

In Memoriam

HOWARD WILLIAM CROCKER
1913-1970

Howard William Crocker, associate public records analyst of the Office of State History of New York State died on July 10, 1970, at Albany Medical Center Hospital in Albany, N.Y., after a short illness. He was survived by his wife, Loraine, two sons, Harry W. and Courtney P., and a brother and a sister.

Bill Crocker, as he was known to his personal friends and professional associates, was a native of Middleport, N.Y. There he began his formal education and initially acquired his lifelong historical interest in the canal system of New York State from those who locally helped build the canal and were serviced by it.

A graduate of St. Lawrence University with a major in history, he earned his Master's degree with honours in history in 1937 from Queens University, Ont., Canada. For the next 2 years, he worked toward his doctorate in history at Clark University, Worcester, Mass., before returning to St. Lawrence University as a history instructor under Albert B. Corey, later, State Historian of New York State. After 4 years of service with the U.S. Air Force (Weather Service), he joined Dr. Corey as an assistant archivist in the Division of Archives and History of the New York State Education Department. Trained as a historian, he brought to his first professional assignments a thoughtful patience in historical research that permeated his professional career.

A specialist in the field of Local Public Records, his appraisal of the potential archival values of records of local units of New York State government reflected his ability and desire to achieve a thoughtful balance among the needs of the scholar, the administrative requirements of the public officer, the rights of the private citizen, and the governmental economics of the present and the future. His achievements in this area were highlighted by his attention to detail and his laborious personal appraisal of over 3,000 different record series maintained by more than 30,000 local records officers throughout New York State.

For the last 20 years of his near quarter of a century service to New York State, he personally appraised, for the State Historian, the archival value of each of the over 9,000 records series held by State agencies, which are scheduled for disposition under the State's records management program. As coauthor of all of the meaningful records management legislation in New York State for the last 20 years, he was known to both bill drafters and administrators for his detailed knowledge of "how it is done" and his championship of the needs of the researchers and scholars of the future.

Working through organizations of local public officials—such as the County Officers' Association, the Association of Towns, and the Municipal Officers' Association—he lectured extensively, conducted yearly training sessions, and authored and coauthored substantive, technical publications for the guidance and direction of local public officials. Included among these publications were the following: *Protecting Local Public Records Against Bombing Attacks* (1950), *Protecting Historical Societies' Records* (1951), *A Basic School*

Filing System (1954), *A Basic Town Filing System* (1955, rev. 1966), *A Filing System for Historical Information* (1965).

His contribution to the Society of American Archivists included participation in numerous seminars, membership on various committees, and contributions to the *American Archivist* in 1950 and 1956.

Selecting an attribute or characteristic for which he will be best remembered is difficult. Most will remember him for his helpfulness. He was a patient and understanding listener; an adviser who always suggested; a technician who freely shared his knowledge and experience; and a teacher who taught with humility but never pontificated.

To his wife, Loraine, and his two sons, Harry and Courtney, we extend our sympathy. We, who share their loss, can best keep his memory alive by devoting ourselves to the pursuit of his oft repeated goal that those who would come after us will have adequate documentation of what was done, who did it, when and how well it was done.

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