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Front page image: George McJunkin, an African-American cowboy who discovered what would become the Folsom Site in Northern New Mexico. [Collection](#) at DMNS.

## Profile: Denver Museum of Nature and Science Archives

Laura Uglean-Jackson

**Could you tell us a little about yourself? What got you interested in the profession and what do you most enjoy about it?**

I grew up in Denver and received my bachelor's in art history from CSU. I've now been an archivist for over 15 years! I can't even believe it has been that long. When I think back to how it all began, it really started at CSU. As a student I worked part-time on campus in the art department's slide library (World Resource Center) and the photography services unit. I loved both jobs. In the Photo Services unit I would often have to find images from their collection which was stored in filing cabinets in a small, closet-like room. I remember sitting in that room and sifting through folders upon folders of old black and white photos of CSU in the early and mid-1900s, and was

mesmerized looking at moments in time decades ago of students, the campus, big events. I didn't know it then, but I was experiencing the impact of how images can tell a story and document history. A similar feeling happened in the slide library, except it was an early joy of collections management tasks- finding slides for professors, creating slides, checking slides in and out. It's obvious to me now that I was a natural-born librarian/archivist, but it took until my senior year to learn about libraries and archives as a career. The CSU Art Librarian visited my seminar class and told us about her journey from art history student to librarian; I knew immediately that I would take a similar journey and decided to look at graduate programs in library science that very day. I attended grad school at Simmons University in Boston and then went on to work at the University of Wyoming's



Laura with Harlan, a giant ground sloth.

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American Heritage Center, the University of California Irvine, and the University of Northern Colorado. I've now been at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science since August 2022.

As to what I enjoy most about this line of work, bringing order to chaos and making collections discoverable through description.

**What's your role at DMNS and what do you find yourself doing on the day-to-day?**

My title is Digital Archivist and I oversee the Archives Collections. Until two months ago I was the only Archives employee so I've spent a lot of

my time keeping up with reference and image requests and trying not to grow the backlog too much. Now that I have two awesome archives colleagues here, I hope to spend more time on policy and procedure to create consistent workflows in all functional areas and implement professional standards and best practices for arrangement and description of collection materials. As is true with most archives, every day here is exciting and different. One day I might be planning for a member night open house, the next could be discussions with colleagues about changes in permissions and licensing. Whatever the day, it's guaranteed that I can wander

down the hall to see something mind-blowing, like 75 million year old turtle eggs or projectile points used to kill bison 10,000 years ago.

### How does the archives at DMNS fit into the wider mission and activities of the institution?

The Archives supports the museum's mission to "Be a catalyst! Ignite our community's passion for nature and science" by providing access to and preserving the history of the museum and

related topics such as scientific discoveries. To me, this is achieved through liberal access policies and discovery systems. The DMNS Archives is open to the public by appointment; users can search our collections online (<https://imu.dmns.org/dmns/archive.html>); and we have an image repository with over [20,000 digitized photographs and negatives](#).

The Archives is organizationally structured in the Science Division with the other collecting areas (Anthropology,



Above: Flat file storage at DMNS

Top right: Cold storage area

Bottom right: Workshop



Zoology, Earth Sciences, and Education) and associated curators. The Archives supports this branch of the museum by stewarding records associated with the other collections. As just one example, Anthropology has projectile points from a specific bison kill site, and Archives has the records and images documenting the excavation of that site. The Archives is also the records management arm for the entire museum, so we work with HR, Facilities, everyone, to make sure their records of lasting importance are preserved in the Archives.

The DMNS Archives is part of the Avenir Conservation Center built in 2014. We have state-of-the-art collections spaces located underground on the south side of the museum. This is by far the newest and shiniest archives I've ever worked at. In addition to standard shelves for boxes, we have custom shelving for artifacts, flat boxes, art, and oversized materials. Additionally, we have cold storage and a freezer for A/V material.

### On a related note, what kinds of archival collections do you have and what do they document?

Most of the Archives' collections are institutional records dating back to the museum's founding in 1900. This includes history of

the collections, the building, exhibits, and files from previous directors and senior leaders. We also have an amazing image collection with over 700,000 photos and negatives in various formats; as well as an impressive film and tape collection documenting everything from early research trips to planetarium shows. Then we have field work and research such as field notes, images, correspondence, and publications documenting site discoveries and excavations. The Archives has a few important collections from outside the museum, such as the Ruth Underhill papers (anthropologist) and the Denver Field Ornithologist records.

### Who are the primary users of the archives?

Scholars and documentarians tend to be the biggest users of our image collections. Staff (e.g. marketing folks, curators, collections assistants) tend to be the primary users of text-based formats. We receive a lot of general interest questions from the general public as well.

### Is there an item or collection that you find particularly notable?

Some of our most requested images are of George McJunkin, an African-American cowboy who discovered what

would become the Folsom Site in Northern New Mexico. We have the only three known images of him. In 1908, while repairing damaged fence line, he unearthed very large bison bones that he knew were too large to be from contemporary bison. He tried to boost interest in the site until his death in 1922, but only after his death did archaeologists investigate the area and find projectile points with the bones, indicating humans were present on the continent much earlier than previously thought. You can read more about him here: <https://www.dmns.org/science/featured-collections/archives/george-mcjunkin/>

**facing? Do you have any exciting projects in the works?**

Currently I'm helping spearhead a grant-funded project to select and implement a new Digital Asset Management System for the Science Division. The Archives, and the entire division, has hundreds of thousands of assets that will benefit from the functionality of a DAMS. It's a challenge just thinking about migrating the Archives' digital images from shared networked storage to a new system, but I have a great team helping and can't wait to share an amazing success story!

**What challenges are you**

**The Cultural and Historic Resources Task Force**

*Mary Rupp and Carl Stewart*

The Cultural and Historic Resources Task Force (CHR) works to improve Colorado's mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts for cultural and historic resources. The Task Force includes all types of collection professionals with a variety of skill sets working with emergency response and recovery personnel in non-profit and government agencies. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions but in case of emergency, please use the website contact form for faster response.

The CHR is organized at two levels – the cultural collections community as a whole and the smaller Steering Committee who meet quarterly and as needed to plan for and respond

to emergencies. All who work with items collected and preserved for their meaning to their communities are encouraged to join.

CHR also maintains a listserv. This is only activated during incidents to help share information. To sign up for the listserv, email Subscribe to [chr@cvt-lists.org](mailto:chr@cvt-lists.org) or use the form on the bottom of the [contact page](#).

In addition to the task force members, this helps improve contact between archives, museums, libraries, historical societies, galleries, and other organizations with collections that work together during regular times. We can help and support each other through the big and small disasters.

A lot has been happening this year with CHR. As with so many organizations, we have had changes in personnel: retirements and new faces. Also, we are reviewing our organizational structure and website and completing some projects that will improve our service to archives, museums and libraries of the State. All of

*Have something to share? Considering submitting to the June issue of the Rocky Mountain Archivist!*

Contact the editor at [willjgregg@gmail.com](mailto:willjgregg@gmail.com)

this will improve our service to our primary partners: the State emergency management office (OEM at DHSEM); History Colorado (SHPO) and all of YOU, the cultural and historic resources of the state.

Our [website](#) has been neglected as we have cycled through a few different webmasters but we are in the process of updating it now. If you know of anyone interested in serving as webmaster for our CHR Squarespace website, please let us know. Resources for disaster planning and response are available [here](#).

### Mapping cultural resources project

We should soon have a new GIS map of the State's museums, archives and libraries on the website. This is Phase 2 of long term CHR project to have a complete mapped database of all Colorado cultural and historic organizations so we can respond efficiently to state emergencies. We need to start Phase 3 to complete this—any grant writers want to join us in this important endeavor? More information will be shared when this project goes live and we look forward to working with you to assure accurate information is available for disaster response.

Please contact the CHR with questions and interest using

the contact [form](#). We hope to spread awareness and encourage preparation for emergency situations.

## Student interns assist with deaccessioning and access project

*Cecily North-Rudow*

The Local History and Genealogy (LHG) department of the Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD) hosts virtual library student interns every semester (or quarter) from a variety of library schools. Since 2020, these internships have focused on archival materials and collections while also working in a virtual environment. Students focus on collection management, metadata creation and basic archival practices. These internships also allow for mentoring by professional Archivists with library students interested in archival work.

In 2022, LHG underwent a massive renovation of their vault and public spaces. This allowed staff to begin the deaccession process for materials collected that are not relevant to the collection, or were extra copies that could be weeded. While going through these materials, it was

necessary to maintain an inventory of discarded titles for potential future use. Staff ran a report through Koha to find all discarded materials within a certain timeframe. The list was almost 3,000 titles. LHG staff also discussed with catalogers to add a link to any digital resources that have replaced the physical copy of the materials. The end goal would be a finding aid in ArchivesSpace and a LibGuide on the PCCLD website.

This proved to be a great opportunity for student work. In the fall of 2022, two MLIS students from San Jose State University and one student from the University of Denver worked together to create a framework for this project. Working with the archivist, they cleaned up the initial report from KOHA to remove duplicate titles and to remove any titles that were still in the collection that had been moved to an archival collection. Students created an excel spreadsheet which tracked title, author, publication date, publisher, number of institutions that housed the same title, and a link to the digital resource if possible. Tabs were created within the spreadsheet to track the titles by specific topics such as education, government documents, genealogy and more. These students went above and beyond the requirements of the project.



The *Journal of Western Archives* is a peer-reviewed, open access journal sponsored by Western regional archival organizations. The journal focuses on contemporary issues and developments in the archival and curatorial fields, particularly as they affect Western archives and manuscript repositories.

### Contributing to the Journal

If you are interested in contributing to the journal or serving as a peer reviewer for journal content, please contact the managing editor at [jwa.editor@gmail.com](mailto:jwa.editor@gmail.com). Article submissions may also be made online at the journal website.

# JWA

<http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/westernarchives/>

They tracked several pieces of information and organized it for what worked best for all of them.

The initial thought was that this project could be done in one semester. The students worked almost 400 hours total over the course of 4 months. It quickly became apparent that more time would need to be dedicated to this project. Searching for titles took about four times longer than originally planned so students were only able to get through about one-third of the initial list. They recommended the project continue to the next semester.



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In spring of 2023, new interns were selected. One from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and one from San Jose State University.

This project has been a great example for MLIS students to use the skills they have learned in school to search for archival materials, compare cataloging records and create metadata for optimal patron reference. In return, the LHG department has saved valuable shelf space for relevant and important collections and will have useable resources on their website for future research.

Thank you to Alyssa Johnson, Erin Smith and Nery Alcivar-Estrella for their willingness to jump into this new project and congratulations on your accomplishments!

## Join the SRMA board in 2023!

*Ashlyn Velte, SRMA Past President*

The SRMA Governing Board has several open positions up for election this spring! Please consider nominating yourself or a colleague. **Nominations should be [submitted using this form](#).** Questions should be directed to Ashlyn Velte (Past President; Chair SRMA Nominating Committee) at [ashlyn.velte@colorado.edu](mailto:ashlyn.velte@colorado.edu). She

will follow up with all nominees and request short statements of interest for those who will run for elections. SRMA will hold its annual election in May, and the election results will be announced in the SRMA Business Meeting in June. Board terms for new elected members begin July 1st. A brief description of the open positions are below. To read complete position descriptions please see the SRMA Bylaws.

### Vice President

The Vice President serves a three-year term: in their first year on the SRMA board as Vice President/President-Elect, in their second year as President, and in their third year as Past President. As Vice President, they assist the President as needed, acts as a liaison to the Program Director and oversees all SRMA educational programs, and coordinates the documentation of board procedures.

### Treasurer

The Treasurer serves for a term of two (2) years. The Treasurer shall be the principal financial officer of SRMA and receive funds and give receipts, keep complete books and records of account, prepare and file all tax returns and related documents as necessary, prescribe and maintain an adequate system of internal audit.

## Member-at-Large

The Member-at-Large serves as two year-term. In their first year, they assist the Program Director and Vice President in developing annual meeting topics, workshops, and other duties as assigned by the President or Board. In their second year, they become the Program Director and develop all aspects of membership meetings and the annual conference.

## Diversity and Inclusion Director

The Diversity and Inclusion Director serves for a term of two (2) years. The Diversity & Inclusion Director is responsible for chairing the Diversity & Inclusion Committee and administering the SRMA Archives Fellowship (see Bylaws Article IV. Section 1.1.iii).



# Governance

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Need to renew your membership? Contact David Fasman at

[david.fasman@du.edu](mailto:david.fasman@du.edu)