LET ME RECOUNT THE WAYS: DOCUMENTING THE POETRY COMMUNITY IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

A CASE STUDY

BY JENNIFER KING

ABSTRACT: In 2006, the Special Collections Research Center at The George Washington University launched a project to collect the papers of Washington, D.C. area poets for the Washington Writers' Archive (WWA). The goal of the WWA is to discover and explore the ways individual writers' personal papers and their literary organizations' records intersect to tell the story of the Washington literary community. As the work began, a tension between the inclusive nature of a community history and the exclusive nature of a literary collection became evident. This case study describes and analyzes the tasks associated with collecting the historical record of a literary community.

Introduction

This case study documents the efforts of the Special Collections Research Center at The George Washington University to collect the history of the Washington, D.C. poetry community. The goal of the Washington Writers' Archive (WWA)[1] project, begun in 2006, is to collect the poetry produced by a diverse mix of artists, as well as preserve the historical record of the interactions among the individual artists and the organizations comprising this artistic community. Initial attempts to establish this collection, starting in 1984, had only limited success. The role of the Special Collections Research Center in the WWA resulted, in part, from an analysis of the previous effort.[2]

The D.C. poetry community is diffuse and difficult to define. The WWA project is further complicated by the tension that exists between collecting literary materials and collecting the history of a community. The often exclusive nature of a literary collection can be at odds with the inclusive nature of a community history collection. "Community histories or community archives are the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential. . . . [D]irection should come from within the community itself."[3] Literary collections, on the other hand, often

seek to acquire writers with established scholarly significance. Library and Archives Canada, for example, "tended not to collect experimental or younger writers before they had proven their value. After all, to be nationally significant, a writer must be well known and well established. Such an unadventurous acquisition strategy is not unusual."[4] Special Collections had to address these issues in selecting a collecting approach for the Washington Writers' Archive.

Literature Review

One of the most important concepts emerging from archival theory and literature in the last half century is the role of the archivist as an active pursuer of materials. In a speech at the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting in 1970, historian Howard Zinn "reproached archivists and manuscripts curators for neglecting to collect the records and papers of significant groups in society . . . outside mainstream American culture. He urged the keepers of records to become 'activists' and to repair the imbalance in their holdings promptly and thoroughly."[5] F. Gerald Ham and other archivists agreed with Zinn. "Our most important and intellectually demanding task as archivists is to make an informed selection of information that will provide the future with a representative record of human experience in our time."[6] Gould P. Colman chastised archivists for focusing on preserving government records while neglecting cultural records. "One could argue that the present generation of archivists and manuscript curators has a responsibility to redress the balance."[7]

According to Ham, the archives profession was woefully unprepared. "With a few notable exceptions, there is no realization that our present data gathering methods are inadequate or that our fundamental problem is the lack of imaginative acquisition guidelines or comprehensive collecting strategies at all levels of archival activity."[8] Ham was echoed by other archivists, such as Riva A. Pollard. "The determination of what is to become part of the permanent historical record—who and what we will document, and which materials best do so—is arguably the most important and central aspect of the archivist's work."[9]

As archivists began to address the challenge of preserving broader categories of human experience, questions about how this could be accomplished led to discussions of methodologies. "If archivists want to document the everyday lives of ordinary people, where are they to begin? What selection criteria should be used, and how should they be developed? If archivists are to fulfill their mission[,] 'to ensure the identification, preservation, and use of records of enduring value,' they need the necessary tools."[10]

Throughout the transformative decade of the 1980s, archivists designed, tested, revised, discarded, employed, and wrote about many tools, including collection assessment, written collection development policies, inter-institutional cooperation, creating historical documentation, and finally, the involvement of the records creators. Jutta Reed-Scott and Faye Phillips applied library collection principles to archives development. "Both urge archivists to write out a policy based on an analysis of the collection, a systematic plan for acquisitions, and coordination with—or at the very least, awareness of—the collecting plans of other repositories."[11]

In order to meet Zinn's challenge, archivists had to reach out to the communities they were attempting to document. This necessarily required more interaction with records creators in order to gain support and trust. These outreach strategies called for differing levels of interaction. Andrea Hinding described the role of the active archivist. "This new stance requires manuscript curators . . . to conceive of collecting as an intellectual activity, as the conscious, systematic documentation of some aspect of culture or experience. In order to document a phenomenon properly . . . the curator must understand it fully—define it in all its complexity. . . . In order to select the representative and the significant, the curator must also necessarily understand the 'whole' or 'universe' from which he or she is preserving a part."[12]

The importance of archivists knowing the community in order to collect its records was also emphasized by a number of other authors, including Brian Keough, who wrote about the efforts of the University at Albany, State University of New York, to document under-documented groups in western New York. These efforts lasted more than 20 years, and he noted methods that proved effective, including maintaining close contact with those in the community, remaining patient, and using an advisory board composed of key leaders to guide the archivist to important resources.[13]

Working with the South Asian diasporic community in Los Angeles, Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan built upon the ideas of Hinding and Keough, concerning the importance of actively entering the community and inviting the community members and records creators to join in appraisal decisions:

> Re-envisioning archival principles of appraisal . . . to actively incorporate participation from traditionally marginalized communities will not only allow these communities to preserve empowered narratives, it will allow archivists to move towards the long-debated, and still unrealized, goal of representative collections. A key component within this shift will be to expand appraisal . . . into tools designed to respect the knowledge systems embedded within community contexts. This may allow archivists to not only create representative archives, but also to move beyond objectification and aid understanding of local knowledge and marginalized narratives.[14]

This participatory model includes a broad role for the records creators until, ultimately, the archivists assume custody, preserve, and provide access to these records in a repository.

If the goal is to document the whole of society, personal papers are essential, and collecting them presents different challenges from collecting government or corporate records. "There is an intimacy in the personal archive not present in the collective, corporate, formalized record-keeping system. These intimate elements are reflected not only in the content and organization of personal records, but come into play in the archivist's direct interaction with the creator/donor during appraisal, acquisition, and subsequent management of personal archives."[15] Collecting literary papers adds yet another layer of complexity. Within the personal papers of literary figures, it is customary to consider aspects of literary significance. "Archivists need to pursue a broad range of material in order to render the full dynamics of the literary scene, its archival record, and the scholarly analysis of that record."[16] The University at Buffalo,

State University of New York, Poetry Collection development policy states that its goal is "to collect first editions of books of poetry published in English beginning in 1900 without prejudice. To collect without prejudice means to collect books and recordings of poetry in all forms and contemporary traditions/schools, from all various communities of poets and from all English speaking countries."[17] When Library and Archives Canada departed from their policy to accept the personal papers of a writer who was not yet a national literary figure, Amy Tector supported the decision, which "created a new point of reference to a writer who had not been part of the larger shared Canadian past."[18]

At The George Washington University, the Washington Writers' Archive staff began with the concept that the community understands itself and the archivists understand collecting, preserving, and providing access to records of enduring value. The project's collection development strategy began with the Jenkinsonian-influenced model of "The Creator as Selector; The Archivist as Keeper,"[19] although this methodology was quickly adapted to meet WWA needs. The records creators were asked to provide expertise on what should be included in an archives in order to document their community. This follows the participatory model of empowering the community to produce an authentic narrative. The expertise of the archivists was employed both to actively pursue these records and, based on an understanding of research needs, to develop appraisal guidelines for selecting specific records worthy of inclusion. Finally, the archivists applied arrangement and description standards to formalize the material's place in the institution.

Washington Writers' Archive, 1984–1987

The Washington Writers' Archive story began in January 1984 when local poet and performance artist Chasen Gaver wrote to Howard Gillette, Director of the Center for Washington Area Studies at The George Washington University (GW).[20] Gaver described a project he had conceived with E. Ethelbert Miller, local poet and Director of the Afro-American Center at Howard University. Their project encouraged local writers to save manuscript drafts as well as correspondence and memorabilia and to deposit these documents at a local repository. They specifically wanted to attract writers who "have focused their work on issues of concern to residents of Washington."[21]

Since Gaver had connections to GW, including several collaborations with GW Dance Professor Maida Withers and poetry readings sponsored by GW student groups, he approached GW as a potential repository. In his letter, Gaver expressed his belief that his work was appropriate for inclusion at the Gelman Library, and proposed to serve as an ambassador to the writers' community of which he was a member.

In response to Gaver's letter, Howard Gillette sent a memo to David McAleavey, Associate Professor in GW's English Department, stating that he had already spoken to Gaver, Miller, and David Zeidberg, head of Special Collections, and that all three had endorsed the project and suggested Special Collections as the repository. In his dual role as a professor in the English Department and as a local poet, McAleavey assumed a leadership role during the formation of the WWA.

In November 1985, McAleavey sent a form letter to local scholars explaining the concept of the WWA, asking them to participate on an Advisory Committee, and calling a meeting on December 6, 1985, of a Washington Metropolitan Area community-based group to build an archival collection. In the letter, McAleavey described the WWA as follows:

> The purpose of the Archive is twofold: to be a repository for materials which would indicate in depth the breadth of the local writing "scene," and to promote the active use of those materials by sponsoring public events and encouraging publications dealing with local writing. The actual acceptance and care of the materials will be handled by Special Collections, but the Advisory Committee is envisaged as an area-wide organization whose responsibilities are to recommend the collection of certain particularly important materials and to promote the fullest possible use of the Archive. To achieve those ends, and to signal to the entire community that this is not being conceived as a GW program as much as a community program, I am taking the liberty of designing a committee large enough to include representatives from all the area Consortium universities, numerous literary organizations, and private citizens with particularly keen interests in the history and growth of Washington literary life.[22]

This concept of a regional repository is important because the Washington area, as understood in the literary community, includes parts of Maryland and Virginia. McAleavey believed that to build a robust regional archive, it was essential to prevent the project from becoming too closely identified with GW. To this end, the Advisory Committee members represented a variety of local colleges, universities, libraries, writing organizations, and individual interest groups and all were encouraged to donate personally and to approach organizations of which they were members.[23] The Advisory Committee was also asked to provide a list of potential donors for Special Collections staff to contact.

Twenty-five years later, it is no longer clear why an Advisory Committee was chosen as the main agency for collection building. In a 2009 interview, McAleavey did not remember any interaction with Special Collections staff, and he believed that the Advisory Committee was assigned an active role in collection development to offset the Special Collections staff's lack of subject expertise in literary collecting.[24]

In July 1986, McAleavey sent a memo to members of the Advisory Committee, informing them that he had convened an Executive Committee, a subset of the Advisory Committee, to discuss the collection development policy drafted by Special Collections staff members Claire McDonald and Sharon Galperin. Surviving documents do not indicate that the head of Special Collections approved the policy. The first draft, dated June 1986, granted the Advisory Committee the power to make collection decisions. In this draft, the committee was seen as an autonomous group of scholars expected to define criteria such as the number of publications or readings for inclusion in the project. In his memo accompanying the policy, McAleavey made clear that the Gelman Library was to retain control of the archives and to make the final decisions about inclusion in the WWA. The final draft of the collection development policy, dated July 1986, gave

Special Collections the authority to make collection decisions, although the Advisory Committee would comment on the acceptability of any proposed contribution, based on committee-established guidelines.[25]

In the July 1986 memo, McAleavey used language regarding the work of the Advisory Committee that foreshadowed its demise. "Any individual who would like to see this organization be more structured should step forward with their ideas. For the moment, I think we can continue to function in an 'ad hoc' way."[26] The documents from the early WWA effort provide no evidence that the Executive Committee created a list of donors or that the Advisory Committee met again or that the Special Collections staff made the quarterly reports called for in the July memo. Although the WWA remained essentially dormant, Special Collections acquired several literary collections during the intervening years. It does not appear that these collections were received as a result of the work of the Advisory Committee, but rather from Special Collections being approached by individuals.

Washington Writers' Archive, 2006–the Present

In 2006, the WWA was revived, thanks to the efforts of another local poet and a new head of Special Collections. Grace Cavalieri is a local poet, playwright, publisher, and the host of the Internet radio program *The Poet and the Poem at the Library of Congress*. She had been a member of the original Advisory Committee and an early contributor to the WWA. Special Collections holds the recordings of *The Poet and the Poem at the Library of Congress* program,[27] Cavalieri's personal papers, and a complete run of the publications from her local small press, Bunny and the Crocodile Press. In 2006, Cavalieri approached Cathy Eisenhower, the collection development librarian for literature, about donating a large collection of published poetry. Eisenhower accepted the books and approached Steven Mandeville-Gamble, department head of Special Collections, to ask if Special Collections wanted the books written by local authors and published by local presses. Mandeville-Gamble accepted these materials as part of the book collection that complements the manuscripts held by Special Collections.

Having been approached by a local poet interested in helping to develop the literary archives of a vibrant poetry community, a community firmly engaged in shared activities such as reading series and local publishing, and having just accepted a substantial collection of local poetry publications, Mandeville-Gamble approached the archivist responsible for curating the Washingtoniana[28] collection to discuss launching a new active collecting phase for the WWA with the local poetry community in D.C.

Special Collections did not have a relationship with the writing community in D.C. and approached Cavalieri as a community insider, the same strategy suggested by Gaver in his original letter to Gillette. Due to her commitment to collecting and preserving works of local authors, her history of support for the WWA, and her understanding of the nature of special collections, Cavalieri proved an excellent choice. Fortunately, she was eager to become an ambassador and she contributed substantially to the success of the project. Cavalieri has been a member of the Washington community of writers for more than 30 years, and through her work as a published author, teacher, publisher,

and host of a radio program, she has met and befriended most of the poetry community. She provided introductions to D.C. authors and her involvement legitimized the project in the eyes of the writing community.

Michael Basinski, curator of the Poetry Collection at the University at Buffalo State University of New York, has written about the strategy of using a community insider for collecting manuscripts and published works from the Underground Poetry scene in the United States. His argument is appropriate to any insular and underrepresented community. Basinski identified the difficulties of collecting in movements that may be hard to track, are constantly shifting, and may be suspicious of authority. He advocated collecting locally to foster an intimacy with the culture being collected.[29]

Special Collections wrote a flexible collection policy based on involving the community rather than on literary significance. This policy stated that Special Collections seeks materials that have scholarly and research value, as defined in consultation with The George Washington University faculty. These materials include "individual papers of local area authors as well as organizational records of local presses, writing clubs, performance spaces, etc. which document the economic, political, social, and cultural history of the literary communities in the District of Columbia and the Metropolitan Washington Area."[30] This policy committed Special Collections to building a community-centric collection. The Poetry Collection at Buffalo also applied an expansive collecting strategy for underground poetry. "Our collection is a collection of the camera eye. Everything in the scene is captured."[31] Curator Basinski also encouraged a flexible collection development policy, which "dissolves conservative convention in the realm of collecting," and allows the process to become inventive, unbridled, and free-floating.[32] For the WWA, Special Collections imposed just one hard border: the collection is limited to artists and organizations in the Washington Metropolitan Area.

In addition to talking with individual poets, the archivist worked to create a presence in the poetry community as a whole. One effective outreach activity has been attendance at poetry readings. This strategy proved most valuable with groups such as avant-garde and spoken word poets because much of their work is spontaneous and unrecorded. Although these underrepresented groups can be hard to find and contact, it is somewhat easier in D.C. because the community is small and the poets have personal as well as professional relationships.

The archivist also met with poets and discussed the WWA at the 2008 "Split This Rock Poetry Festival," organized by the group, D.C. Poets Against the War, and presented a paper as part of a panel, titled "Vaulting into History." This panel discussed the use of archival repositories to collect and preserve both poetry and political discourse and served as another avenue to introduce the WWA to the poetry community and to attract donors.

As a way to showcase the poetry collections and to celebrate D.C. poets who had donated material to the WWA, Special Collections hosted a poetry reading, "Voices from the City" in September 2008. The eight invited presenters represented genres from mainstream to spoken word. Some of these poets served as teachers and mentors to other poets in the community, and others edited literary journals, organized reading series, and published other local poets. The fact that the poets at this event all knew

each other augurs well for efforts to create a collection that shares the inclusive story of a community of poets who interact artistically and personally. Special Collections recently received a collection from one of the poets who attended this event and negotiations continue with another.

The newest initiatives involve using Web 2.0 tools to reach the Washington writing community for donations as well as the research community to promote the use of these resources.[33] Special Collections joined the Facebook group "Washington Poetry" and posts links to departmental events and blog entries that promote the unique WWA content and discuss how researchers have used these records.[34] Special Collections also uses Libguides, a platform to create on-line research guides. Special Collections staff contributed data about primary resource for more than 50 Libguides and designed a separate guide for the WWA that describes existing collections and includes links to local poetry readings and other events in D.C. In this way, the Libguide serves the GW research community, as well as the D.C. poetry community, as a tool for sharing information and promoting the WWA project.[35]

Discussion

During the 1984 effort, the WWA advisory board represented multiple local repositories. This may have led the poetry community to conclude that there was no single repository associated with the project that could answer their questions. In the present effort, the responsibility for building the collection clearly belongs to the GW Special Collections Research Center. The WWA is more likely now to be seen by the poetry community as the authoritative repository, especially as the collection develops and grows.

The most effective strategy Special Collections retained from the 1984 initiative was the use of a community insider. Relying on one ambassador, however, may ultimately result in missed opportunities to expand the collection. At some point, for example, Cavalieri may no longer be willing or able to maintain her current level of involvement. One possible solution is to expand the number of ambassadors. Special Collections staff is already doing this, in effect, when they ask donors and potential donors to suggest other poets to contact.

Another way to expand the role of the community members in collection building would be to recreate an advisory board. The past advisory board was composed of representatives of local academic repositories and a few local poets. In addition, the first advisory board had the authority to make selection decisions. Consequently, the community of artists was not very involved in collection building. A future advisory board should be made up of poets invited to assist with collection building using their unique knowledge of the community. Such an advisory board would be in the best position to provide information about the type of documentary evidence necessary to create an archives representative of the entire D.C. poetry community.

The WWA collection development policy is flexible enough to allow for a truly comprehensive community history. Current collection development efforts include contacting local poets, attending reading series, and hosting events in library space.

After four years of collecting with this broad policy, the archivist realized the need for more detailed direction in order to document the poetry community's multiple genres, ethnic communities, and variety of documentary production. Such direction should begin with a comprehensive survey of the community as well as a survey of the existing collection. The community profile and collection survey will help the archivist to understand what documentation gaps exist and to ensure that the collection represents the entire poetry community, not just those most vocal and visible.

In addition to multiple genres and ethnic diversity, the WWA collection should include record types that represent the full variety of documents produced by the D.C. poetry community. The importance of collecting all record types has been recognized by the Archive for New Poetry, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego. "The Archive's focus on documenting experimental work, including public performances and collaborative efforts, has led to extensive collecting beyond published poems." Sound recordings, personal papers, and editorial files "provide evidence of editorial and writing processes, of publishing and scholarship, and of personal connections among these writers. In doing so, the Archive also documents in broader context the poetic movements that, through their works, these writers, editors, and scholars have defined."[36]

At GW, staff would like to move beyond using Web 2.0 tools simply as a means to alert researchers and members of the community of the WWA's existence and toward using these tools to help build the collection. So far, this has proved an elusive goal because social networking sites are highly dynamic, requiring a high level of time commitment, and innovative approaches related to collection building have yet to be fully imagined and explored.

Conclusion

The renewed WWA initiative began at a time of relative calm in the department. Four years later, the department is less settled and staff attention is shifting to other tasks such as implementing a new collection management system and building new collecting areas. The 1984 WWA effort may have failed because nobody took responsibility for maintaining the momentum of the project after the initial enthusiasm ran its course. Without an ongoing administrative commitment to the project and the designation of one archivist as responsible for its development, the WWA may again be in danger of stalling. The work by staff and the community to build the literary archives has attracted researchers and already enriched the exploration of Washington, D.C. history. For the collection to continue to grow, the enthusiasm felt by the community and the staff must be sustained from the top down and focused through imaginative collecting policies and inclusive outreach initiatives.

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Archives of the Arlington County, Virginia Public Library. She holds an M.L.S. from the University of Michigan and a B.A. from Brandeis University.

NOTES

1. Initially, the name of the WWA was the Washington Writing Archive. It is unclear when the name became the Washington Writers' Archive.
2. Special Collections Research Center will be referred to in this paper as Special Collections.
3. Andrew Flinn, "Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28:2 (2007): 153.
4. Amy Tector, "The Almost Accidental Archive and its Impact on Literary Subjects and Canonicity," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40:2 (2006): 99.
5. Andrea Hinding, "Toward Documentation: New Collecting Strategies in the 1980s," in *Options for the 80s: Proceedings of the Second National Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries*, Conference held in Minneapolis, MN (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1981): 531–532.
6. F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* 38:1 (1975): 5.
7. Gould P. Colman, "The Forum," *American Archivist* 36:3 (1973): 484.
8. F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," 7.
9. Riva A. Pollard, "The Appraisal of Personal Papers: A Critical Literature Review," *Archivaria* 52 (2001): 149.
10. Judith E. Endelman, "Looking Backward to Plan the Future: Collection Analysis for Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 50:3 (1987): 341.
11. Terry Abraham, "Collection Policy or Documentation Strategy: Theory and Practice," *American Archivist* 54:1 (1991): 45.
12. Andrea Hinding, "Toward Documentation: New Collecting Strategies in the 1980s," 535.
13. Brian Keough, "Documenting Diversity: Developing Special Collections of Underdocumented Groups," *Library Collections, Acquisitions, and Technical Services* 26:3 (2002): 241–251.
14. Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan, "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections," *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 90–91.
15. Catherine Hobbs, "The Character of Personal Archives: Reflections on the Value of Records of Individuals," *Archivaria* 52 (2001): 127.
16. Catherine Hobbs, "New Approaches to Canadian Literary Archives," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 40:2 (2006): 112.
17. The Collection Policy of the Poetry Collection. University at Buffalo, The State University of New York.
18. Amy Tector, "The Almost Accidental Archive and its Impact on Literary Subjects and Canonicity," 106.
19. F. Gerald Ham, *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 1993): 9.
20. The Center for Washington Area Studies (CWAS) is a multi-disciplinary university-wide research center whose purpose is to encourage, promote, and engage in research related to Washington, D.C.
21. Chasen Gaver to Professor Howard Gillette, 20 January 1984, Washington Writers' Archive donor file, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
22. David McAleavey to Friends, November 1985, Washington Writers' Archive donor file, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
23. In the original description of the WWA, the Advisory Committee was designed to consist of 21 individuals. GW members included those from the Center for Washington Area Studies, GW English Department, and the head of Special Collections. The other members represented the following repositories: Georgetown University, Howard University, American University, The Catholic University of America, the University of Maryland, George Mason University, the University of the District of Columbia, D.C. Public Library, the Library of Congress, the Folger Shakespeare Library, The Poetry Committee of Greater Washington, The Writer's Center in Bethesda, and interested individuals affiliated with independent presses and those interested in local literature. Documents

were found in the Archive donor file, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

24. McAleavey suggested that the Advisory Committee might have been an attempt to mirror an advisory committee started by O. B. Hardison when he directed the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Folger organized a poetry reading series and Hardison decided to bring together representatives from all the local universities to make shared decisions on poet participants in an attempt to complement, rather than compete with, each other's reading series. David McAleavey, interview by the author, 28 July 2009.
25. These guidelines are not elucidated in this document and could not be discovered. Washington Writing Archive Collection, Collection Development Policy, DRAFT, 7 July 1986, Washington Writers' Archive donor file, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
26. McAleavey to All Members of the Advisory Committee for the Washington Writing Archives, 15 July 1986. Washington Writers' Archive donor file, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
27. Distinguishing features of *The Poet and The Poem at the Library of Congress*, which first aired on WPFW-FM radio in Washington, D.C., are the poets' discussions of craft and sources of inspiration. Since 1977, more than two thousand poets have been interviewed and presented to a national audience.
28. The Washingtoniana collection preserves material relating to the historical and cultural, social, and political aspects of the District of Columbia. These historical materials date from the eighteenth century to the present, with the bulk of the records dating from the twentieth century. The literary and cultural collections extend to the present day.
29. Michael Basinski, "Underground Poetry, Collecting Poetry, and the Librarian," *The Acquisitions Librarian* 14:27 (2002): 17–25.
30. Collection Development Policy Statement, Special Collections—Literary Studies, October 2007, Special Collections Research Center, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.
31. Michael Basinski, "Underground Poetry, Collecting Poetry, and the Librarian," 23.
32. Ibid., 22–23.
33. At the WebWise 2009 Conference, the ECHO Lake Aquarium and Science Center presented Voices for the Lake, their initiative to use Web 2.0 technology in support of a conservation and educational project. The project uses social networking sites such as Facebook and YouTube to raise awareness and build community and stewardship of Lake Champlain. http://www.echovermont.org/ourmission/vfl.html. This presentation inspired new efforts within GW's Special Collections to exploit these technologies to reach constituencies that are increasingly on-line, including the D.C. poetry community.
34. Special Collections posted a blog entry promoting the work of two local poets in gathering the history of the houses in the District of Columbia where writers lived either while writing or as children. The product of these two years of historical research is a Web site that Special Collections helped promote to a wider audience through its blog.
35. Gelman Library Research Guides, "Washington Area Writers," George Washington University, <http://libguides.gwu.edu/content.php?pid=11053&sid=74275&search_terms=Washington>.
36. "Archive for New Poetry," Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego, <http://libraries.ucsd.edu/locations/mscl/collections/archive-for-new-poetry.html>.