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Provenance XXVII

Brian Wilson

Georgia Archives

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PROVENANCE

volume XXVII, 2009

History Making History:
Keynote Address by David B. Gracy II
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**Behrnd-Klodt**, *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives*, reviewed by Ryan Speer

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Cover: David B. Gracy II as a young archivist at the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University. Courtesy of the Southern Labor Archives at Georgia State University. Inset: David B. Gracy II at the 2009 SGA Annual Meeting, where he delivered the keynote address “History Making History.” Photo courtesy of James A. Yancey, Jr.
History Making History*

David B. Gracy II

What a wonderful occasion! A celebration of forty years of growing and strengthening the archival community of Georgia through association in the Society of Georgia Archivists. A celebration of forty years of service of the archival community of Georgia to the citizens of this wonderful and historic state. A celebration of forty years of contribution to the archival profession of the United States—no, not just the United States, but every part of the world where Georgia Archive and Provenance have been and continue to be read. This is a great occasion to bask in the pleasure of long-time and good company. It is the perfect occasion to look at where our Society of Georgia Archivists fits into the historical firmament of archival associations and how well we archivists are doing at telling the story of the contribution of archival enterprise to society.

* This address was presented at the Society of Georgia Archivists annual meeting in Savannah, Georgia on November 4, 2009.

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Archival Association History

The farthest we can go back with the history of archival associations is the formation by Dutch colleagues of the very first professional organization of archivists in 1891. The Dutch Association of Archivists is 118 years old this year. The SGA is forty—already one-third as old as the very oldest. In Georgia in the year of the founding of the Dutch Association, William Jonathan Northen was governor. Having a progressive streak, he established an agricultural and mechanical college for black students and a school for training teachers. Pertinent for us archivists, after leaving office he worked for a time as the state historian and utilized some archival sources in producing the multi-volume work, *Men of Mark in Georgia*.

The Society of American Archivists arose in 1936 and is seventy-three years old this year. At forty, the SGA is more than half as old as our national association—and gaining fast! Why, forty years from now, the SGA will be more than two-thirds as old as the SAA. In Georgia in the year of SAA’s founding, Eugene Talmadge was serving the second of his three terms as governor. Unable to succeed himself, he ran for the U.S. Senate, but lost to Richard Russell, whose archival legacy alone justified the wisdom of the Georgia electorate in selecting him.

The International Council on Archives was established in 1950 and is fifty-nine years old. At forty, the SGA is more than two-thirds the age of the international organization—and gaining even faster! In the Georgia capitol, Eugene Talmadge’s son Herman was too busy continuing his father’s segregationist policies to notice the evolving archival community.

The Society of Georgia Archivists was formed in 1969. It was the fourth association of archivists founded in this country. Only archivists in Michigan in 1958 and Ohio in 1968 pioneered organization before Georgia. The single regional organization established ahead of the SGA—the South Atlantic (later Southeast) Archives and Records Conference, shepherded in large measure by our own A. K. Johnson whose booming voice could move mountains—came to life in 1966. An association of institutions rather than of archivists and lacking a formal structure, the SARC has left the scene. This vaults the SGA

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1 Gilbert Head to David B. Gracy II, email communication, October 29, 2009, in possession of the author.
to being the third oldest of now fifty-five (more if you list the SARC and others that have vanished) regional, state, and local associations of archivists listed on the SAA Web site.²

That’s not a bad statistic for an organization whose president in 1989—the irrepressible and indomitable Kaye Minchew—wrote on our twentieth anniversary: “Twenty years of active service is a long time for an archival organization.”³ Oh, and look at you now!

Regarding the ferment in Georgia that birthed the SGA, I need to note two other facts of archival history. First, the SGA was founded two years after Carroll Hart, the director of the forward-moving Georgia Department of Archives and History, launched the Georgia Archives Institute to create educational offerings initially for her staff, then for paying students. This was the first archives institute established after the Modern Archives Institute at the National Archives and the first based outside of Washington. The archival community in the United States had reached a maturity such that its needs for expanded educational opportunities had to be met.⁴ Georgia’s archivists formed the SGA two years later to meet the need yet more fully and widely.

Second, the SGA was established three years before the SAA, then thirty-three years old, issued its first newsletter. Georgians responded even faster than our national organization to the swelling demand for fostering communication among practitioners in the rapidly growing archival community.

Occupied with the increasingly difficult work of continuing the government’s segregationist policies, Lester Maddox doubtless failed to notice the gathering of Georgia archivists in 1969. Two years later in 1971 in the very next gubernatorial election, Jimmy Carter was swept into office and ushered in a progressive period, especially in regard to archives.

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Consider this: Carter signed the Georgia Records Act advancing records management and he made the records of the office of the governor the property of the state. (I’m sure I don’t need to remind you that as president of the United States he signed the Presidential Records Act in 1978.) Carter not only brought the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board to life, but further he exhibited unusual wisdom in selecting archivists to serve as the first members.

In launching Georgia Archive, now Provenance, thirty-seven years ago in 1972, from what I have been able to find, we began publishing only the fourth journal of archival scholarship in English in the world after the American Archivist, the Journal of the Society of Archivists in Britain, and Indian Archives from India. We preceded both the Canadians with Archivaria and the Australians with Archives and Manuscripts. (We organized six years before they did, too.) Further, our second journal of archival scholarship in the United States has had an imitator. Seeing that Georgia Archive thrived despite the many archivists who said there was not enough scholarship to support a second journal and after negotiations failed to conclude a way in which to harness the energies of the two groups in a single journal, the Midwest Archives Conference successfully launched a third—the Midwestern Archivist, now Archival Issues.

In the thirty-two years since I left Georgia to work in Texas, I have seen the SGA continue to lead. Being deeply invested in encouraging the American archival community’s Archives and Society initiative, focused on developing a robust presence for the archival service to society, I noted with special pleasure when twenty years ago you initiated an Archives and Society award, which you are continuing as the President’s Award. For me, the fundamental work of archivists is doing all we can to ensure that the absolutely essential activity of managing society’s singular archival resource is not taken so much for granted that all those who benefit from our dedication treat the archival asset as they treat air—something that, however essential to their being, requires no individual commitment to have clean, abundant, and usable. Your work bringing the

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archival service to the consciousness of those benefiting from that service shines beyond Georgia’s borders. In this we all took pride in Austin when Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board chair Ross King received the 2009 J. Franklin Jameson Archival Advocacy Award for his work raising “understanding of the value of archives among local, state and federal officials who will be important future supporters of archival initiatives.”

Keep it up, Ross.

In sum, from the earliest days of the Society of Georgia Archivists, we have been an organization to take initiative and do good things. For forty years, Georgians have been at the forefront of the development of archival enterprise in the United States. What a wonderful occasion is celebrating forty years of leadership of the archival profession in Georgia and the United States. Give yourselves a hand. You deserve it.

**Thesis**

The history celebrated on anniversary occasions is fun, and should be. At the same time, on a broader plane, history is serious business, and we archivists have not taken our history seriously. At least we haven’t put it to work for us as we could and should. In writing and in celebrating it, we have approached our history from the perspective that no one but archivists really would or should find it of moment. On the contrary, we should be writing the history of archives and the archival enterprise that advocates for archival service.

Hear the three components of that sentence: Archives and archival enterprise. Archives and archival enterprise are fundamental to society. Archives constitute the largest store of raw experience documented as it was being gained, documented before the person gaining and recording the experience normally even knew the full depth, breadth, and value of the experience. My mother used to say that you have to crawl before you walk, and walk before you run. As true as that is for humans individually, for human societies, it is true where archives do not exist. Holding the documented experience of all variety of people from all walks of life and from ages stretching

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over centuries, archives permit us to profit from a range and depth of experience that we can obtain in no other way. Learning from and building upon human experience is the definition of civilization. That means that archives are a fundamental and irreplaceable foundation of civilization.

But archival documentation in which the experience is laid up can benefit society only after archivists:

- **Appraise and accession** it, determine what part of all records information—information created in the conduct of affairs for the purpose of forwarding and/or documenting those affairs—has enduring value; and then archivists must take title to ensure that the documentation remains available to use;
- Appraise, accession, and **arrange** the archival documentation under the principles of respect des fonds and original order—provenance, if you like—that organizes it so that the context in which the experience was gained and the records were used continues to be integral to the depth of experience the archives document;
- Appraise, accession, arrange, and **describe** it in a manner that has a convenient standard structure that informs potential users of the extent and content of the fonds;
- Appraise, accession, arrange, describe, and **preserve** the documentation by providing an appropriate environment in the fullest sense of that term, from atmosphere to housing;
- Appraise, accession, arrange, describe, preserve, and **help people use archives**: assist users in fashioning strategies for finding among the hundreds or thousands of cubic feet of unique documents in unique fonds in any one or combination of repositories those records and papers essential to fulfilling the information need of the user;
- Appraise, accession, arrange, describe, preserve, help users make use, and **administer** the repository so that it is staffed, supplied, outfitted, and run to meet the needs of society. The raw experience documented in archives that is fundamental to the existence of civilization cannot benefit society unless an archivist performs, and performs well, all these tasks that are required to deliver the critical archival service to society.

**History.** History, like archives, is one of the distinguishing features of humanity. Doubtless it is the best known product realized from using archives. On the surface, history is the simple recounting of events. On a deeper level, history is the work of
characterizing, seeing relationships between and among, and then making meaning from those events. Identifying trends, watersheds, and periods allows humans to define and then appreciate the nature of occurrences. Progress, backsliding, status quo, and stagnation are conclusions we most commonly draw from characterizations of and relationships seen among events developed from serious historical study. Making meaning from experiences documented in archives and reported in historical study offers guideposts, judicious uses of which form the pebbles and boulders in the stream of civilization.

The history we archivists have written so far has been history intended for audiences of archivists. Without question, we need to write history for ourselves. There are things we need to know of, learn from, and enjoy about and in our own history. But this is history storytelling and meaning-making for which you will search in vain at Barnes & Noble. Most of it is in our journals.

And in this regard, I am pleased to compliment the editors of *Provenance*. Just short of half—twelve—of the first twenty-six volumes contain at least one article dealing completely or largely with history—from archives in Republican Rome to disposition of federal records and to southern archival leaders. No journal has a better record.

One of the articles on archival history is Jim O'Toole’s outstanding “The Future of Archival History.” O'Toole does not reach the end of his first paragraph before stating that our poor record of investigating our own history has “left us as archivists with virtually everything yet to be known about the history and meaning of what we do.”

O'Toole echoes Richard Cox, who observed years earlier that, “A knowledge of archival history ought to be an essential part of any archivist’s training and work. Acceptance of the values of archival history is the sign of a more mature, vital, and healthy archival profession.” Then, happily, O'Toole tells us to put this history on a higher plane than the narrow recounting of work done by our predecessors. “A broad cultural approach to

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archival history and its meaning,” O’Toole directs, “will take us in the right direction.” He is on track as far as he goes. We have much to learn from studies of: (1) archival practices in earlier times and places, (2) the nature of and changes in media and methods of production of records, (3) the purposes of record keeping through time, and (4) the influences of society broadly and resource allocators specifically on the selection of records for preservation and the work archivists have been encouraged to do or prohibited from doing.

As truly valid as are O’Toole’s laments that we know too little of our history and that the history we do know needs to be elevated to a higher plane than just recounting events, I have to ask, are we—archivists—the only audience for this history? My answer is a question to you: Why should we be the only audience?

Advocacy. Advocacy—the act of pleading or interceding in favor of and/or defending—is a term hallowed by history—nearly 700 years so far. The earliest documented use dates from 1340 and in a religious context expresses a passion not unlike that with which, from time to time, some archivists of my acquaintance have been known to erupt.

The Oxford English Dictionary shows that the term “advocate” entered our language nine short years after King Edward III of England in 1331, at the age of eighteen and within months of taking full control of his kingship, ordered officials in his government, upon their departures, to leave for their successors the records they created, received, and used in the conduct of their government business. While the skimpy sources suggest no connection between Edward’s defense of his archives and the religious sentiment expressed in that earliest use of the term, research remains to be done.

Through the years, we American archivists have worked various methods of advocating for archives, beginning with talking to sympathetic groups, to getting feature stories in newspapers, to creating opportunities to talk about archives by fashioning events such as those that take place during Archives Month, to taking formal positions on matters of current public


interest relating to archives, and finally to testifying and writing letters to public officials supporting or opposing proposed legislation. All of these are good and must continue to be pursued, but all are focused on the here and now—the issues on the table at this moment. And the moment always fades as new matters come along. Other than whatever change may be affected, nothing remains on a bedside table, coffee table, or other convenient place to continue the advocacy, especially in the absence of our personal passion.

**Proposal**

*Archives and Archival Enterprise, History, and Advocacy*—the meaning I draw from the relationship of these facts is that we archivists need to be writing, or encouraging others to write, the history of the archival enterprise that advocates for the archival enterprise.

History that advocates is history just as well grounded in archival and other primary sources as the best history, just as informative and well balanced as the best history, just as engaging as the best history. Indeed, all good history is history that advocates. Historians don’t just present facts, they offer interpretations of those facts. They tell readers what those facts mean, what lessons can be taken from them. History that advocates for archives would do no more—and no less.

The difference from what we have been writing is that history that advocates for archives and the archival enterprise is written for audiences beyond the community being written about—for us, it would be an audience, however specific or general, other than archivists. Ours would be written with a goal of opening to this audience through the telling of engaging stories why and how archives and the management or subversion of the archival enterprise have mattered. It will demonstrate how archival enterprise—the management and sometimes mismanagement of archives—has altered the course of history and the state of society, has affected the lives of groups of people, even of individuals. It will demonstrate why and how archival enterprise and archives truly have mattered, and by extension still do.

History advocating the archival enterprise will recount the progress of and impediments to stewarding society’s archival asset. The more that this history enfolds the reader in
the struggles that archivists have faced and the bases for the choices they have had to make (including choices that have compromised the integrity of the archival record), the better and more effective the history will be.

This history will treat:

• The archivists, by whatever titles they are known, who deliver the archival service in particular, and through all the ages, as well as those who have impeded and subverted the archival contribution;

• Management of the irreplaceable archival asset, from single treasured documents to the treasure that each fonds is in its own right; and

• Debates over the nature and conduct of the archival enterprise and delivery of the archival service—debates such as those between the archivists of East and West Germany over the value in archives and more basically the role of archives in supporting the state.

Each story will challenge the reader to reflect on the role and contribution of archives to the development of civilization.

Producing Archival Advocacy History

Has history like that which I am proposing ever been written? At least two, if not three initiatives can provide guideposts from which the preparation of history advocating archives could profit. One is a sumptuously illustrated, multi-volume set of books titled The History of the Library in Western Civilization. Written by library admirer and architect Konstantinos Staikos, the work in fact is much less than its title promises. It is more a history of library structures and of the use of materials in libraries than of the role, work, and contribution of the library and librarians in and to Western Civilization. But the goal of writing the history of archives in civilization is one we can adopt and toward which we should work.

The second initiative that I think should be considered is a history of a single repository—the State Library and Archives of Texas—being published next May by the University of Texas Press. One principal motive I had in writing the work was advocating for the agency. It remains to be seen how well the study will serve this consciously intended purpose. Whether or not it does, we will have a work written from this advocacy
perspective, the effectiveness of which we can judge so as to shape the next offering more effectively for the purpose.

The third initiative is the section of historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra’s award-winning study of *How to Write the History of the New World* in which he discusses the creation of the Archives of the Indies.¹¹

I don’t propose that these are the only, or maybe even the best examples. But they are good examples. None was written for the practitioner community. All can serve as guideposts as we set about producing advocacy histories of archives and the archival enterprise. Note that while one of these tries to treat the institution in all of western civilization, the other two deal with a specific repository and body of documentation. While I look forward to the day when we produce something on the grand scale of “Archival Enterprise and Archives in American Civilization”—or “in Western Civilization,” or “in Human Development”—we first have to produce advocacy histories within much smaller frames on which we can draw to craft the grander study. We need to start with advocacy histories of activities and individuals on the local level.

**Work For Us All**

All archivists can contribute to the production of works of archival advocacy history in one of several ways. Two tasks beckon.

• One is ensuring that the archives of our institutions, of our associations of archivists such as the SGA, and of individual archivists are preserved for use. Second nature to us, this job is nonetheless essential.

• The other is purposely and systematically recording oral histories: (1) of users of archives, (2) of policy makers whose decisions have affected delivery of the archival service, and (3) of archival colleagues serving as leaders of associations of archivists, directing archival repositories, heading teams of archivists, and simply working individually in the archival trenches. Recording oral histories cannot help but provide an essential personal, human flavor vital to crafting compelling history.

As historians, we need to begin thinking toward, then writing (or encouraging others to write) for audiences beyond the archival community. We need:
• Stories of archivists managing the archival asset for society and of archivists associated in organizations as the SGA raising the level of and improving the environment for the conduct of archival enterprise;
• Explorations of the challenges in managing archival repositories;
• Relations of the uses of the archival asset that have made differences (and haven’t they all in one way or another?); and
• Accounts of the history of bodies of archives.

CONCLUSION
The Watershed

When the history of archival enterprise in the early years of the twenty-first century is written, I believe this time will emerge as a watershed period, especially in terms of advocacy of the archival enterprise. Of the many developments that are coalescing to make it so, two stand out.

One development is the imbedding of advocacy in what we define as “archival work.” Advocacy has become a component of the archival enterprise as surely and completely as arrangement and description. The American archival community has moved from tentatively pursuing what thirty years ago we called outreach, to the purposeful in-reach of two decades ago, to the determined advocacy of the present. Georgians are in the forefront. Most recently, your advocacy in securing co-sponsors for PAHR—the Preserving the American Historical Record Act—has brought the total of Georgia co-sponsors to third among all the states.

The second development will be the attention the American archival community pays in the coming few years to the history of archival enterprise in America. Recognition of the many upcoming anniversaries of regional, state, and local archival associations following that of the SGA and the looming seventy-fifth anniversary of the Society of American Archivists in 2011 stand to energize and sustain our attention to the history of archival enterprise broadly defined. As this happens we will be able to mobilize our general but passive interest in archival history. With interest in history mobilized, we can generate
energy to extend the impact of anniversary celebrations far beyond the moment of the grand days of the anniversary, as those we are enjoying here in Savannah.

The Work

Coupling attention to the history of archival enterprise with energetic advocacy will position us to produce or encourage the writing of archival-advocacy history as a principal tool for gaining the resources essential to delivering the archival service to society.

We you in the Society of Georgia Archivists are conscious that you have contributed to history—no, not just contributed but also made history, and thus have a story to tell. Just recall the work of figures prominent in only the first decade of the SGA—work done individually, in their repositories, and in the then-young society—figures such as Carroll Hart, Ed Weldon, Dick Eltzroth, Gayle Peters, Wilbur Kurtz, Minnie Clayton, Lee Alexander, Harmon Smith, Bob White, Linda Matthews, Pete Schinkel, Sheryl Vogt, Faye Gamel, and Brenda Banks, among others.

By turning significant attention to—that is, by writing—histories short and long of archival enterprise in Georgia, of archivists in Georgia who have made a difference in the conduct of the archival service, of events in Georgia’s history broadly that highlight the contribution of the archival enterprise to the life of society, you in the SGA have an opportunity once again to pioneer. Because the anniversary of the SGA that we are celebrating here initiates what should be a period of celebration of anniversaries of other regional, state, and local associations, you have the prospect of inaugurating archival advocacy history writing at the regional, state, and local archival organization level.

One thing I can guarantee you is that this is not the last time you will hear this appeal. At the 2009 SAA Annual Meeting in Austin, former SAA president Lee Stout and I were seated as co-chairs of the SAA Archival History Roundtable. Starting with the nearly six hundred members of the Roundtable, we mean to elevate in the consciousness of the American archival community an interest in and knowledge of our shared history. Further, I jumped at the invitation to serve as the chair of the SAA’s seventy-fifth anniversary task force. With Lee again, I will be calling on all of our colleagues to look to our history
as a resource for advocating for the archival enterprise. You
as individuals preserving your own archives and recording
stories of your experiences stewarding the archival asset and
providing the archival service to society, you who are ensuring
preservation of the records of your repositories, you who are
documenting the work of archivists associated in the SGA, you
archivists of Georgia, members of the third-oldest association
of archivists on the regional, state, or local level in the country,
you by the history you have made already—you are in position
to step forward in the work.

So, let us enjoy this celebration today and tomorrow of
forty years of archival history. But don’t permit the trials and
tribulations, losses and gains experienced in these forty years
to end here. Engage this history to make history. Use your
unique and important history to make history, advocating for
the archival enterprise in Georgia and throughout the country.

David B. Gracy II is the Governor Bill Daniel Professor in
Archival Enterprise at the University of Texas at Austin School
of Information. Dr. Gracy worked in the Texas State Archives
and University of Texas Archives before becoming Archivist,
Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University, and then
Director, Texas State Archives. He is a former President of
the Society of Georgia Archivists, the Society of American
Archivists, and the Academy of Certified Archivists, and is a
Fellow of the Texas State Historical Association. Dr. Gracy’s
research interests include the history of archival enterprise, of
archives and libraries in Texas, and of the information domain.
He is the author of Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement
and Description; Littlefield Lands: Colonization on the Texas
Plains, 1912-1920; and Moses Austin: His Life. Dr. Gracy also
is the editor of Libraries & the Cultural Record <http://sentra.
ischool.utexas.edu/~lcr/index.php>, the only journal devoted
exclusively to the broad history of collections of knowledge that
form the cultural record. Dr. Gracy was the founding editor of
Georgia Archive, now Provenance.
Society of Georgia Archivists
Timeline, 1969—present*

1969  The Society of Georgia Archivists founded at a meeting at the Georgia Department of Archives and History on July 25.

1970  SGA annual dues set at $5.00 for individuals.

1971  Society considered a directory of archival and manuscript records and records personnel in Georgia to facilitate communication among local archivists.

          David B. Gracy II, newly appointed chair of publications committee, produces first SGA newsletter.

1972  First issue of *Georgia Archive* was published.

* This timeline was originally created by SGA’s 20th Anniversary Committee and has subsequently been updated by the 30th and 40th Anniversary Committees. The timeline will be maintained on SGA’s website. Please feel free to send any corrections and additions to SGA.

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1973 Governor Jimmy Carter proclaims “Archives Day in Georgia” on May 16. A special banquet was held at the Top of the Mart Restaurant in Atlanta.

1975 *Georgia Archive* receives the Society of American Archivists Award of Merit.

1976 The Georgia Archives Institute celebrates its tenth year of service to the archival profession.

SGA announces receipt of an NHPRC grant to produce a slide/tape show entitled “A Very Fragile Resource: Our Documentary Heritage.”

Dues raised to $7.50 for individuals and $15.00 for contributing members.

First membership brochure published.

1980 Members at annual meeting voted that new officers assume duties January 1 instead of “at the conclusion of the annual meeting.”

1981 Society of Alabama Archivists and the Tennessee Archivists cosponsor fall workshop with SGA.

Edward Weldon elected President of the Society of American Archivists.

1982 SGA-administered NHPRC grant received by State Historical Records Advisory Board to do a needs assessment of Georgia’s historical records.

1983 First issue of *Provenance* published. The new name reflected a new direction as the journal sought to appeal to archivists throughout the South and the nation.

State Historical Records Advisory Board published *Directory of Georgia Archives and Manuscrupts Repositories*. Prepared by Glen McAninch and distributed by SGA.
1985  International Archives Week, April 14-20, in Georgia proclaimed by Governor Joe Frank Harris.

1986  20th annual session of Georgia Archives Institute held.


Georgia Archives published *The Directory of Georgia’s Historical Organizations and Resources* (subsequently republished online by GHRAB as *Directory of Historical and Cultural Organizations*, available online at <http://content.sos.state.ga.us/GHRAB/>).

1988  SGA established the Carroll Hart Scholarship Award to fund training and attendance at professional meetings, institutes, and graduate courses.

Society of American Archivists met in Atlanta, September 29-October 2. Dues for individuals raised to $15.00 annually.

1989  SGA President appointed Tony Dees to chair 20th Anniversary Committee. Meetings held in celebration of twenty years of “setting the record straight.”

Executive Board of SGA voted officially to establish an “Archives and Society Award” to be given to non-archivists who have done exceptional jobs promoting the use of archives in Georgia and the South.

1991  First SGA scholarship (later renamed J. Larry Gulley Scholarship) awarded.

1993  SGA scholarship to annual meeting renamed for J. Larry Gulley.

First David B. Gracy II Award was given.


Board approves plan to hold annual meetings in Atlanta every other year and elsewhere in the state on the intervening years.

1995  Brenda Banks elected President of the Society of American Archivists.

1996  First SGA Web page, hosted by Georgia College & State University, up and running.

GHRAB approved grant proposal for joint project between SGA and Georgia Historical Society to prepare and give a series of workshops on the care of private papers.

1997  Board voted to increase Gracy Award to $100.00.

Board voted to commit enough SGA funds currently in certificates of deposit to make the Gracy Award and the Hart and Gulley Scholarships self-sufficient.

1998  SGA adopted new motto: “Preserving the past and the present for the future.”

For the first time SGA participated in “Office Hours” in the Exhibit Hall during the Society of American Archivists meeting in Orlando, Florida.

SGA established permanent, independent, redesigned and expanded Web site: <www.soga.org>.
1999  SGA individual memberships passed the 200 mark.

    SGA, with the support of a grant from GHRAB, offered seven workshops, three on Arrangement and Description, three on Photographs and Visual Materials and one on Managing the Records of Museums.

2000  Ed Weldon Scholarship established to provide the registration fee for an SGA member to attend the Society of American Archivists (SAA) annual meeting.

2001  First SGA Scholarship auction featured Gilbert Head and introduced the patriarch of SGA’s sock monkey family, Jim Dandy (made by Linda Davis).

2002  Gracy Award increased from $100.00 to $200.00.

    SGA individual dues increased from $15.00 to $25.00.

2004  SGA obtained federal income tax exception under section 501 (c)(3).

2005  SGA Membership Directory goes from print to digital format.

    Listserv Manager established with a 3-year term.

    SGA donated $500.00 to the Gulf Coast Relief Fund to support Hurricane Katrina victims.

2006  SGA Newsletter produced digitally.

    Archives Week Planning Committee received the Georgia Historical Records Advisory Board Award for Advocacy.
2006 Disaster Preparedness Committee established in response to the widespread disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita that took place in 2005 along the Gulf Coast. The Committee worked with ARCHE and SOLINET to update *Shelter from the Stormy Blast*.

First year SGA elections held by electronic ballot using SurveyMonkey.

SGA blog established, first post on October 11.

2008 Brenda S. Banks Educational Workshop Scholarship established for attendance at the SGA-sponsored spring/summer workshop.

Anthony Dees Educational Workshop Scholarship established for attendance at the SGA-sponsored pre-conference workshop.

2009 David Carmichael (Georgia Archives) and Sheryl Vogt (University of Georgia) named as Fellows of the Society of American Archivists.

SGA Fellows program established. Sixteen honorees were inducted.

SGA establishes a Facebook page—122 fans by November!
Statement by Archivist of the United States

David S. Ferriero

To Members of the Society of Georgia Archivists:

It’s a pleasure for me to congratulate the Society of Georgia Archivists on its 40th anniversary.

We at the National Archives and Records Administration feel that we know so many of your members, since we have a major presence in your state and they are frequent visitors. Georgia is the home of one of our thirteen Presidential libraries, the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum in Atlanta, and one of our Federal Records Centers in Ellenwood. It is also home to our five-year-old Southeast Regional Archives in Morrow, which is adjacent to the Georgia State Archives.

Georgia has played a major role in the history of our nation, which is reflected in our holdings in the state that document the history of the nation and of the Southeastern United States. Georgia was one of our thirteen original states, and it was the location for some of the major historical events of the Civil War and later of the Civil Rights Movement. And it produced the nation’s 39th President!

At the National Archives, our mission is to collect, protect, and encourage the use of the records of our Federal government. We will always stand ready at our facilities to help your members in fulfilling their research needs and the needs of those who come to them for assistance in their research.

And I look forward to meeting some of your members during the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Washington in August.

Again, my congratulations on your anniversary and best wishes for your continued successful contributions to the state of Georgia and its people.

DAVID S. FERRIERO
Archivist of the United States

PROVENANCE, vol. XXVII, 2009
“Company History”: Corporate Archives’ Public Outreach on Fortune 100 Company Web Sites

Marie Force

INTRODUCTION

Just before commercialization of the Internet, corporate archives communicated with the public via museums and exhibits, books and articles, educational curricula, television, anniversary publications, and nostalgic packaged goods.¹ By 1996, as growing numbers of companies experimented with their first Web sites, corporate archivists such as Philip F. Mooney at Coca-Cola found a new, “unparalleled opportunity for outreach.”² Mooney and his colleagues at Chevron, Ford Motor, J.C. Penney, Levi Strauss, Texas Instruments, and Wells Fargo were among those contributing early content to company Web sites, such as the J.C. Penney “History Page,” with its illustrated timeline, founder’s biography, video clip, and museum/archives


contact information.\(^3\) A decade later, Company History sections of one or more Web pages are common—only seventeen of the Fortune 100 companies of 2008 did not have one on their Web sites—and maturing, as content and design refresh to engage repeat visitors and incorporate changing technology. If a company has an archives program, its Company History section often extends beyond a timeline to share legacy collections, activities, and communications with the public. This outreach on company Web sites is little discussed in archival literature, as studies of corporate archives and technology tend to focus inward on serving clients within the company.

To examine the online public outreach of corporate archives, this study analyzed the content of Company History sections on the Web sites of Fortune 100 companies. Findings demonstrate that the company Web site is a means for the public to communicate directly with the company, an opportunity for the company to create or increase an emotional bond with customers, and a venue to show the strength and continuity of the brand. Corporate archives engage in a type of public-relations outreach that is different from online outreach of non-corporate archives open to the public and is shaped by marketing messaging, partnerships with other business units, and the necessity to integrate with company objectives. The Web has improved archivists’ ability to serve their corporate missions by connecting them with a diverse audience, ranging from customers to key company stakeholders. Contributions from archivists help build their corporations’ Web sites into marketing brand extensions for their companies, and data collected here can assist archivists and others developing and benchmarking the Company History Web site section.

CORPORATE ARCHIVES AND VISIBILITY

Corporate and non-corporate archives preserve and provide access to collections, but significant distinctions exist, based on the mission, clientele, and unique realities of corporate archives; these differences extend to the Web. Online, both types of repository share diverse audiences, but differ in their definitions of effective outreach. Academic archivists Laura Botts and Lauren Kata found that although the Web has increased expectations of archives’ accessibility, online outreach still serves the same diverse users of pre-Internet days, including teachers and students, genealogists, writers and historians, government employees, and the media. A study of Fortune 100 Web sites describes a company’s public Web site as a tool not just for communication with customers, but as a means for reaching “multiple audiences”: vendors, stockholders, employees, job seekers, financial analysts, the media, students, researchers, and the general public. Companies establish archives to meet business objectives, so resources there primarily serve internal projects and departments rather than external researchers. Although most corporate archivists do provide some type of external reference services by e-mail, Web site, telephone, fax—even in-person visits—the proprietary nature of their archives means there is no consistent open-door policy for all users; rather, everyone is addressed on a case-by-case basis. These restrictions affect the depth and format of archival communications on company Web sites. Repositories open to the public offer online finding aids and virtual archives of primary documents to researchers. To the extent that a Company History section is a reference service, it answers frequently asked questions from external users, most of whom, in the words of Kraft Foods’ Becky Haglund Tousey and Elizabeth W. Adkins, formerly at Ford Motor Company,

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want “a simple answer to a simple question. And they do not ask, nor do they need, to physically visit the archives to get the answer.”

Archival catalogs are usually retained internally on private corporate intranets. Virtual “archives” open on a company’s public Web site often do not involve the corporate archives: materials are recent and posted online as created by business units, e.g., annual reports from Investor Relations or press releases from Corporate Communications.

Underlying these differences in clientele and content are two definitions of effective online outreach. Repositories open to the public use Web sites for marketing, to promote collections, and to show value to institutional stakeholders, but overall, according to Donald Waters, former head of the Digital Library Federation, “the promise of digital technology is for libraries to extend the reach of research and education, improve the quality of learning, and reshape scholarly communication.”

For corporate archives, online outreach is always about more than reference services. The principal function of a company Web site is public-relations outreach: to promote brand and company identity while engaging audiences. In digital design, explains corporate designer Alan Topalian, a company projects and largely controls corporate identity—the “articulation of what an organization is, what it stands for, what it does and how it goes about its business”—in order to shape corporate image, the “impressions and expectations of an organization in the minds of its stakeholders and public.”

As corporate digital communications have evolved, the business units that archives partner with online have also changed. In 2005 a group of Fortune 500 corporate archivists

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described Web site duties shifting from Public Relations to Marketing departments, creating “sales-oriented” Web sites with content linked to company branding and targeted to users’ interests. They agreed that archival Web content must be personalized to connect to audiences and tailored to company strategy to prevent marginalizing archives’ presence on company Web sites.9

Online and off, corporate archivists seek to support business objectives while promoting the value of heritage to the company itself. The importance of visibility and technology (inherent in Web publishing) is frequently discussed in relation to corporate archives. A “visible” archives is “relevant and indispensable to the company whose main concern is not history,”10 is a well-known resource, and extends beyond the collections with good reference services, outreach, and promotion—often using the tools of technology. Former AT&T archivist Marcy Goldstein is one of many urging corporate archivists to actively position the archives within a company’s network of knowledge, utilize the computer as a “conduit of information,” and create products and services that meet business needs.11

Visibility is important to the success of corporate archives continually challenged by company downturns and mergers, profit-based metrics, mission and branding redirections, and

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10 Ibid.

changes in key stakeholders. Archives can easily be hidden or discounted within a corporation: resources often support other departments’ projects and programs, access is restricted to collections, and perceptions abound of musty, old records not relevant to the present company.

This study moves the discussion of archival visibility and technology to the company public Web site where diverse audiences, including other business units, see and interact with the corporate archives.

**Study Methodology and Design**

This study used an evaluation methodology developed by communications scholar Irene Pollach to analyze corporate Web sites’ “About Us” company information section—the area of Web sites most likely to have content provided by the archives. Pollach applies linguist M.A.K. Halliday’s categorization of three functions of language to Web sites, defining the textual function of structure and organizing as text, navigation, and hypertext linkage patterns; expanding the ideational function of processes and concepts to include Web user behavior; and interpreting interpersonal function as both text and interactive Web features used to establish a relationship between a company and its audiences. Pollach’s methodology offers a way to identify and evaluate how language, text structures, linkages, and Web interactives present archival content to the public.

Of the Fortune 100 companies in 2008, thirty-nine (see Appendix A for companies and web addresses) met the following criteria: all had a Company History section in the About Us area of their Web sites and either an entry in

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the *Directory of Corporate Archives in the United States and Canada*, an employee who was a Society of American Archivists member, or a reference on the Web site to historical collections maintained by company staff or vendors. Keyword searches using the terms “history,” “archives,” “archivist,” and “anniversary” found content elsewhere on the sites that was not linked to the Company History section.

Drawing on Pollach’s study, variables for structure and navigation were established. Variables for online corporate archives and company history were also identified (see Codebook in Appendix B). Data from the Web sites were keyed to the variables and then analyzed quantitatively. (Web site content and structure may have altered since data collection in July-September 2008; and with the current economic crisis, archives in this study may have closed or their parent companies may no longer exist as independent entities.)

**FINDINGS**

Of the thirty-nine Web sites from 2008’s Fortune 100 companies that were studied, the ten with the most prominent archival content, ranked by the presence of twenty-seven codes as defined in Appendix B, were General Motors (27 codes), Coca-Cola (22), IBM (22), Intel (22), Hewlett-Packard (21), Wells Fargo (21), Sears (20), Walgreens (20), Johnson & Johnson (18), and Motorola (18). In the following analysis, examples of findings are frequently pulled from these Web sites to demonstrate the range of communication formats, archival visibility, and corporate messaging in the Company History section. Although the Sears corporate archives is currently dormant, its history site SearsArchives.com, created by vendor The History Factory in 2002, is still live, provides

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16 Dennis Preisler, former Sears historian/corporate archivist, e-mail messages to author, September 8 and 14, 2009.
e-mail contact for reference services “by volunteer staff,” and continues to be cited as a recommended resource by various blogs and libraries.

**CONTENT PACKAGING**

Archives were rarely mentioned in Company History section titles. The term “History” was used on thirty Web sites (77%), “Heritage” on five sites, and “Story” twice. Only IBM and Sears named their Company History sections “Archives.” Content was packaged in twelve formats (see Table 1). All but three Web sites had at least one historical image. After photographs, the most common visuals were advertisements;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Web Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Photograph</td>
<td>34 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company History Essay</td>
<td>33 (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company History Timeline</td>
<td>31 (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanned Document</td>
<td>27 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Logo</td>
<td>24 (62%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact Sheet</td>
<td>23 (59%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story/Quote/Speech</td>
<td>18 (46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company “Firsts”</td>
<td>13 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>12 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Video</td>
<td>12 (31%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biography</td>
<td>11 (28%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anniversary Celebration</td>
<td>9 (23%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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then images ranged widely from ephemera, like sheet music for State Farm’s commercial “Like a Good Neighbor” by Barry Manilow,\textsuperscript{20} to retired brands and products. Companies offered a variety of lively, in-depth presentations of historical content for extensive browsing. Twelve companies used Macromedia Flash to animate slide shows, quizzes, and timelines. Kraft Foods packaged its Company History section into one animated timeline.\textsuperscript{21} Hyperlinks led to historical content on the Web sites of affiliated museums and institutions, or elsewhere on the company Web site in media centers, image galleries, anniversary sites, and blogs. Keyword searches found related content not linked to the Company History section, such as “Ford ArteHouse,” a virtual archive of historical images under “Owners Services” on Ford Motor’s Web site,\textsuperscript{22} and Boeing’s “Historical Perspectives” column in its online \textit{Frontiers} magazine.\textsuperscript{23}

Corporations also used Company Histories to highlight heritage brand extensions. Brand extension is the use of an established brand name to launch new products in different categories,\textsuperscript{24} such as sunblock-maker Coppertone’s recent line of sunglasses. Examples of brand extension of a company’s heritage include merchandise with vintage logos, a corporate museum, or a traveling exhibit. Of the thirty-nine Web sites in the sample, fourteen (36\%) had information about heritage brand extensions, such as Boeing’s factory tours and the World


of Coke museum, either within the Company History section or hyperlinked with Company History in the About Us navigation bar. Five Web sites presented the Company History section as a virtual visit to a physical site, e.g., “Visit Bank of America’s History Center” and “Visit the Intel Museum.”

**Visible Corporate Archives**

In addition to presenting historical content, some Web sites made the corporate archives explicitly visible. Seventeen (44%) of thirty-nine Web sites offered windows into restricted-access facilities, services, and staff, revealing the archival functions of appraisal, arrangement and description, reference and access, and preservation, in five content formats (see Table 2). The most visible archives were those of General Motors, Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Motorola, Sears, Wells Fargo, Coca-Cola, and IBM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Web Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of Holdings</td>
<td>14 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>13 (33%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donation Guidelines</td>
<td>10 (26%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archives Staff</td>
<td>6 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Guidelines</td>
<td>4 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Archival appraisal was evident in descriptions of collecting policies and donation procedures. Archives identified what they did or did not collect and missing items. Lockheed

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Martin posted a donation form for download and return of contributions to its “Legacy Program.”

Since finding aids and databases are retained internally, arrangement and description for the public often went no deeper than facility level. Several companies did mention specific, notable collections, such as IBM’s counting and reckoning tools and equipment. IBM and Intel also posted virtual “exhibits,” offering visual clues to the depth and range of their collections.

Company History sections functioned partially as virtual reference for the public: content could answer frequent questions from archives’ external users and thirteen of the Web sites offered direct communication with archival staff by online request forms, e-mail and mailing addresses, and comments on blogs. IBM was the only archive where researchers with requests “requiring extensive staff time” were “encouraged to visit the IBM Corporate Archives in person.”

Preservation activity was mainly implied in the images of artifacts retained by the company, but several Web sites also showed archival boxes, film cans, art racks, and white-gloved hands holding items. A General Motors slideshow had the

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most extensive views of archival facilities. Text also mentioned preservation: “Since 1975, the JPMorgan Chase Archives has promoted the firm’s legacy by collecting and preserving historical documents. . . .”

**ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY**

A company uses its Web site to establish itself as the official authority of its brand and legacy. One way this message was conveyed was through the archivist persona. Dave Smith, founder of the Walt Disney Archives, was introduced as “the ultimate authority on all things Disney,” and author of the “unparalleled reference work, *Disney A to Z: The Official Encyclopedia*.” Anna Mancini at Hewlett-Packard determined authenticity in restoration of the 1930s garage where the company started. Archivists at Coca-Cola and Wells Fargo offered preservation tips and clues for recognizing fake collectibles in their blog articles; value estimates for Coca-Cola collectibles frequently appeared in the comments sections. Although Hewlett-Packard, Walgreens, and Wells Fargo could do no value appraisals for the public, Wells Fargo and IBM

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archivists did post advice, data sheets, and related resources for artifacts frequently presented for valuation and provenance.\footnote{37}

Citing numbers and statistics was another means to convey authority in the Company History. The age of a company and date of founding were often mentioned to inspire trust and respect for the company’s legacy. Descriptions of archives attempted to impress with the size of holdings: General Motors’ Media Archive “houses 15,000 linear feet of shelving,”\footnote{38} while IBM Corporate Archives has “more than 300,000 photographs, slides, negatives and transparencies.”\footnote{39} Once established, authority can be transferred. Ten of the thirty-nine Web sites (26\%) linked or listed resources outside the Company History section, offering alternatives to restricted archives in the form of guidance to organizations and publications trusted by company-history experts. Of the ten most visible Company History sections, 70 percent had related resources.

\textit{Interactivity and Customized Content}

Twenty of the thirty-nine Web sites (51\%) offered personalized interchanges by e-mail, weblogs or “blogs,” RSS feeds, quizzes, shopping, and free take-aways of recipes, photographs, and computer wallpaper. Nine of the ten most visible Company History sections offered interactivities. The most complex was the Generations of General Motors Wiki, a “digital


“Company History”

scrapbook” for users to “write GM’s online living history.”

Coca-Cola, Johnson & Johnson, and Wells Fargo also had blogs entirely dedicated to company legacy.

Although Company History sections are characterized by general communications for multiple audiences, thirteen companies (33%) directly addressed three groups with additional content tailored to their interests: collectors/enthusiasts, students/educators, and employees/retirees. For example, Walt Disney offered extensive educational materials for students and teachers, and Sears connected enthusiasts with experts of its homes sold by mail order. Three Company History sections linked to retiree group Web sites or asked longtime employees and retirees for stories.

HUMANIZING THE ORGANIZATION

Irene Pollach found in her Web site study that “companies appeal to readers’ emotions when they present

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the people behind the organization.” Most photographs and quotations were of company founders and leaders. Brands were made approachable by humanistic language and emphasis on the individual: the word “touch” was repeatedly used, as in “Kraft touches more than a billion people in more than 150 countries.”

Another way to foster connection between visitors to the Web site and the organization behind it is the choice of personal pronouns. Nineteen Web sites (49%) used first-person pronouns (we/us/our) and second-person pronouns (you/your) in section titles, such as “Our History / Heritage / Story,” or in text, claiming relationships between the company and its audiences.

**ENDURING LEGACIES**

Quotations, often by founders and leaders, spoke of founding principles and basic values the company promised to continue, while anniversary celebrations presented legacies connected and vital to current business. Section titles announced “A History of Exceeding Expectations” (Johnson Controls) and a “Heritage of Innovation” (Boeing). Wells Fargo’s blog “bridges events in the past with an outlook on the future,” and United Parcel Service is “a company that has never shied away from reinventing itself.”

Corporations acknowledged that mergers were another form of legacy. Four companies designed their Company History sections to present complex, rich histories of today’s

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45 Pollach, “Corporate Self-Presentation on the WWW,” 294.
strong business conglomerations. Boeing featured a collage of company logos. ConocoPhillips’s history was divided into three parts for its three predecessor companies, Phillips Petroleum, Burlington Resources, and Conoco, Inc.

**DISCUSSION**

Over the past decade, the Internet has made business archives more visible and accessible to the public than ever before in the Company History sections of corporate Web sites. The ten companies in this study with the most extensive and varied content—General Motors, Coca-Cola, IBM, Intel, Hewlett-Packard, Wells Fargo, Sears, Walgreens, Johnson & Johnson, and Motorola—also presented archival staff, work, and collections as relevant and engaged in current business objectives. These companies demonstrate how archival resources can build a Company History section into a strong heritage brand extension, where, as in a corporate museum, the public experiences “not passive collections of organizational artifacts” but “a type of organizational memory that is used strategically by the firm for identity and image development.”

Messages conveyed in Company History sections spoke of rich heritages and enduring principles; strong, successful mergers; brands and products that bring meaningful (and fun) experiences into consumers’ and clients’ lives; and corporate innovation, reliability, and continuity.

This study of text, hypertext, and dialogue found corporate archives building trust in Fortune 100 companies and their Web sites. They leveraged nostalgia for past brands and products, offering personal, connective experiences through interactives and narratives. The most functional Company History sections had both easy-to-navigate introductory

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materials and deeper resources, balancing visitors’ need for quick ready reference and their desire for a rich experience, browsing and interacting in a company’s past.

**USABILITY**

Studies of the About Us sections by Hoa Loranger and Jakob Nielsen in 2003 and 2008 show that usability has improved, but audience expectations have risen even higher.\(^53\) Online visitors like important dates and events easy to scan and comprehend, preferably in vertical timeline layout. “People are particularly interested in milestones, such as how and when the organization was formed, when important products and services were invented and why they are significant, prestigious awards or recognitions.”\(^54\) Loranger and Nielsen caution archivists and Web site designers that before building an elaborate, interactive timeline, they should “carefully consider whether the approach helps users accomplish their tasks more easily and efficiently than a simple scaled-back version.”\(^55\)

Most Company History sections in this study were easy to find, with timelines and materials that gave users insight into company heritage. Section titles were usually some variation of the recommended “Company History” title that viewers know and understand. Thirty-one of the thirty-nine Web sites (79%) used a timeline to introduce company history; only seven (18%) were animated. The most cumbersome timelines required continual clicks and rollovers with the mouse to see small segments of information at a time. Hewlett-Packard’s animated timeline was the easiest to scan visually as a whole.\(^56\) Motorola’s

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\(^{53}\) Although usability increased from 70% to 79% between 2003 and 2008, users’ satisfaction with About Us sections decreased from 5.2 to 4.6 (on a 1–7 scale). Hoa Loranger and Jakob Nielsen, *Corporate Image: Usability Guidelines for Presenting Company Information in a Website’s “About Us” Area*, 2nd ed. (Fremont, Cal.: Nielsen Norman Group, 2008), 4-5.

\(^{54}\) Ibid., 19.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 108.

HTML-based timeline was clean, easy to comprehend, and offered a PDF file print option and a variety of language translations from a drop-down menu. Wells Fargo showed versatility and relevance with a traditional HTML-based timeline, responding to current energy concerns with a “Green Timeline” of “documents and stories from our archives of Wells Fargo’s involvement, commitment and proactive approach on environmental issues.”

For visitors wanting to know more, corporate archives with prominent Company History sections offered related resources, accommodating Web users as active information seekers. Corporate archivists should make sure historical content posted elsewhere on the corporate Web site for a particular event or audience is linked back to Company History, where users assume that content will be located. If a company has an affiliated museum or visitors’ center, as General Motors and Wells Fargo do, links to that institution’s Web site can also offer room for expanding archival content beyond the confines of the company Web site.

**Building Trust**

Trust is a critical factor in interactions on the Web. Because anyone can put up a Web site and call himself or herself an expert, “Trust and credibility are major issues on the Web, where even the biggest company exists as only a few words and pictures in a browser window,” writes Web site usability guru Jakob Nielsen. “Explaining who you are and where you come from does matter.” Using heritage resources in the Company History section establishes a company and its archives as the

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60 Loranger and Nielsen, Corporate Image, 8.
official sources of its history, brand, and products. Archivists are familiar with this role of “expert,” notes Thomas J. Frusciano of Rutgers University. Many archivists serve with curators as “historical experts or institutional historians, and apply that knowledge to make informed appraisal decisions, craft comprehensive documentation plans, assist researchers in their quest for appropriate resources and information, and even conduct research to write history.”

Online, the archivist was presented as company-history expert, guiding visitors through a company’s past and providing reliable information. A major contribution by corporate archivists to Company History sections is an understanding of what people want to know about a company’s past. The majority of the ten most extensive Company History sections had information specifically posted in response to frequent requests, such as Wells Fargo’s Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page, which answered a range of questions on the company’s beginnings, how to build a model stagecoach, responses to genealogical researchers, and information about certain objects.

FAQ pages also revealed corporate archives’ awareness that many online visitors are looking for provenance and value appraisals of old products they own (five of the top ten Company History sections mentioned such requests). The past decade that launched Company History sections also introduced the eBay online auction site and Antiques Roadshow, Cash in the Attic, and other appraisal television programs, heightening awareness of the potential value of collectibles and increasing requests to corporate archives for product values, dates, and authentication.

Value appraisal for the public is a complicated area for many corporate archives due to the volume of requests, difficulty determining condition remotely, fluctuation in prices, and possible liability to the company. Philip F. Mooney at Coca-Cola was the exception in providing product values in

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collectibles columns and blog postings and occasionally inviting people to e-mail images of items directly to him, but had to discontinue individual value appraisals completely after a year to keep conversations on topic and not just “commentary on what do I have and how much is it worth.” Several companies did provide specific information to assist with provenance of collectibles, and Company History sections as a whole can be considered starting places to learn about the place of a product in a company’s past.

**PERSONAL, CONNECTIVE EXPERIENCES**

“The Web is very depersonalized,” note Loranger and Nielsen, “but from our earliest usability studies, we’ve seen that users like getting a sense of the company behind the website.” A *New York Times* reporter exploring online company histories agreed that an “essential element” to an interesting company Web site is “a corporate history that goes beyond nuts and bolts and shows an appreciation, nay, respect, for the product’s special place in modern culture.” Archival staff and collections resources can be the basis of a Company History section that offers visitors personal contact and intimacy with a company and product culture that has been a part of their lives. Experimental research has shown that brand loyalty affects viewers’ attitudes on a company Web site and their intentions to

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63 The Coca-Cola Company, “Lessons Learned.”


revisit the site. Corporate archives house many products that inspire a tremendous amount of affection and nostalgia, often linked with memories of childhood, special experiences, and people. Company History sections offer new ways to interact with a company and its products, and links to communities of people with similar experiences and interests.

As Irene Pollach points out, audience involvement on corporate Web sites is “likely to be high, since people are unlikely to visit a company’s Web site if they have no interest whatsoever in the company and its activities.” This study found the exchange of stories the most intriguing interactive in the Company History section—and a powerful means to convey the corporation’s message to the public. American Express used “True Stories” of stellar customer service to illustrate its company values. Wells Fargo requested “stories of your own experiences, or those of people you know. Because that is the best history—memories of people working together in response to big events.” Coca-Cola requested and offered stories from “hundreds of people . . . about how Coca-Cola has affected their lives,” such as the “New Coke Stories” exchange that “reminds us that the New Coke episode, whether one supported the new formula or not, was a common experience that all Americans shared in the mid-1980s.”

Engaging to audiences, stories are effective educational devices. Recent research has found that “the human brain has a natural affinity for narrative construction. People tend


68 Pollach, “Corporate Self-Presentation on the WWW,” 287.


to remember facts more accurately if they encounter them in a story rather than in a list.”

Narratives in Company History sections are also part of an increasing trend of sharing life stories online—exemplified by Facebook, MySpace, blogs, and Listservs. Finally, story exchange adds to the archives by increasing the staff’s knowledge base, adding resources for research and exhibits, and even building relationships that may lead to future donations.

Building connections between online audiences and the company through Web interactives, virtual access to the corporate archives, and content tailored to frequent users, the Company History site is an effective vehicle for corporate messaging. As online design grows increasingly personalized, the company is more attuned to the customer, but more importantly, according to designer Alan Topalian, “users are gradually drawn into the ‘extended family’ of organization. The inclusion of stakeholders into the corporate family constitutes a significant development of corporate identity.”

Supporting new ways to build relationships between the public and the company will be the challenge and adventure of the next decade for corporate archives’ outreach in Company History sections.

The success of a brand extension such as a Company History section is determined by audience involvement, but as Richard Thomsett, a director at consulting company Brand Architects, warns, “You’ve got to ensure the experience lives up to the brand, you must get the precise fit.” Regular evaluation by corporate archivists of their company’s online history and user needs is critical, as William Landis confirms in his study of early archival Web sites: “Archivists have something to offer

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this potential audience, but the audience also has something to teach archivists.”

Conclusion

Corporate archivists tend to focus their technology resources heavily on developing online services and products within their company, typically on private intranets. However, corporate archives have an important stake in obtaining space on companies’ public Web sites. The Company History sections of corporate Web sites have developed over the past decade into vehicles with good capability—and greater potential—for promoting corporate identity, addressing diverse audiences, and making the actual corporate archives visible to both the general public and key company stakeholders.

Archivists, partnering with other business units on company Web sites, have varying degrees of influence over the final format and presentation of content, but they bring to that partnership the role of company culture expert. They know the brands and products that have inspired loyalty in consumers though the years and what external users ask most often about company history. They are storytellers and collectors of stories, tapping into strong intersections between the personal and the corporate. Inspiring trust in a company and its Web site, archivists and heritage resources build the Company History section into a virtual brand extension of rich content, engaging and educating audiences while actively aligning with their corporation’s current business initiatives.

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Appendix B: Codebook
In this study, codes for structure and navigation, interactives, and Web user groups were based on Irene Pollach’s study “Corporate Self-Presentation on the WWW: Strategies for Enhancing Usability, Credibility and Utility” (2005). Online archives and company-history variables were developed by the researcher, a corporate archivist, with reference to A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology (2005), by Richard Pearce-Moses.77

Structure and Navigation Codes
1. Heritage brand extension: Brand extension is the use of a well-known brand name to launch new products in different categories. Examples of brand extension of a company’s heritage include a line of vintage-logo merchandise, a corporate museum, or traveling exhibit.
2. Related resource: Hyperlink to a Web page within the company Web site or to other Web sites, or a text reference to a print publication.
3. Section name: The Company History hyperlink on the About Us page and heading on the Company History main page.

Archival Codes
4. Archivist: Manager of legacy collections. May be represented by a name, title, job description, photograph, and writings.
5. Contact information: Phone, mail, e-mail, or fax for archives staff.
6. Donation guidelines: Rules or legal-transfer documents related to acquiring items for corporate archives.
8. Holdings: Any text describing collections in corporate archives, or image of a company’s archival facility.
9. Appraisal: “The process of determining whether records and

other materials have permanent (archival) value.”
10. Arrangement and Description: Organization and description of collections based on the principles of provenance (arrangement by creating entity) and original order.
11. Preservation: The safekeeping of items of enduring value to an organization.
12. Reference and Access: Either archives’ contact information for virtual reference (assistance by telephone, mail, fax, or e-mail) or information about on-site reference (researcher may visit to use the collections).

Company History Format Codes
13. Anniversary celebration: A separate unit, e.g., Web page, Macromedia Flash movie, or PDF file, commemorating an anniversary of the company.
14. Audio/Video: Digitized sound or moving footage, including songs, speeches, commercials, or movies.
15. Biography: Personal history of company founder or other employee.
17. Essay: At least one paragraph summarizing company history.
18. Fact Sheet: Web page that goes beyond summary company history with details about a particular subject, event, or program.
19. Object: A three-dimensional historical object presented in a contemporary (color) image—not in historical use, such as in an old ad or commercial.
20. Photograph: Color or black-and-white still image depicting company history, including people, events, objects, buildings, and grounds.
22. Scanned Document: Digital image of an ad or other historical print document.
23. Story/Quote/Speech: Quotation or speech in either audio/video or text format.
24. Timeline: Chronological list of significant events, branding, and/or awards in company history. May be in HTML or Macromedia Flash (still or animated) format.

Other Codes
25. Interactive: Web feature that actively engages users in
activity other than reading: either a traditional point-and-click or a Macromedia Flash animated feature. Exception: Audio/video players were not counted as interactives.

26. Personal pronouns (first person): we, us, our; (second person): you, your

27. User group: Specific audience targeted with content tailored to its common interest.
Functional Analysis and the Reappraisal of Faculty Papers

Gregory Schmidt and Michael Law

Many repositories at American colleges and universities hold the official records of their institutions as well as the personal papers of individuals. Archivists appraise these different materials—institutional records and personal papers—using separate theoretical perspectives. They tend to bring a records-management view of evidential value to the appraisal of institutional records and a curator’s eye for informational and intrinsic values to personal manuscripts. There is one collecting category common to university repositories, however, that requires a hybrid approach. Falling between the two broad categories of university records and personal manuscripts are the papers of university faculty members. Studies of the holdings of university archives indicate that faculty papers are well represented in the archival record.¹

Professional literature has lauded the retention of faculty papers in the holdings of university archival repositories for


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many reasons. Maynard Brichford argues that “in a broad sense the faculty is the university,” and that faculty papers “reveal professional interests and opinions that frequently clarify matters mentioned in official files of the president, deans, or departments.” Francis Fournier ties the value of faculty papers to their ability to “fill in the gaps” of the university records-management program and to better understand the teaching, research, and community-service functions of the university. While faculty papers fall into the category of manuscript collections, the breadth of topics within the papers, especially those outside of teaching, research, and community service, have made appraisal difficult and subsequent arrangement and description problematic.

Archivists perceive faculty papers as “large yet underused” resources, but few know how to approach them in a more useful way. At the root of this dilemma is a general lack of sound appraisal guidelines for these papers. Without those guidelines and agreed-upon selection criteria for faculty papers, selection decisions are more difficult and the papers added to repositories are more likely to confuse both researchers and archivists. A survey by Tara Zachary Laver found that past archival practices at many large Association of Research Libraries (ARL) repositories involved archivists and manuscript curators accepting almost all faculty papers that were offered and keeping everything that was transferred to them. Functional analysis, as expressed by Helen Willa Samuels in her 1992 book *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities*, may provide a mechanism for appraising

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4 Laver, “In a Class by Themselves,” 160.

5 Ibid., 171; Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Weideman, “‘Though this be madness, yet there is method in ’t’: Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy,” *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 57.
and selecting faculty papers, resulting in documentation of the institution and assisting archivists in addressing problematic collections.\(^6\)

This article explores reappraisal of the Malcolm McMillan Papers at the Auburn University (AU) Special Collections and Archives. The exploration is meant to contextualize the long and multifaceted reappraisal process. That process can and should be approached one step at a time, addressing the most serious appraisal errors first, and reevaluating the process after each step. Though the McMillan Papers generate problems in terms of size, arrangement, and description, the first step in their reappraisal will correct the most fundamental problem: an unsound arrangement that has made the finding aid cumbersome and access difficult. The McMillan Papers have the potential, through rearrangement, both to fill in the gaps created by the university records disposition schedule and to document more fully the research, teaching, and administrative functions of the institution. Because the challenges presented by the McMillan Papers may be similar to those concerning faculty papers in other university repositories, the strategy we document in this study should help guide others in the profession who are grappling with such papers within their own repositories.

**Auburn University and Faculty Papers**

Though the official records of Auburn University fall under the appraisal guidelines set forth in the Records Disposition Authority for Public Universities in Alabama (RDA), the archives at AU has long collected non-university records and personal papers. The AU Archives Department was founded by the Auburn Board of Trustees in 1963 for the “purpose of gathering, organizing, and making available materials, manuscripts, and other archival materials on the history of AU and the southern Region.”\(^7\) Over the past forty-five years, archival holdings at

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\(^7\) Auburn University Board of Trustees, Board Meeting Minutes, November 1, 1963, Auburn University, Auburn, Ala., 395-6.
AU have grown to include not only university records but also manuscripts, ephemera, photographs, and artifacts in a variety of subject areas. These subject areas are: the History of Auburn University, Agriculture and Rural Life in Alabama, Aviation and Aerospace, the Civil War, Twentieth Century Alabama Politics, Alabama Architecture, and Alabama Writers.\(^8\)

While collecting policies are important tools for making appraisal decisions, the AU Archives, like most other university archives, has never addressed faculty papers in its published collecting policies. Despite this, among the approximately one thousand record groups in the archives are the personal manuscripts of fifty-six faculty members from a variety of academic disciplines. They range in size from less than one cubic foot (almost half of the faculty collections) to nearly one hundred; they average 6.4 cubic feet. The largest collection, at 96 cubic feet, representing 26.8 percent of the total volume of faculty papers held at the AU Archives, is that of former history professor Malcolm McMillan. Acquisition of faculty papers at AU occurs through both active solicitation and acceptance of offers from faculty or their estates. Acceptance of unsolicited materials depends on an evaluation of the faculty member’s scholarly reputation, his or her record of service, and the contents of the papers. Preference is given to those records that document the topics highlighted as priorities in the AU Archives collecting policies, but guidelines do not exist to guide processing.

**THE MALCOLM McMILLAN PAPERS**

Malcolm McMillan was a faculty member in the Auburn University History Department from 1948 through 1978, chairing the department for the last fourteen of those years. He oversaw the establishment of the department’s doctoral program and created a large body of scholarship regarding Alabama and southern history. He was active in the Southern Historical Association and served from 1968-1976 as the editor of *The Alabama Review*.

Deposited in the Archives in 1990, the McMillan Papers document his entire professional career at AU, including his scholarly research, his teaching, and the issues he faced as the

\(^8\) Ibid.
head of the History Department. The papers also contain a considerable amount of personal material relating to McMillan’s financial, family, and legal concerns. The research materials, comprising a vast majority of the papers, include extensive files of newspaper clippings arranged by topic, note cards, and hand-annotated published works referenced by McMillan. Most of his research materials concern Alabama, the Civil War, and southern history, topics important to the collecting policies of the university archives. There are also a large number of photographs relevant to McMillan’s research interests.

Given McMillan’s prolific scholarship, and his role in building the history program at Auburn University, it is not surprising that the archives was eager to acquire his papers. It is less certain how, once through the archives’ door, the papers were valued and materials were selected for permanent retention. Processing and transfer documents in the AU accession file for the McMillan Papers indicate that fifty-three records boxes were received from McMillan’s estate in February 1990. Given that the McMillan Papers are currently housed in fifty-three records boxes, it is safe to assume that the processing archivist disposed of nothing. The twenty-five large note card boxes received from the McMillan estate appear to have been directly transferred into ninety-seven archival note card boxes. With the exception of re-housing some of the materials into archival storage containers, the McMillan Papers were minimally processed.

The initial appraisal apparently concluded that the original order of the papers was sufficient to serve as its organizational framework. For example, proofs, annotated typescripts, and drafts of McMillan’s most popular book, The Land Called Alabama, are distributed non-consecutively among sixteen of the fifty-three boxes. These same boxes also contain files of personal correspondence, lecture notes, newspaper clippings, conference programs, chapters from other books, and even an early draft of McMillan’s will. Given the overall disorganization of the arrangement, the order that exists appears to have happened by chance. From what appears to have been a literal interpretation of the archival concern for maintaining original order, the McMillan Papers are stored in their “original disorder.”
Box-level descriptions with phrases such as “research notes and some personal papers,” “news clippings and personal papers,” and “personal papers and some clippings” attest to the haphazard arrangement and description. Despite the problem with arrangement and the lack of any series organization, the material housed in the fifty-three records boxes is described at the folder level, making reference and retrieval possible. However, many folder descriptions use vague phrases such as “miscellaneous materials,” “newspaper clippings,” and “research notes,” offering few clues to the researcher as to the nature of their content.

**Initial Reorganization**

Deciding to engage in a reappraisal project begins with an evaluation of costs and benefits. Many archivists are cautious about such enterprises because of the time and effort they perceive them to take. While it is true that reappraisal cannot be done without allotting some staff time and resources, the reality is that it is a *longue durée* process, and not as intensive as is often perceived. As Mark Greene noted in a recent address, slight alterations in certain workflows can make incorporating reappraisal not only seamless, but quite beneficial to the overall completion of many archival goals. It is also just as pertinent to ask what the cost will be of not incorporating some form of reappraisal into the workflows of any archives—maintaining collections like that of Malcolm McMillan that are minimally accessible.

An initial reorganization of the finding aid, as the first step in a reappraisal process, amounts to a “virtual reappraisal.” It reorganizes the finding aid by fitting the dispersed papers together into an intellectual framework. In the case of faculty papers, the framework of functional analysis works far better than traditional personal-manuscript arrangement methods. The reorganization calls for establishing series and sub-series based upon the functional categories outlined by the RDA, with additional series for those items falling outside of the scope of the RDA. Items that neither document the institution nor complement the manuscript side of the papers

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could be recommended for future evaluation and possible de-accessioning. By treating finding aids this way, the entanglements of physical reprocessing and the political dilemmas that come with de-accessioning are left until usage is clearly determined under the new regimen.

**Functional Analysis and Varsity Letters**

As theorists such as F. Gerald Ham have criticized past approaches which have led to collections of limited scope with poor reflections of their intended subjects, many in the field have turned toward emerging methodologies such as macro-appraisal, functional analysis, and the Minnesota Method. The development of functional analysis as a tool for securing, analyzing, and valuing the records and papers produced by an institution has transformed the practice of institutional records appraisal. This transformation is manifest in the shift from a focus on the informational and evidential value of records to the valuation of the ability of records to document the functions of the institution. The archival community has largely accepted functional analysis as expressed by Helen Samuels in *Varsity Letters*, and incorporated it into the appraisal processes at university archives.

Functional analysis methodology developed out of dissatisfaction with institutional records collected using traditional appraisal techniques. Rather than examining specific sets of records or specific locations in the institutional hierarchy to determine suitability for permanent retention, functional analysis shifts the appraisal focus toward a comprehensive understanding of the institution and its core functions. Institutional functional analysis as developed by Terry Cook and Samuels involves the thorough analysis of an institution—

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for instance, Auburn University—before any records-selection decisions are made.\textsuperscript{12} This analysis begins with a study of the institution’s mission statement, historical evolution, organization, and goals. Once a profile of the institution is generated, the core functions that define the institution and the types of records emerge. The institution is thus defined by its core functions rather than by its organizational structure. A focus on the functions that define the institution, rather than on the offices that produce records, allows for the selection of records according to the context in which they were created rather than by their content.\textsuperscript{13}

Samuels argues that official administrative records “should not be considered a full and adequate record of the institution.”\textsuperscript{14} Instead of thinking of functional analysis in the traditional sense (synonymous with a structural analysis), in which the archivist focuses on an institutional office within the hierarchy and determines its function, Samuels advocates that archivists understand what the institution does rather than who does what. With such an intellectual foundation, the records selector is armed with the “knowledge of what is to be documented and the problems of gathering the desired documentation,” and is ready to make informed selection decisions.\textsuperscript{15}

Samuels addresses the broad range of activities occurring in a modern academic institution and distills them into seven general functions typically applicable to all universities: confer credentials, convey knowledge, foster socialization, conduct research, sustain the institution, provide public service, and promote culture.\textsuperscript{16} Adequate documentation of the institution requires official and non-official materials, both of which


\textsuperscript{13} Samuels, \textit{Varsity Letters}, 1.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 6.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 1.
should be “considered part of a common pool of potential documentation.” For some functions, official documentation exists in an overabundance and the archivist must select the most valuable materials. For others, official documentation may be insufficient and the archivist must turn to the papers of individuals to achieve a proper documentation. Samuels considers the papers of faculty members, including lecture notes and course handouts, as valuable documentation, worthy of solicitation. Since the publication of *Varsity Letters*, archivists and records managers alike have refined their evaluations of the importance of faculty papers. For example, Fournier’s 1992 article on faculty papers echoes Samuels’s assertion by noting that faculty papers are important sources for the documentation of the university’s teaching, research, community service, and internal maintenance functions.

Laver’s survey on the collection of faculty papers at repositories in ARL libraries found that though faculty papers are common to most university archives, only twenty-two publications dating back to 1936 mention them as an aspect of archival collecting. These publications, while discussing the collecting of faculty papers and the potential value they could have for use by researchers, rarely addressed the issue of appraisal and selection. A 1983 article by Frederick Honhart in *College and Research Libraries* was the first to propose selection criteria for faculty papers. His three main criteria were: scholarly reputation, record of service to the university, and role in the community. Finding these three criteria still insufficient in making informed selection decisions, a 2002 article in *The American Archivist* by Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Weideman discussed the application of modern appraisal theory and practice in the selection and appraisal of faculty papers.

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17 Ibid., 25.
18 Ibid., 65.
19 Fournier, “‘For They Would Gladly Learn,’” 59.
20 Laver, “In a Class by Themselves,” 160.
faculty papers. Their adaptation of the Minnesota Method, which includes functional analysis as part of its process, to the appraisal of faculty papers at Yale University provides an example of how selection criteria can be refined so that archivists can set appraisal standards and select the most valuable material. The authors discovered that in the past there were no real governing principles behind which faculty papers had been accepted or sought. The authors maintain that their application of the Minnesota Method “allows archivists to prioritize records creators and to determine different levels of appropriate documentation that correspond to the priorities. This six-step process incorporates documentation strategy, collecting policies, macro-appraisal, and functional analysis to form a “structural outline or skeleton” to which repositories can flesh out a method to suit their needs. The Yale policy prioritizes faculty by the functions in which they are prominent and then determines the level of documentation required. It has been successful in both prioritizing which faculty to solicit for papers and in limiting the materials accepted for processing to documents with specific faculty functions. In the case of the reappraisal of the McMillan Papers, initial solicitation and processing have already occurred, and the papers go far beyond the collecting boundaries set by the Yale team. Still, the emphasis on functions in both Varsity Letters and in the Yale policy can help inform a reappraisal and reorganization of the McMillan Papers.

Reappraisal of Collections

Reappraisal is an issue in archival collection management well represented in the professional literature. The debate over the usefulness versus the dangers of reappraisal was ignited when Leonard Rapport championed it in 1981, and Karen Benedict followed with a scathing critique a few years later.  

22 Hyry, Kaplan, and Weideman, “Though this be madness,” 57.

23 Ibid., 60.

Because of either faulty original appraisal judgments or changes in modern appraisal standards, repositories hold records that even the most vocal opponents of reappraisal admit may be “records of dubious value.” The debate rages on, however, over the need for shelf space and the possible consequences of de-accessioning materials to create it. Those issues, however, ignore the main points Rapport laid out in the beginning: use and engagement.

In his discussion of the usability of archival collections, Rapport challenged the very idea of permanence. Archives, he said, need to be much more fluid and dynamic. While Benedict countered that a belief in the permanent security of their papers is what brings donors in and gives them confidence to deposit their records, Rapport and others argue that some records simply outlive their usefulness. Allowing an archives to serve as a mere safe-deposit box for whatever a donor considers valuable puts the archives at a disadvantage. It serves researchers poorly, and weakens rather than strengthens the repository as a whole. Rapport felt that by remaining engaged with the entirety of the holdings, keeping them focused and relevant, and allowing them to be fluid, serves everyone better. It was not, as opponents suggested, a callous and desperate search for more space. That misunderstanding has developed out of a failure to consider separately reappraisal and de-accessioning. The former may lead to the latter, but they are not, as Greene noted, one and the same. Reappraisal, fundamentally, is a professional reengagement with archival holdings, regardless of whether or not any materials are de-accessioned.

For the purposes of the McMillan Papers, the debate about reappraisal and de-accessioning is not crucial. Rather, what is important is where Rapport and Benedict actually agree. Both subscribe to Benedict’s notion that if a collection’s value is questioned because of a lack of use, it may not be a problem

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25 Benedict, “Invitation to a Bonfire,” 44.
26 Rapport, “No Grandfather Clause,” 147.
27 Ibid., 148.
28 Ibid., 150.
with the records themselves, but with its access and reference. If a manuscript collection is poorly arranged or described, and neither researchers nor reference archivists can make sense of it or easily access its materials, its use will suffer. She therefore suggested that revisiting the arrangement and description should be the first step in comprehensive reappraisal. Only after giving a restructured manuscript collection enough time to prove its usability (Rapport suggests a full generation) can we more accurately valuate it, and begin to consider de-accessioning. Whether reappraisal is undertaken for custodial or reference reasons, Sheila Powell notes that “reappraisal is, in the first instance, an appraisal issue” and that “reappraisal should take the form of a new appraisal, using knowledge gained since the original appraisal, and using criteria based on sound appraisal theory.” By using the sub-functions of the Alabama RDA as a guide, it was possible to reappraise the McMillan Papers to retain the informational value while considerably improving the focus for the user.

In her article on the collection of personal papers, Mary Lynn McCree argues that the archivist’s “primary responsibility is to create a focused body of materials that informs the scholar.” Since the McMillan Papers were donated to the Auburn Archives in 1990, only seven written requests have been made to use the materials in the collection. Six of those requests were related to the research McMillan had conducted for his speeches and publications on Alabama industrialist Daniel Pratt. The remaining request was for a transcript of a Civil War diary. Given that the materials requested from the McMillan Papers happen to be those which are the most logically arranged


31 Ibid.

32 Rapport, “No Grandfather Clause,” 149.


and described, the analysis of its use lends some credence to Benedict’s statement that “the lack of use by researchers may be due to poor finding aids or a lack of knowledge of the records.”

Neither the finding aid nor the arrangement facilitates access to the contents. The problems with the McMillan Papers, and others like it, directly impact their usability and the cost to the repository for storage and reference.

**Alabama’s Records Disposition Authority and Functional Analysis**

Functional analysis plays an important role in the RDA for public universities in Alabama. Much like the methodologies described in *Varsity Letters* and the Minnesota Method, an analysis of institutional functions forms the foundation of the Alabama RDA. Alabama law requires public officials to create and maintain records that document the business of their offices. In order to impose consistency in records maintenance across public institutions of higher education, the State Records Commission of Alabama in 1995 drafted *Public Universities of Alabama: Functional Analysis & Records Disposition Authority*. This RDA, issued by the State Records Commission under the authority granted by the Code of Alabama, attempts to apply institutional functional-analysis principles to the records-disposition activities of public universities in the state. As an administrative directive, it establishes the records-management obligations of the fourteen public universities of Alabama and advocates documentation of them along functional lines. By specifying both records and functions to be documented, the RDA serves as something of a bridge between structural analysis and *Varsity Letters*.

The authors of this RDA identify only one function of a public university in Alabama: “to provide education to its clients.” It is the identified “sub-functions” in the Alabama RDA which appear to coincide with the functions identified in *Varsity Letters* and which provide a template for appraisal of faculty papers. The seven RDA sub-functions in which the

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public universities of Alabama may engage to some degree are admitting/expelling students, conveying knowledge, advising and assisting students, enforcing laws, evaluating performance and conferring credentials, conducting research, and administering internal operations. Differences between Samuels’s seven functions and the seven sub-functions in the Alabama RDA occur in several areas, but they are minimal. Where Samuels incorporates the admission and advising of students into the conferring-credentials function, the Alabama Records Commission chose to address these activities separately. The Alabama RDA does not specifically address fostering socialization as a function, but the elements described by Samuels such as housing and student activities are reflected in the RDA’s advising and assisting sub-function. The sub-functions listed in the RDA focus on function over structure and are initially identified and introduced in the RDA without any mention of the offices or departments from which documentation may originate. While the RDA is explicit in its retention and destruction recommendations for each series of institutional documentation identified, the university archivist has the authority to select for permanent retention those records that have otherwise exceeded their recommended retention periods.

Because the RDA addresses only the official documentary universe of the institution and the disposition of institutional records, the archivist at an Alabama public university is neither obliged nor encouraged by the RDA to pursue documentation that would be considered the property of individuals. This, however, can lead to significant gaps in the adequacy of the documentation. For example, the RDA’s convey-knowledge section mandates for permanent retention only published course schedules, university catalogs/bulletins, and new course proposals. *Varsity Letters*, in providing a much richer exploration of the documentation available, lists non-official documentation such as faculty-committee reports, samples of students’ work, instructor records, exam copies, and lecture notes as rich sources of documentation. The university archivist may solicit these materials, common to faculty papers, through gift and deposit agreements. Under the function of administering

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37 Samuels, *Varsity Letters*, 64-72.
internal operations, the RDA requires permanent retention for finalized reports and publications documenting the management of finances, human resources, properties, and facilities. It also requires permanent retention of Board of Trustees minutes, high-level administrators’ files, audit and accreditation records, and the minutes of university-wide committees. The eleven documentation streams identified in this section appear to capture a comprehensive snapshot of university governance. Papers from those faculty involved in university governance may still give additional context to official documentation. Less comprehensive are the records-retention recommendations for documenting research. Only university research policies and the final reports and publications generated by grant-funded research are mandated for permanent retention. Because a large proportion of faculty research falls outside of these two streams, a comprehensive documentation of university research must rely on personal papers.

**Reappraisal Using Sub-functions Identified in the RDA**

In his roles as teacher, scholar, and department head, Malcolm McMillan created documents that conform to three of the seven sub-functions identified in the Alabama RDA for public universities: conveying knowledge, conducting research, and administering internal operations. Though teaching is stated in the RDA to be the “primary activity” of the conveying-knowledge sub-function, the university records recommended for permanent retention do little to document adequately this activity. For documenting the sub-function of conveying knowledge, the RDA recommends that university course schedules, annual bulletins containing course and curriculum records, and records from the library and archives be retained. Samuels argues that the general curriculum serves as only a guide to faculty, and capturing what was taught can be a difficult task. Lecture notes and course handouts, to Samuels, “provide important detail and should be solicited along with other

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38 Alabama State Records Commission, “Public Universities of Alabama,” 2-1.

39 Ibid. 2-4.

40 Ibid. 1-5.
The McMillan Papers include materials used in the classroom, including lecture notes, presentations, visual aids, and student work. McMillan’s record of scholarly research is well documented through the publication drafts, research notes, and correspondence found in his papers. The RDA, not concerned with faculty papers, has a narrow focus in documenting the function of conducting research at the university. Only research activities that have been funded by grant money are subject to RDA documentation requirements. For grant-funded research, the RDA recommends for permanent retention any final reports and publications generated which document procedures, steps taken, and research results. Samuels, discussing the appraisal of faculty papers, notes that the record of the research process can be voluminous and may contain article reprints, photocopies of manuscripts, note cards, photographs, and objects of every variety. She argues that in making retention decisions, the archivist must consider the potential reuse of the data by other scholars. Though the RDA does not address faculty papers, McMillan’s record of scholarly research is a rich documentation of non-grant-funded research at AU and complements the goal of documenting the institution.

The administration of internal operations, as defined in the RDA, includes “office management duties such as communicating and corresponding” and “managing human resources.” Though the RDA does include required reporting by departments to the Board of Trustees in the documentation of sustaining the institution, Samuels recommends also collecting the records of senior officers, including department heads. McMillan, as department head, documented many activities that fall under the broad rubric of sustaining the institution. The McMillan Papers contain significant material documenting his governance of the history department, including finances, personnel, and the creation of the doctoral program in history.

41 Samuels, Varsity Letters, 65.


43 Samuels, Varsity Letters, 124.

an important milestone for the department. The records are rife with privacy issues, including tenure-review papers for History Department faculty and deliberations made during hiring and firing decisions. Reappraisal decisions must consider legal issues surrounding privacy ahead of concern for documenting the university. Though some of the material is already marked as “sealed for privacy,” a more thorough reappraisal for selection would result in the removal of a significant portion of the remaining personnel-management files among the papers. While a large proportion of the McMillan Papers can be appraised and organized along institutional functional lines, there are materials within them that fall outside of the concerns of documenting Auburn University. For appraisal of these documents, collecting policies are more relevant than functional categories. In his work as the editor of the *Alabama Review* and in his service to professional historical associations, McMillan created papers corresponding to AU Archives collection policies on Alabama history. They appear to be worthy of retention in a series not related to institutional functions. Additional materials to be arranged in a non-institutional-related series include family genealogical papers, personal correspondence, and documentation on McMillan’s business, financial, family, and legal activities.

By conducting a reappraisal for arrangement informed by the institutional functional analysis categories in the RDA, the archivist can set in motion a new, more logical organization. The expansive McMillan Papers divides into five series: Teaching Activities, Research Activities, Administrative Activities, *Alabama Review* Editorship, and Personal Papers. Though the first three series fall under the activities he undertook as an AU faculty member and could conceivably be combined, each corresponds to a different functional area of the university. The size of the manuscript collection and the range of McMillan’s research and teaching activities necessitate that research papers and teaching activities fall into series by themselves. Materials for the first series, Teaching Activities, can be appraised according to their value in documenting the function of conveying knowledge. Course notes, visual aids, and any other materials used in the classroom are worthy of consideration in enriching the minimums set forth in the RDA. Because of the current lack of series organization and the limited utility of box
titles, the full range of McMillan’s research activities is difficult to ascertain. The Research Activities series, with topical sub-series, facilitates access by archives users and documents the function of conducting research. Research files in the McMillan Papers contain tremendous amounts of newspaper clippings and published articles. These folders are not merely labeled by broad topic, but specifically address particular events, industries, people, and places within the broad categories of Alabama history, Civil War history, and southern history. The main problem with the research files is that there is almost no discernible order to them. Folders on similar topics are scattered throughout the boxes. For example, files containing research on Alabama governors can be found in fifteen of the fifty-three records boxes. Birmingham-related research files are scattered across twelve boxes. A reappraisal along the lines of documenting research activities will allow for sub-series arrangement within this area and could lead to the imposition of an intellectual reorganization within a new electronic finding aid. Physically rearranging the research materials, while helpful in terms of making reference and retrieval more efficient, may not be worth the trouble if a reappraisal enables archivists virtually to reorder the papers through a series of electronic finding aids. These finding aids will present to the archives user cohesive and logically arranged records even though the physical arrangement remains as it was.

Of the final three series, Administrative Activities, Professional Outreach, and Personal Papers, only the first aligns with a university functional area. Folders within the McMillan Papers referring to his administrative activities account for only about 2 percent of the folders listed. These folders, containing correspondence between McMillan and university administrators, documentation of departmental meetings and deliberations, and the general management of department activities, help to highlight the evolution of the department. During the initial appraisal, folders containing private information were physically moved to a separate box and those containing accessible administrative documentation were left in their original locations. The usability of the administrative series would be greatly enhanced by an imposed intellectual reorganization.
The proposed series locations of materials common to the McMillan Papers will be:

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Institutional Related</strong></th>
<th><strong>Research Activities Series</strong></th>
<th><strong>Administrative Activities Series</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching Activities Series</strong></td>
<td>Class lecture notes</td>
<td>Article and book manuscripts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visual aids</td>
<td>Research notes</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Student output</td>
<td>Scholarly correspondence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Course notes and handouts</td>
<td>Photographs from research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correspondence w/ students</td>
<td>Research photocopies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade books</td>
<td>Newspaper clippings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>McMillan Vita</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research expense sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Research travel forms</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Non-Institutional Related</strong></th>
<th><strong>Personal Series</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Outreach Series</strong></td>
<td>Alabama Review</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Alabama Historical Commission</strong></td>
<td>Personal correspondence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
One last consideration is how to restructure the great volume of photographs in the papers. The folder descriptions for photographs are sufficiently detailed, and describe either personal or research photos. This division between personal and research photos can, in the proposed reorganization, correspond to sub-series divisions within the research and personal papers series. As the vast majority of photographs concern Birmingham, these photographs could be organized into a research sub-series. The remaining photographs, including personal vacation and family images, can be placed in a personal sub-series and may be reevaluated later for possible de-accessioning.

The entire restructuring process for imposing order on these papers can initially be done through the finding aid. Great strides in the development of Encoded Archival Description (EAD) open numerous avenues for increasing the usability of individual manuscripts. Merely digitizing the finding aid increases its accessibility. Providing a controlled vocabulary brings an entire world of online researchers into contact with the holdings. Moreover, if university and non-university records are both digitized and put in EAD format (a project currently underway in the AU archives), they can more easily link together.

Imposing the RDA order and providing more concise series and sub-series containment sets is vital to EAD processing of faculty papers like McMillan’s. At a time when many institutions are moving toward digitization and the use of EAD, reappraising faculty papers makes perfect sense. As well, applying the RDA guidelines for initial levels of containment eliminates much of the guesswork about aligning series and sub-series.

The papers are divided into those records that fall under institutional and non-institutional related series. The RDA categories then provide subsequent containment levels for institutional-related records, and traditional manuscript headings provide the rest. For instance, it transforms the original finding aid, as seen in Table 2, without physically altering the papers at all.
### Table 2

**Original finding aid: (no series information)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 21</th>
<th>Alabama Civil War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abernethy, Thomas P. — The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819, Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hollifield Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21</td>
<td>Term Papers in the History of the Old South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papers Read and Books Reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal Letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McMillan Family Tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chapter II—“Alabama’s First Inhabitants” (from <em>The Land Called Alabama</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pratt, Daniel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summer Appointment, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McMillan’s Last Will and Testament—One of Many, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Photocopies of Various Newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22</td>
<td>Selma Ordnance—Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class Notes—Recent European History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pidhainy, Oleh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Alabama Review</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Brochure on Birmingham, 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20th Street—Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Birmingham Illustrated”—1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rea, Dr. Robert R.—Chairman of Graduate Studies in History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Chamber of Commerce—Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Park Pictures—Birmingham</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Textbooks I Was Writing with Tyree Johnson</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Newly proposed finding aid:**

**Institutional Series**

**Series 1: Administrative Activities**

*Sub-series 1: Program Management*

| Box 21 | Doctoral Program |
# Provenance 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Series 2: Teaching Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Class Notes—Recent European History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Summer Appointment, 1968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Term Papers in the History of the Old South</td>
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</tbody>
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<tr>
<th>Series 3: Research Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-series 1: Alabama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Alabama Civil War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Chapter II—“Alabama’s First Inhabitants” (from <em>The Land Called Alabama</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Notes on Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Selma Ordnance—Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 State Chamber of Commerce—Textiles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Textbooks I Was Writing with Tyree Johnson</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-series 2: The South</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Abernethy, Thomas P.—The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819, Bibliography</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sub-series 3: Daniel Pratt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Pratt, Daniel</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-series 4: Unidentified Research Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Papers Read and Books Reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 Photocopies of Various Newspapers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-series 5: Photographs and Images</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 20th Street—Birmingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 “Birmingham Illustrated”—1913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Brochure on Birmingham, 1947</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Institutional Series</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Series 4: Professional Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-series 1: Alabama Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22 Alabama Review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sub-series 2: Alabama Historical Commission</th>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Series 5: Personal Papers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 21 McMillan Family Tree</td>
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</table>
Such a reorganization is the perfect marriage of technical advancement and employment of more stringent guidelines. It will, for the McMillan Papers and any other sets of similar faculty papers to which it is applied, be a huge step forward for both streamlining manuscript collections and documenting the university.

**CONCLUSION**

Institutional functional analysis, though oriented toward the official records of the institution, can be useful when appraising most faculty papers. While this reappraisal of faculty papers used functional analysis as expressed in the Alabama RDA, university functions in *Varsity Letters* are suitable for most institutions and can serve as a guide for similar repositories appraising or reappraising faculty papers. Given the relatively narrow range of official AU documents required by the RDA for permanent retention, McMillan’s personal papers fill in documentation gaps, especially in the areas of conveying knowledge and conducting research. All saved correspondence relating to use of the papers points to its informational value to historical researchers. The reappraisal of the McMillan Papers may not change the kinds of users who wish to access the materials, but it may increase their numbers and their ability to make use of the records more efficiently.

It is clear from even the most cursory glance at the McMillan material that much of it could be considered for de-accession. If Rapport’s projections hold, nearly 90 percent of any given collection is not worth enduring retention. Bulk reduction may be in the McMillan Papers’ future. However, the initial goal for this article and project was not to reduce its size but to improve arrangement and thereby increase access, use, and reference of the material.

While the RDA specifically does not apply to faculty papers, we believe it is possible, and preferable, to consider the functions of the university when appraising faculty papers.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Box 21</th>
<th>Hollifield Fund</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box 21</td>
<td>McMillan’s Last Will and Testament—One of Many, 1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 22</td>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box 21</td>
<td>Personal Letters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using functional categories as part of the appraisal framework will allow for a greater degree of uniformity when appraising, selecting, and processing future acquisitions of faculty papers. The archivist must also take into account archival collection policies, areas identified as under-documented, and political implications of the appraisal decision. As faculty papers are frequently collected by archives, they should be addressed in archival collection policies. Serving as an explanation to potential future donors of what areas within faculty papers are most valued by the archives, a collection policy would identify the selection criteria that will be applied to all acquired collections.

Relying too heavily on institutional functional analysis does not inform the reappraising archivist about how to approach the parts of the records unrelated to institutional functions. Making selection decisions only on the criteria of how well the material documents institutional functions ignores the collecting policies of the archives and may lead to too narrow a selection focus. With the McMillan reappraisal, the collecting policies for the AU Archives played a role in the decision to add a non-institutional series. Were AU faced with a crisis in available shelving space, prioritizing the research materials by topic would be the only way to reduce bulk. This activity may best be accomplished by soliciting the participation of those to whom the subject matter in the papers is most relevant. For the McMillan Papers, a reappraisal informed by a consideration of both the institutional functional categories identified in the RDA and the collecting policies of the AU Archives works best. A reduction in the size of the manuscript collection will be secondary to the objective of creating a series of useful finding aids. Even without physically reordering the papers, which would be helpful but an overly large use of limited processing resources, presenting the contents of the holdings in an EAD-formatted electronic document, with a controlled vocabulary and organized by the series proposed will improve accessibility and establish a framework for future accessions of faculty papers.

Gregory Schmidt is the Special Collections and Preservation Librarian for Auburn University Libraries. As curator of print
collections in the Department of Special Collections and Archives, Schmidt is responsible for collection development and preservation of library and archival collections. He holds an MLIS from the University of Alabama, and an MS and BS from Auburn University.

Michael Law is a doctoral candidate in the department of History at Auburn University, and worked two years as a graduate assistant in Auburn’s Archives and Special Collections.
Book Reviews


This book is short and economically written and organized, which is an accomplishment, considering the enormity of literature available on the subject of electronic records management. The actual body of the work is a mere 137 pages divided into eight well-partitioned chapters, while much of the remainder of the book (39 pages) is an exhaustive bibliography thoughtfully annotated by Dr. Elizabeth H. Dow. Many readers will find this annotated bibliography alone worth the purchase price.

But all who pick up this book should read the Preface and the very helpful Introduction, which contains the indispensable section “How I’ve Organized This Book” (page xiii), which acts much like a “how-to-use-this-book” section at the beginning of a reference work. In this section Dow reveals that the organizational scheme of the book moves from the abstract to the practical. Chapters 1 through 4 deal with foundational knowledge and terminology while chapters 5 through 8 get down to brass tacks.

*PROVENANCE*, vol. XXVII, 2009
An understanding educator—a member of the faculty at Louisiana State University’s School of Library and Information Science—Dow advises readers to attack the book’s contents in whatever manner works best for them: “If you learn better by moving from the practical to the abstract, I suggest you quickly scan chapters 1 through 4 and then dive into chapters 5 through 8” (page xiii). Such advice was welcome to this reader, and I imagine it will be appreciated by the “lone arranger” for whom this book is intended.

I found the tone of this book refreshing—it was informal and sometimes even colloquial, and Dow unabashedly uses the personal pronoun “I” throughout, which is a nice change from the classic dispassionate, disembodied academic narration or the tedious bureaucratese of white papers, standards, or government documents. Likewise, Dow not only deals with the book’s subjects with candor, she is also candid with the reader about what her book is—and is not. In the appropriately brief Preface, she sets the tone and admits the limited scope of the work: “I do not want to talk down to you; I don’t want to talk over your head; I don’t want to overwhelm you with information and concepts. Consequently I have weighed very carefully what I include and what I leave out. I do not pretend to tell you everything you need to know—only what you need to know to get started” (page viii).

That objective is both admirable and necessary. The field of study that supports the archival management of electronic records has needed a book like this for some time, and it will continue to need books like this if the speed of the field’s development over the last few years is any indication. (Dow is aware of this as well. Again, from the Preface: “In time, some of [the resources I’ve provided] will go out of date. Others will not.” (page viii)) Another feature of this book that I appreciated was that the author acknowledges but does not get bogged down in the substantive but relatively minor disagreements that occur in the scholarly literature. In addition, she often boils down a concept into plain English devoid of jargon. For instance, at the beginning of Chapter 2, she writes: “In other words, digital documents aren’t real documents” (page 21). As she freely admits, simplicity of expression in this field can lead to imprecision in understanding, but Dow’s words are calibrated and considered in such a way that they often fall within an archival educator’s tolerances. But this book isn’t intended for academics (though they would do well to
read it), but rather for the “lone arranger” and/or the electronic records neophyte. In addressing that audience and providing an introduction to the subject, I feel this book succeeds admirably. It will stay by my desk for handy reference and as a resource for further investigation.

Luke Meagher
Wofford College


Archivists and other information professionals usually depend on their own personal interpretation of matters at hand when making decisions regarding the acquisition and use of collections. Barring an emergency hire made necessary by some imminent or actual litigation involving their own institution, most archivists do not have recourse to legal counsel. They must make spot decisions based on amateur opinion. Considering the preponderance of lay interpretation in the disposition of such matters, one would think that legal research materials aimed specifically at archivists would be more common. Unfortunately, Menzi L. Behrnd-Klodt’s offering is one of just a few significant general works in this field since the publication of Gary and Trudy Peterson’s Archives & Manuscripts: Law, a 1985 entry in the old SAA basic manual series, which it both updates and supplants. The information presented here is useful, but a more thoughtful commentary on archivists’ daily activities and their ramifications is wanted.

Navigating Legal Issues in Archives consists of four primary sections: “The ‘Legal’ Framework,” “Acquisition and Ownership Legal Issues,” “Access and Administration Issues,” and “Copyright and Intellectual Property Law and Considerations: Their Effects on Archival Access and Use.” The “Access and Administration” section is the largest, at ten chapters and almost one hundred pages. However, the author’s removal of much substantive discussion to the endnotes means that some of the chapters within these four sections appear to be quite brief. Chapters 4 and 10, dealing respectively with transferring of ownership of archives and administering access to collections, are
among the most extensive portions of the book. Other chapters are extremely abbreviated. For example, the treatment of public records is limited to a discussion of two federal laws and neglects the rich, infuriating, and often-contradictory array of records laws passed by individual states, and ignores the complexities of administering access to public records in government archives and other institutions with those holdings.

*Navigating Legal Issues in Archives* functions best as an introduction to a wide array of legal issues, legislation, and cases. The profusion of short, easily digested chapters suits this approach. On the whole, the book provides a comprehensive overview of many topics germane to the archival enterprise. But the author mostly draws attention to pertinent legal issues without offering substantial practical advice on managing the risks involved. With the exception of the section on acquisition and ownership of records, there is very little constructive thinking regarding the administrative regimes made necessary by the laws under discussion. Well-known problems, such as the unclear relation to archival holdings of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or any of the numerous state or federal records laws conceived with current records in mind, are given thorough factual treatments. However, definitive pronouncements or other value-added inclusions are mostly absent. Familiar sticky questions are referred to your lawyer (a chapter on selecting and working with legal counsel is included).

So what we are left with is a solid factual introduction to laws and cases relevant to archivists. *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives* is a valuable one-stop reference for professionals with limited time or without access to more substantial legal information. It provides up-to-date information relevant to all archivists. But it is a shame that the author’s thorough knowledge of and experience operating in the legal environment of archives could not have been communicated to the reader in a more imaginative way. For instance, it would be interesting to see more documentation of actual cases wherein archivists found themselves in court as a result of conflicts with the various laws discussed here. The section on replevin actions contains a good deal of actual case law; it would be interesting to see a similar approach in other chapters. Has an archivist ever been taken to court for accidentally revealing someone’s Social Security number? Has an archivist ever been prosecuted for providing
access to a dead person’s medical records, or an inactive student’s test scores? The discussion of risk management, as such, is limited to a discussion of protecting physical materials. In real life many archivists (for better or worse) conduct an ad hoc risk management regime, usually without recourse to counsel. Reliance on superstition and questionable reasoning is an ongoing problem in American archives, and it would have been interesting and useful to consider when archivists are taking real risks, and when they are dealing with legal bogeymen.

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Cynthia Pease Miller provides an overview which allows archivists to understand the functions of the individual legislator within the governing process. This clearer understanding is what the successive chapters build on to provide insight into the tasks and philosophies that lead to successful management of a collection of legislative papers. Miller focuses on the management of federal congressional collections, but there is enough detail in her checklists, bibliographies, and appendices detailing workflow that this book could be successfully used as a resource in managing any political individual’s papers—for example, those of a mayor or city council member.

Miller covers familiar topics in collection management—access arrangements, deeds of gift, and donor relations, for example—but she shows how a reader’s thinking on these issues might need a little twist or a refresher to handle particular situations in managing congressional papers. The pages on appraisal decisions provide detailed lists of the types of papers to consider for retention, along with a quick checklist for appraisal decisions. Such aids would help the neophyte manager grapple successfully with the task of collection management. Appendix D, “Congressional Office Staff List,” lists individuals who should be approached to obtain files to make the collection as complete as possible. Appendix E gives good advice on the retention, review, and disposal of certain types of congressional files.
Common access restrictions are enumerated and clearly defined. A secondary theme, covered in Appendix A, “A Chronology of Advances in Managing Congressional Collections,” outlines the history of caring for congressional papers, tracing the subject until the present time, when it is a distinct specialization in archival practice.

One thorny problem unique to congressional records is the presence of classified files. Clear information is given for the receiving archivist on handling classified files, especially concerning who to contact for advice and proper procedure.

The bibliography serves most importantly as a checklist of the government documents that cover the best practices for retaining congressional records. Splitting the bibliography into two sections, first, background and statistical material, and second, selected archival literature, allows the reader to match sources more accurately with questions.

Unfortunately, not enough detail is given to the discussion of handling irradiated mail. Since October 2001, congressional mail has gone through an irradiation process to protect against bioterrorism threats. Miller advises that irradiated mail not be kept as part of a congressional collection, as it poses a safety risk to staff and researchers. However, the nature of the threat is not detailed. Singling out irradiation as a specific threat seems to contradict archival practice as gamma irradiation is suggested as an appropriate, though not necessarily preferred, measure to deal with pest and mold infestations. A quick search through newspaper databases by the reviewer revealed that congressional mail has been subjected to electron irradiation (e-irradiation). Does the danger to staff and researchers lie in differences between these two types of irradiation, e-irradiation and gamma irradiation? Perhaps, the danger lies in the level of irradiation used on congressional mail. Is it significantly higher than the irradiation levels used to control mold and pests? Readers need to understand the rationale for the warning about irradiated mail.

The book’s strength lies in adequately conveying the complexity and size of workload taken on when a repository commits to caring for a congressional collection. It is easy to imagine being bowled over by the prestige and glamour inherent in acquiring congressional papers. Miller hammers home the magnitude of the commitment in the sections “Calculating Costs,” “Space, Personnel and Budgets,” “Planning for Transfer,” and
“Reference Services and Outreach.” Should concern for the well-being of the collection and professional pride fail to temper out-of-control enthusiasm, Miller provides a quick calculation of the bottom line: typical donations range from 1800 to 2500 linear feet and as of 2007 costs for adequate processing were estimated at $150 to $350 per linear foot. There’s nothing like a hefty bottom line to pull one up short and force one to give serious thought to the complexities and responsibilities inherent in a project.

If ever presented with the opportunity, the archivist should suggest Miller’s book as required reading to administrators so they will understand the commitment of time, resources, and money necessary upon accepting such a collection. Future managers will enjoy having a clear rubric against which to measure their own project.

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David B. Gracy II Award
A $200 prize is 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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Use of terms which have special meaning for archivists, manuscripts curators, and records managers should conform to the definitions in Richard Pearce-Moses, ed., A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscripts Curators, and Records Managers (Chicago: SAA, 2005). Copies of this glossary may be purchased from the Society of American Archivists, 17 North State Street, Suite 1425, Chicago, IL 60602-3315; <www.archivists.org>.
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