

Florence Stewart

Florence Stewart, a member of the pioneer generation of American archivists, died 19 February 1983 at the age of 85 in Evanston, Ill. Like her contemporaries, Stewart learned the archival craft while it was in the process of formation. For more than thirty-three years, from 1935 to 1968, she was associated with the Northwestern University Archives, initially as an assistant to the archives' founder, the prominent American historian James Alton James, and later as Northwestern's first university archivist.

Born in Evanston on 14 November 1897, Stewart attended local public schools and entered Northwestern as an undergraduate in 1916, where she studied history with James. From 1920 to 1931 she served as secretary-registrar of the Northwestern University graduate school; during 1931-1932 she was admissions secretary in the graduate school; and in 1932 she joined the staff of the university library, where she held positions in the accessioning, documents, and reference departments.

In 1935, following his retirement as dean of the graduate school and holder of the William Smith Mason Chair of American History, James persuaded Northwestern president Walter Dill Scott and the university's board of trustees to establish a university archives. As university historian, James formally directed the archives from 1935 to 1949, with Stewart as his assistant with day-to-day responsibility for the archives. Stewart then assumed full administrative charge of the archives, initially with the title of archives librarian and later as university archivist. For the next two decades Stewart struggled to build the archives while faced perennially with a dearth of storage space, staff, and financial resources. Her correspondence with leading members of the Society of

American Archivists revealed her continuing interest in new archival developments. In 1965, for example, she visited the University of Wisconsin Archives, then under the direction of Jesse Boell, and was impressed sufficiently with the arrangement system she found there that, upon her return to Northwestern, she began to implement the "Wisconsin system." Although she formally retired in March 1966, she continued to work in the Northwestern Archives until 1968.

In the Spring of 1975 at a meeting of the Midwest Archives Conference she delighted those in the audience with her personal recollections of the founding and initial decades of the Northwestern University Archives. Shortly thereafter, she was honored by MAC, which elected her one of its first emerita members.

Florence Stewart was a warm, humane person fully committed to the archival craft. While not as well known as Mary Givens Bryan, Elizabeth Hamer Kegan, or Margaret Cross Norton, she nonetheless was a member of the founding generation of the American archival profession. Her contribution to preserving the historical record of the institution that she served for almost fifty years constituted a very rich legacy for those of us charged with carrying on her work.

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David B. Gracy II's name was inadvertently omitted as the author of the obituary for Walter Rundell, Jr. in the spring 1983 *American Archivist*.