



User-Driven Reparative Archival Description at NYU Libraries

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2021 May 25



Hi!

Weatherly Stephan
she/her



What I'll Cover

- Reparative Description Principles
- Reparative Description Workflow
- Names
- Titles
- Subject Headings

“

Remediation of practices or data that exclude, silence, harm, or mischaracterize marginalized people in the data created or used by archivists to identify or characterize archival resources

SAA Dictionary of Archives Terminology

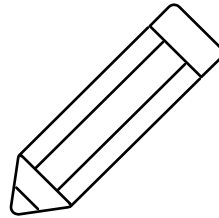


Archival Collections Management

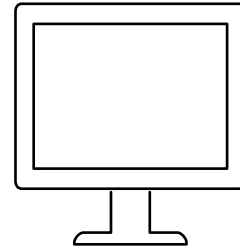
■ Accessioning



■ Arrangement & Description



■ Web Archiving





The Many Facets of Arrangement & Description

Traditional
A&D Projects

Digitization
Preparation

Reading Room
Remediation

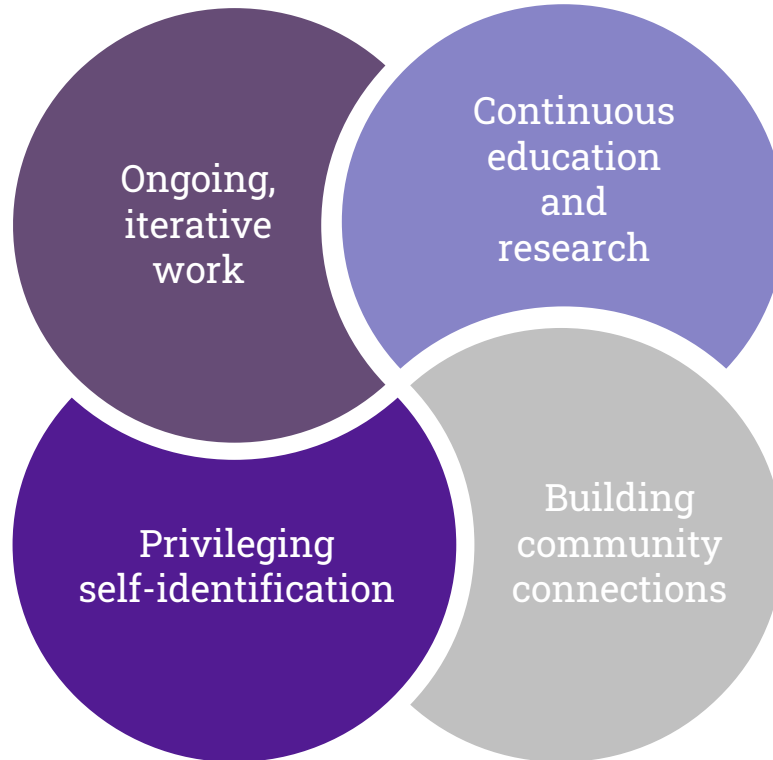
Preservation
Returns

Reparative
Description

Data Cleanup



ACM Values





NYU Special Collections: Report Harmful or Inaccurate Language in Description

You may encounter harmful language in our description, which includes catalog records, finding aids, collection guides, and inventories. If you encounter harmful language in description, or would like to request changes, please complete the following form.

Once you submit this form, we will review and act on your request, and document any changes we make. You can submit the form anonymously if you prefer, or provide your contact information to receive updates.

In which collection name / number / URL does the issue appear? Please provide any collection information you have available.

Please describe the error, omission, or desired change, including box and folder numbers when available / relevant:

BROWSE ALL

Library	
Tamiment Library & Wagner Labor Archives	406,385
The Fales Library & Special Collections	241,291
New-York Historical Society	187,234
New York University Archives	104,970
Center for Brooklyn History	35,327
Akkasah Center for Photography at NYU Abu Dhabi	16,478
Poly Archives	12,866
Research Institute for the Study of Man	10,699
NYU Abu Dhabi Archives and Special Collections	4,572
Digital Content	
Creator	
Date Range	
Subject	
Name	
Place	
Language	
Collection	
Level	

Archival Collections

Search

Advanced Search

RENOVATION NOTICE

NYU Special Collections is undergoing a major renovation and there may be impacts on services and collections. Please contact special.collections@nyu.edu with questions or visit our [website](#) for further information as to services and access.

Use this site to explore descriptions, finding aids, inventories and digitized content from archives held by New York University's special collections. You can also use this site to search archival material held by the New-York Historical Society and Center for Brooklyn History.

WHAT ARE SPECIAL COLLECTIONS?

Special collections are repositories that collect archives, rare books, and manuscripts. These unique materials have been selected for their enduring historical and cultural value.

WHAT ARE ARCHIVES?

Archives are materials created or collected by people and organizations as they lived and worked. They may contain drafts of literary manuscripts, correspondence, meeting minutes, sound and moving image recordings, photographs, reports, and artifacts. Archival collections range from a few letters to hundreds of boxes of organizational records.

HARMFUL LANGUAGE AND CONTENT

You may encounter harmful language in our description, which includes catalog records, finding aids, collection guides, and inventories. If you encounter harmful language in description, or would like to request changes, please complete this [form](#).

Materials in our collections, which comprise a part of the cultural and historical record, may depict offensive and objectionable perspectives, imagery, and norms. While we have control over description of our collections, we cannot alter the content. We are committed to reassessing and modifying description when possible so that it more accurately and transparently reflects the content of materials that are harmful and triggering in any way and for any reason.

As librarians and archivists at NYU Libraries, we are actively confronting and remediating how we describe our collection materials. We know that language can and does perpetuate harm, and the work we are undertaking centers on anti-oppressive practices. We are also making reparative changes, all to ensure that the descriptive language we use upholds and enacts our values of inclusion, diversity, equity, belonging, and accessibility.

Once you submit the [form](#), we will review and act on your request, and document any changes we make. You can submit the form anonymously if you prefer, or provide your contact information to receive updates.

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Names

- Name changes, birth names, deadnames, and anonymized names
- Can affect collection titles, creators, subjects, and narrative notes like biographical/historical notes.
- Changes may or may not be documented in public-facing records



GAPIMNY Records Requested Changes

- GAPIMNY has changed its name from “Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York.” Can that change please be reflected in the “Creator” and “Title” fields?
- We'd also like to replace the first two sentences of the abstract with this: “Founded in 1990, GAPIMNY is an all-volunteer, membership-based community ...”
- Finally, dates [inclusive] should be 1990-2018.

Field	Original Finding Aid	Revised Finding Aid
Creator	Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York	GAPIMNY
Title	Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York Records	GAPIMNY Records
Dates (Inclusive)	1994-2014	1994-2019
Abstract and Historical Note	Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York (GAPIMNY) is a volunteer-run community organization...	GAPIMNY, formerly known as the Gay and Pacific Islander Men of New York, is a volunteer-run community organization...
Revision Note		Finding aid was updated by Anna McCormick to reflect GAPIMNY's name change, November 2019.

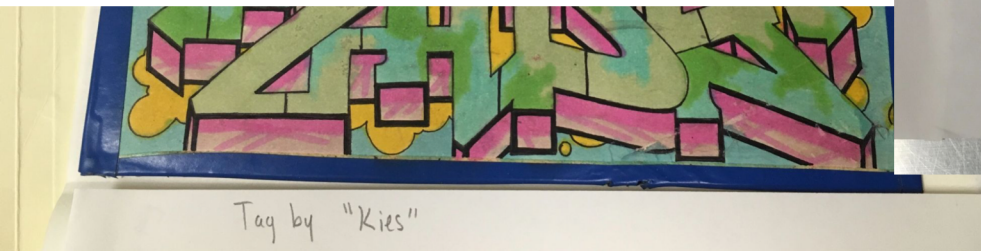
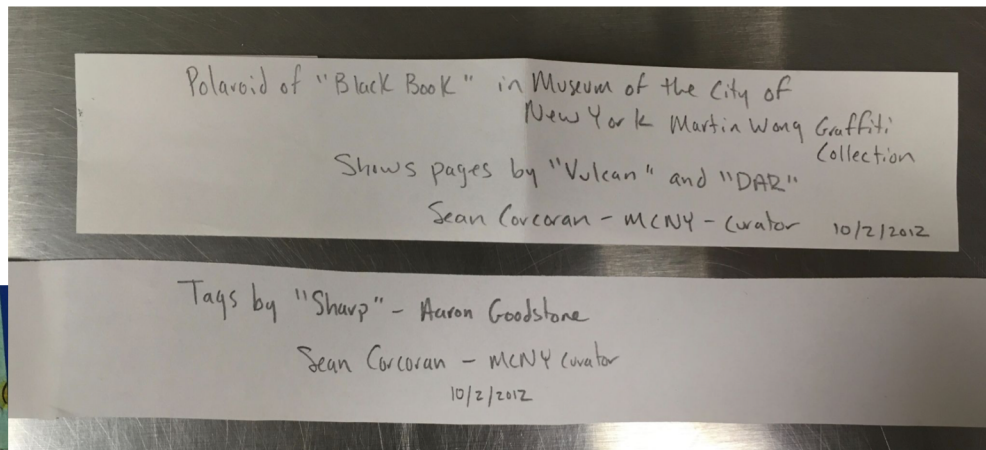
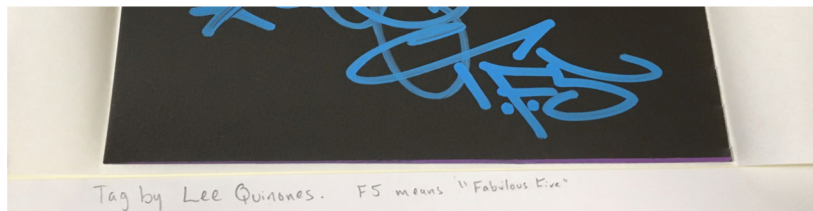


Titles

- Archivist assigned vs. creator-assigned titles
- Typically in unit title (e.g. file title) and scope and contents notes; can also be repeated in subject headings
- Generally documented, except for inadvertent typographical errors



Martin Wong Papers Suggested Changes





Martin Wong Papers Title Changes

Original Finding Aid	Revised Finding Aid
Graffiti: Tag Art	Graffiti: F5 by Lee Quiñones
Graffiti: Assorted Artwork	Graffiti: Artwork by Crash, Sharp, and Laroc
Graffiti: Assorted Artwork	Graffiti: Tag by Kies
Graffiti: Assorted Artwork	Graffiti: Stash Two Fax Art

- Series VIII was added to the collection as an accretion in 2009. Series IX was added to the collection as an accretion in 2013. All other decisions regarding arrangement, description, and physical interventions for this collection prior to 2020 are unknown.
- In 2020, Anna Björnsson McCormick enhanced description of Sign Language works following conservation treatment.
- In 2021, Weatherly Stephan updated the container list to reflect rehousing of oversize materials, and reintegrated oversize material into their original series. Files were retitled with the first line of a work or a description of a prominent figure on the first page, or based on user suggestions, and dated where possible.



Subject Headings

- Requires complex assessments: one mass replacement may not be appropriate for all linked records
- Exploring alternate vocabularies
- May be documented when changes affect other fields in record, or may be overlaid with a general user notification in catalog.



Authorities Working Group

Harmful Subject Headings Work

	A	B
1	Current term	Replacement term
2	Illegal aliens	Undocumented immigrants
3	Illegal aliens in literature	Undocumented immigrants in literature
4	Children of illegal aliens	Children of undocumented immigrants
5	Illegal alien children	Undocumented immigrant children
6	Women illegal aliens	Women undocumented immigrants
7	Aliens	Noncitizens
8	Alien detention centers	Noncitizen detention centers
9	Alien criminals	Noncitizen criminals
10	Taxation of aliens	Taxation of noncitizens
11	Relations with aliens	Relations with noncitizens
12	Deportation of aliens	Deportation of noncitizens
13	Alien labor	Noncitizen labor
14	Alien property	Noncitizen property
15	Church work with aliens	Church work with noncitizens

Title
Author/Creator
Subjects

God and the illegal alien : United States immigration law and a theology /
Robert W Heimburger (Robert Whitaker), 1979- author. >
United States >
Electronic books >
Emigration and immigration law -- United States >
Emigration and immigration -- Religious aspects -- Christianity >
Political theology -- United States >
Religion and state -- United States >
Christianity and law >
LAW / Constitutional >
LAW / Public >
Emigration and immigration law >
Political theology >
Religion and state >
Undocumented immigrants -- United States >
Undocumented immigrants -- Government policy -- United States >
Undocumented immigrants >
Undocumented immigrants -- Government policy >



Archival Collections Management

Harmful Subject Headings Work

<input type="checkbox"/>	A Subject Heading	A Description of Issue(s)	A Suggested Alternative (Term)	Suggested Alternative (So...)
1	Illegal aliens z United States.		Undocumented immigrants z United...	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
2	Illegal aliens x Social conditions.		Undocumented immigrants x Social...	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
3	Prostitutes -- New York (State) -- New Yo...		Sex workers z New York (N.Y.)	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
4	Prostitutes x Civil rights.		Sex workers x Civil rights	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
5	Prostitutes x Human rights.		Sex workers x Human rights	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
6	Prostitution z Haiti.		Sex work z Haiti	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
7	Prostitution.		Sex work	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
8	Prostitution z Netherlands Antilles.		Sex work z Netherlands Antilles	MeSH (Medical Subject Headi...
9	Female impersonators.	LCSH has already introduced the term...	Drag queens	LCSH
10	Sexual minorities -- Identity		Sexual identity Queer identity	Homosaurus
11	Sexual minorities -- Political activity		Activism (LGBTQ)	Homosaurus
12	Sexual minority community		Communities (LGBTQ)	Homosaurus
13	Brothers and sisters.	Not inclusive of non-binary people	Siblings	ERIC (Education Resources Inf...



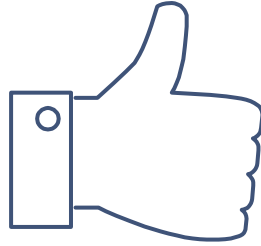
Values





Resources from ACM

- <https://guides.nyu.edu/archival-collections-management/inclusive>
- <https://bit.ly/nyu-aad-manual>



THANKS Y'ALL!

After the Q&A, you can reach me at
was227@nyu.edu