



# The American Archivist

Published Quarterly by  
The Society of American Archivists

Volume 36  
Number 1  
January 1973

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THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST is published quarterly by the Society of American Archivists. Subscriptions, \$15 a year; single copies, \$3.75.

ARTICLES AND RELATED COMMUNICATIONS: Edward Weldon, Editor, American Archivist, The National Archives, Washington, D.C. 20408.

ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Wilbur G. Kurtz, Jr., Coca-Cola Co., P.O. Box 1734, Atlanta, Ga. 30301.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Robert M. Warner, SAA Executive Director, Michigan Historical Collections, 160 Rackham Bldg., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48104. Notice of nonreceipt of an issue must be sent to the secretary by domestic subscribers within six months of issue publication date and by international subscribers within nine months.

BACK ISSUE ORDERS: Vols. 1-29, Johnson Reprint Corp., 111 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10003; Later Issues from the SAA Executive Director's office.

The American Archivist assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

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Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing office.



## Editor's Forum

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### New Format

A number of changes have been introduced into the *American Archivist* with this issue. Most obvious is the cover, the revision of which was advocated by many members in their response to a recent questionnaire and by the Committee for the 1970's in its final report. For the attractive design we are grateful to John R. Hamilton and his University Publications staff at the University of Michigan. Mr. Hamilton chose the type Alert Bold for the title and Caledonia for the spine and foot, both typefaces compatible with the Baskerville we continue to use inside. The cover stock we introduce is Beckett's new Hillsdale finish in Goldenrod, a color we hope will brighten your shelves and not irritate nor be interpreted as a sign of either editorial cowardice or yellow journalism.

Within the journal you will find useful thematic reorganization of the departments—international news and abstracts are combined, all Society news is gathered in one place, activities of state and regional archival organizations have been added as a feature of News Notes, a continually expanding and popular section.

Perhaps most important is the most subtle change, the adoption of a new editorial style policy. We have abandoned the *United States Government Printing Office Style Manual* for the more widely used University of Chicago Press, *A Manual of Style*, 12th edition. Specifically, the Chicago manual differs from the GPO one in its policy on numerals, capitalization, and footnote form; generally, the effect will be a less technical-appearing page and narrative. We encourage prospective contributors to examine the Chicago manual and to prepare copy accordingly.

We also encourage contributors to remember the rules, written and tacit, with which they should be familiar. The standards are based on common sense, implicit professionalism, and courtesy. All copy submitted should be typed double-spaced, especially footnotes at the end and lengthy quoted material, and should have at least one-inch margins on all sides. Especially helpful to an editor and practical for an author to include are one or more copies of the manuscript and a large stamped, self-addressed envelope for the manuscript's return, should it be either accepted or rejected. These considerations cannot help but influence an editor whose lance is the blue pencil and whose shield is emblazoned with a \$ sign. Please help him to help you and those you hope eventually to have as readers.

**Correction**

In the rush to press last issue we omitted the address for one of our advertisers. The International Filmtreat ad should have included the additional lines: 733 3rd Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Our apologies.

**TO THE EDITOR:**

Mr. Robert A. Mayer, in his contribution in your April 1972 issue, mentioned two publications resulting from the Rockefeller Foundation grant to the University College of the West Indies. In fact, there was a third, also by E. C. Baker (not E. D. as cited in the footnote)—“A Guide to records in the Windward Islands” (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1968).

As, at that time, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, and British Guiana had established archival agencies; while British Honduras and Bermuda had also taken steps for the care and preservation of certain archives, the surveys covered virtually all the territories with the exception of the Bahamas, where no permanent agencies had yet been established. Since then Barbados (1964), St. Kitts (1969), and the Bahamas (1971) have established archival agencies under one name or another; and certainly in the case of Barbados it was the impetus of the survey financed by the Rockefeller Foundation which led to the establishment of this Department.

M. J. CHANDLER  
*Department of Archives  
Barbados, West Indies*

**TO THE EDITOR:**

The publication of draft standards on appraisal of gifts in the News Notes section of the July/October issue of the *American Archivist* could result in widespread misunderstanding among archivists as to the present status of tax law regarding charitable deductions for the donation of manuscript gifts. Seeming to ignore the fact that Federal tax law was changed in this matter in 1969, the draft standards propose that an archival or research institution hold itself aloof and unconnected with any efforts by the donor to have manuscript gifts appraised so as to reap a tax benefit. Were it not for the change in law making this virtuous position largely irrelevant, the draft standards would be both important and correct.

The authors of these draft standards may counter, saying that while some deductions of this kind are now prohibited others are still possible. It is probably true that the owner of a Jefferson manuscript may donate the property to a research institution and take a charitable deduction at fair market value. It may also be true (though much less certain) that the heir of a notable person may donate the papers of the notable (after paying taxes) and take a charitable deduction. But it is reasonably clear that when the notable himself donates his papers there is no practicable

way for him to take a meaningful deduction on his income tax. It is this third category that forms the majority of manuscript donations to research institutions. For the second category mentioned here, the law is still so uncertain there is nothing that archivists should establish standards on.

My complaint against these proposed standards is that they fail to mention the new status of tax law and may lead uninformed archivists to conclude that a tax deduction for the donation of manuscripts is still a common and easily attainable incentive. This is not true.

I might go on and propose to the *American Archivist* that a thorough going status report on tax law in this matter be published. My own information in this area, however, suggests that the law is so very unsettled that there is no one who can make a definitive statement at this time.

RICHARD A. JACOBS  
Washington, D.C.

#### TO THE EDITOR:

During the 1972 SAA annual conference in Columbus, Ohio, reports were heard on the establishment and meetings of local/regional archival associations. These associations have formed to provide an opportunity for more people to gather, share ideas on resolving mutual problems, and develop better links of cooperation.

These regional associations are also conducting workshops to assist their members. It would be most helpful to future archival associations to have a central source for information on development of regional groups and to obtain copies of workshop materials. This would facilitate effort in conducting workshops and eliminate needless duplication. In this way the regional associations would assist their region and others in a cooperative network.

The SAA could serve as a central repository for maintaining a file on regional associations, their constitutions, bylaws, workshop materials, etc. If the regional associations and SAA would cooperate on such a project, all of those concerned with archival development would benefit.

How are the SAA records maintained?

There is a certain amount of irony in the fact that archives exist to maintain records, but the SAA records by its officers (archivists) are scattered throughout the country. SAA needs to gather the records of its activity together in a central location to more properly document its own activity. If regional association materials could be placed on file, this would provide some liaison between the SAA and these associations.

I hope that our SAA officers will take steps to properly provide for SAA records and seek to maintain a file of regional association material.

Perhaps the availability of material would become an information source for the *American Archivist* to report on material received from regional associations, useful ideas, etc.

PHYLLIS NOTTINGHAM  
Juneau, Alaska