

## The International Scene: Report on the Second Caribbean Archives Conference October 27-31, 1975

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TEN YEARS AGO, in September 1965, the First Caribbean Archives Conference was held at the University of the West Indies in Mona, a suburb of Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>1</sup> On October 27-31, 1975, after much planning, a Second Caribbean Archives Conference was held, this time in the French islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique. Most of the support for this second conference came from French sources, including funds made available by two of the French ministries in Paris, and also by the departments of Guadeloupe and Martinique, which are considered a part of France.

There were sixty or more registered attendants at the conference, and at the formal sessions place assignments were by country. Barbados, Curaçao, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico had from two to five representatives present. The United States had four representatives in attendance.

Unfortunately the United States was not the only major country greatly involved in Caribbean history that had a small representation at the conference. There was no one present from Great Britain, which played such a large role in Caribbean history, nor from the mainland of Spain, Britain's chief rival. The Central American countries were another area totally unrepresented. Colombia and Venezuela, the two main Caribbean countries of South America proper, were represented only by Fr. Alberto Lee Lopez, director of the National Archives of Colombia and president of the Inter-American Association of Archivists established at Lima in 1974. This may mean that Spanish-speaking countries bordering on the Caribbean feel they should belong to the Inter-American Association of Archivists rather than to the Caribbean Association of Archivists. It would seem they should belong to both. Certainly the two associations must cooperate closely, and we may hope Father Lee's presence symbolized recognition of this fact. Two of the Spanish-speaking islands, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, were well represented, but Cuba remained completely unheard from.

Possibly these absences may be due to shortcomings in the invitation system. But also there was little publicity in archival journals. It was especially unfortunate that the United States was not better represented since we are planning to have the International Congress in Washington, D.C., next September. There should have been

<sup>1</sup>See T. R. Schellenberg, "Caribbean Archives Conference, 1965," *American Archivist* 29 (July 1966): 387-93. Schellenberg was chairman of one of the general sessions of this conference and delivered papers on archival appraisal and on training for archivists in the Caribbean area. Later, a very interesting and valuable 510-page *Report of the Caribbean Archives Conference Held at the University of the West Indies* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, 1965) was published including the proceedings, most of the papers read at the conference, and especially prepared guides to records made available at the conference. A similar report is planned for the second conference, but its preparation will require time.

invitations, announcements, and literature available at this Caribbean Conference. Questions in the minds of many hoping to come from the Caribbean area might thus have been answered.

There were three kinds of meetings at the conference: (1) full sessions at which professional papers were read, followed by discussion; (2) business meetings having to do with establishing the Caribbean Archives Association; and (3) tours of the archives and historic sites. This is not to mention the luncheon given us by the president of the Centre Universitaire des Antilles et de la Guyane, the luncheon given by the préfet de la Guadeloupe at his Saint-Claude residence, a full evening reception given by the municipality of Point-à-Pitre, a reception and dinner given by the Historical Society of Guadeloupe, with folk dancing at Fort Fleur d'Épée in Gosier, and the evening banquet at Bakuoa Hotel in Martinique, and others.

The professional meetings were all held in a room of the Hotel Salako which has windows looking out over the ocean to the mountains of Basse-Terre. Simultaneous translations were heard through headphones contracted for by the International Council on Archives. Each session had its assigned papers, but often more time was spent afterwards in questions, discussion, and sometimes additional contributions of some length.

The official opening session on Monday morning was presided over by Jean-Paul Hervieu. Jean Favier welcomed everyone and emphasized the importance of the conference. Wilfred I. Smith and a representative of the préfet of Guadeloupe each spoke briefly. This was followed by the first working session, on the subject of archives and historical research, which was presided over by Liliane Chauleau, director of the Martinique Archives. The session was opened by a good general paper on "Archives and Universities" by D. Gail Saunders, government archivist of the Bahamas, and a presentation followed on the importance of local records, by Adelaide Merlande, president of the Centre Universitaire des Antilles et de la Guyane.

Four papers then followed that dealt with archives in France and the Netherlands that complement archives in Caribbean countries, the first by Etienne Taillemite, chief curator of the Archives of France; followed by Marie-Antoinette Menier, head of the Outre Mer section of the Archives, a third on "The Papers of the Governors of Martinique" by Gabriel Debien of the University of Nantes, France; and the last on "The Archives in the Netherlands Pertaining to the History of the Caribbean Area" by Evert van Laar of the General State Archives in The Hague. British and Spanish archives were involved only in some of the discussion.

The second working session Tuesday morning was shorter because it had to be followed by the excursion to Basse-Terre where a luncheon was given at the préfet's residence in Saint-Claude, followed by visits to certain historical areas and an all too short one to the Archives of Guadeloupe. At this second working session Wilfred Smith gave the main paper on "Archives and Public Relations," which was followed by discussion. It should be said that on tables to one side, Smith had put newsletters issued by the Archives, publications for the general public, inventories, and examples of newspaper stories. It is unfortunate that other archival establishments did not provide similar public relations exhibits at the conference, as examples of growing emphasis on this type of activity.

The third working session on Wednesday afternoon, presided over by Luis Rodriguez Morales of Puerto Rico, was on "Archival and Technical Training for the Caribbean Area" and emphasized physical rehabilitation and microfilming. The opening paper, by E. Christine Matthews, assistant archivist of Barbados, was

on "Professional Training of Archives Personnel." She dealt both with available overseas training and in-service training, the latter particularly relating to conservation techniques. The second paper was by Sr. Angel Miolan, director of the Centro Taller Regional de Restauracion y Microfilmacion de Documentos in the Dominican Republic, and dealt with their work and plans for establishing a training center and seminar with help from the Organization of American States.

Sr. Miolan's paper was followed by a paper on "Microphotography and Archival Development" written by Albert H. Leisinger, chairman of the Microfilm Committee of the International Council on Archives, and read by me since Leisinger was unable to be present. His paper dealt with objectives for microfilming, especially important in the Caribbean area, the equipment needed, and the part the International Council has played in establishing training centers in undeveloped countries. An unscheduled paper by A. F. Paula, head of the Central Historical Archives of the Netherlands Antilles, was read, dealing with a project to complete the archives of the Netherlands Antilles by publishing microfiche copies of records that in former years had been sent from Surinam, Curaçao, and other colonies, to the General State Archives of the Netherlands.

The fourth and last working session, held on Thursday morning, dealt with archival buildings and their equipping. The general opening paper on "Buildings in Tropical Countries" was by Michel Duchein of Paris, chief of the technical service of the French Archives. It was followed by Clinton Black's description of the specially built Jamaican Archives in Spanish Town, opened in 1962, and by Chauveau's description of the new building in Martinique just opened in February 1975.

Copies of most of these papers, many in both French and English, were made available to conferees. Presumably, the papers and others will be printed eventually in the *Proceedings of the Second Caribbean Archives Conference*.

In addition to time for these sessions on professional problems of particular concern to the Caribbean area, and the time needed for extensive trips and receptions on two fascinating islands, time was required for business meetings of the Caribbean Historical Association, which association, it will be remembered, had been established at the first Caribbean Archives Conference held ten years earlier in Jamaica. It was the Caribbean Historical Association and its president and governing council that had organized this Second Archives Conference, and one of its major objectives was a change of name to Caribbean Archives Association and the establishment of a closer relationship to the International Council on Archives.

At the first business meeting, on Monday afternoon, the president's report was followed by discussions of the state of archives in the Caribbean area and the potential for closer regional cooperation. At the second meeting, on Wednesday morning, the change of name to Caribbean Archives Association was voted. It was also voted that the association should apply to become the Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA). The constitution (or "statutes" as they were referred to) had to be revised accordingly and a drafting committee was appointed to consider these and other desirable changes to be brought before the general assembly. The drafting committee, with M. J. Chandler, Archivist of Barbados, as chairman, went to work and made its report at the final business meeting, held in the new archives building of Martinique on the last day of the conference.<sup>2</sup> The recommended changes were accepted.

<sup>2</sup>Other members of the drafting committee were Clinton V. Black of Jamaica, Michel Duchein of France, Marcos Antonio Martinez Paulino of the Dominican Republic, and D. Gail Saunders of the Bahamas.

The drafting committee had formulated a number of additional resolutions which were also passed at this closing reception. They were:

1. That the archivists of the region, through the Caribbean Archives Association, seek to maintain close relations with the Association of Caribbean Historians.
2. That cooperation with the universities and research institutes of the region be maintained and increased in order to promote research in the area, and to enlist the aid of researchers in promoting the well-being of archival institutions.
3. That the governments of the region be requested to authorize liberal access to their archives in line with the increasingly common implementation of a 30-year rule, in view of the growing interest of researchers in the history of the more recent past.
4. That every effort be made to extend the knowledge of archives holdings in the region by the publication of guides, reports of accessions, and annual reports.
5. That overseas countries holding archives of interest to the region be asked to make them known by similar means, to assist in their microfilming and dissemination wherever possible, and to give favorable consideration to requests to transfer documents originating from archives formed on the territory of other countries or relating to their history.
6. That archivists be urged to emphasize the value of their work to their governments, to researchers, and to the general public by every means available—by reports, exhibitions, publicity in newspapers and other printed media, and on radio and television—and by extension into educational services, and by assuming management responsibilities.
7. That the archivists of the region seek by every means at their disposal, and with the help of whatever regional and international bodies they can usefully turn to, to provide adequate means of training professional, technical, and subprofessional personnel.
8. That the urgent attention of governments of the region be drawn to the particular hazards facing archives under tropical conditions, and that they be urged to provide repositories suitable to their needs, but always of the highest standards of construction and equipment.
9. That full support be given to the Caribbean Archives Association in its programme for promoting cooperation in all fields affecting archives—technical, bibliographical, scholastic and informative.
10. That close cooperation be maintained with other associations in professional and related fields, on local, regional and international levels.

Additional resolutions were passed extending greatly deserved thanks to organizations and persons who had given generous support to this Second Conference of Archivists including "the Government and people of France," the Directorate of the National Archives of France, the authorities and people of Guadeloupe and Martinique, the President of the University Centre of the Antilles and Guyane, the Historical Society of Guadeloupe, the archivists and staffs of the "Archives Départementales" of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and others.

It was voted that the Caribbean Archives Association would continue for the present to maintain as its headquarters the facilities provided the Caribbean Historical Association in recent years in Basse-Terre, the capital city of Guadeloupe. The accepted constitution provides for meetings every four years. The next meeting, as voted by the council, will take place in the Bahamas, presumably at Nassau, the capital. D. Gail Saunders, Archivist of the Bahamas, was elected president of the association, and will surely have her hands full administering the Archives of the Bahamas, serving as president of the Caribbean Archives Association, and planning a conference to match the one in Guadeloupe. Let us hope she will have much help and support.

# The International Scene: News and Abstracts

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**Cuba.** [DONALD KING, National Archives and Records Service] The Cuban *Boletín del Archivo Nacional*, which first appeared in 1902 and was discontinued in 1965, resumed publication in 1974. It is the purpose of the staff to publish original, documented works and selected items from the national, provincial, and regional archives, works and items that will give the Cuban people a better understanding of their history and cultural heritage.

## ABSTRACTS

**Argentina.** [WILBUR E. MENERAY, Tulane University Library, and LAURA MONTI, University of Florida] *Boletín Interamericano de Archivos*, vol. 1 (1974). The *Boletín*, an attempt by the Organization of American States and the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History to produce a *Latin American Archivist*, is published by the Inter-American Center for the Development of Archivists, at the University of Cordoba, Argentina. This first issue is devoted mainly to the printing of resolutions adopted at various meetings and conferences in which Latin Americans have participated since 1947. Many of the meetings have been reported in varying detail in the *American Archivist* (see volumes 23, 27, and 29) and *Archivum* (see volumes 11, 12, and 21).

Perhaps the most important of these was the First Interamerican Congress of Archivists, in Washington in 1961. The resolutions of that meeting (pp. 85-102) call for inter-American cooperation in the preservation of archives, including agreements to help maintain national integrity of records, both public and private. Included within the resolutions are glossaries of Spanish archival terms with their English equivalents, a suggested curriculum for training archivists, standards for transcriptions of Spanish documents, and recommended methods of archival arrangement. Another important conference reported is the Interamerican Seminar on the Integration of the Information Services of Archives, Libraries, and Documentation Centers, held in Washington in 1972. This seminar documented the multiple problems faced by Latin American archival agencies caused by the shortage of proper housing, trained staff, and financial support; and emphasized the need "to create an awareness of the importance of archives as sources of information essential to national development." A third important conference was the multinational seminar that took place in Lima (19 May-6 April 1973). Three working groups dealt with the definition of national archives; the implementation of archival programs in each country; personnel, with the emphasis on training; organization of documents and finding aids; buildings; equipment; conservation and reproduction of documents; preparation of guides, inventories, and indexes; and

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the role of the national archives as the leader in awakening the interest of the governments in preserving the cultural patrimony.

Julio César Gonzalez, writing on the foundation of the National Archives of the province of Buenos Aires, 1821 (pp. 145-50), indicates that the first Spanish official in the colonies interested in preserving documents was Don Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy of New Spain (1535-50). He ordered the assembly of the *Archivo de la Secretaría del Virreinato*, but it was only during the government of the second count of Revilla Gigedo (1789-94) that the basis of what should have been the first national archives in Spanish America was begun. The first national archives was created in Buenos Aires by decree on August 28, 1821, by the government of General Martin Rodriguez. His Secretary of State Bernardino Rivadavia required that all agency archives transfer their documents to this new Archives. Only the Archives of the Cabildo protested, and on the 24th of December a law suppressed all provincial Cabildos. The Archives of the Cabildo were thus transferred.

Charles Kecskemeti, writing about the International Council on Archives (pp. 47-58), gives the historical background of the council, indicates its goals, members, and membership fees, and lists the members and the regional branches. He explains how the council is governed and where and when the international meetings have taken place. A summary is provided also about the International Round Table on Archives, its goals and the places where it has met. The council provides technical assistance for the development of archives. Research missions involved visits to more than thirty-one countries in 1968-69 to gather information about the planning of archives and to help the governments involved; ICA is also involved in professional training and preparation and execution of other projects of UNESCO related to archival developments. ICA also has specialized committees on special subjects. The author refers to the journal, *Archivum*, published by the council, and what it represents; to other studies and manuals; to the publication of guides to publicize the historical sources of various countries; and to cooperation with UNESCO. He concludes that for the future ICA will most likely concentrate on professional assistance for undeveloped countries; studies and research on archival administration, methodology, and techniques; and strengthening cooperation regarding new techniques, especially machine-readable records.

Zulema Carracedo Bosch de Prieto gives a brief history of the National Archives of Argentina (pp. 151-60), which was separated from the National Archives of the province of Buenos Aires by decree on January 30, 1884, during the presidency of General Julio Argentino Roca. The summarized careers and accomplishments of the persons who have occupied the office of the director of the Archives recounts the history of the building itself and explains the arrangement of the Archives. He notes the modifications that have occurred in organization, such as the addition of the Graphic Archives in 1957 and its development into the Audio-Visual Division, formed from the sections on graphics, sound, film, and laboratory.

The volume concludes with a bibliography of recent works on archives and a listing of manuscript repositories in Argentina. The listing is the first in a projected series covering all Latin American nations.

**Belgium.** [PAUL V. GUITÉ, National Archives and Records Service] *Archives et Bibliothèques de Belgique*, vol. 46, nos. 1-2 (1975). In this issue various contributors from several European countries give their assessment of historical research and archival training in their countries. Contributors writing on historical research in their own countries are Leopold Auer of the Austrian State Archives; Elio Lodolini

of Italy; David M. Smith, director of the Borthwick Institute of Historical Research; and Anton Gössi of the State Archives of the Canton of Lucerne. David Smith regrets that historical research does not appear to play so large a role in the British archivist's normal routine as it does in many other countries. Contributors on the training of archivists are Botho Brachmann of the history section of Humboldt University; Vincenta Cortes, inspector general of the Spanish Archives; Heinrich Fichtenau of the Institute of Austrian Historical Studies; Eric Ketelaar, director of the State School for the Training of Archivists, in Holland; Elio Lodolini of Italy; Andrew G. Watson of the University of London; F. Wolff of the Marburg Archives School in West Germany and P. Simeone Tomás-Fernández of the Secret Archives of the Vatican. Training in Belgium is also described briefly by four archivists. The article by Eric Ketelaar on the Dutch School for Archivists appears in English.

A. Arad of the Israel State Archives describes the use of his technique of automated mass spraying of documents. He states that conventional spraying processes require considerable handling as well as time and space for drying the documents. His method attempts to eliminate a certain amount of work, time, and space.

**France.** [PAUL V. GUITÉ, National Archives and Records Service] *La Gazette des Archives*, n.s., no. 88 (1975). The sole article in this issue concerns the theme of archives and documentation discussed at the 1974 Congress of French Archivists. The three texts presented are the three reports which served as the basis for discussion. Henri Charnier gives a definition of documentation; Andrée Chauleur discusses archives and documentation at the central administrative level; Pierre Gérard covers the subject from the level of the departmental administrations.

Charnier states that, vis-à-vis libraries and archives that have a retentive function, documentation is concerned with the association of ideas. As a function, documentation is part utilization while the function of archives is grounded in the origin of documents. In its phenomenal growth, documentation has become identified more with the progress of the human sciences, inseparable from the needs of administration. This imposes on the archives the necessity of making itself known as a research institution in addition to being an administrative agency. Gérard sees the mission of archives as extending beyond the preservation and the scientific use of historical documents to the preparation of contemporary history. This mission imposes upon archivists the obligation of initiating themselves in the documentation of the present. New policies which look to the inclusion of documentation in the field of activity of the archives will have to be developed, policies that unify the methods of work and encourage cooperation among the different centers of documentation. The archives needs to insert itself into the documentary world lest this world becomes formed without its presence.