



Courtesy of Library of Congress. Photograph by Leonard A. Hawley.

C.F.W. Coker

I miss my friend C.F.W. “Fred” Coker. Many months have passed since he died in his Washington, D.C., townhouse on 20 June 1983 of complications arising from esophageal and liver cancer. I shall never forget him, and I count myself fortunate to have called him friend, colleague, and fellow archivist.

Charles Frederick Williams Coker spent almost all of his life in the Southeast among three states particularly proud and conscious of their roles in American history. He was born on 3 July 1932 in Columbia, S.C., and he spent most of his childhood years growing up in Franklin, Va. In 1949 he entered the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received his bachelor’s degree in 1953 and a first-year graduate scholarship in 1954. At the same time, he was offered and accepted a scholarship to study at Oxford University. After a year in England, Fred returned to the United

States. In 1969, he received his M.A. in Library Science from the University of North Carolina.

Before joining the staff of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History in Raleigh in 1963 as assistant state archivist, Fred worked for the Continental Travel Agency in Chapel Hill from 1955 until 1957. The remainder of his life he continued to indulge his love for travel primarily in the United States, Mexico, Europe, and Africa. Fred served in the United States Marine Corps, 1957–62, as a first lieutenant and captain in various positions. For several years after he resigned his commission, Fred served as a consultant to the United States Marine Corps Museum in Quantico, helping to create a manuscript collection and preparing the *Register of the Henry Clay Cochrane Papers* (Manuscript Register Series No. 1) issued in 1968.

Fred remained with the North Carolina

Department of Archives and History until 1973, becoming state archivist in 1970. In 1966 and 1968 the Department published three Coker finding aids as part of its archives information circular series. These were: *North Carolina's Revolutionary War Pay Records*; *Records Relating to Tennessee in the North Carolina State Archives*; and *North Carolina Civil War Records: An Introduction to Printed and Manuscript Sources*. It was during his years in Raleigh that he developed his talent for assisting researchers, guiding them thoughtfully and creatively to the resources that would most benefit their investigations. His archival philosophy came of age as well. Fred had enormous respect for the basic archival theories; he was a stickler for the correct use of terminology ("manuscript" and "record" were not interchangeable terms in his lexicon), and for the strict application of theory to practice. New and innovative archival ideas intrigued him.

It was also during his North Carolina years that Fred began to participate in various professional organizations, among them the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the Manuscript Society, South Atlantic Archives and Records Conference, Special Libraries Association, and the Society of American Archivists. He also began to hone his teaching skills by lecturing on archives and manuscripts collections and techniques to graduate students in the Louisiana State University history department.

In 1973 Fred left North Carolina to settle permanently in Washington, D.C. He joined the staff of the National Archives and Records Service, where from 1974 to 1978 he was in charge of the Printed Documents Division and responsible for maintaining the record copies of the literature published by the federal government. In 1978 he moved to the

Library of Congress as the head of the Reference and Reader Service Section in the Manuscript Division, a position he held until shortly before his death. Here again he was working with researchers, often achieving that symbiotic relationship between archivist and scholar that produces such exciting discoveries of fact and provides the basis for new insights into the past.

It was during this period of his life that Fred became most active in the archival profession. He was the director of the Modern Archives Institute held by the National Archives and Records Service. He also held positions at the University of Maryland, where in 1975 he taught "History and Administration of Modern Archives and Manuscripts," and at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Catholic University of America, teaching a course in government documents.

During 1975, the last year of Ed Weldon's editorship of the *American Archivist*, Fred became associate editor. In 1976 he succeeded Weldon as editor and served in that capacity until the end of 1978.

Fred also was the general editor for the first and extremely successful SAA Basic Manual Series. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of American Archivists in 1976.

Shortly after his death, a group of personal and professional friends made contributions to the SAA and requested that the Society establish an appropriate award in his honor.

The C.F.W. Coker Prize for Finding Aids, established by Council in 1983, will be presented annually and will recognize works or activities of exceptional merit that advance the practice of archival description.

In the fifty years allotted to him, Fred Coker made solid contributions to his profession and claimed hundreds of

friends. All miss him—and I suspect each carries special memories of Fred, in which there is pleasure that he passed our way and sadness that only in memory can he do so again.

MARY LYNN MCCREE
Jane Addams Papers

Nancy C. Prewitt

I lost a dear friend this winter with the passing of Nancy C. Prewitt, retired Associate Director of the Western Historical Manuscripts Collection at the University of Missouri–Columbia. I admired her professionalism, her willingness to volunteer, her strength of character, and the depth of her convictions. Many of us are in her debt.

A graduate of the University of Missouri, Nancy spent virtually all of her professional career with the Western Manuscripts Collection, which she joined in 1946. At that time, WHMC was a one-person repository with little to distinguish it from the myriad other small archival institutions in the United States. Nancy left WHMC temporarily in 1948, returning ten years later as assistant director. It was still a one-person operation.

During the next twenty-three years, WHMC evolved into a modern, progressive repository under Nancy's leadership. Collections, for example, grew markedly with the addition of modern political collections documenting Missouri's contribution to national government: organizational, labor union, and business records providing a source for the history of local, state, and regional activities; and many excellent individual manuscript collections. Between 1958 and 1981 the repository added nearly 1,200 collections.

By the close of Nancy's tenure, Western Manuscripts had developed a capable, proficient staff and a budget to support expanding archival programs. Among her achievements, Nancy took the most pride in the transformation of

WHMC into a nationally recognized and respected territory. She could claim an equal measure of credit for teaching scores of novice archivists, for instilling in them a sense of dedication, and for motivating them to contribute to the profession.

Nancy was active in the Society of American Archivists, the Midwest Archives Conference, her community, and the university; but what is most important is that her career in all of its features was marked by enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and loyalty to her work. She served the archival community honorably. I will miss her.

FRANK H. MACKAMAN
The Dirksen Congressional Center

Karl L. Trever

Karl L. Trever, founding member and Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, editor of the *American Archivist* from July 1949 through October 1956, and a staff member of the National Archives from 1936 to 1964, died of a heart attack in Arlington, Va., on 24 October 1983. Karl was 80 years old and is survived by his wife of 57 years, Myra, one son, two daughters, a sister, ten grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

Born in Halle, Germany, in 1903, of American parents, Karl grew up in Appleton, Wis., where his father was a history professor at Lawrence College. He obtained a bachelor's degree from that institution in 1923 and a master's degree two years later from the University of Wisconsin. He taught history and political science from 1923 to 1933, including a stint at Illinois Wesleyan University (1926–30) and another at Boston University (1930–33). While in Boston, Karl completed three years of further graduate work at Harvard toward a doctorate in history.