

The next step would be evaluation of major existing systems by these criteria, and development of criteria for the ideal, but realizable, national information system.

If the task force is funded, archivists will be hearing about its activities from time to time. We will find out whether a planning process can be devised which involves large numbers of archivists and yet produces results.

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On page 139 of the Winter issue, in the list of the Fellows of the Society of American Archivists, Paul Lewinson's name was misspelled. We sincerely regret our error. THE EDITORS

### Recent Deaths

ERNST POSNER, 1892–1980. On 19 April 1980 The American University class in the History and Current Administration of Archives spent several hours at the Maryland Hall of Records, thus continuing the annual tradition set by Ernst Posner some forty years ago. At lunch the class drank a toast to Ernst, who had died the day before.

How can any one person speak for all the archivists who have been formally and informally educated in *archivology* as well as those who know him only by his writings and his influence?<sup>1</sup> This student registered with apprehension in 1947 for Posner's two-semester course. I was merely a junior archivist in the National Archives, performing routine duties such as packing, shelving, listing and labeling records, and answering simple inquiries.

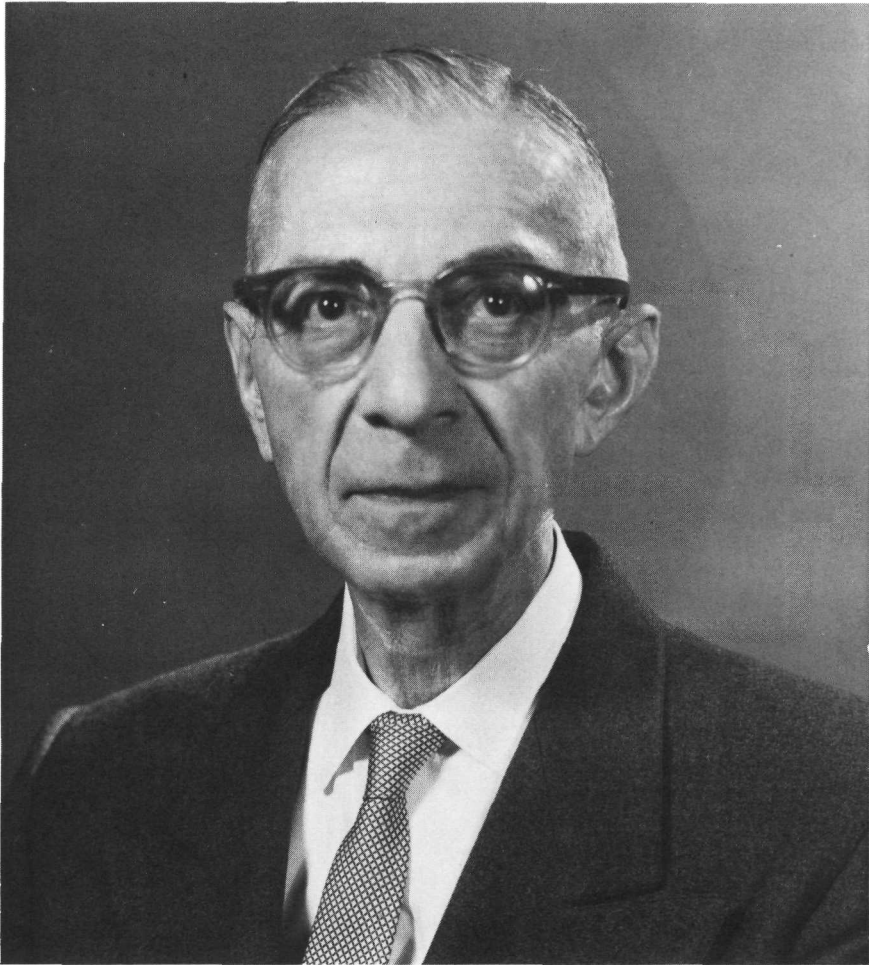
Ernst's introductory lecture, delivered with his residual German accent, covered the etymology of key words, like *archives*, *scrinium*, and *records*, and the importance of "the second oldest profession." His erudition, especially in the classical languages and humanities, became quite evident by the end of his following lecture on archives in the ancient world.

The class saw little trace of the ordeal Ernst experienced before coming to the United States. He talked rarely about it; thus more than a score of years passed before Ernst and his wife, Katherine, related many of the triumphs and tragedies between World War I and his emigration to the United States in 1939. While discussing Barbara Tuchman's *Guns of August* and Solzhenitsyn's *August 1914*, Ernst told of witnessing the Battle of Tannenberg from a hilltop. That he was wounded and earned a medal for bravery did not seem to him to be worth mentioning. From the Eastern Front he moved to the Western until the Armistice.

After the war Ernst resumed his studies in philosophy, history, and languages to complete his doctorate, magna cum laude, at the University of Berlin. Some months later, in October 1920, he entered the Prussian State Archives as an intern. The following year he became a full professional.

Until the Nazi era Ernst rose steadily in the Prussian Archives and achieved substantial stature within the profession and among the researchers who used the archival resources. He became not only a leading specialist in eighteenth-century Prussia, with his publication of *Acta Borussica*, but also gained recognition for his understanding of the problems concerning the disposition of recent records. By the early 1930s Hausreferent Posner became an archival instructor in Berlin.

Despite his war service and his scholarly achievements, Ernst, with his Jewish lineage, was placed, under the terms of the Nuremberg Laws, in a minor staff position. Nonethe-



less, he continued without pause his contribution to the profession.

Ernst had an interest in U.S. history since his student days. Thus, with his desire for global knowledge about archives and his readings about the establishment of our National Archives he took an opportunity in 1938 to visit this country to talk to archivists. They and several historians who knew of his scholarly achievements tried to convince him to stay; instead, he returned to Germany as a matter of duty. Upon his arrival Ernst was arrested and placed in the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. Mrs. Posner pulled military strings to release him. As Wolfgang A. Mommsen, then director of the archives of the Federal Republic, wrote for Ernst's seventy-fifth birthday, "Er verstand diese Welt, er verstand sein deutsches Volk nicht mehr. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

The Posners then went to Sweden, where he lectured on U.S. archives. Then, during the summer of 1939, they migrated to Washington. There Ernst began his years of as-

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed biography, see Paul Lewinson's introduction to *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, Ken Munden, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1967), pp. 7-19.

<sup>2</sup> "Ernst Posner, Mittler zwischen deutschen und amerikanischen Archivwesen," *Der Archivar* 20 (July 1967): 225.

sociation, 1939–61, with The American University, from adjunct professor to dean of the Graduate School.

Posner's career in the U.S. is familiar to all members of the Society of American Archivists. He taught a generation of archivists, wrote extensively on archives, became president of the Society, and was elected to the Cosmos Club. His *American State Archives* has influenced the development of records and archival management in the states. *Archives in the Ancient World* is a classic. Many may not be aware of his series of articles on foreign archives for use in the war effort. (The list of his publications appears as an appendix to the Festschrift: *Archives & the Public Interest*.)

Ernst's last few years were sad, even tragic. The Posners moved to Switzerland where Ernst's leg had to be amputated. Because the prosthetic device was unsatisfactory, they moved to Wiesbaden for treatment, because missing limbs are so common in Germany. Thus they were separated from their adopted land and their many American friends.

But, Ernst had friends in many lands. Ernst spoke of the care he received from the staff of the Vatican Archives when he suffered a heart attack a few years before moving to Switzerland. The archivists in Germany treated him with kindness. To be specific, Ernst was loved and admired by those who knew him. We all lost a friend and teacher.

MEYER H. FISHBEIN, *National Archives and Records Service*



LOUIS M. STARR, director of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, died 2 March 1980, in Louisville, Kentucky, after having spoken at a dinner of the Kentucky Oral History Association. Dr. Starr, the first president of the national Oral History Association (1967–68), was born in New York in 1918, graduated from Yale University in 1940, and after a career in journalism received his doctorate from Columbia University. He joined the staff of Allan Nevins's oral history research office in 1953, and became director of the office when Nevins retired in 1956. Dr. Starr was book editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* from 1961 to 1971, and was himself author of *Bohemian Brigade: Civil War Newsmen in Action*. He pioneered work in cataloging of oral history materials and was co-editor of *The Oral History Collection of Columbia University*, the fourth edition of which appeared in 1979. It was largely through the vision of Louis Starr, in cooperation with the *New York Times* and Microfilming Corporation of America that an ambitious project was launched to make oral history transcripts available to libraries on microfilm and microfiche, with an accompanying index. Dr. Starr's enthusiasm for oral history bordered on the evangelical, and he was tireless in speaking to those who sought to employ the technique, about its process and potential as a source of inestimable value for historians. Even after deteriorating health curbed his natural exuberance he continued to make himself available for speaking engagements and other chores in support of oral history, and seldom turned down an opportunity to help those wanting to know more about this new but ancient tool of the historian's trade.

WILLIAM W. MOSS, *Chief Archivist, John F. Kennedy Library*

CURTIS W. GARRISON, a founding member of the Society of American Archivists, died 21 November 1979. Although he had retired from government service in 1965, he had held a variety of part-time archival and historical positions in recent years and was an archivist-consultant at the time of his death.

Born in Chemung, New York, Dr. Garrison soon moved to Richmond, Virginia. He received a B.A. degree from the University of Richmond in 1923, followed in 1928 by a Ph.D. in history and economics from The Johns Hopkins University. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He entered the archival profession in the fall of 1927 when he became "Assistant" in the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress, working under James Franklin Jameson, then the chief. His duties were varied because of the small staff of the division, but provided excellent training for his career.

In September 1933 the challenge of directing a state archives program attracted Dr. Garrison to Pennsylvania where he assumed the duties of state archivist. He later wrote that he had edited the "galley and page proof of the 8th and 9th series of *Pennsylvania Archives*," and begun the Pennsylvania Historical Records Survey, "the first of such projects in the U.S."

The Rutherford B. Hayes–Lucy Webb Hayes Foundation, of Fremont, Ohio, employed Dr. Garrison as director of research from 1937 until 1946 "to build up the library [and] administer . . . the small museum."

Returning to federal service in 1946, he held positions with various agencies over the next twenty years. He directed research for a history of the Corps of Engineers in World War II, carried out research and reference work for the Central Intelligence Agency, prepared a history of the U.S. Army Transportation Terminal Command, and was working on a history of the Army's Transportation Corps since World War II when he retired. He also embarked with his wife in what he called "an ill-fated restaurant business in Washington" for some eighteen months.