

Walter Rundell, Jr.: The Archival Interests of a Historian

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NOLTE ABSTRACT

Abstract: In his published account of the Survey on the Use of Original Source Material in Graduate Programs in History conducted between 1965 and 1967, Walter Rundell outlined problems hindering the full utilization of such sources. At the core of his recommendations for solving these problems was a conviction that researchers and curators are bound by a common interest in the past and in the materials that document that past. Rundell's subsequent career demonstrated a commitment to the implementation of those recommendations and to the creation of a community of history involving both the custodians of archival materials and the users of those materials.

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BEFORE HIS DEATH IN 1982, Walter Rundell was involved in the archival profession, especially through active participation in the Society of American Archivists. A frequent contributor to the *American Archivist*, he was elected to the council of SAA in 1971 and served as a member until 1975. He was elected a Fellow of the Society in 1974, vice president in 1976, and he assumed the presidency of SAA in October, 1977. In addition, his book *In Pursuit of American History* won SAA's Waldo Gifford Leland Prize in 1971. In all, this made for a distinguished record marked by one unusual fact: Walter Rundell was not an archivist. The survey resulting in *In Pursuit of American History* was sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission (NHPC), and during the two years of the project's life, Rundell worked at the National Archives, but he never held formal employment in the archival field.

The archival profession has been marked at various points by individuals who combined historical and archival work, who shifted from one field to the other, or who prepared for careers as archivists with graduate training in history. It is hard, nonetheless, to think of another man or woman who took such an interest in the archival field and became a respected writer and policy maker within it without serving at any time as an archivist or archival administrator. Walter Rundell's archival interests represent a remarkable example of the scholar practicing what he preached, in this instance, the need for close relationships between archivists and historians.

There would seem to be little need to encourage cooperation between professions so closely and naturally related. A common interest in the past and in the

records that document the past, similar if not identical training, and the continuing contact between curator and researcher create an inevitable professional affinity (propinquity may be the more accurate term). In the American instance, the role of J. Franklin Jameson and the American Historical Association (AHA) in the movement to create a national archival institution points to a tradition of shared purpose.

To say that relations between the professions have always been close is not to say that they have always been amicable or that each side has always seen the other as an equal. Nearness does not guarantee amity in domestic relations, community affairs, or professional relations. As William Birdsall has noted, the early interest of historians in archival issues waned in the 1930s, a process both conducive to, and encouraged by, the creation of the SAA in 1936. Shortly thereafter, the AHA abolished the Public Archives Commission and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, retaining a subcommittee on public archives as a vestigial tie to an area of traditional concern. Like commonwealth status¹ or the other halfway steps taken to ease the process of decolonization, this subcommittee withered away and by 1950 "all AHA committees dealing with archival material had been discontinued."¹

From the archivist's perspective, the three decades after independence were marked by an effort to define a profession that seemed finally to have reached maturity, free of ties to the librarians and historians who had acted as its sponsors and patrons in earlier times. Nevertheless, the question of the archivist's professional status remained largely unanswered, in part because of the profession's slowness in defining ter-

¹William F. Birdsall, "The Two Sides of the Desk: The Archivist and the Historian, 1909-1935," *American Archivist* 38 (April 1975): 159-173.

minology and practice, but perhaps to a greater extent because of its inability to define the background and training that should go into the making of an archivist. No wonder then that even a major figure in modern archival work, Theodore Schellenberg, could describe his field in terms of self-renunciation worthy of one pursuing the monastic life:

Finally, if [the archivist] conducts research of his own, he should do this in an unofficial capacity; for he is hired to be an archivist, not a researcher. He should not subordinate his professional duties to his own research interests. In a word, he should give his knowledge about records unstintingly, even at a sacrifice of his own research interest.

The archivist thus may be regarded as a hewer of wood and drawer of water for the scholars.²

Schellenberg is explicit in his views on the ethical responsibility of an archivist to avoid unfair use of his proximity to and control over records; the implication of servility and subservience in his remarks is equally clear. As will be noted below, Walter Rundell strongly endorsed the scholarly aspirations of curators as beneficial to both sides of the archivist-researcher collaboration.

Whatever the lingering uncertainties concerning the respective positions of archivists and historians, the professions moved through the rich years of the postwar era on largely separate paths. In the last portion of that time of growth and affluence, Walter Rundell began what was to be a lifelong effort to stimulate active cooperation between the fields.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from the University of Texas, Rundell served in the Army Finance Corps, an experience that ultimately led to research and writing on military, financial, and monetary policy.³ He received his doctorate from American University where Ernst Posner was influential as chairman of the department of history and later as dean of the graduate school. In *Black Market Money*, Rundell made explicit the link with Posner, as he did in various articles and lectures.⁴ In 1965, after serving in teaching positions and as assistant executive of the AHA, Rundell joined the staff of NHPC, directing the Survey on the Use of Original Sources in Graduate History Training.⁵ In *Pursuit of American History*, supplemented by articles and addresses on various portions of the survey, documented the findings of the two-year effort.

From the information received in the survey, Rundell identified three major problems hindering research in American history: difficulties in gaining access to original resources, inadequate communications between academic historians and persons "with other historical and curatorial vocations," and a lack of adequate training in historical methodology.⁶ An effort to rectify these problems along with continuing interests in archival education and in the need to expand historical use of nonliterary sources became central themes in Rundell's career and had direct bearing on his professional activities. One final area of interest, the status of the National Archives and Records Service (NARS),

²T. R. Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956; Chicago: Midway Reprint, 1975), 236.

³Walter Rundell, Jr., *Black Market Money: The Collapse of U. S. Military Currency Controls in World War II* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964).

⁴*Ibid.*, xi.

⁵Walter Rundell, Jr., *In Pursuit of American History: Research and Training in the United States* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), x.

⁶*Ibid.*, 313, 326, 328.

reflected a reawakening of the historical profession's interest in a cause that seemed to have triumphed in the 1930s, only to reappear as a problem decades later. If prosperity had encouraged archivists and historians to tend to their own affairs, adversity promoted a new alliance.

On the issue of obstacles between researchers and their sources of material, Rundell noted such factors as the reluctance of repositories to make available copies of documents and the restrictions placed by the federal government on access to recent records.⁷ The matter of reproduction, and the attendant problems of collection control, responsibilities to donors, and protection of copyright, drew some of Rundell's strongest criticisms of professional practice in archives. Given valid donor restrictions on some items, he conceded that these may be absolute, leaving the archivist no discretion in providing access or permission to reproduce. Nevertheless, he contended that the archivist should seek to limit the nature and duration of donor restrictions—those with the eloquence to acquire an important collection should be able to use equivalent charm and tact in minimizing obstacles to access to or duplication of source materials.

In suggesting that donor restrictions were not the only obstacles to access, Rundell raised the possibility that some restrictions, including those on reproduction, could imply an archivist's desire to control research, or at least to guarantee that researchers would give appropriate credit to repositories making material available. While condemning the "ignorance, ingratitude, and/or poor

research techniques" that would lead a historian to neglect proper citation of a repository, Rundell suggested that such oversights should not result in equally unprofessional actions on the part of curators. Although discussed under the heading of restrictions on sources, Rundell's treatment of these issues touched directly on the communication and understanding required in the researcher-archivist relationship.⁸

Copyright provided another issue on access to sources, and Rundell was at least a minor participant in the prolonged debate over revisions in the copyright law. In a 1966 article, he opposed the proposed abolition of the common law aspect of copyright and the extension of copyright protection to derivative works produced from copyrighted material.⁹ Pending a clarification of what was meant by the term derivative, Rundell suggested that this might make research in contemporary records and papers impractical, if not impossible. In his view, scholars would be handicapped by a law intended to protect the royalties due a copyright holder, an insignificant issue (by intention or not) in most scholarly writing. The only loophole he saw in the proposal was the somewhat nebulous fair use provision. In the decade between the publication of Rundell's article and the passage of a new copyright law, little was changed in the shift from common law copyright. The law, as enacted, included a set of guidelines on many issues, including fair use. In practice, historians have conducted business as usual under the new law, continuing to draw from unpublished materials for derivative works.

Rundell's criticism of unnecessary or

⁷Ibid., 314.

⁸Ibid., 319.

⁹Walter Rundell, Jr., "The Recent American Past v. H.R. 4347: Historians' Dilemma," *American Archivist* 29 (April 1966): 209-215.

excessively protective government security regulations became a consistent theme of his work. As in the copyright issue, his concern was with access to sources for the growing number of historians attempting to deal with topics in recent American history. Although recognizing the need for restrictions on some material for some period of time, he joined colleagues in the academic and journalism communities in arguing that such restrictions could be perverted or abused by officials with a vested interest in concealing illegal or incompetent performance. His basic argument was simple and direct: the government, "sustained by tax-paying citizens," had an obligation to respond to the public's need for historical information "that is vitally important to their present and future welfare."¹⁰

From such a simple and virtually indisputable statement to the implementation of a policy satisfactory to all sides has not been an easy trip. Although historians have consistently been on the side of public disclosure of public records, they have had to deal with often paradoxical complexities. While the Freedom of Information Act exemplifies a trend toward protection of civil liberties through disclosure of government held information, the Privacy Act of 1974 represents a desire to protect those liberties by prohibiting the release of certain records. In noting this complication, Rundell observed:

Most of us affirm the need for personal privacy and applaud governmental measures to insure it. Yet if such measures interfere with the legitimate efforts of scholars to search into the past, our enthusiasm quickly becomes tempered.¹¹

Scholarly enthusiasm had been tempered, in one instance, by the Buckley Amendment, opening students' files and the records contained in them to the students themselves. It was tempered also by legislative proposals to make available to individuals or their heirs information contained in government files retrievable by or indexed under personal names. As Rundell noted, the latter proposal contained no statute of limitations; nor did it exempt records held by the National Archives, which could conceivably have been required to provide such information to the heirs of Revolutionary War soldiers and others from the earliest periods of American history. The initial costs could have been crippling to NARS as would their recurrent impact. Eventually, the legislation was amended to exempt archival materials.¹²

The effort to alert Congress to the needs of the National Archives on this and other matters signaled a more active cooperation between historians and archivists. In alluding to the struggle to create a national archival repository, and to Jameson's role in the effort, Rundell hinted at a process that would mark the end of an era in which researchers and curators had comfortably gone about their separate activities. In a less favorable time, the interests of those who study the past and preserve its records would face great difficulty in getting the attention of decision makers preoccupied with the present or the future.¹³ The whole question of access to government records and the role of the Archivist of the United States in helping to formulate policy in this area was but one issue where, in Rundell's view, archivists and historians had common concerns. These

¹⁰Rundell, *In Pursuit*, 321.

¹¹Walter Rundell, Jr., and Bruce F. Adams, "Historians, Archivists, and the Privacy Issue," *Georgia Archive* (Winter 1975): 3.

¹²*Ibid.*, 13.

¹³*Ibid.*, 7.

concerns needed expression if lawmakers were to make progress toward a climate in which "secrecy will be avoided where possible and classification sensibly limited."¹⁴

Rundell's interest in government records and public access to them also extended to the government's historical programs, an activity in which archival concerns and the sensitive question of government publication (as opposed to curatorship) meet. The publication of government documents has long been a practice in certain departments; the production of official narrative histories has involved, in Rundell's words, "more courage and more risk."¹⁵

In addition to risk, expense or partisanship may be grounds for opposition by Congress; federal history programs raise the specter of court history, threatening in effect to create cases in which the curator can control outside research into his collections. Rundell noted one instance in which custodial responsibility and publications are closely related. The records of the Department of State for a given year cannot be released until the appropriate volume of the *Foreign Relations of the United States* is published. Given the state of that project in 1970 when Rundell was addressing this issue, one can understand his reservations about a government publications project and its impact on historians of recent American foreign relations. Access to important records was effectively captive to the operations of a program that had little hope of meeting its goal of publishing the *Foreign Relations* series twenty years after events had taken place.¹⁶

Rundell's recommendations for federal historical programs included a call for an end to parochialism and greater attention to the needs of the public rather than a focus directed primarily at responding to the requirements of the parent agency. The nature of the federal historical establishment, with historical offices created and sustained by, or abolished at the discretion of, individual agencies, makes full implementation of these suggestions unlikely. Although federal historians contend that they do serve the public, at least indirectly, most would concede that the immediate need for survival of their programs is that they serve the information, training, and managerial needs of the departments which create them. Some coordination of effort is noticeable in historical offices within the Department of Defense, but even these programs reflect the nature of a department where the tradition of service autonomy remains strong.

Walter Rundell's interest in the history programs of the federal government included service on the historical advisory board of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He also played a significant role in expanding federal historical programs to the legislative branch, where control of records has verged on the obsessive. He was active in the establishment of a historical office in the U.S. Senate, and shortly before his death took part in efforts to create a similar program in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹⁷

It was Rundell's view that historical offices within the government should prepare "guides to records created by

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Walter Rundell, Jr., "Uncle Sam the Historian: Federal Historical Activities," *The Historian* 33 (November 1970): 1-20. An earlier version of this article was given as a paper before the Southern Historical Association and was reprinted in the 18 December 1969 *Congressional Record*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., 115, pt. 29: 39879-39884 under the title "The U.S. Government's Historical Programs."

¹⁶Rundell, "Uncle Sam the Historian," 9-10.

¹⁷*The Federalist* [Newsletter of the Society for History in the Federal Government] 3 (December 1982): 2.

their organizations and suggest topics that could be developed on the basis of these records."¹⁸ In so doing, he suggested an additional link between archival and historical work through the activities of federal historians. In addition to the writing and research that such personnel accomplish, they also serve a quasi-archival function through their acquaintance with records and the assistance they can provide to outside researchers.

If *In Pursuit of American History* delineated many of Walter Rundell's views on archival issues, then his tenure as chairman of the history department at the University of Maryland, College Park, provided an opportunity to put them into practice. One of the central themes of his work on the survey was that historical training provided inadequate grounding in methodology, though many of the survey's respondents said they considered methodology courses useless or impossible to teach. *In Pursuit* reveals Rundell's feelings on this issue, and his years at Maryland resolved any doubt that may have existed about his dedication to those views. Briefly stated, graduate students in his department were to receive an education in which methodology received heavy emphasis, enforced by his presence as an instructor in historiography and methods.

In Pursuit of American History had cited a reference by a member of the faculty at College Park to the existence of a "Library of Congress syndrome" afflicting Washington area students who felt it necessary to use the library or other downtown repositories even when similar

sources were available on their campuses.¹⁹ Without neglecting campus facilities, Rundell encouraged familiarity with nearby national collections, consistent with his view that confidence in handling archival materials could only be gained through hands on experience. If nothing else, use of the National Archives and Library of Congress encouraged contacts between graduate students and curators at these institutions, a fact that may have aided in the discovery of interests in careers outside of academic life.

In Pursuit of American History had given attention to the subject of documentary editing, both as a specialty within history and as a teaching device. Although some respondents clearly had little use for editing ("a profession similar to nurse's aide or medical technician," according to one),²⁰ others were more positive, although uncertain about how they would train personnel in the field. Rundell even noted that some departments "sponsoring the major documentary editing projects were not seizing opportunities afforded by these projects for training graduate students."²¹ He also suggested that the NHPC might expand its efforts and become the center for such training, one of many indications that *In Pursuit of American History* was a product of an age of growth, or at least one in which expansion seemed a reasonable possibility. Several of its recommendations would seem alien in the era of stringency that followed its publication.²²

In the transitional period between the two, Rundell moved to implement his

¹⁸Walter Rundell, Jr., "Restricted Records: Suggestions from the Survey," *AHA Newsletter* 7 (June 1969): 43.

¹⁹Rundell, *In Pursuit*, 296.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 263.

²¹*Ibid.*, 275.

²²In fact, NHPC's fellowship program began in 1967, followed in 1972 by its summer institute in documentary editing.

recommendations on historical editing. The Booker T. Washington papers project was already under way when Rundell arrived at College Park, and the addition of the Samuel Gompers project and a seminar on historical editing brought together something of a program in historical editing. The department's graduate student journal, *The Maryland Historian*, also predated Rundell's term as chairman, but it was quickly attached to the editing program with the appearance of articles on documentary editing.²³

Where only a few years before departments had considered a teaching oriented alternative to the research oriented Ph.D., the job market of the 1970s required, if anything, a shift away from teaching. At Maryland, Walter Rundell was instrumental in the creation of the history and library science program, awarding students master's degrees in both fields. In addition to the vocational appeal of this program, it was consistent with Rundell's view of the need for curators to have more than technical and administrative skills. Among the needs he cited for the archival profession was greater archival scholarship. "The scholarly curator is a better curator because of the deepened understanding that research and publication bring to his task." In no way did he suggest that archivists should neglect the needs of researchers to pursue their own studies, but he emphatically denied Schellenberg's thoughts on hewing wood and drawing water.²⁴

Rundell's interest in archives and in the

relationship between archivists and researchers was evident in his professional associations. For five years he chaired the Committee on Bibliographical and Research needs of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) and participated through OAH in such events as a 1976 panel on "Manuscript Sources in American History."²⁵

His service on the SAA council reveals his continuing interest in the use of sources and access to them. When SAA discussed the issue of declassification, he moved the adoption of a resolution noting the inclusion of archivists in the government's declassification review process but expressing concern about steps that might delay access to public records.²⁶ In 1973, when Harper and Row complied with a request from the Central Intelligence Agency to examine a manuscript before publication, Rundell introduced a resolution criticizing this incident of submission to prepublication review.²⁷

During his SAA presidency (1977-1978), he demonstrated a similar consistency of interest. In noting the unusual background he brought to the leadership of the professional association of American archival personnel, he acknowledged that his own professional identification had "always been that of a historian."²⁸ This had not prevented his recognition within SAA, nor did it present problems in dealing with such issues as the ownership of papers created by public officials or funding for the National Archives and the redesignated Na-

²³See *The Maryland Historian*, 6 (No. 1 and No. 2, 1975) for features on historical editing.

²⁴Walter Rundell, Jr., and C. Herbet Finch., "The State of Historical Records: A Summary," *American Archivist* 40 (July 1977): 343-347.

²⁵Alden T. Vaughn, "The Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians," *Journal of American History* 63 (March 1977): 971.

²⁶*American Archivist* 36 (July 1973): 477-478.

²⁷*American Archivist* 36 (October 1973): 626-627.

²⁸Walter Rundell, Jr., "The President's Page," *American Archivist* 41 (April 1978): 247.

tional Historical Publications and Records Commission. These were, in his view, issues historians and archivists shared.²⁹

In his presidential address, Rundell spoke on "Photographs as Historical Evidence: Early Texas Oil." The choice permitted him to combine his regional expertise and pride with a treatment of the ways historians should use photographs as sources. Archivists, he noted, had recognized their worth long before their historical colleagues and had recognized them as having intrinsic value as source material, not merely as "adjuncts to written evidence."³⁰

Rundell offered several reasons why historians had long overlooked photographs as evidence, among them the tendency to leave decisions concerning photographic accompaniment to publishers, who were not inclined to be imaginative or generous in their selection. Also, historians had feared that the inclusion of photographs could result in accusations of pandering to a nonscholarly audience.³¹

Rundell attributed a change of attitude to such events as the photographic efforts of the Farm Security Administration and the Office of War Information, agencies whose work resulted in a "brilliant historical record of two of America's most turbulent periods." The transfer of their files to the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress provided researchers with access to collections that demanded to be used.³²

Ever the methodologist, Rundell included in his address views on the archival and historical considerations affect-

ing the use of photographs. First, he suggested that many of the rules employed with documents applied to visual material as well. Researchers should immerse themselves in the secondary literature before digging into original sources and should approach their efforts with a coherent but flexible research design.³³ Basic to his thoughts on the use of photographs was the argument that they should be used as more than ornaments and should offer "some evidence that relates to the project." Without this, photographs would exist apart from the text rather than be integrated into it.

In discussing his use of photographs in preparing "Early Texas Oil," Rundell recounted his experience at the National Archives, where a member of the staff had originally indicated that the Still Pictures Branch had nothing in its files on the subject. Further inquiries on oil producing regions produced the desired results, and Rundell eventually used over a dozen of the branch's photos. The lesson he drew from this was that a researcher should not be satisfied with an initial failure to gain information from a curator, especially if the first query focused too strictly on a specific topic. "The informed researcher should discuss his topic fully so that the custodian can perceive alternate ways to get at the data." For their part, archivists should use caution in providing a categorical statement that a collection maintains nothing on a given topic, especially when they know of "related materials" in the files.³⁴

Rundell clearly considered experience to be the best teacher of good relations

²⁹Ann Morgan Campbell, "Report of the Executive Director," *American Archivist* 42 (January 1979): 117.

³⁰Walter Rundell, Jr., "Photographs as Historical Evidence: Early Texas Oil," *American Archivist* 41 (October 1978): 373.

³¹*Ibid.*, 374.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*, 375.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 376.

between archivists and historians, the value of education or other forms of professional exchange notwithstanding. He attributed part of his willingness to persevere in his search for photographs documenting the oil boom in Texas to having seen such pictures in a book, attributed to the National Archives. Another factor was his own experience of working in the National Archives, where he learned "something of the ways of archivists." Earlier research at the records center in Kansas City further contributed to "a certain archival sense."³⁵

Although skeptical of some of the trends in the historical profession, Walter Rundell was enthusiastically supportive of expanded and innovative uses of original sources, including photographs and other nonliterary materials such as oral history. During his tenure at the University of Maryland, he initiated the department's first course in oral history and supported its use in dissertations prepared under his direction.³⁶ While confident of oral history's role "as an adjunct to written documents," he advised that it deserved more scrutiny. The lapse of time between event and interview and the nature of memory were among the factors requiring judgment and discretion. Nevertheless, he argued that these problems differed only in degree from the considerations involved in using traditional sources.³⁷ The key to the acceptance of unorthodox materials should be whether they could meet the standards applied to conventional records, not whether they necessarily conformed to the traditional view of what constituted a valid historical resource.

The great issue uniting historians and

archivists in the early years of the twentieth century was the campaign to create a national archives. At intervals after the absorption of the archives into the General Services Administration (GSA), that alliance has been restored in opposition to perceived neglect by GSA of its archival responsibilities. In 1977, while vice president of SAA, Rundell presented, and moved for adoption by the Society's council, a resolution calling for independence for the National Archives or the statutory enactment of greater autonomy for the Archivist of the United States. At the very least, the latter option would have provided the archivist with direct access to Congress and independence in matters of archival policy.³⁸

In 1981 testimony before a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, Rundell expressed many of the concerns of those who supported a change in the NARS-GSA relationship. Speaking on behalf of the OAH, he noted a change in the nature of the arguments favoring independence. Earlier efforts had arisen largely from organizational considerations—the question of whether the nation's records should be subordinated to the government's building and procurement service. Later arguments rested more directly on fears that GSA control of NARS posed "severe dangers to the integrity of the records of governmental operations." Foremost among events leading to this charge was the willingness of GSA Administrator Arthur Sampson to make arrangements for President Richard M. Nixon's White House records in a way that bypassed the archivist and exempted

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Martha Ross, "Walter Rundell, Jr., 1928–1982," *Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region Newsletter* 7 (Winter 1983): 4.

³⁷Walter Rundell, Jr., "Main Trends in U. S. Historiography Since the New Deal: Research Projects in Oral History," *Oral History Review* (1976): 46–47.

³⁸*American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 153.

those records from normal handling by NARS. Although this arrangement was eventually overruled by the Congress and the Supreme Court, Rundell pointed to the attempt as evidence of "NARS's vulnerability within GSA."

Politicization added a new urgency to a debate that previously had been fueled by less volatile concerns of funding and general indifference. When President Jimmy Carter's GSA Administrator Rowland Freeman attempted to disperse many documents to regional archives, Rundell described this as part of an overall attack on NARS and its professional leadership. "Only when alarmed archivists, historians, genealogists, political scientists, and concerned citizens raised stiff objections" was the decentralization plan shelved. In Rundell's view, Freeman had erred in making professional decisions regarding archives, "an area in which he had no expertise."³⁹ At the time of his death, Walter Rundell remained a significant spokesman in the campaign to restore the National Archives to independence. In 1985 the National Archives was granted an independent status and redesignated the National Archives and Records Administration. The eventual success of this effort owed much to the united efforts of organizations representing both curators and researchers.

Without underestimating Walter Rundell's interest in regional or chronological topics about which he taught and wrote, his thoughts on

methodology and the use of sources can be described as central to his career. In the various forums available to him, through his research on the life of Walter Prescott Webb, and through his administrative and professional activities, Rundell returned again and again to the subject of sources and their use. In an age when rigor seemed to become less important than relevance, his actions and words argued that only a rigorous application of professional standards would prove history's claim of its worth. Although Rundell was open to new ideas, he insisted that they should be subject to the most intense scrutiny.

Likewise, his interest in the shared concerns of archivists and historians demonstrated the conviction that both should bring to cooperative efforts the best of their separate but related professional techniques and perceptions. In his view, there could be no historical research if archival materials were not preserved and made available to the public in a manner consistent with sound policy and an understanding of society's need to be nourished by its past. His community of history included "all those with a stake in preserving the past in the form of original sources, archivists, curators, and historians alike."⁴⁰ A determined belief in the value of primary sources and a respect for the professions that contribute to their care and use made him an important link between the elements of that community.

³⁹Rundell testimony, Subcommittee on Civil Service, Post Office, and General Service, U. S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, 20 October 1981. Testimony provided by the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History.

⁴⁰Walter Rundell, Jr., "Personal Data from University Archives," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 183.