

# The American Archivist

Volume 42

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July 1979

*The Enteries of  
Baltimore Town  
begun by  
George Walker  
December i<sup>st</sup> 1720*



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## The American Archivist

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COVER: Detail of the title page of the survey book for the laying out of Baltimore Town, 1792.  
*Baltimore City Archives.*

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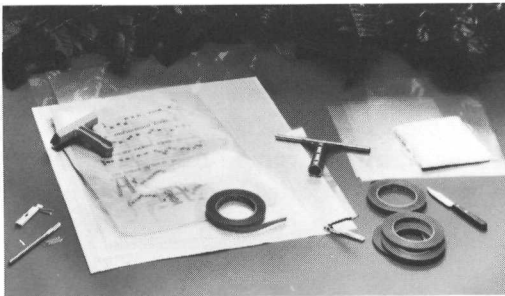
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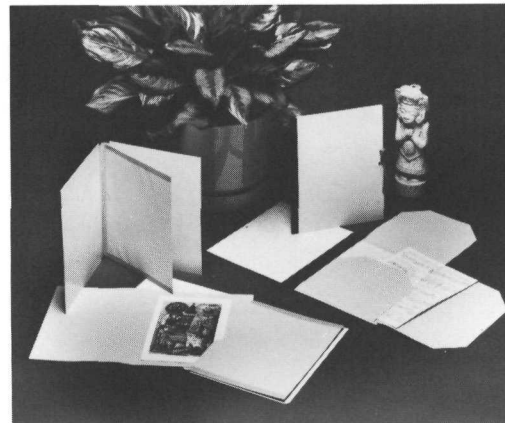
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## The Forum

### TO THE EDITOR:

A former student has forwarded a copy of the article written by Walter Rundell, Jr., "Photographs as Historical Evidence: Early Texas Oil," in *The American Archivist* (October 1978), which was the presidential address delivered on October 5, 1978, in Nashville, Tennessee, to the Society of American Archivists. On pages 376-7, the author refers to the Spindletop Museum as being an illustration of "one of the problems of our profession." I would at this point like to forward some information which might be pertinent to this reference.

It is true that Dr. Rundell did visit the museum during the summer of 1975 and found exactly what he stated; however, there should be an explanation of what happened thereafter which does not appear in the author's remarks.

At that particular point in the museum's history, the Lucas Gusher Monument Association had given the Spindletop Memorial Museum, which was housed in the former Sun Oil Company building at the Amelia Campus, to Lamar University; but I had not yet arrived, since the state appropriation to maintain and operate the museum did not start until September 1975. I was also shocked at the lack of security, climate control, and condition of the material; however, the young man the author made reference to was a volunteer who had given of his services to the Geology Club at the university, in order to keep the museum open until a professional was hired.

Since September 1975, we have opened

a fourteen-building outdoor museum, Gladys City Boomtown, on January 10, 1976, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Lucas Gusher, and moved from the Amelia location to temporary quarters on the Lamar University campus; then subsequently we opened the Spindletop Memorial Museum, in April 1978.

The information presented in the paper published by *The American Archivist* is a great deterrent to our future plans and our attempts to establish a recognized and worthwhile archival collection for the petroleum industry, not only in this area but for the petroleum industry in general. I find that very seldom does the denouncement of a particular program accomplish much and in this instance, while we are attempting to make the Spindletop Museum the first thing people think of when they think of preserving our "oil" heritage, I am afraid it will now be of a negative nature.

Since my arrival here and the hiring of my assistant, from whom Dr. Rundell received the requested information about the Hamill brothers as well as some corrections that we have suggested in his second printing, we have been more than happy to assist everyone who has requested material from our archives. I think this indicates very well our abilities and seriousness about our current obligations and abilities.

I would like to point out that the letter specifically referred to in the article was from F. Rockefeller, not John D. as was related, and it now occupies a place of prominence in one of the thirty exhibit cases dedicated to the geology and history of

Southeast Texas and the Spindletop discovery itself.

Until recently, we did not charge for copies of photographs requested strictly for academic research, but due to the number of orders filled we have been forced to work up a price schedule; however, as it points out, there is still a special rate for scholars and worthy causes.

CALVIN SMITH  
*Director, Museum Services,  
 Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

I have just finished reading the article by Nicholas Montalto in the October 1978 issue (pp. 399-404) in which he reports on the International Institutes Project of the Immigration History Research Center.

When I got to the paragraph where the author appealed "for cooperation from our colleagues in the profession and [we] offer our assistance in arranging the transfer of collections to appropriate repositories," I almost gagged. My personal experience with the IHRC has been just exactly the opposite. I first called on the International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis in 1971 in an attempt to acquire their papers. I continued to work with three subsequent executive directors and boards until 1976, when IHRC Director Rudolph J. Vecoli persuaded the St. Louis Institute Board to give him their collection. The papers were moved immediately to Minnesota. Not too long afterwards I read that the IHRC had received a grant from NHPRC to survey and arrange for preservation other international institutes throughout the country.

It was bad enough to lose this valuable collection of St. Louis history, but it is really insulting for Montalto to make his broad appeal for cooperation from archivists in preserving institute papers. Believe me, any of the historical repositories in St. Louis would have been more than glad to acquire the institute papers. I worked for more than five years for us to become the "appropriate" repository that Montalto calls for. The IHRC also holds the collection of

the International Institute of Boston. Can Montalto be serious when he infers that no repository in Boston was interested in international institute papers?

IRENE CORTINOVIS  
*Associate Director,  
 Western Historical Manuscript Collection—  
 University of Missouri*

*Cortinovis sent a copy of her letter to the Immigration History Research Center. Their reply follows:*

Dear Ms. Cortinovis:

Thank you for sending us a copy of your letter of February 16 to Virginia C. Purdy. We are, however, sorry to learn that you feel so strongly about the acquisition of the records of the International Institute of St. Louis by the Immigration History Research Center. The issue is the perennial one of subject vs. geographical collections. We do not feel the need to justify an immigration history collection which is national, indeed, international in scope. Researchers, we believe, are best served by such a collection which brings together ethnic newspapers, publications, and manuscripts, as well as the records of immigrant service agencies such as the international institutes.

In fact, the records of the St. Louis Institute have been extensively utilized by a number of scholars at the IHRC, including a student writing a doctoral dissertation on the Italians in St. Louis.

Your complaint it seems to us would be better addressed to the Board of Directors of the International Institute of St. Louis, since it was their decision to deposit the records with the IHRC. In your letter you fail to mention that the records of the national organization of the international institutes (the American Council for Nationalities Service) are housed at the IHRC—a major factor in explaining our attraction as a repository to affiliated agencies on the local level. You also fail to mention that one condition of deposit was that the St. Louis Institute records be microfilmed by the center and that a copy of the film be do-



nated to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection, Thomas Jefferson Library, of the University of Missouri. As the IHRC curator, Ms. Lynn S. Toscano, wrote to your colleague, Ms. Anne R. Kenney, on February 6, 1979, the microfilming of the institute records has been completed and a positive copy of the film will soon be sent to your institution. The IHRC has invested considerable time, effort, and money in processing and filming these materials. A detailed inventory running 49 pages has been prepared to the microfilm. I believe that these facts somewhat alter the impression your letter gives that we simply walked off with the institute records lock-stock-and-barrel.

The IHRC, I dare say, deserves some credit for "discovering" the international institute movement and initiating a project for the preservation of its records. At the start of the International Institutes Project the records of only eight out of some fifty institutes had been placed in archival repositories, and of these, three were with the IHRC. As an immediate result of the project, three additional collections have been transferred to archival repositories, and negotiations are in process concerning another fourteen collections. It has been our intention in this project to have the IHRC serve as "repository of last resort." We have in most cases acted as an intermediary between the institutes and nearby historical institutions. Quite a few archivists would, I am sure, attest to this role.

In addition, the IHRC's project has prepared a "Guide to the Records of the International Institute Movement" as well as a manual on records management for currently active international institutes. These, we hope, will enhance efforts to preserve this valuable body of documentation.

It has been and continues to be the operating principle of the IHRC to cooperate with other institutions in the common task of salvaging the long-neglected records of American ethnic communities. But we do not intend to sit idly by while valuable bodies of documents deteriorate and disappear for lack of adequate diligence and vigor on the part of responsible historical agencies. We prefer to cooperate with your institu-

tion as with others, but we will in any case do our job.

NICHOLAS MONTALTO  
*Research Associate, Immigration History Research Center, St. Paul, Minnesota*

RUDOLPH J. VECOLI  
*Director, IHRC*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

The January 1979 issue of *The American Archivist* carries a brief notice in the "News Notes" on the passage of an archival security law in California. While we appreciate the fact that notice of the law was published, the emphasis and wording of the notice implies that the passage of the law was a fairly simple process.

In all fairness, it must be stated that very few laws magically appear in front of our state legislatures for passage without a great deal of advance work having been done. It is unrealistic to imply that the development and passage of archival security laws is a simple process. That has certainly not been our experience with California's new law.

The Society of California Archivists did not simply "endorse" the security law. It appointed a security committee to develop a draft for the proposed legislation, worked closely with SAA to gain information on legislation passed or pending in other states, actively sought a legislator to introduce and refine the proposal, sought the support of other professional organizations, and helped support the bill throughout the legislative process with an active letter-writing campaign both to legislators serving on the committees hearing the bill and to the governor.

SAA has recognized the complexity of this process and invited the head of SCA's security committee, James V. Mink, to participate in an upcoming advanced seminar on security. The publications of the Society of American Archivists should also take note of the problems involved in the passage of security legislation.

For those states which have not as yet obtained an archival security law, we take pride in pointing to our own accomplishment as evidence that it can be done. But, realistically, it does not happen without a

good deal of advance preparation and continued effort.

CHUCK WILSON  
President, Society of California Archivists

TO THE EDITOR:

Mr. Leonard Rapport's article in the January 1979 *American Archivist*, "Fakes and Facsimiles: Problems of Identification," prompted me to take another look at a wallpaper newspaper I had run across in our uncataloged ephemera over a year ago, shortly after my arrival at Amherst.

It is the Vicksburg *Daily Citizen* for 4 July 1863 (with the misprint "CTIIZEN" in the masthead), discussed by Mr. Rapport on pp. 54-55 of his article. A comparison with the tests he listed, and my own knowledge of letterpress printing characteristics, led me to feel that what we had was a genuine original and not one of the numerous facsimiles. It was surely neither a photo-offset facsimile nor type-facsimile, though a photographically produced line block could not be absolutely ruled out.

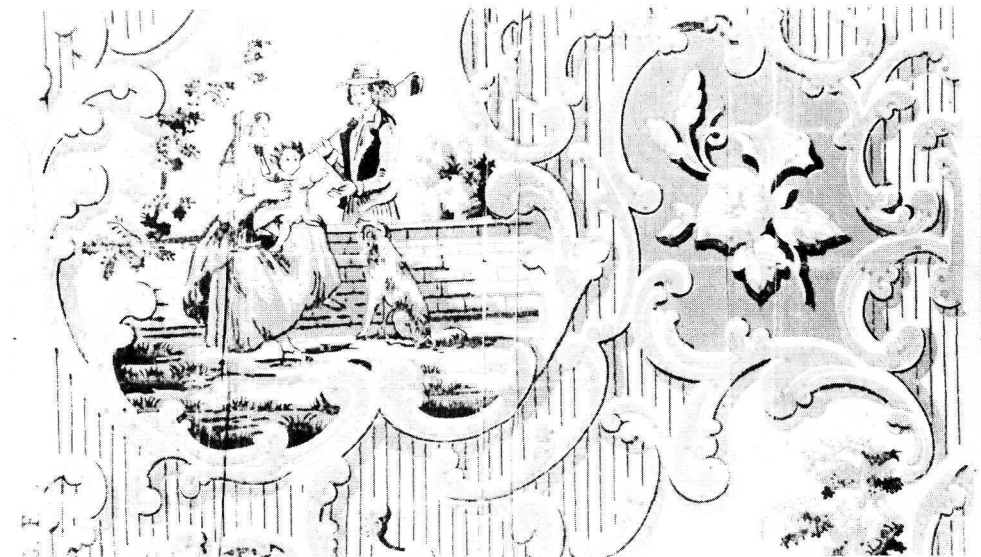
Lest I become a "true believer" without adequate evidence, though, I visited the American Antiquarian Society in nearby Worcester, where Miss Joyce Tracy, Curator of Newspapers, showed me their multiple copies of both the 2 July and 4 July

issues, as well as their extensive collection of the facsimiles. This comparison convinced us that Amherst's is indeed an original.

Of some interest is the particular wallpaper our copy is printed on. My necessarily limited research to date has not turned up another copy on the same paper, nor in fact on any pictorial paper. While a minor point, this is nonetheless intriguing, and I would be interested in knowing what other patterns are represented. This might be a fruitful area for a team of newspaper librarian and wallpaper specialist to investigate, not only for this issue but for other papers as well.

Equally intriguing from my point of view is the utter lack of provenance for our copy. No one here has any idea when or how we acquired the paper, and memories go back a good forty years. I am hopeful that wider publicity among our alumni will reveal some information, but in any case am grateful to you and Mr. Rapport (with whom I have corresponded) for providing the impetus to accurate identification and cataloging of one more piece of our varied collections.

JOHN LANCASTER  
Special Collections Librarian  
and Archivist, Amherst College,  
Amherst, Massachusetts



Amherst College copy of the Vicksburg *Daily Citizen* of 4 July 1863. The pattern is in blue and brown on a buff paper.

## TO THE EDITOR:

[In response to Frank G. Burke's letter, The Forum, January issue, concerning Plunkett's review of *American Literary Manuscripts: A Checklist of Holdings*.]

I do agree with many of Mr. Burke's criticisms, and I plead guilty to the use of kid gloves; but I do take exception to his statement that the *ALM* is a "disservice to scholarship." The labelling of a publication that initially predated Hamer and has the backing of the Modern Language Association as a "disservice to scholarship" is a very strong indictment. I hope that Mr. Robbins is given a fair chance to respond to that criticism.

MICHAEL PLUNKETT

*Assistant Curator of Manuscripts,  
Alderman Library, University of Virginia*

## TO THE EDITOR:

I have recently received and read the January 1979 issue of *The American Archivist*. I would like you to know that I commend the new appearance of our journal. I would also like to comment upon the letter to the editor from D. W. Palmquist regarding the reduced accessions section. I would quickly agree that this section should *not* be reduced but expanded. This section is the first one I read when the journal arrives and I enjoy the accessions received by every repository that reports to the editor. I also believe that the announced policy of reducing the accessions section should be studied further before the reduction step is taken.

JOHN R. WOODARD

*Director, Baptist Historical Collection,  
Wake Forest University*

## TO THE EDITOR:

Congratulations on the new *American Archivist*. It can be read with pleasure and ease. Your first issue is excellent in every way. I congratulate you on all the changes you have made.

DORMAN H. WINFREY

*Director and Librarian,  
Texas State Library, Austin, Texas*

## TO THE EDITOR:

Were it not for the fact that I am a fledgling archivist, I would cancel my membership in SAA immediately. I am entirely opposed to the Council's action in rescheduling the location of the 1982 meeting from Richmond, Virginia, to Boston, Massachusetts.

Distance would prevent me from attending the meeting at either place. But I oppose the change because of the reasoning that prompted it. As a historian and a professional person, I deplore the use by professional people of what amounts to a secondary boycott. The SAA has certain aims none of which has anything to do with exerting economic pressure on what could very well be a non-offending city or even hotel, for the purpose of attaining a political end.

As a woman I am offended by these tactics for granting me my "rights."

SISTER M. HELENA SANFILIPPO

*Sisters of Mercy,  
Burlingame, California*

## TO THE EDITOR:

Sr. M. Helena Sanfilippo uses the right word when she refers, elsewhere in The Forum, to the "tactics" adopted by the SAA general meeting and the Council in Nashville, withdrawing the annual meeting from Virginia because of that state's refusal to ratify ERA. In deciding whether or not a professional organization should take such a position, I think it important to distinguish clearly between the issue and the tactics we use to confront it. What we were contesting in Nashville were tactics, not the issue itself.

How does an organization decide when a political or social issue is likely to have professional implications? Let me suggest three rules of thumb. First, does that issue affect significant numbers of the profession in their place of work? Second, does it create a climate that threatens to affect adversely our professional decisions? And, finally, does it in some way affect what we

perceive to be our public worth? An illustration of the last, for example, was the refusal of certain scientists to participate in the manufacture of the atom bomb, or to allow work on cancer research to be diverted to work on producing defoliants.

Equal rights is a political issue which affects many of us, both men and women, in our place of work. Where there is a clear indication that more than 40 percent of our professional membership can be the objects of salary or other employment discrimination, our working relationships are affected and we are dealing with an issue that has professional implications. We might have viewed the war in Viet Nam similarly. It affected profoundly the administrative priorities of many of the institutions in which we worked, and therefore our archival priorities. For those of us then in universities, it affected our student staffing, our collecting policies, and in some instances raised questions about our legal rights as custodians of confidential material.

Once we focus on the issue as a professional one, we can then advance a series of tactics for facing it. In the case of legal rights, withdrawing economic support is one such tactic, but it is only one. Part of our consternation in Nashville arose when the loyalties of members on the issue of ERA appeared to be tested by their vote on the tactic. I know no simple resolution to this confusion, particularly in the theater of a general business meeting, nor do I deny that the tactics often supersede the issue, as they eventually did during the Civil Rights Movement. But I think it essential, first to make the distinction I suggest, and second to remember that if one declines to support a tactic, or doubts its efficacy, one should not be marked as disloyal to the issue itself.

ELSIE FREIVOGEL

*Director, Academic and Curricular Programs,  
National Archives and Records Service*

TO THE EDITOR (and to the officers, Council, and members of the Society of American Archivists):

On behalf of the Iowa Historical Materials Preservation Society, I would like to thank everyone for the support and encouragement given us during our two and one-half year struggle to establish a state archivist position. Edward McConnell has accepted the position and is expected to arrive in Des Moines early in March.

Special thanks must be given to the SAA Council and the Midwest Archives Conference for resolutions sent to Governor Ray, the Legislature, and the State Historical Board in 1977; to the SAA Regional Archival Activity Committee, the Michigan Archival Association, the Society of Southwest Archivists, and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference for their support; and to the following individuals who responded so promptly and generously to our requests for information: John Daly, David B. Gracy II, F. Gerald Ham, Carroll Hart, Lucile M. Kane, John M. Kinney, Sidney F. McAlpin, Thornton W. Mitchell, John J. Newman, David J. Olson, James D. Porter, William P. Ptacek, Dennis F. Walle, Edward Weldon, and Donald Wilson.

We are hopeful that the state of Iowa's archival management program will soon regain the highly respected reputation it held a half century ago. THANK YOU!

TOBY FISHBEIN  
*President, IHMPS*

TO THE EDITOR:

Your study of reader opinions was a bit disturbing to me. Admittedly, the readers of *The American Archivist* are a rather mixed lot, reflecting the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and interests of archivists nationally. While some (perhaps even a majority) may wish to see the *AA* become more "entertaining," I do not share such views. In fact, I am willing to wager that many among my contemporaries, i.e., those who have joined the profession since 1975, amounting to one-half the SAA's membership, agree with me. *The American Archivist*, like scholarly journals in other professions, ought to serve as the publication platform for the most innovative and excit-

ing efforts of our colleagues. A case in point is the recent special issue on archival automation, which I applaud.

Other SAA projects, such as the manual series, have already contributed substantially to the needs of those among us who need basic training or information but have been unable to acquire it from other sources. The *SAA Newsletter* also serves the membership educationally, as well as being the conveyor of useful information and entertaining anecdotes. In addition, numerous local and regional archival organizations produce newsletters and publications of similar kind and quality. But where in the professional literature can one turn for solid scholarship? Certainly, *The American Archivist* and its sister publication, *Archivaria*, ought to serve this need.

In posing this argument I do not mean to imply that you or your staff have abrogated this responsibility. Quite the contrary, I have noticed a more "professional" and scholarly approach in *AA* content during my brief affiliation with the journal. I hope it continues. Our profession is currently undergoing a profound change. Many of our new colleagues will come from professional training programs, such as those at Wayne State, NARS, and Case Western Reserve. In the future, more Ph.D.'s will enter the profession, bringing with them extensive training in related research fields and a continuing interest in research and publication. *The American Archivist* can serve to foster the development of a more sophisticated methodology and an expansion of professional interests through the kind of recognition that comes from publishing groundbreaking scholarly efforts.

In the past, the *AA* has labored under the same sort of criticism that has marked SAA national conventions, namely, that the same people are heard from time and time again. Your efforts to broaden the scope of reviews to include exhibits, and your attempts to draw upon book reviewers from outside the "enchanted circle" can only be applauded. I wish you much success in

your endeavors and hope that I may do what little I can to foster these same objectives in my own professional activities and responsibilities.

RICHARD M. KESNER  
*Director, Archives of Appalachia,  
East Tennessee State University,  
Johnson City, Tennessee*

#### TO THE EDITOR:

The Restore Ellis Island Committee is attempting to restore the island and to make it the national monument that it should be. As vice president in charge of archives, research, and documents, I am heading the efforts to create a research center and museum on the island. The long-run goal is to locate and microfilm documents pertaining to the Ellis Island experience. When the island is fully restored, these documents will be placed in ethnic reading rooms there. We have been promised adequate space for this purpose by the National Park Service and we are starting efforts, both in the Congress and in the private sector, to find money for the microfilms.

What we need now are persons who will locate documents that can be filmed later.

It is clear that Ellis Island documents are scattered all over the United States. We need a fairly precise inventory of them. I believe that only archivists can accomplish this for the committee. I have communicated with several immigration centers and archives, and they are quite willing to allow access to their documents; but they do not have resources to search their holdings for us.

I am anxious to find curators, archivists, historians, or professionals interested in ethnicity and immigration, to serve on our National Advisory Committee. I hope you will help us in this effort.

AUGUST C. BOLINO  
*Vice President, Restore Ellis Island Committee  
Washington Chapter  
C.U.A.—Cardinal Station, Box 1314  
Washington, DC 20064*