

The Rocky Mountain Archivist

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Above: BBS hair sample collection (ID: 15-37-002) from Tools of the Trade: Artifacts at the National Wildlife Research Center Archives

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Sara Szakaly

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From the President

Sadly, this is my last letter as President of the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists. After our Business Meeting on May 21, I will officially hand off the presidency to incoming president Ashlyn Velte (University of Colorado Boulder Libraries). I've worked with Ashlyn at the CU Boulder Archives since 2019, and I can say with absolute confidence that she will do an excellent job leading SRMA over the next year.

On behalf of the SRMA governing board, I want to thank all of you for participating in a remarkable past year for our organization. Together, we responded as an organization and as archivists to the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, racial injustice within our communities and our own collections, and how to connect our membership together in a time of isolation and virtual meetings. I was proud to be a SRMA member this year.

I want to especially thank all of the SRMA board members who served with me over the past year: Heather Bowden (Past President), Ashlyn Velte (Vice President), Erin Shafer (Program Coordinator), Walker Sampson (Member-at-Large), Blake Graham (Secretary), Patty Rettig (Treasurer), David Fasman (Membership Coordinator), Sean Babbs (Electronic Resources Coordinator), Aaron Ramirez (Preservation Member-at-Large/co-chair, Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice Task Force), Nathalie Proulx (Newsletter Editor), Kalyani Fernando (Archivist), and Craig Haggitt and Jamie Wagner (Continuing Education Coordinators). Each of them volunteered considerable time, effort, and energy this year to make SRMA a more responsive organization for archivists in our region, often way beyond the expectations of their board positions. I asked a lot of them, and in response, they created excellent professional development opportunities; SRMA's well-received and engaging Fall Forum on Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice, which attracted attendees from around the country; a modern website; more efficient membership processes; and a newsletter that continued to be chock full of the innovative things we're all doing at archives across the Rocky Mountain West. Board members, it has been such a pleasure to serve as your president. This has been one of the most fun, productive boards I've ever served on, and I thank them all for putting up with my last-minute agendas, utter lack of familiarity with Robert's Rules, bad jokes, and mid-meeting brain space-outs! To the rest of the membership, please consider volunteering your time to serve with the SRMA board in the future. The future of our organization depends on the leadership of our members.

Big thank-you's are also in order to everyone who volunteered between September 2020-April 2021 to serve on SRMA's new Diversity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice (DIRJ) Task Force: Aaron Ramirez (co-chair/board liaison, Pueblo City-County Library District), Laura Uglean Jackson (co-chair, University of Northern Colorado), Laura Ruttum Senturia (Denver Public Library), Abby Hoverstock (Denver Public Library), Shaun Boyd (History Colorado), Steve Fisher (retired, University of Denver), Jessica Gerber (University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus), and Allaina Wallace (Denver Botanical

Gardens). The DIRJ task force spent seven months exploring how SRMA can, as an organization, better support diversity, inclusion, and racial justice in all forms in sustained ways, and their work is crucial to make us a more responsive, culturally competent, and inclusive organization for all of our members. **Please also join us at the SRMA Annual Business Meeting on May 21st (more information below) to hear co-chairs Aaron Ramirez and Laura Uglean Jackson present the DIRJ task force's recommendations to the board.** DIRJ's recommendations will be also shared via email with all SRMA members later this month and will also be posted to the website. SRMA's incoming governing board will be charged with enacting these recommendations over the next year. On behalf of the current board, I give my deepest thanks to all DIRJ members for their excellent and important work on this project.

Upcoming Events

- **Annual Business Meeting, May 21, 2021, 9:30-11am (virtual).**

SRMA's annual business meeting is free and open to all SRMA members and will again be virtual this year, out of continued concern for the health and safety of our membership. [Please register here to receive a Zoom link and passcode.](#) Join us to hear the board's year-end report of our activities and financial health over the past year, review SRMA's proposed by-laws changes, welcome incoming president Ashlyn Velte, and, most importantly, learn more about the DIRJ Task Force's recommendations to the board.

- **Continuing education opportunity! Metadata Mixology: Tools for Stirring and Shaking Up Metadata Workflows, June 22, 9am-1pm (virtual).**

[More information and registration is online on the SRMA website.](#) Free for SRMA members and students.

Lastly, you may have missed my email, earlier this spring, in which I announced that, beginning in 2021, **SRMA is officially moving to a once-per-year conference schedule.** After many years of hosting both Spring and Fall conferences, the board has decided it is more efficient to consolidate our efforts into one bigger conference each fall. (SRMA's annual business meeting will continue to be held in the spring until further notice.) Please be on the look-out later this summer for information about SRMA's upcoming 2021 annual conference.

Thank you for trusting me to lead the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists over 2020-2021. It's been an honor and a joy.

Megan Friedel
Head of Archives, University of Colorado Boulder Libraries



Tools of the Trade: Artifacts at the National Wildlife Research Center Archives

Sara Szakaly

National Wildlife Research Center Archives

As is the case at many archival institutions, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) Archives is home to more than just documents. Over the years, we have amassed a collection of artifacts documenting NWRC'S history of wildlife research. Last year we completed a project to fully catalog and photograph our entire artifact collection, and we recently shared a selection of the photographs with the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and on our digital collections site.

A wide variety of artifacts are included, and they span nearly the entire history of NWRC and its predecessor agencies. One of these agencies, the Bureau of Biological Survey (BBS), created the oldest artifact in our collection. In the early 1900s, BBS surveyors collected hair from over 180 North American mammal species. The hair samples were put into microscope slides labeled with date, location, species, and the collector's name.



Above: Close up of *Lasionycteris noctivagans* (silver-haired bat) hair sample collected by Clarence Birdseye in 1910.

Below: Benchtop Clinical centrifuge (ID: 15-43-001) and 1938 Bausch and Lomb microscope (ID: 15-57-001).

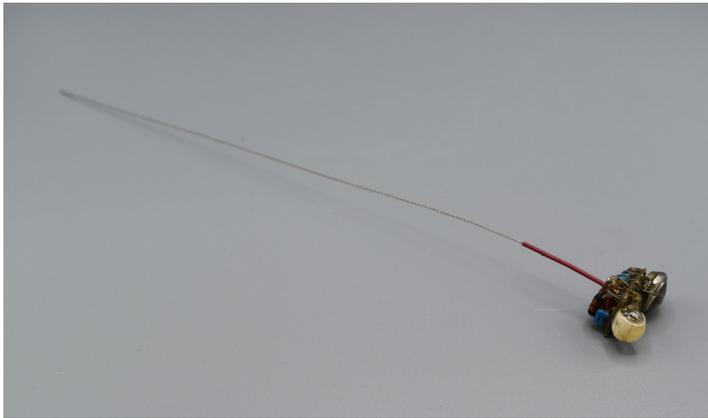


Some of the surveyors who collected the specimens were well-known naturalists. For example, BBS surveyor Edmund Heller was friends with Theodore Roosevelt and accompanied him on an expedition to Africa after his presidency. Another BBS collector, Clarence Birdseye, became interested in the fast freezing of food while on a research expedition in the arctic. He invented a flash-freezing machine that led to the founding of Birds Eye frozen foods, which is still a major food company today.

Wildlife research occurs both in the field and in the laboratory. Chemists and other scientists have been important members of NWRC's research team since its inception. NWRC laboratory research has ranged from examining biological specimens to the analysis and development of chemical repellents and vaccines. Several laboratory artifacts are represented in the collection,

including a centrifuge from the 1970s, and a Bausch and Lomb microscope manufactured in 1938.

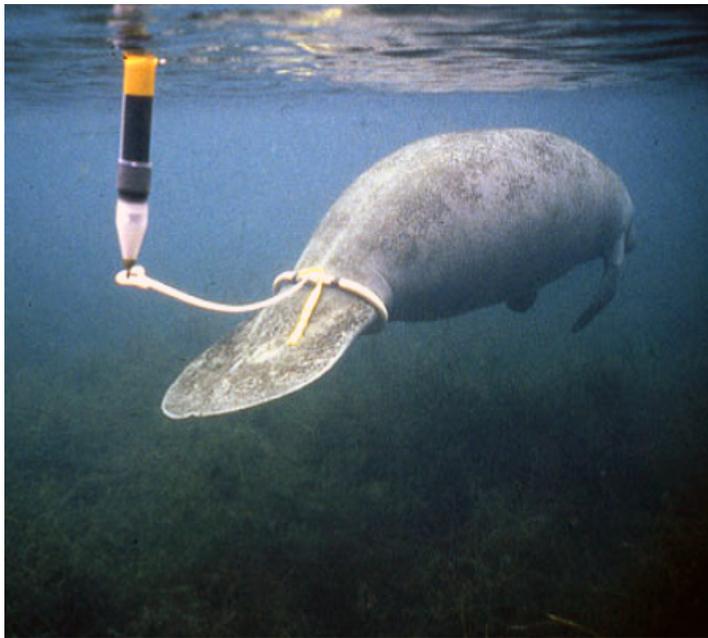
Several of the artifacts in the collection were created by the NWRC Electronics Unit, which pioneered work in wildlife telemetry throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Engineers conducted extensive research to develop small, lightweight, and long-lasting tracking devices to aid in the study of wildlife movements and behavior. The Unit created tailor-made transmitters for dozens of species, ranging in size from small birds to bears, even including aquatic animals such as manatees and sea turtles. The artifact collection includes transmitters and transmitter collars for birds, coyotes, snakes, manatees, polar bears, and other species.



L to R: Close-up of a bird transmitter (ID: 10-04-042).



Polar bear transmitter collar. (ID: 10-05-070)



Manatee with transmitter, early 1980s.



Manatee transmitter (ID: 15-43-001)

The historical objects in this collection highlight the Center's long history of developing science-based solutions for challenging wildlife management issues. Our artifact photography project has created the exciting opportunity to share our story through them in the digital realm.

To view this collection and others, visit [NWRC'S digital collections site](#) or [DPLA](#).



METADATA MIXOLOGY

Tools for *Stirring and Shaking Up*
Metadata Workflows

TUESDAY JUNE 22
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

A **VIRTUAL** CONTINUING EDUCATION SESSION

Including introductions to:

Tidy Data
OpenRefine
Command Line

Presented by Helen Baer (Head, Digital Repositories Unit, Colorado State University), Amber D'Ambrosio (Special Collections and Archives Librarian, Colorado Mesa University), and Katie Fletcher (Metadata Coordinator, CU Boulder Libraries)

FREE for SRMA Members and students
Non-Members: \$30

Visit [HTTPS://SRMARCHIVISTS.ORG/](https://SRMARCHIVISTS.ORG/) to register
And for more information



Society of
Rocky Mountain Archivists

Metadata Mixology

Join three experienced metadata managers for a morning of presentations on choosing the best methods for your metadata workflows, whether you're engaged in cleanup or simply want to improve efficiency. Topics will include introductions to Tidy Data, and demonstrations of OpenRefine and the command line, plus advice on setting up your system for these workflows and knowing when it's time to call IT.

Session schedule:

9:00 - Introductions

9:15 - 10:00 Tidy Data and Metadata Workflows

10:00 - 10:45 OpenRefine Basics

-- Break / Office Hours--

11:15 - 12:00 Command Line and Programming Languages

12:00 - 12:30 Writing Your Recipe: Evaluating Options for Your Needs

12:30 - 1:00 Q & A and Closing

Presented by Helen Baer (Head, Digital Repositories Unit, Colorado State University), Amber D'Ambrosio (Special Collections and Archives Librarian, Colorado Mesa University), and Katie Fletcher (Metadata Coordinator, CU Boulder Libraries)



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The Reading Room May Be Closed, But the University of Denver Archives Is Open for Business

Kate Crowe, Curator
Special Collections and Archives, University of Denver

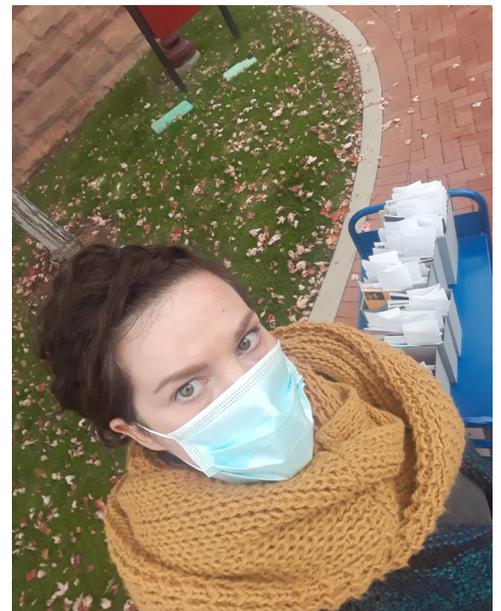


Kate Crowe and Writing faculty member Rob Gilmore in summer 2020.

Even though most courses at the University of Denver went online in March 2020, Special Collections and Archives faculty and staff have found ways to keep supporting archives-based instruction in multiple modalities (online, hybrid, flex, etc.). Curator Kate Crowe worked with faculty in multiple disciplines as in the spring of 2020 to plan a shift from what had been primarily in-person instruction into mostly online work. Kate even did a few planning meetings outside during summer 2020, keeping things COVID-safe and taking a much needed break from Zoom.

Special Collections and Archives shifted most instructional support to online, supporting with in-class visits, remote consultations, and instructional videos. For several in-person classes, we were able to work with faculty to provide COVID-safe physical access to our Fine Press and Artists' Books Collection and zines where the students were expected to produce either artists' books or zines (photo: Kate Crowe, Fall 2020). We've also used document cameras with classes like Bibliography and Research Methods in the English Department to add a bird's eye view into archival boxes of authors' papers to our lectures, giving the students at least a sense of what in-person archival research can look like.

This year (and some change) has been incredibly challenging, and it's made us at DU think really creatively about how to provide access to our archival collections in ways (document cameras, asynchronous instructional videos and tours, more social media outreach) that we plan to implement going forward to making our collections more accessible to remote patrons and classes even as our reading room slowly re-opens to in-person visits.





NHPRC Scholarships

The Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board (CHRAB) is happy to announce this year's funding opportunities from National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for continuing education scholarships in archival studies. Three scholarships of \$1,000 will be awarded to applicants interested in attending in or out of state courses, including online courses, professional conferences and workshops offered by accredited institutions such as the Society of American Archivists (SAA) or American Library Association (ALA). Special consideration will be given towards applicants interested in courses on digital preservation and access. Funds will be available for courses or conferences attended from July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022. Applications will be accepted until funds run out. We encourage you to apply as early as possible.

Previous Scholarships have been awarded to fund activities such as online courses like the Digital Curation Series available at Library Juice Academy; in person courses such as SAA DAS Course, Digital Forensics for Archivists; attending conferences such as 2019 SAA Conference in Austin, Texas, the 2019 American Association for State and Local History Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

Awarded funds can be used for reimbursement of registration fees, hotels, travel, and other expenses. Individuals receiving funding will be required to write a blog post summarizing their experience and how they intend to apply their new knowledge. The blog post will be posted on the Colorado State Archives website to be shared with the archival community in the state. It is encouraged that awardees also submit a short article to SRMA (Society of American Archivist's newsletter).

Interested archivists in Colorado and information professionals with an interest in improving their professional development in archives are encouraged to apply. Applications are open from March 15th, 2021 to June 1, 2022.

To apply please fill out the application form at this link:

<https://forms.gle/F4yrF32r9hpPoNB16>

Questions about applying? Please email CHRAB@state.co.us or call 303-866-5689

NHPRC Re-grants

The Colorado Historical Records Advisory Board (CHRAB) is happy to announce this year's funding opportunities from National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) for Re-Grants. Six grants of \$5,000 will be awarded to eligible applicants around the State of Colorado. The grant period for these funds is July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022. This year, CHRAB will be accepting draft applications. A board member will look over draft applications and provide feedback you may use on your final application. Draft applications will be received for review until April 15th. **Final applications are due May 15, 2021 at 11:59 PM, for consideration.**

Organizations are able to request funding for a wide variety of projects, including digitization, preservation needs, disaster planning, improving accessibility to collections and purchasing supplies. Some special consideration will be given to institutions in smaller, rural areas of the State and a preference will be given to projects with a strong focus on digital accessibility and preservation. Due to NHPRC guidelines, projects for digitizing newspapers will not be eligible for grant funding from CHRAB. For a list of the types of projects eligible for NHPRC funding, please see this link: <https://www.archives.gov/nhprc/apply/eligibility.html>

Applicants will be required to contribute the 25% matching or in-kind funds. All of the grants will adhere to NHPRC's general grant guidelines.

To apply, please follow the instructions and fill out the application form here:

<https://forms.gle/ggqTBF26cOfeyJzh6>

Please submit your completed application by May 31, 2021 at 11:59 PM.

Questions about applying? Please email CHRAB@state.co.us or call 303-866-5689





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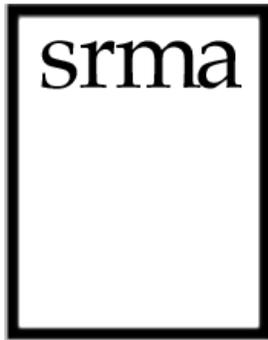
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University of Colorado Boulder Libraries

Electronic Resources/Website

Coordinator: Sean Babbs

Special Collections, Archives & Preservation
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Need to renew your membership?

Contact David Fasman
david.fasman@du.edu

Do you have any projects or collections to feature in the next issue of *Rocky Mountain Archivist*?

Contact Nathalie Proulx at
nathalie.proulx@du.edu