

CATALOGING: A CASE STUDY OF PRACTICES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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ABSTRACT: The following paper contextualizes manuscript cataloging tactics in Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania. Penn's approach maximizes existing capabilities of RLIN and the AMC format. Through extensive use of "linked records," Penn provides access to manuscript holdings without adding significantly to the time required for typical arrangement and description. Foremost in the creation of this methodology was the assurance that the RLIN/AMC database would not be degraded and would, in fact, be strengthened for researchers. Although current manuscript cataloging rules are followed, the spirit of this new approach appears to run counter to prevailing archival conventions or perceptions.

In 1988 the Department of Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, was in the seemingly unfortunate position of having none of its approximately 8,000 linear feet of manuscripts cataloged in *any* on-line database. In fact, only a handful of catalog cards had been generated for holdings that encompass well over a hundred distinct collections, although records did exist for *some* of the thousands of individual items or small groups of items that had found their way into the department over the course of the century. As the newly appointed Curator of Manuscripts, I had to address the issue of bibliographic control immediately and, in essence, completely from scratch. The situation, therefore, was both a bane and a blessing as I began my tenure at Penn: I had no cataloging base on which to build, but I also had no unfortunate or misguided work to impede my freedom to bring our manuscripts under the best bibliographic control that I could envision with today's technology and practices.

The collections at Penn have some central themes but represent the not uncommon diversity of a special collections department in a large research library/university. No guarantee existed that the majority of patrons who would be well-served by aspects of our holdings would know to contact Penn, *even if* collection-level records were created in RLIN/AMC for all of our manuscript collections. I also noticed almost immediately a predominant pattern in reference inquiries. Most often asked was: who wrote to whom? or do you have any letters or manuscripts by so-and-so? I, therefore, based my decisions as to the nature and form of our cataloging practices on the needs of our patrons vis-à-vis our collections.

Having been trained in 1985 in the AMC format by LaVonne Gallo of RLG, I instinctively chose to pursue any manuscript cataloging activity via RLIN. Strengthening the argument to base our cataloging in the RLIN system was the fact that Penn's local on-line catalog (a Notis-based system) had yet to be programmed for AMC-type cataloging. It was of utmost concern to me that I spend *no* time trying to create yet another separate system or data-base locally: I did not want to re-invent the wheel, so to speak, or to strain the financial and personnel resources of an already-overburdened systems office. RLIN provided all the functions, features, and capacities that I would ever need, and using it as our data-base of record meant *immediate* international access to our materials. Although the trend today is to produce cataloging records locally and load them in either RLIN or OCLC, I recommend the opposite, if affordable and permissible at one's institution.¹ But again, my strategy was based almost on a one-stop-shopping mentality: I wanted to deal with only one system *from* which all other needs (such as local cataloging records) would be derived, a system which simultaneously was offering the broadest public access and the greatest commitment to the AMC format.

Rationale

Not all researchers desire the "big picture" when tracking down manuscripts for their topic of study. Many long for and often demand a myopic presentation of information to reduce valuable time and money spent on consulting original documents. More often than not the search for specific manuscript materials falls on the librarian, who then expends considerable time ascertaining whether or not his/her institution has the requested items or to what extent it holds manuscripts related to the inquiry.

The description of manuscript collections, therefore, really has a two-fold function. The first is to provide collection-level information in order to let the research community know where the papers of individuals or records of institutions now reside. The second is to provide series- or subseries-level analysis not only to expedite a researcher's search for pertinent material within a manuscript collection but also to alert researchers to pertinent items within manuscript collections *that they might otherwise not have thought to consult*.

In general, the first need has been met by manuscript librarians through collection-level cataloging in-house; through notification of holdings to *NUCMC* and other published guides to manuscript collections; and since the 1980s through the cataloging of records in the AMC format in RLIN, OCLC, or local on-line catalogs. The second need has generally been managed through the creation of finding aids to or inventories of the contents of individual collections—guides that may then be published or remain within repositories for patron and staff use. Some repositories also create in-house card files or even local machine-readable data bases that interfile groups of letters or materials found within various manuscript collections. Many institutions also participate in organizing and providing data—beyond a mere collection-level scheme—to subject guides, for example, *American Literary Manuscripts* or *English Literary Manuscripts*, which present many individual listings for manuscripts located within larger collections. For example, a repository may indicate that it possesses 149 letters by Eugene O'Neill, 27 of which are in a larger collection of

Random House Archives, 2 of which appear in the John Reed Collection, and 120 of which are in an O'Neill Collection.

A finding aid or register is an essential product for a manuscripts repository. It is the guide to a large body of collected material for researchers needing access to the bulk of that collection; it is a text that can be photocopied easily and sent out; it is the security—or shelf-list—for the physical location of the component parts of the collection. But hard-copy registers do not interact with one another nor unite related material in the way that card files, machine-readable data-bases, or subject guides do: each register must be consulted to answer specific research requests, such as a request for *all* the correspondence of a certain individual within a repository. One traditional method of bringing forth component parts has been to include added entries—both author and title—to the collection-level cataloging record. While this approach offers important assistance to the researcher, it remains cumbersome and often frustrating—cumbersome because the “notes” or “520” field can become painfully long and tedious to read and frustrating because the number of items and their respective dates for the added entries are usually not found in the cataloging record.

At Penn we have developed and implemented a new approach to the description of our manuscript collections. This approach exploits the resources of RLIN by providing national access not only to collection-level information but also to group-level information for our large manuscript collections. At the same time, RLIN provides us with hard-copy container lists or indices that are incorporated into the registers for the collections.

Description of Cataloging Process

We prepare what is essentially a traditional cataloging record for each manuscript collection and enter it into AMC. The entry indicates the years covered in the collection, its physical size, its scope and general contents, its provenance, etc. (For an example of a collection-level entry, see Figure 1.) For large manuscript collections, however, which contain a significant number of important correspondents, we eschew added entries as a means of tracing individual correspondents. Instead we catalog in AMC individual correspondents within a collection *as separate records linked to the collection-level record* (or “host item”). These brief entries contain information as to the extreme dates of the correspondence and the number of items and leaves and also note the collection and folder location. (See Figure 2 for an example of a linked record.)

After all linked records for any given collection have been input and revised, we request an RLIN report (Figure 3). The report is an alphabetized sort of all 1xx and 7xx fields. The alphabetized, two-column printout or report contains the heading (1xx or 7xx field); the date(s) (245 field, subfield “f”); the number of items and leaves (300 field); and the folder number (773 field, subfield “g”).

The report serves as an index for our register to collections such as the Lewis Mumford Papers or the Theodore Dreiser Papers—at an approximate cost of \$450. Without the report from RLIN, we would have typed a list of all the principal correspondents, which in the case of Dreiser runs to 3,742 names. Instead, RLIN does it for us, and the typing (i.e., inputting) that we do with relation to describing this collection will provide national access to many constituent parts of it. As more of our collections are entered into RLIN/AMC in this manner,

less often will we have to check individual collection inventories to determine what correspondence we have for an individual. Instead, one personal name search will retrieve all our holdings at the same time, regardless of the manuscript collection in which they reside.

The feasibility of inputting possibly 3,000 to 4,000 linked records into RLIN/AMC for a single manuscript collection has been enhanced by a mechanism worked out in consultation with RLG staff. We create a "dummy" record in the "Visual Materials File" (VIM) file for a typical linked record. Only the smallest of adjustments is needed to have the VIM record resemble the AMC record.² For the kind of linked records that we input, the ARC segment remains the same for each linked record of a particular collection. The "dummy" record in VIM and the transfer ID command, therefore, are invaluable to us. Because our linked records are generally brief, we really are not typing (i.e., inputting) much more than we would be when creating a register/container list. Because of the quantity of our linked records for an individual collection, we do not include

Dreiser, Theodore, 1871-1945.

Papers, ca. 1890-1965 (bulk 1897-1955).
503 boxes.

American writer.

Summary: Contains 22 series, including correspondence (118 boxes); legal matters (7 boxes); writings (260 boxes), comprising books, essays, short stories, poems, plays, screenplays, radio scripts, addresses, lectures, interviews, introductions, and prefaces; journals edited by Dreiser (6 boxes); notes (9 boxes); diaries (5 boxes); biographical material (1 box); memorabilia (41 boxes), comprising scrapbooks, photographs, art work, promotional material, postcards, and miscellanea; financial records (5 boxes); clippings (23 boxes); works by others (12 boxes); and oversized materials (2 boxes).

Also includes materials regarding various family members: brother Paul Dresser (8 boxes of correspondence, sheet music and lyric sheets, clippings and memorabilia, and two plays written by Dreiser); second wife Helen Dreiser (4 boxes of diaries and other writings); and niece Vera Dreiser (2 boxes of correspondence).

Principal holdings: gift of and purchase from Theodore and Helen Dreiser, 1942-1955. Additional donations: Myrtle Butcher; Louise Campbell; Harold J. Dies; Ralph Fabri; Mrs. William White Gleason; Hazel Mack Godwin; Paul D. Gormley; Marguerite Tjader Harris; R. Sturgis Ingersoll; Los Angeles Public Library; F. O. Matthiessen; Vera Dreiser Scott; Lorna D. Smith; Robert Spiller; and Estelle Kubitz Williams.

Literary rights to unpublished Dreiser manuscripts: The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania.

Finding aids: Unpublished register, container list, and correspondents' index available through Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.

Indexes: AMC file of RLIN provides an index to 3,742 principal correspondents. To obtain a listing, do the following search: fin rt Theodore Dreiser Papers#.

Cite as: Theodore Dreiser Papers, Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.

Location: Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6206.

I. Dresser, Paul, 1858-1906. II. Dreiser, Helen Patges, d.1955. III. Dreiser, Vera. IV. Title: Theodore Dreiser Papers, ca. 1890-1965.

RGPN: Ms. Coll. 30

ID: PAUR92-A3859

CC: 9554

DCF: a

PROC: b

:+B?

Figure 1
Cataloging of a Collection-Level Record

these names as added entries to the collection-level entry, nor are these records traced under the collection-level main entry. We do not think that 3,743 records (in the case of the Theodore Dreiser Papers) is an appropriate search result for "fin pn theodore dreiser." We do, however, use the 590 field in the collection-level entry to indicate that the AMC file of RLIN provides an index to the correspondents in the collection. It goes on to state that a researcher who needs to obtain a listing should do the following search: fin rt "title of the collection." So a researcher who wanted to scan the individual contents of a collection could do so.

All RLIN/AMC cataloging follows the principles outlined in Steven L. Hensen's *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts: A Cataloging Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries*. It may be important to iterate that the RLIN/AMC cataloging that we have adopted at Penn does not increase our processing time: it simply kills two birds with one stone. It creates a listing or index to significant correspondents within a col-

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ID: PAUR92-A2147          CC: 9554      DCF: a      PROC: b
:+B? ful 1
FIN PN MASTERS, EDGAR LEE ALS LI PAUR - Record 1 of 3

ID:PAUR92-A2147          RTYP:d      ST:p      MS:          EL:z      AD:05-07-92
CC:9554  BLT:bd          DCF:a      CSC:d      MOD:      PROC:b      UD:06-24-92
PP:pau   L:eng          PC:i      PD:1912/1950 REP:?
MMD:          OR:          POL:      DM:          RR:          COL:          EML:          GEN:          BSE:
040  PU$cPU$eappm
041  eng
100 1 Masters, Edgar Lee,$|d1868-1950.
245 00 $kCorrespondence$bwith Theodore and Helen Dreiser,$f1912-1950, n.d.
300  280 items (629 leaves).
500  Comprises 275 items to Theodore and Helen Dreiser and 5 items from
      them or their representative.
545  Contains correspondence from Ellen Coyne Masters, wife of Edgar Lee
      Masters.
520  There are 2 galleys (3 leaves) housed in oversize, correspondence
      from E. L. Masters, ca. 1945.
700 10 Masters, Ellen Coyne.
773 0 $tTheodore Dreiser Papers, ca. 1890-1965.$gFolders 4013-4024; 14678.
851  $bSpecial Collections,$aVan Pelt Library, University of
      Pennsylvania, $ cPhiladelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6206.

Masters, Edgar Lee, 1868-1950.
Correspondence with Theodore and Helen Dreiser, 1912-1950, n.d.
280 items (629 leaves).
Comprises 275 items to Theodore and Helen Dreiser and 5 items from them or
their representative.
Contains correspondence from Ellen Coyne Masters, wife of Edgar Lee Masters.
Summary: There are 2 galleys (3 leaves) housed in oversize, correspondence
from E. L. Masters, ca. 1945.
In: Theodore Dreiser Papers, ca. 1890-1965. Folders 4013-4024; 14678.
Location: Special Collections, Van Pelt Library, University of
Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104-6206.

I. Masters, Ellen Coyne.
RGPN: Ms. Coll. 30
ID: PAUR92-A2147          CC: 9554      DCF: a      PROC: b
:+B?
    
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Figure 2
Cataloging of a "Linked Record"

| THEODORE DREISER PAPERS - CORRESPONDENTS' INDEX | Page 109 |
|---|---|
| Martens, Frederick Herman, 1874-1932. SEE International Literary Bureau. | Mason, Harold T. SEE Centaur Book Shop. |
| Martin, E. C. SEE McClure's Magazine. | Mason, Harold T. 1927. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 4005. |
| Martin, Edward Sandford, 1856-1939. 1930-1934. 7 items (10 leaves). Folder 3988. | Mason, J. W. T. (Joseph Warren Teets). 1879-1941. SEE Daily Express (London, England). |
| Martin, George Madden, 1866-1916. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 3990. | Mason, Walt, 1862-1939. 1913. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 4006. |
| Martin, James S. SEE Century Company. | The Masses. 1913. 3 items (3 leaves). Folder 4008. |
| Martin, M. W. SEE Hammond Defense Fund Committee | Massey, Dorothy Collins. 1926-1942. 19 items (31 leaves + 1 photo). Folder 4009. |
| Martin, Martha Evans, d. 1925. SEE Demorest's Family Magazine. | Massie, Effie Dunreith. 1912. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 4010. |
| Martin, Quinn. 1928. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 3993 | Massie, Hughes. SEE Curtis Brown, Ltd. |
| Martin, Raymond. 1939. 2 items (4 leaves). Folder 3994. | Massock, Richard Gilbert, 1900- SEE Associated Press. |
| Martindale, John W. SEE Brookwood Labor College (Katonah, New York). | Masson, C. D. 1932. 8 items (19 leaves + 1 pamphlet). Folder 4011. |
| Maruzen, Kahushiki Kaisha. 1931. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 3997. | Masson Economic Theory and System, 1932. SEE Masson, C. D. |
| Marvin, Cloyd Heck. 1932. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 3998. | Masson, Thomas L. 1920-1923. 4 items (4 leaves). Folder 4012. |
| Marx, Carolyn. SEE New York World-Telegram. | Masters, Edgar Lee, 1868-1950. 1912-1950, n.d. 280 items (629 leaves). Folders 4013-4024; 14678. |
| Marx, Magdeleine. 1932. 2 items (5 leaves). Folder 4000. | Masters, Ellen Coyne SEE Masters, Edgar Lee, 1868-1950. |
| Marx, Saul. SEE Clipper Press. | Masters, Marcia Lee. 1944-1949. 10 items (14 leaves). Folder 4025. |
| Maryland Theatre (Baltimore, Md.). 1931. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 4001. | Mathews, Shailer, 1863-1941. SEE The World Today. |
| Mason, Caroline Atwater, 1853-1939. 1916. 1 item (1 leaf). Folder 4003. | Mathews, William Burdette, 1866-1943. SEE August 27 Club. |
| Mason, Clara R. SEE Philadelphia Art Alliance. | Mathieu, Aron M. SEE Writer's Digest (Cincinnati, Ohio). |

Figure 3
Sample page of RLIN Report

lection through the venue of a national/international data-base. In the case of the Lewis Mumford Papers, a part-time worker was able to enter 4,598 linked records in a semester. When she later worked on the Theodore Dreiser Project, we had refined the system such that she was able to enter 3,742 linked records in about six weeks.

The Debate

The seeds of any current debate regarding the level and nature of cataloging and cataloging records in a national or international shared database may well stem from the classic dichotomy between historical manuscripts repositories and public archives. In a recent article in *American Archivist*, Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland distinguishes "between two competing perspectives within the professional community: one that views archivists as members of a larger community of historian-scholars with a responsibility to interpret the documents in their care; and one that defines archivists as information-management professionals with a responsibility to act as 'gatekeepers' for the materials under their control." In the past the former often endorsed and created calendars (item-level description) for their manuscript collections, while the latter tended to emphasize records management which included issues such as provenance, retention schedules, agency histories, and series-level description. As Gilliland-Swetland notes, although "major historical manuscripts repositories began [after World War II] incorporating the central practices of the public archives tradition, [namely] using arrangement according to provenance as the basis for intellectual and physical control over holdings...[and implementing] series-level rather than item-level description and cataloging," the curators within these same repositories did not also adopt "the outlook of the public archives tradition, that is preserving records for administrative and public needs. Historical manuscripts repositories accepted, rather, what appeared to be better methods for achieving 'traditional' goals, that is, preserving records of enduring value for use in historical scholarship by historians."³

Local cataloging practices tend to differ between historical manuscripts repositories and public archives. In an attempt to enlarge the AMC file in RLIN, federal funding was received in 1985 to "reconvert" local manual files for a group of research institutions into machine-readable cataloging records entered into RLIN's AMC file. In a dramatic way this project made manifest the diversity of cataloging practices still possible within the standard established for machine-readable archival cataloging. The national archival databases created by RLIN and OCLC were bringing together records created essentially from divergent view points, renewing the debate over level and location of description for archival materials.

In terms of the RLIN AMC file, the debate among colleagues seems mostly to concern the two great frustrations expressed by those who consult the file: (1) search results that are too large and which offer high counts for the holdings residing in one institution and (2) lengthy collection-level records with a large quantity of tracings. The latter concerns those well-meaning cataloging records that go into elaborate—sometimes even painful—detail regarding the scope of a certain manuscript collection or record series: entries that run anywhere from five to fifteen or more screens in the long display! The former refers to the

inverse frustration—cataloging records that provide too little information per record yet produce search results in the thousands for items within a single repository.

Although the approach that we have taken at Penn for the cataloging of our manuscripts obviates both frustrations, it suggests to some item-level description and the retrograde traditions of historical manuscripts repositories. Frequently discussed and debated at professional conferences and RLIN-users meetings is not what level of descriptive control should be created by a repository but rather what level of descriptive control should be available through the national on-line bibliographic data-bases. The AMC format was created through the unprecedented union of the Library of Congress and the Society of American Archivists, through a committee known as the National Information Systems Task Force. The task force's objective was to comply with USMARC fields while at the same time providing a format that would respond to and fulfill the bibliographic and management needs of those in charge of manuscript and archival materials and collections. Among the needs of manuscript repositories and archives is that of providing access to component parts of large collections—not only to let the researcher know, in general, that material relating to her or his topic may be had in so-and-so collection but also to reduce the amount of time required by the researcher to locate the needed material by providing container or folder numbers to it. Even more helpful to the researcher and her or his evaluation of how best to allocate time and travel budgets would be a brief description of some of these component parts. Pre-AMC/RLIN, these needs could only be met by creating registers—available in-house, through the mail, or perhaps published; or by maintaining card files in the reading rooms of these repositories; or by creating local on-line data-bases, which might then in turn be available through local or regional networks. For those of us who found these alternatives either costly, time-consuming, clumsy, or generally unsatisfactory to our researchers' needs, the RLIN/AMC file offered a new hope for improved access to our holdings and dissemination of bibliographic information.

I believe that the principal, most productive discussion in which either RLIN/AMC or OCLC/AMC contributors could engage concerns access points (fields of information that are coded for specific retrieval as opposed to “key-word” retrieval) and search results (how many records, representing how many different collections from the same institution, will result from certain search strategies, such as a personal or corporate name search). Secondly or perhaps relatedly, this discourse should address the quality and consistency of cataloging and the amount of bibliographic information provided. Although the SAA, RLG, and OCLC should continue to promulgate standards not only for the format but for the entry of records in the utilities, they should not, in my opinion, inadvertently limit the concept or potential of these utilities to the mission of *NUCMC*. We *must* be forward-looking and address the complexity of our needs through the promotion of new solutions and refined thinking regarding our operations.

Item-level cataloging is the pariah of today's archival profession. For example, in its guidelines for application to the Preservation and Access Program, the National Endowment for the Humanities states: “Calendaring and detailed indexing are not supported unless an applicant can present a persuasive argu-

ment for scholarly needs in this area." But the term "item-level cataloging" or "calendarizing" is misrepresentative of the intellectual complexities of manuscript collection cataloging. I believe that items within a physical and intellectual category should *not* be individually catalogued in national data-bases such as RLIN or OCLC, but I would argue that an intellectual category may comprise only one item, whose cataloging I do support. For example, one illustration of an intellectual category that I have identified as vital to my researchers is "who wrote to whom." So every such category carries equal research value *regardless* of the number of items. Therefore, we created a cataloging record in RLIN for the one letter from Thomas Edison to Theodore Dreiser as well as for the group of 280 items of correspondence between Edgar Lee Masters and Dreiser.

The debate also entails issues regarding access points and search results. I object to a search result (such as I got on the sixth of August 1992) of 1099 hits, 1059 of which represented entries from one special collection. The initial search was find "personal name exact" William Carlos Williams, which resulted in 1099 hits. Suspecting that the majority emanated from one repository, I discovered through a searching strategy that indeed 1059 were from a single institution. It most likely is the case that these items derive from only one or just a few manuscript collections or, put another way, have just one or a few provenances. It is a *time-saving* courtesy to researchers to unite groups of like material together—not only physically, as the library probably received it—but also intellectually, as represented in the cataloging record. Search results of 1059 for a single institution, representing material from only one or a few sources, figuratively-speaking clog the system and absolutely frustrate the researcher (as well as the librarian).

On the other hand, AMC records such as the Francis White Papers with 349 subject entries, 327 of which are personal or corporate names (in the long display there are eleven screens of "bib"), are exasperating, for they fail to tell you how the name that you were searching relates to the collection cataloged: there is no *refined* information to a name that somebody thought was worthy of being an access point. By the way, the AMC record for the Francis White Papers was part of a search result for the following search: find "personal name" Homer Brett. In terms of the record that was available to read to the general public, the name "Homer Brett" does not appear: the researcher has no idea what relation the individual that (s)he was searching relates to the cataloging record selected by the operating system. Although some may claim that at least the researcher will know to contact the institution holding the Francis White Papers, I consider such cataloging elementary in its approach and not exploitative of the system in which it currently exists.

In what one chooses to catalog and then with regard to how one catalogs the material, I propose that institutions who contribute to RLIN pay attention to things like search results, misleading information, or qualitatively poor information. I believe that Penn's approach to the cataloging of its manuscript collections does just that, because it provides more access to materials via a *single* venue; and because it provides qualitatively better information; and because it saves researchers' time for many typical inquiries. Where one could argue possible contradiction is the fact that Penn deliberately has not implemented linked-record AMC cataloging for the hundreds of manuscripts or writings by an author such as Theodore Dreiser. Such materials often comprise a significant

portion of an author's personal papers, and one must admit that the titles of these works can be viewed as important access points. I decided, however, that the main entry for the Dreiser Papers so clearly indicates that the researcher is likely to find most of Dreiser's extant manuscripts at Penn that to catalog them individually does not offer access to a broad population of researchers and would only clog the system in terms of a "personal name" search under "Dreiser." If, however, Penn owned the H.L. Mencken Papers, in which the manuscript to Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* were contained, I would create a separate AMC record linked to the Mencken collection-level record, because Dreiser and *Sister Carrie* have qualitatively more value as access points vis-à-vis the main entry to which they relate. I am trying to reach the patron who may not know to consult a particular manuscript collection, but I am trying to accomplish this while also providing more and better information regarding the particular research interest than added entries and subject entries found in AMC typically offer. *NUCMC* exists; *RLIN/AMC* should and can offer something else in addition to that which *NUCMC* provides.

In the last several years I have either attended cataloging workshops led by staff from the Library of Congress or attended numerous meetings with book catalogers in which I have invariably been told that the need to streamline cataloging practices and/or reduce fields of input is a national mandate or reality. The typical refrain is: "Time and money must be saved; at least give the patron some crumb of a cataloging record rather than add to the backlog." As admirable and seemingly logical as this philosophy may appear, I see no reason why AMC catalogers must follow suit. Like Marion Matters, I would suggest, for example, that manuscripts and archival catalogers use relator terms. As Ms. Matters put it on 16 March 1992 in "Archives & Archivists" (an electronic mail list): "Since the subtleties of 6xx vs 7xx or author vs subject are lost on users (not to mention many archivists), why not tell them the relationship in English? In other words, why not add relator terms to headings more freely (i.e., Hensen, Steven, correspondent), no matter how they're coded?" Since a special task force has carved out a format unique to manuscripts and archives, why not continue to acknowledge and catalog for our unique reference, format, management, and security needs? I don't want an AMC record to resemble a book record more and more: I simply want the AMC format to be machine-compatible with the other formats. Beyond such compatibility and standardization of field codes, we should not look, in my opinion, to the practices of our print colleagues. Rather we should forge ahead with models, databases, and records that truly answer our needs as archival and manuscript professionals and our users' needs.

Conclusion

At several sessions during the 1992 SAA annual meeting in Montreal issues such as multi-level description and/or full-text searching and availability on-line were discussed. And some have even suggested that multi-level searching become a priority system enhancement for *RLIN*. But if such a function were available tomorrow, many significant access issues would remain. How should we point a user at Level I to pertinent material described at Level II, and so on? The availability, for example, of full-text finding aids on-line strikes me as a

luxury of description and a zero-gain with regard to access points or, to put it figuratively, there would be no additional keys to unlock the doors *behind* which lay the desired information. Access via key-word searching is no solution to access, because any full-text data-base would quickly contain such an enormous bank of hits for various character-strings that search results would either be impossible or so large as to be frustrating. The USMARC format provides data in a controlled format and thereby enables us to use controlled vocabulary searches. It is not significant conceptually to decide whether a "personal name" search, for example, contains the 1xx and 7xx fields alone versus the 1xx, 6xx, and 7xx fields. What is important is that a kind of search exists that differs from a key-word search. To quote T.S. Eliot: "We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." So do I contend that multi-level description in an on-line data-base only returns us to issues of access points and quality control.

The system at Penn represents one way of addressing issues of bibliographic access points and quality control in an on-line environment that has been successful. Although it is not expected that our particular cataloging practices will be emulated by all or even many, it is hoped that this review of our methodology will contribute to important dialogue concerning how we actually use the devices of automation, networks, and standard formats.

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NOTES

1. Since the University of Pennsylvania Library was a charter member of RLG, it was committed to either producing bibliographic records directly on RLIN or tape-loading locally-produced records into RLIN. When I began RLIN entry into AMC in 1988, it cost the Library nothing more than was currently being spent: the Department already had a dedicated RLIN terminal, and the Library had purchased a searching package that allowed unlimited searches. Other archival repositories and collections will need to consider the cost of equipment, telecommunication charges, as well as RLG membership, if they choose to catalog directly on RLIN. Often—given larger institutional practices—it is more cost-efficient to produce cataloging records on local systems and produce tapes for RLG to load into RLIN.
2. By working in catalog maintenance (as opposed to the catalog function) and by selecting both VIM and AMC files and setting the input for AMC, we can transfer most of the bibliographic fixed fields, and all of the bibliographic variable fields, and all of the ARC, except the INS field. One simply finds the VIM record, then transfers the ID into AMC. (The transfer ID command is the only one that will copy both the bib and arc segments of a record, but this command can be used only between files, not within a file. VIM is the only other file with an ARC segment; therefore, it holds the "dummy" record.)

After the command "set fun cat mai" is entered, the command for each new cataloging entry is:
 sel fil amc vim/set inp amc/fin id "vim record"/tra id

One must then fill in the BLT and PROC fields in the AMC record and the INS on the ARC segment. The AMC record will contain an 035 field with the ID of the VIM record—a field which we have chosen to delete. The VIM record has a "D" supplied in the INS field, so at the

end of the day we go back into the VIM record and remove it. If we fail to remove the "D," the "dummy" record will be lost overnight.

With the "dummy" VIM record transferred and the above-mentioned fields accounted for, we then enter the specific information for each entry. For our situation, the fixed bibliographic fields include L, PC, and PD. The variable bibliographic fields possibly needing alteration include 041, 1xx, 245, 300, and subfield "g" of the 773 field. For the ARC segment, only the INS field must be entered. The only peculiarity within the variable bibliographic fields is the inability to enter subfields "k" and "f" in the 245 field in the VIM "dummy" record. So we must type them in as we create each new AMC record.

3. Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History," *American Archivist* 54:2 (Spring 1991): 160-175.