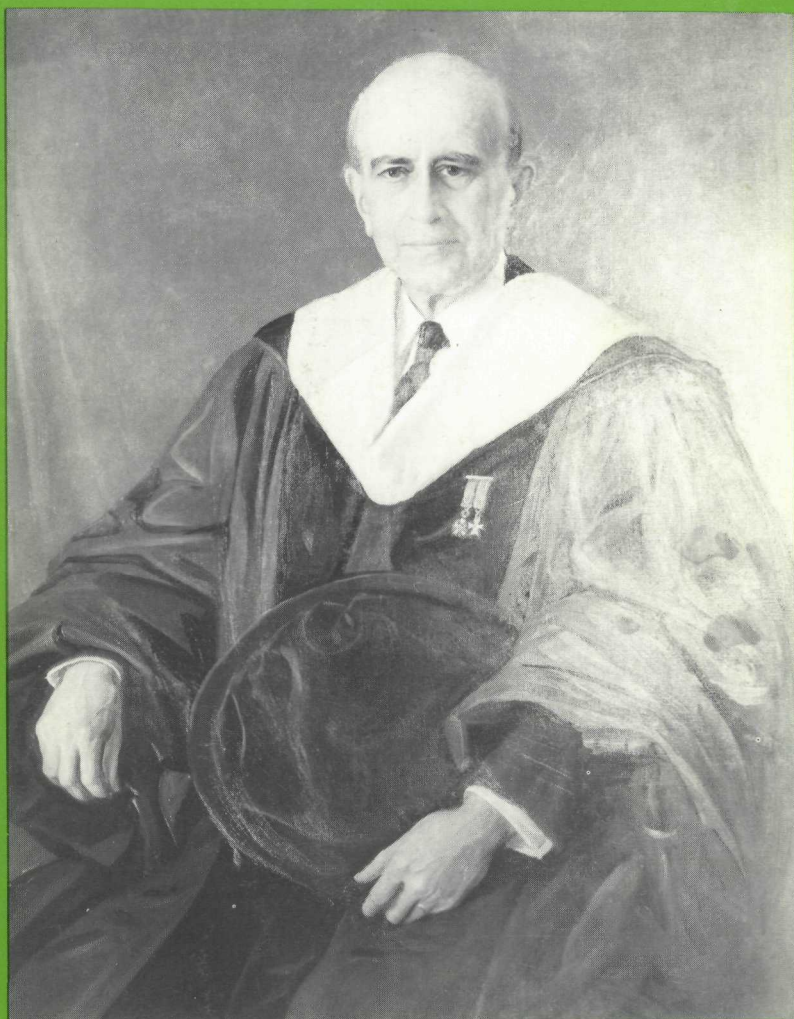


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The Forum

FROM THE EDITOR:

THE FORTY-SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF SAA was different from every other meeting of the Society during the last two decades in that the program committee planned a series of core sessions. It was the hope of the committee from the outset that all of these papers would be published in the *American Archivist* either in a single special issue or spread out over several issues. The number of papers and the length of some of them dictated that the latter approach be taken. Two of those core session papers appear in this issue. One is by Frank G. Burke, and the other is by Margaret S. Child. Other core session papers will be included in future issues.

Other articles in this issue were selected to appeal to a variety of interests. Rodney A. Ross's article is a tribute to one of the very few non-archivists ever to serve as president of SAA. Kenneth W. Rendell's paper on appraisal procedures and considerations fills a need which many SAA members have felt for a long time. The relationship between archivists and historians discussed by Mattie U. Russell has drifted from very close to simply cordial to somewhat strained, but it has never been completely severed in spite of a few widely separated adversary incidents.

One of the factors which has helped preserve the cordial relationship between

archivists and historians has been the willingness of a host of archivists, such as Mattie Russell, who have been willing, indeed eager, to share their knowledge of their holdings and of history in general with researchers, be they historians, genealogists, or whatever. As a financially and intellectually struggling graduate student I visited the state of North Carolina two decades ago to do research for my dissertation. Mattie Russell assisted me greatly in finding manuscript sources, made it possible for me to borrow a book from the University Library, and arranged for a very inexpensive room for me in one of the dormitories. It was evident to me then and remains so now that I was certainly not an isolated case. Consequently, I was pleased when the reviewers recommended publishing her article.

A number of members have expressed concern over the failure to include an annual bibliography in the *American Archivist* for some time. The matter of reviving this feature has been discussed at length by the editorial board. As of this time, efforts are being made to resume publication of a bibliography. Complete details will be announced as soon as they are available.

CHARLES R. SCHULTZ
Editor

TO THE EDITOR:

AS YOU MAY ALREADY BE AWARE, I have just completed a second edition to my bibliography *Information Management, Machine-Readable Records, and Archival Administration* for the Society for American Archivists. In conjunction with the work on this project, it was my pleasure to come into contact with many colleagues who are actively engaged in the management of machine-readable records or the use of automated techniques within their own shops. In some cases, the knowledge and accomplishments of these persons go far beyond anything that I have done on my own or have had the temerity to claim as a personal achievement.

Yet, no one in the profession knows of their activities and accomplishments. They do not write about them for archival journals and newsletters nor do they discuss them at professional gatherings. I do not want to name anyone in particular for fear of embarrassing them. However, I would like to suggest that we are all a lot poorer for their silence. If we are to mature and prosper as a component of the larger information management community, we need to share our ideas and build upon the achievements of our colleagues.

The American Library Association has a special sub-group (LITA) devoted to information technology and its implications for librarians. Unfortunately, archivists are not quite ready for this step. As an interim vehicle for the exchange of information, I would like to suggest that we exploit the availability of "Technical Notes" within the *American Archivist*. Ben DeWhitt, the column's editor, has agreed to run brief articles relating to hardware, software, automated archival systems, etc.

If you are currently using a home grown system or if you are using an off-

the-shelf product, let Ben know about it. I would include information pertaining to the types of archival or office functions in which you employ your system. You might consider your particular application of little importance but it will in all likelihood prove of considerable interest to your colleagues and may ultimately lead to a spread in the use of computers within archives.

Both Ben and I encourage your participation in this communications/education project. Prepare something—no matter how brief—and send it in; keep "Technical Notes" in mind as you select a new system or add to an existing configuration. The profession as a whole has a great deal to gain from your participation in this undertaking. Thanks for your consideration of these remarks.

RICHARD M. KESNER
F.W. Faxon Co.

TO THE EDITOR:

AS A STUDENT OF ARCHIVAL THEORY and administration, I was disturbed to read SAA President J. Frank Cook's statement regarding certification of archivists in "A Time to Take Stock" (*American Archivist*, Winter, 1983). Specifically, I am referring to his remark that while all archivists are interested in higher educational standards, "the trend is away from certification." Mr. Cook blames this trend on the "financial burdens" of "hard times," "opposition to additional regulations," and potential problems regarding members of a professional association who, if denied certification, would charge the association with restraint of trade. Such politically motivated rationales reflect the concerns of practicing professionals but ignore the aspirations of those seeking to enter the profession. I am referring to college and university students, particularly

those at the graduate level, archivists of the twenty-first century.

Those of us concerned with improving educational opportunities through action are distressed by the SAA's apparent lack of commitment to establishing criteria for graduate-level training, coursework and certification. Instead of leading the way towards the realization of such goals, SAA is sidestepping the issue. It is time for some straight talk about certification.

A strong case can be made in support of certification for archivists. In addition to insuring higher standards for students, a SAA-initiated certification program would serve as an incentive to many universities willing to offer a more standardized archival education program. Specifically, Library Information Science schools (e.g. U.C.L.A. where I attend) look to SAA for guidance in establishing criteria which could be incorporated into a MLS program. Many archivists have an MLS or an MA degree in history. How much emphasis do these programs put on archival coursework and training? Without SAA's guidance, the situation will go from poor to critical. It is time for SAA to realize that professional seminars and workshops do not meet all archival education needs. A certification program, endorsed by SAA, and implemented by SAA-accredited institutions, will insure the competency of future archivists and encourage universities to get more serious about archival education.

The concern over practicing professionals who might not meet certification requirements is unnecessary. Any plan to establish certification criteria should include a grandfather clause to insure that all practicing professionals are certified. The idea of certification for archivists should apply to those who want to become professionals. Those who are already employed as archivists need not

panic. Certification measures should be designed to help shape the future of the profession. It is time for SAA to start thinking about archivists of the twenty-first century.

ROBERT B. FREEMAN

TO THE EDITOR:

SIR HILARY JENKINSON'S DICTUM, "the Archivist is not and ought not to be an Historian," quoted by P.D.A. Harvey (*American Archivist*, Winter, 1983), may be something of a stumbling-block to American archivists. It occurred originally in *A Manual of Archive Administration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922; 107), when, as the author observed, "there is no complete treatise on this subject in the English Language; or indeed in any language." (xi). Although retained in the revised edition of 1937 the point was certainly not emphasized when I had the pleasure of being instructed by Sir Hilary in the fifties. Much has changed in our profession since 1922.

Jenkinson feared the archivist might have "a prepossession in favour not only of a subject, but also perhaps of a school of opinion," which caused "bad and dangerous work done in the past" at the Public Record Office. He was talking about *respect des fonds*.

In fact he went on to say that the archivist "will need, of course, some knowledge of history" which meant, at that time and place, an Honours degree, or rather more history than is implied by an American masters degree today. Also he was talking strictly about archives and not documents.

The point is pertinent to our present concern with professional qualifications. Of the programs in the United States and Canada listed in the Society's *Archival Education Opportunities*

(1978) twenty-four are directed by history departments, sixteen by departments of archives, and fourteen by schools of library science. The profession seems to have made up its mind about T.R. Schellenberg's controversial position that "Library schools are the proper place in which to provide archival training." (*The Management of Archives*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1965; 70). However a rough check of "Professional Opportunities" over the past few months gives a rather different picture. Excluding those requiring some special qualification such as a knowledge of computer technology or Yiddish, one-third require a M.L.S., one-third a graduate history qualification, and one-third require one or the other. Clearly this question is by no means resolved.

Today when the archivist has to decide on the retention not only of archives but of documents and even ephemera of all kinds, it is more than ever necessary for him to be an historian, as I am sure Sir Hilary would have agreed.

LESLIE J. WORKMAN
Studies in Medievalism

TO THE EDITOR:

A COMPLIMENT AND A COMMENTARY are offered in connection with the Winter, 1983, issue of the *American Archivist*.

President J. Frank Cook's "A Time to Take Stock," is an experience into a man's mind. In what he has already done, and in what he hopes to see accomplished, especially in defining the nature of an archivist and in recasting archival theory, Dr. Cook reveals a caring and penetrating personality. He has given the Society enough to do for a decade.

In Richard J. Cox's deeply researched and copiously documented article on

"American Archival History. . .," he laments the poor condition of this history. He expresses (p. 39) dismay that college and university archives, for example, rapidly growing in the last two decades, are the subject of scarcely a handful of historical studies. As Special Collections Division Librarian in Brooklyn College of the City University of New York in the 1970's, I may be allowed to speak to that point. There was simply too much to do. Archives were, and still are, but one facet of a Division which encompassed the Brooklyniana Collection, the Rare Book Collection, the Oral Archives, the Alumni Manuscripts Collection (including works of Sam Levenson, Norman Rosten and Irwin Shaw), and the Historic Manuscripts Collection. Of the latter, the Norman Cousins Papers are the most prestigious and are stored in more than five hundred document cases.

Factors unique to the Campus were causing, at a period of non-expanding budgets, a vibrant interest in the archives. This librarian found it an exhilaration and a challenge to do the day-to-day tasks of acquiring archival materials, having registers prepared for them and servicing patrons. Considerable attention was accorded each individual with appropriate identification who applied for materials from any area of Special Collections. Personal interaction with users revealed strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the urgency of writing a history of the archives did not surface, although descriptions of the resources of the room periodically appeared in Campus media.

Since Mr. Cox has so aptly put in new perspective the significance of writing archival histories, his article, given the nurturing hand of time, will surely bear fruit.

ANTOINETTE CIOLLI
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