Challenge Accepted:
Overcoming Obstacles for the 2021 Annual Meeting

by Dr. Betsy Hedler, Executive Secretary, Ohio Local History Alliance; Team Lead, AmeriCorps and Partnerships, Local History Services, Ohio History Connection

The 2021 Annual Meeting will be held online, September 30 through October 2, 2021. I know that many of you (myself included!) were hoping for an in-person meeting for 2021; but I truly believe that this online conference will continue to provide the excellent professional development we were able to deliver for the 2020 Annual Meeting and the 2021 Regional Meetings. Due to the many months of advance planning that go into the conference, we knew that we needed to pick the format that would allow us to plan around the certainty that our plans could be carried out. We also knew that everyone’s budgets continue to be strained by the effects of the pandemic, so we elected to avoid the higher registration and travel costs associated with an in-person conference.

Our conference theme, Challenge Accepted: Overcoming Obstacles, was designed to allow us to address the challenges posed by the pandemic without limiting ourselves to only discussing our reactions to COVID-19. To that end, we have put together a program that addresses both challenges faced by historical communities and the ways museums and historical societies have faced and overcome challenges of all types. Sessions include discussions of increasing access for visitors with disabilities, first-person interpretation of John Brown, remaining relevant during a renovation, creating digital summer camps, as well as various perspectives on marketing your site and making the hard fundraising ask. You won’t want to miss the Executive Director’s Roundtable on the conference theme. In addition, there will be sessions on bringing new life to stagnant exhibits, various aspects of collections care, governance and managerial policies, and marketing your site. I’m particularly looking forward to our “happy hour” session on historical cocktails on Friday; and to the presentation of this year’s Outstanding Achievement Award Winners to close the conference on Saturday! I also look forward to seeing some of you in our (continued on page 3)
Dear SOA Members,

I am writing this message to you just one month after our annual meeting themed “Archives in an Era of Change.” In that time, access to honest history continues to be threatened. As historians, scholars, and educators seek to tell the truth while also disrupting the myths and nostalgic interpretations of America’s past, there is a concerted effort to bemoan that we cannot revise history and doing so is erasing and tarnishing our past.

The way we interpret and analyze the past, particularly as previously neglected and ignored stories are brought to light, is the work of historians. Historical revisionism is absolutely necessary and integral to our work.

As I stated at the annual meeting, we as archivists are in an important position. The significance of our work while history and education are being attacked in states across our nation could not be more critical. We are in a place to do something about it.

And we are.

I am so proud of the work SOA members are doing right now. From changing the language in our finding aids to be more specific of the communities they describe and connect to, to amplifying the voices in our communities to share their stories, archivists are working with communities, in some cases letting the communities lead the projects. Organizations are providing space for communities to access their truth, and to tell their truths. Archivists are acknowledging the emotional labor of this work, and the pain and trauma as well as the joy and healing that staff, volunteers, and communities may experience. These are the ways we dismantle the archaic hierarchal power structures our archival institutions were founded on.

More importantly, these are the ways we can perfect our democracy. We are listening and learning, acknowledging privilege and bias, and we are working with one another and communities in efforts to create a level playing field. We are lifting up those who are already actively doing this work and providing support and platform rather than co-opting the work as our own. We are working with – a concept being fostered at one of the non-profit foundations I work with, which asks what our democracy can be if we define it as not just “of, by, and for” the people, but “with” the people. Imagine what archives can look like when this same theory is applied, working not simply of, by, and for the community, but truly with the community.

The events that have shaped our lives over the past year have a valuable lesson for us: adaptation. The Pandemic has revealed that we can adapt our focus – creating access through digital means. Protest movements have shown us that history is happening right now, and that we can provide access to the stories of the current moment from those who are directly experiencing it. We can provide access without ownership. We can dismantle. We can speak truth to power.

We can adapt.

I hope that we are up for the challenge. In the end, it is the people, not the paper, that matters.

Sherri Goudy
she/her/hers
President, Society of Ohio Archivists
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SOA Mission

Founded in 1968, the Society of Ohio Archivists’ mission is to improve the state of archives in Ohio by promoting the archival profession and providing professional development and networking opportunities for Ohio’s professional and aspiring archivists.
Cover Story (continued from page 1)

virtual networking space/registration desk space.

To keynote this thread, we are very excited to welcome Dr. Anna-Lisa Cox as this year’s plenary speaker, sponsored by Ohio Humanities. Dr. Cox is an award-winning American historian who specializes in the history of racism in the 19th century, with a focus on the North. Her original research underpinned two exhibits at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, and her essays are featured in a number of publications including The Washington Post, Lapham’s Quarterly, the Smithsonian Magazine, and The New York Times. Her recent book, The Bone and Sinew of the Land, on the long-denied history of African American pioneers who settled the Midwest before the Civil War, was honored by the Smithsonian Magazine as one of the best history books of 2018. Professor Henry Louise Gates Jr. praised it for being “a revelation of primary historical research that is written with the beauty and empathic powers of a novel,” and New York Times best-selling author Professor Ibram Kendi lauded it for being a “groundbreaking work of research.”

In addition to frequently being invited to lecture at universities and other organizations nationally and internationally, she is an in-demand guest on radio and television shows, including NPR’s All Things Considered. Dr. Cox is a Non-Resident Fellow at Harvard University’s Hutchins Center for African and African American Research. She is at work on two new book projects, including one on the African Americans who surrounded and influenced the young Abraham Lincoln.

Check our website for registration details and the full program as it is finalized. We will be mailing the full program to members in July. Please contact us at ohiolha@ohiohistory.org with any questions.

SOA News

Archives Month 2021

October is Archives Month and the theme for the 2021 Society of Ohio Archivists poster is “Ohio’s Wonderland: Unboxing the Great Outdoors”, which features archival images from repositories across Ohio that highlights nature, and outdoor recreation and tourism in the state.

During the past year, many have been cooped up indoors and apart from others more than ever before, but the outdoors have always offered an escape! With this in mind, we decided to showcase Ohio’s outdoor spaces. There were dozens of images submissions from a wide variety of archives. Images included parks, hikes, picnics, outdoor amusements, and more!

We want to thank everyone who submitted and encourage people to watch their mailboxes for the final poster near October. In the fall, look for a map companion to the Ohio Archives Passport, which includes listings for Ohio archives, on the SOA website. Keep an eye out for announcements about archival events happening during Archives Month and be sure to share information about your own local events happening throughout the month.

— From the Advocacy and Outreach Committee
The Society of Ohio Archivists came together for a virtual meeting on June 7-8, 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Educational Programming Committee chose the theme, “Archives in an Era of Change” for the 2021 Annual Meeting. Archives have been confronted with the obstacles of research rooms closing to the public, job loss and under-employment, and social justice issues that continue to shape the landscape of the United States and challenge us to look inward and address equity within the archives profession. This year featured an outstanding plenary, five sessions, a virtual tour of three institutions, and posters presented in the lightning round format.

The Educational Programming Committee would like to thank Betsy Hedler and Jenni Salamon from the Ohio History Connection for providing Zoom support throughout the meeting. We continue to thank our presenters and our membership for being flexible while we come together in a virtual format and look forward to meeting in-person again.

### 2021 Annual Conference Recap:

**Archives in an Era of Change**

*By Rachael Bussert, Dayton Metro Library, and William Modrow, Miami University, Educational Programming Committee Co-Chairs*

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**Session:**

**Who Controls the Vocabulary?: Reviewing and Implementing Community Based LGBTQ+ Descriptive Terms**

*Presenters: Karen Robertson and Lisa Wood, Ohio History Connection*

*Session synopsis: Sherri Goudy, Nerd Girl History Adventure*

SOA’s Annual Meeting kicked off with this session by Karen Robertson and Lisa Wood from the Ohio History Connection. Karen and Lisa guided us through ways in which we can rethink the vocabulary that describes our collections. They helped us envision a path to return the control of vocabulary used to describe collections back to the community. Following their example of adjusting the descriptive language in OHC’s LGBTQ+ collections, Karen and Lisa provided lessons and practical tools to aid anyone who is considering this type of project.

Karen began the session by describing their vocabulary review project at OHC. The goal: to prepare and implement a new list of subject headings that can be used with collections about the LGBTQ+ community. The project developed organically through an effort to use more specific and relevant subject headings, such as “bisexual people” and “transgender.” The archivists at OHC began to ask themselves why they shouldn’t use such specific terms, especially when these are the terms that the community uses. Considering the community where the collections originated as well as the communities who would be using the collections is really important, as well as having people from that specific community participate and be part of the decision-making process and having a diverse staff and volunteers. However, Karen stated that the community deserves control even if they aren’t in the archive staff.

They also walked us through resources and tools that aided in tackling the project at OHC. This included staff training through Equitas Health as well as support from the entire institution, as well as seeking out others who had done this kind of work before. Some of those projects they recommended include: The Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia anti-racist description resources, the Power of Words Handbook by the National Japanese American Civic League, and Historic New Orleans Collection catalog statement on harmful language. Another great resource that Karen discussed was Homosaurus, a vocabulary tool that uses vocabulary created by LGBTQ+ archivists.

Lisa, as the cataloger in this work, provided some great considerations for anyone who may embark on this type of work. One major perspective: how necessary is this work? Do people even pay attention to the subject headings? Karen and Lisa both discussed and recommended the Change the Subject documentary as essential viewing. Lisa discussed that this film provides a real-world example of how important this work truly is and can even be a tool in encouraging your institution to do (continued on page 5)

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**Plenary:**

**Archives, Libraries, Museums: Meaning-making and Magic**

*Presenters: Ben Garcia is Deputy Executive Director and Chief Learning Officer at the Ohio History Connection.*

*Synopsis: Adam Wanter*

Day two of the virtual conference opened with our Plenary Speaker Ben Garcia. Mr. Garcia is the Deputy Executive Director and Chief Learning Officer at the Ohio History Connection where he leads special projects and oversees six divisions. Prior museum experience includes tenures at the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Skirball Cultural Center, the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at UC Berkeley, and the Museum of Us. Ben serves on the boards of Equality Ohio and the Association of Midwestern Museums. Mr. Garcia provided a vivid and enthralling account of his own personal journey, detailing the profound ways that libraries and archives played. Mr. Garcia then pivoted to discussing many of the issues that our field currently faces, such as equitable practice, access, and representation in our fields. The plenary ended with a rousing and thought provoking Q&A, where the idea of vocational awe was discussed and examined.

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Heidi Gauder, The Ohio State University, University of Dayton -

of text, image, and video. Many students provided feedback that guided participants through the exhibit with a combination of collections and nativity imagery. Harris created a virtual activity that collection included a digital exhibit to teach students about the Marian Library's Library: Online Exhibits and Special Collections" described using a database to retrieve patent information, worked with the librarians to find local addresses for Dayton-area inventors, and then added this data to a Google MyMap. Notably, during the discussion at the end of the session, Gaudet talked with the group about how their pool of inventors had few women or people of color, using it as an opportunity to acknowledge gaps in historical records and archival collections.

Kayla Harris’s “On Paper: Nativity Imagery from the Marian Library: Online Exhibits and Special Collections” described using a digital exhibit to teach students about the Marian Library’s collections and nativity imagery. Harris created a virtual activity that guided participants through the exhibit with a combination of text, image, and video. Many students provided feedback that they appreciated that the asynchronous format allowed them to work at their own pace and some noted that they enjoyed learning about artifacts while being asked open-ended questions that encouraged them to reflect on their own experiences.

In “Handwriting and Archival Documents,” Bridget Retzloff spoke about using historical materials to teach undergraduates about the history of handwriting. Students who attended this virtual session learned about handwriting and its role in education as well as about transcription crowdsourcing projects. They also practiced reading and transcribing archival documents written in cursive.

For those interested in learning more about these sessions, the presenters created a LibGuide with additional information and resources.

**Session:**

**“Making It Work(flow): New Employees in an Era of Change”**

*Presenters: Brenna Edwards, Karolina “Kay” Lewandowska, Stephanie Luke, Kathryn Slover
Session synopsis: Vic Fleischer*

Kathryn Slover, Digital Archivist at The University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections, introduced the topic and what would be covered in the session, including workflows, especially during the pandemic, individual stories, best practices, and lessons learned. She started with definitions, including workflow, onboarding, documentation, and assumptions and talked about why workflows and documentation are important. She also talked about working with what was there versus starting from scratch, or taking existing documentation and enhancing it. She also talked about lessons learned, including communication is key, writing everything down, and that you can’t change everything in a day.

Stephanie Luke, Metadata Librarian for Special Collections at the University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, talked about cataloging special collections and archival collections, especially the lack of documentation on cataloging procedures and workflows. She covered how what was implemented at her institution and creating new documentation. She also covered lessons learned, including the importance of documentation and workflow.

Brenna Edwards, Manager for Digital Archives at the Harry Ransom Center at The University of Texas at Austin, talked about working remotely and doing detective work to find existing documentation, especially for remote work, which didn’t exist. Therefore, she talked about creating documentation and workflows and mentioned lessons learned, including importance of documentation and reaching out to those in the position previously to help piece things together.

Karolina “Kay” Lewandowska, Records Manager at Commander, Navy Installations Command, mentioned how she started after her institution sent everyone home due to the pandemic and the lack of documentation and workflow. She stated that the existing outflow was outdated so she decided to start from scratch, with the outcome to make it easier for her successors. She also talked about how she helped to build institutional knowledge that will outlive her and covered what (continued on page 6)
she learned, including the need for better documentation and organizational files.

Brenna concluded the session by covering keys to successful documentation and workflow, including reviewing current documentation and workflows and creating them for others, especially your successors. She also stressed the importance of writing everything down, using screenshots and diagrams, and the need to review and update documentation as needed and keeping track of changes and updates. Finally, she stressed the importance of collaboration and testing the documentation and workflows and providing feedback. She also covered tools for creating documentation like Box, GitHub, Trello, and others.

**Session:**

**Virtual Archives Crawl**

**Presenters:** Kristina Schulz and Amy Rohmiller, University of Dayton, Rachel Makarowski and Candace Pine, Miami University, Gino Pasi, The Henry R. Winkler Center for the History of the Health Sciences, University of Cincinnati

**Session synopsis:** Rachel Bussert, Dayton Metro Library

Although many reading rooms have been closed to the public in 2020 and 2021 attendees at the Annual Meeting were still treated to a tour of three archival collections. The first Virtual Archives Crawl was led by tour guides from the University of Dayton, Miami University, and the Henry R. Winkler Center at the University of Cincinnati.

Kristina Schulz and Amy Rohmiller presented a tour of the University Archives and Special Collections at the University of Dayton. Tour highlights included items from the Miriam Jacobs Baseball Memorabilia Collection and athletic memorabilia such as a fan-created statue of the UD football team with coach, Harry Baujan. Attendees were also shown a scrapbook documenting the first four years of women on campus. The scrapbook held autographs from both Eleanor Roosevelt and Judge Florence E. Allen.

Rachel Makarowski and Candace Pine led a tour of the spaces and unique items at the Miami University Special Collections. Attendees were walked through new and updated spaces from the 2015 renovations including cold storage, the Exhibition Room, and state of the art digitization lab. They were also treated to a glimpse of a volume of Shakespeare’s First Folio and the Native American Women Playwrights Archive, as well as historic postcards and World War Two-era student diaries dated from 1942-1950.

Gino Pasi led a tour of The Henry R. Winkler Center for the History of the Health Sciences at the University of Cincinnati. Starting at the R Level of the Winkler Center, Pasi walked attendees through unique items in their medical collections including items from the collections of Bruce Sabin and Henry Heimlich. Attendees also were intrigued by sketches from the Daniel S. Young Civil War Medical Drawings and plates from Mascagni’s Most Splendid Anatomy Ever Published. The tour ended with a look at instruments used in medical practices that would later be known as quackery.

**Session:**

**Amplifying Diverse Voices: Documenting the History of Underrepresented Communities at Two Ohio Universities**

**Presenters:** Victor Fleischer, University of Akron, Matthew Francis, Ohio Northern University

**Synopsis:** William Modrow

As many archivists/archives, libraries and other organizations & individuals begin to address the importance of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, the Ohio Northern University and The University of Akron have undertaken several projects recently that highlight diverse voices, including women, the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, and especially Asian & African Americans.

Vic & Matt discussed how they approached their institutions (administrators) for support including funding, how they worked creating outreach opportunities within the campus community and the community at large. This only strengthens the ties between the universities and the local communities, many for the first time. The interactions from people in underrepresented areas provided new stories and many teaching/learning experiences as these unheard stories were being revealed.

Both speakers elaborated on the increase in opportunity creating important oral histories among these diverse voices. As with any new projects in these areas there may be pushback, but Vic & Matt encouraged attendees not to be afraid of controversy when working on these types of projects as some may encounter unpopular materials or responses when creating these materials.

A great success of Vic & Matt’s work included the positive feedback they received and the possibility for more of these projects!

**Session:**

**Lightning Round Poster Sessions**

Four amazing poster sessions discussing various projects and outcomes from a wide range of institutions.

**Synopsis:** William Modrow

**The Game’s Afoot: Introducing Students to Archival Resources**

**Presenter:** Amy Rohmiller, The University of Dayton

One important & fun way to reach the campus community is through gaming. Amy discussed how using UD’s digital collections they were able to create outreach opportunities, through gaming, among the students at the University of Dayton. Attendees were introduced to resources, materials and staff to increase their awareness of the opportunities, collections and services available to them. Amy included tips, suggestions and ideas how SOA attendees could create these types of gaming programs.

**#ThrowbackThursday Reinvented: A Communications and Archives Collaboration**

**Presenters:** Sarah Aisenbrey and Michelle Bodine, Sisters of the Precious Blood

It is always challenging using social media to promote one’s collections, services or as a means for outreach. It also can be a

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great opportunity. Sarah from the Communications and Archives Departments for the Sisters of the Precious Blood discussed how well this worked for them increasing awareness and reaching a nationwide network. Using images from the collections, they were able to interact through Facebook & twitter to establish connections with alumni.

**Traditional Description and Untraditional Instruction in the Archives**

*Presenter: Suzanne Reller, University of Cincinnati*

Archivists & librarians have constantly worked for years making materials in their collections more accessible through various means such as finding aids. Often we have struggled to explain these to students & researchers. Suzanne discussed how to improve finding aid instruction resulting in more access to collections. She also shared the need to restructure online tutorials to make them more relevant and the importance of building finding aids into the general Information management system available at one’s institution.

**Preserving our Connections: Crafting Instruction Opportunities from Serendipitous Encounters**

*Presenters: Kim Hoffman and Rachel Makarowski, Miami University*

Discovering the undiscovered? Rachel & Kim discussed collaborating with students as they work on departmental library collections—outside of the main libraries collections. Taking advantage of the interest, they created a workshop on how to work with these materials. Using the opportunity as outreach, Rachel & Kim, established connections for future collaborations, workshops and connections.

**Session:**

**Pivoting for Productivity: Adapting Workflows During a Pandemic and Going Forward**

*Presenters: Virginia Dressler, Kent State University, Nicole Sutton, Columbus Metropolitan Library, Cindy Lindsay, Columbus Metropolitan Library*

*Synopsis: Adam Wanter*

SOA’s 2021 Virtual Conference closed with this session by Virginia Dressler, Digital Projects Librarian from Kent State University, and Nicole Sutton and Cindy Lindsay, Local History and Genealogy Librarians from Columbus Metropolitan Library. The session focused on the ins and outs of various projects created and adapted for remote work due the circumstances created by the pandemic.

Virginia Dressler began the presentation with an overview of Kent State’s early response to the pandemic and a call from the Library for student work-from-home projects for the Spring 2020 Semester. Virginia then went over details of the Transcription project, OCR Clean-up project, and ORCID project that she created. Each project had minimal tech requirements, no software requirements, and simple instructions.

After Virginia, Nicole and Cindy discussed Columbus Metropolitan Library’s response to the pandemic and how the Local History and Genealogy Department not only changed their internal workflows but created new projects for other CML staff.
Resource Roundup

By Jenni Salamon, Manager, Digital Services, Ohio History Connection

Whether we are looking for a refresher for ourselves, or resources to point others to, it is helpful to have an updated set of resources for the many components of digitization and digital projects. Check out the non-exhaustive list below—some of these are “oldies but goodies”!

Digitize it!

- **Digital Preservation**, Library of Congress
- **Digitization 101 Webinar Series**, Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts
- **Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI)**, Library of Congress
- **Guidelines for Digital Newspaper Preservation Readiness**, Educopia
- **Minimum Digitization Capture Recommendations**, American Library Association
- **Moving Theory into Practice: Digital Imaging Tutorial**, Cornell University
- **National Digital Newspaper Program**, Library of Congress

Describe it!

- **Understanding Metadata**, NISO
- **Archives for Black Lives**, Archivists responding to Black Lives Matter
- **Dublin Core Metadata Initiative**, for digital objects on the web
- **Homosaurus**, an international LGBTQ linked data vocabulary
- **METS (Metadata Encoding & Transmission Standard)**, Library of Congress
- **PBCore**, for audiovisual content
- **PREMIS (Preservation Metadata Maintenance Activity)**, Library of Congress
- **VRA Core**, for artifacts and images of them, Library of Congress

Copyright it!

- **Copyright Information Center**, Cornell University
- **RightsStatements.org**
- **U.S. Copyright Office**
- **OhioNET “Copyright in Action” training series**
- **Miami University Libraries Copyright Conference**

Network it!

- **Cleveland Archival Roundtable**
- **Miami Valley Archives Roundtable**
- **Northeast Document Conservation Center**
- **Northwest Ohio Cultural Heritage Group**
- **Ohio Digital Network / Digital Public Library of America**
- **Ohio Digitization Interest Group (OhioDIG)**
- **Ohio Preservation Council**
- **Sustainable Heritage Network**, Washington State University

Fund it!

- **Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR)**
- **Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**
- **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**
- **National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)**
- **Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB) Regrants**
- **Ohio History Connection History Fund**
- **Ohio Humanities**
- **Ohio Local History Alliance Digitization Grants**
- **State Library of Ohio LSTA Grants**
**Individual Member News**

**Tom Neel**, Library Director/Archivist at The Samuel Isaly Library of the Ohio Genealogical Society, Bellville, retired in June 2021 after 37 years at OGS and 44 years in library service. **Linda Swanson**, Digital Librarian, has been promoted to Collections Manager.

**New Leadership**

Welcome to new members of council!

**PRESIDENT**
**Sherri Goudy**, she/her/hers  
Nerd Girl History Adventure  
Independent Archivist, Researcher, and Writer

**SECRETARY**
**Jen Johnson**, she/her/hers  
Digitization Consultant and Ohio Digital Network Project Coordinator  
State Library of Ohio

**VICE PRESIDENT**
**Amy Rohmiller**, she/her/hers  
Associate University Archivist  
Roesch Library, University of Dayton

**COUNCIL MEMBER**
**Sasha Griffin**, she/her/hers  
University Archivist and Special Collections Librarian  
Denison University

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**Connect with SOA**

Get the latest news about SOA and the archivist profession in Ohio! Join us on the SOA Listserv, Facebook group, and LinkedIn group.

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