

Minutes of the Idaho Historical Records Advisory Board

April 8, 2002; 10:00 a.m.

Gold Conference Room B, Best Western Wallace Inn, Wallace, Idaho
SHRAB Meeting started late due to the state plane not being able to land in Kellogg because of fog.

Board members present: Babbitt, Bake, Bogstie, Bolles, Darrington, Johnson, Reed, Ricketts, Schreiber, Smylie, Virta, and Walker. Meeting chaired by Steve Walker, State Historical Records Coordinator. Guests present: SHRAB nominee Larry Ghan, and ISHS Archivist Rod House.

A copy of the minutes of the December 11, 2001 meeting has been posted on the web. SHRAB members introduced themselves.

Update on Status of NHPRC Grant #99-003 - Status on grant presented by Steve Walker. The Idaho State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB) has given a series of public meetings within each judicial district of the state to solicit comment on the plan and to create greater awareness of the importance of historical records. Twenty-two 2-hour meetings were held in 21 cities around the state in 2000, and an additional ten meetings were held in cities around the state in 2001. The final SHRAB report was distributed and meetings in 2001 and 2002 were much larger than in 2000 with the average size being between seventeen and eighteen. A table-top display illustrating the importance of records accompanied by numerous handouts was created and the video *Into the Future: On the Preservation of Knowledge in the Electronic Age* was shown. Discussion often ensued as to the double jeopardy that historical records are increasingly placed in due to both poor storage and access of paper records and the rapid technological obsolescence of electronic record formats. The meetings had the added benefit of allowing representatives of neighboring museums and historical record repositories to meet and talk about meeting on a regular basis.

All eleven counties and two cities to date have completed their inventory of records. The fact that a wide variety of records has been already inventoried has helped provide the basis for a list of record series titles that have enduring value. The list has been posted on the SHRAB web page at: <http://www2.state.id.us/ishs/SHRAB.html>

Six SHRAB members were able to travel to the National Association of Government Archivists and Records Administrators Conference in Portland, Oregon in July 2001 and attend an informative series of sessions. This training helped members to be better aware of the issues facing historical records repositories.

We have met or surpassed the performance objectives for NHPRC Grant #99-003:

- 1) We have submitted complete reports and three copies of grant products as specified in the NHPRC guidelines and grant notification letter.
- 2) We have conducted on-site surveys of local governments in 11 of the state's 44 counties.
- 3) We have conducted a mail survey of 700 non-governmental records repositories.
- 4) We have held 22 public meetings with stakeholders and have held ten meetings to review the results of the strategic plan and help educate the public of the importance of records.
- 5) We have expanded our board meetings to 4 times per year and try to meet in different areas of the state to increase public awareness of the SHRAB and its functions.

Objectives still to be accomplished include compiling a summary of county inventories in a database to be made available on the web by the end of 2002. The SHRAB will also offer additional educational meetings on historical records management in 2002. As of this writing one meeting with an attendance of 28 has already been given and another is scheduled for January. The SHRAB would also like to pull together a statewide historical repository listing by the end of 2002 that includes hours open and contact person along with name and address to be published on the web.

Information Items:

Steve Walker had several handouts for the SHRAB members. He called the Board's attention to new rules being proposed by the National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) of the National Archives and Records Administration that affect State Historical Records Advisory Boards. Specifically one rule [Section 1206.30(c)] stated that the **"NHPRC will not consider a grant proposal from a State government agency until a board is appointed and all appointments are current."** This rule directly impacts the Idaho SHRAB as two vacant positions on the Board have yet to be filled even though the board positions became vacant last October and nominations to fill the positions have been submitted in September 2001 and again in January 2002.

It was noted that four positions on the board are due to expire this October as well.

SHRAB members Blaine Bake, Duane Bogstie, Denton Darrington, and Virginia Ricketts are requested to submit current resumes for reappointment as soon as possible or notify the State Historical Records Coordinator if you do not wish reappointment. A joint microfilming grant pilot project between the Idaho State Historical Society and several counties was contemplated earlier this year, but placed on hold due to the state government agency ineligibility due to the SHRAB vacancies. Hopefully, the sooner nominees resumes are submitted for appointment, the better the chance that all appointments

to the SHRAB will remain current.

SHRAB Members Senator Denton Darrington and Representative Steve Smylie replied that they would make inquiries and see if they could ensure that all SHRAB appointments are current.

By-laws updated:

Proposed changes to update the SHRAB by-laws had been sent to SHRAB members in February for discussion. The proposed changes were read aloud to the SHRAB members present. Senator Darrington moved that the by-laws be adopted as amended. Pam Babbitt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the updated by-laws will be posted on the SHRAB web site.

Discussion ensued as to the proposed shape of the 2003 NHPRC grant due in June provided presumed eligibility if SHRAB nominees are appointed to vacant SHRAB positions before then.

Blaine Bake questioned the priority of strategic plan items still to be achieved. Byron Johnson requested information about the proposed Territorial Records project and a copy of the letter sent to the Chief Justice. He said he may make inquiries as to the status of the project when better informed.

2003 NHPRC Grant Application:

Byron Johnson moved that the State Historical Records Coordinator be authorized to create an NHPRC 2003 grant proposal that would include historical records management education and training presentations, a special conference to address historical records management issues in the State, and operating expenses for 4 SHRAB meetings in 2003. Pam Babbitt seconded the motion and it passed without dissent.

Idaho Preservation Act of 2003:

A draft of "The Proposed Idaho Preservation Act of 2003" by the Idaho State Historical Society was given to the SHRAB members for comment. Senator Darrington and Representative Smylie both found the draft proposal lacking in several areas, the most significant being a total absence of mentioning the need for long-term preservation of electronic records.

Electronic Records Concerns:

A digitized copy of the 1947 original State Archives legislation was provided to show members how easily information can be lost and called into legal question when records

are migrated from one format to another. Color information was lost, as was the ability to distinguish between pencil and ink, type size, typed double strikes for emphasis, or the original order of the document. Though the copy contained accurate information, much of the context and authenticity of the record was lost. A sheet entitled "Topics of Concern" was also provided regarding electronic records issues including: an electronic record definition; inclusion of metadata; migration and emulation strategies; validation of electronic records; privacy and confidentiality of citizen information; and who are the stakeholders in the ongoing dialogue relating to electronic records preservation in Idaho government.

Larry Ghan reflected on county government concerns with digital imaging and digital signatures. Financial resources for maintaining technology systems, and being able to access digital information along with its contextual information over ten, twenty, fifty, or more years, is extremely difficult for many counties in Idaho to obtain. Several efforts by County Clerks to obtain a source of dedicated funding for these activities have been thwarted. He noted that even the few counties that have model records management ordinances that provided some funding, need to update them to include managing records in electronic format.

Steve Smylie noted that electronic records represent a tremendous potential for access of information to the public. However, a great disadvantage to electronic access to these records in the future is often over-looked or disregarded.

Virginia Ricketts and Charles Bolles remarked that a sizable number of citizens do not have access to records in electronic formats but still must rely on paper formats. Charles Bolles reported that though there is legislation that the State Library is to be provided 20 copies of state government publications for distribution to libraries across the state, there is no enforcement ability to ensure that happens. As more agencies provide access to their publications solely in electronic form, short and long-term access to publications for many citizens becomes increasingly problematic.

25 years of progress?:

Steve Walker provided a copy of a letter to SHRAB members dated November 4, 1976. In the letter, State Historical Records Coordinator, Merle Wells wrote "**The condition and care given to valuable records held by individuals, private organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions throughout Idaho ranges from excellent to dismal. Problems associated with the preservation of personal and public records are attributable to improper facilities and environment; to failure to appreciate the value of non-current records; to lack of knowledge of preservation techniques; to inadequate financial resources to implement responsible records programs; and to shortages of trained personnel to administer preservation**

programs.” Steve said that though the letter was written over a quarter of a century ago the problem areas cited remain relevant today and much more needs to be accomplished in Idaho in the meantime.

Cooperation and collaboration in historical records management:

Duane Bogstie provided the Board information on the State Department of Administration’s Records Management Plan Task Force and the following articles were provided to Board members for review and discussion at the July SHRAB meeting in Stanley: **“Why Information Technology Isn’t Enough”** by Association of Records Managers and Administrators International, Spring 2000; **“State Archives in 1997: Diverse Conditions, Common Directions”** by Victoria Irons Walch, American Archivist/Vol. 60/ Spring 1997; and an abstract of a Master’s Thesis entitled **“Subtle Sentry: State Public Record Laws and the Availability of Government Information”** by Grace Lessner, 1998. The articles all provide evidence that management of records in all formats (audio, electronic, film, paper, video, etc.) necessitates the close functional cooperation and collaboration of archivists, librarians, information technicians, and records managers.

Discussion ensued on how to bring about cooperation and collaboration among state and local government agencies. Larry Ghan recognized a need to integrate standard concepts within the branches of state and local government. He felt that the historic content and context of records needed to be integrated along with legal, financial and administrative needs for records.

Pam Babbitt thought this could be achieved through common frames of reference in records retention scheduling. It was agreed that more education to historical and records management concerns was needed to be provided to public officials.

At lunch Deputy State Historical Records Coordinator Rod House and several members of the SHRAB visited the Shoshone County Courthouse and were given a tour of the records storage vault in the basement.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 pm and many SHRAB members toured the Northern Pacific Depot and Museum and the historic district in Wallace.

Respectfully submitted by

Steve Walker
State Historical Records Coordinator