

Waldo Gifford Leland: Archivist by Association

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Abstract: This article traces the life and archival-related accomplishments of Waldo Gifford Leland (1879-1966), historian, surveyor of archival repositories in America and in France, father of the American Historical Association's Conference of Archivists, archival theorist, J. Franklin Jameson's key lieutenant in the battle for the establishment of the National Archives, second president of the Society of American Archivists, and long time head of the American Council of Learned Societies. Special attention is given to Leland's affiliation with the Carnegie Institution of Washington, his activities as AHA secretary, and his close relations with Jameson. Also discussed are Leland's support for the archival educational activities of Ernst Posner and Leland's efforts to keep the position of Archivist of the United States free from partisan politics. The article explains how the SAA's Leland Prize for noteworthy publications owes its origins to an excess of money collected for the portrait painting of Leland which hangs in the National Archives.

About the author. Rodney A. Ross grew up in Batavia, Ill., and graduated from Batavia High in 1961. He received his B.A. in history from Knox College and his M.A. and Ph.D., also in history, from the University of Chicago. As a graduate student he assisted John Hope Franklin in preparing the fourth edition of *From Slavery to Freedom*. Dr. Ross taught at Wilberforce University and at Indiana University Northwest before becoming a legislative assistant to U.S. Representative Tim L. Hall. In 1977 Dr. Ross joined the NARS Office of Presidential Libraries, where he remains today. For four years he worked as an archivist with the Nixon Presidential Materials Project. He appeared on SAA programs in 1980 and 1982, presenting papers on Ernst Posner and Waldo Gifford Leland. His publications include: "Ernst Posner," *American Archivist* (1981), "Black Americans and Italo-Ethiopian Relief, 1935-1936," *Ethiopia Observer* (1972), and "Mary Todd Lincoln, Patient at Bellevue," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1970).

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IF YOU ENTER THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES from Pennsylvania Avenue, you may take either of two ceremonial marble staircases to the floor where the top administrators of the Archives have their offices. Five portraits hang in the stairwells. Four are of the first four Archivists of the United States. The fifth is of Waldo Gifford Leland (1879-1966), historian, surveyor of archival repositories in this country and in France, father of the American Historical Association's Conference of Archivists, archival theorist, J. Franklin Jameson's key lieutenant in the battle for the establishment of the National Archives, second president of the Society of American Archivists, and longtime head of the American Council of Learned Societies.

For almost fifty-seven years Leland was a member of the prestigious Cosmos Club of Washington, D.C.—a near record. In a Cosmos Club vignette Albert W. Atwood concluded:

Waldo Leland will be remembered longest for his qualities as a man, for his willingness to work effectively for any cause which appealed to him, for his vital interest in so many things, coupled with righteous indignation against humbug, for his mental integrity, for his enthusiasm, and for his lasting friendships.¹

Lester Cappon, in a memorial piece for the *American Archivist*, observed: "He had a kindly manner and delightful

sense of humor that often came into play through understatement. He spoke softly but distinctly, with economy and grace of language."² As for Leland's standing among archivists, Cappon noted "he was held in high esteem as elder statesman, a keen scholar who enlightened the present with his knowledge of the past."³

Waldo G. Leland was a New Englander by birth and education.⁴ He was born on 17 July 1879 in the Boston suburb of Newton, Mass., to a family of educators. His parents, Luther E. Leland and Ellen Gifford Leland, taught in the community's public schools. His half brother and half sister, both of whom were a generation older than he, followed in their parents' footsteps in becoming teachers.

Upon graduating from the local public schools in 1896, Leland went to Brown University, a choice perhaps influenced by his family's Baptist affiliation. Although J. Franklin Jameson was then a history professor at Brown, Jameson worked primarily with graduate students. Leland's schoolroom contact with the man who was destined to become his mentor in the fullest sense of the term was limited to a single history course.

After receiving his B.A. from Brown in 1900, Leland enrolled in Harvard with the intent of preparing himself for a vocation in college teaching, presumably in the field of sociology.⁵ Once at Harvard, however, he switched to history, in

¹Albert W. Atwood, "Waldo Gifford Leland (1879-1966): Vignette the 104th," *Cosmos Club Bulletin* 20 (March 1967): 4.

²Lester J. Cappon, "In Memoriam: Waldo Gifford Leland, 1879-1966," *American Archivist* 20 (March 1967): 127.

³*Ibid.*

⁴During his lifetime Leland was most often addressed as Waldo G. Leland. At the time the SAA's Leland Prize was being established, however, he stated his desire that his full name be used. Leland to Oliver W. Holmes, 21 February 1958, Waldo Gifford Leland Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (cited hereafter as Leland Papers), Box 106: "SAA-WGL Prize."

⁵Waldo Gifford Leland, "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," reprinted from the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (October 1951): 268.

which discipline he earned his M.A. While in later life Leland would often be addressed as Dr. Leland, his doctorates from Rochester, Northwestern, Colorado, and North Carolina all were honorary.

In January 1903 Harvard professor Albert Bushnell Hart, upon the recommendation of Jameson, offered Leland the opportunity to go to the nation's capital and assist Claude H. Van Tyne in compiling the *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington* under a grant made to the Library of Congress by the newly founded Carnegie Institution of Washington.⁶ What was to have been a six-month temporary project became the basis of Leland's twenty-four year term of employment with the Carnegie Institution.

The Carnegie Institution published the Van Tyne-Leland volume in 1904 and issued an enlarged second edition in 1907, of which Leland was sole compiler.⁷ The *Guide* became what Jameson hoped it would be, a model of workmanship and utility for students of history.⁸ The *Washington Post* praised it as "the first comprehensive listing of American state papers."⁹ It was not superseded as the classic work in the field until 1948 when the National Ar-

chives published a repository guide to its records.¹⁰ One weakness of the Van Tyne-Leland *Guide* was its abbreviated treatment of the War Department's holdings. The explanation was that Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth had refused permission to the two researchers to make a detailed, independent inspection of the records under his control.¹¹ For the National Archives the Leland work was an indispensable tool for examiners whose surveys in the 1930s and 1940s led to the accession by the Archives of federal records held by departments and agencies. Even today the book remains a mainstay of the National Archives in laying claim to estranged records.¹²

In the years between the publication of the two editions of the *Guide* Leland searched throughout the eastern United States for letters from delegates to the Continental Congress. This preliminary exploration venture served as the basis for another important Carnegie Institution publication, Edmund C. Burnett's eight-volume edited collection of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*.¹³ While in North Carolina on his survey, Leland first met Robert Digges Wimberly Connor, the man who was to become the first Archivist of the United States.¹⁴

As Leland traveled around the coun-

⁶*Ibid.*, 269.

⁷Claude H. Van Tyne and Waldo G. Leland, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1904); Claude H. Van Tyne and Waldo G. Leland, *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. by W. G. Leland (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1907).

⁸J. Franklin Jameson to Leland, 15 January 1903, Leland Papers, Box 20.

⁹Editorial: "Waldo G. Leland," *Washington Post*, 23 October 1966.

¹⁰Samuel Flagg Bemis, *Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 495; National Archives, *Guide to the Records in the National Archives* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1948).

¹¹Mabel E. Deutrich, *Struggle for Supremacy: The Career of General Fred C. Ainsworth* (Washington, D.C.: Public Affairs Press, 1962), p. 89.

¹²Conversations of the author with Leonard Rapport and Philip R. Ward, 28 January 1983.

¹³Leland to Herbert E. Klingelhofer, 4 August 1956, Leland Papers, Box 22; Edmund C. Burnett, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, 8 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1921-1936; reprinted in Gloucester, Mass., by Peter Smith, 1963), I: xxiv.

¹⁴Leland, "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," pp. 285-286.

try more and more, he was recognized within the American Historical Association as an authority on archives due largely to his experience with the *Guide*. In 1907 he spoke before the Columbia Historical Society of Washington, D.C., on "The Archives of the Federal Government."¹⁵ His delivery of this paper, in which he stressed the need for adequate housing for federal archives, marked the beginning of his active participation in Jameson's long but successful fight for a National Archives.¹⁶ As if writing and speaking on archival matters and campaigning for the National Archives were not enough to keep him occupied, Leland spent much of the time from 1907 to 1914 and 1922 to 1927 in Paris directing the Carnegie Institution's search for historical documents in France relating to American history prior to 1850.

Beginning in his first year of employment with the Carnegie Institution, Leland assisted Andrew C. McLaughlin, the director of the Bureau (later Department) of Historical Research and editor of the *American Historical Review*, with the editing of the *AHR*.¹⁷ Thus by 1905 Leland was working on *AHR* matters under Jameson's direction, for in that year Jameson succeeded McLaughlin at the Carnegie Institution and resumed the *AHR* editorship he had previously exercised. Leland's tasks included compiling the *AHR*'s "Notes and News" section. In

1908, upon his election as AHA secretary, Leland assumed responsibility for editing the AHA's annual reports. He had this duty through 1919.¹⁸

In 1909 Leland served as secretary not only for the AHA but also for the sixth annual Conference of Historical Societies, which was held in connection with the AHA's 25th annual meeting that December.¹⁹ Of even more importance for members of the archival profession, he conceived the idea of convening the first Conference of Archivists, which met during that same AHA gathering.²⁰ The event had the added significance of commemorating the tenth anniversary of the AHA's establishment of its Public Archives Commission.

For that first Conference of Archivists, Leland was the first of eight speakers. In his paper, "American Archival Problems," he charged the group with laying the foundation of

an archive economy, sound in principle, and in practice adapted to American conditions, in conformity to which all our public archives, federal, State, county, municipal, and town, and perhaps even our private archives shall in time come to be administered.²¹

This goal was to be met by seeking legislation regarding the creation and governance of archives and by resolving

¹⁵Waldo G. Leland, "The Archives of the Federal Government," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* (Washington, D.C.: Columbia Historical Society, 1908), vol. XI, pp. 71-100.

¹⁶Cf. Victor Gondos, Jr., *J. Franklin Jameson and the Birth of the National Archives, 1906-1926* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981); Fred Shelley, "The Interest of J. Franklin Jameson in the National Archives: 1908-1934," *American Archivist* 12 (April 1949): 99-130.

¹⁷Leland, "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," pp. 285-286.

¹⁸J. Franklin Jameson to Fred T. Field, 9 January 1915, J. Franklin Jameson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 107: "Leland, W.G. - 1915."

¹⁹Waldo G. Leland, "Sixth Annual Conference of Historical Societies," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1909*, pp. 281-288.

²⁰Waldo Gifford Leland, "The First Conference of Archivists, December 1909: The Beginnings of a Profession," *American Archivist* 8 (April 1950): 113.

²¹Waldo G. Leland, "American Archival Problems," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1909*, pp. 342-348.

problems of internal archival matters. All but one of the other papers were given by archivists who, in association with the Carnegie Institution, had explored foreign archives and could tell of their experiences.

Leland's paper for that 1909 meeting continues to be cited by archivists today. In a 1966 article on arrangement methods, Frank Evans called attention to Leland's argument in favor of the archival principle of *respect des fonds* as opposed to the American practice of the early twentieth century of applying library methods of classification to archival records.²² Ruth Helmuth, in her 1981 SAA presidential address, noted that an appeal for advanced university courses to prepare students for archival work could be traced as far back as Leland's address.²³

In 1910 Leland was an American delegate to the International Congress of Archivists and Librarians along with Gaillard Hunt of the Library of Congress, Dunbar Rowland of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and Arnold J.F. van Laer of the New York State Library.²⁴ Leland presented a paper entitled "The Work of the Public Archives Commission of the American Historical Association" and presided in one of the sections for a time. An international flow of information apparently worked both ways as evidenced by T.R. Schellenberg's later assertion that it was

largely because of discussions at the Brussels congress "that the principle of provenance became known in the United States."²⁵ In particular, Schellenberg credited Leland and van Laer with popularizing the principle at the meeting of the Public Archives Commission later that year.

At the fourth Conference of Archivists in 1912, Leland presented another of his now classic papers, "Some Fundamental Principles in Relation to Archives."²⁶ For that meeting Victor Paltsits of New York, another of the early towering figures of the archival profession, had presented a plan for an archival manual, a proposed American equivalent of the then preeminent work in the field by the three Dutch archivists, Muller, Feith, and Fruin. Leland opened discussion on the Paltsits proposal in his paper.

It was this same 1912 Leland paper that Lester Cappon cited in his posthumous article "What, Then, Is There To Theorize About?" in attempting to refute Frank Burke's contention that America had produced no archival theorists.²⁷ Cappon noted that among the principles enunciated by Leland was the concept that "archives are preserved primarily for public or administrative purposes, secondarily for private purposes, such as those of the historical investigator."²⁸

Leland's writings on archives during

²²Frank B. Evans, "Modern Methods of Arrangement of Archives in the United States," *American Archivist* 29 (April 1966): 245.

²³Ruth W. Helmuth, "Education for American Archivists: A View from the Trenches," *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 299. This article is an expanded version of Mrs. Helmuth's presidential address delivered on 3 September 1981. In a letter of 11 March 1982 to the author, Mrs. Helmuth indicated that her note card for the actual address mentioned Leland but did not include the quotation cited in her article.

²⁴Leland, "The First Conference of Archivists," pp. 115-116.

²⁵T. R. Schellenberg, "The Principle of Provenance and Modern Records in the United States," *American Archivist* 28 (January 1965): 39.

²⁶Waldo G. Leland, "Some Fundamental Principles in Relation to Archives," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1912*, pp. 264-268.

²⁷Lester J. Cappon, "What, Then, Is There To Theorize About?" *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982): 19-25.

²⁸Leland, "Some Fundamental Principles in Relation to Archives," p. 266, as quoted in Cappon (see note 27).

the pre-World War I years often were tied in with his lobbying activities on behalf of the National Archives. The high point for his writings specifically on this subject was a 1912 Jameson-inspired article, in which he summarized much of his thinking regarding the National Archives.²⁹ Leland called attention to the value of America's governmental records; surveyed the deplorable conditions of their storage; compared the American situation to that in enlightened quarters in Europe; offered a remedy, both as to the type of building needed and as to the form and responsibilities of an agency that could best meet the nation's archival needs; addressed the subject of the destruction of relatively worthless records, thereby putting in a plug for records scheduling; and emphasized the necessity of adhering to the principle of *respect des fonds*.

The opportunity to put forth a detailed plan for a proper state archives was given to Leland in 1912—a productive year, to say the least—when the trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library asked him to come to Illinois and make recommendations regarding state archival building needs and policies.³⁰ According to Ernst Posner, this marked the first time an American archivist had outlined the proper needs, functions, and desirable status for a state archival agency.³¹ The Leland document, however, made little immediate impact on archival developments in Illinois.

Leland's greatest significance for Illinois may lie in the fact that Margaret Cross Norton decided she wanted to become an archivist after seeing a 1915 program Leland and several associates produced at a joint meeting of the AHA, the American Economic Association, and the American Political Science Association in support of a proposed National Archives.³² Victor Paltsits and Leland served as chairman and secretary, respectively, for that gathering. Leland made most of the arrangements for the meeting and secured the slides used for the presentations.³³ During the meeting, the various speakers, including Leland, described the fine archival buildings and practices of certain states, businesses, and foreign nations and contrasted this picture with the shameful way the United States government maintained some of its archival records.³⁴

During World War I, Leland's interest in archival matters took a new turn. In 1917 he served as secretary, first of the Jameson-chaired conference of historians, which led to the establishment of a National Board for Historical Service, and then of the board itself. One of the board's activities involved the collection and preservation of war records, a subject Leland became so familiar with that he coauthored with Newton D. Mereness an *Introduction to the American Official Sources for the Economic and Social History of the*

²⁹Waldo Gifford Leland, "The National Archives: A Programme," *American Historical Review* 18 (October 1912): 5–25. This article was reprinted as Senate Document 717, 63d Cong., 3d Session, 21 December 1914.

³⁰*Cf.* State of Illinois, *Report of the State Education Building Commission to the Forty-Eighth General Assembly*, 1913.

³¹Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 98.

³²Margaret Cross Norton, "Archives in Illinois: The Pioneer Period," *Illinois Libraries* 63 (March 1981): 235.

³³Sixteenth Report of the Public Archives Commission, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1915*, p. 261.

³⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 261–262. *Cf.* Leland, "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," p. 268.

War.³⁵ This work was the first of more than 150 volumes in James T. Shotwell's series *The Economic and Social History of the War*.

After the war and prior to his 1922 departure for Europe, Leland acted as adviser to Eben Putnam, the American Legion official who helped engineer grassroots support among World War I veterans in favor of the establishment of a National Archives. While Leland was in Europe, he and Jameson corresponded frequently regarding the National Archives. Victory was theirs in 1926 when Congress passed both authorization and appropriation legislation for an archives building.

For two decades, while Leland had been supporting Jameson's efforts on behalf of the National Archives, he also had been in charge of the Carnegie Institution's mission to France to compile a multi-volume *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris*.³⁶ Two-thirds of the first volume, subtitled *Libraries*, was devoted to materials in the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale. Although Leland was listed as the first of three authors for the second volume, subtitled *Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, its principal author was John J. Meng of Catholic University. As late as 1955 Leland still had hope of publishing an additional two volumes, but this was not to be.³⁷

Among the Leland Papers at the Library of Congress, however, are drafts of volumes three through five.

Another of Leland's responsibilities during his years in Europe was directing the foreign copying program of the Library of Congress for French manuscripts relating to the United States.³⁸ During the Library's initial phase of collecting, 1914-1927, thousands of pages of handwritten and typewritten transcripts were added to the holdings of LC's Manuscripts Division. Today, as part of the Library's microfilm acquisition program, Leland's unpublished guide to the archives of the French Ministry of the Marine serves as a primary basis for document selection.³⁹

Yet another project with which Leland was associated during his residence in Paris was the creation of a calendar of records relating to early French activities in the United States. Leland acted as initial supervisor on behalf of a dozen Mississippi Valley historical societies, libraries, and state archival agencies. In the 1920s the Carnegie Institution published a two-volume *Calendar of Manuscripts in Paris Archives and Libraries relating to the History of the Mississippi Valley to 1803* prepared by Leland's successor.⁴⁰

Also during his years in France, Leland acted as adviser and unofficial guide to American researchers and

³⁵Waldo G. Leland and Newton D. Mereness, *Introduction to the American Official Sources for the Economic and Social History of the World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926).

³⁶Cf. Roscoe R. Hill, *American Missions in European Archives* (Mexico, D.F.: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía Historia—Comisión de Historia, 1951, no. 108), pp. 47-53; Waldo G. Leland, *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris*, vol. I, *Libraries* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1932); Waldo G. Leland, John J. Meng, and Abel Doysié, *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris*, vol. II, *Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1943).

³⁷Leland to William Berrien, 27 July 1955, Leland Papers, Box 15.

³⁸Hill, *American Missions in European Archives*, pp. 66-67.

³⁹Conversation of the author with Russell Smith, 31 October 1981.

⁴⁰Cf. Hill, *American Missions in European Archives*, pp. 51-53; N.M.M. Surrey, *Calendar of Manuscripts in Paris Archives and Libraries relating to the History of the Mississippi Valley to 1803*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1926 and 1928).

historians in Europe. In addition, he worked with foreign scholars in the interest of international intellectual cooperation. He helped organize the International Committee of Historical Sciences. Later he would serve as vice president (1929-1931) and then as president (1938-1946) of the European-based International Academic Union.

In 1927 Leland faced an important career choice, whether to remain with the Carnegie Institution or to accept the executive secretaryship of the American Council of Learned Societies, an association of professional groups in the humanities and social sciences for which he had served as organizing secretary eight years earlier. For Leland, the question was whether he could do "the most in the advancement of knowledge" by continuing his research investigations or by directing an organization one of whose main functions was to advise foundations on the distribution of money for scholarly enterprises.⁴¹ With the encouragement of Jameson, who was to leave the Carnegie Institution himself the following year to become head of the Manuscripts Division at the Library of Congress, Leland took the ACLS offer.

Some years later, in 1934, following Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of the National Archives Act, which provided for an agency to operate the partially completed building, Leland was Jameson's first choice to become Archivist of the United States.⁴² For his part, Leland turned down the chance of being the AHA's candidate for the position, partly because he knew his

Republican party affiliation would present political difficulties for President Roosevelt with Congress. Following Jameson's death in 1937, Leland declined an offer by the Librarian of Congress to succeed Jameson as head of the Manuscripts Division.⁴³

One year later, in 1938, Leland agreed to President Roosevelt's request that he serve as chairman of an executive committee to plan the construction and organization of what was to become the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.⁴⁴ Given the bitterly partisan division in Congress over the 1939 legislation authorizing the federal government to accept the proposed repository, Leland's standing as a Republican helped give legitimacy to the pioneering arrangement. The success of the Roosevelt Library, for which Leland deserves at least a measure of credit, led to the bipartisan unanimity of 1955 when Congress enacted open-ended legislation for the creation of additional presidential libraries.

Roosevelt's choice of Leland to head the executive committee was particularly appropriate in view of Leland's standing within the American archival community as a founding member of the Society of American Archivists. In 1939, while Leland and his wife were traveling in South America, the SAA elected him as successor to Albert Ray Newsome, the first president of the society. In his 1940 SAA presidential address, entitled "The Archivist in Times of Emergency," Leland stressed five study areas for SAA involvement: assuring the physical survival of records in wartime; providing records storage space when agencies sud-

⁴¹Leland to John C. Merriam, 1 February 1927, Papers of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Staff Files: Leland, W. G.; cf. letter of introduction for Leland from Samuel Flagg Bemis to Pablo Martinez del Rio, 12 June 1940, Leland Papers, Box 15.

⁴²Donald R. McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 16-17.

⁴³Leland, "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," p. 271.

⁴⁴Cf. Waldo Gifford Leland, "The Creation of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library: A Personal Narrative," *American Archivist* 18 (January 1955): 11-29.

denly decided that existing storage locations had to be used for other purposes; putting together information on the organization, functions, and history of agencies created to deal with America's entry in World War I; looking at long-term recordkeeping practices so as to reduce the volume of records retained; and preparing a manual of suggestions on how best to collect and preserve records generated during war.⁴⁵ Shortly thereafter the SAA established three committees which, in addressing points Leland had raised, worked closely with the Committee on the Conservation of Cultural Resources established by the National Resources Planning Board.

Leland returned to the subject of war-related archival activities for his 1941 presidential address. This time he presented a history of the projects undertaken by historians and archivists in the United State during World War I.⁴⁶ The following year he once again served the cause of history when he assumed the chairmanship of the Committee on Records of War Administration. Thanks to this committee's efforts, more than two dozen federal agencies established wartime historical units.

During his years as executive secretary or director of the ACLS, Leland gave strong backing to the development in America of a basic program for archival training. Toward this end he was instrumental in obtaining funds from the Carnegie Corporation in the early 1940s

to pay the American University salary of Ernst Posner, the World War II German refugee archivist.⁴⁷ So highly did Leland regard Posner that he acted as sponsor for the latter's admission to the Cosmos Club.⁴⁸ In the late 1940s, when Posner had a chance to leave American University to take a position as an archivist with the federal government, he sought Leland's advice.⁴⁹ Leland responded by phrasing the dilemma in language reminiscent of that he had used for himself two decades earlier. The question, he wrote, was whether Posner could "do more for the profession by practicing or by continuing to teach it and to organize systematic instruction in it."⁵⁰ Posner decided to remain at American University.

Even after Leland's retirement as ACLS director in 1946, he still was able to get money for archival-related causes. Thus in 1961 Leland persuaded the ACLS to fund Posner's trip to Warsaw as SAA representative to the sixth International Conference of the Round Table on Archives.⁵¹ Several years later Leland's intercession resulted in the ACLS awarding Morris Rieger, the chairman of the SAA's International Relations Committee, a travel grant so that he could represent the SAA at the 1964 Brussels International Archives Congress.⁵²

Leland maintained an active life in retirement. In a 1947 letter to a nephew he alluded to his responsibilities as presi-

⁴⁵Cf. Waldo G. Leland, "The Archivist in Times of Emergency," *American Archivist* 4 (January 1941): 1-12.

⁴⁶Cf. Waldo G. Leland, "Historians and Archivists in the First World War," *American Archivist* 5 (January 1942): 1-17.

⁴⁷"Phone message from Mr. Leland," 8 April 1940, Solon J. Buck Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Box 1: "American Council of Learned Societies."

⁴⁸Posner to Leland, 25 November 1949, Leland Papers, Box 25: "Posner, Ernst."

⁴⁹Posner to Leland, 19 September 1948, Leland Papers, Box 25: "Posner, Ernst."

⁵⁰Leland to Posner, 21 September 1948, Leland Papers, Box 25: "Posner, Ernst."

⁵¹Philip M. Hamer to Leland, 21 June 1961, Leland Papers, Box 19: "Hamer, Philip and Elizabeth."

⁵²Morris Rieger to Leland, 7 August 1964, Leland Papers, Box 106: "SAA 1963-65"; Oliver W. Holmes to Leland, Leland Papers, Box 20: "HO"; conversation of the author with Morris Rieger, 23 October 1980.

dent of the Cosmos Club and as member of the Brown University Board of Fellows.⁵³ To another family member he observed:

I can assure you that if you live in Washington, in contact with government as I have, there is a great demand for advisory services. I have been chairman of the Advisory Board of the National Park Service and vice chairman of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, and those have been full time jobs, without compensation of course, but exceedingly interesting.⁵⁴

One area in which Leland's interest remained constant was his concern that the job of Archivist of the United States not become a patronage position. When Connor retired as Archivist Leland endorsed Connor's choice of Solon J. Buck as successor.⁵⁵ In 1948 when Buck was contemplating resigning as Archivist, he discussed the matter of his successor with Leland.⁵⁶ The two men agreed that the position of Archivist ought to go to someone who by training and experience was a professional archivist. When Wayne Grover, Buck's assistant, became the third Archivist of the United States, he wrote to Leland: "I am sure that I owe my appointment to the position you took in the matter."⁵⁷

During the first year of Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration, Leland, Posner, Guy Stanton Ford of the AHA, and others feared that Edmund Mansure, head of the General Services Administration (which had controlled the National Archives and Records Service since the 1949 governmental reorganization), was contemplating replacing Grover with Georgetown University professor Charles Tansill, for whom Leland had very little regard.⁵⁸ In January 1953 Leland sought assistance from Milton Eisenhower, whom he had befriended when the two men served together on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO.⁵⁹ Milton Eisenhower was confident that the new administration had "no disposition" to inject politics into the National Archives, but he acknowledged that an "accident" could happen.⁶⁰ In May, in response to another, more urgent letter from Leland, Milton Eisenhower promised to put the information "into the right hands."⁶¹ Several days later he informed Leland that he had indeed "been able to say a few words at the right place."⁶²

Nonetheless, as late as August Leland and his associates remained worried that Mansure would succumb to pressure from Sen. Everett Dirksen and remove Grover.⁶³ These fears proved to be in

⁵³Leland to George Chisholm, 28 September 1947, Leland Papers, Box 11: "Family Correspondence, 1947."

⁵⁴Leland to Samuel Leland, 30 September 1951, Leland Papers, Box 11: "Family Correspondence, 1951."

⁵⁵McCoy, *The National Archives: America's Ministry of Documents, 1934-1968*, pp. 114-116.

⁵⁶Buck to Edmund F. Mansure, 12 June 1953, Leland Papers, Box 16: "Buck, Solon J."

⁵⁷Grover to Leland, 23 June 1948, Wayne C. Grover Papers, Record Group 200, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Box 1 (hereafter cited as Grover Papers).

⁵⁸Leland to Ford, Leland Papers, Box 19: "Ford, Guy Stanton." For the extensive Leland-Posner interchange on the subject see Leland Papers, Box 25: "Posner, Ernst." For the specific reference to Tansill see Leland to Eisenhower, 11 May 1953, Leland Papers: Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton."

⁵⁹Eisenhower to Leland, 9 January 1953, Leland Papers, Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton."

⁶⁰Eisenhower to Leland, 14 January 1953, Leland Papers, Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton."

⁶¹Leland to Eisenhower, 11 May 1953, Leland Papers, Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton"; Eisenhower to Leland, 18 May 1953, Leland Papers, Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton."

⁶²Eisenhower to Leland, 22 May 1953, Leland Papers, Box 18: "Eisenhower, Milton."

⁶³Leland to Posner, 18 August 1953, Leland Papers, Box 25: "Posner, Ernst."

vain. Grover continued to serve as Archivist until his retirement in 1965.

In various ways the heads of the National Archives have manifested the respect they held for Leland. Early in the 1950s Grover sent Leland a note in which he stated: "Your brief formulation of the principle of the *respect des fonds* was so clear and explicit that we are still passing it along for the benefit of new staff members."⁶⁴ Several years later the National Archives went so far as to issue a National Archives Staff Information Paper devoted exclusively to the writings and speeches of Leland for the period 1909-1921.⁶⁵ This booklet, edited by T.R. Schellenberg, included sections on public obligation to care for archives, definition of archives, transfer, custody, recovery, destruction, classification, description, and provision of access.

In 1952 Collas Harris, executive officer of the National Archives, invited Leland to deliver the main address at the unveiling of a portrait painting of R.D.W. Connor.⁶⁶ Three years later, Leland performed a similar duty for the dedication of the AHA's bronze portrait plaque in tribute to Jameson, which remains affixed to the wall near the guard's desk at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the Archives.⁶⁷ Little did Leland realize that soon a similar honor would be his, for on 24 October 1957 the Archives unveiled a portrait of Leland in

its main conference room.

How the Archives acquired the Leland portrait and, even more importantly, the interrelationship between the Leland Portrait Committee and the SAA's Waldo Gifford Leland Prize is a story worth telling in some detail. In 1956 one of Leland's friends pledged \$100 if Grover would mount a campaign to obtain funds for a portrait of Leland to be hung in the National Archives.⁶⁸ Grover did just that after obtaining approval of the Senate and House members of the National Archives Trust Fund Board to a resolution endorsing the idea.⁶⁹ This action allowed the Leland Portrait Committee (with Guy Stanton Ford as chairman and Grover's assistant Oliver W. Holmes as secretary-treasurer) to deposit checks in the NATF account.

Holmes collected lists of prospective contributors, mainly those associated with the SAA, the AHA, the ACLS, the Library of Congress, the Cosmos Club, the Brown University trustees, the American Philosophical Society, and the National Park Service. He then sent out 1,350 solicitation letters. The committee announced a goal of \$1,200 and added a proviso that should a surplus be collected the balance would be used to benefit the National Archives.⁷⁰ The committee's drive was immensely successful, raising \$2,741.⁷¹

Leland actively involved himself in artistic decisions regarding his portrait. He

⁶⁴Grover to Leland, 17 July 1951, Grover Papers, Box 1.

⁶⁵National Archives and Records Service, Staff Information Paper 20, "Archival Principles: Selections From the Writings of Waldo Gifford Leland," March 1955 (reprinted 1974, 1975).

⁶⁶Leland to Buck, 18 September 1952, Leland Papers, Box 16: "Buck, Solon J."; Waldo G. Leland, "R. D. W. Connor, First Archivist of the United States," *American Archivist* 16 (January 1953): 45-54.

⁶⁷Cf. Waldo Gifford Leland, "James Franklin Jameson," *American Archivist* 19 (July 1956): 195-201; Waldo Gifford Leland, "The Prehistory and Origins of the National Historical Publications Commission," *American Archivist* 27 (April 1964): 187-194.

⁶⁸Oliver W. Holmes to Guy Stanton Ford, 14 February 1957, Records of the National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 64, National Archives, Washington, D.C., Planning and Control Cases #063-103 (hereafter cited as RG 64 — #063-103).

⁶⁹Grover to Sen. Olin D. Johnston, 29 October 1956, Grover Papers, Box 1.

⁷⁰Guy Stanton Ford to "Dear Colleague," n.d., Leland Papers, Box 98: "Leland Portrait, 1957."

⁷¹Memo of Walter Robertson, Jr., to N [Wayne C. Grover], 2 October 1957, RG 64 — #063-103.

and his wife chose the Norwegian-born Marylander Bjorn Egeli from available portrait painters in Washington, D.C., and New York. In a February 1957 letter to Ford, Holmes, and Grover, Leland suggested that in commissioning Egeli the committee ought to explain that the painting was "to be the pendant of the portrait of Connor," with the canvas inside the frame measuring 35 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches by 47 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches.⁷² Leland, who could not help thinking "that most of those who glance at my portrait will never have seen the original and will wonder who the hell he was," chose to be painted in an academic gown on which he had pinned his Legion of Honor decoration from France (1929) and that of the Order of Polonia Restituta from Poland (1933).⁷³

At the unveiling ceremony Leland was hailed as the "father of the American archival profession."⁷⁴ Ford presented the portrait to Grover. Buck, in delivering the main address, lauded Leland as a moving spirit in the organization of the SAA and cited him as having been in the forefront of those who worked on behalf of archival matters in the United States. Leland also spoke at the gathering and in light-hearted style told why he questioned his claim to being known as an archivist.⁷⁵

With the portrait in place, the Leland

Portrait Committee still had to decide what to do with its after-expenses revenue. Grover and Holmes suggested that the money ought to be used to endow a Leland prize to be given annually for the best publication in the United States in the archival field.⁷⁶ Walter Robertson, Jr., executive officer of the National Archives, concurred with the idea but voiced his feeling that the Archives itself ought not to administer the fund.⁷⁷ The logical solution was to give the money to the SAA.

Both Leland and SAA president William Overton assented to the plan, as did the SAA Council.⁷⁸ Consequently in January 1958 the Leland Portrait Committee presented a check for \$1,050 to the SAA for use by the society in establishing the Leland Prize. Two years later the Buck Portrait Committee chairman, Elizabeth E. Hamer, presented the SAA with another oversubscription check, this time for \$141.55.⁷⁹ In his lifetime Leland contributed \$1,000 of his own money to the SAA for the Leland Prize.⁸⁰ He also made provision in his will for additional funds to be added to the prize's endowment so as to bring the total up to a full \$10,000.⁸¹ In 1972 Leland's widow, Gertrude Dennis Leland, carried out her husband's wishes and gave the SAA \$8,000 for this purpose.⁸²

⁷²Leland to Guy Stanton Ford, Oliver W. Holmes, and Wayne C. Grover, 19 February 1957, Grover Papers.

⁷³Leland to Thomas B. Appleget, 19 February 1957, Leland Papers, Box 98: "Leland Portrait."

⁷⁴This quotation, which by no means represents a consensus summary of Leland's historical standing, was cited without attribution in *LC Information Bulletin* 16 (October 28, 1957): 566.

⁷⁵Waldo Gifford Leland, "Recollections of the Man Who Rang the Bell," *American Archivist* 21 (January 1958): 55-57. The subtitle of this author's article is taken from a similar expression of sentiment on Leland's part in "Some Early Recollections of an Itinerant Historian," p. 278.

⁷⁶Grover to Leland, 17 December 1957, RG 64 — #063-103.

⁷⁷Memo of Walter Robertson, Jr., to N [Wayne C. Grover], 29 November 1957, RG 64 — #063-103.

⁷⁸*American Archivist* 21 (April 1958): 223.

⁷⁹Hamer to Mary Givens Bryan, 16 June 1960, Leland Papers, Box 19: "Hamer, Philip and Elizabeth."

⁸⁰*American Archivist* 25 (January 1962): 115; *American Archivist* 26 (January 1963): 114; *American Archivist* 27 (January 1964): 160.

⁸¹Leland to Dolores C. Renze, 14 December 1963, Leland Papers, Box 106: "SAA-WGL Prize."

⁸²*American Archivist* 37 (January 1974): 173.

Also in 1972, Frank Burke, head of the National Archives's exhibits and education program, moved the collection of portraits to the building's stairwells where they could be seen more readily by the general public.⁸³ The SAA's Leland Prize continues to be awarded each year, a tribute to the man who contributed so much to the development of archival practices and the archival profession in the United States.

What last words would Leland himself wish to impart to an audience of archivists in the 1980s? Perhaps he would want to repeat the message he gave in a paper at a luncheon in December 1949 at the annual meeting of the AHA. His theme was "Don't forget your roots." Leland noted that the profession of archivist was the offspring of that of historian and added:

This relationship is proudly acknowledged on both sides and it is of great importance that it be maintained and strengthened. The archivist must, it is true, deal with a vast number of technical problems, but he must not, because of that necessity, become a mere technician.

The ultimate purpose of the preservation and efficient administration of the public records goes far beyond the improvement of administrative processes and the facilitation of the public business. The ultimate purpose is to make it possible for our present generation to have enduring and dependable knowledge of their past, of which our present is a part. To achieve this ultimate purpose the necessary technical and administrative processes must be controlled by the scholar, and it is in the high ideals and purposes of scholarship and in its concern for the public good that the archivist must find his motives and seek his inspiration.⁸⁴

⁸³Conversation of the author with Frank G. Burke, 26 January 1983.

⁸⁴Leland, "The First Conference of Archivists," p. 120.