

Recruitment, Training, and Promotion in the National Archives

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National Archives

EVERY agency of Government is concerned with the problem of building up and maintaining an efficient personnel. The National Archives may fairly boast of the excellence of its staff, but in order to hold its own in an endless competition for talent it must give constant thought to its policies affecting recruitment, training, and promotion. It must ask and answer again and again such questions as the following: What are the ingredients that go to make up an ideal archivist for work in the National Archives? Of those ingredients, which may reasonably be demanded of candidates for employment at the lowest professional level (GS-5) and which must be acquired on the job? ² What can the National Archives do to make sure that it gets the kind of recruits it wants and that those it hires develop fully their natural capabilities?

Some of the qualities most desired in archivists are those most difficult to find and to assess. Many are inborn or depend on inborn psychological traits. Most are insusceptible of measurement. Among the more elusive may be listed such qualities as good nature, patience, perseverance, common sense, thoroughness, accuracy, ability to keep a long-term project moving and in perspective, amenability to suggestion and criticism, ability to transact business with dispatch and without unnecessary discussion, and ability to keep strictly to the point in such processes as the appraisal, analysis, and description of records, avoiding the idle lure of curiosity.

One quality of the highest importance for almost every phase of archival work is that of sound evaluative judgment. This kind of judgment becomes increasingly important as pressure of space makes necessary the application of more and more exacting stand-

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² Professional positions at the National Archives fall within grades GS-5 and GS-14 of the Classified Service. The entrance salary for grade GS-5 is \$3,670; the maximum of that grade is \$4,480. Starting salaries in the other grades mentioned in this article are as follows: GS-7, \$4,525; GS-9, \$5,440; and GS-11, \$6,390.

ards in the selection of records for retention. In the process of selection it is essential not only to recognize absolute values but to weigh relative values against each other and against the resources available for preservation and service. Even where disposal is not in question, an order of values is needed to set priorities for transfer, repair, microfilming, description, and publication. It is essential also in the selection of material to be brought to the attention of researchers.

Unfortunately there are no stigmata by which the saints of good judgment can be certainly identified. A graduate degree is not conclusive evidence. Some graduate students in history never feel the compulsion to exercise a truly discriminating judgment. They seem so steeped in the Rankian notion of objectivity that they regard all facts as of equal importance, only to be collected and arranged in order to win scholarly recognition; and the universities, nodding, like Homer, sometimes award graduate degrees for the fruits of mere pedantic industry.

Good judgment is not wholly an inborn characteristic. It depends largely on natural bent; but, if the bent is there, it can be developed. Persons who are daily required at the university, or later on the job, to make conscious value judgments form the habit of judging, of thinking critically, of approaching their tasks in a questioning frame of mind. Conversely, without exercise, the natural impulse to question and judge can atrophy. The National Archives, therefore, ought to look for recruits who have already shown some inclination to question and after recruitment ought to encourage that inclination even to the point of tolerating a degree of fractiousness.

Next to judgment in importance are the qualities of adaptability and cooperativeness. The National Archives is not an assemblage of isolated persons engaged in the performance of separate duties, each following his own individual devices. It is an organization of some 250 people who are expected to work cheerfully together under discipline, accepting policies and decisions with which they may not always agree. They cannot afford to be egoists on the job. Their efforts are mainly joint efforts, and their products must often be anonymous. Few of their assignments are of such a nature as to add perceptibly to their fame or reputation.

The qualities that have been named above are unquestionably the most important in the makeup of an ideal archivist; but under the Civil Service system the qualities demanded as prerequisites for employment must as a rule be objectively measurable if they are to be competitively evaluated. They must be expressed in such

terms as academic credits or their clear equivalents, experience (ratable in years, rank, and salary), physical ability to perform the ordinary duties of an archivist, and ability to pass a standard intelligence test. Some direct consideration could perhaps be given to the more intangible qualities desired if all candidates could be subjected to an oral interview as a part of their entrance examination.

In shaping the last examination for young archivists in 1953 the National Archives tried to fix its stated requirements in such a way as to obtain indirectly some of the less tangible qualities it desired. Thus the requirement of a college education or its equivalent was imposed not as a means of ensuring that the candidate knew certain things but rather — and more significantly — as a proof of his ability to study and learn whatever might prove necessary to operate effectively in a professional field. The stipulation that 30 semester hours of his academic training should have been in history or social science was intended not as a guarantee that the candidate had mastered a specific body of knowledge but merely as a sign that he was interested and had received some general instruction in a field of learning and point of view that have been found most germane to all work with archives. The further requirement of 12 hours in United States history had a more direct application. An archivist in the National Archives must be able to appraise records first of all in the light of their relation to our national history; he must be able to describe them in their historical context; and he must have knowledge of their main historical significance so that he can intelligently serve historical scholars who call on him for help.

Beyond the minimum requirement of 12 hours in United States history some training in historical method is desired as a basis for judging the source value of records and understanding the process of historical research in which the archivist is called on to assist. Great weight, therefore, was given in the examination to graduate training in historical or other documentary research.

Facility in writing simple correct English is one of the important measurable requirements of an archivist. Records cannot in the nature of things be cataloged in a stereotyped manner; and archivists therefore need to be able to express the essential facts about them, clearly and economically, in the free style of series inventories, analytical essays, guides, and the like. To do so calls for something more than a minimum vocabulary and familiarity with the rudiments of grammar. It calls for clear logic and an ability to

take the reader's point of view in writing. It calls above all for an appreciation of the importance of the writing process as a means of conveying thought to a reader rather than easing the pressure of flatulence in a writer's word-laden soul.

Our examination of 1953 tested writing facility only to a limited extent and ought probably to be revised to test it more thoroughly. Perhaps a mistake was made in handling the examination when, in order to qualify a larger number of persons, the passing grade on the written test (which emphasized verbal abilities) was set considerably below the usual level. Had we held firm, we should have had a much smaller list, which could be freshened with new applicants more frequently. As it is, the length of the register in comparison with the small number of appointments annually made from it delays the giving of a new examination, with the result that each year the register becomes less apt for its purpose and that there is an increasing temptation to ignore it and rely on the selective promotion of qualified persons already on the rolls in sub-professional and clerical positions. It would probably be better, when next an examination is held, to strengthen the elements designed to test verbal facility and raise the passing score even above the customary level. If in this way the number who qualify could be held to 30 or 40, the list might offer a better selection of candidates on the whole; and, being used more frequently, it would at least be sooner exhausted.

Not every job in the National Archives calls for all the qualities that have been enumerated as desirable. In recruiting, however, it would not do to require only those qualities that are specifically needed to handle a particular job. Every employee at the GS-5 level should be versatile enough to handle any job at that level in the organization and should be eligible, after on-the-job training and experience, for promotion to a GS-7 position in any branch of the organization. He should be selected, insofar as possible, with regard to the qualities of intelligence, general education, adaptability, and knowledge in the broad fields of history and social science, which are relevant to all archival work, and only as a secondary consideration, when in these general qualifications he is equal to all rivals, with regard to his special qualifications for the job immediately to be filled.

For if the National Archives is to operate within the limits of its budget and yet cope with changes in demand and shifts in program emphasis, it must not be cramped in its freedom to move employees around. It ought not, in recruiting, to place a premium

on special knowledge that it cannot hope to foster by promotion. And it cannot offer opportunities for advancement in every special subject field indicated by its wide variety of record holdings. The number of specialized subject fields in which it can support the growth of experts is at present extremely limited. To require specialized knowledge of candidates for GS-5 positions, moreover, would be vain in the present state of the market because highly trained persons are not to be found at that level. The margin of a course or two in some academic subject is not enough to make a true specialist and ought not be allowed to outweigh the rarer and more important qualities that contribute to general aptitude for archival work.

Thus far consideration has been given only to the qualifications that ought to be demanded of candidates for junior professional appointments. Other qualities of the ideal archivist for work in the National Archives are not likely to be possessed by new recruits and must as a rule be acquired after their appointment. For promotion to grades GS-7 and GS-9 the National Archives usually demands (1) progressive mastery of the knowledge and skill that are of general utility in its professional operations, (2) sound knowledge of the subject content of at least one record group, (3) a demonstrated ability to become quickly familiar with the broad subject content of any record group, and (4) some knowledge of one or more of the special subject fields or disciplines to which records in the National Archives relate.

The main elements of archival knowledge and skill that can reasonably be expected of candidates for promotion to GS-7 positions are:

1. A broad substantive knowledge of the resources of the National Archives as a whole. This implies a general knowledge of the organizational and functional history of the Federal Government.
2. Knowledge of appraisal standards and methods, of the process of identifying documents by internal criticism and analysis, and of the fundamental principles of archival arrangement.
3. Knowledge of the prescribed form and style of inventories and other finding aids used in the National Archives and ability to apply it.
4. Knowledge of the principal laws and regulations governing the preservation and use of records—the disposal law, the Federal Records Act, and the pertinent regulations of the General Services Administration.
5. Knowledge of the policies and procedures set forth in the National Archives *Handbook of Procedures*.
6. Knowledge of the rudimentary techniques of editing historical documents.

7. Knowledge of the basic techniques of repair and preservation and photographic duplication.

8. A proper attitude toward archives and archival responsibilities as measured by the standard expressed in the "Archivist's Code."

Note that a distinction is made between knowledge of the content of a body of records and knowledge of the subject fields or disciplines to which they chiefly relate. In order to learn what the records contain one must ordinarily study their provenance, the functions and organization of the agencies in which they accumulated, and their arrangement. One can do this most effectively by the normal archival process of examining the records themselves, inventorying them, cataloging them, and searching in them. Considerable knowledge of this kind should be possessed by one who is to be promoted to grade GS-7 and much more by one who is to be promoted to grade GS-9.

But mastery of the subject fields and disciplines to which records chiefly relate goes beyond familiarity with the records themselves. It involves a systematic study of a more academic kind — the study of texts, treatises, and monographs apart from the records. It can often be best acquired through enrollment in courses at a university; and therefore academic credits beyond the minimum required for entrance at the GS-5 level should be recognized as evidence of attainment in this connection. Highly specialized knowledge, however, ought not to be looked for at grades GS-7 and 9; and versatility in handling diverse assignments ought still to be the main consideration. Positions in these grades are normally filled by promotion. If they are to be well filled, they should be filled by the persons of highest broad competence in the National Archives as a whole and not necessarily by persons within the sections or branches where the vacancies occur. Overemphasis by some supervisors on familiarity with the records under their immediate charge and on specific subject knowledge as distinct from adaptability and ability to acquire essential knowledge readily has led to a degree of parochialism in some of the record branches and in some instances to the pushing up of persons who, in fact, had only a slender edge of superiority in their special fields of knowledge and who were clearly not good prospects for further advancement either as experts or as supervisors.

Beyond the grade of GS-9 further advancement can take either of two directions, depending on the inclination of the person involved and the opportunities that happen to present themselves. An archivist may concentrate on achieving ever greater mastery in a

particularly important subject field and gradually qualify as a true expert; or he may broaden his interests, enlarging the number of fields in which he has moderate competence, and advance in the direction of supervisory and administrative responsibility.

The National Archives has found resources for setting up only a very few full-time expert's positions, and those are only at an intermediate grade. But as more and more of the basic work of inventorying is accomplished, greater opportunities for highly qualified subject experts will develop. The number and kinds of fields in which experts are in fact employed will obviously depend on the availability of money, the urgency of the need, and the availability of qualified persons to fill the positions.

But whether we have experts or not, we must have administrators and supervisors to direct and coordinate the work of the great majority of employees. For these positions we should have a good reservoir of broadly competent persons who have demonstrated their ability to deal effectively with people and to plan and carry through work programs.

To say that those who aspire to administrative and supervisory positions need to be broadly competent is not to say that they have no need for training in some field of scholarship and an appreciation of the aims and methods of scholars. On the contrary. The National Archives, as an agency dedicated to the service of scholars, should be directed by persons who have at least had some training or experience as scholars. For this reason, in filling positions above the grade of GS-9, the Archivist gives considerable preference to persons who can show scholarly achievements approximately equivalent to those represented by a Ph. D. degree. This preference applies not only to the positions of experts but also to those of supervisors in the professional archivist's ladder. If no candidates qualified in all respects for promotion into the higher positions are available within the organization, the National Archives will not hesitate to go outside to find them.

In establishing a policy for staffing a professional organization one must decide to what extent and at what levels one is prepared to stratify personnel. The National Archives has always maintained a pretty clear distinction between professional and subprofessional positions and at present draws at least half of its professional archivists from the GS-5 register. It would rely more heavily on that register if the yield in talents were of a higher quality, and in time the register will doubtless be improved to the point where this can be done. Graduation of subprofessional and clerical em-

ployees into professional positions will become more difficult as the qualifications of persons on the register with whom they must compete becomes higher.

No register now exists for grades above GS-5, all higher positions being filled by promotion or reassignment within the General Services Administration, by transfer from other agencies, or (in rare instances) by authorized special recruitment. But the requirements noted above for positions of grade GS-11 or higher have somewhat the same stratifying effect at the GS-11 level as would setting up and using a separate examination for such jobs.

In order to reduce stratification and to provide for the continuous improvement of its personnel, the National Archives has inaugurated a broad program for training staff members and encouraging them to pursue such studies on the job and at universities as will enable them to meet the standards set for promotion. It cannot undertake to give every person who enters at the lowest professional grade all the training necessary for him to meet the requirements of higher grades. Advanced academic training is still left very largely to the enterprise of the employees themselves. The National Archives does, however, freely grant full- or part-time educational furloughs, during which employees may attend universities with an assurance that they may return to full-time employment and to a prospect of competitive advantage in the filling of higher jobs. It also offers many opportunities for scholarly work in the line of duty, which may, if well done, be accepted as the equivalent of an advanced degree. In the future, moreover, if pending legislation is enacted, some limited opportunities may be offered for advanced university study at Government expense in fields that are particularly germane to the work of the National Archives and Records Service. Such opportunities, if they materialize, should bring about a healthy emulation among all employees to prove their superior earnestness and ability.

All professional employees in the National Archives are encouraged to develop their knowledge in special subject areas concurrently with their more general competency as archivists. Supervisors are expected to give those under their direction, either formally or informally, intensive training in the special subject matter of the records with which they must deal. All professionals are encouraged to have some independent scholarly interest and to write for publication either on archival matters or on subjects for which the records in the National Archives provide important

source material. Publication in the *Accessions Journal* or the *Staff Information* series is assured for all significant and competent writings about the records or about archival problems. Such writings and scholarly contributions in history, economics, government, and allied fields; activity in learned societies; teaching advanced courses at a university; and purposeful travel — all are recognized as partial equivalents of graduate degrees.

In addition to its general provisions for encouraging employees to keep up their scholarly interests and qualify themselves for advancement, the National Archives has recently adopted a plan for attracting recruits of higher scholastic qualifications and for training them methodically in the rudiments of archival theory and practice. Under this plan the basic grade for full professional archivists has been raised from GS-5 to GS-7. Although archivists are still recruited at grade GS-5, that grade is now regarded only as an apprentice grade. Persons occupying GS-5 positions are subject to close and fairly constant supervision, whereas those in grade GS-7 positions are expected to perform their duties with only general instruction and limited review — usually on a spot-check basis.

Some adjustments have had to be made in the staffing pattern of the organization, and work assignments have had to be somewhat redistributed to support the higher basic professional grade. Chores that were formerly imposed on junior archivists are now more properly relegated to subprofessional employees. The effect of this adjustment has been to increase the general efficiency of operation and to raise the morale of most professional employees in the lowest grade. New employees during their first year are given an intensive course of training in archival theory and practice and a series of fairly exacting tests. Those who pass the tests with an average of 70 or better and produce a satisfactory test exercise in arrangement and description, besides performing their regular duties to the satisfaction of their supervisors, are automatically assigned at the end of the year to GS-7 positions as qualified professional archivists without having to wait for a vacancy to occur at that grade. Those who fail and have not already acquired Civil Service status are dropped from the service. Those who fail but have previously acquired status are reassigned to grade GS-5 subprofessional positions. Employees belonging to this third class are permitted to repeat the tests but not the course with the next training group; and, if they qualify, they are promoted. If they fail the second time, their reassignment as subprofessionals is made permanent.

The course is intended to develop in its members a broad versatility in their profession that will enable them to handle intelligently assignments involving unfamiliar subjects and records and so will make possible a greater degree of flexibility of assignment. It aims to give all GS-5 archivists a correct understanding of the overall organization and functions of the National Archives and Records Service and its place in the General Services Administration, a sound knowledge of basic archival principles, some mastery of necessary archival skills, and a general familiarity with all the more important record holdings of the National Archives. All professional employees in the National Archives need such training as well as an intimate knowledge of the holdings and operations of the particular branches in which they work. It is the essential minimum of information that all should have who are to render intelligent reference service and perform the other common duties of archivists. It needs to be given methodically and cannot economically be left to casual absorption.

The course for the fiscal year 1954 was given to all GS-5 archivists, including several who had been in the grade for a long time. The instruction consisted of required readings (for each of which mimeographed review questions were provided), weekly 2-hour lecture and discussion sessions, and practice finding-aid and arrangement projects, individually supervised. Each chief archivist described the principal holdings of his branch; the heads of the technical laboratories explained and demonstrated their work; and others most conversant with the several topics discussed appraisal policies, the principles of arrangement and description, documentary publication (including microfilm publication and historical editing), and the programs of the Federal Register Division, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, the Records Management Division, and the General Services Administration as a whole.

Each employee enrolled in the course was allowed 4 hours a week of official time to do the required reading and study and 48 hours for the practice finding-aid project.

There were five tests:

1. Verbal ability (an objective test composed of parts of several printed tests provided by the Civil Service Commission).
2. Professional knowledge, parts A-E (true-false and multiple choice).
3. Professional knowledge, part F (true-false).
4. Discussion test of professional knowledge and written expression (subjective).
5. Test finding-aid project. This test had to be accomplished in 6 days without supervision or coaching.

The first three tests were rated according to key by personnel of the General Services Administration Training Branch. The fourth was rated by a panel of four senior archivists, each acting independently without knowledge of the ratings given by the others and without knowledge of the identity of the examinees. The results are tabulated below. For each trainee the numerical grades received on tests 1-4 are given; the letters U or S for test 5 represent unsatisfactory or satisfactory completion of his finding-aid project. The letters A, B, C, and D, under the heading for test 4, head columns of ratings given by the four different readers of that test. The letter F after a trainee's number indicates his failure.

TRAINEE	TEST 1	TEST 2	TEST 3	TEST 4				Average	AVERAGE (Tests 1-4)	TEST 5 (Project)
				A	B	C	D			
1 F	49	69	81	63	50	61	72	62	65	U
2	65	85	84	<i>Resigned</i>						—
3 F	55	74	72	68	70	63	67	67	67	S
4	73	62	86	67	70	59	70	67	72	S
5	90	93	89	83	75	80	89	82	89	S
6	59	65	68	<i>Resigned</i>						U
7	84	83	77	71	70	65	79	71	79	S
8	70	78	77	71	70	65	70	69	74	S
9	63	76	70	73	70	69	76	72	70	S
10	74	86	86	74	50	70	72	67	78	S
11	80	90	84	90	80	82	86	85	85	S
12*	55	71	74	73	75	70	80	75	69	S
13	81	87	81	80	75	67	74	74	81	S
14	68	79	72	72	75	70	77	74	73	S
15	68	73	72	74	70	70	65	70	71	S
16	79	81	84	74	75	75	84	77	80	S
17	71	76	71	69	70	68	67	69	72	S
18	54	75	<i>Excused for the year on account of sickness</i>							—
19 F	62	71	67	61	70	58	54	61	65	U
20 F	70	69	67	64	69	61	68	66	68	S
21	76	89	81	82	75	71	84	78	81	S
22	61	81	81	85	85	91	86	87	78	S
23	80	88	90	85	80	74	94	83	85	S
24	83	86	81	80	85	81	80	82	83	S
25	67	89	79	85	80	82	84	83	80	S
26	54	75	85	80	70	71	76	74	72	S
27	81	89	86	79	70	70	87	77	83	S
28	79	92	79	75	75	74	79	76	82	S
29	58	81	75	69	50	75	70	66	70	S
30	65	87	79	67	69	59	60	64	74	S
31	68	81	74	74	70	70	68	71	74	S
32	84	79	72	68	70	60	65	66	75	S
33	71	90	84	81	85	82	88	84	82	S
34 F	42	69	67	57	50	58	54	55	58	U
35			82	78	75	68	86	77		S
36	<i>Entered late</i>									S
37	<i>Entered late</i>									S
AVERAGE:	69	80	78					73		

* Passed on special oral examination.

From this tabulation it appears that the grades on the two tests measuring verbal ability (tests 1 and 4) were relatively low. All but two members of the class made their lowest grade on one of these two tests. Nineteen made their two lowest grades on them. This result was, of course, to be expected in almost any group examined after a course planned mainly to impart factual information. It points, however, to a deficiency that is important for the National Archives.

Of the 34 employees (old and new) enrolled at the beginning of the course, 25 passed and were promoted; 2 dropped out on leaving the agency; 1 was excused for the year on account of sickness and permitted to wait and take the course with the 1954-55 group; 1, having made an average score of 69, was orally examined by a panel of five and passed; 5 failed to pass the course and, already having status, were transferred to GS-5 archives assistant positions. Of those who failed none were probationers without status, and therefore none were dropped from the payroll. [All who failed were given an opportunity to qualify by repeating one or more of the examinations.] The results of the examination correlated closely with the estimates of the trainees' supervisors — [those who failed the course were in all cases recognized by the supervisors as their weakest employees]; those whose examination grades fell in the upper quarter were recognized as the best qualified intellectually.

The testing feature of the course is of especial importance, for it accomplishes what has never been accomplished before — the early elimination of persons who have no aptitude for the work. Theoretically Civil Service rules have always allowed the dropping of unsatisfactory employees during their probationary year, but supervisors are seldom willing to exercise the authority given them in this regard, with the result that a number of employees not well suited for archival work have been carried along and a few, through compounded error, even have been promoted. The new plan brings out clearly and objectively the weaknesses of the trainees and removes from their supervisors the distasteful duty of passing adverse judgment on them. It also gives the "front offices" a chance to appraise directly the talents of junior members of the staff. The Director of Archival Management himself gave several of the lectures, presided over most of the discussions, and supervised some of the examinations, gaining in this way a good deal of firsthand knowledge of the trainees as persons.

In fiscal year 1955 the number of trainees has not exceeded eight at any one time; and it has, therefore, been possible to conduct the

lecture and discussion sessions on a more intimate basis. The members of the group meet in the offices or stack areas of the persons who conduct the sessions so that they can see the situations and records that are under consideration and discuss more freely and informally the problems presented. The sessions have been shortened from 2 hours to 1 hour, but the time allowed for practice finding-aid projects has been increased to 60 hours.

The objection has been raised that new recruits are not ready to receive training of the general and theoretical kind offered in the basic training course until after they have worked for some time with records. This objection, though not without merit, is outweighed by other considerations. Although it is true that brand-new recruits who have had no experience whatever with records have difficulty at first in relating the theoretical discussions to concrete realities, their concurrent practical experience on the job gradually overcomes this handicap; and their practical experience is made more meaningful for them by their theoretical study just as their theoretical study is made more significant by their daily experience. If the course in general theory were postponed until the new employees had had a year or so of practical experience, it might indeed be more easily understood by them; but the experience itself would be less fruitful of growth and would tend, as it has often tended, to fix in them a narrower conception of archival work than they are likely to receive from the combination of general study in a group of persons from different operating units and daily work with particular records in the units to which they are assigned. Beyond this there are three important administrative considerations:

1. In order to make the system work and bring the GS-5 professional recruits within their training year to a level of knowledge and proficiency that would justify promoting them to full-fledged professional status it was necessary to establish an intensive course, planned and carried out centrally. Such a course had, inevitably, to concentrate on the general principles and skills of the profession and on other matters of general relevancy, rather than go into such matters as special subject knowledge or familiarity with particular bodies of records. These latter elements can and should be acquired in the record branches.

2. Much that is taught in the course relates to procedures and regulations of the National Archives and Records Service, which have never been and can hardly be well taught in the operating units.

3. As has already been pointed out, the basic training course serves, with its tests, as a means of evaluating the capabilities of new employees before their probationary period has ended and facilitates the elimination of those who are unsuited to the work.

In fiscal year 1956 the National Archives plans to coordinate its basic training course with the general academic program in records and archives administration that has been offered by the American University in cooperation with the National Archives and the Maryland Hall of Records since 1939. As a part of this program the course will be open both to GS-5 archivists on the National Archives staff and to students enrolled at the university, and it will carry 6 semester hours of credit toward an academic degree or toward a certificate in archives administration for those who register for the course at the university. The university will make several scholarships available for National Archives trainees, enabling them to take for credit the inservice training course and one additional course in history, political science, or public administration.

The archives course will extend over two semesters and will be carried in the catalog of the university for the fall semester under the title "History and Administration of Archives: Principles and Techniques," to be given in the National Archives Building during regular office hours by the Director of Archival Management, Theodore R. Schellenberg. The spring semester will be devoted to inservice training projects, to be carried out during regular office hours in the record branches of the National Archives under the general direction of Dr. Schellenberg. The qualifying tests designed to select those on the National Archives staff who are to be promoted or dropped from the professional rolls will be in addition to the regular examinations required for university credit. All persons from outside the National Archives desiring to serve internships in archival work at the National Archives will have to do so during the 4 months of the spring semester.

One continuing handicap of the basic training course is the paucity of good literature dealing with problems that arise most frequently in the National Archives. The British and Dutch manuals are not wholly applicable to our problems. For this reason Dr. Schellenberg has written a textbook, entitled *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*, which incorporates the substance of lectures he gave last year as Fulbright lecturer in Australia. This book, soon to be published, will go far toward overcoming the present deficiency.

As a means of producing more specialized writings and carrying the inservice training program above the level of the basic course, Dr. Schellenberg has also organized a series of seminar conferences for senior archivists (section chiefs and some of their assistants)

to start in September 1955. The members of these conferences will study various professional topics and report their findings in papers, which will be subjected to group criticism. The topics to be covered in the first 2 years will relate particularly to the past record-keeping practices of the Federal Government — the conditions in the agencies that gave rise to each, the personal forces at work, the efficiency of the systems for administrative purposes, and their consequences for all archival operations.

It is hoped that many of the reports on these topics will be substantial enough to warrant their publication as *Staff Information Papers* or *Bulletins* of the National Archives or in the form of a single volume of collected essays.

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