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## Editor's Note

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## Editor's Note

Welcome to the first online issue of *The Primary Source*. Our hope is to continue to provide useful information to a broad audience curious about archival matters. The electronic format is freely available and will be published by the Society of Mississippi Archivists twice a year. A print newsletter, also published twice a year, will be mailed to SMA members.

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Several years ago, I attended a session at the Society of American Archivists annual meeting where, in a moment of exasperation during the q&a, one of the attendees stated, "I'm an archivist, not a cataloger!" The sentiment is not an unfamiliar one to those of us charged with describing archives and special collections materials according to what were, at the time, emerging standards made necessary by electronic capture and delivery of finding aids and ever-increasing digitization projects requiring metadata for individual objects.

In the interceding years, some academic libraries have been experimenting with reallocation of personnel and restructuring departments to best sync the work with the expertise. A special collections cataloger may be administratively part of the Special Collections Department, but spend part or all of their time in Technical Services. Conversely, Technical Services may send a cataloger or two to Special Collections according to a routine schedule. Both areas of expertise are necessary to create the best records for researchers. All of the finding guides, card files, pathfinders, databases, lists and bibliographies in the world will not get the record into the OPAC and bundle the record with similar works in a search result. Skills that may be described as "cataloging-esque" are fundamental to our mission of exposing hidden materials by creating metadata that may be sorted, manipulated, and most importantly, shared.

"The Cataloging Issue" of *The Primary Source* approaches the topic from three angles. Kathy Wells offers a handy guide to cataloging rare books. Ms. Wells' clear and informative piece, "Special Collections Cataloging: Rare Books," should prove particularly helpful to the archivist without a background in librarianship. Most readers will not expect to laugh at an article called "Cataloging Community Cookbooks," or "Cataloging -" anything for that matter. Hans Rasmussen finds a way in his amusing essay about a very special collection. Chatham Ewing's article captures the archival dilemma behind "I'm an archivist, not a cataloger!" as he outlines the strategies he and his colleagues worked through to create MARC records for their manuscript collections in "Process and Product: Jump-Starting Archival Cataloging."

Enjoy.

Peggy Price  
Editor