

Midwest Archives Conference, 2008 Annual Meeting
April 16 – April 19, 2008
Louisville, Kentucky

David B. Malone
Head of Archives and Special Collections
Wheaton College

First, thank you to LIBRAS for its generous support that enabled me to attend the Spring 2008 meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference in Louisville, Kentucky. It has been several years since I was able to attend this important conference. The Midwest Archives Conference is the largest regional professional archival body and is a leader in continuing education and dialog in the profession.

As part of the conference, I attended a pre-conference workshop titled: *Photographic Preservation on a Shoestring Budget*. This workshop was presented by Michael McCormick from the Maryland State Archives, Annapolis. This workshop proved helpful, especially in being able to identify photographs properly so that they may be handled and stored correctly. I also attended a session, as noted below, on describing photographs.

The MAC Conference sessions I attended were:

Changing for the Better (reviewing and adjusting program goals and objectives)
The Future belongs to Archivists (exploiting opportunities to connect with users)
The Useful Ten Words of the Thousand: describing photographs in words
Best Practices for Audio Preservation
Engaging NetGen: providing access to digital primary source material on-line
Implementing and Improving Access Systems: stories from the field
Racing Headlong into Archives 2.0: connecting collections and communities

All of the sessions were excellent, and provided insight and direction for the next phase of activities at the Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections. Some of the highlights of the conference, which will provide helpful information, were the photograph-related sessions. Additionally the sessions that provided insight into the future of archives and how these relate to the web and connecting to our users was most helpful. Most helpful, of all, was the reintroduction to an archival management system developed by the University of Illinois Archives and much further along in its development than when I saw it last. The development has progressed so much that it is now a very attractive resource for the Wheaton College Archives and Special Collections to utilize to manage its collections.

As mentioned before, the Midwest Archives Conference is a leader in the profession and is one of the premier venues for professional communication. One such concept borne out of MAC repositories and a part of a national archival debate is the concept advanced by Dennis Meissner and Mark Greene (both MAC members and officers) of More Product, Less Process, which focuses upon repositories finding efficiencies to describe more material less completely (to a lesser level) to enable more patrons to find “hidden collections.” If archivists spend too much time plumbing the depths of collections to describe them they will describe fewer materials.