

# Archives in Colleges and Universities: Some Comments on Data Collected by the Society's Committee on College and University Archives

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IN the summer of 1949 a survey was made to determine the extent of archival awareness in institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada. That survey was, of necessity, limited to 200 schools selected to cover as wide a range as possible — class, location, and size. The statistical data collected were presented in the 1949 report of the Committee on College and University Archives.<sup>1</sup> Aside from the statistical results, however, there emerged several points which merit some discussion.

The survey reveals some strange conceptions of what a college or university archives should be. One university archivist, for example, stated that his work of collecting business records was of more importance than collecting and preserving the official records of his university! Yet Federal and State archivists have been preaching for years that it is the business of an archival agency first to serve the institution or organization that created it. Another school announced the establishment of its archives department with the avowed purpose of collecting the records of the city in which the college is located but, since nothing was reported to the Committee about the records of the college itself, there is some doubt as to whether the archives of that institution should be classified as college or municipal. Among other statements received that confused the Committee were the following:

We are mindful of the importance of preserving all kinds of data which re-

<sup>1</sup> *American Archivist*, 12: 62-64 (Jan. 1950). Additional answers have been received since this report was made, and the current number of colleges and universities surveyed and claiming to have archives is now eighty-four.

cord the history and development of the institution and are glad from year to year to add *items* to our *collection*. (*Italics mine.*)

I have the title of archivist but have really nothing to do with the archives. I do no work with any of this material.

It is understandable that some State-controlled universities are constrained to have their archives serve as the depositories for both official State records and regional history. Nevertheless, the question does arise as to whether a college or university archives should serve in that capacity when the State has a functioning historical society and a well-organized department of archives.

Too many of the schools reporting apparently have not yet comprehended the modern objectives of archival agencies. For this reason, their archivists are usually given one or two rooms in the library with the expectation that nothing will be preserved but old programs, a few very ancient trustee and faculty minutes, and some college publications. As yet only a limited number of colleges and universities recognize all the values that should be considered in appraising records — administrative, legal, and research. Of the eighty-four colleges and universities reporting to the Committee only two indicated in the fifth edition of *American Universities and Colleges* that they had an archives. One of these confessed to the Committee that little is being done with its archives; the other stoutly denied having any archival unit! Whatever the case may be, rarely can there be found any mention of the archives in student bulletins, yearbooks, or catalogs. This, in spite of the fact that every other administrative service is described in such publications. In some cases this omission could stem from the fact that the archivist himself is too retiring. Often he spends considerable time and effort developing his program without even the faculty being aware of what he is doing. The head of a department at one of the larger universities questioned me at length about the *raison d'être* of archives, and ended the conversation with: "Well, I am very interested, because we don't have any such program at the University of ———." The very next week I learned that his school had had an archivist for the past six years!

In this connection one very pertinent fact emerges. Where the administrators are interested in and appreciate the value of archives, the faculty or the board of trustees may be indifferent to or even hostile toward the establishment of an archival program. The librarian of a certain college which places great emphasis on impeccable scholarship informed the Committee that: "If I were to mention the fact that . . . the records of faculty meetings and

such were kept in the library, I can see the amazement on the faces of those who have the keeping of those records in their hands. It would be an entirely NEW idea to them, and would not meet with acceptance from them I can assure you."

There now remains one other negative fact of importance to note. On the basis of what qualifications do some administrators appoint archivists? Is the registrar or bursar appointed archivist because he deals with student or business records and is thereby believed automatically qualified to administer all records? Is the professor of botany appointed archivist because he is teaching only four hours this semester? Is the librarian appointed because the administrator thinks libraries and archives are one and indivisible? Or is a faculty member simply picked at random with the remark, "You're it!" Many of the newly-fledged archivists confessed to the Committee that they are beyond their depth and do not know where to start or where to go after they start.

The positive side of the picture is somewhat brighter. While we may regret that many archives do not recognize the sharp line of demarcation between historical documents and archival material, we are grateful to the "historical collections" in colleges and universities which make a place for the archives of the institution. These are well exemplified by Washington and Jefferson, and the Universities of Michigan and Virginia.

Gradually American colleges are moving away from the "one or two rooms for the archives" idea. One institution, though still housing them in the library, has secured a five-stack area for its archives; another has been allotted enough space in which to install equipment similar to that used in National Archives. Still others have found that their libraries are not large enough to house both books and a steady accumulation of records. The president of Lincoln Memorial University in Tennessee, for example, is campaigning for a million dollars, a part of which will be used to erect a suitable building for the Lincoln Memorial University Archives. And at least one major Eastern university is quietly consulting plans of archival buildings.

Still looking on the brighter side, more and more schools are employing full time professional archivists and giving them substantial cooperation. Where librarians or others have been put in charge of the archival programs, recognition is being given to the fact that library techniques will not suffice for the handling of records in bulk. Therefore many of the officials responsible for archives have taken or are planning to take the intensive summer

course in archival administration offered by American University under the direction of Dr. Ernst Posner. In addition, they are visiting other college and university archives, and they have also discovered what college presidents have long known — that they can learn much by writing to others in the field for suggestions and ideas.

Although most educational institutions make no mention of their archives in their official publications, they are beginning to list the names of the archivists, and many permit the issuance of separate bulletins describing the aims and objectives of the archives. Catholic University recently took a big forward step by holding public ceremonies in connection with the inauguration and blessing of its archives by a high church official.

Already many of the conceptions noted earlier in this discussion are changing. One of the most interesting facts revealed by the Committee's survey was that administrators are beginning to *plan* for their archives. A surprisingly large number of college and university presidents have written to the Committee asking where literature on archives can be secured, and requesting suggestions on the establishment of archival programs. To these we have unhesitatingly offered the following suggestions, to be used where practicable: (1) employ a trained archivist; (2) make the archives an integral part of the administrative set-up rather than a mere appendage to it, with the archivist directly responsible to the president; (3) establish the archives as an agency independent of the library, though perhaps housed in the library building; (4) insist that the primary function of the archives be the preservation of official records of the institution for possible evidential value — administrative, legal, or research; that historical documents *not* concerned with the university be properly placed in the manuscript collection of the library; that generally, the archives will comprise: records of administrative officers and departments (correspondence files), minutes of trustee, faculty, and committee meetings, samples of student notes and faculty lecture notes, examinations, official publications of the university, records of student organizations and classes, and pictures of university people and places, including blueprints of university buildings.

A number of schools readily acknowledge a debt of gratitude to the professor emeritus or the librarian who, unacknowledged, voluntarily undertook the task of collecting and preserving everything of value that could be found. These archivists without portfolio

have worked against the day when the school would recognize the significance of its records.

Appended is a list of college and university archives responding to the Committee's survey questionnaire, together with the names and titles of the persons reported to be in charge of archives at that time. This list does not include those schools interested in establishing archives nor those now in the planning stage. It is hoped that some day a more scientific survey can be made of the remaining 11,800 colleges and universities in the United States. At least, this survey has furnished a basis for judging the present status of college and university archives.

### COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

<i>STATE &amp; INSTITUTION</i>	<i>PERSON IN CHARGE</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
<b>ALABAMA</b>		
Tuskegee Institute	Mrs. Jessie P. Guzman	Director, Research and Records
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>		
University of California (Berkeley)	May Dornin	Head, Dept. of Archives
University of California (L. A.)	Neal Harlow	Head, Dept. of Special Collections
University of Southern California	Myrtle G. Hart	Archivist, Reference Librarian
<b>CONNECTICUT</b>		
Yale University	David H. Clift	Assistant Librarian
<b>DELAWARE</b>		
University of Delaware	John A. Monroe	Archivist
<b>DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA</b>		
Catholic University of America	Rev. Henry J. Browne	Archivist
<b>FLORIDA</b>		
University of Florida	Richard S. Johnson	Keeper of the Archives, Registrar
<b>GEORGIA</b>		
Emory University	Richard B. Harwell	Assistant Librarian
Telfair Academy of Arts & Sciences	Mrs. Dolores B. Floyd	Archivist
<b>ILLINOIS</b>		
University of Chicago	Mabel Dean	Archivist
University of Illinois	Icko Iben	Archivist, Newspaper Librarian
Roosevelt College	Robert Dibble	Chairman, Historical Files and Records

<i>STATE &amp; INSTITUTION</i>	<i>PERSON IN CHARGE</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
Southern Illinois University	Prof. E. G. Lentz	- - - -
Augustana College	Rev. I. O. Nothstein	Archivist
<i>INDIANA</i>		
University of Indiana	Mrs. Mary B. Craig	Archivist
University of Notre Dame	Rev. Thomas T. McAvoy	Archivist
Purdue University	Esther Schlundt	Reference Librarian
<i>IOWA</i>		
Central College	Mrs. Robert Lautenbach	Archivist
State University of Iowa	Ralph E. Ellsworth	Director of Libraries and Archivist
<i>KENTUCKY</i>		
Centre College of Kentucky	Mrs. Dorothy T. Cullen	Librarian
University of Kentucky	Jacqueline Bull	Archivist
<i>LOUISIANA</i>		
Louisiana State University	V. L. Bedsole	Head, Dept. of Archives
Tulane University	Susan Keane	Reference Secretary
<i>MAINE</i>		
Colby College	James Humphrey III	Librarian
<i>MARYLAND</i>		
Mt. Saint Mary's College	Rev. Hugh J. Phillips	Librarian & Archivist
<i>MASSACHUSETTS</i>		
Amherst College	Rena M. Durken	Curator
Boston University	Prof. Robert E. Moody	Archivist
Harvard University	Clifford K. Shipton	Custodian of Archives
Smith College	Mrs. Margaret S. Grierson	Archivist
American International College	Eulin Klyver Hobbie	Librarian and Archivist
Mount Holyoke College	Mrs. Marion M. Randall	Acting Librarian
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Vernon D. Tate	Director of Libraries
<i>MICHIGAN</i>		
University of Michigan	Lewis G. Vander Velde	Director, Michigan Historical Collections
<i>MINNESOTA</i>		
University of Minnesota	Marian A. Huttner	Princ. Librarian (Arch.)
Saint Olaf College	Olaf M. Norlie	Archivist
<i>MISSOURI</i>		
University of Missouri	Ralph H. Parker	Librarian
Northeast Missouri State Teachers College	Pauline Knobbs	Archivist
<i>MONTANA</i>		
Montana State University	Lucile Speer	Documents and Serials Librarian
<i>NEW HAMPSHIRE</i>		
Dartmouth College	Hazel E. Joslyn	Archivist

<i>STATE &amp; INSTITUTION</i>	<i>PERSON IN CHARGE</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
<b>NEW JERSEY</b>		
Princeton University	Henry L. Savage	Archivist
Rutgers University	Richard P. McCormick	Prof. of History
Drew University	O. Gerald Lawson	Librarian
<b>NEW YORK</b>		
Colgate University	Howard D. Williams	Archivist
Columbia University	M. Halsey Thomas	Curator, Columbiana
Fordham University	Maurice L. Ahern	Archivist
Rochester University	Margaret Butterfield	Curator, University Archives
Union College	Helmar L. Webb	Librarian & Archivist
Utica College	Glenn Thompson	Archivist
Hamilton College	David Wilder	Librarian
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>		
State Teachers College	Nellie R. Swanson	Acting Archivist, Librarian
University of North Dakota	Della Mathys	Librarian
<b>OHIO</b>		
Antioch College	Bessie L. Totten	Curator
Hebrew Union College	Selma Stern-Taeubler	Archivist
John Carroll University	Rev. James A. Mackin, S.J.	Archivist, Director of Library
Marietta College	George J. Blazier	Librarian
Wilmington College	Willis H. Hall	Professor of History
<b>OKLAHOMA</b>		
University of Oklahoma	Gaston Litton	Archivist
<b>OREGON</b>		
University of Oregon	Martin Schmitt	Curator, Special Collections
Willamette University	- - - -	Librarian
<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>		
Franklin & Marshall College	Elizabeth C. Kieffer	Reference Librarian
Moravian College & Seminary	Rt. Rev. S. H. Gapp	Archivist
Pennsylvania State College	Ralph W. McComb	Librarian
University of Pennsylvania	Leonidas Dodson	Archivist
Susquehanna University	Hilda G. Kolpin	Librarian
Temple University	Edith Cheney	Curator
Washington & Jefferson College	Charles M. Ewing	Director, Historical Collections
<b>RHODE ISLAND</b>		
Brown University	William E. Louttit	Archivist
<b>TENNESSEE</b>		
Fisk University	- - - -	Archivist and Records Administrator
Lincoln Memorial University	R. Gerald McMurty	Director of Archives
The University of the South	Mrs. Oscar N. Torian	Archivist

<i>STATE &amp; INSTITUTION</i>	<i>PERSON IN CHARGE</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
<i>TEXAS</i>		
University of Texas	Winnie Allen	Archivist
Trinity University	Mrs. Theresa R. Simms	Librarian
<i>VIRGINIA</i>		
Richmond University	Lucy T. Throckmorton	Acting Librarian
University of Virginia	Francis L. Berkeley, Jr.	Curator of Manuscripts
<i>WEST VIRGINIA</i>		
Washington & Lee University	Ollinger Crenshaw	Professor of History
West Virginia University	E. M. Grieder	Librarian
Bethany College	Mrs. Edna Woolery	Assistant Librarian
<i>WISCONSIN</i>		
Beloit College	Prof. Robert K. Richardson	Archivist
<i>WYOMING</i>		
University of Wyoming	Lola M. Homsher	Archivist
<i>CANADA</i>		
Université Laval	Abbé Arthur Maheux	Archiviste
University of Saskatchewan	Lewis H. Thomas	Provincial Archivist
Victoria University	Margaret Ray	Associate Librarian