Slide 1

The Art of Access:

The Development of Collection Information Access at the
Archives of American Art

Karen B. Weiss
Museum of Modern Art Tokyo
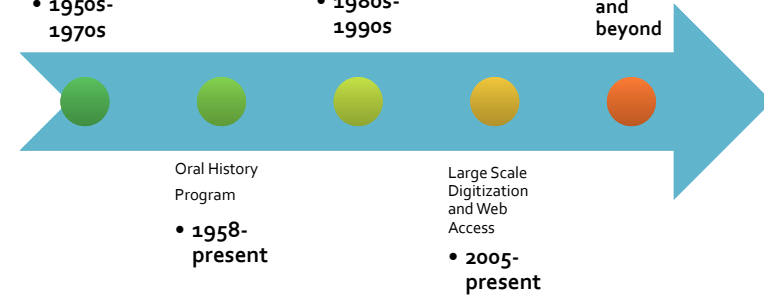June 18, 2016
weissk@si.edu

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Slide 2

Advancing Access Through the Decades

Founded,
1954
Microfilm, Card
Catalog Access
- **1950s-1970s**

Online
Catalogs,
Shared
Standards
- **1980s-1990s**

Crowdsourcing
, Linked Open
Data,
Collaborations
- **2013-2016
and
beyond**

Oral History
Program
- **1958-present**

Large Scale
Digitization
and Web
Access
- **2005-present**

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Slide 3

Excerpt from a 1970 oral history interview of Archives' founder Lawrence Fleischman

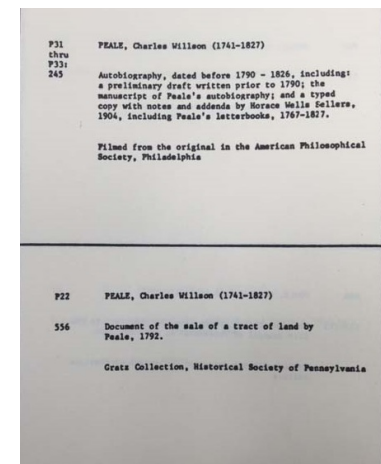"*...the idea came to me: ...* **Why isn't there a central place where records could be saved?** *....*

[I] went to see Ted Richardson. I started talking to him about my idea. I remember his eyes lit up and he said, "This would be a great thing to do...and he said

'*Microfilm is such a wonderful tool—now with microfilm it would be possible to go, for instance, to Philadelphia'...*

I suggested we call it 'The Archives of American Art'."

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Slide 4

Founding Mission:
Collaboration with Repositories to Increase Access

P31
thru
P33:
245   PEALE, Charles Willson (1741-1827)

Autobiography, dated before 1790 - 1826, including:
a preliminary draft written prior to 1790; the
manuscript of Peale's autobiography; and a typed
copy with notes and addenda by Horace Wells Sellers,
1904, including Peale's letterbooks, 1767-1827.

Filmed from the original in the American Philosophical
Society, Philadelphia

P22

556   PEALE, Charles Willson (1741-1827)

Document of the sale of a tract of land by
Peale, 1792.

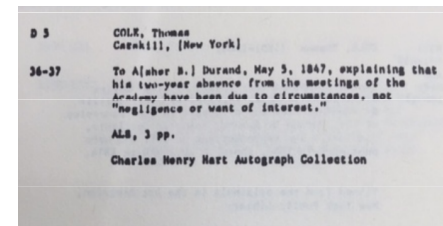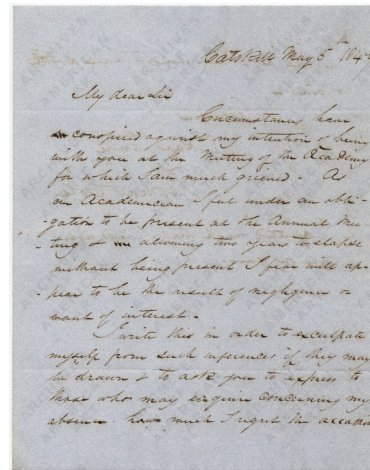Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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1954 (through 1995)
Microfilmed Papers Held in Private Hands

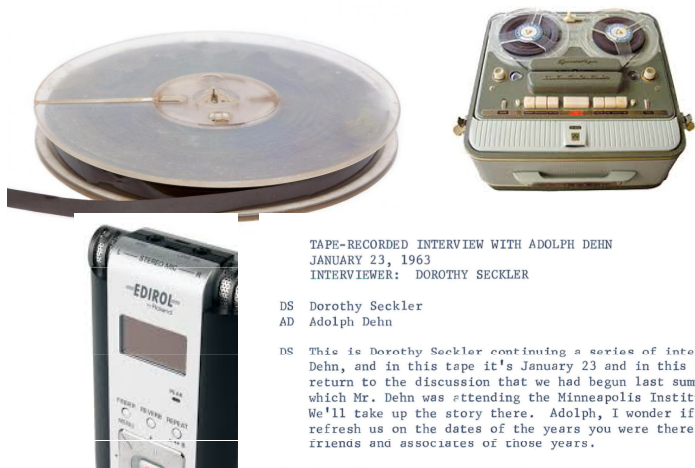- Papers lent by individuals were microfilmed and returned to their lenders.
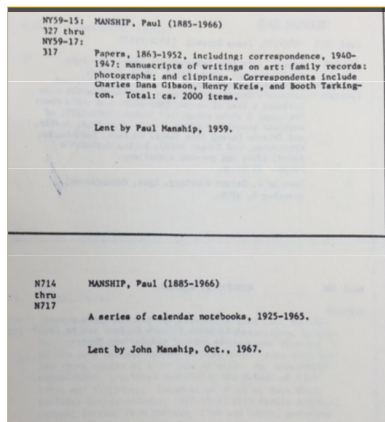
5

Early Acquisitions
Individual Items, Small Letter Collections

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1958
Oral History Program Launched

TAPE-RECORDED INTERVIEW WITH ADOLPH DEHN
JANUARY 23, 1963
INTERVIEWER: DOROTHY SECKLER

DS Dorothy Seckler
AD Adolph Dehn

DS This is Dorothy Seckler continuing a series of interviews with Adolph Dehn, and in this tape it's January 23 and in this interview we're going to return to the discussion that we had begun last summer of the years during which Mr. Dehn was attending the Minneapolis Institute of Fine Arts. We'll take up the story there. Adolph, I wonder if you would like to just refresh us on the dates of the years you were there and some of the close friends and associates of those years.

AD I was 18 when I went to the Minneapolis art school and that was in the autumn of 1914. I was there three years. Then I went on to the Art

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1960s
Moves Headquarters to New York City
The Pace Picks Up

8

Collections Acquired Incrementally
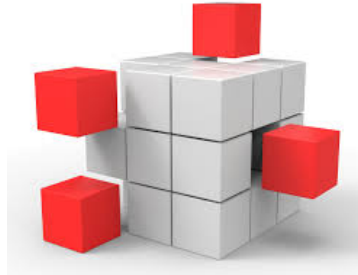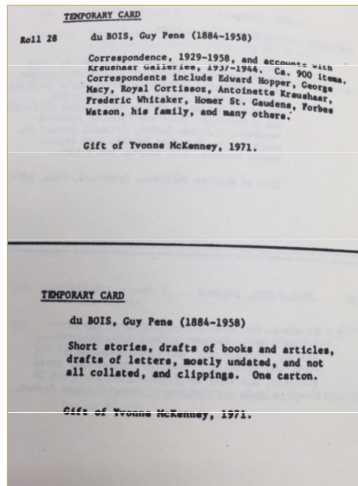
1960s
The Pace (And Size) Picks Up

1960s
New Approaches to Description and Arrangement

- "More Product, Less Process" (MPLP)

- Access is Prioritized

- Description and processing less detailed

- Focus on aggregate levels

1970s
The Archives Joins the Smithsonian Institution

1970s
Expansion of Regional Network of Research and Collecting Centers
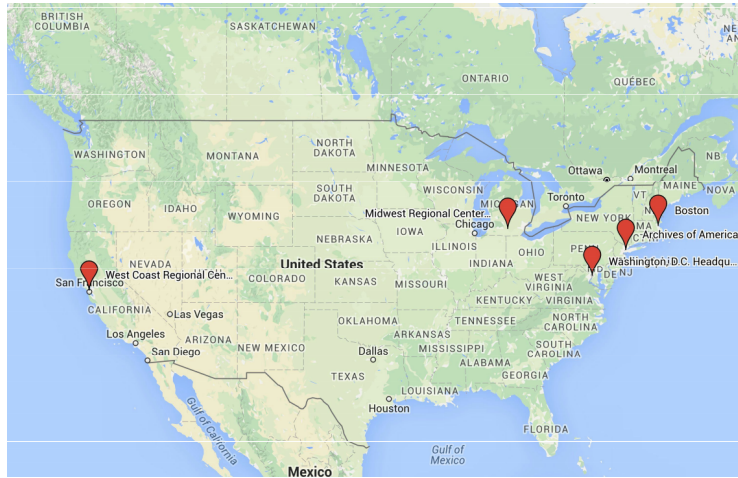
1980s
Standards for Archival Description:
USMARC Format and Content Standards
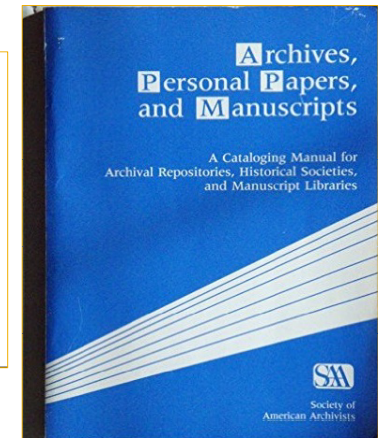
1985
Smithsonian Institution Bibliographic Information System

- Supported USMARC formats for libraries, archives and museum and research center databases
- Sparked collaboration; use of standards; development of shared vocabularies and authority files
- Provided collection management capabilities
- System support, maintenance and migration handled by central Smithsonian

1980s-1990s
Integrating Information Within and Beyond the Smithsonian Institution

1980s-1990s
Processing, Finding Aids and Encoded Archival Description (EAD)

1996- Web Access to Catalog Records
1997- Archives' first website
www.aaa.si.edu
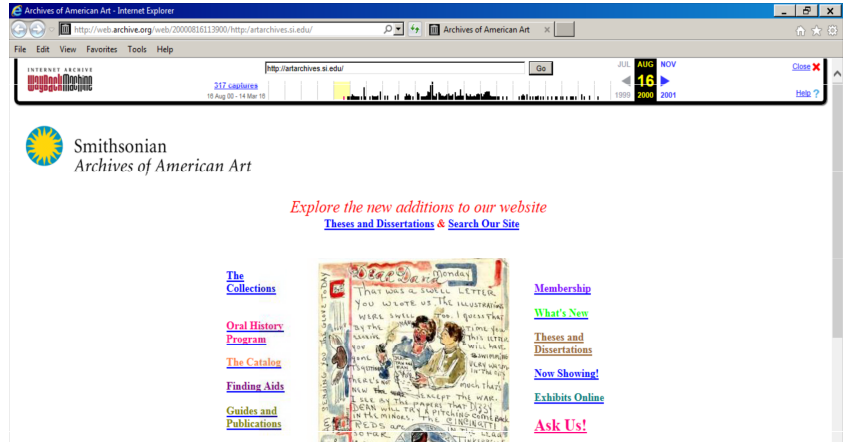
1999 – 2004
Large-scale Digitization of Microfilm Sets the Stage

- Digitized 267 microfilm reels – 250,000 files
- Developed the future strategy for digitization of original collections in their entirety
- Used EAD XML's structured data corresponding to image file directory and naming conventions to link the digital files
- Presented the digital files online via box/folder links.

2004
Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS) Published by the Society of American Archivists

- Statement of Principles
- Overview of Archival Description
- Part I-Describing Archival Materials, Chapters 1-8
- Part II-Archival Authority Records, Chapters 9-13

Slide 21
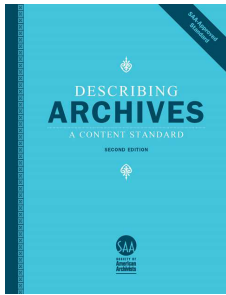
2005-2018
Terra Foundation for American Art
Digitization Grant

Archives of American Art — Background on the Terra Foundation Center for Digital Collections

Slide 22

Fully Digitized Collections

Archives of American Art — Fully Digitized Collections

Slide 23

Processing Archivists and EAD Finding Aids

Slide 24

EAD XML Finding Aids Uploaded to
Archives' Collection Information System