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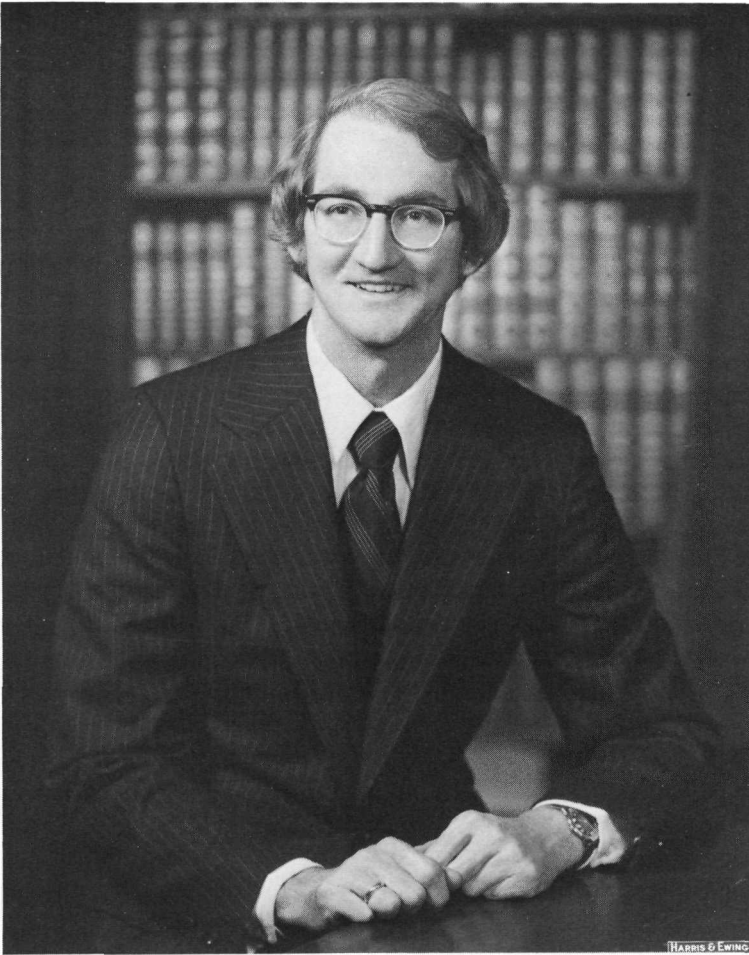
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WALTER RUNDELL, JR.
President, Society of American Archivists
1977-78

Professor of history at the University of Maryland since 1971, Walter Rundell, Jr., was born in Austin, Texas, on November 2, 1928. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1951 and took his Ph.D. at the American University in 1957. He has taught at Del Mar College, Texas Woman's University, the University of Oklahoma, and Iowa State University. From 1961-65, he served as assistant executive secretary of the American Historical Association, and for the two succeeding years he directed the Survey on the Use of Original Sources in Graduate History Training, at the National Archives. He has published *Black Market Money* (1964), *In Pursuit of American History* (1970), and *Early Texas Oil: A Photographic History* (1977), as well as other pamphlets, articles, and book reviews dealing with archives, historiography, and Western history. His second book won the Waldo G. Leland Award in 1971, and he was named a Fellow in 1974. He served on the Council from 1971-75. His "Webb the Schoolteacher," published in *Essays on Walter Prescott Webb* (1976), won the Webb-Smith Essay Prize. He is currently preparing a biography of Webb.

The Forum

[Following, translated by Hugh Taylor, is part of a letter to SAA President Walter Rundell, Jr., from the director of the Archives du Gard, in Nîmes, France—E.D.]

Dear Sir:

For some time now, I have been receiving letters from the USA addressed to the Gard Archives, "Centre de documentation d'histoire protestante." The letters request genealogical information about descendants of French Protestants forced to emigrate following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The requesters seem to think that I can provide the information from the seventeenth to twentieth centuries without any indication of the part of France from which their ancestors came. We are assuredly a documentation center for French protestantism, but we do not have the means to respond effectively to questions of this kind without far more specific detail being submitted to us.

Presumably, the inquiries have resulted from a notice in an American periodical suggesting that we have an office set up specifically to handle genealogical inquiries. If we could determine which publication was responsible, I could write them and explain the situation.

ROBERT DEBANT, *Directeur des Archives du Gard*
20 Rue des Chassaintes
Nîmes, France

TO THE EDITOR:

A project to collect and publish the papers of Samuel Gompers (1850–1924) is under way at the University of Maryland and at Pace University. It is funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. All the collected documents will be published in a comprehensive microfilm edition; the most significant papers will appear in a twelve to fifteen volume printed edition.

The Gompers papers are scattered throughout the country. Major collections are to be found with the AFL-CIO, the Library of Congress, the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and the New York Public Library; the project has discovered smaller collections in many other repositories.

The editors would welcome information regarding any letters to, from, or about Samuel Gompers. Address correspondence to Stuart B. Kaufman, History Department, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742.

STUART B. KAUFMAN
Editor, The Samuel Gompers Papers

TO THE EDITOR:

At its November 1977 meeting, in Washington, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission adopted a formal statement of general policy, particularly regarding basic approaches to national archival problems. The statement has been written in terms to identify certain basic needs and preferred

approaches to meet these needs, and its aim is not only to give direction to the commission staff but to inform agencies and institutions of the commission's guiding principles. I would appreciate the opportunity of sharing a copy of the statement with the readers of *The American Archivist*. The statement is as follows:

Categories of Need and Preferred Approaches

(1) Need: Programs to ensure the preservation of historical records.

Preferred approaches:

(a) Cooperative programs including state, regional, or other area-wide approaches whereby proficiency and equipment are made available to records repositories that need them; (b) Programs which place the highest value on the informational content, rather than the artifact value, of historical records; (c) Microform programs which combine goals of space saving, security, and wider availability with preservation of information in records.

(2) Need: Surveys of records not in archival repositories.

Preferred approaches:

(a) Programs combining the identification, appraisal, and appropriate accessioning of materials of historical value into adequately equipped repositories; (b) Programs which include the education of records custodians who are not trained archivists as part of the survey effort and which bring records program needs to the attention of those who can influence their condition and access to them; (c) Programs which, when possible, provide for future updating of survey data.

(3) Need: Guides to historical records in repositories in the United States.

(a) First attention to guides at the collection/record group level rather than more detailed levels of description; (b) Cooperative programs which make information available to the maximum number of users in the most inexpensive and accessible form; (c) Information gathering and recording projects compatible with the automated national data base under development by the commission; (d) Submission of appropriate information to the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*.

(4) Need: The education and training of archivists, records custodians, and historical agency administrators in the administration of historical records programs.

Preferred approaches:

(a) Programs to improve the knowledge of those who are not professional archivists but who administer historical records or the repositories in which they have been deposited; (b) Programs which will increase the concern and understanding of organizations which create records of long-range value; (c) Programs to increase the skills of professional archivists, especially in developing expanded records programs; (d) Programs for training of beginning archivists by qualified instructors.

(5) Need: Arrangement, description, and archival processing of historical records.

Preferred approaches:

(a) Programs which give first attention to processing of materials not now accessible to research; (b) Programs which emphasize basic rather than more detailed archival controls and processes.

(6) Need: The development or improvement of system-wide records programs for state and local governments and for private records-creating organizations.

Preferred approaches:

(a) Systematic records management programs, especially the development of retention schedules, linked to ongoing archival programs; (b) Model programs which may be adopted system-wide or by comparable units.

(7) Need: Improved techniques and tools in all major areas of need.

Preferred approaches:

Research, testing, and demonstration programs which provide the maximum sharing of reports, plans, evaluations, standard forms and similar products with others who may find them useful.

For further information write: NHPRC, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D.C. 20408, or telephone (202)-724-1616.

FRANK G. BURKE

Executive Director,

National Historical Publications and Records Commission