

# In Memoriam

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LESTER KRUGER BORN  
1903–1969

Just as he was the unbiased and very nearly perfect archival theorist, so he could have been—had his potential been sufficiently perceived and had his worth received the recognition it merited—one of those properly unopinionated and unprejudiced practitioners of archives administration who have successfully guided the National Archives in its youth and kept it on course at its several turns of the road. Denied that opportunity, even though he had demonstrated in postwar Germany an unusual ability to organize and administer archival endeavors, he continued nevertheless to march in the very first rank of contemporary archivists in the United States and significantly and especially on the international scene. To him all archivists are indebted: some, as in Germany, for his uncompromising stand on the need to reopen the archival schools for young people in the face of opposition; some, as here and elsewhere, because, through his writings, his activities, his *savoir faire*, and his example, he taught us how to behave in the archivist's one world.

For many he has been the authority signing himself "L. K. B." at the end of the article on "Archives" appearing in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; and one must turn again and again to that exposition to gain an appreciation of the keenest of intellects. Referring there to the technology of our craft, he observed, "This inventiveness of man has brought newer problems as it has solved older ones"; and his perception of the scope of these problems is an insightful one. Again, with particular reference to the *stages techniques* of the Direction des Archives de France, he states their purpose to be one of providing "the traditionally trained archivist with the understanding which would enable him to cope with the avalanche always about to slide upon his institution."

Far from understanding the nature of the avalanche, many among us, it must regretfully be said, give no appearance of knowing that it is there. This man, however—and this is my conviction—saw it, feared it, and had the knowledge to protect himself from the dangers it threatened. It may be that his special qualifications as a classicist, a humanist, made it easier for him to detect the nature of archival problems—and thus to draw solutions from a deeper wisdom than most of us possess. I can think of no better example of his insight than the following passage occurring in the essay he published in the July 1952 issue of the *American Archivist*:

Let us consider briefly another indisputable point—the disastrous results of unenlightened nationalism. Closed borders, whether physical or mental, restrict the outlook of the scholar; their end product is bias. From bias, the transition to biased nationalism is relatively simple. Archivists must be aware of ideas, must be ready to exchange ideas and materials with their colleagues in other countries. Historians must have the compelling desire to employ in their studies the archival resources of other lands; they must have free access to those sources, wherever they may be, within the legitimate limits set by the requirements of national security.

That he was able, with such good grace, and utterly without rancor, to remain offstage (though, as he might have said, his proper place was *in mediis*

*rebus*)—while his counsel was ever sought, particularly by those of us seeking the meaning of the historical complexities of our profession and the boundaries of our discipline—and that, for instance, he had an apparent satisfaction in the tedious chore of translating and abstracting to fill the greater part of his revived department in the *American Archivist* attested not so much to an acceptance of his particular situation as to a readiness, even an eagerness, to serve the lowliest of us.

When I heard that he had died, unexpectedly, on October 7, my mind was filled with all of the thoughts I have expressed above—but not immediately. My first thought, rather, was of his devotion: as a man bereft by the untimely death of his wife who for more than a quarter of a century was preoccupied with bringing up, with love and with self-sacrifice, his only son, now established in his own career. The visible pursuit—as classical scholar, teacher, archivist, diplomat, editor, and librarian, with Ohio State University, George Washington University, the Historical Records Survey, the United States Military Government in Germany, Unesco, the International Council on Archives, the American Embassy in Manila, and the Library of Congress—productive and meaningful though it was, must be seen, as undoubtedly it was seen in his own mind, as secondary to his role as a father. Many who thought they knew him well never saw, beneath an innate dignity often misinterpreted as stiffness, the man himself.

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CHRISTOPHER CRITTENDEN  
1902–1969

Christopher Crittenden was an active founding member of the Society of American Archivists in 1936, and he became one of its most prominent and beloved leaders. The Society's loss in his death is greater than perceived by most present members. Dr. Crittenden was a Council Member for 7 years, vice president for 1 year, and president from 1947 to 1949. He was one of the first group of Fellows of the Society, named in 1958. His career spanned the years in which the profession grew from a scattering of substantial institutions, among which North Carolina was already outstanding, to a well-established body with an active professional organization. His own contribution to this development was notable.

In his presidential address, "The Archivist as a Public Servant," (in *American Archivist*, 12:3–8; Jan. 1949), Dr. Crittenden recognized that although governmental archivists had for the most part been educated to do research in history, they had to adapt themselves to the concept of an archives as an agency of government, with a wide range of duties. He was "not in the least perturbed" by new developments, including the administration of records in the creating agencies. He felt that these new phases gave us an opportunity to enlarge and to broaden our services and our professional standing.

In this address Dr. Crittenden proposed that the Society establish a long-range planning committee, and he soon became the committee's chairman. He was an assiduous worker for the Society and a valued friend to all who knew him.