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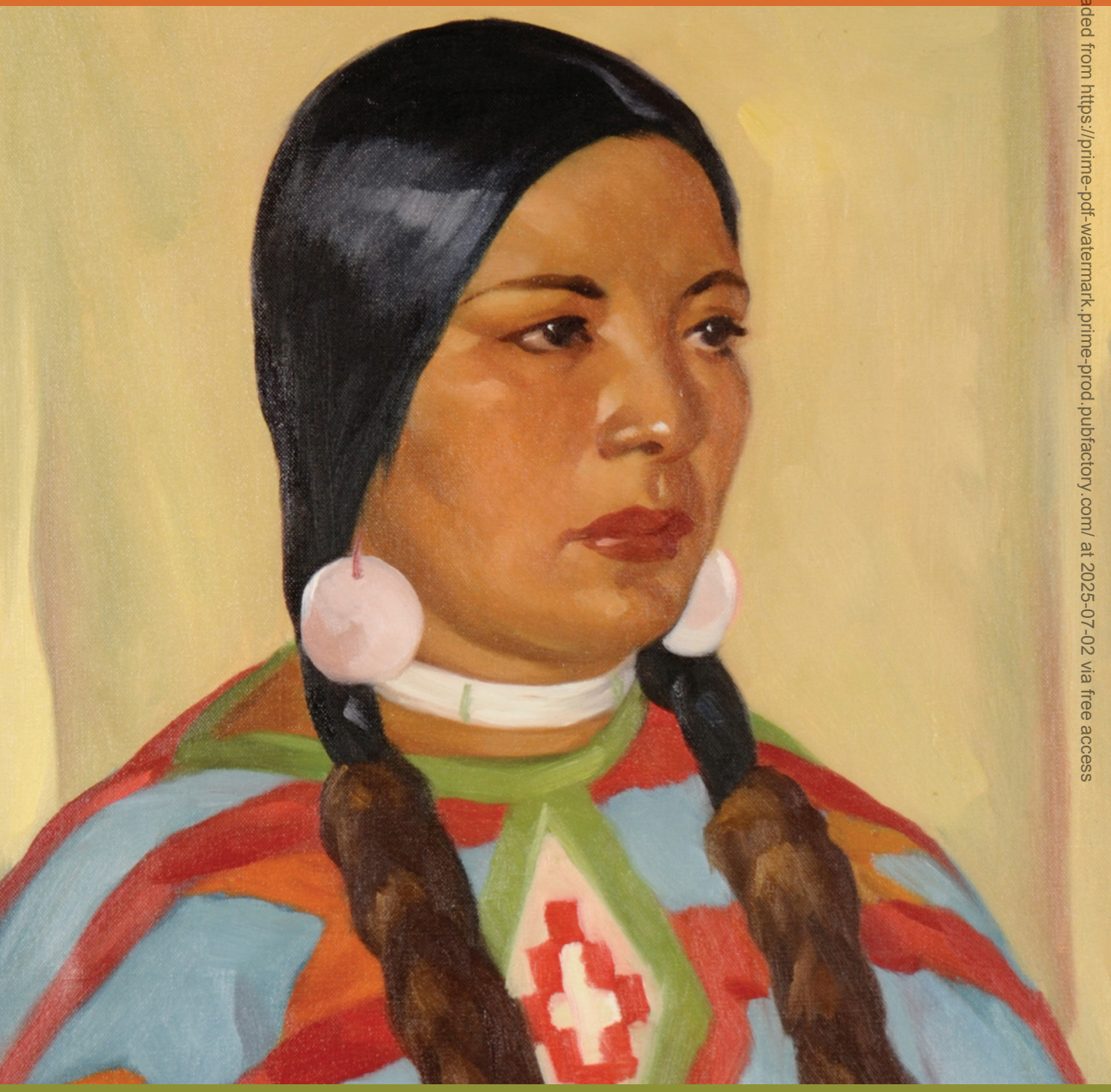
the

AMERICAN ARCHIVIST



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About the Cover

Worth D. Griffin, *Melissa Parr (Reflection at Dawn)*, 1935. Oil on canvas. Museum of Art/ WSU Permanent Collection, University purchase. 37.1.38. © Estate of Worth D. Griffin. Used with permission from Washington State University's Museum of Fine Arts.

This portrait of Melissa Chapman Parr (1903–1983) is part of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal discussed by Kimberly Christen in her article "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation." Parr was a full blooded Cayuse of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, a descendent of Chief Joseph, and a niece to Chief George Redhawk. Her Indian name was Talawetonmi, "Reflection of Dawn" in English. Recognized as a tribal beauty, she won the American Indian Beauty contest several times. In 1932, she was the first Indian woman selected as the Queen of the Pendleton Round-Up and in 1973 was inducted into the Pendleton Round-Up Hall of Fame. During World War II she christened the launching of the tanker the S.S. "Pendleton." (Malissa Minthorn Winks, Collections and Research Manager, Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.)

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Articles

Review Essay

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Forum

With the exception of editing for conformity to capitalization, punctuation, and citation style, letters to the Forum are published verbatim.

To the Editor:

The Library of Virginia would like to provide the readers of the *American Archivist* with up-to-date information about the Virginia Pupil Placement Board Records as discussed by Sonia Yaco in her article "Balancing Privacy and Access in School Desegregation Collections: A Case Study" in the Fall/Winter 2010 issue of the journal. Ms. Yaco's discussion of this collection was based on an informal conversation three years ago with the archivist then assigned to process this extensive collection (300 cubic feet), and the article does not present an accurate picture of how the collection is being managed and made accessible today.

Due to a substantial backlog of records in need of processing and limited archival staff, the Pupil Placement Board Records had not yet been processed when the Library received its first research request for these records in 2003. The agency made the records available to the researcher but asked her to sign a nondisclosure agreement to protect the Library should there be privacy-protected records in the collection. The agreement was based on similar documents used by other archival institutions and stated that the researcher could not use any privacy-protected information that might be contained in the records in a manner that would tie the information to a specific individual. The purpose of the research agreement was to protect individuals whose privacy might be compromised by the Library's providing access to an unprocessed collection. This was the only restriction ever placed on the use of the Pupil Placement Board Records.

Processing of the Pupil Placement Board Records began in 2006. As the processing archivist, Christopher J. Abraham, delved into the collection, he discovered material (report cards, adoption information, and medical records) that is protected under the definition of personal information found in the Code of Virginia [§ 2.2-3801] and addressed in FERPA and HIPAA guidelines. Ms. Yaco makes reference to this type of material as well in footnote 62 of her article. Mr. Abraham also observed that there were handwritten notations made on a number of placement applications that referenced IQ scores, commented on the mental condition of the child, or described indications of abuse. Since this information pertained to minors, the Library believed that it should be protected; as Mr. Abraham processed the collection, he sealed any original

application that contained sensitive material such as this for the seventy-five–year period permitted under the Virginia Public Records Act. At the same time, he placed a copy of the application with the sensitive material redacted in the original files next to the sealed item. Thus, the research potential and the integrity of the collection were preserved. No portion of the collection has ever been separated, removed, or in any way treated in a manner that is inconsistent with accepted archival practice. Returning documents containing privacy-protected material to the originating agency and thus separating them from the record group to which they belong—the approach outlined in the second case study in Ms. Yaco's article relating to the Norfolk Public Schools Desegregation Papers—is not in keeping with best practices in the archival profession.

Mr. Abraham had only processed a small portion of the collection by February 2008, when Ms. Yaco contacted him. Mr. Abraham was happy to have a collegial conversation with a professional colleague responsible for another collection that presented similar issues. He was not informed by Ms. Yaco that she considered the conversation to be a formal interview, as indicated in footnote 50 of the article. Mr. Abraham left the Library for a promotional opportunity with another archival organization shortly after this conversation. Ms. Yaco has not spoken with anyone at the Library since that time about the processing of the collection, although the manager of the State Records Branch and the state archivist would have been most willing to talk with her. Ms. Yaco spoke with the director of the American Friends Service about the third collection used as a case study but did not reach out to anyone of similar standing at the Library of Virginia. She also never visited the Library to examine the Pupil Placement Board Records in person. Her assessment of the processing and accessibility of the collection is based on one informal conversation with an archivist early in his work and not on her own personal experience.

The Library of Virginia consulted with the agency's counsel within the Attorney General's Office in December 2008. Our counsel had no issues with the Library's approach to the collection, finding it to be conscientious, if conservative. Ms. Yaco is indeed correct in stating that before Library staff had familiarized themselves with the content of the collection, researchers had to file a formal request to use the collection. However, no one has ever been denied access. In fact, five researchers have asked to use the collection since 2003 (not one, as stated in Ms. Yaco's article on page 639), and all have been accommodated. Users of the Pupil Placement Board Records no longer have to file a formal research request but only need to complete the general patron registration form that all users of the Archives Research Room sign when they view any manuscript material.

The Library of Virginia is dismayed that the editors of the *American Archivist* did not attempt to verify the facts prior to publishing Ms. Yaco's article. We hope

that this article will not discourage researchers from using the Pupil Placement Records. We welcome research in the Pupil Placement Board Records and other collections in the Library of Virginia that shed light on Virginia history during the period of massive resistance, desegregation, and civil rights. These topics have been neglected by historians and archivists for far too long.

Sandra Gioia Treadway
Librarian of Virginia and State Archivist

To the Editor:

I would like to respond to Sandra Treadway's letter about my article, "Balancing Privacy and Access in School Desegregation Collections: A Case Study." The basis for the section of my article dealing with the Library of Virginia (LVA) was an interview with the then current archivist of the Virginia Pupil Placement Board Records. I first spoke with him on the phone and told him that I wanted to write an article on how school desegregation collections were dealt with at various institutions. I invited him to co-author a presentation at a professional conference on this topic, but he declined. I then visited the Library of Virginia to see him, and the collection, in person. I took notes at our meeting. It is difficult for me to see how this could have been misinterpreted as an informal discussion.

To further understand how the Library of Virginia handled access to this collection, I contacted the Library of Virginia Archives and Map Research Room and asked about the procedures for accessing the Pupil Placement Board Records. I was provided with the Researcher Application form I discuss in the article. In my article I quote Sarah Eskridge as writing in her 2006 article that she is the only one who had seen the collection, which was true at the time she wrote her article. In the course of researching my article during 2009 and 2010, I followed up by speaking to several researchers who had recently used the collection, and they confirmed the access procedures. Thus I verified the access procedures used by Library of Virginia in multiple ways. I am happy to hear that the Researcher Application is no longer in use, but that does not change the fact that LVA did require it in the past.

In each of the three repositories I examined in my article, I spoke with the archivist responsible for the collection in question. At the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) archives, that archivist is also the director of the archives. Unlike LVA, it is not primarily a library and archives. So for both AFSC and LVA, I spoke with the archivists directly responsible for the collections in question.

I join Sandra Treadway in hoping that researchers will use the Pupil Placement Board Records and other records at LVA and other repositories to uncover the full story of the struggle for civil rights in Virginia. I would welcome greater involvement by LVA staff in the statewide Desegregation of Virginia Education Project, which I cochair.

Sonia Yaco
Old Dominion University

FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Jo Pugh

Categories and Connections

A reader took me to task recently for placing a paper in the "articles" section of the journal rather than the "perspectives" section, which set me thinking about categories. For more than twenty years now, the editorial policy of the *American Archivist* has defined article categories, and the table of contents has been organized to reinforce categorization, most commonly by research articles, case studies, perspectives, and reviews. The order in the print journal may imply a hierarchy, or readers may infer a hierarchy, whether intended or not.

The online version of the *American Archivist* also categorizes articles, but the reader's experience is not the same as it is with the print version. In the print journal, the table of contents structures the content of an issue but does not control the reader's experience. Print affords easy scanning, flexible browsing, and nonlinear reading of images, captions, graphs, and tables as paths through the issue. In the current iteration of the online journal, the interface to an issue fixes the reader's path through the content, which is most usable as a "chunk" of content with borders, boundaries, and an order that can be breached only through the secondary function of going to a specific page. Online access is clean and efficient but far more deterministic for the reader, as the present technology stands.

The use of categories depends on who owns them, defines them, and applies them, and of course, categories mean different things to different people. As defined in the editorial policy for the *American Archivist*, research articles are "analytical and critical expositions based on original investigation or on systematic review of literature," and case studies are "analytical reports of projects or activities that take place in a specific setting and offer the basis for emulation or comparison in other settings." In the social sciences, the case study is but one of many research methods available to the investigator.

In practice, *American Archivist* readers may tend to think of research articles as "theory" and case studies as "practice," even though as editor I do not sense

this distinction in the way that authors present their work to the journal. A research paper may emphasize a particular research methodology to test hypotheses, articulate new models, or generate new knowledge or insights from particular study populations. In a classic mode, a research article should provide new ways of "talking about the nature of things," as Michael Buckland writes.[1] Most research in archival studies, however, has typically been done with constrained participation or limited numbers of institutions, so that the distinction sometimes blurs between research papers and case studies. Although a well-developed case study reports on changes to institutional practice or provides practical solutions at one institution that can be emulated by others, we seek case studies that extend archival thought beyond the borders of institutional practice to encompass new ways of doing the work of archives.

As Geoffrey Yeo brilliantly pointed out in the *American Archivist* in 2008, people think of categories as prototypes but at the edges of any category are boundary objects that may be claimed by the members of more than one community.[2] As editor, I must consider how the categorization of articles meets the needs of authors and readers. Authors on a tenure track, whether teaching faculty or university staff, may care very much whether their papers are labeled as articles or case studies. Readers differ about whether the content in the *American Archivist* is too "theoretical" or too "practical," and the rather arbitrary categorization of papers in a given issue, although an attempt to be useful, sometimes becomes counterproductive. Such is the case for the articles in this issue, some of which cross the boundary between the presentation of research findings and the explication of a single case.

Several of the papers in this issue examine categories and connections. Kimberly Christen, in "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation," provides a case study of the Plateau tribes in the Pacific Northwest and directly confronts the issue of categories and the power relationships that they convey, especially in the description of records touching the lives of Native Americans. She introduces insightful sources from the literature of anthropology and the social sciences. As one of the reviewers noted, this paper "provides an excellent model of how to apply some of the goals that we've put forth in the Native American Protocols." Christen's article is a concrete example of the kinds of

> simultaneous multiple provenance, parallel provenance, and cocreatorship in postcolonial settings…[with] large implications for archival theory and practice as they challenge existing constructs of the archive itself, as well as ownership and other rights in record. . . . They point to the need to account

[1] Michael Buckland, "On the Nature of Records Management Theory," *American Archivist* 57 (Spring 1994): 346–51.

[2] Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Record (2): Prototypes and Boundary Objects," *American Archivist* 71 (Spring/Summer 2008): 118–43.

> for the multiple perspectives and requirements of the cocreators of records in appraisal decisions; capture their multiple perspectives and contexts in archival description; and reflect and negotiate a matrix of mutual rights and obligations in archival policy making and in the development of professional codes of ethics.

The Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG) of the Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI) discusses similar issues in an even broader framework in its paper "Educating for the Archival Multiverse." The authors provide helpful ways of seeing how various groups categorize content, access, research, and teaching. They provide a theoretical framework that goes well beyond the practice of archives. They argue for the use of the term *pluralism* rather than *diversity* to clarify what we want to do in our professional strategic goal, noting that

> *Diversity* as a concept, along with its supporting rhetoric and policy of multiculturalism, tends to play into "us" and "them" ways of thinking, emphasizing the differences between mainstream and minority or marginalized communities or groups.

They argue that the use of the term *pluralism*

> strives to give equal footing to the range of perspectives explored, encompassing such considerations as culture, race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic standing, gender, gender identity, sexuality, disability, and citizenship status, as well as to recognize the intersections among them.

One of the reviewers noted that this paper "emphasizes the need to replace the dominant system or paradigm in archives with what it variously describes as 'multiverse,' or 'pluralistic' perspectives on the archival mission."

Kate Theimer offers a perspective about a pivotal moment in the development of the archival profession. Like Janus, she looks back to look forward. In "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?," she shows how categories change over time and may accumulate until what results can only be considered a fundamental paradigm shift. Theimer goes well beyond Web 2.0 applications to posit that changing archival knowledge, practice, and attitudes have coalesced into a new professional worldview that she calls Archives 2.0. She proposes that this concept provides a useful starting point for conversations about future directions for the archival profession.

Emily Monks-Leeson, winner of the 2010 Pease Award for her paper "Archives on the Internet: Representing Contexts and Provenance from Repository to Website," ponders how online collections of archival materials mounted by nonarchivists affect the public understanding of archives. She also

examines shifting categories. Like Kimberly Christen, Monks-Leeson points out a

> renewed interest in ways of representing records' contexts of creation and use to reveal complex and shifting meanings without abandoning a foundation from which such meanings can be gleaned." She reviews "recent archival literature and how it points to the ways that this plurality of source and meaning, and the awareness of the interrelationships and multiple creators within fonds, does not necessarily unseat the concept of provenance itself so much as expand it.

Like the AERI group and Christen, she notes that

> the greater challenge to re-envisioning provenance in online archives may well have less to do with accepting and representing multiple contexts of creation and use than with negotiating what these mean for related concepts dependent on provenancial stability

and

> the growth of online archives will almost certainly have an impact on the ways that researchers understand and use archival repositories, as well as on the ways repositories manage their own records as they take their holdings online.

Michelle Caswell, in "'Thank You Very Much, Now Give Them Back': Cultural Property and the Fight over the Iraqi Baath Party Records," also shows the power of categories. She identifies two existing views of cultural property, nationalist and universalist, but proposes a new construct, "postcolonial," to elucidate the political, legal, and ethical conflicts in the debate over the custody of the Iraqi Baath Party records. She educates us not only about the particular case, but helps us understand the larger issues of cultural property:

> Power, memory, identity construction, and their interconnections are central themes of postcolonial discourse, which not only pays attention to the voices of the colonized, the marginal, and the subaltern, but contextualizes their responses to, engagement with, and resistance of colonialism within the specificities of recent history.

J. Gordon Daines III's article "Re-engineering Archives: Business Process Management (BPM) and the Quest for Archival Efficiency" provides a superb example of how concepts from other disciplines, in this case management, can apply to the archival context. He raises the discussion of backlogs to a new level of sophistication and makes concrete proposals for future action for reducing them. Although set in one repository, it creates new knowledge beyond that one institution. One of the reviewers remarked that this paper

> will be required reading for every archivist involved in processing. Unlike recent work in this area, it suggests a specific set of achievable steps that can be undertaken at any repository. The author is to be commended for such excellent, thoughtful work; after reading it, I really wish I had thought of the idea for this paper and more to the point, executed it so well.

Christopher J. Prom, in "Using Web Analytics to Improve Online Access to Archival Resources," undertakes a similar task in that he uses research with a tool, in this case Web analytics, to improve practice in one institution and shows all institutions how this tool can improve online access to archival finding aids and sources. He exhibits a deep understanding of the systems in use in his repository, Web analytics tools, and the ways of Google as a search engine. These deep and broad understandings enable him to make dramatic changes in how users experience his website. One reviewer noted that the

> author points out how his institution's experience with Web analytics led not only to the alteration of their site design, but also to the improvement of the descriptive content of finding aids. This sort of insight gives a technical exercise like perusing Web statistics an important practical application for archivists.

Lisa M. Schmidt offers insights into two important processes of use to other repositories in "Preserving the H-Net Email Lists: A Case Study in Trusted Digital Repository Assessment." First, she demonstrates for the first time how to preserve active, ongoing, academic email lists using the listserv H-Net: Humanities and Social Sciences Online consortium as a subject. Second, she tests the application of the Trustworthy Repositories Audit and Certification (TRAC): Criteria and Checklist as a tool to measure how well her repository ensured the long-term preservation of email lists and to make needed changes.

In "Institutional Functional Analysis at Northern Michigan University: A New Process of Appraisal and Arrangement of Archival Records," Marcus C. Robyns and Jason Woolman provide a case study that details how one university and college archives with limited financial and human resources adapted elements of Helen Samuels's concept of institutional functional analysis and Terry Cook's concept of macro-appraisal into a model to improve appraisal and arrangement of institutional records. Their work applies theoretical concepts in a practical setting that extends well beyond their own institution.

Barbara Rockenbach describes specific theories developed in education about how undergraduates learn to demonstrate their applications to teaching in archives. In "Archives, Undergraduates, and Inquiry-Based Learning: Case Studies from Yale University Library," she discusses the integration of primary sources into the teaching of undergraduate courses through inquiry-based learning exercises. She also illustrates how librarians and archivists can collaborate with faculty to integrate collections into the curriculum.

In "Leadership Skills for Archivists," George Mariz, Donna McCrea, Larry J. Hackman, Tony Kurtz, and Randall C. Jimerson offer a variety of perspectives on the nature of leadership in archival organizations of all sorts. They argue that archivists need to develop leadership skills at the repository level, in the parent institution, and at the level of national professional activities and public policy.

Perhaps a prototypical case study is Tamar Chute's "'What Do You Mean the Museum Went Bankrupt?': Lending Artifacts to Outside Institutions." This compelling but cautionary story illustrates how one archivist can share experience to better archival practice.

Another useful category for readers is the review essay, which offers an overview of a group of books often from related disciplines and provides a broader theoretical view of a field and its recent developments. Such essays allow readers, especially busy practitioners, to stand back and survey the landscape, to see the forest and not only the trees.

Jeffrey Mifflin provides another fine contribution to our understanding of the context of photography in " 'Visible Memory, Visual Method': Objectivity and the Photographic Archives of Science," in which he reviews five books on photography and the history of science. He continues his exploration of visual evidence in science and in archives,[3] and here explores the changing uses of visual evidence in the sciences and how photography has changed the way scientists understand the scientific method. His essay broadens and deepens our ability to work with historical images in archival collections. The story of Darwin's search for photographs of facial expressions is especially revealing, and the story of the daguerreotypes of American slaves is particularly compelling and moving.

In his presidential address, "Unifying the Archives Profession: A Proposal," Peter Gottlieb challenges us to examine the multiplicity of our professional organizations and to assess whether some form of federation would strengthen the voice of professionals in our associated fields and improve services to practitioners.

Reviews are an especially important category for practitioners, students, and educators. New reviews editor Amy Cooper Cary and associate reviews editor Danna Bell-Russel begin their tenure by offering reviews of six books in this issue. They are also exploring the use of new tools to connect readers with the archival literature in all its forms. Last year's readership survey revealed that more than half of the respondents wanted reviews of archival tools, such as OAIster or Archivist's Toolkit (82%); archival resources, such as online reports

[3] Jeffrey Mifflin, "Visual Archives in Perspective: Enlarging on Historical Medical Photographs," *American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 32–69; " 'The Story They Tell': On Archives and the Latent Voices in Documentary Photograph Collections," *American Archivist* 73 (Spring/Summer 2010): 250–62; and, with Elisabeth Kaplan, "'Mind and Sight': Visual Literacy and the Archivist," in *American Archival Studies: Theory and Practice*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), first published in *Archival Issues* 21, no. 2 (1996): 107–27.

of organizations such as OCLC, NINCH, or NARA (58%); special issues of related periodicals that feature archival topics (54%); and websites (53%) in addition to monographs. See the introduction to the reviews section for more information about these important and exciting changes.

The editorial board is completing its analysis of the results of the survey of *American Archivist* readers and will publish the results in the next issue. As I enter my last year as your editor, I renew my call for papers, letters, and conversation about scope and content of the *American Archivist*.

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