

The MONTANA Archivist

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Montana SHRAB to offer Workshop....

You asked for it, we deliver! In response to our strategic planning survey's last year, folks from across the state requested more basic archival training. The Montana SHRAB took your request to heart and will be offering a two-day *Archival Appraisal and Description Workshop* in Helena on February 19-20. Steve Walker, former State Archivist of Idaho, will instruct attendees in collection appraisal techniques, determining collection order, creating effective inventories, and promoting collections. Attendees will walk away with lots of great examples and resources. The workshop will be held at the Lewis and Clark County Library, 8:30 to 4:30 each day. There is no fee for the workshop, which is made possible through funding provided by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). For more information contact Jodie Foley at 444-7482 or jfoley@mt.gov.

Montana Memory Project website gets facelift

The "Montana Memory Project" is a collection of digital collections and items relating to Montana's cultural heritage. Access is free and open through the Internet. Many of these items are digitized copies of historic material, some items are contemporary. All serve as a resource for education, business, pleasure, and lifelong learning. Contributing institutions include libraries, historical societies and museums from across the state. Check out the great collections at <http://cdm103401.cdmhost.com/> For more information about the individual collections contact the contributing institution.

Upcoming Events and Conferences

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| February 19-20, 2009 | Helena, Montana, SHRAB Archival Appraisal and Description Workshop |
| March 12-14, 2009 | Billings, Montana, Museums Association of Montana Annual Conference |
| April 15-18, 2009 | Portland, Oregon, Northwest Archivists Annual Meeting |
| April 22-25, 2009 | Kalispell, Montana, Montana Library Association Annual Meeting, |
| July 15-18, 2009 | Seattle, Washington, NAGARA Annual Meeting |
| August 11-16, 2009 | Austin, Texas, Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting |



New SAA Scholarships Available for Archives Students

The **Mosaic Student Scholarship** was established by the Society of American Archivists in August 2008 to promote diversification of the American archives profession. This scholarship provides financial and mentoring support to minority students pursuing graduate education in archival science. Up to two \$5,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2009.

The **F. Gerald Ham Scholarship** will award up to two \$7,500 scholarships to graduate students in their second year of archival studies at a U.S. university. Awarded for the first time in 2008, criteria include past performance in a graduate archival studies program and faculty members' assessment of potential in the field. It is named for SAA Fellow and past president F. Gerald Ham.

The application deadline for both is February 28, 2009. For more information about how to apply see <http://www.archivists.org/>

IMLS to offer third round of Connecting to Collections Bookshelf in 2009

The Third Round of applications for the IMLS Bookshelf is now available and will continue until 5:00 p.m., March 9, 2009. The Institute of Museum and Library Services will award 1,000 additional sets of the *IMLS Connecting to Collections Bookshelf* in 2009. IMLS has awarded over 1,800 sets of the Bookshelf in the two previous application rounds to museums, libraries, and archives. The awards have been made to collecting institutions in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. To see the list of recipients, click on the link to the right. The Bookshelf is a set of resources selected by conservation experts throughout the country. The Bookshelf is actually three sets of resources entitled: **Core Collection**, **Living Collections**, and **Nonliving Collections**. Awards are made through a competitive, on-line application process. Applications can be submitted to AASLH between at www.aaslh.org/Bookshelf.

Conferences and Training Opportunities

I. 2009 Northwest Archivists Conference

Rendezvous 2009! Northwest Archivists Conference

Portland, Oregon April 15-18, 2009

The Northwest Archivists are pleased to announce the 2009 History & Heritage Rendezvous in Portland, Oregon. The 62nd Annual Northwest Archivists Conference will be held jointly with meetings of the Oregon Heritage Commission, Northwest Oral History Association, and the Pacific Northwest History Conference in a unique opportunity for exchange among academic and public historians, students, and the general public. The goal of "Rendezvous 2009" is to reflect the sharing of ideas, multiplicity of perspectives, and convergence of cultures reflected in the history of our region. Details can be found on their website: <http://www.lib.washington.edu/nwa/>

2. Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting

Austin, Texas August 11-16, 2009

The annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists will be held in Austin, Texas, as a joint meeting with the Council of State Archivists. Registration information can be found at <http://www.archivists.org/conference/>

3. National Preservation Conference

Nashville, Tennessee October 13-17, 2009

The National Preservation Conference provides all-important know how, innovative ideas, and inspiration for people saving America's

historic places and revitalizing communities. The Conference is the premier educational and networking event for community leaders, volunteers and staff of the historic preservation movement.

Request registration information from the National Trust for Historic Preservation: 800-944-6847 Email: conference@nthp.org

4. 2009 Modern Archives Institute

Washington D.C. June 1-12, 2009.

The deadline for applications to the Summer Institute is Feb. 28.

The National Archives and Records Administration, in cooperation with the Library of Congress, present the Modern Archives Institutes for 2009. The goal of the Institute is to introduce participants to archival theory and practice and the responsibilities of archival work. Participants usually have limited archival experience and represent a wide variety of archival repositories, large and small, public and private. Priority is given to persons who work with archives or manuscripts. Managers whose organizations include archival units, persons from other professions who require a basic understanding of archival work, and those who are preparing for a career in archives and manuscripts will be admitted on a space-available basis. The 2-week program provides an introduction to archival principles and techniques for individuals who work with personal papers, as well as those who work with the records of public and private institutions and organizations. The Institute concentrates on the following basic archival functions: acquisition of archival material; appraisal and disposition; arrangement and description; preservation; reference and access; and public programs.

For application and more information see <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/modern-archives-institute/>

5. National Archives Calendar of Events which includes trainings held at the regional depositories, genealogy workshops and much more. <http://www.archives.gov/calendar/> In addition to live training, there are many resources available online: **Preservation and Archives at the National Archives** <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/> This page includes, free CD-ROM sources, and links to other areas of interest.

6. Donor issues? The Society of American Archivists provides excellent brochures that can be printed to give to potential donors. They can be found on the SAA website. <http://www.archivists.org/publications/brochures/> Topics include A Guide to Deeds of Gifts, Donating Your Personal or Family Papers to a Repository, and Donating Your Organizational Records to a Repository.

New resources....

Two New SAA publications to Put on Your Reading List

Managing Congressional Collections

Congressional collections challenge archivists and collecting institutions with every conceivable management problem. From soliciting the collection and working with the member's office through detailed processing guidelines, each chapter of this manual includes best practices for managing these unwieldy collections. *Managing Congressional Collections* is a project of SAA's Congressional Papers Roundtable and was funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. SAA member price is \$19.95. <http://www.archivists.org/>

Navigating Legal Issues in Archives is authored by Menzi Behrnd-Klodt and introduces a variety of legal issues in the administration and management of collections. Twenty-two chapters are organized into four sections and each chapter opens with a brief explanation of why the topic is important

to archivists and to whom the material is most applicable. The text is supplemented with sample legal documents and forms. SAA member price is \$49.95. <http://www.archivists.org/>

Big Sky ARMA offers Records Management Broadcasts

Big Sky ARMA website links to "Inside the Records Room" the only national talk show dedicated to Records Management issues. Past broadcasts are available at <http://www.insidetherecordroom.com/>

Archive Month Posters displayed online

The Council of State Archivists displays all state posters created to celebrate Archives Month. Montana's 2008 poster can be seen at <http://www.statearchivists.org/archivesmonth/AAM-posters.htm#mt>. The site also has a prep kit to host your own Archives Month events or celebrations. Start planning now!

Digital Partnerships Guidelines

The Council of State Archivist has issued a statement regarding issues any institution should consider when entering into a Digital Access Partnership. This helpful document will assist any organization that is considering a digitization partnership with providers such as the Genealogical Society of Utah/Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (GSU/LDS), Ancestry.com, iArchives, and others. See <http://www.statearchivists.org/issues/ocp/index.htm> for the full text.

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Within the opening chapters of *Our Mutual Friend*, Charles Dickens sets a scene that ought to make many librarians and archivists cringe. Mr. Boffin, a simple man who has come into a great inheritance, presents himself to his lawyer's office where he is handled by Blight, the lawyer's clerk. At first Blight insists that Boffin wait while he checks off a series of names listed in an appointment book until the proper name is found, and then makes a great show of pulling down an additional volume called the "Caller's Book" where he again peruses the list and enters Boffin's name at the end. As Dickens describes the incident, the simple Mr. Boffin is impressed with this show of bureaucratic procedure.

"Strict system here; eh, my lad?" said Mr. Boffin, as he was booked. "Yes sir," returned the boy. "I couldn't get on without it." By which he probably meant that his mind would have been shattered to pieces without this fiction of an occupation.

Mr. Boffin's good humored reaction to this record keeping ritual should not distract us from the issue at hand; that such record keeping is onerous to both the patron and the establishment insisting upon its practice.

In our zeal to document everything in our repositories to justify our existence, we sometimes lose sight of our most basic charge to provide outstanding service to the research community. How many forms must a patron to your facility execute before leaving with his or her's sheaf of photocopies and notes? Are they handed a registration form, a call slip form, a photocopy

request form, and a photograph reproduction form? Is the information required for the execution of this documentation repetitive? Is there an easier way? My own answers to the above form the basis for my modest proposal in this essay.

Copyright concerns and document control are important considerations to any manuscript repositories, but in our continuing obsession with these matters I feel that we subject our customers to a battery of forms that may be, in this age of digital information access, somewhat superfluous. Worrying that a researcher has failed to sign a copyright notice for the privilege of gaining a photostat or digital scan seems a bit overboard, especially considering that we will likely end up posting it ourselves on the internet as part of some "digital resources" project. The material itself may be valuable, but the potential commercial exploitation of our images and documents is hardly the stuff of high finance. Ask anyone who has attempted to self publish a historical narrative how sales are doing and you might gain a glimmer of the paltry sums involved.

My solution is simple. Allow researchers, after filling out the initial registration form, to use a digital camera to take their notes. In fact, encourage them to do so. This would eliminate one more form to fill out and increase the efficiency of the researcher's labor. Such a practice puts the responsibility of the person wielding the camera to keep the citations straight, spares the material the temporary exposure to the cruel high intensity light of the photocopy machine, and allows repository staff the luxury of eliminating reams of paperwork to file away. Yes, the resulting images could possibly end up on the internet unacknowledged, but should we not trust editors and publishers to insist on bibliographies with more than a URL address? If we have done our jobs, the collections from which such documents were drawn should be easy enough for anyone to track down, and if the editors do their job, the author will be required to do exactly that. We would gain the time to devote ourselves to more meaningful tasks as well. Imagine the work that Blight the lawyer's clerk could have accomplished had he not kept those duplicate books in what Dickens called a "fiction of an occupation."

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Pasque flowers. Photo by Laurie gigeette McGrath



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Big Sky. Big Land. Big History.

Montana

Historical Society

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