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# The American Archivist



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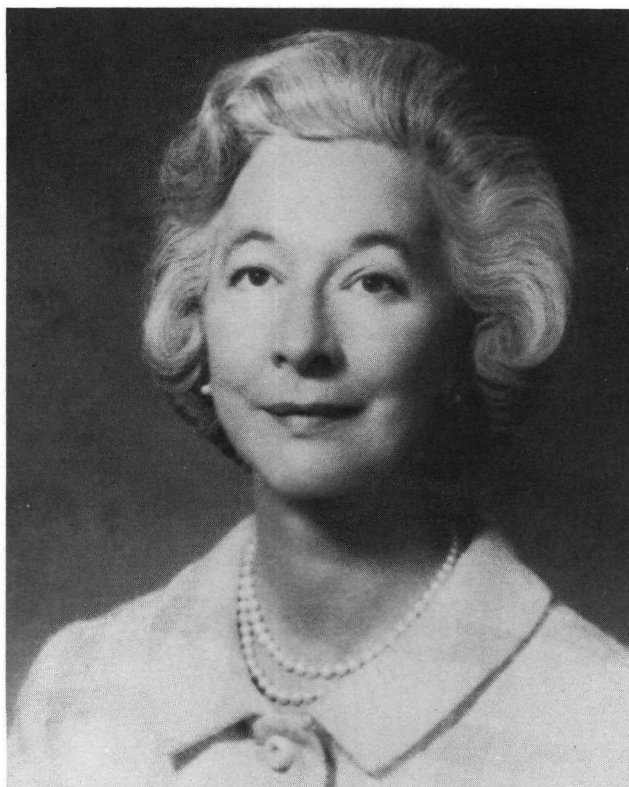
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ELIZABETH HAMER KEGAN  
President, Society of American Archivists  
1975-76

Assistant Librarian of Congress since 1963, Elizabeth Hamer Kegan joined the Library of Congress staff in 1951. She served first as the information and publications officer and in 1960 became assistant librarian for public affairs. Mrs. Kegan received her B.A. from the University of Tennessee and did graduate work in history, political science, and archives administration at the University of Chicago, the University of Tennessee, and at The American University. She was with the Survey of Federal Archives in the States, first as research assistant and finally as editor-in-chief of the *Inventory of Federal Archives in the States* and administrative assistant in charge of SFA. After joining the staff of the National Archives in 1942, she served in various public relations and publications positions, as exhibits and information officer, and as chief of the Exhibits and Publications Section, National Archives and Records Service. Mrs. Kegan represents the Library of Congress on the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and on the Federal Agency Bicentennial Task Force. An individual member of the International Council on Archives, Mrs. Kegan has attended the International Congresses held in Florence (1956), Brussels (1964), Washington (1966), Madrid (1968), and Moscow (1972). A member of many historical associations, Mrs. Kegan was a founding member of the SAA, was selected as a Fellow in 1960, was a member of the Council, 1969-73, and served as vice president, 1974-75. She and her late husband, Philip M. Hamer, executive director of the National Historical Publications Commission, are the first husband and wife to serve as presidents of the Society, Dr. Hamer's term having been 1960-61.

40th Annual Meeting of the  
**SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS**  
September 28–October 1, 1976

and the

VIIIth International Congress of the  
**INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES**  
September 27–October 1, 1976

Washington, D. C. Statler-Hilton Hotel

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## The Forum

TO THE EDITOR:

The articles in your July 1975 issue of the *American Archivist* by Messrs. Cook and Jones leave much to be desired. They provide a conclusion to a two-hundred-year-old problem and scramble for evidence to support it, "pooh-poohing" very obvious problems in opening records to the public upon retirement of a President or, for that matter, Members of Congress or the Judiciary. Were the problems not so complex the Committee on Government Operations would not have such a problem in arriving at an easy solution.

I am especially piqued by the political overtones of the articles and the unnecessary innuendoes, "... until we elect a statesman to the presidency." Insulting Presidents or, for that matter, those many who work for a more effective government is the business of the S[ymbionese] L[iberation] A[rmy], not the SAA.

DONALD C. WIGGLESWORTH  
Severna Park, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to respond to remarks made by Maynard Brichford in his review (*American Archivist*, July 1975) of the issue of the *Drexel Library Quarterly* (January 1975) devoted to "Management of Archives and Manuscript Collections for Librarians." It is to his comments on the chapter written by me that I take understandable offense.

Brichford conveys no sense of what I have written nor that Oliver W. Holmes's article, "Archival Arrangement—Five Different Operations at Five Different Levels" (*American Archivist*, January 1964), is the theoretical model for establishing progressively refined intellectual control over personal papers in particular and private papers in general. In my article, the "subgroup" is graduated to the status of a separate record level while Holmes's "depository level" is omitted for reason that it is not common to many manuscript depositories, and for reason that it is an arrangement scheme imposed on papers/records by the depository and is not an intrinsic quality of papers/records themselves.

A negative aspect of Holmes's theoretical model of special importance is the lack of any differentiation among the different record levels. Only the record group and subgroup levels relate to provenance; while the series, folder, and item levels relate merely to the order of the records. Holmes does, however, imply this relationship when he states (*American Archivist*, January 1964, p. 32) that "Once all series are assigned to record groups *and* subgroups so that the boundaries of these are finally certain, the archivist looks *within the group or subgroup* and works out a logical arrangement sequence for the series so assigned." (Italics mine.)

My *DLQ* chapter builds on this statement. It is the only such attempt in the literature to do this in terms outlined by Holmes, and it is a clear and deliberate application of archival theory to the arrangement and description of manuscript collec-

tions. [Note: Kenneth Duckett in *Modern Manuscripts* applies traditional library concepts to bibliographical control instead of archival theory.]

Brichford alludes to my somewhat eccentric usage of terms. However, an examination of Holmes's article will show that I have been wholly consistent not only with Holmes but also with the 1974 *Glossary*. Brichford's contention that my usage of record group and subgroup is the way that "other archivists" refer to "series" is probably true, but there's the rub. He and "other archivists" in doing so have confused subgroups with series, failing to recognize that subgrouping is done on the basis of the record creating agency, and that unless subgrouping is done first (in line with Holmes's recommendation), then the records of any one subgroup will be scattered among all the series, thereby obstructing intellectual control unnecessarily. Unfortunately, this failure to establish subgroups as a first step is common to most registers, guides, or inventories that I have seen.

There are other points that need to be disputed with Brichford (name control as the key to specific subject access, ephemera, etc.), but the above commentary addresses the profession's central issue relating to arrangement and description.

I would hope that fellow archivists and librarians will give a fairer reading to the *DLQ* than Brichford has done. The other authors in the issue also deserve better.

RICHARD C. BERNER

*University of Washington Libraries*



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

## Workshops on College and University Archives.

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For further information write:

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