

Manufacturers' Aircraft Association Records Now Available

The nearly four hundred cubic feet of records of the Manufacturers' Aircraft Association (MAA) have been arranged, described, and cataloged and are now available for research. The MAA, although not very well known today, for sixty years played an instrumental role in the development of the aviation industry.



One of the Hunter brothers making some adjustments to the engine during a 1931 flight. Manufacturer's Aircraft Association Records.

Before World War I, aviation was not an accepted means of transportation. Airplanes were flown by a few barnstormers, or those wealthy enough to afford an airplane, and were viewed by most people as dangerous contraptions. There were only about six small shops manufacturing airplanes at the time. During the war, the combatants realized the potential of the airplane as a military weapon. The Allies placed orders for planes from United States' companies beginning in 1915. At that time there were approximately 130 patents related to aviation held by various companies. There was little cooperation between airplane manufacturers and often the companies went to court over the use of patents, which hindered the development of the industry. This atmosphere changed somewhat in

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From the Director



Mark Greene

Twenty years ago, when an archivist was asked the question, “what is it you do?” he or she most likely would have answered to the effect that “I preserve primary sources of permanent value.” In the years since, the profession has shifted its perception of its responsibilities. I’ve had occasion to discuss in previous columns that we have learned that permanence is an unrealistic goal, and that preservation is a means to an end—the end being researchers accessing and using the material—not an end in itself. Nevertheless, preservation remains crucial to our mission, and a recently issued study, *A Public Trust at Risk: The Heritage Health Index Report on the State of America’s Collections*, published by Heritage Preservation and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, focuses attention on the extent to which US repositories are implementing the most important preservation steps—storage environment, security, and emergency planning.

The new study provides evidence of how well US repositories are or are not doing in these areas. The Health Index is based on results of a detailed national repository survey in which the American Heritage Center (AHC) participated about a year earlier. The publication is a summary of the fuller data and analysis found on the accompanying web site (www.heritagehealthindex.org). The hard copy summary is available for order from the web site for \$1.50. While it is intended as a “call to action to improve the care of collections” in every manner of repository across the U.S., the index shows that archival repositories generally do a better job of preserving their collections than do libraries and museums—and reveals further that the AHC is among the institutions that have most thoroughly addressed major preservation risks.

We know from studies undertaken at the Library of Congress and other institutions that the single most important influence on the longevity of archival materials is the storage environment in which they are kept: temperature, humidity, light, air quality. No other factors—the type of boxes and folders the archival material is kept in, for example—are anywhere close to as important for preservation purposes. This is precisely why repositories go to great lengths and expense to create stable storage climates by installing substantial HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems—and often installing specialized lighting that reduces heat buildup and ultraviolet rays—in their storage spaces.

The index notes that only 9% of archives have no environmental controls in any of their storage spaces; the AHC is among the roughly 30% of archives with such controls in all of its storage spaces. While the report does not break down statistics on repositories with adequate security systems by archives/libraries/museums, we are among the 40% of large repositories of all types with proper security—with substantial support from the University our aging building security system was upgraded and expanded this summer.

And given that even the best climate controls and security systems cannot compensate for damage caused by emergencies, whether natural flooding or burst building pipes, it is crucial for repositories to have formal disaster response plans. As one of our profession’s newsletters recently reminded us,

No institution is immune to fires or broken water pipes. Be it caused by an act of God, garden-variety human stupidity, or poor maintenance, your institution will have a disaster of some sort...disaster and emergency preparedness is a major part of any archives’ preservation plan.

HERITAGE
HIGHLIGHTS
Spring 2006

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Again, the AHC is among the one-third of archives that has such a plan. Our plan is tested, effective, and reviewed on a regular basis by its creator and chief implementer, Bill Hopkins, our Collections Manager. Just as I shared in this column a couple of years ago the generally taboo subject of reappraisal and deaccessioning, I will do the same now with the truth about disasters.

Archivists have been afraid that our donors and researchers would be demoralized if they knew the truth—as a professional conservator reminded all of us in a recent newsletter: “It is not a matter of *if* your institution will have a disaster, but *when*.” I’m betting that instead, the AHC staff’s ability to respond to those emergencies and to minimize their effect will inspire confidence. Last year, a negligent contractor in effect put a hole in a roof above one of our collection storage areas during a rainstorm. Water poured in, wetting 196 boxes. Under Bill’s direction, every member of our staff and faculty, from the director to the clerical staff and all the archivists and others in between, formed into teams to remove boxes from the shelves (not just those that were wet, but another two hundred or so that were at risk), transfer collection material from wet boxes to dry, and transfer any wet collection material immediately to our cold storage room.

Quick, purposeful emergency response meant that of the 196 wet boxes, 160 were replaced *before any of the contents were even damp* (the rather expensive boxes we use for collection storage absorb a great deal of water before letting any of the moisture reach the contents). When we brought a conservator from the Gerald Ford Conservation Center to assess the collection material that was wet, she reported to us that the combination of immediate reboxing, having a cold storage room available (most repositories are not so fortunate), and knowing to place the material immediately in that room (set out in our emergency response plan) resulted in all the material being able to dry properly and with no threat of mold.

The end result was that *nothing in our collections sustained serious damage*. Proper storage containers, the best storage environment (in this case a cold room), expert preparedness, and unstinting teamwork succeeded in diffusing a potential disaster. No repository can guarantee that emergencies won’t happen; the best can minimize or eliminate the consequences of those emergencies for the collections in our trust. Ultimately, just as there is no point to preserving material that cannot be used, nothing can be used if it isn’t preserved. My colleagues at the AHC do excellent work on both parts of that equation.

Follow-up to previous column on preserving home computer files: Tony Wickersham, the AHC’s Senior Computer Support Specialist writes: “I agree with the tips that you gave, but would like to add that TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) files can also be compressed, and one should specify the non-compressed option when creating a TIFF.” He is, of course, correct. UW Professor John Allen offered this:

External hard drives are now available in 60 GB capacities for about \$150, connected to the computer with FireWire (IEEE 1394) or USB 2.0. Professional photographers are now using these drives as secure storage. But folks need to heed your advice about temperatures and any source/generator of electromagnetic energy (TV sets, etc.).



Charlotte Greene




Manufacturers' Aircraft Association *continued from page 1*

1917 when several of the companies formed the Aircraft Manufacturers' Association to educate the public about the industry and improve airline engineering through collaboration.

Upon the entry of the U.S. into the war, the army and navy realized the need for a large number of planes to be manufactured and approached the association for assistance. The military determined twenty thousand planes were necessary, an impossibility because of patent litigation in the industry. In 1917, National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics proposed to the manufacturing companies that they draw up a patent licensing agreement whereby all airplane manufacturing companies producing planes for the government would use the patents. By July, the manufacturers organized the Manufacturer's Aircraft Association to manage the patent cross-licensing agreement.

The MAA invited all manufacturers to join the organization. The members had access to all of the patents licensed under the agreement. The MAA collected royalties for each airplane built and distributed the money among the patent owners. The association also became the spokesman for the industry and the liaison between the government and the manufacturers. The MAA made it possible for the quick production of planes for the war effort.

Following the war, the MAA continued its role as the principal spokesman for the development of the aviation industry. In 1919, it began publishing the *Aircraft Year Book*, which became the standard authority on aviation. Other functions of the MAA included assisting with the raising of a trained work force for the manufacturers, organization of vocational schools, and the sharing of manufacturing methods. After sixty years of operation, the MAA closed its doors on its New York offices during the mid-1970s. For six decades the organization provided the stability, cooperative environment, and leadership necessary to transform the fledgling airplane companies of the early twentieth century into hugely successful businesses which met the country's military and commercial aviation needs.

The MAA Records held by the AHC contain correspondence, legal files, patent and historical information, and sixteen cubic feet of photographs, dating from 1900 to 1955, of aircraft companies, airlines, aviators such as Charles Lindberg and Amelia Earhart, arctic explorers, early attempts at flight, military planes, and air mail operations. 

Wyoming History Day Contest Held at UW

The AHC hosted the 26th Wyoming History Day contest on May 1, 2006. More than 330 students in grades six through twelve from around the state registered for the competition. This year's theme was "Taking A Stand in History: People, Ideas, Events." The students had to select a topic which related to the theme and write a paper, produce a documentary, construct an exhibit, or write and act in a performance.

The students researched and presented a wide range of historical topics. Several entries studied the life of Oskar Schindler and his successful effort to save more than one thousand Jews from the gas chamber during World War II.

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Wyoming History Day Contest Held at UW continued from page 4

Wyoming History Day is affiliated with National History Day. The first and second place winners at the state contest are eligible to attend the national competition to be held at the University of Maryland at College Park during June.

The mission of National History Day is to provide students with opportunities to learn historical content and develop research, thinking, and communication skills through the study of history, and to provide educators with resources and training to enhance classroom teaching. The AHC strongly promotes the use of primary sources in the teaching of history, which is a requirement of every History Day entry.

The AHC coordinates Wyoming History Day, which is also sponsored by the Wyoming State Historical Society and the Wyoming Department of State Parks and Cultural Resources. Wyoming contributors to the student competition include Taco Johns, Inc., Qwest Communications, and the University of Wyoming.



Alicia Patton and Jenny Suau of Frontier Middle School in Casper performed "The Salem Witch Trials" at the Wyoming History Day competition.

Educators from Bolivia Visit Wyoming

by Kristi Wallin, Project Manager, Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education

Viewing our country, state, and university through the eyes of foreign visitors provides new perspectives and appreciation. Faculty and staff at the AHC had that privilege when they hosted a delegation of Bolivian educators. Through the Wyoming Partnership for Civic Education (Wyo-PCE), the AHC and College of Education have received a Civitas International Civic Education Exchange Program grant from the Center for Civic Education.

Civitas is a cooperative project of civic education organizations in the United States and emerging and established democracies throughout the world. The Civitas Exchange Program is administered by the Center for Civic Education and funded by the U.S. Department of Education under the Education for Democracy Act. The program is implemented worldwide in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State.

Wyoming has partnered with the *Educadores para la Democracia* (Educators for Democracy), a group of educators and policy makers in Bolivia who are working to initiate civic education programs in Bolivia's schools. During the two-year grant period, delegations of educators from



(From left to right, first row) Benjamin Maraza, public school teacher, Julie Sellers, foreign language specialist for the Wyoming Department of Education, Robert Huayta, La Paz Department of Education (second row left to right), Juan Carlos Parra, La Paz mayor's office, Isak Nti Asare, Laramie High School student and interpreter, and Ariel Mealla, a sociology professor from La Paz, enjoy one of the presentations at the AHC.

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Educators from Bolivia Visit Wyoming *continued from page 5*

Wyoming will travel to Bolivia to help them create and implement their programs. Delegations of educators and policy makers from Bolivia will visit Wyoming to interact with teachers and view civic education curriculum.

The first Bolivian delegation visited Wyoming in May, 2006. The group was led by Lourdes Maldonado, a school principal and chairwoman of *Eduadores para la Democracia*. Joining Senora Maldonado were representatives from the city/state department of education, the La Paz mayor's office, the university in La Paz, and two teachers.

During their time in Wyoming, the delegation visited Laramie, Cheyenne, and Casper. The AHC hosted a reception for them and faculty made presentations on various Wyoming topics. Rick Ewig spoke of teaching about the World War II era Heart Mountain Relocation Center using the AHC's manuscript collections. Carol Bowers and Rick Ewig discussed suffrage in Wyoming, and Judit Olah explained the responsibilities of the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership.


The Civitas delegation spent a day in Cheyenne visiting with state legislators, Wyoming Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Hill, and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jim McBride. The delegation also visited various schools in Casper and Cheyenne.

The next Civitas exchange will occur in August when another delegation of Bolivian educators travels to Wyoming to participate in the Wyo-PCE's Summer Workshop for Civics Educators, which will be held in Powell. 

AHC Joins Prospector

by Mark Shelstad

Prospector is a unified catalog of twenty-three institutions in Colorado and Wyoming that provides access to almost 20 million books, archives collections, journals, sound recordings, films, videotapes and other materials. This service will be fully available to UW faculty, students and staff by April 2006.

The AHC records in Prospector will indicate that its collections are available for use and provide contact information on how to access the materials with online finding aids or by visiting the AHC. For more information, please visit the Prospector home page at <http://www.prospector.coalition.org> 



Mark Greene Elected to SAA Post

Mark Greene, director of the AHC, has been elected as vice president and president elect of the Society of American Archivists (SAA). Founded in 1936, SAA has become an advocate and focal point for the development of professional standards for the preservation of historical records and a resource for sharing information on how to address the challenge of managing computer-generated records. SAA is North


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Mark Greene Elected to SAA Post *continued from page 6*

America's oldest and largest national archival professional association, which educates and informs the country's large archival community.


Greene came to the AHC in 2002 from the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan, where he headed the Research Center programs. From 1989 to 2000 he was curator of manuscript acquisitions for the Minnesota Historical Society, and from 1985 to 1989 was college archivist for Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Greene earned a bachelor's degree in history and politics and government from Ripon College in Wisconsin, and a master's degree in U.S. history from the University of Michigan.

Greene responded to receiving the honor: "The AHC is a renowned institution, with nationally important collections and an outstanding staff and I have been honored to lead it. This is a significant honor, which I hope will provide an additional boost of visibility and status for the AHC." 

Judit Olah Joins AHC as Archivist for Simpson Institute

Judit Olah began her duties as Curator of the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership on January 30, 2006. Formerly, Judit was an Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies at Queens College of the City University of New York. She was the faculty coordinator of the Archives and Records Management program certified by New York State. Judit also taught courses in the areas of archives and records management, and the organization of information, indexing, abstracting, and thesaurus design. Before her academic appointment, Judit was the manager of archives services for eleven years for an international non-profit organization, where she managed large scale document preservation, storage relocation and digitization projects, besides running a department that provided archival reference and research services both nationally and internationally. Judit traveled extensively in the US and Canada to present at regional conferences as well as provide consultation to local units on archival policies and practices.

Judit discovered the beauty of Wyoming when participating in a conference in Sheridan, Wyoming in 1998 and has been coming out West ever since. She is an avid backpacker and a seeker of solitude. When not working she enjoys outings with her young son.

Judit has high aspirations in her new role at the AHC. "In our era of the vanishing paper records, it has become critical to collect and protect records of political and economic leadership not only for the sake of writing better histories but to capture the essence of past experiences that can guide us in our future endeavors. I am looking forward to the challenges of raising the awareness of the need and the importance of archiving historic documents." 



Judit Olah, Curator of the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership

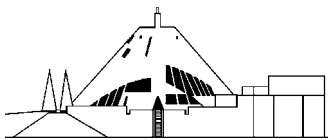


Photo
from the
Archives

A young couple just married in West Berlin received a bouquet of flowers from the bride's mother and grandmother who were not allowed to participate in the wedding. The mother and grandmother waved from a window in East Berlin. Ca. 1960s from the Richard Harrity Collection, American Heritage Center.



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