

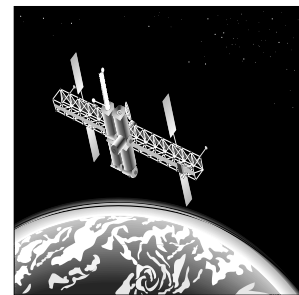


STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD FOR THE STATE OF IDAHO

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"The Mission of the Idaho State Historical Records Advisory Board is to be an advocate for the creation, preservation, dissemination and use of information that accurately chronicles the people and institutions of Idaho, both public and private."

October 3, 2002 Minutes of the Idaho Historical Records Advisory Board
Basement Conference Room, Boise High School, Boise, Idaho

Board members present: Abraham, Blake, Bogstie, Darrington, Ghan, Reed, Schreiber, Smylie, and Virta, Meeting chaired by Steve Walker, State Historical Records Coordinator. Guests present: Rod House, Deputy State Historical Records Coordinator

A copy of the minutes of the July 12, 2002 meeting has been posted on the web.

SHRAB members introduced themselves and were welcomed to the Idaho Council for History Education Conference by Russ Heller. The conference theme was "No History, No Future: Lessons for the Twenty-First Century. SHRAB members were invited to attend sessions after the meeting.

UPDATE ON STATUS OF NHPRC GRANT #99-003 - Status on grant presented by Steve Walker.

A number of presentations have been made around the state by the State Historical Records Coordinator on the management of historical records. Presentations to various historical organizations and government agencies have been given or are scheduled in Boise, Bonners Ferry, Coeur d'Alene,

Mackay, Murphy, Nampa, Paris, Pocatello, Rexburg and Wallace for this year. Presentations also given in conjunction with meetings of the Idaho Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, Idaho Association of Cities, Idaho City Clerks, Treasurers, and Finance Officers Association, and the Idaho Library Association.

Progress is being made on updating addresses, phone numbers, and contacts for a directory of historical repositories across the state. The information is being placed in a database and will eventually be made available on the SHRAB website.

The official proclamation of the Governor declaring October to be Documentary Heritage Month was received a few days ago. Jim McGill, President of the Idaho Chapter of the Oregon-California Trails Association will be speaking at the Idaho State Historical Society Historical Library on October 23, 2002. The title of his talk is "Pioneer Trails and Records." New to the SHRAB website is a quick lesson on archives and manuscripts entitled "So You Have a Box of Papers...." Several presentations by the State Historical Records Coordinator are also planned in North Idaho and Eastern Idaho. More had been planned but the budget cuts have deeply effected what the Idaho State Historical Society can afford to do.

As a result of the cuts the ISHS has eliminated its statewide Idaho History Day education program, closed its Capitol Education Center, and cutback the hours both the Museum and library are open to the public. Budgets for library and archival materials needed for preservation have been eliminated as well. Funding for boxes and other supplies will come from grants we were fortunate to receive. The Society has recently lost several professionals, some have taken positions elsewhere and some have had their positions eliminated. The Society is now forced into a position where future budget cuts have to come from elimination of positions as everything else has been eliminated. As a result, some professionals are actively seeking other positions for some degree of security and stability.

A training grant for the year 2003 was submitted to the NHPRC and the State Historical Records Coordinator responded to several questions the grant reviewers posed. One of the questions raised by the NHPRC was the following: "Thank you for continuing to send us the Idaho Board's minutes to keep informed of the SHRAB's activities. We noted with interest and some concern the discussion between the board and Steve Guerber, the Historical Society's Executive Director, about the relationship between the SHRAB and the Historical Society. NHPRC views its state board program as a partnership between the state and the Commission. It recognizes that in order for a state board to be active and effective, it depends on the leadership of the state archivist, the support of the archives' parent agency, and the active participation and support of the board's members. The board has approved this grant proposal and some revisions. Is the Historical Society still willing and able to support this project as described in the proposal and budget submitted?" The Coordinator asked that question and others like it to the best of his ability, but obviously budget cuts have deeply effected the amount of support the Society can offer to all its programs. We will not know whether the 2003 grant proposal was approved in full, approved in part, or denied until early November and the rusts of the NHPRC decision will be discussed at the December meeting along with plans for the coming year.

SHRAB members discussed the effect of budget cutbacks on the State Historical Society, history preservation, and how the State Historical Records Advisory Board should respond.

Steve Smylie - It seems obvious that the State Historical Society needs to seek dedicated funds rather than general funds. There should be no dissension among the staff, everyone needs to get on the same page.

Mary Reed - I like what Steve Guerber has done for the State Historical Society the last few years. He has produced a good image for the Society. I think even if we don't get grant funds for support, the SHRAB should still meet.

Terry Abraham - I think that seeking dedicated funds is the wrong approach as a substitute for state support. Grants and dedicated funds are meant to be a revenue enhancement to state programs, not a replacement for state revenue. The heritage of our state is all our responsibilities. Tax funds should continue to support these programs, otherwise our heritage is going to be degraded and lost.

Larry Ghan - There doesn't seem to be an appreciation in this state for the real costs of records maintenance and preservation. It doesn't come for free! There needs to be a mechanism for preserving records and providing responsible access to them that isn't subject to wild swings in the budgeting process.

Blaine Bake - I think we need to talk about how we need to position ourselves to make this come about. If the SHRAB depends on the leadership of the State Archivist, I think we have to recognize, with no reflection on Steve Walker, that the State Archivist is now 3rd level management within the State Historical Society. At least his predecessor was 2nd level management. The State Historical Society itself is a low priority agency in the State Department of Higher Education. I think the SHRAB has to ask itself "Who are we? And how can we better improve the status of history preservation in the State?" All agencies in the state responsible for the preservation of our history need to be working together. The SHRAB needs to coordinate and facilitate this.

Terry Abraham - I don't think we should look at the days of Steve Walker's predecessor as some sort of "Golden Age." The State Archivist was only half-time then, and before that there was no State Archivist position. The responsibility of the SHRAB is to review NHPRC proposals made in this state. Anything else we do is simply advisory. The SHRAB has no power to do anything else.

Larry Ghan - I don't think we should downplay the advisory role we have been given. We can have a lot of potential influence on the direction of historical preservation in this state. We need to work with historical repositories on how to best package the needs they have for public consumption. I believe there is strong public support for our history in Idaho. We just need to find a meaningful way to focus that support that will translate into better funding.

Terry Abraham - We are talking about something that is beyond our role. We review NHPRC grants, period. Anything else is the role of other agencies. We can offer suggestions to the Governor or Legislature which can be accepted or rejected. We aren't lobbyists. The only influence any of us have is personal influence as a citizen.

Alan Virta - I think we need to ask ourselves "Why is Idaho among the few states, were the state archives functions at a minimum?" Other states with less population and smaller budgets have better funded and staffed state archives. The State Archives in these states are better able to take a strong role in historical preservation. Why is it that Idaho offers so little support to the state archives functions?"

Steve Smylie - We need to have a strong advocate to promote managing our records. We are being buried in paper. We have trouble finding things on computers. Technical obsolescence quickly renders electronic records unreadable. We need the State Archives and the Historical Society to be these advocates.

Denton Darrington - Steve Guerber is well respected among the legislature, but he has not been able to translate that into strong support for the historical society. We are in a budget crisis worse than that of the 1980's. I remember those times, they were horrible. In many ways the

situation now is worse. In the 1980's, there was confidence in the business sector and the stock market that things would soon turn around. Today, confidence is not that high. State agencies are suffering from current budget cuts and will suffer more in the next few years. The State Historical Society is a dismantling agency. It will basically be up to the Governor and the Legislature as to how far they wish to dismantle state government. There is a strong movement politically to limit and reduce FTE positions. I wish I could tell you that there is strong support for history among the legislature, believe me I have tried to drum up that support, but it just isn't there. When you are talking about cuts to health and welfare and education, there just isn't strong support for the Idaho State Historical Society.

Steve Smylie - That is why I think we need to go down the dedicated fund route as there is no push to increase the funding for the Historical Society among Representatives in the House even if economic conditions were better.

Denton Darrington - It will be very difficult to get a dedicated fund through the Senate. The better response is an acceptable general fund appropriation for the historical society and state archives. I have no crystal ball as to where we are going, but as I said before, to me it looks like this downturn will be far worse than in the 1980's. Investors don't have the confidence now in corporate America as they did then. The key is how far the Governor and State Legislature will allow government in Idaho to deteriorate. The issue is not spending levels, but taxes. There is no support for tax increases and a great deal of talk about further reductions. I believe the overall picture will be as excruciating as it was in the 1980's and probably worse.

Larry Ghan - Being at the local level, I foresee many problems simply being shifted from the state level of government to the local level. At the local level, we have great difficulty in maintaining and preserving records, because when it comes to priorities records-keeping is at the bottom of the list. Many local governments are transferring records to the State Archives to relieve some of the burden of an unfunded mandate to care for these records. Many local governments don't have storage space or staff to devote to records.

Denton Darrington - There will be more pressure put on the local level due to the economic conditions.

Steve Smylie - From the House side of the Legislature, from what I can tell, any increase in general funds simply will not happen.

Larry Ghan - Currently, I believe we are the only county in the State that has passed an ordinance to manage records. My focus through the years has helped answer a problem that has faced our county and we have found a way to finance it. We now have increased efficiency in maintaining and locating records. Twenty years ago it could take up to three to four hours to find a document. Now, we can do it instantaneously on the computer or find it within 5 to 10 minutes in paper form. We have had to invest over the years, but the return on our investment is tremendous. Especially in tight financial times, we need to do what we can to economize. An emphasis on managing information on both the state and local level can increase efficiency and save money at the same time. It just takes strong leadership to make it a priority.

SHRAB Members left for lunch and to attend a panel on “The War on Terrorism – One Year Later.”

Duane Bogstie: I would like to bring the SHRAB up to date concerning the grant proposal I brought before them last meeting. (Distributes a handout to members).

In May 1998, the Department of Administration formed the Records Management Plan Task Force. Members of this group were charged with developing a records management policy, statute and plan for the State of Idaho. Idaho Code Section 67-5752 gives the Director of the Department of Administration the responsibility of developing a statewide records management program. A State Records Management Guide was created as a product of the cohesive effort of the Task Force and as part of the intent of Idaho Code. The vision of the task force is to enable access to public records through a record management system designed for consistency across the various areas of state government. Its goals are to promote coordination and collaboration in records management among all areas of state government and to establish uniformity in standards, guidelines, retention policies, security, etc., of records management through the various areas of state government.

The Idaho Code, Section 67-4126, also makes the State Archives responsible for identifying, storing, preserving, and providing public access to government records, which have continuing historical value beyond their usefulness to the agencies which created them.

In November 2000, the State Record Center developed a strategic plan with the intent of managing stored records electronically. The vision of this plan is to create and phase in an automated records management tracking system. Its goals include designing a system structure and procedures, and to develop a records retention tracking program to identify records for disposal or transfer to the State Archives.

Setting forth with the strategic plan formulated by the State Records Center, a sub-committee was created with representatives from the State Records Center and the State Archives and charged with developing an Electronic Records Management System and to implement software standards for Records Management Applications. The vision of the sub-committee is to implement a Records Management Application system that will have inventory control, conduct file searches and retrievals, and store and archive electronic records. The goals include the following:

- Review and implement Records Management Application software which meets with the U.S. Department of Defense standard (DoD 5015.2)

- Review and implement systems equipment (server, scanner, micro film camera, micro film scanner, hard drives)

- To store electronic records for various state agencies and to archive electronic records information that has permanent retention for various government offices (on the state, county, and city agency level).

Streamline the processes of both reviewing stored records for disposal and the transfer of records to the State Archives.

To identify and manage official records.

A Questionnaire has been formulated by the Electronic Records Management Application System sub-committee for state agencies and the questionnaire will be sent out to all agencies by the Information Technology Resource Management Council. With the information received from the questionnaire the State Record Center will plan on submitting a grant for a two-year pilot project. Electronic records storage charges will be figured by the byte. By the end of October, we hope to identify what hardware the agencies will need for the project. By April 2003, a grant will be written for review by the NHPRC and the SHRAB.

Blaine Bake - I see potential security problems involving this information technology as permanent records in electronic formats can be easily changed.

Duane Bogstie - This is the reason we are adopting the U.S. Department of Defense Records Management Application Standard (DoD 5015.2). This has become a de facto international standard and is designed with security in mind. There is a real need to have independent third party storage and management of agency records for reasons of authenticity and economy, however agency inertia must be overcome. Many agencies believe they "own" the records rather than view them as a public asset. Many agencies pay for permanent records to be stored rather than transfer them to the State Archives for free. They somehow believe "ownership" will be lost, but in reality ownership remains with the state, custodianship is all that is transferred.

Terry Abraham - The inertia of agencies is because Idaho is a small state in population and responsibility has been individualized rather than institutionalized.

Steve Walker - Unfortunately, individualized control means that procedures vary widely from agency to agency and management techniques tend to be idiosyncratic and not very consistent with the passage of time. These individualized systems are also part of the hidden costs in staffing, equipment, and time that gets overlooked in the budget. Centralizing these functions will save staff time, prevent the purchase of unnecessary equipment, and lower overall storage costs. If this grant is successful, agencies will see that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages and that, more than anything else, will overcome the reluctance of some agencies. We look forward to seeing the grant application next year.

Further discussion involved future SHRAB meeting sites and times.

The next meeting is December 9, 2002 is at the Public Safety Auditorium, 7200 Barrister Road, Boise.

The meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm.
Respectfully submitted by

Steve Walker
State Historical Records Coordinator