

The American Archivist

Volume 50
Number 1
Winter 1987



Published Quarterly by
The Society of American Archivists

The American Archivist

Julia Marks Young, *Editor*

University of Southern Mississippi

Bill Burck, *Managing Editor*

Joycelyn Trigg, *Copy Editor*

DEPARTMENT EDITORS

Nicholas C. Burckel, *Reviews*

Maygene Daniels, *Shorter Features*

Dean DeBolt, *Technical Notes*

F.L. Eaton, *News Notes*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Edmund Berkeley, Jr., chair (1986–1989), *University of Virginia*

Kenneth W. Duckett (1985–1988), *University of Oregon*

Jacqueline Goggin (1985–1988), *Library of Congress*

Linda M. Matthews (1984–1987), *Emory University*

Eva S. Moseley (1983–1986), *Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College*

Nancy A. Sahli (1986–1989), *National Historical Publications and Records Commission*

Samuel A. Sizer (1983–1986), *Texas State Library*

Timothy Walch (1984–1987), *National Archives and Records Administration*

The Society of American Archivists

PRESIDENT William L. Joyce, *Princeton University*

VICE PRESIDENT Sue E. Holbert, *Minnesota Historical Society*

TREASURER Anne P. Diffendal, *Nebraska State Historical Society*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Donn C. Neal

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Francis X. Blouin, Jr. (1984–1987), *University of Michigan*

Paul I. Chestnut (1985–1988), *Library of Congress*

Larry J. Hackman (1982–1986), *New York State Archives*

Edie Hedlin (1982–1986), *National Archives and Records Administration*

Linda Henry (1983–1986), *National Archives and Records Administration*

Anne R. Kenney (1985–1988), *University of Missouri. St. Louis*

Eva S. Moseley (1984–1987), *Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College*

Trudy Huskamp Peterson (1984–1987), *National Archives and Records Administration*

Victoria Irons Walch (1985–1988), *Consultant*

Cover: Several SAA members on the Society's second China trip pausing to model traditional Chinese opera apparel. Soloists for this command performance are, from left to right: Trudy H. Peterson, Linda Henry, Frank J. Cook, Larry J. Hackman, Robert M. Warner, Edward Weldon, and Eva Moseley. Moseley's article, "Visiting Archives in China," begins on p. 137. Photo by Tom Campbell.

The American Archivist

Volume 50 / Number 1 / Winter 1987

An Uneasy Balance: Voluntarism and Professionalism / 7

William L. Joyce

The Documentation Strategy Process: A Model and a Case Study / 12

Larry Hackman and Joan Warnow-Blewett

Promoting Archives and Research: A Study in International Cooperation / 48

Frank B. Evans

Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving / 66

John W. Roberts

What Is the Use of Archives? A Challenge for the Profession / 76

Bruce W. Dearstyne

Commentaries and Case Studies / 88

Optical Character Recognition: Technology with New Relevance for Archival Automation Projects / 88

Marie Allen

Variations in the Processing Rates on the Magnuson and Jackson Senatorial Papers / 100

Uli Haller

Filling the Gap: Planning on the Local and Individual Levels / 110

Gregory S. Hunter

The Forum / 3

Reviews / 116

International Scene / 136

Visiting Archives in China / 137

Eva Moseley

An Attempt to Establish an Oral History Project in the University of Zambia Library, Lusaka Campus / 142

Augustine W.C. Msiska

The Society of American Archivists / 148

REVIEWS

Peterson and Peterson, *Archives & Manuscripts: Law* / 116
reviewed by Lawrence Dowler

CEL Educational Resources, *The Video Encyclopedia of the 20th Century* / 117
reviewed by Frank H. Mackaman

Buechele, ed., *Newsfilm Index: A Guide to the Newsfilm Collection, 1954-1971* / 119
reviewed by Alan F. Lewis

Whalen, ed., *Reference Services in Archives* / 120
reviewed by Mary Jo Pugh

Craig and Ramsey, eds., *Guide to the Holdings of the Archives of Ontario* / 122
reviewed by David J. Olson

Seifried, *Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives/Guide des Archives Photographiques Canadiennes*; and Conkelton, comp., *University of California Directory of Photographic Collections* / 123
reviewed by Maureen O'Brien Will

Gordon, dir., and Yurkiw, ed. *Union List of Manuscripts in Canadian Repositories / Catalog Collectif des Manuscrits Conservés dans les Dépôts d'Archives Canadiennes, Supplément 1891-1982* / 125
reviewed by Eleanor McKay

Nicol, Sheppard, and Foster, comps., *Hospital Clinical Records; Symposium at the King's Fund Centre, Wednesday, 8 May 1985, Proceedings*; and Sheppard and Hall, *Contemporary Medical Archives Centre Consolidated Accessions List* / 125
reviewed by Paul G. Anderson

Division of Archives and History, *College and University Records Retention and Disposition Schedule* / 127
reviewed by Carolyn J. Mattern

Nebraska Records Management Division, *Raiders of the Lost Files*; and Nebraska Records Management Division, *Right on Schedule* / 128
reviewed by Timothy L. Ericson

Kaufman, ed., *The Samuel Gompers Papers: The Making of a Union Leader, 1850-86* / 130
reviewed by Michael O. Smith

The Forum

TO THE EDITOR:

In regard to the review of my book (*A Guide to Classification Schemes for Local Government Documents Collections*) on pages 81-82 of *The American Archivist* (Winter 1986), it appears that the reviewer missed the point of the text. Inferences that most of the seventeen classification schemes discussed in the book are impractical for use with state government documents overlook the fact that the subject matter of the book is local, *aka* municipal, government documents. The definition of local documents, on page 4 of the book, excludes state government publications.

Furthermore, the shorthanded dismissal of my discussion in the book of classifications schemes no longer in use as a superfluity is equally surprising. Libraries should not eliminate the abandoned schemes from consideration. Many are simpler to apply and easier to understand than is, for example, the notation and shelf organization produced by the Library of Congress Classification. All options open to local documents organization should be reviewed by libraries, particularly because local documents inevitably require original cataloging and classification. Local libraries, with typical collections of fewer than 500 documents, need not feel obliged to adopt schemes such as the Library of Congress Classification until

their collections approach thousands of items, as was the case at the Census Bureau Library and Harvard's Loeb Library.

In the book, an "impartial banquet" of possibilities is presented, from which the reader is free to evaluate and select. Any reader of my book should appreciate, as the *Library of Congress Professional Association Newsletter* has noted, that it is a "valuable work for libraries developing local documents collections."

Russell Castonguay
Reference Librarian
C. M. Brakensiek Public Library

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to compliment Marjorie Barritt on her article, "The Appraisal of Personally Identifiable Student Records" (Summer 1986), and add a piece of information to it. I have had occasion, this past year, to become involved in the issue of research access to student records, and I welcome Ms. Barritt's article both for the information it provides about current practice and for serving as a stimulus to further serious consideration of the issue.

My recent experiences lead me to believe that the widespread formulation and promulgation of policies which permit scholarly access to 80-year-old and older records would do much to stimulate

research on the history of the students and communities served by the nation's colleges and universities. As long as the accessibility and even the existence of such records is not clear, researchers will be discouraged. While we, as C & U archivists, have a responsibility to our institutions—many of which have traditionally guarded the confidentiality of records beyond the exigency of the law—as well as to scholarship, much can be done to negotiate compromises which will serve both.

And at least the legality of research access to older student records is clear. I have received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Office, which may resolve any lingering doubts about the status of records once a student dies (Barritt, pp. 266-67). The FERPA Office states explicitly that "all rights and obligations under FERPA cease with the death of the student," and hence that general research access to such records is entirely lawful. Perhaps this clarification will serve to stimulate other C & U archivists (and their institutions) to actively consider both the value and the accessibility of their early (and more recent) student records.

Mark A. Greene
College Archivist
Carleton College

FROM THE EDITOR:

Readers will notice several format and staff changes in this issue of *The American Archivist*. The Shorter Features and Technical Notes departments have been combined into an expanded section, Commentaries and Case Studies, comprised of sharply focused essays on technical and non-technical

subjects that do not require full-length articles. The section features analyses of the development and implementation of archival programs, use of particular products and procedures within specific institutional settings, and short discussions of common theoretical, methodological, or professional issues.

The International Scene department likewise has been expanded to include short, substantive articles by American and foreign archivists commenting on practices and issues of foreign archives and archivists. Articles focusing on significant and innovative programs and projects abroad and commentaries by foreign archivists examining American archival practice and theory are particularly welcome.

In order to promote more timely reporting of archival news and activities and to eliminate overlap between the publications of the Society, the News Notes section has been eliminated from the journal. Items previously published in this section will be reported in the *SAA Newsletter*.

Several staff changes have accompanied this format restructuring. Dean DeBolt (University of West Florida) and Joel Wurl (Immigration History Research Center) are the new editors of Commentaries and Case Studies. Marjorie Barritt and Nancy Bartlett (Bentley Historical Library) are the new editors of International Scene. Special thanks are extended to former department editors Maygene Daniels (Shorter Features, 1986), Fynnette Eaton (News Notes, 1980-1986), Ronald Plavchan (International Scene, 1976-1986), and Thomas E. Weir, Jr. (News Notes, 1977-1986) for their conscientious and creative contributions to the *American Archivist*.

JULIA MARKS YOUNG
Editor