

# The American Archivist

Published Quarterly by  
The Society of American Archivists

Volume 37  
Number 3  
July 1974

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THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST is published quarterly by the Society of American Archivists. Subscriptions, \$20 a year; single copies, \$5 to members, \$6 to non-members.

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

ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Donald F. Harrison, General Services Administration (NNPD), Washington, D.C. 20408.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE: Ann Morgan Campbell, Executive Director, SAA, University of Illinois-Chicago Circle, Box 8198, Chicago, Ill. 60680; phone (312) 996-3370. *Notice of nonreceipt of an issue must be sent to the executive director by domestic subscribers within four months of issue publication date and by international subscribers within six months.*

BACK ISSUE ORDERS: Howard L. Applegate, SAA Treasurer, The Balch Institute, 1627 The Fidelity Bldg., 123 So. Broad St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19109.

The *American Archivist* is indexed in *Library Literature*, and is abstracted in *Historical Abstracts*.

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.

## The Forum

### Publishing the Papers of Women

The 1954 Report of the National Historical Publications Commission to the President of the United States recommended the papers of a number of American women as worthy of publication; however, the Commission itself has heretofore never had enough uncommitted funds to encourage an active program in this area.

Hoping that such a program can be developed, the NHPC in 1972 named a special Advisory Committee on Women's Papers. The committee recommended that the papers of seventy-five women and women's organizations be edited and published in letterpress or microfilm or by a combination of the methods. (Another NHPC committee is now compiling a list of persons representing ethnic minorities.) The list of women selected, while quite extensive, is not definitive. Women whose papers have been or are being published, such as those of Abigail Adams in *The Adams Papers*, were excluded, as well as papers of women known to have left no substantial or significant body of records.

The NHPC itself set two constraints on the committee: creative writers and artists were not to be considered at this time unless they had also made other contributions to social history, and papers of women who had died in the past ten years were to be omitted. Several entries in the list indicate the importance of women's organizations; for instance, the names of four leaders of the National Women's Trade Union League are included. The committee did not establish priorities, but it did recommend the immediate support of the publication of the papers of Jane Addams at Hull House, because the project has a sponsor and an editor and is in the advanced planning stage.

The Commission hopes that the historical and archival professions and women's organizations will examine the preliminary list, suggest additional names, help establish priorities, and, above all, join the NHPC in organizing and encouraging projects that will lead to greater understanding and appreciation of the role of women in U.S. history. To obtain copies of the list or to suggest additional names, write to the National Historical Publications Commission, National Archives Building, Washington, D.C. 20408.

*NHPC Advisory Committee on Women's Papers*



## TO THE EDITOR:

The otherwise very useful article by Patricia Bartkowski and William Saffady on "Shelving and Office Furniture for Archives Buildings" [*American Archivist* 37(January 1974): 55-66.] omits mention of a basic problem created by reducing aisle space widths in a records storage area. Admittedly, this will increase the storage volume available within a given number of square feet of floor space area. As the authors point out, narrow aisles will make access to stored material more difficult. However, more important, narrow aisles can complicate fire fighting efforts and endanger the safety of both the stored records and the people working with them.

Part of the answer to safely increasing the utilization of available space in a records storage facility may lie in my suggestion to a session at the 1960 Society meeting that records rarely accessed be stored on pallets.

BELDEN MENKUS  
*Bergenfield, N.J.*

**Toronto, Canada**



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**October 1-4, 1974**

**Royal York Hotel**

**Local Arrangements Chairman A. Robert N. Woadden**

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