

Academic Archivists and the SAA, 1938-1979: From Arcana Siwash to the C&U PAG

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Abstract: This paper traces the historical development of archivists and archival programs in institutions of higher education, from their existence as a handful of manuscript repositories in the 1930s to the creation in 1979 of the Society of American Archivists's College and University (C&U) Professional Affinity Group representing 40 percent of the society's membership. The evolution of C&U activities is illustrated using surveys of academic archivists, publication projects, and education and training programs. The role of academic archivists within their institutions, their influence on the wider profession and on archival institutions, and the increasing importance of their collections are examined in detail.

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THE FIRST VOLUME OF the *American Archivist* in 1938 had a news note for “readers . . . particularly . . . connected with educational institutions,” but the reference was to an accession at the University of Michigan, not to the activities of an organized group of academic archivists. Another ten years would pass before the Society of American Archivists (SAA) reached the milestone of creating a committee on college and university archives. Content at first to serve as handmaiden to historians interested almost exclusively in historical manuscripts, academic archivists only gradually began to preserve the records of their own institutions. In the decade of the 1950s they became too concerned with their own institutional records, and their involvement in the affairs of the society slackened. By the 1960s a revitalized committee surveyed academic archivists on several occasions and then moved to meet their expanding needs for education and professional training. The creation of many new academic archives, made possible in part by greatly increased funding of higher education in the 1960s, yielded a rich return in professional activity in the 1970s. Constituting some 40 percent of the society’s individual membership by 1979, academic archivists played a leading role in creating a more professional SAA.¹

During the decade after the society’s founding in 1936, individual academic archivists laid the foundations which continue to serve their institutions. Possessing no national organization, publications, or structure specifically designed to articulate their needs or focus their activities, the thin ranks of academic archivists functioned largely in isolation but, particularly at Harvard and Princeton, exhibited a strong commitment to the preservation of their institutions’ history and to making records

more accessible to researchers. F. Gerald Ham, Archivist of the State of Wisconsin, makes a good case that by the “post-custodial era” [the 1980s] institutions of higher education were overdocumented compared with other institutions and groups; but such was not the case in the 1940s when administrators of colleges and universities largely ignored the need to document their institutions’ work.²

Most of the efforts of these pioneer academic archivists were designed to provide better service to historians and other scholarly researchers. The distinction between historical manuscripts and official archives was sometimes blurred. The author of “Arcana Siwash: The Function and Needs of a College Archives” urged archivists to assist scholars in preparing better college histories, but, as a former history instructor, showed little concern for the need of administrators to be able to refer to past policy decisions. During the same year, 1946, however, a section of the news notes in the *American Archivist* listed the range of materials belonging in an academic archives: official academic correspondence and records, minutes and reports, publications, and materials related to faculty, alumni, and students. Such a list was essential because (as the chair of the 1944 Committee on Institutional Archives observed in his report on educational institutions) “rarely is there evidence of a systematic policy with reference to the transfer of records from administrative offices to the archives.” Unfortunately, the list apparently did not reach every reader of news notes. The archivist at a newly established “Archives Department” sent the *American Archivist* an announcement of her appointment but, as the editor informed readers, “Miss Homsher’s leaflet does not state whether or

¹*American Archivist* 1 (July 1938): 159.

²L. G. VanderVelde, “Local Records,” *American Archivist* 3 (October 1940): 255–56; *American Archivist* 5 (April 1942): 135–36; W. N. Franklin, “The Seventh Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists,” *American Archivist* 7 (January 1944): 20–21; *American Archivist* 9 (January 1946): 95–96; F. Gerald Ham, Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era,” *American Archivist* 44 (Summer 1981): 210–11.

not her department will serve as the depository for the *official* records of the University of Wyoming." Wyoming, like many colleges and universities, was more concerned with preserving the records of regional organizations than the records of its own institution. This bias resulted from the fact that the archives was usually only a department in a library whose collecting policy, quite legitimately, was based on historical manuscripts, not institutional records.³

By the late 1940s a number of academic archivists had come to see the need to reorganize their craft to include the preservation of the records of their institutions. Dividing responsibilities between the librarian and the archivist at the academy was hastened, interestingly enough, by a librarian, John Melville Jennings of the Virginia Historical Society. Jennings, who had been curator of rare books and manuscripts at the College of William and Mary, argued forthrightly for "the establishment of an independent agency devoted solely to archival and related functions, and operating under an archivist directly responsible to the institutional executive."⁴

The Establishment of the C&U Archives Committee

Jennings's address at the 1948 SAA annual meeting inspired Dwight H. Wilson, the newly appointed, first archivist of Fisk University—almost certainly the first black school to establish an archives and records management program—to dedicate himself

to the creation of an organization that could assist academic archivists in coping with their common problems. He, more than anyone else, was the founder of the SAA's College and University Archives Committee. Wilson, who had been at the National Archives and then with the Allied Commission Archives in Rome after the Second World War, wrote Jennings that "my interest in exploring the whole field was aroused by the paper you read." Wilson quickly prepared a "Fisk University Archives Charter" which established the new archives under the office of the president, not the librarian, and began a most energetic accessioning program designed to preserve records with administrative and legal value. He cared little about historical artifacts and left historical manuscripts largely to the library. The Fisk archives was concerned with the official records of the university; Wilson wanted other schools to establish similar archival programs staffed by dedicated professional archivists. In his 1952 article "No Ivory Tower: The Administration of a College or University Archives," Wilson summed up in very practical, how-to-proceed terms a number of components, including an annual plan, a design for box labels, and a fill-in-the-blank "Archives Charter or Plan of Organization." He was dedicated to his subject, asserting: "The professors often regard [the archivist] . . . as an administrative frill, while the trustees are only too prone to consider him a needless expense. Both faculty and trustees are grossly in error."⁵

³H. H. Peckham, "University War Records," *The War Records Collector* 1 (May 1944): 9–10; T. Le Duc, "Arcana Siwash: The Functions and Needs of a College Archives," *American Archivist* 9 (April 1946): 132–35; *American Archivist* 9 (October 1946): 387–89; *American Archivist* 8 (January 1945): 80–82; *American Archivist* 9 (October 1946): 389; L. M. Homsher, *University Archives and Western Historical Manuscripts Collections: University of Wyoming* (Laramie, Wyo., 1949). Homsher's checklist did not include institutional records, but a section of the booklet did note that such a checklist would be prepared.

⁴J. M. Jennings, "Archival Activity in American Universities and Colleges," *American Archivist* 12 (April 1949): 155–63, quotation 161–62.

⁵D. H. Wilson to J. M. Jennings, 10 March 1949, SAA Archives, Series 200/3/2, box 2, folder 3; (hereafter, citations to the SAA Archives will be as follows, using the above citation as an example: 200/3/2,2/3); Jennings to Wilson, 17 March 1949, 200/3/2,2/3; Dwight H. Wilson, "No Ivory Tower: The Administration of a College or University Archives," *College and Research Libraries* 13 (July 1952): 215–22, quotation 218; Fisk University Charter, 200/3/2,2/3; *American Archivist* 11 (October 1948): 390. The news notes editor reported that Wilson

Wilson's very sound advice was of great assistance to academic archivists who otherwise had almost no professional literature or trained colleagues to consult. Hundreds of colleges and universities benefited from his voluminous correspondence and consultations on their archival programs: "I am attempting to establish working relationships with as many college and university archivists as I can in the hope that we may be of mutual benefit to each other." When Wilson located an archivist, he would exchange knowledge and information; he became an invaluable clearinghouse for ideas, techniques, and procedures. If a school had no archival program, he urged it to establish one immediately.⁶

Wilson soon decided "that the Society of American Archivists is unable to give [academic archivists] enough help in developing techniques suited to [their] particular needs. This is no reflection on the society since it was not organized to meet the needs of any specialized group of archivists." In January 1949 he wrote the SAA president Christopher Crittenden that "it was, and is my thought that with an ever increasing number of [academic] archivists there should be an organization dealing with their specific problems." He did not think that the Committee on Institutional Archives would "suffice for meeting the unique problems which a university archives must solve." Wilson, however, very much wanted this "organization of university archivists" to "be a sub-body of the Society of American Archivists." When, shortly after his letter to the SAA, he re-

ceived a letter from Leonidas Dodson, archivist of the University of Pennsylvania, also advocating an organization for academic archivists, Wilson welcomed the support but rejected the suggestion that the group to be formed might be independent of the SAA. Within ten days of Wilson's letter to Crittenden, the president agreed to the establishment of a college and university (C&U) archives committee within the society, thus avoiding the fragmentation of the small profession. Wilson both organized the committee and served as its first chair—to my knowledge, the first black to chair an SAA committee.⁷

By February 1949 the committee, with members from the universities of Michigan, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Harvard, was organized and at work on the two problems on which all C&U committees have since worked: what topics will be on the next year's annual meeting program and how shall talks on "little steps for little feet" be balanced by papers devoted to theoretical discussions. The committee considered preparing a pamphlet on academic archives to be followed by a manual on the subject. While neither of these tasks was completed by that committee—or any subsequent committee—the group assisted a number of individual archivists seeking advice on professional problems, wrote several articles, and met its major goal of "discovering the nature and extent of all college and university archives now extant, as a basis for future study"—in a most creditable manner.⁸

Also in 1949, Wilson surveyed 150 ac-

"says that President Johnson is believed to be the first president of a Negro school to see and fill the need for an archival program."

⁶Wilson to C. Shipton, 4 August 1948, and Wilson to I. Iben, 21 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/2; Wilson to E. J. Leahy, 15 December 1949, R. A. Shiff to Wilson, 12 December 1949, and Wilson to Shiff, 6 January 1950, 200/3/2,2/3.

⁷Wilson to R. M. Durkan, 29 December 1948, 200/3/2,2/1; Wilson to C. Crittenden, 7 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/1; Wilson to L. Dodson, 10 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/3; Wilson to G. Litton, 21 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/3; Wilson to M. H. Thomas, 10 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/3; Crittenden to Wilson, 20 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/1; Wilson to Crittenden, 24 January 1949, 200/3/2,2/1; and Shipton to Wilson, 21 February 1949, 200/3/2,2/2.

⁸Wilson to College and University Archives Committee, 11 April 1949, 200/3/2,2/1; Shipton to Wilson, 6 June 1949, 200/3/2,2/2; Wilson to A. H. Poetker, 30 August 1949, 200/3/2,2/2; *American Archivist* 15 (January 1952): 87 and 96; *American Archivist* 13 (January 1950): 56–57, quotation 56.

ademic institutions chosen at random. He found 56 had archival programs, 47 were keeping some historical records or were interested in an archival program, and 12 were "totally uninterested in archives." Although he received no replies from 35 schools, Wilson was pleased to observe in his report to the society a growing commitment to the need for a professionally staffed archival program: "out of the 115 answers received, 108 [89 percent] reveal definite awareness of the need for keeping official records." Wilson's energetic commitment to the work of the SAA must have been awesome to behold. In his cover letter for this report, compiled a bare six months after the committee had started, Wilson apologized that "the enclosed report is not as full as I could wish, but a series of events rather effectively prevented my devoting more time to the work; my mother broke her hip in March and died in April; my hip was broken in May and operated on in June; and my first child, a son, was born in July [after 14 years of marriage]."⁹

In 1952 the committee chairmanship passed to Father Henry J. Browne, S.J., archivist of the Catholic University of America. At the 1952 SAA annual meeting, the academic archivists decided to hold a "conference" at each annual meeting. In 1953 this conference held a breakfast session at which former SAA president, Solon J. Buck, was a "special guest." Buck attempted to convince the group that the collecting policy of a university archives should include nonofficial documents, such as the papers of faculty and other historical manuscripts. The conference minutes reported

that "some felt that manuscripts collections by their very nature have no place in an institution's archives." Although there was general agreement that academic archives could accept faculty papers, the minutes did report one speaker declaring, "A professor did not produce official records in the same sense as the incumbent of a continuing administrative office."¹⁰

The debate over what belonged in an academic archives continued for years after the committee was founded; but in 1952 the archival theoretician and philosopher Ernst Posner, while acknowledging the debt college and university archivists owed historians, nevertheless asserted the sound principle which has since guided most academic archivists: "In establishing its archives an educational institution seeks to meet *one* need, that of preserving and making accessible the record of its past activities so that the administrator as well as the historian may turn to it for guidance and information." The new chairman, Browne, shared this view and conducted workshops for administrators of Roman Catholic schools to convince them "that a well-ordered and functioning archives is not a luxury but an obligation they owe to the past, the present, and the future." He also wrote two articles for the *American Archivist*, "A Plan of Organization for a University Archives" and "An Appeal for Archives in Institutions of Higher Learning," which stressed the need for building an archival program on the fundamental principle of serving as the repository for official records.¹¹

Browne's first article was based on his own newly established archives at the

⁹"Report of the Committee on College and University Archives," June 1949, 200/3/2,2/1; *American Archivist* 13 (January 1950): 62-64; Wilson to H. Halvorson, 29 July 1949, 200/3/2,2/2; Dwight H. Wilson, "Archives in Colleges and Universities: Some Comments on Data Collected by the Society's Committee on College and University Archives," *American Archivist* 13 (October 1950): 343-50; Wilson to Cappon, 20 August 1949, 200/3/2,2/1.

¹⁰*American Archivist* 16 (January 1953): 92; *American Archivist* 17 (January 1954): 93-94, 71-72.

¹¹"The College and University Archives in the United States," in *Archives and the Public Interest: Selected Essays by Ernst Posner*, ed. Kenneth Munden (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1967), 148-58, quotation 151; H. J. Browne, "A Plan of Organization for a University Archives," *American Archivist* 12 (October 1949): 355-58, and "An Appeal for Archives in Institutions of Higher Learning," *American Archivist* 16 (July 1953): 213-25.

equally new Catholic University of America and continued the tradition started by Clifford Shipton at Harvard of what has been called “How we do it at Slippery Rock U.” Shipton’s two articles in the 1947 *American Archivist* on the goals, functions, and collections of the Harvard University Archives are far more than how-we-do-it-here pieces, however. For the first time, the professional literature raised a number of fundamental issues and debatable questions that academic archivists struggling for advice needed to consider: relationships with the library, understanding institutional structures, and the range of material to be collected. Shipton’s opinionated but wise counsel proved invaluable to his colleagues, many of whom had just been assigned their jobs and had little or no professional training. Other writers provided valuable examinations of developing programs, such as Edith M. Fox in “The Genesis of Cornell University’s Collection of Regional History,” while Fulmer Mood and Vernon Cartensen argued in “University Records and Their Relation to General University Administration” that archivists should be part of the administrative hierarchy with authority to manage current as well as noncurrent records. In the early 1950s articles on academic archives also began to deal with specific issues; for example, in “The University Archivist and the Thesis Problem,” Andrew M. Horn discussed both the delicate relationship between archivists and librarians and the place of microfilming in preserving theses.¹²

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of Wilson

and Browne was not as evident in their successors of the mid and late 1950s. Except for planning a session for the annual meeting, the committee was moribund. Academic archivists became less involved in the theory and philosophy of their craft. The writing of articles dwindled, in quality even more than quantity. Neither scholarly nor practical, papers became only dreary case studies. Perhaps nothing so clearly reveals the paucity of C&U activity in the mid 1950s than the remarks of the SAA secretary in his 1955–56 report: “The Committee on College and University Records has been recruiting members in its appropriate circle and answering inquiries, and on October 10, 1956, it brought together about two dozen members in a special meeting to discuss its peculiar problems.”¹³

When Oliver Wendell Holmes of the National Archives became president of the society in 1958, he realized that changes had to be made in the SAA committees. He asked Philip P. Mason, archivist of Wayne State University, to accept the chairmanship of the C&U committee. President Holmes told Mason that the current chairman “has served his quota of years and the Committee badly needs energizing and something of a positive program.” Mason replaced some of the deadwood and began to revive the committee. At the 1959 annual meeting, a workshop on “The Archives and the Role of the University Archivist” was conducted for beginning academic archivists, and plans were underway to update the survey taken by Wilson

¹²Clifford Shipton, “The Harvard University Archives: Goal and Function,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 1 (Winter 1947): 101–08, and “Collections of The Harvard University Archives,” *Harvard Library Bulletin* 1 (Spring 1947): 176–84; E. M. Fox, “The Genesis of Cornell University’s Collection of Regional History,” *American Archivist* 14 (April 1951): 105–16; Fulmer Mood and Vernon Carstensen, “University Records and Their Relation to General University Administration,” *College and Research Libraries* 11 (October 1950): 337–45; Andrew H. Horn, “The University Archivist and the Thesis Problem,” *American Archivist* 15 (October 1952): 321–31; W. E. Louttit, Jr., “Brown University Archives,” *Books at Brown* 12 (January 1950): 1–4; A. Pollard, “From 1776 to 1944: College Archives Preserve Fascinating Dartmouthiana,” *Dartmouth Alumni Magazine* 36 (June 1944): 11–12; and Mary Elizabeth Hinkley, *The Role of the College Library in the Preservation and Organization of the Archives of Its Own Institution* (Master’s thesis, Columbia University), Association of College and Research Libraries Microcard Publication, no. 28.

¹³L. Dodson, “The University Archives,” *Ivy Leaf* 6 (March 1957): 51–52; *American Archivist* 20 (January 1957): 64.

a decade earlier. By 1962 a bibliography of writings on academic archives had been published and a survey of archival programs at 350 institutions of higher learning had been completed. The survey revealed that 113 institutions, or a little over one-third, had a program with full- or part-time archivists, another seventy "designated the library as the repository . . . although they had no systematic program to collect records of enduring value," fifty-four institutions relied on the office of origin to preserve the material, and "thirty-one had no program whatsoever." If this picture—librarians attempting to function as archivists without archival training or any clear understanding of the range of materials needing preservation—was discouraging, the gloom was offset in part by learning that 133 schools were considering establishing archival programs, twenty-three in the immediate future.¹⁴

The Revitalization of the Committee

In 1963 Mason resigned from the chairmanship on being elected secretary of the society. Edith M. Fox, archivist of Cornell University, replaced him and continued the efforts to expand the role of academic archivists in the profession, particularly by increasing the amount of research conducted by scholars in academic repositories. At her request Shipton gave a paper at the 1963 meeting on "College Archives and Academic Research," in which he urged that academic archives not become just records centers for noncurrent institutional files. Although he fully recognized the value of a strong records management program to the establishment of a strong archival pro-

gram, he declared that "on the other hand, no true historian can glance at the treasures being held in the cold, chaste hands of tight-lipped records management people without having his Phi Beta Kappa key throb painfully." In 1964 Fox's committee conducted an interesting update of the 1962 survey by examining 320 previously unsurveyed schools. The results, however, were much the same as in 1949 and 1962: ". . . the survey reaffirms that the most retarding influence upon the establishment and functioning of archival programs continues to be the lack of a fundamental conception of the nature and purpose of an archives." In his 1965 SAA presidential address W. Kaye Lamb, Dominion Archivist of Canada, criticized amateurs who at "a large number of institutions—especially colleges and universities—are embarking enthusiastically upon the collection of manuscripts without any real conception of what their proper care and servicing will involve."¹⁵

Having completed three surveys, the committee moved on to the next step: the preparation of a directory. Under Robert Warner's chairmanship from 1964 to 1967, the *Directory of College and University Archives in the United States and Canada* was published in 1966. This project, which surveyed over 1,200 institutions, proved a major undertaking for both the committee and the society, costing the SAA and sponsoring repositories over \$2,500 to produce, edit, and print. For the first time academic archivists had not only the addresses of over 600 professional colleagues, but also a description of their repositories explaining types of records collected, size of holdings,

¹⁴O. W. Holmes to P. P. Mason, 24 November 1958, 200/3/3/2,2/9; Mason to D. C. Renze, 28 October 1959, 200/3/3/2,2/9; *American Archivist* 23 (January 1960): 100; L. J. Cappon, "Archival Good Works for Theologians," *American Archivist* 22 (July 1959): 300–01; *American Archivist* 25 (January 1962): 125; *American Archivist* 26 (January 1963): 117; and Philip P. Mason, "College and University Archives, 1962," *American Archivist* 26 (April 1963): 161–65, quotations 162–63.

¹⁵Fox to H. Chatfield, 31 July 1963, 200/8/1,4/1; W. K. Lamb, "The Changing Role of the Archivist," *American Archivist* 26 (January 1966): 3–10, quotation 9–10; Fox to Shipton, 24 July 1963, 200/8/1,4/1; Clifford Shipton, "College Archives and Academic Research," *American Archivist* 27 (July 1964): 395–400; *American Archivist* 28 (April 1965): 324; and "Report of the 1964 Survey," 200/8/1,4/3.

and services provided.¹⁶

The C&U committee continued to hold very popular and valuable workshops at SAA annual meetings in the mid 1960s. At the 1965 session on “College Archives, Today and Tomorrow,” those attending heard presentations on “who should administer it?, what should it collect?, what role should records management play?, what are its uses for research?, and how much will it cost?” The 1967 session was devoted to “The Unique Role of the University Archives in the Archival Profession,” while the session the following year concentrated on “Archives and Records Management in the University.” Though these workshops were well attended, the presentations were seldom published and thus their impact was temporary and localized.¹⁷

The best workshop in the mid 1960s, however, was the justly famous Allerton Park Institute of 1964 planned by Maynard Brichford, archivist of the University of Illinois. At that workshop, simply entitled *University Archives*, attendees heard seven papers: “History and Theory of Archival Practice,” “Records Management,” “The Collecting of Archival Materials at Cornell University,” “Appraisal and Processing,” “Conservation,” “The Reference Use of Archives,” and “A Scholar’s View of University Archives.” These papers were published by the institute, and this elegant and useful volume partially redeemed several futile efforts to produce a C&U manual or guidelines. The Allerton Park workshop and its successor in 1967 on archival adminis-

tration in small colleges and universities were sponsored by the University of Illinois’s Graduate School of Library Science rather than by either the C&U Committee or SAA. Workshops, sessions at annual meetings, articles in professional journals, or even highly successful institutes like Allerton did not satisfy the need for a series of courses in archival administration at the graduate school level. Academic archivists have in recent years been leaders in supporting the development of graduate archival education.¹⁸

The publication of articles remained a primary means of education, and the professional literature on academic archives improved in the late 1960s and early 1970s, perhaps reflecting a maturing of the practitioners’ skills. At the behest of the C&U committee the entire July 1968 issue of the *American Archivist* was devoted to academic archives, with articles on problems of confidentiality, records management, federal-university relationships and the resulting “paperwork explosion,” and the problems of small college archives. The depth of analysis in case study articles significantly improved, with authors once again subjecting their programs to an analysis of the role of the archives in the institution. Articles by academic archivists on accessioning and appraising materials and organizing and administering a university archives appeared in a library journal, while another archivist wrote a piece, also for a library publication, “Interpreting the University Archives to the Librarian.” In 1971,

¹⁶“Report of the College and University Archives Committee, 1965–66,” 200/8/1,4/4; 1966 Directory, 200/1/7,1/27; R. M. Warner to D. E. Estes, 10 March 1966, 200/8/1,4/3; *American Archivist* 30 (January 1967): 213, 223–24.

¹⁷“Report of the College and University Archives Committee, 1965,” 200/8/1,4/3; *American Archivist* 29 (January 1966): 136; E. O. Alldredge, “Still To Be Done,” *American Archivist* 28 (January 1965): 8; Warner to Opal Thornburg, 10 January 1966, 200/8/1,4/3; College and University Archives Committee file, 200/1/6,1/35; College and University Archives Committee file 200/1/7,1/27; *American Archivist* 31 (January 1968): 97–98, 111; and *American Archivist* 32 (January 1969): 49–50, 67.

¹⁸*American Archivist* 28 (January 1965): 181–82; R. E. Stevens, ed., *University Archives*, Allerton Park Institute, no. 11 (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1965); “Proceedings of the Conference on Archival Administration for Small Universities, Colleges, and Junior Colleges,” *Occasional Papers*, no. 88 (Graduate School of Library Science, University of Illinois, 1967); J. V. Mink to M. Brichford, 12 and 18 January 1965, 200/3/4/1,1/15; and Warner to Brichford, 22 February 1965, 200/3/4,1/15.

with Ruth Helmuth of Case Western Reserve University as chair, the C&U committee produced an annotated bibliography of writings in the field; however, the goal of a manual on the administration of an academic archives remained a dream in spite of several attempts to begin such a project.¹⁹

During the 1960s the increasing number of academic archivists began to reshape the SAA and the profession. Warner's analysis of the 1966 survey had shown that "48.3 percent of American [academic] institutions have archives." While many were small and poorly staffed, there was a sound basis for his optimistic projection that "there will be a rapid expansion of this important phase of the archival profession." By the mid 1960s the average annual salary of the head of a university archives was only \$780 behind that of the head of a state archives, in spite of the fact that most academic archives were much younger. (Regrettably, at \$10,260 and \$11,040 respectively, neither was exactly getting rich.) The next salary survey, in 1970, showed only a tiny \$40 increase in average annual salary for academic archivists, and a salary ranking

them, with church archivists, at the bottom of all archival specialties, despite the higher percentage of advanced degrees and archival training held by C&U archivists compared to the overall profession. Though academic archivists were poorly paid, the low salaries apparently did not discourage applications for positions. This 1970 survey showed the number of C&U archivists had increased so rapidly that they constituted one-third of the membership of the society, giving the SAA almost exactly the same percentage of academic archivist members as female members. The majority of academic archivists, however, carried on their work without any involvement in the society or its College and University Archives Committee. A 1972 directory survey conducted by the committee continued to tell the same story: "... nearly one-fourth devoted less than 10 percent of one professional staff member's time to archives; fewer than 40 percent boasted a staff of at least one full-time professional. Volume of holdings for repositories varied greatly, but well over half had fewer than 500 cubic feet and only 25 percent had more than 1,000 feet."²⁰

¹⁹Warner, "The Status of College and University Archives"; H. Finch, "The Problem of Confidentiality in a College Archives"; Chatfield, "Records Management in the Administration of College and University Archives"; W. F. Schmidt and S. J. Wilson, "A Practical Approach to University Records Management"; B. C. Harding, "Federal-University Relationships and the Paper Work Explosion"; W. K. Hackmann, "Small College Archives: Problems and Solutions," *American Archivist* 31 (July 1968): 235-75; D. M. Tweedale, "Procurement and Evaluation of Materials for a University Archives," *College and Research Libraries* 26 (November 1965): 517-24ff; W. W. Wasson, "Organizing and Administering a University Archives," *College and Research Libraries* 29 (March 1968): 109-16; M. I. Crawford, "Interpreting the University Archives to the Librarian," *Pennsylvania Library Association Bulletin* 23 (November 1968): 349-58; Maynard Brichford, "The Illiarch," *Illinois Libraries* 52 (February 1970): 182-204, and "University Archives: Relationships With Faculty," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 173-81; H. D. Williams, "Records Salvage After the Fire at Colgate University," *American Archivist* 37 (July 1964): 375-79; R. E. Miller, "College and University Archives: The Experience of One Institution," *College and Research Libraries* 28 (March 1967): 113-19; Harry N. Fujita, "A Case Study: Retention Schedules at the University of Washington," *Records Management Quarterly* 2 (October 1968): 25-28; Clifford Shipton, "Harvard University Archives in 1938 and in 1969," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 18 (April 1970): 205-11; B. M. Solomon, "The Women's Archives: Radcliffe College," *Social Service Review* 36 (September 1962): 325-27; F. J. Weber, "The Catholic University of America Archives," *American Catholic Historical Society Records* 77 (March 1966): 50-59; M. Hall, "The Department of Archives and Manuscripts," *Catholic University of America Bulletin* 1 (November 1967): 2-3; R. W. Helmuth, "The University Archives: A Very Personal View," *Outlook* 4 (Spring 1967): 3-9; *American Archivist* 34 (January 1971): 107; *American Archivist* 35 (January 1972): 121-22; College and University Archives Committee Report, 200/1/1, 1/32; *American Archivist* 33 (January 1970): 129; and College and University Archives Committee, "College and University Archives: A Select Bibliography," *American Archivist* 37 (January 1974): 67-72, 177.

²⁰Robert M. Warner, "The Status of College and University Archives," *American Archivist* 31 (July 1968): 235-37; Frank B. Evans and Robert M. Warner, "American Archivists and Their Society: A Composite View,"

C&U's Glory Years

Both by playing a major role in SAA activities and building more comprehensive programs within their individual institutions, academic archivists began to assume a position of leadership within the archival profession in the 1970s. This decade marked a fundamental change in the entire profession and especially in the Society of American Archivists, culminating in the hiring of a paid executive director. The report of the Committee for the 1970s opened the association and, in many ways, the whole profession to a more democratic spirit with more active participation by younger, professionally trained archivists. Modifications of the committee structure broadened and expanded the membership of the C&U archives committee, enabling it to engage in projects formerly beyond its power. By 1976 the committee had forty-six members; some thirty-four attended the committee meeting at the 1978 annual meeting. Of course, these large numbers made meetings cumbersome on occasion, but the additional "person-power" was essential to the ambitious tasks the committee took on in the late 1970s. Having studied the issue of preparing and preserving master's theses and doctoral dissertations, the 1975 committee passed a resolution, later approved by Council, detailing strict archival standards. A subcommittee on student records monitored for several years the impact of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Countless educational institutions were saved from destroying valuable student records by this group's ability to educate archivists and ad-

ministrators about alternative methods of satisfying the confidentiality provisions of FERPA. The subcommittee on Standards for College and University Archives provided the profession with urgently needed guidelines outlining minimum standards for core mission, administration, service, personnel, facilities and equipment, supporting services, and records management. At last, academic archivists had benchmark standards by which to measure their progress and these minimum standards became the basis for the SAA's institutional evaluation program.²¹

The C&U Committee produced another directory, which generated a machine-readable data base of over 900 academic archives and 1,600 archivists in the United States and Canada that is still used by researchers. The survey for the directory revealed that one-half the archives in public institutions had been established since 1970, while the archives at private schools were considerably older but had much smaller holdings. The question of the administrative location of academic archives had been largely resolved by 1979: the survey found between 80 and 90 percent housed in and reporting to the library administration rather than directly to the executive head of the institution. These close administrative ties have helped most archivists and librarians to reach an accommodation on their radically different classification systems. While considerable tension remained over the place of the M.L.S. degree in archival training, no academic archivist wishing to keep up with the literature in the field could ignore journals such as *College and Research Li-*

American Archivist 34 (April 1971): 157–72; Philip P. Mason, "Economic Status of the Archival Profession, 1965–66," *American Archivist* 30 (January 1967): 105–22; and *American Archivist* 36 (January 1973): 140.

²¹Philip P. Mason, "The Society of American Archivists in the Seventies: Report of the Committee for the 1970s," *American Archivist* 35 (April 1972): 201–03; S. Finnegan to College and University Archives Committee, n.d., 200/6/3/3,3/22; "Resolution on Theses and Dissertations," *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 148–49 and 200/6/3/3,1/57; C. B. Elston to A. M. Campbell, 8 October 1976, 200/6/3/3,2/32; H. P. Holden, "Student Records: The Harvard Experience," *American Archivist* (October 1976): 461–67; Elston to College and University Archives Committee, 8 June 1977, 200/6/3/3,3/23; Society of American Archivists, *Guidelines for College and University Archives*, 1979; Guidelines, 200/6/3/3,4/10 and *American Archivist* 43 (Spring 1980): 262–71.

braries which did much to bridge the gap between the two professions.²²

The years 1976–1979 were glory years for the C&U archives committee. Under the extraordinarily productive chairmanship of Nicholas Burckel, the committee, in addition to coping with FERPA's effect on student records and guidelines for archival programs, produced *College and University Archives: Selected Readings*. Edited by Charles B. Elston, this volume's seventeen articles and several appendixes by archivists, records managers, and historians on every aspect of an academic archives provided both the newcomer and the experienced archivist with essential advice and information. "Selected Readings" clearly illustrates the richness of the published contributions in this period.²³

Published in 1979, this reader would have been a good deal thinner had it appeared a decade earlier, because the mid 1970s was an especially productive period for literature on academic archives. To consider only one aspect, historians increasingly used their own institutions' archival resources for research. For a number of years after archives began to be fairly common in educational institutions, many academic historians seemed to regard these repositories as significant only when they housed

nationally famous collections. By the 1970s academic institutional records as well as local historical collections began to interest historians as they discovered the broad range of intellectual, social, political, economic, and educational history that could be written from the records in their own archives. (Perhaps this interest was initially stimulated by many institutions seeking to document their centennial histories.) David B. Potts, professor of history at Union College, exemplified this new awareness in his article "College Archives as Windows on American Society." The responsibility of academic archivists for what Maynard Brichford, in his 1980 SAA presidential address, called "*Überlieferungsbildung*" (twenty-one German letters for "the handing down of culture or civilization") was being recognized by both archivists and researchers.²⁴

The committee's glory years came just as the SAA greatly altered its committee structure. In 1979 the many institutionally and functionally related committees were replaced with Professional Affinity Groups (PAG), or Sections, as they now are called. The College and University Archives Committee made a smooth transformation to a loosely structured group of hundreds of professionally related members thanks to

²²SAA, *Directory of College and University Archives in the United States and Canada*, 1979; Nicholas C. Burckel and J. Frank Cook, "A Profile of College and University Archives in the United States," *American Archivist* 45 (Fall 1982): 410–28. Archivists are dependent on library journals for much of their professional reading. Of thirteen articles on academic archives (published 1962–1971) cited in footnote 18, only two appeared in the *American Archivist*, while six appeared in publications in the library field.

²³Burckel to College and University Archives Committee, 3 October 1978, 200/6/3/3,3/22; SAA, *College and University Archives: Selected Readings*, 1979; *American Archivist* 42 (January 1979): 132; and Burckel to College and University Archives Committee, 25 October 1978, 200/6/3/3,4/10; and *American Archivist* 42 (October 1979): 539–40, 543.

²⁴Probably the single most useful volume after the book of readings was the *Drexel Library Quarterly's* January 1975 issue (vol. 11) on "Management of Archives and Manuscript Collections for Librarians." Nicholas Burckel, "Establishing a College Archives: Possibilities and Priorities," *College and Research Libraries* 36 (September 1975): 384–92; William Saffady, "A University Archives and Records Management Program: Some Operational Guidelines," *College and Research Libraries* 35 (May 1974): 204–10; and Annel Straus, "College and University Archives: Three Decades of Development," *College and Research Libraries* 40 (September 1979): 432–39 are three excellent examples of the high quality research and writing produced by academic archivists in the late 1970s. For the role of historians, see E. J. Blenton "University Archives: A Reason for Existence," *American Archivist* 38 (April 1975): 175–80; D. B. Potts, "College Archives As Windows on American Society," *American Archivist* 40 (January 1977): 43–49; and Walter Rundell, "Personal Data From University Archives," *American Archivist* 34 (April 1971): 183–88; Maynard Brichford, "Academic Archives: *Überlieferungsbildung*," *American Archivist* 43 (Fall 1980): 449–60.

the talented leadership of section chairs and an active steering committee. The first newsletter produced by a PAG, the *Academic Archivist*, keeps the group informed. It is relatively easy to find members willing to form task forces to carry out specific projects. Shortly after the PAG was formed, chaired by Helen Samuels Slotkin of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, members established a task force headed by Patrick Quinn of Northwestern University which produced an excellent new forms manual for the whole profession, replacing the dated and rather homemade volume of college and university archives forms compiled back in 1973. Study groups examined the impact of computer information networks, and the long awaited manual on college and university archives is being written by William Maher of the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana under section sponsorship.²⁵

Academic archivists may be proud of what they have accomplished over the last half century. From a few struggling, isolated

practitioners they have become the largest group within the national association. Now the charge is made that higher education is overdocumented. That criticism is valid to a degree, but overdocumentation is a manageable problem, unlike the situation of fifty years ago when these institutions' records were largely ignored. College and university archivists have established an organizational structure, written the professional literature, and developed the education and training they needed to serve both institution and researcher. Academic archivists in the future—using the vast resources of their institutions—will be in a unique position to serve their colleagues and the public in addressing the challenges that face the profession as the century closes. Solving the problems of the modern record; setting higher standards of education, training, and performance; and involving citizens in the history of their nation and world will be the role that C&U archivists can, and will, make in the future.

²⁵*American Archivist* 43 (Winter 1980): 137.