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What Archives Reveal:
The Hidden Poems of Amelia Earhart
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Cover: Amelia Earhart on the wing of her plane, holding hands with her husband, George Palmer Putnam, prior to taking off for Puerto Rico from Miami on her second world flight attempt, circa June 1, 1937. [Image Identifier: XI.B.16.B] Courtesy of the George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart Papers, Purdue University Libraries Archives and Special Collections.

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Building on the Past: Construction of the New Georgia Archives

David W. Carmicheal

On September 10, 2005, the Georgia Archives celebrated its eighty-eighth birthday in a new home, its fourth since 1918. Georgia Secretary of State Cathy Cox formed a unique partnership with state and federal government officials, one county, two cities, a university, and a foundation to accomplish construction of the 171,000 square-foot building. The construction took just nineteen months from groundbreaking to opening day, but the events that led to the new archives dated back many years, even decades. In fact, though no one knew it at the time, they began with the construction of an interstate highway.

Early Buildings

The concept of a state archives, as a place where the official records of the state are gathered in one place for continued preservation, is found very early in Georgia history. The colonial trustees kept careful records of their proceedings and, in one instance, removed a Recorder from office because, in addition to “living in open Adultery” and being in other respects “a worth-
less fellow,” he “was not capable of making up the Records.”\(^1\) As early as 1825 the governor authorized Joseph Vallence Bevan to “search the archives” of the state for information regarding the Indian tribes of Georgia,\(^2\) and in 1833 the concept of a state archives was alluded to when the Commissioners of the Land Lottery in Georgia’s Gold Region discovered certain “mistakes which seem to be of such character as to require of us an explanation to be deposited amongst the archives of the state so as to be a clue to facts which may arise by any Judicial or Legislative investigation upon the matter.”\(^3\) Nearly forty years later the adjutant general of Georgia acknowledged a letter by saying, “the letter has been filed, and in the archives of the State will be preserved the testimony of the cheerful promptitude with which Capt. Bethea responded to the call of the Governor.”\(^4\)

If Georgia’s officials imagined themselves the keepers of a carefully compiled and preserved documentary record, they were surely ignoring the visible evidence that confronted them daily in the state’s capitol building. Writing in 1917, Lucian Lamar Knight, who became the first director of the Department of Archives and History, reported that the most historical records of the state had been “relegated to corners where rats and roaches congregate.” More alarming still was the discovery that “in the basement of the state capitol, not long ago, some rare papers were found in a lot of rubbish which the janitor was actually using for purposes of fuel”—a fact that Knight said, “I blush to record.”\(^5\) Knight’s call to preserve the state’s historical record met surprisingly stiff resistance; so much so that Dr. Knight himself was arrested in the gallery of the House of Representatives when


\(^3\) Commissioners of the Land Lottery of the Gold Region, Milledgeville, Georgia, 6 July 1833, Land Lottery Administrative Records, RG 3-1-20, Georgia Archives.

\(^4\) L. H. Briscoe to W. B. Hodgson, 12 March 1863, Adjutant General Letterbooks, RG 22-1-1, Georgia Archives.

\(^5\) Lucian Lamar Knight, *Shall Our Records be Lost? Georgia’s Most Vital Need: a Department of Archives*, report to the Governor, 30 June 1917, 5.
the debate became so heated that he leaned over the rail and called one of the honored members a liar. At last, though, on August 20, 1918, the General Assembly, prompted partly by patriotism engendered by World War I, officially established the state archives.

Almost immediately, the problem of space to protect the records became paramount. The report of the Committee to Provide Quarters argued that “the condition of these archives, some of them in the last stages of decay—their number, and their importance to the State render it necessary to obtain quarters in which light and air are abundant. These are the prime requisites to secure the ends of preservation.” But space in the Capitol building, then as now, was at a premium. The committee finally concluded that, “the only spaces suited to the ends in view are the four archways on the top floor, leading from the corridors to the rotunda,” which the committee proposed to enclose. Even these “not so frequently visited” spaces were apparently assigned to the archives with great reluctance, for the report goes on to argue, somewhat plaintively, that “these spaces at the present time serve no special purpose; at least none in comparison with the exigencies of the present crisis, for they are simply balconies.” In any event, the archives received permission to occupy only two of the four balconies, which were promptly equipped with what was then considered state-of-the-art preservation equipment, “oak shelves, enclosed by glass.”

By 1929, preservation efforts had advanced to where the collection was being “filed in dust-proof, light-proof boxes.”

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8 Ibid.

9 Ibid., 8.

10 Ibid., 12.

11 *Tenth Annual Report of the State Historian and Director of the Department of Archives and History for the State of Georgia* (Privately published, 1929), iii.
collection itself had grown to include ten thousand bound volumes and four hundred thousand loose papers. That same year the heirs of furniture magnate Amos Giles Rhodes offered his former residence on Peachtree Street in Atlanta as “a permanent home for the Department.” The home, which was described as “practically fireproof,” was accepted by the legislature and governor on August 21, 1929. Although $5,000 was appropriated for repairs and shelving, and the staff moved into their new home later that year, most of the collection was left behind at the capitol building because no funds were appropriated for the maintenance of the new archives. In fact, the director of the department, Ruth Blair, paid for the opening reception out of her personal funds—and then went on to do the same for the heat, light, water and janitor bills for the entire year of 1930! Because of Blair’s personal commitment, the archives building remained open to researchers every day of the week, including Sundays, all at the personal expense of the director.

Rhodes Hall gave the archives increased visibility and, for a time, alleviated the overcrowding that had plagued the collection in the Capitol, but it was hardly an ideal home. The mansion, whose twenty rooms had seemed so expansive compared to the balconies of the Capitol, prompted Blair to provide space for the collections, “curios, and relics,” of the Atlanta Historical Society, the Atlanta Old Guard, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Daughters of 1812, and an organization of Spanish-American War Veterans. When Mrs. J. E. Hays became director in 1937, she began giving over whole rooms to these and other patriotic organizations, so that Rhodes Hall soon had no room for new accessions of state records and manuscripts.

Compounding the crowded conditions was the condition of the building itself. Rhodes Hall was built in 1904, and by the

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13 Blair succeeded Knight in 1925.

14 *Eleventh Annual Report of the State Historian and Director of the Department of Archives and History for the State of Georgia* (Privately published, 1930), 1.

15 *Thirteenth Annual Report of the State Historian and Director of the Department of Archives and History*, June 18, 1931—January 1, 1932 (Privately published, 1932), 2.
mid-1950s it was badly in need of a new roof and other repairs. Photographs of the time show records stacked against walls that have been heavily water-damaged. Squirrels found such easy access to the building that Mary Givens Bryan, who succeeded Mrs. Hays as director in 1951, reported that “hundreds of original books have been badly damaged by squirrels, rats, book worms and bugs”—her note appended to the back of the photograph of a dramatically chewed eighteenth-century deed book.  

It was Bryan who led the charge to build a new archives facility, talking to the press and plying them with photographs of the building’s deteriorating storage conditions, speaking tirelessly to patriotic and historical organizations, and even attempting to orchestrate a letter-writing campaign to the governor. Among the files of the Secretary of State is a letter addressed to Governor Marvin Griffin, dated January 23, 1958, which urges the governor to provide funding for a new archives building. The letter promises—in rhapsodic terms—a unique place “in the annals of history” to the governor who would do such a deed, even saying that future generations “will call your name ‘blessed’.” Other paragraphs extol the diligent work conducted by Ms. Bryan and her staff under the most “terrific handicaps.” But it is the handwritten note at the top of the letter that proves most interesting. It reads: “Draft of letter by Mary Bryan for Archives patrons to send Governor, each individual to change in phraseology in order for each letter not to be identical.” It is initialed by Bryan with an additional notation: “Copy for Mr. Fortson.”

All of Bryan’s reports and speeches—and even her letter-writing campaign—might have come to nothing had it not been for Ben W. Fortson, Jr., or “Mr. Ben,” as he was known to generations of Georgians. Fortson embraced the cause of a new archives building shortly after becoming Secretary of State in 1946 (an office he held until 1979), and in 1955 he finally convinced the state’s General Assembly to appropriate funds to plan a new building. Mr. Fortson took personal interest in the new building

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16 Photograph of 1783 record book of Colonial Deeds, [Archives] Administration—Photographs and Negatives, RG 4-1-57, Box 2, folder: Rhodes Hall archives, Georgia Archives.

17 Mary Givens Bryan, draft of letter to Governor Marvin Griffin, 23 January 1958, Secretary of State Subject Files, RG 2-1-2, Box 20, Archives and History, 1957-58, Georgia Archives.
and, despite being confined to a wheelchair, traveled personally to inspect archives buildings in Washington, DC, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Kansas City, and Lansing in order to study, as Ms. Bryan wrote, "the mistakes of other buildings." 

As plans for the new building developed, Georgians embraced the idea enthusiastically. Offers poured into Mr. Ben's office from patriotic organizations and regular citizens offering to sponsor murals and dioramas (with topics ranging from Oglethorpe landing in Georgia to Agnes Hobson racing by horseback to warn the patriots of advancing British troops—the message secreted in her hair). One society asked to sponsor a fountain, others wanted to provide moving pictures of Georgia history, and one group proposed the installation of a giant barometer in the entrance hall in order to predict the weather. But this was to be a building devoted to archives, and Secretary Fortson resisted attempts to divert the project from its primary purpose. He was building what Victor Gondos, Jr. predicted would be "one of the foremost archival buildings in America and the world." 

Mary Givens Bryan did not live to see the building dedication on October 11, 1965, but the building was everything she had hoped for. It was hailed as the most modern archival facility in the country: its fireproof construction and gas-powered air conditioning were touted as providing the finest security possible for historical records, and researchers exclaimed over the grand accommodations made for them in walnut and marble. Even the exterior of the building excited comment. One article reported that the building "stands in such solitary splendor be-

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18 Mary Givens Bryan to B. E. Thrasher, Jr., 20 June 1961, Secretary of State Subject Files, RG 2-1-2, Box 21, folder: Archives Building General Correspondence, 1959-61, Georgia Archives.

19 Victor Gondos, Jr. to Mary Givens Bryan, 16 June 1961, Secretary of State Subject Files, RG 2-1-2, Box 21, folder: Archives Building General Correspondence, 1959-61.

20 She died on July 28, 1964. Obituary of Mary Givens Bryan, n.d., Mary Givens Bryan Memorial Correspondence, RG 4-1-14, Box 1, folder: Miscellaneous Information Concerning Mary Givens Bryan, Georgia Archives.
tween the ribbed circle of Atlanta Stadium and the gold-domed state capitol that it is almost a traffic hazard.”

Visitation during the first year rocketed from 7,586 to 13,543, and for the next thirty-five years the fourteen-story marble building—which many Georgians called “the white ice cube”—served the needs of Georgia’s records well. Inevitably, however, years passed and excitement about this modern marvel faded. Eventually the building posed insurmountable problems to those who occupied it—and even to passersby. Some of the building’s challenges were subtle, obvious only to those who tried to snake computer cables through its walnut and marble skeleton, or to those charged with maintaining constant humidity and temperature levels with deteriorating HVAC equipment. Other problems were not so subtle, however, as when massive panels of marble began to fall from the facade of the building and crash onto sidewalks below.

A 1998 engineering study confirmed what staff had suspected for several years, ever since stress fractures had appeared in the floor: the building was sinking. The engineers conjectured that water saturation and the construction of nearby I-75 had disturbed the soil around the structure and triggered the instability so that the southwest corner of the archives building had settled as much as 4 1/2 inches. Water had penetrated the concrete walls on all sides; a fact that was hardly surprising since, as the report noted, the lawn to the south of the building was saturated with water, so much so that the “sidewalk panels move when walked upon and water seeps up at the joints.” More disturbing, though, was the fact that as the building sank it twisted, causing the marble panels to pull away from the facade. The possibility of heavy stone falling onto unsuspecting pedestrians would have been alarming enough under normal circumstances, but the 1996 Summer Olympics were about to begin, and the archives


23 Ibid., items 5.5 and 5.8. See also item 6.6.

24 Ibid., item 6.10.
sat in the middle of one of the game’s busiest venues. State officials quickly drilled into the facade and secured the shaky panels with large bolts.

Even as the building sank, the archives faced massive expenses to repair the aging HVAC systems. The cost to repair and refurbish the state archives (estimated by some to be as much as $40,000,000) made new construction an attractive alternative.

**PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

In 1999 the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) outlined a long-term plan to replace some of its eleven regional repositories with new buildings; construction of a new Southeast Regional Branch would provide the prototype for all future construction. NARA officials—encouraged by their experience with Archives II, their newest facility at College Park, Maryland—envisioned a facility located on or near a university campus.

Word that both the national and state archives were looking for possible building locations reached the office of the president of Clayton College and State University (CCSU). The university recognized that the two facilities could be important components of plans to build a strong program in information technology. A strategy had already been developed to redesign the area around the college campus, so with the aid of Gateway Development (the master planners for the campus redevelopment), the Clayton County Development Authority, and local and state officials from Clayton County, the university began to urge the two archives to locate adjacent to the CCSU campus. After extensive discussions, an arrangement was made for the archives to lease a new building that would be built and owned by the Development Authority of Clayton County.

In April 2001 the Georgia General Assembly voted to increase the budget of the state archives to cover the rent required for the new building. A lease agreement was signed in October, and the groundbreaking took place on October 30 of that year.

**OUT WITH THE OLD**

The building that had been greeted with such acclaim in 1965 was the product of an era very different from the one in which the new state archives would be built. Apart from the ob-
vious advances in technology, the world had changed in subtler ways. In many ways the marble and walnut structure one block south of the capitol building was a monument to its builders’ vision of state government in the early 1960s: big, centralized, and authoritative. In the decades since, the staff of the archives—like most in state government—had diminished considerably (from a high of one hundred in 1983 to fifty by 2003), and the belief that government services should be centralized in one segment of the state’s capital city fell gradually from favor. Even as the people demanded decentralized government, technology made it possible: the new building would be located outside the city center, and would reflect a more open and frugal vision of government.

In both 1965 and 2003 the archives staff set out to build the finest archival facility possible. The records of the 1965 construction project make much of the special trips made by the Secretary of State and members of the building committee to visit other archives and collect building ideas. Mention of these field trips in newspaper articles and reports was apparently meant to convey to the public how purposefully the archives was going about its planning. Cross-country air travel, after all, was still serious business in the early 1960s, though the archives party’s hardships were doubtless blunted by their preference for first-class accommodations. The fact remained, though, that archives staff were unlikely to have visited more than a handful of other archives until the need arose as part of the building project. By contrast, as the design of the new building got underway in 2000, the director and deputy director had, between them, visited hundreds of archives over the course of their careers, during an age of much easier travel and communication. Consequently, only two trips were taken with the building construction specifically in mind: the deputy director visited the South

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25 The Secretary of State and his party seem always to have flown first class. A menu from one of the flights indicates that the on-board meal was prepared by “Eugene Ertle, Executive Chef.” Ertle was, at the time, president of both the American Culinary Federation and the Chefs de Cuisine Association of Chicago. The three-course meal included French pastries and four different cocktails (all doubles).

26 Design of the building began in late 2000, using private funds, even though the General Assembly did not officially authorize the construction agreement until early 2001.
Carolina Department of Archives and History to discuss architectural questions,\textsuperscript{27} and, with the director, visited the Archives II facility of NARA in College Park, Maryland.

More important even than the rise of rapid transportation was the rise of archival and allied professionals since the early 1960s. Unlike the archivists who built in 1965, the twenty-first-century archivists had access to consultants with highly specialized knowledge in everything from environmental controls and laboratory construction to lighting levels and shelving layout. Visits to other archival facilities largely confirmed the advice given by these professionals.

From the outset, it was determined that the functions of the archives must take precedence over every other consideration of design and construction. In a parallel to the 1964 construction, the archivists in 2000 had strong support from the Secretary of State—in this case, Cathy Cox—who resisted attempts to deflect the building from its primary purpose. In fact, the archives’ special environmental needs formed the basis of the lease agreement.

**Design**

The first priority of design was to define environmental performance criteria for the building. The lease required the architects and contractors to produce a building that met certain design criteria spelled out by the archives staff.\textsuperscript{28} These criteria included matters both large (the temperature and humidity levels in the vaults, the floor loads) and small (the use of solvent-free adhesives, identification of the types of plastics to avoid during construction). In effect, this allowed the archives staff to avoid technical decisions that were beyond their expertise. Once the archivists had outlined the design criteria, the architects and engineers were responsible for designing systems that would meet that intent and were given maximum flexibility to do so. The archives staff were not required to approve specific engineering solutions. At the end of the project, and before the archives occupied the building, an independent commissioning

\textsuperscript{27} Both the South Carolina facility and the Georgia Archives were designed by the firm of Hellmuth, Obata, & Kassabaum (HOK), though by different architects.

\textsuperscript{28} The design criteria were incorporated into the lease document itself.
engineer was hired by the archives to verify that the building did, in fact, meet the specified design criteria.

Architects first met with staff and users to create a wish list of building attributes; then the design work began from a functional perspective. The various functions and processes of the archives were described, evaluated, and redesigned (where necessary) before spaces were planned. For example, the process of bringing records into the archives was studied, and resulted in the construction of separate spaces for unloading the truck, inspecting the records for possible contamination, and, when necessary, the decontamination, cleaning and conservation of records. Each space was designed to accommodate the flow of records from loading dock to vault storage in an efficient manner.

Some spaces were designed to be used in only one way, such as the isolation room, which was designed to keep moldy records from contaminating the rest of the building. Wherever possible, though, rooms were designed to be flexible enough for multiple uses: for instance, both the training and processing rooms can be subdivided into smaller rooms when the necessity to accommodate multiple sessions or projects arises. Ceilings have built-in ports for the installation of wireless data transmitters. The lobby walls are built from reclaimed southern heart pine, and are topped by a picture rail from which exhibit facsimiles are conveniently hung. When bare, the walls function as a design element in themselves.

The vaults in the building were designed to be flexible as well. Two of the four vaults were built to accommodate compact mobile shelving immediately; a third was built with tracks in the floor for eventual conversion to compact shelving. The first-floor vault was designed to hold maps, rare books, and other non-standard containers; it includes automatic doors which make it easier to remove large documents to the public reading room. In all, the building will hold a maximum of 257,000 cubic feet of materials.

Some visitors to the old building had complained about its imposing facade and intimidating features. With that in mind, the archivists set about to design a building that was inviting and responsive to the public. Two walk-in closets and a class-
room were built to accommodate visiting school groups. Tour stations were built which allow visiting groups to observe a storage vault, the microfilm/scanning area, and the conservation laboratory, and a specific tour route was planned and lined with informative panels. The main reference room, designed to include traditional tables as well as lounge chairs, looks into a quiet garden area. In a separate room adjacent to the welcome desk, the Customer Service Center was created where researchers register before entering the reference room, pay for photocopies, or buy publications. The Customer Service Center enables staff to focus on patrons away from the bustle of the main entrance and the welcome desk.

The lease agreement for the archives specified a maximum construction budget, so the archives staff spent much time evaluating each design and construction decision in light of the budget. Fortunately, the architects and contractors were enthusiastic about their roles in constructing an important public building. They quickly grasped the difference between the project must-haves (such as the strict environmental controls) and the archivists' wish lists, and they worked diligently to accommodate them all. Their enthusiasm paid off in a building that satisfies both the public and the archives staff. Construction was completed one month ahead of schedule at a cost of only $120 per square foot—the cost of a middle school in Georgia.

**PREPARING THE COLLECTIONS**

During the design and construction of the new building, the archives staff undertook the monumental task of preparing the collection for the move to the new building. Even before design began, staff started inventorying the collection at the container level. The archives contained nearly three hundred thousand boxes, volumes, and other discrete units; each had to be briefly inspected, inventoried, and then, after data entry, bar

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29 The walk-in closets contain hooks and cubbies where students can store coats and other belongings. The door to each closet is equipped with a push-button combination lock so that the combination can be given to the teacher, who can control access.

30 Despite its low cost, the archives building (as of 2005) has won several design awards, including a joint award from the American Library Association and the American Institute of Architects as one of the eight finest library/archives buildings in the nation.
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coded. Boxes were evaluated, and those that appeared too fragile to make the move were replaced. Early estimates were that thirty thousand cubic-foot boxes would need to be replaced before the move, though, as the move date approached, the criteria for replacement were made more stringent and this estimate fell considerably.

Staff were divided into move teams, and move team leaders held monthly—and, eventually—weekly meetings to discuss move progress. The steps required to prepare for the move were carefully tested and then plotted on a chart so that progress could be evaluated frequently and resources reassigned as required. For example, a decision was made early to stretch-wrap all bound volumes before the move. A pilot plan was created to pull volumes from the shelves, place a bar coded page inside the front cover of each, vacuum the cover, text block, and spine of each, and then stretch-wrap each volume individually. The initial proposal included some twelve steps to be performed on each volume. The team responsible for this project selected one hundred volumes, and performed the steps while timing their activities. The pilot demonstrated that to perform all twelve steps on twenty-five thousand volumes would require the work to continue many months past the move date. The plan was then revised, the number of steps was halved, and the test project was performed again. This time the pilot project demonstrated that the new process would complete the job in time for the move. Similar tests were performed on other processes and all essential work was completed in time for the move.

Over four thousand artifacts were cataloged and transferred to the State Capitol Museum. Oversized and extremely fragile items were separated for special handling. Each project related to the move was assigned to specific staff members and a team leader. Team leaders met several times each month to compare notes and reassign resources to critical projects. As a result of such teamwork, the archives staff maintained full services throughout the thirty months of preparation—and even expanded weekend hours.

Archives patrons were kept apprised of construction progress, and prepared for temporary record closures through online notices and exhibits of construction photographs and building plans. As furniture and shelving were selected for the new building, samples were displayed in the archives lobby to
give patrons a glimpse of the ongoing work. Nine months before the new building opened, the archives issued its first tentative schedule of record closings. The schedule was updated periodically, as dates became more specific.

**MOVING THE COLLECTIONS**

In June 2002, a request for proposals was issued to potential moving vendors, which described the move and the types of services that would be required by the archives; a vendor was selected the following month. As part of the contract, the moving vendor supplied a move coordinator to help staff plan the logistics of the move itself. Through extensive meetings with staff, the move coordinator developed a detailed plan that spelled out the order in which records would be removed from the old building, what conveyances would be used for specific types of records, how trucks would be loaded and unloaded, how the contents of each truck would be verified, and when staff offices would be relocated.

Original records were closed on January 1, 2003, and the final push to prepare the records for the relocation began. The move itself began on schedule on February 15. The three hundred thousand containers and volumes were placed on dollies or carts, stretch-wrapped, and then placed on trucks that were sealed by the archives staff. In the time since the old building had been opened, a canopy had been added to the loading dock, and a security station was installed at the driveway entrance, making it impossible for semi-tractor trailers to access the old building. As a result, the move was done using box trucks that, while smaller, made it easier for archives staff to track and process the loads. Loading and unloading were supervised by archives staff. Just before the truck left the old building, the archives staff would instruct the driver which of three routes to follow to the new building; the random pattern of the routes provided an added measure of security. Once the truck was en route, the manifest of its contents was faxed to the new building. By the time the truck arrived, staff had deployed to the proper floor to receive the records. Archives staff inspected and broke the seal on each truck before the records were removed and placed on shelves. Once the records were in place, staff scanned the record barcodes to their new shelf locations and verified that all records
Construction of the New Georgia Archives

had been received and accounted for. By the end of each day the computer system contained the new locations of records.

Throughout the move, many staff remained at the old building to continue providing reference services. The library remained open to the public until the last day of March. In addition, the State General Assembly was in session throughout the period of the move and staff maintained all relevant reference services.

The last record arrived at the new archives on April 25. For the next six days, the staff continued scanning records to their new locations and arranging library books in the public reference room. On May 6, the archives reopened to the public after being fully closed only five weeks. The move itself was accomplished over a ten-week period.

**Into The New**

On May 6, 2003, the Georgia Archives opened its doors to researchers in the new building. As expected, the archives saw an immediate increase in use.\(^3^1\) Two trends, though, proved unexpected and more gratifying: fully one-third of users during the first year were visitors who had never researched in the archives before, and, use by students and teachers increased dramatically. The customer-friendly design of the building resulted in thousands of people touring the facility within its first two years, including many who were interested in the archives’ functions, even if they did not intend to conduct research at the facility themselves.

On April 1, 2005, the National Archives Southeast Regional branch opened next door to the state archives, the first such co-location in the country. Genealogists in particular were excited to find their two primary resource repositories located just steps apart. But students and teachers, too, have benefited from the co-location, particularly through the two archives’ joint participation in “Teaching American History” grants. The location of the new archives has brought two other benefits: students from the adjacent Clayton College and State University have served as interns, primarily scanning documents for online access by patrons; and the archives’ new location—within a com-

\(^3^1\) During the first few months, usage increased as much as 55 percent before falling off to less dramatic levels.
munity, rather than as one more government building within a large government complex—has brought many positive results, both tangible and intangible. The local economic development association, for example, has been enthusiastic in its support of the two archives and their friends groups, with the result that both archives are being marketed more actively and widely than ever before.

**INTO THE FUTURE**

Since 1918, the Georgia Archives has occupied four facilities, each one bringing a renewed sense of possibility. Each new building was greeted with enthusiasm and, though that enthusiasm waned as the spaces created in 1918, 1930, and 1964 deteriorated, each represented a belief that the records of the state were worth preserving in the finest conditions possible. The archivists who opened this latest building feel a similar sense of optimism (even if that sense is tempered by the lessons of previous facilities), and a commitment to the value of the state's historical records.

The Georgia Archives, now in its eighty-eighth year, is poised to take advantage of new possibilities and opportunities hardly imaginable in 1918. Ironically, though, the world war that raged when the archives was established prompted the first archivist of Georgia to argue for archival preservation in words that resonate in today's post-9/11 world: "Events," he wrote, "are putting a solemn emphasis upon the importance of records." The latest Georgia Archives facility is another in a long line of efforts to properly address the importance of those records.

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32 Lucian Lamar Knight, *Shall Our Records be Lost? Georgia's Most Vital Need: a Department of Archives*, report to the Governor, 30 June 1917, 27.
The importance of primary source materials to scholarship is undeniable. Primary source materials can verify or contradict information accepted as true in history books and other secondary sources. They can tell the whole, or at least more complete, story of events. Unlike secondary sources, primary source materials offer first-hand accounts from the past, bringing history closer and making it feel more real. It can even be argued that primary source materials are less susceptible than published texts to the loss or misinterpretation of information over time in subsequent edition revisions. In particular among primary source materials, manuscripts such as diaries and letters offer glimpses into history where historic figures are untainted and unskewed by the biographers and scholars who interpret them. Unpublished manuscripts have not usually been censored or edited to reflect modern thoughts, beliefs, or politically correct views the way secondary sources often are.

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At their best, primary source materials reveal new information about people and events from the past. In the following article, the author will tell the story of how recently-discovered poems found among Amelia Earhart’s personal papers shed new light into the life of the famous, yet elusive aviator.

**Discovery of Earhart’s Poems**

At one time and another, AE wrote many fragments of verse, for she found deep pleasure in building little images with words. That aspect was very private—almost secret.¹

—George Palmer Putnam

During her lifetime, Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) wrote three books about her flying career: *20 Hrs. 40 Min.* (1929), *The Fun of It* (1932), and *Last Flight* (1937).² In addition to these accounts, she wrote chapters and introductions for several children’s books and articles on aviation for numerous magazines and newspapers such as the *New York Times* and the *New York Herald-Tribune*. She even served a brief stint as Aviation Editor for *Cosmopolitan* magazine writing articles and answering readers’ questions about flying. It is still widely unknown today, however, that Amelia Earhart secretly dreamed of becoming an accomplished creative writer. In addition to her published non-fiction works, she wrote numerous poems and drafts of short stories; the majority of these efforts were written before she became a famous aviator. Few of these pieces have been published. Considering the public’s endless curiosity about Amelia Earhart, one might ask why historians and biographers have not previously discussed her writings in detail.

The answer to this question lies in the mind of George Palmer Putnam, the charismatic publisher and promoter who became Earhart’s husband in 1931. After Earhart’s disappearance, Putnam donated approximately fifteen cubic feet of his


wife's working papers, medals, and other select memorabilia to Purdue University. Although the collection was rich with documentation on Earhart's major flights and other accomplishments, it contained no personal papers and very few items whose dates preceded Earhart's first major flight in 1928. For decades, biographers and researchers have relied upon Purdue's collection of Earhart's papers established by George Palmer Putnam, as well as the Earhart Papers collection at the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute. The gaps in these two major Earhart collections reveal little personal information, and leave researchers questioning who Earhart really was as a woman, a wife, and a person.

Amelia Earhart's sister, Muriel Earhart Morrissey, comes closest to answering this question with her book, *Courage is the Price*. Unlike other biographies of Earhart, which barely skim the surface of her personal life, Morrissey's book contains her accounts of growing up with Earhart: what types of books young Amelia enjoyed reading, what games she played, and what her early life was like. The only problem with Morrissey's book is that the only information the reader receives information about Earhart is second-hand. There were very few primary source materials available for Morrissey to draw upon when she wrote her sister's biography in 1963. Although Morrissey and other biographers allude to Earhart's passion for reading and writing poetry, there have been few examples of Earhart's writings to quote from, or to analyze for their potential biographical significance. If, as many authors have argued, Earhart frequently wrote poems, where were they?

For over half a century, scholars assumed that Earhart's early writings and other personal papers burned in a fire that destroyed part of the Putnams' home in Rye, New York, in 1934. This was a logical assumption, as the papers never showed up on the market, and George Putnam did nothing to discourage this belief. In fact, most of Earhart's earliest writings and papers did

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3 George Palmer Putnam, correspondence with Purdue University president Edward C. Elliott, 1940, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries.

burn in the fire, but not all of them. George Putnam saved a collection of approximately five hundred documents that had been most personal to him and Amelia. Just as he had during their marriage, Putnam respected his wife's privacy and her wish to never share her personal life with the public. He held onto Earhart's personal papers, undoubtedly aware of their significance to future researchers, but he never revealed their existence to anyone, including Earhart's immediate family.

This treasure trove of Earhart's personal papers include her marriage license, letters she wrote to Putnam while on her flights, a premarital agreement that outlined her desire to maintain her independence during their marriage, short story drafts, notes for speeches and books, dozens of poems and poem drafts, even a flight log from her record-breaking 1932 solo flight across the Atlantic. It is likely that Earhart wrote much more than what has survived.

Incredibly, it was not until 2002, when George Putnam's granddaughter Sally Putnam Chapman donated Putnam's cherished private collection of Amelia's personal papers to Purdue University, that the existence of the papers was verified. Following Putnam's death, his widow Margaret Lewis inherited his estate, including Earhart's personal papers. In the 1980s, when Sally Putnam Chapman began writing her book on her grandparents' relationships with Earhart, she relied upon the papers to tell the personal story behind Earhart and Putnam's romance. Subsequently, Margaret Lewis gave the Earhart papers to Sally Putnam Chapman.

After the publication of Chapman's book in 1997, she considered her options on where the papers might be donated so that the public could access them. Purdue was among her choices for the collection, primarily because most of Earhart's papers had resided there since 1940, with her grandfather's initial donation. Chapman ultimately chose Purdue over other institutions because she wanted to reunite Earhart's aviation papers with her personal papers and to fulfill her grandfather's wishes. As Chapman noted: "my grandfather chose to give the collection to Purdue because Amelia loved Purdue and because of Purdue's generous sponsorship of her flights. They were married during Amelia's time on the faculty at Purdue, and they spent time on
the campus together. I am just fulfilling what he would have done. The whole collection is finally home again.”

Like buried treasure, Earhart’s personal papers contain a wealth of new information about the private side of Amelia Earhart, just waiting to be discovered by researchers: in particular, Earhart’s poems tell the story of an intelligent young woman who possessed a love for words and a burning desire to write. They reveal her thoughts on flying, aging and death, love, and heartbreak as they provide new insight into the aviator’s early life.

**THE POEMS IN CONTEXT: EARHART’S EARLY LIFE**

Amelia Earhart grew up in a family that valued books and knowledge. From an early age, young Amelia liked to play with existing words and invent new ones. She was often intentionally creative in the spelling she used in her letters to friends and family. As a child she enjoyed studying poetry, and for a brief time, she and her sister Muriel [Earhart Morrissey] were taught at home by a governess who incorporated poetry into her instruction. According to Muriel, the governess stressed poetry over more traditional subjects: “We omitted geography almost entirely from our studies, but we reveled in poetry far beyond our years.”

In an interview, Earhart’s mother Amy stated that Amelia composed her first poem between four and five years of age. Among the few school papers of Earhart’s that have survived are notes she took on various meter and rhyme schemes for particular types of verses.

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5 Purdue University News Service, press release, “Purdue Libraries Land New Rare Items for Amelia Earhart Collection,” 2 May 2002, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries.

6 Morrissey, *Courage is the Price*, 68.


8 Amelia Earhart, poetry notes, n.d., Folder W-4 (Writings Series), The George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart Papers, Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries, hereafter cited as the Putnam Collection.
Around 1917, at the age of twenty, Earhart began to create a large scrapbook of poetry clippings revealing many of her early interests, such as women's rights, that she planned to compile into an anthology when she found the time. For years, she collected and saved poems that spoke to her; this portfolio of clippings still exists today, and is part of the Earhart Papers owned by the Schlesinger Library at the Radcliffe Institute.

Earhart's taste in poetry was eccentric, and encompassed many periods and styles. She seemed to have a preference for Symbolist poetry, recognized by poetry scholars as a particularly complex subgenre; she also appreciated Imagist, Victorian and Romantic poetry, as well as modern verse. The strongest similarities among the poems she collected were recurring themes of melancholy, death, love and heartbreak, and the effects of time and aging. Many of the poems touted the transience of human life, or the belief that beauty and the written word could convey immortality after the physical body succumbed to death. She seemed to have a preference for women poets, and probably appreciated the new voices of female independence she observed in poets like Edna St. Vincent Millay and Elinor Wylie; she also admired Carl Sandburg.9

Many biographers who knew Earhart personally including her sister Muriel Earhart Morrissey and her husband George Palmer Putnam have commented on Amelia's love for both reading and writing poetry. Yet, until the rediscovery of Earhart's personal papers, there was almost no evidence of Earhart's own efforts. Numerous biographies include Earhart's poem "Courage," but have few other examples to provide.10 Morrissey wrote in her biography of her sister that while they were living in Chicago they were "devotees of Harriet Monroe's Poetry magazine."11 Perhaps unbeknownst to Muriel, Amelia submitted some of her poems to the magazine.

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10 Mary Lovell, The Sound of Wings: The Life of Amelia Earhart (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), unnumbered page preceding "Table of Contents." Mary Lovell's excellent work is perhaps the most thoroughly researched and best written of all the Earhart biographies.

11 Morrissey, Courage is the Price, 110.
Using the pseudonym "Emil Harte," twelve-three-year-old Amelia submitted four poems to *Poetry* on April 6, 1921. She included with the poems a letter that stated simply: "Enclosed are four small efforts of a novice." The original letter and poems she submitted can be found in her personal papers at Purdue, along with a personal response from *Poetry*’s editor, Harriet Monroe. The poems Earhart submitted are titled "Palm tree," "To M———", "My Friend," and "From an Airplane." All of the poems are short and written in free verse. Although they were rejected, Harriet Monroe wrote back to "Mr. Harte," stating that she considered the poems to be "unusually promising," and urged him to contribute more in the future. Monroe’s opinion demonstrates that Earhart’s poems had potential.

Although Earhart was still honing her poetic skills, the four raw, brief poems Earhart submitted are undeniably moving; they reveal her keen observation skills and successful use of rhythm and meter to convey mood. One of the poems, "Palm tree," includes a description of a tree encased in ice.

"Palm tree"
Like crackling icicles,
your brittle sword-branches
rattle in the small breezes
of thick warm nights.

Knowing nothing of cold,
is it with malice of ignorance,
that you chill
the thick, warm dreams
of souls uneasy at discomfort?

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12 Although other sources, notably the PBS video *Amelia Earhart* (Nancy Porter Productions, 1993) have stated that Earhart’s pseudonym was "Emil A. Harte," a thorough examination of the original letter and supporting documents reveal that there was no middle initial—the “A” was just an extra flourish on the “H” in “Harte.”

13 Amelia Earhart, poems, 1921, Folder W-6 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.
Earhart incorporates strong trochaic words into the poem to bring to mind the harshness and brutality of winter; she frequently uses "k," "t," and "l" sounds to convey the sharp snapping of the tree's frozen limbs. The poem exudes a coldness that is associated with the palm tree's ignorance of the freezing destruction of winter. There is also an overall air of melancholy and loneliness that is captured by the image of the single palm tree, standing out of place in the winter landscape.

In the short poems "To M——" and "My Friend," Earhart describes the personalities of two people in character snapshots that illustrate Earhart's fascination with the inner workings of the human mind. They also reveal Earhart's early feminist observance that women were often more appreciated for their beauty than for their intellect. In the poem, a beautiful woman scornfully laugh at her admirers for appreciating her body without noticing her inner qualities.

Earhart is fascinated with watching others: her poems serve as an outlet for the personal thoughts and emotions of a very private person who strives to understand the people she observes. On the reverse sides of the poems "To M——" and "My Friend," Earhart wrote the word "personality." The word also appears on the verso of other poems that she did not submit for publication. It is possible that Earhart planned to write an entire series of poems based on various types of people she encountered.

The last of the four poems Earhart submitted to Poetry magazine, "From an Airplane," is particularly interesting due to its connection with the beginning of Earhart's aviation career. "From an Airplane" captures her ability to observe and appreciate the beauty of nature from her privileged location in the sky. At the time "From an Airplane," was submitted, she was taking flying lessons, and had just completed her first ride as a passenger in an airplane the previous December. Women pilots were still a rarity in 1921, and Amelia was occasionally photographed for the newspaper. When interviewed, she was usually asked to tell a little about herself; she never failed to acknowledge her appreciation for literature and her desire to write. Yet, at the same time, she rarely shared the poems and stories she created. Despite her devotion to reading and writing poetry, Earhart's intensely private nature probably prevented her from capitalizing on the publication of her poems after she became famous. Ac-
According to one of her closest friends, Marion Stabler, Earhart "was never too tired to discuss art, science, poetry, religion, or politics," but she never spoke about anything of a personal nature. Her love for poetry was like her love for beauty and solitude—absolute. This makes the discovery of Earhart's hidden poems even more significant, as they provide a rare snapshot of the young aviator as very few people knew her.

Publication

Only one of Earhart's poems was published during her lifetime, and initial publication of this poem was against her wishes. The poem "Courage" first appeared in a 1928 issue of *Survey Graphic* magazine, in an article titled "Who Is Amelia Earhart?" by Marion Perkins. The public dissemination of Earhart's belief that "Courage is the price that Life exacts for granting peace," was well timed, as Earhart was in the midst of her first major flight: the one that would bring her instant fame as the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean. In her diary of the flight, Earhart wrote: "I got a wire from M.P. [Marion Perkins] asking permission to publish one of my poems as the subject was 'courage.' I refused as I know the luck it would bring forth. Anyway I can't remember whether I liked it." This statement, written at the very beginning of her aviation career, suggests that Earhart was less concerned with her image as an aviator than she was with her desire to publish a poem of quality.

Despite the public's seemingly insatiable need for information about her, Earhart wrote many more poems that never appeared in print. Dozens of these can be found in her personal papers at Purdue. Keeping in mind that she was later married to George Palmer Putnam, one of the nation's most prominent publisher/publicists, it is almost certain that if Earhart had wanted

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15 Marion Perkins, "Who Is Amelia Earhart?" *Survey Graphic* (1 July 1928): 393.

16 Amelia Earhart, diary, 1928, Amelia Earhart Collection 1061, Seaver Center for Western History Research, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Los Angeles, CA. Also quoted in Mary Lovell, *The Sound of Wings*, 112.
to publish her work, she could have done so. According to her friend and colleague Eugene Vidal, Earhart wrote and submitted numerous poems for publication anonymously: "She wrote poetry for magazines under another name and often showed me the poems before mailing them." It is unknown whether the poems Vidal is referring to were the four that she had submitted to *Poetry* in 1921. It is also unknown if she used aliases other than "Emil Harte." It is likely that Earhart, who published her poetry under an alias before she became famous, felt the need to guard her privacy even more strictly after she became known throughout the world as an aviator. It is also possible that Earhart wanted her poems to stand on their own merits; her fame would have complicated that possibility.

**AGING AND DEATH POEMS: SUPPORTING BIOGRAPHERS’ CLAIMS**

Most of Earhart’s poems, like the ones she collected for her scrapbook, describe love and heartbreak, the transience of life, a romantic notion of death, and the effects of aging. George Putnam, Mary Lovell, and other biographers have noted Earhart’s fear of growing old, but it is only when reading Earhart’s poems and other personal papers that one is able to verify this. Earhart frequently wrote of her fascination with death, and her fear of aging. She described herself to friends as a “fatalist,” and felt all good pilots should be willing to die for that one grand adventure. Such a strong fear of growing old may seem strange for a woman who never reached forty years of age, but Earhart’s fears were most likely a result of the excessive longevity that flourished in her family (her grandmother, mother, and sister all lived well into their nineties).

As a young adult, Earhart would have been aware that her yearning for constant adventure would be harder to satisfy as she grew older. Likely, she witnessed the increased dependence and decreased physical capabilities of family members as they aged, and this heightened her fears. Whether or not this relates to a fear of aging, or being perceived as old, it is interesting to note that her records show that while still in her early twenties, Earhart began telling people (and even writing on official documents) that she was born a year later than she actually was.

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For this reason, many sources still list her birth date incorrectly, as 1898 instead of 1897.18

In 1937, just prior to her fatal world flight attempt, she told reporter and friend Carl Allen that she had a feeling there was just one more good flight left in her system, and after finishing her world flight she intended to give up major long-distance flying. Although she did not intend to retire from flying completely, Earhart may have already been considering herself too old for such adventures, half-mockingly stating to Allen: “I’m getting old, and want to make way for the new generation before I’m feeble, too!”19 According to Allen, Earhart also said: “As far as I know, I’ve got only one obsession—a small and probably feminine horror of growing old—so I won’t feel completely cheated if I fail to come back.”20 For Earhart, life simply was not worth living in a diminished capacity. According to her husband George Putnam, she once said: “It is hard to be old—so hard. I’m afraid I’ll hate it. Hate to grow old. I think probably, GP, that I’ll not live—to be old.”21 She also told Putnam that when she died, she’d “like best to go in [her] plane. Quickly.”22 In some ways, Earhart seemed to welcome death, and several of the poems she wrote reflected this. Earhart probably shared the Symbolist concept of death as a liberation from the harsh realities of the world. In one of her poems, “Carrion,” she describes death as a bird of prey that mercifully ends the lovelorn suffering of the living.

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18 Amelia Earhart, pilot licenses and registration cards, various dates, Putnam Collection. Earhart’s birth date is listed as 1897 in the records of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Atchison, Kansas.
19 Carl Allen, telegram, 3 July 1937, Item VIII.D.4, Putnam Collection.
20 Rich, Amelia Earhart, 256.
21 Putnam, Soaring Wings, 291.
22 Putnam, Soaring Wings, 294, and in Scrapbook 15, Putnam Collection.
“Carrion”
Merciless Life
laughs in the burning sun
and only Death,
slow-circling down,
shadows the aerid flesh
bruised by the panther-paws of love.23

Earhart’s notes accompanying the “Carrion” poem state: “The vulture is kind. Life is merciless.”24 In a similarly themed poem, Earhart implies that there is a seductive side to death: “some meet death/ with closed eyes of horror/ dare infinitely/ for another glimpse.”25

Not all of Earhart’s poems are as dark as these. In some, Earhart promotes the idea that life, not death, should be cherished. In one poem, she expresses the very mortal desire to capture and preserve certain instances in time, to “snatch molten moments from the fire of Life,” holding them “until the brief glow fades and they are hardened to their everlasting shape.”26 Unlike her assertion in “Carrion” that life is merciless, in this poem Earhart suggests that there are happy, or “molten moments” in life, but because they are fleeting they must be seized and treasured. Arguably, this carpe diem philosophy played a significant role in the development of Amelia’s aviation career, influencing the pilot’s decisions to take more risks and push herself to her limits.

LOVE POEMS: CONTRADICTING BIOGRAPHERS’ CLAIMS

After becoming a famous pilot, and despite her hectic schedule, Earhart still wrote many fragments of verse privately. According to her husband George Palmer Putnam, she always

23 Amelia Earhart, poem, ca. 1920s, Folder W-8 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.

24 Amelia Earhart, poetry notes, ca. 1920s, Folder W-8 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.

25 Amelia Earhart, poem, ca. 1920s, Folder W-6 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.

26 Amelia Earhart, poem, ca. 1920s, Folder W-6 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.
found deep pleasure in building little images with words. Of the small number of Earhart’s later poems that have survived, a few are love poems. One of these poems was included in Putnam’s biography of Earhart, which was published after her disappearance. In this poem, the speaker notes her lover’s presence in the room and remembers how “the stars watched us as we lay.”

Another unpublished love poem of Earhart’s follows:

I have seen your eyes at dawn beloved
dark with sleep
And lying on your breast—have watched
the new day creep

Into new depths, putting aside old shadows
spun by night
To show again the lovely living colors
of your sunlit sight

The significance of this poem is that it can be dated to a time between 1931 and Earhart’s disappearance in 1937, during Earhart’s marriage to Putnam. Some biographers have described their marriage as simply one of convenience, a manager and his client living and working together without love or passion. The poem is written on the letterhead of a hotel they frequented; making it likely that Earhart wrote this letter to Putnam. At least one of the names listed on the hotel letterhead belonged to someone who did not work for the hotel until 1931; offering new evidence to possibly contradict biographers’ claims that Earhart and Putnam were in a passionless marriage.

27 Putnam, Soaring Wings, 171.

28 Ibid.

29 Amelia Earhart, poem, ca. 1931-1937, Folder M-3 (Family Series), Putnam Collection.

It is interesting to compare Earhart's mature love poems of the 1930s to a poem she wrote about desire in the 1920s, in which she personified passion as a winged entity who comes to her "with out-stretched quivering hands,"\(^{31}\) reflecting the fiery and romanticized view of desire of a young woman, whereas the two love poems Earhart wrote after marrying Putnam in 1931 suggest a simple acceptance of the tranquil beauty of adult love.

**Significance of Earhart's Poems to Future Scholarship**

Earhart was known for her extreme privacy and great reluctance to share any of her personal life with the public. Although she likely would have considered her love poems to be deeply personal and would probably never have published them under her own name, she still chose to keep these intimate poems among her personal papers to be discovered after her death. It is likely that Earhart's poetry was born out of her yearning for achievement, fame, and even immortality, as much as it provided a necessary outlet for the emotions of an extremely private person.

As Earhart began to devote more time to her aviation career she was left with much less time for reading or writing poetry. A newspaper article from 1931, three years after Earhart's first transatlantic flight, states that Earhart "adores poetry, but gets little time for anything but trade journals."\(^{32}\) George Putnam knew his wife's writing was important to her, and in his biography of her he wrote: "Truly, I think among all her crowding ambitions, AE would have enjoyed best of all the leisure to play about with the friends she liked so well—*words*. Few, I think, realized her great regard for the written and the spoken word, her joy in, as she said, 'having little words get up and dance for one.' Always AE cherished a wistful ambition to have one full year of leisure to devote to writing, a year uninterrupted by flights, lecturing, or journalistic dead lines."\(^{33}\) Putnam did not believe

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\(^{31}\) Amelia Earhart, poem, ca. 1920s, Folder W-8 (Writings Series), Putnam Collection.


\(^{33}\) Putnam, *Soaring Wings*, 174-175.
Earhart had ever been satisfied with anything she wrote, but that she "had the craftsman's devotion to the labor which eventually produces good writing, if one has something to say, and I had hoped she might have her year, for it was important to her."\textsuperscript{34}

Despite the allure of being a published poet, Earhart likely recognized that there were drawbacks as well. The public may have found it difficult to take her seriously as a poet and a famous pilot, and Earhart was well aware of the need to focus her public image on her work on behalf of aviation and women's rights. It is interesting that Earhart included subjects in her writing that she never discussed openly with anyone outside her immediate circle of confidants. Her surviving poems reveal her personal thoughts and interests, and are invaluable to researchers seeking to understand her fully as a person.

Although family members and friends of Earhart's have long stated that Earhart wrote poetry, many biographers have shied away from the subject, lacking sufficient proof. It is unfortunate that most of Earhart's poems and other writings burned, because the ones that remain reveal much about her, documenting private thoughts and feelings that exist nowhere else. The three books Earhart wrote contain little of the passion she felt for life; instead, they remain as somewhat aloof accounts of her major flights. Still, these books are among the most widely used sources by biographers searching for first-hand information from Earhart on her life. Biographers would undoubtedly rely more on Earhart's own unpublished writings if their existence were more widely known.

The newly processed George Palmer Putnam Collection of Amelia Earhart Papers brings together again Earhart's working and personal papers as one cohesive collection, offering new insight into the life of the famous and elusive aviator. Fortunately, Earhart's poems in the Putnam Collection are now available to the public, and items from the collection are being digitized as part of an ongoing effort to make them more accessible.\textsuperscript{35} Like

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.

tiny pieces of a puzzle, each of the newly discovered poems provides researchers with a clearer, more complete version of a very public figure, yet undeniably private woman with private fears and passions who desired to become a writer.

CHALLENGES TO PROCESSING EARHART’S PERSONAL PAPERS

Like most manuscript collections, the Earhart Papers presented several archival processing challenges. Initially, it was unclear whether the poems that were part of Earhart’s personal papers were actually written by her. As all archivists know, it is crucial to understand as much about a person whose papers are being processed as possible. After much research into Earhart’s life, it became clear that she had been an admirer of poetry since childhood, and had admitted on more than one occasion that she wrote poems herself. However, with very few of Earhart’s poems available for study, it was difficult to determine the likelihood that the poems in Earhart’s papers were her own.

In order to study the poems for possible revelations into Earhart’s life, the archivist felt it was of utmost importance to first exhaust all possibilities that the poems may have been authored by someone else. Recognizing Earhart’s voice as a poet was complicated by the fact that some biographies stated that she translated poems written in other languages. Much research work was done to try and determine whether the poems in Earhart’s personal papers were ones that had been written by foreign poets, or ones that she had written herself. Another possibility, keeping Earhart’s poetry scrapbook and affinity for collecting poems in mind, was that some poems might have been published work that she had transcribed for future use in her anthology. Again, this required research into trying to identify the poems themselves and who might have written them. After months of searching poetry databases and anthologies, surfing the Internet, and consulting members of the English faculty at Purdue, the archivist determined that the poems were written by Earhart because they were found in several draft revisions within her papers and could not be found elsewhere.

Once Earhart’s authorship had been established, the next challenge was to decipher Earhart’s handwriting. Not only was it difficult to read, but because she frequently wrote with pencil, some of the text in her work was smeared. To further present challenges, Earhart also used abbreviations, creative spelling,
and, as mentioned earlier, occasionally invented words of her own. All of these factors made studying and interpreting Earhart’s poems somewhat difficult. In some cases, where the text of the poems was very faint, the archivist had to photocopy the text on a dark setting to reveal the words clearly.

In addition to these challenges, most of Earhart’s poems were not dated. For some of the poems, it was necessary to follow other clues to help establish their dates. For example, Earhart’s handwriting style changed somewhat over time, and this helped in some cases with approximating the dates of certain poems. A particular notebook containing poems might have been intermingled with notes from high school or college courses; thus providing additional information that would suggesting an approximate date. In a few cases, such as the love poem believed to be written to her husband between 1931 and 1937, stationery letterhead helped establish a possible range of dates.

**Research Significance of Primary Source Material**

Unpublished sources pose problems unlike those involved in working with published ones, although both must be evaluated for their accuracy and value. But finding the particular unpublished record needed can present a much greater challenge than locating widely duplicated materials, and even when it has been brought to light, uncovering desired information in a collection of letters or official files remains a larger task than examining a book, newspaper, or report. At the same time, the rewards of the search can include the wonderful excitement of discovering something unique which unlocks a mystery about the past.36

Since archivists are frequently among the first to locate the historic gems lying hidden in archival and manuscript collections, they are in a unique position in terms of their abilities to recognize and interpret primary source materials that will enhance or, in some cases, contradict history books. Amelia Earhart’s papers exemplify the important role primary source materials play in historical interpretation. The poems Earhart

wrote reveal more about her than can be found in biographies, textbooks, or films. Just as a Civil War diary will reveal much more about the living conditions and psyche of a Confederate soldier than a Civil War history book, Earhart’s poems bring to light the human side of the elusive aviator in documenting her thoughts and feelings via her own unique voice.  

In Muriel Earhart Morrissey’s biography of her sister, she wrote: “It is our loss, I feel, that so much of Amelia’s writing is purely factual prose. I know she longed for a time when she could write ‘as the spirit moves’ without regard for deadlines or publishers’ limitations.”37 Had Earhart survived, it would have been interesting to see if she would have fulfilled her wish to devote a year to writing along with setting aviation records and her work as a women’s rights pioneer. Perhaps Earhart might have also been remembered for those friends she liked so well—the words she coaxed to dance.

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37 Morrissey, *Courage is the Price*, 137.
Kenneth Foote notes in his seminal book on memorials, *Shadowed Ground*, that, “Every society in every period has borne witness to war, disaster, violence and tragedy.”¹ The universal nature of conflict is, of course, well known, so it is perhaps not surprising that, as with many other institutions of society, archives have been impacted by human violence and destruction. Indeed, the birth of the archival profession is often closely associated with one of the most important wars in history—the French Revolution of 1789. In the aftermath of the revolution, the new French government sought to make the records of the republic open to the people of France for the first time, in the process creating the first National Archives and establishing modern archival principles.² It is perhaps fitting then, that the modern ar-


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chival profession should consider its roots in conflict, since war and archives have consistently interacted throughout history, albeit in many different ways.

Archives are viewed differently by defending forces, occupiers, citizens of a country under siege, and those charged with rebuilding an area ravaged by an armed conflict. Indeed, the interaction between archives and war is so varied and extensive that to try to develop a comprehensive account would be impossible. The nature of the interaction has changed over time. Before the bureaucratic bulk of the modern nation-state, attacks on government archives occurred, but often with different purposes and outcomes than in the past century. For example, when Frederick the Great invaded Saxony in 1756, Europe reportedly reserved its greatest outrage for his forcing the Queen of Saxony to remove her seals from the Dresden archives, an act that, while not greatly damaging in a practical sense, was highly offensive symbolically. Such an attack is representative of the smaller, more symbolic damage done to archives in previous centuries. The wars of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have targeted archives on a greater scale, in part because of the mass of documentation available to target in the modern age, as well as more efficient methods of capture and destruction. Using examples from various conflicts, this article will examine the interaction between archives and war through four rubrics: protection, destruction, capture, and use and restitution.

**Protection and Destruction**

One of the most basic considerations of archives in war is protection—protection of one’s records from the enemy being the greatest concern. Many efforts have been made through various conflicts to protect records from physical harm. Occasionally, concerned citizens rather than public officials have taken up the responsibility for preservation, such as during the Spanish Civil War of 1936 to 1939 when committees comprised of artists, architects, librarians, and archivists took it upon themselves to save valuable documents by moving them to safer areas. More often, however, preservation efforts are undertaken officially. On the European front during World War II, for ex-

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ample, archives were evacuated from areas that were probable targets of bombing raids, and placed in country estates, castles and salt mines, among other places. Even in the continental United States, where Axis attacks did not occur, the National Archives undertook detailed evacuation planning. Efforts were also made to protect records that could not be removed from the probable line of fire. A 1941 National Archives publication actually provided a chart illustrating the types of bombs that could fall on the institution, describing each bomb’s terminal velocity, penetration (i.e. “good” for a demolition bomb, “poor” for an aerial mine), and common targets, presumably so that archivists could identify bombs as they fell. ⁴

Through the years, the threat of war has inspired the writing of many sets of guidelines advising archivists which records are most valuable and should receive protection. In the United States, the National Archives issued guidelines in various publications including “Records Essential to Continuity of State and Local Government” and “The Care of Records in a National Emergency,” both published in 1941. These documents outlined how archivists should appraise records from federal and city-level government to church and business concerns. The documents with the greatest need for protection were the most crucial records—those describing the populations’ citizenship, and property information. ⁵ The more society has come to rely on the corpus of vital records, the more valuable the destruction of these records has become to those interested in disrupting society-at-large.

While the protection of one’s own archives has long been a concern in wartime, the protection of archives and records belonging to the enemy became a priority in the wars of the twentieth century. In World War I, the Germans first began to concern themselves with protecting monuments and art in occupied areas after the destruction of cultural artifacts produced a severe reaction among neutral nations. Indeed, in the early twentieth century, previous acceptance of archival plunder “gave way


⁵ Ibid., 12-13.
to recognition of the privileged character of a county’s scientific, artistic and other cultural possessions.”6 Expressions to this effect were included in clauses of the Hague Conventions on the Laws and Customs of War in 1899 and 1907, and attained greater significance with the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, ratified at The Hague in 1954. According to the convention, during conflict, parties should “prohibit, prevent, and, if necessary, put a stop to any form of theft, pillage and misappropriation of, and any acts of vandalism against, cultural property.” After the fighting ends, the occupier should continue to support the preservation and safeguarding of cultural property.7

While the destruction of archives outrages many, and conventions indicate that “the protection of archives against military combat action, abuse, and plundering [is] one of the responsibilities of occupying forces,” not all forces see the value in protection, and often such protection is not given. In practice, military occupation often “gives [the occupier] carte blanche as to its government and imposes upon him solely the obligation to restore and maintain, so far as possible, public order and public life.”8 While such power does not always translate into a respect for the heritage of a country, even in the heart of war, efforts are sometimes made to preserve archives and cultural property.

World War II was notable for the recognition of the importance of protecting archives at the highest levels of command. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had recently established the first presidential library, was concerned with Europe’s cultural heritage and authorized efforts for its protection, through efforts such as the appointment of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historical Monu-

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6 Ibid., 213, 215.


mements in War Areas, known as the “Roberts Commission” in 1943. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander—in-Chief of the Allied Armies, also appreciated the “necessity of obtaining and of keeping unimpaired the records of an occupied territory.” This attention to cultural heritage resulted in the appointment of officers to the Museum, Fine Arts and Archives (MFA&A) Division, a group comprised of British and American service members charged with securing art and archives in newly occupied areas in Europe. The charge of the MFA&A was to prevent Allied troops from damaging monuments and historic buildings, and to prevent “looting of public or private collections” by the troops, mostly as souvenirs or items to be sent home to their families. In 1945, the MFA&A troops also tracked down major German caches of looted material and works of art that were hidden in mines and castles. While genuine efforts such as these were made to protect cultural heritage, much of the damage had already been done, and many archival collections became casualties of the war. The UNESCO report *Archives Destroyed in the Twentieth Century* lists thousands of collections damaged or destroyed during World War II, a conflict that resulted in “the greatest loss and displacement of cultural treasures, books, and archives in history.” The end result of damage or destruction

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11 Rothfeld, “Holocaust Records.”

12 Ibid.


is, of course, the same, but motivations for attacks on archives in war can differ greatly.

The value of an archive often guarantees its protection, but occasionally it is this very same recognition of value that leads to its destruction. For example, during World War II, the Dutch resistance destroyed the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Amsterdam in order to deprive the Nazi’s of the use of population registers, from which they would identify citizens to deport to concentration camps.\(^\text{15}\)

Archival institutions can also become caught in the crossfire of warring factions. In 1922, fire fights among newly independent Irish forces in the heart of the city of Dublin led to the inadvertent destruction of the Public Records Office, resulting in the loss of one of Ireland’s major national archives, which dated back to the thirteenth century. The loss of the office proved devastating, and has “significantly influenced the writing of Irish history of all periods” as well as the development of archival policy in Ireland.\(^\text{16}\)

More insidious, however, is the destruction of archives as part of a systematic effort to obliterate a people. During World War II, as part of their agenda of destroying cultural property, the Nazis employed at least two looting squads: the Ribbentrop Battalion and the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg.\(^\text{17}\) Particularly in Poland, the squads set about destroying or capturing archives, manuscripts, and related materials in a concerted effort to destroy the cultural identity of groups of people as well as to assemble and preserve looted materials “for propaganda and re-

\(^{15}\) Posner, “Public Records,” 222.


search purposes” such as the proposed “Centre for Research on the Jewish Question’ in Frankfurt.”

More recently Serbian forces employed similar tactics in the Balkan wars of the 1990s, in which they destroyed libraries, archives and public record offices as a part of the campaign of “ethnic cleansing.” The destruction of cultural heritage by Serbian forces was far reaching. Librarian Andras Reidelmayer, who surveyed the damage and testified at the war crimes trial of Slobodan Milosevic, wrote that in 1999 public records and archives comprising almost the entire documentary base for the orderly functioning of government and society in Kosova (Kosovo) were removed on orders from Belgrade. Registries of births, marriages and deaths, citizenship, probate and property records, as well as judicial and police records were either evacuated to Serbia or burned in situ.

Religious holdings were targeted as well. Reidelmayer noted that next to governmental archives, the most serious loss “in Kosovo was the burning of the [Islamic Community of Kosovo’s] Central Archive in the center of Prishtina,” an institution holding “the written record of 600 years of Islamic culture in the region.” In addition, approximately one-third of all Islamic houses of worship were destroyed or damaged, along with their in-house libraries or archives. Academic and public libraries and archives were also targeted, as were private collections. The attack on the broad range of legal, cultural, and religious materials in Kosovo was a concerted attempt at “historicide” designed to go beyond physical elimination of the population, by eradicating memory of them as well. In part due to the awareness of the destruction of cultural heritage during the Balkan Wars, the War in Iraq has been watched closely.

18 Dean, “Cultural Looting.”


20 Riedlmayer, “Libraries and archives.”

21 Ibid., 6.
The archival community, and the world, greeted the United States’ war with Iraq with profound attention and scrutiny for many reasons, but in part because “Iraq is universally recognized to be especially rich in cultural heritage”—a heritage that would be put at great risk. Prior to the United States invasion, several organizations, including the Society of American Archivists, the American Library Association, and Human Rights Watch issued statements calling for the protection of government archives and cultural heritage from destruction and looting. The statements cited the importance of Iraqi records and cultural materials for the country’s future. The Society of American Archivists’ statement noted that:

Without records, Iraqi officials cannot be held accountable. Without records, citizens cannot exercise their rights. Without records a stable economic environment cannot emerge. And without records, the Iraqi people as well as the citizens of the world lose an important part of our shared cultural heritage.

Despite the attention and calls for protection, Iraq’s archives, libraries, and cultural institutions were largely not protected, and many were ransacked and looted in the chaos attendant upon the invasion. While officials noted that there simply

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was not the manpower to protect all of the archives and cultural institutions in Iraq, the comments of some officials pointed to intentional neglect. British military officials acknowledged that the failure to protect some government archives was a calculated “means of showing the population that the [Saddam Hussein’s Baath] party had lost control.” The symbolism of the looting was also highlighted in a justification by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld:

[Very often the pictures [shown by the media] are pictures of people going into the symbols of the regime—into the palaces, into the boats, and into the Baath Party headquarters, and into the places that have been part of that repression. And while no one condones looting, on the other hand, one can understand the pent-up feelings that may result from decades of repression.]

Whatever the reasoning, the failure to protect Iraq’s cultural heritage met with international condemnation. The International Committee of the Blue Shield met to declare that it “deplore[s] and [is] deeply shocked by the extensive damage to, and looting of, the cultural heritage of Iraq caused by the recent conflict.” Within the Bush administration, three members of the White House Cultural Property Advisory Committee “resigned to protest the U.S. failure to protect the [National] museum from looting.” Indeed, the looting of the National Museum has attracted the most attention due to the antiquities that

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28 Megan K. Stack and Josh Meyer, “They Burned the History of This Country.” Vandals have ravaged the national library and cultural institutions. FBI will help seek stolen items.” Los Angeles Times, 18 April 2003: A, 3.
have been lost,29 but the destruction reportedly touched all types of institutions including art museums, film archives, local population registries, and universities.30

In order to investigate some of the claims and provide assistance, a small team from the Library of Congress visited two institutions, the National Library and the House of Manuscripts, in Baghdad, Iraq in the fall of 2003. The team found that the majority of the National Library’s collection was, although in disarray, largely unharmed. The Iraqi librarians indicated that the main loss at their institution was to the archives, including the intentional destruction by fire of archival documents dating from 1977 to the present, a time period described as the “Republican era,” as well as “all microfilms of newspapers and archival materials” in two separate fires on April 10 and 14, 2003.31 The degree of damage was reportedly somewhat lessened by the actions of concerned local clergy members who had taken library and archival materials to their mosque for safekeeping between the two fires. In contrast to the destruction at the National Library, the Library of Congress team found that another major repository, the national department of manuscripts, also known as the House of Manuscripts, avoided looting or damage. Housed in a bomb shelter with well-controlled temperature and humidity, the manuscripts were already in a better position to survive the conflict than the above-ground public building housing the National Library. However, the Library of Congress team found that the dedicated House of Manuscripts “staff members did everything they could to protect those manuscripts from harm before, during and after the war. They enrolled the support of the whole

29 Milbry Polk and Angela M.H. Schuster, eds., The Looting of the Iraq Museum, Baghdad: The Lost Legacy of Ancient Mesopotamia (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2005). This recently published book details the loss and recovery of some materials during the looting, but has not yet been reviewed by this author.


neighborhood to provide security twenty-four hours a day and were successful in preventing several attempts at looting the center.”\(^\text{32}\)

Despite the ability of the institutions visited by the Library of Congress team to preserve much of their collections from harm, it would seem that the losses to culture and history in Iraq are sizeable. While the United States recovered “700 artifacts and tens of thousands of ancient manuscripts that had been missing from the collection of the National Museum in Baghdad” in May 2003,\(^\text{33}\) and recovery efforts are ongoing, cultural property is notoriously difficult to recover, as pieces frequently are sold illegally on the international market. It is likely that much of the materials looted in Iraq may never be recovered. As for recovered archival material, the questionable authenticity of documents that have been removed from their chain of custody, or possibly forged, will limit their usefulness. In addition, valuable documents relating to the rule of Saddam Hussein may also have been lost, making it difficult to build a case against him and may limit understanding of his regime.\(^\text{34}\) The losses attracted the attention of several international groups including Interpol, which convened a “Meeting on Cultural Property Looting in Iraq” in May 2003 to discuss efforts to recover lost artifacts. In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been involved with rebuilding efforts, holding forums on cultural heritage and drafting a plan of action for

\(^{32}\) Ibid.


\(^{34}\) Bruce P. Montgomery writes in “The Iraqi Secret Police Files: A Documentary Record of the Anfal Genocide,” Archivaria 52 (Fall 2001): 69-99, that during the Gulf War of 1991, documents were recovered in Northern Iraq in the aftermath of a Kurdish rebellion. The captured documents “contained direct evidence of crimes against humanity and the Anfal genocide that had been perpetrated against the Kurds by the Iraqi regime during the late 1980’s.” These documents were transferred to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. in 2003 and are now housed at the University of Colorado at Boulder’s Human Rights Initiative.
the rehabilitation of libraries and archives in Iraq.\textsuperscript{35} At the Interpol meeting, then-United States Attorney General John Ashcroft denounced the looting in strong terms, stating that the “looting of Iraq’s cultural heritage is a violation of the law. It is an affront to the dignity of the Iraqi people. It is an assault on the values of civilization—an assault on the values we all share.”\textsuperscript{36} Such values are clearly demonstrated by the local community in Baghdad which took an active role in the protection of the materials at the National Library and House of Manuscripts.

\textbf{CAPTURE AND USE}

In addition to the cultural and historical significance of cultural materials, administrative records and archives are important in wartime for the effective running of territories. At minimum, occupiers often need access to maps and information on the infrastructure of an area in order to provide basic services to occupied populations and their own forces. In many instances, occupiers also use the archives and public records of their new territories to gather evidence about the population or the former regime, what archivist Linda Barnickel calls the “intelligence value” in records.\textsuperscript{37}

Such intelligence information can be used by the occupier to conscript labor or seize assets and is also useful after the war to understand and prosecute officials of former regimes. Sometimes obtaining such information is a military objective unto itself. For example, during World War II, in addition to the few trained MFA&A officers who were primarily charged with securing and protecting items of cultural significance, Allied troops made concerted efforts to confiscate German administrative archives, launching operations such as “GOLDCUP” in


1945, which "specifically search[ed] for ministerial personnel and archival records of the Third Reich." 38

In addition to intelligence information, occupiers seize items of cultural significance, such as archives and works of art, as part of the "spoils of war." In one of the grandest examples of such seizure, Napoleon undertook systemic cultural plunder during his military campaigns in order to enrich the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Louvre to further the "great design of an empire which [he] had planned to survive his personal reign." Indeed, while Napoleon ruled,

\[\text{[t]he most prestigious record accumulations of the continent, such as the archives of the Holy See in Rome, the German Empire archives in Vienna and the Simancas archives of the Spanish kingdom, as well as the archives of provinces annexed by France (including Piedmont and Belgium) were transferred to Paris [and held] in a gigantic archival institution.}^{39}\]

This archival dominance of Napoleonic France was short-lived, however. Peace treaties required that the looted archives be returned to their owners, and most were by 1817.

While seized archival material can be used to enrich the culture of a nation, as Napoleon desired, archives are often included among the cultural items seized by a country as recompense for previous cultural plunder or as "trophies" to be kept to compensate for other losses. Perhaps the most extensive plunder of this sort was taken by the Soviet Union during World War II. In addition to administrative archives, the Soviets seized German archival material including manuscripts, early printed books, drawings, and ethnographic materials. 40

Ironically, many


40 See Patricia Kennedy Grimsted, "Spoils of War Returned: U.S. Restitution of Nazi-Looted Cultural Treasures to the USSR, 1945-1959," Prologue 34: 3 (Fall 2002) for a history of the transfer of Soviet property seized by the Nazis and then returned to the USSR by the United States.
of these “trophies” are never utilized by their new owners. A striking example is the estimated ten million volumes of books the Soviet Union seized. Many of these books have rotted away, since “so many of the plundered books were thereafter either neglected, destroyed in ideological ‘cleansing’ campaigns, or hidden from public view in classified ‘Special Collections’ for half a century.”

It is unclear why the Soviets held on to so much material, even when it was reportedly simply rotting away in their care. Certainly, the expense of transporting and housing seized materials can be significant, and after time can lead to a proprietary relationship, even if the materials are no longer of value.

In addition to their use as a tool of war, archives and records can document and aid the war itself. Ernst Posner, a Prussian archivist who fled Nazi Germany after detainment in a concentration camp, attributed German military success “in part at least, to the utilization of a carefully kept record.” Indeed, detailed German files played a large role in the prosecution of German officers at Nuremberg and Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem.

More recently, documentation of crimes against humanity has been seen in the records of the Khmer Rouge. As part of their rule of Cambodia throughout the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge perpetrated the Cambodian genocide that claimed 1.7 million lives. Like the Germans, the Khmer Rouge kept records of their prisoners and methods of execution, often in graphic detail. Documents from the Tuol Sleng prison archives include arrest forms, notes on torture sessions, and photographs of tortured and executed prisoners. The records are notable for their clear documentation of slaughter. A typical document, titled “List of

Names of Prisoners Who Entered from 17 February 1977 to 17 April 1977" gives the names of “1,566 prisoners recording their gender, position, organizational unit, date of entry, and in a final column noting whether the prisoner had been ‘smashed’.46 The Tuol Sleng archives, along with others, have been instrumental in understanding the Cambodian genocide and bringing former officials to trial.47

The records of the Tuol Sleng archives make the perpetration of slaughter seem as commonplace as any other bureaucratic function. Records such as these offer insight into what Hannah Arendt called “the Banality of Evil,” the form of relative normalcy and structure that mass murder can take.48 The increased bureaucracy of vital documentation noted earlier has allowed for greater control of the citizenry, resulting in a changed dynamic between the public and government.49 This increased documentation can be seen as part of a “logic of mass death” created in the twentieth century that allows for “vast numbers of persons [to be] simply marked for annihilation as part of an impersonal process of destruction.” This is what philosopher Edith Wyschogrod refers to as the “death event.”50 While many factors of industrialization have influenced the “death event,” in many cases archival material has often enabled or accompanied the slaughter.

Restitution
Restitution of archives seized in war has been part of making peace for centuries. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European peace treaties commonly called for the return of archives within four months after a conflict ceased, and while


47 Ibid.

48 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, 253-254.

49 Thank you to Patricia Galloway for pointing out this connection.

certainly not all of the looted material was returned, restitution was common in many cases. Indeed, in the early nineteenth century, the Emperor of Austria was so pleased with how his seized archives had been treated by the French that he made a present of a gold snuffbox to the French archivist Pierre-Claude-Francois Daunou in gratitude.51

In contrast, the scope of twentieth-century warfare has made restitution more difficult than it was in previous centuries. While many items taken during the world wars were returned to their country of origin after peace was made, a certain amount of material has been used for political gamesmanship and held as part of the spoils of war. Indeed, archives captured by the United States, the former Soviet Union, and Western European countries have been used, and will no doubt continue to be used, by governments and politicians as bargaining chips to reclaim cultural materials or to affect policy. For example, in 1992 the U.S. Congress sidelined a planned return of the Smolensk Communist Party Archives to Russia, when the Congress made repatriation contingent upon the return of Hebrew and Yiddish manuscripts seized during World War II and held in the Russian State Library to the owner’s heirs, who now live in the United States.52 Indeed, despite the passage of time, restitution of World War II plunder remains contentious. As recently as 1995, the Russian Parliament considered a law that would officially make Soviet World War II plunder recompense for German plunder and not subject to return at any time.53

Another factor affecting restitution of cultural property is the post-war society. At the end of World War II, for example, MFA&A officials were involved in the repatriation of cultural material looted from European Jews. To this end the Offenbach Archival Depot operated in the American Zone of Occupation under the direction of archivist Captain Seymour J. Pomrenze, processing over three million objects from 1945 to 1952. While the majority of the objects were returned to their owners, the decimation of European Jewry complicated the restitution process of around five hundred thousand items of questionable own-

51 Kecskeméti, “Displaced European Archives,”134.


53 Ibid., 61.
ership. Some American Jewish leaders argued that since “Eu-
roe is no longer, and is very unlikely that it can become again, a
center of Jewish spiritual and cultural activity” the looted mate-
rials should not be kept in Europe. Acknowledging the claims
that dispersed communities in Europe still had on their items, it
was proposed that some items would be returned to the commu-
nities “in proportion to the prospective religious and cultural
needs of the community and its capacity to retain, to care for,
and to use them for the religious and cultural purposes for which
they were intended.” A proposed centralized repository for looted
Jewish material to be located in Copenhagen, Denmark, failed
to keep the items on the continent, and the material was instead
relocated to institutions in Israel and the United States, includ-
ing the Library of Congress. 54

The decision to remove looted material from Europe,
while practical, was also, no doubt, emotional. Given that mil-
lions of Jews had just been killed in Europe, the sense that the
materials were unsafe may have been pervasive. But, the reality
that the main Jewish population centers thereafter would be lo-
cated outside of Europe also influenced the decision. The situa-
tion illustrates complications that can result when the act of re-
stitution changes from simply returning materials to their coun-
try of origin to deciding what is best for the material. Even with
the best of intentions, the decision to remove culturally signifi-
cant items from their countries of origin, because the countries
are perceived to be unworthy or unable to care for them, are dif-
ficult ones that may become subject to the pressure of politics.

CONCLUSION

In war, archives can become battlefields, tools, and tar-
gets. Indeed, their integral role in society means that archives
reflect the many types of conflict they are involved in or repre-
sent, from the barbaric to the heroic. By plundering the archival
heritage of a nation or people, warring parties can inflict vicious
damage and exact revenge, even many years after a conflict has
ended. The administrative use and exploitation of archives dur-
ing wartime is less emotional and more strategic, but also dam-

54 Robert G. Waite, “Returning Jewish Cultural Property: The Handling of
Books Looted by the Nazis in the American Zone of Occupation, 1945 to
aging to the enemy and useful to the occupier. Finally, the bu-
reaucratic records of modern warfare and genocide can not only
document a history of war, but also provide a detailed record of
mass death and evidence a record that itself can be used to help
prosecute perpetrators of war crimes and document the fate of a
war’s victims. Notwithstanding international recognition and
conventions dictating the importance of protecting archival and
cultural heritage during war, combatants in the twenty-first cen-
tury continue to place heritage at risk. It would seem, like war
itself, that destruction and exploitation of archives will continue
to take place despite the countless examples of the long-term
damage such abuse causes. As one Iraqi librarian was quoted
saying after the looting in Baghdad: “We can buy computers. We
can make new buildings. But we can’t buy a museum, or these
books, or history.”

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vist at the J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library, Loyola Uni-
versity New Orleans.

55 Megan K. Stack and Josh Meyer, “They Burned the History of This
The most striking feature of the American archival profession in recent years is its ongoing search for identity and for public acceptance as a socially significant profession. Many of the important developments in the field since the early 1980s have either derived from or eventually contributed to this quest for professional identity and recognition. At times this has stirred passionate debates over the nature of American archives, the role of archivists in society, the relationship between archives and other professions, and the education necessary for archivists, among other topics.¹

The search for professional identity has led American archivists to develop external initiatives to increase public aware-
ness of archival resources and services, partly in order to obtain increased funding and higher salaries. Within the profession there have been initiatives to improve standards of archival practice. Whether explicitly or implicitly, these efforts have often been closely related to underlying goals of increasing professionalism and gaining public recognition. This process of professionalization has had three broad manifestations: developing internal standards for professional recognition; enhancing the public image of archives and archivists; and strengthening the research and theoretical foundations of the profession.

Ever since the Society of American Archivists (SAA) emerged as a professional association in 1936, American archivists and manuscript curators have tried to define their professional mission and identity. Started by historians, the archival profession began early to forge its separate roles in two distinct but important areas: protecting the legal, administrative, and historical records of organizations, and preserving documentary evidence of cultural heritage and social memory.

In the first arena, archivists have worked diligently to protect the rights and privileges of citizens, employees, and consumers, and have held public officials, corporate executives, union leaders, and others accountable for their actions. Archivists ensure the authenticity of documentary records, provide security for vital evidence, and enable the public to enjoy access to records that affect their rights and privileges. They must negotiate the often thorny dilemmas of providing open access to information while protecting the legitimate privacy concerns of individuals, the rights of business and the private sector, and the national security interests of government.

In preserving cultural heritage, archivists share responsibility with librarians, museum curators, and other information professionals. The primary sources—manuscripts as well as archives—that archivists preserve are often unique and irreplaceable, making conservation and security high priorities. These needs must be balanced by the requirement to make such vital information freely available to the greatest possible number of people. In an age of increasing automation, archivists have to be savvy about the technology of recordkeeping and access.
**TEN CRITICAL ISSUES FOR AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS**

In this professional environment I have identified ten critical issues facing the archival profession in the United States in the coming years. Some of these issues are direct or indirect challenges to archival identity and relevance in modern society. Others are opportunities for action, or recommendations for increased emphasis in our professional priorities. None of these are “new” issues, but they represent the concerns that should be foremost in our profession’s preparation for the future. Together, these are the “megatrends” or new directions that are transforming our archives.²

1. **HOW WE DEFINE “ARCHIVES” AND “RECORDS” WILL SHAPE OUR RESPONSE TO PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGES**

After several decades in which the purposes, perspectives, and techniques of archivists and manuscript curators have grown closer, some archivists have recently begun advocating a more rigid and narrow definition of the profession. They argue that the term archives should only apply to records created as a result of formal business transactions, not to private papers or manuscripts. This would strengthen the professionalism of archivists by emphasizing their specialized knowledge, but it would drive a wedge within an already small profession. My personal hope is that the profession will continue to embrace a broader definition of archives as all records and documents having long-term value for society and for individual citizens. Archives encompass both records of evidence and accountability and documents of historical and cultural significance. A narrower definition negates much of the importance of our professional endeavors.

2. **POSTMODERNISM CHALLENGES THE NEUTRAL AND “OBJECTIVE” ROLE OF ARCHIVISTS**

The recent discourse on postmodern archives challenges traditional perceptions of the role of archivists more fundamentally than any theoretical shift since the recognition, more than a generation ago, that archives are not valuable only for their historical content, but also for their legal and administrative value. Traditional archival theory defines the archivist as a neu-

trial party interested in preserving the authenticity, reliability, and impartiality of records. Some archivists are now contesting these assumptions, using postmodern theory to underscore the imprint of archivists in shaping the historical record and playing an active part in mediation between archives and users. As this discourse plays out, I suspect we will gain a deeper appreciation for the role of archivists and the impact of our collective and individual decisions about archival selection, appraisal, description, and reference. In doing so, my hope is that we will seek to overcome the long-standing bias in favor of documenting the powerful groups in society and attempt a broader documentation of all people. “Archives for all” should be our mantra.

We should embrace the power of archives. Archivists are not handmaidens of history, passive guardians of cultural treasures, or gatekeepers limiting access to endangered documents. As recent writers discussing the implications for archivists of postmodern thinking have declared, archivists play an active and essential role in shaping the contents of our repositories, in interpreting them (through finding aids, for example), and in either encouraging or limiting various types of access to “our” records.

This power carries a solemn obligation to use it wisely, to acknowledge that neutrality and objectivity are desirable but unattainable in a pure form, and to ensure that archives protect the public interest rather than the privileges of the political, economic, social, or intellectual elite.  

3. DIVERSITY IS CRITICAL IN ORDER FOR THE PROFESSION AND OUR RESEARCH HOLDINGS TO DOCUMENT ALL FACETS OF SOCIETY

Archivists and museum curators comprise a largely white, middle class profession, with relatively small numbers of people from underrepresented social groups. SAA has undertaken an important diversity initiative, in response to a recent task force on diversity. These concerns need to receive prominent attention, not only to ensure that a broad array of demographic perspectives will be represented in the profession, but also to ensure that archives and manuscript collections do not neglect

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3 This was the theme of my August 2005 presidential address, “Embracing the Power of Archives,” presented at the SAA annual meeting, New Orleans, LA, 18 August 2005. This was presented nine months after my SGA keynote address.
minority groups in favor of the easier process of documenting the wealthy and powerful segments of society.

Our archives—either at the level of individual repositories, or at least collectively on a national level—should represent all people in our democratic society. The interests, perspectives, and stories of the common man and woman deserve to be protected and preserved, along with the records of government, business, organized labor, religious institutions, and cultural organizations. Archives can speak truth to power, but only if we ensure their voices are heard. Archives can ensure not a more diverse or more just society, but at least one in which the rights and interests of all social groups—even the most marginalized and neglected—are protected and documented. We need to heed the call made a generation ago by Jerry Ham, Howard Zinn, and others to be activists in ensuring the preservation of these unheard voices.

As a profession we have made important progress in documenting previously marginalized groups. But just as in our broader society’s quest for civil rights, there remains much to be done. In August 2002 civil rights leader Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth spoke at the SAA plenary session. A slip of the tongue led him to address us not as archivists but as “activists.” But he then stated that as archivists we should also be activists. We can start by reaffirming our profession’s commitment to diversity. The SAA Committee on Diversity has begun an active agenda to meet its charge, derived from Council’s June 1999 position statement:

The Society of American Archivists is committed to integrating diversity concerns and perspectives into all aspects of its activities and into the fabric of the profession as a whole. SAA is also committed to the goal of a Society membership that reflects the broad diversity of American society. SAA believes that these commitments are essential to the effective pursuit of the archival mission ‘to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of the nation’s historical record.’

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My hope is that SAA and all archivists will celebrate the diversity within our profession, and commit ourselves to building an archival profession that truly and accurately reflects the diversity within our society: in our membership, in our archival programs, and in the activities of both SAA and regional archival associations.

4. ARCHIVAL HISTORY CAN PROVIDE A CONTEXT FOR UNDERSTANDING OUR OWN PROFESSION

One sure sign of a maturing and self-conscious profession is an enhanced awareness and concern about its own history. As archivists we need to understand our own historical development as a profession. As Bob Marley stated: “If you know your history, then you would know where you’re coming from.”

After many years of neglect, the study of archival history, both in the United States and internationally, has made significant recent strides. The SAA Archival History Roundtable meetings have become more active and vibrant in recent years, with several formal papers presented, and lively discussion of themes in archival history. In October 2003 the First International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (I-CHORA) brought more than a hundred people to the University of Toronto for three days of stimulating papers and discussions. The conference featured twenty-six papers by researchers from Australia, Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The second I-CHORA conference assembled in August-September 2005 in Amsterdam, with an even more extensive program of speakers from around the world. Future conferences will be held in Boston in September 2007, and in Australia in 2008. Selected papers from the first two I-CHORA conferences will be published, respectively, in Archivaria and Archival Science. This increasing focus on the history of archives and records will help archivists in understanding the roots and growth of their profession.

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5. NEW TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES TOOLS FOR ARCHIVAL ACCESS AND CONTROL

In addition to protecting electronic records, archivists have developed automated techniques for managing the records and providing access. The adaptation of the MARC cataloging format as one means of archival description, and subsequent development of Encoded Archival Description for online access, have substantially enhanced the means for researchers of all kinds to access archives and manuscripts. One promising development which did not meet its visionary goal was the joint U.S.-Canadian descriptive standard project called CUSTARD (Canadian-U.S. Task Force on Archival Description).7 The effort to develop a common North American standard of description led instead to separate revisions of United States and Canadian standards. Another recent initiative may be more successful: American archivists are now developing Encoded Archival Context as a means of providing information about the creators of records and the circumstances under which such records came into existence. In these new initiatives, archivists need to pay careful attention to the needs of users and to ensure that technology enhances rather than obscures accessibility.

6. ELECTRONIC RECORDS CHALLENGE OUR ASSUMPTIONS AND METHODS FOR CONTROLLING MODERN DOCUMENTATION

The increasing reliance on electronic records in commerce, government, and even personal communications requires archivists to develop new strategies for ensuring adequate documentation of society and for ensuring the preservation and continued accessibility of those “born digital” records that have enduring value. Cooperation and communication with information technology professionals is increasingly essential. This of course is a research area of necessarily international dimensions. The InterPARES Project is an excellent model of such international and multidisciplinary cooperation. The challenge that archivists still face, it seems to me, is to translate academic models of perfection into workable standards that meet the daily operational needs of organizations.

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7. ARCHIVISTS MUST ENHANCE THEIR PUBLIC IMAGE IN ORDER TO SECURE ADEQUATE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

An SAA initiative in the 1980s focused on “Archives and Society,” and concluded that although archivists enjoyed respect and admiration for their work, their resource allocators (those who controlled funding for archival programs) perceived them as “mousy” and ineffective in commanding resources and power within their own institutions. The report prepared by Sidney Levy and Albert Robles, entitled The Image of Archivists: Resource Allocators’ Perceptions concluded:

The general public does not seem well informed about archives, their locations and their contents. The typical view among resource allocators is that the average person has only vague notions about archives. ...Traditional stereotypes that linger on even among more knowledgeable resource allocators need to be counteracted. 8 ...In sum, archivists have an identity that is a compound of specific abilities and attractions, somewhat vaguely conceptualized in the minds of others and burdened by unexciting stereotypical elements. To improve their situation, archivists need to define more coherent identity objectives, and communicate greater freshness and distinctiveness in imagery by their training, programs, self-assertion, publicity, advertising, and relevance to modern life. 9

It is time for a renewed focus on these concerns, in order to educate the public about the importance and power embedded in archival records. We need to renew our efforts at public outreach and increasing public understanding of archives and what we do. I am currently developing a proposal for SAA to create a new task force to examine these concerns and recommend actions that SAA can take to build on the ideas generated in the 1980s. This will employ data gathered by the A*CENSUS project, which in 2003 surveyed over eleven thousand archivists


9 Ibid, v.
in the United States, developing valuable data that we can use in future planning and programs.

8. PUBLIC ADVOCACY IS ESSENTIAL TO ENSURE OUR RELEVANCE IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

In order to protect citizens' rights and the integrity of archives, we must forge a stronger alliance and partnership for public advocacy. With that goal in mind, I chaired a session at the American Historical Association annual meeting in Seattle in January 2005 on the topic of "Public Advocacy for Archives, Museums, and Documentary Editing." As the proposal for this session stated:

Historians rely on archives and artifacts for much of their research and evidence. So do all citizens. As a recent proposal for increased federal support for state and local history organizations points out: "Our democratic form of government relies on a public grounded in knowledge of our nation's past and skilled at using that knowledge to make reasoned decisions about our nation's future direction. It is our commitment to keeping honest records—archives—that preserves the rights of individuals and assures that governments and other institutions perform in the public interest."

When funding and support for archives, museums, and documentary editions proves inadequate to meet the needs of both academic and non-academic researchers, public advocacy becomes an essential tool for educating political leaders, institutional administrators, and the public about the importance of documents and artifacts for all members of society. Although the priorities of archivists, museum curators, and documentary editors sometimes differ, experience demonstrates the importance of collaboration and mutual support in achieving our common goals.

Neglect and poor funding still threaten the loss of documents and artifacts in many states and cities. Another area of challenge and concern is with misuse and inadequate access to those records and artifacts that do exist. Recent advocacy concerns have included excessive se-
crecy regarding access to public documents, excessive classification restrictions for many government records, access limits to papers of former presidents and other elected officials, and concerns about intellectual property rights.

In almost every successful advocacy initiative the combined forces of many groups concerned about the nation’s historical documents and artifacts have worked toward a common objective.\(^\text{10}\)

There are three agenda issues regarding advocacy efforts by historians and archivists in this statement:

1. Funding concerns for archives, including the National Archives and Records Administration and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.
2. Opposition to secrecy in respect to public records.
3. Concerns about open access to records, particularly government records subject to security classification, privacy legislation, and freedom of information.

In addition to these issues, another significant concern emerged in 2004: the attempt by the Bush Administration to nominate a new Archivist of the United States without public hearings or professional review of his qualifications. On April 8, 2004 the White House announced that Archivist of the United States John Carlin would step down and that President Bush would nominate historian Allen Weinstein as the new Archivist. This action appeared to violate the independent and non-partisan nature of the position of Archivist of the United States. Twenty-five professional organizations, including AHA, OAH, ALA, and other national and regional groups, joined with SAA in issuing a public statement:

When former President Ronald Reagan signed the *National Archives and Records Administration Act of 1984*, he said that, “the materials that the Archives safeguards are precious and irreplaceable national treasures and the agency that looks after the historical records of the Fed-

\(^\text{10}\) AHA session proposal, in author’s possession.
eral Government should be accorded a status that is com-
mensurate with its important responsibilities.”
[The law] clearly states that, “The Archivist shall be ap-
pointed without regard to political affiliations and solely
on the basis of the professional qualifications required
to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office of
Archivist.”

In an April 15 editorial entitled “The Haunted Archives,”
The Nation stated:

The national archivist is crucial in a democratic society:
He preserves our history and makes government records
available to the public. He should also serve as an advoca-
cate for greater openness. ... Bush’s move is part of a larger
pattern of expanded White House secrecy ... It’s true that
all Presidents want to control access to their papers, but
it’s the responsibility of the archivist to see that access is
“free, open, equal, and nondiscriminatory...”

Weinstein gained confirmation as Archivist of the United
States in February 2005. He has since worked closely with lead-
ers of SAA, the National Association of Government Archives
and Records Administrators, and the Council of State Archivists
to seek collaboration among archival organizations.

Why should we care about who serves as Archivist of the
United States? How does it affect us? Control of the documen-
tary record, with the power to alter or suppress the truth about
governmental actions, threatens the very basis of democratic
society. As George Orwell warned in 1984, “Who controls the
past, controls the future; who controls the present, controls the
past.” As public citizens we must demand that the National

11 SAA, “Statement on the Nomination of Allen Weinstein to Become Archi-
vist of the United States,” 14 April 2004 (online resource) <http://

17: 3 and 4; (online resource) <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20040503/
editors> (accessed February 24, 2006).

13 Helen Willa Samuels, “Who Controls the Past,” American Archivist 49
Archives and Records Administration remain a non-partisan body, led by people dedicated to the public's democratic rights. **9. ACCESS TO RECORDS IS ESSENTIAL, BUT RECENT POLITICAL ACTIONS THREATEN THIS RIGHT OF ALL CITIZENS**

In the heightened anxiety about homeland security and terrorist threats, the White House has launched an extensive and broad assault on First Amendment freedoms and the public's right to know what government agencies are doing. Archivists and librarians must continue to speak out against such unwarranted invasions of public interests, and to educate the public about the importance of access to public records. This problem has deepened in the past decade, particularly under the current administration. As I wrote in a letter published in *US News and World Report* on January 26, 2004:

> On behalf of the Society of American Archivists, I congratulate you on publishing “Keeping Secrets,” which reveals the Bush administration’s ongoing efforts to hide records from the public. Open access to government records is the hallmark of democratic government. It is vital to protect the rights and privileges of each citizen. As professionals charged with ensuring adequate documentation of actions by government and other organizations, archivists recognize the necessity of holding our leaders accountable. Our democratic institutions depend on accurate records and public access to such information. The rationales presented by Bush administration officials to withhold records from public scrutiny eerily echo the Nixon administration’s arguments during the Watergate scandals. Such policies threaten the public interest. The freedom which we claim to represent depends on an informed citizenry. As such we must demand the overturn of recent administration policies which cloak our public servants’ actions in secrecy.¹⁴

These are ongoing concerns of the highest priority for all citizens of democratic societies. As archivists, part of our profes-

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sional responsibility is to ensure accountability of public figures, corporate executives, and university presidents.

**10. COOPERATION WITH RELATED PROFESSIONS PROVIDES STRENGTH IN NUMBERS**

None of these public advocacy initiatives or concerns can be fully addressed without renewed and active cooperation among the various information professionals. Archivists need to strengthen their ties with librarians, historians, records managers, museum professionals, government records keepers, information technology experts, and many other allied professionals. This was one reason for the interdisciplinary panel of archivists, historians, editors, and museum curators at the AHA meeting in January 2005. It is also why SAA has begun holding joint Council meetings with the leaders of the National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators and the Council of State Archivists. Rather than competing for slices of a small pie, we must cooperate in the effort to provide a more bountiful repast for all who labor to ensure the documentary heritage of society. We must work together, for we shall all struggle to survive if we continue to work independently of each other.

**ISSUES CONFRONTING MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION**

This is a long list and an ambitious agenda. These ten critical issues relate, in one way or another, to the SAA strategic priorities that are currently being developed and revised as the basis for the archival profession's action agenda. The three broad strategic issues identified by SAA focus on the challenges posed by changing technology, the need for diversity in American archives, and the limited public awareness of archival issues. 15

These broad issues affecting the profession also suggest important implications for individual archivists and manuscript curators. Some of the concerns addressed above will have immediate impact on many, perhaps most, archivists and manuscript curators in the United States. Using technological tools such as MARC and EAD, or negotiating the sometimes-treacherous shoals of providing equitable access to manuscripts and archives, loom on the near horizon if they have not already reached our personal workplaces. Other issues will affect only a

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small number now, but more people a decade hence. Preserving electronic records or considering the issues of professional identity and definition, diversity, and public image may fall in this category. As individuals, as well as collectively, however, we ignore these concerns at our peril. Successfully fulfilling our professional responsibilities requires attention to these matters. We cannot survive without such awareness.

However, there are some concerns that we face on the job that differ from the broad perspective of the profession. In our daily work we must find adequate money, time, and resources to keep the door open and the lights on. We have to schedule reference desk time, processing and description, acquisition, preservation, and planning. Our backlogs always threaten to grow out of control, and researchers of all types require assistance. There never seems to be enough time to get through the piles of papers or the daily requirements of our work.

Despite these daily struggles, it is essential for all of us whose work involves caring for archives and manuscripts to keep an eye on the horizon. We need the broad view to see what direction we are heading and to ensure that we reach our destinations safely. We need to know not only where we are coming from, as Bob Marley stated, but also where we are going. As individual archivists, this will require learning new techniques, new professional concepts, and new strategies for success. It is part of our lifelong learning. As a profession, it is essential for our success and indeed for our very survival.

Randall C. Jimerson is professor of history and director of the Graduate Program in Archives and Records Management at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. He is a Fellow and the past president of the Society of American Archivists (2004-2005). He is currently president of the Mount Vernon (WA) chapter of ARMA, and is a former president of New England Archivists, which presented him the Distinguished Service Award in 1994. He is editor of American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice (SAA, 2000), and author of The Private Civil War: Popular Thought During the Sectional Conflict (LSU Press, 1988). He received his PhD in American History at the University of Michigan and worked as an archivist at the Bentley Historical Library and at Yale University. From 1979 to 1994 he was university archivist and director of the Historical Manuscripts and Archives Department of the University of Connecticut Libraries, where he also led the graduate program in History and Archival Management.
Reviews


*Digital Imaging: A Practical Approach* is a perfect addition to the American Association for State and Local History Book Series. Addressing the practical issues associated with beginning and managing digital projects, Koelling provides a manageable and easy-to-read text for users at all levels. Largely based on Koelling’s experiences at the Nebraska State Historical Society where she served as curator of photographs and head of digital imaging, she designed this work as an overview of and introduction to digital imaging, laid out in eight straightforward and illustrated chapters. Covering such fundamentals as ethics and copyright, project management, equipment, metadata and other technical specifications, *Digital Imaging* discusses the core elements involved in any digital project. It also lives up to its title in focusing primarily on practicalities. This text is useful not just for archivists, but also for curators, librarians, technicians, scholars, teachers, and students, and does include multiple formats.

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of documents, in contrast to many digitization guides that focus solely on photographs.

With so many guides to digital imaging and digital preservation now available online and on the market, Koelling’s book has some interesting and unique aspects to offer, especially to beginners. First, instead of placing the glossary at the end, she has featured it in the beginning as Chapter One because, she asserts, it is very important to speak “digital.” “Get comfortable with the language so that the rest of the book will be easy to understand,” Koelling writes in the preface. This is a useful approach, especially as her glossary includes some annotation and illustrations in addition to definitions of key terms. Readers would be remiss in skipping over this chapter.

Digitization is not just an access tool, but also an enhancement tool, as Koelling contends in Chapter Eight, “Revealing History: Image Enhancement as a Research Tool.” Here she explores techniques one can use to discover “hidden information,” as well as to recover information from deteriorating originals, using digitization software. “The implications for historical research are mindboggling,” she claims, as she provides several examples that speak to the power and possibilities of carefully supervised image manipulation for research. Koelling admits that she chose to include this chapter “just for fun and because not much is being said about the unexpected benefits of digital projects.”

Koelling means for this book to serve as a beginner’s practical guide to digital imaging. As such, the primary focus is on the process of digitization, rather than the issues surrounding it. For some of the more controversial or sophisticated issues covered, such as copyright and long-term preservation and storage, readers should probably look to other resources, as well as institutional policy and administration for guidance. Nor does she provide specific product comparison tables for digitization equipment or supplies: although these things may not be appropriate for this publication, they are necessary for managing digital projects. Finally, while Koelling does provide a bit of advice and project management strategy for working with vendors, *Digital Imaging* is more appropriate as a guide for in-house or do-it-yourself projects.
Overall this is a useful resource. In the current age, the likelihood that digital imaging will not involve or impact an archivist or local history professional seems slim. For anyone looking for a readable and approachable overview of digitization, I recommend Koelling's book.

Lauren Kata
Archivist
Southern Labor Archives
Georgia State University


Daniel Solove, a professor at the George Washington University Law School and a widely cited legal authority on privacy issues, has written this book primarily as a reformist tract. He argues that contemporary technological developments have successfully undermined traditional statutory regulations designed to safeguard personal information. American culture, in his view, requires both a new conceptual framework for thinking about privacy and new legal strictures in order to protect sensitive data in a freewheeling digital environment. Most archivists will recognize his record keeping concerns, though many may disagree with his dire prescriptions and question the practicality of his proposed legislative solutions. Solove succeeds in crafting a clearly written and vigorously argued advocacy piece. Readers will need to look elsewhere, however, for a balanced presentation that places privacy issues in a more satisfying and comprehensive historical perspective.

Solove builds his argument around the existence of "digital dossiers" in cyberspace culture. He briefly chronicles the rise of governmental and private sector databases, reciting a familiar litany of villains who threaten the sanctity of personal information: credit reporting agencies, careless bureaucrats, nefarious direct marketers, annoying spammers, and sinister hackers. Technological change has exacerbated the problem by permitting interested parties to easily amass and link individual data from varied sources. This produces an "aggregation effect" that
essentially destroys personal privacy by combining financial, educational, medical, and psychographic data concerning individuals into comprehensive digital biographies that often convey inaccurate and misleading information. Archivists who struggle to preserve electronic records might be amused by the author’s offhanded contention that “little on the Internet disappears or is forgotten, even when we delete or change the information,” but he successfully articulates the dangers and possibilities of unauthorized record linkage.

Conceptual and political problems, in Solove’s view, have prevented Americans from effectively confronting the digital dilemma. Orwellian notions of Big Brother, attempting to stifle political dissent by conducting secret surveillance on unsuspecting citizens, have hitherto dominated the intellectual and legal discourse surrounding privacy. Solove views this metaphor as outdated and less relevant to contemporary concerns, proposing instead a Kafkaesque alternative. Drawing on the story of Joseph K. from Franz Kafka’s novel, The Trial, Solove argues that ordinary citizens are most often victimized by thoughtless bureaucrats who carelessly handle personal information without malicious or sinister intent. Routine record keeping decisions, made by government officials and private employees without any accountability and often based on narrow short-term considerations, silently erode privacy. The existence of vast storehouses of personal information, though often acquired in a piecemeal fashion for relatively benign purposes, makes people vulnerable to such dangers as racial profiling, arbitrary decisionmaking, and petty retaliation.

Even worse, the legal system offers few remedies. In the most convincing section of his book, Solove illustrates the way in which privacy legislation has evolved in an idiosyncratic and patchwork fashion. Over the past three decades, Congress has passed a series of laws designed to deal with such specific issues as student files, video rentals, motor vehicle records, personal health care information, and cable viewing habits. This largely ineffective legislative potpourri fails to articulate any overarching social philosophy, provides only inadequate tort remedies for aggrieved consumers, and focuses on issues involving discrete pieces of data rather than more systemic flaws in the informational universe. Solove argues that the United States requires a new legal “architecture” to protect privacy by restructuring the
relationship between business and government. His specific solutions include holding record keepers more accountable for the types of data they maintain, empowering citizens to control access to their personal information, better balancing the competing social demands for transparency and privacy, and shifting the informational power dynamic from institutions to individuals. Solove believes that the Fourth Amendment, properly interpreted, can serve as the basis for this new legal architecture, when supplemented by a new and improved Privacy Act and a more coherent legislative approach.

Archivists may view some of Solove's solutions with a wary eye. He confidently embraces records redaction as an effective regulatory mechanism, but this complicated and time-consuming process remains administratively unwieldy for public records professionals. He somewhat cavalierly advocates mandatory destruction schedules for documentary materials, without considering their historical, cultural, and permanent archival significance. His suggestion that "information collected from third party records may only be used for the particular purpose for which it is collected" would appear to negate most research use. Depending on one's philosophical and political proclivities, The Digital Person either correctly shifts accountability for record keeping dilemmas to governmental entities and the private sector, or constitutes an alarmist jeremiad that will both hinder ongoing public regulatory activity and stifle private commerce.

Philosophical considerations aside, the book illustrates one other problematic academic issue. Solove accurately acknowledges that "privacy is contextual and historically contingent," shaped by particular cultural norms and social practices that constantly change and evolve. His argument would have benefited from a more sustained engagement with the historical forces that have shaped American attitudes toward privacy. He presents some useful background concerning late-nineteenth century privacy debates, but remains sketchy about overall trends and historical roots. Solove provides a "history of public-sector databases" in three pages, and churns out a "history of private-sector databases" in only five. He contrasts "traditional" conceptions of privacy with contemporary formulations, thereby masking the complexities and disagreements that swirl around such issues during particular historical moments. Solove would have
strengthened his case by systematically consulting the growing historical literature on privacy, and by examining in more detail the ways in which archivists and record keepers have attempted to balance privacy and access. In fact, Solove seems largely unaware that such debates and discussions take place in the archival world. Legal scholars, historians, and archivists clearly live in different professional universes. Their literature rarely overlaps, to the detriment of each discipline. Archivists may not all agree with Solove, but they need to take his arguments seriously, read widely in such literature, and build more effective links with academics who share their concerns.

Peter J. Wosh
New York University


The editors of the 1981 Who Was Who chose to describe Society of American Archivists Fellow Lester J. Cappon as a "historian," a choice that might have both pleased and puzzled Cappon himself. Pleased, because throughout his life he advocated historical training as the essential preparation for an archival career. Puzzled, because his job title at Colonial Williamsburg, the institution with which he was most closely associated, was "archivist;" he also served successively as secretary, from 1942 to 1950, as vice-president in 1955, and as president of the Society of American Archivists in 1957; and his work frequently appeared in American Archivist. But then, Cappon would not have seen the terms "historian" and "archivist" as contradictory or mutually exclusive.

Anyone familiar with the current spats among archival educators might therefore consider Richard Cox an unlikely candidate to edit a collection of Cappon's writings. In fact, such a pairing would seem to be the modern equivalent of asking John Calvin to edit a volume of papal encyclicals. Fortunately, Cox did decide to edit such a volume, for he has produced a work
that is both balanced and useful in spite of the editor’s predictably Jovian tone.

Cox clearly explains the value of this volume by saying that Cappon’s essays, in his view, “document the formation of an American archival profession,” an accurate assessment of Cappon’s position in archival history. Cappon’s writings, like those of others of his generation, were also both elegant and learned, and the thorough and often witty reviews of the professional literature that he incorporated into virtually every essay would themselves justify the publication of this volume. However, in his wide-ranging introduction Cox exhibits such considerable skill in relating Cappon’s writings to current problems in what he calls “historical hermeneutics” that he adds to the usefulness of this work for both scholars and practitioners.

Inexplicably, the volume does not incorporate several of Cappon’s writings described at length in the introduction. One wonders why, for example, Cox omits what he himself calls “the best scholarly treatment on genealogical research” by an archivist but includes several of Cappon’s works that he acknowledges “did not show him at his best” and more than one article on the technical minutiae of archival practice published in library journals. One also wishes that Cox had incorporated one or two of Cappon’s early annual reports described in the introduction, which would have provided a valuable prologue to Cappon’s development as an archivist and a scholar. Readers may also be disappointed that Cox or his publisher relegated many of his liveliest and most informative observations to the footnotes at the back of the book.

Of course, it is always easy for a reviewer to question an editor’s selection of material, a process rendered more likely in this case because Cox does not explain his criteria beyond saying that he picked out those essays that in his opinion were “of most interest to North American archivists.” Such questions as a rule, however, represent a judgment of the volume the reviewer expected or wanted the author to write. It is far more appropriate to judge a book by the criteria the author set for himself, one Cox has successfully met. As he hoped, he has produced a volume that will be an essential addition to any academic or professional library, and has helped bring Cappon back into the archival canon. Surely most archival educators will want to add at least one of these essays to their syllabi, probably Cappon’s delightful

If this work is as widely read as it should be, Richard Cox will have also helped prepare the ground for the mature analytical studies in archival theory that both he and Cappon have called for, no small accomplishment and one that merits approval.

Ellen Garrison
Associate Professor of History
Middle Tennessee State University


Preservation of and access to information has become increasingly important and complicated. Paradoxical problems of shrinking budgets and expanding digital programs make the jobs of preservation administrators and archivists an exceptional challenge. Advances in traditional and non-traditional preservation techniques are exciting, while advances in digital technology burden the field with more formats, software, and hardware, with no end in sight.

Managing Preservation for Libraries and Archives: Current Practice and Future Developments succeeds in giving the reader a synopsis of recent developments in the field in a collection of essays that tackle both traditional and new problems facing libraries and archives. The first chapter gives a quick overview of preservation ideals, obstacles, and strategies and summarizes key preservation principles such as artifactual versus informational value, causes of damage (internal and external), and the importance of having preservation policies. The introduction reminds us that, even though the landscape of information delivery and the methods and best practices of preservation have evolved, our goals and missions are still the same.

The first few chapters take on the difficult job of synthesizing the issues associated with digitization. The first task is defining the digital dilemma—the diverse types of collections, the resources needed to preserve them, problems with technol-
ogy and obsolescence, and organizational challenges. The author asks us to ponder if we can really expect digital information to survive in institutions without the resources for proper preservation. This segues nicely to the next chapters on selection for digital preservation and long-term storage issues. The last half of the book explains new advances in the preservation of more traditional formats (paper and sound recordings) and contains web and print resources on preservation management. Some of the "new advances" are not so new, e.g., mass deacidification. Still, the book provides the reader with a useful overview of past and present research on each subject in manageable, understandable doses.

As implied by the title, the book presumes the reader has a basic understanding of preservation, yet beginners can also benefit from it. The chapters are well-written, the headings and subheadings make it easy to navigate, and each chapter ends with a list of references for further reading. If you are behind in your reading, this book is a good summary of recent literature and research and a good complement to the many "how-to" guides to preservation management.

Tina Mason
Education Officer
Preservation Services
Southeastern Library Network


The author who brought us the invaluable instruction guide for writing a disaster plan, Disaster Response and Planning for Libraries, 2nd Edition (ALA, 2003), and a preservation professional with broad experience in writing, teaching, and consulting in the preservation management field, Miriam B. Kahn offers another guide that no librarian or archivist concerned with safeguarding his or her institutions' digital resources should be without. Kahn has written a concise and readable guide to help smaller libraries and archives in particular plan and respond to
digital disasters by physically and intellectually safeguarding their resources, hardware, software applications, and data for the future.

The volume is organized into two sections and nine chapters of narrative text, concluding with a tenth chapter that provides twenty-nine invaluable checklists to help practitioners put Kahn's recommendations into practice (for example, the essential components of a basic computer response plan). The book concludes with a current bibliography, a useful index, an appendix of contact information for organizations involved with the preservation of electronic records, and a second appendix of companies that protect or help cope with the loss of digital materials. Her use of case studies and real-world examples helps illustrate recommended strategies.

While many institutions have developed disaster plans to safeguard their print collections, Kahn shares her dismay that preparedness levels to safeguard digital resources, like circulation records, websites, online exhibits, all of which have become essential in providing services, still vary greatly. Kahn suggests that working with digital materials requires the same type of proactive advance planning as audio-visual materials, which are equally vulnerable to the passage of time and changes in technology.

The first section of this volume looks primarily at short-term solutions for protecting data, including backup procedures, the importance of an up-to-date computer disaster response plan that includes an inventory of all hardware, software and data, a priority list for data recovery, and the importance of cooperation and coordination among the individual members of the institution-wide disaster team. While this volume concentrates on protecting the software and data-side of disaster response, it does provide some useful advice on disaster response to recover or replace hardware, including such areas as recovery procedures, insurance coverage, and recovery of those coveted backups like magnetic tape, optical disks, and diskettes.

In the second section, Kahn expresses concern with long-term preservation and access to material in digital libraries and archives, and includes a discussion of options for copying ("refreshing"), migration, reformatting, and converting, as well as the less-explored option of emulation. In this section, the author makes a special plea for project plans that include long-term stor-
age, staffing, and expertise, with greatest emphasis on the importance of overall budgeting for future storage. In Kahn's view, the challenge lies in the misperception that when we create backup storage we preserve data, both physically and intellectually, in perpetuity, or that file formats like JPEG, TIFF, ASCII, or even PDF promise standards that will allow access to data forever. Unfortunately, file formats are inherently unreliable, and without any planning, our successors in the field will face obsolete data formats, to say nothing of the hardware that surely in less than a few decades can only be recovered at a local dump. Kahn suggests several ways that libraries and archives can protect the intellectual content of digital projects so that it may be accessed and identified in the future. Finally, Kahn cautions in her discussion on copyright issues that no institution can avoid an investigation of copyright law that might have an impact on any planned or sustained digital collection.

Kahn concludes the narrative of Section Two with an encouraging discussion of the international effort for the long-term retention of digital resources, by describing the initiatives and work of over a dozen national and international organizations that are working diligently to develop interoperable metadata standards, foster the exchange of information and collaboration, provide guidance and education, and conduct research in the area of digital preservation and access. Chapter Ten concludes this volume and provides twenty-nine checklists including, formulating a computer disaster response plan, keeping track of information about digital resources, and making important decisions about the future retention and accessibility of your digital resources.

Protecting Your Library's Digital Sources is highly recommended reading for its assessment of the pertinent issues and practical guidelines it provides for all those concerned with safeguarding the digital sources at their institution.

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Written for personnel at all levels in any type of library, Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives is an outgrowth of many years’ worth of workshop handouts developed by the authors as they taught preservation and conservation techniques to library staff, volunteers, students, and private collectors. Divided into six sections and five appendices, the book serves as a basic guide to the preservation of active collections, and, as such, will be of interest to anyone involved in collection management at any level.

A detailed table of contents provides quick access to specific information within the various sections. This information is also repeated at the beginning of each section, eliminating the need to flip back and forth between the preliminary pages and the text when seeking information on a specific topic. Good use of white space and headings further facilitates scanning the text for answers. Photographs and line drawings enhance the text.

Section One: The Basics of Preservation addresses such diverse topics as the physical environment, disaster planning, and storage methods. The discussion of environmental factors includes information not only on how to preserve collections under optimum conditions, but also measures that can be taken to mitigate the negative impact of conditions imposed by aging buildings and HVAC systems. The authors offer practical suggestions for managing relative humidity and lighting and for teaching patrons and staff to handle materials properly. They also provide tips for dealing with common problems such as water leakage, HVAC system failure, and small-scale mold outbreaks. Concluding Section One is a summary of basic preservation measures and an excellent discussion of things not to do.

Section Two addresses the matter of having a proper workspace in which to undertake preservation activities. The authors recommend having a secure area dedicated solely to preservation activities, and providing advice as to plumbing access, flooring, furnishings, lighting, environmental factors, storage of materials awaiting processing, and equipment.

In Section Three, the authors address basic preservation techniques, such as selecting items for placement in storage con-
tainers or enclosures, working with particular types of materials other than books, and making simple enclosures. The narrative includes format-specific advice for protecting commonly held items such as large maps, and less common materials such as glass negatives and lantern slides.

Section Four deals with paper types and basic paper repair techniques. The authors provide tips on adhesives, tools, and methods of repairing a range of problems such as edge tears, holes, torn book pages, and damaged fold-out maps. This leads naturally into Section Five, which speaks to book conservation techniques. A review of bookbinding structure and terminology progresses into a discussion of proper book handling, including cleaning, packing, and moving books. Information on supplies and equipment one would need for repairing books follows. Easy-to-follow, illustrated instructions for executing a variety of basic book repairs comprise the bulk of Section Five. The directions are sufficiently detailed for those not trained in book conservation to use to good effect on materials which do not warrant the expense of sending to a specialist, and progress from the fairly simple to the more complicated. The wealth of information provided in this section alone justifies the price of the book for any library that attempts to do its own repairs on circulating materials.

The final section deals with exhibits of materials, and addresses factors of exhibit design that impinge on the conservation of the displayed materials. The authors address legal issues such as security and insurance, as well as conservation concerns such as proper mounting, framing, and other display-related matters. As with the previous sections, this one is extensively illustrated and very practical.

Five appendices complete the book. The authors could easily expand Appendix A into a full section, as it deals with the care of photographs. Advice given covers everything from unframing to types of damage and guidelines for proper display. Appendix B provides a list of suppliers, conservation binders, and salvage companies with whom the authors have had experience. Appendix C provides a list of organizations that can provide help and referrals, while Appendix D is a glossary, and Appendix E is a partially annotated bibliography. The book concludes with an index which gives page references to both the body of the text and the terms listed in the glossary.
Printed on acid-free paper and sturdily bound, *Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives* deserves a place in any library—especially those that lack trained conservation personnel.

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INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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