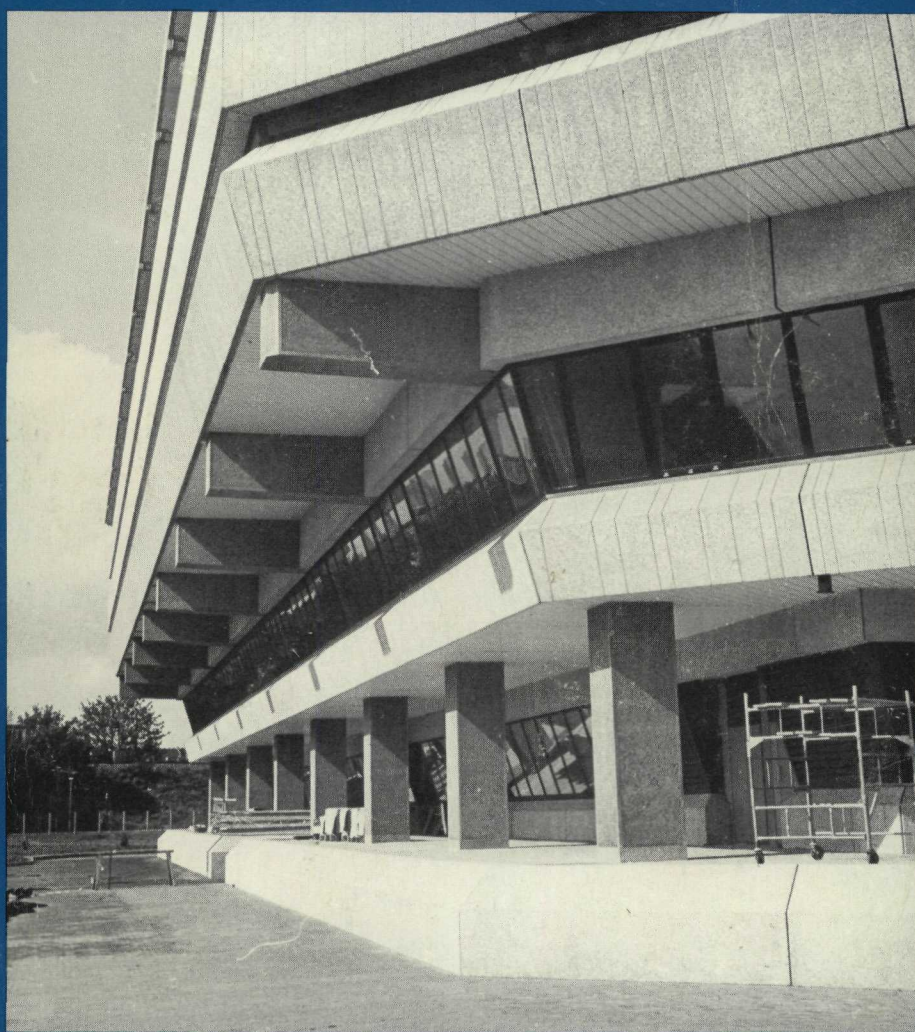


# The American Archivist

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## The American Archivist

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## The Forum

### TO THE EDITOR:

I was very offended by the style and content of Jane K. Gibbs's review of *A Guide to the Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections* by Frederick L. Honhart, Suzann Pyzik, and Saralee R. Howard (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1976), which appeared in the July 1978 issue of *The American Archivist*. Ms. Gibbs states that the guide ". . . is seriously flawed by its inconsistencies, inattention to detail, and poor editing." Two sentences later she adds that "Designed to direct the researcher to the in-house finding aids of the Archives and Historical Collections, it accomplishes this goal quite well." From my point of view it is Ms. Gibbs's review that is flawed by inconsistencies and poor editing.

Many of her criticisms are trivial ("Also, the credentials of the editors are not given, and it is notable that not one of them is a member of the listed staff"); some even niggling ("It is not clear, however, if all or only some of the faculty, staff, and administrative personnel were invited to make this contribution"); others incomprehensible ("Curiously, many of the Land Grant entries make no mention of land grants at all").

I have examined M.S.U.'s guide and found it very usable. Its strength lies in its very existence; a staff the size of M.S.U.'s Archives and Historical Collection should be congratulated for enterprise that many repositories with larger staffs have been unwilling to undertake. Ms. Gibbs's lack of empathy for the enormity of such an undertaking is demonstrated by the whole tone of her review culminating in her final peevish sentence, the hackneyed phrase of all disgruntled reviewers of reference books.

JOHN F. DOJKA  
*Archivist, Yale University Library*  
New Haven, CT 06520

### TO THE EDITOR:

After reading Jane Gibbs's review of the *Guide to the Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections*, I feel compelled to reply. Her comments on the lack of uniform size descriptors and the confusion over processed and unprocessed records are significant criticisms of the *Guide*. There are, however, serious deficiencies with Ms. Gibbs's review and I

would like to address myself to some of them.

Ms. Gibbs notes the failure of the *Guide* to discuss “record groups, classification schemes, possible restrictions or NUCMC listings.” This information is not included because it is not relevant to the function of a published guide, which serves as an external finding aid describing the entire holdings of a repository.

Another observation by the reviewer is the variation in the amount and quality of information given in the descriptions of the collections. Considering the normal variety in quality and size of the collections, the *Guide* descriptions only reflect the realities of the repository’s holdings.

Ms. Gibbs is also troubled by the lack of land grants in the Land Grant Research Collection. In the Foreword to the *Guide* the establishment of the Land Grant Research Program is noted, “whose objective is the collection of research materials on the origins and development of the land grant philosophy of education.” The Land Grant Research Collection is an artificial collection of manuscripts and records relating to the above stated topic, not “land grants.”

The reviewer complains about the lack of a chronological index. Given the rarity of such an index in a guide, it would seem appropriate only to comment when such an index exists. However, the *Guide* does contain a donor index to the collections, which is not a typical index for this type of publication and of which I would have appreciated comment, pro or con.

If there is any justification for Ms. Gibbs’s statement that the *Guide* “is seriously flawed by its inconsistencies, inattention to detail and poor editing,” it certainly has not been demonstrated in her review. Rather, it demonstrated

her own lack of familiarity with both the function of guides to archives and manuscripts in general and the *Guide to the Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections* in particular.

FREDERICK L. HONHART

*Office of the Director, University Archives  
and Historical Collections,  
Michigan State University,  
East Lansing, MI 48824*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

For the third year in a row the SAA’s annual meeting has ended with an advertisement for the city chosen as the site of the next meeting. We have seen slide-tapes about Salt Lake City and Nashville and a film about Chicago.

It isn’t clear to me why we have seen them. Do the people who arrange to show these commercials believe that SAA members decide whether or not to go to meetings on the basis of the number of nightclubs or French restaurants available, or the size of a city’s zoo? Did Council use such criteria in picking the city in the first place?

Our job is to care for the nation’s memory as recorded in various physical media; it isn’t too grandiose to say that we have an active concern for truth. The “come to Funville” propaganda we have been seeing is concerned not with truth but with sales, and I suggest that it is inappropriate for us to have anything to do with it. Let’s go back to spending the last twenty minutes of each meeting talking shop and saying goodbye to our colleagues.

EVA MOSELEY

*Curator of Manuscripts  
Radcliffe College*

## TO THE EDITOR:

The Library of Congress is exploring the possibility of issuing either (1) a complete twenty-year accumulation of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, with updated entries and a consolidated index; or (2) a consolidation of the current indexes. The Library is also considering the use of microfiche for either publication.

Reactions from users and potential buyers of NUCMC are being sought. Please address comments to me at the address below.

HARRIET OSTROFF  
*Editor, NUCMC*  
*Library of Congress*  
*Washington, DC 20540*

## TO THE EDITOR:

The North Carolina State Archives is attempting to locate a photograph of the late Henry Howard Eddy, who served as State Archivist, 1946–48. Eddy was the first of six State Archivists of North Carolina and neither we nor New York (from whence he came) or Pennsylvania (to which he went) have a picture of him.

Anyone with a photograph of Eddy is asked to lend it to the North Carolina Archives for copying. Please send it to Thornton W. Mitchell, Archives and Records Section, 109 E. Jones St., Raleigh, NC 27611.

THORNTON W. MITCHELL  
*State Archivist,*  
*North Carolina State Archives*

## TO THE EDITOR:

The United Negro College Fund, Inc., recently has established an ar-

chives. In addition to processing the records of the organization, they are trying to locate materials about the UNCF contained in other repositories. Anyone knowing about such materials is asked to contact: Gregory S. Hunter, Archivist, United Negro College Fund, Inc., 500 East 62d Street, New York, NY 10021.

GREGORY S. HUNTER  
*Archivist, UNCF*

## TO THE EDITOR:

One of the greatest obstacles to the development of microfilming in South America is the lack of technical publications in the field and in the local language.

With the idea of solving this problem, CENADEM is starting a major project of technical publications treating all areas of micrographics. To accomplish this goal, CENADEM is requesting micrographics professionals around the world to send articles dealing with any and all aspects of the field. CENADEM—National Center for Micrographic Development—is an organization located in São Paulo, Brazil, whose purpose is the dissemination of information about micrographics.

Authors may send original articles or others already published elsewhere, or even papers presented at congresses, symposia, and the like. All material selected for publication will be translated.

Professionals who wish to collaborate in this large-scale program in the promotion of micrographics should send: (1) a complete copy of the text of the article, (2) photos and other illustrative material where pertinent, (3) a short biography, and (4) a black-and-white photo of the author.

Authors will, of course, receive copies of the publication upon its appearance.

Contributions should be sent to:  
CENADEM  
At. Antonio Paulo A.Silva  
Av. São Luiz, 258 - cj. 1505  
01046 - São Paulo - SP  
BRAZIL

ANTONIO PAULO DE ANDRADE E SILVA  
*General Director*

TO THE EDITOR:

Dr. Michael T. Stieber, archivist of the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, Pittsburgh, advised me to contact you with my query about the

present whereabouts of a manuscript.

It might be of great help if you would be so kind as to place the following advertisement in *The American Archivist*:

Information, please, on the present whereabouts of a 600 pp. manuscript by the Swiss traveller, physician, and botanist Laurent Garcin (1683–1752). The manuscript was offered for sale in 1945 by Messrs. Francis Edwards, London, catalog nr. 675, bound in one volume.

Please send any information about the manuscript to me, at the address below.

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2311 NV Leiden  
The Netherlands