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Department of History and Archives

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Accomplishments/Progress Since the 13th All-American Council

The Department of History and Archives has focused on the following projects since the 13th All-American Council:

- ◆ **Development of plans for an archives/museum building at the OCA Chancery**
With the approval of the Holy Synod to undertake a feasibility study of new facilities to more adequately house the OCA Archives and provide space for a small museum, initial contacts with architects have been made and funding is being investigated.
- ◆ **Increased outreach and publications**
The department's outreach activities have increased through presentations on historical and other topics at conferences (American Theological Library Association, Orthodox Christian Laity, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies) and other venues (St. Tikhon's Seminary, Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church). A series of articles was published in *The Orthodox Church* to increase awareness of the OCA Archives throughout the Church. Participation in the Orthodox Encyclopedia being published in Russia continues, through the work of a special task force of the Department of History and Archives. Particularly significant outreach within the OCA was achieved through the research undertaken by OCA departments and institutions researching the documentation of their own past activities and publications. Noteworthy assistance was also provided to the Archdiocese of Canada in conjunction with the organization of its archives and a virtual exhibit on the archdiocesan web site.
- ◆ **Acquisition of additional historical materials**
Growth of the collections of the OCA Archives continues principally through the addition of inactive files of the OCA Chancery that document every aspect of Church activity and life. Other historical collections maintained in the OCA Archives, all of which constantly grow, include photographs, films, videos, audio recordings, periodicals, church directories, anniversary and other historical publications from throughout the world, as well as some historical artifacts and, most significantly, a manuscript division consisting of more than 50 collections of the per-

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sonal and organizational archives of various hierarchs, clergy, lay leaders and Church-related organizations. In the past three years, the personal archives of retired OCA Primate Metropolitan Theodosius, Frs. John Meyendorff and Leonid Kishkovsky, and Dr. Constance Tarasar have been added to the Manuscript Division. This growth of our collections has necessitated a reconfiguration of the shelving in the OCA Archives as a space-saving measure and also underscores the need for larger and improved facilities to properly house the OCA Archives.

- ◆ **Increased presence on the OCA web site**

The Department of History and Archives continually provides historical material for the OCA web site. Most recently, in celebration of the 35th anniversary of autocephaly, the key documents pertaining to autocephaly as well as an extensive photo gallery were posted. Some of the biographies of past OCA Primates have been posted. Additionally, the section on the North American saints is gradually being enhanced. With the continuing expansion of the new OCA web site, more historical and archival resource materials will be posted.

Ongoing functions, programs or services of the department:

- ◆ Serving as the primary resource of historical information and archival documentation for the central church administration, most significantly for the decision-making processes of the All-American Council, Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council, and other administrative organs of the Church.
- ◆ Providing historical resources and referral to dioceses, institutions, parishes, clergy, seminarians, scholars, and other interested individuals both within and outside the Church. This, in many cases, reinforces missionary and educational outreach by other means and witnesses to the Holy Tradition of the Orthodox Church.
- ◆ Expanding and developing the Archives of The Orthodox Church in America through the proper maintenance of the ever-increasing inactive records of the OCA Chancery, as well as the maintenance and acquisition of other types of historical materials and collections for the OCA Archives. These include manuscript collections, personal and organizational papers, periodicals, commemorative books, church directories, various types of historical publications, as well as photographs, videos, films, and audio recordings.
- ◆ Monitoring the completeness of official records at the OCA Chancery and assisting the central church administration in various records management issues.
- ◆ Assisting dioceses, institutions, and parishes in the development and maintenance of their own historical records and providing consultation in emergencies involving archival materials.

An ongoing concern is the housing of the OCA Archives in a building specifically designed for that purpose. Current inadequate basement conditions could, in the long term, cause deterioration of older materials. The need for suitable computer database programs for the inventory and cataloging of the various collections of the OCA Archives has impeded efficiency and development in this area.

Plans for the Future

- ◆ Development of plans for an archives/museum building at the OCA Chancery.
- ◆ Enhancement of computer systems for the OCA Archives.
- ◆ Continue to increase presence on the OCA web site.
- ◆ Outreach.
- ◆ Publications.
- ◆ Acquisition of additional historical materials.

Members of the department plan to conduct a feasibility study for the construction of a modest addition to the OCA Chancery building in order to more adequately house the OCA Archives, Chancery library, and a small museum. Subsequently, if funding is available, concrete plans will be developed. Such construction has been considered for many years - without tangible results due to lack of funding. Efforts will be undertaken to secure grants and other types of funding.

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Suitable database programs will be acquired or created to inventory and catalog all materials in the OCA Archives. At present, only paper-based finding aids and catalogs exist in the OCA Archives. A database for searching through decisions of major decision-making bodies (Holy Synod, All-American Council, Metropolitan Council) is also projected.

In addition to publishing and otherwise enhancing historical content on the OCA web site, the Department of History and Archives would like to create its own web page, which would provide information on the collections of the OCA Archives as well as resources to assist church archivists and historians.

Outreach will continue through historical publications on the OCA web site, the Orthodox Encyclopedia, and elsewhere. Outreach will also continue to be offered by providing copies of OCA archival materials to dioceses, parishes, institutions, clergy, seminarians, and other researchers upon request. We will also provide appropriate reference and consultation on historical issues. Increased efforts will be made to provide professional support to dioceses, institutions, and parishes in the development and maintenance of their own historical collections. In order to foster historical knowledge throughout the Church, presentations on various topics of North American Orthodox Church history will be offered, upon invitation, in parishes or institutions.

Production of new historical publications and videos is needed to enhance awareness of the Church's history. If funding for such projects is made available, they will be undertaken.

Donations of historically significant materials to the OCA Archives are always welcome. Greater efforts will be made to systematically obtain such materials. The department also plans to increase its activities in obtaining and/or conducting oral histories with hierarchs, clergy, and other individuals involved in significant historical developments in the life of the Church.

Accountability

The Church cannot adequately fulfill her mission without a full consciousness of her historical past. This consciousness also provides the faithful and those seeking the truth in Orthodoxy a sense of historical identity. A firm sense of historical identity will enable the vision of The Orthodox Church in America as the local territorial Church on this continent to be fully realized. It is the responsibility of the Department of History and Archives to advance this essential historical consciousness throughout the Church.

The department adequately serves its functions of being an information and referral service for the Church at all levels. These functions have been greatly enhanced by email and other computer technology. Greater efficiency could be achieved through databases for archives cataloging and indexing.

This department serves the Church's missionary goals by providing historical information and archival documentation to organizations, scholars, and other interested individuals whose initial (and often only) contact with the Church is through historical study. This is enhanced by the listing of the OCA Archives in numerous published and online historical resource guides and directories.

The department is the main resource of historical information and archival documentation and also provides translation services for the church administration and its ministry units. The department works most closely with the Canonization Commission, the Department of Communications, and the Department of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations by providing archival materials, translations, or photographs for publication or reference.

The OCA Archives are also the official repository for the inactive records of the central administration and all of its church ministries and departments.

Clergy and laity involved in Church administration at all levels should have a greater knowledge of the Church's historical records related to their areas of responsibility. Graduating seminarians should be strongly encouraged to visit

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the OCA Archives in order to examine documentation pertaining to the parishes or other areas of Church life where they will be serving. By becoming cognizant of the past, they will hopefully be better equipped to serve the Church's current and future needs. Similar visits by individuals already active in any facet of Church administration are also most welcome.

Theses and papers by seminarians and scholars on topics of Church history in North America should be further encouraged. Such studies would entail research in the rich collections of the OCA Archives and would foster historical knowledge throughout the Church.

Funding should be made available to enable the department to regularly produce historical publications and videos.

Dioceses, institutions, and parishes should pay more serious attention to preserving their inactive records and other materials of historical importance. The department is prepared to assist them in these efforts through training or consulting services.