

VIEWS: *The Newsletter of the Visual Materials Section Society of American Archivists*

Volume 13, Number 1

December 1998

ORANGE JUICE GLAD YOU WERE IN ORLANDO?

Visual Materials Section Meeting Update

Minutes

Visual Materials Section, Society of American
Archivists

September 3, 1998

Introductions.

Catherine Johnson (Dance Heritage Coalition),
Chair, opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

She introduced Tim Hawkins (Tim Hawkins
Consulting), Chair Elect; Laurie Baty (NHPRC),
newsletter editor; and indicated that Judi Hoffman
(Library of Congress), past chair and chair of the
nominating committee, was unable to attend because
of the death of her father. She had a card for section
members to sign and encouraged donations.

Section business.

Laurie Baty announced that section T-shirts would
be available at the meeting. Large and extra-large
were available, 100 percent cotton. Cash and checks
made payable to Laurie were welcome. Any money
made on the sale of the shirts is given to SAA to offset
the cost of the expanded newsletter.

A sign-up sheet passed around.

The section dinner would be at the Big River Grille
on the Boardwalk at about 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet
is posted on the message board. Check the board
for the exact time.

Architectural Records Roundtable. Beth
Bilderback (University of South Carolina) reported that
the roundtable meeting will be today at 4:45.

**Visual Materials Cataloging and Access
Roundtable.** James Eason (UC-Berkeley), reported
that the roundtable's meeting would also be today at
4:45. Cataloging issues would be the primary focus
of that meeting.

**Association of Moving Image Archivists
(AMIA).** Mary Ide (WGBH, Boston) reported for Judi
Hoffman that AMIA's annual meeting would be in
Miami Beach from December 7-14, 1998. Association
of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA). Mary Ide (WGBH,
Boston) reported for that the annual meeting would

**JOHN SLATE
WINS
CHAIR-ELECT**

be in Miami Beach from December 7-14, 1998. For
more information, check the AMIA Web site at <<http://www.amianet.org>>. Sony Pictures has set up a
graduate scholarship (AMIA's second) and another
scholarship is the Mary Pickford. Each pays \$3,000
per year. Work continues on the revision of *Archival
Moving Images: A Cataloging Manual*.

The Library of Congress had begun circulating
drafts for review by the AMIA-AMIM review committee
chaired by Jane Johnson from the UCLA Film &
Television Archive. AMIA-AMIM review members
have also been circulating comments and reviews of
drafts among themselves. The LC draft (over 200
pages) will be posted on the AMIA Web site soon.
After the AMIA-AMIM review process is completed,
a revised LC draft will be re-posted to the AMIA
website, and notice will be made to various
appropriate listservs, newsletters, and other
publications seeking comments from the field at large.
[See related articles, p. 6—Ed.]

A moving image Compendium of Practice, similar
to the NHPRC-funded *MARC for Archival Visual
Materials: A Compendium of Practice* by Linda J.
Evans and Maureen O'Brien Will (published by the
Chicago Historical Society in 1988) is underway. A
draft was distributed at last year's AMIA conference
in Bethesda, Maryland. The project is spearheaded
by Linda Tadic and other staff from the Peabody
Archive at the University of Georgia. It is intended to
represent actual, existing cataloging practice and
documentation. Sample records, etc., have been
submitted from some 20 or more archives, both large
and small, from across the country. Anyone interested
in this project should contact Linda Tadic, Head,
Media Department, Curator Peabody Award Archive,
University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, GA 30602-
1641; (706) 542-1971 (voice); (706) 542-4144 (fax);
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The Moving Image Genre-Form Guide, intended
as a complete replacement of *Moving Image*

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Advanced Workshop

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Bibliography

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Three-Year Plan

John Slate

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Association of Moving Image Archivists

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Visual Materials Cataloging & Access Roundtable (VMCART)

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Materials: Genre Terms (cited in cataloging records as "mim") and published in 1988 by the Library of Congress, is also undergoing revision. A draft dated February 1998 has been completed by three authors at the Library of Congress: Brian Taves, Judi Hoffman, and Karen Lund, with additional input from the archival/library, cataloging, scholarly, and moving image fields. The draft is available at the LC Web site <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic.migintro.html>>. It is currently in use by LC's Motion Pictures Division and the authority code is cited as "migfg." It should be noted that it differs significantly from "mim."

Work continues on the U.S. National Moving Image Preservation Plans Committee to implement the recommendations in LC's *Television and Video Preservation 1997: A Study of the Current State of American Television and Video Preservation* (published 1997 by the Library of Congress). It is a comprehensive survey of television and video preservation and needs, and runs five volumes (bound as three). Several task forces are presently at work developing plans or recommending revisions of stated plans for the project's implementation. They include task forces on: preservation, access, cataloging, storage, and funding. It is a companion piece to the film preservation study conducted and published several years ago. Purchases must be made through the Government Printing Office (ISBN 0-8444-0946-4). For more information, contact Steve Leggett, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, James Madison Building, Room 338, Washington, DC 20540-4690; (202) 707-5912 (voice); <sleg@loc.gov> (e-mail).

Finally, there is a session on Saturday at 10:30 on "Tracking American Television: The Documentation Trail."

SAA Council liaison. Peter Hirtle (Cornell University) reported on the SAA Council's effort to oppose the extension of copyright. There would be a session on Saturday on copyright.

Committee Reports.

Bibliography. Information is to be sent to John Slate (Texas African American Archives).

Publications Review. Jennifer Watts (Huntington Library). Nothing to report.

Advanced Workshop. Catherine Johnson reported that this committee needed a chair.

Program. Friday at 1:45 there would be a Web presentation.

Newsletter. Laurie Baty reported that there had been three regular issues of *Views* plus a special mailing for the ballot and T-shirt orders. SAA is now printing on 11x17 paper and saddle stitching so that the newsletter is finally looking like a newsletter. She thanked Bruce Johnson for his ongoing editorial

assistance and once again asked that she be placed on mailing lists to receive information on members' institutions. Laurie reminded the group that the newsletter is their newsletter, not hers. She also went over the deadlines, and reminded the attendees that they needed to be thinking in advance when taking those deadlines into account. The October 1 deadline is for information current in December, February 1 for April, and June 1 for August. Laurie also indicated that she had review copies for a number of publishers and that anyone interested in reviewing visual-materials related books should contact her. She had one book, *Signs*, a Getty publication on Walker Evans and asked for a reviewer. Tim Hawkins took the book. [See p. 9—Ed.]

Open Announcements.

Katherine Hamilton-Smith (Curt Teich Postcard Collection) announced that she had published a directory of post card collections holdings. For more information please contact her.

Kit Leary, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, announced that *Magic Fire*, a show commissioned by the festival, would be at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, November 12 through early December. Tickets would be available September 13. *Magic Fire* is set in Argentina in the time of the death of Evita Perone.

An archival position at the American Jewish Historical Society in Massachusetts was announced. Interested parties should contact Katherine Jacob at the society.

D. Mark Katz's online photo auction in November was announced. The Web site for this auction is <<http://www.diamondlightphotos.com>>.

Donna Longo DiMichael from the Pequot Museum of Mashantucket, CT, announced the availability of a 3-year cataloger position. Inquiries should go to her.

Linda Ries (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission) announced that the publication on history of photography in Pennsylvania received the Hamer Award.

Election.

Tim Hawkins read the statements for James K. Burant and John Slate, the two Chair-elect candidates, neither of whom were able to attend the meeting. Ballots were passed out, marked and collected.

Break-out Sessions.

Chris Paton, a member of the SAA Program Committee for the Pittsburgh, PA, meeting, encouraged the submission of proposals sponsored by the section.

The meeting then broke out into four subgroups to discuss and reported back on the topics:

- **Program and Workshop** (Catherine Johnson). Brainstormed on program proposals. "Meeting the Challenge of Contemporary Records" is the theme for the Pittsburgh SAA meeting. Two proposals were discussed: Nicolette Bromberg (State Historical Society of Wisconsin) will coordinate "Collecting Contemporary Photographs" and a second proposal, with no immediate coordinator was "The Loss of the Visual Record," which would look at the loss of materials now that so many images are being captured through digital technology.

- **Publications Review** (Jennifer Watts). Look at current SAA publications pertaining to photographs, need for updating, author suggestions, and so on. Jennifer announced lively discussion, focusing primarily on a much-needed revision of Ritzenthaler. Also that the bibliography needed to be brought up to date. Papers presented at SAA should be looked at for publishability. The section also felt that, as new SAA publications came out, there should be a way to ensure any necessary VM components are included. Examples given are the SAA publications on copyright and law, which need sections on visual materials and digital issues. A more advanced reader also would be useful. The group also questioned whether SAA could re-issue Jim Reilly's *The Albumen & Salted Paper Book*, originally published by Light Impressions (1980) and now out of print. Other possible publications included a processes/costume book and a 20th century costumes book, similar to Joan Savera's *Dressed for the Photographer* would be useful.

- **Moving Images** (Mary Ide). Judy Hoffman had raised the question of a separate SAA interest group for moving-image archivists. The group proposed Visual Materials Section support following initiatives:

- ☞ SAA sponsored Video Tape & Film Workshop - care & preservation focus
- ☞ SAA formal liaison with Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA); this would allow for reciprocal discounts on workshops and conference
- ☞ VMS review the annual AMIA conference at SAA meeting
- ☞ VMS support SAA sessions on: New Digital Technologies and Digital Migration Issues; Use, Marketing and Licensing of Moving Image Materials; Copyright and Moving Image Materials; Filmography Development (identification of clips within a moving image program should accompany final program); Primer on Visual Literacy and Related Issues.

In addition there was an interest in VMS facilitating information about the following: Locating Moving Image Reference Materials; Archivists, Museum

Curators and Interactive Projects: Relative Logistics, Problems and Dialogue; How to Produce a Short PR Film/Video for Your Archive; List Funding Sources for Moving Image Material Access and Preservation; List of Vendor Sources for Moving Image Technical Needs, e.g. film transfer. List of Moving Image Equipment Sources.

- **Web site** (Tim Hawkins). Tim announced that the individuals who sat in on this discussion would form a committee to continue to look into a Web site for the section.

Results of the election.

Tim Hawkins announced that John Slate was elected Chair-elect.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Cartwright (University of Hawaii)
Secretary *Pro Tem*.

FROM THE CHAIR

Tim Hawkins

Tim Hawkins Consulting

Outside the piped-in sounds of gentle waves washed up on the artificial beaches of the Boardwalk. The SAA conference, held in September at the Dolphin Hotel at Disney World in Orlando, provided the perfect venue for any of us who have ever pondered the post-modernist question, "What is real?"

Inside, 45 members of the Visual Materials Section discussed more concrete questions, like, "What programs and workshops should we propose for Pittsburgh?"; "Which publications need to be updated?"; "What's going on with the development of a Web site?"; and, of course, "Have the T-shirts arrived yet?"

A half hour of liaison and committee reports provided updates on the current status of section activities. The election of the Chair-elect followed, with a surprising number of ballots returned. The conjecture was that the mailing of a separate ballot with the T-shirt order form led to a much higher return rate than usual, and should be considered as an option for upcoming elections. AND THE WINNER IS: John Slate from the Texas African American Archives. (Not to worry Jim, I've got plenty of extra volunteer work for you!)

At this point the meeting split into groups to discuss a variety of topics, including: publications reviews, moving image group, program development, and the Web site. I led the Web site group, and as this is my pet project I'll be going off on a tangent now.

Section leadership names addresses, phone, and e-mail will be found on page 2 of this issue of Views.

It's an honor to be selected as the leader of a section. It's a bit of an energizing experience. For a while after this happens the ideas for the upcoming year can seem infinite. After writing a couple of columns and putting together a session proposal or two, though, the reality sets in that there's only so much that can be done as a volunteer to an organization. All of you know this. I had a lot of ideas when I was elected last year. I still do, but the reality is that I'd be happy to accomplish just one major goal in the next year. The goal I've selected is to establish an exceptional Web site for the Visual Materials Section. If I can make that one thing happen I'll feel I've succeeded.

My vision for a VM Web site is as an information resource to the visual materials community. This would be: a resource to link VM Section member sites to a central search engine; an on-line venue for current and past issues of *Views*; a directory to VM archivists, curators, and experts; an area to find the bibliography on-line; links to vendors and suppliers of archival storage materials; and, links to sites that provide a variety of technical information. And, of course, I'd like to do this with a jazzy visual interface. What else? Tell me what you'd need on a Web site.

We established a Web Site Committee in Orlando and have located two potential host sites. I'm willing to beat the bushes for corporate funding if necessary. If you were not able to attend the Orlando meeting and have interest in participating in Web site development please let me know via e-mail (<freshH2O@earthlink.net>. That's *o* as in *oxygen* by the way. I know that's a simple mistake, but it happens.)

Beyond the Web site, I feel my place is to be here to help. If any of you heading up committees or other projects need help of any kind please feel free to call on me.

And to answer the big question: Yes, the T-shirts DID show up. Kudos to Laurie for the Florida Orange design, and for hawking, how many? 26? unsold shirts in the hall. [*Actually, I think it was more like 15—Ed.*] I think we want her on our side!

FROM THE CHAIR-ELECT

John Slate

Texas African American Archives

First of all, I want to thank all who voted, because this section is only as responsive as those who vote and voice their choices. It is an honor and a privilege to be regarded as worthy of holding this office, and I hope I will serve the section faithfully. Your suggestions and comments are very important to me, and I will entertain any idea you may have.

As Chair-elect of one of the most vital and progressive units within SAA, I want to make sure we continue the good work of past chairs, but especially of the present chair. Tim's publication ideas are great, and I support them and any new ones we can formulate. There can never be enough manuals or texts to help those of us who process or manage visual materials for an ever-increasing body of users. Perhaps a manual about arrangement and description of visual materials collections? The Ritzenthaler text is an important one, but I would like to take it a step further.

I also need to apologize to the Section for not yet completing the updated Visual Materials Bibliography. With your indulgence I will, with the assistance of Margaret Compton and Larry Landis, finish and make it accessible through a Web site.

In the following months, let's pledge to work together in person, on the internet, by telephone, and by mail to put our ideas into action and view the results at our next meeting. If you haven't met me in person, why not do so virtually? I can be reached at <jslate@onramp.net>.

VMCAR MEETING REPORT

Orlando, September. 3, 1998

The Visual Materials Cataloging and Access Roundtable met in Orlando on September 3. The meeting was chaired by Kate Bowers of the Harvard University Archives, with Vice-chair and Chair-elect James Eason of the Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley. Kelley Gove, of Radcliffe College, has agreed to serve as Vice-chair and Chair-elect for the coming year.

A quick show-of-hands indicated that, of about 25 attendees, most members work with original visual materials, a few with surrogate images, 6-10 work with moving-image collections, and 3 are from museums, 1 from a commercial agency, about 6 are from governmental archives, and about 10 from colleges or universities.

Reports were made on Visual Materials and Description Section meetings, and an update on AMIA activities was given.

The Description Section Web site may be accessed at <<http://www.library.yale.edu/~dsmith/saa/saadescr.htm>> and the AMIA Web site at <<http://www.amianet.org>>.

A variety of resources were reported on by roundtable members:

ArtMARC Sourcebook: cataloging art, architecture, and their visual images is a recent (1998) publication with useful reports from various institutions engaged in image cataloging. Chapters include reports from slide libraries, architectural collections, fine art collections, and historical societies, among others. Several detailed tables provide ready comparison of various institutions' use of MARC fields for different data types. Although there is a heavy emphasis on art slide collections, there is good variety represented, and the comparisons are interesting and informative.

Art and Architecture Thesaurus: Michelle Futornick of the Getty Information Institute announced the AAT Roundtable, at which the new Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN) would be discussed. Also, reorganization at Getty will change the nature and name of the GII, but they will continue all current activities and AAT support & development. See: <<http://www.gii.getty.edu/>> and <<http://www.gii.getty.edu/vocabulary/index.html>>.

Library of Congress (LC): Anne Mitchell reported that their Farm Security Administration photo site is up on the Web [*Go to* <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>> and search on "FSA"—Ed.], as is a baseball card collection [<<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bbhtml/bbhome.html>>]. No news to report on LC *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (LCTGM)*. Both LCTGM I and II are available via the Web [<<http://lcweb.loc.gov/lexico/>>, LCTGM I and II are linked from *this page*—Ed.]. Alpha testing of EAD continues. Minor revisions to Elisabeth Betz Parker's *Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections* have been issued (some time ago) and are included in the Cataloger's Workstation CD-ROM, but no new paper edition is being planned. Many roundtable members expressed strong interest in an updated edition of this text, and Anne Mitchell agreed to look into this further at LC. Anne Mitchell and James Eason will be in contact to discuss further.

VMCAR Web site: after discovering that all but one roundtable member have and use the Web, input was requested for useful resources for the VMCAR site <<http://hul.harvard.edu/~kate/vmcar.htm>>. Kate Bowers will continue to maintain this site. There was interest in supplementing the membership list with areas of expertise or interest, and e-mail addresses of those willing to be contacted by colleagues. The Chair will request such listings from members via e-mail.

An informal and often spirited group discussion was held, with suggested discussion topics: EAD for

visual materials, and use of non-MARC image databases. Discussion then returned to publications and resources including the need for updates to *Graphic Materials* (Betz Parker) and to *Archives & Manuscripts: Administration of Photographic Collections* (Ritzenthaler).

More detailed meeting notes, and other Roundtable information, are available at <<http://hul.harvard.edu/~Ekate/vmcar.htm>>.

Association of Moving Image Archivists Barbara Humphrys, Library of Congress

The Association of Moving Image Archivists' (AMIA) annual conference will be held in Miami, Florida, December 7-12. Although the meeting will most likely be history when *Views* is out, information about the meeting and AMIA may be obtained from AMIA's Web site <<http://www.amianet.org/>> or from the AMIA office at (310) 550-1300.

The principal news from the AMIA Cataloging and Documentation Committee is that substantial work has been done toward revising the *Archival Moving Images: a Cataloging Manual (AMIM)*. The AMIM Revision Subcommittee of the AMIA Cataloging and Documentation Committee met in Long Beach, California, October 4-5 to complete the first phase of a cataloging rule revision effort that began last spring.

In March 1998, the Library of Congress (LC) invited the AMIA Cataloging and Documentation Committee to participate in the revision of Wendy White-Hensen's cataloging standard, *Archival Moving Images: a Cataloging Manual*. This work is the standard descriptive cataloging tool for the field, and has not been updated since its original publication in 1984. The Committee began laying the groundwork for such a revision several years ago with its nationwide survey (resulting in the 1995 report, "Recommendations for Revision of *Archival Moving Image Materials: a Cataloging Manual*"), and a subsequent survey that formed the basis of the Compendium of Cataloging Practices.

The chair of the AMIM Revision Subcommittee is Jane Johnson (UCLA Film and Television Archive). Committee members include Ruta Abolins (University of Georgia Libraries), Henry Mattoon (National Moving Image Database), Joanne Rudof (Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies), and Judi Hoffman (Library of Congress). The Committee is working with the internal AMIM Revision Committee in the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (M/B/RS), which is chaired by AMIA member Arlene Balkansky. The revision process is being coordinated and overseen by the Library of Congress Cataloging and Support Office (CPSO) [*See following article*—Ed.].

M/B/RS has prepared a draft of the basic *AMIM* text, the bulk of which is Chapters 0-7, covering the general rules and seven areas of description (title, edition, country of production, etc.). The AMIA subcommittee was asked to comment on LC's drafts, and to also propose rules for several additional areas, namely uniform title, unedited footage, transcription, information sources, collection level records, and new glossary terms.

The AMIA subcommittee is recommending an approach to description which is significantly different from both the original cataloging rules and the LC drafts. Some restructuring of the rules to accommodate uniform title and transcription, for example, should facilitate use of the rules while bringing them more in line with other national standards and current cataloging practices in the field. The AMIA contributions thus far have taken the form of alternative drafts of several chapters, and three new chapters: "Object of the Record," "Choice of Access Points," and "Uniform Title." Each chapter includes a preface that summarizes and justifies differences from the LC approach.

Shortly after the Long Beach meeting, the AMIA Subcommittee submitted its draft to CPSO. CPSO will work with M/B/RS and the AMIA subcommittee to incorporate both drafts into a single document, to be distributed for field-wide review in December (see related announcement). During this general review period, LC will look at other AMIA subcommittee contributions and comments that are beyond the scope of the first draft.

Look for the AMIA drafts on the AMIA Web site. For further information about the project, please contact:

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A REQUEST FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING POLICY AND SUPPORT OFFICE

A revision of the cataloging manual, *Archival Moving Image Materials*, is in progress [See preceding article—Ed.]. The purpose of this manual is to provide instructions for the descriptive cataloging of archival

film and video within the framework of the second edition of the *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*. The manual was originally compiled in 1984 by Wendy White-Hensen of the Library of Congress Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division (M/B/RS). The current revision, coordinated by the Library's Cataloging Policy and Support Office (CPSO), has been undertaken by a committee of M/B/RS staff with contributions from a committee of the Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA).

The draft revision will be available for review and comment from December 1, 1998, to March 1, 1999, on the Library's CPSO home page at <http://lcweb.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/>. Printed copies may also be requested during the review period from CPSO by e-mailing cpsol@loc.gov.

FROM THE LISTS

American Museum of Photography

The American Museum of Photography™, has recently opened at <http://www.photographymuseum.com/>. The site replaces collector and independent historian William Becker's "Photography's Beginnings: A Visual History" and incorporates all the features of its predecessor. The new on-line exhibition is *An Eye for the World*, rediscovered Pictorialist and Modernist images from 1934-5 by Shotaro Shimomura. Other available exhibits have been improved with sharper and clearer scans. They include:

- *Small Worlds*, a series of historic scenes and groups in the carte de visite format;
- *At Ease*, American daguerreotype portraits with relaxed, informal poses; and
- *Of Bricks & Light*, an extended exhibition of architectural photographs from 1845-1915.

New features on the site include:

- A Museum Book Store that offers staff-written reviews and discount online ordering;
- A Buyer's Guide to products designed for preserving and protecting photographs; and
- A Registrar's Office providing a contact point for matters concerning exhibition loans and rights-and-permissions.

[N.B.—*This clever Web site is for a private collection owned by William Becker—Ed.*]

European Society for the History of Photography

You are cordially invited to visit the recently created Web site of the European Society for the History of Photography, a group which, since its establishment in 1978, has provided opportunities for those interested or involved in the history of photography to exchange news and views and share knowledge. The site is at www.wmin.ac.uk/media/ESHP/.

Walker Art Center Goes Interactive

The Walker Art Center invites you to participate in an online exploration of art and the digital age: *The Shock of the View: Artists, Audiences, and Museums in the Digital Age* will be online September 22, 1998-March 16, 1999.

The Walker Art Center, in association with the Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, the San Jose Museum of Art, the Wexner Center for the Arts, The Ohio State University, and Rhizome, announces a six-month online project that explores the similarities and differences between "old" art practices and "new" digital work.

Shock of the View begins with online exhibitions—"object lessons"—that pair works of art or performances from a museum collection with digital works of art. Every three weeks new work will be added, organized around the broad themes of object, space, performance, and the hybrid. Commentaries by invited curators, artists, educators, and critics and an ongoing listserv will explore the ways digital media impacts artists, audiences, and museums.

An abbreviated list of participants includes: Mark Amerika, Simon Biggs, Natalie Bookchin, Kathy Brew, Toni Dove, Timothy Druckrey, Richard Flood, Jennifer Gonzalez, Ken Goldberg, Rachel Greene, Diane Gromala, Bill Horrigan, Steven Johnson, Sandy Stone, Mark C. Taylor, Laura Trippi, and Benjamin Weil.

They welcome your participation and hope you will join the discussion. The site may be found at <<http://www.walkerart.org/salons/shockoftheview/>>. Email: <shock-subscribe@rhizome.walkerart.org> to join the listserv.

IN PRINT

The Reviews

- Ramsay, Jr., Jack C. *Photographer. . . Under Fire: The Story of George S. Cook (1819-1902)* (Green Bay, WI: Historical Resources Press, 1994) 191 p. \$29.95 (at <<http://www.barnesandnoble.com>>) ISBN 0964251108.

reviewed by Beth Bilderback, Assistant Manuscripts Librarian, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

The name George Smith Cook is not often on the tip of one's tongue when discussing the history of photography. Despite his early and life-long involvement in the field, Cook fell into the shadow of his friend and ex-partner, Mathew Brady. As soon as the news of Daguerre's invention reached the United States, Cook was making plans to learn the art of photography, and for Cook it was an art as well as a means of documentation. Cook began chronicling the Civil War before it started and continued to do so despite physical

dangers and limited supplies. He established photojournalism in South Carolina and became the Confederate counterpart to Brady in the North. He instructed untold numbers of photographers, including his two sons who would continue his gallery after his death, and kept many photographers in business through a brisk equipment and supplies trade. Yet little has been written about Cook the man or the photographer.

Ramsay, the great grandson of Cook, brings more of the man to light. George Cook kept meticulous records from his early apprenticeship to the end of his career and instructed his sons to do the same. Most of these records survive and are held by the Valentine Museum in Richmond, Virginia, and the Library of Congress. The Cook Collection of cased images, glass plate negatives, and film negatives is held by the Valentine Museum. Therefore a wealth of information is available to researchers concerning Cook's photographic business. Ramsay also had access to materials held by the family, including a diary kept by Cook's eldest son, George LaGrange, for all of his adult life, as well as to stories passed down in the family. Not being a photographic historian, however, Ramsay often overlooks the significance and implications of Cook's work. Many questions beg asking, and Ramsay does not indicate whether the information is available in the records or not.

Cook found himself in New Orleans on the eve of the birth of photography. He worked at odd jobs and as a portrait painter, but soon after hearing about Daguerre's invention and seeing it demonstrated, he learned the trade. By 1843, Cook had received instruction from a Mr. Ely and others and was managing Ely's gallery very successfully. Cook made specific notes about lighting, camera position, depth of field, preparation of chemicals, and gilding daguerreotypes. Ramsay fails to follow through, though, to compare Cook's recipes and processes to his competitors. There is no indication as to who this Mr. Ely was, how he learned the art, or from whence he came.

Feeling confident in his new trade, Cook left New Orleans for inland sites in 1845. He criss-crossed the Southern states for four years, providing instruction to numerous students, establishing galleries that he then turned over to a promising pupil, and selling equipment and chemicals. Even after settling in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1849, Cook continued to sell supplies to many of his former students. Ramsay provides a good description of his travels and income per town, indicating Cook's acute business acumen for he never stayed in a place that was not profitable. What Ramsay does not seem to realize and never points out to his reader is that Cook is largely responsible for the early expansion of photography throughout the Southern hinterlands.

Cook's venture into photojournalism began in early 1861 when he photographed Major Anderson and his staff at Fort Sumter. Cook sent these negatives to Edward Anthony in New York who then mass produced photographs for sale. This venture also boosted Cook's national reputation, although already well established by this time. Cook continued to photograph scenes in and around Charleston during the War, often ignoring physical danger to obtain an image. He made history

by photographing an exploding shell and a naval engagement between monitors. Cook was one of the few Southern photographers who could work outside the studio due to limited supplies. Being the businessman he was, Cook maintained contact with his Northern suppliers and bought shares in a couple of blockade runners to ensure his supply line. When he had surplus equipment and chemicals, he sold to inland photographers. The reader, though, is left to wonder how Cook compared to photographers in other Southern ports, and what was the real impact of his supply trade during the war both to individual photographers and to the profession in the South.

A significant part of the book is devoted to Cook's son, LaGrange, due in large part to the existence of his extensive diary. Although LaGrange provides a wonderful glimpse into post-war society and events, very little is written of his father's business. Other than working long hours in the studio and opening galleries in other cities at different times, Ramsay gives little indication of Cook's professional activities from 1865 to 1880 when he moved to Richmond, Virginia. Even after that time, Ramsay seems to focus on LaGrange and his brother, Huestis, who later took over the business from Cook. There is only a brief mention of the honor bestowed on Cook by the Photographer's Association of America in 1890. Cook remained an active photographer until his death in 1902. He made daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, wet plate negatives, dry plate negatives, albumen prints, and probably various other printing-out-prints, although this was not discussed. Cook worked through many changes in photography, its processes and equipment, and might have contributed improvements in some way.

For the general reader, Ramsay's book is interesting and readable. Ramsay gives depth to Cook's life through family stories and the intimacy only kinship can afford. He gives enough background on photography and its early noted practitioners to provide context for Cook's work. Yet Ramsay leaves the reader wanting more. What is looked for now is a companion book that will delve deep into Cook's photographic business with all its associations and ramifications and give him his proper place in the history of photography.

- *Walker Evans: Signs*. Los Angeles: Getty Trust Publications, 1998. 96 p. ISBN 0892363762(cloth) \$19.95.

reviewed by Tim Hawkins, Tim Hawkins Consulting.

"Walker Evans showed us how to see America, and we continue, for the most part, to see it his way." These final words to Andrei Codrescu's essay in *Signs* summarize an attitude held by many toward the work of Walker Evans.

In *Signs* the Getty Museum has focused on a subject matter that permeates Evans' body of work. Through this focus Evans took the commonplace details of everyday life to sketch a broad portrait of America. By including the clutter that most photographers of the period consciously excluded, Evans produced images rich in the details of life.

Signs brings into focus, also, a significant historical issue. It could be argued that Walker Evans was the first modernist photographer. By concentrating on billboards, posters, road signs, and other images of the printed word Evans brought us self-referential images—photographs that allude to the process of communication. "Meditations on the art of photography" as Codrescu calls them.

Beyond that, however, as Andy Grundberg points out in a discussion of Evans' *American Photographs*, "They are signs in the literal sense, but they are also signs of the growing dominion of acculturated imagery. In other words, Evans showed us that images designed to create desire were omnipresent." And further, "Evans was attempting to create a text with his photographs. He in fact created an evocative nexus of signs, a symbiology of things American. And the experience Evan's opus describes is one in which imagery plays a role which can only be described as political."¹

Walker Evans laid the groundwork for many who would follow him. As Codrescu aptly points out in the extensive essay accompanying *Signs*, Royal Baking Powder Steps (p. 13) is "a corner-turning picture, both personally for Evans, who composed a perfect geometric abstraction, and for his successors, like Robert Frank and Andy Warhol, who absorbed it." Indeed, without the work of Walker Evans, *The Americans* might not have been possible.

Signs is a finely produced book, with superb reproductions. The layout and design, at first inspection, appear busy and chaotic. They include a cluttered intermingling of full-bleeds mixed with photos featuring generous borders—borders in contrasting pure whites and deep blacks—and a corresponding mix of contrasting typefaces. As with Evans' signs though, the cluttered design is right for the subject matter.

This is but a small slice of Walker Evans' work—50 prints selected from the Getty Museum's collection, the largest holding of prints made by Walker Evans himself. In a very limited selection of 50 images, however, *Signs* highlights, in a small yet exquisite way, an important theme from one of the twentieth century's most important photographers.

¹Andy Grundberg, *Crisis of the Real: Writings in Photography* (New York: Aperture Foundation, 1990.), p.14-5.

The Books

Barber, James G., and Verone, Amy, eds. *Theodore Roosevelt: Icon of the American Century*. Washington: National Portrait Gallery?, 1998. ISBN 0295977531 (Price not available at press time.)

Bello, Jane Halsman, and Bello, Steve. *Phillipe Halsman: A Retrospective. Photographs from the Halsman Family Collection*. Boston: Bullfinch Press, 1998. 212 p. ISBN 0821223739 (cloth) \$75.

Cotten, Jerry W. *Light and Air: The Photography of Bayard Wootten*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. 272 p. ISBN 0-8078-2445-

3 (cloth) \$37.50. For a description of this publication, see <<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/wcotten/>>.

Howe, Kathleen Stewart. *The Tamarind Papers, Volume 17 (1997-98). Intersections: Lithography, Photography, and the Traditions of Printmaking*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Art Museum. March 1998. 120 p. \$29.95 (paper). With essays: "Photography's Non-reproducibility, or, the Rhetoric of Touch," by Stephen C. Pinson; "Nature's Supernaturalism: William Henry Fox Talbot and Botanical Illustration," by Douglas Nickel; "Lithographie: An Art of Imitation," by Jeff Rosen; "The Battle for a Market: Art Reproductions in Print and Photography from 1850 to 1880," by Pierre-lin Renie; "F. Holland Day and the Appeal of Hand Wrought Appearances," by James Crump; "'In the Colors of Nature': Detroit Publishing Company Photochroms," by Thomas W. Southall; "Ben Shahn and the American Racial Divide," by Susan H. Edwards; "The Prison Series: A Conversation with James Casebere," by Jan Howard; "At Play in the Fields of the World: Lithographs by Walton Ford," by Kathleen Stewart Howe.

Johnson, Drew Heath and Eymann, Marcia, eds. *Silver & Gold: Cased Images of the California Gold Rush*. Iowa City, IA: Univ of Iowa Press, 1998. 264 p. ISBN: 0877456194 \$59.95 (cloth). (to be reviewed)

Lawson, Julie. *Women in White. Photographs by Clementina, Lady Hawarden*. Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 1997. 23 p. ISBN 0903598787 (paper) price not available.

Lowry, Bates, and Lowry, Isabel. *The Silver Canvas: Daguerreotype Masterpieces from the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1998. 256 p. ISBN: 0892363681 (cloth) \$80. (to be reviewed)

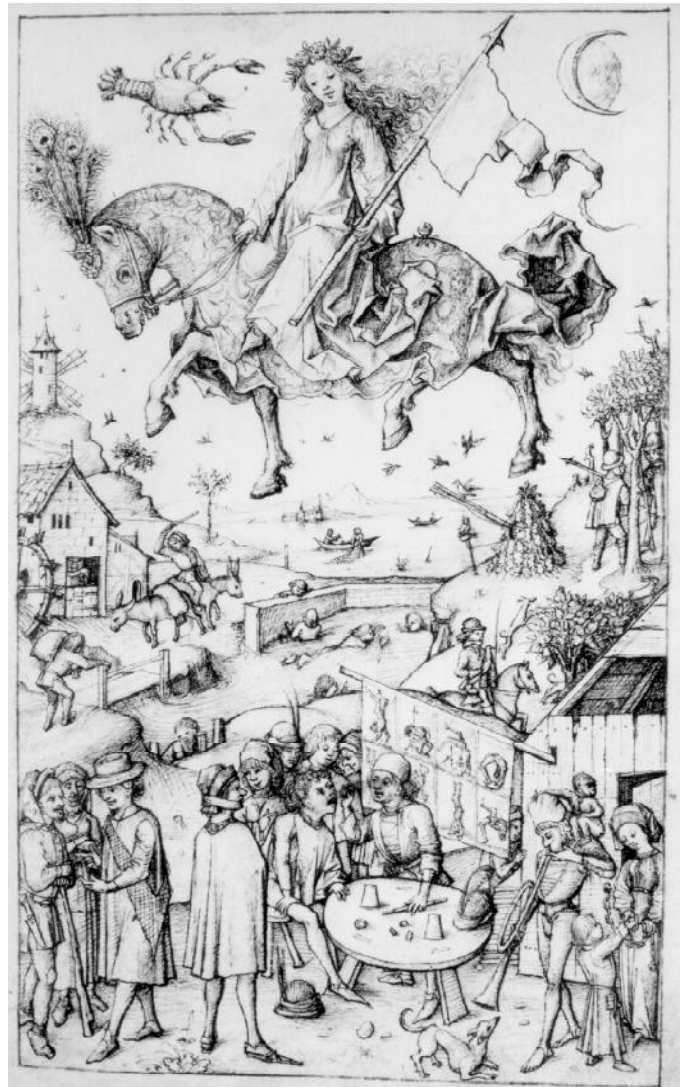
Martin, James C. and Martin, Robert Sidney. *Maps of Texas and the Southwest, 1513-1900*. [No. 18 in the Fred H. and Ella Mae Moore Texas History Reprint Series.] Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998. 190 p. ISBN 0-87611-169-X \$39.95 (cloth). (This is a new edition.)

_____. *Contours of Discovery. Printed Maps Delineating the Texas and Southwest Chapters in the Cartographic History of North America*. Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1998. 66 p. ISBN 0-87611-058-8 \$49.95 (portfolio).

Rouse, Sarah. *Into the Light: An Illustrated Guide to the Photographic Collections in the National Library of Ireland*. 120 p. ISBN 0907328296 (paper) £9.95. (to be reviewed)

Stevenson, Sara. *Photographing Children* [Edinburgh]: National Galleries of Scotland, [1993?]. 22 p. ISBN 0903598388 (paper) £4.95.

Singer, Robert T. *Edo: Art in Japan, 1615-1868*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998. 448 p. ISBN



Luna and Her Children (17r) from *The Housebook, 1475-1485. The Housebook Master. Middle Rhenish, active c. 1465/1500. Pen and ink with watercolor and metal leaf. Collection of the Princes of Waldburg-Wolfegg. See Christoph Graf zu Waldburg Wolfegg, Venus and Mars. . . in *The Books and Love and War: A Manual for Life in the Late Middle Ages in What's Up*. [The exhibition, combining the manuscript Housebook and contemporary prints, is a MUST SEE!!—Ed.]*

0300077963 (cloth) \$85. [Also Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1998; ISBN: 0894682261 (cloth).]

Waldburg Wolfegg, Christoph Graf zu. *Venus and Mars: The World of the Medieval Housebook*. New York: Prestel, 1998. 116 p. ISBN: 3-7913-1839-X \$40 (paper).

WHAT'S UP

opened October 29. *Silver & Gold: Cased Images of the California Gold Rush*. National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC.

opened November 6. *Philippe Halsmann: A Retrospective*. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC.

opened November 26. *The History of Photography: Selection from the Collection*. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

through December 6. *Making Architecture. The Getty Center from Concept through Construction*. Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA.

through December 19. *ellipse photo 98*. The Ellipse Center, 4350 N. Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA.

through January 3, 1999. *Masterworks of the Photography Collection: Picturing Modern Life*. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX.

through January 10. *Mary Cassatt*. Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL.

through January 10. *Aubrey Beardsley*. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

through January 15. *Eve Arnold: In Retrospect*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 15. *... and the daughter married the prince. By Eileen Cowin*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 15. *Tet + 30: Central Florida Remembers Vietnam*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 15. *Requiem: By the Photographs Who Died in Vietnam and Indochina*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 15. *Going Back: New photographs from Vietnam*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 15. *An Avalanche of White Lies and Prayers. An Installation by Mary Jean Viano Crowe*. Southeast Museum of Photography, Daytona, FL.

through January 17. *A Practical Dreamer: The Photographs of Man Ray*. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

through January 29. *Contrasts*. Seagram Gallery, 375 Park Avenue, New York. Open Monday through Friday, 9-5.

through January 31. *Love and War: A Manual for Life in the Late Middle Ages*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

through February 7. *Theodore Roosevelt: Icon of the American Century*. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC.

through February 15. *Edo: Art in Japan, 1615-1868*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

through February 21, 1999. *Ray Atkeson, Photographer*. Oregon History Center, 1200 SW Park, Portland.

through February 28. *Brassai: The Eye of Paris*. Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (TX).

through March 28. *Dagerreotypes to Digital*. Oregon History Center, 1200 SW Park, Portland.

through April 11. *Masterworks of Photography Collection: Land of Plenty, Land of Contrast*. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX.

through April 12. *Henri Cartier-Bresson: Elsewhere. Photographs from the Americas and Asia*. Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

opens February 14. *Mary Cassatt*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

opens April 13. *Brassai: The Eye of Paris*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

opens April 25. *Photographs from the Collection*. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

opens May 11. *Love and War: A Manual for Life in the Late Middle Ages*, the Frick Collection, New York, NY. [This is an edited version of the exhibition by the same name appearing earlier at the National Gallery of Art.]

ARTFUL DODGING: Things Heard, Enhanced, and Passed On

Berkeley, CA. The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley is pleased to announce the completion of the Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection Digital Archiving Project. Funded by the Library Services and Technology Act, this one year project sought to make the Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection available on the internet. The collection, comprised of more than 2,300 paintings, drawings, prints, lettersheets, and other materials related to Early California and Western America, is one of the premier sources of pictorial documentation of the history of California and the West and is a valuable resource for teaching, learning, and research. Increased access has been made available via a comprehensive and detailed online finding aid encoded using EAD (Encoded Archival Description), archival digital images of all items in the collection hyperlinked to the online finding aid, and USMARC collection, series, and sub-series level records. The collection will be available on-line in late fall 1998 and will become a core part of the California Heritage Digital Archive and the Online Archive of California. Look for it at <<http://sunsite2.berkeley.edu/oac/>>.

Detroit, MI. Douglas Haller, a former VM Section Chair, has joined the staff of the Walter P. Reuther Library at Wayne State University as Coordinator of Audiovisual Collections. The collections include the recently acquired Detroit News Collection, dating from the Civil War to the 1980s. Since 1986 Douglas has been Head Archivist at the University of Pennsylvania Museum, Philadelphia.

Denver, CO. Section member Randy Gitsch recently produced *Keepers of the Frame*, a

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documentary film on the subject of film preservation and restoration. The film was screened at IFFM (Independent Feature Film Market) in New York in September. If you're interested in learning more about this film, contact Randy at Mount Pilot Productions, 1685 S. Colorado Blvd., #S-139, Denver, CO 80222; (303) 758-4356; e-mail <MtPilot@EarthLink.net>.

Fort Worth, TX. The Amon Carter Museum recently received a generous grant from the Dorr Foundation to purchase an Ilford 2150 paper processor and to hire a photography technician to operate the processor. In 1990 the museum received the donation of Nell Dorr's

Views: *The Newsletter of the Visual Materials Section of the Society of American Archivists* is published three times a year by and for the Visual Materials Section. For membership information, call or write the Society of American Archivists, 600 S. Federal, Suite 504, Chicago, IL 60605, (312) 922-0140.

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Your comments and suggestions for improvements will always receive a cordial hearing. The next deadline is February 1, 1999. Opinions expressed are those of the authors.

(1893-1989) complete archives of prints, negatives, and personal papers. Dorr opened her first studio in Florida in the 1920s and later moved to New York, where she ran a studio and participated in several exhibitions, including the 1955 Museum of Modern Art's *The Family of Man*. The Amon Carter is preparing for a comprehensive exhibition of her work. The Dorr Foundation grant will allow the museum to make Dorr's materials more accessible.

New York, NY. We are relieved to report that the "Hay Wadsworth" daguerreotype portrait, reportedly of Abraham Lincoln, offered at Christies this past October, was bought in buy the house. We showed a known early likeness of the 16th president alongside that of the image reproduced in the auction house catalog, and not one person thought that the two were related. An eye-witness to the auction reported that the bidding was less than lively.

The October 2, 1998, issue of the *Wall Street Journal* included an article on "Collecting/Photography: Accidental Art," that discussed the rise of the collectability of snapshots. Check it out on page W16.

Portland, OR. Sharon M. Howe has joined the staff of the Oregon Historical Society (OHS) as Curatorial Assistant. Her predecessor, Mandy York-Oates, is now Archivist for the Southwest Writers' Collection at Southwest Texas State University. Sue Seyl, the Photographs Curator at OHS won 2 gold and 2 silver medals in rowing at the World Masters Games held in Portland during August. For those of you who follow this, her silvers were in WD2X and WD4X and the gold were in WC8+, and WD2-. [*There's a prize for the first correct answer deciphering of those events—Ed.*]