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Introduction to Western Archivists Meeting Special Issue

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Introduction

J. Gordon Daines III

Regional archival associations play a key role in providing professional development opportunities for archivists. Their regional meetings are highly accessible, and they provide networking opportunities for archivists living and working in bounded geographic locations. These regional meetings are particularly important for archivists working and living in the western United States.

In the early 21st century the Conference of Intermountain Archivists, the Northwest Archivists, Inc., the Society of California Archivists, and the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists began to look for ways to strengthen their regional identity and decided to hold a joint annual meeting. The meeting was called the Western Roundup and was held in Las Vegas, Nevada.¹ It was extremely successful. Archivists enjoyed stimulating educational sessions and the opportunity to network with colleagues from different parts of the western United States. Leadership of the regional archival associations decided to build on the success of this initial conference and put in place a plan to hold a joint meeting of the four regional archival associations every five years. The second meeting was held in Seattle, Washington in 2010 and the third meeting was held in Denver, Colorado in 2015. The fourth meeting was to have been held in San Francisco, California from April 22-25, 2020 but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.² This version of the joint conference was renamed the Western Archivists Meeting.

The *Journal of Western Archives* was launched in Seattle, Washington at the 2010 joint conference. The purpose of the journal is to provide “archivists, manuscript curators, and graduate students in the American West a place to publish on topics of particular interest and relevance to them.”³ JWA has successfully filled this role over

1. J. Gordon Daines III, “Tilting at Windmills: Reflections on the Establishment of the Journal of Western Archives,” *Journal of Western Archives* 1, no. 1 (2010): 4. <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/vol1/iss1/1/>
2. Sara Platto, Yanqing Wang, Jinfeng Zhou, and Ernesto Carafoli. "History of the COVID-19 pandemic: Origin, Explosion, Worldwide Spreading." *Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications* 538 (2021): 14-23.
3. Journal of Western Archives, “About this Journal,” <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/about.html>. Accessed March 24, 2021.

the last decade publishing content covering topics from digital processing to web archiving to archival history to diversity, equity, and inclusion. It has become a valuable resource to archivists living and working in the western United States and beyond.

With the cancellation of the Western Archivists Meeting, the editorial board of the *Journal of Western Archives* decided to produce a special issue featuring content scheduled to have been presented at the Western Archivists Meeting. Articles in this special issue address topics from visual literacy to moving an archives to communities of practice to oral histories to employing an ethics of care model with students and interns. These topics are timely and interesting. While the editorial board realizes that a few journal articles cannot replace the missed opportunities provide by a joint regional meeting, we hope that these articles will stimulate discussion and conversation. We look forward to 2025 and the next joint meeting of the western regional archival associations.