emergence of modern archives is the nation-state and its attendant lexicon. Indeed, his narrative of modern archives’ emergence relies upon narratives of nation in France, England, and the United States, and in so doing foregrounds a tradition of archives’ service to national projects. Understanding archives’ *raison d’être* and their ongoing development in this way, Schellenberg’s prescription of archival techniques expresses the politics and poetics of the role of “modern archives” in nation-building.

⁷ Schellenberg’s formulation is now a truism of archival practice, the most crucial aspect being that far more records will be destroyed than transferred to archival institutions. He emphasizes: “The archivist’s role, moreover, should be that of moderator. Archivists dealing with modern records realize that not all of them can be preserved, that some of them have to be destroyed, and that, in fact, a discriminating destruction of a portion of them is a service to scholarship.” *Ibid.*, 152.

In the case of modern archives in the United States, Schellenberg's account makes rhetorical use of the fundamental differences between archives in different countries:

Archival principles and techniques have evolved in all countries in relation to the ways in which public records are kept while they are in current use by the government. The ways of the United States government are basically different from those of the governments of other countries. In the United States public records are kept according to various new filing systems; in practically all other countries they are kept according to a registry system. This book, then, is in some degree a study of contrasts: contrasts between the principles and techniques evolved in relation to new filing systems in the United States and those evolved in relation to the registry system abroad.⁸

Logical and benign is one reading of Schellenberg's pronouncement of the basic differences between the governance of different countries and, consequently, the archives that document them; however, another reading, especially given the emphasis on the "new" in "modern archives," suggests the politically meaningful ways that organization of an archive—either through new filing systems of the United States or implicitly outdated registry systems of the "Old World"—reflects the structure of the government it serves. The above excerpt from *Modern Archives's* introduction lays the groundwork for a study of how the archives of the United States are exceptional, reflective of the nation's exceptional government, and dialectically related to that exceptional government. Given the both descriptive and prescriptive orientation of *Modern Archives*, Schellenberg's opening pages set up a discussion of not only how to build an archive, but how also, by extension, to maintain a particular understanding of the United States.

Schellenberg asserts, for example, that the archival institutions of "France, England, and the United States will best serve to illustrate the importance accorded to the preservation of national archival resources," rather than those of ancient

⁸ Ibid., x.

civilizations, the Middle Ages, Germany, Italy, Spain, and “other countries.”⁹ He goes on to describe the origins of the first national archives in the world, the Archives Nationales in Paris. Established in the wake of the French Revolution, the archive was formed to keep “the records of the New France—records that signified its gains and displayed its glories.” By contrast, England’s Public Records Office was created for the “practical reason” that the records of government were in disrepair and the “cultural reason” that historians lobbied for the creation of an archive.¹⁰

Schellenberg continues, connecting the origins of the United States National Archives and Records Administration with those of the Archives Nationales and Public Records Office. As in England, United States governmental records were generally neglected; many were destroyed in fires throughout the nineteenth century. Moreover, between 1900 and 1912, the Public Archives Commission of the American Historical Association argued for the creation of a national archive in the interest of historical scholarship. As in France, the national archive would house the records of a new nation. Taking this constellation of archives in England, France, and the United States as his starting point, Schellenberg concludes with the four major reasons for the establishment of archival institutions: government efficiency, personal interest (to protect the rights of citizens), official record, and cultural purposes.

At first, of these four reasons, the final—“cultural”—seems vaguely to indicate the importance of archives to national projects, as well as scholars’ participation in such projects, but Schellenberg explains: “In England and the United States historians were the first to recognize the importance of public records, and largely through their insistence national archives were established in the two countries. Historians saw that such records in their entirety reflect not only the growth and functioning of government, but also the development of a nation.”¹¹ Notably, the height of the Public Archives

⁹ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-7.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Commission's activities coincided with the height of the United States' initial forays into the realm of imperial conquest; at the end of the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth century, the government necessarily created a record of its acquisitions on the continental United States, Caribbean, and the Pacific.¹²

Schellenberg thus constructs a particular frame of reference for understanding the origins and purposes of the archive in the United States. Such a construct foregrounds national interests (though Schellenberg never fully defines those interests) and in so doing precludes understandings of the archive that provide an alternative narrative of its emergence in the United States. Coupled with the above-cited transformation of a "current record" into an "archival record," Schellenberg's analysis does not invite a definition of another form of archive. A modern archive is constituted by culling non-current records and is inherently borne of government bureaucracy. In the interest of streamlining archival practice, and in the expediency of understanding the French and English origins of modern archives, acceptance of Schellenberg's articulation of archival principles limits the vocabulary for understanding how archives are constituted, and how they function and to what effect. As Schellenberg both describes and prescribes the "essential nature," the varied functions, etc., of archives, he is also stating what an archive is not and cannot be; evident in these tacit omissions is the ideology of American exceptionalism and the allegory of the archive.

EXCEPTIONAL TECHNOLOGIES IN MODERN ARCHIVES

As mentioned above, one of the crucial mechanisms for signaling the modern character of United States archives is the use of technologies therein. Given the enormous volume

¹² For a discussion of the challenge that disparate colonial archives present to both archivists and historians, see Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003). Also, NARA has published documentary editions of records (twenty-eight volumes!) relating to the United States' continental expansion, *Territorial Papers of the United States*. Government commissions on new territorial acquisitions in the Pacific, including the Committee on Pacific Islands and Puerto Rico and the Committee on the Philippines, also generated reports and correspondence, now housed at NARA.

of records characteristic of modern government bureaucracy, various technologies facilitate and streamline the work of the archivist. Schellenberg explains that “Certain physical conditions for the creation and maintenance of records had to exist before modern filing systems could be developed.”¹³ In other words, these conditions and the technologies responsive to their demands help to define a modern archive. Schellenberg focuses on two technologies developed in the United States: duplication and filing systems. More readily incorporated into the work of a recently established archive in the United States (1934) than in archives long ago established in, for example, France (1790) or England (1838), these technologies enable the creation of archives that are uniquely American.

Government agencies of the United States held voluminous records, both original documents and mechanical reproductions from press-copying machines. Invented by James Watt in 1780, the press-copying machine was used in some government agencies, but “came into general use in the War Department during the Civil War and in the rest of the Federal agencies about a decade later.”¹⁴ The invention of the typewriter in 1868, its first use in the federal government (including the War Department), and its later use for making carbon copies, also translated into an increased production of records for later disposition.¹⁵

This increased volume of records prompted the adoption of new systems that made use of recent file-related inventions. Products of the necessity to manage the growth in government documents, these new filing systems’ “critical elements” were their capacity for “easy insertion and expansion”; such ease in insertion and expansion freed government agencies from maintaining their records in outmoded ledgers or registries. The first of these was a 3.5 inch x 8 inch wooden box invented by E. W. Woodruff, allowing the “sequential arrangement” of folded documents. The second of these inventions was the

¹³ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 81.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82. Schellenberg also notes the importance of other duplication technologies for the development of United States archival practice, namely the mimeograph, hectograph, and photostat (83).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

vertical file, an invention of Nathaniel S. Rosenau, allowing—as the Woodruff box did—the easy insertion and expansion of files.¹⁶

Schellenberg suggests that, taken together, new technologies of reproduction and order revolutionized the ways that United States archival practice would develop. The form of the archive—flexible and with room for expansion—indicated the ways that United States archival practice would and could adapt to changing conditions and specific agencies' needs. (Indeed, Schellenberg's discussions of appraisal and description of archival records, beyond the scope of this paper, especially emphasize the importance of both expert historical knowledge and attention to the particularities of the agency whose records were in question. Especially lively is his discussion of Melvil Dewey's decimal system's shortcomings when applied to archival records.¹⁷)

These technologies seem, to the present-day reader, rather quaint insofar as it is difficult to imagine that no one previous to Woodruff had thought to fold documents and file them in a box. Nevertheless, the quaintness (or perhaps even the veracity) of Schellenberg's account of technological innovations matters less than the weight given to them by, and in, his narrative of the emergence of modern archives. Suffice it to say that in Schellenberg's explanation of the dialectical relationship between modern government and modern archive, the wooden box, press-copying machine, and typewriter are indispensable, and the importance attributed to these inventions merit further consideration.

More precisely, the fact that these new technologies were first incorporated into the federal government's War Department raises questions about which agencies most required the use of new technologies and why. The incidence of new technologies of duplication and filing (of reproduction and order) in those federal agencies mandated, in United States overseas projects, to reproduce select state apparatuses enjoyed in the United States (such as democracy and Christianity) and

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-84. Rosenau's invention was promoted under the auspices of librarian Melvil Dewey's Library Bureau and was later featured at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago (84).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

to re-order the populations of new overseas territories may be read as inconsequential. Another understanding of that incidence, however, is possible: the content and form of the modern archive both animates and embodies ideology endorsed and promoted by the War Department, an ideology of American exceptionalism that elided the imperial characteristics of the United States' foreign policy. If the differences in maintenance of records reflect the differences in operation of governments, the modern technologies of United States archives reflect the new global power that the United States, at the end of the nineteenth-century, was coming to wield.

ARCHIVAL ALLEGORY OF MODERN ARCHIVES

Apparent by this point in my consideration of "archival allegory" is the occasional conflation of modern archives and archival practice therein. Analytical movement between these two discrete, if related, concepts is meant to highlight the allegorical relationship between the modern archive (the object), archival practice (the act), the archivist (the subject), the text (the object once-removed, a text that purports to stand outside of ideological and political bias to deliver a prescription for the formation of modern archives), and ideology (that encompasses all, in this case, American exceptionalism). To put it another way, analysis that centers the mutually constitutive relationship between the archive and archiving suggests the ways that both are ideologically contained as well as ideologically productive: Archives and archivists are products and producers of history, categories, and categorizers. It suggests, as in Clifford's discussion of ethnographic allegory, that both the modern archive and archival practice therein are allegorical both in "content (what it says about cultures and their histories)" and "form (what is implied by its mode of textualization)."¹⁸

The (sometimes tedious and rather convoluted) labor of making sense of how Schellenberg's *Modern Archives* could be "archival allegory" raises the simple question, Why? What purpose does such a concept serve? For students of the archive, broadly defined, an understanding of "archival allegory" suggests the conceptual boundaries around the formation of archival institutions in the United States; it also suggests how those

¹⁸ Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," 98.

boundaries were delineated by the national projects that national archives always serve. Stated more simply, an understanding of archival allegory historicizes and contextualizes Schellenberg's writing about modern archives. To assert that this canonical text is not outside, beyond, or above ideology is not necessarily to discount all of its arguments. Rather, to suggest the specific logic and conditions of the text indicates the need to review *Modern Archives* periodically; such review of the assumptions underlying prescriptions for archival practice would, one should hope, yield innovations in both theorizations of archives as well as their practical maintenance. On a related note, the proposition of "archival allegory," and *Modern Archives* as an expression of it, simply suggests the need for an expanded vocabulary and dispels any remaining notions of facile objectivity in archives. It implies the need to recognize and grapple with the always politicized nature of archives.

CULTURAL STUDIES FOR MODERN ARCHIVES

That said, the form of such "grappling" remains undetermined, though the importance of doing so is, one hopes, clear. And the challenge is predictable: if the discipline of archival studies employs a vocabulary not easily applied to (or not suitable for) critique of the discipline itself, the vocabulary of another field may be fruitfully enlisted. One such field may be that of cultural studies, perhaps made evident by this essay's attempt to apply James Clifford's work on "ethnographic allegory" to the study of archival theory and practice.

As one narrative, albeit disputed, of the emergence of cultural studies holds, the field was founded in Britain by Marxist scholars concerned, as their theoretical orientation would suggest, with the reproduction of class structure in Europe.¹⁹ Additionally, the work of scholars outside of the Birmingham School (including, for example, Michel Foucault's examination of the birth of the prison in France and Walter Benjamin's study of the reproduction of art and film) suggests concern with how

¹⁹ See Jon Stratton and Ien Ang, "On the Impossibility of a Global Cultural Studies: 'British' Cultural Studies in an 'International' Frame" in *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 361-391. Stratton and Ang's argument may be useful for a critical study of the narrative of the emergence of United States archives.

different technologies enable, or promise to resist, reproduction of power relations, as well as with how reproduction (as both an action and a concept, in both content and form) enables the disruption, or ultimate downfall, of order as is.²⁰

Given that Clifford's application of the concept of allegory to anthropological practice introduces the possibility that ethnography makes "moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements," and given that scholarship (such as those examples cited above) in cultural studies focuses on the reproduction of ideology, the concerns addressed in these works clearly resonate with the needed modes of critique of archives. Beginning with the recognition of archives as always politicized, and never transcendent of ideology, and then considering the role of duplication (or reproduction) and filing (or order) in the making and defining of modern archives, the possibility emerges of how questions central in cultural studies may also apply to study of the archive.

CONCLUSION

This essay began with an idealistic quote from Theodore Roosevelt Schellenberg's *Modern Archives* about the crucial role of the archivist in establishing truth. The work of the archivist, Schellenberg suggests, is "to preserve the evidence, impartially, without taint of political or ideological bias"; though a formidable task, the (implied) virtue of archival work is its commitment to transcending politics and ideology, to building an unbiased historical record. Schellenberg's *Modern Archives* thus attempts both to make a timeless statement about the archivist's place in a modern world and to stake a claim about the importance of the archive to the articulation of modernity.

Review of Schellenberg's writing about archival work, however, belies claims of timelessness, suggesting instead the historical specificity of his scholarship. Indeed, in the fifty years since the publication of *Modern Archives*, the emergence of cultural studies has enabled another way to read work about the archive and archival practice. This essay provides a preliminary review of Schellenberg's canonical text and gestures to further

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1979); Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

application of cultural studies' approaches to archival studies. Cultural studies' analytical tools allow an understanding of the archive as a sociopolitical construct, an institution literally and figuratively contained by the ideological vocabulary available to the archivists who create them. Consideration of the content and form of archives, then, indicates that they are a potentially important site of investigation for cultural studies (not only archival studies, as discussed above); after all, the archive is often both the site and the source for the production of much historical scholarship. To explore how the archive (at least as it is defined by Schellenberg) is at once repressive and ideologically productive—whether through the proposal of a concept of “archival allegory” or otherwise—is to explore how the archive, surprisingly peripheral and taken for granted, both shapes and is shaped by dominant discourse.

Cheryl Beredo is a graduate student in the Department of American Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. A graduate of Cornell University and the University of Pittsburgh, Beredo has worked at Cornell University's Human Sexuality Collection, the Radcliffe Institute's Schlesinger Library, and as NHPRC fellow in Archival Administration at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

The Elusive Simplicity of Container-Level Encoded Archival Description: Some Considerations

Leah Broaddus

INTRODUCTION

Web-managed finding aids require streamlined, efficient intellectual organization of materials. It is not just a question of aesthetics, but of pragmatics. A more consistent, generalizable system of organization aids institutions in adopting, migrating, and building on the structure. The generalizable elements of a solution can be repeated, predicted, explained, taught, and further developed.¹ They also lend the skeletal structure necessary to support unique elements.

Pinning down the “unique” and “non-unique” elements of archival finding aids has been a long and complex process. Part of the early impetus for doing so cooperatively was the push toward the creation of an Encoded Archival Description (EAD) Document Type Definition (DTD). This was to be a scripted language, much like the more commonly known HyperText Markup Language (HTML), for describing and posting the standardized elements of finding-aid documents to the World

¹ Conversation with University of Illinois math graduate student Dan Lior, October 30, 2007, Champaign, Illinois.

Wide Web, allowing for some higher interactive Web functions. According to Dennis Meissner, leading up to the release of version 1.0, many of the archivists involved in the push seemed to nurse some small, defiant hope that for their institutions the smallest number of collection-description revisions possible would be required in order to bring them into compliance with new Web structures.² Even the smallest changes to any of the thousands of local finding-aid structures would require human resources that few archives had available or could afford. Making changes to physical labels on thousands of boxes was so impracticable that the very idea was understandably offensive to contemplate.

Choosing their battles, the creators of EAD, according to Janice E. Ruth, focused on creating a standard hierarchical structure for collection-level data.³ To their immense credit, it is now a relatively simple process to transfer collection-level data between institutions and software platforms. The quest that archives have not yet followed to its labyrinthine conclusion, however, is that of creating a software-compatible, peer-institution-transferable, standardized container-level Extensible Markup Language (XML) hierarchy. In the interim, EAD is very cleverly structured to accommodate a near-infinite system of possible data-hierarchies and arrangements at the container level, and no single piece of collection-administration software can or could ever navigate all of them. Hence, every archive's container-list structure is local or nearly local.

The purpose of this article is to advocate the development of a structural goal towards which container-level data standards might evolve over time, and to contribute to the needed corpus of hypotheses in order to arrive at a solution to the problem of universal transfer. To this end, a hypothesis is posited which points to a possible standardized solution. Illustrative examples are then presented.

² Dennis Meissner. "First Things First: Reengineering Finding Aids for Implementation of EAD," *American Archivist* 60, n. 4 (2007): 373.

³ Janice E. Ruth. "Encoded Archival Description: A Structural Overview," *American Archivist* 60, n. 3 (1997): 316.

BACKGROUND

One frequent conception among newcomers to EAD and Web-database-driven administrative software for the management of finding aids is that such programs and DTDs were written so that archivists would be able to put finding aids on the Web. This is not really an adequate summary of the goal, however. Finding aids had been put on the Web by many simpler and more widely supported full-text searchable methods. Even Gopher, as described by Michael Holland and Elizabeth Nielsen in 1995, supported full-text searching via the Internet.⁴ HTML documents were all as full-text searchable as a specialized archival XML document later would be. But Holland and Nielsen also believed that full-text was not enough; it did not “relieve one of the responsibility of following established professional guidelines for arrangement and description, including rigorous subject analysis and vocabulary control.”⁵ According to Daniel Pitti and Wendy M. Duff six years later, “during the early stages of EAD, many asked why it was necessary, arguing that HTML appeared to be ‘good enough’ to do the job.”⁶ This is probably because there was, and still is, some lack of universal clarity as to what that “job” was to be.

EAD documents provide a large hierarchical template for a collection, and to represent a collection in the hierarchy an archivist must first shred a finding aid into standardized pieces and group them into levels. The point of the shredding and the standardized groupings and hierarchies is to lend machine-readable meaning to the archival information elements that underlie the visual display. The computer needs to be able to use the arrangement to translate the content according to an XML DTD that tells it what to expect to find, and where. As Stephen J. DeRose phrased it in 1997, “Structured information is information that is analyzed. [O]nly when information has been

⁴ Michael Holland and Elizabeth Nielsen. “Gophers in the Archives: Planning and Implementing an archives and Records Management Gopher” *Provenance XIII* (1995): 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 44-45.

⁶ Daniel V. Pitti and Wendy M. Duff, “Introduction,” *Encoded Archival Description on the Internet*, Pitti and Duff, eds. (New York: The Haworth Press, Inc., 2001), 3.

divided up by such an analysis and the parts and relationships have been identified, can computers process it in useful ways.”⁷

Because EAD XML limits what tags can be used inside of other tags, the computer can discern infinitely recurring hierarchical relationships. For computers, “navigation requires naming.”⁸ The nature of the data is recognizable by looking at where the data is filed. The location serves as a structurally defined “name” for the piece of data. When EAD was created, the idea was that if every institution used a standard EAD tag-system to store its data, not only would any institution be able to take in foreign EAD trees from any other and display them using a local stylesheet, but it would be possible to do other things, like create a stylesheet modeled to look like a Swiss cheese version of a library catalog entry to create a draft of a MACHine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) record. The designers of EAD intended that eventually such use of the structure would be possible, though they did not include it in the primary EAD development project.

As Janice Ruth has written, “The group ... felt that it would be burdensome and unwieldy for EAD to be structured so that a complete MARC record could be harvested automatically from the SGML markup,” but “for those MARC-like elements already represented in EAD, the team added an optional ENCODING ANALOG attribute, which permits the designation of the applicable MARC field or subfield together with the authoritative form of the data.”⁹

A person does not need to have an EAD tag hierarchy in place to put a finding-aid display on the Web, and someone visiting a Web site can successfully use a non-EAD finding aid, but without the hierarchies underneath the display, or an administrative software program with spreadsheet hierarchies that tell what is grouped with—and ranked under—what, meta searches cannot recognize the nature of the pieces of data in the finding aid, down to the granular level required for a successful federated archival reference-search.

⁷ Steven J. DeRose, “Navigation, Access, and Control Using Structured Information,” *American Archivist* 60, n. 3 (1997): 299.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 301.

⁹ Ruth, *Encoded Archival Description*, 316.

EAD was meant to allow a researcher to search the archives of the entire world all at once, by typing in a question that could be interpreted and answered by all the many and different worldwide machines. Daniel Pitti and Wendy M. Duff called this ideal “union access” and they predicted that users would “be able to discover or locate archival materials no matter where they are located in the world” and that “Libraries and archives will be able to easily share information about complementary records and collections and to ‘virtually’ integrate collections related by provenance, but dispersed geographically or administratively.”¹⁰ This was to be accomplished by convincing everyone to use the same EAD structure and applying tags in a software-generalizable manner. It was also meant to ensure that if one university sent another a file containing one of their collections’ EAD documents, the new institution could download it straight into their EAD reader and have no trouble whatsoever digitally storing it and “parsing” or parceling out the data into local hierarchies. The goal was that the local program should be able to pack a foreign finding aid away with the rest of the native finding aids just as if it had been created locally. This ideal, however, has not yet come to fruition.

FROM EAD TO COLLECTION ADMINISTRATIVE SOFTWARE

According to a Web survey of fifty-four institutions done by Xiaomu Zhou in 2006, database-driven structures are one of the more popular solutions for Web delivery.¹¹ These special complex table systems allow an archivist to list the data from each of the XML finding aids one after another, as one would enter multiple line-entries in a flat spreadsheet like Excel, yet still keep track of all of the complex hierarchies and relationship groupings. The most common of these table-management systems that lets an archivist list multiple XML documents-worth of information inside a single traditional table-structure is called MySQL. “My” is an adornment, but SQL means “Structured Query Language.” It is called “query language” because it allows for lots of advanced search capabilities by standardizing, or structuring, the layers of hierarchy inside of which unique data

¹⁰ Pitti and Duff, 3.

¹¹ Xiaomu Zhou, “Examining Search Functions of EAD Finding Aids Web Sites,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 4, n. 3/4 (2006): 106 (table).

are described. By using a MySQL table to store the data, all kinds of programs, not just those used in the library-archives industry, can reach in, interpret data relationships, and pull out whatever pieces of the data they desire to display or use at the time.

Administrative software designed to input and extract data to and from these hierarchical spreadsheets, or MySQL-managed tables, allows archivists to manipulate data using customized interfaces. For example, one administrative software component might be fill-in-the-blank forms and menu selections for new collection data entry, rather than requiring raw-encoded EAD. An early example of this would be the University of Illinois's Archon (Archives-Online) software-development project co-authored by Chris Prom and Scott Schwartz. Another emerging example is the Archivists' Toolkit Project, an ongoing project of the University of California San Diego Libraries, New York University Libraries, and Five Colleges, Inc. Libraries. Archivists enter collection information into programs like Archon and Archivists' Toolkit using fill-in-the-blank online form interfaces. Ideally, the software takes the information out of the forms, stores it in tables, and then uses it to create as many formats as desired, such as an online finding aid that can be displayed in a standardized EAD tag-code, or even a MARC record draft.¹² If any of the early examples of this kind of administrative software system were to become fully functional, it would no longer be essential for an archivist to be able to encode raw EAD or program and customize a delivery system in order to display EAD XML documents, though he might still choose to do so, working from raw output options. With that in mind, some archivists are already making the move to focusing now on user studies and home-grown programming to help archives collaborate to develop non-commercial, local delivery systems that utilize these untapped functionalities.¹³

¹² Chris Prom and Scott Schwartz, Archon Web site, <<http://www.archon.org/>> (accessed October 15, 2007); University of California San Diego Libraries, New York University Libraries and Five Colleges, Inc. Libraries, Archivists' Toolkit Project Web site <<http://archivisttoolkit.org/>> (accessed October 28, 2008).

¹³ Zhou, "Examining Search Functions," 103.

Though it is possible that these local systems might one day compete and eventually merge into one world-system, for the moment the “union access” proposal simply becomes more and more encumbered as each institution or region strikes out on its own.

Software programmers generally attempt to write collection-administration programs so broad and open as to accommodate multi-institutions’ local container-level structurings. That way the software can be marketed and sold broadly. The software, once installed, however, requires that the local institution hire its own programmer to “finish off” and customize the functionality so that it will accommodate the locally chosen hierarchical structures for the container-list, and the end result is that inevitably the software becomes locally distinct again, incompatible with other offshoots of the same original marketed package. Because many archives are still trading individual data sets between these systems using EAD documents as the “Esperanto” of the digital finding-aid lexicon, it might be efficient to consider that some further standardization of the underlying hierarchical structure of EAD, even within single institutions, would simplify the process of delivery-system development and EAD markup, to the benefit of many.

PROBLEM

Structured database software systems like Archon, Archivists’ Toolkit, and other homegrown local and regional systems which import or read EAD-structured XML documents can be programmed to import collection-level data from other managed databases with relatively few problems. A moderately experienced programmer can steer the collection-level fields from one EAD XML-generating program into any other, writing a script with instructions that allow the computer to carry out the transfer automatically. However, when it comes to the container-level data, much of this potential for clean exchange falls apart. It is rare and perhaps unheard of for one archive’s local EAD-compatible administration-software platform to trade container-level data smoothly with another’s, or for a program that searches multiple institutions’ data with any search method other than full-text keyword searching to read and negotiate in a fully functional manner among all of what

are fundamentally dissonant EAD container-level management systems.

When an archivist makes the decision to start entering finding aids into a table-driven piece of software instead of hand-coding them, he or she faces several hurdles. If previous archivists have already implemented one of many arbitrary systems for hand-coding EAD documents one-by-one, it is unlikely that the box lists will upload correctly into any new commercial collection-management program. The collection-level data will fare better, generally, but collection-level data are usually just a few pages long at most, whereas container-level data may go on for thirty or forty pages. With that in mind, the archivists who previously have been hand-coding EAD documents for the institution will, quite understandably, want to stick with their current non-database-structured process. If they are in compliance with EAD display standards, they will see no advantage to re-coding or migrating hundreds or thousands of lines of data, just so that it can be uploaded and stored in a particular piece of software that allows for the same sort of controlled searching, particularly if that software, unlike the perceived-EAD, is not standard to all institutions. But again, though by hand-coding they are complying with allowable structures of EAD, all they may have accomplished in hand-coding the hundreds of finding aids is little more than if they had coded them in HTML so far as compatibility with other institutions and software goes. Yet compatibility was a primary purpose for EAD and all of the recent collection-administrative software. Looking ahead a little, even if the legacy finding aids must remain unchanged, surely at least the newly digitized finding aids could be brought into compliance with some agreed-upon standard.

Many institutions that produce articles and have sought a voice in EAD development naturally also have a large legacy of encoded finding aids. On the other hand, many of the institutions concerned with reading the literature and using the standards may not yet have implemented EAD, or may have been hand-coding a very small, limited set of finding aids. Some archives are still trying to evaluate their first software solutions. As Zhou points out, "Although a variety of archival institutions are considering joining the EAD community, it is primarily college and university archives and special collections that have adopted

EAD to encode their finding aids.”¹⁴ It would seem, therefore, still useful to establish a current recommendation for optimal EAD-encoding structure down to the container list, such that any unencumbered institution could be invited to adhere, if interested in achieving the most seamless EAD field-mapping for exchange of finding aids with future peer institutions and administration software platforms, realizing the fullest potential of having a specialized XML DTD. If an institution chooses not to follow the optimal-structure recommendation, they could, of course, still code a document in an acceptable, locally administrated form of EAD that would function as a freestanding document on the World Wide Web, even if the container-level data would not be available for interchange between institutions. But this is not an optimal level of cooperation for an academic and professional field in the digital age. Working together, as with the collection-level data, it would seem possible for archivists to unite and determine an optimal, software-interpretable, generalizable skeleton upon which to model new container lists.

The most frequent explanations given for the lack of standardization at the container level are usually one or both of these two arguments:

1. Archival collections are unique; and
2. We cannot relabel boxes, so physical order has to trump intellectual coherence in the digital realm.

These arguments are based in part on a lack of understanding of the term “standardization” in the context of information technology. Standardization in a searchable database is an attempt to define what is new or unique about an element by building on what is known and non-unique about it. Take library cataloging for an example. Library of Congress subject headings form a standardized lexicon which effectively serves two purposes:

1. It provides an established vocabulary for describing materials in consistent manner across institutions; and
2. It demonstrates by rules and by consistency the manner by which further unique words may be added to that vocabulary.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 100.

The cataloger places the new, unique heading in a meaningful non-unique position within the existing body of vocabulary so that others can understand it, as well as locate it for later applications. The system of using headings and the process for creating new headings are standardized, whereas the headings themselves remain unique.

The second argument is a symptom of under-utilization of information technology, whether EAD or spreadsheet table-based collection-administrative software programs in general. It is possible to represent illogical physical orderings with very logical Web-accessible intellectual descriptive documentation. Historically, users have not “browsed” archival shelves, and boxes from a single collection have not had to sit next to each other on the shelf. Now, however, it has become possible to create virtual, browseable electronic shelves by presenting a falsely organized view of a collection that can quite easily refer back to a disordered physical reality. EAD and collection-administrative programs can impose some useful regulation on this wide-open descriptive situation so that researchers, as well as archivists, can make informed assumptions about where to look electronically for descriptive data even if the physical arrangement of the materials is unique. Many of the scenarios that archivists think of as being a part of the “uniqueness” of collections are actually the result of physical happenstance, and are furthermore quite commonplace among repositories, even though they may disobey the current descriptive practices. For instance:

- A series extends over three boxes with nonconsecutive numbers.
- A series ends mid-box and another begins.
- A new box needs to be inserted between two old boxes intellectually, even though its box number is much higher.
- The collection is too small for series, but there are five distinct intellectual themes inside each of the two boxes.

Collections may sometimes be old, and they may have been processed before certain descriptive practices were put in place, or perhaps the current descriptive practice seems unclear. EAD, for its part, allows for a plethora of solutions, without making it clear which one will result in the most

frequently applied structure for each case. If archivists could agree upon a standardized, optimal hierarchical container-level shell schema for newly encoded finding aids that directed structuring of these common scenarios, then even if archives keep legacy templates intact, looking to a more collective future, it might enable commercial programmers to create programs with higher delivery functions for a larger, more viable customer base, rather than having to spend their energies creating one-by-one compatibility patches for isolated customer systems. One common illustration of a container-level element that has eluded much-needed standardization is the concept of the box.

Hierarchically, in an XML document, depending on one's local system setup, a box tag might not be able to be opened and closed as a subcomponent within a series because it might also contain folders of another series. Concurrently, a single box may, in some institutions, be listed in a single EAD document twice, but it risks confusing those other institutions' brands of EAD administrative software that either disallow repetition, or interpret it as an order to overwrite on import. Within a single institution, some of the finding aids for collections treat boxes as intellectual sub-sub-series bearing scope notes and dates, and others treat boxes as strictly physical locations whereas folders bear scope notes and dates. Sometimes within a single finding aid it is possible to find examples of both intellectual and strictly physical treatments of "box." In the context of prose and individual free-standing EAD documents, such variety is permissible. For a programmer or a database, each of these forks in the road of local treatment requires an entirely separate customized programming path and an increasingly sophisticated understanding on the part of a non-cognitive machine in order to carry out each small function across institutions.

According to the creators of EAD, "It was agreed that the intellectual arrangement of the archival materials was more important and more permanent than the physical order, and the DTD was designed accordingly."¹⁵ It may be impossible to settle on one single standardized physical structure that would meet all collection-descriptive needs. But on the other hand, it might be possible for intellectual structure to ascend still further and form a more restrictive, standardized tag structure for marked-

¹⁵ Ruth, *Encoded Archival Description*, 315.

up EAD container lists. If physical elements could be exclusively relegated to serving an attribute-function within intellectual structure, it might in fact grant archivists more freedom of physical description without disrupting software-compatible container-level arrangements.

For optimal software and peer compatibility, tag hierarchy must be consistent, even if attributes are flexible. On a family tree, for instance, the grandmother must always be the mother's mother—she cannot sometimes be the sister of the grandchild, but she still may have any physical attributes she likes. For optimal software-compatibility, EAD XML structure could prohibit physical containers, such as a box, from bearing any intellectual sub-elements such as titles and dates. Any physical item such as a box or folder entered in EAD could be required to have some level of intellectual structure surmounting and anchoring it, from which it would consistently inherit its descriptive traits.

In XML markup terms, this would mean something like displacing all of the <container> tags and attributes and assigning them as attributes within intellectual tags such as the <c> tags. The “box” might not sometimes be hierarchically above a series and at other times below it, but rather always above. Alternately, in order for “container” to be used as a hierarchical indicator within EAD tag structure, it could be made to suffer a concrete hierarchical boundary. All of the optional container attributes, like “type,” would need to be physical descriptions that corresponded to the hierarchical station of that box or its sub-elements. Some elements of physical structure in a finding aid happen to sync up consistently with intellectual structure. One such element is “folder,” or “file.” No two series or subseries need ever be housed within a single folder in any archive. For that reason, “file” is clearly always arranged hierarchically below the series and subseries, never above. “File” is thus already hierarchically stable as a part of the intellectual <c> tag structure, and the <container> tag's attribute-destination “folder” should conceivably be able to cede to “file.” “Folder” is consistently intellectual, as well as consistently physical, whereas “box” is only consistently, reliably physical.

ILLUSTRATIONS

For those already using XML, or for those planning to design customized collection administrative software, one of the best ways to explicate this type of suggestion is through the use of illustrations. As explained in section 7.2.5 of the EAD Application Guidelines, version 1.0, one XML tag can only inherit an attribute from another if it falls within the family of that tag, after the opening parent-tag and before the closing one.¹⁶ Similarly, in a normal XML structure designed for an archive, if there were a series that consisted mostly of boxes, an XML document could assign the default container-type “box” at the series level. This is not to say that the series would be one box, but rather that the attribute “container,” if used by any tag within this series would always be of the type “box.” All the tags that were listed under the jurisdiction of that series, if they invoked the attribute “container” by assigning a container number, would inherit the container-type “box” attribute, without having to say so each time, unless another were specified locally to override it.

If an archivist had a software program for administrating collection data, he could input a complex legacy container list such as the one below, exactly in the progression it is written here:

Series 1: Correspondence, packaged awards, and standing volume

Box 1

Folder 44 — Correspondence with Jim and Ralph, 1920-1940

Item 1 — Letter from Jim

Item 2 — Letter from Ralph

Box 2

Folder 1 — Correspondence, 2004-2006

Package 1

Item 1 — Framed Award

Item 2 — Framed Award

Item 1 (a free-standing unboxed item) — Book

Behind the scenes, meanwhile, the administration software program could, among other things, format this list into

¹⁶ Society of American Archivists, Encoded Archival Description Working Group, *Encoded Archival Description Application Guidelines: Version 1.0* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1999), 200-203.

software and database-friendly, consistently hierarchical XML code similar to that shown in **Example A**:

```

<co1 level="series" container-type="box">1
  <did>
    <unittitle >
      Correspondence, packaged awards, and standing volume
    </unittitle>
    <co2 level="file" container=1>44
      <did>
        <unittitle>
          Correspondence with Jim and Ralph
          <unitdate type="inclusive">
            1920-1940
          </unitdate>
        </unittitle>

        <co3 level="item">1
          <did>
            <unittitle >Letter from Jim
            </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>

        <co3 level="item">2
          <did>
            <unittitle > Letter from Ralph
            </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>
      </did>
    </co2>

    <co2 level="file" container=2>1
      <did>
        <unittitle>
          Correspondence
          <unitdate type="inclusive">
            2004-2006
          </unitdate>
        </unittitle>
      </did>
    </co2>

    <co2 level="item" container-type="package" container=1>1
      <did>
        <unittitle>
          Framed award
        </unittitle>

```

```

    </did>
  </co2>
  <co2 level="item" container-type="package" container=1>2
    <did>
      <unittitle>
        Framed award
      </unittitle>
    </did>
  </co2>
  <co2 level="item">3
    <did>
      <unittitle>
        Book
      </unittitle>
    </did>
  </co2>
</did>
</co1>

```

If a series were composed of two boxes and each box held a different kind of content that required titling, rather than assigning titles to the boxes themselves in XML, the archivist would need to impose an extra level of “subseries” structure within the code (not on the box-labels of the actual boxes—just electronically within EAD) using unnumbered subseries. Unnumbered `<c>` tags might, for example, always indicate that a level existed only in XML hierarchical structure, not in the physical world. The two unnumbered subseries could be assigned the container-type “box” and a container number (box number) which would indicate the existence of a physical box. As before, one might also here assign the container-type “box” at the series level, so that it could be left out of all the subsequent “subseries” level tags that fell hierarchically within the parent series.

The archivist would enter the collection into an administrative software database in the following structural order:

Series 1

Subseries (unnumbered) — Correspondence with Mr. Smith,
1940-1943

Description: This subseries contains correspondence with

Mr. Smith.

Box 34

Folder 1 — Letters about floorboards

Folder 2 — Letters about curtains

Subseries (unnumbered) — Correspondence with Mr. Jones,
1940-1942

Description: This subseries contains correspondence with
Mr. Jones.

Box 35

Folder 1 — Letters about light fixtures

Folder 2 — Letters about carpeting

The software would then generate roughly the XML code of

Example B:

```
<co1 level="series"; container-type="box">1
  <did>
    <co2 level="subseries"; container=34>
      <did>
        <unittitle >
          Correspondence with Mr. Smith
          <unitdate type="inclusive">
            1940-1943
          </unitdate>
        </unittitle>
        <scopecontent>
          This subseries contains correspondence with Mr. Smith
        </scopecontent>

        <co3 level="file">1
          <did>
            <unittitle> Letters about floorboards
          </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>
        <co3 level="file">2
          <did>
            <unittitle> Letters about curtains
          </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>
      </did>
    </co2>
  <co2 level="subseries"; container=35>
    <did>
      <unittitle >
        Correspondence with Mr. Jones
```



```

<unitdate type="inclusive">
  1940-1942
</unitdate>
</unittitle>
<scopecontent>
This subseries contains correspondence with Mr. Jones
</scopecontent>
<co3 level="file">1
  <did>
    <unittitle> Letters about light fixtures
  </unittitle>
  </did>
</co3>
<co3 level="file">2
  <did>
    <unittitle>Letters about carpeting
  </unittitle>
  </did>
</co3>
</did>
</co2>
</did>
</co1>

```

If a collection were too small traditionally to have had series, and was, for example, housed within a single box, one would, for the sake of optimal XML software-usable structure, impose an unnumbered (again, electronic-only) series upon the entire collection, assign a container type “box” and box number to indicate an actual physical box within that series, continuing by adding all of the files within it. Administrative software data entry would be something like the following, where the unnumbered series bears the descriptive data that would have belonged to the box:

```

Series (unnumbered) — Collection of correspondence with everyone,
1920-1963
Box 1
  Folder 1 — Letters about floorboards
  Folder 2 — Letters about light fixtures
  Folder 3 — Letters about rats

```

XML output would look similar to **Example C**:

```
<co1 level="series"; container-type="box"; container=1>
  <did>
    <unittitle>Collection of correspondence with everybody
      <unitdate type="inclusive">1920-1963</unitdate>
    </unittitle>
    <scopecontent>This series contains correspondence with Misters
      Yardley, Smith, and Jones
    </scopecontent>
    <co2 level="file"> 1
      <unittitle>Letters about floorboards
      </unittitle>
    </co2>
    <co2 level="file">2
      <did>
        <unittitle>Letters about light fixtures
        </unittitle>
      </did>
    </co2>
    <co2 level="file">3
      <did>
        <unittitle>Letters about rats
        </unittitle>
      </did>
    </co2>
  </did>
</co1>
```

If parts of a single series appeared in multiple boxes that also contained parts of other series, the container attribute's destination number (the box number) could be repeated as an attribute within multiple file-level or other series-level tags, and software programmers would need to know that they should consistently treat multiple-mention of any container number as an "add-to" command rather than an "overwrite" command or a data entry error. Data entry example:

Series 1

Subseries (unnumbered) — Correspondence with Mr. Smith

Box 2

Folder 30 — Letters about floorboards

Folder 31 — Letters about curtains

Series 2

Subseries (unnumbered) — Correspondence with Mr. Jones

Box 2

Folder 32 — Letters about light fixtures

Folder 33 — Letters about carpeting

Series 3

Subseries (unnumbered) — Correspondence with Mr. Yardley

Box 3

Folder 1 — Letters about rats

The XML output might look something like **Example D**:

```
<co1 level="series"; container-type="box">1
  <did>
    <co2 level="subseries"; container=2>
      <did>
        <unittitle >
          Correspondence with Mr. Smith
        </unittitle>

        <co3 level="file">30
          <did>
            <unittitle> Letters about floorboards
          </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>
        <co3 level="file">31
          <did>
            <unittitle> Letters about curtains
          </unittitle>
          </did>
        </co3>
      </did>

    </co2>
  </did>
</co1>
<co1 level="series"; container-type="box">2
  <did>
    <co2 level="subseries"; container=2>
      <did>
        <unittitle >
          Correspondence with Mr. Jones
        </unittitle>

        <co3 level="file">32
          <did>
            <unittitle> Letters about light fixtures
```

```

        </unittitle>
        </did>
    </co3>
    <co3 level="file">33
        <did>
            <unittitle>Letters about carpeting
            </unittitle>
            </did>
        </co3>

    </did>
</co2>
</did>
</co1>
<co1 level="series"; container-type="box">3
    <co2 level="subseries"; container=3>
        <did>
            <unittitle >
                Correspondence with Mr. Yardley
            </unittitle>

            <co3 level="file">1
                <did>
                    <unittitle> Letters about rats
                    </unittitle>
                    </did>
                </co3>
            </did>
        </co2>
    </did>
</co1>

```

CONCLUSION

EAD in its current version requires that archivists impose one of many possible intellectual structures upon a box list, and simply by applying one of any number of possible structures, EAD serves to enable advanced-search functionalities locally. EAD markup tags can serve as markers/anchors for local programs and search engines, regardless of where they are or how they are arranged at a single institution. However, without consistency across collections, it is difficult to find administrative software that can work for all the disparately structured EAD documents. The problem is compounded when archivists try to create cooperative finding-aid databases across institutions. If a functional solution could lead to the standardized treatment of the container list across archives, then that alone might greatly reduce the amount of time programming-code software designers

must currently invest in composing compatible import and export protocols. An optimal standard for software consciously structuring EAD container-level data as a whole would be an asset for both collection-administration system programmers and archivists at institutions who just want to know “the best” software solution for managing and encoding the finding aids for the Web. The axiom of Occam’s Razor, that “the simplest solution is probably the best one,” when it is used as a limit on creativity and exploration, is probably disputed for good reason in many scenarios, but once the rules of a solution are fully explored and understood, simplicity has its structural benefits. An optimized standard may not preclude the usefulness of other local or legacy solutions, yet it is certainly at least an asset that archivists might want to have in-pocket, for application where there is a choice.

Leah Broaddus is the university archivist at Southern Illinois University Carbondale’s Morris Library Special Collections Research Center. She is a graduate of the MLS special collections program at Indiana University Bloomington and has a background in Perl programming and library instruction. With the assistance of SIUC information services staff programmer Mickey Soltys, the mentorship of Special Collections director Pam Hackbart-Dean, and the support of University of Illinois archivists Chris Prom and Scott Schwartz, she recently led the implementation of online-finding-aid management at her institution. Research support was provided by SIUC Morris Library.

Where's the Context? Enhancing Access to Digital Archives

Abigail R. Griner

I would contend that most objects of culture are . . . embedded within context and those contexts are embedded within other ones as well. So a characteristic of cultural objects is they're increasingly context-dependent.

-Brian Eno, *Time and Bits: Managing Digital Continuity*¹

INTRODUCTION

Providing access to original materials is an ethical responsibility for all professional archivists. In the Code of Ethics for Archivists, access is the sixth tenet, stating that archivists not only provide equal and open access to records, they preserve the intellectual integrity of collections.² In an analog environment, this responsibility is somewhat straightforward

¹ Margaret MacLean and Ben H. Davis, *Time and Bits: Managing Digital Continuity* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, Getty Trust), 1998, 51.

² "Code of Ethics for Archivists" (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), at <http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app_ethics.asp> (accessed March 4, 2009).

and uncomplicated. However, technology has advanced rapidly over the past decade, and digitization projects are at the forefront of library and archival news. In a digital world, the once-simple tasks of promoting access to original materials and preserving their intellectual integrity are far more complicated. Although digitization has the potential to increase greatly a repository's patron base, complex decisions arise for archivists when contemplating this path. Institutions must expend more of their resources and staff to replicate digitally the value of analog collections. Many of these problems have been examined before, so I will address an issue that has been largely disregarded by archival literature: the necessity of placing digital collections within a broader social and historical context.

CONTRASTING DIGITAL AND ANALOG SETTINGS

Understanding context is vital for patrons researching archival collections. Unlike books, primary sources cannot stand by themselves. Thus, their level of description largely determines their long-term value. In the article "Archives Described at Collection Level," Meg Sweet and David Thomas state: "Archival documents can only be understood in the context in which they were created." Contextual information is also extremely critical when archival holdings contain sensitive subjects, topics that may be offensive to much of society now but were once acceptable. If understood in their proper historical context, these materials may not appear as offensive to researchers. Therefore, context is necessary for interpreting archival materials.³

Various kinds of contextual information may be obtained from archival collections. During their research, patrons learn about relationships between collections housed in the repository as well as in other institutions. They gather knowledge on historical trends, events, and figures related to the materials

³ Meg Sweet and David Thomas, "Archives Described at Collection Level," *D-Lib Magazine* 6 (September 2000), <<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/september00/sweet/09sweet.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009); see also Abby Smith, *Why Digitize?*, (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 1999, 8-9), <<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub80-smith/pub80.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009); Michael Ester, *Digital Image Collections: Issues and Practices* (Washington, D.C.: Commission on Preservation and Access, 1996), 18.

they are studying. Before researchers even view an archival collection, a finding aid offers them descriptive information to place documents in context, which is vital for them to understand if a specific collection is relevant to their project. By adding historical context within finding aids, archivists already enhance access to analog collections. In addition to contextual information in finding aids, physically viewing original materials teaches researchers about the provenance of a collection and its connections to other people, places, and times.⁴

However, the research experience in a digital environment is entirely different from an analog setting. In an actual research room, users have the opportunity to examine whole boxes of materials, seeing the relationship between documents, folders, and series, and the correlation between these, the overarching collection, and even other collections held in the repository. The experience is very personal, and patrons often feel a strong connection to the physical materials. This does not occur in a digital environment, though. Researchers often find materials on the Internet by using a search engine, which leads them to the type of archival items they may or may not need without any way of showing how they reached them. Also, if users find digitized archives by browsing popular Web sites, they may not realize that certain images or documents have been decontextualized or misinterpreted. In most cases, even archival Web sites contain such minimal descriptive information that researchers could easily misinterpret their value or fail to see any relation to their studies. If digital archives do not provide patrons enough information to detail clearly the provenance and context of their holdings, the researchers will not be able to determine the reliability and quality of the evidence before them. In an analog setting, the researcher and archivist both have certain expectations and assumptions, but this is not true in a digital environment where archivists have no knowledge of who is viewing their collections, their level of research experience, or

⁴ Aaron D. Purcell, "Providing Better Access to Manuscript Collections: A Case Study from the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.," *Journal of Archival Organization* 1 (2002): 37, 49.

the particular information for which they are looking.⁵ Thus, the success of researchers in the digital setting depends even more on how well archivists do their jobs.

TRANSLATING ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS ONLINE

Most archivists focus on the importance of provenance and chronology when creating their finding aids, providing detailed description of a collection as a whole, and only briefly summarizing individual series. This is a standard method and has been somewhat successful in an analog environment. However, it is not necessarily the best approach in a digital world. Even the *General International Standard for Archival Description*, or *ISAD(G)*, provides guidelines for archival description that do not always apply to digital spaces. Perhaps this is because *ISAD(G)* was developed at a time when digital space was first becoming a reality. For instance, the guidelines state that it is necessary to provide information relevant to the level of description. However, Abby Smith points out that online researchers want more information than most finding aids contain, especially in an environment where they cannot see the actual records and no reference archivist is readily available to assist them, as in a physical archives.⁶

Based on usability tests conducted at my institution, I have found that researchers tend to expect digital collections and finding aids to be more organized, better documented,

⁵ Smith, *Why Digitize?*, 8-9; Bradley L. Schaffner, "Electronic Resources: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?," *College and Research Libraries* 62 (May 2001): 243; Christine L. Borgman, "The Invisible Library: Paradox of the Global Information Structure," *Library Trends* 51 (Spring 2003): 18-19, <http://www.ideals.uiuc.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/8487/librarytrendsv51i4j_opt.pdf?sequence=1> (accessed May 26, 2009); Sweet and Thomas, "Archives Described at Collection Level." Borgman, Schaffner, Sweet, and Thomas all discuss problems with search engines stripping context from digital items. Elizabeth Hallam Smith, "Lost in Cyberspace: Have Archives a Future?" (paper presented at the Australian Society of Archivists Conference, Melbourne, Australia, August 19, 2000), 10, <http://www.archivists.org.au/files/Conference_Papers/2000/hallamsmith.pdf> (accessed March 4, 2009).

⁶ Sweet and Thomas, "Archives Described at Collection Level"; *ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description* (Ottawa: International Council on Archives, 2000), <http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/isad_g_2e.pdf> (accessed May 26, 2009); Smith, *Why Digitize?*, 8-9.

and simpler to use than an actual physical archive. They want to understand fully the historical and social contexts of the collection materials they are browsing online. Avoiding redundancy of information is another *ISAD(G)* guideline that may need to be altered in a digital environment. Researchers may come across an archives page without understanding the path they took to get there. In order to avoid redundancy, an archivist might not have included contextual information on the accessed page or a link to it because the details are included on another Web page. But unless this is clearly stated, patrons may not understand it and fail to realize an item is relevant to their research.

It is important to note that much of the general public has extremely limited experience with archival sources, so few people have the research skills necessary to use primary sources effectively. But archival institutions still insist on digitizing collections for the Internet. Digitization allows researchers easier access to materials, but if they do not understand how to use original documents, digital archives will still not be an accessible research tool for them. Therefore, archival Web sites need to be simple for all user levels and include detailed explanations on their subject matter. Guidance on using archival collections or links to sites that provide tutorials on using archives would also add value. Otherwise, institutions are only reaching the same audience, those who already conduct research in a physical repository. In many cases, they are losing a younger, more computer-savvy group of potential patrons by failing to design user-friendly, archival Web sites.⁷

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although context is vital to understanding primary sources, many authors only briefly acknowledge the necessity of providing contextual information to digital collections. Diane Zorich's book, *Managing Digital Assets*, includes only two brief paragraphs on contextual information, referencing related technical issues. Donald Waters and John Garrett's 1996 volume does the same, but in more detail. Much literature focuses

⁷ Abby Smith, *Strategies for Building Digitized Collections* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2001), <<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub101/contents.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009).

on contextual information in relation to metadata, though. Metadata is an excellent tool when digitizing collections, but researchers cannot see this information so it is not helpful for users who are trying to understand the social and historical context of materials. It is useful when implementing a searchable database of collections, but for patrons who would like to browse collections serendipitously, it is not a viable tool.⁸

Conversely, Stephen E. Ostrow acknowledges the importance of contextual information in relation to digital historical-image collections. He emphasizes the advantage of having a reading-room experience viewing photographs because researchers develop a greater understanding of a whole image collection by looking at folders within a box series, viewing groups of images at a time, and understanding their relation to each other and their role in the collection itself. Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland also discusses archival theory within a digital environment and the centrality of context but does not approach any specific problems associated with providing contextual information for digital archives. Still, she does successfully examine the disparity between concerns within the archival community and those in the library field in terms of digitization.⁹

Abby Smith gives the topic significant attention in two articles written for the Council on Library and Information Resources. Smith states that the analog and digital environment are significantly different, and a digital setting hinders researchers because a computer “flattens and decontextualizes” original

⁸ Diane Zorich, *Managing Digital Assets: Options for Cultural and Educational Organizations* (Los Angeles: Getty Information Institute, 1999), 62; Donald Waters and John Garrett, *Preserving Digital Information: A Report of the Task Force on Archiving Digital Information* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 1996), <<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub63watersgarrett.pdf>> (accessed May 26, 2009).

⁹ Stephen E. Ostrow, *Digitizing Historical Pictorial Collections for the Internet* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 1998), <<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/ostrow/pub71.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009); Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of the Archival Perspective in the Digital Environment* (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2000), <<http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub89/contents.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009).

materials. She also maintains that archivists and librarians must carefully detail the digital collections they offer, even more so than analog materials. According to Smith, digitized items should actually be considered publications because they must be accompanied by an extensive amount of descriptive information in order to be understood in their broader historical and social context on the Internet. Aaron Purcell considers the issue as well, arguing that since digitization has become popular, archivists have focused on the technology issues associated with migrating archival materials to an electronic format, but in the process they have largely neglected content and context.¹⁰

TAKING A CUE FROM LIBRARIES

Perhaps the lack of archival literature on context and digital archives is related to the difference between perspectives in the library and archival fields. More libraries than archives have recently digitized their collections, particularly books and journals, but it does not necessarily hurt the value of these single-level items if context is not provided. Researchers may still gather quality information because they are meant to be examined as independent works. In contrast, archival collections are more valuable to patrons if viewed in terms of their provenance and historical context. Therefore, it seems the dire need for more literature on contextual information is related to the scarcity of resources for digitization projects in the archival world.

In many ways, archivists as well as librarians are still in the learning stages when it comes to digitization, and it is clear there are still no professional guidelines for certain areas of description for online collections. Libraries have more experience in digitization issues but library-and-information-science (LIS) theory is vastly different from archival theory. Although archives are generally studied in conjunction with LIS and history, archives in fact make up a separate discipline with a unique body of theory, research, and professional experience. This can be detrimental to or work against expanding the archive research base. Thus, archivists need to develop their own digitization guidelines, and understand clearly the differences between digital libraries and digital archives. In considering

¹⁰ Smith, *Strategies for Building Digitized Collections*; Smith, *Why Digitize?*, 8-9; Purcell, "Providing Better Access," 35.

this, archival institutions may begin to realize that the costs of digitizing archives are much higher in terms of time and resources than for creating digital libraries.

CHALLENGES TO PROVIDING CONTEXT

Several explanations may exist for the lack of contextual information on many archival Web sites. First, the nature of each collection is different, according to size, provenance, format, and research value. Most researchers would like all collections to be digitized, but this is not practical due to the lack of resources and funding within archival institutions. Therefore, archivists must select materials for digitization carefully. If an archivist selects a smaller, more manageable collection to digitize, it is generally easier to find contextual information because the description of each series is usually more detailed than that of a larger collection. This is not always the case, though, particularly if an archivist did not understand the research value of a collection at the time it was processed. In this case and that of other, larger archival collections, the lack of descriptive information will make it much more difficult for an archivist to provide context in an online environment. Also, to represent the content of larger collections, groups of individual documents or photographs are usually digitized instead of the entire collections. In this case, it is critical to provide contextual information since researchers are unable to compare all the records within series.

Deciding the amount of contextual information to include in a digital collection is a very difficult choice, and archivists must approach this on a case-by-case basis. According to Gilliland-Swetland, “the key is to explain the physical aspects and intellectual structure of the collection that may not be apparent and to provide enough contextual information for the user to understand the historical circumstances and organizational processes of the object’s creation.”¹¹ Some collections need little contextual information because the materials presented are fairly straightforward, particularly if they are small in size and created by a familiar individual or organization. Every archival institution should have a policy regarding their digital-collection presence and the inclusion of relevant contextual information should be detailed in this policy.

¹¹ Gilliland-Swetland, *Enduring Paradigm*.

For collections lacking contextual information within their finding aids, archivists need to perform more research to decide on an appropriate amount of information to add for digital reproductions. It is also vital for research work to determine contextual information to be done prior to or at the time of digitization. If not, vital information will be lost.¹² There are different methods of providing descriptive information other than rewriting current finding aids, though. Presenting a timeline of events relevant to the collection may be helpful. Users can then relate and compare items to each other and the larger collection as a whole in reference to the events described. Events on the timeline may be linked to a database detailing these topics. Links to people, place names, and images mentioned could also contribute in determining context. Linking to other similar records may be an option as well. When considering the importance of context, archivists must realize that ultimately it may be more practical to digitize more than less in many cases because researchers often draw context by seeing the relationship between records in a collection. Thus, archivists might consider digitizing collections that are related to one another or focus on some of the same topics. Therefore, regardless of the finding aid, additional contextual information may be identical for a certain group of collections.¹³

Employing any of these methods is quite labor intensive but the context it provides is very beneficial. Before digitization, archivists must understand the need for extremely descriptive information that details the context of archival materials. Their understanding of this will alter decisions when selecting materials because collections with limited background information will require much more time, effort, and resources for the institution.

¹² Waters and Garrett, *Preserving Digital Information*, 26; Ester, *Digital Image Collections*, 19; Kenneth Thibodeau, "Building the Archives of the Future: Advances in Preserving Electronic Records at the National Archives and Records Administration," *D-Lib Magazine* 7 (February 2001), <<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/february01/thibodeau/02thibodeau.html>> (accessed March 4, 2009).

¹³ Samuel Gustman et al., eds., "Supporting Access to Large Oral History Archives" (paper presented at the International Conference on Digital Libraries, Portland, Ore., June 14-18, 2002), 9 <<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=544220.544224>> (accessed March 4, 2009); Ostrow, *Digitizing Historical Pictorial Collections*.

This may explain why many archival Web sites do not provide the information needed for researchers to understand the historical and social contexts of archival documents, photographs, and other materials. Archivists often fail to see the disparity between a research experience in an analog environment and a digital one. But they must learn methods to add value to digital items in order to produce digital collections more similar to analog records; providing contextual information is a significant way to do just that. The digital environment is changing the nature of research. We have a professional obligation to enable new types of research facilitated by a digital environment.

CONCLUSION

In order to determine the needs of researchers in an online environment, actual surveys should be conducted on user behavior on archival Web sites. Sweet and Thomas state that, "In practice many archive users require clear, accurate and searchable descriptions of individual files (or their equivalents). They then move 'bottom upwards' to see the context in which the documents were created and used."¹⁴ This may or may not be true, but where is the documented research for this conclusion? And, if it is true, what should be the major priorities for archivists before posting digital collections to the Internet?

Archivists simply need to decide where their priorities lie and which ethical responsibilities are more important to them: providing equal access to online users and patrons in a physical archive or preserving the intellectual integrity of archival materials by including information that clearly communicates their historical and social contexts? (These may or may not be mutually exclusive.) Archival repositories hold valuable materials that the general public may have no knowledge of but which have the potential to make a great contribution to society. Thus, archival institutions have the ethical responsibility to disseminate this information to the public for the greater good. Otherwise, they will negate the potential of digital archives and their efforts will be for naught.¹⁵

¹⁴ Sweet and Thomas, "Archives Described at Collection Level."

¹⁵ Smith, "Lost in Cyberspace," 10.

Digitization in archives is often a choice between “depth and breadth.”¹⁶ Due to limited staff, resources, and time, many archival institutions end up choosing to digitize smaller collections in their entirety or a sizeable amount of materials within a range of large collections and including some contextual information from their current finding aids rather than expending time and effort to assess the finding aids to see if more research needs to be conducted in order to provide better description. Thus, quantity of digitized collections, not quality of information, becomes the priority. This is often a response to outside pressures from users demanding better access. Nonetheless, it is important to understand what kind of access is most beneficial to users instead of folding to impatient researchers.¹⁷

Abigail R. Griner is Access and Electronic Records Archivist at the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies at the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia. Before moving to Athens, she interned as a processing assistant at the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah, Georgia. She holds an M.A. in Public History from Armstrong Atlantic State University and an M.L.I.S. from the University of South Carolina.

¹⁶ Sweet and Thomas, “Archives Described at Collection Level.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Archival Work in a Surreal World: The Imagination of George Saunders

Erica Olsen

When George Saunders's first collection of short stories, *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline*, came out in 1996 reviewers emphasized the surrealism of his fictional world of run-down theme parks and virtual-reality franchise businesses: "... a nightmarish post-apocalyptic world that might have been envisioned by Walt Disney on acid," wrote the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, while *Newsweek* called it "a cybernetic, post-apocalyptic dystopia."¹

Saunders's settings may be surreal, but the work that his characters perform in the *CivilWarLand* stories is grounded in the reality of contemporary records management. In "The 400-Pound CEO," the title character works at Humane Raccoon Alternatives, a company that claims to relocate problem raccoons to the countryside while actually killing them. Still a lowly employee, not yet a CEO, he completes routine paperwork—"Post-burial I write up the invoices and a paragraph or two on how overjoyed the raccoons were when

¹ The blurbs appear in the front matter of the Riverhead Books paperback edition of *CivilWarLand in Bad Decline* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1997).

we set them free”—while lusting after Freeda, the company’s “document placement and retrieval specialist.”² In the title story, “CivilWarLand in Bad Decline,” the narrator works at a historical theme park of questionable accuracy, located on the old McKinnon family property: “Their homestead’s long gone but our records indicate that it was located near present-day Information Hoedown.”³ Saunders continues the recordkeeping theme in *Pastoralia*, his second collection. In the title story, the main character lives and works in a faux-caveman theme-park habitat where his job description includes creating pictographs, arguably humanity’s earliest form of recordkeeping. Behind the scenes, he faxes in a “Daily Partner Performance Evaluation Form,” which he completes with incorrect information in order to keep his underperforming coworker from being fired.

Theme parks and small-animal slaughter aside, Saunders’s fictional world is one that records managers and archivists will find familiar. In the story “CivilWarLand,” records construct the fictional world. Here’s how the characters (and readers) learn that the park is losing money: the boss “pulls out the summer stats. We’re in the worst attendance decline in ten years. If it gets any worse, staff is going to be let go in droves.”⁴ Despite the decline in visitation (for which random attacks by teenage gangs are partly to blame), the narrator carries on with his work, which includes a “Verisimilitude Evaluation,” a “normal clandestine New Employee Observation,” and an “Employee Retrospective”—the last item being paperwork after an employee is fired.⁵ Assigned to find someone willing to take on the gangs, the narrator goes to a coworker described as “the queen of info. It’s in her personality. She enjoys digging up dirt on people.... She has access to all records. I ask can she identify current employees with a history of violence. She says she can if I buy her lunch.”⁶ The queen of info has access to “federal sources”

² Ibid., 45-46.

³ Ibid., 11-12.

⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁵ Ibid., 18, 14, 9.

⁶ Ibid., 6.

that reveal one employee's history as a Vietnam veteran.⁷ "She suggests I take a nice long look at his marksmanship scores. She says his special combat course listing goes on for pages."⁸ Even relationships between people are described in terms of records, such as when the narrator describes his wife's lack of respect for him: "She's always denigrating my paystub."⁹ The entire story can be read as a narrative of recordkeeping. It is the routine activity that absorbs much of his characters' work lives, and it is how they track their successes and failures as human beings.

In addition to the informational value of records, archives have a broader significance as "society's collective memory," in the words of Kenneth E. Foote, a scholar of geography and landscape history.¹⁰ Foote writes: "For archivists, the idea of archives as memory is more than a metaphor. The documents and artifacts they collect are important resources for extending the spatial and temporal range of human communication."¹¹ In "CivilWarLand," however, this transmission process has gone askew. The theme park's hokey attractions are said to be based on documentation—"actual Gettysburg photos"—but the results are far from authentic or convincing.¹² Moreover, the records the

⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

⁹ Ibid., 5. Saunders apparently relates deeply to the world of recordkeeping. In an interview in the *Missouri Review*, he cast his own admission to the Syracuse University Master of Fine Arts program in creative writing in a records-related light, saying he felt as if his admission had been a "clerical error." With an undergraduate degree from the Colorado School of Mines and work experience as an engineer, he did not have the typical writer's education. In the same interview, he mentions the kind of paperwork he had to do in a former job: "running my little photocopier ... writing Environmental Health and Safety Assessment Plans." Saunders now teaches at Syracuse University. J. J. Wylie, "An Interview with George Saunders," *Missouri Review* 24.2 (2001: 55, 67), <www.missourireview.org/content/dynamic/view_text.php?text_id=819> (accessed April 29, 2009).

¹⁰ Kenneth E. Foote, "To Remember and Forget: Archives, Memory, and Culture," *American Archivist* 53 (Summer 1990): 378-393, rpt. in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 29.

¹¹ Ibid., 46.

¹² Saunders, *CivilWarLand*, 7.

park relies on are not always correct; if they were, the narrator would be out of a job, because one of his main responsibilities is reviewing the “Verisimilitude Irregularities List.”¹³ This is the kind of problem he has to deal with: “Mr. Grayson, Staff Ornithologist, has recently recalculated and estimates that to accurately approximate the 1865 bird population we’ll need to eliminate a couple hundred orioles or so.”¹⁴ Records become archives become memory. “CivilWarLand” asks, If Employee Retrospectives record our lives today, what kind of history are we creating for tomorrow? How will we be remembered?

Records are not the only source of information in “CivilWarLand.” People are sources of history, too—but this is the narrator’s little secret. The population of the theme park includes the ghosts of the McKinnons, the family who lived there during the Civil War. The narrator is able to interact with them and uses their conversations to develop special attractions for the park, helping his own career in the process: “That’s basically how I finally moved up from Verisimilitude Inspector to Special Assistant, by lifting ideas from the McKinnons. The Mrs. likes me because after she taught me a few obscure 1800s ballads and I parlayed them into Individual Achievement Awards, I bought her a Rubik’s Cube. To her, colored plastic is like something from Venus.”¹⁵ The ghost of Mr. McKinnon is less cooperative: “It’s too bad I can’t make an inroad because he was at Antietam and could be a gold mine of war info.”¹⁶ The narrator’s interactions with the McKinnons serve as a reminder that something was lost in the transition from oral to written culture. As historian and archivist James M. O’Toole has noted, “writing broke down the human links that were at the heart of the information storage and transfer process in the oral world.”¹⁷ And it is human

¹³ Ibid., 8.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷ James M. O’Toole, “On the Idea of Permanence,” *American Archivist* 52 (Winter 1989): 10-25, rpt. in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 479.

links that Saunders's unlikely heroes, in "CivilWarLand," "The 400-Pound CEO," and other stories, are trying desperately to maintain.

"Everything in the world is holy and unholy at the same time," Saunders said in a *New York Times Magazine* interview.¹⁸ He was responding to a question about talking Doritos, which had appeared in his newest collection of short stories, *In Persuasion Nation*, but the same could be said of his depiction of records in "CivilWarLand." Is communicating with ghosts a historian's dream or a nightmare? The story takes an even darker turn when the narrator discovers the truth about the McKinnon family: "In front of Information Hoedown I see the McKinnons cavorting. I get closer and see that they're not cavorting at all, they've inadvertently wandered too close to their actual death site and are being compelled to act out again and again the last minutes of their lives."¹⁹ We learn that Mr. McKinnon, his mental health damaged by his wartime service—the experience at Antietam that the narrator hoped to access—murdered his own family and then took his own life. As Foote, the geographer, has written, our society often wants to commemorate violent but meaningful events (such as wars), while erasing the memory of events that are violent but apparently meaningless (such as murders): "A society's need to remember is balanced against its desire to forget.... If the violence fails to exemplify an enduring value, there is greater likelihood of the site, artifacts, and documentary record being effaced, either actively or passively."²⁰ In "CivilWarLand," the theme park seems to have inadvertently preserved the ghosts of the McKinnons by recreating a setting that will not allow them to rest in peace. Instead of creating a collective memorial, such as the Gettysburg battlefield, the CivilWarLand site has preserved the memory of one family's individual, horrific tragedy.

In "CivilWarLand," "The 400-Pound CEO," and "Pastoralia," the comically heroic characters persist in displaying their emotions, personality, individuality, and humanity,

¹⁸ Deborah Solomon, "The Stuff of Fiction: Questions for George Saunders," *The New York Times Magazine* (April 9, 2006), 17.

¹⁹ Saunders, *CivilWarLand*, 24.

²⁰ Foote, "To Remember and Forget," 37.

qualities that come into conflict with the stories' settings, in which business transactions dominate. Another story, "Offloading for Mrs. Schwartz" (also in *CivilWarLand*), tells of a virtual-reality game operator in desperate financial straits who finds himself selling the memories of an elderly woman as educational software. Even more directly than "CivilWarLand," it is a story about documentation, memory, and the value of individual human experience. Saunders's characters seem to take part in the postmodern critique of archives, as expressed (to give one example) by the historian Carolyn Steedman, who laments that "The archive is not potentially made up of everything, as is human memory."²¹ Postmodernism, by questioning the power of archival institutions and broadening the definition of "the archive," has challenged longstanding recordkeeping practices—a challenge to which archivists have only recently begun to respond.²² Saunders's work suggests another kind of response, in fiction. While his characters struggle to transcend the records that make their lives small, his stories themselves document the emotions and experiences that would go unrecorded if not preserved in the archives of fiction.

Erica Olsen is a writer and a contract archivist who has worked most recently at Edge of the Cedars State Park Museum in Blanding, Utah. She is a regular contributor to *Fine Books & Collections* magazine.

²¹ Quoted in Francis X. Blouin, "Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory," *Archival Issues* 24.2 (1999): 105.

²² Archival historian Tom Nesmith cites a number of articles about archives and postmodernism in footnote 2 of his article "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives," *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 25.

Book Reviews

Archival Internships: A Guide for Faculty, Supervisors, and Students. By Jeannette A. Bastian and Donna Webber (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008. Illustrated with bibliography and index. 117 pp.).

This well-organized and honest manual thoroughly explores the discussion of professional standards to be applied to archival internships. While the Society of American Archivists has put forth in this decade a list of “recommendations” to guide the internship experience, Bastian and Webber have written a book calling for these recommendations to become standardized, and for further guidelines to create consistency across internship experiences.

They bolster their arguments in part with survey responses from graduates of the Simmons College School of Library and Information Science where Bastian teaches and where Webber supervises interns as the college archivist.

Their call for standards is premised on the long tradition of internships as an essential component of archival education. In fact, even as the definition of an archival education continues to develop, the authors point out that there was a time when a

history degree and field experience constituted the education and training of an archivist. More recently, an M.L.S. or an M.A. in history with internships in archival settings have qualified many a professional archives manager. But always the internship figures prominently in the archives education.

The nature of archival work—that is, its unique and idiosyncratic features from one archives setting to another—can defy a theoretical, classroom education. Thus, field experience will probably always be a critical component of the complete archival education, in the authors' estimation. Recent surveys, according to the authors, show that about one-third of current professionals have participated in an internship experience. Other statistics illustrate the frequency with which internships result in later hiring of the student after completion of a degree.

Having made their argument for the importance of internships, the authors have designed a manual for students, their faculty advisors, and their internship-site supervisors on a nuts-and-bolts level. They do not spare discussion of what can go wrong in these arrangements, but also offer corrective measures, which, as with so many practices in archives management, amount to common sense.

In seven chapters, liberally illustrated with case studies that any of us with archives-management experience will recognize immediately, Bastian and Webber cover the requirements of an academic internship from all relevant perspectives. One chapter is devoted to the independent internship usually sponsored by corporate, private, or academic archives at institutions that do not offer archival education.

While discussing the characteristics of a successful internship program, *Archival Internships* does not shy away from discussions of the uncommunicative site supervisor, the uninquisitive intern, or the preoccupied academic advisor. We are all products of our work environments and the demands they place on us. However, with the structure of standards, and a helpful section of sample forms, Bastian and Webber leave no facet of the internship process unaddressed.

Forms in the book include sample internship job announcements, intern work plans, internship applications, faculty expectations for educational requirements, and evaluation forms both for site supervisors and interns to gauge the meaningfulness of the experience in terms of their education.

As the authors point out, many students need coaching in job etiquette and work ethics, though a high number of archives students are studying for a second career and already have basic job experience. In all honesty, the internship may be a point where a student decides s/he does not want to be an archivist.

Consistent structure, management, and evaluation are the key elements of standardized internships, as are, of course, communication at all levels and among all the players. The needs of the internship site supervisor ideally will be met as the intern is gaining meaningful work experience. This balanced and thorough manual should prove an excellent road map for the many repositories that sponsor interns, leaving little room for vague expectations or student disappointment.

As the authors point out, in the best of all worlds, the student learns to apply classroom theory, develops professional confidence, and gains a career mentor while creating a product that is useful to the sponsoring repository.

Suzanne K. Durham
University of West Georgia

College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice. Edited by Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008. 360 pp.).

In 1979 the Society of American Archivists published *College and University Archives: Selected Readings*, a volume of practical essays covering issues of concern to college and university archivists. While the 1979 volume contains much that is useful, even after almost thirty years, a publication designed to meet the needs of college and university archivists of the twenty-first century has been long overdue. *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice* addresses the issues facing today's archivists head on, in a reader that contains often-challenging and always thought-provoking articles.

Editors Christopher J. Prom and Ellen D. Swain, both of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, have assembled a list of authors that reads like a "Who's Who" of college and university archivists. Besides the editors, contributors include Nicholas C. Burckel (Marquette), Tamar Chute (Ohio State),

Kenneth D. Crews (Columbia), Tom Hyry, Diane E. Kaplan, and Christine Weideman (all of Yale), Nancy M. Kunde (Wisconsin), Kathryn M. Neal (Berkeley), Tim Pyatt (Duke), Robert P. Spindler (Arizona State), Richard V. Szary and Helen R. Tibbo (North Carolina), and Elizabeth Yakel (Michigan). In the preface, Prom and Swain identify three overarching themes for the essays that follow: “The opportunities and challenges posed by ever changing technology, the importance of cooperation and collaboration beyond the archives’ walls, and the necessity for a proactive approach in undertaking the academic archival enterprise” (vii). These themes are played out in a series of thirteen chapters, divided into four broad topics: “Redefining the Role of College and University Archives,” “Capturing Campus Histories,” “Managing Efficient Programs,” and “Serving Our Users.”

The first section on the changing role of college and university archives opens with a chapter by Nicholas Burckel, the only contributor with articles in both the 1979 and 2008 volumes. He is therefore in a unique position to reflect upon the advances of the last thirty years. Interestingly, Burckel’s basic advice—to be proactive, innovative, and collaborative within the confines of budgetary constraints—remains unchanged; however, he notes the methods by which archivists accomplish these goals has been transformed markedly by technology. In Chapter 2, Helen Tibbo examines the changes archivists must face while working with electronic records. Archivists must manage large collections of electronic records and digital objects, with proper attention to issues such as authenticity, metadata, and preservation; they must live up to changing and increasing user populations and expectations; and they must partner with information science and technology to curate these collections successfully. Robert Spindler continues this theme in Chapter 3 by stressing the need to focus on preservation in this era of institutional repositories and electronic publishing.

Part Two focuses on innovative ways in which archivists can document aspects of their campus histories that have often been neglected. In a reprint of a 2002 article (Chapter 4), Ellen Swain describes an oral history project at the University of Illinois that documents student life and culture through interviews with alumni. Kathryn Neal (Chapter 5) provides an excellent summation of the new guidelines that promote documentation of diverse populations on campus. In the final chapter of the section

(Chapter 6), the three Yale archivists apply the Minnesota Method of appraising business records to the development of an appraisal policy for faculty papers. This seminal article, first published in *American Archivist* in 2002, has already proved influential in the development of new collection policies for these papers in other parts of the country.

In perhaps the most provocative essay of the entire volume, Christopher J. Prom writes on new approaches to processing in Chapter 8 of Part Three, "Managing Efficient Programs." In the light of the Meissner-Greene "more product, less process" recommendations, Prom asserts that the challenges of processing backlogs are at least somewhat attributable to the level of detail in finding aids, as well as the complex tools used to create them. According to Prom, archivists must increase access to their collections by employing a variety of strategies, including instituting better descriptive workflows and better management of processing as a whole. An excellent chapter on outreach by Tamar Chute and a thoughtful essay on reframing records management by Nancy Kunde round out this section.

The final section, "Serving Our Users," continues the theme of maximizing access to archival collections. The articles reflect the growing concern among archivists of how to appropriately assess and respond to the needs of the ever-changing user population. Tim Pyatt (Chapter 10) recommends balancing the issue of providing access with those of privacy and confidentiality. Similarly, Kenneth Crews (Chapter 11) advocates balance in allowing access within the confines of copyright law. In a reprint of a 2001 article (Chapter 12), Richard Szary notes the potential of encoded finding aids to provide more collections in a recognizable, standardized form. Unfortunately, as Prom notes in Chapter 8, this potential has not yet been realized. The final chapter (Chapter 13), by Elizabeth Yakel, recommends connecting with users to enhance reference. Yakel's excellent article should be required reading for all archivists involved in reference services.

Archivists with small budgets and staffs may become overwhelmed by the number and variety of recommendations contained in this volume. As Prom notes in his chapter, archivists must master description, manage people and projects, use complex technologies, and enhance online access to collections. These may seem daunting tasks, and we can only work within

the confines of what is possible in our specific situations. Prom advocates better management of processing as a means to increase access to collections. More efficient management of other aspects of archival work may provide the key to implementation of these recommendations and achievement of the ultimate goal of the archival enterprise, serving our users.

Christine de Catanzaro
Georgia Institute of Technology

Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide.

By David Carmicheal (Iowa City, Ia: Council of State Archivists, 2007. 24 pp.).

In light of the number of natural disasters that have occurred in the last few years, this booklet provides a much-needed informative introduction for those who want to understand better how to protect their records. *Rescuing Family Records: A Disaster Planning Guide* is written in a straightforward and simplified manner. Most people understand the need to protect their information but are unsure how to start and what should be protected. This booklet addresses these issues.

Chapter 1 asks the all-important question, Are you prepared?, for the list of potential manmade and natural disasters. Loss of identification, whether through theft or natural disaster, is a life-altering experience. Chapter 2 discusses why records are important and how the loss of identification and financial and health records can negatively impact one's ability to put his or her life back together after the dust settles or the water recedes. So what records should be preserved? Chapter 3 provides checklists that divide records into essential, high-risk, and irreplaceable categories. In the next chapter the checklists are expanded into tables that clarify the kinds of records and whether they should be duplicated. Before marking on the tables, they should be photocopied for later use. Chapter 5 discusses protection of family records. It is not always prudent to depend on others to maintain a copy of one's legal and financial records. The idea of placing personal financial information with family or friends may not be a good idea. Governmental agencies such as city and county governments and school boards are not experts

at protecting records. They are struggling to protect their own records from regular use and theft. The next chapter expands on the advantages and disadvantages of original versus copies or duplicated records and whether duplicates should be in paper or electronic format. A discussion of the problems of electronic files and updating software is also included.

Organizations such as state and local emergency-management agencies, as well as fire and police departments, should have this booklet available for individuals to purchase. The information contained in the booklet will enable potential evacuees to plan and prepare an evacuation kit before it is needed.

As the current director of the Georgia Archives, David Carmicheal led the Council of State Archivists' nationwide effort after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to protect essential records better. His knowledge and experience have served him well in the creation of this basic guide which will help individuals to prepare for disaster.

A CD-ROM of the work including printable checklists would be another format that many would find useful. One issue not addressed in the checklist is estate records. A spouse or family member will require a number of records which should be included in a disaster-planning kit. Regarding school records, one may do well to include at least the last two report cards for each child in the event that needed educational records are no longer available from the school board.

Carmicheal has provided much-needed information in a very accessible form. One can hope he will consider additional booklets addressing the disaster planning needs of churches, businesses, and organizations.

Muriel McDowell Jackson
Middle Georgia Archives
Washington Memorial Library

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

David B. Gracy II Award

A \$200 prize is presented annually to the author of the best article in *Provenance*. Named after David B. Gracy II, founder and first editor of *Georgia Archive* (the precursor of *Provenance*), the award began in 1990 with volume VIII. It is judged by members of *Provenance*'s editorial board.

Sheila McAlister won the 2007 David B. Gracy II Award for her paper, "Designing a Preservation Survey: The Digital Library of Georgia."

Editorial Policy

Members of the Society of Georgia Archivists, and others with professional interest in the aims of the society, are invited to submit manuscripts for consideration and to suggest areas of concern or subjects which they feel should be included in forthcoming issues of *Provenance*.

Manuscripts and related correspondence should be addressed to Editor Brian Wilson, Georgia Archives, 5800 Jonesboro Road, Morrow, GA 30260; e-mail: bwilson@sos.ga.gov.

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Use of terms which have special meaning for archivists, manuscripts curators, and records managers should conform to the definitions in Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscripts Curators, and Records Managers* (Chicago: SAA, 2005). Copies of this glossary may be purchased from the Society of American Archivists, 17 North State Street, Suite 1425, Chicago, IL 60602-3315; <www.archivists.org>.

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