

Fall Meeting 2000: *Meeting Program*

"Growing from Our Roots: Traditional Archival Activities in a
New Era"

October 20-21, 2000
Holy Cross, Worcester, Mass.

Registration and Vendor Visits 9:00-9:45

Keynote Address: 9:45-11:00

The keynote speaker Jill Lepore, historian and assistant professor at Boston University, author of the acclaimed *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* will recount her experiences in archives and assess the meaning she makes of archival materials and the historic record.

Break: 11:00-11:15

Discussion Sessions: 11:15-12:15

Session 1: The Care and Feeding of Donors

Description: Building collections through donor relations is an important aspect of collection development. This discussion will focus on planning, preparation, process, and performance using case studies to examine successful and unsuccessful donor relations.

Presenter: Phil Cronenwett, Head of Special Collections, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

Session 2: Accessibility and Archives

Description: What does it mean to be accessible to all our patrons? Many barriers exist for disabled patrons' use of our materials... we will take a brief look at the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and discuss how technology provides both barriers and opportunities to and for our disabled patrons. In particular, we will discuss some types of software that can improve access and discuss what it means to develop accessible web pages. Please bring questions, and also success stories, to share.

Presenter: Susan Edelberg, Internet and Government Documents Librarian, Amherst College, Amherst, MA

Session 3: Why Finding Aids

Description: Frank Evans broadly defines a finding aid as "descriptive media, published and unpublished ... [used] to establish physical or administrative and intellectual control over records and other holdings." This led to a wide variety of "finding aid" styles developed by individual repositories, and suited to local interests and resources. The drive for standardization that began with the MARC record and continues with EAD seeks, among other things, to facilitate the exchange of archival information by specifically defining the parts and structure of a uniform finding aid. At the same time, the ease of creating access to archival material over the Internet has led to a proliferation of often very creative, but non-standard, and non-traditional, approaches to developing "descriptive media." How can we balance the need for standardization against the desire to reach a variety of audiences in new and creative ways? The session will, through discussion and through looking at examples of electronic finding aids, seek to address this question.

Presenter: Greg Colati, University Archives, Tisch Library Tufts Univ., Medford, MA

Session 4: Rabbits from a Hat: Reference in Archives

Description: Whether you are responsible for a small local history collection, a person shop in a special collections department at a college/university library or part of a larger reference team in a state archives, this session will provide valuable insight into the daily operations of reader services. Topics include: designing policies and procedures -- registration forms, photocopy policies. Photographic services -- rights and reproductions. Research services -- how much is too much? Help is out there -- don't reinvent the wheel: learn what others have and who does what best. Get out there -- finding friends in the research community.

Presenter: Jennifer Tolpa, Mass. Historical Society, 1154 Boylston St., Boston, MA

Session 5: Skeletons in the Closet: Ethical Issues for Archivists

Description: When are our ethics not ethical? One topic this session will explore is the perception of archival management by Native American communities. The chair of this session will use her own experiences in museum archives as a jumping-off point for a group discussion of a wide range of archival ethical issues. Attendees should come prepared to share topics with colleagues.

Presenter: Sarah R. Demb, Museum Archivist, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard Univ., 11 Divinity Ave., Cambridge, MA

Session 6: The Bare Necessities : What Do I Need to Know to Get an Archival Program Started?

Description: An informal discussion of the basic needs for starting an archival program. There will be opportunities for questions from those who are just starting out, and veteran archivists can offer some practical advice from their own experiences.

Presenter: Elizabeth Mock, Healey Library, Univ. of Mass., Boston, 100 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA

Session 7: You are Not Alone: Solving Electronic Records Issues Through Cooperation

Description: Without reliable electronic records institutions will be unable to manage and defend themselves -- they will lose their memories and be at significant risk. The session will provide information about the problems associated with the continuing reliability of electronic systems. Collaborative partnerships among information technology staff, archivists, records managers, auditors, lawyers, and others are proposed to address these needs.

Presenter: Helen Samuels, E32-335, Mass. Inst. of Technology, 77 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA

Session 8: Using Volunteers in Your Repository

Description: What are the advantages and disadvantages of volunteers? How can you determine what types of work are appropriate for each volunteer? How can you most efficiently train them, manage their work, and deal with problems? How can you stimulate their motivation and turn them into an advocate for your archives? Join in a discussion of these and other questions.

Presenter: Paul Carnahan, Vermont Historical Society, 14 Sabin St., Montpelier, VT

Session 9: Processing in the Real World

Description: This discussion will cover processing strategies that you and your colleague have developed to accommodate records creation and disposition and manuscript collecting at your own institutions. Have you developed a way to manage a "sticky" processing situation or problem? What mechanisms have you had to devise to cope with situations that weren't covered in school or learned on the job, according to your institution's mission and resources? For example, how do you handle collections that are not static, collections that consistently grow? Or, how do you most effectively use student or volunteer workers? What adjustments have you had to make to the processing workflow to meet the needs of staff and researchers alike? What have you tried that worked, and what didn't? In some cases, there may be no "answers" to our processing dilemmas. Come and share your "best practices" and hear how others manage the often challenging and (usually) rewarding work of processing.

Presenter: Barbara Trippel Simmons, Amherst College, Amherst, MA

Session 10: Dibs on Family Papers: Developing Cooperative Collecting Policies Among Repositories

Description: A panel will discuss how repositories might reach agreements about who collects what when several institutions are collecting in the same subject area or the same geographical region, to insure documentation and to minimize competition.

Presenter: Joan Krizack and Theresa Percy

Vendor Visits: 12:15-1:45

Lunch: 12:30-1:30

Break: 1:30-1:45

Mini Workshops: 1:45-3:00

(10 workshops repeated again at 3:15)

Workshop 1: Archival Compost: Weeding Collections

Presenter: Leah Weisse, MAPC, WGBH Foundation, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA

Description:

This workshop will focus on case studies and attendees' issues pertaining to weeding materials in various formats, with particular attention to institutional and evidential value, third-party privacy issues, the effect of collection size on weeding at various levels, and the use of volunteers and students or interns.

Workshop 2: It's 10:00 p.m.! Do You Know Where Your Collections Are? or Archival Security and Access to Collections

Presenter: Gregor Trinkaus-Randall, Preservation Specialist, Mass. Board of Library Commissioners, 648 Beacon St., Boston, MA

Description:

Have you thought about how secure your collections are and from what they are protected? Archival security involves more than just protection from theft. This session will introduce attendees to low or no-cost methods that can be undertaken to protect holdings from such threats as disasters, thefts, environmental damage, and mutilation.

Workshop 3: Preservation on a Shoestring: Getting the Most from the Money You Don't Have

Presenter: Karen Brown, Northeast Document Conservation Center

Description:

"I know preservation is important, but there's so much to be done. Where do I start, and how will I afford it?" If this sounds familiar, you may be surprised to find out how much you can do to preserve your collections without allocating large amounts of money (or even any at all!). This workshop will provide low-cost strategies for improving the preservation of your collections. Subjects to be covered include environmental control, storage and handling, exhibition, emergency preparedness, and management issues.

Workshop 4: Basic Records Management

Presenter: Anne Marie Phillips, Assistant University Archivist, Manuscripts & Archives, Yale University, New Haven, CT

Description:

This workshop is designed to introduce participants to the basic principles of records management. The workshop focuses on methods and issues in identifying, appraising, scheduling, and arranging for the transfer (or destruction) of records of your institution. Topics to be covered include:

- Elements of a startup records management program
- Methods of identifying records that exist in your institution
- Traditional (series-based) record scheduling versus functional record scheduling
- Creating educational documentation for those at your institution who will be responsible for implementing record schedules
- Incorporating a records management program into your archives program

This workshop is appropriate for people from institutions of all types and sizes, and there will be a discussion of how size and type of institution affect records management program implementations.

Workshop 5: Information vs. Illustration: the Role of Photographic Images in Archival Repositories

Presenter: Robin McElheny, Assoc. Archivist for Programs, Harvard University Archives, Pusey Library, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA

Description:

This session will focus on the use of images as primary sources for historical research and their relationship to text documents. It will include a discussion of portraits.

Workshop 6: Reading a Life: The Tales Diaries and Letters Tell

Presenter: Jeffrey Marshall, Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library, Univ. of Vermont, Burlington, VT

Description:

Private writings, especially from the 18th and 19th centuries, are by their nature often unfamiliar and perplexing historical records, but they can provide a wealth of information for researchers who know how to interpret them. Jump "between the lines" in this workshop as we consider popular conventions of letter-writing and diary-keeping from earlier eras, and the issues of authenticity, trustworthiness and bias.

Workshop 7: Developing an Institutional Collection Policy

Presenters: Rutherford W. Witthus, Curator of Literary and Natural History Collections, and Betsy Pittman, University Archivist, Thomas J. Dodd Research Center, Univ. of Conn., 405 Babbidge Rd., U-205, Storrs, CT

Description:

A well-designed collection development policy for an archives may be used to evaluate collections as they have been developed in the past; to determine how collections should be maintained and further developed; and to establish priorities for current planning and budgets. This workshop will lead participants through the essential elements of establishing a collection development policy: what should be included, who should be involved, and how the policy should be presented. Using examples supplied by the instructors, the goal will be to present a model that might then be used in an actual repository. Participants may bring their own collection development policies as examples and for critique.

Workshop 8: Resources for New Archivists

Presenters: Virginia Hunt, Harvard Medical Library and Ellen Doon, Archivist, Yale

Description:

As a new archivist, especially in a single-person shop, it can be difficult to know where to turn for answers and assistance. This discussion will center on providing resources for new archivists, with some focus on running a single-person shop. Topics for discussion include publications and web resources, networking and outreach, and utilizing federal, state, and local programs

providing assistance with environmental planning, preservation, and mounting collections and finding aids online.

Workshop 9: Managing to Keep Your Sanity

Presenter: Hollie Marron, of InRhythm, Ashfield, MA

Description:

Juggling multiple roles and tasks at work create areas of stress in the work life of the modern archivist. Under the direction of the instructor you will take away skills for successfully managing stress on the job. This workshop aims to help you reduce your stress through basic meditation and yoga techniques. Please bring a towel with you and comfortable clothes to wear during the session.

Workshop 10: Establishing Contact with the Outside World: Outreach Programs for Your Archives

Presenter: Richard Stattler, Rhode Island Historical Society and William Milhomme, Field Archivist, Mass. Historic Records Advisory Board

Description:

The most professionally run archives in the world isn't much good unless it attracts researchers to its collections. Increasing patron statistics help bring in grant money, improve public visibility, and justify budgets. Outreach activities bring variety to archivists' jobs and promote the archival profession. This workshop will explore ways repositories can attract new patrons, including public speaking engagements (the primary focus), exhibits, tours, brochures, websites, and collection guides. We will also consider how to do outreach with a small staff and a small budget. We will brainstorm about outreach activities appropriate for different kinds of institutions. Finally, we will examine ways to encourage repeat visitors by improving reference services.

Break: 3:00-3:15

Mini Workshops: 3:15-4:30

(the same 10 workshops - see 1:45-3:00)

"Ice Cream To Go" Social: 4:30-5:00