



VIEWS



SOCIETY OF
American
Archivists

NEWSLETTER OF THE VISUAL MATERIALS SECTION

November 2016

Volume 30, Number 3

Contents

1 - CHAIR'S CORNER

#saavms

2 - MEMBER NEWS

Feature story; select news
briefs

5 - LIFE IN THE SHOP

Accidental Treasures:
Lantern Slides from the
Spanish-American War

8 - VOICES FROM VMCAR

Memories of Chester
Project

10 - EDITOR'S NOTE

Views Gets a Retouch

#saavms

The term “visual materials” encompasses a wide range of non-textual as well as moving image forms, including photographs, video, film, paintings, drawings, cartoons, prints, and architectural drawings. Some can be categorized as fine art, and others as documentary record, but as archivists or librarians we might have to deal with any or all of these items. For the 65-plus years the section has been in business, no matter what its title, the Visual Materials Section has offered to its members a venue for learning, discussion, and sharing.

But, have we been sharing like our more textually inclined colleagues? We have photographs, etchings, posters, and graphic labels, both in analog and digital form, but who knows about them? In other words, are you utilizing social media outlets appropriately?

The definition says that “*social media* are computer-mediated technologies that allow individuals, companies, governments, and other organizations to view, create, and share information, ideas, career interests, and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks.” Social media programs are interactive Web 2.0, Internet-based applications that allow for user generated responses and comment. From one business or person to another, people create online communities to share information, ideas, or personal messages.

So, are you sharing items from your collections to solicit a response? Don't forget, we can also call this “marketing” and make our supervisors and directors happy! If you haven't been sharing, I do recommend trying. And since we all have visual materials, pictures are easier to post than thinking about what to write, so you are even closer to the finish line. You might have to include a few metadata tags, oops.... “hashtags,” but that can be fun and amusing, and not onerous. Luckily, the VM Section has a handy hashtag for you to add to your visual materials post: #saavms.

C'mon everyone! Let's make the rest of SAA, heck the world, look at our collections. Just do it #saavms!

Gerrianne Schaad

The Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay, Jr. Archives
Florida Southern College



CHAIR'S CORNER

Join us online!

Official website:

saavms.org



**Visual Materials
Section**



@saavms



@saavms

MEMBER NEWS

VIEWS IS PUBLISHED THREE TIMES EACH YEAR BY THE VISUAL MATERIALS SECTION OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

Kim Andersen
Communications Coordinator

Deborah Rice
Editor

Anne Cuyler Salsich
Life in the Shop Editor

Paula Jeannet Mangiafico
Books Editor

Rose Chiango
Exhibitions Editor

Elizabeth Clemens
Member News Editor

Kerri A. Pfister
Layout

Alan Renga
Web

**Anna Raugalis, Stepahie Caloia,
Kaitlyn Dorsky**
Social Media

Opinions expressed are those of the authors.

Contact the editor: drice@wayne.edu

Steering Committee

Gerrianne Schaad, Chair
The Sarah D. and L. Kirk McKay, Jr.
Archives, Florida Southern College

Kim Andersen, Chair-Elect
Special Collections Section, State
Archives of North Carolina

Paula Jeannet Mangiafico, Past Chair
David M. Rubenstein Rare Book &
Manuscript Library, Duke University

Members-at-Large
Laura Treat, Irlanda Jacinto,
and Emily Vinson

For membership information contact:
Society of American Archivists
www.archivists.org
17 North State St., Suite 1425
Chicago, IL 60602-3315
Tel: 312-606-0722
Toll-free: 866-772-7858

Restoration Complete on a WPA Treasure

by **Elizabeth Clemens**

AV Archivist, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

In 1937, United Auto Workers Local 174 sponsored the creation of a series of murals to enliven their Union Hall and celebrate their rich, if relatively young, history. The resulting work proved to be one of the most memorable pieces of Detroit's New Deal-era artwork.



The restored mural now hangs in the Reuther Library Reading Room.

This mural features vignettes from pivotal moments in the union's history, including: the 1936-1937 Flint Sit-Down Strike, the "Battle of the Overpass," and a painted rendering of Local 174's first union contract. In the center of the piece, an auto worker holds hands with a female industrial worker who carries the CIO flag, symbolizing the hope of the worker and the solidarity between the two organizations. A unique feature of the mural is the addition of historical union buttons pinned and glued to the breasts of some of the workers. The historical reenactments featured in the painting were modeled directly from photographs, many of which are part of the Reuther Library's collections. The mural was originally part of a series that explored the history of the modern labor movement, however, other sections not able to be removed from the building were lost when it was demolished in the 1950s. The lost panels highlighted the relationship between agricultural and industrial labor, commemorated important events, such as the Ford Hunger March, and highlighted the role of women in early UAW organizing efforts.

The mural was painted by two artists employed with the WPA's Federal Art Project (FAP): Walter Speck and Barbara Wilson. Speck was an influential

MEMBER NEWS



Walter Speck puts the finishing touches on the mural, December 1937.

member of Detroit's art scene in the 1930s-1940s. Known primarily as a ceramist, he also created paintings, murals, and lithographs and exhibited both locally and nationally. Much of his career was spent in educational and mentorship roles. He taught at the Detroit School of Art, the Minzinger Art School, and the National Arts Camp at Interlochen. Wilson worked primarily within various New Deal cultural programs, and created murals, easel paintings, and illustrations for the FAP, the Federal Emergency Relief Act (FERA), and the Treasury Department's Section of Fine Arts.

Untitled has a long, transient history. In 1954 the mural was painstakingly removed from its home at 2730 Maybury Grand in Detroit, Michigan and installed in a building located at 6495 West Warren after its former home was razed to make way for a freeway project. The mural stayed in place until 2002 when it was moved to Local 174's new headquarters in Romulus, Michigan. In 2015, the mural



Members of UAW Westside Local 174 remove the mural from their hall, 2015.

was donated to Wayne State University with the hope that it would be preserved and made available to the public for generations to come. Extensive restoration work, which repaired decades of wear and damage, was made possible through the generous support of members and retirees from UAW West Side Local 174, the Michigan Labor History Society, the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and private individuals. The mural is now on display in the Reading Room of the Library.

Visit the [blog post](#) to see a time-lapse of the installation.



A view of restoration work which cleaned off years of dirt and smoke, repaired tears, and in-painted areas damaged by water.

MEMBER NEWS



Buddhist temple, Terminal Way, Terminal Island. Los Angeles: 1932-33 by Anton Wagner, PC 17, California Historical Society.

California Historical Society Launches Digital Library

The California Historical Society recently launched its [Digital Library](#), which features the work of Anton Wagner. The digitized collection currently features 438 black-and-white photographs taken of Los Angeles by Wagner between 1932-1933 as he conducted research for his doctoral dissertation on the city. These beautiful images depict the Depression's impact on the rapidly growing urban landscape and demonstrate the socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural diversities of the Southland.

New Additions to the NYARC Discovery Tool

Two incredible visual resources are now available through the New York Art Resources Consortium's (NYARC) research tool [NYARC Discovery](#): the NYARC web archives and the Frick Art Reference Library's Photoarchive. The NYARC web archives include six thematic collections, as well as the consortium's institutional website collections. These themes and institutional websites include: Art Resources, Artists' Websites, Auction Houses, Catalogues Raisonnés, New York City Galleries, Restitution of Lost or Looted Art, Brooklyn Museum, The Frick Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, and the New York Art Resources Consortium. The Frick Art Reference Library's Photoarchive is a study collection of more than one million photographic reproductions of works of art from the fourth to the mid-twentieth century by artists trained in the Western tradition. As of summer 2016, nearly 200,000 catalog records and over 75,000 digital images are accessible through NYARC Discovery. Cataloging and digitization of this collection is ongoing, so be sure to check back for new additions.

VM Member Given Highest Honor by Royal Society of Canada



Photo credit: Bernard Clark.

VM member and SAA Fellow Joan Schwartz was recently elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada (RSC), one of the highest honors for Canadian academics in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Dr. Schwartz is an internationally recognized photographic historian, archival theorist, and historical geographer who currently serves as professor and head of the Department of Art History and Conservation at Queen's University, Kingston Canada. Dr. Schwartz is a former specialist in photography acquisition and research at the National Archives of Canada (1977-2003) and is known by many as being the leading authority on early photography in Canada and as an advocate of its importance to archival collections. Congratulations, Dr. Schwartz!

LIFE IN THE SHOP

Accidental Treasures: Lantern Slides from the Spanish-American War

by Lisa Crunk

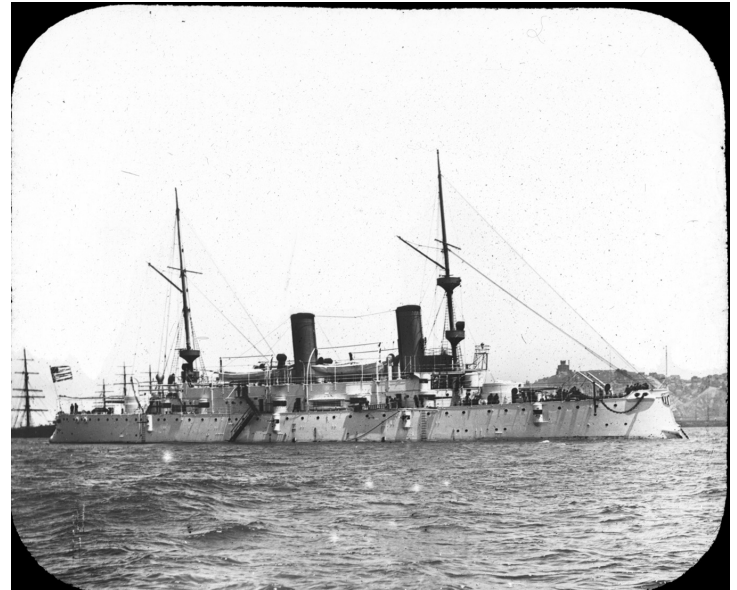
Photo Archivist

Naval History & Heritage Command

Washington Navy Yard, DC

As archivists at the Naval History & Heritage Command, the staff of the photo section (all three of us) on a daily basis comes into contact with historic and significant imagery related to the US Navy as we process donated collections from our backlog. But on occasion we find something we hadn't planned for and weren't even aware we had. This was the case on February 5th of 2014. During the survey phase of an upcoming renovation project, archivists Dave Colamaria and Jon Roscoe discovered two large wooden boxes tucked away up high on a shelving unit.

Once they were brought down and opened, what was uncovered was a truly significant find - approximately 325 original (and unbroken!) glass slides from the Spanish-American War (1898). On one of the boxes was the following etching:

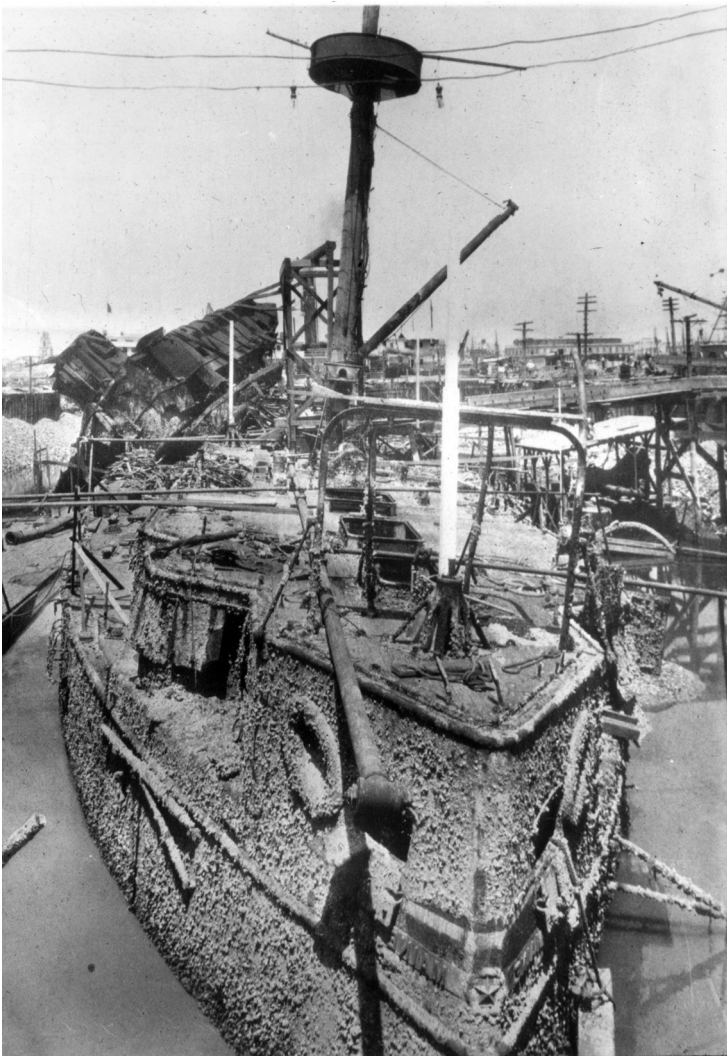


WHI.2014.07 [Admiral] Dewey's Flagship – USS Olympia.

Photographic Slides
US Naval Military Activities
In and Around Manila
Spanish – American War – 1898
and Philippine Insurrection
Douglas White
War Correspondent.

WHI.2014.17 Crew of Reina Christina
in prayer before battle, April 24 1898

LIFE IN THE SHOP



Paperwork noted that the collection was donated to the Naval Historical Foundation in 1948, from the Estate of Lieutenant C. J. Dutreaux, whose image appears in one of the slides. The Foundation transferred the collection to the Naval History & Heritage Command in 2008, however it was never processed. Each slide was individually wrapped in tissue paper and included full captions and dates, which were likely prepared by the photographer, Douglas White (who also worked for the *San Francisco Examiner*). Based on the delicate paper wrapping that still encased the majority of slides, it appears they had not been looked at in decades. The glass slides were in perfect condition and housed in two large wooden boxes with a leather strap on one, which likely allowed for it to be carried by the shoulder for a glass lantern show. Given the presence of images of the battleship Maine being excavated (1911-1912), we believe the slides were created around 1912.

Once it was realized what we had uncovered, there was tremendous excitement amongst the staff, especially the historians at the Command. The collection is significant because the Navy played a central role in nearly every aspect of the Spanish-American war from logistics to diplomacy. Some of the most interesting images include Colonel Theodore Roosevelt in San Juan, various Spanish shipwrecks, the raising of USS Olympia's flag over Manila, captured and imprisoned Spanish troops, execution walls, and even waterboarding (referred to in the caption as "water cure").

[TOP] WHI.2014.03

Wreck of the Maine, raised 1912

[BOTTOM] WHI.2014.29

Apprentice boys onboard USS Olympia



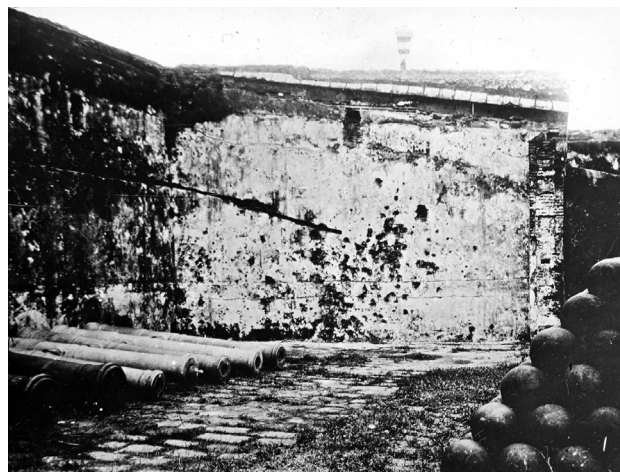
LIFE IN THE SHOP



The images were an amazing find, though they were never really lost – they were simply waiting to be rediscovered. The staff has digitized all the slides and is in the process of loading them to our website. As we continue to process our backlog we will likely continue to find significant treasures, but none perhaps as notable as the Spanish-American War glass slide collection. This collection can be found on the Naval History and Heritage Command [website](#) by clicking through: Our Collections » Photography » Wars and Events » Spanish American War.

[LEFT] WHI.2014.36x

Admiral Camara's fleet in the Suez Canal



[CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT] WHI.2014.44 **Warrant Officers** onboard USS Charleston: Phelps, Glynn & Gill; WHI.2014.30 **Old shellbacks** with Purdy: Dave Ireland, Purdy, Tom Griffin, John King; WHI.2014.61 **Execution Wall**, Cavite, P.I.; WHI.2014.57 **Arsenal Battery**, Cavite, P.I.

Voices from VMCAR

Cataloging and Access Member Spotlight

by Kait Dorsky

Chair-Elect of Visual Materials Cataloging & Access Roundtable



The Chester Library (CL) in Chester, New Jersey, has recently revamped its Local History Department (LHD) under the helm of Debra Schiff, the inaugural Local History Librarian. With a mission to serve as a “resource for education about historical events, people, and places of Chester and its environs,” the

LHD collects and provides access to the history of this former farming town.

Over the five years since she was hired, Debra has reshaped the position, creating video oral histories, online multimedia exhibits, and digitized images from loaned materials. She devised the Memories of Chester project, collecting oral histories from local residents. Starting with the [Herman Rademacher Series](#), the result is a collection of raw video interviews, edited videos on YouTube, a digital collection of items loaned or donated, and a multimedia online exhibit.

In an interview with Debra, the Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable (VMCAR) gathered more details about how she devised and implemented this project, and the benefits of using oral histories and multimedia tools to contextualize and add detail to archival collections.

KD: How did you become interested in the visual material archiving field?

DS: My interest is in archives and special collections, as a whole. But between an internship at the Zimmerli Museum and an independent study at Alexander Library at Rutgers working with a collection of artists’ books, I was hooked!

KD: Describe how the Memories of Chester project came about.

DS: That’s a funny story. In the fall of 2014, Jack Rademacher, a third-generation Chesterite, dropped by to show me his collection of Chester postcards. I asked to



borrow them to make a digital copy for the library and an online exhibit on the CL website. He readily agreed. The exhibit was a hit, and locals kept asking to see all of the postcards. I put high-quality enlargements in a binder at the Library’s front desk for patrons to see at their leisure.

Jack’s father Herman stopped by in mid-2015 with some of his own postcards. He told me, “If you think Jack’s collection is something, you should see mine!” He was right; it was much larger, had older items, and was in good condition. He also started telling me stories, which he allowed me to record while he looked through the postcards. Having an object-centric interview was a great way to jog the 83-year-old’s memory, while giving CL a unique online exhibit.

KD: What variety of materials comprise the Memories of Chester project?

VMCAR

DS: HD digital video recordings; lower-quality, MPEG video clips; digital TIFFs and JPEGs of the postcards; transcripts of the interviews; and multi-media online exhibits including the MPEGs, JPEGs, transcripts, and detailed descriptions. I also mounted an in-person exhibit in 2015 featuring photos of Herman holding the postcards, facsimiles, and exhibit text including quotes from Herman.

This year I began interviewing charter members of the now-defunct Chester Optimist Club. They have donated 9 linear feet of materials, including scrapbooks, photographs, ephemera, organizational records, and more, documenting their many fundraising activities. The artifacts and records help remind the interviewees as they talk about their experiences.

KD: What is the historical value of these materials and oral histories?



DS: The postcard images in the Rademacher Family Collection document a northwestern New Jersey town over more than 100 years. The oral histories provide context to the images, as well as to other collections in the Library and other local organizations. Many Chester residents aren't natives, so it's even more important to record folks like Herman, who has lived in town for 80+ years.

The Optimist Club items document local efforts to raise funds for Chester youth. They showed how these men (and later women, who were allowed to join in the mid-1990s) sponsored the Science Fair and scholarships, held turtle races, and led many other youth-friendly efforts.

KD: How is this project supported?

DS: Initially I used my own video equipment. At the end of last year, the Friends of the Library raised funds to buy the LHD its own equipment. The Library Director and I agreed that this ongoing project is of high priority, so it's now part of my job description. Two former members of the Optimist Club are on the Library Board, and are enthusiastic supporters.

KD: How have you chosen the topics covered in these oral histories and online exhibits?

DS: The topics stemmed from the postcards and other photos. When an interviewee viewed a given image, a story would come right away. There are some universal experiences, like dinner at Larison's Turkey Farm, a restaurant that is now closed. When a volunteer transcribed Herman's clips on Larison, she had her own stories from a frame of reference about 20 years later. She and her sister were interviewed earlier this year for the project.

KD: What cataloging standards and software are you using?

DS: CL is part of a county-wide consortium using a catalog system not suited for special collections. We don't have an IT department, and I'm a Lone Arranger working at CL three days a week, so we make do with what we have. I back up to two different external units, as well as Amazon Drive. I use the free version of Lightworks to edit videos, which is pretty sophisticated. I'm working on html finding aids that will be discoverable through Google and the library catalog.

KD: How do you see the Memories of Chester project continuing to grow?

DS: The project is growing on its own steam, thankfully. I've recently interviewed two sisters who grew up in another part of Chester from Herman, about 25 years later. I also interviewed Tommie Barker, a Chester native who was one of the original women professional baseball players. I have been recording the Optimists this summer, and more participants have emerged as word of the project spreads. After the Optimist interviews,

VMCAR

I'll work on more online and in-person exhibits. Other than Tommie, we've had two other famous residents who would be great interviewees as well.

KD: How do you see the Memories of Chester project, and the Local History Department, fitting into and/or supporting the larger mission of the Chester Library?

DS: The mission of the LHD directly supports the overall CL mission. The Memories of Chester project provides a

lively and interesting way to examine the people, history, and locations of Chester. Because the people and places of Chester are the focal points, both the project and the department help further CL's mission as an educational resource for the community.

Views Gets a Retouch

by **Deborah Rice**
Views Editor

As you may have read in the July issue, the newsletter has had a long history and one in which it played a seminal role in disseminating information to and facilitating communication amongst its members. Now, with multiple outlets like the listserv, revamped website, and social media options filling much of these roles, we are refocusing our section publication.

I am pleased to announce the relaunch of *Views* next year as a bi-yearly magazine. It will feature more in-depth articles, conference papers, opinion pieces, essays, reviews and more. Regular departments like the Chair's Column, Life in the Shop, Books, and VMCAR will remain, alongside new offerings such as Viewpoint (members share thoughts on the magazine, section, or other VM topics) and In Focus (a compendium of VM-related "sound bites", facts, and information).

If you'd like to be a part of the editorial and design team, please indicate your interest to me (drice@wayne.edu) by December 20th. We are currently soliciting for the following:

- Reviews Editor (exhibits, conferences, workshops, symposia)
- Essays Editor (opinion, project experience, collection or format focus, or even fiction)
- Feature Articles and Conference Papers Editor
- Designer

I am excited at the prospect of growing *Views* as a rich resource with opportunities for discourse on topics, events, and ideas pertinent to our profession, as well as a creative outlet and publishing platform for VM members. Further information on submission guidelines and a publication calendar will be posted to the web site soon.

The magazine can only be successful with member participation, so I invite you to **submit your ideas and content now for the first issue: Spring 2017.**

Let's think big!

See following page for other ways members can share content previously found within the newsletter. Contact the VM Communications Committee (kim.andersen@ncdcr.gov) with questions about how to get involved or suggestions on how to maximize impact. **Share often and much!**

