

RESEARCH ARCHIVES

FOY SCALF

The priorities of the Research Archives during the 2021–22 academic year were to prepare for reopening to patrons, to process our accessions backlog, and to reorient our operating procedures to the new normal that is the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. So much happened in those twelve months! Following all university protocols, on July 19, 2021, the Research Archives announced a research resumption plan that included access for personnel authorized to conduct on-site work at the OI. Authorized patrons could reserve windows of time to use the Research Archives, including the Elizabeth Morse Genius reading room. We acknowledge and thank the people across the OI who made this resumption possible through their many hours of work and collaboration. In particular, as the OI's COVID-19 lead, deputy director and chief curator Jean Evans helped tremendously to facilitate compliance with all university protocols, and visitor services and security manager Vick Cruz made all the necessary arrangements for security, access permissions, cleaning, and hand-sanitizing stations. Without their help, reopening would not have been possible.

As pandemic guidance shifted and various mandates were lifted, the Research Archives continued to expand its schedule and access. Beginning on August 9, 2021, we reopened to patrons on a slightly restricted schedule (9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday). The reservation requirement was lifted, and patrons had free access during operating hours without capacity restrictions. Those phased reopening steps paved the way for an official return to our traditional operating hours on September 27, 2021, in time for the return of students to campus for the autumn quarter. And return they did! Over the course of the year, 2,094 individual patrons swiped their ID cards 21,303 times to enter the Research Archives, producing an access report of nearly 600 pages. Under the umbrella of the University of Chicago, we may appear as a relatively humble library with 70,000 volumes, a single full-time librarian, and a small part-time staff, but by accommodating more than 2,000 visitors each year we provide an immense service to our community, both on campus and beyond. At a time when the student population is growing exponentially, we strive to offer an exceptional research environment with unparalleled access to resources. The increase in student population has had a ripple effect on accommodating infrastructure, and many students now visit the Research Archives' reading room for the quiet study space it offers.

In an effort to reach out to the many new faces we have seen over the past few years, welcome cards are now available and distributed to visitors (fig. 1). With the help of Josh Tulisak and Anne Flannery (and with inspiration from Anne's Cultural Heritage Experiment), our welcome message sought to inspire a sense of community participation and collective responsibility. After all, the collections of the Research Archives belong to the community that uses them; we staff are stewards, and it is our job to ensure that our patrons make the network connections they need—whether those networks are formed of information or people. For the former, we continued to provide subject expertise for access to digital resources throughout the year, fielding more than a thousand patron requests for help in finding off-site access to materials. For the latter, the reading room remains one of the primary communal hubs of our institute and university.

This year, patrons experienced a few changes in the library. The most impactful was the restriction on printing. For decades, printing in the Research Archives had been provided free of charge to patrons. This courtesy was intended as a convenient service for faculty, staff, and students associated



Figure 1. Front (left) and back (right) of welcome cards for Research Archives visitors.

with the OI, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), and the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). However, over the years, word spread—where else on a university campus could someone get free printing these days!—and the Research Archives began experiencing a flood of individuals whose primary reason for visiting was to take advantage of our printing service. At times, a line of ten or more people would be waiting at our two computer terminals to print to our single printer. To reduce consumption and the costs of subsidizing this massive increase in printing, we restricted printing to faculty, staff, and NELC/CMES students, using a privately distributed code that is monitored for activity. This policy ensures that our patrons have access to the resources they need without budgets, equipment, and staff being unduly stressed by subsidized campus-wide printing. In line with this new policy, we worked with the OI's information technology (IT) manager Knut Boehmer to replace our decade-old Xerox multifunction device. The replacement was delayed in December 2021 when Knut was promoted to another role in IT Services at the university. Although we congratulated him on his new endeavor, we knew we would miss his steadfast service and close collaboration with the Research Archives. Once Logan Conley joined the OI as IT analyst on April 11, 2022, we resumed the task, and scheduling for the delivery of the new Canon machines was completed by the end of the academic year.

There has long been a close collaboration between the Research Archives and the OI Museum Archives; the relationship goes beyond the confusing use of “archives” in both departments’ names and has more to do with the intertwining of our collections and subject specialties. Picking up from our predecessors—John Larson and Chuck Jones—Anne Flannery and I continue to join forces on several projects. Our work on the OI Oral History project continued with an interview of Matt Stolper, emeritus professor of Assyriology, on July 7, 2021. The interview ran for well over two hours, and the edited version will be posted on the OI's YouTube channel. On a more somber note, the OI lost yet another pillar in the community with the death of Robert K. Ritner on July 25, 2021. Prior to his death, he had asked me to act as the literary executor of his scholarly library and papers. I am pleased to report that his scholarly library was donated to his alma mater Rice University in November 2021 with the help of Scott Vieira, Rice's collection development coordinator, and Sophie Crawford-Brown, assistant professor in Rice's Department of Art History. Over the next few years, we hope to see an online space develop where the contents of Ritner's extensive library can be explored. As for Ritner's papers—both analog and born-digital—we are still organizing, cataloging, and processing them for deposition into the OI Museum Archives. By the close of the 2021–22

academic year, we had rehoused more than 6,600 slides (with several thousand more to go), cataloged Ritner's notes from his graduate student years, organized his correspondence, and backed up all his digital files. There are still more than forty bankers boxes of material and hundreds of thousands of digital files to process. We expect to finish the analog materials during the 2022–23 academic year and to sort out the digital files by the end of the 2023–24 academic year. Progress on Ritner's papers can be monitored through the institutional repository database, where users can drill down from the collection-level record (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu/id/ca7375d2-0b07-4c09-9b74-cfe8faabfc3e>).

ACQUISITIONS

Acquisitions in 2021–22 were very strong (table 1), reflecting several factors. First, we spent much of the year processing the accessions backlog that had accumulated the previous year because of COVID-19 restrictions. This backlog resulted primarily from the suspension of our on-site volunteer program, as part of which volunteer Betty Bush had steadfastly helped me process new Research Archives acquisitions since 2013. With Betty's return this year, we were able to get back on track. I owe so many thanks to Betty; I do not know what I would do without all her hard work and assistance. Second, we received a number of major donations over the past few years, and their processing is reflected in our accession numbers. Our acquisitions this year were primarily through purchases (284 accessions), but a substantial number of volumes arrived as gifts (33 accessions). Our exchange program, mainly conducted through the University of Chicago Press with the help of *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (JNES) managing editor Seth Richardson, continued to provide the library with fundamental publications (13 accessions). Over the course of the year, the Research Archives' expenditures included more than \$50,000 on new acquisitions purchases and over \$3,600 in shipping charges. To accommodate the needs of the premier library for the study of the ancient Middle East in the Western Hemisphere, we gratefully acknowledge the generous increase to the library's budget established by former OI director Christopher Woods and implemented by interim director Theo

Table 1. Research Archives acquisitions, July 2021–June 2022

Month	Number of accession lots	Volumes		
		Monographs, series, pamphlets	Journals	Total
July 2021	15	19	14	33
August 2021	52	70	58	128
September 2021	20	93	46	139
October 2021	41	76	24	100
November 2021	32	78	7	85
December 2021	50	81	38	119
January 2022	11	24	1	25
February 2022	21	53	21	74
March 2022	34	111	42	153
April 2022	14	75	8	83
May 2022	32	74	188	262
June 2022	8	65	2	67
Totals	330	819	449	1,268

van den Hout and associate director of administration and finance Brendan Bulger. Our entire community owes them a debt of gratitude for recognizing the Research Archives as the heart of the OI.

ONLINE CATALOG

Research Archives staff added approximately 7,500 new records to the library catalog in the EMu collection management system this year (table 2; numbers are rounded up to the nearest hundred). This number represents a 50 percent increase over last year, again reflecting the rebound effected by the resumption of our volunteer program and on-site staff schedules. Records are available online for searching, sorting, and downloading in a variety of formats (<https://oi-idb.uchicago.edu>).

Table 2. Catalog records

Year	No. of catalog records added	Total no. of catalog records
2021–22	7,500	577,500
2020–21	5,000	570,000
2019–20	10,000	565,000
2018–19	10,000	555,000
2017–18	10,000	545,000
2016–17	10,000	535,000

As predicted in last year's report, the Research Archives library collection now exceeds 70,000 volumes (table 3), nearly double the 40,000 volumes in the OI library in 1969 prior to the founding of the Research Archives.

Table 3. Research Archives analytics

Type	Total no. of records
Total volumes	70,543
Monographs	17,513
Monograph sections	74,000
Series	1,912
Series volumes	22,493
Series volume sections	102,388
Journals	1,037
Journal volumes	29,472
Journal volume articles	326,370
Theses	1,065
Pamphlets	3058
Reviews	123,291
Festschriften (volumes)	730
Digital invoice records	2,495
Digital cover art records	13,562
Adobe PDFs	41,793

Catalog records with links pointing to online content continued to grow, reaching 124,351 records. In addition to the labor required for entering these links, they need to be maintained because websites often change the structure of their URL addresses, requiring updates to their records in our catalog. When digital object identifiers (DOIs) are available, we include them in our metadata to help ensure the long-term viability of links in the catalog, and we encourage publishers of online content to employ a registered permalink or DOI system for sustainable access to these online materials. Many of our records include multiple links: one directly to publishers' online options and others directing users to aggregator databases such as JSTOR. A continuing desideratum is to incorporate links in the catalog to general online resources, such as online dictionaries, grammars, and text editions.

DONATIONS

The Research Archives continues to benefit greatly from generous donations of both funds and books. We would like to thank the following for their thoughtful gifts (in alphabetical order): Carolyn Allen, Pamela Allen, Warren Allen, and the estate of T. George Allen; Susan Allison and OI Image Permissions; Alex and Tigran Areshian; Dean Barthuly; Andrew Baumann; Bob Biggs and Clarence Anderson; Gretel Braidwood and Ray Tindel; Eric Cline; Steve Cole and Lisa Heidorn; Fred Donner; Andrea Dudek; Jean Evans; Anne Flannery; Kathryn Girten and the estate of Eugene Cruz-Uribe; Sue Geshwender; Gita Ghei; McGuire Gibson; James Holland; Charissa Johnson; Janet Johnson and Don Whitcomb; W. Raymond Johnson; Kathryn Lissak; Brett McClain; Malcolm Mosher Jr.; Dennis Pardee; Seth Richardson and *JNES*; Stephanie Rost and Elizabeth Stone; Martha Roth and the estate of Miguel Civil; Roberta Schaffner; Emily Teeter; Tasha Vorderstrasse; Linda Wheatley-Irving; Barbara Breasted Whitesides; Bruce Williams; Dianne Yurco; and Joan Žabkar. We would like to acknowledge and thank Polina Kasian, Wally Verdooren, Matt Perley, Brendan Bulger, and Theo van den Hout for all their help with these donations. We would also like to thank Denise Browning at the Suq for her gracious collaboration with the Research Archives in selling duplicate books to help raise funds.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In last year's report, I mentioned the work of Rachel Madden, at the time a Loyola University graduate student in public history doing an internship with us in the Research Archives. After a long delay and some hiccups with our Google Arts & Culture collaboration, I am happy to report that her meticulous work has finally seen the light of day with the launch of the two-part OI online exhibition *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*:

- Part 1: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/rwWhzTdob10nLA>
- Part 2: <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/4AXR09XM5lg0hw>

This online exhibition, launched in April 2022, was based closely on the 2010–11 exhibition and accompanying catalog publication by Christopher Woods. We would like to thank Rachel for the more than one hundred hours that she poured into this project, as well as Eric Aupperle for his initial forays into organizing the digital images and metadata. With these contributions, the OI now has eight online exhibitions available through Google Arts & Culture that reflect both the digital preservation of past on-site exhibitions and born-digital exhibitions.

The practicum work of Claire Mokrauer-Madden on the Directors Correspondence of former OI director John Wilson, mentioned in last year's report, was continued during a practicum by Hilarie Pozesky from Dominican University. We were incredibly lucky this year because Claire and Hilarie have now joined forces as Sepia Archival Management, through which they continued their work on the Wilson directorship. They examined the Directors Correspondence files from 1936, spending hundreds of hours digitizing, cataloging, and transcribing a large selection of material intended for a future publication in the OI Digital Archives series tentatively titled *The New Past: The Directorship of John Albert Wilson*, vol. 1, 1936. Their project is an extremely important one, as very little analysis has been made of this era in our institution's history. We look forward to collaborating further with them to reveal the aftermath of James Henry Breasted's death in 1935, when the OI was completely transformed in the wake of extreme financial hardships.

For many years we worked hand-in-hand with volunteer manager Sue Geshwender as part of establishing and extending the volunteer program in the Research Archives. Sue's retirement this year is yet another sign of the major changes taking place at the OI. We would like to thank Sue for all her help, leadership, and collaboration on building such a robust and successful volunteer corps. Although we have not yet brought all our volunteers back on-site, many of them continue to work remotely on a variety of projects. Many thanks to Betty Bush, Kym Crawford, Jane Clinkert-White, Roberta Schaffner, Gabriele Correa da Silva, and Eric Whitacre.

Last but certainly not least, I must thank the staff members of the Research Archives, who are absolutely essential to the flourishing and operation of the library. Without their punctuality, collegiality, flexibility, and hard work, our patrons could not perform their research and the library would not function. Once again, I express my deepest thanks to Marta Díaz Herrera, Sunwoo Lee, Tanya Olsen, Rebecca Wang, Catie Witt, and Amy Zillman.
