



*Alberta Government Photograph*

HUGH A. TAYLOR  
President, Society of American Archivists, 1978-79

Before coming to North America in 1965, Hugh A. Taylor had a distinguished archival career in his native England. He took his B.A. and M.A. degrees at Oxford University in 1949-54, with a diploma in Archives Administration from the University of Liverpool in 1951. He served as city archivist of Leeds from 1951 to 1954, and held the same position in Liverpool from 1954 to 1958. He left the post of county archivist of Northumberland, which he had held since 1958, to serve as provincial archivist of Alberta, Canada, 1965-67, and of New Brunswick, 1967-71. After six years (1971-77) as director of the Archives Branch of the Public Archives of Canada, in Ottawa, he became provincial archivist of Nova Scotia early in 1978, the position he still holds. He has taught archives administration on both sides of the Atlantic, at Liverpool University, 1954-58, and at the University of New Brunswick, 1969-70. His activities in professional associations also spans the ocean. He was a council member and chairman of the North Eastern Region of the Society of Archivists (United Kingdom), 1963-65, and is still a member of that society. He was chairman of the Archives Section of the Canadian Historical Association, 1967-68, and of its Committee of the Future, 1973-74. He also edited its journal, *The Canadian Archivist*, from 1968 to 1970. He is a member of the Association of Canadian Archivists and chaired its Education Committee in 1975-76. Taylor has belonged to the SAA since 1971 and has served the Society in the following positions: Council member, 1973-77; Executive Committee, 1976-77; Committee for the 1970s, 1971; Editorial Board, 1973-76; Program Committee, 1973; Education and Professional Development Committee, since 1974; and Committee on Regional Archival Activity, since 1976. He presented papers at the Society's annual meetings in 1971, 1974, and 1976. His writings include nearly a dozen articles.

# Focus

HUGH A. TAYLOR

EMBARKING UPON MY YEAR as president of the Society of American Archivists, I now have some idea how Nicholas Breakspear must have felt on Christmas Day 1154. In case there may be some of you who do not instantly recall the occasion, let me remind you that Nicholas on that day was crowned Pope and took the name Adrian IV, the only Englishman ever to be so honored. You will be relieved to know that I do not intend to push the analogy any further, but I too stand in awe of my responsibility and will serve you as best I can.

I am a British subject by birth, a Canadian citizen by choice, and an American Archivist by profession in the sense that archivists in both Canada and the United States are jointly endeavoring to secure the archival inheritance of North America. Assuredly we have a professional border, but may it too stand undefended. Let us like good gardeners continue to chat over the fence and visit our neighbors. The results could surprise and delight both our houses for we are all seeking solutions to much the same problems.

Before the cloud-capped towers of our wonderful meeting dissolve in memory, I would like to outline and focus on some of the important events which lie ahead of us.

In the field of archival education, the outstanding success of the basic workshops sponsored by the Society have encouraged us to continue our efforts in this direction, and our submission to the National Endowment for the Humanities is designed to reach an even wider public through the production of basic educational materials for those who are unable to attend the more formal workshops and need some basis upon which to build with local resources. I would like to sound a faint note of warning here, for there is a fine line between the elegantly simple and the dangerously simplistic, of which I am assured the designers of the material are well aware. I nearly said that you cannot sensibly abbreviate *Hamlet* to the compass of a five cent piece, but that is precisely what modern technology probably can do, and without abbreviation! In any case

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This article is the greeting of the incoming president presented to the Society of American Archivists at their forty-second annual meeting, on 6 October 1978, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Nashville, Tennessee.

there will be a very timely conference for invited participants in November of this year on the future of workshop education.

First of what may become a series of more specialized educational opportunities is the business archives workshop scheduled for December 1978 in Chicago. If successful and funds are available, the same program could be offered again on three subsequent occasions during the coming year.

Specialized and more advanced offerings of this kind are particularly important as we all try to extend our horizons in the light of unfamiliar constituencies and new media. Despite the very real constraints of time, travel, and budgets we must try to resist too much nuts-and-bolts specialization which can so easily reduce us to technicians rather than (must I say?) craftspersons. We are all members of a "mystery" in the medieval sense but on an international scale, and should be aware that we in the western world do not have all the solutions even if we have much of the technology—also that third world nations are facing problems similar to ours but with climatic differences as an added dimension. International Archives Week, toward the end of 1979, will help to remind us of our colleagues and fellow members of the Society beyond North America about whom we should be better informed, and to remind the general public of our worldwide activity. In this context, I would like also to draw your attention to the international study tour to Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji in 1979.

We will, of course, continue to publish. Five new manuals are on the way. Under the leadership of Virginia Purdy, *The American Archivist* will not (in the best sense) be quite the same, and I am sure that for her the presses will roll on time and we will continue to enjoy our journal at the customary regular intervals. In addition, we are promised an introduction to religious archives, a college and university archives reader, and an archivists' catalog on how to buy what and where, the last to be distributed free to members.

While on the subject of specialized fields, you are all well aware of the growth of societies which appeal to these special interests, especially in the areas of sound and image. We must try not to see these societies as rival associations, but rather as sources of strength and encouragement to those of us who often have to grapple with wayward and complex technologies. We simply urge that insofar as you are all *archivists* you will remain active members of this Society, a vital bridge between the less familiar "media of record" and the main body of archival tradition into which most of us are associated. You have much to teach us and to learn from us, since the general principles of our profession hold true for us all. We in turn must see that these new media and you the archivists who manage them have a proper place in our activities and publications, for your impact is growing at an ever increasing rate.

There will in future be more consideration given to the total environment of retrieval through model finding-aid systems for various types of repositories, systems which are being developed by the Committee on Finding Aids; and examples of this work were on display at the annual meeting.

A thoroughly holistic approach is also being taken by the Committee on Automated Records, which has adopted a five-year-plan and is anxious that we all learn to become more comfortable with machine-readable archives and recognize the implications of the automated record on so much of the work of other com-

mittees. Here is an excellent example of a highly specialized group of archivists determined in the nicest way to educate us and help us to talk to them on equal terms.

These are just a few of the exciting new projects emerging from the committees, about which we can expect to hear more in the coming year. We are now committed to a reorganization of the committee structure, thanks to the excellent work of the Committee on Committees, and Council recognizes that the committees appointed this year will require general guidance on how best to proceed so that a smooth transition may be effected.

The Society also plans to conduct a comprehensive salary survey in 1979 and probably in alternate years thereafter. We will continue to work at our professional identity and, I hope, arrive at some resolution of our trinitarian problem with regard to certification of individuals, accreditation of archival education, and evaluation of archival institutions.

As archivists we take note of roots, and the root of the title I have chosen for this brief piece had a much more domestic meaning in the Roman world. Toward the end of the year we will move toward our own *focus*—our hearth, home, and headquarters in Chicago, to savor the delights already being prepared for us by our Program and Local Arrangements Committees. Have a good year!

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**Correction**

In the article "Photographs as Historical Evidence," by Walter Rundell, Jr., in the October 1978 issue of this journal, the legend for the photograph on page 392 was inadvertently dropped off when the picture was printed. An integral part of the illustration, the legend reads: *Rogers No. 1, discovery well in Mexia field, which came in at 3,000 barrels daily in November, 1920.*