

# NEWSLETTER

NEW ENGLAND ARCHIVISTS



**C O V E R** — The photo shows a large group of young women on a horse-drawn sleigh heading off to go skiing from the Poland Spring House, c. 1940. The grand hotel, built in 1876, served summer holiday makers in Poland Spring, Maine, until 1975 when a disastrous fire ripped through the building and razed it to the ground. The image was taken by George French and is part of the larger George French Collection. French worked as the photographer for the Maine Development Commission for nearly twenty years, from 1936 to 1955. His photographs promoted Maine's tourism industry. *Courtesy of the Maine State Archives.*

**I N S I D E** — Nadia Dixson reports on the Education Committee's Skill Share program (page 4); Frances Pollitt discusses processing the Dana F. Perkins & Sons Collection (page 18); NEA President Jamie Rice speaks to the importance of collaboration (page 7); NEA members share their latest news (page 8); session reports from the Fall 2019 Meeting (page 12); the IDC interviews the authors of *Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources* (page 16); the Preservica Roundtable shares an update (page 14); reviews of ToggL software and the Librarians Active Learning Institute Archives and Special Collections track are featured (page 20); and a Board Member Spotlight with Jamie Rice (page 23).

**TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE**

N E A

# New England Archivists

TAKING THE PAST INTO THE FUTURE

45 Skehan Street • Somerville, MA 02143

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>

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The *NEA Newsletter* is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. The contents of the *Newsletter* may be reproduced in whole or in part provided that credit is given.

**Articles** and **News** of interest to archivists, historical society members, historians, and other NEA members should be sent for consideration to the attention of: Katy Sternberger at <[newsletter@newenglandarchivists.org](mailto:newsletter@newenglandarchivists.org)>.

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# Table of Contents

<b>From the Editors</b> .....	3
<b>Archival Insight</b>	
Python in the Archives: What the Education Committee Did Over Summer Vacation.....	4
<b>Inside NEA</b>	
From the President.....	7
<b>News and Notes</b>	
Maine.....	8
Massachusetts .....	8
Rhode Island.....	10
Other News .....	10
<b>Fall 2019 Meeting Session Reports</b> .....	12
<b>NEA Roundtable Updates</b> .....	14
<b>Who's Missing from This Table?</b>	
Interview with creators of <i>Archives for     Black Lives in Philadelphia</i> <i>Anti-Racist Description Resources</i> .....	16
<b>Archival Insight</b>	
Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library .....	18
<b>Reviews</b>	
Librarians Active Learning Institute - Archives and Special Collections Track (LALI-ASC) .....	20
Toggl - Free Time Tracking Software.....	21
<b>NEA Member Spotlight</b> .....	23
<b>This Season in New England History</b> .....	24

# From the Editors

- Danielle Castronovo

**H**appy New Year! As we look forward to the work ahead of us in 2020, this issue reflects many forward-looking changes we've made to the *NEA Newsletter* over the past year. We are excited to announce that the *Newsletter* will be rolling out digital delivery in response to our most recent member survey. And we will continue to highlight teaching and learning, diversity, and technology—priorities for archivists throughout the year.

In this issue, Nadia Dixson writes on the Education Committee's Skill Share program and the Python course they ran last summer (page 4). Dixson wanted to learn Python to assist with her work and relates the positive experience she had learning to code in a group setting.

Frances Pollitt discusses the challenges of processing large-format surveying company plans and field notebooks in the Dana F. Perkins & Sons Collection from the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library (page 18). In a similar vein, there are reports on two sessions and a plenary by Matthew Edney entitled "How Did 18th Century Maps End Up In Archives?" from the fall meeting at the Osher Map Library in Portland, Maine (page 12).

Continuing the technology reviews that began in the last issue, Jessica Steytler reviews the time-tracking tool Toggl (page 21). She describes her experience managing tasks with the app and how it can be used to report on archival labor. We also feature a review of the Librarians Active Learning Institute Archives and Special Collections track (LALI-ASC) workshop held at Dartmouth College this past summer (page 20). The review, written by Andrea Belair, describes the immersive nature of the workshop and its emphasis on techniques that participants can in turn use in their own work with students.

This issue features an interview with the authors of *Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources* in our "Who's Missing from This Table" section (page 16). The Preservica Roundtable reports on their in-person meeting at Yale (page 14). The full-day program included discussions about digital preservation, troubleshooting tips, and a Q&A session.

I am pleased to introduce our first Board Member Spotlight featuring NEA President Jamie Rice (page 23). These spotlights are a way for readers to get to know board members and their roles in NEA.

Finally, as always, we have interesting updates from NEA members and local repositories in our News and Notes section (page 8). ■

**INSIDE**  
**NEA SPRING 2020 MEETING**  
**OUTSIDE**  
 PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, APRIL 2-4, 2020

#### EARLY-BIRD REGISTRATION OPENS IN JANUARY!

Join us April 2-4 at the New England Archivists Spring 2020 Meeting at the Providence Marriott Downtown in Providence, Rhode Island. With the theme Inside & Outside, we will explore ideas of inclusion and exclusion in our collections, audiences, and workforce.

Our program has something for everyone. Learn something new at a workshop. Hear from thought-provoking plenary speakers. Network and share ideas at roundtables and sessions. Engage with the local community at repository tours and our community Day of Service project. Or enjoy some downtime socializing at the reception and playing archives-themed bingo!

FOR PROGRAM AND HOTEL INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: [newenglandarchivists.org/Spring-2020](http://newenglandarchivists.org/Spring-2020) | #NEAsp2020

## ARCHIVAL INSIGHT

## Python in the Archives: What the Education Committee Did Over Summer Vacation

By Nadia Dixson

As co-chair of the NEA Education Committee, I have been rethinking how we offer opportunities for professional development. The 2019-2020 NEA strategic plan tasked the committee with creating affordable options for our geographically dispersed membership. One of the suggested solutions was skill shares. A year ago, when we sat down to figure out how to tackle this objective, we defined skill shares broadly: they would be an opportunity for NEA's membership to get together to discuss material or to teach each other skills they have gained in the course of their work. Skill shares would be less intensive than workshops, and they would offer the opportunity for people to develop skills in teaching. They would also give people a chance to learn in community with their peers.

The Education Committee has offered several trials of the skill share model. You may have seen the reading group where we discussed "Nineteenth-Century Depictions of Disabilities and Modern Metadata: A Consideration of Material in the P. T. Barnum Digital Collection" by Meghan R. Rinn, and when we hosted a discussion about how NEA works with immediate past president Karen Adler Abramson. Last summer, I initiated a skill share which would be a self-study course on the Python programming language. I hope that my experiences with this course will embolden others to take on leading a skill share, whether that means leading a one-time reading group or talking about a piece of software you have learned or are trying to learn. My experience will give you an example of one motivation, the sorts of problems you might encounter, and the rewards of learning in community. At the very least, it should assure you that not everything needs to go exactly right, or that you even really need to know exactly what you are doing to create a valuable experience.

For several years I had wanted to pick up a programming language. In my work as the City of Somerville archivist, I handle both physical and electronic records. It has become obvious to me that learning a scripting language would help me in my work of arranging and describing electronic records. Friends who were a little further down the road of programming suggested the book *Python the Hard Way* by Zed A. Shaw.

*Python the Hard Way* presents the programming language in fifty-two lessons. The number of chapters was not a deterrent because they seemed to be formatted in bite-sized chunks. I drew up a schedule where we would cover seven lessons a week and finish up our work by the end

of the summer. However, I also tried to keep the schedule loose, so I planned rolling coverage of lessons with some review worked into each hour-long discussion. This would allow members of the group to miss some weeks, since I hoped people would be able to fit this class around summer vacation schedules.

Commitment was always a consideration when planning this offering. The skill shares so far have been offered for free. We are not paying for a room or an instructor, and the experimental nature of the course makes that a logical decision. However, people frequently sign up for free offerings and then don't invest their time. We expected more people to sign up than to attend the course. We had eight individuals sign up for the course. Of those, five showed up to the first four or so weeks of discussions. Two dropped along the way due to time constraints, and we ended as a group of three: Irene Gates from the Harvard Law School Library, Melanie Wisner from Houghton Library at Harvard, and myself. This should still be considered a success. Looking at completion rates for free online courses, this is typical. The time commitment was difficult to estimate at the beginning of the course. The discussions were an hour long, but studying for the course required at least an additional two to three hours most weeks. While I had thought that I could work through a lesson in roughly a half an hour each day, I found coding required sustained attention, so I could only do the work required on the weekends.

The choice of Zed A. Shaw's book was a blessing and a curse. It was easy to find Shaw's book in bookstores and libraries, and it was intended for absolute beginners. Unfortunately, we found the amount of material covered in each

chapter to be wildly uneven. New concepts could come all together in a rush, or a lesson would be nothing but memorizing terms. Shaw's style, which I found breezy and approachable at first, began to seem dismissive of his peers and sometimes patronizing to his students.

Despite the inadequacies of the source material, we did learn things. When the material was difficult, we could talk through the concepts. We could laugh together at some of the ridiculousness we found in our text, and we could celebrate together when it all finally came together. I had tried unsuccessfully to tackle this book on my own, but the accountability we owed to each other kept me going. When we came to the end of the course, we all agreed that we wanted to keep meeting. We're continuing our Python project.

There is, of course, a wider community of practitioners of the Python language. Many Python circles use the phrase, "Come for the language, stay for the community." It is interesting to me that as a group, Python programmers also recognize that sustained learning takes place in groups. Moreover, the Python community is committed to addressing the problems that have plagued tech. The lack of gender and racial diversity is something the Boston Python community is addressing directly. In this group, the code of conduct is mentioned at the start of every meeting. They are actively trying to understand the challenges of learning to code for all users. Because of that goal, our group of potential programmers were invited to give a talk at the October Lightning Talk session of the Boston Python User Group. We gave an honest account of our reaction to Shaw's text, and we were welcomed and seconded in our assessment of his text. The group suggested other resources and cheered on our accomplishments.

Learning happens best in groups; it does require the work of the individual, but it is solidified in solving our problems with other people. I learned a great deal about Python in the many weeks I spent with Irene and Melanie, and I hope to learn more. In the meantime, I would like to offer you the opportunity to form your own tiny learning communities. The NEA Education Committee is here to help provide you with the infrastructure to bring a group together. If you are looking for advice and support, we can offer that too. Moreover, I hope that you will look at our lack of experience, lack of ideal text, and the challenges of scheduling and ongoing commitment as minor barriers. We

encountered all of these things, but the experience was still incredibly valuable.

The question "How does learning happen?" has always fascinated me. I was tracked into independent study courses as an adolescent and learning things has always been a source of joy for me. But how does one develop expertise and skills outside of school? It is not enough just to read books; relating that information to someone else is what solidified my knowledge. Moreover, I have become convinced that it does not matter whether my companions are more experienced than me, a peer, or someone I am actively trying to teach. This is the main benefit skill shares will offer: a community in which to learn. The NEA Education Committee is here to facilitate that for you, and we're looking forward to hearing your ideas.



Nadia Dixson is a graduate of Simmons College, founding archivist of the City of Somerville Archives, and a dedicated lifelong learner. ■

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# Inside NEA

FROM THE PRESIDENT

- Jamie Kingman Rice



This fall, I was invited to participate in a two-day symposium for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture digital collection fellowships. The Omohundro Institute's (OI) Lapidus Initiative Fellowships for Digital Collections offers small financial awards to scholars and special collections libraries and archives working in partnership on collaborative digitization initiatives.

The two-day symposium, which included representatives from special collections repositories as well as past fellowship recipients, stakeholders, and federal grant makers, provided me an important opportunity to hear from historians working directly with collections. The OI Digital Collections Fellowships are spearheaded by the users themselves in collaboration with the repository to create a "mutually beneficial" product.

Certainly, the importance of collaboration is not lost on the archival community, but seeing the full potential of collaboration can be a daunting task. Looking outside of traditional partnerships to solicit different perspectives is not only beneficial but in some cases paramount. However, the complexities of digitization or any collections-based initiative are difficult to explain. A start to this broader conversation is to ensure professional development offerings include varied perspectives on collections use and accessibility.

## We Need Spring Session Reporters!

The *NEA Newsletter* is seeking session reporters for our Spring 2020 Meeting - Inside & Outside on April 2-4, 2020, being held at the Providence Marriott in Downtown Providence, Rhode Island. Please email your interest to <newsletter@newenglandarchivists.org>.

At NEA's educational offerings, workshops, and yearly meetings, including the recent Fall 2019 Meeting "Maps & Legends," the program strives to include a wide range of voices. The perspectives of researchers, dealers, genealogists, architects, and the for-profit world are important and relevant to the archival community. The more we can include different voices in NEA and share our perspective outside our profession, the better.

Audience is at the core of our work as archivists. While each of us may define audience differently, learning from one another is fundamental to our success. By finding creative, and better yet, financially supported ways to foster collaboration and bridge the gaps between processing and use, we can in turn advocate for our profession.

I would be remiss if I didn't provide a link to OI's Lapidus Initiative Fellowship: <<https://oieahc.wm.edu/fellowships/digital-collections-fellowships/>>. ■

## Nominate Someone or Apply for a New England Archivists Award

The New England Archivists offers five awards through nomination and application that honor leadership in the field and provide financial support for projects and professional development.

Nominations for the Archival Advocacy Award, which is given to a nominee demonstrating extraordinary support of New England archival programs and records, and the Distinguished Service Award, which is given to a nominee who promotes the objectives of New England Archivists and has made significant archival contributions, are due by March 1.

Applications for the Audio/Visual Professional Development Award, the Richard L. Haas Records Management Award, and the Richard W. Hale Jr. Professional Development Award are due by February 15. These awards offer an opportunity to receive funding to support a project and continue professional development in their archival specialty.

For more details on the five awards New England Archivists offers visit:  
<<https://newenglandarchivists.org/awards/>>

# News and Notes

## MAINE

### *Mapping the Classroom* Exhibition at the Osher Map Library

*Mapping the Classroom: Teaching Geography and History in 19th and 20th Century New England* is on view until February 22 at the Osher Map Library & Smith Center for Cartographic Education at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. Curated by the library's executive director, Libby Bischof, the exhibition features hand-drawn maps by schoolchildren, embroidery, globes, geography textbooks, and other objects that highlight education and teaching in nineteenth- and twentieth-century New England. For more information, visit <<https://oshermaps.org>>.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Records of Building #19 Acquired by the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at NEHGS

The Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at New England Historic Genealogical Society, located in Boston,

recently acquired the records of Building #19. A discount chain store founded by Gerald Elovitz (also known as Jerry Ellis) and Harry Andler in 1964, Building #19 is mostly known for its self-deprecating humor in advertisements, as well as for its surplus stock of miscellaneous clothing and household goods. At its peak, the company had eighteen stores across New England, but in 2013, after declaring bankruptcy, the stores closed.

Comprised of approximately 1,000 linear feet, the collection contains thousands of mockups of advertisements and weekly advertising circulars—which often featured caricatures of Elovitz—as well as photographs, newspaper clippings, and memorabilia, including Building #19 passports and *The Official Building #19 Awful Joke Book*. Processing is underway. For more information about the collection, contact <[reference@nehgs.org](mailto:reference@nehgs.org)>.

### *Queering the Collection* Exhibit at Harvard Law School Library

The Harvard Law School Library's current exhibit is *Queering the Collection: LGBTQ+ History ca. 1600-1970*. Many library collections contain rich stories of individuals across centuries who transgressed sexual and gender norms, as well as documentation of the people and systems against which they transgressed. These historical artifacts can help shape new narratives around queer history and identity or enrich old ones. Coded language and oblique references may pose challenges to researchers, but there is a wealth of material to find on queer people throughout history.

Each case in the exhibit highlights a different approach to researching queer history: using known figures, embracing uncomfortable terms, being open to the unexpected, and using secondary sources. The exhibit was curated by A. J. Blechner, Anna Martin, and Mary Person and will be on view daily in Harvard Law School Library's Caspersen Room through February 14. View highlights from the exhibit at <<https://bit.ly/hlslqtc>>.

A 2011 advertising circular featuring Gerald Elovitz, depicted in the center. Courtesy of the Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center.

Visit NEA online at:

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)>



## Free Access to Women Writers Online in March for Women's History Month

Women Writers Online, published by the Women Writers Project (WWP) at Northeastern University, will be available for free during the month of March in celebration of Women's History Month. This collection includes more than 400 texts written or translated by women between 1526 and 1850 and is a valuable resource for teaching and research. To work with the Women Writers Online collection prior to March, arrange a one-month trial by calling 617-373-4435 or emailing <wwp@neu.edu>.


In addition, the WWP Lab recently released the Women Writers Vector Toolkit, which supports web-based explorations of relationships among words in Women Writers Online. The toolkit is an online laboratory for learning about and experimenting with word embedding models. Visit the discovery interface at <lab.wwp.northeastern.edu/wwvt/>.

For more information about Women Writers Online and its related tools, see <https://wwp.northeastern.edu/wwo>.

## Massachusetts SHRAB Announces Archival Field Fellowship Recipients

The Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) announced the 2019–2020 recipients of the Archival Field Fellowships. A new offering from the Roving Archivist Program, these paid fellowships serve a two-fold function: to increase hands-on assistance to Massachusetts repositories and to provide emerging archivists with professional experience and mentorship. The program pairs graduate students or recent graduates with a repository and includes a grant for the institutional recipients to purchase archival supplies.

Archival Field Fellowships were awarded to Deanna Parsi, Katherine Philbin, Sarah J. Morin, Jeremy Ferris, and Arianna Fiorello-Omosho. Institutional recipients include the Museum of African American History, Historical Society of Greenfield, Tewksbury Office of the Town Clerk, Peak House Heritage Center, Provincetown Public Library, and Merrimac Office of the Town Clerk.

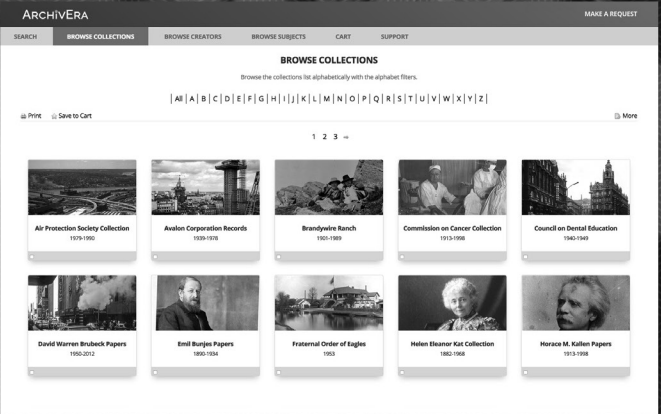


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The fellowship program is supported by the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). For more information, see the SHRAB blog, <<https://mashrabblog.wordpress.com>>.

## **WGBH Awarded Grant to Support the American Archive of Public Broadcasting**

**W**GBH announced it was awarded a two-year, \$750,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which will enhance the usability of the American Archive of Public Broadcasting (AAPB). The AAPB is a collaboration between WGBH and the Library of Congress that aims to digitize and preserve thousands of hours of broadcasts and previously inaccessible programs from the more than sixty-year legacy of public radio and public television.

The grant will support a two-pronged effort to make the AAPB an even more valuable resource for researchers, educators, academics, and the public. The AAPB will work with Brandeis University's Lab for Linguistics and Computation, which uses machine learning and artificial intelligence to develop open-source tools and workflows, to capture detailed metadata from the radio and television programs. This metadata will improve access and discoverability of content. Additionally, the grant designates funds for outreach efforts and continued relationship building with public media stations and other organizations across the country. The AAPB is available at <<https://americanarchive.org>>.

## R H O D E I S L A N D

### **Action Plan Released for “Toward a National Archival Finding Aid Network”**

**T**he action plan for the “Toward a National Archival Finding Aid Network” (NAFAN) planning initiative, organized by the California Digital Library (CDL), has been released. Representatives from multiple regional finding aid aggregations, including the Rhode Island Archives and Manuscript Collections Online (RIAMCO), participated in the project. The plan is available at <<https://bit.ly/action-plan-nafan>>.

Many regional finding aid aggregators across the country struggle to find sufficient resources to update their platforms and engage with some of the most promising advances in the field. The action plan provides recommendations for and principles to guide next steps to implement a sustainable, national-level finding aid network.

The NAFAN planning initiative is supported with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and administered in California by the state librarian.

For more information, refer to the project wiki at <<https://confluence.ucop.edu/display/NAFAN>>.

## O T H E R N E W S

### **Save the Date for the NEA Spring 2020 Meeting**

**S**ave the date! The NEA Spring 2020 Meeting will be held from April 2–4 at the Providence Marriott Downtown in Providence, Rhode Island. The theme of the meeting is “Inside & Outside” and will explore ideas of inclusion and exclusion in our collections, audiences, and workforce as well as the multifaceted roles of archivists. We look forward to seeing you there! The spring 2020 program committee chair is Amber LaFountain, <[Amber\\_LaFountain@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:Amber_LaFountain@hms.harvard.edu)>.

### **JCAS Article on Human Rights Records Translated into Portuguese**

**T**he *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies (JCAS)* announced that its research article “Developing a Typology of Human Rights Records” by Noah Geraci and Michelle Caswell has been translated into Portuguese. The translation appears in volume 12, number 3, of the Brazilian information science journal *Revista Ibero-Americana de Ciência da Informação (RICI)*.

Originally published in *JCAS* volume 3 (2016), the article outlines a methodology for de/constructing the term “human rights record” and proposes a typology of human rights records.

According to *RICI* editorial board members Murilo Bastos da Cunha and Georgete Medleg Rodrigues, “This article is of great interest to the readers of our journal in Brazil because of the importance of the relation between human rights and archives.”

The original article published in *JCAS* (English) is available at <<https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol3/iss1/1>>. The translated article published in *RICI* (Portuguese) is available at <<https://doi.org/10.26512/rici.v12.n3.2019.24467>>.

## Climate Teach-In Held at Simmons University

In solidarity with climate activists across the globe, archivists in the Boston area met for a climate teach-in on September 20, 2019. Archivists met in person at Simmons University and dropped in to an online video discussion to reflect upon Samantha Winn’s article “Dying Well in the Anthropocene: On the End of Archivists.”

Some participants were considering the topic for the first time. Others were already thinking about how to alter practices such as collecting and appraising. Still others were interested in considering theoretical concepts like “acceptable loss,” the acknowledgment that we will lose some of our collections to the ongoing climate crisis and what that means for how we approach our work.

Anyone can facilitate an archives and climate teach-in. A toolkit, including teaching modules and a Zotero library, is available from Project ARCC and Archivists Against History Repeating Itself at <<http://bit.ly/archivistclimatestrike19>>.

## Season Two of SAA’s *Archives in Context* Podcast Released

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) announced season two of *Archives in Context*, a podcast highlight-

ing archival literature and technologies, and most importantly, the people behind them. Cosponsored by SAA’s Publications Board, *American Archivist* Editorial Board, and Committee on Public Awareness, the podcast explores the often moving and important work of memory keeping.

Season two features interviews with Peter Wosh, editor of SAA’s Archival Fundamentals Series III; Laura Millar, author of *A Matter of Facts: The Value of Evidence in an Information Age*; Christine Weideman and Mary Caldera, editors of *Archival Values: Essays in Honor of Mark A. Greene*; Davia Nelson, cohost of *The Keepers* podcast; Teresa Brinati, SAA director of publishing; Kathleen D. Roe, author of *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists*; and Margot Note, author of *Creating Family Archives: A Step-by-Step Guide to Saving Your Memories for Future Generations*. Listen to the full season via Google Play, Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and the *Archives in Context* website <<https://archivesincontext.archivists.org>>.



Lobstering in winter off the coast of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1953. This image of lobsterman Louis Pento was taken by prolific photographer Douglas J. Armsden (1918–2009), a large portion of whose collection resides at the Portsmouth Athenaeum. *Courtesy of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.*

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# Fall 2019 Meeting Session Reports

## Plenary

- Daniel McCormack

A journey through the creation, use, and acquisition of colonial maps with a New England connection provided a highly appropriate beginning to NEA's Fall 2019 Meeting at the University of Southern Maine in Portland. Matthew Edney's plenary "How Did 18th Century Maps End Up In Archives?" addressed the broad processes of cartographic production and acquisition during this period and the many considerations that went into their creation.

Edney, author of the recently published *Cartography: The Ideal and Its History* (2019) and co-editor of *Cartography in the European Enlightenment* (2019), part of the University of Chicago Press's History of Cartography series, considered cartography in a broad sense—the study of maps and the processes involved in their creation, circulation, and use. As the sum of geographic knowledge, maps found their use as instruments of imperialism and nationalism, circulated among those who wanted to know the world. Taking a broad sociocultural and historical and cartographic view, he shone a light on maps by explaining their materiality.

Maps, as Edney explained, are works depicting the broad structure of the world, compiled from many sources. What we call maps would be circulated among those who wanted to know the world. The geographical map is thus different in scope and intent from a mariner's chart, or a plan showing subdivided land, he noted. Edney peeled back the documents called maps to show the interwoven processes of creation, circulation, and production, rather than new or more relevant information, which drove a cycle that led to the creation of new maps. He showed how maps and their creation followed several different trajectories.

An analysis of the processes that resulted in eighteenth-century maps showed how maps and their creation followed specific trajectories, involving their commissioning and use by government, circulation into private hands, and then to the public. Several well-known maps

from early New England, such as that of William Douglass (1755) and John Green (1755), were used to illustrate the utilization of previous mapmakers' content. The creation of a map would incorporate elements meant to serve a specific purpose, and these in turn could find their way into the next map.

Broad patterns of production and consumption can be seen in maps produced in this era, and the creation of new maps was a function of these patterns. Within this pattern, producers and consumers played a dependent role. The archival function had a place in this dynamic, as government officials would first consult existing sources before creating a new map. Such a map would then find its way to government archives. Storage served as a function of circulation, he noted.

Edney's plenary considered maps beyond documents or artifacts through an examination of their history and as consequences of processes. The information on a page or fabric serves a purpose and is the product of many different elements brought together. For archivists, this knowledge may make it difficult to look at maps the same way again.

## Navigating Uncharted Waters: A Panel Conversation with Cartographic Collections Professionals

- Rebecca White

**Presenters:** Ève Bourbeau-Allard (moderator); Michael Buehler, Boston Rare Maps; Matthew Edney, University of Southern Maine and University of Wisconsin-Madison; Roberta Ransley-Matteau, University of Southern Maine. (Bonnie Burns, Harvard Map Collection, was unable to attend).

This panel discussed tips and resources for map cataloging and description, research tips for users, as well as the future of maps. In a discussion on what to capture in map description, Roberta Ransley-Matteau talked about the importance in the details, e.g. mapmaker, published date, map patron, edition, language of the verso, and historical background among others. Matthew Edney spoke about the importance of focusing on what is around the map more than the map itself. Doing so gives the context of where the map came from and what the map says about itself. Michael Buehler suggested trying to ren-

der the maps exciting and interesting to draw in more people and get more usage out of your collections. Ève Bourbeau-Allard also gave the tip to check what libraries and archives have digitized maps and see how they have been described.

There was a discussion of the pros and cons of map digitization. Edney and Ransley-Matteau both saw the pros of it. Ransley-Matteau mentioned how having digitized globes makes it is easier and safer to find the maker of the globe. Globe makers usually have their name at the bottom of the globe. Edney expressed how it speeds up the research process when trying to figure out where a particular map came from. There are a couple of downsides, as Edney pointed out: the first, failing to image the material object (scanning the blank pages, digitizing globes in and out of their furniture, etc.); and the second, people taking old maps and using modern coordinates to test the accuracy of the old maps.

Audience questions mainly focused on what resources to use when researching the history of mapping things besides geography, and the future of maps and mapmaking. Resources mentioned for map research were <https://www.davidrumsey.com/>, <https://www.loc.gov/maps>, <https://gallica.bnf.fr>, and <https://www.europeana.eu/>. Reference books by Peter Van Der Krogt and *Tooley's Dictionary of Mapmakers* were discussed. Early English Books Online was also mentioned but requires a subscription. For cataloging resources, *DCRM (C): Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials (Cartographic)* put out by the Rare Books and Manuscripts section of ACRL and using OCLC were discussed.

There was a discussion of the rich history of mapping things other than geography. Examples included Joseph Priestley's map "A New Chart of History," the map of the internet from 1994, as well as P. J. Mode's collection of persuasion maps currently being donated to Cornell University <https://persuasivemaps.library.cornell.edu>. Edney also discussed how during the Renaissance era there were maps of affection/attraction that mapped personal interactions, as well as medieval priests that mapped Europe and North Africa as female and male bodies. All the panelists saw a bright future for maps and mapmaking as there is an increasing trend for data mapping and mapping manuscript collections.

## Short Presentations and Discussion

- Katy Sternberger

**Speakers:** Susie R. Bock, University of Southern Maine; Frances Pollitt, retired map curator and current map collection volunteer; Raven Norlander-McCarty, Works on Paper; Prudence Doherty, University of Vermont

Maps in archival collections are sometimes overlooked due to their specialized storage and handling needs, but in reality they can serve as valuable tools for researchers. In four short presentations, the speakers addressed strategies for storing, conserving, and providing access to collections.

In the first presentation, "Mapping Manuscript Collections," Susie Bock described the pros and cons of creating an interactive map of manuscript collections at the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine. By displaying the collections visually using Tableau, Bock was able to identify gaps in collecting and reevaluate processing practices to ensure that geographic locations are included in finding aids. Among the limitations of the map is that it cannot show the nuances of a collection's geographic coverage as each collection had to be assigned to a particular town and not a region or the entire state. But overall, the interactive map improved contextualization and accessibility of the collections.

Next, Frances Pollitt provided practical tips for preserving maps in "Some Map Storage Solutions." One of the first steps she suggested was to put in place a strong collecting policy, including deaccession procedures, because you cannot determine what to do if you do not know what you have. She likened map cases to "waterfront property" and recommended prioritizing which items receive such high-demand storage. Other smart storage solutions included: using boxes for smaller items instead of taking up valuable space in map drawers, folding paper around items to keep them separated, and humidifying items that need flattening (instructional videos are available on YouTube). Pollitt urged archivists not to put maps aside just because they are in a different format and harder to handle.

Raven Norlander-McCarty presented two case studies related to the conservation of oversize maps. Her presentation served as a follow-up to session 1.4: Beyond the Carton

on oversize materials at the NEA Spring 2019 Meeting. She explained that the idea of conservation is to stabilize the material so that it can be accessed, and she used a sixteen-foot-long blueprint and a Masonic wall chart as examples. Both items were regularly used and had suffered significant damage but were cleaned, reinforced, and rehoused. She advised providing instructions with oversize items to help plan for unrolling and handling them.

Finally, Prudence Doherty spoke about “Old Land Survey Maps and Records, New Users.” She described the process of preserving, describing, and facilitating access to Vermont land surveyor records. This collection is heavily used due to its importance in resolving contemporary issues such as land disputes. Researchers are often first-time archives users who might see archival procedures as barriers to access. Other challenges included the use of offsite storage and insufficient description. Doherty alleviated these concerns by placing more finding aids online, creating online research guides, implementing a system to schedule appointments, and connecting with the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors so that they can learn how to put archives terminology in their own words. ■



Henry Clay Barnabee as the Major in *Rob Roy*. Henry Clay Barnabee was a nineteenth-century stage actor. He formed the Bostonians, an acting troupe that toured from 1887 until 1904. The Henry Clay Barnabee Collection was donated by Barnabee, to the Portsmouth Public Library, New Hampshire, in 1907. Photographs from the collection are viewable on the Portsmouth Public Library's digital exhibits page <[www.portsmouthexhibits.org](http://www.portsmouthexhibits.org)>. *Courtesy of the Portsmouth Public Library.*

## NEA Roundtable Updates

### Preservica Roundtable Holds In-Person Meeting at Yale

Last November, the Preservica Roundtable held its largest in-person meeting to date at Yale University. The full-day program included discussions about digital preservation, Preservica's recent upgrade to 6.0 for cloud users, troubleshooting tips for various system workflows, institutional customization to the product's front-end, and a Q&A session with Wendy Goodier, product owner at Preservica, on ArchivesSpace catalog integration and Preservica's new PUT tool for ingest. The meeting also set aside time for three live demonstrations from attendees, which highlighted bulk packaging scripts for SIP creation, automating system configuration, and Preservica-Aviary synchronization.

The roundtable is planning two more in-person meetings for 2020 to continue conversations from November and allow roundtable members to share projects, ask questions, and troubleshoot issues together. The Preservica Roundtable co-chairs are Sarah Hayes, digital archivist at the Trustees of Reservations, and Alejandra Dean, assistant digital archivist at the Massachusetts Archives. ■



The Preservica Roundtable held its largest in-person meeting to date at Yale University in November. *Courtesy of Alejandra Dean.*

### NEA Has Eleven Roundtables!

Offering opportunities for members to connect over shared interests, affiliations, backgrounds, occupational categories, practices and methodologies, and more.

<[www.newenglandarchivists.org/roundtables](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org/roundtables)>



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## WHO'S MISSING FROM THIS TABLE?

About the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, social justice, and diversity within the archives profession and NEA.

This issue's "Who's Missing from This Table?" is part one of a two-part spotlight interview by the Inclusion and Diversity Committee with the creators of *Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources*, available at <[archivesforblacklives.wordpress.com](http://archivesforblacklives.wordpress.com)>.

- Alexis A. Antracoli, Interim Assistant University Librarian for Special Collections, Princeton University Library
- Annalise Berdini, Digital Archivist, Princeton University Library
- Kelly Bolding, Project Archivist for Americana Manuscript Collections, Princeton University Library
- Faith Charlton, Lead Processing Archivist for Manuscripts Division Collections, Princeton University Library
- Amanda Ferrara, Public Services Project Archivist, Princeton University Library
- Valencia Johnson, Project Archivist for Student Life, Princeton University Library
- Katy Rawdon, Coordinator of Technical Services, Special Collections Research Center, Temple University Libraries

### ***Tell us about the origins of this project and how your working group came together.***

The Anti-Racist Description Working Group, which formed in the fall of 2017, is a working group of Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia (or A4BLiP for short), a loose association of archivists, librarians, and allied professionals in the area responding to the issues raised by the Black Lives Matter movement.

The initiative for the working group was inspired by Teresa Raiford, a Portland-based activist and founder of the organization Don't Shoot PDX, with whom A4BLiP collaborated on a presentation at the 2017 Society of American Archivists (SAA) Liberated Archive forum. Shortly after the SAA meeting, Teresa reached out to A4BLiP organizers to see if they had any recommendations for how she might approach a catalog audit.

A4BLiP members realized that this was an area that lacked guidance for those doing archival description; many could recount instances of seeing description applied in ways that were racist, but none of us knew of any specific recommendations for how to address this in a programmatic way. As a way to provide a framework for our own audits of racist description and guidance that would be useful to other (white) archivists, we decided to create a set of recommendations.

So in this sense, the project also arose from a shared practical need to equip ourselves to redress our institutions' "failure of care" surrounding the description of Black lives in the archival record (to cite Theaster Gates through the lens of Bergis Jules). Working at predominantly white institutions (PWIs) is an experience that all of the members of this group share; and while racist description is certainly present in other contexts, PWIs have a particular need and responsibility to repair for their complicity in systems of colonialism and white supremacy. While many PWIs are taking some initial steps towards acknowledging these legacies at a macro level (for example, projects that explore universities' connections to slavery), there is a parallel imperative to address how white supremacy has been embedded into every aspect and detail of how these institutions operate. In our case, as library workers responsible for archival metadata, this gets down to the clear disparity between the way white and Black lives have been described in finding aids.

### ***Give us an overview of the final document and how you feel it can have an impact.***

The A4BLiP Anti-Racist Description Resources are broken up into three sections: a set of metadata recommendations, an annotated bibliography, and an extensive bibliography. The extensive bibliography was gathered first, reviewed in detail by members of the working group, and informed the other two sections.



The metadata recommendations are comprised of practical examples for anti-racist description that we hope can be put into practice across a wide array of institutions. The section is broken up into seven areas of focus, including Voice and Style, Community Collaboration and Expanding Audiences, Auditing Legacy Description and Reparative Processing, Handling Racist Folder Titles and Creator-Supplied Description, Describing Slavery Records, Subjects and Classification, and Transparency. Our recommendations in each of these sections were informed by our literature review as well as examples from our own experiences and the experiences and recommendations of our reviewers. Some recommendations should be fairly easy to apply day-to-day, but others are more difficult and will require institutional change. We hope that these recommendations will give others practical places from which to start their own descriptive review processes. They are by no means exhaustive, but include what we thought to be the most helpful and important recommendations.

The annotated bibliography includes a selection of theory-focused articles from the extensive bibliography that we chose to highlight based on their critique of descriptive practice and theory. Our review in preparation for developing this resource reinforced our understanding that there is a wealth of research and dozens of important contributions to rectifying archival erasure and white supremacist description. But we recognize that few of us have as much time as we would like to read all of these works, and so we created the annotated bibliography in the hopes that it would help others quickly find resources that would help them rethink archival description.

***You note in your introduction that many folks in the working group are white women working at PWIs. How did this shape and complicate the work you were doing?***

We included brief biographies and self-identifications for all of the working group members at the beginning of the document because we thought it was crucial to the integrity of this project to be upfront about our positionality in relationship to this work. In one sense, this is a way of saying, “We are a bunch of mostly white ladies telling you how to not be racist when describing Black people, so please take that into account.” It’s also a way of acknowledging that members of the group bring different levels of knowledge and lived experience to the table.

Speaking to the shared identities of many members of our group as white women, there is a way in which the two years we spent on this project served to address gaps in our own knowledge and prepare us to conduct reparative description work at our institutions in a responsible and informed manner. But we should also acknowledge that working on this project together was a different experience for the white and Black members of the group. It required extra emotional labor from Black members, and there were times when the learning of white members came at the expense of Black members.

To provide an example, and this is Kelly speaking, myself and others committed a microaggression against Valencia. I made it worse when trying to backtrack. A white colleague took on the responsibility of calling us out for it, and we had to reflect on our actions and take steps to try to repair our relationship. I apologized and acknowledged the impact of my mistakes to Valencia, and I processed my own shame and “feelings” over what I did separately with trusted colleagues and friends who are also white and had the bandwidth to do that with me. The purpose of sharing this, with the consent of those involved, is to say that no one is immune to internalized racism, and we need to be in a constant state of confronting our own biases. It’s also to admit that racism operated in a group of people working under explicit anti-racist objectives and will continue to operate in groups like ours due to the structural nature of racism itself. This is something we would encourage other groups to remain aware of and take measures to manage from the beginning.

It’s imperative that we continuously and proactively question and confront how white supremacy shows up for us personally so that we aren’t learning at the expense of our POC friends and colleagues. This continued self-study is an ongoing practice that’s never complete, and it’s incredibly important for white folks who are involved in projects geared towards addressing racism. This is both so that we can produce work that is actually helpful to the communities we hope to support, and to minimize the harm we cause our Black and POC collaborators in the process. There have been times when this group embodied the recommendations we offer here, and there have been times when we failed them, but we are actively and iteratively working to get better.

Join the IDC next issue for the second part of this interview, which explores crowdfunding for compensating reviewers, neutrality in archival description, and putting these descriptive recommendations into practice. ■

## ARCHIVAL INSIGHT

Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center  
at the Boston Public Library

*By Frances Pollitt*

Surveying companies acquire plans, field notebooks, and surveys of retiring surveyors, thus accumulating over time the works of scores of surveyors and engineers. The Dana F. Perkins surveying company, presently of Tewksbury, Massachusetts, gave such a collection of materials representing the work of twenty or so nineteenth- and twentieth-century greater Boston-area surveyors to the Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center (LMEC) at the Boston Public Library. LMEC collected the records of these surveyors not only to preserve them but also to provide researchers with a snapshot of the process of record-keeping used by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century surveyors to keep track of their work—a confusing business.

The entire group of materials represents three corporate entities: the Fuller-Whitney Corp., which conducted the surveying for the monumental Back Bay Filling Project from 1880-1900; the William H. Whitney Company working in the greater Boston area; and the William A. Mason & Sons Company, whose surveyors worked mostly in Cambridge and Boston but went as far afield as Wayland, Massachusetts, and Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire. The years of the overall collection span from 1839-1930. The formal name given to this collection is the Dana F. Perkins & Sons Collection.

The Collection's 276 aluminum tubes, 324 envelopes filled with sketches, 104 field notebooks, 75 blue ledgers and 27 wooden drawers of catalog cards arrived at the Boston Public Library in 2008—each group with numbers assigned by the surveyors.

### The Processing

When faced with a group of varied materials, with different numbering systems and preservation needs, time was taken to discover the overarching organization of the materials: how they relate to each other, whether the numbering systems could be reconciled, and what to undertake first. In this case, the 276 numbered aluminum tubes from the William A. Mason & Sons Co. were selected to tackle first.

Each of these 276 tubes contained about thirty finished plans of both waxed linen and blueprint plans. These rolled drawings were professionally flattened and stored in archival folders, with records of the group created in an Excel spreadsheet. Duplicates were discarded, blueprints were foldered separately from the waxed linen drawings, and all but one of the aluminum tubes were discarded. The

Mason Company surveyors numbered the tubes and drawings (ex. Tube 1 Drawing 3), and that numbering was preserved and used as the identifying number for each survey in the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet includes tube number, drawing number, title, creator, town, street names, person's names on survey, and the ubiquitous notes. LMEC volunteers are presently engaged in georeferencing these plans into an online GIS program with the goal of making reference points and texts (from the spreadsheet) available to the public through the LMEC's website. There is no plan to digitize the over 8,000 plus plans.

The 104 Mason Company field notebooks were re-housed into acid-free archival boxes and a record of the individual books was created in an Excel spreadsheet using the original numbering.

The 324 envelopes containing Mason Company preliminary sketches were removed from the envelopes and stored flat in archival folders. These are so numerous and ephemeral that no attempt has yet been made to record the data from these materials. The original envelope numbers were transferred to the archival folders. Interesting to note are the many sizes of scraps, sheets, and kinds of paper the surveyors used to record work in the field—a snapshot of paper quality and type and economy through the decades.

Seventy-five ledgers held the published plans for the monumental Boston Back Bay Filling Project undertaken in 1880-1900 and recorded by the Fuller-Whitney Corp. The sheets in the ledgers were removed from the nineteenth-century ledger bindings and placed flat in acid-free archival folders. Though this group of Back Bay materials was not numbered, they are a chronological record, so the folders were labeled and stored

in chronological order. One blue ledger cover was retained as an example and the rest were discarded.

Of particular note are the month-by-month schedules of real estate sales and the sketches of progress of the filling-in process along the present-day Back Bay area of Boston as far west as the Brookline town line. An Excel spreadsheet records these sets of plans chronologically. A few of these sets have been cataloged into the Boston Public Library's online bibliographic system using library cataloging standards. The Excel spreadsheet contains the total number of sets in the collection.

Under the direction of then-curator Ron Grim and librarian Lauren Chen, the bulk of the work with these materials has been accomplished by volunteers: one with a library and archives background, one with GIS georeferencing experience, and one a city planner.

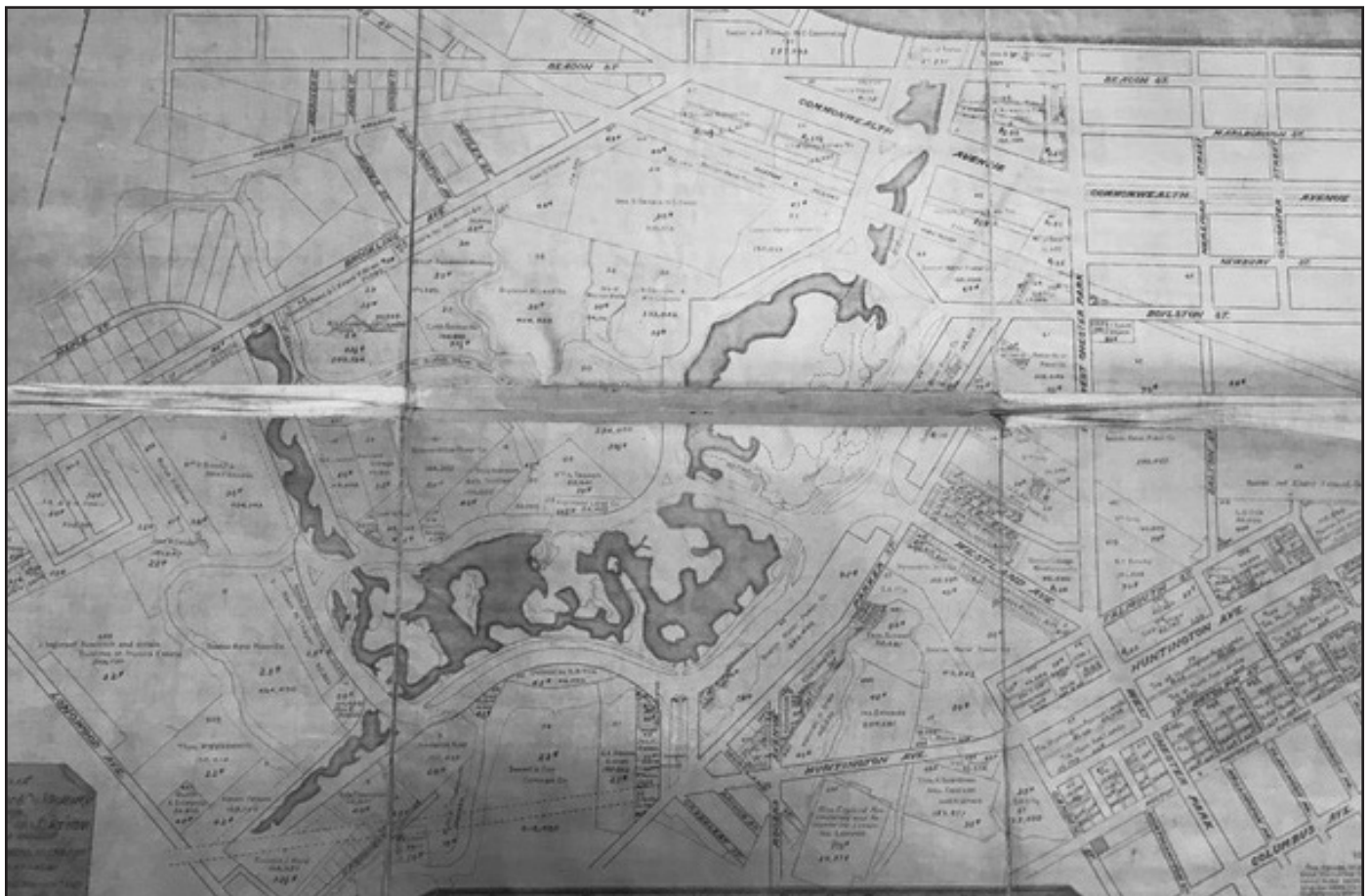
Some of the LMEC's collections, including this one,

are stored in a section of the Boston Public Library's nineteenth-century basement. On one twenty-first century day, utility workers passing by noticed the spread of blueprints from the Fuller-Whitney Back Bay Filling Project. Invited to get a closer look, one of them spotted the name "John Quincy Adams" in the land seller's column. His day, and mine, made history.



Frances Pollitt has worked with map collections at the Maine Historical Society, Osher Map Library, Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, and Wayland Historical Society. She has presented and published articles on various historical cartographic subjects.

Her education includes degrees from College of the Atlantic, University of Southern Maine, and Syracuse University. She presently lives in Wayland, Massachusetts.



Plan of Back Bay Park & Vicinity showing assessor's valuation of vacant lands with names of owners, areas, and location of estates. 1882. Fuller & Whitney Engrs. Courtesy of Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center at the Boston Public Library.

# Reviews

## Review of Librarians Active Learning Institute - Archives and Special Collections Track (LALI-ASC)

- Reviewed by Andrea Belair, Librarian for Archives and Special Collections at Union College

The Librarians Active Leadership Institute, Archives and Special Collections track (LALI-ASC) is a four-day intensive workshop that takes place on the campus of Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire. LALI itself was developed to concentrate on teaching methods for library professions, and the ASC track is a subsection of the workshop that focuses on the use of archives and special collections materials. Participants in the workshop must complete an application with a letter of support. Because of the small class sizes, it can be difficult to gain acceptance into the program.

The LALI-ASC facilitators for our cohort were Laura Barrett, head of teaching and learning at Dartmouth College; Peter Carini, the college archivist at Dartmouth's Rauner Special Collections Library; and Cindy Tobery, associate director of the Dartmouth Center for the Advancement of Learning. Our session took place from August 14-17, 2019, thankfully during the summer as a less active time for academia when there might be less distraction.

We arrived at campus for registration in the afternoon; I checked in, and the workshop began immediately. There were eleven participants for our session, and we were invited to sit around a large table. We were directed to turn to the person next to us and introduce ourselves, telling the other person who we are and why we are participating in the workshop. We were then asked to introduce our partner to the group. Although a very simple exercise, this way of introducing another person, rather than the traditional approach of introducing ourselves, was an introduction to the methods that we would learn over the next few days. It forced us to listen and process information that we received with a measurable outcome, and, although I did not realize it at the time, this introductory exercise used the "meet, engage, reflect" framework that would be our mantra for the length of the workshop. We then listened to a fascinating talk by a keynote speaker regarding the learning process and the human brain.

The LALI-ASC model centers around engagement, and the workshop is one immersive engagement experience after another. For the next few days, we would be both the learner and the teacher, and we experienced the "meet, engage, reflect" model in both roles. We started the second day with our reflections on the keynote speaker from the previous day. The instructors then discussed backwards design, in which instructors create measurable learning outcomes and outline learning activities, instructional methods, and assessments. In backwards design, instructors identify desired results, determine acceptable evidence and plan learning experiences for their learners. The instructors then handed out case studies for an exercise to use backwards design and create goals, develop measurable outcomes, and plan a class session. We passed our exercises to others to be evaluated. One question that we discussed as a group: where do we want the struggle to take place during a session? For example, we might use a transcription of a document if the handwriting is difficult to read, since we do not want the struggle to be in reading the handwriting if that is not one of our goals or measurable outcomes.

What do we mean by "meet, engage, reflect"? Meeting the learners is pre-assessment, which might be very brief, such as an introduction and a chance for the students to give some of their context and experience with special collections materials. It might even be a survey sent out before a session, or it might be a simple question such as "stand up if you've been to an archival repository." When we engage, the next step of the model, we think about how to engage students and reduce their perceptions of us as an authority that can be a barrier to learning. We use collaborative learning techniques, and we share our authority with the learners as an integral component of active learning. We have students engage with each other and work together in exercises where they can tell us about what they find and become experts in their own right. Finally, we reflect. We have students reflect, as we might as well, about their favorite takeaways, things they liked and did not like, things they learned, and so forth. This might be a "minute paper," where students jot a few of these items down on a note in anonymous fashion. In our session, we crumpled up our notes and had a mock snowball fight, where we tossed the crumpled notes around the room to each other, finally picking up the closest one and reading it aloud to the group.

The days were filled with similar activities. We would act as students many times ourselves, being led through

sessions designed by instructors from Dartmouth's special collections, where we acted as learners and reflected on our experiences. By taking the place of the students, we participated in different methods of instruction, and we could see firsthand what worked for us as well as what we might have changed during a session.

Early in the workshop, the instructors assigned a practicum that we would work on with a buddy, and they told us to use the space to take risks and try new things with teaching. We would instruct a session ourselves and then have a period devoted to feedback, from which we were encouraged to listen without response unless we needed to ask for specifics. On the final day of the workshop, we put the sessions we had designed into practice. The practicum that my buddy Steven and I worked on was about Dartmouth's fraternities and desegregation issues. We used record groups from Dartmouth's collections, and we planned a session using backwards design method. We had been given time to work on our session during the workshop, and we would take part in all the sessions designed by participants, with each of us rotating to teach our sessions. It was intimidating and there were challenges, but it was an excellent way to take risks with more trial and error than I would want to do back home with students. After a long day we were finally dismissed to depart and consider how we might incorporate what we learned back into our own instruction. I have no doubt that LALI-ASC has made me a better teacher, and I heartily recommend this program to anyone involved in teaching with primary sources.

## Review of Toggl - Free Time Tracking Software <<https://toggl.com>>

- Reviewed by Jessica Steytler, Reference Librarian/Archivist,  
Brookline Public Library

I was talking to a friend about life, and I asked what was making her happy. She started and stopped a few times but mostly talked about work. It was clear that work was monopolizing her thoughts and not sparking joy. She was overwhelmed and frustrated by the number of things she had to do and how little she felt she had accomplished. I think we have all been there at some point. It's not uncommon to bounce from one workstation to another throughout a day, get interrupted by a reference request, intern, or meeting, and then wonder what you were doing. Inevitably

we have to report up about what we've been doing. Organizing our thoughts around what we have done can feel daunting and add to our stress, particularly if we do not have a coherent method to track what we've done. The way I get on with my work and quiet my anxieties is with a time-tracking tool called Toggl.

Toggl, at its heart, is a timer. When you start your account, you have a blank slate. It uses several features that help a user customize the tool for their work. Identify Tasks and then organize them using Projects and Tags. Here is an introduction to how I use this app.

Step 0. Controlled vocabulary: Like all things, life is better with consistency. This is true for when you name all aspects in Toggl. That way when you are reviewing tasks, work is collated efficiently. Keep that in mind as you go along.

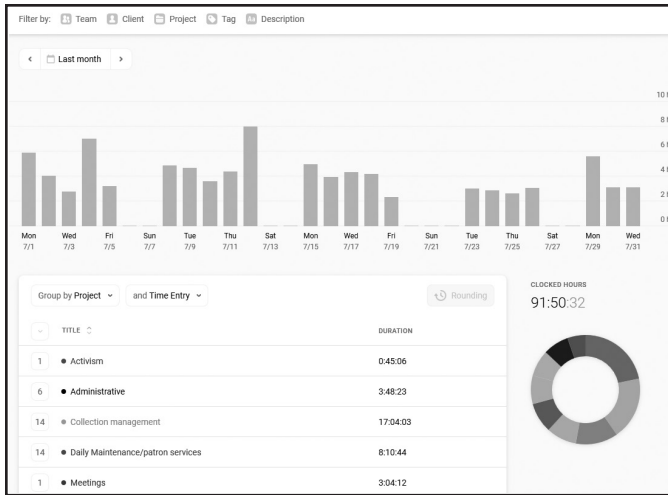
Step 1. Tasks: This is the first layer of building. It is a description of your activity. For example, right now Toggl is running and the task "write for *NEA Newsletter*" is set. Earlier it was "reference," and later I will be working on transcribing an accessions notebook into a spreadsheet, so "accession spreadsheet." Type in the task fresh, let the predictive text guide you or select from previously created tasks using the "go/play" symbol within the interface.

Step 2. Project: Tasks can be assigned to a Project. While you do not need to have a project to have a task, it does organize your information. Here are some things I do all the time:

- Process collections
- Answer reference questions
- Assist patrons with using our resources on-site
- Fulfill scan-on-demand requests
- Collection management-related tasks

These categories are the basis for my Projects. My controlled vocabulary for those things turn into: Process, Daily Maintenance, Public-Facing, Tech maintenance/scanning, Collection Management. A limitation of the system is that a Task can only be under one Project. But if you restart a Task from the list, it will automatically populate it from the Project it was assigned to.

Step 3. Tags: These are used to add further description to a task or project. For example, I created education/in-



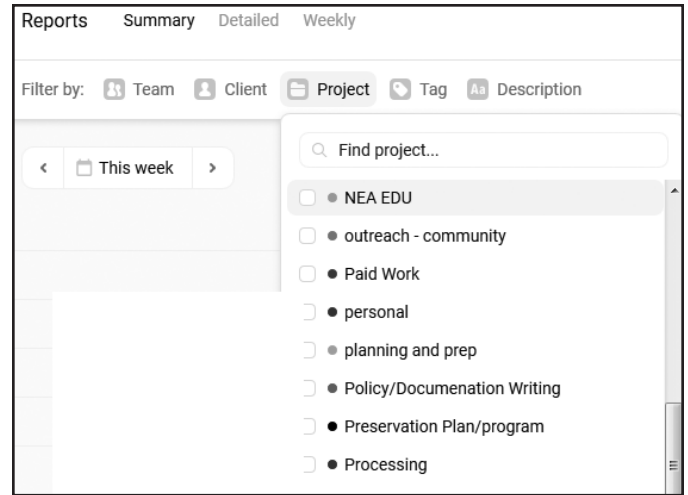
One-month general review featuring minimized Projects and total time spent. Click on Projects for details.

struction as a tag to cover a swath of activities, including active oversight for interns, writing a brochure, and providing a talk for a scheduled group of students/researchers on how to use the archives. Each of these types of education/instruction fell under a separate Project but also encompassed a feature of my work that I know I will have to speak to during report writing or annual reviews. The solution to the limitation of one Project per Task is Tags, since more than one Tag can be assigned to a Task.

**Step 4. Clients:** This is an optional feature, but it is particularly helpful when common tasks are being done for specifically funded work, such as grants or a consulting gig. One limitation is that a Project can only have one Client. However, Clients may have multiple Projects.

**Step 5. Reports:** This is where everything pays off. The reports can be looked at in a summary level or can be zoomed in for details, including a breakdown by week. You can filter by team, client, project, tag, or description. The reports can be downloaded as a PDF or a spreadsheet.

There are modifications and edits built into the system. The tool is computer- and mobile-friendly. I use the free version and get a lot out of it. The paid subscription is tiered and is helpful if you have a larger team or if you want more reporting options. You can log in through an existing Google account or use an independent login. Team members can be invited to a workspace to Tasks and keep track of work. Tasks can run in the moment, or you can go to manual mode. In manual mode you can backfill



Filtering by Projects or Tags for fine-tuning within Reports.

work that you couldn't describe in the moment. Additionally, Tags, Projects, and Tasks can all be edited—individually or in bulk—after the fact to correct errors or unify the controlled vocabulary.

Toggl is just another tool. If it doesn't fit a person's personality, preference, and needs, then it won't work for that person. I've made a habit out of using this tool. By maintaining consistent use, it gives me prompts through the Tasks, Tags, and Projects, and I am able to step away from the impossible expectation that I am going to remember everything I do. It helps me address inevitable anxiety that I'm not actually working enough. When I'm tempted to say yes to one more responsibility, this tells me with analytic precision exactly how little time I have left and I have more confidence to negotiate with management on priorities. Toggl generates reports automatically, which alleviates the terror of the blank page when report writing. I know that if I wanted to, I could do more with this tool, but how I use it is good enough for this moment and for what I need. More than anything, it tracks tasks for me so that I can get on with the doing rather than worry about the reporting. ■

### Promote your photograph collections!

The *NEA Newsletter* is seeking submissions from repositories in New England for back cover pictorial features in *This Season in New England History*. Submissions should be in digital format at 300 dpi or better, along with a caption detailing the subject of the photograph. Please email submissions to <newsletter@newenglandarchivists.org>.

## NEA Member Spotlight



**Name:**

Jamie Rice

**Affiliated institution:**

Maine Historical Society

**Job title or career stage:**

Director of Collections & Research

**How did you become interested in the archival field?**

I have an undergraduate degree in history and really wanted to work in the field but did not want to teach. I started to explore other options and began volunteering at the Maine Historical Society (MHS). The archivist at MHS encouraged me to think about archives as a career.

**What are some of your focuses and interests in the archival field?**

I started as a processing archivist, but eventually, and largely, worked in reference and research. As a result, I tend to focus on both preservation and access, specifically preparing and promoting collections for research. Ensuring collections are preserved, accessible, and finding unique ways to promote use, are all important aspects of my current work.

**What is your role on the board and what are your responsibilities?**

I am the current NEA president, through March 2020. My role includes maintaining continuity, encouraging NEA membership participation at the board level, and presiding over the organization's business.

**What are you looking forward to about being on the board?**

Participating on the NEA Board affords me an opportunity to learn from my fellow archivists and keep up with trends in the field. As a mid-career archivist, the NEA board provides a platform where I can learn from archivists across the career spectrum, especially in respect to career expectations. Working as an adminis-

trator, this is especially helpful as I hire and manage professionals within varied stages of their careers.

**What do you hope to accomplish while on the board?**

NEA has a strategic opportunity to be at the forefront on several issues concerning our field. While on the board, I hope to represent a subsection of archivists and archival repositories (northern New England; midsized repositories; historical societies) as NEA navigates and takes a leadership role in advocating for our profession.

**What do you see as the most pressing challenge to archives? Also for NEA?**

The need to advocate for our profession is nothing new, but current threats against the humanities in general demonstrates the need to accentuate the relevancy and role that archives play in our national narrative. However, there are so many layers to advocacy, while managing the expectations of users, administrations, and archivists alike. One of the challenges NEA faces is representing the varied types of repositories and archivists in its sphere, and the unique (and similar) challenges different archives and archivists face. A regional, professional organization like NEA must constantly work to include, represent, and consider the varied types of archivists, archives, and audiences in its orbit, while advocating for the profession in general.

**What's an interesting fact about you or an unexpected talent or interest? Alternatively, what would you do on your ideal day off?**

I especially enjoy traveling and seeing new places and cultures. I have traveled around the world, throughout the United States, Europe, and Africa. However, my favorite place to visit is Disney World.

**What are your hopes for the archival profession?**

Ultimately, I hope the archival profession garnishes the resources necessary to effectively care for collections, meet user expectations, and develop successful partnerships between traditional archival practice and emerging technologies. ■

Visit NEA online at:

[www.newenglandarchivists.org](http://www.newenglandarchivists.org)

## THIS SEASON IN NEW ENGLAND HISTORY



### **What's wrong with this picture: January in May?**

Winter does last a long time in New England! These photos, taken by an unnamed staff photographer, ran in the *Portland Evening Express*, Portland, Maine, on Friday, May 11, 1945, accompanied by the following caption: "In the merry, merry month of May—Deering High Diamonddeers, slated to play South Portland today, staged a comedy game when the tilt was cancelled by unseasonal weather. At left above, Gene Sturgeon gets set to 'slide' for the plate—and brought along his sled for the job. At right he completes the slide and batter Norton Sawyer watches as catcher Billy Edes tags Sturgeon. (Hey, that's a snowball, not a baseball!) and Umpire Ole Olsen (Oaks AC) calls the runner out." *Courtesy Portland Public Library, Archives & Special Collections.*