A Viewpoint on Appraisal of National Records

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CHARLES FRANCIS Adams in addressing an American Historical Association meeting in 1900 mentioned the already accepted opinion that "each generation will rewrite its history of the past." We may then assume that each generation of archivists should draft its own appraisal standards. Neither proposition is literally valid. Historians rewrite the history produced by their contemporaries and, occasionally, even revise their own conclusions. Similarly, archivists should continually reexamine their appraisal policies in the light of changing and expanding research requirements.

As few rigid rules of appraisal have withstood the test of time, it seems desirable to prepare status reports that will serve as benchmarks for auditing our methodology and controlling assumptions, comparing experiences and decisions with our colleagues, and inviting comments by researchers. Several such studies were in fact prepared by members of the National Archives between 1940 and 1960, all members of the same generation of archivists who staffed the institution from its beginnings.

We should first dispose of any implication of a generation gap with regard to appraisal standards. Some recent critics have assumed that the founders of the National Archives had a narrow view of political and military history and a belief that archivists should remain aloof from records management and judgments about the retention of all or parts of records series. The evidence from their reports and correspondence shows clearly that the original staff of deputy examiners were committed to the "New History" first expounded by Edward Eggleston[1] in 1900 and elaborated on by James Harvey Robinson[2] a decade later.

The staff during the first decade of the National Archives was quite prepared to seek the social and economic roots of history and to preserve records on the common as well as the uncommon man. The deputy examiners had in fact a more thorough grounding in the social sciences than recent recruits have had. With regard to the second oft-repeated charge, few of the original staff agreed with Sir Hilary Jenkinson's theory[3] that archivists must accept the records that are preserved by departmental administrators without influencing or subjectively judging the decisions of these administrators.

The author, a Fellow of the Society and Director of the Records Appraisal Division, National Archives, read this paper on Oct. 9, 1969, during the Society's 33d annual meeting in Madison, Wis.

1 Edward Eggleston, "The New History," in American Historical Association, *Annual Report for the Year 1900,* I:35–47.

2 James Harvey Robinson, *The New History* (New York, 1912).

3 Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London, rev. ed., 1937).

The appraisers of the 1930's and 1940's did work under severe handicaps. They found an appalling mass of records, much of it of transitory value. Significant documents were often buried in trivia. By 1940 therefore, appraisers turned their attention to the disposal rather than to the conservation of records. This concern with the negative side of preservation increased during the defense period and the war mobilization of the 1940's. Demands for rapid appraisal of records to clear needed office space built up pressures for large-scale destruction of Federal records. To their surprise archivists failed to find the search-rooms full of researchers using the records that were being transferred into the National Archives building. This lack of support, particularly among historians, resulted in part from the bias of contemporary historiography.

While the influence of the "New History" qualified the appraisers to consider a variety of research needs and to appraise records about "persons, places and things" conservatively, historians had rejected scientific history that presumed the use of all available sources on a given topic. During the formative years of the National Archives relativism dominated historiography. History was often based on the intuition of widely read and intelligent synthesizers rather than on extensive examination of original source materials.

The Great Depression deterred researchers from long stays in archival establishments. Later, the war did generate some research by military and emergency agencies. The National Archives was nevertheless disappointed by how often these agencies failed to utilize the records of the past to solve urgent problems. I remember, for example, a searcher from the Office of Price Administration requesting anonymity because he and others had been told not to waste time in the National Archives. We should then review, in the light of this environment, appraisal standards in the National Archives during the first two and even three decades.

The first major statement on the appraisal of national records appeared in an address by Philip C. Brooks at a luncheon of this Society in April 1940.[4] Many of his observations were to be repeated in various forms by other archivists. Brooks began with a warning about the British decision to use records for the manufacture of munitions. He implied therefore that recordkeepers should plan systematic disposal. Thus after describing the various values of records—to the agency of origin, for administrative history, and for historical research—he also defined some classes that should be eliminated from consideration. Documentation that is stored by agencies without the intention of making it a matter of record may, for example, be classified as "non-record." This principle of "intent" apparently derived from Jenkinson.

[4] *What Records Shall be Preserved?* (National Archives *Staff Information Circulars,* No. 9; Washington, 1940).

It is probably good that discussions about the intent of the civil servant in filing papers are now rare. Brooks also virtually wrote off the vast accumulations of punched cards on the grounds that the data should be appraised in their original or final forms. Sampling was Brooks' solution to most problems of appraising case files. This proposal has become one of the few enduring principles of appraisal.

Appraisal standards were reviewed under war pressures in 1944 when G. Philip Bauer took up, as he implied, where Brooks left off. The essence of his remarks at a records management conference appears thus: "It is inevitable that many records of possible and even plausible utility for studies in such fields as history, politics, economics, and sociology will be deliberately listed for disposal; and the Archivist may be expected to sanction their disposal as he had done in the past. Values must be weighed against costs."[5]

Much of the remainder of Bauer's address implies that appraisers should become cost accountants. Actually, his chief purpose was to expose many of the high-sounding appraisals as redundancies if not as nonsense. The appraisers' job is prophecy; and prophecy, said Bauer, must be suspect.

Bauer continued by discussing the appraisal of numerous types of records—executive, budget, personnel, medical, scientific, and legal records; case files and studies; records of operating activities; and the like. According to his standards budgets and basic books of account would be retained; raw data sources (and, in some cases, records relating to personal rights) would be destroyed. Some of Bauer's basic assumptions were criticized by Herman Kahn,[6] who considered archives a cultural asset and therefore not subject to cost accounting. Kahn rejected most attempts to develop rules of appraisal in favor of independent judgment by sound archivists of good will.

Finally, we have Theodore R. Schellenberg's synthesis of various views of appraisal, both here and abroad, and his own significant contributions. His views were expressed in several forms, his main ideas being most fully developed in a pamphlet, *The Appraisal of Modern Public Records*.[7] His reference to "evidential" and "information" records we may either reject as unconvincing or accept, as most of us do, as a shorthand for distinguishing between records on organization, policies, and functions and records that contain information on topics other than the history of the agency of origin.

The remainder of his bulletin was occupied by explanations of the various values inherent in records. Like the earlier contributions, much emphasis was placed on disposal. Records containing raw statistical data

[5] *The Appraisal of Current and Recent Records* (National Archives *Staff Information Circulars*, No. 13; Washington, 1946).
[6] *Ibid*, p. 22–25.
[7] *Bulletins of the National Archives*, No. 8 (Washington, 1956).

were again generally recommended for destruction. Records relating to real property, on the other hand, were proposed for preservation. Population census schedules received a high rating while economic schedules were to be pulped. Schellenberg arrived at two main conclusions: (1) objectivity in appraisal is desirable but unachievable; and (2) for each group of records archivists must inform themselves fully about the agency of origin and the research needs of the time. Also, in specialized fields where the archivist's knowledge is inadequate, he called for the use of experts.

The body of literature on records appraisal, dating from Meissner in 1901, contains acceptable rules for what Schellenberg calls "evidential values." In terms of current records these standards require the retention of authoritative documents (including delegations of authority) on organization and functions; procedural issuances; organization charts and directories; agreements with other agencies; correspondence and other documents that describe or illustrate executive policies; judicial case files relating to decisions that affect and define agency functions; legal opinions; minutes of conferences and staff meetings at the executive level; and narrative and statistical reports that explain and summarize agency activities.

Even within this class of records the appraiser faces judgments in selection, particularly with regard to methods of documenting policies. How much documentation of divisional, branch, and sectional procedures is essential? How should the appraiser deal with the executives files which contain only reference copies of papers on transactions that are fully documented at lower levels? Should the appraiser seek minutes of meetings at levels below the executive suite when they show the origins of important decisions? Or may the appraiser assume that some communication to the executive would adequately contain all important recommendations by the various staff participants? Because many executives now retain a minimum of documentation on current issues, such problems are not rare. When they make a decision, the related transaction file is often referred to an operating unit, sometimes as low as a branch or section, for implementation. Appraisers must therefore study in detail the mail and file procedures in each agency and its subordinate units.

Fewer rules guide archivists in appraising other administrative and operating records. Most of these classes fall into the "informational" category as defined by Schellenberg. The most voluminous type of record within this vast class is the case file or, in British terminology, the "single instance file." Opinions vary from the extreme of destroying all case files when they relate to routine procedures to total retention because they provide important and uniform source data about many units, be they of persons, institutions, or places.

Probably the most comprehensive examination of this problem appears in Paul Lewinson's article on "Archival Sampling."[8] Lewinson concluded that certain types of case files require only a recurring "evidential," or procedural sample. The term "recurring" is, however, largely ignored when procedural samples are selected. It is my conviction that a procedural sample or, in shorthand, a specimen, is advisable even when descriptive manuals are available. Exceptions may be made when the manuals include every form and stereotype required. We must beware, however, of a recent trend toward greater flexibility on the part of the operator.

Lewinson explained the difficulties in applying statistical sampling techniques to case files that contain valuable social and economic data about many individuals. He concluded that application of this technique had never been used but that the possibility of later use "cannot be foreclosed." While archivists rarely if ever employ random statistical sampling, they often require the selection of important or illustrative cases on the basis of enumerated criteria.

Most of the literature about statistical records recommends, with occasional exceptions, the destruction of raw data sources and intermediate tabulations.

In contrast with disposal of most statistical materials, archivists have established the rule that real estate records should be retained after conveyance of the land to private purchasers; thus, the Federal government in effect duplicates some of the information in local title papers. Records on the public domain were considered until recently of long-term or permanent value. Since the New Deal, however, the government has been acquiring land for relatively short-term use. Agencies temporarily occupy land and make improvements to assist communities in constructing housing and facilities, building sewers and water mains, liquidating foreclosed mortgages, and the like. It seems unnecessary to retain related records permanently at the Federal level to overcome any local deficiencies in maintaining title papers.

Over a period of time the attitude toward records of science and technology has changed though no generally applicable criteria for permanent preservation have been developed. Brooks admitted that he lacked the specialized knowledge to cite examples of records suitable for either disposal or retention. Bauer could not conceive of scientists leaving their laboratories to study archives. Schellenberg hedged a bit by noting that some observational records may have value, but, in the main, that scientific data were usually summarized in special reports that would satisfy research needs. All three ignored the history of technology with one exception—Schellenberg's comment that only the earliest, and a few recent, patent case files need be retained permanently.

On the other hand, A. W. Mabbs, chief appraiser in the London Public Record Office, recently called attention to the potential values of

8 In *American Archivist,* 20: 291–312.

records on science and technology while admitting the inability of his staff to appraise them.[9] He is, he wrote, "considering ways in which this defect can be remedied." The Society of American Archivists is also exploring ways to deal with the ever-increasing accumulations of scientific records that are often incomprehensible to the layman. The National Archives has initiated the first in a series of studies of scientific and patent records and technical publications. After a number of special studies are completed, the agency will try to recruit experts to advise it on standards for appraisal. Interest in the history of science and the effect of technological change on society have perceptively increased. Archivists must therefore protect the research sources for these areas of history as we have for others.

Historians of science and technology are still few enough that they can meet in a large living room. It would however require a vast auditorium to hold the many scholars who are seeking and using basic source data on people, institutions, and places to explain political, social, psychological, and economic phenomena. The trend toward empirical history and quantified methods of research in the humanities and the social sciences seems as dramatic and pervasive as the rise of scientific history, social studies, and relativism. They follow, in fact, a progression. Objective, scientific history ignored measurement to its own disadvantage. The scientific approach did, however, foster an interest in the use of social science techniques to explain the past. Relativism may have been an inevitable reaction to the claim that the proper methodology would recreate history. The relativists, in turn, often generalized on the basis of impressionistic and deductive judgments. Historians are now using empirical evidence to test these generalizations. Archivists should be sensitive to any major shifts in historiography and in the resource requirements for the social sciences. An analysis of recent trends in research is therefore appropriate when discoursing on appraisal standards.

American quanto-empirical historians cite Frederick Jackson Turner as their progenitor, chiefly because of his dictum that events are determined by many social and economic phenomena. "History," he wrote, "is the biography of society in all its departments." From evidence in his writings and lectures it is reasonable to assume that Turner would have sought, had the sources been both available and subject to ready analysis, objective evidence of the role of sectionalism, conservation, transportation, and other subthemes of his frontier thesis. One of his students, Orin G. Libby, pioneered in the tabulation of election returns and roll calls for political analyses.

Numerous historians admitted that some of the judgments were measurable when they used such words as "growing," "prosperous,"

[9] "The Public Record Officer and the Second Review," in *Archives*, vol. 8, no. 40:184 (Oct. 1968).

"overwhelming," "prevailing," "typical," and "productive." They usually used these and many other descriptive terms in an impressionistic rather than empiric sense, because they were either unaware of the existence of source data or were unable to aggregate and correlate the data. Historians can justly pride themselves on their ability to adapt speedily new techniques of information management. Archivists must follow their example if not lead in these new directions.

The first electronic computer was constructed in 1946 to compile firing tables. ENIAC, to use its acronym, determined a shell's trajectory in about half the time it took to reach a target. This computer was soon adapted to the solution of other mathematical problems in the physical sciences. Improvements, largely developed by the National Bureau of Standards, resulted in the first commercial computer for the Census Bureau in 1951. At first this UNIVAC served as a fast and efficient counter. Within a short time, however, UNIVAC was programed to store, remove, replace, compute, and print out millions of bits of information in seconds. Its utility for economic analysis was by then generally appreciated.

Since the physiocrats, economists had developed models that, they claimed, could predict economic behavior under specified circumstances. The economic process is viewed as a complex, systematic interaction of forces. Econometricians try to develop mathematical models to represent the relationships of these forces by using statistical techniques to express these relationships numerically. Measurements of wealth, production, wages, prices, manpower resources, employment, costs, realization, and other economic elements may be correlated into equations for economic intelligence and planning. These econometric concerns are of such importance for national and regional planning as well as for decisionmaking at the level of individual establishments that considerable manpower has been allocated to gather, correlate, match, merge, tabulate, and analyze economic source data.

Records appraisers at the National Archives are conscious of the implication of this development with regard to the content of national records and the problems of their appraisal for archival purposes. It was, in fact, several economists who first approached National Archives and Records Service about the preservation of records in machine-readable form. While staff members welcomed their interest, they had to admit their ignorance of what records in this form were being maintained by Federal agencies. They have educated themselves since then. During these past few months much of their appraisal effort has been devoted to evaluation of data on electronic tape. Some of their most difficult problems in this area concern decisions on economic data.

Many archivists believe that their chief nongovernment clients are historians and therefore their needs must be paramount. Even if we accept this view we are confronted with changing directions in history that have an important bearing on appraisal.

The new trend—or, as some hold, fad—toward quantification in history began, in the main, with new viewpoints on political history. This history followed Turner's lead about a half century late. It began, Turner would be happy to know, with Merle Curti's study of a "frontier county" published in 1959.[10]

Historians, sometimes with the aid of political scientists, merge opinion polls, election returns, legislative roll calls, and quantified characteristics of the population for studies of political behavior.[11] This interest has as yet had little bearing on use of national records because the chief sources are maintained at the State and local levels. National records have been used principally for census information. Even the unpublished records of Congress have not been used extensively by the quantifiers. They may be expected nevertheless to use congressional records, court case files, and other sources increasingly.

I foresee wide use of quantified and quantifiable sources at the national level by the new generation of economic and social historians. The economic historians have followed the lead of the economists by using economic models for critical analyses of earlier generalizations. During the 1930's several economic historians had recommended the techniques of theoretical economics to reexamine the past. They had, however, lacked the manpower and capital resources to apply model-building techniques to the voluminous, incomplete, and widely scattered data sources. Economists, who felt the need for historical time series to analyze long-term trends, took the initiative in gathering and analyzing historical data. Within a short period historians adopted similar methods to study economic activity from the 16th century on.

A widely debated study by Robert W. Fogel on the role of railroads in the American economy at the turn of the century suggests how the use of economic theory will affect national archives.[12] He used the voluminous series of Interstate Commerce Commission railroad tariffs to determine freight costs. By our earlier standards such records were, at best, of dubious archival interest. Professor Fogel used the economists' tool of counterfactual models to determine what would have happened had no railroads existed at that time. Social historians are also using voluminous data, often by combining the techniques of psychology, political science, sociology, economics, and demography to examine social and geographic mobility, attitudes and opinions, the structure of society, urban development, and the like.

The computer has significantly reversed the trend toward specialization that resulted in part because of the tedium of dealing with masses of

[10] *The Making of an American Community* (Stanford, Calif., 1959).

[11] Allan G. Bogue's "United States: The 'New' Political History," in *Journal of Contemporary History,* 3: 5–27 (1968), is recommended for its review of recent political history.

[12] Robert W. Fogel, *Railroads in Economic Growth: Essays in Econometric History* (Baltimore, 1964).

information on many topics. As others have noted, just as we were about to perish from overspecialization the ultimate specialist, the computer, was developed. Historians, political scientists, economists, and geographers are, for example, preparing parallel regional studies with a common purpose of understanding what happened in order to learn better what must be done. We have only to examine some recent literature on the Great Lakes area and urban studies to see this significant interdisciplinary trend. To collect their basic sources these potential clients are quite prepared to send assistants to repositories for extended periods.

What does all this mean for archivists? First, that they must reject the idea of the volume of information deterring research. Second, they must now question whether source materials for special studies are more valuable than source materials for recurring studies. This questioned rule assumes that data for recurring studies are more likely to be fully exploited and thus have little value after the publication of aggregates. Researchers now point out that raw data sources over a long period lend themselves to new, meaningful correlations and regression analyses. On the other hand, one-time data, though they may relate to an important topic, are of limited value unless the data can be compared to similar information at another point in time.

Even the rule that biographical information in national records is of marginal archival value is subject to review. Some important work on the political and social elite is being produced. Sources on this class appear widely in all archival establishments. It may be argued that only information on the elite need be retained for such studies. Obviously, however, the elite can only be understood by comparison with their more common contemporaries. Where does this leave the appraisal of case files, submissions, personnel records, and the like? The quantifiers will, I believe, gladly work with archivists to develop statistical samples of case files and questionnaires to meet their research needs.

Quantification and the computer have also aggravated appraisers' problems by the rapidly changing technology. Records in machine-readable form may be used rapidly by researchers; yet, they may be easily erased without a trace or be so poorly documented as to be unintelligible. Archivists must act quickly to evaluate machine-readable records if they are to preserve any currently generated Federal data.

Regrettably, the archivists are not being aided to any great degree by agency managers. Appraisers do work closely with the Office of Records Management in NARS. Methods of classification and arrangement that will effectively separate transitory from permanent records should be developed before long. Before the computer age the more progressive records managers showed some interest and capability with regard to the disposition of records. While they may have lacked the knowledge and training to determine archival values, they understood agency needs and they did try to learn from key officials the possible long-term use ot records. Their findings were of considerable aid to archival appraisers.

Now that many of the developers of paperwork management are reaching retirement age their places are being taken by generalists in the management of organization and information. These generalists seem to have little interest in the orderly retirement of records. To cite an example: a few weeks ago, one manager in a large agency phoned me for the definition of "archival records" and "noncurrent records." The big "pay-off" is in the management of computerized systems, not in the orderly disposition of records.

These computer experts are rarely helpful in dealing with the difficult problems in appraising records in machine-readable form. Few seem to have given serious thought to the long-term requirements for records in data tape, videofile, disk, drum, microfile, and punched card forms. Apparently most have not even considered these media as records. We must first learn their specialized language or jargon to communicate with them. Then we may educate them about planned disposition.

The records center system has been one of the most important innovations by the National Archives and Records Service. It was reasonably assumed that the maintenance of noncurrent records would bring to light mismanagement of records and decrease losses of permanent records. But, as agencies learned of the substantial savings achieved by transferring records to centers, they transferred records that were still relatively active.

This burden upon the centers, though justified from the point of view of economy, retarded efforts to winnow the records of archival quality from the chaff of ephemerae. Recently, nevertheless, appraisers have been working with center personnel to plan the orderly disposition of large masses of noncurrent records. Eventually, these appraisers will advise agencies about improving the management of their records. In the meantime, the establishment of a regional archives in each center has lightened the appraisal burden by adding archivists committed to records preservation. These regional archives will also give appraisers wider latitude by furnishing a home for records that have significance for regional studies, a field of great interest to administrators and scholars. Such records have often been destroyed in the past.

The status report that I have presented is a rather dismal one. I have had to question rules formerly accepted. History and the social sciences seem to be changing too rapidly for archivists to keep current, much less try to predict future research needs. We master the needs of the past only to face dynamically changing demands. Records management that was to solve most problems has moved in other directions. Yet, the situation is far from hopeless. What we now require is what archival institutions have always required—sound, qualified appraisers.

Quality in appraisal, with sound standards, can only be achieved by establishing quality standards that we can apply to the selection of appraisers. The appraiser is, first of all, a professional archivist. He meets the basic requirements in history and has some training in political science and, ideally, in at least one of the social or physical sciences. Before his assignment to appraisal duties he demonstrates his own abilities in research by the preparation of papers requiring the use of original sources.

Beyond this fulfillment of basic qualifications, recruits should also be fully tested in arranging, describing, and servicing records. Facing and having to do something about the complex arrangement of records as they arrive at archival establishments is useful for understanding records in current office space. Sound descriptive methods should be a prerequisite for note-taking and the preparation of appraisal reports.

In 1940 Brooks asserted that appraisers in order to judge current demands should double as servicers of records. Combing these activities has obvious benefits. Archivists having both functions, however, spend on reference the time they should spend on appraisal. Actually, major appraisal projects may take months of study and interviews. The appraiser's alternative to performing both functions is to maintain rapport with those who service records. Occasional meetings with custodial archivists are desirable to discuss the many matters of mutual interest.[13] Of greater importance to appraisers than an occasional visit with individual searchers are systematic readings in scholarly literature and meetings with researchers.

The apprentice appraiser is usually assigned a narrow field of Government. He should examine significant publications relating to or produced by the assigned agencies, including all relevant legislation and directives. These publications must be supplemented by readings on topics that are importantly dealt with by the agencies. Those who handle liaison with the State Department, for example, are presumed to have an interest in diplomatic history that is refueled by extensive readings. As the appraiser takes on increasing responsibilities, he may rely on his already substantial knowledge about Government programs and activities, supplemented by more selective readings.

Attendance at certain scholarly meetings and conferences is desirable and occasionally necessary. Listening to the presentation of papers is less valuable than the opportunity to ask leading figures about their work and the interests of their students. They should get out where the scholarly action is.

Appraisers must also maintain close liaison with innovators in the many fields of paperwork management. Changes in business machines, including computers, and managerial techniques affect the state of records. Close association with managers will keep appraisers informed about

[13] Appraisers' interest in reference service is explained in H. G. Jones's *The Records of a Nation,* p. 80 (New York, 1969).

developments of concern to them. Familiarity with the best management literature will also be helpful. As appraisers consult with agency executives and managers in determining which of their current records have enduring value, they should be educators in the field of good records management practices.

Full-time appraisal permits the archivist to study the records of an entire bureau rather than to evaluate particular segments on an ad hoc basis. The founding fathers of the National Archives preached the necessity of appraising records within the context of the holdings of an entire office. Such appraisal virtually ceased, however, when the custodial divisions were assigned liaison activities. Now that appraisal is again a full-time activity, piecemeal appraisal has been replaced by a retention planning program.

A. W. Mabbs referred to the appraiser's "elusive distillation of knowledge, wisdom, experience, common sense and whatever else . . . contributes to an understanding of the historical criterion" for solving difficult appraisal problems.[14] I do not even rule out, in addition, educated intuition although my predecessors claimed that "the old concept of intuitive judgment has been completely discredited." All of these qualities are necessary for the appraiser in determining whether he has difficult problems if he so plans to spend his time on obviously valuable or valueless records. When he lacks special knowledge about the subject matter of a body of records, the appraiser should seek the advice of experts. Paid consultants usually prove more useful than volunteers who offer advice after a cursory study of difficult problems. But, on the basis of the experts' findings, it is, nevertheless, the archivist who must make the final decisions.

In my discussions with appraisers here and from abroad I have sensed feelings of inadequacy in dealing with some of our mutual problems. We face these problems with humility. We are all conscious of annual storage costs as is any space manager. We should not have to weigh on the same scale costs and cultural benefits; yet, we do so regularly. We recommend retaining records when we believe their values warrant the cost of storage and servicing. We must be reasonably certain that the "permanent" records will be used for significant research. In order that both researchers and repositories are not burdened beyond their capacities, we have to make decisions on disposition. Even automation does not lessen these burdens greatly. Miniaturization is expensive; and if appraisers are not selective the cost of retrieving information from miniaturized and machine-readable records may become prohibitive.

After a study of each appraisal problem we must arrive at reasoned decisions. We must try to keep our errors on the side of conservation

[14] "The Public Record Officer and the Second Review," p. 183.

because we must remain conservators. But err or not, we must make decisions for the next problem is already knocking on our door.

An appraiser's humility in facing problems is matched by his confidence in explaining to administrators and researchers that his decisions are just. About the searching process of decisionmaking he does indeed finally convince that severest of critics—himself.