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The American Archivist

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The Forum

FROM THE EDITOR:

AFTER BEING "ON THE ROAD" for slightly over a year, the *American Archivist* has taken out a two-year lease at Texas A&M University. While College Station, Texas, the home of the Aggie Joke, may not immediately appear to be on a par with some former residences of the journal, it is probably worth noting that Texas A&M University is strongly committed to excellence in areas other than jokes and athletics. The commitment Texas A&M has made to the *American Archivist* is considerable just as is that of SAA. Both the University and the society anticipate an excellent relationship and an outstanding publication. As has always been the case, however, the success of the journal will depend greatly upon the cooperation of members of the SAA and others submitting interesting, well written manuscripts.

Few changes are planned for the *American Archivist* in the immediate future. The major ones will be readily apparent to all readers of this issue. Each article will have a short abstract prepared by the author. This should help readers determine the potential value of an article. The abstracts will also help future bibliographers and indexers of the journal. A brief biographical sketch will be included to give readers a better

idea of each author's background. Some consideration was given to including photographs of authors, but this matter was tabled by the editorial board at its meeting in Boston. Efforts will be made to tie the cover illustration to the lead article, if at all possible, or to one of the other major articles. Any suggestions for further changes will be considered by the editorial board.

Having successfully put together this issue with the assistance and cooperation of the several authors and departmental editors as well as that of Deborah Risteen, I have developed a tremendous empathy for the five issue editors. Of course, they knew in advance they would do this only once while I expect to do it eight times. They did face a number of difficulties and frustrations because there could be no continuity. They could not devote long periods of time to revisions because of the time frame in which they were working. If an excellent manuscript arrived after they had chosen the necessary number of articles, they had to pass it on to someone else rather than use it themselves. SSA owes these five people—Frank H. Mackaman, Eva S. Moseley, Harold P. Anderson, J.R.K. Kantor, and Mary Elizabeth Ruwell—a tremendous debt of

gratitude for stepping into the breach and performing well under adversity.

The *American Archivist's* time spent "on the road" has also been a trying experience for authors. For some it has meant working with two or more editors, each of whom had different ideas about what should be done to make a manuscript suitable for publication. It has also meant long delays between the submission of manuscripts and a decision on their fate. Having the journal at a "permanent" home will alleviate this problem. I shall make every effort to send copies of any manuscript out for review within a week of receiving it. The review process should not take more than four weeks. Thus authors should have a decision in six to eight weeks from the time they submit an article.

While any article that is submitted will be carefully considered for publication, authors interested in having an article published in the *American Archivist* might give some consideration to results of two reader surveys conducted in the last four years. In both cases the areas in which most readers showed the greatest interest were theoretical and practical ar-

ticles on arrangement and description, finding aids, reference and access, appraisal, and preservation. Other areas in which substantial interest was expressed include copyright, privacy, education and training, the history and description of archival institutions, and history of the archival profession. Publications, security, and training of researchers are the areas of archival management in which most interest was shown.

Several other things have been learned from the reader survey. The section most people read regularly is news notes. Articles, reviews, and SAA news and proceedings are also heavily read on a regular basis. Over 90 percent of those surveyed read or looked through every issue. Over 50 percent of the readers are the only ones to see their copy. Thus, there appears to be very little sharing of the journal with archivists who are not members of SAA. Nearly 90 percent of the copies are saved for future reference. Hence, there should certainly be ample copies of the *American Archivist* available for consultation by archivists of the future.

CHARLES R. SCHULTZ
Editor

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