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# PROVENANCE

**Volume XXXI, issue 2:  
No Competing Claims**



# PROVENANCE

Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists

Volume XXXI (2013)

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## Let's Get Digital! Possibilities and Problems of Oral History in the Digital Age<sup>\*</sup>

Clifford Kuhn

I am honored and delighted to address this conference. For in the world of oral history, archivists have never played a more central, prominent, and crucial role than they do today. A recent survey of Oral Historical Association members revealed that fully 20% of OHA list their principal place of employment as libraries or archives. In the past few months, I've had the pleasure of participating in an on-line chat sponsored by the Oral Section of SAA; attending the section's brown bag luncheon and sponsored session at SAA in New Orleans, taking part in another panel there; and observing the newly formed archives interest group within the Oral History Association – all marked by enormous enthusiasm, interest and creativity. Indeed, we're living in what might be called the "golden age" of oral history and archives.

Of course, the archive has always had a close connection with oral history, dating back to its inception as a formal practice with the founding of the Columbia University Oral History Research Program in 1948, which set the tone for oral history for decades. As part of Columbia founder Allen Nevins's attempt to legitimize the methodology within the academy, oral history interviews were to be grounded in extensive preparation, recorded, professionally preserved and described, and made available to researchers. Reflecting the archival origins of oral history, they also were to be accompanied by legal release forms. Furthermore, in Columbia's view, it was the transcript, rather than the tape recording, which was the final product emerging from an oral history interview. Like other archival documents, a transcript could be readily indexed or catalogued for use by researchers.

That largely was the relationship before the digital era. Today, in settings ranging from small repositories to massive collections like the Veterans History Project collection at the

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<sup>\*</sup> **Note from Editor:** Plenary address at the 2013 Tri-State Archivists Meeting, a joint meeting of the Society of Georgia Archivists, Society of North Carolina Archivists, and the South Carolina Archivists Association.

Library of Congress, archivists are actively interacting with both producers and consumers of oral history, as well as generating their own interviews, in a manner that is perhaps unprecedented in terms of both accessibility and possibility. The move away from analog recorders to laptops, smart phones and other readily available digital recording devices, along with the greatly increased access to and potential platforms for oral history interviews, has been both democratizing and transformative, even more so than when cassettes and video recorders began to supplant reel-to-reel recorders in the late 1960s. Intertwined with general cultural currents such as what one might call the “broadcast yourself” sensibility, as well as specific developments such as the StoryCorps phenomenon, technological advances have certainly contributed to the enormous popularity of oral history today. And archivists are right in the center of it all.

Not only has the proliferation of high quality and affordable audio and video recorders greatly facilitated the actual recording of interviews and thus extended oral history practice, but the digital revolution has impacted in complicated ways all aspects of the oral history process. From the collection, preservation, management, and description of oral history interviews, to their interpretation and presentation in diverse formats and media, to associated ethical and legal issues, we are in the midst of what Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, editors of *The Oral History Reader*, have called one of the four major paradigm shifts in the field since World War II.<sup>1</sup> As Michael Frisch and Douglas Lambert have recently written, “Almost every traditional assumption about the collecting, curation, and uses of oral history is collapsing in the digital age.”<sup>2</sup>

Today I’d like to spend the first half of my remarks discussing some ramifications of digital oral history for the

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, “Introduction to Part I,” Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London: Routledge, 2006): 1, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Frisch, Michael with Douglas Lambert. “Mapping Approaches to Oral History Content Management in the Digital Age,” in *Oral History in the Digital Age*, ed. Doug Boyd, Steve Cohen, Brad Rakerd, and Dean Rehberger (Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2012), <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/2012/07/mapping/>.

archival community, from the actual creation of a document to its usages and interpretations. The second half will be spent examining a specific collection which has connections to each of the states represented here. It is a very important collection, and is representative of many collections in that it has been severely underutilized in large part because it has never been digitized. So we'll engage in an exercise of the imagination, brainstorming, if you will, some of the myriad possibilities in which this collection might be utilized if it were in fact digitized, and accordingly how the archives might intersect with the process.

In order to address the often dizzying array of issues and choices involved with contemporary oral history, in 2010 a partnership including the Oral History Association (OHA), the American Folklore Society, and Michigan State University's MATRIX Center for the Humanities received a national leadership grant from the Institute for Library and Museum Services, entitled "Oral History in the Digital Age," or OHDA. OHDA sought to articulate current best practices in the collection, curation and dissemination of oral history interviews, in a dynamic manner geared for practitioners from a diversity of vantage points. Indeed, the catch-phrase for oral history for what form a project might take is "it depends" – it depends upon resources, objectives, and so forth. The resultant website launched in 2012 (<http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu>) provides a portal to hundreds of best practices documents; an interactive guide for selecting appropriate equipment; and a collection of seventy-five essays written by experts about all aspects of the oral history process, often drawing from exemplary case studies.

While it is impossible to explore in detail all of the areas treated in OHDA, I'm going to draw attention to several which I think warrant particular attention. The digital revolution has rekindled an interest in sound itself, in "aural history" as it were, while improved technology along with contemporary expectations have also contributed to a recent great increase in video oral history. OHDA offers numerous suggestions to optimize both audio and video recording quality, and examines some of the ramifications of video oral history, including privacy concerns. One consequence is a move away from reliance on the transcript alone, because the founding of the Columbia program the principal

document consulted by researchers, yet one that is costly and labor-intensive, and that only provides a pale representation of the spoken word. In recent years a variety of indexing and cataloguing systems have been developed which handle audio-visual materials. Mike Frisch and his associates at Randforce have broken full interviews into segments, then indexed the segments in a manner designed to lead to multiple possibilities of usage. Another pioneering effort is the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer System (OHMS) developed by Doug Boyd of the University of Kentucky, an open-source, web-based application which links indexes to audio, as well as to transcripts.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, at the archivist interest group last week at OHA, someone actually tweeted, “With regard to oral histories in archives, is the transcript just very ‘robust’ descriptive metadata?”

As OHDA illustrates, the digital revolution has impacted the curation of oral history interviews as much as their collection. Digitization has greatly enhanced access to numerous valuable yet underutilized oral history interviews and collections, especially as repositories have increasingly placed both transcripts and actual recordings online. Digital advances have brought much more than just greater user access, too. As archivists have developed increasingly sophisticated forms of describing, managing and indexing oral history interviews, they have significantly extended the possibilities of usage and interpretation.

Yet heightened availability of oral history in the digital environment has also raised a variety of concerns. Especially because many, perhaps most, online users access oral history interviews through Google, thus often bypassing disclaimers or any descriptive material provided by the hosting repository, decontextualization becomes a real possibility when oral history interviews are put online. Perhaps with undue apprehension, there are those in the oral history community who wonder if the knowledge that an interview will be posted online will have a chilling effect on how much a narrator divulges in an interview. The instantaneous, widespread accessibility of material on the internet raises the question of the impact of online publication on

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<sup>3</sup> Doug Boyd, “OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History for Free,” *Oral History Review* 40, no. 1 (2013): 95-106.



narrators and their communities, and elevates the specter of litigation around such issues as defamation, invasion of privacy, or third party damage. Accordingly, it has never been more imperative to put into practice the principle of informed consent before ever conducting an interview, whether or not required by an institutional review board, and to consult counsel at the outset of a project.

OHDA also addresses some of the myriad potential usages and applications of oral history in the digital era, and it also behooves archivists and others initiating oral history projects to deeply consider possible usages at the beginning, along with considerations about equipment, project budget, legal issues, preservation and access, cataloguing and metadata. Oral history has been central in the evolution of public humanities over the past two decades, not merely in the greater dissemination of historical knowledge, but in the collaborative interaction between professional historians and diverse constituencies, often through the engagement of digital tools. As manifested by a variety of projects-in-progress, such as the Southern Oral History Programs "Mapping the Long Women's Movement" initiative (<http://dhpress.org/mapping-the-long-womens-movement/>), the intersection of oral history and advanced digital mapping programs offers an especially fruitful and powerful collaborative possibility.

Digital oral history has begun to influence scholarship as well, if somewhat haltingly, as scholars have begun to consider the attributes and possibilities of digital oral historical sources in their work, to "think" and "author" digitally as it were. The accessibility of digitized oral history offers the possibility of high-powered searches to detect patterns or themes across large collections of oral history interviews, although to date it has been primarily linguists rather than historians who have availed themselves of such an approach. The Summer/Fall 2012 issue of the *Oral History Review* included two articles where oral/aural history was integral rather than supplemental to the central argument, thus requiring readers to listen as well as read through access to the online edition of the journal. The Winter/Spring 2013 issue amplified some of the essays originally composed for OHDA, while the Summer/Fall 2013 issue embedded video links for the first time.

To better illustrate some of the potential usages out there, let me turn now to a case study, a collection that has NOT been digitized yet one which has tremendous possibilities. It is the “Uprising of ’34” collection of close to 500 oral history interviews housed at Georgia State University Special Collections and Archives, describing the general textile strike of 1934 as well as mill village life, the Depression and New Deal, and other larger contexts in which the strike took place. The interviews were conducted for what became the award-winning film “The Uprising of ’34,” made by George Stoney and Judith Helfand, which had its origins in the mid-1980s in a consortium of trade unionists and historians interested in gathering and presenting material about one of the South’s most significant strikes, yet an incident which had been repressed in memory and omitted from most history texts.

I chose the Uprising collection to highlight for several reasons. There is a direct connection to each of the states represented here today. In its evolution, the film already had a long and complex relationship with the archives, and the filmmakers used it to actively and creatively engage with a variety of constituencies both during preproduction and after its completion. Finally, it epitomizes the underutilization of non-digitized collections, and the possibilities when greater access is made available.

In the 1970s and 1980s, interviewers for the University of North Carolina’s Southern Oral History Program (SOHP) engaged in a massive oral history project on industrialization in the Carolina Piedmont, which in many ways marked the genesis of Uprising. The makers of Uprising themselves conducted interviews in the three states, along with Alabama and Tennessee. One of the communities featured was Honea Path, South Carolina, where six workers were killed during the strike, and where the activities surrounding the film sparked a local effort to erect a memorial to the slain workers. Meanwhile, South Carolina public television originally banned the film, then only broadcast it three years later. And of course, the collection resides at the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State.

Uprising was integrally involved with archives from its inception. When SOHP interviewers asked Piedmont textile workers about the strike, they were met, for the most part, with

silence. This silence in turn led researchers to search for relevant archival materials. What they found at the National Archives, in Record Group 398 of the National Recovery Administration (NRA), was a remarkable collection of letters that mill hands had written to Franklin Roosevelt and the NRA about the effects of the textile industry code adopted in 1933. These letters proved crucial in the award-winning book *Like a Family*, written by scholars at the University of North Carolina.

The filmmakers in turn utilized the letters in a number of ways. Along with other documents – photographs from the Bettman Archives and elsewhere, newsreel footage, lists of union locals, and labor board case files – the letters served to open doors, stir memories, and challenge received historical wisdom in numerous southern communities where the strike and its larger context had long been forgotten or repressed.

The letters also challenged the newsreel footage of the strike, obtained mainly from the Fox Movietone Collection at the University of South Carolina. True, the newsreel footage, like other documents, helped authenticate the strike and open up discussion in communities where it had occurred. Because of its visual power, it also led the filmmakers to seek narrators from places where newsreel footage had been shot. Yet the newsreels also contained considerable limitations. In particular, they tended to support the simplistic notion equating unions with strikes, violence, and mayhem, to the exclusion of showing the process of grassroots resistance and organizing that preceded the strike. As Judith Helfand has written, the filmmakers' greatest challenge was thus "to keep the newsreels from defining what is history." Accordingly, the filmmakers sought to find people actually featured in the newsreel footage, to find out "what times were like from their point of view, from the other side of the newsreel cameras."

To more address the fear that accompanied the strike and its aftermath, the filmmakers explored another key source, hundreds of grievances filed by the United Textile Workers (UTW) with the NRA, to reinstate workers who had been blacklisted. These case files provided rich narratives of the strike in numerous local situations. They served as surrogate telephone directories, enabling the filmmakers to track down union members

and leaders who had been dispersed from their communities in the wake of the strike. For instance, working directly from the blacklists found in the archives, the filmmakers were able to locate five members of one Knoxville, Tennessee local alone. For many workers, seeing the blacklists and the case files was accompanied by what Judith Helfand has called “a sense of awe”; the documents both validated their experience in the strike as being important enough to be preserved, and showed that the union hadn’t deserted them to the degree commonly believed.

From the outset, the filmmakers perceived history as an organizing tool to address concerns of the present and future as well as the past. To an extraordinary degree, they served as facilitators in countless workshops, senior centers, schools, trade union leadership development sessions, and other settings, where they used the documents themselves to help enable people to talk about long-suppressed events and feelings, and to foster discussion about history and memory, community and democracy.

For all of the outreach associated with *Uprising*, however, the interviews themselves, outside of what appeared in the film, have remained severely underutilized, like so many undigitized oral history collections. The roughly 500 interviews are organized by state and then by locality. Transcripts exist for a preponderance of interviews, though in part since the transcripts were done largely in service of film editing, they are not easily searchable. Despite its richness, research traffic in the collection has been light; only a handful of scholarly works cite the collection, which has also been employed in lesson plans developed at Georgia State. In short, the emphasis on the film itself and the fact that the interviews were never digitized has relegated to obscurity the 95% of the footage that wasn’t originally used.

Let us now imagine that the interviews had been digitized either at their inception or more recently. Moreover, let’s imagine that the interviews were reviewed and indexed, using a controlled vocabulary drawing from the indices of seminal works in the field, along with other terms addressing memory itself along with emotions, feelings and values. Let us further imagine that a system such as OHMS synched the index to both the audio and the transcripts. What might the possibilities be? How far and in what ways could the outreach and impact of the collection go?

Let's begin by examining possible usages using the collection by itself, without links to external collections or sources. Cross-referencing themes across interviews in the collection offers the potential for written essays or audio-visual mini-documentaries on any number of themes going many different directions at many different levels. These could address various historical topics: The effect of the boll weevil on Upcountry farmers, religion, recreation and community life in the mill villages, the nature and extent of paternalism, working conditions, the stretchout and the speed-up in textiles, the dispersal of key organizers in the aftermath of the strike, race relations, and the strike's legacy, among other topics. These treatments could also address *how* the narrators remembered, the metaphor of family used by so many mill workers, for instance, or the manner in which narrators brought up memories associated with shame or fear. Such shorter pieces – perfect assignments for students – could also utilize other interviews and primary documents in Special Collections, such as additional interviews and other materials pertaining to labor attorney Joe Jacobs, and also be in conversation with the relevant secondary literature.

Other usages using only the materials in the collection might include a website dedicated to the collection or an online exhibition. It could be similar to an on-line exhibition designed by scholars associated with *Like A Family*, but better because digital tools have improved in recent years. Topically, it might resemble a website about another southern textile strike, the 1914-15 strike at Atlanta's Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills, mounted by Special Collections at the Georgia Institute of Technology, though the oral history interviews would be central to the site. Oral history websites and online exhibitions should offer access to the interviews through a number of portals, searchable by geography, for instance, or by theme. Archivists and other creators might do well to consult a range of exemplary oral history-based websites such as the Illinois State Museum's award-winning Audio-Video Barn, or the Southern Foodways Alliance site.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ibiblio.org/sohp/laf/index.html>;  
[http://www.library.gatech.edu/fulton\\_bag/](http://www.library.gatech.edu/fulton_bag/); <http://avbarn.museum.state.il.us/>;  
<http://www.southernfoodways.org/oral-history/>.

Another online strategy might be to frame individual interviews online, linking audio and the transcript, and offering surrounding description, contextualization and complementary documents. For some of the Uprising interviews, there exists a direct link to other sources that might be utilized. The collection, for instance, includes an interview with a stringer for Fox Movietone News, who tells in his interview of the instructions he received concerning the subject matter he was to film and his point of view. This interview could be juxtaposed with the Movietone news footage. Similarly, the filmmakers interviewed Emma Zimmerman from near East Newnan, Georgia, who also appeared in some of the newsreel footage.

The interviews already have been used and could be further developed in lesson plans, connecting both to state social studies standards and to the newly rolled-out Common Core, which emphasizes student interaction with primary sources. Oral history interviews of course can be seen as texts which can be critically interrogated in terms of form, structure, meaning, themes, and evidence.

So far I've only discussed usage of the Uprising interviews more or less internally, as a self-contained entity. Once one links the collection to external sources, its outreach and impact becomes exponentially more powerful. There now exists the possibility to mine data across collections and to engage in content analysis from large numbers of interviews. More specifically, there are some people interviewed for Uprising – veteran organizer Eula McGill, radical Nanny Washburn and labor lawyer Joe Jacobs, for instance – who have been interviewed elsewhere. An examination of their collective interviews not only amplifies their observations about the past, but also offers the possibility for a longitudinal study of memory – to what degree did their recollections remain stable or transform over the years during which they told their stories?<sup>5</sup>

Another arena for extending the outreach of the Uprising Collection are the actual locations where narrators lived and where

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<sup>5</sup> Interviews with Eula McGill, Southern Oral History Program, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Interviews with Joe Jacobs, Georgia Government Documentation Project, Special Collections, Georgia State University; Interview with Nanny Washburn, WRFG Living Atlanta Collection, Atlanta History Center.

the strike took place. (Of course, people's memories are often the strongest and most vivid when attached to a specific place with all of its associations.) And here the possibilities are powerful and almost endless. The potential exists to link the interviews – linking in both directions – to local archives, museums, libraries, and public programs. One can imagine kiosks or on-line sites that really drill down into a local community combining the interviews with photographs and other documents and artifacts, along with maps presented with various degrees of sophistication. Or walking or driving tours where participants could download interview excerpts or other content. Perhaps community members themselves could take part in the digital indexing of the interviews, identifying what *they* felt was significant, and really challenging the manner in which knowledge is often disseminated.

Moving in an entirely different direction, another potential way to extend the outreach of the Uprising collection is to connect with other archival collections and entities which handle similar information – not only other labor archives and collections like the Southern Oral History Program but labor history museums such as the one in Paterson, New Jersey headed for many years by Sol Stetin, who had been with the United Textile Workers during the 1930s and who was interviewed for “Uprising.” The newly launched Digital Public Library of America should facilitate such connections; indeed, a search for “General Textile Strike” brought up twenty-four strike photographs taken by photo journalist Kenneth Rogers and housed at the Atlanta History Center.

The last possibility I'll mention is linkage of the interviews to such online reference sources as the New Georgia Encyclopedia (NGE), which literally receives over two million hits a month. It is easy to comb the NGE for instance, and find a range of subjects to which the Uprising interviews could be linked – from the boll weevil to mill villages to Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge. And once again, the interviews would have an impact well beyond the physical archives alone.

So, in conclusion, I challenge you in your capacity as the real brokers of oral history in the digital age to deeply engage with the oral history process at all stages of that process, including its legal, ethical and interpretative dimensions, and to be as creative

and imaginative as possible in considering the myriad ways in which oral history might be employed.

**Clifford Kuhn** is a specialist in twentieth-century southern history and in oral history. His publications include *Living Atlanta: An Oral History of the City, 1914-1948* and *Contesting the New South Order: The 1914-1915 Strike at Atlanta's Fulton Mills*. Kuhn has played a leading role in the field of oral history. He has served in numerous leadership capacities for the Oral History Association, the national professional organization in the field, including as president in 2000-2001. He has also been involved with numerous award-winning and highly acclaimed oral and public history efforts. In January 2013, he became the executive director of the Oral History Association.



## **“No Competing Claims”: The Seizure, Abandonment, and the Acquisition of PATCO Records**

Traci JoLeigh Drummond

### **Introduction**

The U.S. Government seized the records of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO) in August 1981, shortly after the Reagan Administration shut down the union for striking against the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). A defining moment for labor relations in the United States, the strike and its ramifications resonate even now.<sup>1</sup> The records, which provide insight into day-to-day operations as well as tactics used in hopes of pushing the FAA to respond favorably to the union’s demands, are an essential part of understanding that defining moment.

For the next few years, the records moved between several offices under the watchful eye of a trustee appointed by the U.S. Bankruptcy Court. As the time neared when the courts would no longer need to have access to the records, former PATCO member Terrence Shannon, who had relocated to Atlanta from Savannah, Georgia, contacted the trustee assigned to the collection and asked if the records could be turned over to him. There was no official union to return the records to (this remains the case today). In addition to the over 11,000 firings and seizure of the records by the U.S. Government, the Federal Labor Relations Authority decertified PATCO on October 22, 1981. With no acknowledged stakeholders to retrieve the records on behalf of the union, Shannon found himself in a position to claim PATCO’s historical legacy. The circumstances surrounding the guardianship of the records after their seizure up until their donation to the Southern Labor Archives (SLA) at Georgia State University (GSU), combined with a breakdown in communication between the courts and former officers, placed the records in a limbo that could have meant their abandonment or destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the strike, see Joseph A. McCartin, *Collision Course: Ronald Reagan, the Air Traffic Controllers, and the Strike That Changed America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Some approximations had the PATCO records at close to one thousand cubic feet upon their arrival at the SLA; as of 2013 it remains the Archives' largest single collection even after processing and extensive weeding. It took close to twenty-five years to process, an operation significantly slowed due to a lack of support from its creator and many projects competing for resources in the Archives. Despite sustaining these setbacks, today the records are not only processed but also digitized and online for use by researchers. How did such an important 20<sup>th</sup> century collection become, essentially, an orphan, up for grabs to whoever claimed it? And how did its status as an orphaned collection affect efforts to make it available for research?

### **PATCO and the SLA: Background of the Acquisition**

The SLA received the PATCO records in 1986, five years after the union's tumultuous walkout, strike, and ultimate dissolution by President Ronald Reagan. PATCO was a very young union when it was decertified: the organization had unionized in 1968 after several years of attempting to bargain for its members' benefits, hours, and working conditions. During its short life, PATCO tried a variety of tactics to force resolution of its issues with the FAA, including sickouts, congressional lobbying, and other actions that slowed air traffic in the United States. The final act pursued before the mass firing was a strike, which happened after Reagan – who had promised PATCO during his presidential run that he would help the air traffic controllers in their quest for better benefits, hours, and working conditions - did not return support in the way that they had hoped. Herbert R. Northrup called the strike “a watershed event in governmental labor relations.” The fallout from the strike was severe: private sector employers became unafraid to fire striking workers and permanently replace them with non-union employees, organized labor's reputation suffered in the public eye, and, as PATCO lacked support from other airline industry unions, the “solidarity of the labor movement was exposed as uneven at best, and fraudulent at worst.”<sup>2</sup> Despite the best efforts of PATCO's former officers

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<sup>2</sup> Herbert R. Northrup, “The Rise and Demise of PATCO,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* 37, no. 2 (January 1984): 167; Arthur Shostak, “An Unhappy

and members, they could recover neither their jobs nor their reputations after they were fired.

The SLA, the oldest collecting area in Special Collections and Archives at GSU Library, brought in its first collection in 1971. With a mission to collect the records of labor unions and organizations in the South, it began to acquire the records of textile unions, woodworkers, and other unions traditionally associated with the region. As unions in the region shifted from these traditional trades to include representation in the industrial trades and the professional and service industries, the SLA began to acquire more collections with an emphasis on aviation, aerospace, and the airline industry. In addition to the PATCO records, 1986 was also the year that Carolyn Wills began to donate her Eastern Airlines' Southern Region Office materials. In the early 1990s the SLA became the official repository for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, known for their affiliations with the transportation and aviation industries. In the last twenty years, collections that reflect work in these areas have become a significant collecting strength in the archives.

### **Terrence Shannon, Ex-Air Traffic Controller and PATCO Member**

Shannon, an air traffic controller from PATCO Local 159, Savannah Tower, plays a key role in this story. He received training in the military and at eighteen, was drafted to Viet Nam and there received what he called his first real on-the-job training. He began working for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in 1976, eventually transferring to Savannah, Georgia.

Shannon was already a PATCO member when he arrived in Savannah and was in Savannah when the strike started in 1981. About the strike, he says, "Oh, I was pumped, I wanted to strike, I really wanted every bit of it to be, to let the public know that we weren't being treated fairly. We understood we weren't being treated fairly – we lost the PR battle – but I really did want to strike. I was 100% for it."

After the firings of August 5, 1981, Shannon says “I decided to come to Atlanta to raise money because I had been raising money for the locals down there...the people in Savannah. I’d helped everybody get unemployment, food stamps...we [finally] figured out we were fired forever.” In Atlanta, he connected with the PATCO Southern Region Headquarters, which were located in College Park, Georgia, found room and board with a fellow ex-controller, and began coordinating with area unions to raise funds for fired PATCO members and their families.

After about six months of fundraising, Shannon realized he should consider another career path. He enrolled at GSU and soon received his bachelor’s degree in history; he then enrolled in GSU’s College of Law. While working on his undergraduate degree, he met Les Hough, who was teaching one of Shannon’s history classes. Hough was also the head of Special Collections and Archives at the University’s Pullen Library (known today as the University Library) and director of the SLA. Naturally, conversations between the two men turned to talk of the now-defunct union, the whereabouts of its records, and the possibility of trying to obtain them for the SLA.<sup>3</sup>

By the time this idea took root, Shannon knew that PATCO was in bankruptcy. As a law student, he knew that a trustee would be handling the union’s bankruptcy proceedings, and he made a few calls to contacts in the Washington, D.C. area to see if anyone knew the whereabouts of the records. Once he got the name of the trustee, Robert Tyler, he reached out and told him “‘you know I’m here at Georgia State University and we have the Southern Labor Archives and I was wondering how we might be able to get the...papers [sic].’ And [the trustee] said ‘send me a letter’ and so I did. And I got a letter in return that said ‘they’re yours’...me personally, and I was like ‘Whoa, okay!’ But I had no idea what I had just been given.”<sup>4</sup>

Of this news, Hough says “I wish I could take credit for the original idea; I certainly knew...the significance of the PATCO dispute to the overall labor history of the 20th century, especially the late 20th century. So, I knew of its significance but I had no

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<sup>3</sup> Terrence Shannon, interviewed by the author, April 6, 2012, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>4</sup> Shannon interview.

inkling up to just a few weeks before the material was acquired that it would be available.” He continues, “But Terrence just came to my office...informed me that - of course this was already five years after the firings, the job action and firings - so he informed me that he had been attempting to acquire the records of the national office of PATCO and wanted to know whether the Labor Archives, Special Collections at Georgia State, would be interested in working with him in that venture of acquiring those materials.”<sup>5</sup> They were.

Given that the U.S. Government had seized the records from the union, who identified Shannon as the legal recipient for PATCO’s records? It did not occur to Shannon at the time that there might be any other academic institutions interested in the fate of the records, or that former union officers or members had an interest in obtaining the records after their use for bankruptcy proceedings. Correspondence and court documents in the accession record for the PATCO collection indicate that Shannon was the only one who had contacted the lawyers who were using the documents to ask for their return.

### **“No Competing Claims”: Getting the Collection**

In a letter to Robert Tyler, Attorney at Law (and also the lawyer assigned as trustee to the seized PATCO records), dated May 14, 1985, Shannon requested “the possession of the PATCO paperwork entrusted [sic] to you by Judge Whelan’s PATCO Bankrupt [sic] decision” and referred to PATCO Local 159 of Savannah, Georgia, as ... “a viable PATCO organization joining efforts with the Southern Labor Archives of Georgia State University to collect and preserve the history of PATCO.”<sup>6</sup> The status of Local 159 as a functioning union local as late as 1985 cannot be confirmed but because the union had been decertified in 1981, its regional and local offices would have most likely been decertified as well. Because many PATCO-related lawsuits were still being litigated in 1985, it would take some time for the records to be turned over to Shannon.

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<sup>5</sup> Leslie S. Hough, interviewed by the author, November 7, 2011, Atlanta, GA.

<sup>6</sup> Terrence Shannon to Robert Tyler, May 14, 1985, PATCO accession record, Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University Library.

A motion to tender documents to Anthony Skirlick (a California air traffic controller), had the documents transferred to his lawyers (Kenney, Carlson, & Warren, P.C.). A copy of this motion was mailed to Marc E. Albert, attorney for Tyler (of Williams, Meyers, and Quiggle). He suggested “temporary possession be given to [Kenney, Carlson, & Warren, P.C.] with [Skirlick] then obtaining the records upon completion of the litigation requiring the need for the records.”<sup>7</sup> Shannon agreed, and on May 24, 1985, Albert filed a response to the motion to tender documents to Anthony Skirlick et al., with the following stipulation in place: “Upon completion of their need for the records, the records will be turned over to PATCO Local 159 for historical preservation purposes.”<sup>8</sup> Albert’s response to Shannon on Tyler’s behalf did not indicate that he had issue with Shannon’s claims about the status of Local 159, nor did he indicate that any person or organization had made claim to the PATCO records prior to Shannon.

On June 26, 1985, Shannon wrote to Glenn H. Carlson at Kenney, Carlson, & Warren, P.C., inquiring about the volume of records and asking when they might be turned over to GSU Library.<sup>9</sup> He received the following response from Carlson, typed July 8, 1985:

“Please be advised that the transmittal to me of the records of PATCO, of which we will shortly take custody, is two thirds of a 40-foot trailer. We plan to temporarily store these documents in a storage facility in Virginia and will give you the exact location thereof upon their placement therein. At this time, I cannot give you the date (tentative or

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<sup>7</sup> “Unfriendly Skies,” *Time Magazine*, July 23, 1984, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,952436,00.html>; United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Columbia, *Motion to tender documents to Anthony Skirlick, et al (Case no. 81-00656)*, May 17, 1985, PATCO accession record; Marc E. Albert to Terrence Shannon, May 24, 1985, PATCO accession record.

<sup>8</sup> United States Bankruptcy Court for the District of Columbia, *Response to Motion to Tender Documents to Anthony Skirlick, Et Al (Case No. 81-00656)*, May 24, 1985, PATCO accession record.

<sup>9</sup> Terrence Shannon to Glenn H. Carlson, June 26, 1985, PATCO accession record.

otherwise) when you will be able to acquire the records as the same is contingent wholly upon the termination of our litigation, for which no end is now in sight.”<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, a letter dated February 7, 1986, has Shannon following up with Albert (then of Tyler, Bartel, Burt and Albert), letting him know that on January 17 “the PATCO collection was relocated to Georgia State University.” He added “as per our phone conversation of January 21, PATCO Local 159 has sole disposal rights over the residue of the Collection not historically preserved in the archives.”<sup>11</sup>

Once the records were available for transfer to the SLA, Hough and Shannon made plans to travel to Washington, D.C. to get the records. On a cold January morning in 1986, the men landed in Washington, D.C. with little more than an address scribbled on a small piece of paper and an identification number for a storage container.<sup>12</sup> They rented the largest U-Haul truck they could find and headed to a storage lot on the outskirts of town. There they located, in an unlocked trailer one would normally find attached to a semi, over 1,000 (estimated) records center cartons containing the contents of the seized offices of PATCO.

Hough recalls that he and Shannon:

“... found the appropriate trailer...[I]t was literally stacked floor to ceiling in this trailer. And so we basically, we had flown early that morning, picked up the truck and by mid-morning were on the site so we literally spent the rest of the day 'til dark, literally through boxes and making on-site appraisal of what was worth keeping. And there was literally everything you can imagine in this truck. There were ashtrays...what had happened was, as I understand it is, that the court had seized everything that was in the offices of PATCO at some point there after the injunctions had been put into place, assets were being seized, and for

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<sup>10</sup> Glenn H. Carlson to Terrence Shannon, July 8, 1985, PATCO accession record.

<sup>11</sup> Terrence Shannon to Marc E. Albert, February 7, 1986, PATCO accession record.

<sup>12</sup> Hough interview.

the purposes of these papers and other materials it literally meant packing it all up and...at various other times it was in law offices or perhaps in court custody, evidentiary status or whatever, but in this case it was piled floor to ceiling and we began shifting boxes. And we didn't take everything because - there was documentation that really wasn't - not worthy of preservation."<sup>13</sup>

Hough and Shannon packed records that could quickly be identified as important or promising into the U-Haul.<sup>14</sup> Even with basic appraisal applied to the mass of records, the U-Haul was full by the time they left the storage lot.

When Shannon stated that he had no idea what he'd been given, he was referring to both significance and volume. Upon first seeing the contents of the trailer, the first question was "How are we gonna do this?" He continues "...it was beyond our means, but somehow I believe they [their D.C. contacts regarding the collection] helped us move the papers into the U-Haul because it would have been physically impossible for Les and I to move some of those boxes...and it took quite a bit of time, but I also know that we were not the only ones doing it...cause it would have taken us days."<sup>15</sup>

They packed from morning to evening and set out for Atlanta as night fell. Largely uneventful, the trip only became problematic when Hough and Shannon pulled into a weigh station (Hough says it was in North Carolina; Shannon says Virginia) and were discovered to be over the legal weight for the trailer. Shannon says, "So we had to sit there until we paid our fine...all they wanted was our fine...and so we paid our fine and we were going down the road and we saw this truck stop and so we pulled into the truck stop and got something to eat, it was already dark...and we got a map that told us where all the weigh stations were so we decided to go back roads. We got a room someplace I believe in South Carolina. We stayed the night, got up the next morning, drove until about two exits before the next weigh station, got out

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<sup>13</sup> Hough interview.

<sup>14</sup> Hough interview.

<sup>15</sup> Shannon interview.



[off the interstate] and we did the back roads all the way to Atlanta. That took forever. We were both exhausted.”<sup>16</sup> Hough referred to it as “A bit of an unconventional process.”<sup>17</sup>

The records arrived at the SLA in 1986. Hough estimates that there “must have been something on the order of one thousand cubic feet, much of it in banker’s boxes, there was probably more than one thousand cubic feet of material in that trailer of which we probably took something like eighty percent, could have been eighty to ninety percent possibly.”<sup>18</sup> Whatever the actual amount, it was and remains the largest single accession of records received by the SLA.

### **PATCO Lives and the University of Texas at Arlington**

The only other repository with significant PATCO holdings is the Texas Labor Archives (TLA) at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). It houses papers from former PATCO members and records from local and regional offices, which fill in the gaps in the national records held at the SLA. As of 2010, the TLA had the same volume of PATCO material as the SLA.

Shannon had no knowledge of any intent of former officers to donate the records to the TLA when he sought to get them for the SLA. However, once the records were in Atlanta, a former PATCO administrator, who, on hearing that the PATCO records had been given to Shannon and donated to the SLA, called Shannon to convey his displeasure with the situation. The conversation was brief - Shannon hung up on the unknown caller after only a few minutes – but he does remember that the voice on the other end of the line told him that the records were intended for a repository in Texas.<sup>19</sup>

The SLA’s accession record for PATCO does not contain any documentation that indicates Hough or Shannon knew of PATCO’s former officers’ wish for the records to go to the TLA. Hoping to find out more, I contacted Melissa Gonzales, labor archivist for the TLA, to see if their records could shed any light on the details of the situation. Gonzales found correspondence that

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<sup>16</sup> Shannon interview.

<sup>17</sup> Hough interview.

<sup>18</sup> Hough interview.

<sup>19</sup> Shannon interview.

included communications between former union officers and the TLA and contained evidence of heated exchanges between administrators of the TLA and the SLA. According to Gonzales' research in the TLA records, this correspondence began in mid-1987, over a year after the collection arrived in Atlanta.<sup>20</sup>

In the summary of the correspondence and notes provided by Gonzales, it is apparent that relations between the two archives were strained from the beginning, and that the archivist for the TLA along with former members (by then affiliated with PATCO Lives) were disappointed that the national office's records had been obtained by Shannon for the SLA.<sup>21</sup> The amount of time between the records coming to Atlanta and the SLA being contacted by TLA indicates that the records may have been in Atlanta for over a year before the former officers realized they had been acquired by the SLA. Of the situation, Shannon says "I did get some feedback through some friends who have kept up with different air traffic control organizations, there was one called PATCO Lives that was around for a while, got some negative feedback. People were still a little upset that I'd done this. I personally didn't care what anybody felt after that."<sup>22</sup> PATCO Lives was an organization created in the aftermath of the shutdown to provide a conduit of communication for former members and keep them updated on litigation and news related to the strike and shutdown.

Correspondence between former PATCO officers and the TLA began in June of 1987 when former archivist Jane Boley asked Richard Kelly Chaplin to "convey UTA's interest in collecting PATCO's records from different regions and its headquarters in Washington, D.C." Shortly thereafter, Boley contacted Hough "to tell him that Mr. Chaplin and Ms. Faye Henry [presumably former PATCO officers] had visited the Texas Labor Archives at UTA, and they concluded that the national records should come to UTA."<sup>23</sup>

During that visit, Mr. Chaplin told Ms. Boley that a trailer full of "stuff" existed, but he later discovered that PATCO had

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<sup>20</sup> Melissa Gonzales, email message to the author, April 9, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Gonzales to author.

<sup>22</sup> Shannon interview.

<sup>23</sup> Gonzales to author.

“disposed of” those papers. Ms. Boley interpreted this to mean the paper had been destroyed. Later that month, Faye Henry called Ms. Boley to say the trailer was kept because of a bankruptcy case, but the trailer had been hauled off in the middle of the night.

Apparently when the hearing was over, a PATCO member from Georgia took the records and donated them to the SLA. According to Kelly Chaplin and Faye Henry, this member did not have the authority to do so.<sup>24</sup>

“Certainly by ’86 there was no PATCO as such,” says Hough. “There were former officers but I must say we never sought to reach out to them – ‘Is this okay to do this’ – as far as we knew the document we had [presumably the May 1985 motion to tender the documents to Anthony Skirlick] indicated it was no longer the property of those folks, it was the property of the court. And in fact, the federal government. And so that was who we felt like we needed to deal with. It’s not that we tried to keep it a secret - I wasn’t being defensive - it was not a live organization at all and the materials had explicitly been seized from the control of the former officers along with all other assets. We didn’t feel like they were really relevant and we didn’t really have time. We thought that the materials might disappear at any time.”<sup>25</sup>

Bill Taylor, then-director of PATCO Lives, had been unaware of the transfer of records to the SLA. Gonzales’ summary reads: “This transfer consisted of 18,000 lbs. of records of supposedly little significance. Bill Taylor and others had already taken the more valuable records. Calls from Mr. Taylor to Mr. Shannon went unanswered and unreturned.” Once Shannon did contact Taylor about the remainder of the national records, Taylor informed Shannon that “there would be no more records going to Georgia State.” Taylor then informed Boley that the following issue of the PATCO Lives newsletter (*The Lifeline*) would encourage all PATCO members, locals, and regionals to send their records to the TLA.<sup>26</sup>

The announcement ran in the September 1987 issue of *The Lifeline*. In part, it said “To create a repository for PATCO records

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<sup>24</sup> Gonzales to author.

<sup>25</sup> Hough, interview.

<sup>26</sup> Gonzales to author.

has been a goal of ours for many years now. Today, after months of investigations and consultations, we have reached agreement with representatives of the University of Texas to store the records in their labor library.”<sup>27</sup> The SLA never received another substantial group of PATCO records, although it has received a handful of small, interesting collections from former members over the years.

### **Processing the PATCO Records**

Once the SLA accessioned the records, they went unprocessed for a number of years before attempts were made to fully process them, most likely due to the size of the collection and other departmental priorities. This does not mean, however, that the collection was ignored. But before there can be a discussion about processing the PATCO records, it is important to discuss almost fifteen years of efforts to get a handle on such a large collection, including its earliest processing plan, box-level inventories, and appraisal of certain record types and formats for deaccessioning. It is worth noting that for the SLA, acquisition of the PATCO collection in 1986 probably increased the size of the archives’ holdings by twenty percent, which likely overwhelmed staff and put a strain on their space and other resources (Special Collections and Archives has grown substantially since 1986 and currently has four storage locations around the GSU campus).

The earliest known processing plan is a five-page document that cites Oliver W. Holmes (on the topic of arrangement) and Frank Boles (on sampling) and includes a list of possible series and a reference to item-level calendaring. Interestingly it includes information about an early National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant proposal, the success of which seems to have been contingent upon the SLA’s acquisition of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA) records with the idea that two sets of records pertaining to the work of air traffic controllers would have made the SLA a more appealing awardee for such a grant (the NATCA collection has never been acquired

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<sup>27</sup> Bill Taylor, “Updates,” *The Lifeline*, September 1987.

by the SLA). This funding would have provided for a processing archivist.<sup>28</sup>

A repository needing two similar collections (or meeting some other requirement) in order to better their chances for receiving a grant is a good reminder of the important role funding plays toward getting a large collection processed in a timely and efficient manner. Pam Hackbart-Dean writes in *How to Keep Union Records*: “In the era of declining resources and escalating processing and preservation costs, building strong relationships between repositories and union donors has become even more important... Union archives, like the records of most modern bureaucracies, are often large, complicated, and costly to process.”<sup>29</sup> Two unions for which the SLA is the official repository, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and the National Federation of Federal Employees, both provided the archives with financial support to process their ample collections. Special Collections and Archives received a grant for funding to process the sizeable group of state Nurses Association records housed there as well. Like the SLA, the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University and the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University “are now receiving substantial union support for basic archival work” (for some collections and projects).<sup>30</sup> With competing projects, limited resources, and no funding for a dedicated processing archivist for the collection, it is understandable that SLA staff could not prioritize the PATCO records for many years.

A later report, titled “An evaluation of the PATCO collection for arrangement and description” (1989) provides a more detailed look at the resources needed to get the records processed. Several interesting items to note from this report include the fact that Shannon had not signed the deed of gift as late as the date of its writing (although it was signed shortly thereafter), and that “Once again in 1989 the repository was turned down for a National Endowment for the Humanities [NEH] grant and the

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<sup>28</sup> “PATCO (processing Plan),” ca. 1986, PATCO accession record.

<sup>29</sup> Pamela Hackbart-Dean. “Unions and Labor Archives,” in Michael Nash, ed., *How to Keep Union Records*, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2010): 18.

<sup>30</sup> Hackbart-Dean. “Unions and Labor Archives,” 18.

collection may have another waiting period before being processed.”<sup>31</sup> From that point forward, more than ten years passed before the staff would have any part of the collection processed and available for research.

Portions of the collection had been appraised and deaccessioned by 1989, which the report lists as being “approximately 600 feet.” It also describes the collection as in “good shape,” that “[c]onservation and preservation of the [paper portion of the] collection will not be difficult,” and recommends basic processing practices for the paper, but encourages further investigation into the preservation of thirty-eight disk packs that contained financial information and whose preservation would allow the packs to be “kept in place of the voluminous paper records” that comprised the same information. At the time, GSU only had one computer “that the disc packs could possibl[y] be run on...[a computer that] runs the school’s entire financial network and if the PATCO discs caused the system to crash, the archives would be responsible.”<sup>32</sup> Not finding an acceptable solution to the preservation and use of the disk packs, the archives finally deaccessioned and destroyed them in March of 2000.<sup>33</sup> This action – deaccessioning the disc packs because of technical obsolescence – is one direct result of not having the resources to process the collection in a timely manner. While staff was reasonably sure that the content of the disk packs were also available in paper, it will remain unknown if valuable content was lost.

The accession record for PATCO contains several different versions of inventories, some with notes about content or weeding or lists of boxes that had already been removed. Few of these have dates, but were likely created in the mid-1990s through the mid-2000s. There are also documents that provide the series to be used when processing the collection, which ultimately changed over time. The finished collection has eighteen series, more than that proposed by any prior labor archivist. There were also early

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<sup>31</sup> “An Evaluation of the PATCO Collection for Processing and Arrangement (Georgia State University, May 31, 1989),” PATCO accession record.

<sup>32</sup> “Evaluation of the PATCO Collection,” PATCO accession record.

<sup>33</sup> Annie L. Tilden, “Disposal of 30 Disk Platters from PATCO (86-45),” March 28, 2000, PATCO accession record.

processing plans that were not closely followed once the staff began processing.

Series I through IV were processed in 2001 by Pam Hackbart-Dean (SLA archivist before becoming head of Special Collections and Archives at GSU Library), and Annie L. Tilden, former processing archivist for the SLA, fifteen years after the collection had arrived at the Archives. Using inventories, they pulled together groups of boxes with related material. Using traditional processing practices, they created the following series, which included sub-series: President's Files, Vice-President's Files, Regional Vice-President's Files, and Director's Files. The first four series did have some signs of minimum standards processing practices despite being arranged according to traditional practices: the materials were not refoldered nor were they arranged chronologically within each folder. Stopping after only four series, it is unclear why processing halted at this time.

When I began work at the SLA in 2007, in-process boxes of the PATCO collection indicated that previous archivist Lauren Kata had continued the work of Hackbart-Dean. The continuing phase of processing seemed to have abandoned the traditional processing used in series I through IV, and the series titles that had been assigned differed somewhat from those on early series lists. Once I decided to prioritize PATCO for processing, I reviewed the materials Kata had processed to discover that minimum standards practices had been used for this second effort at processing. This makes sense: the impact of the seminal Greene-Meissner article "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," published just a few years earlier, cannot be overstated especially when one considers the effect it has had on archives with large collections and backlogs.<sup>34</sup>

Kata created helpful minimum standards processing guidelines tailored to the PATCO records and the SLA's needs but I could not find series or inventory notes. Both the condition of the in-process boxes when reviewed in 2008 and the deviation from the earlier established series led me to feel as if I could start over

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<sup>34</sup> For more information see Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *American Archivist* 68 (Fall/Winter 2005): 208–263.

with a tweaked minimum-standards processing plan and the introduction of new series that, while not perfect, would allow for quick processing by staff with limited training. Series I through IV were not reprocessed. Picking up the project in early 2008 meant that it might be finished by 2011, the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the strike.

Given the size of the unprocessed portion of this collection, I maintained use of series in order to make it manageable for staff (while processing) and researchers (while using). Even with over 400 cubic feet deaccessioned (this is only an estimate and is likely a low number) and 32 feet already processed, there was still an estimated 400 linear feet to appraise, sort, refolder, and inventory for finding aids. I changed some series titles based on the function or office from or for which materials were created.

During processing, certain items were identified for removal from the collection. The SLA maintained some of these materials, such as periodicals not created by PATCO or any of its locals (these were separated to the Labor Periodicals collection); FAA (and other) publications were separated and cataloged to the Special Collections and Archives book holdings. Other materials, such as duplicates, widely held periodicals, and incomplete membership lists were deaccessioned and/or destroyed. The size of the collection also necessitated the use of multiple finding aids because one inventory for the entire collection would be too big for one EAD file. Instead of compiling one inventory and breaking it arbitrarily into sections, eighteen finding aids were created, one for each series.

Processing of the PATCO records was completed in early 2010, twenty-four years after it arrived, with no grant assistance, using only staff, students, and temporary workers. It was a great accomplishment for the archives, which had processed an approximately 1,000 cubic foot collection with no donor or grant assistance and had reduced the size of the collection to 200 linear feet. However, this made no significant impact on the backlog: the size of the SLA collections had more than doubled since 1986 and as soon as the PATCO boxes were off the shelves, spaces were filled with incoming collections.



## **Digitization of the Collection**

In 2009 Barbara Petersohn, Digital Projects and Grant Writing Librarian at GSU Library, looked to Special Collections and Archives for a grant writing opportunity. The PATCO records, with processing in progress and near completion, were an obvious choice considering the upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the strike. Petersohn and I began writing a National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant in spring 2010 with a proposal to digitize eight of the eighteen series, those that were the most information-rich and contained the least amount of personal, restricted, or copyrighted information (the collection was mainly processed using minimum-standards processing, after all). These included the President's Files, Vice-President's Files, Regional Vice-President's Files, Director's Files, the Strike Files, Central Office Files, Regions and Locals, and Publications.

In December 2010, the NHPRC awarded GSU Library a matching grant in the amount of \$90,000. I oversaw preparation of the collection for digitization and staff was hired to perform scanning and other tasks; Petersohn oversaw day-to-day operations and planned the workflow. Digitization began in June 2011 and wrapped up in August 2012, the 31<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the strike.

The digitized series are available as part of GSU Library's Digital Collections (the platform used is CONTENTdm). Virtual documents display as they would in person, within folders, and maintain aspects of the physical user experience. Improving on the access provided to the collection by processing, text in the digitized records has been converted using optical character recognition and the documents are searchable for specific names or terms in addition to browsing. Users can also download files (as .pdf documents) to make retrieval of information easier once it is discovered.

## **Outreach on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Strike**

The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the strike was commemorated in August 2011 at a meeting in Hollywood, Florida. PATCO members past and present – both fired air traffic controllers and those organized in 1996 and onward by a new union that took up the PATCO name - attended the convention both to reminisce and discuss issues important to the current union, which is affiliated

with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. Arthur Shostak (a sociologist known for his work on PATCO, retired from Drexel University) suggested to Ron Taylor, PATCO president, that he have the archivists from the SLA and the TLA present at the convention and discuss the collections at each repository.

Claire Galloway Jenkins, formerly of the TLA, spoke to the attendees about their PATCO collections and I spoke about the collection at the SLA and the in-progress NHPRC grant. Attendees were interested in the archivists' work. Some air traffic controllers had questions about their personal collections or the holdings in the archives. Others wanted to share stories, photos, or artifacts with the archivists. Attendees left the meeting understanding how the legacy of the strike is being preserved, debated, and examined in the academic realm.

## **Conclusion**

While it is unlikely that a labor union collection of this magnitude will ever again be placed at such risk, had the PATCO records been forgotten on that vacant lot the loss to the historical record would have been considerable. The records - arguably one of the most important collections on 20<sup>th</sup> century labor history - were rescued and housed, albeit at an archives unprepared for the commitment of caring for such a large collection without financial assistance. However, despite the collection's size and briefly contested ownership, despite lack of funding for a dedicated processing archivist and changes in archival practice and technology, and despite the project's on-again, off-again status, the records are now available to researchers, both online and in-person.

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## **Ambiguity and the Digital Archivist**

Caryn Radick

### **Introduction**

The position title “digital archivist” has appeared increasingly within the archival community, reflecting changes brought on by the exponential growth of reliance on technology in our society. Although it is clear that a digital archivist uses technology to preserve and provide access to archival material, the responsibilities of digital archivists differ. As a digital archivist, I became intrigued by digital archivist position announcements – the range of skill sets and desired qualities led me to consider that someone with the same title could have different responsibilities. Discussions with other archivists and librarians brought the realization that being a digital archivist implied different qualities and skills to different audiences: I found I had to clarify my work focused on digitization rather than born-digital.

Position descriptions and other professional discussions indicate that a digital archivist is expected to either create (through digitization of analog holdings) or manipulate electronic files (containing born-digital or already digitized archival material). However, as this article will demonstrate, the differences in and the skill sets needed to work with the original material – analog versus born-digital – are a “fault line” in the definition and usage of the digital archivist title. That is, some statements suggest that digital archivist only refers to someone who is charged with working with born-digital material.

This article examines the term digital archivist as it is used within the archival profession. It demonstrates why the picture that emerges of the digital archivist is blurred by a lack of consistent definitions and descriptions. This article discusses issues that arise when considering how the digital archivist title is treated in several examples of archival writing. These include assertions that are undercut by contradictions, a glossing over of problematic aspects, and a lack of editorial oversight or follow through. Additionally, this article provides a picture of the digital archivist through a content analysis of advertisements for digital archivist positions

that focuses on their wording about requirements for born-digital versus digitization work.

The intent is to examine the wording of publicly available information – that is, information that organizations and institutions chose to post, publish, or disseminate – that includes statements on digital archivists and is meant to shape their work. Having worked as an editor prior to and since becoming an archivist, I am interested in understanding the issues that make it difficult to have a clear definition of digital archivist. What is present in the writing about this title that may be contributing to the confusion? Thus, I have taken an “editorial” approach in my reading, looking to tease out the wording, passages, and issues that highlight certainties and uncertainties of who digital archivists are.

Although some questions that arise during reading could be settled by contacting the authors of the documents or position descriptions, the intent of this article is to demonstrate where and why a reader might become confused in reading about digital archivists. Also, although there is clearly a “wish list” element to many position descriptions, what is ultimately circulated is what the institution chose to publicly disseminate in its name. Further investigation could show that a statement was made in error or simply not edited to reflect the intention of the writers, but at some point it was “published.”

Differences in similar position titles will always exist, in part because institutional size dictates a certain level and number of responsibilities – a lone arranger shop versus a large research library, for example. Although it is unrealistic to think of terms as absolute (“elasticity” accompanies language and helps move it in new directions),<sup>1</sup> it is worth questioning usages that imply that “it goes without saying” the matter of who a digital archivist is has been settled. As will be demonstrated, despite assertions that digital archivist should be used to mean “works with born-digital,” the term remains largely undefined and used in different ways. Attempts to clarify what a digital archivist is or does often muddy the waters through lack of detailed explanation. Others conflate

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<sup>1</sup> Alice Prochaska’s article “Special Collections in an International Perspective,” *Library Trends* 52, no. 1 (June 2003), refers to the term “special collections” as “almost infinitely elastic”: 139.

responsibilities with title, such as equating working with digital archives with “digital archivist.”

The descriptions of digital archivists are examined in two ways, or using a hybrid approach. First, by demonstrating how two documents meant to provide guidance and instruction regarding digital archives exemplify the problems of how digital archivist is used. These are the Society of American Archivists’ (SAA) Digital Archives Committee on Education (DACE) 2011 *Report of the Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force* through which the SAA’s Digital Archives Specialist (DAS) Certificate is laid out (and the online description of the program); and the AIMS work group’s 2012 *Born-Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship (AIMS)* which offers recommendations for working with born-digital material. The second approach is a brief analysis of position descriptions where the digital archivist title is used to describe positions with digitization responsibilities, born-digital responsibilities, or both.

### **Literature Review – Terminology**

Discussions of terminological differences are expected within any profession that is not homogenous, and archival discussions have also formed around uses of terms such as “archive” or “curation” that have been adopted outside of the profession. While the definition of digital archivist has not been examined within professional literature, it has featured discussions of why terminology and definitions matter along with examinations of particular terms.

Michael Piggott, Geoffrey Yeo, and Adrian Cunningham have discussed issues of how a term is used within the archival profession. Piggott and Yeo particularly address why some reluctance surrounds discussion of definitions. Piggott acknowledges the difficult aspects of seeking exact definitions in the introduction to his *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays* (2012) which he opens with a statement that:

“My attitude problem concerning definitions, however, is different and presents with two contradictory symptoms. Firstly, my faith that defining terms for a diverse audience in even one country is weak....The second symptom relates

to the way definitions are used.... Even choosing between collection and holdings, electronic and digital, record-making and recordkeeping, and archives and archive can become fraught. Never entirely absent either is the attraction of game playing, which archivists seem unusually attracted to: *you can call it 'a reading,' I'll decide if you've misunderstood me, and the clincher what, if anything, is a reading?*" (italics in the original)<sup>2</sup>

Piggott's approach acknowledges one of the major difficulties of terminology: some audiences may never get beyond their differing perspectives on individual terms, thus losing sight of the larger discussion. However, it is necessary to consider what obstacles might further obscure a clear definition. In "Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations," Geoffrey Yeo considers the value of examining and providing definitions as a prelude a discussion of treatments of the word "record:"

"Such definitions may not offer unassailable truths but are still useful for many purposes. They assist new entrants to the profession and other inquirers seeking clarification of professional terminology, and they can also be valuable to established professionals when analyzing basic concepts or communicating with customers, experts in other fields, persons in authority, or the wider public."<sup>3</sup>

Regarding resistance to attempts to make definitions definitive or prescriptive, Yeo responds, "Whatever reservations we may have about universal statements, it is legitimate to want to explore the meaning of things and especially their meanings within

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Piggott, *Archives and Societal Provenance: Australian Essays*, (Oxford, United Kingdom: Chandos Publishing, 2012): 6.

<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations," *American Archivist* 70, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 315–343. Quotation, p. 317. The second part of this article, entitled, "Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects," appears in *American Archivist* 71, no. 1, (Spring/Summer 2008): 118–143.

particular communities.”<sup>4</sup> Yeo’s statements aptly address the “why bother” aspect of trying to understand what people or communities mean when they use a particular term. Although it is not unusual that a term such as digital archivist may be defined differently within different communities, one of the problems with this term is that it really is not defined. Instead, the term is treated as an extension of digital archives in professional literature; however, position descriptions indicate that the “digital” in digital archivist can refer to digitization. Given that some instances of the former are not clear in their statements or contain contradictory information, the picture remains fuzzy.

Another reason language and wording are worth focusing on is that dismissing or glossing over different or vague terminology leaves gaps in the discussion. Lack of consensus or arguments about terminology also hinder the ability to speak as an authority both within the profession and in outreach efforts. If we are unable or unwilling to understand each other, we have little chance of presenting a unified message about our profession.

Cunningham gets to the heart of the issues of terminology – and closer to the subject of this article – when discussing the term “digital archive,” which he asserts has been “hijacked” and misused. Although he also acknowledges the problems of definitions, particularly those that relate to “digital,” he states the need for better articulation. “Indeed, the advent of digital archives has only accentuated the unreliability of our terminology. All the more reason, therefore, for us to articulate and assert our meanings with clarity, while at the same time acknowledging the contested nature of the semantic and political terrain.”<sup>5</sup> His approach brings a level of practicality to the terminology issue – stating the need to acknowledge and accept terminology issues and to work to offer usable definitions.

Cunningham’s article contains references to digital archivists and their work, but, as occurs with other examples, that

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 318.

<sup>5</sup> Adrian Cunningham, “Digital Curation/Digital Archiving: A View from the National Archives of Australia,” *American Archivist* 71 no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2008): 532, footnote 7.



term is undefined and is only mentioned in the context of the larger discussion of the term digital archives.<sup>6</sup>

### **Digital Archivists in Professional Literature**

Archival writing implies the digital archivist specializes in born-digital (and possibly already-digitized) material although some writers, such as the authors of the AIMS report discussed below, acknowledge the ambiguity surrounding the title. This section addresses how on examination, statements about what a digital archivist does are unclear. Although documents have been written with the purpose of bringing clarity to issues surrounding born-digital material, they do not tackle the use of language regarding the professionals who work with them.

This section focuses on how two recent documents that make statements about digital archivists highlight these issues in the professional discussion, particularly how the title digital archivist draws from the term [born] digital archives: these are the SAA DACE 2011 *Report of the Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force* and the 2012 *AIMS Born-Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship* which makes recommendations for working with born-digital material. Each document is the product of archival professionals who were brought together to chart a path for ensuring best practices (and practitioners) for the digital future of the profession. As such, the close reading that follows demonstrates how their language reveals some of the issues and uncertainties related to the use of digital archivist.

SAA established the DACE task force with the charge of “developing a detailed professional development curriculum on the subject of digital archives.”<sup>7</sup> The DACE report states that the DAS certificate centers on the skills necessary to work with “digital archives” which they define as born-digital and further differentiates digital archives from digitization:

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. References to digital archivists are on pages 532, 535, 541, and 542.

<sup>7</sup> Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force. *Report of the Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force*. (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011): 15. Accessed July 12, 2013, <http://www.archivists.org/governance/taskforces/DACEReport.5.16.11.pdf>.

“The task force agreed that two basic concepts would guide its work. The first was that its focus would be on born-digital records, thus on digital archives rather than digitized archives. The members believed that this distinction was important because it accepts that digital records are a central concern of archivists and because these move the focus of the curriculum away from paper records, which is truly where digitization projects are focused.”<sup>8</sup>

Another SAA definition that supports this view appears in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the DAS certificate on the SAA’s website. Under the question “What is the difference between ‘digital archives’ and ‘electronic records’?” is the answer:

“‘Electronic records’ are those (whether digital or analog) that require electronic devices in order to be created and used.

‘Digital archives’ are permanent digital records that require a computer to create and use them. The term ‘archives’ may refer to both materials and the repositories that house them; similarly ‘digital archives’ may refer to an archival institution focused on the management of permanent digital records or a cache or collection of such materials.”<sup>9</sup>

The DACE task force is clear that its members believe the language used to discuss digital archives matters. The report acknowledges the necessity of forging common definitions in the area of cutting-edge technology:

“Administering archives in a ubiquitously networked world is no longer a matter for archivists alone. Because born-digital materials are subject to short-lived technologies at the time of creation, their management and preservation

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 2–3.

<sup>9</sup> Society of American Archivists. “Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers!),” accessed July 12, 2013, <http://www2.archivists.org/book/export/html/14913>.

require a highly coordinated effort. The ability to define roles and responsibilities clearly depends on the extent to which we are speaking the same language.”<sup>10</sup>

Despite the purpose of working to bring clarity to digital archives, the DACE task force also obscures its terms, possibly in part through editorial oversight. The report uses the term “digital archives” 140 times, mostly in reference to the DAS certificate. The term “digital archivist” appears six times. Two appear to be accidental, references to the “Digital Archivist Specialist” curriculum.<sup>11</sup> Most likely, this is a slip between “archives” and “archivist,” or might indicate that the initial A stood for “archivist” at one point but was later changed.

The other four references to digital archivists appear in the Appendix E section of the report, which lays out the course descriptions for the DAS curriculum, giving information about intended audiences and learning outcomes as well. Two instances are in the proposed “Thinking Digital” class, which has the intended target audience of “archivists and others who need to think and act as digital archivists.” The learning outcome for the course is “to teach participants how to think like digital archivists in digital environment.”<sup>12</sup>

At first reading, the use of “digital archivist” appears to refer back to the definition of “digital archives” that the DACE task force established in their basic concepts.<sup>13</sup> However, a look at the online course description implies something else about the DAS curriculum: “*Who Should Attend?*: Archivists and others who

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<sup>10</sup> Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force, “Report”: 6.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., References to the “Digital Archivist Specialist Curriculum” occur on pages 28 and 56. I considered whether the word “curriculum” (as opposed to “certificate”) might imply that the usage was intentional, but there are 22 uses of “Digital Archives Specialist Curriculum” in the report, leading me to conclude that was the intended term.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28. One of the “Digital Archivist Specialist Curriculum” usages appears in this description as well.

<sup>13</sup> See page 133-134 of this article for quotation.

are responsible for planning and implementing digitization projects at the beginning and intermediate level.”<sup>14</sup>

Although the website does not carry through the idea that the “Thinking Digital” course is intended for digital archivists or people who want to think like one, the fact that this class is about digitization throws the DACE report’s usages into question and adds further confusion. This declaration contradicts the idea of the DAS “focus” on born-digital collections. The word “focus” might imply that there is room to discuss other, more peripheral, areas of archival practice. However, given that the focus was meant to exclude even files that resulted from digitization, it is confusing that a course based on working with analog materials should appear in the DAS curriculum.

The next reference to digital archivists in the DACE report is in the learning outcomes for the Standards for Digital Archives course description, which says it “provides participants with an overview of the most important standards a digital archivist needs to know and enough knowledge to implement parts of these in their own work environments.”<sup>15</sup> The report’s designated audience carries through to the online description for this course, which asks, “Do you know the most important standards a digital archivist needs to know?”<sup>16</sup> Without a definition or a clear idea of whether digitization is a part of what a digital archivist may do, it is hard to know how to answer.

The final digital archivist reference in the DACE report appears in the target audience in the course description for the “Managing Electronic Records in Archives and Special Collections” course: “This course is intended for digital archivists and electronic records managers, university archivists, curators and others who need to understand and articulate the challenges and solutions for managing born-digital and electronic records in archives, special collections and on a larger campus-wide or

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<sup>14</sup> Society of American Archivists, “Thinking Digital” course description accessed July 12, 2013, <http://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/course-catalog/f-thinking-digital-a-practical-session-to-help-get-you-started-das>.

<sup>15</sup> Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force, “Report,” 29.

<sup>16</sup> Society of American Archivists, “Standards for Digital Archives,” accessed July 12, 2013, <http://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/course-catalog/f-standards-for-digital-archives-das>.

institutional level.”<sup>17</sup>

In the online course description, this has been modified to “College and university archivists, records managers, and special collections curators whose activities include ingest and management of electronic records.”<sup>18</sup> The dropping of certain terms may relate to the wording issue, but it is impossible to make that determination just by comparing the report and website.

Other slips in definitions occur in Appendix D: The Course Description Data Elements for Digital Archives Specialist Curriculum, which frames the composition of the course descriptions. Each description has a “glossary” category, which the frame says is a “list of important terms in this workshop with a link back to Richard Pearce-Moses’ glossary of archival terms.”<sup>19</sup> However, several of the terms listed in the course descriptions, such as “digital archives” and “digital collection” had not yet appeared in the glossary as of July 2013.<sup>20</sup> The glossary within the report also does not include a definition of “digital archivist.” Rather, with the exception a definition of “digital curation,” the DACE glossary definitions are for terms used to classify professionals in terms of potential audiences for the DAS classes, such as administrator, manager, and practitioner. Given that a glossary for the course descriptions was established, even informal definitions for the listed terms would be useful.

Like the DACE task force, the AIMS work group also set out to look at digital archives (which they refer to as “born-digital

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<sup>17</sup> Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force, “Report,” 54.

<sup>18</sup> Society of American Archivists, “Managing Electronic Records in Archives and Special Collections,” accessed July 12, 2013.

<http://www2.archivists.org/prof-education/course-catalog/tr-managing-electronic-records-in-archives-and-special-collections-das>.

<sup>19</sup> Digital Archives Continuing Education Task Force, “Report,” 22.

<sup>20</sup> In 2012, SAA established a Glossary Working Group “to establish and maintain mechanisms and procedures for allowing periodic updates and contributions of new content to *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* and to ensure that this important resource adheres to the highest quality professional standards.”

(<http://www2.archivists.org/news/2012/volunteers-sought-for-glossary-working-group>). See *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* by Richard Pearce-Moses, available at: <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary>. Although nonexistent terms referenced in the report may now be added, the report discusses them as if they had already been established.

archives” rather than “digital archives,” with a few exceptions) and are careful to establish the parameters:

“...the challenges of stewarding born-digital material demand new strategies as well as a redefinition of archival workflows. [Accordingly, this emerging challenge will affect the skill-set needed for archivists and the working relationships among archival colleagues as well as those outside our communities and organizations.] If the archival profession aims to preserve and manage born-digital material to standards matching those of paper-based collections, a broader and deeper understanding of these issues must be developed, and this understanding must be incorporated into training of new archival professionals, professional development programs, and continuing education.”<sup>21</sup>

Working on the AIMS project were “archivists, digital archivists, technical developers and repository managers.”<sup>22</sup> The use of both “archivists” and “digital archivists” suggests that there is some sort of distinction between the two designations that goes beyond a superficial difference in title. The AIMS project also acknowledged the level of terminological differences between members of the archival community, between United States and United Kingdom (where the AIMS partnership was based) and within national communities:

“The third challenge was language and terminology. The differences both in use and understanding of terminology between the US and the UK as well as between the archival profession and the digital library world of both countries prompted questions and, in many instances, prevented the acceptance of assumed definitions and understandings. Adding to this challenge was the redefining of traditional archival terms to a born-digital context. The partners

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<sup>21</sup> AIMS Work Group, “AIMS Born-Digital Collections: An Inter-Institutional Model for Stewardship” (2012): i. accessed July 12, 2013, [http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/aims/whitepaper/AIMS\\_final.pdf](http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/aims/whitepaper/AIMS_final.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, iii.

recognized that, despite differences in terminology, the fundamental archival objectives and outcomes required redefinition of the nature of the activities and tasks required to achieve them. To aid in disambiguating these terms, the project partners created a glossary, included in *Appendix A*.<sup>23</sup>

The term digital archivist does not appear in the glossary, nor are there any definitions of archival professionals.

The AIMS project included hiring professionals who were specifically referred to as “Digital Archivists.” Thus the report often contains references to “Digital Archivists” and “the Digital Archivists.” However, the title is inconsistently treated throughout the report (the italics are mine for emphasis):

“The first project milestone was the recruitment and hire of a *Digital Archivist* at each of the four institutions. All four *digital archivists* were initially appointed to fixed-term contracts. However, two of the four posts have subsequently become permanent (at Stanford and Virginia) and the other two (at Hull and Yale) were filled via a secondment. All four institutions will retain these experienced staff members assembled for this project. Once the *digital archivists* were oriented to the technical, organizational, and archival environment of their institution, the project proceeded via two workflows. First, the *Digital Archivists* and their colleagues processed the digital collections identified for the AIMS project, many of which were hybrid collections of digital and paper-based materials. The *Digital Archivists* shared information on all elements of their work.”<sup>24</sup>

Although the inconsistency in treatment is confusing (looking over the report, there are a number of minor editorial issues, so this treatment can be attributed in part to the need for an additional layer of proofreading), it becomes more confusing because the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., viii.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., vi.

AIMS framework also contains references to “digital archivists” in a more generic sense, that is, it distinguishes between a digital archivist and an AIMS digital archivist, for example, “The project team collaborated with others working in this area and with the digital archivist community through the following means.”<sup>25</sup> The fact that there is a specific and a generic use of the same term, and that the treatments are not consistent makes it harder to determine who is being referred to in certain cases.

The AIMS report also mentions findings of inconsistencies related to the title of digital archivist. In the section entitled “Archivist Community Events,” the report states, “There were relatively few posts with the explicit job title of digital archivist, and the precise requirements and responsibilities of these posts varied quite dramatically. In the UK there was already quite an established digital preservation community . . . . There are however, only a few examples of posts with the explicit job title of digital archivist.”<sup>26</sup> The report does not delve deeper into the numbers, nor into the varying requirements and responsibilities held by those who have the digital archivist title.

Although formally establishing a definition of the digital archivist title is out of the scope of the AIMS framework, which focused on practices, the discussion leaves a gap. Based on the AIMS “Digital Archivist” titles, it would seem that that AIMS members wish to establish a community of digital archivists with similar responsibilities. However, the report provides no framework within which that might occur; it just observes the differences among “digital archivists” without making any attempt to reconcile them.

Both the DACE and AIMS documents use digital archivist to refer to someone who works with born-digital materials, but do not offer a definition. The usages discussed above highlight both the wording and the discussions that lead to the lack of clarity in establishing an identity for digital archivists.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 174.



## Advertised Position Titles

This section discusses content analyses, focusing on other discussions of “digital” or “special collections” positions, particularly those that mention or offer perspectives on wording and terminology. It also provides a content analysis focusing on digital archivist position advertisements and what they say about the born-digital versus digitization responsibilities of a digital archivist. The advertisements reflect and even further complicate prevailing ambiguities particularly regarding the issue of digital archivists primarily working with born-digital versus digitization.

### *Literature Review of Content Analyses*

Content analyses of position advertisements are another means by which the language surrounding a title – whether the title itself or the responsibilities attending it – is considered. Although library and archival literature frequently feature such discussions, they are often focused more on categories of positions than individual titles.<sup>27</sup> Very few specifically consider special collections or archival positions. Two that do are Michelle Riggs' examination of required knowledge of encoded archival description in job descriptions and Kelli Hansen's look at special collections librarian positions.<sup>28</sup> Where Riggs' focus on an EAD skill set assisted her choice of terms to look for, she also notes the differences in wording of other required skills and a lack of clarity

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<sup>27</sup> Both John D. Shank's article, “The Blended Librarian: A Job Announcement Analysis of the Newly Emerging Position of Instructional Design Librarian,” *College & Research Libraries* 67, no. 6 (2006): 515–524, and Karen S. Croneis and Pat Henderson's article, “Electronic and Digital Librarian Professions: A Content Analysis of Announcements from 1990 to 2000,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28, no. 4 (2002): 232–237, drew my attention to Gary W. White, “Academic Subject Specialist Positions in the United States: A Content Analysis of Announcements from 1990 through 1998,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 25 (November 1999): 372–382. White divides content analyses into three categories, examining: types of positions, skill sets required, or general issues.

<sup>28</sup> Michelle Riggs, “The Correlation of Archival Education and Job Requirements since the Advent of Encoded Archival Description,” *Journal of Archival Organization* 3, no. 1 (2005): 61–79; Kelli Hansen “Education, Training, and Recruitment of Special Collections Librarians: An Analysis of Job Advertisements,” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 12, no. 2 (2011): 110–132.

in some advertisements.<sup>29</sup> Hansen also finds that lack of standardized wording for job titles to be a difficulty in conducting her analysis.<sup>30</sup>

A third, more recent, content analysis article with a special collections focus is “Job Advertisements for Recent Graduates: Advising, Curriculum, and Job-Seeking Implications,” in which Robert Reeves and Trudi Bellardo Hahn conducted a position advertisement content analysis for special collection librarians for entry level positions within the library and information science field.<sup>31</sup> They include jobs that list digitization experience, but say this is “either in terms of digital preservation or digitization for access.”<sup>32</sup> It is unclear whether working with born-digital material is included under those terms although digital preservation may imply that.

Karen Croneis and Pat Henderson looked at announcements for “Electronic and Digital Librarian Professions”<sup>33</sup> and discuss how the complexity of the electronic/digital environment is reflected in the variety of titles that carry those terms, and distinctions between “electronic” titles and “digital” ones.<sup>34</sup> Closer to the vein of this article, an examination of an emerging position title was undertaken by John D. Shank, who looked at announcements for instructional design librarian.<sup>35</sup> Shank also addresses the lack of consensus and definition for the instructional design librarian, claiming it is in part the result of the newness of the title. Ultimately, in going through advertisements he decided to focus on the specific use of

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<sup>29</sup> Riggs, p. 66–67.

<sup>30</sup> Hansen, “Education, Training and Recruitment,” 113.

<sup>31</sup> Robert K. Reeves and Trudi Bellardo Hahn, “Job Advertisements for Recent Graduates: Advising, Curriculum, and Job-Seeking Implications,” *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science* 51, no. 2 (2010): 103–119.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>33</sup> Karen S. Croneis and Pat Henderson, “Electronic and Digital Librarian Professions: A Content Analysis of Announcements from 1990 to 2000,” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28, no. 4 (2002): 232–237.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>35</sup> John D. Shank, “The Blended Librarian: A Job Announcement Analysis of the Newly Emerging Position of Instructional Design Librarian,” *College & Research Libraries* 67, no. 6 (2006): 515–524.

the words “Instructional Design” and “Librarian” the title.<sup>36</sup> In 2012, Jeonghyun Kim, Edward Warga, and William E. Moen looked at announcements for digital curation positions.<sup>37</sup> The introduction provides examples definitions of digital curation that include working with born-digital and digitization and the article later includes a breakdown of terms used in position titles, with 11% of titles containing the word “archivist.”<sup>38</sup>

Beyond demonstrating that the library and archival professions continue to engage in efforts to understand what skills professionals need, these analyses sometimes gave indications of problematic or difficult-to-interpret wording. The authors tended to see this as a stumbling block in the analysis. In the case of digital archivist, I saw wording as a stopping point; the issues I found in considering the position descriptions informed my curiosity about why the definition seemed so elusive.

### *Method and Findings*

As my initial interest in the differences in responsibilities for the title digital archivist was sparked by reading position announcements, I undertook an exploratory analysis of digital archivist positions advertised on the Archives and Archivists (A&A) listserv, using their 1993–2006 archives and their 2006 to present archives (the sample used for this article includes 2012, but not beyond).<sup>39</sup> I searched the listserv for messages containing the words “digital,” “archivist,” and “position.” Results that were not job advertisements were weeded out. Although a number of job announcements contained these words (for example, several Assistant Archivist position advertisements contained the word “digital”), any position title that did not include the words “digital”

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<sup>36</sup> Shank, 517. Shank does say that there were cases where librarian was not used in the title, but as a position classification.

<sup>37</sup> Jeonghyun Kim, Edward Warga and William E. Moen, “Competencies Required for Digital Curation: An Analysis of Job Advertisements,” *The International Journal of Digital Curation* 8, no. 1 (2013): 66–83. doi:10.2218/ijdc.v8i1.242.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 67, 71.

<sup>39</sup> The Archives and Archivists listserv for February 1993 to September 2006 are available at: April 1993 to September 2006: <http://listserv.muohio.edu/archives/archives.html>. The listserv archives for 2006 to present are available at <http://forums.archivists.org/read/?forum=archives>.

and “archivist” were also eliminated. I also searched through online sources of job advertisements including Code4Lib, ArchivesGig, and ALA jobList,<sup>40</sup> in this case, only searching for the term “digital archivist.” A Google Alerts request for this term also brought several more recent ads to light.

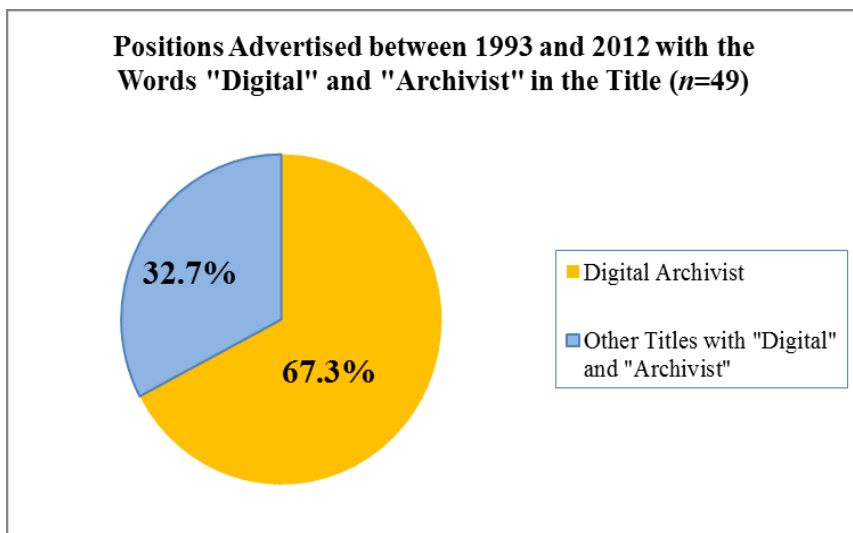
This left a sample of 49 ads. The majority of the titles in the sample (33, or 67%) of the ads were for “digital archivist” and the remainder were for titles such as “digital archivist librarian” or “digital resources archivist”<sup>41</sup> (See Figure 1). I decided to further narrow the focus by looking at the “digital archivist” positions, (with one exception, a title for “university and digital archivist”). I also eliminated job descriptions that appeared to be reposted in cases, for example if a position was advertised twice or more over the course of two to six months. There are some tricks and compromises in doing these sorts of eliminations, and as Robert Reeves and Trudi Bellardo Hahn stated, this process is “more of an art than a science.”<sup>42</sup> When the same or a similar ads appeared after more than a year, I chose to treat them as if they were additional positions (surmising that perhaps the person who had taken the job originally had moved on and that the employer could have made changes in wording), making the ad a “new” advertisement.

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<sup>40</sup> Job postings on the Code4Lib site are available at <http://jobs.code4lib.org/>; The Archives Gig website is available at <http://archivesgig.livejournal.com/>. ALA (American Library Association) jobList is available at <http://joblist.ala.org/>.

<sup>41</sup> The titles eliminated were: Project Archivist for Digital Records Program; Systems and Digital Resource Archivist; Digital Resources Archivist; University Archivist/Head, Digital Collections; Digital Librarian/Archivist; Archivist/Digital Specialist; Digital Programs Archivist (this appeared twice for the same institution in different years); Digital Archivist/Librarian; Digital Records Archivist; Digital Collections Archivist; Digital Preservation Archivist; Digital Preservation and Electronic Records Archivist; Archivist for Digital Collections; Digital Services Archivist; Digital Initiatives Archivist.

<sup>42</sup> Reeves and Bellardo Hahn, “Job Advertisements for Recent Graduates,” 108.



*Figure 1*

As Reeves and Bellardo Hahn note, the lack of accessible full descriptions can be an obstacle to collecting ads.<sup>43</sup> Many A&A posts were partial, listing a few lines of description before referring to a website that at one point contained the full job ad. Occasionally a more fleshed out advertisement was still available on an institution's website, or the posting had been given in full elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

The postings were analyzed in two ways. I set up an Excel spreadsheet to chart references in these descriptions to duties pertaining both to digitizing analog collections and working with digitized or born-digital material. I noted whether a description included both digitization and born-digital or if the language was vague or ambiguous: for example, references to "digital conversion," which could be interpreted as either converting analog to digital or digital to another digital format; "leading digital initiatives" was also difficult to interpret as referring to born-digital or digitization without other language that made this clearer. The majority of descriptions had some level of specificity

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, 105.

<sup>44</sup> Code4Lib (Code4Lib.org) had intact job ads going back to 2007. The job description for my position was also only a partial and could no longer be obtained online. To include this information, I used my own copy.

although those relying on overly broad language (such as “leading digital initiatives”) were opaque in their expectations. In many cases, the responsibilities were not limited to “digital” work, but also included more “traditional” responsibilities, such as public service or processing.

Each selected ad was also run through QSR NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. I reread each ad, coding nodes for references to digitization, born-digital, uncertain (again, “leading digital initiatives” with no other language to help translate), and for various “traditional” requirements. Where only part of the ad had been available, that part was coded as it often gave information about expectations regarding working with digitization versus born-digital.

The results show that “digital archivist” positions that are only for working with born-digital records were in the minority. Of those 33 positions that held the title digital archivist, nine (27%) used the term born-digital and did not refer to digitization; nine (27%) used the terms digitize, digitizing, or digitization without reference to born-digital; 12 (37%) referred to both digitization or digitizing and born-digital; three (9%) used neither term (see Figure 2).

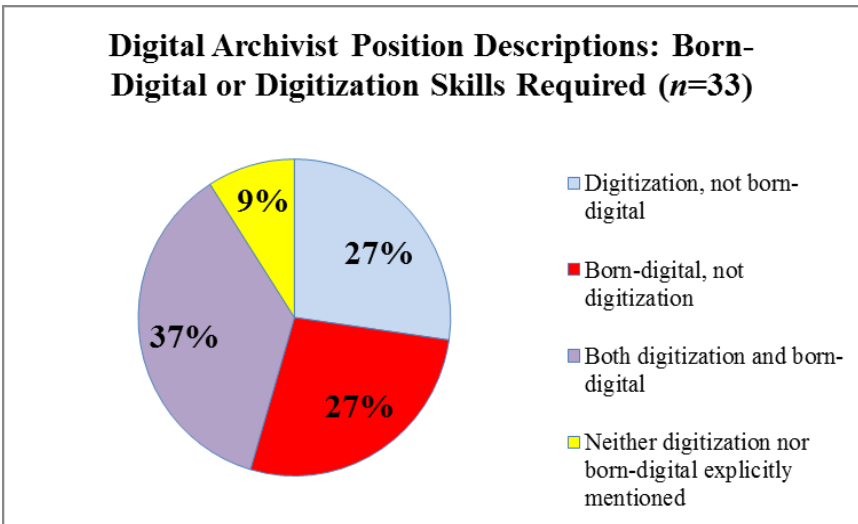


Figure 2

These position descriptions are presumably one of the reasons why the authors of the AIMS framework found such disparities between titles. The advertisements also indicate that digital archivists are expected to perform many of the traditional responsibilities of archival jobs, including reference, processing, and writing and encoding finding aids.<sup>45</sup>

### **Implications and Future Directions**

Although position descriptions tend to be broad, it is important that a description makes clear what skill sets are needed for a position to be successful and effective. Members of the archival and library professions also need to acknowledge that a professional title may not always signify a particular skill set: if an institution's digital archivist is a digitization specialist, further training will be necessary to work with born-digital. A student interested in a course for digital archivists needs to investigate the course to ensure that its content matches the skill set they seek to acquire. Perhaps the most crucial factor is that members of the archival community understand the differences in meaning and can communicate them to each other along with the administrators of their units and libraries.

In the future, it would be worthwhile to survey and interview digital archivists to determine what their responsibilities regarding digitization and born-digital work are, whether their responsibilities adequately reflect the advertisements for their positions or if their responsibilities have changed in the meantime, and what impact, if any, the ambiguity has on them and their work. It would also be worth looking at other titles used for archivists performing digitization and born-digital work to see where their responsibilities align with digital archivists. Another area to explore is other requirements of the position, such as educational background and a more thorough breakdown of which "traditional" archival skill sets are found in these position advertisements.

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<sup>45</sup> The initial intention of this article was to consider the different responsibilities, but through the course of research, I saw the need to focus on the larger definition of digital archivist, particularly as it pertained to born-digital versus digitization.

## **Conclusion**

This article has shown how the use of the title digital archivist reveals both a fault line and a lack of clarity in the archival profession. The term lacks a concrete definition, even in literature that considers the work of digital archivists, and it is often conflated to derive from the more solidly-defined “digital archives.” Although there are assertions that a digital archivist works with born-digital materials, many of the advertisements for digital archivists indicate responsibilities for digitization work. Given differing institutional needs and budgets, it is unrealistic to expect that these duties will always be performed by different people and that such blurred lines of responsibilities will always occur. However, it would also be useful for a standard-bearer such as the Society of American Archivists to include a definition of digital archivist in its glossary.

Terminology issues will most likely always exist within the archival profession. It is useful to keep its “elastic” properties in mind; indeed, terminology should evolve as our missions do. However, it would help avoid confusion if we make the effort to acknowledge and examine rather than dismiss differences and ensure that a definition is established, even if only within a particular context. In the instance of digital archivists, it would be useful if we could balance a greater need for clarity with the understanding that it is unlikely that one uniform definition will ever exist.

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## Metadata and LAMs: Lasting Collaborative Success

*Felicia J. Williamson*

*“Collaboration brings new users to collections.”<sup>1</sup>*

### Introduction

As Muriel Foulonneau writes, “at the heart of collaboration lies the harmonization of collections and services.” As more and more material becomes available through cultural heritage institutions, it has become part of many institutions’ mission to make these materials available online. Indeed, “the ubiquity of online access inspires a vision of a single search across *all* collections, without regard to where the assets are housed or what institutional unit oversees them.”<sup>2</sup> It is an expectation at many institutions to have online exhibits that coincide with physical exhibits. Moreover, it has become apparent that better access can be accomplished when institutions share information to reach their audiences.

In today’s information environment – where new users expect to access materials online – libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs) face external pressure to increase their web presence. For cultural heritage institutions – large, and especially small – the cost is daunting. Nonetheless, “by digitizing their collections, cultural heritage institutions can make information accessible that was previously only available to a select group of researchers.”<sup>3</sup> This is a benefit that has drawn many a LAM to the precipice of a collaborative effort based on metadata interoperability. This article will discuss the use of metadata in

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<sup>1</sup> Liz Bishoff, “The Collaboration Imperative,” *Library Journal* 129, no. 1 (January 2004): 34.

<sup>2</sup> Muriel Foulonneau and Jenn Riley, *Metadata for Digital Resources: Implementation, Systems Design and Interoperability* (Oxford: Chandos, 2008): 118; Diane Zorich, Günter Waibel and Ricky Erway, “Beyond the Silos of the LAMs: Collaboration Among Libraries, Archives and Museums,” (Dublin, OH: OCLC Research, 2008), accessed June 10, 2013, <http://www.oclc.org/content/dam/research/publications/library/2008/2008-05.pdf>.

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

LAMs, focusing on best practices resulting from American attempts to utilize uniform metadata standards to collaborate and offer the best, comprehensive access to materials in LAMs.

## Metadata

The most common definition of metadata is that it is “data about data” – another way to understand metadata is that it is all the information necessary to identify and retrieve a digital object. Historically, catalog records, finding aids, and museum artifact descriptions have formed the metadata backbones of LAMs. Thus, “good metadata makes it possible to catalog and effectively present digital information to the public.” For metadata to be good, it must describe many aspects of the original object, whether born digital or not. Significantly, many metadata schema are currently in use and there is no single metadata scheme that is prevailing – the result is that a collaborative effort will often include multiple metadata schema that have to be reconciled.<sup>4</sup> To collaborate effectively, LAMs must grapple with this and many other complex technical issues. Good metadata, whatever the final conclusion, is key to collaborative success.

At the most basic level, metadata allows LAMs to keep track of materials for both their own institutional needs and for resource sharing or collaboration. At its best “metadata allows various functions to be performed on digital resources, for example, discovery, interpretation, preservation, management, presentation and re-use of objects.” For metadata to allow for discovery, interpretation, and preservation and so on and also be functional across institutions, the metadata must be interoperable. “Interoperability, at its most basic level, is the ability of different systems to talk to each other.”<sup>5</sup> If metadata does not transfer well from one system to another, it will either decrease the effectiveness of a collaborative effort, or in a worst case scenario force the collapse of the collaboration altogether. Indeed, as the following discussion of collaborative success will show – metadata interoperability is the cornerstone of a successful project.

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<sup>4</sup> Trevor Jones, “An Introduction to Digital Projects for Libraries, Museums and Archives,” <http://images.library.uiuc.edu/resources/introduction.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> Foulonneau and Riley, *Metadata for Digital Resources*, 6, 119.

## Dublin Core

Most collaborative projects utilize some form of the Dublin Core metadata element set. “The Dublin Core (aka the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set), created in 1995, is a set of fifteen generic elements for describing resources. These are: Creator, Contributor, Publisher, Title, Date, Language, Format, Subject, Description, Identifier, Relation, Source, Type, Coverage, and Rights.” The Dublin Core was established at the outset of the internet era and has international reach. Significantly it informs the many metadata schema that have grown up in the archival field, including METS, MODS, etc. The Dublin Core describes “a wide range of networked resources ... by a cross-disciplinary group of professionals from librarianship, computer science, text encoding, the museum community, and other related fields of scholarship.”<sup>6</sup> The fact that a cross-disciplinary group created Dublin Core is perhaps foretelling of its use for LAM collaborations as inherently cross-disciplinary endeavors.

Diane Hillmann explains a concept that comes up but is often not explained in many of the collaborative project descriptions – the use of qualified versus unqualified Dublin Core elements. The Dublin Core has fifteen optional elements, all of which have a set of qualifiers which further identify that particular piece of metadata. Thus, the use of “qualified” Dublin Core metadata means applying elements that are more descriptive due to the use of these “qualifiers” while unqualified metadata use the elements in their original form. Earlier projects relied on unqualified metadata while more recent projects recommend the use of qualified elements.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Diane Hillmann, “Dublin Core Metadata Initiative,” accessed November 26, 2010, <http://dublincore.org/documents/2001/04/12/usageguide/>; Carol Godby, Jeffrey A. Young and Eric Childress “A Repository of Metadata Crosswalks,” *D-Lib Magazine* 10, no. 12 (December 2004), accessed October 11, 2013 <http://www.dlib.org/dlib/december04/godby/12godby.html>; Hillmann, “Dublin Core Metadata Initiative.”

<sup>7</sup> “The Dublin Core metadata elements fall into three groups that roughly indicate the type of information stored in them: (1) elements mainly to the Content of the resource, (2) elements related mainly to the resource as Intellectual Property, and (3) elements related mainly to the Instantiation of the resources... Content (Title, Subject, Description, Type, Source, Relation, Coverage), Intellectual Property (Creator, Publisher, Contributor, Rights) and

Further, Dublin Core is often built into crosswalks to enable metadata interoperability. As Katherine Timms writes, “because it [Dublin Core] can be commonly applied in all three cultural heritage sectors (libraries, archives and museums), it can also serve as the standard to which descriptions can be mapped using crosswalks for use in building integrated systems.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, the core set of either qualified or unqualified Dublin Core elements are set up alongside either MARC or EAD or the legacy descriptive metadata standards used by the agencies involved in the collaboration. The crosswalk is put in place to link one common element to another from standard to standard, which allows for true descriptive depth and interoperability and has been shown to increase the usability, flexibility and worth of the metadata sharing operation. The reach of Dublin Core is expanded by implementing Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, even though few institutions are taking this step.

LAM collaborations have the end goal that they will provide more content online for a wider audience. To do this, LAM collaborators are turning to new technology and have commonly relied on meta-mark-up to enable this functionality. “The most common way to associate metadata with web-accessible content is to embed the metadata in the identical object that it describes. If the object is an HTML document, metadata can be embedded by use of <meta> elements... the metadata can then be harvested and indexed by Internet search engines.”<sup>9</sup> While this allows for in-depth access to collections, it also requires investment by the LAM collaborators to enrich their metadata through the use of standardized tagging. The long-term payoff is there, but there must be the drive to make this happen across departments and even across institutions. When evaluating true costs and benefits of a collaborative project, stakeholders should

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Instantiation (Date, Format, Identifier, Language).” Sheila S. Intner, Susan S. Lazinger, and Jean Weihs, *Metadata and Its Impact on Libraries* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2005): 32-33.

<sup>8</sup> Katherine V. Timms, “Arbitrary borders? New Partnerships for Cultural Heritage Siblings – Libraries, Archives and Museums: Creating Integrated Descriptive Systems” (M.Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2007): 108.

<sup>9</sup> Priscilla Caplan, *Metadata Fundamentals for All Librarians*, (Chicago: American Library Association, 2003): 45.

keep this perimeter in mind. Further gain comes from implementing the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting, though it requires an added level of planning and expertise.

### **Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting**

The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) is a system that enhances access to metadata for the purpose of sharing and thereby, increase interoperability. The OAI-PMH crawls xml-structured metadata produced by museums and archives, and streamlines the process for harvesting the metadata and producing search results in the web environment. To participate, a repository must sign up and “open” their metadata to the crawling process. Multiple sets or types of metadata records can be searched by the OAI-PMH as long as they are validated and adhere to XML structures. “The OAI ... stands for the Open Archives Initiative and seeks to develop and promote interoperability standards that facilitate the efficient dissemination of content.”<sup>10</sup> The PMH takes the OAI several steps further. Once metadata meets a minimum standard, the harvester will collect it and return search results for a particular repository. It is, essentially, a metadata aggregator.<sup>11</sup>

The strength of OAI-PMH is that it “allows OAI provider systems to serve up any metadata schema that can be validated against an available SML Schema Definition.” which facilitates a flexible, if complex, data combing structure for large quantity caches of metadata records. However, the fact that practitioners make decisions about “mapping metadata from one representation into unqualified Dublin Core” and then create crosswalks to existing metadata schema – for instance, EAD or MARC – which are then combed by OAI-PMH to produce web results explains how the theory of OAI-PMH becomes difficult to put into practice. Significantly, OAI-PMH may be of substantial use and applicability to those repositories which update their records and upload large batches of records often – this explains why OAI-

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<sup>10</sup> Intner, et. al., *Metadata and Its Impact on Libraries*, 54.

<sup>11</sup> Carl Lagoze, “The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting,” accessed November 25, 2010, <http://www.openarchives.org/OAI/openarchivesprotocol.html>.

PMH has been adopted by agencies like NASA.<sup>12</sup>

While these problems should be on the radar for any group of collaborators about to embark on a metadata project, Sheila Intner writes this summation:

“Although there has been progress toward a default global metadata standard – unqualified Dublin core – as well as toward a global meta-language in which to describe the digital objects of various communities – XML – and a metadata framework in which to wrap the multiplicity of metadata schema these communities created to describe these objects – RDF – implementing the OAI has shown, among other things, that the problem of interoperability still requires a variety of assessment activities to guide plans for the long-term sustainability of the services established.”<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, Hillman writes that “the flexibility and lack of precision inherent in simple DC also allow its inconsistent application. Our experience corroborates earlier work suggesting that ongoing efforts to map subject terminologies and harmonize ontologies are necessary to achieve a high level of functional interoperability.”<sup>14</sup> The most successful, long-term collaborations built LAM-specific ontologies, metadata-crosswalks, and were able to adjust their technology to best serve retrieval needs.

## Literature Review

The literature on metadata and collaborative projects within LAMs can be divided into two main subject areas: the technical issue of metadata and its use for LAM collaboration and specific

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<sup>12</sup> Intner, et al. *Metadata and Its Impact on Libraries*, 55-56; Chu Churngwei, Walter E. Baskin, Juliet Z. Pao, and Michael L. Nelson, “OAI-PMH Architecture for the NASA Langley Research Center Atmospheric Science Data Center,” in ECDL Proceedings of the 10<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Research and Advanced Technology for Digital Libraries, 2006, accessed October 14, 2013, <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.75.5304>.

<sup>13</sup> Intner, et al. *Metadata and Its Impact on Libraries*, 55-56.

<sup>14</sup> Diane Hillmann and Elaine L. Westbrooks, eds. *Metadata in Practice*, Chicago: American Library Association, 2004. 175.

metadata collaborative projects in American LAMs. LAM collaborative projects moved from relying on Dublin Core as a sole metadata standard to more complex technological applications. Priscilla Caplan provides a fundamental interpretation of metadata including excellent explanations of interoperability, controlled vocabularies, and syntax. Hillman, Foulonneau, and Trevor Jones<sup>15</sup> take this fundamental understanding and apply it to more complex technologies and their application, explaining how the methods with which metadata is applied can enhance the long-term success of a collaborative project.

Throughout the literature, discussions of new approaches or technologies that can overcome the potential shortcomings of either Dublin Core<sup>16</sup> or OAI-PMH<sup>17</sup> emerge. Metadata crosswalks are a recurring theme as well as the need for federated searching: “Simultaneously searching multiple databases via a single interface or portal is known as federated searching or meta-searching.” There is a recurring interest or willingness to invest in the “development of high functioning federated search”<sup>18</sup> capabilities. The needs of the end user drive technical innovation. Current researchers demand one-stop searching technology with an

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<sup>15</sup> Caplan, *Metadata Fundamentals for All Librarians*, 1-44; Hillmann and Westbrook, eds. *Metadata in Practice*, 20; Foulonneau and Riley. *Metadata for Digital Resources: Implementation, Systems Design and Interoperability*, 118; Jones. “An Introduction to Digital Projects for Libraries, Museums and Archives.”

<sup>16</sup> Dublin Core Metadata Initiative, <http://www.dublincore.org/metadata-basics/>, accessed December 1, 2010. “Early Dublin Core workshops popularized the idea of “core metadata” for simple and generic resource descriptions. The fifteen-element “Dublin Core” achieved wide dissemination as part of the Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting (OAI-PMH) and has been ratified as IETF RFC 5013, ANSI/NISO Standard Z39.85-2007, and ISO Standard 15836:2009.”

<sup>17</sup> Lagoze, “The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting.” “The Open Archives Initiative Protocol for Metadata Harvesting” (referred to as the OAI-PMH in the remainder of this document) provides an application-independent interoperability framework based on *metadata harvesting*. There are two classes of participants in the OAI-PMH framework: *Data Providers* administer systems that support the OAI-PMH as a means of exposing metadata; and *Service Providers* use metadata harvested via the OAI-PMH as a basis for building value-added services.”

<sup>18</sup> Timms, “Arbitrary borders?,” 99; Zorich, et. al., “Beyond the Silos of the LAMs,” 17.

intuitive interface, but the metadata infrastructure necessary for that sort of searchability requires substantial expertise.

In response to the changing needs of patrons in addition to shrinking budgets, more LAMs have turned to collaboration in the online environment. Thus, a second area in the literature focuses on collaborative projects in American LAMs. Many of these projects are IMLS funded and are meant to gather local or state-wide materials and provide increased access to materials through unified, searchable metadata. For an introduction to the basics of LAM collaboration including funding and patron expectations, see Jennifer Novia's work in *LAM Collaboration*. Novia explains that the ability to present online surrogates of the varied items in the collections of LAMs forced the issue of collaboration on to potential collaborative partners – and made the idea of sharing access in the online environment (as well as funding streams) seem not only possible but desirable. A recurring example of an ideal collaborative project is the Colorado Digitization Project, which is discussed in an article by Brenda Bailey-Hainer.<sup>19</sup> This project is archetypal in many ways, but was phased out in 2010. As one of the first large collaborative digitization projects based on shared metadata and interoperability, the Colorado Digitization Program stood out as an example for other regional and intuitional collaborations that followed.

A current, successful statewide LAM collaborative is the Publication of Archival, Library & Museum Materials (PALMM)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Jennifer Novia, "Library, Archival and Museum (LAM) Collaboration: Driving Forces and Recent Trends," *Endnotes: The Journal of the New Members Round Table* 3, no. 1 (October 2012); Brenda Bailey-Hainer and Richard Urban, "The Colorado Digitization Program: A Collaboration Success Story," *Library Hi Tech* 22, no. 3 (2004): 254-262.

<sup>20</sup> "Publication of Archival, Library & Museum Materials (PALMM) is a cooperative initiative of the public universities of Florida to provide digital access to important source materials for research and scholarship. PALMM projects may involve a single university or may be collaborative efforts between a university and partners within or outside of the state university system. PALMM projects create high-quality virtual collections relevant to the students, research community and general citizenry of Florida." Publication of Archival, Library & Museum Materials (PALMM) (2012), accessed June 28, 2013, <http://palmm.fcla.edu/>.



project. This project, like a similar project in Texas – TARO<sup>21</sup> – maintains a strong federated searching function that allows researchers to search across a multitude of state LAMs for materials through a simple online interface. PALMM is significant in that it presents a great deal of digitized content sourced from dozens of state agencies and repositories. It searches well and is easy to use and understand – and has incorporated interoperable metadata and a great deal of depth despite the diversity of source organizations. In contrast, TARO is an older project that simply searches online finding aids from participating institutions. TARO does not search digital images, and can only search the metadata of EAD finding aids – a limitation that excludes many potential institutional participants. Nevertheless, TARO provides searchable metadata for institutions across a large number of institutions and is easily searched.

There will likely be more projects like PALMM and TARO as regional organizations address the task of metadata unification as a group. Meanwhile, the next wave of U.S. collaborations are large institutional LAMs like the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum or the Smithsonian as well as university systems. Diane Zorich and her co-authors explain such projects in “Beyond the Silos of the LAMs: Collaboration Among Libraries, Archives and Museums”<sup>22</sup> in which the authors explain the movement of LAM administrators along a collaboration continuum as they work toward a unified search option. While online collaboration and increasingly flexible web environments make more resource sharing and online representation of collections possible, the need for communication and flexibility is evident. Historic, free-standing silos within the LAM community and within the metadata architecture make collaboration a challenge,

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<sup>21</sup> “TARO (Texas Archival Resources Online) makes descriptions of the rich archival, manuscript, and museum collections in repositories across the state available to the public. The site consists of the collection descriptions or ‘finding aids’ that archives, libraries, and museums create to assist users in locating information in their collections. Consider these an extended table of contents which describe unique materials only available at the individual repositories.” Texas Archival Resources Online, accessed June 28, 2013, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/about.html>.

<sup>22</sup> Zorich, et al. “Beyond the Silos of the LAMs”: 10-16.

but the common goal of presenting collections online is a motivating force.

### **LAM Best Practices**

First, the literature is clear in recommending that planners examine the needs of their user population and look at comparable projects – mining the literature for free advice before carefully choosing the metadata standard they will implement for the collaborative project. Indeed, while most of the literature mentions the use of Dublin Core as a basic template metadata scheme, recent articles are pushing for increased “technological and semantic interoperability.” As discussed above, to enhance interoperability LAMs will have to implement specific element structures based on a set of elements from the Dublin Core. Indeed, “stick to standards as much as possible, but if and when you diverge, document what has been done and why it was done.”<sup>23</sup> The current best practice is to tailor LAM-specific metadata set based on Dublin Core. Significantly, part of the lessons learned from other projects is that qualified Dublin Core might offer success for LAM collaborations.

Second, the use of a single metadata standard – Dublin Core – to map all other integral metadata records is a best practice. Successful LAMs take it further. “The dream of a single metadata standard is an illusion” and as such, “attempts to enhance consistency through the promotion of guidelines within communities and coordination across communities can be extremely valuable.” Thus, successful LAMs work through multilateral collaboration to encourage uniform application of the metadata elements that the institution itself deems most useful, and then the LAM sets up a structure to monitor and clean up the metadata records already in place. This enables the creation of uniform, good metadata from a variety of creator institutions or departments and, in the long-term, enhances interoperability. LAMs can take this even further if they are able to “anticipate future uses of your data.”<sup>24</sup>

Third, it is important that any LAM collaboration take steps to build up the technical infrastructure that will allow for long term

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<sup>23</sup> Timms, “Arbitrary borders?”: 96; Hillmann, *Metadata in Practice*, xvi.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, xvi, 226.

success of a large technical undertaking, utilizing financial and human resources efficiently. To have technical infrastructure that will facilitate long-term success, collaborative partners should assess the state of their servers, choose a central management team and support staff and find a functional communication medium that works for all participants. Having the support and open communication lines with the IT department as well as the grant or departmental funding sources are two key elements for collaborative success.

Fourth, people matter. Like any team project, a LAM collaborative project is dependent on the people who work on the team. The complexities of a LAM collaboration demand flexibility and open-mindedness. “LAM professionals who understand issues surrounding different types of collections and collecting institutions, and who are not rigidly wedded to their own professional traditions, bring an open-mindedness that allows them to embrace ideas from other professions in the interests of the collaboration.”<sup>25</sup> Give and take will make or break a collaborative project.

It is imperative that a large, collaborative project involve the staff of all participating institutions or departments. Because staff members rather than department heads will often implement large projects on a day to day basis, their insights are invaluable. Moreover, if staff feel invested, their ongoing participation will increase. In addition, it is important to have a point person or people who are available and known to the program implementers. If those people are at the helm of a project and are either unavailable due to the demands of their other job duties or leave their position, the project will often fall on hard times. It is important to line up a trusted replacement and to always maintain open communication with all stakeholders. Transparency is important, as is the ability to ask questions and be confident that ideas, concerns and feedback will be heard and also responded to. Having a group email might be sufficient, as long as someone, or a group, take the responsibility to answer questions and concerns.

Finally, once the LAMs have put in so much planning and preparation, it is imperative to use the skills of great programmers

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 27.

to produce an interface that allows for intuitive searching across collections. “One ideal feature of a landscape is that it should be transparent to the user. The professional and technical complications of collection versus item description and metadata format, content and aggregation should not be allowed to adversely affect the user’s interaction with the environment; their experience should be as seamless as possible.”<sup>26</sup> If the search interface helps the end user understand their results and increases the project’s visibility, it could help with ongoing sustainability through institutional buy-in and funding. Thus, a best practice for LAMs is to keep the end user in mind.

## **Conclusion**

The issues of legacy metadata, institutional politics, and monetary and technical roadblocks are enough to discourage even the most ambitious information professional. However, the benefits to be gained from a successful collaboration are legion. Not only do new audiences gain access to collections, but an institution or set of partner institutions/departments, gain a much better understanding of, and thereby control over, metadata. This has lasting benefit to organizations and their patrons. By applying some best practices and spending more time planning and building an infrastructure that will last – collaborative partners can build online environments that facilitate research for wider audiences on a deeper level than was previously possible.

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<sup>26</sup> Gordon Dunsire, “Future Information Environments: Deserts, Jungles or Parks?” (paper presented at Archives, Libraries, Museums 10 (AKM10), Porec, Croatia, 2006): 2, accessed December 1, 2010, <http://cdlr.strath.ac.uk/pubs/dunsireg/akm2006Futures.pdf>.

County Historical Commission as well as the Society of American Archivists. Since joining the faculty at SHSU's Newton Gresham Library as the new head of Thomason Special Collections in 2011, Williamson has instituted a program of instruction and outreach with the hopes of making its archival holdings more accessible to the campus and surrounding community.

## Attitudes About and the Effects of the Use of Student Assistants in Special Collections and Archives

Carol Waggoner-Angleton

### Introduction

As university special collections and archives attempt to deal with a continuing backlog of processing collections, the present economic situation, and the adoption of new processing philosophies, managers are impelled to examine the role of student assistants. This article explores the history of using student assistants in libraries and archives to determine whether using them can positively impact special collections and archives as well as how managers' attitudes about using them affect students' assigned tasks and duties.

In 1998, the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) conducted a survey of the state of special collections libraries in North America, releasing the final report in 2001. While *Special Collections in ARL Libraries* reported the state of special collections divisions to be good, this report was one of the first to highlight the high rates of unprocessed and uncataloged material in all formats contained in institutions. By 2003, the term "hidden collections" described "large unprocessed or under-processed backlogs of rare book, manuscript, and archival materials [that had become] a major problem in research libraries around the country."<sup>1</sup> Barbara M. Jones's white paper, *Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access to Unprocessed Special Collections Materials in North America's Research Libraries*, was one of the first to articulate the risks to the collections themselves if they remained hidden, risks that ranged from damage and theft of material, impedance of scholarship, and expense to the institution. This paper also started important discussions on the benefit of increased access to special collections materials, the

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Panitch, *Special Collections in Libraries: The Results of the 1998 Survey* (Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 2001): 49-50; Barbara M. Jones, *Hidden Collections, Scholarly Barriers: Creating Access to Unprocessed Special Collections Materials in North America's Research Libraries* (white paper, Association of Research Libraries Task Force on Special Collections, 2003): 1.

definition of access, and the necessity for different levels of access to aid discovery.

Clearly, coming to grips with “hidden collections” will mean for most repositories an additional expenditure of resources, in money, time, and available employees. Most of the survey libraries in *Special Collections in ARL Libraries* maintain special collections on a minimal budget, with 55.8% having less than \$1,000 per year to spend on support (staff and supplies). Of libraries surveyed, 23% reported less than one full time employee (FTE) and 52% reported no paraprofessional staffing. To process collections, 82% used professional staff, 53% used paraprofessionals, and 52% used student employees.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, staffing had risen somewhat, librarians working in ARL libraries averaged 2.8 FTE and assigned staff – staff designated for special collections, not temporary staff or “floaters” – to 2.3 FTE on average. An unpublished comparison in 2012 suggested that librarians assigned to special collections averaged 2.1 FTE librarians with 2.7 FTE for professional staff and .64 student assistants. Of the 51 libraries included in this comparison, 41% had more than one FTE librarian and 57% had more than one FTE staff, with only 15% employing student assistants. Part-time staff was not accounted for.<sup>3</sup> Submission reporting instructions allow for several employees to be counted as one FTE, therefore it is possible that institutions could be employing several part-time individuals that report as one FTE librarian or professional staff. Combining several individuals to fill one FTE position could create a discontinuity in the workflow, especially in the processing of collections.

More Product Less Process (MPLP) is at the same time a philosophical shift in processing theory as well as a suggested workflow process. Greene and Meissner’s 2005 paper, which formalized MPLP as a distinct way to view processing goals, defines a basic level of access to collections by establishing the

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<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth A. Sudduth, Nancy B. Newins, and William E. Sudduth, *Special Collections in College and University Libraries CLIP Note #35* (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2004): 5.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Bruner, “‘New U’ Comparators for Special Collections 2012” Internal Excel Spreadsheet, Reese Library Augusta State University (2012).

minimal necessary intellectual control to ensure discovery of collections, while also maintaining the security of collections. Having a collection's basic preservation needs addressed by a stable macro-environment, rather than conducting labor intensive tasks such as refolding or removing fasteners, articulated an approach that many archives already implemented. Processing collections, whatever their status, is time intensive. Various metrics studies have estimated processing times from 3.3 to 40 hours a linear foot, depending on the type of collection (19<sup>th</sup> century or modern) and the level of preservation work conducted.<sup>4</sup>

Continuing examination of MPLP has stressed the effective use of available resources to reduce backlog. In the context of academic repositories, student labor is a prime available resource. Small institutions have adopted MPLP to routinely process personal papers, corporate business records, and institutional records. Additionally, in a study cited by Stephanie H. Crowe and Karen Spilman, 91% of institutions where staff self-identify as having both processing responsibilities and additional duties have adopted MPLP in processing collections. Christopher J. Prom suggests that Greene and Meissner's data does not support a conclusion that MPLP reduces backlog, and his reanalysis advises additional study to support a correlation between MPLP and backlog. The original Greene and Meissner data in Prom's analysis supports a strong correlation between archives that effectively utilize student labor and size of backlog.<sup>5</sup> The backlog is least where student labor is utilized the most.

If we accept the premise that more manpower is necessary to process hidden collections, and that support budgets will remain low, where are we most likely to find this extra manpower? In

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<sup>4</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product Less Process: Revamping Traditional Scholarly Processing," *The American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (2005): 222-225.

<sup>5</sup> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Application While Less Appreciation: The Adopters and Antagonists of MPLP," *Journal of Archival Organization* 8, no. 3-4 (2010): 174-226; Stephanie H. Crowe and Karen Spilman, "MPLP @ 5: More Access, Less Backlog?" *Journal of Archival Organization* 8, no.2 (2010): 110-13; Christopher J. Prom, "Optimum Access: Processing in College and University Archives," *College and University Archives: Readings in Theory and Practice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009): 155-184.



academic libraries, given Prom's promising correlation, one solution is to increase the number of student assistants available to process collections or to ensure completion of basic departmental tasks. Prom's investigation indicates that increased student help could provide a solution to dealing with an institution's backlog of "hidden collections." An examination of the historical and established uses of student assistants in academic libraries will provide some insight in using students for this type of task.

### Literature Review

Student assistants and American academic libraries have a long association. This literature review highlights an over-reliance on library literature rather than literature unique to special collections and archives, largely because archival literature focuses heavily on student internships rather than student assistants. Rather than develop a separate literature, special collections and archives authors instead rely upon the library literature and extrapolate from it where library, archives, and special collections tasks resembled one another.

Student assistants were a fixture in American academic libraries in the 1800s and Academic libraries reported using student assistants to staff their institutions as early as 1853. The personal reminiscence of past leaders in the field bears this out. Harry Lyman Koopman recalls that in 1893 one third of his staff at Brown was composed of student assistants. (To be fair, the whole staff consisted of Brown, an assistant librarian, and a student assistant.) However, Koopman remained enthusiastic about student help and pointed to the 661 students employed at Brown's library by 1930 as proof of the growth in his institution. Initially, Koopman was less choosy about where he used his student assistants, recollecting that they had been responsible for significant reference and circulation work. However, as he discussed the duties of the 1930s student assistant, the work became less autonomous, more clerical in nature and more supervised.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Gail V. Oltmanns, "The Student Perspective," in *Libraries and Student Assistants: Critical Links*, ed. William K. Black (New York: The Haworth Press, 1995): 63; David A. Baldwin and Daniel C. Barkley, *Supervisors of Student Employees in Today's Academic Libraries* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited,

Few supervisors today could hire students using the criteria advanced by Mildred Camp in *Student Assistants and the College Library*. While acknowledging that some colleagues argued there was no aspect of library work that students could not do with adequate supervision, she believed that students could do routine, mechanical tasks as well as any trained staff person, therefore freeing the trained personnel to focus on more important duties. In fact, any work by students that demanded detailed supervision by staff was deemed poor economy. Additionally, she noted that the hiring pool should be limited to freshmen and sophomores as hiring upperclassmen wasted training and disrupted the library workflow. She discouraged hiring the most academically gifted because their personalities were not suited for painstaking detailed work and they were inclined to show too much initiative. Camp also warned against hiring the popular student; they would attract their friends to the library and this would disrupt the student's work. Yet even Camp agreed that more work could be accomplished with student help than without it.<sup>7</sup>

Charles Harvey Brown and H.G. Bousefield represent a traditional view of student assistants which occasionally persists today. Despite acknowledging that many libraries utilized student assistants to staff circulation and reference desks, they argued that it should be a last resort and a temporary means to deal with staff shortages. Instead, students should ideally be assigned work suitable for untrained workers with no responsibilities with contact with the public. The use of students in public service areas lowered the tone of the library and the dignity of the library profession.<sup>8</sup>

Helen Brown's survey of student assistants, conducted at the libraries of Vassar, Mount Holyoke, and Wellesley, confirmed that the institutions utilized students for the majority of repetitive clerical tasks. She acknowledged that the field debated two viewpoints about student assistants. One viewpoint held that student assistants were in libraries solely to address institutional

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2007): 5; Harry Lyman Koopman, "The Student Assistant and Library Training," *Libraries* 35 (1930): 87-89.

<sup>7</sup> Mildred Camp, "Student Assistants and the College Library," *Library Journal* 59 (1934): 923-925.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Harvey Brown and H.G. Bousfield, *Circulation Work in College and University Libraries* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1933): 53.

needs for efficiency and service; this side held that student duties should consist of the repetitive clerical tasks. The other viewpoint argued that student employment was an educational experience in its own right and they should be given work that complemented their subject of study.<sup>9</sup> Most practitioners advocated roles which fell between these poles.

Thinking about the role of student assistants, supervisors began to consider what benefits the students gained as library assistants. Lillian Guinn, writing in *Public Libraries*, agreed that students were of benefit to the library, stating “Student help can do satisfactorily much work which would be expensive and unwise to require of a trained library assistant.” She also articulated the less tangible benefits: students were an avenue for the library to be more connected to class work and their presence would make the library more inviting to student use. Additionally, this student pool could provide recruits to the library profession. Students benefited by developing skills in workplace cooperation and learning to fit in to a highly organized work culture.<sup>10</sup>

As early as 1932, Mary Elizabeth Downey articulated a major determiner in the ability of student assistants to work effectively in a library setting.

“So far as the attitude of college librarians is concerned our problem naturally resolves itself into two sides: on the one hand are those who do not see how the library can be run without the aid of student assistants and who feel that a greater amount of work can be done satisfactorily with them there so enthusiastic over having students share the work is to say there is nothing which they may not do under careful supervision... on the other hand are college librarians who do not know how to organize and manage such help, who do not have teaching ability, and so strenuously object to being bothered with

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<sup>9</sup> Helen M. Brown, “Conditions Contributing to the Efficient Service of Student Assistants in a Selected Group of College Libraries,” *College and Research Libraries* 5 (1943): 44-52.

<sup>10</sup> Lillian Guinn, “Student Help in the Library,” *Public Libraries* 30 (1925): 162-164.

student assistants. They feel that teaching and supervising the work of students has no part in their work as librarian and that none of it should be delegated to those not having come through a library school... [they] consider everything done in the library as belonging to their own particular province and that it must be the work only of these technically trained and authorized by sheepskin to do it. We are in sympathy with the former attitude.”<sup>11</sup>

Downey has kindred spirits in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Seventy-five years later, Kimberly Burke Sweetman wrote; “[t]here is nothing a well-trained student couldn’t do under careful supervision. Those who do not know how to organize and manage such help [are the ones who] so strenuously object to being bothered with student assistants.”<sup>12</sup>

In the late 1960s and early 1970s there was a shift in attitude to create assistant positions which challenged students and gave them more responsibility. Providing them with challenging work to perform was believed to be a key to retaining student workers. Students now are seen as team players in the successful academic library. They are consulted about the needs of users, the planning and evaluation of services, can be involved in reference service, circulation service, collection maintenance, clerical support, manuscript processing, bindery/preservation, processing, original cataloging, peer library information teams, and peer library instruction. And yet, even the progressive 1970s produced throwbacks. A student assistant management manual advises, “the primary duty for pages or student assistants is to shelve and shelf-read. Duties may be extended to include answering the telephone, (and renewing books by phone), mending books, preparing magazines for circulation, and desk work.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mary Elizabeth Downey, “Work of Student Assistants in College Libraries,” *Library Journal* 57 (1932): 417.

<sup>12</sup> Kimberly Burke Sweetman, *Managing Student Assistants: A How to Do It Manual for Librarians* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007): 1.

<sup>13</sup> David Gregory, “The Evolving Role of Student Employees in Academic Libraries,” in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 12; Donald J. Kenny and Frances O. Painter, “Recruiting, Hiring and Assessing Student Workers in

While the profession may be comfortable with using student assistants to supplement the work of librarians, tension still exists on using students in two areas: reference services and original cataloging. The debate over the use of student assistants is especially fierce and some practitioners still doubt the effectiveness of utilizing graduate assistants in reference and instruction roles.<sup>14</sup> Given that the bulk of work in special collections falls within reference provision and arrangement and description (cataloging), a deep seated bias against this type of assignment could play into the dearth of literature which exists for student assistants in the archives setting. However, a 1970 case study reported on efforts to expand reference service through the use of student assistants. The hypothesis for this study was that an upper-level college student could perform competent reference work in an undergraduate library staffed by one full-time reference librarian. The librarian would be available for detailed reference questions but students were trained to handle ready reference requests. Having undergone a brief orientation and basic training on locations of materials, catalog entry rules, and search techniques the service seemed effective. Several lines of continuing inquiry were outlined and it was believed there should be further investigation into more effective training.

A significant proportion of the profession, having determined that students assistants were in the library to stay, were more concerned how to effectively select, train, and supervise this sub-section of the workforce. Assuming that 95% of the student body would have some interaction with student assistants,

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Academic Libraries,” in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 41; Jeanne F. Voyles and Mark D. Winston, “The Changing Role of the Student Employee in a Team Based Organization,” in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 110; Alice E. Wright, *Library Clerical Workers & Pages (Including Student Assistants)* (Hamden, CT: The Shoestring Press or Linnet Books, 1973): 18.

<sup>14</sup> Karen Womack and Karen Rupp-Serrano, “The Librarian’s Apprentice: Reference Graduate Assistants,” *Reference Services Review* 28 (2000): para. 44; Phillip J. Jones, Janet H. Parsch and Vijith M. Varghese, “Graduate Assistants at the University of Arkansas Libraries: Past, Future and Significance,” *Arkansas Libraries* 62, no.2 (2005): 6-11.

candidate selection was critical.<sup>15</sup> Training, varied duties, and clear instructions were considered an aid to student morale. These factors, along with a careful choice of candidates, would reduce turnover and improve the economic return for unskilled help. The 1980s and 1990s saw an increase in the literature on selection, training, and supervision. A 1985 University of Virginia study made a series of recommendations to address three broad categories of issues: the development of well-articulated hiring processes; a concrete system of rewards and relationships; and an articulated training strategy accompanied by an investment of time to accomplish training goals.<sup>16</sup>

Modern manuals expand upon these principles and have value chiefly in the discussion of supervision methods and suggestions for clear and easy to understand documentation forms; Sweetman's work being an excellent illustration of this point.<sup>17</sup> Student management handbooks also elaborate on the position that to improve the training, efficiency, and retention of student assistants, the supervisor must be given training and support in hiring, scheduling, motivating, managing performance, and accommodating the disabled employee. Ultimately, the supervisor who cannot manage student assistants as useful members of the department misses the point of having student assistants at all. "The promise inherent in student workers is not fulfilled if librarians are not available for consultation and other services to faculty, do not serve on substantive campus-wide committees and do not contribute to scholarship and research in the field. [Successful management of student assistants] provides the time librarians need for academic leadership on campus."<sup>18</sup>

Assessment on user attitudes to student assistance for reference should be investigated, although this study revealed that

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<sup>15</sup> Cecil J. McHale, "An Experiment in Hiring Student Part-time Assistants," *Libraries* 36 (1931): 379-382.

<sup>16</sup> Louis Shores, "Staff Spirit Among Student Assistants," *Libraries* 34 (1929): 346-348; Oltmanns, "The Student Perspective," in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 70.

<sup>17</sup> Kimberly Burke Sweetman, *Managing Student Assistants: A How to Do It Manual for Librarians* (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007): Summary.

<sup>18</sup> Janice H. Burrows, "Training Student Workers in Academic Libraries. How and Why?" in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 77-86.

some students related much easier to help and instruction from their peers. Most surprisingly, the study suggested exploration into practitioner attitudes that all reference service must be conducted by professionals. Some believed that student assistants were capable of answering simple reference questions once they have the time to gain more experience and absorb more knowledge. Using students as effective supplements at the reference desk has been revisited and more attention has been paid to developing formal training that teaches students ready reference resources, OPAC searching techniques, strategies for handling and interpretation of citations, strategies for reference interviews, and the proper methods and techniques for referring questions to more qualified library staff.<sup>19</sup>

Besides reference services, literature directly addresses using students for cataloging projects. A microfilm cataloging project, which addressed microfilm that had been omitted in the migration to a Voyager ILS, trained student workers to search for bibliographic records, add these items to the catalog, and create basic catalog records if none were available. Detailed research on using student assistants in cataloging found that they were used for some cataloging tasks such as downloading of bibliographic and authority records, monographic cataloging and classification, assigning subject headings, checking authority controls, doing holdings database maintenance, and editing of 246 or 505 MARC tags.<sup>20</sup> This study reflected a continuing reluctance to assign student assistants to higher local cataloging tasks and focused on traditional technical services tasks: processing of materials, applying call number labels, security strips, and property stamps.

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<sup>19</sup> Arthur P. Young, "Student Assistants: A Report and a Challenge," *RQ* 9, no. 4 (1970): 295-297; David Gregory, "The Evolving Role of Student Employees in Academic Libraries," in Black, *Libraries and Student Assistants*, 4-28; Chris Neuhaus, "Flexibility and Feedback: A New Approach to Ongoing Training for Reference Student Assistants," *Reference Services Review* 29, no.1 (2001): para. 1.

<sup>20</sup> Cecilia M. Schmitz, "Revealing Hidden Collections: The Temporary Cataloging Project at Auburn University Libraries," *Technical Services Quarterly* 19, no.1 (2001): 47-61; Timothy Gatti, "Utilization of Students as Cataloging Assistants at Carnegie Category I Institution Libraries," *Library Resources and Technical Service* 49, no.1 (2005): 27-31.

Students are most often used in a higher level capacity when they provide skill sets that complement rather than duplicate traditional roles. Illustrated in a 1990 study, students performed higher-level cataloging for special projects that need language skills or subject knowledge the library cannot supply. Students were valued for their computer expertise as early as 1987 when students in a Colorado library took the lead on solving the library's signage problems because of their expertise with a Texas Instruments computer and a Hewlett-Packard graph plotter. As library computing services expanded through the 1990s, librarians relied on student assistants to perform tasks that required technical and computer skills with a high degree of accuracy, responsibility, effectiveness, and efficiency. Students assisting in library technology interacted with patrons in the following areas: using library homepage resources, email, Microsoft Office, printing, laptop use, course-based software, online registration, and digital imaging.<sup>21</sup>

Student assistants have also been good conduits to educate the student body in library specific issues like preservation awareness. Using the student assistants as a focus group allowed library personnel to plan strategies to educate the student body on care of materials. Preservation is one area of special collections and archives that made the earliest use of student assistants for department specific tasks. Elaine Smythe created training and workflow to enable student assistants to do preservation work on books. Students have continued to be utilized to undertake specific preservation tasks such as book repair and triage and collection condition surveys.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Joni Gomez and Johanne LaGrange, "A Chinese Challenge: Utilizing Students for Special Cataloging Projects," *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 12, no.1 (1990): 39-58; Susan Rewinkel, "Using Student Assistant Resources to Solve a Problem Creatively," *Colorado Libraries* 13 (1987): 25; Constantia Constantinou, "Recruiting, Training and Motivating Student Assistants in Academic Libraries," *Catholic Library World* 69, no.1 (1998): 20-23; Jana Reeg-Steidinger, Denise Madland and Carol Hagness, "Technology Student Assistants in Academic Libraries: We Can't Survive Without 'Em," *Technical Services Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2005): 65-75.

<sup>22</sup> Diane Kaufman and Jeanne M. Drewes, "Using Student Employees to Focus Preservation Awareness Campaigns," *Promoting Preservation Awareness in Libraries: A Sourcebook for Academic, Public School and Special Collections*



Barbara L. Floyd and Richard W. Oram were two of the first to write specifically on the use of undergraduates as archival employees.<sup>23</sup> The majority of supervisors interviewed believed that archives student assistants routinely performed higher-level tasks compared to students in other departments. While a manual was considered useful, because student assistant tasks in archives were rarely routine, supervisors thought that it was more useful to train students in a certain level of basic archival theory. *Student Assistants in Archival Repositories: A Handbook for Managers* (1992) is still a core publication for advice and management strategies but should be read in combination with the more recent Jeannette A. Bastian and Donna Webber's *Archival Internships: A Guide for Faculty, Supervisors, and Students* (2008). A comparison of both shows the evolution of the goals of archival internships.

Students are considered ideal to participate in many aspects of patron services in special collections and archives: to page and reshelve collections; photocopy material, monitor a reading room, carry out reader registration procedures, and answer simple reference questions.<sup>24</sup> These duties are not significantly different from tasks found elsewhere in the library. Mary C. LaFogg contends that students are capable, under supervision, of carrying out department specific tasks.

“Student assistants, usually under direct supervision, assist in the routine aspects of transportation, processing, and servicing of unique and confidential archival materials and other activities supporting the public, technical and administrative services functions of the department.

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ed. Jeanne M. Drewes and Julie A. Page (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1997): 124; Elaine Smythe, “Preservation on a Shoestring or What to Do Until the Conservator Comes,” *LLA Bulletin* (Winter 1993): 124-128; Mary Ellen Starmer, “Benefits of Practicum Students in Preservation: The Value of the Experience to the Department, Students and Field,” *Collection Management* 29, no. 2 (2005): 33-40.

<sup>23</sup> Barbara L. Floyd and Richard W. Oram, “Learning by Doing: Undergraduates as Employees in Archives,” *American Archivist* 55, no. 3 (1992): 444.

<sup>24</sup> Mary C. LaFogg, et al., *Student Assistants in Archival Repositories: A Handbook for Managers* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992): 31.

Student assistant tasks include the following: prepare and verify inventories against physical contents of collections, refolder, rebox and label material, stamp and/or number folders, arrange material in alphabetical, chronological or other order in accordance with a pre-determined plan of arrangement, do routine preservation work including: identifying and photocopying unstable materials, removing paper clips, staples, rubber bands and other damaging materials, type or input finding aids, inventories correspondence acknowledgements bibliographic records and other work in accordance with established formats and standards, retrieve and shelf collection material from adjacent and off – site storage areas, photocopy material for patrons for administrative purposes and collection preservation, do record keeping, invoicing, filing and data entry for files needed for administrative management, reference use, move, shelve and pack collection supplies and furniture, record requests from institution offices, make recommendations for arrangements and descriptions, take subject content notes for materials being processed, trace corporate or individual names and histories, and prepare cross references as directed by a supervisor.<sup>25</sup>

LaFogg advised managers who train students to rely on SAA's *Archival Fundamental Series*, which provides introductory through advanced how-to information and practical examples. LaFogg further advised consulting current professional literature to furnish background for tasks assigned to students.<sup>26</sup>

LaFogg, already aware of the backlog crisis, advocated the use of student assistants to alleviate it. "If there is a backlog because past resources have not kept pace with the actual rate of acquisitions and demands for services, this indicates how

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 1.

important it is to control this situation before it worsens or services are curtailed.”<sup>27</sup> M. Winslow Lundy explained how the University of Colorado Boulder utilized students to provide minimum level cataloging to address the backlog for two rare book collections. Methods developed by libraries to handle the backlog in new acquisitions for general circulation have rarely been applied to items in special collections, particularly if these departments were responsible for aspects of acquisitions or cataloging.<sup>28</sup> Adapting the current process for temporary records to special collections holdings reduced the backlog, but this project was confined to monograph collections which additionally had available records in OCLC which the student could modify and copy.

The Center for Primary Research and Training at the University of California Los Angeles has standardized a process that pairs students’ research needs with unprocessed or underprocessed collections, targeting both potential scholarship and the backlog of hidden collections. As described by Victoria Steele, an archivist trains students on arrangement and description techniques, often following more traditional processing guidelines rather than MPLP, resulting in high-quality finding aids.<sup>29</sup>

However, LaFogg, Lundy, and Steele utilized graduate student assistants similarly to the archives internships outlined in *Archival Internships: A Guide for Faculty, Supervisors and Students*. This guide stressed that archives supervisors must work closely with faculty advisors to provide a strong internship experience for students.<sup>30</sup> Relying on student internships is an option for institutions having library or archives schools or graduate degrees related to a collection’s strengths. Smaller repositories wishing to make use of undergraduates must extrapolate their goals and processes from the literature on library student assistants, such as the LaFogg and Bastian and Webber

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>28</sup> M. Winslow Lundy, “Providing Access to Special Collections with In-process Records,” *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 45, no.1 (2007): 39-58.

<sup>29</sup> Victoria Steele, “Exposing Hidden Collections: The UCLA Experience,” *C&RL News* 69 (June 2008): 316-317, 331.

<sup>30</sup> Jeannette Allis, Bastian, and Donna. Webber, *Archival Internships: A Guide for Faculty, Supervisors, and Students* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008): 20.

publications as well as Larry M. Brow's article that condenses archival processing down to three concise points for student training. Brow advises encouraging students to embrace their role as subject experts when processing collections, to be careful not to destroy any information about the papers being processed and to avoid the "toxic trap" of wondering if the collection will ever be of interest to anyone in particular.<sup>31</sup>

Modern literature on student assistants shows that libraries are encouraged to view students as a valuable asset, rather than a necessary curse or an answer to cheap if unreliable labor. Supervisors who view students as library ambassadors and beneficial resources do the most to ensure that students are trained to be valuable colleagues in providing good service. More emphasis is being placed on good training, clear directions, and multiple delivery methods of training to grow and nurture superior student assistants.<sup>32</sup> Documenting procedures can decrease training time and increase student efficiency.<sup>33</sup> Rather than assigning tasks that any student can accomplish, supervisors are now encouraged to assign tasks based on individual strengths and inclinations.

Attitudes on the capabilities of student assistants have changed over time and students are often seen as capable of accomplishing significant work within departments rather than solely as labor for repetitive tasks, though this attitude still exists. Students are particularly in demand to support libraries' technology needs or to enhance special programs. Adequate training and supervisor attitudes are the most important factors in developing quality student assistants and these factors also limit student turnover. Special collections and archives could use student assistants for a variety of tasks related to processing hidden collections, provided the procedures developed for graduate

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<sup>31</sup> Larry M. Brow, "'The Spiel' aka Processing Advice for Student Assistants," *Archival Outlook* no. 3 (April/May 2012): 26.

<sup>32</sup> Jane M. Kathman and Michael D. Kathman, "Training Student Employees for Quality Service," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 26, no. 3 (2000): 176-182; John Phil McLaney, Lisa E. Vardaman and Brian D. Webb, "Training Students Workers: A Survey of Alabama Libraries," *Alabama Librarian* 54, no. 1 (2004): 15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Gwen Meyer Gregory, *The Successful Academic Librarian: Winning Strategies from Library Leaders* (Medford, New Jersey: Information Today Inc., 2005): 5.

students can be applied to an undergraduate candidate pool. The literature gives no strong indication that undergraduate students cannot be used as supplemental labor.

There are two very important points to remember when considering hidden collections in general and especially in using student assistants to help deal with them. The goals for the collections must be clear. “Defining what constitutes access to hidden collections is crucial. Access in this case refers to a better understanding of the delicate balance between minimal intellectual control that enables use and minimal control that adds no value to researchers wanting to use collections.”<sup>34</sup> Without this, student help will be wasted. Archives and library cultural norms must also be overcome to utilize students to their fullest potential.

## Survey

A small scale survey was conducted to see what sort of tasks student assistants were performing in special collections and archives and what practitioners believed about using student assistants in their special collections and archives. The method used was the personal interview in order to examine opinions, facts, and stories from supervisors in order to benefit from their experiences and to formulate other possible avenues of inquiry when using student assistants to accomplish the work of academic special collection and archives.<sup>35</sup>

Out of several interviewing formats, I chose the semi-structured interview format in order to maintain interview flexibility. This type of interview allows for follow-up questions while retaining a schedule to cover the desired aspects of the topic. An interview schedule can consist of an outline that groups the topics to be covered or can consist of open-ended questions posed to the interviewee in either a fixed or varied order.<sup>36</sup> See the appendix for a copy of the interview schedule.

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<sup>34</sup> Elizabeth Yakel, “Hidden Collections in Archives and Libraries,” *OCLC Systems and Services* 21, no. 2 (2005): 96.

<sup>35</sup> Sabine Mertens Oishi, *How to Conduct In-Person Interviews for Surveys* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2003): 173.

<sup>36</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004): 113; G. E. Gorman, and Peter Clayton, *Qualitative*

Interviewees were chosen by using two criteria. First, the interviewee was employed by a University System of Georgia (USG) library. By having all subjects employed by the USG, it would control for the policies and funding mechanisms influencing the hiring and use of student assistants because all respondents would be constrained by similar restrictions enacted by the Board of Regents. Second, participants who met the USG qualification were chosen from the Society of Georgia Archivists (SGA) membership list because members tend to be supportive of research questions affecting the profession. Of 200 SGA members, 34 were affiliated with USG institutions. From this number, seven individuals agreed to be interviewed resulting in a return of 20% of the sampled population. While interviewee selection was more a result of purposive sampling, a case could also be made for convenience sampling because of access to the SGA membership list.<sup>37</sup> However, I did invite SGA members to participate in the interviews who were not known personally to the interviewer in order to mitigate bias that could be introduced by convenience sampling. The likely reasons for the small sample size include the compressed timeline available for the research project and the interview period falling during the summer months when many individuals take vacation time.

The small sample size dictated that I could not use any of the subjects as pre-test subjects for the interview schedule. The interview schedule was pre-tested on a colleague that did not fit the criteria for the interviewees. Interviewees were contacted by email. The email outlined the purpose of the interview and individuals were asked to reply with a preferred date and time for an interview if they wished to participate. A follow up email was sent with instructions on how to participate. A Wimba interview room was set up to have archived recordings that I could listen to later to supplement and verify notes taken. Due to the brief timeline, the interviews were not transcribed. The interview archive was destroyed at the end of the project to protect interviewee confidentiality. This combination telephone/internet method was

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*Research for the Information Professional* (London: Facet Publishing, 2005): 128.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 129.

chosen in order to accurately recall the substance of the interviews, and to eliminate any bias which could be introduced by the body language of the interviewer as well as a concession to the short timeline and the distance between the researcher and the interviewees. However, a telephone interview takes some control away from the interviewer. "In comparison with the personal interview the person being interviewed over the telephone tends to find it easier to terminate the interview before it is finished."<sup>38</sup>

## Findings

The population interviewed ranged from mid-level managers and directors of departments to a director of libraries and archives. These individuals served institutions having from 6,000 to 35,000 students. Several of the special collections were offshoots of other departments, such as Access Services or a subdivision of access and reference. Most were library departments in their own right and one was a division of a combined cultural heritage organization that included a gallery, museum, and Holocaust interpretive center.

One department had no student assistants, but was expecting to have access to five student research assistants as part of a grant funded project. One department had decided not to hire student assistants and to divert that funding to hiring a full-time paraprofessional. Two departments had one student assistant, one department had two assigned and funded student assistants, and one department had four to five student assistants.

Two departments engaged in more traditional archival processing because they had small collections; one of these said that they had eliminated their backlog. The remaining departments believed that their methods more closely aligned with MPLP. Most thought that the use of MPLP was a necessity and one department stated that MPLP had helped make a considerable dent in their backlog. However, most of the MPLP practitioners said that the collection being processed would be the greatest determinant of whether or not to use an MPLP approach. One practitioner said

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<sup>38</sup> Ronald L. Powell and Lynn Silipigni Connaway, *Basic Research Methods for Librarians* 4th ed. (Westport CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2004): 157.

that as a lone arranger, they had no choice but to employ an MPLP approach.

Respondents varied in the tasks they felt could be assigned to students and each respondent labeled different tasks as low-level or high-level. One respondent stated that all of the tasks would be assigned to students, depending on the collection and the strengths of each individual student. Most respondents believed that most of the tasks were low-level, but acknowledged that the collection itself would determine whether a task would be low-level or high-level. One respondent said that a third level needed to be created, the “it depends” to assess how tasks would change importance dependent upon the collection. Other tasks or projects mentioned by the interviewees that could be assigned to student assistants included:

- Constructing displays – both creating display content and mounting displays
- Functioning as a “teacher’s aide” during archives instruction sessions
- Answering the telephone and taking messages
- Functioning as exhibit docents
- Setting up facilities for special events
- Hosting refreshment tables for special events
- Gathering data for grant applications
- Choosing storage materials for realia
- Compiling supplies orders with supervisor approval
- Creating collections from “mystery box donations”
- Designing webpages
- Training other student assistants
- Creating signs
- Updating brochures and other publications

A number of methods are used to recruit student assistants: keeping an informal list of students who inquire about positions; using referrals from academic departments or other student assistants; recruiting from access services; choosing from a pool of student volunteers; or observing likely students during class sessions requested by academic departments as part of course



content. One department specifically sets the requirements that student assistants must be history majors with a 3.0 or better grade point average in their coursework. Graduate students who work in the department must be masters' candidates in either history or library science.

The training of student assistants varied as well. In some cases, student training was very informal and consisted of personal instruction and task shadowing. Student training manuals were used by other departments and one respondent mentioned that collections care was specifically addressed. Another department developed a training process that all student volunteers and interns must undertake. Students were given vocabulary sheets of terms and a quiz to acquaint students with archival "buzz words," exercises on space management and environmental standards, readings on basic archival processes, and an assignment to visit another archives to observe the similarities and differences in their operations. Additional skills were taught in group sessions with the supervisor demonstrating and performing the task with the students. Another program provided two student training manuals: one that addressed basic archival processes and another that addressed database imputing. Students were also required to read on the history of the university, attend the volunteer orientation to learn basic tasks, perform task shadowing, and ask a lot of questions. In reviewing the interviews, it was clear that the respondents who believed that students were capable of valuable work to the department and were the most enthusiastic about their inclusion had also spent the most effort to develop training programs for their students and spent time supervising student assistants in the acquisition of new skills.

Attitudes towards student assistants ran the full gamut of positions uncovered in the literature review. One department had decided to cease using student assistants because there was not enough employee continuity, the work outcomes were too varied, and they preferred to invest in a paraprofessional who was motivated to invest time and continuing education in the position. However, most believed that the students did the work to adequate or professional levels, allowed the department to accomplish more work, and brought enthusiasm and fresh eyes to the work. One department acknowledged the necessity of accepting a lack of

worker continuity because eventually students would graduate. Others thought that there was very little turnover in student employees, that the students appreciated the benefits of a campus job, and, more importantly, were drawn to the library or department because of a positive work atmosphere. One respondent conveyed that mentoring and helping students have work experience that added to their resumes or graduate school applications was an obligation to the profession.

### **Recommendations for further study**

The findings indicate that a new interview schedule should be developed to focus on tasks specific to special collections and archives. The task list – influenced heavily by the library environment – revealed no consensus among the interviewees when asked to assess the effectiveness of student assistants in a special collections and archives environment. Designating tasks as low-level or high-level, as suggested by the results of the literature review, did not help clarify what were appropriate assignments for student assistants. As the literature review demonstrated, questions about student assistants need to be answered with archives specific solutions rather than using solutions extrapolated from a similar but still different environment.

A first step for further study will be to develop a new list of tasks which can be assigned to student assistants; a list which focuses on tasks done in archives. The training manuals provided to student employees of special collections and archives should be reviewed to discover what tasks are commonly assigned to student assistants. This study should then be repeated using a new task list, preferably on a larger population of respondents.

### **Conclusion**

It is not unreasonable to consider the use of student assistants for tasks in special collections and archives; the literature review shows that student assistants have been part of American academic libraries for well over a century. Further, student assistants are employed in a representative sample of the USG special collections and archives and the majority of those institutions included in this sample identify with MPLP as a management standard. There is an indication that institutions most

satisfied with their student assistants employ a well-thought training process, which is necessary to achieve results. Institutions wishing to implement MPLP as their management philosophy to deal with collections backlog will not be deviating from accepted practice if they consider using student assistants to fill their labor deficit. However studying the use of students specifically in the special collections and archives environments would provide a more solid body of evidence on which to assess their effectiveness.

**Carol Waggoner-Angleton** received her Master's in Library and Information Science from Valdosta State University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies from Aberystwyth University in Wales (U.K.). She is a book reviewer for *Provenance* and has contributed to the *Georgia Library Quarterly*. Carol is also an active member of several professional associations, including the Society of American Archivists, the Society of Georgia Archivists, the Georgia Library Association, the South Carolina Association of Archivists, and the CSRA Library Association.

## Appendix

Interview schedule

Interviewee #

Date

Title or responsibilities

1. Tell me a little about your institution.
2. Tell me a little about your collections or department.
3. Number of students in department.
4. Does your department have a traditional processing philosophy or one aligned more closely with MPLP?
5. Of the following tasks, which ones do you routinely assign to students? (blank means no check means yes)
  - a. prepare and verify inventories against physical contents of collections
  - b. refolder, rebox and label material
  - c. stamp and/or number folders,
  - d. arrange material in alphabetical, chronological or other order in accordance with a pre – determined plan of arrangement,
  - e. do routine preservation work including: identifying and photocopying unstable materials,
  - f. removing paper clips, staples, rubber bands and other damaging materials,
  - g. type or input finding aids, inventories correspondence acknowledgements bibliographic records and other work in accordance with established formats and standards,
  - h. retrieve and shelf collection material from adjacent and off – site storage areas,
  - i. photocopy material for patrons for administrative purposes and collection preservation
  - j. do record keeping, invoicing, filing and data entry for files needed for administrative management,
  - k. reference
  - l. move, shelve and pack collection supplies and furniture,
  - m. record requests from institution offices (m proved difficult to explain and was struck after two interviews)

- n. make recommendations for arrangements and descriptions,
  - o. take subject content notes for materials being processed,
  - p. trace corporate or individual names and histories, and prepare cross references as directed by a supervisor
6. Which of these tasks do you consider lower level tasks in terms of the student's ability and capability to assume responsibility? (Place "L" by task)
  7. Which of these tasks do you consider lower level tasks in terms of the student's ability and capability to assume responsibility? (Place "H" by task)
  8. What other tasks do you assign that have not been mentioned?
  9. How do you recruit student assistants?
  10. How do you train student assistants?
  11. How do you feel about using student assistants in archives or special collections?
  12. What else would you like to address on the subject of student assistants?

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification, and Preservation.** Ian Batterham (Canberra, BC: National Archives of Australia, 2008. xiii, 200 pp.)

*The Office Copying Revolution: History, Identification, and Preservation* began as author Ian Batterham's Master's thesis on thermographic copying. Upon the realization that there was no exhaustive documentation on office copying methods from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the current time, Batterham set out to right this wrong. The author divides the book into eleven sections beginning with the basic Impact Transfer Process, which began in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The author follows with the Ink/Dye Transfer Process (including letterpress and chromolithography), Stencil Processes, Non-Silver Photo-Sensitive Processes (such as blue printing), and Silver Photo-Sensitive Processes (including standard black and white photography as well as Photostats and gelatin dye transfers). Sections follow on Lithography, Typographic Copying, Thermal Induction Copy Processes (e.g. Thermofax), Electrostatic Processes, and Ink Jet Printing. Each section contains profiles of specific processes and outlines the actual copying procedure. It specifies the years of active use, common synonyms for the process, the process's history as well as its chemistry and working procedure. He caps the list with how to identify the format (including descriptions of paper and ink used) and how to effectively preserve it. Finally, he adds information regarding health concerns generated by handling the material, if any.

The book is heavily illustrated and contains almost 200 examples of not only the products of these different processes but the machines involved in creating them. Fans of early 20<sup>th</sup> century printed material as well as mid-century advertising a la *Mad Men* will enjoy the advertisements used. Batterham's writing style is technical out of necessity due to the subject matter but not so much that the reader might get lost in a jumble of foreign vocabulary; however, included in one of the appendices is a glossary of terms. He also takes the time to explore the greater context of his topic: how the industrial revolution and the technological advancements

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century made the profession of typist a thing of the past. There are three appendices (including the aforementioned glossary) outlining how to identify a copy of unknown parentage as well as how to make a legible preservation copy. From the beginning, Batterham is very careful with vocabulary and thoroughly explains his use of the word “copy” as opposed to “duplicate” or “print.” He addresses how once proprietary names have now been absorbed into everyday usage and how names for specific processes have been appropriated (e.g. photocopy).

As time progresses, this book will only grow in importance on many levels. First and foremost, as scholars in the future examine the mechanized reproduction and dissemination of the written word – from Gutenberg to the present – the information presented will fill a gap in terms of both technical information as well as preservation information. On a more local level, practitioners in archives and special collections working with more and more 20<sup>th</sup> century material will appreciate knowing how each particular process worked and what specific measures need to be taken to ensure that each particular kind of paper and ink are best preserved. This book is highly recommended for any collection of archival and preservation literature.

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***Archival Arrangement and Description.*** Edited by Christopher J. Prom and Thomas J. Frusciano (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2013. 215 pp.)

*Archival Arrangement and Description* is the first publication in the new “Trends in Archives Practice” series from the Society of American Archivists (SAA). The Trends series complements the existing Archives Fundamental Series II publications by providing up-to-date examinations of current practice and thought in a modular format. *Archival Arrangement and Description* seeks to provide an overview and summary of

recent trends in archival processing, updating Kathleen Roe's *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: SAA, 2005) with modules focused on archival descriptive standards, processing born-digital records, and designing descriptive and access systems.

The first module, *Standards for Archival Description*, written by Sibyl Schaefer and Janet M. Bunde, outlines the various categories of archival descriptive standards one may encounter in processing archival records (structural standards, content standards, data value standards, and metadata and companion standards). Summaries of many standards – including Encoded Archival Description (EAD), Encoded Archival Context – Corporate Bodies, Persons, and Families (EAC-CPF), and *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) – provide readers with a quick introduction to the range of descriptive standards. An appendix containing “Acronyms Relating to Archival Description” also helps decipher the “alphabet soup” of archival description. Sections on “Archival Standards in Action” and “Choosing the Right Standards” successfully demonstrate how these descriptive standards can be implemented to better facilitate sharing, repurposing, and management of archival descriptions.

*Processing Digital Records and Manuscripts*, the second module, delineates challenges posed by born-digital archival records and provides a framework for developing practices and procedures for processing these records. Author J. Gordon Daines III does a commendable job aligning digital processing with more traditional methods, providing an excellent introduction to the field for archivists with little to no familiarity in working with born-digital records. He outlines seven tasks in the archival process (accessioning, gathering contextual information, preservation assessment, establishing an arrangement scheme, physical arrangement, description, and access) and describes ways in which born-digital records may complicate each task. A list of recent activities and projects focused on digital processing is found in Appendix A. Perhaps most useful for archivists seeking to develop a digital processing workflow, however, is Appendix C, a chart listing “Selected Tools for Use in Processing Digital Records and Manuscripts” and noting which tools can be used to accomplish which key tasks.



In the third module, *Designing Descriptive and Access Systems*, Daniel A. Santamaria focuses on the wide range of tools that can be used to accession, describe, and deliver descriptions of archival collections and records. The author follows the same model as Daines, and highlights various tools and workflows that can be applied in each task. Tools used in describing archival materials and delivering descriptions to users are particularly emphasized. Throughout the module and specifically in Appendix A, Santamaria provides suggestions for various levels of implementation, describing the "simplest option," "more advanced option," and "most advanced option" for each task. Additionally, while he does make specific references to both Archon and Archivists' Toolkit, the implementation of ArchiveSpace as a merger of these tools will not make the module obsolete, as most of the recommendations are generalized and not tool specific.

Taken as a whole, *Archival Arrangement and Description* provides archivists with basic knowledge on modern archival descriptive practices, giving an archivist at any size repository a solid foundation for making professional judgments regarding descriptive standards, born-digital records processing, and descriptive and access systems. Each module includes case studies and detailed appendices and bibliographies which clearly provide implementation examples and sources for additional information on the given topics.

As noted by SAA Publications Editor Peter J. Wosh in the "Preface to Trends in Archival Practice," however, the modular approach is intended to produce stand-alone resources in a "nimble and easily updatable format appropriate for a fast-moving and rapidly changing record-keeping world" (p. v). *Archival Arrangement and Description* provides a snapshot of current best practices and thought, yet there is no clear statement of how or when the modules will be updated. For example, the *Standards for Archival Description* module notes that both *DACS* and *EAD* are under revision. The *DACS* revision was made available by SAA as an e-publication in May 2013 and in print in July 2013. How – and how quickly – will these revisions be incorporated into the existing module?

In *Archival Arrangement and Description* and its modules, SAA has produced a wonderful tool for archivists wishing to learn

more about current practices. If consistently revised to reflect the evolution of these practices, the modules will stand as a valuable resource to archives students and professionals.

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***Practical Digital Preservation: A How-To Guide for Organizations of Any Size.*** By Adrian Brown (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2013. 352 pp.)

Digital preservation is a term that is used with more and more frequency across LIS disciplines and can mean different things to different information professionals. At the 2007 ALA Annual Conference in Washington D.C., the ALCTS Preservation and Reformatting Section of the American Library Association offered a comprehensive definition of the term, stating that digital preservation “combines policies, strategies and actions to ensure the accurate rendering of authenticated content over time, regardless of the challenges of media failure and technological change. Digital preservation applies to both born digital and reformatted content. Digital preservation policies document an organization’s commitment to preserve digital content for future use; specify file formats to be preserved and the level of preservation to be provided; and ensure compliance with standards and best practices for responsible stewardship of digital information. Digital preservation strategies and actions address content creation, integrity and maintenance.”<sup>1</sup>

With that definition in mind, one can easily see that digital preservation is not just the concern of systems librarians and digital LIS personnel. It should be and is of high importance to archivists

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<sup>1</sup> “Definitions of Digital Preservation.” Prepared by the ALCTS Preservation and Reformatting Section, Working Group on Defining Digital Preservation, accessed October 10, 2013, <http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/defdigpres0408>

across a spectrum of institutions. Digital preservation is not only for archivists working with digital libraries or on digitization projects of their own. If born digital materials have not made an appearance in your archive yet, they are on their way and are here to stay. Having an action plan in place to tackle these new technical challenges is obviously a prudent plan. However, many smaller libraries, historical societies, and cultural heritage institutions are already understaffed and underfunded. There is no room in dwindling budgets to hire digital preservation professionals for needs assessment and policy planning. That is where Adrian Brown's *Practical Digital Preservation: A How-To Guide for Organizations of Any Size* comes into play. This book provides a thorough introduction to all aspects of digital preservation, including digitization and description best practices, digital file storage, managing born digital content, and appropriate storage and back-up procedures.

Brown's work is incredibly useful for a variety of skill levels, including those completely unfamiliar with digitization, digital repositories, and born digital materials. One of the strengths is that the author takes the time to define all of the terminology used in contemporary discussions of digital archives and repositories. This attention to detail is extraordinarily useful for those inexperienced in this area and can serve as a primer for liaising with systems librarians, digital repository managers and IT departments. Another strength is the broad view this title takes on digital preservation. Brown walks the reader through every step in the process from identifying common models and policies in digital preservation planning to selecting, acquiring, accessioning, ingesting, describing, and preserving digital objects to finally providing reliable patron access to these materials. It should be noted however, that this book does not provide detailed technical specifications on hardware for digital preservation systems, though this is not necessarily a flaw in the resource. Technology is evolving at such a speed that any hardware recommendation put into print would be outdated by the time of publication. Brown still provides enough detailed information that hardware specification decisions would be well informed by the content of this book.

Smaller memory institutions, institutional archives, and libraries alike would all benefit from more exposure to the far-reaching topic of digital preservation. Brown's *Practical Digital Preservation* provides both a welcome introduction to this often unnecessarily obtuse topic as well as enough nuances to advise even the most seasoned digital archivist.

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***Libraries and Archives : A Comparative Study*** by Tomas Lidman  
(Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012, 123 pp.)

In *Libraries and Archives: A Comparative Study*, Tomas Lidman seeks to delineate the similarities and differences between archives and libraries. Lidman has had the unique opportunity to serve as both the Director of the National Library of Sweden and as the National Archivist of Sweden, giving him insight into the duties of both librarians and archivists and their self-perceptions. As the chief administrator for two of the top cultural institutions in Sweden, he has seen the need for this type of handbook for politicians, students, and bureaucrats. Lidman traces the history of archives and libraries from the pre-historic times up to the twentieth century. The focus then shifts to current trends and a look into the future. The book focuses on national institutions, primarily in Europe.

Lidman concisely traces the history of archives and libraries from the clay tablets of the ancient city-state of Ebla and the library in Alexandria, respectively. He uses developments in both fields to highlight the early nature and how the two professions have grown apart. Archives are a place where public documents are stored with some form of systematic organization for the use of governmental administration. Libraries are places where literary works were stored and cataloged as well as opened to scholarly research. Lidman concludes that libraries did not exist before 1000 BC; all collections discovered prior to that are

administrative records and should be considered archives. Also, Lidman connects the emergence of national archives and libraries to rising nationalism as a result of the establishment of more centralized and unified nations during the Renaissance period. He traces developments that contributed to the growth and importance of both institutions through the Age of Enlightenment and the importance of the Vienna Congress of 1814-1815 in awakening nations to the importance of history. Lidman discusses important advances in practices and methodologies in both professions. In discussing archives, he highlights the importance of experiences from post-revolutionary France in the introduction of the principle of provenance and the contribution of the Dutch in introducing the first archival manual in 1898. Libraries saw advances in organization and classification schemes during this time. Lidman pays due deference to Dewey stating, "Melvil Dewey is one of the most important people, perhaps the most influential, in the development of the modern library" (p. 43).

Lidman chronicles the differences in principles of national libraries and national archives and their development in the twentieth century. He concentrates on national libraries, focusing on their methods of acquisition and classification. Lidman reviews the core functions of a national library as the following: creation of a national bibliography, compiling union catalogs, and acting as the library of legal deposit. In addition, he focuses on the explosion of records creation in the twentieth century and how it has shaped archival methodologies, especially in the area of appraisal, reviewing different approaches various countries have taken in appraisal, e.g. Schellenberg versus Jenkinson. A central theme is that libraries have been successful in standardizing practices on an international scale while archives have not. Lidman points to the ability of libraries to treat their materials as independent units, compared to the more organic and unique nature of archival collections, as the reason for libraries success in creating standards in classification and cataloging. Lidman points to the rapid growth of digital materials as current and future issues facing the professions.

Not only does Lidman discuss the past, but also, he looks ahead to the future, changing his focus to possible ways libraries and archives can come together. Libraries and archives face issues

in managing digital assets and making them widely available to the public. The author reviews strategic plans for both libraries and archives and finds that, while cooperation with other institutions is often mentioned, cooperation between national archives and national libraries is rarely explicitly stated. Many issues, such as copyright and access face both professions, and both professions have skills that could help the other. While the author feels that the professions should be more collaborative, a central theme throughout the book, and restated in his conclusion, is that national archives and national libraries should remain separate institutions.

Tomas Lidman succinctly demonstrates the differences between libraries and archives by tracing their developments throughout history and the challenges encountered currently. His experience positions him well, and he demonstrates a thorough understanding of both professions. Lidman successfully gives readers a view of methodologies, principles, and challenges involved in libraries and archives. This book is recommended for administrators, those interested in a brief historical analysis of both fields, and those interested in learning more about international and Eurocentric developments in the fields.

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***Family Trees: A History of Genealogy in America.*** By François Weil. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013, 304 pp.)

To be a reference archivist or a librarian is to listen to the breathless wonder of a genealogist explaining a convoluted family connection that surely only has historical significance for that family. But we smile and nod and ooh and ahh because this researcher has found out something about a family member! Little did we know that in our role as research assistants to this genealogist, we have helped shape the art of family history into the science of genealogy. It wasn't always like that and it has taken a Frenchman to explain this to us in a new book chronicling the

popularity of genealogy as both pastime and profession in our country.

A scholar of American social and cultural history, François Weil is the chancellor of the Universities of Paris. He studied at Harvard and has taught history at numerous American universities. Among his earlier books are *A History of New York* and *Empires of the Imagination: Histories of the Louisiana Purchase*. Here he has written a clear and well-described chronology of the American pursuit of family history, using political, racial, commercial, and even religious contexts as backdrops. This is not a book about how to conduct genealogical research. It is a book that explains why genealogy took hold in the United States beginning in the early Colonial days and has remained popular through the Republican period, post-bellum America, the Progressive era, and the Civil Rights era.

Weil explains the conflicted intentions of New England settlers who struck out from the motherland seeking religious freedom and political independence, yet found themselves wanting to make familial connections with their English forbearers as early as the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. In this new democracy, genealogy as practiced in Europe was intended to establish noble lineage and patrician claims. In America, family genealogies were published for mass consumption, creating an early clearinghouse for Americans to make connections among their fellow citizens. Those patrician claims appealed to some Americans, however, who engaged in a lucrative – if fraudulent – business of finding family connections in Europe for a nice fee. It seems there were a number of Americans in the 19<sup>th</sup> century who wanted to believe an unclaimed English estate was waiting for them.

As the Civil War era developed and the race issue divided this country before and after the actual conflict, genealogy was used to define racial superiority, according to Weil's history. Charles Darwin's and others' theories on genetics and inherited-versus-acquired characteristics encouraged theories of racism as well as arguments for the practice of eugenics, for which genealogy became a tool. Ironically, as Weil explains, African Americans had their own passion to document their fragmented lineage, having only the oral traditions carried on slave ships to American soil.

Of note to the archivist is Weil's account of how public libraries and archives in this country in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century would denigrate researchers of the family tree, considering them not much more than a nuisance. However, by mid-century, genealogists were recognized as a substantial patron population. Numerous genealogical organizations had developed and researchers were younger with rigorous methodologies for documenting family histories. In the 1950s, the National Archives even appointed a nationally known genealogist to facilitate genealogical research there.

Weil's writing is entertaining for those in the archives reference profession, though it will probably not enlighten your work methods or create new protocols for improving service to genealogists. Nevertheless, it could be read appropriately at one's desk, unlike a Twilight novel, which would draw stares of disapproval from patrons and co-workers. On the other side of the reference desk, *Family Trees* is written to easily entertain the genealogist, either professional or lay researcher, who might appreciate the lineage that Weil traces of their historical pursuits.

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**Waldo Gifford Leland and the Origins of the American Archival Profession.** Edited with an introduction by Peter J. Wosh (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 397 pp.)

It is said professionals, and archivists are unlikely to be exceptions, rarely read extensively in the history of their own professions. Reading Wosh's work on the career of Waldo Gifford Leland, a well presented introduction to the development of the archival field in the United States, helps close the deficit. Leland, present at the earliest flowering of the profession and well acquainted with some of the most prominent historians and archivists of the time, serves as a good starting point for examining the history of American archival practice



Wosh finds the contributions of Leland, SAA's second president, have been overshadowed by other prominent founding fathers. Theodore Schellenburg for example, continues to be referenced in the current literature while Leland languishes in obscurity. Wosh deftly sketches why this may be the case. Leland was never involved in the formulation of archival theory, though his support of the principles of provenance and original order was integral in the acceptance of these principles in the United States. Neither was he responsible for solutions to the practical problems of the profession; though his 1908 essay *On Photography*, should be prescribed to counteract the unbridled enthusiasm exhibited in some quarters for digitization as the panacea for all modern access problems. Leland himself was at pains to stress that he had never worked as an archivist. Why then, should an archivist be aware of the contributions that Leland made to the field?

An exploration of Leland's contributions is immeasurably aided by Wosh's treatment of his subject. In his career, Leland allied himself with historians who, in Wosh's words, "were attempting to establish a new type of fact-based discourse that relied on the systematic exploitation of archives...[by] locating, investigating and publishing the primary source documents that would form the building blocks for their revolutionary approach to history" (p. 19). Using a biographical opening chapter that sketches Leland's life while allowing the chosen primary documents, consisting of writings by Leland and others published in the conference proceedings which marked milestones in Leland's career, to illuminate his work, Wosh has established a fact-based discourse between the subject and the reader of which Leland could only approve.

Wosh's resulting fact-based discourse offers proof that Leland was necessary for creating the professional culture that sustains American archivists today. Leland was a key component in orienting the focus of the fledgling profession on the adoption of international standards and encouraging prominent archivists and historians to establish a strong American presence in the international archival community. As one of the tireless supporters of a national archives for the United States, his example encouraged the strong networking culture the profession relies on today. His early work with the American Historical Association

rooted a habit of outreach to other disciplines which continues to benefit the field. His two terms as SAA president bear witness that, at one time, the archives community was fully cognizant of Leland's contributions to the field and Wosh's work may very well restore the community's awareness of his voice to American archives and increase the field's appreciation for its unique culture as a profession. For understanding the history of the profession, Wosh's treatment of Leland may well become a core work.

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***How to Manage Processing in Archives and Special Collections.***  
By Pam Hackbart-Dean and Elizabeth Slomba (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2012. 156 pp.)

There are few people in the archives profession today with as much experience processing archives, managing the processing of archives, and teaching the process of processing archives than Pam Hackbart-Dean. For more years than she might admit to she has been a stalwart of the arrangement and description teaching circuit. Her credentials in this field are well known, certainly to Georgia archivists who benefited from her leadership and mentorship during her time at the University of Georgia's Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Study. On the national stage she is equally well regarded, teaching SAA workshops on arrangement and description, chairing numerous SAA sections and committees, and serving on the Academy of Certified Archivists exam development committee. All this to say, if you want to know about processing archives, you must sit at the knee of Pam Hackbart-Dean. And fortunately for those of us miles distant from Carbondale, Illinois, she has made it much easier for us to do just that with the publication of her latest monograph, coauthored with Elizabeth Slomba, *How to Manage Processing in Archives and Special Collections*.

In this slim work, Hackbart-Dean and Slomba methodically chart out the critical elements to the successful management of processing archival materials. As summarized in the thoughtfully annotated table of contents, the authors cover the “soups to nuts” of managing processing.

One of the strengths of their work is Hackbart-Dean and Slomba’s early assertion that “whatever choices and decision you make must be based on the size shop and type of institution in which you work, and your processing management needs to be results-oriented and patron-based and have clear goals and objectives” (p. 5). Each collection, each repository, is unique and so the management choices must be tailored to fit them individually. However, there are standards and best practices that can be employed to fit the situation at hand. The authors then proceed to present strategies for processing programs for a variety of institutions, staffing levels, collection types, etc. The key to their argument seems to be that successful programs are those that manage their situations with intention and within established best practice methods.

Another one of the book’s strengths is the concisely presented academic literature supporting the authors’ positions. The citations in each chapter and in the bibliographic essay reference the landmark works in archival policy and practice. The authors write, “Academic knowledge and practical experience work together and are inseparable in the life of a processing archivist” (p. 109). Indeed, the bibliographic essay alone is indispensable as a resource.

What this book is *not* is an in-depth processing manual. While there are helpful tables and worksheets (such as the Priorities Worksheet or the Decision-Making Tree for Processing an Individual Collection), the chapters do not contain step-by-step instructions. For instance the subheading “Processing Manuals” is not quite one-page long – the authors tell you that processing manuals are important and itemize the areas which should be included in any manual you might create, but leave to you the follow-up to create that content. Appendix 1 contains helpful templates, which are similar to those in other SAA resource books.

This book is at its foundation a ready-reference book for archivists who want to managing processing programs with

thoughtful intention, rather than in an ad hoc, reactionary way. The authors acknowledge that archives come in all shapes and sizes (large shop, small shop; business records, manuscript collections; mixed media, traditional paper) but regardless of individual situations there are well-considered and proven techniques and strategies for the successful management of processing programs. Hackbart-Dean and Slomba ably present these strategies without becoming bogged down in the minutiae of execution. In this regard, the book fills an important spot on the archivist's bookshelf. The only negative I can say about this book is its hefty price tag.

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***Digital Curation: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians.*** By Ross Harvey (New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2010. 225 pp.)

*Digital Curation: A How To Manual* by Ross Harvey is an excellent and comprehensive overview of the basics of digital curation and the requirements for its practice. Author D.R. Harvey is a well-respected expert in the field of digital curation and brings his knowledge to this work. The book consists of fifteen chapters, organized into three main sections. The first provides the reader with digital curation basics, including vocabulary, and an overview of basic reference models, such as OAIS. The author's opinions of the changing technological landscape are also presented in this section. Section two explains the requirements for digital curation, including the various types of policies and procedures, and an overview of managing digital curation. Section three covers the day-to-day practices of digital curation.

If the book fails in any respect, it is its focus on the Digital Curation Lifecycle model as the basis for most of section two and three, to the almost complete exclusion of other models. Models such as OAIS are mentioned but they are not explored in any sort

of detail. This lack of attention to American conceptual models of digital curation is the one complaint anyone may have about *Digital Curation*. This is a small issue with the work overall, but American archivists should be aware that if they are looking for guidance or a better understanding of OAIS, they will need to look elsewhere. Harvey readily acknowledges his lack of attention to OAIS. For him, the Digital Curation Centre Curation Lifecycle Model is a much better model for discussing digital curation as a whole process. OAIS, in Harvey's opinion, "does not take account of activities outside the digital archival system: in particular, it does not offer guidance on the creation of data or on the use and reuse of data" (p. 33). Again, this is a minor issue, but one that any potential reader should be well aware of.

Where this book shines is in the amount of detail given throughout the work. One such example, Chapter 13, Preserving Data, is an extensive listing and discussion of tools, metadata standards, preservation strategies, etc. This chapter, of importance to archivists, is a perfect example of the detail and research that has gone into *Digital Curation*. Another excellent part is Chapter 2, Changing Landscapes. This chapter details how scholarship and research are changing. Harvey spends most of the chapter discussing what he calls cyber scholarship or e-scholarship. Harvey explains the importance of digital curation in a world where scholarship is "data-driven"; digital curation is about collecting, preserving, and providing access to this data. This chapter is especially important because it discusses the skills needed to aid curation of the data required for cyber scholarship. This in particular was helpful for understanding the many different roles and responsibilities necessary in a digital curation program. These are just two examples of the value of this excellent work.

Consider *Digital Curation* as highly recommended even with one small shortcoming. This work should be on the shelf of any digital curator or archivist. One can only hope that it will be regularly updated so that it says on top of the newest trends in the field. *Digital Curation* is an excellent, detailed primer and reference book for anyone interested in and responsible for the curation of digital materials.

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**Many Happy Returns: Advocacy and the Development of Archives.** Edited by Larry J. Hackman (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011. 424 pp.)

The dire financial events of the last several years have made it clear to archivists that their value is questioned and that the continued existence of their repositories will remain under fire for some time to come. Institutions large and small have seen staff and hours reduced, and some have been shuttered altogether. The extraordinary battles waged to preserve citizens' access to their heritage at the Library and Archives Canada and the Georgia State Archives prove that archivists are operating in an environment where no repository is safe from the predations of lawmakers and others looking to balance budgets and who fail to grasp the importance of access to heritage as a hard-won civic right.

Thankfully, there is an increasing tide of archival literature that seeks to address the need for the profession to be at the forefront of the "value" discussion by actively advocating for archives, instead of being constantly on the defensive. Archivists increasingly understand that if it is not they who convince the resource allocators, administrators, politicians, and the public of their value, then there will be no one left to mourn them when they are gone. A very welcome addition to the literature is the volume *Many Happy Returns*, edited by Larry J. Hackman. Hackman, whose lengthy and sterling career includes heading the New York State Archives and NARA's Truman Library, clearly has a passion and track record for successful advocacy. He is also painfully aware that archivists as a group have been reluctant to grapple with this critical part of their work; early on, he admonishes archivists that "advocacy is part of the core work of an archives; it is not an add-on, or, in reality, an option" (p. 11).

The first section of *Many Happy Returns*, Basic Advocacy Principles and Methods, written by Hackman, is designed to give

the individual archivist a thorough grounding in the practice of archival advocacy. This is perhaps the most valuable part of the book, and something that archivists can return to time and again for new ideas, refreshment, and encouragement to continue the advocacy process, defined by Hackman as “activities consciously aimed to persuade individuals or organizations to act on behalf of a program or institution” (p. vii).

This definition differs from some used by others in later sections of the book, something Hackman too quickly dismisses (some of archivists’ difficulties with advocacy might stem from the fact that they cannot agree on what it is), but each of the varying ideas falls under the larger notion of convincing others of the archives’ value and inspiring them to support the institution.

The second section is comprised of 13 case studies written by archivists from a wide variety of repositories – corporate, academic, government, community, non-profit, and more – about their experiences utilizing advocacy principles in their work. Each has valuable information to impart about advocacy in the real world; many are amazing studies in persistence and innovative thinking. One minor quibble with this section is that many of the case studies are written by managers or directors of archives, which conflicts with Hackman’s stated desire to target the volume for the individual archivist. The profession, as the book acknowledges, would benefit from more (and more impartial) case studies, particularly those from the viewpoint of the rank-and-file professional.

The third section, *Perspectives on Advocacy Issues*, contains essays on advocacy in the Web 2.0 world, at the federal level, and as part of the graduate archival studies program curriculum. Each of these sections is excellent, though I was most inspired by Richard Cox’s call to make advocacy a more central part of graduate program education. His essay hits directly at Hackman’s idea that advocacy is a hub off of which everything else is made possible, a concept which should be taken to heart by graduate program educators. The last section of the book closes with some final recommendations by Hackman and suggestions for further reading.

*Many Happy Returns* absolutely succeeds in its desire to be a starting point for discussions on advocacy and to encourage

further writing on the subject. There are also many tips, tools, and lessons in the book that can be used by almost every archivist on an immediate basis. Most importantly, Hackman inculcates the mindset of making advocacy part and parcel of all archivists' daily work, something that is not as difficult as it seems. Indeed, having advocacy as a pillar of daily archival practice may prove critical to the success of many repositories in the years to come.

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**Records and Information Management.** By Patricia C. Franks  
(Chicago: American Library Association, 2013. 410 pp.)

In the U.S., records management has been viewed as separate from archival management. Using the lifecycle model, inactive records were reviewed for their enduring historical value. Those of sufficient importance were permanently retained and managed by an archive. This was a practical approach for analog records. As physical space was needed, archivists were called to appraise files within cabinets or storage boxes and to move them into the archives. This solution does not work as well with electronic records. Digital storage is relatively cheap compared to physical space. Without vigilance and early intervention, digital files become corrupted and file formats become obsolete. Archivists must work with records managers to identify and preserve electronic records before they are lost.

*Records and Information Management*, written by Patricia C. Franks, Associate Professor and Program Coordinator of the Archives and Records Administration Program at San Jose University, provides a comprehensive and accessible introduction to records management principles. The topics include information governance, electronic records, disaster recovery and business continuity planning, risk management, and business processes and workflow mapping.



Franks does an impressive job of explaining complex concepts using bullet points, diagrams, and sidebars. In addition, each chapter closes with an essay or case study by an experienced practitioner to reinforce the discussion. For example, Chapter 8, which deals with disaster preparedness and business continuity planning, ends with an essay by Emilie Gagnet Leumas, the Director of Archives and Records for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, summarizing the implementation of an electronic document system following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Each chapter also includes a bibliography to suggest further reading.

The book is organized into twelve chapters, each of which presents related topics, theories, and terminology. It also includes a comprehensive glossary of terms at the end for easy reference. Readers may approach the book sequentially or topically, which makes it a good fit for the new as well as the seasoned professional. Although some chapters overlap with related issues, each can be consulted separately to answer specific questions.

After a brief overview of the history of records management in Chapter 1, the book opens and closes with information governance. Because it deals with legal and regulatory compliance, it is important that archivists work with records managers, legal representatives, human resources, risk managers, information technology, information security, and executive leadership to craft strategic information policies that align with the mission of the archives. Chapters 4 and 5 cover the basics of records management, including appraisal, retention, disposition, storage, and retrieval. Chapter 5 contains an introduction to business process mapping, which is helpful for archivists when implementing workflow reviews and improvements. Chapters 6 and 7 discuss electronic records, including websites and social media. Chapter 6 focuses on the implementation of electronic records systems and presents a good overview of standards and issues to consider. Chapters 8 and 9 relate to risk management, disaster recovery and business continuity planning. Chapter 10 introduces archival science and Chapter 11 lists educational options for records management.

The introduction of electronic records is changing everything about archival management, including acquisition,

appraisal, description, and preservation. Because of the fragility of digital objects, archivists must intervene earlier in the lifecycle in order to identify and harvest these records. As the line blurs between when records management ends and archival management begins, it is important for all information professionals to communicate. Because records managers already work with legal, risk management, information technology and security, and business processes, they are powerful allies for archivists. This is especially true when archives are asked to justify their value to an organization. Franks' *Records and Information Management* is a tool to help archivists identify areas of overlap and collaboration, as well as to create a records program in a small organization.

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## INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

### David B. Gracy II Award

A \$200 prize is presented annually to the author of the best article in *Provenance*. Named for David B. Gracy II, founder and first editor of *Georgia Archive*, now *Provenance*, the award began in 1990 with volume VIII. It is judged by the *Provenance* Editorial Board.

The 2011 award went to Gregory Schmidt and Michael Law for “Functional Analysis and the Reappraisal of Faculty Papers: A Practical Application.” For past winners visit: <http://www.soga.org/publications/provenance/gracyaward>.

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