

Spring Meeting: *Meeting Program*

**April 30, 1994
Mount Holyoke College**

8:30- 9:30: Registration and Coffee

9:30 -11:15: Concurrent Morning Sessions

1. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY: Federal, State, and Local

Speakers: Mary Ronan, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.; Mitchell Pearlman, Freedom of Information Commission, Hartford, CT; Motile Keller, Municipal Archives, Bridgeport, Connecticut

Chair: James K. Owens, National Archives, New England Region

The right to know us the right to privacy. The right et the American people to know what its government is doing is essential to the maintenance of our democracy. At the same time, our citizens have the right to expect the government to maintain the privacy of personal information it has accumulated about Them. Are these concepts contradictory, and - if so - can they be reconciled? The Federal, as well as some state and local governments have passed legislation and developed policies governing these concepts. Representatives from the National Archives, the Slate of Connecticut and the city of Bridgeport, CT, will discuss how their governments deal with these issues.

2. CRIMES AGAINST THE SYSTEMS: Legal and Ethical issues of Electronic Records

Speakers: Christopher Beam, Edmund S. Muskie Archives; James Estrada, University of Connecticut; Donald Ghostlaw, Caruso, Murry, & Ghostlaw; Ronald Patkus, Boston College

Chair: Paul Lasewicz, Aetna Life and Casualty

The legal and ethical environment- surrounding the electronic archives is to a large degree a blank slate, evolving daily in sometimes surprising directions. This panel will define some of those directions as they exist today, and as they may come to be. One speaker, formerly with the National Archives, will discuss the controversy surrounding the disposition of the National Security Council electronic records during the Bush, Administration. Another, a lawyer specializing in copyright and electronic communications, will talk about the legal aspects of E-mail. A third, an academic archivist, will delve into the sensitive topic of privacy and electronic communications. And the fourth, an academic librarian, will explore ethics information technology - issues and dilemmas that arise with electronic capabilities.

3. ARCHIVIST AS FULCRUM: Weighing the Issues of Acquisition and Deaccessioning in an Ethical Balance

Speakers: Mark H. Jones, Connecticut State Archives; Elizabeth Mock, University of Massachusetts Boston; Stephen Nonack, The Boston Atheneum

Chair: Randall Jimerson, University of Connecticut

How do we build the ethical codes of our profession into our policies for collecting or disposing of historical materials? What's practical (staff capabilities)? What's realistic? Speakers will discuss their experiences in defining a collection policy, on issues of responsibility, and the challenges of ethical deaccessioning: junk or profit.

11:15 -12:15: Late Morning Short Sessions

1. SHAPING THE PAST'S FUTURE: NHPRC Strategic Plans in the New England States

Speaker: Gregory Sanford, Vermont State Archives

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission recently required state historical records advisory boards to develop strategic plans for addressing the need of each state's historical records. The plans will be key to evaluating proposals from each state to the NHPRC. This discussion will review the NHPRC requirements and provide information on the planning efforts within the New England states.

2. PRECAUTIONS WHEN EXHIBITING WORKS OF ART AND ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Speaker: Eileen C. Clancy, Northeast Document Conservation Center

This talk will illustrate safe methods of presentation, as well as discuss environmental considerations, and possible damage to works as a result of exhibition. Paper artifacts, photographs, and books are among the kinds of objects to be covered.

3. THE NIXON WHITE HOUSE TAPES

Speaker: Christopher Beam, Edmund S. Muskie Archives

The Nixon White House tapes, which contain over 4,000 hours of recorded conversations that took place between February 1971 and July 1973, have been in the custody of the National Archives since 1977. They have been processed, but are still closed to the public. A former member of the National Archives staff who worked on the important collection. will bring us up-to-date on this unique and important collection.

12:15 -1:30: Buffet Lunch

1:45 -2:30: Business Meeting

2:45 -4:15: Concurrent Afternoon Sessions

1. STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Speakers: Mary Harper, Hole in the Wall Gang Camp; Marjorie Strong, Archives of Barre History and the Barre Museum; Eartha Dengler, Immigrant City Archives, Lawrence, MA

Chair: Mary Harper

Most archivists work with previously established archival or manuscript programs, or if they organize a program it is often with financial support and strong official backing. But a few archivists have organized a program completely on their own, with little support and almost no funds. They literally "start from scratch". The speakers will discuss their experiences at organizing new programs or transferring older ones, and talk about how and why they did it, their efforts to obtain support for the program and convince others of the importance of the archives.

2. DOCUMENTING ACTIVIST MOVEMENTS

Speakers: May Lee Tom, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College; Robin Washington, Bay State Banner; Libby Bouvier, Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court

Chair: Gaylene Bordeaux, University of Massachusetts Boston

The Archivist who deals with the records of an activist organization can expect to find him or herself in delicate situations. The three speakers in this session will cover the archives of the early 20th century peace movement and of contemporary woman's movements. These are records of people and activities that are controversial. The presenters will focus on the pitfalls and questions that arise in arrangement and control, along with the challenges of actively seeking out and networking such collections.

3. PRIVATE ACCESS: Personal, Ethical, and Privacy Issues

Speakers: Katherine Kraft, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College; Albert H. Whitaker, Jr., Massachusetts Archives

Chair: Edward Desrochers, Phillips Exeter Academy

This session will address the problems of maintaining the delicate balance between the sometimes competing interests of access and restrictions to information. Public sector records and access to them comprise one of the guarantees of government accountability. At the same time, certain categories of government records contain information specific to persons which merit protection under the "privacy" laws. Private repositories must also be prepared to face some of the same questions of access.

Attention will be given to the theory and practice of administering freedom of information and privacy laws in both public and private repositories. Case studies will be used to stimulate discussion of ethical considerations regarding the research use of personal information and the responsibilities assumed by the custodians as they acquire records containing personal data. As an applied art, access and restrictions standards have been recently tested at the Massachusetts Archives in connection with the investigation into radiation experiments at the Fernald School.

Participants are encouraged to be prepared to discuss cases and administrative practices regarding access and restriction policies at their own institutions.

4:15-5:30: Reception