

**Report on the Cultural Heritage Archives Symposium
American Folklife Center, Library of Congress
September 26-27, 2013**

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On September 26 and 27, 2013, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress held a free international symposium that was open to the public entitled *Cultural Heritage Archives: Networks, Innovation & Collaboration* (<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/events/culturalheritagearchives/>).

The two-day event was conceived to energize the discussion of ethnographic archival thought and practice by presenting fresh and dynamic strategies for contemporary archival realities. It also provided a forum for new and varied voices to present and discuss emerging archival initiatives as well as to introduce case studies focused on several key topics for a public audience. The symposium combined two excellent keynote speeches by invited speakers, with numerous short focused papers (5-7 min.) on a range of topics presented in six sessions, plus many posters and computer presentations in two 'Marketplace of Ideas' sessions.

The hope was that the symposium would encourage the participation of researchers and archivists whose work and approach to cultural heritage archives was ground-breaking and stimulating. With this in mind, a call for papers was sent out in April 2013 to a wide international audience not limited to those engaged in ethnographic research and archival work. This generated a surprisingly varied, innovative, and exciting set of proposals, many of which were chosen for the program. In all, sixty-five persons did presentations during the symposium days, including speakers from many American institutions from across the country as well as those from India, Egypt, France, Italy, Kazakhstan, the UK, and Canada.

Cultural heritage archives serve as valuable repositories of memory and knowledge and represent the on-going community-based creativity of individuals and groups. During the past decade, there has been an increasing acknowledgement of the value and power of developing such archives at all levels, from very local and informal collections to large national and international repositories. Among American archivists working with folklore and ethnomusicological materials, significant recent progress has been made to professionalize the process of working with archival materials through improved communication, coordinated efforts, and collaborative projects (as demonstrated by the creation and development of the National Folklore Archives Initiative and

the AFS Ethnographic Thesaurus), among other things. It is noteworthy to mention that, with the symposium, the audience and community of ethnographic and cultural heritage archivists was significantly broadened.

In addition, the symposium explored common issues of concern to a varied array of cultural heritage archives and archivists. The topic of “cultural heritage archives” seemed to strike a chord, drawing interest and excitement, not just from folklore and ethnomusicological archivists but also from scholars, researchers and other archivists and librarians from vastly different arenas who felt a kinship with the topics and approaches offered in the call for papers. For example, there were submissions from those representing Native and other ethnic communities, a professor from an academic Theater and Dance Department, museum staff, historians and oral historians, educators, metadata librarians, archivists working with photography and moving images, and more.

Among other things, the symposium provided an opportunity to concentrate on ways in which archives and archivists can develop collaborations and alliances with communities involved in cultural heritage documentation to address their shared concerns.

CALL FOR PAPERS:

The symposium program, consisting of short talks given during six sessions plus a variety of poster and other presentations, was generated through a call for papers. Colleagues from diverse areas of work devoted to cultural heritage archives were encouraged to submit proposals. The publicity for the symposium was widely distributed widely in the United States and abroad. Presenters were asked to offer case studies, models, and topics related to the theme of one of the six main sessions that were discussed during the symposium, described in the following way:

Session I: Users of Cultural Heritage Archival Materials

The role of an archive is conceived most frequently as preserving documentation of activities and events, sometimes for contemporary uses but more often with an eye to the future. This session will focus on issues surrounding relationships between archives and communities of users in terms of interaction and outreach.

- Who are the users of archival collections?
- What presumptions do archivists make about these users (both present and future)? How do these presumptions shape the kinds of documentation archives acquire and the mechanisms by which they provide access to collections?
- Who are the users of academic, public, and private archives respectively? Are they from the same demographic groups? If not,

where are the overlaps?

- How are ethnographic archives working together with communities of origin?
- If archivists recognize under-utilized resources in their collections and recognize possible users of such material, how do they (or should they) bring the users and the materials together?

Session II: Archival Description

With the rise and increasing sophistication of search capabilities and information technologies in the digital age, as well as new user behaviors, archives are challenged to rethink older modes of collection description. This session will explore successful and not-so-successful case studies and solutions for providing access to cultural heritage materials.

- How are archivists changing the ways in which they describe archival collections? How are changes in access technologies driving these changes? How are changes in preservation technologies affecting these changes? What are other drivers?
- How has the use of controlled vocabularies facilitated or hindered access in this new environment?
- How can archivists maintain professional descriptive standards while facilitating participatory description through collaborative cataloging?
- How do archives loosen their control of archival description to allow communities of origin to maintain connections to their cultural materials?
- How does More Product / Less Process apply to cultural heritage and ethnographic materials, where the need to provide deep contextual background is ever-challenged by today's exponential growth of cultural documentation?

Session III: Preservation and Digital Stewardship

Cultural heritage documentation exists in complex states of being—be these states digital, physical, electronic, material, analog, acoustic, visual, aural, tactile, textual, or any combination thereof. A single method for preservation of our multifarious collections seems implausible, or even naïve. This session looks to the field of cultural heritage archives for broad or specific views on active preservation and/or digital stewardship programs.

- What are you doing to ensure the longevity of your collections?
- How do you balance analog and digital preservation of your materials?
- Which tools are you using?
- What tools are needed?
- Which models currently work, and which do not?

Session IV: Forging Archival Collaborations and Alliances

No matter what their size or location, archives face the same preservation and access issues. But smaller ones do not have the advantage of economies of scale. And archives are often located within larger academic or governmental institutions that may shape their policies (as well as budgets). As a result, similar materials housed in different archives may experience different levels or processes of preservation. They may also be afforded different types or levels of access.

- Are there examples of archival collaborations that respect institutional differences but still bridge those realities?
- Are there examples of alliances that help the archival community maximize preservation and access?

Session V: Sharing Resources

Archives today do much to reach out to external audiences for support through crowd-sourcing, targeted participation, on-site volunteerism and internships, among other strategies. This session looks to the field for examples of ongoing collaborations between archives, both successful and unsuccessful.

- How do archives work with other archives to share resources, improve efficiency, find new audiences, or develop collaborative projects?
- How beneficial is resource sharing among archival institutions?
- To what extent is it feasible to serve as a back-up repository where the control of content remains in the hands of communities of origin?
- We see how participatory activities between archives and the public work, but how are they sustained, and how are the results of such participation integrated into long-term archival practice and preservation?

Session VI: Education and Training

Cultural heritage archivists are often asked to give guidance and offer training for preserving, safeguarding, and providing access to ethnographic materials. This effort involves mastering myriad and often complex areas of study. This session focuses on case studies of archival training models, collaborations, and examples that have worked or have not—to encourage the development of coordinated training for the archival treatment of cultural heritage materials.

- How can we help to provide the most efficient and effective training for individuals and groups seeking archival assistance—and what are the most beneficial ways to coordinate our efforts?
- In what ways can larger or regional archival institutions offer support that can effect lasting change in local or community archives?

AFS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUNDING:

The response to the call for papers was far more than anticipated. Using federally appropriated funds, the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress was able to support a portion of the costs associated with the keynote speakers and session chairs, plus a number of presenters who could not travel to the symposium without such support. Through the AFS Consultancy and Professional Development Program, the American Folklife Center was able to offer valuable additional financial support to a selection of chosen expert colleagues to encourage their participation and to ensure a rich level of discourse and discussion for those who attended the symposium. Specifically, the American Folklife Center requested and were granted money for travel support for nine speakers who would otherwise not have been able to attend the symposium for financial reasons. These invited speakers were experts in their fields and represented cutting-edge thinking and practice in the cultural heritage archives sector.

The following presenters were able to attend the Cultural Heritage Archives Symposium as a result of AFS Consultancy and Professional Development Funding:

Alexandria Caster and Lizeth Zepeda
Arizona Historical Society Library and Archives, Tucson, AZ

"Visible Culture, Enduring Memory: Sharing Historic Photos of Arizona's Mexican Heritage with the Digital Generation"

Abstract: Recent conflicts over the banning of ethnic studies illustrate how southern Arizona's rich cultural heritage has come under attack by efforts to contest or marginalize community memory and cultural history. This presentation focuses on a project designed to share online hundreds of important cultural heritage photographs, which richly illustrate Arizona's Mexican cultural heritage. Archivist Alexandria Caster, noting that diverse photographs collected by the groundbreaking Mexican Heritage Project in the 1980s offered a powerful window on community memory, began a project to offer the digital generation worldwide access to these images. A Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant provided support for a new digital exhibit of hundreds of photos now online at the Arizona Memory Project. This presentation highlights efforts of project manager Alexandria Caster and Lizeth Zepeda, Knowledge River Graduate Assistant, with regards to digitization, exhibit creation, and outreach efforts to bring community members closer to this vital cultural heritage archive.

Alexandria Caster is an archivist and librarian at the Arizona Historical Society Library and Archives with a profound interest in historic photographs as well as

art, history and cultural heritage traditions of varied expressions. Her research interests currently focus on variations of cultural expression, constructions of memory, and the intersection of art, identity, language and representation as reflected through the photographic medium.

Lizeth Zepeda is currently pursuing her master's degree at the University of Arizona's School of Information Resources and Library Science (SIRLS) where she is a Knowledge River Scholar. Her interests include an intersectional approach to race, class, gender, and sexuality with regards to archiving. An additional focus of hers is that of uncovering erased and ignored histories of communities of queer people of color.

Anna Fariello
Hunter Library, Digital Initiatives, West Carolina University

"Hand to Hand: Connecting Digital Humanities to Community"

Abstract: This presentation is built on experiences at Western Carolina University where an academic library's Digital Initiatives program works hand-in-hand with the region's many archival repositories to create robust online access to archival holdings. While some of Hunter Library's external partners are large (Great Smoky Mountains National Park, for example), most partner archives are housed at smaller institutions with few staff and limited resources. Over the past decade, the library has built relationships with diverse groups, including local and indigenous partners, state and federal partners, as well as internal university partners. This paper will describe a number of successful online archival collections and will focus on the development of external partnerships with specific strategies for involving underserved communities in professional practice and the challenges involving community partners.

Anna Fariello is an Associate Professor at Western Carolina University's Hunter Library, where she is building digital collections focused on the region's material culture. She has training as a professional curator and is a former research fellow with the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Among her publications, she is author of three books on Cherokee crafts, author of *Blue Ridge Roadways: A Virginia Field Guide to Cultural Sites* (2006), and co-author of the textbook *Objects & Meaning: New Perspectives on Art and Craft* (2003).

Joanne Lammers and Teague Scheiter
Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences/Writers' Guild Foundation,
Los Angeles, CA

"Beyond the Vaults: Creating a Shared Resource through Aggregation of Motion Picture Oral History Collections"

Abstract: Moving image archives are responsible for the preservation of film and video heritage. To further its preservation mission and to document the contributions of filmmakers, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (AMPAS) has an initiative to record video oral histories with people in all film professions. These spoken accounts provide insight into the art, science, and craft of motion pictures. To ensure those stories already recorded are preserved and accessed, AMPAS is forming an oral history consortium with entertainment guilds and societies to share resources, exchange best practices and seek solutions to common problems. Using the Writers Guild Foundation's deposit agreement with AMPAS, this presentation will discuss the current form of these partnerships -- from centralized storage and cataloging to a workflow for co-production and a collective search for funding. By fostering collaboration between large and small archives, the project hopes to preserve at-risk collections and provide access to our community's voices.

Joanne Lammers is Director of the Writers Guild Foundation Archive, where she manages the daily operations of the Foundation's special collections, which include the historical records of the Writers Guild of America, West, as well as personal papers, scripts, production material, photographs, and oral histories of prominent writers for film, television, radio and digital media.

Teague Schreiber is the Manager of Oral History Projects for the Academy Foundation, overseeing the identification and acquisition of at-risk audiovisual oral history collections to ensure their preservation, as well as the production of new video-recorded oral histories, in fulfillment of the larger goal of providing access to filmmaker voices within the Academy's forthcoming Motion Picture Museum. Schreiber received a BA in film & digital media from the University of California, Santa Cruz and a master's degree in preservation and presentation of the moving image from the University of Amsterdam.

Colby Maddox
Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago, IL

"Old Town School Call Numbers: What's in a Name?"

Abstract: Old Town School has created a successful, genera-based system to describe its folk music collections to 250 teachers and 7,000 students who require a non-academic, consumer-friendly access model. Five main genres were identified in Old Town's collection (North American Roots, Celtic, Folk, World and Pop) and laid out thirty-one subgenres under the mains. Larger geographic areas in the World genera (European, Latin) were also assigned country codes. Call numbers are created by combining genre, subgenera, country code, subject, item number and media type. For example, our third Victor Jara LP would be coded W1aCsJaraV3-LP. By viewing, hearing or repeating these call numbers, a patron receives all the necessary information to locate materials. MP3 copies of the each archival Old Town School concert recording

are stamped with their associated metadata. Soon our patrons will be able to access archival recordings digitally using the same friendly and familiar terms as our consumer materials.

Colby Maddox has been the Manager of the Old Town School of Folk Music's library and archive since 1999 where he works with published recordings, books and video recordings, as well as unpublished live concert recordings of performances presented at the School. In 1999, after the School had completed a move to the former Hild Library, he brought the Resource Center out of storage, and has since enjoyed creating and maintaining a working library and archive with Old Town's unique holdings.

Peter B. Kaufman
Archives for Creativity and Intelligent Television, New York City

"Creativity and Moving Image Archives"

Abstract: What if we were able to tell our stories through the moving image with the ease with which we tell our stories through the printed word? The technology to communicate may be available, but our cultural heritage archives - and moving image archives in particular - lack the welcoming utility of our public libraries. We need to develop a process that empowers pioneers - journalists, historians, artists, scientists and other explorers - to journey into our collections, not just to send dispatches back from the coalface but also to create new works and new insights by working with these valuable assets. This process includes incentives to attract pioneers into our moving image archives, simple confidence-building measures by the host institutions, and distinctive showcases and platforms to bring new work to new audiences.

Peter B. Kaufman is president and executive producer of Intelligent Television in New York City. Intelligent Television produces films, videos, and television in close association with cultural and educational institutions worldwide. INT recently launched the Intelligent Channel on YouTube to present an original multi-part series focused on politics, history, art, and literature. Educated at Cornell and Columbia University, Kaufman has served as associate director of Columbia University's Center for New Media Teaching and Learning; co-director, with the British Film Institute's Paul Gerhardt and co-chair of the Copyright Committee of the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

Jane Anderson
Center for Heritage and Society, Anthropology Department, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
 and
Kimberly Christen
Dept. of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies, Washington State University, Pullman, WA

"Local Contexts: Traditional Knowledge Licenses and Labels"

Abstract: This presentation will introduce Local Contexts, an informational website for a new set of Traditional Knowledge (TK) Licenses and Labels developed in response to indigenous communities' needs. Local Contexts provides a new option for indigenous communities to manage their intellectual property rights and interests in the documentation, digitization, and sharing of their digital cultural heritage. The License and Label options provide indigenous, local and traditional communities new options in terms of access and control, based on customary rules, protocols, guidelines, and models for appropriate use of cultural heritage materials. The framework is also designed to help cultural institutions work with these communities to include missing documentary information and to help negotiate ownership and control of public domain materials. Local Contexts is being developed in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organization, the Intellectual Property in Cultural Heritage project (IPinCH), the Mukurtu CMS software platform, and the Center for Digital Archaeology.

Jane Anderson is Assistant Professor in the Center for Heritage and Society, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, and Adjunct Professor of Law at New York University School of Law. Her work is focused on the philosophical and practical problems for intellectual property law and the protection of Indigenous/traditional knowledge resources and cultural heritage. Since 2007 Anderson has worked as an Expert Consultant for the World Intellectual Property Organization on a number of policy proposals for the protection of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions. These include developing a framework for an international alternative dispute resolution/mediation service for intellectual property and Indigenous knowledge disputes, international guidelines for cultural institutions with Indigenous collections, and the development of site-specific intellectual property protocols to assist local communities and enhance and support already-existing knowledge-management practices.

Kimberly Christen is an Associate Professor in the Department of Critical Culture, Gender and Race Studies, Director of Digital Projects at the Plateau Center for American Indian Studies and Associate Director of the Digital Technology and Culture program at Washington State University. Her academic research focuses on the intersection of digital technologies, archival practices, cultural heritage movements and intellectual property rights within indigenous communities and other stakeholders. She is currently directing the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, a collaboratively curated online site for Plateau cultural materials, and Mukurtu CMS, a free, open source digital archive and content management tool specifically designed to meet the needs of indigenous communities as they manage and share their digital cultural heritage.

The Symposium itself:

As it turned out, the symposium offered an inspiring collection of presentations by archivists, librarians, researchers, historians, theorists, and educators representing many perspectives and cultural heritage archives of all kinds. It was especially fortunate that many of the some 250 attendees at the event, including international visitors, actively engaged in discussions following sessions, asking thought-provoking questions and challenging speakers with comments--and then eagerly networked during the coffee hours and at the evening reception. One prominent thread that ran throughout the many topics and approaches considered at the symposium was that of the need and value of increased collaboration among archives and archivists. And further, that it is ever more essential that archives involve community participation in their decision-making and strategies, whether with local communities, communities of origin, or ethnic or cultural groups.

The website of the *Cultural Heritage Archives: Networks, Innovation & Collaboration* can be found at:

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/events/culturalheritagearchives/index.html>

It links to the final schedule of the symposium, descriptions of each of the sessions, and biographical sketches for all the presenters plus abstracts of their presentations. The symposium was webcast and will be posted on the Library of Congress website in the near future. A link to the webcast will appear on the symposium page cited above.

Follow-Up:

An evaluation form was distributed at the end of the symposium to attendees and presenters with questions about the organization of individual conference sessions and speakers, logistics of the event, and what were the most meaningful parts of the symposium. 30 evaluations forms were returned.

Here are a few comments on programming and speakers:

- Really appreciated the long sessions to accommodate presentations AND questions
- Good variety in terms of presenters and topics. . . A good mix of the philosophical and the practical—with additional technology thrown in
- This was a superb cross-section of research and disciplines. Technological innovation and best practices. The international speakers were much appreciated.
- Short presentations from many speakers was fresh and kept things moving. An excellent format.

Some comments on the most meaningful parts of the symposium:

- Connecting with a rich group of colleagues. I liked that it wasn't just academics who were invited to speak.

- Learning about new and learned systems. Making new relationships with similar researchers/archivists.
- Networking, exposure to recent trends or ideas.
- Variety of (global) participants.
- Honestly, all of it. I had such a great time and now have so much to think about!
- Exposure to so many different archives (outside of my normal subject matter)
- The emphasis on collaboration was much appreciated and exceeded my expectations.
- Performing the archive, collaborating, intellectual property and access issues.

On December 3, 2013, a follow-up Survey Monkey Questionnaire was sent to all participants and to those who had registered for the event. This survey asked if the symposium had created an opportunity for new interactions, inspired follow-up communications, or generated any collaborations based on having attended the symposium. 40 persons responded to the questionnaire. Among them:

- one person said how valuable it was that NEH staff were in attendance;
- quite a few mentioned meeting a very diverse array of speakers and archival perspectives, academic and otherwise, international and domestic, with whom many continue to have online conversations;
- another person brought up a plan to submit a proposal to Mellon (discussed for the first time at the symposium) to build a database that would include Native American materials from a variety of institutions;
- someone mentioned that a group of persons from Seattle who attended the symposium have met several times for follow-up meetings

Additional results of the symposium have been generated by self-initiated blogs and other online reports about the symposium posted on the American Folklife Center website and elsewhere. Here are citations to a few of these publications:

Aigine Cultural Research Center. "Cultural Heritage Archives: Networks, Innovation & Collaboration. *Aigine Cultural Research Center, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan website*, October 7, 2013. <http://www.aigine.kg/?p=5660&lang=en>

Bradtke, Elaine. "Bringing It Together and Getting It Out There." *The Full English*, October 3, 2013. <http://efdss-thefullenglish.blogspot.com/2013/10/bringing-it-together-and-getting-it-out.html>

Fernandez, Natalie. "The OMA at the Cultural Heritage Archives Symposium 2013." *Oregon Multicultural Archives Blog*, September 30, 2013. <http://wpmu.library.oregonstate.edu/oregon-multicultural-archives/2013/09/30/chas-2013/>

Koivisto, Joseph. "Library of Congress's Cultural Heritage Archives Symposium." *CUA CHIM* [Catholic University of America, Cultural Heritage Information Management Blog], September 29, 2013.

<http://cuachim.wordpress.com/2013/09/29/library-of-congresss-cultural-heritage-archives-symposium/>

Monier, Jacqueline. "Biblioteca Alexandrina Hosted at 'Archives of Cultural Heritage' Conference." *The Cairo Post*. October 9, 2013.

http://thecairopost.com/news/15714/arts_and_culture/bibliotheca-alexandrina-hosted-at-archives-of-cultural-heritage-conference

Muglia, Caroline. "Presenting at the Library of Congress!" *Cedars in the Pines: The Lebanese in North Carolina Project Website*, October 21, 2013.

<http://nclebanese.wordpress.com/2013/10/21/presenting-at-the-library-of-congress/>

Russell, Samuel. "Report on: Cultural Heritage Archives: Networks, Innovation & Collaboration Symposium." *Seeking Wisdom in a Library*, January 29, 2014.

<http://seekingwisdominalibrary.wordpress.com/2014/01/29/report-on-cultural-heritage-archives-networks-innovation-collaboration-symposium/>

Saylor, Nicole. "Symposium Sparks Broad Discussion of Ethnographic Archives." *Folklife Today*, December 9, 2013. <http://blogs.loc.gov/folklife/2013/12/chas2013/>

Vallier, John. "UW Libraries Media Center Represented @ the Library of Congress." *UW Libraries Media Center Blog*, October 7, 2013.

<http://uwmediacenter.blogspot.com/>

Work, Lauren. "Cultural Heritage Archives Symposium." Posted by a National Digital Stewardship Resident at PBS in *Conferences & Events, NDSR and Tagged Archives, Cultural Heritage, Digital Preservation, LC*, October 1, 2013.

<http://workindigital.wordpress.com/tag/cultural-heritage/>

Finally, an article was recently published in the March/April issue of the Society of American Archivists' newsletter, *Archival Outlook*, by two presenters who met at the Symposium concerning one of their presentations:

Briggs, Anna and Deborah Hollis. "The Film Archive as a Classroom: Lessons for Heritage Professionals," *Archival Outlook*, March/April 2014, pp. 16, 30-13.

Conclusion

Following the Cultural Heritage Symposium, American Folklife Center staff have met amongst themselves and with others in the Library of Congress to discuss further follow-up collaborations and plans. The final chapter of this event has certainly not yet been written. With AFS Consultancy and Professional

Development Program support, the symposium received valuable support that enhanced the event and helped to make it a success. We look forward to continued archival collaborations, projects, and outreach opportunities with the larger field of cultural heritage archives.