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Introduction

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Introduction

Helen Wong Smith

Since 2010 the Journal of Western Archives (JWA) has fulfilled its intent to publish on contemporary issues and developments in the archival and curatorial fields, particularly as they affect archives and manuscript repositories in the Western United States. One could argue that the majority of articles published in the journal extend beyond the Western region. This can be seen in the broad applicability of a number of its articles to the archival profession in general, including “Donor Relations in the Twenty-First Century,”¹ “From Accession to Access: A Born-Digital Materials Case Study,”² and “Developing Web Archiving Metadata Best Practices to Meet User Needs.”³ The content of the journal exhibits its value to all archivists and allied professionals.

Focusing the third topic-based special issue on diversity and inclusion addresses a woefully underrepresented subject in archival literature. While the importance of addressing diversity has gained significant recognition in the information professions, as demonstrated by the American Library Association’s establishment of an Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services and initiatives by the Society of American Archivists (SAA), the archival literature discussing diversity and inclusion is limited. Why and how archivists must increase diversity and inclusion in our profession and collections to better serve our communities is enriched by this issue.

It is noteworthy that the term “Diversity” is not listed as a keyword for this journal, yet a search of the journal’s contents results in 28 hits—the most relevant being a review of the 2014 SAA publication *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A*

1. Dainan M. Skeem, “Donor Relations in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of Western Archives* 9, no. 1 (2018), <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol9/iss1/9> (accessed January 29, 2019).
2. Cyndi Shein, “From Accession to Access: A Born-Digital Materials Case Study,” *Journal of Western Archives* 5, no. 1 (2014), <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol5/iss1/1> (accessed January 29, 2019).
3. Jackie M. Dooley, Karen Stoll Farrell, Tammi Kim, and Jessica Venlet, “Developing Web Archiving Metadata Best Practices to Meet User Needs,” *Journal of Western Archives* 8, no. 2 (2017) <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol8/iss2/5> (accessed January 29, 2019).

Reader on Diversity and Inclusion, edited by Mary A. Caldera and Kathryn M. Neal.⁴ The Native American Archives Special Issue produced by JWA reflects this journal's commitment to broadening the discussion surrounding diversity and inclusion.

The dearth of archival literature discussing diversity and inclusion is striking, even after the publication of *Through the Archival Looking Glass*. A WorldCat search on November 12, 2018 underscores the need for the profession to engage with these topics. While the search "Archiv* diversity" yields 239,685 hits and "Archives diversity" yields 103,383 hits, the results are tangential. The most recent work is a chapter in a monograph: "Media as a Threat and Subordinate of Cultural Heritage in Zimbabwe," 2019. By limiting the above search to "Library Science, Generalities & Reference," the hits decreased to 556, with 266 being print books, 201 ebooks, and 94 journal articles. Note that 299 are in French with 220 in English. The bilingual conference proceedings *CITRA 2007: Cooperation to Preserve Diversity* by the International Conference of the Round Table on Archives reflects the need to capture efforts being put forth for the benefit of our profession.

An additional limit within the WorldCat search of "Libraries – Library Science" resulted in 82 works in English ranging from "Design for Diversity: Library Services for Higher Education and Research in Australia" published in 1977 to "Asian American Librarians and Library Services: Activism, Collaborations, and Strategies" published in 2018. This further displays the miniscule coverage diversity and inclusion receives in our collective radar of professional issues which undoubtedly has increased since 2007.

Through the Archival Looking Glass is cited throughout this issue with good cause, and it is insightful to review the Library of Congress Subject Headings ascribed to it:

Archives -- United States -- Administration.

Minorities -- United States -- Archives.

Women -- United States -- Archives.

Sexual minorities -- Archives.

Archives -- Philosophy.

Information science -- Philosophy.

Archives -- Administration.

Minorities.

4. Alexandra M. Bisio, "Review of *Through the Archival Looking Glass: A Reader on Diversity and Inclusion*," *Journal of Western Archives* 5, no. 1 (2014), <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol5/iss1/9> (accessed January 29, 2019).

Sexual minorities.

Women.

United States.

I propose diversity and inclusion as it applies to the archival profession can far exceed these subjects. It is gratifying this issue expands the epistemology of diversity by the breadth of what can be included.

If you join me in the conviction put forth by Wendy Duff and Joan Cherry that “archives, have the potential to make social impact through preserving culture...,”⁵ you will appreciate the development of primary source literacy instruction and its connection with diversity and inclusion in **Understanding My Home: The Potential for Affective Impact and Cultural Competence in Primary Source Literacy**. The authors’ selections of collections which showcase the “diverse array of communities” reflect a sensitivity and responsiveness to cultural differences by considering “ideas beyond traditional, western notions of archives and records management.” Some are reticent in utilizing such collections due to their lack of confidence in cultural competence, and this project exhibits the success to be achieved by utilizing locally-focused manuscript collections that can resonate with students and facilitate a stronger sense of place and community. Those of us who have developed our archival instruction to align with coursework curriculum have long recognized increased student (and instructor) engagement. By recognizing the emotional impact archives can have, the authors argue that the concepts of “diversity, inclusion, cultural sensitivity, representation, belonging, identity, or visibility must be addressed” in the application of the Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy. By following their lead, we will be rewarded, as they were, with dramatically increased appreciation for our collections and profession.

Another academic approach to increase diversity is offered in **Archivist-in-Residence: Advocating and Managing Diversity Residency Opportunities in University Archives and Special Collections**. Angela Fritz provides practical advice for establishing and managing a residency program that she argues can “promot[e] diversity across campus through archival outreach [which] is about connecting cultures.” The resources, steps, considerations, and challenges for a diversity residency program can bridge campus cultures, a status we often fail to articulate, and have enormous impacts on institutional and professional goals.

Crossing such “cultural-divides” on campus and beyond its environs is addressed in **Seeking Grace: Reconstructing the History of African American Alumnae at**

5. Wendy Duff and Joan Cherry. “Archival Orientation for Undergraduate Students: An Exploratory Study of Impact.” *The American Archivist* 71, no. 2 (2008): 500-501, 504-508.

the University of Denver with interdisciplinary scholars, graduate students, and archivists collaborating to bring to light the contributions of a formerly under-represented population. It provides an excellent example of how to adjust a project focus when stakeholders change while maintaining the primary intent of the project.

The two papers from Utah State University in Logan, Utah exhibit how we can diversify our records and patrons. **Voices from Drug Court: Partnering to Bring Historically Excluded Communities into the Archives** is a bold departure from the traditional populations we collect in our repositories arguing that such “omission [s] disregards the contributions and experiences of many communities throughout the U.S....to gain insights into the human experience.” The importance of such community-based efforts engaging community scholars who are members of the community to be documented is emphasized in this article and reiterated in **Utah State University’s Cache Valley Latinx Voices Project: Social Justice in the Archives** which describes another project on the same campus. In addition to drawing on members from the Latinx community to join university specialists for their advisory board, they hired those with cultural currency to run the project. Other professions have long recognized the benefits of training a member of the target culture in their discipline rather than imposing a field expert into said culture, and this project’s success can be attributed to this approach in engaging community members in all aspects.

The objection to Western names imposed on traditional places have long been a battle fought by indigenous cultures. Similar sensitivity is related to the consciousness of memorializing buildings after those whose actions and values disrespect other cultures is the topic of **When Building Namesakes Have Ties to White Supremacy: A Case Study of Oregon State University’s Building Names Evaluation Process**. The laborious and painstaking process of evaluating the renaming of such buildings at Oregon State University features the role of archivists, who can “bring archival documents to the forefront of a community’s awareness and understanding,” the context these notables operated in. Offering “historical knowledge and research expertise,” the author played a significant role in a campus-wide endeavor incorporating multiple facets of diversity.

Diversity manifests itself in as many forms as the human experience, and **The Cost of Care and the Impact on the Archives Profession** challenges us to include a demographic seldom mentioned in such conversations. The impacts of caregiving in a profession with a higher than average tenuous employment with average salaries falling behind inflation are further compounded by gender, race, and sexual orientation. The authors’ assertion that “caregivers experience more limited choices in the types of archival employment they can pursue,” coupled with McCrea’s assertion that “leaders are not born, but develop out of opportunity,”⁶ is met with solid recommendations.

6. Donna E. McCrea, “Learning to Lead: Cultivating Leadership Skills” in “Leadership Skills for Archivists,” George Mariz et al., *The American Archivist* 74 (Spring/Summer 2011): 104.

One can always rely on Terry Baxter to present a philosophical view of a topic and his paper **The Doorway from Heart to Heart: Diversity's Stubbornly Persistent Illusion** does not disappoint. Recognizing the evolution of the concept from diversity to inclusion “operates from the premise that it is a false position to consider groups of people have the authority to *allow* other people to participate in societal structures” Baxter argues that examples of the historically disenfranchised communities telling their own stories allowed the accurate story to be revealed leads to a paradigm shift that we “value the community over the stuff.” His assertion that the need for a diverse human record is “because it will connect us to each other and to ourselves in meaningful ways” prompts me to nominate Baxter as Archival Philosopher for the decade.

Mahalo nui loa a pau to J. Gordon Daines III for the opportunity to serve as guest editor, the reviewers, and the authors who share the goal of diversification and increased inclusion of the archival record and our profession. These papers provide the reader with ample ideas, examples, and guidance to pursue this crucial goal.