



SPRING  
1991  
NEWSLETTER

# THE GREATER NEW ORLEANS ARCHIVISTS

*A Report from Catherine C. Kahn  
of the Touro Infirmary Archives:*

## USMARC AMC Workshop

"Once you've  
learned how  
to code  
the standard  
library  
descriptions  
for computer,  
you can shop  
with knowledge  
for a system  
that suits  
the needs  
of your institution."

There's a logical progression in selecting and implementing a computerized system for an archival repository. If you are like most archivists in New Orleans, you are not a librarian and would do well to attend workshops on **Library Standards** and **USMARC AMC** offered by the **Society of American Archivists**. Once you've learned how to code the standard library descriptions for computer, you can shop with knowledge for a system that suits the needs of your institution.

Faced with brand-new archives at Touro Infirmary, I knew that I wanted to start from scratch in MARC AMC without creating a backlog of obsolete paper records about my repository's holdings. So, I signed up for the SAA workshop doubleheader at Pittsburgh in July and sent off for the MicroMARC demo disk from Michigan State University. I never did get to the workshop on standards, which was canceled, but I use the Second Edition of Steven Hensen's *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts* as if it were holy writ. I plunged right into "Understanding the MARC Format for Archives and Manuscripts Control." It was taught by Kathleen Roe, New York State Archivist, and Debbie Pendleton, who is with the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Readers will be familiar with Roe's articles in *The American Archivist* about creating standards for archives. Both were excellent instructors and delightful people.

We covered a lot in two intense days. In the first morning alone, we surveyed the history of efforts to computerize archival description, the need for uniform standards, the difficulty of fitting "round" archival cataloging into "square" library standards, and the structure and use of the USMARC AMC format. From then on, it was hands-on practice. The mysteries of tags, delimiters, indicators, fields, and subfields all became clear. Each kind of field was examined, including those for main entries, notes, archival control, and indexing. As we worked examples, we began to converse with each other in MARCjargon: "Do you think this is a 110 with a \$a and \$b subfield or a 110 with a 710 added entry?" "Why is the date on a 100 subfield \$d for main entry?" The last session of the last afternoon was terrific. We designed a MARC form to fit our individual needs. This made us sift through the various fields, narrowing down to those that fit our holdings and streamlining the coding procedure. For instance, as mine was an entirely unprocessed archives, I could tailor a form that gave main entry, title, physical description,

Continued on page 2

source, and location, while reserving cross indexing and the scope and content notes for later, after I had established bibliographic control.

I also discovered that MicroMARC AMC was exactly the right supplier for the PC-based system at the Touro Archives. I came home confident in using the MicroMARC program that I found waiting for me. I'm pleased with my system and my training, although I still would like to go to a Library Standards workshop. The SAA has no immediate plans to offer one. When it does, I'll finally be able to put my horse in front of my cart. Maybe the Greater New Orleans Archivists should organize such a workshop on it own, calling on our librarian colleagues to indoctrinate us history majors.

Here is a very abbreviated example of conventional cataloging of one of Touro's records translated into MARC AMC coding :

**Conventional cataloging:**

**TOURO INFIRMARY**

Admission Book of Touro Infirmary, 1855 January 3 to 1860 March 29. Bound manuscript. 88pp. 1 item.

The earliest existing records book of Touro Infirmary. Records number/name/place of birth/occupation/last place from/ residence in New Orleans/date of admission hour of admission/date of discharge/date of death/age/whose account/deposit/rate per day/ . . . Total of 1,584 admissions.

Restrictions: No publication of patients' names without written permission from the archivist.

**A MARC record of the same information** (with field, delimiters, and sub-field [indicated by the dollar sign]):

*(Main entry, corporate)*

110 2- \$a Touro Infirmary

*(Title and date)*

245 \$a Admission Book of Touro Infirmary. \$f 1855-01-03 to 1860-03-29.

*(Physical description)*

300 \$a 1 \$f Bound manuscript, 88 written pages.

*(How arranged)*

351 \$a Sequentially

*(Description and expanded description)*

520 \$a The earliest existing record book of Touro Infirmary

\$b Records number/name/place of birth/occupation/last place from/residence in New Orleans/date of admission/date of discharge/age/whose account/deposit/rate per day/ . . .

*(Reproduction)*

533 \$a Microfilmed \$cGenealogical Society of Utah

*(Restrictions, if any)*

540 \$a No publication of patients' names without written permission  
\$c Apply to archivist.

*(Provenance)*

561 \$a Discovered when Tulane University Medical Center moved from Canal Street to Tulane Avenue in 1933 and returned to Touro Infirmary.

*(Immediate source of acquisition and accession number)*

541 \$a Touro Infirmary \$c Found in house \$e 1990.17.1

Access points (cross indexing) would fall into 600 (names), 610 (corporations), and 650 (subjects).

Maybe we should organize a Library Standards workshop on our own."



# Archival Researchers Say the Darndest Things

**Kansas State Historical Society**, 120 Southwest 10th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66612.

Bob Knecht has begun writing a humor column for *The Dusty Shelf*, the newsletter of the Kansas City Area Archivists. He is soliciting the profession for humorous stories from archivists' experiences. Here is an example from his column of Vol. 10, No. 2: "One need not be unlettered to write amazing reference letters. Several years ago, we received one from a serious scholar who told us, 'Out of the mountain of existing manuscripts, I need to cull diaries which are dramatic, emotional, and personally insightful. I need to eliminate diaries . . . which are purely-descriptive.' Naturally, this person wanted us to send a list of those that met her criteria."



## Opportunities

**The Amistad Research Center at Tulane University**, 6823 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70118. Telephone: (504) 865-5535.

*Executive Director.* Qualifications: Graduate degree (Ph.D. preferred) in United States history and good knowledge of ethnic history and archives. Administrative experience and ability to raise money and acquire collections. Salary: Minimum \$40,000. Employment to begin on January 1, 1992.

*Reference Archivist.* Qualifications: Graduate degree in history and good knowledge of ethnic history and archives. Knowledge of US-MARC AMC or willingness to attend the relevant SAA workshop at the Center's expense. Salary: Minimum \$26,000. Employment to begin June 1, 1991.

**The Historic New Orleans Collection**, Personnel Officer, 533 Royal Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-2179. Telephone: (504) 523-4662.

*Manuscripts Cataloger.* Qualifications: M.A. in Southern history or related field; formal archival training and "significant" professional experience; excellent written communication skills; reading knowledge of French, Spanish, or German; knowledge of computers; ability to work on a team. Salary: "Competitive." Deadline: May 10, 1991.

**The Society of American Archivists-Colonial Dames Chapter III Scholarship Committee**, Michele Pacifico, Chairperson, The National Archives and Records Administration, Archives II Project, Room 409, Washington, D. C. Telephone: (202) 501-5110.

*Scholarship to the National Archives Modern Archives Institute:* Covers tuition, travel, and housing expenses for the institute to be held from June 3 through 14, 1991. Qualifications: Employment for less than two years actually working with manuscripts and in a repository with "a fair percentage" of its holdings predating 1825. Resumé with two letters of recommendation from persons having "definite knowledge of the applicant's qualifications."



*The researcher needed only diaries "which are dramatic, emotional, and personally insightful."*

### CITY PARK EXHIBIT

GNOA Secretary Sally Reeves is serving as guest curator of the exhibition *City Park Seasons: One Hundred Years in the Oaks*. Celebrating the centennial of the founding of the City Park Improvement Association, the show will run from April 14 through July 30, 1991. Ms. Reeves's participation has been through the courtesy of the New Orleans Notarial Archives. A companion exhibit will run at the Historic New Orleans Collection June 15 through September 30.

# Publications of Note

The National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators announces the availability of *Guide and Resources for Archival Strategic Preservation Planning*. The work includes two DOS-type computer floppy discs, a 3.5-inch disc and a 5.25 one. The computer-assisted self-study asks multiple-choice questions about preservation and reports suggestions on the subject tailored to your repository's needs. The printed parts are a manual and a collection of readings. It is available **only from the Society of American Archivists**. The cost to SAA members is \$95.00, plus \$6.00 shipping. For non-members the package costs \$120.00, plus the shipping.

The Smithsonian Institution has one of the largest, virtually unknown, photographic holdings in the country. Its *Guide to Photographic Collections, Volume 1: National Museum of American History* is available at a cost of \$29.95, plus \$2.25 shipping, from the Smithsonian Press, Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania 17294-0900. Telephone: (717) 794-2148.



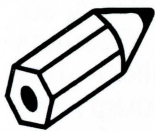
Lee Miller, Manuscripts Librarian at Tulane University, becomes editor of *The SSA Newsletter* (of the Society of Southwest Archivists) effective with the next issue. He is soliciting articles or suggestions for articles on archives and computers and may be reached at (504) 865-5685.

## SPRING MEETING

**TIME:** 6 P.M., THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1991

**PLACE:**

THE LOYOLA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES  
(ELEVATOR TO) 5TH FLOOR OF MILLER HALL  
6363 ST. CHARLES AVENUE



THE GREATER  
NEW ORLEANS  
ARCHIVISTS

All submissions, please, c/o Sally Reeves  
The New Orleans Notarial Archives  
Room B4, 421 Loyola Avenue  
New Orleans, LA 70112