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## Provenance IX, Issues 1 & 2

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# PROVENANCE

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# PROVENANCE

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## **The Status of Users In Archival Enterprise**

**Michael Widener**

T. R. Schellenberg, the dean of modern archival enterprise, set a dual objective for the profession. "The end of all archival effort is to preserve valuable records and make them available for use," he wrote.<sup>1</sup> When Schellenberg wrote these words some thirty-five years ago, archivists were oriented primarily toward the materials they worked with and perceived the users of these materials as a relatively small, elite group of scholars, mainly historians.

Those days are long gone, however. Users are much more numerous and diverse than they were thirty-five years ago. Even the historians themselves have changed. The political, social, financial, and technological spheres in which archival institutions now operate demand that the profession set aside its focus on the records themselves and instead

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<sup>1</sup> T. R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 224.

concentrate on the users of the records and the uses to which they put the records. In short, the archival profession is being challenged by events to rethink its mission.

As late as the mid-1970s, virtually all discussion of users dealt with cooperation between historians and archivists or with the value of primary source material for this or that field of research. These works, written as much by historians as by archivists, were based on generalizations from personal experience with very little rigorous analysis, as Michael Stevens has observed.<sup>2</sup> The literature on archival reference work, where one would have expected more interest in users, has been scanty, and as Janice Ruth has noted, mainly concerned with "standardized practices designed to resolve the conflicts between researchers' access needs and archivists' preservation concerns."<sup>3</sup>

However, in the past fifteen years or so archivists have begun to reach past assumptions and platitudes about archives users. The change in attitude was clearly signaled in the 1987 report of the Society of American Archivists' Task Force on Goals and Priorities:

Archivists tend to think about their work in the order in which it is performed. Inevitably, use comes last. Since use of archival materials is the goal to which

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Stevens, "The Historian and Archival Finding Aids," *Georgia Archive* 5 (1977): 70.

<sup>3</sup> Janice E. Ruth, "Educating the Reference Archivist," *American Archivist* 51 (1988): 268.

all other activities are directed, archivists need to re-examine their priorities.<sup>4</sup>

Recent literature shows that archivists have begun taking a serious look at their user communities. While most of the literature is produced by Americans, interest in users is not limited to the United States. Indeed, while archival institutions in the Third World would seem to have little time to study their users as they struggle to fulfill their basic needs, their lack of development could be seen as an opportunity to develop their own models for archival institutions based on the unique needs of their users before they adopt western models that may not be as appropriate.

### **A Classification of Archives Users**

Archives users can be divided into three broad groups. The academic user is a scholar who consults archival sources to arrive at an understanding of the past and/or the present, with the intention of disseminating this understanding through publication or teaching. The practical user is a representative of business or government who enters the archives seeking information to assist in taking action or reaching a decision. The non-specialist user comes to the archives to satisfy an internal, personal information need; although this user may be conducting historical research or trying to make a decision, the

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<sup>4</sup> *Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1986), 23.



information is valuable for its own sake over and above its value for secondary uses. To this basic scheme one could also add artists who use archives as a source for ideas and inspiration, as well as those who publish archival materials.<sup>5</sup>

### Historians Aren't What They Used To Be

Archival reading rooms were originally dominated by the academic users, in particular historians and other scholars conducting historical research. Historians came to study the great men, the great events, and the great institutions of the past. Historians and their fellow academics were connoisseurs of archives. They worked with archival sources for extended periods of time with the goal of producing knowledge. They were much like the archivists themselves, who were also typically trained as historians, and as a result there developed a sense of community between archivists and academic users.<sup>6</sup> This may help explain the earlier lack of interest in user studies. Archivists may have felt there was no need to study users who were cast from the same mold as themselves.

Historians played a central role in the creation of archival institutions, particularly those in the United States and Great Britain.<sup>7</sup> In Europe, historians were largely responsible for

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<sup>5</sup> César A. García Belsunce, "El uso práctico de los archivos," *Archivum* 29 (1982): 77-78.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-79.

<sup>7</sup> Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 6-8.

the training of archivists. Archival enterprise was itself classified as an auxiliary discipline of history, as is reflected today in the Library of Congress classification system.

The nature of academic research in archives, however, has undergone profound changes in the past few decades. The sheer number of researchers has increased rapidly and substantially throughout the world as a result of overall growth in higher education. The field of history has become much more diverse, with such sub-disciplines as economic history, social history, business history, and women's history, to name only a few. There has also been a tremendous crossover between history and other disciplines. Fields such as science, education, and geography now have their own historians. Social and political scientists are using historical data to test hypotheses. Historians are themselves borrowing techniques from other fields such as quantitative analysis, elite studies, and psychoanalysis.<sup>8</sup> Academic research in general has become much more interdisciplinary in nature.<sup>9</sup> These changes have dramatically affected the quantity and types of records requested by researchers.<sup>10</sup>

Research about historians as users of archives has itself broken new ground, challenging some of the assumptions that both archivists and historians have held about the

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Roper, "The Academic Use of Archives," *Archivum* 29 (1982): 27-29.

<sup>9</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?," *Archivaria* 25 (1987-1988): 14-15.

<sup>10</sup> Roper, "The Academic Use of Archives," 29-32.

process of historical research using primary source material. Historians have told us that they need more guides to archival holdings, yet several studies have shown that they make little use of the guides that already exist. Studies by Paul Conway, Margaret Stieg, and Michael Stevens have shown that historians rely much more on word-of-mouth, citations in the literature, and other informal sources to learn about useful archival sources.<sup>11</sup> However, two citation studies of archival sources used by historians have produced some contradictory results. While Jacqueline Goggin found that historians tended to under-utilize the source material available to them, Frederic Miller's study of social historians documented extensive use of archives for a wide variety of research. Goggin and Miller agree on one point: the level of processing seems to be an important factor in determining use.<sup>12</sup>

Another finding, one that some archivists have yet to realize, is that historians and other scholars are no longer the primary users of archives.

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<sup>11</sup> Stevens, "The Historian and Archival Finding Aids," 69-74; Margaret F. Stieg, "The Information Needs of Historians," *College & Research Libraries* 42, 6 (1981): 549-560; Paul Conway, "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Survey" *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986): 35-56.

<sup>12</sup> Jacqueline Goggin, "The Indirect Approach: A Study of Scholarly Users of Black and Women's Organizational Records in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division," *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986): 57-67; Frederic Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49 (1986): 371-392.



## Archives: They're Not Just For History Any More

The number of practical users has increased steadily over time. These users are government officials, bureaucrats, businessmen, or others who come to the archives seeking quick answers to help in taking action or reaching decisions. They could be from the institution that created the records or from outside the institution. Their answers are often found in a handful of records from the recent past. These users, unlike academic users, are often not at home in the archival world; their education has not prepared them for consulting primary source material, and the archives themselves are not organized to provide them with the type of service they are seeking.<sup>13</sup>

The archival community itself has paid little attention to the needs of these "practical" users until recently; in earlier archival literature (pre-1976), there are few articles on the use of archives for decision-making, for example, even in the literature on business archives.<sup>14</sup> The impression is that archivists saw the queries of practical users as somewhat pedestrian and uninteresting. However, as César García Belsunce cautions, if archives do not provide

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<sup>13</sup> García Belsunce, "El uso práctico de los archivos," 78-79.

<sup>14</sup> Frank B. Evans, comp., *Modern Archives and Manuscripts: A Select Bibliography* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1975).

"information for action," the practical users will create other institutions that do.<sup>15</sup>

The last class of users to appear in the reading rooms (and the lowest class, in the eyes of many archivists) is the non-specialist user, or "common man." This is also becoming the largest group, and is thus challenging the traditional image of archives as a cultural resource for the elite. In the English-speaking world and Western Europe, this group is predominantly genealogists. In other parts of the world, local history seems to be the most common research interest of these users. Administrative research is an important activity of non-specialist users in all parts of the world. A survey by the Italian archivist L. S. Principe showed that the non-specialist user is usually an infrequent visitor:

He is drawn toward the archives out of cultural interest or mere curiosity; but he is driven off by them because their hours and their research aids (which are either insufficient or too complicated) make it impossible for a layman to overcome the difficulties inherent in archive research. In addition, a great many archives still require that those handling the documents be qualified researchers [thus driving] away many who might eventually have become avid archive users.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> García Belsunce, "El uso práctico de los archivos," 79.

<sup>16</sup> L. S. Principe, "Everyman and Archives," *Archivum* 29 (1982): 136.

Principe points out that repositories which organize themselves for this type of user tend to draw more of them. Genealogists have attracted the greatest attention from archivists. Their reception by archivists has sometimes been hostile;<sup>17</sup> and Michel Duchein, a leader in the archival profession, terms their growing numbers "alarming" and a threat to the physical condition of the documents they use.<sup>18</sup> However, genealogists helped to create many archival institutions in the U.S. and remain among their staunchest supporters.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the large proportion of non-specialist users in archives (Principe's survey set their share at seventy percent of users world-wide, while branches of the National Archives report from fifty to eighty percent), there have been remarkably few studies of them. Conway's study of

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<sup>17</sup> Ivan Borsa, "The Expanding Archival Clientele in the Post-World War II Period," *Archivum* 26 (1979): 122. For complaints by professional genealogists about poor attitudes toward them on the part of archivists, see Milton Rubincam, "What the Genealogist Expects of an Archival Agency or Historical Society," *American Archivist* 12 (1949): 333-338; and Mary Speakman, "The User Talks Back," *American Archivist* 47 (1984): 164-171.

<sup>18</sup> Michel Duchein, *Obstacles to the Access, Use and Transfer of Information from Archives: A RAMP Study* (Paris: Unesco, 1983).

<sup>19</sup> Phoebe Jacobsen, "The World Turned Upside Down': Reference Priorities and the State Archives," *American Archivist* 44 (1981): 341-345.

presidential library users showed that non-specialists are less confident about their ability to use archives, need help in defining and narrowing their topics, and place a high value on personal attention. He argues that archives should accommodate the reference services to the non-specialist users, not the other way around.<sup>20</sup> Principe cites a French study of genealogists, and a forthcoming study of National Archives users should shed additional light.

### Is There a Science to Archives?

Discussions on archival theory have addressed the scientific aspirations of the archival profession. A round of articles on archival theory in the 1981 issues of the *American Archivist* made virtually no mention of users or user studies. Frank Burke envisioned archival science as a study of the process of record creation and of reverence for artifacts.<sup>21</sup> These are valid concerns for archivists, but if archives are to be more than collections of old records, they must take part in the broader network of information sources and look to the use of archives as the point of contact. Lawrence Dowler makes this point in his research agenda for the archival profession:

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<sup>20</sup> Conway, "Presidential Libraries," 46-55.

<sup>21</sup> Frank G. Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (1981): 40-46.



In the end, we may discover that what is distinctive about archival practice does not really constitute a separate and unique profession, but rather is one part of a broader profession concerned with the uses of information. . . . Archivists must redirect their attention from the records or form of material to the uses of information, including potential uses. We need to put aside sentiment and tradition and, drawing upon the social sciences, begin to analyze and evaluate archival work.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, if there is a science to archives (or to librarianship or information, for that matter), then an understanding of use and users must surely be a central component of this science. For all its pretensions, information science is not that far ahead of archival science in some respects. As Hugh Taylor points out, archival theory and information science share the characteristic of being a "cluster of concepts based on practical experience" instead of true theories.<sup>23</sup> "'Archival science' must be supported by a body of knowledge which is more than personal observation or even collective wisdom, if it is to have any genuine scientific pretension," he adds.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Dowler, "The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records," *American Archivist* 51 (1988): 77.

<sup>23</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, *Archival Services and the Concept of the User: A RAMP Study* (Paris: UNESCO, 1984), 24.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 88-89.

### Implications of Use and Users for Archival Work

"There is, of course, a sense in which every task we perform is a service to the user, directly or indirectly," argues Hugh Taylor.<sup>25</sup> A review of the components of archival enterprise shows how a user orientation serves to unify these components.

Appraisal. Studies that investigate the types of materials used by different groups of researchers and how the materials are used provide valuable insights for appraisal decisions. Given the tremendous volume of twentieth-century records and the impossibility of keeping everything, it is more important than ever that archivists make appraisals based on what will be of value to users now and in the future. "There may be extremely valuable materials being lost today because there is much of far less value on our shelves with an implied commitment to process it," says Taylor, "but will it ever be of significant research use?"<sup>26</sup>

Appraisal has been one area where assumptions about users have been prevalent. Financial and organizational records have typically been placed high on appraisal priorities because of their value in describing an institution's operations, yet the previously cited studies by Goggin and Miller show that these types of institutional records are little used. However, who is to say that these

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

records will not be useful for new research interests not yet envisioned? This point illustrates one of the shortcomings of user studies: how do you study users of the future? This problem does not worry Miller. He points out that social historians develop their research questions first and then adapt the available materials to obtain answers; the available archival sources do not determine the research questions. "Only in rare cases should archivists suspect that one appraisal decision might seriously change the course of historical research," he concludes.<sup>27</sup>

Arrangement and description. Several authors have pointed out the inadequacy of the standard finding aids for many types of archival research, including genealogy, practical uses, and the new social history. In fact, benefit to the user should be the primary yardstick for gauging the worth of particular descriptive practices. Randall Jimerson has suggested that the convenience of the archivist has been a more common standard in the past.<sup>28</sup>

In this regard, Richard Lytle has studied the efficacy of provenance-based searches compared with subject searches. His results indicated that neither method produced good results, although he concluded that provenance searching was preferable since it was less dependent on the quality of index terms than subject

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<sup>27</sup> Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research," 391.

<sup>28</sup> Randall C. Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity: Meeting User Needs in the Information Society," *American Archivist* 52 (1989): 332-341.



searching. His study also suggested that large quantities of potentially useful materials are largely untapped by existing finding aids.<sup>29</sup>

A study by David Bearman of user queries at eighteen repositories and the previously cited study of historians by Michael Stevens both showed that names were the most common access points provided by users. Bearman, however, cautions that the users may not be so much expressing what they want as asking for what they know the archives can provide.<sup>30</sup>

In summary, the studies conducted so far tell us about the usefulness of our present finding aids but not about new types of finding aids that could better serve user needs. Several writers have argued that, given the great diversity in the needs and background of today's users, the ideal solution would be specialized finding aids for different types of users.

Access. Principe's survey of national archives indicates the impact that access policies can have on use patterns. Those repositories which put forth greater efforts to make themselves accessible to non-specialist users through more

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<sup>29</sup> Richard H. Lytle, "Intellectual Access to Archives: II. Report of an Experiment Comparing Provenance and Catalogue Indexing Methods of Subject Retrieval," *American Archivist* 43 (1980): 191-207.

<sup>30</sup> David Bearman, "User Presentation Language in Archives," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 3, 14 (1989-1990): 7; Stevens, "The Historian and Archival Finding Aids," 72-74.

convenient hours, more open access to documents, and active exhibition and outreach programs saw greater growth in use by non-specialists.

Reference service. Nowhere in archival services is an understanding of the user more important than in reference activities. Given the complexities of archival finding aids and the holdings themselves, a reference archivist's assistance has been deemed essential in conducting research in archives.

Reference services in archives, however, have been roundly criticized on several points. "Current practice relies too heavily on the subject knowledge and memory of the individual archivist, and is too dependent on the personalities of the researcher and archivist," says Mary Jo Pugh, who argues that better finding aids would help provide more consistent reference service.<sup>31</sup> Several authors have noted poor attitudes on the part of reference archivists, especially when it comes to dealing with genealogists and other non-specialist users.<sup>32</sup> Jacqueline Goggin, a former reference archivist who became a researcher, describes the poor quality of reference services she found in several repositories and said user studies will be of little use if archivists do not first change their attitudes

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<sup>31</sup> Mary Jo Pugh, "The Illusion of Omniscience: Subject Access and the Reference Archivist," *American Archivist* 45 (1982): 38-39.

<sup>32</sup> Ruth, "Educating the Reference Archivist," 268-270.

about users.<sup>33</sup> Paul Conway calls for reference services tailored to the user's needs. "One of the worst disservices we have done to ourselves," he said, "is to continually call reference service an art and to use that as an excuse to dismiss analysis of it."<sup>34</sup>

These observations lead one to the conclusion that perhaps there is a need to study reference archivists as well as the users they serve. If use and users are indeed so central to archival work as the SAA's *Planning for the Archival Profession* report asserts, the profession cannot go on alienating users through poor reference service.

Archival education. The preceding discussion about reference also highlights the lack of training on users and user services in most archival training curricula. Janice Ruth's article summarizes the views of many in the profession on this need, and proposes a curriculum in which user studies would be a primary component.<sup>35</sup> Paul Conway and Elsie Freeman, among others, suggest that conducting user studies would be a valuable research and training tool for archives students and faculty.<sup>36</sup> The

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<sup>33</sup> Jacqueline Goggin, "Commentary," *American Archivist* 51 (1988): 87-89.

<sup>34</sup> Conway, "Presidential Libraries," 55.

<sup>35</sup> Ruth, "Educating the Reference Archivist," 266-276.

<sup>36</sup> Paul Conway, "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," *American Archivist* 49 (1986): 406; Elsie T. Freeman, "In the Eye of the Beholder:

findings of existing user studies have yet to make their way into the standard texts on archival enterprise, and Jacqueline Goggin notes that the studies seem to have had little impact on actual practice.<sup>37</sup> Communication skills would be another important component of a reformed training program for reference archivists. "All student archivists would surely benefit from what [Bruno Delmas] calls the 'psychosociology of communications,'" says Hugh Taylor.<sup>38</sup>

The archival training curriculum is not alone in its lack of training on users. In my own passage through a master's program in library and information science, there has been surprisingly little discussion of users or their needs.

Automation. Being on the frontier of automated access to collections provides archivists with the opportunity to take the user into account in the design of automated finding aids, unlike what happened during the development of most traditional printed finding aids now in use. Hugh Taylor sees the computer as a means of fundamentally changing the reference archivist's role from providing answers to clarifying questions. He warns that if we are not careful in the design phase, automated systems could end up burdening archivists with more questions than before. He

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Archives Administration from the User Point of View," *American Archivist* 47 (1984): 122-123.

<sup>37</sup> Goggin, "Commentary," 87.

<sup>38</sup> Taylor, *Archival Services*, 88.



also points out that the trend in end-user computing is to empower end users to do their own retrieval without intervention from "gatekeepers."<sup>39</sup>

On the whole, the archival profession has avoided stumbling blithely into automation and taken a rather cautious approach. By doing so, archivists can benefit from the successes and failures of those in the library field. However, they should not miss the opportunity to open their holdings to users in new ways.

Preservation. While preservation should not be the ultimate goal of archival enterprise, it is also true that it is impossible to use records that are poorly preserved. Use patterns have important implications for preservation priorities. In response to the large numbers of genealogical researchers in U.S. repositories, archives have microfilmed a large part of the records of greatest use to genealogists, such as the U.S. census records. Preservation concerns have been used in the past to create barriers to use by non-specialist users but, as Principe suggests, this need not be the case if archives can provide for "special consultation aids, suitable space, appropriate technical aids and sufficiently trained personnel to satisfy a demand that is different from the traditional one."<sup>40</sup>

Outreach. If use is the primary objective of archival work, archives cannot sit and wait for users to show up. The

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<sup>39</sup> Taylor, "Transformation," 23.

<sup>40</sup> Principe, "Everyman and Archives," 136.

SAA's Committee on Goals and Priorities rightly gave outreach programs a prominent role in its proposals for the profession. If outreach programs are to be successful in bringing new users into archival repositories, they must embody an understanding of who those users are, what their information needs are, and how the repository is prepared to meet those needs once the new user comes through the door. Elsie Freeman, the most vocal advocate for outreach programs in the U.S., has called on archivists to incorporate user studies into their outreach activities.<sup>41</sup>

### **Use and Users in Developing Nations**

Outside of the United States and Western Europe, there is little evidence of user studies undertaken by archival institutions. Peter Mazikana, an archivist from Zimbabwe, confirmed this observation in a 1990 RAMP study which looked at the role of national archives in decision-making. "If one asks [archivists] about their users they are able to tabulate the categories of records used and the purposes for this but when one prods deeper one suddenly realises that all that exist are generalities," he reported.<sup>42</sup> He found that archivists were out of touch with other government

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<sup>41</sup> Elsie T. Freeman, "Buying Quarter Inch Holes: Public Support Through Results," *Midwestern Archivist* 10 (1985): 92.

<sup>42</sup> Peter C. Mazikana, *Archives and Records Management for Decision Makers: A RAMP Study* (Paris: UNESCO, 1990), 13.

agencies, and that decision makers likewise ignored archives as an information source in decision-making. This ignorance about users does not bode well for users' ability to access information in the archives or for the archives' ability to garner support, he added. Mazikana advised archives to become aware of information needs in their governments and to become aggressive marketers of their services.<sup>43</sup>

Lack of use is a common lament in the Mexican archival literature, exemplified by Enrique Ampudia Mello's book *Institucionalidad y gobierno: un ensayo sobre la dimensión archivística de la Administración Pública*. He argues that Mexican government archives failed to keep up with the explosion of document output and with modern techniques of archival practice, and as a result were increasingly ignored by the public administration.<sup>44</sup>

There are several possible explanations for the lack of user studies in developing nations. In many of these nations access to archival sources is still restricted to qualified scholars; such policies reflect a custodial orientation on the part of archivists and a lack of interest in understanding or expanding use and users.<sup>45</sup> Cultural norms or historical patterns could be responsible for

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-18, 43-46.

<sup>44</sup> J. Enrique Ampudia Mello, *Institucionalidad y gobierno: un ensayo sobre la dimensión archivística de la Administración Pública* (México, D.F.: Archivo General de la Nación, 1988).

<sup>45</sup> For a summary of access policies around the world see Principe, "Everyman and Archives," 136-142.



concern or lack of concern with users. In Mexico, for example, there is no tradition of public libraries or of open government.

It is tempting to excuse archives in developing nations from conducting user studies because of the immensity of pressing problems facing them: a huge backlog of unprocessed materials, poor facilities, lack of trained staff, lack of funding, and so on. However, it is precisely the nature and magnitude of their problems which makes it important for these institutions to understand their current and potential users. Such an understanding will enable them to direct their limited resources toward the most pressing needs of their users, thus raising their status as vital and worthwhile institutions in the eyes of decision makers and citizens.

In fact, the state of archival under-development can be seen as an opportunity for archival institutions to make a fresh start, taking user needs into account from the beginning as they create new models for archival enterprise. In the U.S., by comparison, the archival profession is retrofitting user needs onto a system that was designed with the needs of the physical record in mind. Why should a developing nation import a model for archival enterprise when it can build one of its own that reflects its own unique needs and characteristics?

### **The Role of Archives: To Preserve or To Serve?**

The question of use and users is a question about the basic nature of archival enterprise: do archivists preserve or do they serve? When they study their users, archivists are in

a sense studying themselves. User studies hold up a mirror to the profession and archivists see how their users, and by extension society, sees them.

A different kind of user study, the Levy Report, shows the results of decades of archivists playing the role of records custodians. Resource allocators see archivists as quiet, unassuming detail-oriented servants.<sup>46</sup> David Gracy has pointed out that by defining the archival mission as keeping records for future use, archivists are making a very weak case with present-oriented funding agencies.<sup>47</sup> Randall Jimerson urges archivists to set aside the passive role of an information custodian in favor of an active role as an information processor, geared to meeting the needs of users. He proposes a marketing paradigm for the archival profession, where an orientation to the "customer" replaces the "product orientation" of the past.<sup>48</sup>

If archivists still have difficulty leaving their custodial role behind, perhaps they should ponder an archives without users. What good are the records if no one uses them? As Hugh Taylor points out, "Without users (which include ourselves) records and the information they contain have only a potential, a pent-up energy."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Sidney J. Levy and Albert G. Robles, *The Image of Archivists: Resource Allocators' Perceptions* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984).

<sup>47</sup> David B. Gracy II, "Is There a Future in the Use of Archives?", *Archivaria* 24 (1987): 3-9.

<sup>48</sup> Jimerson, "Redefining Archival Identity," 336-337.

<sup>49</sup> Taylor, *Archival Services*, 3.

An orientation to the user is vital to the future of archival institutions and to archivists as a profession. It defines their purpose, it unifies the facets of their work, and it gives archivists an important role to fill in the eyes of society. To serve the user, archivists must first know him.

**Michael Widener** has been the Archivist/Rare Books Librarian at the Tarlton Law Library, University of Texas at Austin, since October 1991. This article was originally written as a paper for the Seminar on Archival Enterprise taught by Dr. David B. Gracy II in the spring of 1991.

## **Project Jukebox: An Innovative Way to Access and Preserve Oral History Records**

**Gretchen L. Lake**

*Project Jukebox is a multimedia workstation which brings audio, written, and photographic records to the researcher at the click of a computer mouse.*

This article will introduce oral history curators, archivists, librarians, researchers, and others interested in the preservation and accessibility of oral history recordings to a fascinating project at the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Project Jukebox is an exciting, unique approach to age-old problems of preservation, storage, and retrieval of oral history records. Using state-of-the-art technology, Project Jukebox allows a researcher to find an appropriate interview, to listen to the interview, to look at historical photographs relative to the interview, to locate the

site of the interview on a map, and when available, to read a transcript of the interview. The original records are not subject to damage from handling because the patron works from a digitized record on the computer.

### **The Oral History Collection**

The Oral History Collection of the Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, contains over 6000 tapes onto which the stories of Alaska's rich history have been recorded. The breadth and depth of this collection is best illustrated by some examples:

(1) Much of the history of Native Alaska is not written, but oral, passed down from generation to generation by the telling of stories. The collection contains over two thousand tapes representing all of Alaska's native groups: Tlingit and Athabaskan Indians, Inupiaq and Yup'ik Eskimos, Aleuts, and others. It is the most extensive collection of Alaska Native oral history in the world.

(2) The collection contains the recordings of the Alaska Native Review Commission hearings.

(3) Tapes included in this rich collection contain recordings of many non-native pioneers, some of whom are still living (or were living until recently).



The collection contains recordings of politicians, miners, business persons, military personnel, pilots, nurses, teachers, and others who have helped to build Alaska's history.

(4) The collection includes the recordings of delegates to the constitutional convention held on the University of Alaska campus in 1955 prior to Alaska becoming a state in 1959. It also contains interviews with participants in the statehood movement.

The curator of oral history continues to seek out those who should have their stories or recollections preserved on tape. Grants from British Petroleum and others and the fact that many researchers now deposit copies of their field work interviews in the Rasmuson Library enables the collection to grow. Efforts have been made to identify collections at other institutions so that researchers can be referred elsewhere. The collection is a gold mine for the researcher. However, as with many oral history collections, problems lie in the access to these tapes and in their preservation.

### **What is Project Jukebox?**

Project Jukebox is a multimedia workstation which brings audio, written, and photographic records to the researcher at the click of a computer mouse. The original idea of the project was to digitize the audio tapes onto a

compact disk, much as music is now recorded. Once the information was in a digitized form, computer programs could be written to allow access to and retrieval of the digital information. Next to the computer would be a stack of compact disks, and as the computer needed a particular disk, it would be read into the computer—just like the old phonograph record jukeboxes. It all sounds rather simple; however, it is not.

The idea for Project Jukebox came from the facile minds of two friends, an imaginative engineering management graduate student, Felix Vogt, and an energetic but understaffed curator of oral history, Dr. Will Schneider. Schneider told Vogt of his frustration in overseeing an ever-growing collection of oral history tapes (6000+) which were slowly deteriorating and not easily accessible. Vogt took those problems and turned them into his master's degree project, "PROJECT JUKEBOX: Using Modern Technology to Preserve Endangered Recordings: A Feasibility Study." This study became the basis of a successful proposal for a 1990 Apple Library of Tomorrow grant.

Apple Computer, Inc.'s Apple Library of Tomorrow grant program assists libraries by giving them the hardware and software to make their creative, technological dreams come true. Five hundred libraries submitted proposals in 1990. Of the thirteen libraries which received grants only four were academic libraries. Project Jukebox was one of the projects funded.



### **Problems with Oral History Collections**

Presently the preservation of audio tapes is labor intensive. Patrons listen to copies of the original tapes, in order to prevent wear on the original. Unless the tapes have been previously copied, the researcher must wait for a copy to be made.

In order to slow the deterioration process, the tapes must be physically turned (rotated on the shelf) annually. Since the deterioration of the tape itself and the magnetic data on it is inevitable, the tapes must be copied periodically onto new tapes. Each time a copy is made, a little of the original is lost, much like making copies of copies of photographs. This is the way of analog recording and copying.

There is also a problem of access to the information on the tapes. Patrons and staff have problems deciding which oral history tape is the one needed. Access to the tapes has been by an index which, although recently computerized, is cumbersome to use. Descriptions of the oral history tapes are being entered into a regional bibliographic database, WLN (formerly the Western Library Network). The index and WLN provide access at the tape level, that is, somewhere on this tape will be a reference to the subject the researcher wants. The researcher must still listen to the tape to find the information. Tape listening is an analog process. Unless there is a transcript of the tape giving the researcher the approximate location of the sought after passage, the researcher must listen to the tape from the beginning until he hears the needed passage.

### **Innovative Solutions to Preservation and Access Problems**

Digital recording and copying, however, is different. Once a recording is digitized, each copy of it is as true as the original. There is no degradation from generation to generation. Project Jukebox takes advantage of that technology. The project's computer specialist, Daniel Grahek, wrote programs using the software provided by Apple Computer, Inc. to access the digital information. He also developed the screen and menus which the researcher uses to access to material.

As the project developed, other information was added to supplement the oral recordings. Outlines for the interviews or actual transcripts of the oral interview, historical photographs from the rich collection in the archives, and maps relating to the areas covered by the tapes were scanned onto the compact disk. When the interview is with a person who speaks an Alaskan native language, or any other foreign language, the transcript will be in both the original language and in English. Not all transcripts have been translated at this time, and there are not transcripts for all the tapes, but the capability to show both transcripts on the screen is available. With the addition of transcripts and outlines, historical photographs, and maps, the researcher could read the transcript or outline, see the interviewee, locate the area of the interview on a map, and hear the voice of the person interviewed. All the computer specialist had to do was make it all work.

Grahek used a variety of hardware and software products and developed programs of his own to make Jukebox work. A Macintosh Ix computer with a Digidesign AudioMedia card, an Apple Scanner, and erasable optical disks provided the main development tools. Apple Computer, Inc. gave the computer specialist access to their software design engineers and the use of their latest discoveries. The computer specialist used Hypercard, Freetext, and other software to develop the programs which would provide a user-friendly interface for the end user.

The workstations consist of a Macintosh SE/30 or Classic II computer, CD-ROM disk drive(s), and a Style Writer printer.

There were some administrative problems to solve as well. As holders of the trust of the donors of materials, the persons working on the project had to be certain that the rights of the donors were respected, and that any restrictions on the collections would be observed. This was accomplished in two ways. First, on the computer Grahek designed a release form which appears on the screen and requires that the researcher "sign" that he or she has read and understands the conditions (see Figure 1); the computer is programmed to keep a record of the signed release form. Second, the copy of the photograph used is only a "reference" copy, used much as a photocopy. If the researcher wants a better copy, he or she must order one from the archives or from the personal collection cited.

A fantastic jump into space age technology awaits the user when he or she sits down before the Jukebox workstation (see Figure 2). The computer screen asks what



type of search is desired (see Figure 3). Depending upon the answer given, the computer screen will show a list of index terms, a list of names, a list of places, or a series of photographs to view (see Figure 4). Using the computer mouse, one will "click" on those items of interest, and Jukebox will do the rest of the work to bring to the user the voices, photographs, and interview transcripts (see Figures 5 and 6). The photographs have captions to identify them, and when one "clicks" on an individual person in a group photograph, the image of the person is highlighted and a separate caption identifies the person (see Figure 7). A "click" on the map icon shows the geographic area in detail (in some cases one inch to the mile) (see Figures 8 - 12).

### **The Future of Jukebox**

One year after the project was funded by Apple Computer, Inc., a prototype workstation was in place and being demonstrated to interested persons. The National Park Service became interested in Jukebox-type stations as a means of describing two of their Alaskan parks to visitors, residents, and employees. The Park Service funded a multi-year grant for the production of stand-alone workstations. The workstation for the Yukon-Charley National Park was being tested and demonstrated during the summer of 1992.

The North Slope Borough, which has its headquarters in Barrow, Alaska, became interested in using a Project Jukebox workstation to preserve and make accessible the



oral traditions of the natives in this northernmost region of Alaska. The borough funded a pilot project to access a portion of their collections. The Fairbanks Native Association and the Tanana Native Council (Tanana Indian Reorganization Act Council) have also made arrangements for using Project Jukebox technology to preserve oral histories from their region.

Unfortunately, most of these new projects do not address the problem of the 6,000 tapes in the oral history collection which are not being put on to CD-ROM disks. As funding becomes available, these tapes need to be copied to digital tape for long term preservation and access.

Dr. Schneider has demonstrated Project Jukebox to the National Oral History Association, the Smithsonian, and federal government funding agencies. However, in these times of fiscal restraint, there is less interest in awarding grants for reconversion projects than in new recordings. In other words, Schneider may be able to secure funding for new Project Jukebox workstations for other national parks, but not for the very necessary preservation work needed for the 6,000 tapes in the collection.

In discussing funding for preservation of oral history tapes with the author in June 1992, Dr. Schneider said that "this raises a critical question of priorities: How should funding agencies balance support for recording and preservation." He argues that "it is a disservice to everyone if we do not put our major support into preservation of what we already have that is valuable." He thinks that "a common point of agreement may be that all projects to do

new recordings should include funds for processing and development of computer based user workstations."

The years ahead look promising for Project Jukebox because it uses the new technology of tomorrow to make the past more accessible to present and future generations. While doing this, it is also doing the extraordinary work of preserving the past in a form which guarantees reproduction with integrity for time immemorial.

*If you are interested in more information about Project Jukebox, please call or write Project Jukebox, Oral History Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK 99775; 907-474-7261.*

**Gretchen L. Lake** is Archivist, Archives, Manuscript and Historical Photographs section, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

### Sources

The author wishes to thank Dr. William S. Schneider, and Daniel Grahek, Oral History Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks for sharing their expertise, notes, and reports with her.

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**FIGURES**

**Return to Audio Card**

HTRL Number H91-22-14

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS  
The Elmer E. Rasmuson Library  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-1005

**ORAL HISTORY  
GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT**

I, Donald D. Chase, Box 64, Eagle, AK 99738, transfer to the University of Alaska Rasmuson Library my title, interest, and copyright to the interviews recorded with me on Aug. 26, 1991, to be used for scholarly purposes.

[Donald D. Chase]  
signature

8/27/91

(1/90)

Figure 1. Release screen (National Park Service).



The Chipp-Ikpikpuk River and Meade River  
Oral History Project

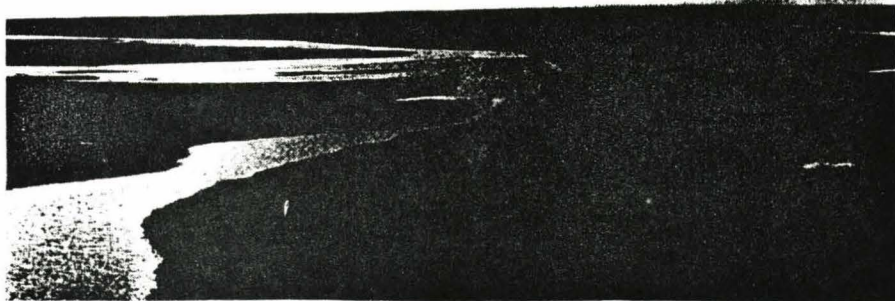
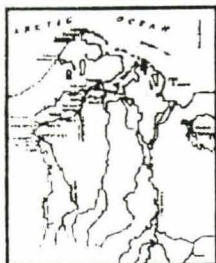


Figure 2. Example of the welcoming screen (North Slope Borough).



People



Places

Events, Topics, and Placenames

Akiatchiaq  
 Akpik, Florence  
 Akpik, Frankie  
 Akpik, Henry  
 Akpik, Joe  
 Akpik, Mary  
 Akpik, Sam  
 Akpik, Walter  
 Alaqtuq  
 Alaqtuq River  
 Alaska Territorial Guard  
 Anniatchiaq  
 Arctic Contractors  
 Atuqtuq  
 Aumalik  
 Avvaq  
 Barrow  
 Barrow - hospital  
 Barrow - hotel  
 Bay of Cape Halkett  
 Belcher  
 black-out conditions  
 boundaries  
 brents  
 Brooks Range

Click on the category which  
you want to select.

Go to previous screen

Go to database menu

Figure 3. Screen giving choices on how to search Jukebox (North Slope Borough).

Click on a photograph to open records for that person.

Tigitunnaq  
Arnold Brewer, Sr.

Qappan  
Adam Leavitt

Aakuk  
Charlie Edwardsen, Sr.

Nasagaik  
Henry Nashahnik

Amayun  
Mary Edwardsen

Qigisaq  
Ernest Kignak

Suvhuraq  
Greta Akpik

Pamiittuaq  
Thomas Brewer, Sr.

Aggiagruk  
Nina Nayukak

Kumiakak  
Faye Nasunginya

Kuuaynan  
Samuel Kanakomna

Aakuk  
Sarah Kanakomna

Utik  
Walter Akpik, Sr.

Nungasaraq  
Ben Nungasak

Qavviyaq  
Mattie Tunik

Go Back

Figure 4. Having chosen the "People" category, this screen shows all fifteen native elders interviewed for the project. "Clicking" on Greta Akpik will bring her interview to the screen (North Slope Borough).

Keywords:

Alaqtq  
Barrow  
Barrow - hospital  
camps - Brower's  
camps - coastal  
camps - summer  
church  
death - accidental  
Department of Health  
diseases - rheumatism  
dwellings - sod  
education - schools  
employment  
feasts  
fish - frozen  
fishing

Biography:

Greta and Walter Akpik

Greta and Walter Akpik lived in Atkasuk and both have had a lifetime of associations with the inland river systems. As a little girl, Greta recalls traveling with her parents on the rivers (Tape 1, Pg. 2) (Tape numbers refer to the numbering system utilized in Arundale and Schneider, 1987). She remembers the site of Alaqtq near the

00036

Greta Akpik, Suvhuraq

Return to List of Tape Numbers

Click on an outline segment to view the transcript for that segment.

Return to previous screen

Return to main menu

Return to map

Greta Akpik talks with Wendy Arundale about...

1) ...how her family traveled on seasonal rounds when she was young.  
seasonal rounds\ hunting\ trapping\ whaling\ food - preservation\ Barrow!

2) ...her earliest memories of camps.  
Ikpikpak\ Msade River\ Payugvik\ camps - Brower's\ Alaqtq\ Tasipak Lake!

3) ...her father's mother, and how her sister often stayed with her grandmother.  
Utayuk\ games - cards\ diseases - rheumatism!

Figure 5. The first screen of the Greta Akpik interview showing a photograph of Greta Akpik, the keywords to use to search through the interview, the transcript,

1187-101-A

Greta Akpik - Atqasuk

March 14, 1982

Interviewed by Wendy Arundale

Cathy Demientieff, Transcriber and Translator of Transcription

Tapes 1 and 2

Wendy: This is Wendy Arundale and I'm talking to Greta Akpik in her home in Atqasuk on March 14, 1982 and we're going to talk a little bit about Greta's life and some of the things that happened to her when she was younger. Shall we start out and talk about some of the first things you remember as a little girl?

Greta: Yes. Should I talk Eskimo or talk in English a little? Maybe you won't understand me when I talk in English. I talk funny.

Wendy: No, that's fine. Maybe you could put it in Inupiaq and then kind of tell me what you've said so that I can know what to talk to you about next. But I think that it would be nice to have some of it, at least, in Inupiaq.

Greta: You starting it? Oh, it's running. The first thing I remembered when I was a girl. We never stay in town, Barrow, because my father was a whaler and trapper. He never stay in town all the time, he always try to go hunting by boat, by dogteam. He usually had dogs, six or seven, all the time. He go not much, saving dogs. But he likes to hunt. He don't want us to be hungry all the time. He didn't raise us with money, with big money, he just raise us with hunting animals. People, those hunters, never stay in one place all



Greta Akpik, Suvluuzaaq



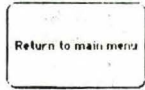
Local Search



Play Audio

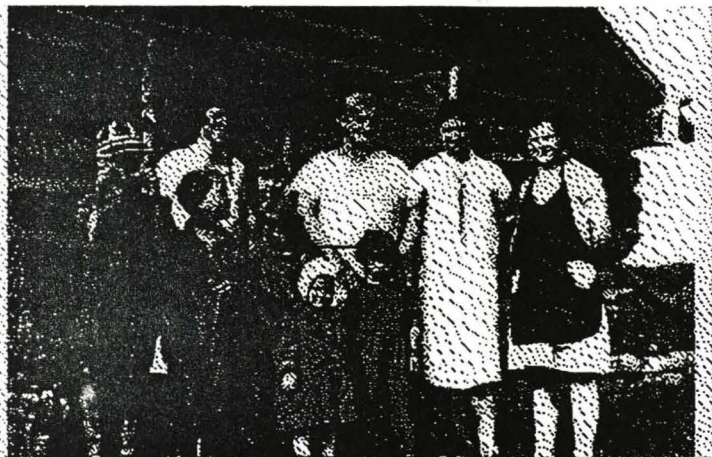


Go Back



Return to main menu

Figure 6. The second screen of the Greta Akpik interview showing the transcript (North Slope Borough).



Dorris Eagan (Jack Eagan's daughter)

Figure 7. Example of a person being identified within a group photograph. The caption refers to the person highlighted (Demonstration Project).



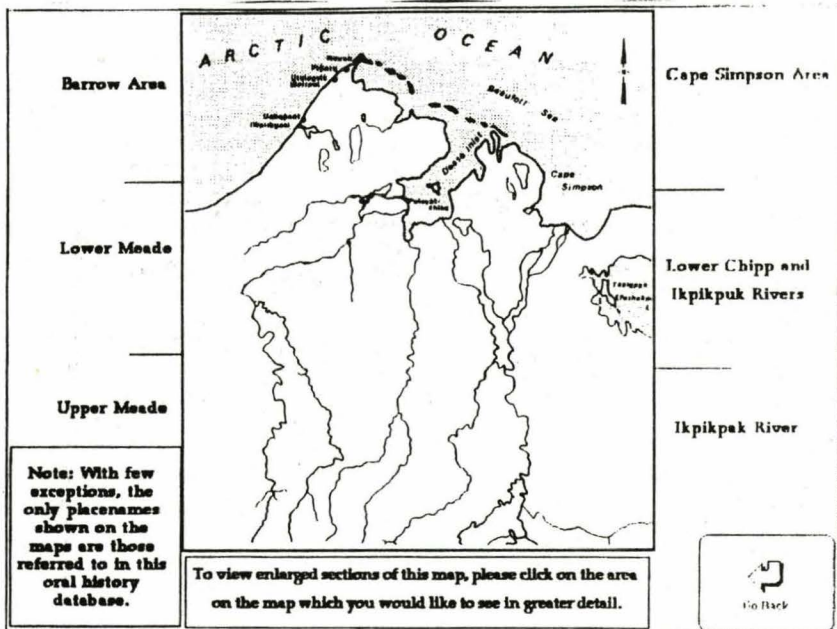


Figure 8. "Places" screen showing the large map of the Barrow area (North Slope Borough).

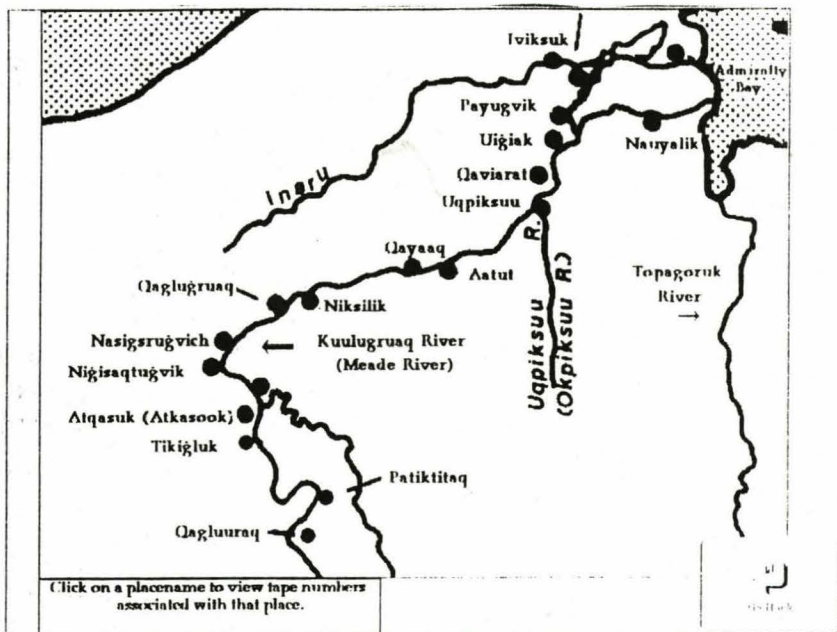


Figure 9. Detail map of the Lower Chipp and Ikpikpak Rivers area. The placenames are shown in Inupiaq and English. "Click" on a placename, and it is



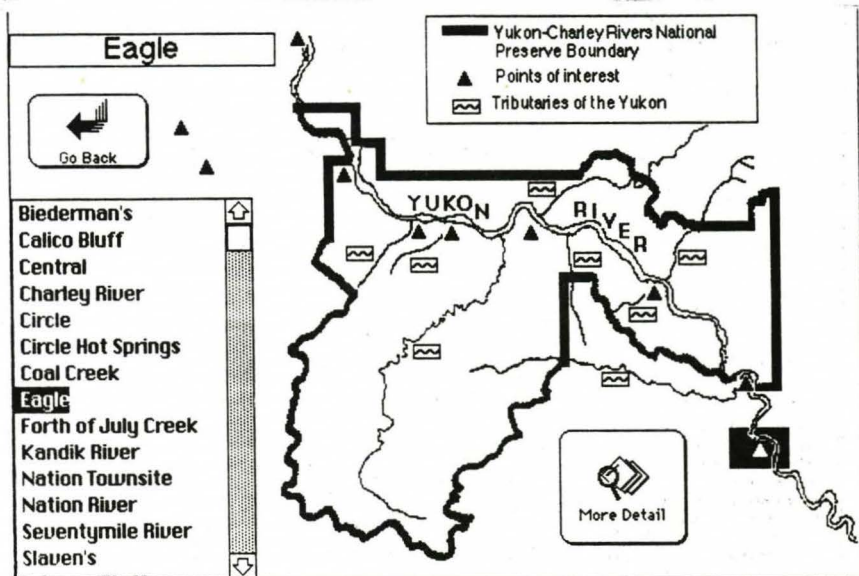


Figure 10. "Places" screen showing the larger area. Eagle has been highlighted (National Park Service).

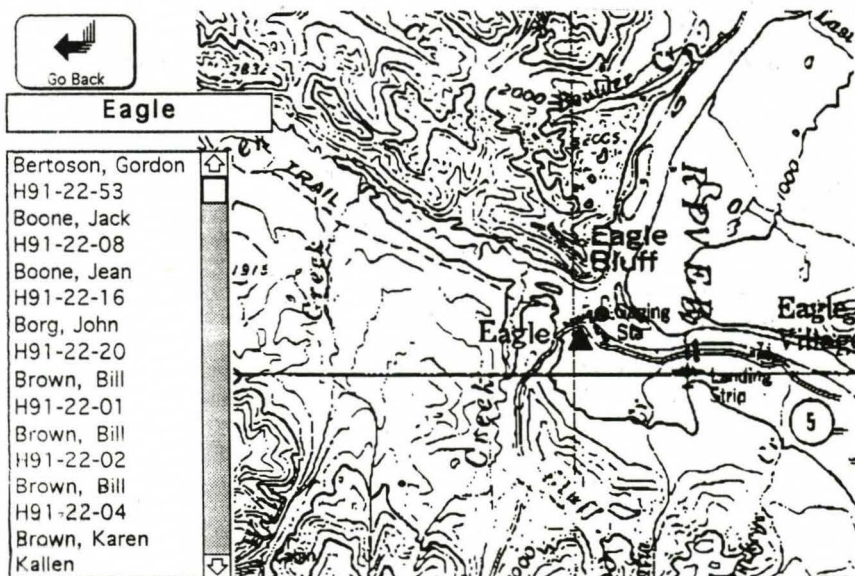


Figure 11. Detail map of Eagle, Alaska, at a scale of one mile to the inch. This screen also shows interviews available relating to Eagle (National Park Service).

## Jukebox Sites

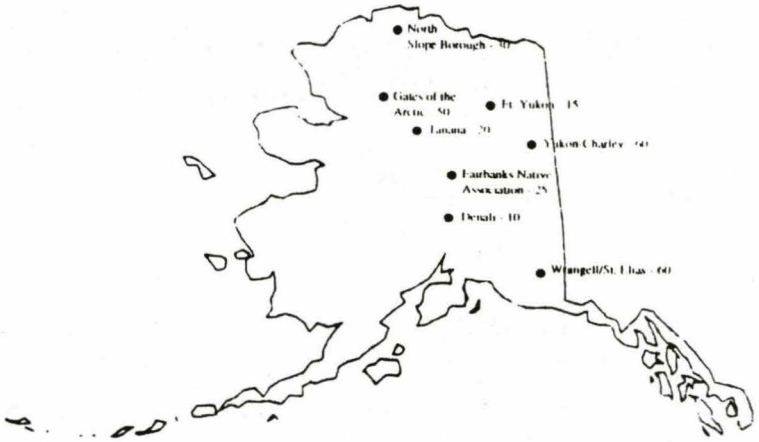


Figure 12. Map of Jukebox sites. The numbers indicate the number of tapes included in each project.

## **The Development of the Jimmy Carter Library's Audiovisual Collection**

**David J. Stanhope**

The audio-visual (AV) collection of a presidential library offers the world a unique record of the life and times of a United States President and his administration. The nature of presidential AV records also creates a considerable challenge for the Office of Presidential Libraries within the National Archives and Records Administration. To meet the needs of the president, the public, and future scholars, special archival policies and practices must be implemented when dealing with presidential AV records. The development of the Jimmy Carter Library AV Collection presents an excellent case study of the policies, programs, and problems involved in administering a presidential AV collection.

The development of the Jimmy Carter AV Collection can be divided into four distinct stages or phases: creation of

the collection, beginning January 20, 1977; pre-library, which lasted from January 20, 1981, until the opening of the Jimmy Carter Library, October 1, 1985; beginning library, through October 1, 1990; and established library. This article will identify different AV series and media in the collection and will discuss archival methods, procedures, and problems involved with each group during each phase of the developing collection. Other archival functions and policies related to the collection, such as accessioning, copyright, equipment, and supplies also will be discussed.

Many of the materials that comprise the Carter AV Collection were not created by or during the Carter administration. However, the cornerstone of the Carter AV Collection are those materials that were created by the Carter White House offices and agencies, January 20, 1977, through January 20, 1981. The four major series created were the White House Staff Photographers (WHSP) negatives and still pictures, White House Communications Agency (WHCA) videotapes, WHCA audiotapes, and the Naval Photographic Center (NPC) films.\* Other AV material created or retained by the White House included a small collection of pre-presidential photographs, an oral history audiotape collection created by the National Archives liaison staff, a Panama Canal oral history collection created by a staff intern, and an audiotape collection of 1976 Carter campaign speeches.

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\* A list of abbreviations used follows the article.



To help monitor the creation and disposition of presidential historical materials, the Office of Presidential Libraries (NL) of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) detailed a small presidential papers liaison staff within the White House complex. The primary goal of NL and the liaison staff was to help ensure that a full and accurate record of the president and his administration was organized and preserved for deposit in a presidential library. This task was accomplished by offering archival services to the White House, and most importantly, by advising the president and his staff about the importance of preserving historical presidential material.<sup>1</sup> A brief description of each presidential AV collection, its creating office, and NL's assistance is needed to understand the provenance and development of the Jimmy Carter AV Collection.

The office of White House Staff Photographer was administered through the White House Military Office, but policy decisions concerning the photos were directed by the White House Press Office. The staff photographers produced over 28,000 rolls of photographic film organized into five series: presidential, vice presidential, personal, personal history, and White House grounds and buildings. Most of this film was 35 mm, with approximately 400 rolls on

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<sup>1</sup> Report, Carter Presidential Historical Materials, 16 March 1977, "Presidential Papers [1]," Box 70, Hugh Carter's Files, Jimmy Carter Library (Hereafter cited as JCL); interview with John Fawcett (Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries), 12 July 1990.

70 mm, 90 mm, and 120 mm film. Each roll was assigned a series letter and a roll number, dated, and then filed numerically. The numbering system for each of the presidential, vice presidential, and personal series was roughly chronological. Each roll was stored in a glassine negative sleeve within a folder (some acid neutral, some not) with a contact sheet of the roll identifying photographer, roll number, and date. Extra sets of contact sheets were printed to be used as the collection finding aid.

The archives liaison staff and NL served the staff photographers office in an advisory role only. Archivists at NL advised the office on what film to use and archival processing standards. The also advised the White House Administration Office on the need to implement a photo identification and indexing program.<sup>2</sup> This was never done, later causing difficulty for archivists responsible for providing reference service for the collection.

The White House Communications Agency was also operated by the White House Military Office. Two of their many responsibilities were to make audio and video recordings of the president, first lady, and White House staff. WHCA audio crews recorded all public speeches and statements of the president, the first lady, and some of the comments made by senior aides on one-quarter-inch, reel-to-reel audiotape. Scheduling for events to be

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Fynette Eaton (Branch Chief, Technical Services Branch, Center for Electronic Records), 6/20/90; Monthly Status Report of Presidential Papers Staff, Marie Allen to Daniel Reed, 2 August 1978, "6/78-12/78;" Reading files of David E. Alsobrook.

recorded was arranged through secretaries of the president and first lady and through the White House Office of Communications (not to be confused with WHCA). The audiotapes were arranged into presidential, first lady, or staff series, and then numbered in rough chronological order.

WHCA videotapes were recorded off network television or created by WHCA. Presidential speeches, news conferences, and interviews were recorded on two-inch quad videotape. The nightly news summaries aired by the major networks were recorded on three-quarter-inch videocassettes. The videotapes were arranged into two series: presidential and Carter Hold Bay (CHB). The CHB tapes were miscellaneous programs recorded for the personal use of the president and his staff. This series also included some videotaped speech practice sessions. The videotapes were also numbered in chronological order. Scheduling for WHCA video was through the White House Office of Communications and Office of Administration.

NL and the liaison staff also scheduled programs of historical significance to be recorded. More important, they advised WHCA of the need to preserve video recordings of the president's speech rehearsal sessions. WHCA did not recognize the historical value of the practice speech tapes and usually reused the tape stock. NL arranged to provide or reimburse WHCA with tape stock in exchange for the



practice tapes. Unfortunately, this arrangement began in mid-1979, and only a few practice tapes were preserved.<sup>3</sup>

NARA provided courtesy storage services to WHCA for their video and audio tapes. WHCA retained legal custody of the tapes, including control over access, while NARA merely assured a safe, secure storage location. This service was coordinated by NL archivists.<sup>4</sup>

The Naval Photographic Center located at Anacostia Naval Air Station created an important presidential film collection. This unit's work with the White House also was coordinated through the White House Military Office. Film assignments were scheduled through the president's secretary, the Office for Appointments, Scheduling and Advance, and the Office of Communications. NPC film crews were responsible for filming presidential trips, official White House ceremonies, and state dinners. Access to the film was controlled by the Press Office. In order to save money, events recorded by WHCA on video were not filmed

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<sup>3</sup> Memo for the Record, 19 January 1979, Re: Audiovisual Activities of this Office, "January 1978-May 1978;" Memo for the Record, 26 July 1979, Re: Videotapes of the President's Practice Sessions Prior to Speeches, "June 1979-Sept. 1979," Reading Files of David E. Alsobrook; Interview with Doug Thurman (Supervisory Archivist, Office of Presidential Libraries), 21 June 1990; Interview with David E. Alsobrook (Supervisory Archivist, Jimmy Carter Library), 19 June 1990.

<sup>4</sup> Memo, Marie Allen to Valerio Giannini, 29 March 1978, "PHM Memos to/from Giannini/Carter," Reading Files of David E. Alsobrook.



by NPC. All of the film created was 16 mm color original with a separately recorded one-quarter-inch audiotape sound track; however, sound was not recorded at all events filmed. Duplicate or reference 16mm work prints with 16mm magnetic sound tracks were reproduced for some of the film to preserve the originals. Films were filed chronologically with an ID code indicating the fiscal year of the film and its numerical sequence. NL also provided courtesy storage for NPC film.

All of these AV collections created to document the Carter administration were considered presidential materials. The NPC film, though produced by a federal agency outside the White House, was designated presidential materials by the White House, NPC officials, and the National Archives.<sup>5</sup>

The smaller AV collections retained or produced by the Carter White House were of a special nature. The staff exit interviews and family oral history program were initiated and implemented by NL and the liaison staff, with the approval of President Carter. To ensure legal ownership, deeds of gift were transacted for all interviewees not on the White House staff. White House staff interviews were considered presidential materials and thus did not require deeds of gift. The Panama Canal oral history program was produced by an intern in the Congressional Liaison Office. The archives

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<sup>5</sup> Notes for Dr. O'Neill for Briefing with Mary Lawton, 20 October 1980, "Oct.-Dec. 1980;" Memo, Mary Lawton to Marty Beaman, 21 October 1980, "PHM-Military Office & WHCA;" Reading Files of David E. Alsobrook; Fawcett, interview.

liaison staff did not participate actively in this program, but did offer literature on oral history techniques, office supplies, and clerical assistance. The Panama Canal history tapes were transferred to and filed by White House Central Files. The 1976 Carter campaign tapes were part of the Carter campaign materials originally deposited with the Georgia Department of Archives and History. A duplicate set was made for the Carter White House. NL created a subject index for the tapes based on the White House Central File subject categories detailing speeches, briefings, and interviews.<sup>6</sup>

In November 1980, President Carter lost his bid for a second term as president and the first stage of development of the Jimmy Carter AV collection was ended. Earlier in his administration President Carter signed a letter of intent to donate his presidential materials to the U.S. government for later deposit in a presidential library. This letter of intent gave NL the authority to make arrangements for the future disposition of the Carter presidential materials. During the last weeks of the administration, NL AV specialists surveyed the AV records created by the Carter White House. This survey covered those records created by WHSP, WHCA, and NPC offices. The smaller AV collections were not included in this survey, because they belonged to offices already surveyed by NL's liaison office.

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<sup>6</sup> Monthly Status Report of the Presidential Papers Staff, Marie Allen to Daniel Reed, 2 August 1978, "6/78-12/78," Reading Files of David E. Alsobrook.

Many Carter AV materials were not surveyed by NL specialists or accessioned by NL because they had been removed from the White House before the end of the administration survey took place. Some of the material is still unaccounted for. Some of it, like the WHSP personal and personal history series, is in the possession of staff still working for President Carter.

On January 21, 1981, the Carter White House materials were shipped to the Carter Presidential Materials Project (NCLP) in Atlanta, Georgia. Because NCLP did not have proper storage facilities, all White House AV materials, except those smaller collections shipped with White House office files, were deposited at the National Archives. On January 31, 1981, President Carter signed a deed of gift, donating his presidential materials to the United States government.<sup>7</sup>

The transfer of the Carter AV material to the National Archives marked the beginning of the second, or pre-library, phase in the development of the Carter AV collection. The material was stored in Washington, D.C., because the facilities in Atlanta did not meet environmental standards for the storage of sensitive AV material. NL, which had the

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<sup>7</sup> Letter, Jimmy Carter to Jay Solomon, 6 March 1978, attached to Memo, Hugh Carter to Jimmy Carter, 23 February 1978, "Presidential Libraries I [1]," Box 69, Hugh Carter's Files, JCL; Deed of Gift, Jimmy Carter to Robert Warner, 31 January 1981, "Jimmy Carter," Administration Files of JCL; Interview with Dick McNeill (Audiovisual Specialist, Nixon Presidential Materials Project), 20 June 1990.



trained staff and equipment essential for the proper administration and preservation of a multi-media AV collection, initiated archival programs and policies guided by the principles of provenance and President Carter's deed of gift.

NL accessioned a considerable amount of Carter AV material. The 185-cubic-foot WHSP collection of negatives, extra photographic prints, and contact sheets, contained approximately 600,000 images. The WHCA collection consisted on 99 cubic feet of two-inch videotape, 86 cubic feet of three-quarter-inch videocassettes, and 152 cubic feet of one-quarter-inch audiotape. NPC film titled approximately 250 cubic feet of color original and sound track audiotapes. After the material was accessioned, NL worked primarily on processing, referencing, and preserving the collection.<sup>8</sup> Much of this work was done to prepare the material for its future disposition and use at the Jimmy Carter Library.

Processing the material was simple and straight-forward. All the collections were in order, and NL followed the original order of the collections. The WHSP collection, which had not been examined by administration staff, was inspected and arranged while archivists assembled an orderly and accurate set of contact sheets. Finding aids of the material consisted of the inventories and logs that accompanied the material to NL. The WHSP contact sheets

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<sup>8</sup> Notes of a telephone conversation, Ros Wright to Doug Thurman, 11 February 1981, "AV," Administration Files of JCL, 1982.



served as the finding aid for the WHSP photos and negatives. No scope and content notes or collection descriptions were produced during this stage by NL or NCLP staff.

Most of NL's programs and policies concerning the Carter material focused on conservation, which "encompasses the three functions of examination, preservation, and restoration."<sup>9</sup> Examination of the material was done during processing. Restoration of the relatively new material was unwarranted at this time. NL focused its energies on preservation programs that would help preserve the material for future generations.

Preservation programs are those that are designed to stabilize the current conditions of the material, regulate the environment, provide appropriate housing and storage, and monitor use and handling. Because the Carter material was new, NL had to do little to stabilize its condition, other than provide housing in an environmentally safe storage facility. All of the magnetic tape and film was put into appropriate sleeves or boxes and stored in a regulated environment. Most of NL's preservation programs centered on measures to limit improper or excessive handling and they initiated a preservation and reference copy program for the Carter AV collection which allowed duplicate copies of the material to be used for reference and copy service orders. Original

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<sup>9</sup> Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, *et al.*, *Administration of Photographic Collections*, SAA Basic Manual Series (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984), 94.

materials were then prepared to be preserved in cold storage facilities planned for the future Carter Library.

The copying program was costly and labor intensive. Fortunately, the WHCA audiotape collection was accessioned with a reference copy and an original set of tapes. The program was designed to produce a reference copy for each WHCA videotape, most of the NPC films, and one-sixth of the WHSP negatives. A three-quarter-inch reference videotape collection of all the WHCA videotape was created by making duplicates of all the three-quarter-inch News Summaries and transferring all the two-inch video to three-quarter-inch videocassettes. The reference work print and 16 mm mag track collection for the NPC film had been initiated by the NPC labs during the administration. NL continued this program after it received the material. In an attempt to cut costs, some films of routine events were not duplicated. Another program to create a video reference collection of the NPC film was begun, but was not completed because it was too costly, labor intensive, and time consuming. Archivists at NL and NLCP selected approximately one-sixth of the WHSP negatives to be duplicated onto 90 mm film. The film duplication was done by Kodak, Inc., and shipments of original film were periodically sent to them from 1982 to 1988. The images selected for duplication were those that best document the history of the Carter administration.

Routine ceremonial handshake photos were not included in the 90 mm negative collection.<sup>10</sup>

Providing reference service for the Carter AV collection was a cumbersome task for NL and NLCP archivists during the pre-library years. Reference requests were received by NL, by NLCP, and by President Carter's transition office. NL had physical possession of the material in Washington, DC, but President Carter's office in Atlanta controlled access to the material. Because of this arrangement, many reference requests were routed through all three offices before action on the request was completed.

An additional reference problem during this period was caused by the limited finding aids. There were no name, subject, place, or event indices for any of the collections. Audio, video, and film logs were available for WHCA and NPC collections. NL and NLCP each had a set of WHSP contact sheets, but because there was no index to the collection, finding photographs was difficult. NL could access the photo collection by date only. NLCP used the president's daily diary name index to locate dates people met with the president. Archivists would then check to see if a photo for that particular meeting or person existed. Photo requests of a subjective nature, such as the president

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<sup>10</sup> Eaton, Thurman, interviews; Report, Progress of the Carter Presidential Materials Project, 27 May 1982, "AV;" Monthly Report, March 1982, "Monthly Reports," Administration Files of JCL, 1982.



in leisure or with a group of children, were nearly impossible to fulfill without many hours of searching.<sup>11</sup>

Copyright issues concerning the collection involved the WHCA material, since both the WHSP and NPC collections were in the public domain. The WHCA collections contained many tapes recorded off network television and subject to copyright. According to NL policy, tapes of presidential events covered by pool coverage would be considered public domain because the networks could not copyright the image or words of the president. These events included national press conferences and speeches. Researchers requesting copies of copyrighted material were warned that the material was copyrighted and advised to seek permission to use the material. NL did not copy or duplicate copyrighted material except for those instances cited in the fair use clauses of the 1976 copyright law (17 United States Code, sections 107 and 108).

During the pre-library years, NL was the office most involved with the Carter AV material, but NLCP was also involved with the developing collection. In addition to AV reference, most of NLCP's work involved accessioning post-presidential AV material, which was received through President Carter's office or through solicitation efforts by NL and NLCP. Most of the material received through President Carter's office consisted of photos, tapes, and records mailed to President Carter by the public. Some were

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<sup>11</sup>Quarterly Report for January-March 1981, "Routine Reports-Monthly & Staff Reports," Administration Files of JCL, 1982; Alsobrook, Eaton, and Thurman, Interviews.



created by President Carter's office or by agents contracted by his office. Some of the most significant material included photos of President Carter's trips and video and audio recordings of symposiums held at the Carter Center of Emory University.

Solicitation efforts by NL and NLCP during this period did result in the acquisition of two valuable collections, the Rafshoon collection and the Mims collection. The Gerald Rafshoon collection, 1970-1981, consisting of 144 cubic feet of videotape, audiotape, and film documents the communications and public relations firms that produced many of President Carter's campaign commercials. This collection contains both the commercial master and edited out-takes. The Roddy Mims collection, 1976-1982, consists of thirty cubic feet of color slides and black and white photographic negatives taken by Roddy Mims, a *Time-Life* photographer. The collection documents Mims's work covering political candidates and government officials during the Carter years and contains many images of President Carter as well as other Democratic and Republican officials. The deed of gift for each collection transferred physical ownership and copyright to the National Archives.

The second phase in the development of the Carter AV collection ended with the opening of the Jimmy Carter Library and the transfer of the Carter material from NL to it. The beginning-library phase in the development of the collection was particularly important. It was during this phase that the entire collection was brought together within the Jimmy Carter Library. Programs, policies, and procedures established during this phase have had a

permanent effect on the organization and management of the collection. Problems such as small staff size and a divided collection hampered NLC's efforts to organize the collection quickly for public use. Most of the work done during this period concentrated on organizing the storage areas, establishing reference procedures, implementing an AV copying service, continuing preservation projects, and processing post-presidential collections.

The transfer of the Carter AV material from Washington to Atlanta began in the spring of 1987. Because of continuing copying programs, NL retained approximately twenty percent of the WHSP negatives and all of the NPC work prints for fiscal years 1978 through 1981. The entire WHCA two-inch video collection was also kept in Washington. This material was periodically shipped to NLC over the next three and a half years. Dividing the materials between Washington and Atlanta initially was necessary and beneficial, but later caused problems.

The new library had been planned and built with particular attention given to the storage of audio-visual material. In addition to stack areas for manuscript material, the library contained two cold storage vaults and a lab with a photographic dark room. The entire facility was climate controlled; stack levels were to stay at sixty-eight to seventy-two degrees Fahrenheit with a relative humidity (RH) of fifty to sixty percent, the cooler vault at fifty to fifty-five degrees, and the freezer vault was at zero degrees Fahrenheit. While an ideal relative humidity for each cold vault would have been forty to fifty percent, engineering and funding limitations demanded that the vaults have an RH of fifty to

sixty percent. The AV lab and dark room, which were supplied by a separate air system, had been designed for temperatures as low as sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit with a fifty percent RH. The AV storage facilities were designed so that original NPC film and WHSP negatives would be frozen (housed permanently in the freezer vault) and the rest of the material would be stored in the cooler vault. Unfortunately, the amount of post-presidential material accessioned during this period made the original storage plans insufficient.

During 1987, the freezer vault was unused because its relative humidity was too high and temperature fluctuations on a cyclical basis had occurred. This forced staff to store all NLC AV material in the cooler vault. It soon became apparent that there was going to be a shortage of storage space. NLC was still expecting to receive the Rafshoon collection and the rest of the presidential material from NL, a total of 300 cubic feet. In addition, NLC had to plan for future acquisitions.

During the beginning-library period, alternate storage arrangements were implemented to resolve the storage problems. First, the freezer vault cooling units were repaired in the fall of 1988 allowing the 220 cubic feet of NPC film originals to be stored there.<sup>12</sup> The WHCA audiotapes and NPC audiotapes were stored in stack areas where temperature and humidity levels were not ideal, but they were stable and posed no immediate threat to the tapes. All extra contact sheets were also stored in the stack

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<sup>12</sup>Eventually all of the WHSP original negatives will be stored there as well.



areas. These arrangements left room in the cooler vault to store the rest of the presidential and post-presidential material which included all the reference collections, the Rafshoon and Mims collections, and other post-presidential materials.

In addition to organizing the storage space, NLC AV personnel also formulated reference procedures for using the collection. These were designed for visiting researchers as well as phone and mail requests. NLC had to balance the public's right to use the collection with NLC's need to preserve the integrity of the material. Reference copies for all of the presidential material were made to limit the use of original material. Duplicates would be made from reference copies. The fundamental policy governing all of NLC's reference and copy programs was that no original material would be used or loaned for viewing or copying.<sup>13</sup>

When the Jimmy Carter Library opened, the only AV material open for research was the presidential material and some pre-presidential photos that were used in the museum. Access was no longer controlled by President Carter's office; most questions concerning access were left to the discretion of the library's director.

Most AV requests still came through the mail or by phone. Since the collection was not indexed and was accessed by date only, reference work was still difficult. Some research aids did exist to help find names, events, dates, and quotes. These included the president's daily

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<sup>13</sup>WHSP original negatives will be used to make prints until the 90 mm copy negative project is finished.



diary, *Public Papers of the Presidents*, and a card index to the WHSP collection. Unfortunately, the card index was incomplete and only indexed up to mid-1978. Finding AV material, when given vague or nonspecific descriptions, was still a difficult task. Researchers interested in footage of a Carter quote were required to locate the date and event where the statement was made. In general, one hour was the limit NLC staff would spend on research for a mail or phone reference request. Most material or information was found within this time, but if it was not, the researcher was so informed.

Researchers visiting the library were given research interviews by the AV archivist. The interview was used to familiarize the researcher with the library's holdings, rules, and procedures. Researchers worked in the library's research room, which was furnished with a set of finding aids and a small room for viewing videotapes or listening to audiotapes. All researchers were encouraged to use the resources available in the research room for finding AV materials or information pertinent to their topics and searches. A reproduction form for audiovisuals was used for ordering reproductions of material.

When the library opened, it did not have facilities or equipment to view the NPC film. In the spring of 1990, NLC purchased a 16 mm movie viewer. Prior to that purchase, researchers viewed video reference copies of the film; films without video reference copies were kept at NARA's NL or sent to them for viewing.

The AV archivist replied to research requests in writing, by phone, or both. Researchers interested in photos were

usually sent photocopies. Researchers interested in visual footage or sound recordings were informed whether a videotape, audiotape, or film existed for the desired event. All written replies were accompanied by an NLC reproduction fee schedule and an AV reproduction order form. Researchers would then send the form and payment back to NLC, which would process the order and mail the duplicates to the researcher.

Payment procedures for AV reproductions were also troublesome during the library's first years. All payments were received and processed by the AV archivist for the National Archives Trust Fund. Individuals were required to pre-pay, while businesses and agencies, such as newspapers and television stations, were sent invoices. Many bills became long overdue and some were not paid at all. The AV archivist spent an inordinate amount of time keeping track of accounts and sending out past due notices. A new policy was eventually established for firms that had an outstanding bill, delaying the processing of their reproduction requests until that bill was paid, but this did little to solve the problem. In the summer of 1990, the NLC decided to require pre-payment for all AV reproduction requests. To help expedite requests, NLC began to accept credit cards for payment which freed the AV archivist from unnecessary accounting duties and insured that all AV researchers paid their bills.

Also established during the beginning-library period was the AV copying service. Set up to fulfill several institutional goals, such as preservation, reference, and outreach programs, NLC's copying service was used mostly to fulfill

AV reproduction requests. Because of the variety of AV mediums within the Carter AV collection and the wide range of users, the NLC copying service offered a variety of reproduction services. Several factors, such as the cost of equipment, technical training, security, and convenience, determined whether a particular reproduction service was done by Carter Library staff or sent out to commercial firms. Vendors were chosen on their ability to deliver services while safeguarding the integrity of the material duplicated. Commercial labs were briefed on the special nature of archival material and the need to protect and preserve it at all times.

Copying performed by staff required inexpensive equipment and a minimum of technical expertise. The first staff copying services were video and audiotape duplication. NLC was able to supply these services with two three-quarter-inch video machines, a VHS player/recorder, and a telex tape duplicating machine. In the spring of 1988, a dark room was set up to handle black and white photographic work. Commercial firms made film-to-video transfers, and reproduced 16 mm motion picture film, color photographs, and various high-tech videotape formats. Fortunately, a few Atlanta firms were able to fulfill all of the possible reproduction services requested of NLC.

During this period NLC continued many of NL's preservation and processing projects and also started new ones. It began organizing all the miscellaneous post-presidential material accessioned by NLCP and NL. Unfortunately, NL was still working on projects begun earlier, such as the NPC video reference program, and



many of the post-presidential accessions were poorly documented. These problems continued to affect processing and reference programs until the summer of 1990, when all the Carter AV material in Washington, DC, was shipped to Atlanta, Georgia, and most miscellaneous post-presidential material was organized into a universal post-presidential AV collection.

The largest project initiated by NLC and continued by NLC was the WHSP 90 mm negative duplication project. All of the original rolls that had been duplicated by the end of 1986 were shipped to NLC with the duplicate (90 mm) film rolls. The remaining originals to be duplicated were shipped periodically to NLC through the summer of 1990. NLC technicians then cut the negatives off the rolls of 90 mm film and prepared them for storage. Particular attention was given to identifying each duplicate negative and checking the rolls with the master list of rolls duplicated. NLC AV staff also compiled a set of reference contact sheets for the 90 mm negatives. The project was one half complete at the end of fiscal year 1990.

Other AV processing projects initiated by NLC during this period included the Mims and Rafshoon collections, two post-presidential videotape collections, and a post-presidential audiotape collection. Processing procedures at NLC included standard archival arrangement, description, and preservation methods, emphasizing provenance and the conservation of the material. The Mims collection was in chronological and numerical order when NLC received it. Processing included re-sleeving the negatives and slides and compiling a list of the images. The Rafshoon collection



was not as well organized as the Mims collection when it was received. Work on a preliminary inventory of items was begun to determine the proper arrangement scheme. The post-presidential videotape and audiotape collections were small collections requiring arrangement and description.

Much was done in the pre-library and beginning-library years to prepare the Jimmy Carter AV collection for public use and permanent storage. However, the management of the collection was hampered by a few problems. The first was a lack of personnel. Between 1981 and 1987, NLCP and NLC had one archivist working with the AV material. This person also served as the institution's librarian and computer expert. A few part-time employees worked with AV between 1986 and 1987. In the fall of 1987, a full-time AV archivist was appointed, assisted by two part-timers who were replaced by two full-time AV archives technicians in 1988 and 1989. The second problem was the division of the collection between two places. As stated earlier, reference and copy services were hindered by this division and the periodic shipments of material meant many processing hours were devoted to re-shelving boxes and/or re-arranging the storage areas. The division was necessary but a troublesome arrangement.

The established-library phase, which began in October 1990, holds promise and challenges. Staff personnel and library resources have been sufficient to carry out the many functions necessary in administering a presidential library's audiovisual collection. Future goals and duties designated by the AV archivist include transferring AV series currently stored with textual records to the AV collection, monitoring

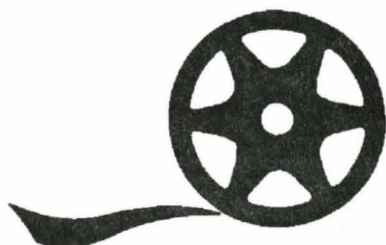
the condition of the materials and the storage facilities, starting preservation copy programs for deteriorating magnetic tapes, and educating Carter family and staff members in the importance of depositing their historically valuable AV records in the Jimmy Carter Library, as well as initiating other solicitation efforts.

**David J. Stanhope** has been the audiovisual archivist for the Jimmy Carter Library since 1988.

A list of abbreviations used in this article follows:

CHB	Carter Hold Bay
JCL	Jimmy Carter Library
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NL	Office of the Presidential Libraries
NLCP	Carter Presidential Materials Project
NPC	Naval Photographic Center
WHCA	White House Communications Agency
WHSP	White House Staff Photographers

## SHORT SUBJECTS



### Features

## The US Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon, a Military Archives In Georgia

**Kathryn R. Coker**

### Introduction

There's a relatively new "kid" archives on the block. It's called the U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon Archives located in Augusta, Georgia. Augusta is not only the home of the Masters Golf Tournament but also the

home of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, the army's communicators since 1860.

### **Authorization**

The United States Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon (USASC&FG) Archives, established in 1985, is authorized by the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Supplement 1 to Army Regulation 870-5 which states: "Commanders with historical offices staffed by Army Historians will establish and maintain a repository of selected historical documentation to serve as the corporate memory of the mission activities of the Command." Command or local level authorization is provided under USASC&FG Supplement 1 to AR 870-5, 5 February 1987, as amended, which officially establishes the USASC&FG Archives.

### **Purpose**

The mission of the USASC&FG Archives is to document on a **local level** the history of the United States Signal Corps, the Signal Center, Fort Gordon, the military role in the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA), and affiliated personnel. Effecting this mission not only records the memory of the Signal Corps and the installation, but also promotes the study of military history. The study of military history can strengthen today's military training, aid practical experience, and promote a deeper understanding of strategy, tactics, logistics, and the principles of war. It can also promote esprit-de-corps and pride in the military profession. In the words of former TRADOC Commander, General William Richardson, "We...want to use history to



impress upon the basic trainee the importance of his heritage, his place in the Army, why he is serving in that Army, and his responsibility to it."

### **Location and Office Profile**

The USASC&FG Archives is located administratively within the Command Historian Office, which reports to the Chief of Staff. The archives is staffed by a professional archivist who is also charged with historical functions and reports directly to the command historian. Additional support comes from soldiers, volunteers, and college student interns.

### **Access Policy**

As stated in the standard operating procedures (SOP), the archives is available for research and reference use by military and civilian personnel whose topic of interest falls within the scope of the collection. Patrons, of course, are not allowed in the environmentally controlled closed stack area. No records are loaned to patrons, with few exceptions, and all records must be used on site.

### **Collection Policy**

With the information proliferation of this modern society, decisions must be made concerning which records are to be collected and retained. A collection policy has been adopted based upon directives from TRADOC and the installation command, the collection policies of the signal museum and the two installation libraries, and upon local information needs. This policy must be flexible in order to

meet changing directives and research needs. The focus of USASC&FG Archives is upon historically valuable but inactive records generated by, for, and about the Signal Corps, the signal center, Fort Gordon, the military role in the Central Savannah River Area, and on associated personnel. These records will be or have been appraised to be of such evidential, informational, and research value to warrant permanent (infinite) retention. Records not falling within the scope of the collection policy are transferred, if possible, to appropriate repositories.

### **Records Collection**

Under a local Fort Gordon regulation, the installation's approximately forty unit historians and the command group point of contact are charged with assisting the Command Historian Office in identifying, locating, and transferring records of historical value to the archives. Usually these are inactive records no longer necessary in the daily operation of the office. There are exceptions, such as the roster of officers and signal center curriculum. If the unit historians wait until some records are no longer active, they will no longer be available for retention—lost. A lesson learned early in the program was that a compromise must be made between archival theory and practice. In addition to the unit historian network, the office has designed other procedures to aid in records collection, such as local records surveys, records schedules, news releases, and news stories. This records collection effort in no way supplants the U. S. Army's Modern Army Recordkeeping System (MARKS), which is actually a set of schedules mandating the

disposition of official army records. The best collection tool is the annual command history, a required publication documenting the installations' significant activities from combat developments and Signal Corps training to base operations. Unit historians are required to prepare their directorate's or organization's annual report and to substantiate it with accompanying documentation. The Command Historian Office and archives then takes the reports and background documents and evaluates, analyzes, and synthesizes them into a 200 page or more comprehensive and integrated history. The fact that the 1990 annual command history had 20 cubic feet of documentation is indicative of just how successful this effort has been. The Command Historian Office and archives has quarterly in-progress reviews to keep the records collection educational process and momentum going throughout the year.

### **What Are Records?**

This certainly seems a rhetorical question to the professional archivist, but certainly not to users. Archivists must stress that records are recorded information regardless of media or characteristics and may be in any format including videotape and machine readable data. For example, the Joint Universal Lessons Learned Data Base was created from observations made by a diverse audience during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. On a 55,000 acre post with over forty offices, it is imperative to educate creators and users of records on the idea that



historical (archival) records are defined as records in any format which have been appraised to be worthy of indefinite or permanent retention by the USASC&FG Archives and that there is no age or time limit on historical records. That is, the record does not have to be old to be of historical value. While this too may seem apparent, it merits mentioning since unit historians have received calls from individuals for example saying, "I guess you don't want this map showing Vietnam War training villages here in the 1960s. You only want really old records, right?" Other callers ask questions such as, "These records concern training here in the 1970s. They aren't current. You don't want these, do you?" The archives is concerned in documenting the present, past, and future of those institutions and individuals falling within the collection policy.

### **Processing**

Once records are transferred to the archives, they are acknowledged, appraised, conserved, arranged, accessioned, described, stored, and made available to users in accordance with archival practices and procedures. Initially, the archives was on the tenth floor of the headquarters building, with minimal office space and no space to create an archives. After three months and a space utilization study, it relocated to a one story brick building with three offices and a large storage area equipped with an arms room. After spending one Georgia summer in the unairconditioned storage area during which some records suffered minor damage, the office convinced local authorities of the need for an environmentally



controlled area meeting archival standards. Soon thereafter, using specially designated funds, the storage area was upgraded and the archives actively began to collect records.

### **Installation Records**

The USASC&FG Archives contains two broad categories of official records, installation records and Signal Corps records. The former are official records or copies of official records of the U. S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon, its predecessors (e.g., Camp Gordon established in 1941, the Signal Corps Training Center, the Signal Training Center, the Southeastern Signal School), and defunct organizations and schools, such as the Provost Marshal General School and the Civil Affairs School. Examples of installation records include annual reports, historical studies, signal center curricula, officer rosters, unit histories, training photographs, memorials, commander's annual assessments, review and analysis reports, newspapers, oral histories, videotapes of special installation events, etc. These and other installation records were used to write a published history of Fort Gordon.

### **Signal Corps Records**

The archives also retains records documenting the history of the U. S. Army Signal Corps, founded in 1860 by Brigadier General Albert J. Myer. The Signal Corps enables soldiers on the battlefield to communicate. Lieutenant General John J. Yeosock, commander of the Army Central Command (ARCENT) in the Persian Gulf War wrote:

With the execution of Desert Storm on 17 February 1991, the theater assumed a greater complexity and scope....[A] numbered field army was employed...to coordinate the actions of the tactical corps conducting the theater main attack....[Third Army's] XVIII Airborne Corps and the VII Corps were the organizations that made things happen during Desert Storm....While ARCENT headquarters and EAC (Echelon Above Corps) units set the stage for ground operations, it was the corps that maneuvered in southern Iraq and Kuwait to accomplish the objective.<sup>1</sup>

This means that they could not have maneuvered without communications provided by the Signal Corps. The Signal Corps has been the U. S. Army's communicators from the days of the wigwag signaling system, first tested in combat during the Civil War, to the Persian Gulf War's electronic battlefield. Examples of Signal Corps records in the archives include reports of the Chief Signal Officer, Signal Corps technical bulletins, Signal Corps technical leaflets, after action reports (such as, 93rd Signal Brigade in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm); Signal Corps unit histories, Signal Corps photographs from the Civil War to the present, historical monographs, staff studies, special studies (such as, Headquarters Fifth Army, Office of the

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<sup>1</sup>Yeosock, John Y., "Army Operations in the Gulf Theater," *Military Review*, LXXI (September 1991): 13, 15.

Signal Officer, *Data On The Signal Corps In The Italian Campaign, 1945* and *The War Balloon "Santiago" And The Men In Her Life*); Defense Technical Information Center studies, military campaign maps, videotaped exit interviews with the Chief of Signal (the USASC&FG commander), oral histories, postcards, and diverse other records documenting the Signal Corps's history and its regimental motto "get the message through."

### **Manuscripts Collections**

The archives retains personal papers (manuscripts) of individuals associated with the Signal Center, Fort Gordon, and/or the Signal Corps. These collections vary in coverage and format including, for example, correspondence, books, photographs, postcards, scrapbooks, newspapers, unit histories, memoirs and diaries, and other records collected by military and civilian personnel throughout their careers. These collections are either donated by the individual or his/her representative. The collections not only document the careers of the given individuals but also that individual's role in the history of the Signal Corps and/or Fort Gordon. Examples of manuscript collections include those of Brigadier General Albert J. Myer, chief signal officers Major General Spencer B. Akin, Major General George I. Back, Major General George S. Gibbs, and Major General David P. Gibbs; Lieutenant Colonel Reuben Abramowitz, who established the European Signal School at Ansbach, Germany; Signal Corps photographer Matthew B. Aitken; Verlin C. Blackwell, a Signal Corps radio operator during World War II who painted watercolors depicting radio



operations in Darwin, Australia; Major W. W. Keen Butcher, who served with the 34th Signal Company, 34th Infantry Division in World War II; Colonel Gerald Carlisle, deputy commandant and commandant of the Signal School from 1965 to 1966; Brigadier General Francis E. Howard, a former commandant of the Provost Marshal General Center at Camp Gordon and Camp Gordon's thirteenth commander; Vietnam War veteran Major General Norman E. Archibald, and Lieutenant General Thomas M. Rienzi, who among other assignments, served in command positions with the 96th Signal Battalion during World War II, commanded the 51st Signal Battalion in Korea from 1957 to 1960, and commanded the 1st Signal Brigade in Vietnam. A manuscripts guide to the collections is available.

### **Future**

The Signal Center and Fort Gordon Archives recently received a grant for compact movable shelving. It was running out of space and the problem would compound itself with the records of Persian Gulf War and those collected during the fiftieth commemoration of World War II. The archives has gradually moved into the realm of automation with the purchase of MicroMARC:amc and is now coordinating with the two libraries on post to create a local area network. Access to the collections will also be improved with the installation of the Professional Office System (PROFS), an official electronic mail system. The archives is also striving to network with the U. S. Army historical community including other TRADOC installations, the Center for Military History, and the Military History



Institute; one long term goal of the archives is to be a vital link in that community's Automation Vision 2000. The Command Historian Office and Archives, along with its counterparts, continues to lobby for the importance of history and the historical mission. As LTG Charles A. Horner, commander of the U. S. Central Command Air Force in the Persian Gulf War, recently paraphrased, "People who fail to study their history are destined to repeat it...."<sup>2</sup>

**Kathryn Roe Coker** has been Historian/Archivist at the U. S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon Archives since May 1985.

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<sup>2</sup>Horner, Charles A., "The Air Campaign," *Military Review* LXXI (September 1991): 17.

## How to Catalog Negatives Without Money

**Ted Ryan**

One of the dilemmas facing visual materials archivists is the rising cost of properly cataloging and preserving their images. By their very nature, photograph and negatives are expensive to reference and store.

In September of 1989, photojournalist Kenneth G. Rogers willed a large and important photograph collection to the Atlanta History Center's Library/Archives. Rogers had been a photographer for the *Atlanta Constitution*, and then the *Atlanta Journal*, from 1923 to 1973, and was head of the photography department from 1928 to 1950. The collection contains over 12,000 4x5-inch black and white negatives and color transparencies of Atlanta and the surrounding area photographed by Rogers which provide a rich view of

Atlanta's growth from a bustling southern town into an international city. Rogers, known for his excursions into rural Georgia to photograph the local population, was called the "Dean of Southern Photographers," and this collection shows why.

When the collection (over four hundred glass plate negatives, several thousand acetate negatives, and a small amount of nitrate-based negatives) was donated, it was stored in either 4x5-inch negative boxes or in envelopes (which contained anywhere from one to seventy negatives) and labeled by event. The identifications tended to be rather vague. For example, one box had "Galogly" written on the outside. The box contained twenty-seven glass plate negatives of trial scenes. It took considerable research to discover that what the caption referred to was a murder trial which took place in 1927.

Once the donation of the collection was announced in the Atlanta Historical Society's *Newsletter* and in the *Atlanta Constitution*, the society received numerous telephone calls from individuals requesting permission to use the collection. This instantaneous demand for the collection posed problems. First, the negatives, particularly the glass plate negatives, were fragile and could not be used by the patrons. Second, in order to make contact sheets following our usual method of cataloging would have been extremely expensive (approximately \$8,000 to \$10,000) and would have taken approximately eight years to complete. The patron demand, plus the in-house need for the images in several projects, coupled with the preservation concerns, required swift action.

At a conference in New York a few years before, David Horvath of the University of Louisville had demonstrated a method of videotaping glass plate negatives as a temporary

method of displaying fragile images to researchers. With this demonstration in mind, the society archives staff began to experiment with filming the Rogers negatives. The larger negatives, including 4x5-inch ones, as in this collection, can be filmed full frame, which eased the process. Also, many video cameras (including the one used by the society) have character generators which allow any institutional cataloging codes to be filmed on each image. As a test, approximately 100 images were filmed with their cataloging codes. The results seemed to satisfy demands. The filming could be done quickly, in-house, and at a low cost. In January 1990, society staff decided to begin filming the rest of the collection, and by March 1990, the task was complete.

### **Steps for Filming 4x5-inch Negatives**

- 1) Select a camera with the ability to reverse polarity (change a negative to a positive picture). The society used a Panasonic WV-3255/8AF Color Video Camera which is an older camera. Some newer video cameras do not have the Negative/Positive reversal feature. It is also important to select a camera which will produce external titles. These are used to provide the identification codes on the filmed negatives. The character generator on the camera used provides for subtitles up to fifteen characters—ample space for an identification code.
- 2) Place a light table (angled is preferable) on the ground. Create a frame for the negative to be filmed by cutting a 4x5-inch rectangle out of heavy black construction paper, and place it on the light table.
- 3) Set the camera on a tripod approximately six feet high, and angle down to face the light table.



- 4) Put a negative in place on the light table and zoom the camera focus in until the image fills the screen.
- 5) Follow the camera directions for generating the sub-titles and reversing the polarity.
- 6) Film each negative for five seconds.
- 7) Continue the same process with next negative. If this sounds relatively easy, that is because it is.

### **Steps for Filming 35 MM Negatives**

Tameron has introduced a new product called "the Photovix," which is available at most photographic supply stores. The Photovix will reverse the polarity of 35 mm negatives and can also be used to film 35 mm transparencies. The process is the same as above, except an additional piece of equipment is needed. A character generator by JVC is available to add the sub-titles.

The decision to videotape the Rogers collection was made after careful consideration of the alternatives. The society compared various methods for providing reference images and long term negative preservation, investigating photo-microfiche, optical disk, laserdisk, contact printing, and making reference and security enlargements. All of these methods have arguments for or against, but the one thing they all had in common was the great expense; the least expensive being contact printing (cost cited above). The photo-microfiche was quoted at \$1.95 an image, security prints at \$3.50 an image, and laser or optical disk equipment costs were prohibitive. Grants, another route to consider, would have taken too much time, and there seems to be disagreement between the various granting organizations as to the proper reference and preservation procedures. Technology is changing so rapidly that it is

particularly difficult to select a format to provide reference of visual materials.

After studying these different methods, the society decided on none of the above. Choosing to film the images on video tape and make contact preservation copies as time and money allowed was a difficult decision. It is known that the life expectancy of video tape is relatively short (fifteen to twenty years), and each generation video tape reproduction produces a poorer version. Also, videotaping does nothing to preserve the negatives. That cost would still have to be borne somewhere down the line. In addition, video players are sometimes difficult for patrons to use and it can take longer to look at numerous images than using some other formats. Looking at an image at the beginning of a two-hour tape and then fast forwarding to the end of the tape can take several minutes.

The potential benefits outweighed the cost. First, this method can be accomplished quickly. The first series of 8,000 negatives was filmed in three months primarily using student interns and volunteers. Second, the cost is minimal. Video tape recorders and players can be purchased at a small cost, the only other expense being the purchase and duplication of tapes, both of which are reasonable. Cost per image is approximately thirteen cents. Third, even though the video tapes have a short life expectancy, if they are duplicated every ten years, the institution should get forty to sixty years of life out of the first filming. By that time, contact prints or some other more permanent method of reproduction for reference can be employed. Fourth, the process can be done completely in-house. Finally, utilizing this method allowed the society to open a collection without letting patrons handle the originals. The collection would

otherwise have joined a back-log of unprocessed collections.

The final result supports the society's actions. It took an additional year and a half to complete the written inventory to the collection, though the collection was completely filmed by March of 1990, and the videos were available to the staff of the history center as well as to the public. By the end of 1991, the index was prepared, edited, printed, and ready for use. In the year the collection was available on tape, it was used by a wide number of patrons with nothing but positive feedback. The society has continued to make contact prints from the negatives for preservation and reference purposes. Encouraged by this positive response, the society has since filmed two other large negative collections (and has plans for several other collections) utilizing student and intern labor.

This method is viewed as strictly a temporary one, but it does allow time to examine newer technologies, which become more affordable daily, while new collections are opened for patron use. Large collections of negatives are available for use, and at a reasonable cost, before the move up the technological ladder is made.

**Ted Ryan** has been Visual Arts Archivist for the Atlanta Historical Society since June 1989.

## **Archival Automation: A Brief Look at Two Systems**

**Frank T. Wheeler**

While computers and automation have seemingly taken over, they have slowly and painfully crept into the archives. Automated on-line catalogs are replacing the manual card catalog and control over numerous collections and record groups has become easier. Some have argued that automation is not a positive step for an archives. These arguments will lessen as archivists begin to integrate automated systems into their daily routines of cataloging and collection maintenance.

There are few automated systems designed especially for archives. The two systems examined here are



MicroMARC:amc and AllMS (Archives Integrated Information Management System). All institutions have different specifications for what they consider to be good "archival software." This evaluation is relevant specifically to the needs of archivists at the Atlanta Historical Society, Inc. In addition, this investigation viewed only the demonstration software and not the full system; opinions of the systems could have been altered after viewing the full packages at work.

MicroMARC:amc, produced by Michigan State University, appeared to be an excellent automation package. The main menu of the package consists of five different choices. These are 1) Edit or Update the Description-Process-Action File; 2) Search Files; 3) Request Reports; 4) Convert Record To/From USMARC AMC Format; and 5) Create Auxiliary Index Files.

The first option, "Edit or Update," is fairly straightforward. A user needs to have a feel for the different fields and tags. This could pose a dilemma for some archivists, who are not as familiar with automated cataloging as are librarians. However, this option does seem easy to follow.

The second option, "Search Files," allows the user to select records from the institution's database. The search can be done by auxiliary index files that can be created in the use of the fifth option from the main menu, "Create Auxiliary Index Files." The Search Files option does not appear, from the demonstration software, to be user-friendly. In addition, it does not break the search down to the folder level. A researcher will have to consult a second source to find an actual folder level inventory. Modification is needed here since there are software packages offering this folder level search ability.

The third option is remarkably helpful in the maintenance and record keeping activities of an institution. The option "Request Reports" has the capability of generating 1) Accession Reports; 2) Processing Status Reports; 3) Future Action Reports; 4) Index Term Reports; 5) Miscellaneous Reports; and 6) Special Reports, which allows the archivist to create and modify his own reports, and provides the archivist, manuscripts curator, or records manager access to every collection and record group at every phase of processing.

Option number four is a nice attribute of the software. The MARCIN and MARCOUT programs allow for the importing and exporting of USMARC formatted files. This is exceptionally helpful to an institution exporting records to OCLC or RLIN. The fourth option seems very easy to use, is menu driven, and requires little input on the user's part. The key to this conversion option is an understanding of the proper use of the USMARC-AMC format before exporting or importing records to and from OCLC or RLIN.

The other software package is AIIIMS (Archival Integrated Information Management System), produced by MIS Software Development, Inc., of Tallahassee, Florida. This system, in place at the Florida State Archives (for whom it was originally designed), is available for purchase as of January 1992. It is important to recognize that the system in use at the Florida archives could be altered to fit an individual institution's needs. This system contains all major features from the MicroMARC:amc package plus additional attractive features deserving of examination.

The first noteworthy advantage of the AIIIMS system is the care that the developers gave to control over patron usage. Upon entry to a repository, a patron's name is entered into the computer, and each is assigned a patron

identification number. The registration process provides all pertinent information about the patron including: address, driver's license/social security number, organization, and interest. All items requested from closed stacks are entered into the computer under the patron's personalized information and number.

The AIIIMS system will take the patron information and convert it into reports that can be used to fulfill a variety of needs. For example, an institution could utilize AIIIMS to compile a report on the number of patron requests for material on topics concerning the Civil War. With today's budget restrictions, this could be very valuable in order to see what areas a repository needs to direct its acquisitions budget toward. This could also assist an institution in compiling user-specific mailing lists for programs and workshops and donor lists for potential future donations.

The detailed user information provided by the AIIIMS system is also an advantage in relation to security. The archivist knows who the last user of a certain item was and can retrieve this information by accessing either the actual folder title or patron use information. Most repositories already have developed reports for research material use information, but these reports commonly are not automated and do not permit a subject specific search.

The most attractive feature of AIIIMS is the ease of cataloging. The staff member entering the information uses a workform adhering to the MARC/AMC format which can later be exported to OCLC or RLIN. Records that are being imported can be edited prior to their addition to the holdings database.

The most important cataloging feature is the length of the record. Unlike other archival software packages, AIIIMS allows the archivist to enter an inventory beyond the



biography/history and scope/content notes. The collection inventory maintains an endless number of cases, bytes, and files crossed. Therefore, the inventory can be entered at folder and, if desired, item level. The item level will be effective when cataloging photographs. However, there is as yet no visual component to AIIMS system which would allow the patron to view the photograph via the computer.

Another cataloging feature is the system's capability to build and maintain authority data files. These will be used as the search terms, and they will be validated against the existing authority files. If the terms do not exist in the files, they can very easily be added.

Action tracking can also be done on any collections or group of records housed in a repository through the AIIMS system. Information on accessions, preservation, arrangement and description, and other tasks which are performed on the collection, record group, or particular item, can be tracked. Included in action tracking, is the capability to provide for security and staff accountability in regards to what has or has not been performed on a particular group or item.

The AIIMS system has no built in restrictions or limits. There is neither a maximum number of users nor a maximum number of records that can be stored on the databases. There is a record limit of two billion per database. According to the demonstration disk and the available literature on this system, the only practical limits are based on the speed and size of the hardware platform on which the system is installed.

In summary, both systems do an outstanding job in meeting their purposes and goals. The AIIMS package contained all of the features of MicroMarc:amc, in addition



to several extremely valuable other features. These additional features of the AIMS system seem to have been made with archivists, manuscript curators, and record managers in mind, but these features do come with a higher price tag.

One must remember that all archives and special collections function on the same basic principles which must be modified to fit their individual needs. Thus, each repository needs to act as an educated consumer, painstakingly examining what they want in an automated system, in order to purchase the system which most closely satisfies their needs and to use it to its fullest potential.

**Frank T. Wheeler** was manuscripts archivist at the Atlanta Historical Society at the time this article was written. He has since become University Archivist at the University of New Hampshire.

## REVIEWS, CRITIQUES, AND ANNOTATIONS

### REVIEW ESSAY

#### **Archivists and the Use of Archival Records; Or, A View from the World of Documentary Editing**

**Richard J. Cox**

The past decade has been a time of new calls for reassessment of the archival reference function and analysis of the use of archival and historical records. Like bookends, we have on the one side a series of statements arguing for institutional studies of users and on the other calls for national approaches to the problem of understanding the use of America's documentary heritage.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>A sampling of these writings include Paul Conway, "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986): 393-407; Bruce W. Dearstyne, "What Is the Use of Archives? A

Despite the strong calls, there has been little response to either side.<sup>2</sup> Ann Gordon's study, also called the Historical Documents Study, for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission is a rare star in the constellation

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Challenge for the Profession," *American Archivist* 50 (Winter 1987): 76-87; and Lawrence Dowler, "The Role of Use in Defining Archival Practice and Principles: A Research Agenda for the Availability and Use of Records," *American Archivist* 51 (Winter/Spring 1988): 74-86.

<sup>2</sup>The studies published by the archival community include David Bearman, "User Presentation Language in Archives," *Archives and Museum Informatics* 3 (Winter 1989-90): 3-7; Dianne L. Beattie, "An Archival User Study: Researchers in the Field of Women's History," *Archivaria* 29 (Winter 1989-90): 33-50; Paul Conway, "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Survey," *Midwestern Archivist* 11, 1 (1986): 35-56; Clark A. Elliott, "Citation Patterns and Documentation for the History of Science: Some Methodological Considerations," *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 131-42; Jacqueline Goggin, "The Indirect Approach: A Study of Scholarly Users of Black and Women's Organizational Records in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division," *Midwestern Archivist* 11, 1 (1986): 57-67; William J. Maher, "The Use of User Studies," *Midwestern Archivist* 11, 1 (1986): 15-26; and Fredric Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49 (Fall 1986): 371-92. At best, this is an uneven mix of researcher analysis. It appears that most archivists are maintaining fairly simplistic statistic breakdowns of their researchers; see, for example, the collection of essays in Lucille Whalen, ed., *Reference Services in Archives* (New York: Haworth Press, 1986).

of archival user studies.<sup>3</sup> It also shows the great need that the archival profession has for such studies, but not in the manner that the Gordon study intended. It is also a very different study than what archivists probably expected.

The genesis of the Gordon study was the "desire on the part of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission to learn more about the researchers who consult sources made available through projects it funds."<sup>4</sup> Without question, this is a national user study with a closely defined purpose. Supposedly, because of the breadth of the commission's support for both basic archival records and historical manuscript projects and documentary editions, the study of the use of the documentary heritage should be sufficient to benefit the American archival profession. The commission itself announced the study as being the most comprehensive analysis of historical researchers in two decades.<sup>5</sup> But, as a closer examination of the study suggests, there should be sufficient doubt about just what the end purpose of the study was intended to be. For one thing, there are a number of competing purposes mentioned at other points in the study, such as

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<sup>3</sup>Ann D. Gordon, *Using the Nation's Documentary Heritage: The Report of the Historical Documents Study* (Washington, D.C.: National Historical Publications and Records Commission in cooperation with the American Council of Learned Societies, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> *Using*, 14.

<sup>5</sup> "New Study of Research Finds Major Obstacles," *Annotation* 20 (March 1992): 6.



"by recognizing how thoroughly integrated into society are the uses of history, one can understand the social importance of the documents themselves."<sup>6</sup> More important, however, it is what the study does not examine that is so telling about its real purposes.

What was the nature of the survey and the methodology employed? This study surveyed 2,225 people randomly selected from the membership lists of five historical and genealogical societies: National Genealogical Society, Organization of American Historians, American Society for Legal History, American Association for State and Local History, and the National Council on Public History. The purpose of selecting from these organizations was to "represent some of the known variety among researchers."<sup>7</sup> The diversity of these associations supports providing such broad representation. A lengthy questionnaire of twenty-nine items was sent, seeking information on the nature of research, the kinds of sources consulted, how the resources were discovered, the manner in which access to the sources was achieved, and background data on the researcher and his or her training and experience. Of the 2,225 surveys sent, 1,394 individuals returned the questionnaires, quite an excellent return rate. While throughout the study there are references about how the different researchers use or approach historical records, it is also true that there are many occasions when the

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<sup>6</sup> *Using*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> *Using*, 17.

distinctions are not made. This problem undermines the value, at least at times, of surveying the very different research constituencies; but this, ultimately, is a minor criticism.

Who were the respondents? They were experienced researchers, one third noting they had done historical research for more than twenty years. There was an interesting mix: students represented eleven percent, avocational researchers made up forty-three percent, and occupational researchers accounted for forty-five percent. Half of the occupational researchers were university or college faculty. Ann Gordon, using the survey data, then tried to characterize each of the kinds of researchers. For example, education and training of these researchers, among many areas, were considered.

The study is well-structured in its presentation of conclusions and recommendations. After an executive summary and recommendations and general introduction, there are chapters on how historical research skills are used, how researchers discover their sources, how they get to the archival records and historical manuscripts, the nature of use made by historical researchers of archival finding aids, the role of microforms in this research, the role and use of documentary editions, and the message in all these findings for the commission. What is immediately noticeable about this brief summary of the report's structure are some missing elements: Where is there a description of the archivist's role in forming the documentary heritage through appraisal and preservation selection? What about the growing use of electronic networks for research and

increasing interest in the digitalization of traditional documents to support this use? What about differences between the use of electronic records and the documentary heritage in other media? Why are microforms and documentary editions singled out for special chapters? All these questions, and others, directly relate to the matter of the use of historical records.

Some of the answers to these questions rest in the purpose of the report to examine the commission's roles in the use of the documentary heritage. The commission has been, for example, the primary supporter of documentary editions in letterpress and microform for the past three decades. But some of this can also be chalked up to a very traditional, lopsided view of what archivists, manuscript curators, and historical researchers are doing and how they relate to each other. When there are references to other basic archival functions, they are misleading. For example: "Any researcher would shudder to hear archivists talk about appraising sources by standards of the use they currently receive because researchers know their own fickleness, their own selectivity, and the likelihood that they overlooked or omitted sources pertinent to their pursuit. The researcher and the record keeper will do best by planning together."<sup>8</sup> But this statement seems to suggest that use is the main criterion for appraisal, and archival appraisal is more complex than this. Gordon's understanding of the archival profession seems flawed.

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<sup>8</sup> *Using*, 54.



There are, however, many lucid aspects to the study. Gordon deftly characterizes parts of the relationship between the custodians and the users of the documentary heritage. She notes, for example, that "archivists fault the whole system of academic historical education for failing to prepare students for archival research," and then suggests that "by and large historians have ignored the criticism, and respondents to the survey seem to disagree with it."<sup>9</sup> This part of the study demonstrates some of its value in debunking such long-held perceptions. This is seen in other ways. The survey results suggest that "archives and libraries serve already as places where people not only pursue research but also learn how. If researchers assert this in practice, the associated professions do not routinely acknowledge the fact."<sup>10</sup> Another important view is that "researchers expect every library to function in some respects as a research institution regardless of scope and budgets."<sup>11</sup> Given the development of online information systems, inter-library loan operations, electronic delivery of documents, and other developments, it is not surprising that this view has developed. But this is in contrast to such conclusions as "local historical societies . . . may serve well the needs for information on local topics but at the same time be isolated from the wider world of libraries and related

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<sup>9</sup> *Using*, 25-26.

<sup>10</sup> *Using*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> *Using*, 36.



sources."<sup>12</sup> This statement is absolutely true, yet it is especially problematic since these kinds of organizations hold a significant quantity of the nation's documentary heritage. One might ask just how this problem affects many of the other findings and conclusions in this study, but this is not completely developed in a forthright or logical fashion.

What are some of the other important points made by the study? "Researchers turn to the historical record not for the sake of using it but to answer questions. The distinction is an important one in defining the relationship between archivists and researchers. The former speak of archives as 'underused,' while researchers want solutions."<sup>13</sup> While this kind of statement needs additional evidence and can be challenged, it is also true that it fundamentally paints some of the differences between archivists and users which archivists sometimes ignore or take for granted. Gordon also notes that the "Commission has set national standards for many aspects of work underlying and supporting the preservation and publication of sources, but it has not yet set standards for their dissemination."<sup>14</sup> This is true, as well, with final reports of archival records and historical manuscripts projects that the commission has funded.

The study is characterized by many assumptions, some untested, some debatable, and others probably correct.

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<sup>12</sup> *Using*, 36.

<sup>13</sup> *Using*, 45.

<sup>14</sup> *Using*, 89.

But the preponderance of such assumptions make them worth noting. For example, we are told that "at no earlier time in its history have so many people sought historical information in and about the United States."<sup>15</sup> Historic preservation, historic sites, history museums, genealogy, and the large number of graduate trained historians are all cited as evidence for this statement. But there is no specific proof offered for this. It is an assertion without evidence. In fact, we know that there has been earlier periods in which great interest has been expressed in the preservation and use of historical documents.<sup>16</sup> Whether this is a dangerous assertion will be discussed later with other matters.

Another example of such assumptions is the statement that "the twenty-five years that separate Rundell's research [this is a reference to the 1970 publication of Walter Rundell, Jr., *In Pursuit of American History: Research and Training in the United States*] from the Historical Documents Study have seen renewed popularity of historical study in the adult population at large, new applications for historical research outside of academic departments in the public and private sectors that produce employment for many professionally trained practitioners, and recognition in the nation's archives

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<sup>15</sup> *Using*, 13.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, the recent analysis by Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

that academic use constitutes only a part of their service."<sup>17</sup> Again, one might ask what the evidence is for this statement. Public history, for example, remains firmly entrenched in the academy. Public historians strive to prove that their exhibit catalogs, consulting reports, and commissioned work are as worthy of consideration as the scholarly monographs of their university counterparts; in other words, they still must define their value in academic terms.<sup>18</sup> There are, in addition, no measures that historical study is more or less popular. As for the recognition by archivists, this is not provable either. It is just as easy to assert that archivists prefer to have their academic colleagues as users rather than any other researchers. The lingering, tireless debate on the matter of graduate archival education suggests that archivists identify themselves as historians, which is another way of saying that the degree of recognition of changing use may at least be seen as undesirable, if it is truly evident to most archivists.<sup>19</sup>

The assumptions about documentary editions are especially noteworthy. First, we have this statement: "With the start of a new era of documentary editing in the 1950s

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<sup>17</sup> *Using*, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup> The quarterly journal, *The Public Historian*, is full of such arguments, although there are certainly a wide range of views within the public history community about this.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, the one dimensional arguments in Marilyn H. Pettit, "Archivist-Historians: An Endangered Species?" *OAH Newsletter* 19 (November 1991): 8-9, 18.



came the grand promise that any household could have Jefferson and Franklin on its shelves. Inflated as the image may have been, the editions do bring documents of national importance within reach."<sup>20</sup> This seems an especially loaded statement. While it makes a contrast between original design and actual results, this statement's meaning of "within reach" is unclear. Within reach by whom? Who are using these editions? What difference have they made in historical research or on larger public understanding of the past? Since there has been virtually no evaluation of the impact or importance of documentary editions (reviews of such volumes do not usually consider the larger issues, but most often treat the publications as the products of scholarly historians), these questions are even more crucial to an evaluation of the use of archival records and historical manuscripts. This area of the study leads us closer to its real purpose, a subject that will be considered later in this essay.

Beyond assumptions, there are even some contradictions that require further explanation. At one point, in discussing researchers getting to the sources, Gordon stated that "researchers can plan their time before they travel if archivists will make available copies of the best finding aids."<sup>21</sup> But in her chapter on finding aids, Gordon chronicles the problems with the lack of use by researchers of these guides. As she states: "Historians do have a tradition of ambivalence about the usefulness of guides.

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<sup>20</sup> *Using*, 35.

<sup>21</sup> *Using*, 42.



They also have their own customary practices of proven effectiveness, different systems rather than an antipathy to system."<sup>22</sup> How this problem fits with the earlier recommendation is not explained, a situation that occurs more than once throughout the study. There is, of course, also a question about what constitutes an effective finding aid. Gordon does not define this, but the professional archivist has with his or her emphasis on basic concepts such as provenance, context, and original order. Michel Duchein has stated that the "archival document . . . has . . . a raison d'être only to the extent that it belongs to a whole." He goes on to note that "consequently, to appreciate a document, it is essential to know exactly where it was created, in the framework of what process, to what end, for whom, when and how it was received by the addressee, and how it came into our hands."<sup>23</sup> This is the rationale for an effective archival finding aid.

Even more perplexing is the description in this study of the obstacles put in front of researchers for using the documentary heritage:

In a sense the easiest obstacles to overcome are prohibitions against use because of the condition of the sources. About 30 percent of respondents had been barred from collections because repository staff had not

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<sup>22</sup> *Using*, 59.

<sup>23</sup> Michel Duchein, "Theoretical Problems and Practical Problems of 'Respect des Fonds' in Archival Science," *Archivaria* 16 (1983): 67.

yet described or arranged the records, and another 20 percent or more had been barred because records were in poor physical condition. Although they do not come close to the obstacle posed by travel, these numbers are too high. They can be reduced with funds and staff time committed to description, arrangement, and preservation. No one's interest conflicts with the goal of getting the sources into or back into use. It is necessary that the people who closed the records give priority to making them accessible and that they receive what support they need to do the job.<sup>24</sup>

The problem statement in this quotation is the one that suggests that more funds and staff can resolve this problem. This is not the problem. The problem is the lack of new strategies and approaches. Besides, resources will always be limited, requiring new strategies and approaches to be developed, tested, and refined, as David Bearman has convincingly argued in his brief study, *Archival Methods*.<sup>25</sup> For someone to make such a suggestion in a study of this sort is to cause the entire work to be viewed with suspicion: for it is simply not the question of adequate funds and staff, it is how these funds and staff have always been used and should be used in the future.

There is also, at times, a remarkable display of ignorance about what is going on in the archival profession.

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<sup>24</sup> *Using*, 46.

<sup>25</sup> *Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report*, 3 (Spring 1989).

Gordon comments on archival user studies in a peculiar way: "The survey data do not distinguish the intensity of each person's use. When archives examine their own users, they can discriminate between the person who posed a single question or sought a specific document and the person who spent weeks consulting an entire record group or reading through an entire life in personal papers. Those differences are critical to decisions about good reference service and systems of retrieval."<sup>26</sup> On its face value, this is true, but the problem with this statement is that archivists have not embraced the notion of conducting very sophisticated institutional user studies. Those that have been done can be counted on one hand (and were cited above). Most archival repositories may count basic statistics, but there is little evidence that they are doing the analysis Gordon sees here as so important.

It is easy to find any number of other problems in understanding the archival community and its mission. For example, why is there no discussion of distinctions between use of institutional archives and the records located in historical records/manuscripts repositories? The differences are not a secret; in 1977, David Gracy in his basic primer on archival arrangement and description clearly stated the difference: "Archives are kept primarily to satisfy the needs of their creating organization. A manuscripts collection is accumulated to foster the study of the subjects about which

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<sup>26</sup> *Using*, 52.

the repository collects."<sup>27</sup> Fredric Miller, in his more recent updated basic manual on arrangement and description, has emphasized this as well by noting that records in an archives have "inherent unity and structure" while those in a manuscripts repository lack structure and need more arrangement and description.<sup>28</sup> There are clear implications for this, such as the fact that the kinds of researchers which Gordon describes and examines are not the intended beneficiary of the preservation of this portion of the documentary heritage.

In all this there is a decided prejudice evident, at least to me, in favor of documentary editions. This first appears in Gordon's chapter on microfilmed records, when she writes that

documentary editing superseded archival practice as the foundation for microfilmed projects. In the book editions sponsored by the agency, historians compiled sources by searching in many repositories and arranged them as the editor determined they would be most useful. As the costs of publishing large editions mounted, microform took on a new role as substitute medium for publication of editions modeled on the books. The microform editions are a compromise; they rarely incorporate the annotation expected in book editions,

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<sup>27</sup> David B. Gracy, *Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description*, (Chicago: SAA, 1977), 3.

<sup>28</sup> Frederic M. Miller, *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: SAA, 1990), 4.



and though their guides exceed the archival finding aid, they rarely achieve the standard of a book.<sup>29</sup>

Part of this elicits a response of so what? Except, and this is a big except, the statement seems to be carefully worded to suggest that documentary editions are somehow the highest level of device for bringing documentary records to researchers.

The full chapter on documentary editions is even more revealing. While it is suggested that the marketing of these editions has not been as successful as hoped for and there are references to the fact that they have been criticized as not the ideal means by which to present historical records for their use, there is really little analysis of their use or merit of continuance. Gordon does suggest that sales figures are not a reliable mechanism by which to evaluate the documentary editions, but, then, what is? Furthermore, there is really little discussion about what the documentary editions actually represent. At one point Gordon notes that "people who use documentary editions rely on the scholarship of the editors to augment their own work."<sup>30</sup> This actually raises the question whether these works are more documentary sources than they are scholarly works, and this is an important distinction. Should we really fool ourselves into thinking that the large dollars invested in these editions are preserving documentary sources; if they

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<sup>29</sup> *Using*, 69.

<sup>30</sup> *Using*, p. 83.

are, it is an infinitesimal portion of the documentary heritage. It is important here is to realize that Rundell's study of two decades asked precisely such questions about the nature and use of documentary editions.<sup>31</sup>

Here it is worth an aside to consider an additional summary of this study by Gordon in the Association for Documentary Editing's own journal. In this essay Gordon focuses on her perception of documentary editions and their value, and, more importantly, her version of the debate between archivists and documentary editors. She states in this revealing essay that "within and around the Commission an argument about the relative merits of granting funds to archivists or editors simmered and occasionally boiled over."<sup>32</sup> Then she suggests that such things as the inability of researchers to get to the archival and historical manuscripts repositories "suggests new perspectives on a host of issues, including the importance of microfilm and of published documents which the researcher can bring close to home."<sup>33</sup> This leads to her re-statement of the larger study's finding that the National Historical Publications and Records Commission should "regain its position of

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<sup>31</sup> Walter Rundell, Jr., *In Pursuit of American History: Research and Training in the United States* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), chapters 7 and 9.

<sup>32</sup> "A Future for Documentary Editions: The Historical Documents Study," *Documentary Editing* 14 (March 1992): 6.

<sup>33</sup> "A Future," 6.

leadership in the field of documentary editing."<sup>34</sup> At this point it should be obvious to all that Ann Gordon writes from the vantage of a documentary editor. Gordon laments the arguing between archivists and documentary editors over a "single, slim pot of federal money" and lambastes "critics within the Commission and their allies outside [who] have tried to redefine editing as an extension of archival management and practice."<sup>35</sup> Gordon then, in this brief essay, tries to show that editing is a superior manner in which to make primary source materials available to the researcher; for example, "scholars cannot match editors in their ability to travel in pursuit of sources on a topic."<sup>36</sup> Although she does suggest some serious questions that must be answered about documentary editions, it is also clear that the main purpose of the Historical Documents Study was to carve out a role and funding for documentary editing and not to evaluate objectively how researchers use historical records.

This perspective is misapplied when Gordon makes final recommendations to the commission in the fuller study. She presents a perspective that candidly suggests the commission has been too wedded to the archival profession:

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<sup>34</sup> "A Future," 6.

<sup>35</sup> "A Future," 7.

<sup>36</sup> "A Future," 8.

Because the records program evolved as a partner in extending the professional development of archivists, many of its grants have a remote relationship with researchers and the public at large. They improve skills, support long-range planning, and address technical problems of preservation. When such projects publish results, the works are written for other archivists, not for users of the historical record or the public.<sup>37</sup>

What is the point of this statement? It is almost contradictory to what follows on the next page:

Researchers are well served by work that improves their access to manuscript collections and records. Grants for the arrangement and description of collections and for finding aids should be made not only for exemplary collections and to prepare models of archival practice but also to make important collections more usable under current research demand.<sup>38</sup>

So, we might ask, what should the commission really do? Gordon suggests, as she did in the ADE journal, that the "Historical Documents Study urges the Commission to reassert leadership not only through support for specific editions but also through national programs."<sup>39</sup> Why the

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<sup>37</sup> *Using*, 89.

<sup>38</sup> *Using*, 90.

<sup>39</sup> *Using*, 90.



emphasis on documentary editions? Could it be that this study really was an excuse merely to urge continuation of the support for documentary editing? And, if so, why is this so bad?

There are many problems with arguing without clear support for what is being argued. Documentary editions are very labor intensive users of resources in order to preserve very infinitesimal portions of this heritage. Coincidentally, at about the time this study was released, a letter to the editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* about the Mark Twain documentary edition describes the problem with the way such projects have been managed. The commentator notes that an eleven word telegram receives a twenty-seven line explanation, causing the letter writer to suggest that at the rate that the project is proceeding it will "take 100 years to publish the full 60 volumes required to print them all" and about thirty-two million dollars in federal funding.<sup>40</sup> Here, and many have noted such problems with documentary editions, we have a clear distinction between federally-sponsored scholarship and the need to make such sources readily available to the researcher. Moreover, the purpose to support these editions has overridden other important issues that should be included in such a study of historical records use. So, what have we learned? We have a better sense of the national use of historical records, but it is a knowledge that begs for more precise and serious institutional studies such

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<sup>40</sup> Ralph H. Orth, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 11 March 1992: B5-6.

as Paul Conway has argued for in his milestone article. But what we have learned has been buried in a series of assumptions about the value of certain kinds of historical records such as documentary editions, along with some basic misassumptions about the basic work of the archivist.

Finally, should the archival community simply ignore this study? Despite some of my serious reservations about its purpose, *Using the Nation's Documentary Heritage* should sound a call to archivists to study more seriously the dynamics of their research use that can be used to assist in the design of archival finding aids and especially the national, online systems that the archival profession is committed to developing. Such studies will better answer many of the kinds of questions raised by Gordon. Moreover, there are many illuminating findings about the use of historical records in this publication which archivists can draw upon for institutional reference operations. And, finally, this report should prompt archivists to understand more fully the purpose and nature of documentary editing.

Gordon seems to think archivists misunderstand documentary editing. In truth, most archivists have not seriously thought about documentary editing in one way or another. The slant of *Using the Nation's Documentary Heritage* in favor of documentary editing should cause the archival profession to re-open discussion about its role and funding. Despite my comments in this review, I am not against such work at all, but I believe it should be seen as scholarly historical work and not archival work or preservation. This means that large-scale federal or other

funding of multi-decade editorial projects should not be justified in the guise of making primary source materials more readily available; the cost is too high, the process is too slow, and the portion of the documentary heritage thus effected virtually infinitesimal. Documentary editing seems to be a nineteenth century approach to preserving the documentary heritage. As long as such editing is seen as a research activity (because it really is little different than what any careful historian does in using archival sources and preparing a research monograph), there is no problem with this activity. If funding used for its support diminishes what is available for the preservation and management of archival records and historical manuscripts, then archivists should be much more outspoken in their criticism and demand more serious accounting of how these editorial projects are used and administered. Looked at in this manner, the Gordon report has done us all a great service, giving us much to consider and debate for many years.

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**Book Review**

*A Home-Concealed Woman: The Diaries of Magnolia Wynn LeGuin, 1901-1913.* Edited by Charles A. LeGuin. Foreword by Ursula K. LeGuin. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1990. Bibliographical references. Pp. xxxii, 374; index; illustrated; ISBN 0-820-31236-3; \$24.95.

No war, depression or milestone of progress marks the first decade of this century. Events during those years happened largely in the lives of individuals, families, and communities. With few exceptions, those happenings are lost to us.

What a treasure then to glimpse a rural life centered around home and community. How confirming to share the thoughts and feelings of a woman of conscience, a self-described "home concealed woman." How revealing to find that, although circumstances and environment differ markedly, her central cares and concerns differ little from those of modern wives and mothers who live "close at home."

Magnolia Wynn LeGuin spent her life in Georgia's Piedmont near High Falls, in an area first known as Wynn's Mill, later as LeGuin's Mill. It was a landscape that offered her plenty of seasonal contrasts and opportunities to worship nature. The time in which she lived offered her less. She had few choices other than overlapping roles of daughter, sister, wife and mother—roles she accepted and learned to balance with grace.



Yet her need for reflection, her driving urge to capture her world through the written word are what set Magnolia apart as a woman. It is those needs which yield a comprehensive and careful record of her maturity.

Magnolia was a realist, a strong and independent thinker whose complex personality unfolds on the page as she bears children, grieves over the loss of parents, and keeps home and family moving forward.

Diary-keeping began in earnest for her in 1901, although she had made several earlier attempts at keeping a journal. Published entries contain a few passages from 1892 and 1899. These place Magnolia both chronologically and psychologically for the reader. A variety of ledgers, and account and memorandum books served as the physical diaries. Some of these had been used previously for farm records, and Magnolia simply wrote around and over the earlier copy. Six books in all cover the entries from 1901 to 1913. There are also two existing copybooks which contain recipes, poems and Bible verses.

The middle years of diary keeping seemed to be Magnolia's most critical, for entries are both longer and more numerous from 1902-1907. In the same period, she was most occupied with her duties as a wife, her children and her babies—she gave birth to four during the six years—and had precious little time to write. In one 1902 entry she notes, "I have had to write like fighting fire, in extreme haste--baby crying as hard as he could."

She speaks in 1903 of "a craving to read often, strong inclinations to write and lots to do." In 1906 she names

more than one hundred guests who visited her home in a single summer.

Magnolia in fact kept two diaries from January 1903 through February 1906. The second diary seems more reflective of her public face, of her participation in what took place around her. Original diary entries, meanwhile, were written in more direct language and seem to be reserved for her deeper feelings. Near the end of 1905, the distinctions in style blur, which would indicate an integration of Magnolia's public and private selves. She wrote exclusively in the second diary for the remainder of 1906, then abandoned it and returned to the original.

Her love of trees, flowers (both wild and cultivated) and fall weather is evident throughout the diaries. Yet her entries indicate a conflict between her own desires and her motherly concern for making a good home AND giving her children sufficient time and attention. (At the conclusion of the published entries are many of Magnolia's recipes for sweets and desserts, as well as preparations for home remedies.)

Later entries reveal a more serene Magnolia, one who gets out into the community more often and is easier on herself. In later years, she is occupied with her children's education, with her own reading and development, and with passing along her love of words. "Good literature," she records, "builds character—sorry reading tears it down, lays no foundation to make good men and women."

Her dedication took effect. Grandson Charles LeGuin, who wrote the introduction to the volume, is a university professor and husband of writer Ursula LeGuin, who wrote

the foreword. It is through LeGuin's foresight and connections that his grandmother's contribution to our literary heritage is preserved.

Ann S. Ritter

Decatur, Georgia

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**David Gracy Award:** A fifty dollar prize will be presented annually to the author of the best article in *Provenance*. Named after David B. Gracy, founder and first editor of *Georgia Archive* (the precursor of *Provenance*), the award began in 1990 with volume VIII and is judged by members of *Provenance's* editorial board.

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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*.

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Each manuscript should be submitted in three copies, the original typescript and two copies. Articles submitted on diskette (IBM compatible, in unformatted ASCII form) are welcome. Diskettes should be accompanied by three formatted hard copies.

The title of the paper should be accurate and distinctive rather than merely descriptive.

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Use of terms which have special meanings for archivists, manuscript curators, and records managers should conform to the definitions in Lewis J. Bellardo and Lynn Lady Bellardo, compilers, *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers* (Chicago: SAA, 1992). Copies of this glossary may be purchased from the Society of American Archivists, 600 S. Federal Street, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605.

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