

The President's Page

Lift Your Lamp

DAVID B. GRACY II

Archivists have few occasions to celebrate and lift our lamp before the public. But happily, for the next two years, occasions are at hand.

This year we observe the 50th anniversary of the National Archives of the United States, and 1984 will be marked by various celebrations. In April the U.S. Postal Service will issue a special stamp honoring the National Archives. This fall, Society members all will have opportunities to participate in the celebration through events planned for our annual meeting in Washington, D.C.

Later in September, at the opening of the International Congress on Archives in West Germany, the president of the ICA will announce the occasion of the second International Archives Week. The week is an opportunity for archivists, archival institutions, and professional societies in their particular localities around the world to celebrate, publicize, and promote their archives and the archival service to society.

Four years ago the first International Archives Week provided the occasion

for archivists and archives in the United States and Canada to present talks to the public on archival services; to hold open houses introducing the public to the holdings, work, and purposes of repositories; to mount displays exhibiting both treasured holdings and the archival enterprise that preserves them; and to erect and dedicate markers to archival events. Archivists in several communities used International Archives Week to gather in special convocations to discuss mutual concerns and interests, both domestic and foreign.

The most successful and far-reaching enterprise of which I am aware was the "Archives in the Attic" activity developed in Canada. Archivists publicized a time when they would be available at an institution to advise the public on the historical value and conservation needs of all records and papers brought in for inspection. There was no sales pitch for collecting, just service to the community. But actually, more than providing service to the community, the occasion offered archivists an unmatched opportunity, as much through the invitation to

the event as through the personal contact with those who came, to raise public consciousness of archival service—public consciousness, and appreciation we so desperately need.

International Archives Week proved such a great success around the world that it is being repeated. The week of 15–19 April 1985 has been designated for the observance in the United States; a date will be selected soon for Canada.

The International Archival Affairs Committee of the SAA (chaired by Maygene Daniels, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, DC 20408) will serve as a clearinghouse for information and ideas.

Archivists have few occasions to inform the public of our service and to publicly take pride in what we do. Here are two in a row. Let us make the most of them.

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