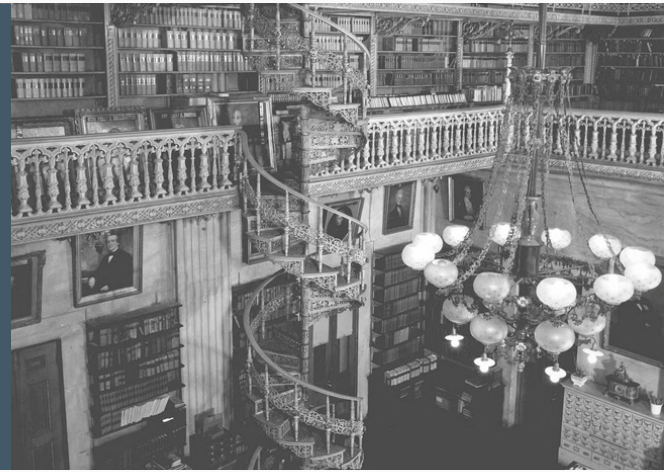


# TENNESSEE ARCHIVISTS:

The Newsletter



TENNESSEE STATE CAPITOL INTERIOR  
SOURCE: TENNESSEE VIRTUAL ARCHIVE

## President's Message

It's hard to believe that we have made it through another year and we are looking ahead to 2023! The Society of Tennessee Archivists has made it through the pandemic and are ready to get back to work in our individual archives.

Many of us met in November for the 2022 Society of Tennessee Archivists Conference in Jackson, Tennessee. The two-day event was attended by archivists from across the state and from various types of archives. I enjoyed meeting many of you for the first time and catching up with those that I have been friends and colleagues with for years. The presentations and speakers were amazing and they really inspired me. We were able to offer the conference as a hybrid event and we hope to be able to do that in 2023 so any of our members can attend. Thank You to the STA Executive Committee for your work to have a successful conference!

The STA has a special place in my heart because the people who are a part of this organization have always been there for me as I have navigated my archives career. I am fortunate in that I have been the Houston County Archivist for the past 11 years and since the first day we started the archives. We started with a county that had never organized or archived their government records and now we have a very successful county archive. We are also the only place in Houston County that is collecting and preserving our local history and genealogical records for researchers to access and enjoy. I hope that each one of you and your archives are succeeding and preserving the records and history that are in your care. We are the caretakers of Tennessee history and that is an important job, even if nobody by you sees it!

I am looking forward to leading the STA in 2023 and my "door" is always open. I would love to hear from my fellow archivists about what you are accomplishing

in your archives. Please email me at: [houstoncountyarchive@gmail.com](mailto:houstoncountyarchive@gmail.com)

Remember: Collect Today what will be History Tomorrow!

Sincerely,  
Melissa Barker  
STA President

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Society of Tennessee Archivists:  
President: Melissa Barker  
Vice-President: David Sowell  
Secretary: Bradley Boshers  
Treasurer: Mary McSparran  
Web-site: Lori Lockhart  
Newsletter Editor: Brigitte Billeaudeau



# Vice - President's Message

BY DAVID R. SOWELL,  
TENNESSEE STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES



Happy New Year!

Coming off a successful annual meeting in Jackson, this Society is preparing for a busy year in archives advocacy and leadership.

What can you do for us? We have many committee chairmanships open and welcome members to volunteer their time to advance our archives education programs and STA membership. Chairmanships and committee openings are available for our Education Committee, Awards Committee and Membership Committee. This is an excellent way to become involved in the objectives of this organization- "to promote the preservation, description, use, administration and accessibility of archives and manuscripts; to encourage government agencies, institutions and individuals to assume and assume modern collection, preservation, and administration of archives and manuscripts; to promote the exchange of information among archival institutions."

We need to develop a disaster reaction team using talent in our organization to react to disasters and calamities in our archives institutions in this state.

The instances of water and heating problems over Christmas 2022 proves our need to provide aid to those institutions with advice and assistance.

We need to improve our membership rolls. All those employed in the field and those aspiring to be archivists should be members of STA. Encourage your colleagues to become members of STA.

Melissa Barker, our STA president, and I look forward to providing leadership for the Society in the New Year.

Here's to STA2023 in Springfield, Tennessee- "the Dark-Fired Tobacco Capital of the World." Coming October 2023.



# Enhancing Future Discovery: Making Milligan Digital Repository More Robust and Inclusive

BY KATHERINE BANKS, MLS  
UNIVERSITY ARCHIVIST & INFORMATION RESOURCES LIBRARIAN  
MILLIGAN UNIVERSITY (MILLIGAN, TN)

As the only archivist at Milligan University, I do a little bit of everything archives-related, including overseeing our institutional repository/online archives, Milligan Digital Repository (MDR). The system is DSpace and went live in 2015. My predecessors established the submission portal that serves as both the self-submission workflow for students and faculty to submit their research and the workflow for submitting items to the archives; a function only the archivist and student workers do as we digitize collections. Because of this set-up, much of the metadata is user-generated. When I came into the position in 2018, I kept the digitization workflow established by my predecessor and didn't make many changes.

Thanks to an online continuing education course, I was inspired to create a Metadata Application Profile (MAP) for MDR. This MAP goes through each piece of metadata we need, or possibly need, for an item in MDR and gives detail for each piece of metadata, such as which Dublin Core term to use, what the definition of the piece of metadata is, and examples of what this piece of metadata might look like. To create this, I went through the Dublin Core terms and used their definitions to help craft local instances to meet our specific needs. I also created controlled vocabularies for local subjects, located in appendices at the end of the MAP. Hopefully, staff assigning metadata or reviewing user-submitted metadata will be able to better standardize input to allow for better searching and more robust metadata. Additionally, I have put in alternate forms of names, especially for women's names, that direct the user of the MAP to one standard form. This should help anyone assigning metadata who has one form of the name or subject to see if it is what they should use or if there is a different form, resulting in cleaner metadata from the beginning of the workflow.

Having the MAP is a good foundation for standardizing and cleaning up all the user-generated metadata on MDR. But we must have a way to implement all the guidance the MAP gives us. One concrete application is the spreadsheet that I and my student workers use when digitizing collections. I have since updated the spreadsheet to color-code it and map it to the MAP – what pieces are required, which are suggested, and which are optional. I can tailor the spreadsheet to each collection depending on what recommended and optional elements from the MAP should be included. This allows student workers and myself to more quickly move through writing out the metadata for each digitized item.

**"This work has also led to trying to make the metadata more robust in another way – full names."**

KATHERINE BANKS





# Enhancing Future Discovery cont.

This work has also led to trying to make the metadata more robust in another way – full names. Inspired by a webinar where the presenters discussed describing women’s names more fully, I started working on filling out photo descriptions and subject keywords where all we had for a woman was “Mrs. Husband’s Name.” I now try to include women’s full names, including their maiden and married names, whenever adding metadata to an item. Sometimes we must do this for men as well, as they are often described only by their first initials in older photos. My student workers and I have made great use of our alumni directories to try to get these full names to include in the metadata. But sometimes I have had to make use of school newspapers, census records, and graves to find and corroborate information about names.

Putting work into organizing metadata on the front end makes the work faster and easier, especially since my student workers do most of the digitizing but don’t necessarily have the time or interest in delving into the nitty-gritty of metadata. Hopefully, this work will make searching smoother and easier. People searching will not have to dig through redundant subjects and can find people by their full names. This allows for a more inclusive database. Of course, this is a never-ending process. Our controlled vocabulary of names is constantly growing as we encounter more and more names we have not used before. I have only tackled the subject keywords and some descriptions in cleaning up the metadata, and I acknowledge that there are probably several other pieces of metadata that could use this same attention. The work I have done has already made searching better and has given names back to people. ■



Screenshots of Milligan Digital Repository  
Source: Provided by author



TO EXPLORE MORE OF KATHERINE BANKS' WORK VISIT  
THE MILLIGAN DIGITAL REPOSITORY  
[HTTPS://MCSTOR.LIBRARY.MILLIGAN.EDU/](https://mcstor.library.milligan.edu/)

**Thweatt Award Recipients**

**Institutions**

Calvin M. McClung Historical Collection, Knoxville

Southern Baptist Historical Library and Museum, Nashville

**Individuals**

Steve Cotham, Knox County Historian

Barbara Garrett Nicholson, Giles County Archivist

Chris Barlow, Overton County Archivist

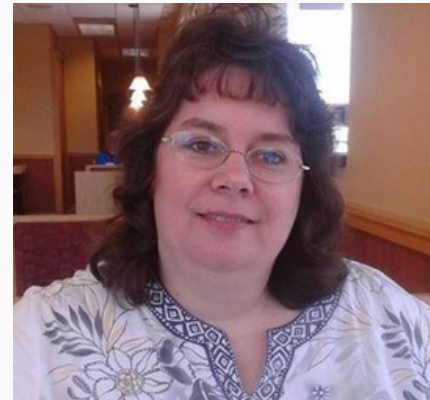
Congratulations to all of the recipients



# Getting Your Digital Content Noticed by Genealogists

MELISSA BARKER, CERTIFIED ARCHIVES MANAGER  
HOUSTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE ARCHIVES & MUSEUM

Genealogists are scouring the internet looking for their ancestors daily. As they navigate their way through thousands of websites and social media pages, how do you get them to find the content you and your staff have worked so hard to produce?



## The Genealogist

Genealogists are a unique type of researcher. They come from every walk of life and are searching for their ancestors in every corner. They want to know the good, the bad, and the ugly of their family history. They are on a mission and they need the help of archivists, librarians, and other record professionals to help them find the records.

- Genealogists can be overwhelmed by your available records and their requests can be overwhelming to archivists.
- Always be upfront about waiting times and research backlogs.
- Encourage genealogists to take advantage of online indexes, finding aids, and digitized records.
- Try to guide genealogists to the records in your archive that would be most beneficial to their research.

## Key Words or Phrases Genealogists Look for at the Archives

Genealogists are taught to look for key words and phrases on archives websites, social media pages and at the archive facility. These words and phrases are well known to archivists but are not always easily found by genealogists. Here are some tips to connect with genealogists using key words or phrases.

- Indexes: Genealogists live to search through indexes for their ancestors. Make indexes readily available and visible on your website.
- Finding Aids: While they know the terms, they need help navigating these collections.
- Digital Collections: Genealogists are constantly looking for records to be available online. These records should not be buried under layers of your website.
- Family Histories: These can be published histories, oral histories or simple family group sheets and trees. Highlighting family histories on your website and social media pages will attract genealogists to your archive.

## “It’s All Online” Myth

As archivists we wrestle with the “It’s All Online” myth almost daily. We know most of our records are not online, but we must continually educate the genealogy community of this fact. We can do this by using our websites and most importantly our social media pages to get the word out that “It’s Not All Online.”

- Posting content to your website consistently or on a schedule will attract genealogists.
- Posting to your social media platforms consistently or on a schedule will attract genealogists to “like” or “subscribe” to your pages.
- Using visuals such as a digitized document, photograph or photo of an artifact will attract more curious genealogists.
- “Show Them and They Will Come,” when we open the stacks and share the behind the scenes of our archives, genealogists will want to know more.



## Getting Your Digital Content Noticed by Genealogists cont.

### Archives Websites, Is Yours Genealogist Friendly?

One of the first stops genealogists make is to your website. We should try to make our websites genealogist friendly so the content that is available can be found as easily as possible. You cannot put everything on the landing page, but you can put easy to follow genealogy terms and phrases.

- A genealogist button or link that will direct users to the page that contains all the genealogical related records and information.
- Make your search engine genealogy friendly by using algorithms and other search settings that will help genealogists search for surnames in all records on your website.
- Put as much content that includes indexes, digitized records and finding aids on your website. Most likely, many genealogists will not be able to visit your facility and you want to make them frequent visitors to your website.
- Share what you have in the stacks; processed and unprocessed collections.

### Social Media Pages, Your Advertising Billboard

Social media pages can be the key to success for your archives. This form of advertising your archives is one that can give genealogists a snapshot of the records you have available on your website or available for research at your facility.

- Use visuals with your social media posts. Posts with just text will be passed by.
- Keep your text as short as possible.
- Share where the item can be found in your archive and if it's a part of a larger collection of records. Include call numbers, collection titles, etc.
- Be sure to include your archives contact information in each post so genealogists can contact you about the item you posted, the larger collection of records the item came from, or other records housed at your archive.

### Getting Genealogists into Your Facility

Genealogists will travel for research. Many use their annual vacations to visit places where their ancestors lived. Laying the groundwork with your website and social media pages should educate and entice genealogists to make their way to your front door and the wonderful collections of records you have in your stacks.

- Publish your days and hours of operation to your website and social media pages. Being persistent and update these pages when you have not-normal hours.
- Entice genealogists by giving them a glimpse of what is in your collections. It may be relevant to their research!
- Announce and celebrate any new records collections that you have received, even if you haven't processed the collection yet.
- Open your facility up once a year to the public. Bring out records collections that are not normally accessed and are filled with genealogical information. ■

### Further Reading Resources

Marketing Finding Aids on Social Media: What Worked and What Didn't Work by Felicia Williamson; Scott Vieira, James Williamson, *The American Archivist*, Volume 78, Issue 2  
<https://tinyurl.com/eh9zuuv7>

#FromtheArchives: An Assessment of a Successful Social Media Program in an Academic Archives by Robert G. Weaver, *The American Archivist*, Volume 85, No. 1  
<https://tinyurl.com/aj2rywya>

Tips for Social Media Success by U.S. National Archives  
<https://www.archives.gov/social-media/policies/tips-for-success>



## Welcome New Officers

President-Elect

David Sowell, Tennessee State Library  
and Archives

Treasurer

Mary McSparran

Secretary

Bradley Boshers

## Got something to say?

Is your archive doing something that you want to share with the membership of the Society of Tennessee Archivists? Let us know! We want to celebrate the things that are happening in Tennessee Archives. You can share what's happening with your editor, Brigitte Billeaudeau, and we can promote your news on social media.

Contact the editor at  
[bbilledx@memphis.edu](mailto:bbilledx@memphis.edu).

