

# The American Archivist

Volume 46  
Number 1  
Winter 1983



Published Quarterly by  
The Society of American Archivists

---

## The American Archivist

---

Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, *Editor*, Winter 1983 issue

*University of Pennsylvania*

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*

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

Eva S. Moseley (1983-86), *Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College*

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

Samuel A. Sizer (1983-86), *Oklahoma Division of Archives and Records*

Hugh A. Taylor (1981-84), *Wolfville, Nova Scotia*

---

## The Society of American Archivists

---

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

VICE PRESIDENT David B. Gracy II, *Texas State Archives*

TREASURER Paul H. McCarthy, *University of Alaska*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Ann Morgan Campbell

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

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

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

Larry J. Hackman (1982-86), *New York State Archives*

Edie Hedlin (1982-86), *National Historical Publications and Records Commission*

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

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

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

---

### On the cover:

Tablet (FARA 979) similar to the archival tablets found at Ebla. (See Book Review, p. 82.) Photograph courtesy of the University Museum, University of Pennsylvania.

# The American Archivist

Volume 46 / Number 1 / Winter 1983

---

**A Time to Take Stock/9**

J. Frank Cook

**Reflections of an Unrepentant Editor/14**

Nathan Reingold

**Archives in Britain: Anarchy or Policy?/22**

P.D.A. Harvey

**American Archival History: Its Development, Needs, and Opportunities/31**

Richard J. Cox

**Archives: Accessibility for the Disabled/42**

Brenda Beasley Kepley

**Disaster Preparedness and Recovery: Photographic Materials/52**

Klaus B. Hendriks and Brian Lesser

---

**Shorter Features/69**

**The Presidential Library and the White House Liaison Office/69**

Raymond H. Geselbracht and Daniel J. Reed

**Subject Indexing a Large Photograph Collection/72**

Frederick J. Stielow

---

**The Forum/3**

---

**Reviews/75**

---

**Technical Notes/91**

---

**International Scene/97**

---

**News Notes/103**

---

**The Society of American Archivists/107**

---

---

**REVIEWS**


---

Cruse, ed., **Microcartography: Applications for Archives and Libraries/75**  
reviewed by Ralph Ehrenberg

Ehrenberg, **Archives & Manuscripts: Maps and Architectural Drawings/76**  
reviewed by J.B. Post

Jenkins, **Rare Books and Manuscript Thefts: A Security System for Librarians, Booksellers, and Collectors/77**  
reviewed by Murphy D. Smith

Gandert, **Protecting Your Collection: A Handbook, Survey, and Guide for the Security of Rare Books, Manuscripts, Archives, and Works of Art/78**  
reviewed by Timothy Walch

Rhoads, **The Applicability of UNISIST Guidelines and ISO International Standards to Archives Administration and Records Management: A RAMP Study/78**  
reviewed by James Fruscione

Cortés-Alonso, **Documentacion y documentos and Archivos de España y America—Materiales para un manual/80**  
reviewed by Lawrence J. McCrank

Matthiae, **Ebla—An Empire Rediscovered** and Pettinato, **The Archives of Ebla/82**  
reviewed by David Horrocks

Beers, comp., **Bibliographies in American History, 1942-1978/83**  
reviewed by Dale Floyd

---

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 1983. All rights reserved. Second class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois, and additional mailing office.



# The Forum

## FROM THE EDITOR:

AS THE FIFTH AND LAST "REVOLVING" EDITOR of the *American Archivist*, I am very happy to see the journal go to the more permanent pilotage of Charles Schultz. A short term editor reacts rather than guides, being concerned with immediate deadlines rather than future improvements or policy decisions. Change is difficult because it is so much simpler to take advantage of developed policy and practice. In the case of the *American Archivist* this conservatism was probably to the benefit of the journal because of the significant administrative changes—the physical move out of Washington, D.C., the shift of technical responsibilities from the editor to Chicago headquarters, and the delineation of the duties of the Editorial Board. Now Charles can set the *American Archivist* on a course that will take advantage of the new ports and different winds. I hope this issue is a constructive link in the transition.

The articles in this issue look both at the past and to the future. They offer an interesting comment on how archivists are perceived by themselves and by their audiences.

Richard Cox points out how little American archivists have sought to define their role, as he traces the trends of research on the history of archives

and calls for more self-examination. Interestingly, two authors in this same issue quote the British archivist/historian Sir Hilary Jenkinson who was deeply interested in the roles and relationships of both archivists and historians. Nathan Reingold examines the work of the historical editor, a traditional and extensive user of archives. Paul Harvey looks at the "brown paper syndrome" of discovering archives in Britain, which certainly has many U.S. and Canadian parallels. One reviewer of this article delightedly recalled "the awe with which NBC newsman John Hart, doing a TV feature in the National Archives exhibit hall, viewed the piece of brown paper containing the ink scratches recording the vote for independence in the Continental Congress. He was so overcome I had to get him a chair." As Professor Harvey says, archivists still have to coax the lay audience to see beyond the wrapping and understand the importance of the contents.

At the same time, the profession must adapt to technological change. Innovations are not just new forms of documentation entering archives, but, as Brenda Kepley discusses, new equipment facilitates the use of records. Klaus Hendriks and Brian Lesser show how knowledgeable today's archivist must be in

order to properly care for records. If disaster strikes, records that might have been considered lost can now be saved through new conservation techniques, but only if these techniques are applied correctly.

Archives are still somewhat esoteric to the layman and still find their most interested audience among historians. Yet the role of the archivist is increasingly complex as new technology and sophisticated options are introduced. Perhaps this issue will also encourage archivists to expand their audience and their perception of their role.

MARY ELIZABETH RUWELL  
*University of Pennsylvania*

## TO THE EDITOR:

I READ WITH CONSIDERABLE INTEREST David R. Smith's article, "An Historical Look at Business Archives," in the Summer, 1982, issue of the *American Archivist*. The article appears to be accurate for the most part and I would not dispute the author's conclusions. However, I do feel obligated to set the record straight on one matter: the date, 1944, which he uses for the establishment of the Insurance Company of North America Archives.

The INA Archives was created by resolution of the Board of Directors on April 5, 1881. I quote from the minutes of that meeting,

On motion it was resolved that the officers of the Company be authorized to select a competent person to collect together the Archives of the Company embodying them in a history, and look up such other collateral projects as may present themselves.

The competent person selected for the job was William Montgomery, he did "collect together the archives of the Company," and used them extensively to write *A History of the Insurance Company of North America* which was published in 1885.

The INA Archives today holds important company records that date back to its founding in 1792. We can document the existence, increased accumulation and continuing use of archival records since 1881. Examples include the creation of the "twelfth-floor museum" when the current home office was built in 1925, where company documents, books and manuscripts were displayed; exhibits in the 1920s and '30s in which INA's history was portrayed through its archival records as well as art and artifacts; and in 1942, the publication of *Biography of a Business* by Marquis James in which the INA Archives is noted throughout as a source. For most of that period, it appears that the Secretary/Treasurer was responsible for the archives. Then, in 1944, a curator was put in charge of the company records and art; this is the date used in most of the literature which David Smith cites.

The creation of the INA Archives in 1881 and documentation of the continuing collection and use of company records was researched by the archives staff while preparing the INA entry for the 1980 edition of the *Directory of Business Archives in the United States and Canada*. I decided, with the approval of the editor, that it would be accurate to report 1881 as the year the INA Archives was established. That makes it the oldest corporate archives in North America.

What might at first appear to be a matter of argument between myself and Mr. Smith stems, perhaps, from a lack of clear definition in his article. Is the author's subject business archives or

company archives, and what criteria is he using to determine the establishment dates of the archives he discusses? Why is the date of a Board resolution ordering that the company archives be collected not acceptable?

N. CLAUDETTE JOHN  
*INA Archives*

### TO THE EDITOR:

I DO NOT KNOW IF IT IS USEFUL to bring a few points to your readers' attention concerning the Boeing Archives. (See Douglas Bakken, "Corporate Archives Today," Summer, 1982.) Peter McLellan's article appeared in January 1966; the citation to the *Air Museum News* should probably read 1981.

Unfortunately the Museum did not open in September of 1982; they are hoping for an early 1983 opening. The Boeing Company and the Museum of Flight (previously Pacific Museum of Flight and originally the Pacific Northwest Aviation Historical Foundation) are separate institutions. While the former supports the Museum, as do other industries, it is not "financially committed". The importance of independence is viewed as significant by both sides. This includes the archival resources.

PAUL G. SPITZER  
*The Boeing Company*

### TO THE EDITOR:

I READ THE ARTICLE by Michael A. Lutzker on Max Weber and bureaucratic organisations in the Spring 1982 issue with considerable interest. As I am employed by a private business bureaucracy, I would like to add a minor comment.

In a very small company which com-

prises partners only, the profits are presumably shared among the partners so that their salaries reflect the profitability of the business. Therefore, it may be presumed that the harder each works, the greater their salary. However, in a business bureaucracy all the staff are merely employees and do not act as partners nor are they rewarded on the same basis. Esprit de corps functions such that everyone pulls his weight and works for the good of the company but, because the salaries of employees are fixed according to scales and do not reflect the profits of the business (at least in New Zealand) employees work, in the last resort, for themselves. Staff compare their salaries and/or their ranking in the organisation with those of their peers. If they feel that some are rising vis-a-vis themselves, a conflict situation arises which may be reflected in memoranda to superiors or involvement with outside bodies, such as unions or professional associations. This must widen the net of the appraising archivist. To what extent is it important to reflect such situations in the records chosen for permanent retention as archives? Should the appraiser dispose of the material from a body outside the company on the grounds that it in no way reflects the structure or activities of the organisation whose records are being sorted? This is surely an area of staff relations which no doubt takes second place to the struggle among departments within the company and yet at the time is of paramount importance to each individual employee.

R. H. GRIFFIN  
*Bank of New Zealand*

### TO THE EDITOR:

I HAVE READ WITH DEEP INTEREST the article by Rodney A. Ross, "Ernst Posner: the Bridge between the Old World and

the New," in the Autumn 1981 issue.

I wish to make known two episodes in memory of him.

The School of Archival Science, Paleography and Diplomatics of Rome conferred in the year 1972 with a solemn ceremony for its centenary the first *honoris causa* degrees to Ernst Posner and four other eminent scholars—Giulio Battelli, Robert-Henri Bautier, Johannes Papritz and Aurelio Tanodi (in 1979 for the conclusion of the International Committee of the Guide to the Sources for the History of the Nations of the Third World, two other degrees were granted to the president and the secretary of the Committee, Dató Alwi Jantan and Charles Kecskeméti). Posner was very glad of this recognition.

I have then a personal testimony of Posner's nature.

He wrote to me personally one of his

last letters on 2 July 1979 recognizing me as "the only and authorized translator" in Italian of his book *Archives in the Ancient World* and concurring with my idea of adding to the book two articles he published on American archives. Knowing that I teach archives history in the School of Archival Science of Rome, he enclosed, too, "the draft of an article on Byzantine Archives" only for use in my teaching (he considered the article not yet "publishable" and indicated the books to see for the completion of the study). I think that this article, too (perhaps his last), should be published.

Posner was a great man and scholar; he may well be defined "citizen of the world." His letter to me finished with the words: "For me Rome is still the *caput mundi*!"

DONATO TAMBLÉ

*Archivio di Stato di Roma*

---

#### 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 29 September 1982, by Deborah Risteen, Managing Editor.

The *American Archivist* is published quarterly by the Society of American Archivists, 330 S. Wells St., Suite 810, Chicago, IL 60606. The managing editor is Deborah Risteen. 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, IL 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 4,150; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales, 3; mail subscriptions to members and subscribers, 3,633; total paid circulation, 3,636; free distribution, 8; total distribution, 3,644; office use, leftover, spoiled after printing, 506. For the most recent issue (Summer 1982), total number of copies printed, 4,100; sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors, and counter sales, 6; mail subscriptions to members and subscribers, 3,586; total paid circulation, 3,592; free distribution, 14; total distribution, 3,606; office use, leftover, and spoiled after printing, 494.