



Albany Skyline Digital Artwork by Michael Thompsett / Web Banner update

YOUR NEW 2022-2023 GOVERNANCE GROUP:

Jenifer Monger
(Chair)

Jenifer Monger has focused her career on engaging communities and promoting responsible collections stewardship to foster a rich understanding of archival and museum collections. As the Assistant Institute Archivist at RPI, she's leading reference and outreach activities, managing and preserving collections in multiple formats, managing access platforms, and creating and maintaining collection management workflows and procedures. Jenifer serves as a mentor for those new to the field — she is a member of the SAA Membership Committee and chair of the SAA Career Services Commons, an active member of an international group of scholars called Paperology, and a member of the International Council on Archives — to name a few!

Amanda Greenwood
(Vice-Chair)

Amanda Greenwood is the Bigelow Project Archivist at Union College in Schenectady (NY). She earned an MSIS in archives and records administration from the University at Albany, SUNY and an ALM in English from Harvard University. Greenwood is a committee member of the James Joyce Society of Korea and serves on the American Archivist Editorial Board as an early-career member. Her writings and research interests focus on the intersection of post-colonialism and masculinity in the works of James Joyce, linguistics and gender in hardboiled fiction, trauma and emotions in archival work, and web archiving labor and maintenance. In her position as Vice-Chair, Amanda is eager to *continues*

MEMBERSHIP

After a 2-year hiatus, we welcome you back!

Capital Area Archivists of New York (CAA) is an organization of archivists and others dedicated to serving the archival needs of the Capital Region.

Membership is open to any individual or organization interested in the management of archives and manuscripts.

CAA encourages cooperation among repositories in the region, increases awareness of historical records issues, and helps educate people in the practices of the archival profession.

CAA's membership represents all types of repositories. CAA holds meetings three times a year, publishes a newsletter, and participates in outreach activities.

The organization is incorporated under the Board of Regents of the New York State Education Department.

DUES ARE \$5 PER YEAR.

help create networking and professional events for archivists in the Capital Region.

Jill Tominosky
(Programming & Communications)

Jill Tominosky is a NYS Certified Archivist and Librarian whose current role is Local History Librarian for the Guilderland Public Library, where she is responsible for the acquisition and preservation of regional texts and manuscripts. She is a University at Albany MSIS graduate, with a concentration in Archives & Records Management and holds a BA in Museum Studies from the University of Rochester. Tominosky is also a member of the Cultural Competency Task Force for the Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) which has developed a new domain for the ACA Exam. Previous archival positions include: NEH Project Archivist for Union College's Special Collections & Archives, New York State Library's Manuscripts & Special Collections Unit, and ConnectNY Library Consortia.

As Programming & Communications Leader, Jill looks forward to refreshing CAA's marketing strategies and expanding outreach efforts to our growing membership.

Mark Wolfe
(Website Administrator)

Mark Wolfe is the Curator of Digital Collections at the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives at the University at Albany. I shepherd large digitization projects in the repository for all formats, especially audio and video. I have expertise in all audio and moving image formats as well as their playback devices for digitization.

Along with CAA's website, I manage the department's website, and I was until recently, responsible for building and managing the New York Archives Conference's website.

Along with my digitization work, I conduct reference on archival collections, supervise students and interns in metadata creation, and I periodically engage with donors. I also teach the digital libraries course in the graduate program in information science at the University at Albany. Prior to coming to M.E. Grenander, I worked on the InterPARES Project as the project coordinator from 2003 to 2006.

Brian Keough
(Annual Dinner Coordinator)

Brian Keough is Head of the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives at the University at Albany and is Co-Director, National Death Penalty Archive, University at Albany.

Keough specializes in the acquisition of political archives; access to archival collections; archives and historical agency management; needs assessments and business process analysis for record management programs; digital preservation; and regional 20th Century political history.

Brian has previously served as MARAC Chair, 2016-2017 and is the Local Arrangements Committee Chair for the 2023 MARAC Conference in Saratoga Springs (NY).

MARAC
Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference

Save the Date

Fall 2023 Conference
October 18-22, 2023

Saratoga Springs, NY

MEMBER NEWS



Marietta Carr
Librarian/Archivist
Schenectady County
Historical Society

Archives Shelving Upgrade

The Schenectady County Historical Society Grems-Doolittle Library is undertaking a major upgrade to our archival storage system which will ensure our ability to continue collecting historic documents, photos, maps, videos, and music of Schenectady County for many years to come. We have reached capacity for our current static shelving, so we are upgrading to a mobile, high density shelving system from Donnegan Systems Inc.

The new storage system will increase our capacity by 65%! Installation is scheduled for mid-November, so we've spent the summer and early fall preparing - including inventorying collections, rehousing materials, and stabilizing fragile materials.

The next step in our preparations is to move approximately 850 linear feet of archival materials from the basement vault into the library research room to make space for the new storage system and keep the materials safe during the installation.

Once the materials are safely moved, we will remove the old storage shelves and prepare the vault for installation. After the installation, we will return the materials to the vault.

Because the archival materials will take up all of the available space in the research room, the library will be closed to the public starting October 10th. The library will reopen December 12th. The SCHS museum will be closed November 1st and reopen for our annual Festival of Trees on December 3rd.

Schenectady African American Historical Records Project

The Schenectady County Historical Society is currently coordinating a collaborative community archives project focused on preserving historical records created by African Americans in Schenectady.

Led by an advisory committee of community elders and activists, the project began in 2020 with a planning grant from the NYS Archives Documentary Heritage Program.

Thanks to funding from the Schenectady County Legislature and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Museums for America, we have now entered the second phase of the project, a community survey.

Using a range of questions, the survey will expand our knowledge of local African American history, recognize the culture and memory keepers who are already caring for the community's historical records, and illuminate the ways SCHS can support record creators and caretakers with their preservation and access efforts.

We plan to compile a catalog or similar tool to describe where historical materials are held, whether researchers can access them, and what preservation efforts are currently underway or needed. We hope this project will become a foundation for future research, preservation, and education. Anyone looking for information on the African American Historical Records Project or wishing to participate in the survey should contact Marietta Carr at the Schenectady County Historical Society at 518-374-0263, option 3, or by [email](#).



From the Archives



Amanda Greenwood
Bigelow Project Archivist
Union College

The John Bigelow Papers at Union College

Schenectady is home to one of the most prestigious private universities in New York State. Union College, a university famous for having the oldest commercial radio station in the United States (Union, n.d.) and an extensive list of noted alumni, also has a number of impressive and historically valuable collections in its department of Special Collections and Archives. As one of Union's most requested collections, the John Bigelow Papers consist of biographical and professional papers, scrapbooks, journals, a library exceeding 4,000 books, and approximately 22,000 letters of correspondence. These letters of correspondence are what attracts researchers of various disciplines around the world to Schaffer Library's Department of Special Collections and Archives, and the digitization requests can be time-consuming and voluminous when a researcher asks for 200 letters, at multiple pages each, to be scanned.



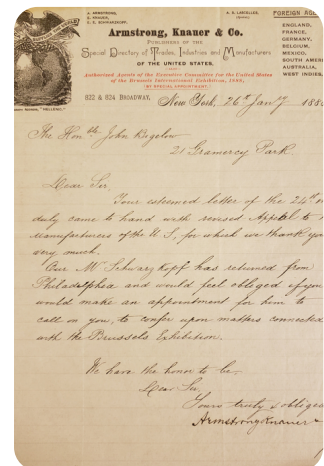
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This prompted the library to apply for a National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant; in 2021, the National Archives awarded Union an NHPRC grant to support the digitization of the correspondence in the collection (Union, 2021).

John Bigelow (November 25, 1817 - December 19, 1911) lived a dynamic life during a time of rapid social and industrial change. He was an American author, diplomat, lawyer, and distinguished man of letters who was involved in significant historical events such as discouraging France from building ships for the Confederacy during the Civil War and helping to expose the political corruption of Tammany Hall's William "Boss" Tweed in New York City. A browsing of his collection reveals that his acquaintances, business associates, and friends represented a "roll call of the leaders of his time" (Clapp, 1968, p. viii), with these leaders

steering literary, political, and social movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Born in the town of Malden-on-Hudson to Asa and Lucy Isham Bigelow, Bigelow studied at Washington College in Hartford, Connecticut, and then at Union College, where he graduated as a member of the class of 1835. From 1835-1837, he studied law in New York City. It was during this time where he first made the acquaintances with poet Fitz-Green Halleck, politician Samuel J. Tilden, and poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant, with whom Bigelow would become co-owner and co-editor of the New York Evening Post. Admitted to the New York City Bar in 1838, Bigelow's career moved from practicing law to writing and editing for the next ten years, contributing to The Plebeian, the New York Review, and the Democratic Review.

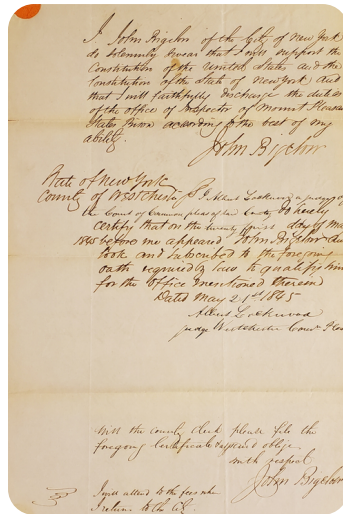


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From the Archives

to further entrench himself in artistic and literary circles upon meeting William Thackeray, William Hargreaves, Charles Dickens, and Anthony Trollope, among others.

From 1860-1861, Bigelow supported the nomination of Abraham Lincoln by the Republican Party and was appointed by Lincoln to be the Consul-General at Paris. From 1870-1900, Bigelow was involved in New York State politics as he was elected Secretary of the State of New York, bolstered Samuel J. Tilden's Presidential candidacy, and was appointed the Commissioner of the U.S. Section 5 at the Brussels Exposition of 1888. After Tilden's death in 1886, Bigelow was elected as the President of the Board of Trustees for the Tilden Trust, and he was steadfast in helping to make Tilden's dream to create a public library in New York City a reality. Because of his unwavering loyalty to Tilden's vision, Bigelow became the first President of the New York Free Public Library. Bigelow also played an important role in supporting Philippe-Jean Bunau-Varilla in constructing the Panama Canal, a role that then U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt was thankful for. Bigelow died at the age of ninety-five on December 19 in 1911.



At Union College, John Bigelow's incredible life comes alive through the items in his collection. The John Bigelow Papers is Union's best-kept secret, a secret that is not kept by choice, but rather because the historically significant findings in the collection continue to be unearthed as the collection is re-processed during the NHPRC grant. The collection was gifted to the College in 1958 on behalf of the Bigelow family, the extent of which is approximately 80 linear feet. It includes around 22,000 letters from prominent cultural and political titans, including Andrew Carnegie, Charles Dickens, John Jay, J.P. Morgan, Theodore Roosevelt, Mark Twain, and Thurlow Weed. The letters detail Bigelow's activities as the U.S. Consul to France during the Civil War, the founding of the Panama Canal, and Lincoln's assassination.

A portion of the collection focuses on Bigelow's professional involvement in the creation of eminent institutions in New York City like the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Public Library.

The diaries of his wife, Jane Tunis Poultney Bigelow, are unique pieces of the collection. Just as respected and loved as her husband, Jane was an important figure in the New York literary and social scene. Her diaries offer a fascinating look into the Bigelow family as she details their life and travels. Some especially delightful tidbits are her entries wherein she writes about Charles Dickens and Oscar Wilde when they stayed with the family during their trips to New York City. The Bigelows also had a remarkable library of over 4,000 books that can be found in the collection. The rare books cover various topics, such as religious texts, biographies, works of fiction, and historical and political writings. In addition to those items, over twenty scrapbooks, various journals kept by other family members, drawings, photographs, and an assortment of John Bigelow's writings are also found in the collection.

From the Archives

Throughout his life, Bigelow championed democracy in his professional and personal lives, and evidence of this can be seen throughout his collection. Bigelow biographer Margaret Clapp (1968) wrote that upon his death, his character was remembered far more than his accomplishments (p. viii); it is evident from the correspondence created during his lifetime, and the testimonials about Bigelow after his death, that those words are accurate. Because of the NHPRC grant, researchers will soon be able to gain access to these documents, enriching scholarship in a variety of disciplines. In fact, the Bigelow team has reached some exciting milestones. Student workers have already scanned almost 19,000 letters thus far, and additional letters have been discovered in other materials, such as scrapbooks, books, and journals. Additionally, the collection materials are getting more attention from researchers.



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Author April White used materials from the collection during the research of her book *The Divorce Colony*; an entire chapter is dedicated to Bigelow's daughter Flora Bigelow Dodge Guest. In addition, Union College librarians led a cohort of research students during the Summer Institute for Digital Exploration at Schaffer (Summer IDEaS) program and used the Bigelow papers for research material. Three students were introduced to key digital scholarship and digital humanities methods such as network analysis, mapping, and text analysis and applied data visualization methods to digitized nineteenth-century letters from the collection. Moreover, the Bigelow team has been busy planning a project that will enable crowdsourcing to transcribe the diaries of Jane Bigelow. Jane's diaries were written between 1850-1873 and narrate her life as she traveled around the world with her family.

Bibliography

Clapp, Margaret. (1968). *First Forgotten Citizen: John Bigelow*. Greenwood Press.

Union College. (2021, August 5). *College receives National Archives grant to digitize its popular Bigelow Collection*. News. <https://www.union.edu/news/stories/202107/college-receives-national-archives-grant-digitize-its-popular-bigelow-collection>

Union College. (n.d.). WRUC. *Home*. <https://wruc.union.edu/>

Images

1 / John Bigelow, 1911. Courtesy of Union College Schaffer Library.

2 / A letter regarding an exhibition from the 1888 Brussels International Exposition, 1888. Courtesy of Union College Schaffer Library.

3 / John Bigelow's Sing Sing Prison Inspector Oath, 1845. Courtesy of Union College Schaffer Library.

4 / One section out of many holding the rare books that make up the Bigelow family library in Union College Schaffer Library's Department of Special Collections and Archives.

5 / John Bigelow, 1911. Courtesy of Union College Schaffer Library.

From the Archives



Jenifer Monger
Asst. Institute Archivist
Rensselaer Polytechnic
Institute

Migration, Collaboration and Innovation with Archipelago Commons

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) is the nation's oldest—and one of the world's most renowned—technological research universities. As the school approaches its 200th anniversary, the Rensselaer Libraries and Institute Archives are implementing changes that will revolutionize how they provide access to their digital collections. Twenty years ago, a proprietary digitization program was established for access and discovery of RPI's globally known collections and alumni. In 2002, the Archives and Collections acquired InMagic Genie, a Lucidea product to provide access to archival images and drawings. In 2005, the Rensselaer Libraries acquired Digitool, an Exlibris product used to provide access for theses, dissertations, media, images, and publications. Though these systems served the end user well for some time, the fact of the matter is, these systems also prohibited

staff from the level of quality control and associated metadata these sensitive objects demand. These systems were also siloed, meaning two separate systems, not easily discoverable on the web, with two different interfaces (not customizable by/for RPI staff), and two separate approaches to digital asset management and metadata structuring. Furthermore, neither system allowed for the integration of digital preservation efforts which have been underway since 2014.

Moving toward an open source system was paramount. In 2017, researching an updated software system to showcase these digital assets became a focal point for the Libraries and Archives. In July of this year, the migration of digital assets to a new access and discovery platform called Archipelago Commons (or simply Archipelago) began. Since then, staff at RPI have been working closely with

Metro Library Council's Digital Services Team.

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Images

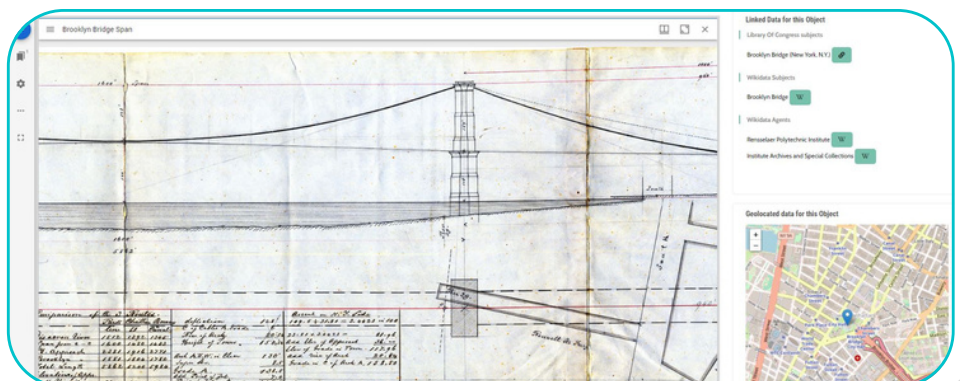
1 / Close up view of hand drawing of the Brooklyn Bridge Span in the Mirador Viewer in Archipelago. Linked Open Data upper right; Geolocated Data for the object, lower right.

Resources

<https://archipelago.nyc/>
<https://metro.org/>
<https://github.com/esmero>

RPI Digital Repository Team:
Jenifer Monger, Brenden McCarthy, Tammy Gobert, George Biggar, Liz King, Catherine Littell and the unwavering support of the Rensselaer Libraries Director, Andrew White.

With deep gratitude we thank the Archipelago Commons Team at Metro Library Council: Diego Pino Navarro, Allison Lund, Katie Romabilies, Albert Min and Nate Hill.



From the Archives

Some awesome attributes of Archipelago:

- Unique opportunity to collaborate with lead architect developer(s)
- Ability and encouragement to request/suggest features
- Metadata freedom - cast and expose any schema
- Extensive customization
- User-driven metadata displays; we can highlight or hide the metadata we want!
- Spectacular content viewing experience
- Content becomes more discoverable with Wikidata
- Includes a practical application of Linked Open Data
- Open communication with the Metro team; they understand us, we understand them, and everyone is happy!
- Exit strategy (not that we'll want to leave), but this open source system allows us to get content in, own it, and easily get it back out!
- We have a seat at the table - RPI's Metadata Librarian, Brenden McCarthy is on the Archipelago Working Group

The implementation of Archipelago for the Libraries and Archives at RPI is now fostering creativity, collaboration and innovation.

Staff are excited for the future of their digital assets and their ability to expose, share and make connections between digital assets that haven't been possible, until now. As RPI enters its 200th anniversary the team of experts in charge of this project celebrates the possibilities this new open infrastructure will bring to their vast communities of researchers.

Want to submit any news, conference presentations, certifications, or articles?

Visit our submission guidelines and contribute to our next issue!

[GUIDELINES](#)

