WRAPPING UP 2017

As we begin to prepare for the new year, we thought we should review and reminisce about the previous year, your new committee, and the events of Seattle Area Archivists.

This year, we said goodbye to our fearless leaders Amy Heidrick, Jeff Winter, and Odette Allen and welcomed in new committee members. Seattle Area Archivists is now lead by Ashley Mead, Megan Churchwell, Michael Conyers, Amanda Demeter, and Nicole Sonett.

This new leadership has attempted to revamp Seattle Area Archivists, from our logo to our new acronym, SeArch. We’ve also incorporated a bi-weekly newsletter, the backlogs of which can be viewed on our google groups. This newsletter will incorporate announcements and events we’ve previously discussed on our newsletter, as well as new information about members and future plans.

SEARCH SWAG

We’ve put together some merchandise with our new logo on them! We’re using CafePress, an online retailer that allows for plenty of customization and product variety. If you desire any item you don’t see currently, let us know and we can create it.

Check out the new swag here: http://www.cafepress.com/dd/11215919

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Your 2017-2019 Steering Committee

ASHLEY MEAD, CHAIR
I’m the Assistant Registrar – Rights & Reproductions and (self-proclaimed) unofficial Photo Archivist at the Seattle Art Museum. I have an MA in Museum Studies from Johns Hopkins and have spent the last 5 years volunteering and working in museums collections and archives. I love history and learning and absolutely love exploring collections and archives.

MEGAN CHURCHWELL, CO-CHAIR
My educational background includes a B.A. in History from Willamette University (Salem, OR) and an M.A. in Museology from the University of Washington. My professional interests center around local Pacific Northwest history. In 2011-2012, I packed artifacts for MOHAI’s move. Since 2014, I have been the curator at the Puget Sound Navy Museum (Bremerton, WA), where my duties include accepting newly donated collections, curating temporary and long-term exhibits, and managing our social media presence.

MICHAEL CONYERS, TREASURER
After working for 11 years on the Amazon.com books team, I quit and went to school at the University of Washington in 2012, earning my BA in History and MLIS at the iSchool in 2014. I am interested in making contributions to world heritage preservation through digital archiving. I am currently working with the wonderful and important non-profit Arc/k Project to preserve objects and locations through 3D/AR/VR technology.

AMANDA DEMETER, SECRETARY
I came to Seattle after five years working as a paraprofessional in an academic Special Collections library, and obtained my MLIS at the University of Washington in 2015. I’ve processed collections, provided reference services, and performed outreach all along the west coast, from Santa Barbara, California to Nome, Alaska.

NICOLE SONETT, MEMBER-AT-LARGE
My name is Nicole Sonett and I’m a recent graduate of the iSchool at the University of Washington. With my MLIS, I was able to intern at the Metropolitan Museum of Art this past summer (see my article in this newsletter!) and I’m currently working at Parametric Portfolio as their Records Retention Associate.
SEARCH SPOTLIGHT

Hallie Appel
Position: Assistant Archivist, Seattle Public Schools, in Seattle since June 2017

I was lucky enough to discover archiving as a viable career through a history internship in Brandeis University’s Special Collections, and after finishing my MLIS at Simmons College and taking advantage of the wonderful opportunities available in Boston, I am ecstatic to be back on the West Coast and close to my family. I am particularly interested in oral history, preservation, and ensuring access for as broad a spectrum of users as possible.

Adriana Flores
Archivist & Special Collections Librarian
University of Puget Sound

This past summer, Adriana Flores was hired as the new Archivist & Special Collections Librarian at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. Prior to working at Puget Sound, Adriana was the Assistant Archivist for Acquisitions at Boston University’s Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center. Adriana completed her M.S. in Library and Information Science from Simmons College in 2016 and is a 2013 graduate of Puget Sound.

Celebrating New Positions:

Nicole Sonett is now working as Records Retention Associate at Parametric Portfolios
Nicole Davis is now working as the Supervisory Archivist at the Museum of Flight
Jenn Parent joined the Museum of Flight as Archivist in June
Amy Heidrick became the Director of Collections of the Museum of Flight in April
Amanda Demeter will be joining King County Archives as Assistant Archivist in December.

THE MUSEUM OF FLIGHT LAUNCHES DIGITAL COLLECTIONS SITE

By the Archives Staff at the Museum of Flight

The Museum of Flight is pleased to announce the completion of a grant-funded project to digitize all of our World War I-related archival holdings. The 18-month project, supported by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) with funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, has been the first of its kind for the museum: a complete project to fully process, catalog, digitize, and make collections materials available online. --

The result is a dedicated website showcasing unique archival materials from approximately 50 collections related to World War I, collections that include the personal accounts of WWI aviators, technical information about the aircraft they flew, and ephemera that documents their wartime experiences.

Beginning in late spring of 2016, our Digitization Specialist began the project by developing our formal digitization initiatives: guidelines that would formalize how we digitize collection materials, including the scanning standards and what types of metadata and identifying information would be added to each digital file. Staff archivists then began processing and cataloging each collection to be digitized, creating highly detailed finding aids in order to provide descriptive metadata for the digitization process.

Once processed and cataloged, our Digitization Project Archivist assessed each item for stability and noted any condition issues. From this assessment, she determined the proper method of digitization, whether on a traditional flatbed scanner (standard or oversized) or through our photography studio set-up, which uses a high-quality digital camera and foam book stands to support items with fragile bindings.

After each item was digitized, the Archives team began the lengthy process of preparing the nearly 10,000 unique digital files for use and online display. The Digitization Project Archivist made minimal corrections in Photoshop, compiled multi-part documents into single files, and applied descriptive metadata to the files based on the finding aid description and her own research. Our Digitization Specialist oversaw creation of the project website, created using the open source content management system Omeka, by uploading access copies and associated metadata records. The entire team helped review the uploaded items for quality control.

The final site, The Museum of Flight Digital Collections, hosts all digitized files, metadata, and finding aids, allowing users to browse the wide variety of materials, including photographs, journals, military orders, scrapbooks, correspondence, technical documentation, maps, and even sheet music of patriotic and war-themed songs popular during the period, among other items.

This project has been a great starting point for launching our digital initiatives. We plan to add more content as we tackle future digitization projects. Stay tuned!

To access The Museum of Flight’s new digital collections, go to http://mof.omeka.net.

CLIR Project Team: Karen Bean (Digital Project Archivist), Nicole Davis (Supervisory Archivist), Amanda Demeter (Archivist), Amy Heidrick (Associate Director of Collections), Jessica Jones (Archivist), Ali Lane (Digitization Specialist), Jenn Parent (Archivist), and Lindsay Zaborowski (Archivist).
During Summer 2017, Member-at-Large Nicole Sonett had the opportunity to participate in a 10 week internship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Continue reading to glimpse one of the projects she worked on during her time at the Met.

Throughout the past century, the fields of library science, museum studies, and associated fields have stratified. These fields have become distinct paths of studies. When pursuing graduate schools, students must choose between museology and library science and the courses provided are very specific to the chosen field. Some students can muscle through a dual degree program, but that was not my path.

Having recently finished my degree in library science, I viewed these fields as related subjects but very distinct in their own ways.

Working within the archives at The Metropolitan Museum of Art has shown me that these distinct paths of studies have not always functioned as such. As I was processing the Textile Study Room records for The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, I noticed many letters that demonstrated a different way of research and reference than I am used to. These records contain correspondence between the curators of the Textile Study Room and scholars, students, and the generally curious public. From 1908 to 2003, curators provided reference services to those who wrote in an asked for help. These curious minds had a vast spectrum of queries, from easily answered questions to those that required multipage responses from the curators.

As a librarian, I have been trained to provide online and in-person reference services for students and scholars. I walk them through creating bibliographies, how to build them and use them in the most efficient way. This is the same kind of work that the curators of the Textile Study Room were doing via correspondence. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has one specific letter, written by Francis Little in 1928, replying to an inquiry about “silk and goat’s hair mixtures” that references, quotes, and summarizes multiple pieces of literature from Little’s own library. Looking through the annual reports and bulletins to build the finding aid for this collection, available here, I found records of the library the curators had access to during their tenure at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. I can only presume that the curators were comfortable as experts in their field, knew the contents of their shelves, and were able to make the connections between the reference question and the literature within their office. My engagement with this collection has shown me that curators, specifically within the Textiles Study Room, provided research and reference help to students and scholars, just the same as librarians do today.
MET'S ARCHIVES, CONTINUED

Even Edith A. Standen, who protested that she knew little of textiles when she joined the Textiles Study Room, provided these responses to inquiring minds. Standen is best known for her participation in the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section during World War II, also known as “The Monuments Men,” a group of soldiers working within the war to locate, track, and save looted art and objects. Within the Textile Study Room records, one can get a firsthand look at the work she did in the Museum when she returned from the war. Included in this work are lists of objects that relate or pertain to student and scholar’s investigations into the collection. Having looked through these letters myself, it is clear that Standen gained a wonderful grasp of her subject and was able to assist many inquiring minds.

In this modern age, we can thank technology for the ability to browse the museum’s catalog and use keyword searches. In 1956, Valerie M. Field, did not have this luxury. Field wrote into the Textile Study Room and her letter was received by Edith Standen. As a student of Bishop Otter College, Field was studying English tapestries, specifically researching Montlake tapestries in her letter to Standen. Her letter above, states that she is a student at “Bishop Otter College, who is making a study of English tapestries.” Edith Standen replied to this inquiry with two typed pages of accession numbers, context, and descriptions of tapestries she knew fit Field’s question, pictured below. She closed the letter with an invitation to contact her again if Field needed any further information about these tapestries.

Today, all queries regarding textiles go to the Ratti Textiles Center, which opened in 1995. The opening of the Ratti Textiles Center demonstrated The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s longstanding commitment to collecting textiles. The former Textiles Study Room underwent structural and organizational changes to better serve the public and the objects.

Rather than having dedicated textiles curators in Ratti, as was previously done in the Textiles Study Room, these curators work in their individual departments and with the Ratti Textiles Center. The five full time staff members care for the collection, laisse between the public and the curators, and provide limited reference services for all inquiring minds.

The correspondence in the Textile Study Room Records shows the reference work that scholars were investigating and that curators were providing. With the Ratti Textiles Center, most of this reference work occurs online. Open to the public, anyone can write in and work with the staff of Ratti to learn more about or view textiles within the collection.

Staff members of the Ratti Textiles Center receive all the inquiries regarding textiles, from “how do I clean a christening gown?” to more broad questions regarding a type or time period. Some questions are easily answerable, and others must be parsed out by the researcher and a Ratti staff member. From here, the researcher can continue to do further research online, be referred to a researcher, or physically visit the Ratti Textiles Center. When visiting, researchers can use site specific resources like WEFT-ID (short for Western European Figurative Tapestry Image Database) or Milton Sunday’s archives, as well as make appointments to view the collection.
After speaking with Eva Labson and Eva DeAngelis-Glasser, it’s clear that the intimate relationships between scholar and curator have changed, but remain accessible. Had I been a scholar in this field, the nature of knowledge sharing might not have been as shocking. If I had written my thesis on figurative tapestries, rather than Carnegie libraries, I might have written into the Ratti Textiles Center for information. The staff and curators at the Ratti Textile Center remain a warm and easily accessible resource for all inquiring minds, including mine.

The Textile Study Room of The Metropolitan Museum of Art opened in 1908. From then until the mid-1990s, when its activities were integrated into those of the Antonio Ratti Textile Center, the Textile Study Room was consulted by students, designers, and others seeking knowledge or inspiration from historical and contemporary examples of fabrics. In its early years, research supported by the Textile Study Room focused on European textiles and laces, as well as Japanese and Chinese textiles. The Textile Study Room frequently hosted lectures about its holdings by curators and specialists in the field. It also acquired photographs of fabrics and textiles from Central and South America, Asia, and India. The records include correspondence, invoices, fabric samples, photographs and other items that document the work of curators and other staff of this department over several decades.


**Upcoming Events**

**DECEMBER 21 MEETING AT THE LIVING COMPUTER MUSEUM**

We are pleased to announce our next quarterly open meeting at Living Computers: Museum + Labs on December 21 from 10 am to 12 pm. Our host is Amelia Roberts, Archivist at the Living Computer Museum. After a brief SeArch business meeting, the Archives team will be talking about the organization and leading us on a behind the scenes tour. We’ll have holiday treats and hot coffee for a warm December meeting! Please RSVP by December 18th to seattle.area.archivists@gmail.com.

**FEBRUARY 8 SAA WORKSHOP AT SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

On Thursday, February 8, 2018 from 9 am to 5 pm at the John Stanford Center for Educational Excellence (Seattle Public Schools), SAA and SeArch will co-host the course “Teaching with Primary Sources: How to Design for Active Learning.” This course is part of SAA’s Foundational program and offers continuing education credits upon completion. For more information on the course, see the SAA website. SeArch will have registration discount codes for members in good standing. Stay tuned for information on this soon, plus a scholarship opportunity!
UPCOMING CONFERENCES

AHA Annual Meeting, January 4-7 in Washington, DC
ALA Midwinter Meetings, Feb 9-13 in Denver, CO
Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology, March 19-23 in University of Tübingen, Germany
Archiving 2018: Digitization Preservation, and Access, April 17-20 in Washington, D.C.
AAM Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo, May 6-9 in Phoenix, AZ
SLA Annual Conference, June 11-18 in Baltimore, MD

ALAN Annual Conference, June 21-26 in New Orleans, LA
SAA Annual Meeting, Aug 12-18 in Washington, DC
SPNHC 33rd Annual & TDGW Joint Meeting - Collections & Data in an Unstable World, August 25-Sept 2 in Dunedin, New Zealand, Otago Museum & University of Otago
Association of Science-Technology Centers Annual Conference, Sept 29-Oct 2 in Hartford, CT
PastForward, November 16-19 in San Francisco, CA

did we forget anything? get in touch!

you can always reach us at seattle.area.archivists@gmail.com and don't forget to RSVP and attend our quarterly meeting!

DECEMBER 21
QUARTERLY MEETING
10am at the Living Computer Museum