

October Topic: Keeping Track of Reference Use

A researcher has found a fantastic collection about large carp in the Mississippi River, and you remember that there was another researcher a few months ago who wanted information on that topic. How do you find his name? Your field archivist is having difficulty appraising a collection and wants to know if any researchers were interested in the subject of drainage ditches during the past ten years. Can you give her the answer? The new state archivist wants a list of the top ten research subjects last year. Can you compile the list without guessing? Inquiring archival minds want to know.

Statistics are a necessary part of reference work. Accumulating data about the number of patrons and who used a certain collection is standard operating procedure in most archives and manuscript operations. However, the truly inspired reference archivist not only knows who is researching what topic, but has the data to prove it. The October inquiry concerns how archivists collect information about the interests of their patrons and the use they make of the data. Specifically:

1. What information about patrons'

research subjects do you record? Why do you acquire this data and how do you use it?

2. What is your system for acquiring this data and getting information out of it? Is it or will it be automated?

3. How well does the system work? What are its limitations? Case examples are particularly welcome.

Note that this inquiry is focused on the subject analysis of patron use, not simply the number of patrons or data gathered solely for the security reasons.

Responses received by September 15, 1988 will be reported in the October Newsletter. Comments and suggestions about future inquiries are encouraged.

Address all responses and inquiries to Bruce H. Bruemmer, Charles Babbage Institute, 103 Walter Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455 or call 612/624-5050. Electronic mail users can send mail through BITNET to BBRUEMMER@UMNACVX.

NEWS FROM ARCHIVAL ORGANIZATIONS

Twin Cities Archives Round Table (TCART)

By Mary Klauda, Minnesota Historical Society

The Twin Cities Archives Round Table (TCART) is one of the newer regional archival organizations on the block. Established in the early 1980s, TCART now includes members from archival repositories in the metropolitan areas of St. Paul and

Minneapolis as well as archivists from all corners of the state of Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and eastern North Dakota. TCART's goal is the preservation of and access to historically valuable information, by providing an opportunity for Twin

Cities area archivists to meet together to share information on issues of interest to the local archives community and by informing members of archival programs and resources in the area. TCART is meant to be an informal, social organization, where archivists can meet, visit other repositories, and talk with others about their work. TCART is governed by its constitution that provides for a four-member board and dues structure. Meetings are held twice a year, and a newsletter goes out in the winter and summer. A membership directory is published biennially. Annual membership dues of \$5.00 per member cover the cost of meetings, printings, and mailings. There are currently 100 dues-paying members.

TCART's winter meeting is held at a Twin Cities area repository and the summer

meeting is held at one of the many archival repositories in greater Minnesota. This summer for the first time, TCART is planning an extended weekend meeting in Duluth, Minnesota. Known as the major port city on Lake Superior, Duluth is also the home of two archival repositories, a state of the art public library, and a prominent county historical society in a restored railroad depot. The event, to be held on July 23-24, 1988 (Sat.-Sun.), will include visits to all of the above, a picnic on a Lake Superior beach, and a trip up the North Shore on Sunday.

If you are interested in learning more about TCART or the summer fling in Duluth, contact Penny Krosch, TCART president, University Archives, 10 Walter Library, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455. 612-624-0562.

Kansas City Area Archivists

By Carol J. Dage, Liberty Memorial Museum

The Kansas City Area Archivists organization is made up of area professionals in the archives, museum, library and history fields. KCAA is actively involved in many educational projects and is committed to sharing the expertise of its membership with the public. One such project that encourages involvement with the community is the annual Outreach Fair through which public awareness of work in the archival field is developed.

This year the Outreach Fair will be held in conjunction with an antique show and sale and is scheduled for May 14th and 15th at Ward Parkway Shopping Center in Kansas City, Missouri. KCAA members staff a booth during the fair and are on hand to answer questions visitors might have concerning proper care, handling and storage of archival materials. Historic films on video tape are available for public view-

ing and samples of brochures from area institutions, supply catalogs, booklists and other information related to archives are available for distribution. Examples of historical documents and other types of archival materials are displayed to facilitate instruction and demonstration of procedures. Patrons of the fair last year were very receptive to the program and the insights of the membership were an added bonus to the presentation.

Outreach Fair 1988 promises to be yet another positive step taken to promote awareness of the proper care of historical documents and should serve also as an introduction to the many agencies throughout the community involved in preserving treasured papers and photographs! For additional information contact: Carol J. Dage, Archivist, Liberty Memorial Museum, Kansas City, Missouri 64108.

Chicago Area Archivists

By Patty Cloud, Northwestern University Archives

The Chicago Area Archivists, founded in 1981, was incorporated in 1986 as a group of archivists, historians, manuscripts curators, librarians, records managers, and others interested in archival activity in the Chicago area. The CAA seeks to provide opportunities for members to meet, share information about archival issues, and to promote preservation of and access to permanently valuable records concerning the Chicago area. CAA has since its foundation sponsored numerous programs touching on the history, practice and policy of archival repositories in the Chicago area. In 1986, CAA compiled and published Archival and Manuscript Repositories in Metropolitan Chicago and the Calumet Region of Northwest Indiana for the 1986 meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Chicago. Copies of this guide are available

at no charge from Brother Michael Grace, University Archivist, Loyola University, E.M. Cudahy Library, 6525 Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60626. 312-508-2661. CAA publishes a quarterly newsletter for members; annual dues are \$3.00.

CAA is sponsoring a tour and discussion of the upcoming Newberry Library exhibit, "Humanities' Mirror: Reading at the Newberry, 1887-1987," on April 20, 1988, at 5:30 p.m. at the Newberry Library.

For more information about joining the Chicago Area Archivists, contact Richard Kaplan, Archivist/Information Specialist, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Suite 700, 140 S. Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60603. 312-726-8000.

SAA NOTIS Users' Group

By Patty Cloud, Northwestern University Archives

The Society of American Archivists' NOTIS Users' Group held its first meeting at the SAA Annual Convention in New York. The group seeks to provide a forum for archivists and others using the AMC format in NOTIS; we invite correspondence from those interested in NOTIS, anticipating using NOTIS in the future, and those with more general concerns. The group is open to all SAA members, and produces a biennial newsletter.

The SAA NOTIS Users' Group is planning to hold an evening session at the regular annual meeting of the NOTIS Users' Group, scheduled for June 22-24 at Northwestern University. All those in the area who are interested in attending, and especially those with ideas for brief presentations are invited to contact Patty Cloud, SAA NOTIS Users' Group Chair, at the Northwestern University Archives, 1935 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208. 312-491-3136.