SNACSchool 3.2

Module 2:

Authority Control Basics
Defining authority control...

Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology (SAA)

authority control, n. ~ Description: The process of establishing the preferred form of a heading, such as proper name or subject, for use in a catalog, and ensuring that all catalog records use such headings.

RT: cataloging

Notes: The preferred form of a heading is typically defined by a standard. Once established, the form is usually recorded in an authority file for future reference, along with cross-references from other forms of the heading, to ensure consistency.
Authority control means applying standards as a frame for work describing corporate bodies, persons and families to ensure consistency.

**ISAAR-CPF** (International Standard for Archival Authority Control = Corporate bodies, Persons, Families):

Archival authority records may be used:

- to describe a corporate body, person, or family as units within an archival descriptive system
- and/or to control the creation and use of access points in archival descriptions
- to document relationships between different records creators and between those entities and the records created by them and/or other resources about or by them.

Where a number of repositories hold records from a given source they can more easily share or link contextual information about this source if it has been maintained in a standardized manner.
Applying authority control... 

Authority control applied in SNAC means establishing a **preferred heading** for an entity, and supplying a **variant heading(s)** (cross references) to when warranted.
In many cases, corporate body entities can have several **variant names**. In the IBM example, we see several variants in foreign languages. We also see that the most familiar name is not the preferred name in this case.
Archival authority data requires additional information about corporate bodies, persons, and families responsible for the creation, assembly, accumulation, and/or maintenance and use of the archival materials being described.

Creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described, and the EAC-CPF (Encoded Archival Context) allows for additional information not normally found in a library authority records.

How is an archival authority record different from a library authority record?

A traditional **library** authority record has:
- preferred heading
- variant heading(s)
- biography/history
- demographic attributes
- source citations

A **SNAC** authority record contains has:
- preferred heading
- variant heading(s)
- biography/history
- demographic attributes
- sources citations
- contextual links to related archival resources
- contextual links to related CPF entities
- contextual links to external related CPF entities
What is an *archival* authority record?

Formed using the EAC-CPF standard, it is a description of an entity … a corporate body, a person, or a family, associated with a body of archival materials, or other special collections. The controlled form of the entity name is used as an access point to a description of those records.

The archival authority record provides additional information and context for understanding how the entity created, used and maintained its archival materials. It also illustrates contextual relationships between two or more entities.
What types of information are required in an archival authority record?

1. Identity (name)
2. Description
3. Relationships
4. Control
Archival authority record example -- Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The SNAC record provides biographical information along with contextual links to original archival collections created by her, or archival materials about her.

It also contains contextual links to other entities described in SNAC records.
In SNAC, we use archival authority records to describe entities; corporate body names, person names and family names, as creators and as subjects, and in the process, establish controlled headings for the entities ...

Corporate body entities

- John F. Kennedy (Aircraft Carrier)
- National Park Service
- United States. Embassy (Germany)
- Baffin Island Expedition (1927)
- White House Conference on Aging (1961)
- United States. Army

Person entities

- Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865
- Chisholm, Shirley, 1924-2005
- Stanton, Elizabeth Cady, 1815-1902
- Ride, Sally, 1951-2012
- Kennedy, Robert F., 1925-1968
- Kennedy, John F. (John Fitzgerald), 1917-1963

Family entities

- Truman (Family : Independence, Mo.)
- Bacon (Family : Boston, Mass.)
- Vanderbilt family
- Bush (Family : Houston, Tex.)
- Talmage family (McRae, Ga.)
- Eastman (Family : Rochester, N.Y.)

See the Name Elements pdf for more entity examples.
What defines a corporate body? (from RDA-Resource Description and Access)

A collective agent who is composed of persons who are organized for a common purpose or activity.

RDA provides for posting preferred and variant names as access points.

SNAC Documentation: SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Corporate Bodies PDF
An agent who is an individual human being who lives or is assumed to have lived.

This also includes fictitious and legendary persons, and real non-human entities.

RDA provides for posting preferred and variant names as access points.

**SNAC documentation:** [SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Persons PDF](#)
What defines a family? (from RDA - Resource Description and Access)

A collective agent who is composed of persons who are related by birth, marriage, adoption, civil union, or similar legal status, or who otherwise present themselves as a family.

RDA provides for posting preferred and variant names as access points.

**SNAC Documentation:** [SNAC Editing Cheat Sheet - Families PDF](#)
Plantations, Enslavers, and Enslaved People and Families in SNAC

- Plantations with enslaved peoples, in SNAC, are considered corporate bodies
- Enslavers and Plantations could be ownerOf other enslaved peoples or families
- This is one of the ways SNAC is different than other authorities (ex: LC considers Plantations geographic names)

Boone Hall (Plantation : S.C.)

Boone Hall Plantation, located in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, is one of America’s oldest working plantations, continually producing agricultural crops for over 320 years. The land was gifted from owner, Theophilus Patey, to his daughter Elizabeth and her new husband Major John Boone as a wedding gift in 1681; it was then known as Boone Hall Plantation. The Boone family owned the plantation until 1811 when it was sold to Thomas A. Vandell and then Henry and John Horibeck bought the property. By 1850, enslaved laborers produced 4 million bricks, by hand, per year.

SNAC documentation:
Policy, Describing Plantations, Estates, Farms, and Comparable Entities as Corporate Bodies, is on SNAC Portal
Nancy Carter Quander was an enslaved woman owned by George & Martha Washington at their plantation/estate, Mount Vernon.

Here we can see the relationship between the enslaved person and the enslaver.
This example shows how Quander’s relationship with Mount Vernon can be recorded in SNAC.
How to create a Name Authority record -- Example

Primary source of information: **Commander Isaac Schlossbach Personal Papers, 1928 - 1973**

These records contain the personal papers of Commander Isaac Schlossbach, primarily relating to his participation in Admiral Richard E. Byrd's First Antarctic Expedition, 1928-1930. The photographs in the collection are of the expedition and are dated from 1928-1930. Also within the records is a 41-page transcript of an interview with Commander Schlossbach covering his life and career by John T. Mason, Jr., Director of Oral History, U.S. Naval Institute, recorded at Annapolis, Maryland, June 17, 1969. Also included is a copy of a published oral interview done with Commander Schlossbach by Amory H. Waite during the Summer of 1972.

The **Preferred Heading** comes from information in the biographical description listed above.
1. The finding aid provides only the first and last names.

2. Let’s check Wikipedia...Lists birth and death dates and a nickname (Ike).

3. Same thing with Find A Grave and Library of Congress Name Authority File: they both have life dates and nickname.
Constructing the preferred heading...

1. First and last name come from finding aid description.

Schlossbach, Isaac, 1891-1984

2. Birth and death years come additional research (Wikipedia).

3. The preferred name and life and death years were confirmed with additional sources:
   - Find A Grave
   - Library of Congress Name Authority File

When possible, use the fullest form of the name possible based on evidence found in biographical sources. Refer to SNAC’s Preference for Fullest Forms of Names policy for more guidance on this approach.
Preferred Name:

*Schlossbach, Isaac, 1891-1984*

- Full name based on the name in archives collection title
- Life years found in Schlossbach’s Findagrave.com memorial, LC NAF, Wikipedia

Variant / Non-Preferred Name:

*Schlossbach, Ike, 1891-1984*

- Information found in Schlossbach’s Wikipedia article

Remember to consult SNAC policy for source citations: [Citations in SNAC: Sources and Format](#) and guidance for posting preferred and variant name headings: [Name Elements PDF](#)
The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) was established on December 16, 2003, when President George W. Bush signed the National Museum of African American History and Culture Act (PL 108-184) into law, establishing the museum as part of the Smithsonian Institution. The new museum will be devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, art, history and culture. The museum's collections will cover topics such as slavery, post-Civil War Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance and the civil rights movement. This accession consists of planning records for NMAAHC and includes materials related to the African American Institutional Study, 1991; task force meetings of the National African American Museum Project, 1992-1993; and the Plan for Action Presidential Commission, 2001-2003. Materials include reports, surveys, research materials, and other related records.

From the information provided in the abstract from these papers let’s devise a preferred heading.
Identify sources of information...

1. The finding aid provides a name
2. Let’s check Wikipedia...it gives more clues that its part of the Smithsonian and also referred to as NMAAHC
3. The website also has the same information
4. The Library of Congress Name Authority File has its name with “(U.S.)” and several alternative names.
Constructing the preferred heading...

1. Preferred name is the form used by the museum (what it calls itself)

National Museum of African American History and Culture (U.S.)

2. “U.S.” is added to clarify the name based on RDA rules, and it follows the pattern established in the Library of Congress Authority File for Smithsonian Museum names.
Preferred Name:

National Museum of African American History and Culture (U.S.)
- What the museum calls itself
- Based on RDA rules and found in the Library of Congress Authority File

Variant / Non-Preferred Names:

United States. National Museum of African American History and Culture
Smithsonian Institution. National Museum of African American History and Culture
NMAAHC
- These variants are found in LC Name Authority File, and are based on other commonly used patterns for corporate names.
- “NMAAHC” (not in LCNAF) is listed because it there is seems to be enough evidence on the website and in Wikipedia to create this alternative name.