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A Gentle Approach To "Gentle Ren": Processing The Papers Of Former College President Renwick Jackson

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Known as the public honors college of Maryland, St. Mary's College of Maryland (SMCM) did not acquire that prestigious designation until 1992.[1] In past years, SMCM experienced immense change as it transformed from a female seminary, to a junior college, and finally into a liberal arts university.[2] At the heart of this evolution was the institution's first male president, Dr. J. Renwick ("Ren," also known as "Gentle Ren"[3]) Jackson, who led the college from 1969 to 1982. Jackson's professional and personal papers, acquired in 2013 by the college's archivist, would ultimately serve as the perfect case study to test the theme of flexibility as stated in Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner's "More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections." Comprising approximately 12 linear feet and lacking any original order, a pure item-level or folder-level processing framework was deemed impossible given that the project had to be completed within a budgeted time of 160 hours. Working alongside the college's archivist, I decided that a combination of Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner's minimal processing and more detailed processing methods would be the best way to both finish the project within a short period of time and allow researchers to most easily use the collection.

Literature Review
Nearing its tenth anniversary, Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner's "More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections" remains a source of discussion among archival professionals. Though supporters of MPLP, better known

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[1] "About St. Mary's: Key Facts," St. Mary's College of Maryland, http://www.smcm.edu/about/key-facts.html.

[2] J. Frederick Fausz, *Monument School of the People: A Sesquicentennial History of St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1840-1990* (St. Mary's City: St. Mary's College of Maryland, 1990).

[3] Fausz, *Monument School of the People*, 117-118.

as "more product, less process," uphold the standard based on its capability to quickly reduce backlogs, critics note its tendency to produce less detailed finding aids, express concern regarding potential security and privacy issues, and worry about the impact on the professional image of archival workers.

Supporters of MPLP implementation cite a variety of reasons and offer practical examples of how it changes processing strategies. Donna McCrea and Christine Weideman both uphold minimal processing by praising practitioners' capability to quickly process collections, with the former noting that "within one year we moved a total of 464 linear feet of university records and manuscript materials from backlog to processed in 623 hours."[4] Barbara Austen records that MPLP allowed her to process 1,200 collections in approximately two years.[5]

Proponents of minimal processing also note its positive impact on researchers. As stated in their original text, Greene and Meissner emphasize focusing on users: "we need to articulate a new set of arrangement, preservation, and description guidelines that… assures arrangement of materials *adequate* to user needs…[and] that describes materials *sufficient* to promote use."[6] Stephanie H. Crowe and Karen Spilman's article serves as an example of this position, as their research not only verified that MPLP reduces backlogs, but also notes that 58.2% of respondents positively replied to a question concerning archivists' "ability to assist researchers with inquiries"[7] In another survey conducted by

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[4] Christine Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," *The American Archivist* 69, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2006): 278-279; Donna E. McCrea, "Getting More for Less: Testing a New Processing Model at the University of Montana," *The American Archivist* 69, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2006): 288.

[5] Barbara Austen, "Speed Reading in the Archives: Can Less Produce More?," http://www.common-place.org/vol-10/no-04/tales/.

[6] Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Pragmatically Revamping Traditional Processing Approaches to Deal with Late 20th-Century Collections," *The American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (Fall/Winter, 2005): 212-213.

[7] Stephanie H. Crowe and Karen Spilman, "MPLP @ 5: More Access, Less Backlog?," *Journal of Archival Organization* 8, no. 2 (2010): 131. In addition, 82.1% of respondents also agreed to the following question: "Do you believe that your increased ability to assist researchers has been a direct result of your repository's implementation of MPLP?"

Matt Gorzalski and Marcella Wiget, the authors reveal that 90% of survey respondents affirmed that "minimal description [has] been sufficient in locating records."[8] Greene and Meissner's 2013 letter to *Archivaria* highlights the benefits of using "more product, less process" (such as increased processing speed, "improved user outcomes, and better relations with donors and other stakeholders") along with supportive research articles.[9] Altogether, there exists solid evidence to utilize MPLP for processing large collections and backlogs.

Archivists also note drawbacks and concerns about MPLP, particularly its tendency to produce somewhat problematic finding aids. Though she praises MPLP, McCrea comments on "[the possibility] that with minimal processing we [archivists] will miss, and so fail to describe, a particularly important or unique component of a collection" as well as other issues such as possibly misplacing unmarked folders in boxes.[10] Christine Weideman lists weaknesses of MPLP, including the risk that some items are not properly processed, less accurate finding aids, and increased difficulty in answering researchers' questions.[11] Michael Strom, author of "Texas-Sized Progress: Applying Minimum-Standards Processing Guidelines to the Jim Wright Papers," echoes some of these concerns, including the commonly remarked problem that "portions of the finding aid lack the detail many traditional finding aids have…[and] the staff may retrieve more boxes and spend slightly more time on reference requests in the future."[12]

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[8] Matt Gorzalski and Marcella Wiget, "More Access, Less Backlog; How the Kansas Historical Society Got Its Groove Back," *Archival Issues* 33, no. 1 (2011): 13-14.

[9] Mark Greene and Dennis E. Meissner, "Letter to the Editor," *Archivaria*, 75 (2013): 2-3. More supporting articles appear in the following source: Greene, Meissner, Van Ness and Prom, "Forum," 412.

[10] McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 287; Gorzalski and Wiget, "More Access, Less Backlog," 19; Barbara Austen emphasizes similar issues in her blog post.

[11] Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," 280-283; Gorzalski and Wiget, "More Access, Less Backlog."

[12] Michael Strom, "Texas-Sized Progress: Applying Minimum-Standards Processing Guidelines to the Jim Wright Papers," 111; Carl Van Ness, "Much Ado About Paper Clips: 'More Product, Less Process' and the Modern Manuscript Repository," *The American Archivist* 73, no. 1 (Spring/Summer, 2010): 140. Gorzalski and Wiget, Weideman, Greene and Meissner, and Mark

Archivists articulate other problems with MPLP. Several express concerns about topics like duplicates remaining in place and that scantily-detailed finding aids will prove unable to attract researchers to an archive.[13] Aside from finding fault with Greene and Meissner's survey methodology, Carl Van Ness reminds readers that Christine Weideman quickly processed a small collection with the help of six workers—triple the personnel he would have ordered to work on a similar project—thus calling into question the validity of an early and notable supporter of Greene and Meissner.[14] Rachel Anchor also notes that "what studies like McCrea's have failed to demonstrate, as well as the true impact on the user, is cost savings." She further expresses a concern "about an over-reliance on series-level information…[and] that original order is often original disorder, necessitating physical arrangement at item-level in order to identify important information."[15]

Finally, archivists show some concern about MPLP's impact on the archival field itself. Robert Cox draws attention to the potential negative effect of minimal processing on job satisfaction.[16] A similar perspective was found in a survey response collected by Crowe and Spilman: "I think it's a good thing to get brief descriptions out there but at some point we're going to lose our professional status if we don't know what's in our collections."[17] In the same survey, Crowe and Spilman also recorded this comment:

> More collections will have a descriptive handle, but we'll know less about the content of the collections and

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Greene's "MPLP: It's Not Just for Processing Anymore" also note this consequence of employing minimal processing.

[13] Robert Cox, "Maximal Processing, or, Archivist on a Pale Horse," *Journal of Archival Organization* 8, no. 2 (2010): 138-142; McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 287-288; Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," 278, 281-283.

[14] Van Ness, "Much Ado About Paper Clips," 139.

[15] Rachel Anchor, "'More Product, Less Process': Method, Madness or Practice?," *Archives and Records: The Journal of the Archives and Records Association* 34, no. 2 (2013): 164.

[16] Cox, "Maximal Processing," 139, 141.

[17] Crowe and Spilman, "MPLP @ 5," 120-121; Meissner and Greene, "More Application While Less Appreciation: The Adopters and Antagonists of MPLP," 198, 211-212.

therefore the ways in which they may be useful to researchers. I predict that within the next ten years, the pendulum will swing back and there will be another overhaul of archival processing focused on detailed description, especially at the item level related to mass digitization.[18]

Finally, Greene and Meissner's "More Application while Less Appreciation: The Adopters and Antagonists of MPLP" highlights oft-remarked concerns such as security issues, including literal loss of material through theft, and that "MPLP…[wrongly focuses] on the hidden collections problem…that bad appraisal decisions represent the lion's share of the [backlog] problem."[19] The rather remarkable scholarly debate between Greene and Meissner, and their critics and supporters, has underlined the necessity of carefully considering when and where to employ minimal processing.[20]

Case Study: "Gentle Ren"

Arriving at the SMCM archives in April of 2013, the 11 boxes (approximately 12 linear feet) of Dr. Jackson's collection lacked any kind of organizational schema—emphasized by the discovery of confidential budget documents, newspaper clippings of college activities, and personal correspondence all within the same box.[21] Only a select few items were housed in protective casings, such as binders or manila folders, though the documents' subject headers allowed me to quickly identify the contents of each item. Given Jackson's importance in shaping SMCM into a

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[18] Ibid., 121.

[19] Meissner and Greene, "More Application While Less Appreciation," 202-209, 215. Various debates in *The American Archivist* between Greene, Meissner, and their critics emphasize this point well.

[20] Gorzalski and Wiget, "More Access, Less Backlog," 8; Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," 281.

[21] Other document types include photographs of various sizes; personal notes largely lacking identifying information; evaluations of professors; anti-administration protest materials such as notes, letters, and underground newspapers; legal documents, including court records; and school-sponsored publications such as advertising brochures, issues of *The Mulberry Tree*. For a more complete list, contact college archivist Kent Randell.

respected liberal arts college, the institution's archivist and I deemed it necessary to begin processing the collection at the item-level.

Requiring approximately three and a half months of time at 10 hours per week, I commenced the project with a thorough investigation of the collection's papers, which took about four weeks. Aside from gaining a greater understanding of the collection's contents, this provided the opportunity to note potential privacy violations and consider how to sort the documents into different series.[22] The bulk of my time, approximately eleven weeks, was dedicated to actually processing the collection. This process included sorting papers into the archive's standard pre-existing series; creating additional series based upon the collection contents, such as anti-administration protest material, photographs, and correspondence; re-foldering some documents in acid-free folders; and re-boxing the collection in archival containers. I organized the documents within series dedicated to Jackson alone based on their date of publication or creation due to a combination of time constraints, small collection size, and concern that any more detailed action (e.g., separating the materials into different subseries within each series) would result in a partially processed collection by the project's end date.[23] With the remaining time, I collaborated with the college archivist to create an online finding aid that included series and subseries level descriptions, along with folder lists. Only documents or topics related to major incidents that occurred during Dr. Jackson's tenure received brief subseries level descriptions. In conclusion, the project itself required 160 hours to complete, or approximately 13 hours for each linear foot of material.

This case study's results reiterated a key point from Greene and Meissner's landmark text: flexibility.[24] They emphasize the

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[22] A tactic supported by Greene and Meissner.

[23] Cheryl Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP: Strategies and Techniques," *Archivaria* 76 (Fall 2013): 101, 104.

[24] Flexibility is discussed throughout: Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process"; Meissner and Greene, "More Application While Less Appreciation"; Greene and Meissner, "Letter to the Editor"; Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing"; Anchor, "'More Product, Less Process'"; Crowe and Spilman, "MPLP @ 5"; Greene, "MPLP: It's Not Just for

importance of careful consideration before processing: "while some archivists erroneously see MPLP as a set of rigid prescriptions repudiating detailed processing…it is in fact an approach that stresses flexibility in applying processing procedures, and sensibility and sound management in deploying institutional resources." Greene and Meissner further state that "*above all, MPLP focuses on the needs of researchers as the key driver in processing decision-making*" (author emphasis).[25] As it is believed that Dr. Jackson's collection will be used heavily by researchers, only employing minimal processing to process the collection would undermine scholars' capabilities to best utilize the documents: Donna McCrea's argument that "by doing so little work beneath the series level and within folders, the accuracy of the finding aid is potentially compromised for researchers and reference archivists," would be insufficient for this important collection of papers.[26] In contrast, a pure item-level or similar approach within the allotted time period would result in only a partially processed collection. By maintaining flexibility, and bearing in mind the importance of user accessibility, a hybrid approach that utilized aspects of MPLP and more time-intensive processing techniques resulted in the project's completion within 160 hours.[27]

Results

As the project progressed, maintaining flexibility while processing became increasingly prominent. Using item-level processing during the project's early stages resulted in the discovery of documents from Dr. Jackson's predecessors, M. Adele France and May Russell, who respectively served as president of the institution from 1923-1948 and 1948-1969. Those papers associated with President France – mostly letters between

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Processing Anymore"; Greene, Meissner, Van Ness and Prom, "Forum," 411; McCrea, "Getting More for Less"; Strom, "Texas-Sized Progress"; Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP: Strategies and Techniques"; Megan Floyd Desnoyers, "When is a Collection Processed," *The Midwestern Archivist* 3, no. 1 (1982).

[25] Greene and Meissner, "Letter to the Editor," 2.
[26] McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 288.
[27] Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 93-98, 108-110.

her and students – provide an intriguing and intimate view of the college's history, student life, and southern Maryland education during the early twentieth century, a rare find for scholars interested in those subjects.[28] Documents connected with May Russell's administration quickly established their significance as they revealed more about the "Griffin Case," where the former president and her board of trustees faced a lawsuit from history professor and faculty senate president Dr. Richard Griffin.[29] These items may have gone unnoticed had I only employed minimal processing techniques during this stage—a problem that supporters and detractors of MPLP both note.

Other examples of document discovery support the idea of selectively applying different processing techniques. Despite his role in helping transform St. Mary's College into a liberal arts institution, Jackson remains well-known as a controversial figure who evoked extremely negative responses from professors and students alike. Jackson faced declarations of no confidence from the faculty in 1974, and undergraduates in 1978.[30] Students especially utilized campus newspapers and more radical publications to express their discontent with the president and actions taken by the college's administration. Jackson avidly collected these materials, along with student-created flyers and notes that protested the administration and/or arranged clandestine meetings. Beyond providing researchers with treasures of the college's underground life during this period of history, particularly materials that represent novel additions to the college's archives, they also reveal Jackson's obvious interest in the college's students and faculty. The former president's decision to collect local newspapers and newspaper articles, including his occasional contributions and responses in those pieces, emphasizes his concern about the institution's image. The discovery of unique materials potentially overlooked by minimal processing re-underlines the appropriateness of using different processing techniques in certain scenarios.

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[28] "Past Presidents," St. Mary's College of Maryland, http://www.smcm.edu/inauguration/past_presidents.html.

[29] Fausz, *Monument School of the People*, 112-113.

[30] Ibid., 119-120, 124-135.

A final example concerning the benefits of carefully choosing different processing methods involves privacy, specifically correspondence between the college's administration and a student who became pregnant during her first year at SMCM. As the documents revealed the student's name, delicate family situation, and the institution's positive response by providing support to her situation, the college archivist redacted identifying information and disposed of the original to avoid embarrassing the student and/or violating the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Minimal processing may have ignored this document, leading to possible privacy violations and overlooking an item that revealed a significant change in the college's administrative focus. The leadership of Jackson's immediate predecessor, May Russell, emphasized more conservative values—as Fausz notes, "[Dr. Russell] probably would not have contested allegations that she was trying to impose the conformist values of the early 1950s on the unruly undergraduates of the late 1960s." Dr. Jackson's response to the student's situation illustrates a transformative change towards a more liberal leadership.[31] Altogether, these examples demonstrate the importance of selectively processing at the item-level—or at least careful consideration of processing choices.

I also found item-level processing to be useful for removing duplicates. Though some MPLP practicates' follow the admonition to not remove copies, doing so for this donation resulted in the reduction of almost two linear feet—a 17% decrease in original collection size.[32] Though eliminating these materials resulted in processing times of greater than 4 hours per linear foot, one could argue that the storage space saved through such measures warranted the additional effort.[33] As some archives may accept collections relevant to their collection development policy

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[31] Ibid., 114, 118- 124, 131, 134-135.

[32] Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 243; McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 287-288; Greene, "MPLP: It's Not Just for Processing Anymore," 181.

[33] Greene, Meissner, Van Ness and Prom, "Forum," 415; Van Ness, "Much Ado About Paper Clips," 141; Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 243; Cox, "Maximal Processing," 139; Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 107-108.

regardless of available storage space, so archivists must carefully consider if this process should occur.[34] Admittedly, several factors affected the decision to weed Jackson's papers, such as the ease of removing duplicates and the availability of staff to perform these duties.[35] However, it may prove easier to remove materials in the processing stage, instead of facing storage-related crises down the road.[36]

At the same time, a selective application of minimal processing strategies during other phases of the project resulted in its successful completion within 160 hours. As noted previously, Jackson avidly collected different kinds of publications during his tenure, resulting in relatively large amounts of both complete newspapers and clippings. Because these items revealed much about his mindset and provided additional perspectives of the institution, I deemed them a valuable asset worth maintenance. In order to ensure this 1-2 linear feet of documents was quickly processed, I organized the items based on publication date. For example, all documents from a specific year were housed in one or a group of folders dedicated to that year.[37] As re-foldering each individual news clipping or full paper would have demanded excessive quantities of time and resources, I determined this choice as the most efficient way to both fully process the collection and make certain that researchers could easily access that information.[38] Though individual items were not arranged in chronological order, and despite the fact some important documents may go undiscovered, this tactic helped me to complete

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[34] See Michael Strom, "Texas-Sized Progress."

[35] See also Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 108.

[36] Greene, Meissner, Van Ness and Prom, "Forum," 415; Van Ness, "Much Ado About Paper Clips," 141; Cox, "Maximal Processing," 139; Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 107-108. Donna McCrea offers a counterpoint to this argument.

[37] I undertook similar tactics for other series in the collection – such as "memoranda." All documents associated with the "memoranda" subseries were sorted into different years.

[38] McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 287, 290; Cox, "Maximal Processing," 136; Weideman, "Accessioning as Processing," 282; Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 221, 225-226, 235; Meissner and Greene, "More Application While Less Appreciation," 176-177, 200, 209; Van Ness, "Much Ado About Paper Clips," 138.

the project on time.[39] Additionally, the environmental controls of the archival storage room will ensure that degradation of the various crumbling newsprint will be greatly reduced—further emphasizing that intense arrangement of the clippings into individual acid free folders or making preservation photocopies remained unnecessary.[40]

Following the advice of minimal processors also proved useful when dealing with paperclips and other kinds of metal fasteners. Greene and Meissner argue that the time needed to eliminate such bindings usually outweighs any potential benefits.[41] However, Jackson's collection had not been kept in a temperature and humidity controlled environment prior to arriving at SMCM— meaning that a large percentage of metal fasteners and their attached pages already exhibited extensive rust damage and paper deterioration. In addition, most paperclips and staples could be quickly removed. Therefore, I removed paperclips and staples whenever it proved possible and easy to do so. I left in place other forms of metal fasteners that could not eliminated easily—such as staples used to bind documents exceeding fifty pages. Removing all staples would have resulted in damage to the paper documents, financial costs for the SMCM archives to replace them with plastic clips, and time loss spent on this task.

Maintaining the balance between item-level and minimal processing ultimately resulted in processing this important collection within a short period of time. Understandably, an MPLP mindset proved useful when dealing with large quantities of certain materials, such as newspapers, or potential problems like metal fasteners. In contrast, some item-level processing significantly reduced the collection's size through elimination of duplicated and/or unusable material[42]; resulted in the discovery of documents

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[39] McCrea, "Getting More for Less," 287-288; Greene, "MPLP: It's Not Just for Processing Anymore," 199; see also Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 101.

[40] Greene and Meissner, "More Product, Less Process," 231, 235, 250-252.

[41] Ibid., 221-222, 230-231, 234-235, 239, 251-253.

[42] Materials defined as unusable include personal and/or illegible notes scrawled by Dr. Jackson, as well as those documents that contained little informational value (see T.R. Schellenberg's "The Appraisal of Modern Records"). Most of Dr. Jackson's collection contained enough value to warrant maintenance.

associated with previous St. Mary's College of Maryland presidents; and correctly identified sensitive materials to be appropriately addressed by the college's archivist. This case study altogether supports the lesson maintained by Greene and Meissner: that minimal processing remains an approach utilized in moderation and only after deliberation. As Cheryl Oestreicher emphasizes:

> Each collection is unique, and by continually experimenting with and learning different techniques, archivists have the opportunity to implement a more flexible approach to processing. The main point Greene and Meissner make is that we must revise strategies to enable the processing of more collections in less time and thereby create more access for researchers…Overall, the main lesson learned is that the best way to process a collection is not to adhere strictly to item-level or MPLP approaches, but instead bring together appropriate techniques from multiple approaches to create a suitable and long-term strategy. [43]

Conclusion

Selectively applying various processing techniques at different stages of this project resulted in a fully processed collection and semi-complete finding aid within 160 work hours. Upholding either technique to what Megan Desnoyers refers to as "an ideal standard level" would have left an unfinished project or one that accidentally overlooked important documents and/or several major privacy violations. [44] This strategy proved to be the most useful and successful choice in processing the Renwick Jackson papers.

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[43] Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 109-110. Oestreicher also notes the following: "Processing a collection is less about an archivist's desires to arrange and describe perfectly and more about providing access to researchers. [Our] overall approach…was to think less about subscribing to specific professing methods and more about utilizing techniques appropriate for a particular series, subseries, or format, whether item-level, minimal, or somewhere in between" (108).

[44] Desnoyers, "When is a Collection Processed," 7.

Yet it seems that too many archivists have misconstrued minimal processing over the past ten years. One respondent in Crowe and Spilman's survey views minimal processing as a short term solution to the archival backlog problem, believing practitioners will eventually adopt more comprehensive techniques at a later time.[45] Though "maximal processing" was eventually adopted as a synonym for "minimal processing" by Greene and Meissner, Robert Cox clearly views his practice as a step above and beyond MPLP.[46] Such individuals see MPLP as an inflexible framework that will be cast aside when the right opportunity arises, not one mindset (of many) that can be altered as the situation demands. Additionally, supporters and critics of minimal processing have chosen to minimize their discussion of flexibly applying different archival techniques: though Christine Weideman addresses this theme throughout her article, Donna McCrea only does so in her paper's concluding pages while Robert Cox generally ignores this topic altogether. By situating MPLP and other processing techniques solely in a discussion of usefulness, scholars have risked ignoring/downsizing an important lesson maintained in Greene and Meissner's original article.[47]

A similar problem exists when discussing minimal processing's capability to adequately address security concerns. A respondent in Crowe and Spilman's article noted their fear about MPLP's inability to secure documents with the following comment: 'I think it [MPLP] will provide access to huge amounts of backlog materials, but I wonder what the short-term repercussions will be for security/privacy.'[48] In "More Application while Less Appreciation: The Adopters and Antagonists of MPLP," Greene and Meissner dedicated a significant percentage of their article to this topic, thereby highlighting security concerns as a common theme in the minimal processing debate.

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[45] Crowe and Spilman, "MPLP @ 5," 121.

[46] Greene and Meissner, "Letter to the Editor," 1; Cox, "Maximal Processing," 136, 140, 143-148.

[47] Not every scholar has this problem—Weideman, Desnoyers, Oestreicher, and Anchor exemplify individuals who have understood the point of flexibility as emphasized by Greene and Meissner.

[48] Crowe and Spilman, "MPLP @ 5," 121.

But even when discussing this topic, scholars have apparently defined minimal processing as a set of procedures, not a larger mindset. As Cheryl Oestreicher emphasizes in "Personal Papers and MPLP: Strategies and Techniques," minimal processing does not mean security measures disappear—only that different situations should dictate different levels of scrutiny.[49] Dr. Jackson's status as a former college president with a controversial past; his tendency to collect different materials; and an inability to easily discern the contents of his collection encouraged myself and the college archivist to pursue item-level processing techniques during the early and middle periods of the project. Doing so resulted in the discovery of sensitive materials that required addressing, thus vindicating our choice. Had the donation been a perfectly organized collection with folder and item lists, few reasons could have supported the decision to similarly comb through the documents. In addition, the choice to arrange the collection's newspapers and newsprint articles based on chronological publication (without more extensively organizing the documents) was determined by their value and our diminishing time. Both examples emphasize the importance of carefully considering where to apply different processing techniques—an idea not as heavily addressed in earlier literature.

Discussions about security and MPLP's status as a short term solution highlight an important absence in previously published archival literature—that too few archivists will consider flexibility at different stages of a project when making collections available for public use. Minimal processing practices, along with item-level and folder-level processing techniques, each have important uses—and should be applied to whole projects or individual phases as necessary.

Steven Gentry graduated from St. Mary's College of Maryland in 2014 with a degree in history, sociology, and museum studies. He has interned at the St. Mary's College of Maryland Archives; the special collections department of Langsdale Library; Historic St. Mary's City; and the central

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[49] Oestreicher, "Personal Papers and MPLP," 106; see also Greene, "MPLP: It's Not Just For Processing Anymore," 197, along with the respective section from Meissner and Greene, "More Application while Less Appreciation."

library of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. He currently works at the Miller Branch of the Howard County Library System.