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THE QUARTERLY

December 2001

The DC Caucus of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives
Conference

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— FROM THE CHAIR —

December 19, 2001

Dear Colleague-

It's been four months since our last newsletter, and what a four months it's been. Your Representative has been remiss about organizing any quarterly meetings, but there will be time enough in early 2002.

In the meantime, my fellow members have been taking up whatever slack I may have let slip through my hands. DC Caucus members have organized a remarkable “Archives Fair,” have led teacher and student workshops on archives and archival materials, and have made great contributions to a very successful MARAC Fall Meeting. In addition, many DC Caucus members were active in the recent Society of American Archivists Conference held in Washington in August 2001, and this meeting set

new attendance records for SAA.

There are other articles in this edition of the Quarterly detailing the work of our colleagues, as well as photographs in which we try to present the activities of the Caucus a bit more graphically.

We are pleased to publish an article by Adrienne Woods on the Electronic Records Archives initiative of the National Archives and Records Administration. Ms. Wood's article continues the efforts of the Quarterly to publish substantive articles on the archival work going on here in Washington.

The next issue of the Mid-Atlantic Archivist (MAA) will be coming out in early to mid-January as a combined Fall/Winter issue. The reason for a combination issue lies principally with the New York City tragedy. Many of our friends and colleagues were personally affected by this awful event. Your Caucus Representative is still, truthfully, somewhat uncertain as to what actions the Caucus might take in regards to the events in New York City and at the Pentagon, beyond a token monetary donation. I think there will be some discussion of the events in New York and Arlington in the next issue of the MAA, and perhaps we can garner some thoughts of what, if anything, we might do as a Caucus. I am eager to hear all ideas.

MARAC, along with the Society of American Archivists, and other organizations, has taken a strong stand against Executive Order 13233. I am sure that there will be an article in the next MAA accounting for MARAC's position on this issue. For those of you following the fallout from President Bush's Executive Order 13233 (regarding the Presidential Records Act) Steve Hensen, President of SAA, wrote an opinion piece which appeared in Sunday's (December 16, 2001) Washington Post Outlook Section. You can read the online version at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A46716-2001Dec14.html>. MARAC wrote a letter that was placed in the official record of the Government Reform Committee's hearing on E.O. 13233.

I also wish to commend to DC Caucus members a careful review of all issues of the MAA. The Steering Committee is facing a number of issues – the adequacy of the dues structure, the type of administrative infrastructure we wish to employ, and the number of Meetings MARAC should have every year. If you have any concerns or questions about these issues, please contact me. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2002.

Finally, it is with deep regret that I announce Michele Lee's retirement as editor of the Quarterly. This is the last issue for which she will be editor. Michele's life is changing (marriage!) and she has other items (wedding!) on her agenda. Although I am pleased to announce that Ms. Sarah R. Demb, Assistant Archivist at the National Museum of the American Indian, has agreed to serve as editor, I wish to thank Michele for her wonderful stewardship of the Quarterly. And I want you to thank her as well, at M-Lee@nga.gov.

The Very Best of The Season,

Jim Cassedy
DC Caucus Representative

— NEWS FEATURES —

Building the Archives of the Future

In 1970, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) accepted its first electronic records. Since then, they have successfully accessioned, preserved, and made available nearly 42,000 data files from more than 100 Federal agencies, bureaus, and departments. So far, most of the electronic records scheduled for transfer to the National Archives have been in the form of highly-structured data files and data bases.

A Federal court case in the early 1990s changed the electronic records picture for NARA. In that case, which involved records of the Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush administrations from 1981 to 1993, the court held that printed copies of emails and memoranda about them were qualitatively different than the original email in electronic form. So the originals themselves had to be managed as records.

The case has been closed for years, but it forced the Government, and NARA in particular, to focus its attention on electronic records as never before. At the end of President Clinton's first term, using data provided by the Executive Office of the President (EOP), NARA staff estimated that, when Clinton left office, it would face the prospect of receiving at least 10 million email messages from the EOP.

NARA determined that its electronic records efforts at the time would be insufficient to deal with the complexity, diversity, and enormous volume of Federal electronic records that were being created. For example, in the last decade the capacity of NARA's Electronic and Special Media Records Services Division (formally known as the Center for Electronic Records) to perform full archival processing of electronic records has grown from hundreds of files to tens of thousands of files annually. Now, NARA needs to expand annual capacity to millions, and probably tens of millions, of digital files over the next few years.

Such growth is not manageable with NARA's current systems and processes. Federal agencies' output of electronic records now includes vast quantities of email, geo-spatial data, digital images, World Wide Web sites, and word processing documents. For example, in eight years, the Clinton White House generated not 10 million, as once predicted, but approximately 40 million email messages in only one of its systems.

The anticipated deluge of electronic records won't come solely from the White House. The State Department will soon begin transferring to NARA millions of diplomatic messages annually in electronic form. Moreover, the Pentagon anticipates sending annually more than 50 million scanned page images from official military personnel files starting in 2005. It's conceivable that NARA may receive close to one billion files annually by 2009.

To meet the challenge that electronic records pose to NARA's mission, in 1998 the Archivist established the Electronic Records Archives (ERA) program, an initiative designed to research, plan, and develop a system that can assemble, manage, preserve, and access the electronic records produced by all branches of the Federal Government. Its goal is to give NARA the capability to accession an enormous quantity of digital archival materials in complex and ever-changing varieties of formats and to preserve and provide access to these valuable materials permanently.

ERA's early efforts have been driven by the recognition that, in effect, no one in the world has yet produced a way to permanently preserve electronic records. But they are on the leading edge of efforts to do so. Over the last three years, they have joined various research collaborations and partnerships with a network of experts in the technical and archival infrastructure necessary to support preservation of electronic records.

While most of the research partners have far greater computer capabilities and expertise than NARA, they uniformly agree that we face the most difficult problems in the digital arena. The reason is simple: While the other Federal agencies they work with have to pursue its own mission, NARA has to deal with the results of all those missions.

But NARA also needs to meet pressing needs related to the lifecycle management of records. To address these needs, the ERA staff is working with staff in other offices to develop a plan for "progressive roll-outs." These "roll-outs" will provide tools that NARA staff can use in their work even before the ERA system is developed. The "roll-outs" will eventually be folded into the ERA system.

Equipped with an understanding of the problem, the technological partnerships and expertise, and a skilled team of Government staff and expert contractors, NARA is well on its way to building the archives of the future.

For more information about the Electronic Records Archives Program visit their website at www.nara.gov/era.

—Adrienne M. Woods, Electronic Records Archives Communications Specialist at National Archives and Records Administration

MARAC MEETING IN RICHMOND

DC Caucus Members were extremely active at MARAC's Fall 2001 Meeting in Richmond, Virginia. DC's own listserv manager, Cheryl Stadel-Bevans served as a co-chair of the Program Committee, and organized a program which helped draw 256 people to the meeting. Other DC Caucus members serving on the Program Committee included MARAC Chair Jeff Flannery, Janice Goldblum, Greg LaMotta, Jennie Guilbaud, and Susan Malbin.



Bruce Ambacher and Fynnette Eaton presented a terrific program on managing archives of electronic records at MARAC's Fall meeting in Richmond. This program was chaired by Mark Conrad.



Meeting of the DC Caucus in Richmond.



Becky Collier, Michael Hussey, Nancy Yeide, and Meg Melvin, participants in a panel on art looted by the Nazis.

In addition, several of our Caucus members spoke at sessions. Patrice Brown spoke on NARA records concerning the Panama Canal. Jennie Guilbaud and Frank Serene participated on a panel on documenting population diversity. Marisa Keller chaired a panel on borrowing and lending artifacts.



Greg Hunter, Maygene Daniels and Michael Miller at the MARAC session on intrinsic value.

Former MARAC Chairs Bruce Ambacher and Fynnette Eaton presented a brilliant program on the planning for the Management of Electronic Records of Enduring Value. MARAC Treasurer Becky Collier, Meg Melvin and Nancy Yeide spoke at a panel on art looted by the Nazis, chaired by Michael Hussey. Maygene Daniels presented a paper on the development of NARA's concept of 'Intrinsic Value,' a session chaired by Dr. Michael Miller. Kristine Kaske presented a paper on archives in museums. Susan Abbott discussed U.S. Government photographers attempting to document the Latino experience. David Anderson spoke on collecting faculty papers in college and university archives.



DC Caucus members Greg LaMotta (obscuring himself), Judy Thorne, and Susan Abbott contemplate the MARAC ice sculpture at a reception at the Virginia Library. New York MARAC member John Celardo and Becky Ebert from the Handley Library in Winchester, Virginia, round out this fine group.



DC Caucus Members Danna Bell Russel and Kristine Kaske, with unidentified masher in the background.



Former MARAC Chairs Janet Linde, Jim Byers and Lucious Edwards contemplate the melting MARAC ice sculpture in the hospitality suite.



Even Leonard Rapport, MARAC icon and DC Caucus member, cannot save the ice sculpture.

All of these people did an outstanding job, and contributed to a great program. Our Richmond meeting was a great success and we hope to see you at our next MARAC meeting!

— Jim Cassedy, National Archives and Records Administration

The National Archives Assembly Panel Program on “The Charters of Freedom: An Interim Report”

The National Archives Assembly presented an Archives Week panel program entitled, “The Charters of Freedom: An Interim Report.” The speakers included Ms. Mary Lynne Ritzenthaler and Ms. Catherine Nicholson of NARA’s Document Conservation Laboratory. This program was held on Wednesday, October 10, 2001, in the Auditorium of the National Archives at College Park. Ms. Jennie Guilbaud organized this program.



Panelists on the National Archives Assembly Program. Katherine Ludwig of the Document Conservation Laboratory, National Archives and Records Administration, organized this panel

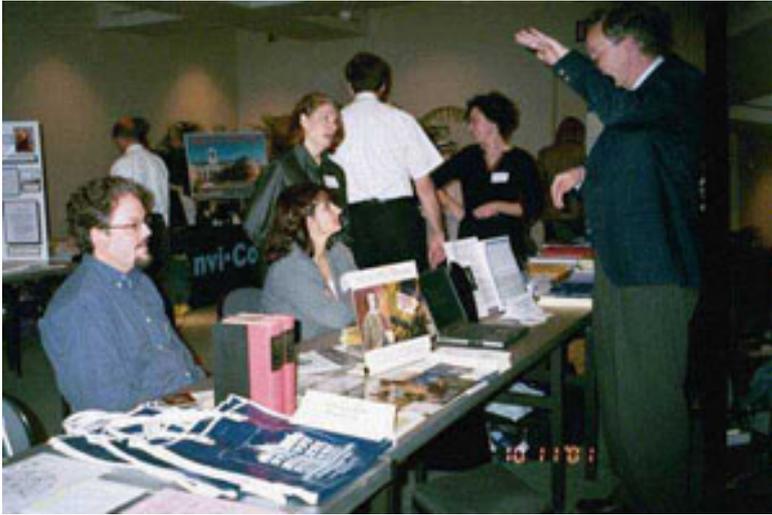
In addition to ongoing presentations, the National Archives Assembly has been vocal in expressing its' concerns over issues of possible dangers to archival holdings as the renovation of National Archives and Records Administration Archives 1 proceeds. Many members of the DC Caucus are also members of the Assembly.

— Jim Cassedy, National Archives and Records Administration

Fourth Annual Archives Fair

On October 11, 2001, over 150 people attended the DC Caucus 4th Annual Archives Fair, held at the Ripley Center, Smithsonian Institution. Over 26 repositories actively participated, including the National Gallery of Art Gallery Archives, the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, National Air and Space Museum Archives, and Smithsonian Institution Archives. The plenipotentiary speaker at the Fair was Ms. Nina Gilden Seavey of the George Washington University's Documentary Center. She wrote, produced, and directed the Emmy Award winning documentary, A PARALYZING FEAR: The Story of Polio in America. Many thanks to Kristine Kaske and her colleagues for a job very well done.

— Jim Cassedy, National Archives and Records Administration



Some participants at the Archives Fair.



Mrs. Felix Grant, founder of the Felix E. Grant JazzArchives at the University of District of Columbia and Archivist Judith Korey.



Howard Lowell, Deputy Assistant Archivist for Records Services, National Archives and Records Administration, at NARA's Exhibit Booth, Archives Fair.

DC Caucus “History Day” Workshops

The DC Caucus hosted two successful workshops this fall - one for teachers and one for students working on History Day projects. The teachers’ workshop, offered for a second year, featured a revised roster of instructors. The newest additions were Gail Redmann, Edward James Redmond, and Donna Wells. The instructors explained the differences between primary and secondary resources, demonstrated a variety of descriptive tools for archival collections, and offered advice on how to locate primary source materials. The twenty teachers who participated got an opportunity to work with historic maps and photographs and learned how to evaluate Internet resources. The second workshop featured the same roster of instructors but a slightly modified program. We added a component on deciphering old handwriting and using the census. Despite a small turnout, the workshop went well for our first year and was enjoyed by all. We expect that next year will prove to be bigger and better as it was with the teacher’s workshop.

Thanks to Danna Bell-Russel and the National Digital Library Learning Center at the Library of Congress for serving as our host again this year and the wonderful crew of instructors - Faye Haskins, Kristine Kaske, Gail Redmann, Edward James Redmond, and Donna Wells. Last and definitely not least, many thanks are owed Mychalene Giampaoli of the Historical Society of Washington, DC for coordinating the workshops and recruiting the students and teachers who participated. The DC Caucus has established a great partnership the Historical Society and we hope it will continue in the years to come.

— Susan McElrath, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

“Ninety Years of Scurlock” Lecture

Over seventy people John Fleckner’s slide talk about the Scurlock Studio of Washington, D.C. attended at the Martin Luther King Memorial Library auditorium on Wednesday, October, 11, 2001 at 6:30pm. Fleckner, head of Archives Center at the National Museum of American History, talked about the unique and historical importance of the Scurlock Studio as documenting the growing African American Community in the city. Fleckner gave the talk under the aegis of the Washingtoniana Division, the Art Division and the Black Studies of the District’s Public Library. Moorland-Spingarn Research Center of Howard University, the Historical Society of D.C. and the Gelman Library Special Collections cosponsored the event in honor of Archives Week. Many local African-American photographers attended, most notably George Scurlock (son of Addison, the studio’s founder.) The Scurlock Studio archives are at the Smithsonian’s Museum of American History Archives Center.

—Susan Malbin, Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library

NEXT ISSUE OF THE QUARTERLY: March 2002

Please send articles and notices about upcoming events, people, and news in the DC area to Sarah Demb at: DembS@nmaihrc.si.edu.

Any suggestions for improving this newsletter (format or content)? All ideas welcome.

The Quarterly is a newsletter dedicated to keeping members of the DC Caucus of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC) aware of the varied activities of the Caucus. The newsletter is generally published four times a year and is electronically mailed to members and interested parties. A hard copy of the newsletter is available on request.