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The American Archivist

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About the cover: Agricultural Extension Agent Albert T. Hall meets with a rural family in Almont Township, Michigan, in 1956. Through a township extension program, this farmer had doubled his farm income within a three-year period. Dorothy Frye's article explores the opportunity for archivists to take advantage of the service legacy embedded in the mission of land-grant colleges and universities. (Photo courtesy of the Michigan State University Archives and Historical Collections)

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Forum

To the editor:

Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland's essay, "The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History" (Spring 1991), is an effort to bring a historiographical paradigm of conflict to what the author has seen as consensus interpretations about the development of the American archival profession and its institutions. Gilliland-Swetland states that

Three of the leading archival historians writing today, Richard Berner, J. Frank Cook, and Richard J. Cox, as represented in works cited in these notes, all exhibit a tendency to view the history of the profession in descriptive, almost self-congratulatory, instead of in analytical, self-critical terms (p. 163, fn. 6).

The author suggests instead that the two historical manuscripts and public archives traditions, originally described by Berner, have continued to be the basis of considerable conflict within the archival profession in the United States. As he writes,

Defenders of the historical manuscripts tradition perceived themselves as members of a community of humanities scholars and, by extension, as historian-interpreters of the documents they preserved. Advocates of the public archives tradition perceived themselves to be professionals with mastery over a body of specialized theory and practice; consequently they viewed their role as administrator-custodian of the documents they preserved (p. 163).

Although it is certainly refreshing to see another broad interpretation of American archival development, I must suggest that it is far too simplistic an interpretation. The simplicity is, perhaps, due to the author's selective use of the published literature in the archival field. In any event, I know it is too elementary an explanation because of the way my own work is viewed. Since I am cited so often and so extensively, I believed a response was in order. My response is not intended to demolish an argument, but rather is intended to encourage Gilliland-Swetland and others to turn their energies anew to more in-depth analysis of the development of our profession and the archival repositories that provide its superstructure. I was happy to see such an essay published.

How does Gilliland-Swetland view my own writing? I have already cited above the note in which he states that I have a predilection to view American archival history in "descriptive, almost self-congratulatory, instead of in analytical, self-critical terms." I am not sure quite what to make of this statement. On the one hand, a number of my essays in my *American Archival Analysis: The Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1990) are very critical of the archival profession's development, the opposite of what Gilliland-Swetland suggests. In fact, I am more accustomed to being accused of being too critical about the American archival profession.

Perhaps Gilliland-Swetland's later characterization of my writings provides the clue to what he is suggesting:

Like the Progressive scientific reformers so well represented by Norton in the first half of the twentieth century, Cox sees the political and social institutions of modern society arriving at a new plateau of complexity and interdependence. . . . Also, like the Progressive reformers, Cox views the profession's lingering commitment to the ideal of the archivist as interpreter-scholar as a self-indulgent and dangerous luxury (p. 172).

This is a fine and interesting interpretation, except for the fact that I have no problem with the archivist as interpreter-scholar, whatever that actually means. Gilliland-Swetland looks at several articles of mine from the mid-1980s without taking into account that they were framed as part of specific debates and that later writings perhaps reveal more of my views on the nature of the archival profession. In my most recent volume, *Managing Institutional Archives: Foundational Principles and Practices* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), I have tried to write in detail about the many roles institutional archivists play without jettisoning the role to serve wider humanities scholars. A number of my essays in *American Archival Analysis* also suggest this. As for modern society being more complex—well, it is, and if the Progressives suggested this, then that is fine as well. Actually, I can never quite figure out if Gilliland-Swetland's labeling of some of us as being in the Progressive tradition is meant to be criticism or not.

I suspect Gilliland-Swetland is looking for some broad intellectual model by which my work can be more easily pigeonholed. He notes, as an instance, that "central to Progressive thought was a belief that scientific principles and techniques could, and must, be applied to the management of every aspect of an increasingly complex world" (p. 164).

If anything, I see my writings since the early 1970s as more evolutionary than systematic, a self-recognition that I tried to

describe in the preface of my *American Archival Analysis*. I wish they were more systematic, and I am striving to achieve this. In these writings there is certainly more of the Progressive view than any other, at least in my strong sense that archivists have a body of knowledge and theory and that, where it is weak, this knowledge and theory should be extended. But so what? Even many of the archivists who fit into the Historical Manuscripts tradition have advocated this very position.

I really have little problem with any of this except for the fact that Gilliland-Swetland's essay itself has some sweeping statements that are unsubstantiated and that show fissures and cracks in his own interpretation. Let me characterize this with just one example. The author notes that the "SAA founding generation's goal of seeing the establishment of more institutional archives had been realized" by 1979 because of the existence of "nine hundred academic archives" by this latter date (p. 169). However, during the same period, there was also limited growth in business archives and local government archives, other main forms of institutional archives. This would be a minor point, indeed, except for the fact that Gilliland-Swetland sees the development of academic archives as an essential point in American archival history.

Despite the ever-present shortages of financial and physical resources, an institutional infrastructure was acknowledged and relatively secure. The time seemed right to turn to other priorities such as enhancing the professional status and public image of archivists, an agenda that would serve in part to perpetuate society's commitment to its archival caretakers (p. 169).

It might well be that the shift to professional status and public image, as the author terms it, came about because many of the newly appointed academic archivists moved into their positions with little previous education and training in archival

work. Or, it may have come about because many of these academic archives were actually less institutional archives than historical manuscript collecting repositories, as the author himself hints at in a succeeding page. In any event, there is simply too great a leap here in interpretation. More work is needed in examining not the published literature but the personal papers of archivists, the records of archival institutions, and interviews with archivists of the period. Besides, the archival profession doesn't move quite as easily as a single organism ("the time seemed right to turn") as the author suggests. Personally, I don't think every aspect of the debate can be ascribed to the differing views of members of the competing camps of Historical Manuscripts and Public Archives. The academic archivists themselves straddle these camps, yet they seem pivotal to the debate. Many more reasons need to be considered before such a sweeping characterization can be made.

Gilliland-Swetland ended his article by quoting me to suggest that the profession needs to understand its own past in order to understand what it is presently doing. The author noted an additional worry that "archivists have been exposed to much description and little analysis, much thinking and writing that reinforce our a priori assumptions and little critical self-analysis about the costs and implications of social and professional change" (p. 175). But it seems to me that Gilliland-Swetland has only moved us a tiny step away from the description and lack of analysis. Throughout the essay I sense his worrying about the emotionalism of the debates, the motives of the debaters, and the role of the archivist in society, but the author does not make it clear where he stands on any of this or how this characterizes his own analysis. To depict this debate based on the readings of a few dozen articles, a handful of books, and some newsletter articles can be best described as suggestive and certainly open to

extreme reinterpretation once the more serious historical analysis begins. What I am suggesting is, of course, that what Gilliland-Swetland worries about, he is himself guilty of doing, with one exception—he never takes a stance in the debate or provides a more creative interpretation of what has gone on in the past couple of decades. Since he is identified as a practicing archivist, I found this a little strange. Maybe there is a viewpoint that simply required a little more clarity and explication.

Paradigms are made, of course, as efforts to categorize activities or knowledge into meaningful patterns that can be additionally evaluated and used. But a paradigm must be more closely based on reality. Gilliland-Swetland has clearly placed me into a Neo-Progressive school of archival historiography. This is probably the fruits of my sin of writing too much on the topic, as has been suggested to me even by my friends. But I still perceive myself as an archivist in a distinct profession with a distinct mission that rests on archival knowledge, theory, and practice. And I strongly believe that this view cuts across both American archival traditions, making the entire business much more messy than Gilliland-Swetland suggests it is.

What is also lacking in his effort is an explication of whether this is really any different from archivists in other countries. Australian archivist Glenda Acland recently wrote, for example,

Archival institutions in the 1990s should not be acquisition driven or custody oriented nor managed primarily as information outlets. . . . The pivot of archival science is evidence not information. Archivists do not deal with isolated and free-floating bits of information, but with their documentary expression. . . . Archivists are in the *understanding* business not the *information* business. . . . A change in the traditionally perceived archival mindset is needed here to manage the records and their continuum, not the rel-

ics as the end stage in the record life cycle ("Managing the Record Rather Than the Relic," *Archives and Manuscripts* 20, no. 1 [1992]: 58–59).

Now where would we put Acland in the various traditions described by Gilliland-Swetland? Does her use of science and information place her with the Neo-Progressives? Or does her sense of archivists' understanding mean she is more of the Historical Manuscripts tradition? See, in the end it really does not matter too terribly much, for the point is the nature of the archival mission and the knowledge and theory used to support that mission.

A decade ago, in a review of the study on American archival history, I argued that our knowledge was incomplete. This is the essay Gilliland-Swetland cited to end his own piece. I would resubmit that new and more serious study is very much needed and that the lack of such study is what limits Gilliland-Swetland's first contribution in American archival historiography. He has provided us with a viewpoint; now we need to see him and others delve more deeply and show us whether it really holds up. I think we will find a much more complex picture out there than either Gilliland-Swetland or, to be quite honest, I have painted. So much the better, and so much more interesting.

I look forward to seeing more contributions from Luke J. Gilliland-Swetland in the future.¹

RICHARD J. COX

University of Pittsburgh

School of Library and Information Science

Author's response:

I am happy for this opportunity to reply to Richard Cox's response to my article "The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History" (Spring 1991).

The article began as a seminar paper which I wrote in early 1990 when, as a student in archives administration, I indeed lacked significant "practical" archival experience. The Society of American Archivists' decision to award this piece the Theodore Calvin Pease Award was, I understood, a recognition that it represented the best research paper submitted by a "student" of archival administration; significant practical experience on the part of the author was not a criterion for the award. Indeed, by its very nature the award recognizes that valid insights may sometimes be offered by those who are just beginning and who may well lack the extensive experience which can sharpen, but also sometimes cloud, intellectual vision.

In the almost three years that have elapsed between the writing of this piece and its publication in the *American Archivist* I have assumed a position as a practicing archivist. Like Richard Cox, who also identifies himself as a "practicing" archivist, I, too, would like to believe that my thinking is evolutionary.

The long delay between the acceptance of the piece for publication (which came as part of its receiving the Pease award) and its appearance in the *American Archivist* is unfortunate. Because I felt ethically bound to leave the paper as nearly as possible in the form it was in when it received the award, I decline to be held accountable for the literature, cited by Cox in his response, which has been published in the interim. Similarly, I decline to be held responsible for all the articles which I did not write but which Richard Cox would have had me

¹This must seem like a letter to myself. However, the article being discussed here was published in an issue of the *American Archivist* edited by David Klaassen. After a little soul-searching I decided to respond to the essay in an effort to generate some discussion about the writing of American archival history.

write, such as explicating the validity of my model to Australian archival history.

If I were to rewrite this article today I would of course "tweak" my arguments here and there in light of the insights I have gained through my subsequent practical experience and professional involvement. However, I would change neither my interpretive framework nor any of the substantive points I made. Indeed, my experience has only reaffirmed my belief in the characterization of the world views which I limned in my article and has convinced me that they are more pervasive in the archival profession than I had at first thought.

Consistent with my historical training to the point when I wrote my paper, I approached archival literature from the perspective both of an intellectual historian, seeking to understand the underlying intellectual assumptions, coherence, and contradictions in a selective body, of public texts; and from the perspective of a cultural historian, seeking to understand the ways in which the archival community's public discourse was situated within the changing cultural landscape of twentieth-century paradigms and methodologies I utilized for analysis, and the interpretations I offered are valid and consistent with current American historiography.

With regard to my methodology of positing two traditions representing fundamentally different perspectives, I baldly stated that: "In reality they are, of course, not mutually exclusive, but may be seen as competing 'ideal types' " (p. 163). In light of my clear statements that I was attempting to provide a heuristically useful, rather than a descriptive, paradigm for interpreting American archival history, Richard Cox's criticisms that I am making "sweeping generalizations" and that "the entire business" is "much more messy than Gililand-Swetland suggests it is" simply do not obtain.

Undoubtedly, actual archival events were

different from the published archival history of Richard Cox, J. Frank Cook, and Richard Berner in their respective works. Cox would have me utilize "the personal papers of archivists, the records of archival institutions, and interviews with archivists of the period" to write the way it really was, despite the fact that archival historians have used all these sources and still produced what I consider to be a descriptive and noncritical institutional history of the profession. Ultimately, for the purposes of my problematic and my methodology, what "really" happened was less important than how archivists understood and presented those events to themselves and to the "non-archival" community in their published writings. I was working within the framework of intellectual history, not social history. Obviously, Cox believes that our mutual colleagues' published writings are dangerously inadequate statements about the profession, since my reliance upon those published sources "can be best described as suggestive and certainly open to extreme interpretation once the more serious historical analysis begins."

I profoundly regret that any infelicitous use of language on my part might have led Richard Cox to believe that I was making an ad hominem argument when I characterized his work as uncritical. At the heart of Cox's critique of my article is, I suspect, the irritating fact that I "pigeonholed" his writing and his position but failed to pigeonhole myself. Cox maintains that my failure to take a stance in the debates I discuss or to place myself clearly within one of the two "ideal" traditions I posit proves that I am guilty of perpetuating description at the expense of critical self-analysis. I consider Cox's charge to signal my success in achieving an Archimedean point outside the debates. Because I believe that "taking a stand" is often more a guise for axe-grinding advocacy than it is a mark of critical and engaged analysis, I happily plead guilty to this charge.

In the final analysis, I am more deeply troubled by the tone of Cox's response than I am by any of the specific criticisms he levels. Richard Cox aggressively and almost glibly maintains that it is sufficient that we all believe ourselves "a distinct profession with a distinct mission that rests on archival knowledge, theory, and practice." At great length, Cox has publicized *his* vision of our mission. I, however, believe that it does "matter terribly much" how *each* of us as a professional understands, interprets, and operationalizes *our*

understanding of that mission. It was that belief which directed the writing of my article, and it is that belief which sustains this defense of its propositions.

LUKE J. GILLILAND-SWETLAND
*Henry Ford Museum &
Greenfield Village Research Center*

With the exception of editing for conformity of capitalization, punctuation, and citation style, letters to the Forum are published verbatim.



P U B L I C A T I O N

Keeping Archives (2nd edition)

edited by Judith Ellis

Since publication of the first edition in 1987, this manual has established itself as a standard student text and professional reference. All chapters have been revised and updated to comprehensively cover the basics of archival administration. Numerous explanatory tables, helpful illustrations, and sample forms guide and inform the reader in establishing and maintaining an effective archives operation. New chapters include "Preservation," "Legal Responsibilities and Issues," and "Managing Records in Special Formats."

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From the Editor

The Roles of the Editor: Some Additional Reflections

THE EDITOR OF A professional or scholarly journal fills many roles. Arthur Plotnik's brief primer on editing contains a chapter on the basic steps of editing from acceptance of a manuscript to the final proof-reading of the galleys, but he also includes chapters on the editor's personality and the "uneasy alliance" between editor and writer.¹ The theme of his volume concerns the many difficulties besetting the editor, as well as the editor's joys. The roles of an editor are many, and some are hard and even prone to controversy.

There are many other volumes such as this which I have perused in an effort to understand more fully what it is I am doing as editor of the *American Archivist*. It is a topic worth discussing for two reasons in this editorial introduction. First, the contents of this issue are the result of David Klaassen's last effort as my predecessor editor. Thanks are due to David for taking on this responsibility, one more easily criticized than praised, and to the various section editors and assistants who worked with him. Second, I now have completed more

than a year of editing the *American Archivist*, and I have much to reflect about as a result of this usually exciting but sometimes frustrating time.² Trying to get the journal back on a timely production schedule and meeting a certain quality standard have constituted a major challenge.

Over the past year I have been the beneficiary of many comments on the *American Archivist* and the effectiveness of my work. These comments have taken the form of praise, criticism, and many helpful pieces of advice. In all of these statements there have been certain assumptions made about the roles of the editor. Some of these assumptions are as follows: the editor determines the content of the journal (serving as a professional "gatekeeper"); the editor controls the journal's quality; this quality should reflect a professional consensus; the editor publishes what he or she agrees with (and conversely doesn't publish what he or she doesn't agree with); and the editor is an educator who works with the potential au-

¹Arthur Plotnik, *The Elements of Editing: A Modern Guide for Editors and Journalists* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1982).

²For my first effort at reflection see "The *American Archivist*: Voice of the Profession or Another Role? Some Thoughts at the Beginning of an Editorship," *American Archivist* 54 (Fall 1991): 462-64.

thor until something is ready to be published. While there is an element of truth in most of these perspectives, it is also clear that they reveal fairly serious misapprehensions about the role of this journal's editor; they are also important to discuss periodically because such assumptions can influence the nature of the *American Archivist*.

The editor as professional gatekeeper is one of my favorite specters, one that has been pounded back and forth in the often acrimonious Archives ListServ. In one sense, it is completely correct in that the editor has the ultimate responsibility for selecting what goes into the journal. But two major aspects of editing such a journal challenge the gatekeeper role.

First, there is the difficulty of soliciting and obtaining manuscripts to be considered for publication in this journal. I have heard from many people who seem to think (they really don't, but logically this is what they are saying) that somehow the editor single-handedly produces the journal's contents; this has even been joked about because I have written and published articles and books on archival science, practice, and history. The editor is dependent, of course, on what is received, and the strengths of a particular issue or an entire editorial tenure ultimately are shaped by this simple fact. The editor can beg, plead, threaten, bribe . . . you get the idea . . . but the profession really determines the contents of the *American Archivist* by what it researches and writes. In my first editorial I hinted at this when I stated that under my editorship the appearance of the journal will look different from volumes produced by other editors only as far as what is received; I am now even more convinced of this fact.³

The range of essays published in this particular issue show the diversity of sources by which essays are generated, and it is (as

are all such issues) a microcosm of what is going on in our profession. Two of the essays are the result of the research opportunities provided by the Research Fellowship Program in Modern Archives at the Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. Needless to say, the archival literature of the past decade would have been far weaker without this opportunity.⁴ Three other selections are the derivative products of Society of American Archivists (SAA) meetings, and they certainly are part of the trend of the origination of many of these essays at SAA and other professional conferences. The remaining essay is the reflection of a career of writing and doing public programs in archives; Elsie Freeman's writings practically constitute the body of published work on this topic in the past two decades, with only the recent intrusion of individuals like Timothy Ericson and Terry Cook. In effect, her work is also representative of the trend in which a small portion of the authors published in the *American Archivist* sustain this journal. So, in a sense, the journal is the product of research sabbaticals, invitations to present papers at professional conferences, and strong personal convictions about what archivists should be doing. The editor can hardly shape the journal without seriously contending with these trends.

The second determining factor for publication in this journal is the peer review process that the editor of the *American Archivist* employs. This process is worth explaining in this particular editorial preface, especially since I have received a wide range of comments about it. When I receive a manuscript, I dispatch it to two or three reviewers who have expertise in the subject of the submission. In many cases, I draw

³"The *American Archivist*," p. 464.

⁴Personally, I am convinced that historians of our profession will determine the Bentley Fellows program to be one of the most significant factors in the recent development of the American archival literature.

on at least one member of SAA's Editorial Board, a group that does yeoman service for our association and that quite frequently receives from me requests for assistance. Before sending out a manuscript, I tentatively assign it to one of the sections of the journal (in an effort to guide the reviewers in assessing the manuscript's potential for publication); I also send the reviewers a set of guidelines and a specific deadline (usually about a month). On receipt of the reviewers' comments I re-read the original submission, examine the reviewers' comments, and attempt to make a decision. In some instances, I may send the manuscript out to an additional reviewer, but that usually is not necessary. I then make a decision to accept, to accept with revisions, or to reject. At this point, about sixty percent of the manuscripts are rejected. In most cases I send copies of reviewers' comments (with all personal identifying information removed) to the author, with notification for revisions and a due date.

To some extent, then, the contents of the journal reflect the best thinking, research, and writing of the archival community, as contributed by the authors themselves and commented on by their peer experts. Nevertheless, the matter of what the content of the journal represents is a topic of debate within the field. Some would say it reflects the editor's own perceptions. Others believe the content reflects the matters of importance to the archival community—even, when examined over a long enough period of time, a consensus of views. My sense is that the truth lies somewhere between these two rather extreme views. I am not going to argue that the editor does not stamp some of his or her own personality on the *American Archivist*. (Otherwise, why would I write these editorials?) This stamp of individuality must occur to some extent because the editor makes the final determination based on his assessment of the essay and because the editor has a certain

model in mind for what the *American Archivist* should be.⁵

However, I hope that my description of the peer review process reveals that a broader range of views is also at work here. In fact, some of my edited issues have contained essays with which I had significant differences of opinion. In this present issue, assembled by my predecessor, there is one essay that I strongly disagree with regarding its interpretation and its perspective about the nature of the archival profession. This is as it should be. As the published exchange between myself and another author suggests, differences of opinion can be healthy and valuable for the profession. As an editor, I wish our *American Archivist* "Forum" would be twenty pages long because such a wealth of letters would indicate that the profession reads and uses the journal and is reacting to it.⁶ It is in such debates that the archival profession will emerge with more substantial positions and will improve its theoretical and methodological foundations, although without serious reflection and research such debates

⁵My own personal predilection would be to see the *American Archivist* as a journal primarily featuring research and expositions of archival theory, both aspects of the field requiring substantially more activity. However, no matter how hard I work to achieve this, I am constrained by the degree of research and theorizing going on in the archival profession. While I sense there is much more of this activity going on now than before, I still doubt it is enough to support four full issues of the *American Archivist*.

⁶Our professional counterpart, *Archivaria*, has been far more successful in this than the *American Archivist*. Why? Is it because the essays are more controversial? Is it because the contents are of a higher quality and generate discussion? Does the Canadian archival community differ that much from the community in the United States? I must admit there are some differences, such as those reflected in the manner in which Canadians have approached the development of archival descriptive standards, but I do not personally believe these differences are such that the discussion about the archival literature should be more vigorous than it is in the United States. Nonetheless, there are substantial differences.

can soon repeat themselves endlessly with little additional insight.⁷

In these comments I have tried to describe my various roles. I have dealt with matters of the gatekeeper role, the editor's role in forming the literature, and the matter of professional consensus. But what about the matter of the "quality" of contents? Or, in a very closely related issue, the role of the editor as an educator or counselor to potential authors?

There is no question that there is an educational aspect to the editing of this journal. The *American Archivist* is certainly the bread and butter for most American archival educators; its essays update other basic manuals or monographs, providing the most recent views on archival practice and theory. The row after row of issues of this journal also provide a fairly comprehensive set of perspectives on nearly any archival topic, and the educator can purposely select writings that conflict to serve as a catalyst for classroom debate and discussion. The educator needs to remember that his or her students are usually discovering for the first time the riches (and weaknesses) of the half-century accumulation of the journal. The *American Archivist* also reflects the history of our national archival community and the core of research called for and conducted, opinions expressed and challenged, and activities engaged in and completed. So, it should stand to reason, the editor will function as an educator of sorts. But that role

is not, in my opinion, one that enters into the working relationship with authors.

My response to this question may seem controversial, and I know it differs significantly from the opinions of some of my predecessor editors. In terms of reviewing, selecting, and revising manuscripts for publication in the *American Archivist*, I don't think the editor should be seen only as an educator or the process as an educational one. The editor should be concerned first with the quality of the content of the contributions and then with the quality of their writing and presentation. The editor decides for publication on the former aspect and then works to achieve the latter; if the second aspect cannot be achieved in an acceptable manner by the author, the manuscript will probably not be published. It is not the role of the editor to re-write, no matter what the potential value of the contribution. There is no question that the editing process is intended to strengthen the final version of the essay, but its main purpose is to produce the best possible record of archival research and other writing. When I inherited these responsibilities as editor I actually revised the "Author's Guidelines" and "Editorial Policy" to reflect this. The role of the editor is to seek out solid and mature thinking and work, and I believe this is an essential task for the profession. Even winners of the student writing contest, the Pease Award, should be judged by the same criteria as other manuscripts if the essay is to be published in the *American Archivist*.⁸

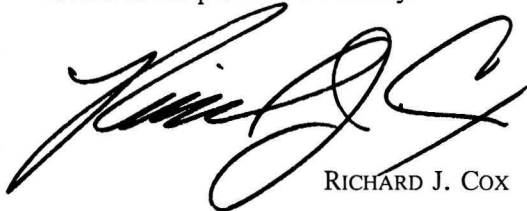
These are some additional reflections on the roles of the *American Archivist* editor.

⁷One example of this, in my opinion, is the continuing sixty-year debate about the source of education, history or library/information science for future archivists. Little new has been contributed to this discussion since the late 1930s. One role of the editor of the *American Archivist* is to be as familiar as possible with the published literature so as to inform, as politely as possible, prospective authors that the topic of their essay either does not take into account the existing literature or, in fact, seems to rediscover concepts and opinions long held by the profession. This is one of the editor's most difficult roles.

⁸So, this particular award committee should, first, determine the best student paper of those submitted, and, second, evaluate and decide whether the essay meets appropriate criteria for publication in the *American Archivist*. Given the continued strengthening of graduate archival education programs, I predict that an increasing portion of the essays published in the journal will emanate from these programs.

You can judge how well they are being carried out by the contents of the issues you receive. And, furthermore, I continue to welcome comments about what the *American Archivist* is and should be. We may not agree, but you can have the last word by submitting interesting and important research and writing on archival topics. Your submissions will be fairly reviewed and

evaluated, and some will be published. Those published will become part of the record of our profession's history.



RICHARD J. COX



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