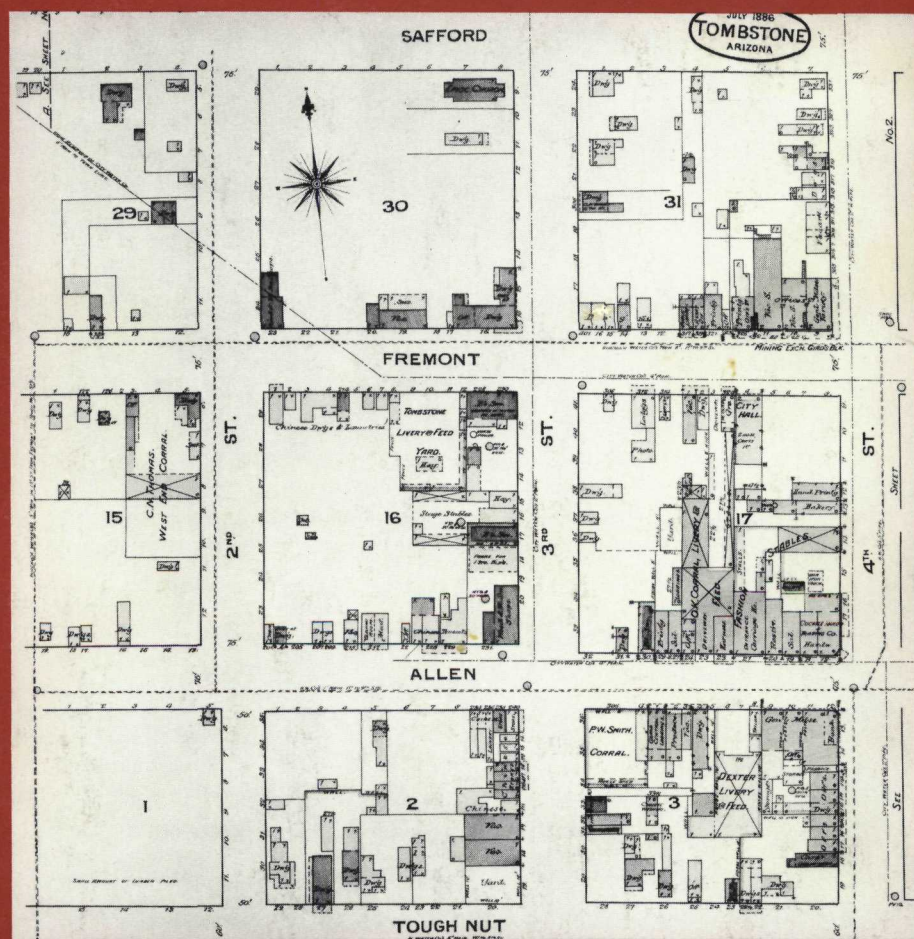


The American Archivist

Volume 45
Number 1
Winter 1982



Published Quarterly by
The Society of American Archivists

The American Archivist

Frank H. Mackaman, *Editor*, Winter 1982 issue

Dirksen Congressional Research Center

Deborah Risteen, *Managing Editor*

Janet G. Sted, *Copy Editor*

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Christopher Beam, *Shorter Features*

Ben DeWhitt, *Technical Notes*

F.L. Eaton, *News Notes*

Brenda A. Beasley Kepley, *Reviews*

Ronald J. Plavchan, *The International Scene*

Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, *Reviews*

Thomas E. Weir, Jr., *News Notes*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Edmund Berkeley, Jr., chair (1982-85), *University of Virginia*

Francis X. Blouin, Jr. (1980-83), *University of Michigan*

C. F. W. Coker (1982-85), *Library of Congress*

J. Frank Cook (1979-82), *University of Wisconsin, Madison*

Mabel E. Deutrich (1980-83), *Aptos, California*

J. R. K. Kantor (1979-82), *University of California*

James B. Rhoads (1981-84), *Rhoads Associates International*

Hugh A. Taylor (1981-84), *Public Archives of Canada*

The Society of American Archivists

PRESIDENT Edward Weldon, *National Archives and Records Service*

VICE PRESIDENT J. Frank Cook, *University of Wisconsin, Madison*

TREASURER Paul H. McCarthy, *University of Alaska*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Ann Morgan Campbell

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Lynn A. Bonfield (1979-83), *Bonfield Archival Consultants*

Shonnie Finnegan (1978-82), *State University of New York at Buffalo*

Meyer H. Fishbein (1979-83), *American University*

Robert S. Gordon (1980-84), *Public Archives of Canada*

Sue E. Holbert (1981-85), *Minnesota Historical Society*

William L. Joyce (1981-85), *The New York Public Library*

Richard H. Lytle (1981-82), *Smithsonian Institution*

Virginia C. Purdy (1980-84), *National Archives and Records Service*

On the cover: 1886 plan for the O.K. Corral, Tombstone, Arizona. From Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress: Plans of North American Cities and Towns Produced by the Sanborn Map Company. See review, p. 62.

The American Archivist

Volume 45 / Number 1 / Winter 1982

Adaptive Reuse of Old Buildings for Archives /11

Jay Haymond

What, Then, Is There To Theorize About? /19

Lester J. Cappon

Disrespecting Original Order /26

Frank Boles

The Illusion of Omniscience:

Subject Access and the Reference Archivist /33

Mary Jo Pugh

Northeast Document Conservation Center:

A Case Study in Cooperative Conservation /45

Ann Russell

Shorter Features /53

**Toward National Information Systems for Archives
and Manuscript Repositories**

David Bearman

The Forum /3

Reviews /57

Technical Notes /71

The International Scene /75

News Notes /83

The Society of American Archivists /87

Recent death —

LESTER J. CAPPON



REVIEWS

Hellerstein, Park-Hume, and Offen, eds., *Victorian Women: A Documentary Account of Women's Lives in Nineteenth-Century England, France, and the United States* /57

reviewed by Deborah S. Gardner

Dunn and Dunn, eds., *The Papers of William Penn: Volume One, 1644-1679* /60
reviewed by Robert J. Plowman

Guertler and Newburger, eds., *The Records of Baltimore's Private Organizations: A Guide to Archival Resources*; Cox, *Tracing the History of the Baltimore Structure*; LeFurgy, David, and Cox, *Governing Baltimore: A Guide to the Records of the Mayor and City Council at the Baltimore City Archives* /61

reviewed by Kathryn Allamong Jacob

Reference and Bibliography Section, Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, *Fire Insurance Maps in the Library of Congress: Plans of North American Cities and Towns Produced by the Sanborn Map Company* /62

reviewed by Joanne E. Fraser

Albert, ed., *The American Federation of Labor Records: The Samuel Gompers Era* /64

reviewed by Michael Nash

Witteborg. *Good Show! A Practical Guide for Temporary Exhibitions* /65

reviewed by Christina Rudy Smith

The *American Archivist* is published by the Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606, four times yearly. Postmaster: Send all correspondence and 3579 forms to the address above. Subscriptions: \$30 a year to North American addresses, \$35 a year to other addresses; single copies \$6 to SAA members, \$7 to nonmembers.

Articles and related communications should be sent to Deborah Risteen, Managing Editor, Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606. Telephone: (312) 922-0140.

Advertising correspondence, membership and subscription correspondence, and orders for back issues should be sent to the Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606. Claims for issues not received should be sent to SAA headquarters within four months of issue publication date for domestic subscribers and within six months for international subscribers.

The *American Archivist* is indexed in *Library Literature* and is abstracted in *Historical Abstracts*; book reviews are indexed in *Book Review Index*.

The *American Archivist* and the Society of American Archivists assume no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

Typesetting for the *American Archivist* is done by Daamen, Inc., Center Rutland, Vermont, and the journal is printed by Kirby Lithographic Co., Inc., of Arlington, Virginia.

©Society of American Archivists 1982. All rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and additional mailing office.

The Forum

FROM THE EDITOR:

THE RECENT HISTORY of the *American Archivist* has been characterized by continuity. For over thirty years, the Society of American Archivists and the National Archives have cooperated to produce the profession's scholarly journal; since 1949 the editor of the *American Archivist* has been an employee of the National Archives. This mutually beneficial arrangement provided publishing stability and a foundation of staff and financial support for the journal. By the same token, National Archives employees who worked on the *American Archivist* had a unique opportunity for professional enrichment; the NARS Library benefitted, too, as the repository for journal subscriptions and review copies of books generated by the publishing arrangement.

But the times are changing, and the *American Archivist* is in transition. Early in 1980, the Administrator of General Services raised questions about NARS's relationship with the *American Archivist* and launched an investigation which resulted in a "cease and desist" order preventing the editor from further work on the journal. In May 1981, the Council of the Society authorized plans to produce the *American Archivist* independently of NARS. We are in the midst of that process now.

The Winter issue of the journal is the

first published under the new arrangement. For at least the next three issues, a series of special issue editors in cooperation with department editors will produce the *American Archivist*. These issue editors will be Eva Moseley, Harold Anderson, and J.R.K. Kantor. Our responsibilities are not much different from those of other editors: select reviewers for submissions, choose articles for publication, make editorial suggestions, work with authors on revisions, and help shepherd the volume through production. We are extremely fortunate to have Deborah Risteen at SAA headquarters as managing editor of the journal. She will help to provide a thread of continuity during this period of change. Collectively, we are learning a great deal about the job of putting out the journal. We probably have more to learn, too.

What does all of this mean to you? If you are a reader of the journal, it means that the Society has taken the necessary and appropriate steps to ensure that no interruption in publication will occur. It has worked closely with the designated editors to set up timetables and to provide moral and material support. These efforts will guarantee, I am convinced, the publication of a useful, attractive, informative professional journal.

If you are an author, the new arrangement will require some patience. As responsibilities shift from editor to

editor, you may have to wait a bit longer than usual for firm publishing commitments. I suspect that editors will rely more heavily on reviewers' comments, too, since the benefits of a long association with the journal will be missing for the special issue editors. There will be times—the authors included here can confirm it—that the editor will be anxious and demanding as the necessary deadlines loom ever larger. For this issue we had only about six weeks to evaluate articles, make revisions, and get the finished product to the printer. Under these circumstances, authors will certainly appreciate the importance of submitting articles ready to print and in the precise form set down by the editorial guidelines.

At the same time, you can be certain that we welcome your submissions with open arms. The quality of the journal depends ultimately on the nature of the articles, and we constantly need to replenish the supply. It is a healthy sign that the backlog of submissions available to me contained several promising articles on a variety of topics including national archival priorities, microcomputer archives systems, and the state of college and university archives. You may see some of them in future issues. Keep those articles coming; the procedural quirks are not insurmountable.

It has been a personal and professional pleasure to work with the fine group of dedicated and talented people—the authors, reviewers, and Society staff—who put this volume together. I want to acknowledge particularly Virginia Purdy's substantial contribution to the history of the *American Archivist*. Her three and a half year tenure marked new developments in the journal that we all appreciate and respect. She set high standards for the *American Archivist*—hers is a tough act to follow.

FRANK H. MACKAMAN
The Dirksen Center

TO THE EDITOR:

DAVID CLARY's ESSAY in the Spring 1981 issue, "Trouble Is My Business: A Private View of 'Public' History," is marred by serious misunderstandings. I hope I may be allowed to comment upon them, as someone who is both an academic and a public historian.

Public history programs were not devised in a frantic effort to shore up enrollments and save tenured professors their positions. A large new freshman course with hundreds of students will help in enrollment problems, but tenured positions are not saved by adding a few graduate students to the department's load. Those of us who conceived and created the public history programs were not and are not in danger of being dismissed.

Clary openly states that his is a cynical view, as in fact it is. A broader and more reliable theory of human nature makes allowance for other motivations than economic self-interest. In this case, even academics have a desire to serve public need. Exploring a new dimension, taking on a challenging and invigorating new responsibility, offering training which can equip students for a new and important role in society: these were the attractions which led us to take on a large and (in career terms) unnecessary complication in our lives. Promotions can be gained by research and writing, rarely if ever by department service or by the labor intensive teaching required in public history programs. The rewards lie elsewhere. Clary's allegations may please those for whom any attack upon professors is a pleasing one, but they have little to do with providing an actual explanation.

Clary suggests that the concept of "public history" has been dreamed up by academics and—in their usual imperial, arrogant fashion—thrust upon histori-

ans outside of the academy against their will.

Here I must with apology turn to some personal references, for the terms “public history” and “public historian” were devised by me. I have been teaching at UC Santa Barbara since 1955, but before then I was a civilian historian in a major Air Force headquarters. Beginning in 1963, I have served as a consulting historian and expert witness in a long series of lengthy trials involving the water resource management history of the Sacramento Valley in this state. This extended experience over many years as a “public historian” outside of the academy taught me how powerful the historical method is in explaining complex public issues currently in dispute, and how rarely those in public life think historically. In 1975 my university approved my proposal to establish in our department a Graduate Program in Public Historical Studies. The first students began their work in the fall of 1976, and since then we have trained about fifty students.

The response was surprising, nationally. Letters and phone calls informed us how pleased many people in non-academic positions were that their field, hitherto without a handle, finally had a name. Reading the first issue of *The Public Historian*, the quarterly launched by my colleague G. Wesley Johnson, an historian working for an eastern state legislature exclaimed to us, “you have told me what I am.” Now public history programs with experienced public historians as professors exist in many institutions including Indiana University and the University of South Carolina. The National Council on Public History, a non-profit corporation composed of major public (and some academic) historians from around the nation, is in vigorous operation, having sponsored the well-attended third annual national conference on public

history. We even hear now that the term has come into international usage. To say, as Clary does, that “virtually all of us so recently branded by academics as ‘public’ historians find the term offensive” only indicates a misconception of where the term came from and reveals as well how far from the main stream of what is going on nationally Clary has placed himself.

What, then, does “public history” mean? My purpose was only to indicate location. I did not try to define the kind of work being done. I certainly did not want to set up hostile exclusions. Thus the term “professional historian,” which Clary favors, by implication writes off the thousands of teaching historians as *not* professionals, an irritating absurdity. The term “public historian,” then, is aimed only at denominating a person who did his or her work in the community at large, rather than within teaching institutions. They worked for clients, they consulted, they were on historical research staffs, they developed historical parks, they wrote history as their full time professional employment.

Clary is quite right to sound the warning that programs in public history must be well designed, well taught. He issues a number of valuable admonitions as to the things they should bear in mind. Regrettably, so valuable a communication from so important a person as the former chief historian of the U.S. Forest Service—and now a prominent consulting historian—is burdened with animus, bitterness, and cynicism, not to speak of hyperbole so gratuitously insulting that the credibility of the entire statement is lost. One hopes that the dialogue over public history can proceed with more largeness of spirit.

ROBERT KELLEY

University of California, Santa Barbara

TO THE EDITOR:

I HAVE JUST HAD TIME to finish reading the two articles on archival theory by Frank G. Burke (Winter 1981) and Harold T. Pinkett (Summer 1981). I am very glad to see such fine articles in the *American Archivist*!

Burke's intensive and expansive "gestalt" lecture on archival theory raises many excellent questions. One can easily see why Schellenberg et. al. did little by the way of formulating theory, but none can be terribly blamed for not doing so. They had practical problems to solve. Burke's comments on the sad lack of interest by archivists in reviewing documentary publications is highly instructive. Yet, his general remarks reflecting upon cultural relativism and a Hegelian view of philosophy raise only further points of debate, not conclusions. Waiting for the academy to give us archival theory, however, may be only waiting for manna from heaven that never comes.

Pinkett's sharp review of certain archival interests was useful in terms of analysis and well done. I disagree with him, nevertheless, when he says that there is just one mode of typically American thought, but that is a minor point. Both articles and more are needed.

My major point goes far beyond both of these articles. I think that new archives theory and principles are needed *now*, not in some vague, unknown future time. I know that there are many problems with such a thought, e.g., who will pay for pure research, etc. But nothing of real value is gained cheaply. A few of my many reasons, given briefly, are as follows: the nature of "record" media is rapidly changing; the *a priori* reasoning of records management already invalidates present theory and principles; some archivists are now acting, thinking, upon unmentioned theory

and principles; there are obvious technological advancements in regard to documentation *qua* information added to the effects of appraisal on documentation. Also, one can observe the "denaturing" and "neutering" of archives materials before presenting them to researchers—the passive nature of present archives theory and principles *versus* active information and activist archivists.

Lastly, the increasing invalidation of the nineteenth century European "organic" analogy concerning the past reality of archives should be recognized as a fact. The reflections of Burke and Pinkett, though very valuable, are too tame for me. *Radical thinking* is needed; new archives theory and principles are needed!

JOSEPH ANDREW SETTANNI

TO THE EDITOR:

CONGRATULATIONS to Ruth W. Helmuth for her imaginative concept of the *faith factor*. She uses this term on the President's Page of *The American Archivist* (page 285, Summer 1981) in her discussions of user studies and of the variegated steps involved in archival searching. In coping with studies showing holdings not used, she would call upon a faith factor in rendering decisions to discard. Records of intrinsic value to an institution she believes should be preserved.

Brooklyn College of the City University of New York provides an excellent example. The advent of a new president and the celebration of the college's fiftieth anniversary set off an unprecedented number of requests for hitherto unused resources.

Robert L. Hess, historian, appointed in 1979, provided dynamic leadership as president in the preparations for the 1980/81 anniversary celebration. Vir-

tually every department of the college responded with some form of exhibit, seminar and/or special event. A volume entitled *Brooklyn College — The First Half-Century* was prepared by a professor emeritus of history and a composition for the occasion from a colleague in the music department was commissioned.

The Special Collections Division of the Brooklyn College Library, as a result, became recognized as an exciting source of information about the college's and the borough's past. In response to requests, the division retrieved pictures, old and rare books of poetry and prose, sermons, manuscripts and scrapbook clippings up to that time little-used.

This archivist endorses the principle of the faith factor and thanks Ruth W. Helmuth for her formulation of the concept.

ANTOINETTE CIOLLI
*Former Chief,
Special Collections Division,
Brooklyn College*

TO THE EDITOR:

CERTAIN PROBLEMS related to archival sampling were not discussed in Frank Boles's "Sampling in Archives," which appeared in the Spring 1981 issue. The application of sampling to the Stearns Salt and Lumber Company Papers demonstrates these problems. First, data from the entire collection (1207 accounts) was converted into machine readable form in order to determine the mean, standard deviation, and variance needed for calculations of sample size required. The time and related expense this process involved would no doubt have been sufficient to process the entire collection several times. This procedure obviously could not be applied to a col-

lection of accounts representing two hundred cubic feet of records instead of two cubic feet. A decision to forego this data conversion eliminates the easy creation of sample parameters and the identification of the unusual cases.

Second, no efforts apparently were made to alert future researchers to the retention on a non-sampling basis of twenty-five unusually large accounts which were removed from the sampling universe in order to reduce the sample size that was required. Without identification of these accounts as being selected on a non-random basis, a future researcher might add them in with the sampled accounts and derive misleading statistics.

Boles should be commended for recognizing a basic problem in the sampling of archival material: the need to preserve the unusual case. The decision to treat separately the larger accounts of this firm can be followed when appraising correspondence files or case files. The requirements of modern records selection do not absolve archivists of their responsibility to examine, identify, and preserve records of permanent value.

MICHAEL F. KOHL
*City Records Center
City of Milwaukee*

AUTHOR'S RESPONSE

I AGREE with these two points. Regarding the second, I assumed researchers would be informed of sampling methodology through the finding aid and thank Mr. Kohl for stating explicitly the necessity of this.

As to the first point, I did not intend to imply that variance be determined by converting entire data sets into machine readable form. As I stated cryptically on p. 127, one of the difficulties in mathematical sampling is estimating variance.

I specifically ruled out discussing problems such as this, as well as any general discussion of the mathematics involved in footnote 3, p. 126. This was done for the sake of brevity. Since the subject has been raised, however, let me clarify that in estimates of variance the mean is irrelevant and standard deviation is a specific mathematical measure of variance, not a separate value. As I suggested in footnote 3, those interested in mastering the details can find the information they seek in the sampling literature of statistics and sociology.

My point in converting the entire data set into machine readable form was to carry out the third objective of my paper, to demonstrate the validity of sampling techniques by applying them to a data set of known values. I apologize for any lack of clarity on this point.

FRANK BOLES
Chicago Historical Society

Postal Notice

The following statement of ownership, management, and circulation was filed in accordance with the provisions of Section 4369, Title 39, U.S. Code, on 22 September 1981, by Ann Morgan Campbell, Executive Director.

The *American Archivist* is published quarterly by the Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, IL 60606. The Editor in 1981 was Virginia C. Purdy, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC 20408, who also served as managing editor. The Owner is the Society of American Archivists, a nonprofit organization consisting of members and associates of the archival profession.

The legally constituted business office of the Society is with the Executive Director, who holds office by appointment of the Council. On the date of this filing, the Executive Director's address was Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606. There are no stockholders, bondholders, mortgages, or other security holders in the organization.

The average number of copies of each issue printed during the preceding twelve months is 4,300; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales, 1; mail subscriptions to members and subscribers, 3,934; total paid circulation, 3,935; free distribution, 7; total distribution, 3,942; office use, leftover, spoiled after printing, 358. For the most recent issue (Summer 1981), total number of copies printed, 4,300; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales, 0; mail subscriptions to members and subscribers, 3,741; total paid circulation, 3,741; free distribution, 5; total distribution, 3,746; office use, leftover, and spoiled after printing, 525.