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THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

OCTOBER 13 AND 14, 1939

THE Society of American Archivists held its third annual meeting in Annapolis, Maryland, October 13 and 14, 1939. The historic city of Annapolis furnished a delightful background for the meeting. There was a total registration of 108. Members came from the South, from the Middle West, from Canada and New England. The papers were of the highest quality and stimulated lively discussion.

The stay in Annapolis was made pleasant by the efficient planning of the Committee on Local Arrangements of which Hon. Herbert R. O'Connor, governor of Maryland, was chairman and Dr. Morris L. Radoff was secretary. Of special note was the luncheon at the Officers' Club at the U. S. Naval Academy, the tour of the Maryland Hall of Records with its courteous staff of workers who generously stayed at their posts until late hours to welcome visitors, and the tour of the historic parts of Annapolis.

Mr. Solon J. Buck, director of publications of the National Archives, presided at the opening session on the Editing and Publication of Archival Documents, in the Mirror Room of Carvel Hall Hotel. Mr. C. C. Crittenden, secretary of the North Carolina Historical Commission read the first paper on "Publication Policies for Archival and Historical Agencies." It was in the nature of a report of the activities of the Committee on Publications of the Society of American Archivists of which Dr. Crittenden is chairman. He first called attention to the main parts of the report of the committee for 1938 suggesting ways of stimulating and aiding the publication of archival material. He then brought the report up to date by outlining the activities of the committee to September, 1939. Among these were plans for the preparation and publication of a manual to cover in a

practical way, the copying, editing, and publication of documentary materials and the re-thinking of the problem of publication in the light of new techniques. Other projects which might be stimulated by the committee were suggested as follows: a manual for the preparation of calendars, inventories, and guides in connection with archives and manuscript collections; an American manual of archival administration; and encouraging the publication of administrative reports by archival agencies throughout the country. He concluded that the committee, or some other agency, might well circularize American archivists for information on accomplishments and plans, and this compiled and occasionally published, preferably in *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*.

The second paper at the opening session was read by Mr. Julian P. Boyd, director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, on "St. Columba, Peter Force, and Robert C. Binkley: The Lesson They Teach." Mr. Boyd developed an interesting and informative account of the historical aspects of documentary reproduction from the days of the copyist in the monastery, through the invention of printing, and Peter Force (who served as a symbolic figure representing the work of such men as Sparks, Hazard, and a score of others) to the modern methods of mimeograph, hectograph, and microphotography. He thus drew attention to the new versus the traditional methods of publication. He concluded that traditional methods of publication by printing might be retained for state and national publications, but urged the adoption of the principle of free interchange of documentary material reproduced by microphotography, or some modern process, among local and state agencies. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, he reported, has officially adopted a principle of free interchange of documentary material with other institutions and has formally abandoned warehouse theories of documentary custodianship.

Mr. Clarence E. Carter, editor of the territorial papers, United States Department of State, led the discussion. Although not condemning the new methods, he cautioned those present of the danger that "the people we are trying to reach may be neglected" by new methods and he proposed that the development of microphotography be fostered but that the publication of extensive series and calendars of federal and state archives be continued in the traditional manner.

He urged caution also in the preparation of a manual of procedure, opposing standardization but approving the usefulness of a mere codification of basic rules.

Mr. Crittenden pointed out that editors of experience and attainment did not need the manual but that it would be a great help to others and solicited the aid and advice of such men as Dr. Carter.

Miss Jean Stephenson, chairman of the Genealogical Records Committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution, emphasized her need for a manual. She stated that she finds it necessary to write about four hundred letters a year to amateur and lay writers outlining rules for copying deeds and other historical work, which, she said, was good on information but poor on style.

Mr. Buck pointed out that a trained French archivist had prepared a manual containing excellent suggestions for the amateur in simple language but that it would not be applicable to problems in this country.

Mr. George J. Miller, director of the Historical Records Survey in New York City, took issue with emphasis on traditional methods and stated that a manual should be available to all who want to work in the records and argued the low cost of microphotography.

Mr. Dorsey W. Hyde of the National Archives felt that standardization would not be desirable and that there was a danger in encouraging microphotography since it might lead to a decrease in the amount of documentary publication by present processes.

Mr. Victor H. Paltsits, New York Public Library, opposed the levelling process implied in the principle of making manuals of procedure available and the employment of new techniques and pointed out that each editor faces different problems and that general rules for editing would be difficult to draft. He felt that photostat and microfilm copies could not take the place of original documents for careful study and that there was no justification for undertaking the editing of documents unless it be by trained persons with trained eyes. With reference to the free interchange of materials among depositories, he cautioned that there was a difference between co-operation between agencies in the use of material and selling copies of collections for which large sums had been paid.

Mr. James F. Kenney, Dominion Archives, Ottawa, Canada, also thought that care must be exercised in the use of reproductions and

cited an instance where, in using a photostat of a medieval document, an Irish scholar mistook a hole in the document for writing and consequently made a serious blunder.

Mr. Herbert A. Kellar, director of the McCormick Historical Association, said that the historian could be of more influence in world affairs if he got out of the "ivory tower" and argued that many people without formal training could do good work if they were supplied with guides and manuals.

Mr. Buck said he thought that this session might be looked back upon as an historic event.

The luncheon on Friday took place in the Officers' Club at the United States Naval Academy. Mr. A. R. Newsome, president of the Society of American Archivists, in introducing the governor of Maryland and the chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, said that the Society was signally honored by having the two highest ranking officials of the state to welcome it. The first to speak was Honorable Carroll T. Bond, chief judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals. He welcomed the Society to Annapolis in the name of the Hall of Records Commission of which he is chairman. He paid high tribute to the work of the late Dr. James A. Robertson in the development of the Maryland Hall of Records, to the archivist of the United States and the staff of the National Archives for advice and assistance, and to Mr. Morris L. Radoff, the new archivist of Maryland. He said that holders of political offices in Maryland were interested in the cultural affairs of the state and in the preservation of its records but evinced no disposition to interfere with the archivist.

The governor, Honorable Herbert R. O'Connor, extended the welcome of the state of Maryland and after an interesting review of the historic events leading to the building of the Hall of Records, stated his own concern in the important work in which the members of the Society of American Archivists are engaged and emphasized the fact that the self-perpetuating Hall of Records Commission guaranteed that there would be no radical change in the present policy of non-interference with the direction of the archives.

Mr. Herbert A. Kellar presided at the first afternoon session on State and Local Archives. In his paper on "The Public Relations of Archival Depositories," Mr. William D. McCain of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History outlined a policy whereby state archivists might better cultivate friendly relations with the general

public. Indicating that most state archivists realize the value of newspaper publicity and make special efforts to cultivate the press, he felt that scholars often have a tendency to regard the activities of patriotic organizations with amused tolerance. He suggested that such a policy is unwise and that the membership in such organizations is made up of responsible citizens and taxpayers, and usually they have considerable influence with legislative bodies. Other groups which the state archivist might cultivate profitably, Mr. McCain continued, are genealogists, one of the most vociferous groups that engage in research, and legislative and administrative departments, because the archivist must have appropriations from the legislature and records from state departments. He concluded that one of the most neglected phases is the lack of contact with businessmen's organizations, and finally that opportunities for making friends in the schools and colleges should not be neglected.

Mr. Lewis G. VanderVelde of the University of Michigan, in his paper on "Local Records," described the program and aims of the recently established Michigan Historical Collections of the University of Michigan. He urged the advantages of a state-supported agency as a depository for state and local historical records, and argued for the desirability of such an agency being wholly separate from any institution having divergent aims—such as libraries and museums. Insisting that the objective of the collector of local records should always be collection for use by the history student, he discounted the value of collecting simply for its own sake, or even simply for preservation. He explained that although a few local archives have found their way into the Michigan Historical Collections and have been gratefully accepted, it is anticipated that the Michigan Historical Collections will always remain primarily a depository for local historical records, and that the proper housing of local archival records will not be attained in Michigan until adequate financial provision is made for their care in Lansing or in individual centers throughout the state.

Mr. William R. Hogan of Louisiana State University gave a critical résumé of the work of the Historical Records Survey and pointed out the danger of curtailment of the project leaving incomplete results, particularly when the work is largely completed. He thought that repetition was too frequent in the county inventories and that they were spending too much time on research and writing.

Although they might be venturing too deeply into legal essays, he thought that some of the county histories were the best yet written. An Englishman was quoted as saying recently that these county inventories will be as valuable as the medieval inventories to English history. Mr. Hogan concluded that continued federal guidance of the project was desirable and he felt that state records should eventually be under federal control.

Miss G. B. Krum, chief of the Burton Historical Collections of the Detroit Public Library, Mr. Lester J. Cappon, archivist of the University of Virginia, Mr. Victor H. Paltsits, and others took part in an interesting and constructive discussion.

The annual dinner of the Society took place in the Mirror Room of the Carvel Hall Hotel and was presided over by Mr. George H. Ryden, archivist of Delaware. Before presenting Mr. Newsome, the chairman introduced those at the speaker's table, including Mrs. James A. Robertson as a guest of honor. The presidential address, which appeared in the October, 1939, issue of *THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST*, was on a par with the high standard set by Mr. Newsome on two previous occasions, and these three addresses are indicative of the strength of purpose instilled into this organization by his presidency.

Following the dinner the members of the Society adjourned to the Ballroom of the hotel for the annual business meeting. President Newsome read a brief farewell message, a copy of which is filed in the archives of the Society. The report of the secretary, Mr. Philip C. Brooks, who was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting because of serious illness, was read by Mr. Emmett J. Leahy, who acted as secretary during the meeting. Mr. Julian P. Boyd read his report as treasurer, and it was approved. A fitting tribute was paid to the late Dr. James A. Robertson, vice-president of the Society, upon whose invitation the Society met in Annapolis for the third annual meeting. Resolutions were passed in appreciation of the work of the committees on local arrangements, program, and pronunciation, and following the report of the nominating committee, the following officers were elected: Mr. Waldo G. Leland, president, Mr. Theodore C. Blegen, vice-president, Mr. Philip C. Brooks, secretary, Mr. Julian P. Boyd, treasurer, and Mr. William D. McCain to the council.

The session on Saturday morning on Problems in Archival Administration was presided over by Mr. Lester J. Cappon. Mr. Em-

mett J. Leahy of the National Archives, recently returned from a nine-month European tour, read a paper on "Aspects of European Archival Administration, 1939." He described new buildings in Prague and other European cities constructed with a view to possible air raids and quick mobility of records; the status of administration of archives in various countries, the archivist being responsible to the chief executive in three countries, to the minister of interior in three, to the minister of education in six, to a member of the judiciary in one, and to the minister of finance in one. Although the principle of the Historical Records Survey is ignored abroad, Mr. Leahy noted that in Germany, retired officers, clerks, and teachers constitute a corps, called "archive protectors" who report to the Reich on location, condition, and discovery of archives. In describing archival training abroad, he said that while European courses include palaeography and diplomatics, not particularly applicable to our problems in the United States, the European practice of conducting laboratory courses would be advisable.

The second paper, "A Study of Muller, Feith, and Fruin's Manual in Relation to Current Archival Problems," was read by Mr. Arthur H. Leavitt of the National Archives. This work by eminent Dutch archivists was first published in 1898. A German translation was made in 1905, the Italian in 1908, and the French in 1910. The authors include a broad definition of archives which if written today would include photographs and sound recordings. They place the date line at twenty-five years, with exceptions, and respect the principle of provenance. They provide, however, for rearrangement of records obviously out of order and the replacing of documents coming from outside which were previously lost or stolen. They would not require the preservation of the original arrangement in subdivisions. Following this paper, Mr. Buck pointed out that through modesty Mr. Leavitt had omitted to report that he had an English translation of this work in press.

Mr. Harold S. Burt, examiner of public records in Connecticut, outlined the principles followed in that state with respect to "Specifying Inks and Papers for Government Offices." The state chemist tests and approves inks, typewriter ribbons, and papers which are authorized for use in state and local offices. In the case of inks, the chemist approved five out of twenty-five tested for sediment, scum, iron content, fastness of color, and action on steel pens. Thirty-nine

typewriter ribbons out of fifty-five submitted were approved after tests for thread count, even edge, filling, life, and fading. The paper test followed is similar to that of the U. S. Bureau of Standards and includes the following specifications: 100 per cent rag stock, minimum of 5 per cent acid, .5 per cent glue; and tests on folding, ruling, tearing, writing (to determine whether it is clean-cut and if there is suitable penetration of ink), erasure, and effect of hand lotions. In conclusion, Mr. Burt read a law passed July 1, 1939, providing that all local records be kept in fireproof rooms or cabinets, and that the examiner of public records may purchase at town expense such equipment as he specifies if local officials do not act voluntarily upon his recommendation.

In the discussion which followed, Miss Helen L. Chatfield of the treasury archives asked whether these specifications referred to office stationery and carbon paper. Mr. Burt said it referred only to bound volumes and cards, that is, to so-called "permanent records" in the narrow sense.

The luncheon on Saturday was held in the Ballroom of the Carvel Hall Hotel with Mr. W. Stull Holt, of Johns Hopkins University, presiding. The Society enjoyed a surprise in the presence of Mr. Archibald MacLeish, librarian of Congress, who was induced to speak briefly before the scheduled address by Mr. Herbert Heaton of Princeton University.

Mr. MacLeish, while remarking that he had of course been unable to formulate a program for the library in the brief space of time since October 1, nevertheless asserted his conviction that under present conditions, archivists and librarians, scholars and writers, must work together in defense of the cultural values which are now threatened. He urged the early drafting of the broad outlines of a plan of co-operative effort. As an example he suggested that such tools as the Historical Records Survey should be utilized by archivists, librarians, and scholars in general in the furthering of their objectives. Finally, he indicated his desire to serve as the agent of those who believe with him that the defense of the democratic position in culture and scholarship is the concern of all men of letters.

Mr. Heaton, an authority upon English economic history, then gave a stimulating and interesting address on "Finding, Preserving, and Using Business Records." After mentioning outstanding books which have been written from business records and relating several

stories of how collections of such records have been found, for the most part by accident, Mr. Heaton developed the thesis that a good set of business records reflect the action of groups more accurately than do public records dealing with the "thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not" of legislative decrees. He also outlined the four-point program of a group of business men in St. Paul wherein they report, deposit, preserve, and discuss problems in respect to present and future business records. In conclusion, he emphasized the need of a generalized description of records in various depositories, a kind of union-list, and advocated the formation of an organization which would have this as one of its aims.

The afternoon session on Maps as Archival Records was held in the Mirror Room of Carvel Hall Hotel with Mr. Fred W. Shipman of the National Archives presiding. The first paper was read by Mr. Lloyd A. Brown, of the Wm. L. Clements Library on "The Special Problems of Map Administration."

In discussing the problem of proper evaluation of maps, he emphasized that the map division of a library should not be subsidiary to the newspaper department, as it often is, but be separately maintained. Another problem arising in the administration of maps results from increased accessions due to the large number of maps now available. Mr. Brown, in dealing with the discouraging problem of filing and storage, urged that large maps be cut and hinged and not folded, and that maps be placed in folders in drawers and filed flat. Valuable hints were given in the consideration of other problems such as those of classification, repair, cleaning, and mounting. The public, he concluded, will make more and better use of maps when they are made available and more easily accessible.

Speaking on "The Historian and the Use of Archival Maps," Mr. Samuel Flagg Bemis of Yale University called upon general historians to make a more lavish use of maps, both constructive and facsimile. He pointed out the meager utilization which the general standard historians of the United States have made of cartography and suggested that the historical reviews might devote more attention to the reproduction of maps. He contrasted the paucity of such maps in general histories with the excellence of such material in textbooks, and felt that the more humble textbook writers might contribute something by way of example to the more exalted historians. He had these specific recommendations to make: better geographical instruction in

the elementary schools to make students more map conscious and map demanding; the preparation of facsimile collections in multiple copies for representative libraries, after the model of Hulburt's collection of *Crown Maps*, and Karpinski's facsimiles of American maps in European archives; the introduction of courses in historical cartography in graduate instruction in history; and more consultation with expert cartographers. He recommended historical cartography as a career for ambitious young scholars looking for a field that is not too crowded.

Mr. S. W. Boggs of the United States Department of State was the third speaker. In his paper on "The Use of Maps in Boundary Problems," he referred to the fact that the lack of maps, or the existence of inadequate ones, is highly disconcerting. The properties of maps make their use in boundary disputes different from the use of other sources, he said, and maps often portray more geographic knowledge or ignorance in a square inch than is possible in an equal area of text. He pointed out that boundary controversies may be either simplified or greatly complicated by the publication of maps and disputes may even arise from the issuance of a postage stamp bearing a map. Their value in such disputes depends upon their accuracy, reliability, and impartiality, although Mr. Boggs indicated that sometimes maps are specially prepared to win an argument, as for example map "A" for the arbitration of the northeastern boundary dispute with Great Britain in 1827-1831 and some of the maps prepared for the Venezuela-British Guiana Boundary Commission, for the Tacna-Arica arbitration, and for the Chaco boundary dispute.

The fourth paper, "Archival Maps as Illustrated by Those in the National Archives," was read by Mr. W. L. G. Joerg, chief of the Division of Maps. He said that the principle of provenance which underlies the organization of the regular custodial divisions in the National Archives, according to which a separate division is provided for each legislative branch and each executive department of the federal government, applies also to the Division of Maps even though they receive records from all departments and branches. From the geographer's point of view a map collection might be arranged and classified regionally but because of the inadvisability of cutting the threads connecting the maps with their related textual records in other custodial divisions, they regard the regional classification as inappropriate. The 38,000 maps now in the National Archives,

largely from the Senate and five executive departments are filed with *respect pour les fonds* but they apply the regional principle, bringing together the entries concerning different maps in various collections that deal with the same area or subject in a card catalogue.

Mr. Frank Stringfellow Barr, president of St. Johns College, Annapolis, presided at the dinner session Saturday evening. The program called for remarks from the new president, and Mr. Leland being in South America, it was decided by a group of members to ask Mr. Julian P. Boyd, director of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, to read the recently formulated policies adopted by that society. Mr. Boyd said the report was written by a committee composed largely of lay members. The policy as adopted looked forward to the broadening of the scope of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History*, a recognition of the society's obligation to the community, and the use of modern techniques in the reproduction of manuscripts for use in a more liberal policy of sale or exchange with other depositories.

The paper on "The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park," prepared by R. D. W. Connor, archivist of United States, was read by Mr. Solon J. Buck. Mr. Connor was called away from the meeting due to the sad news of a death in his family. He pointed out that the president had no thought of a memorial to himself by the establishment of this library, and that the name of the depository was suggested by the advisory committee and retained only after overriding the vigorous protest of the president. The committee was of the opinion that the president's collections are too voluminous to be adequately preserved and administered as a private library and too important as source materials for the study of recent American history to justify their being held permanently in private custody and it welcomed the president's plan as an opportunity to set up for the first time in this country, under federal control and for the use of the public, an extensive collection of source material to a specific period in American history. After agreeing that under modern conditions decentralization of such collections has certain definite advantages, the committee agreed that the solution of the problem was to carve out of the Hyde Park estate, a sixteen-acre lot, to have erected thereon with private funds a modern fireproof building to serve as a permanent repository for the president's papers, books, and the other historical material, and to donate the whole as a completed project to the United States to be maintained for the benefit of the public. The

collection will include over 6,000,000 pieces of executive correspondence; 15,000 books and pamphlets; 50 boxes of material containing personal and unofficial papers of Mr. Roosevelt's two administrations as governor of New York; some New York state material; over 400 pictures and prints; and 37 ship models. Louis A. Simon, who supervised the construction of the National Archives, is the architect, and the building, now under construction, should be completed by the early fall of 1940.

Dr. James F. Kenney of the Dominion Archives, Ottawa, made the final address of the meeting on "What the Research Scholar Expects of an Archival Establishment." Dr. Kenney emphasized that while archives are essentially for the use of government officials, they could, by a little additional expenditure, be made available to all persons who have a legitimate desire to use them, and thus yield ten- or hundredfold returns. He pointed out that it is the duty of the archivist to organize material and to aid students in research. Research scholars are sometimes weak in knowledge of how to find their way about, and the archivist must be a scholar, a practiced psychologist, and be filled with the milk of human patience. Since many students and scholars are weak on finance, it is the duty of the archivist to allow them to get as much work as possible accomplished in a short time, and he pointed out that at Ottawa students may work in the Dominion Archives twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. It is also the function of the archivist, he thought, to assemble auxiliary helps for students such as: a good reference library, transcripts from related series, guides to documents, and provide facilities for inexpensive reproductions.

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