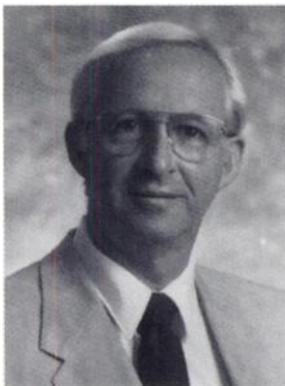


HISTORY CORNER



The Heritage Project: Looking Ahead



Dennis Patton, MD

In this issue of the "History Corner," I'd like to review a proposed project to preserve SNM's heritage in a secure and yet highly accessible manner. It would involve transferring a large number of key original documents to electronic storage, where they will be made accessible on the SNM Web-site. This will open up a whole new way of preserving and sharing our heritage.

The former way of archiving historically important materials was this: Someone possessing a document of historical interest would send it to the SNM Archives in Reston, Virginia, where it would be "accessioned," cataloged into the database, and stored in our climate-controlled secure room at SNM Headquarters. A historian or researcher interested in studying the document would travel to Reston, get permission to view the Archives during business hours, find the document by searching through the box named in the database, and study it under the watchful eyes of a staff member. To find a particular item in the document would require reading through it. Photocopiers are available, but to make a standard photograph of an item, the visitor would have to bring a camera setup. To find related documents the visitor would consult the database or rummage through the boxes. At close of business, everything would be returned to the Archives.

The new way of storing and gaining access to materials: Someone possessing a document of historical interest would scan it and transmit it, perhaps by e-mail, to the Archives at SNM Headquarters. Alternatively, the document could either be mailed to the Headquarters for scanning and then returned or be retained as a donation to the archival collection.

We would then catalog the scanned item, and post it in text-readable form to the Heritage section of the SNM Web-

site. A historian or researcher interested in studying the document would download it from the web site and add it to his or her own database (text and/or graphics). To find a particular item would need only a search command. This process could be done from anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day, seven days a week—truly unlimited access.

At this time there are no plans to put items of a more personal nature on the web, such as recollections and reminiscences of past presidents and other key figures—these will be made available on site at the Archives in Reston but without web publication. Limiting the kinds of materials on the internet is done in part to encourage contributors to our Audio-tape Collection to reminisce freely.

We have many boxes of documents in the Archives (donations from the Ter-Pogossian, Brucer, Buntaine, Kramer, and Conway collections as well as historical Technologist Section materials), and more are coming in all the time. If we transfer the documents to electronic storage, we can then transport the actual materials in an inexpensive, remote facility dedicated to storing archival collections. The facility would be climate-controlled and secure.

SNM will seek underwriting for this project in the near future. In the meantime, anyone possessing original documents of historical interest (key letters, memos, photographs, etc.) is encouraged either to donate them to the SNM Archives or to scan them and e-mail them to for consideration. (Please contact John Childs by e-mail, jchilds@snm.org, for scanning and e-mail transmission specifications). Donors should consult their tax consultants for tax write-offs. The Archives Committee and the historian will then decide on acceptance. If you are thinking of making such a donation or have any questions about the SNM Archive, please e-mail me (dpatton@radiology.arizona.edu).

Soon we hope to see the heritage of nuclear medicine available to anyone, anytime, anywhere, through the magic of the web!

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