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About the cover: Scene from an animated film produced by unions in support of Franklin Roosevelt's 1944 presidential campaign (top); and animated figure from a commercial created by Walt Disney Studios for Dwight Eisenhower's 1952 presidential campaign (bottom). These images are among the more than 55,000 film, audio, and video recordings that make up the Political Commercial Archive of the University of Oklahoma's Political Communication Center. The article by Kathleen J.M. Haynes, Lynda Lee Kaid, and Charles E. Rand explores issues faced by the Political Commercial Archive in the archival management of moving image and sound recordings. (Photos courtesy of the Political Commercial Archive)

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From the Editor

Archival Diversity and the Engaged Reader

IN HIS INTERNATIONAL ARCHIVES DAY address printed in this issue of the *American Archivist*, Jean-Pierre Wallot reflects on the challenge that the diversity of archives poses to our efforts to find commonality for the archival profession as a whole. This question of how to find unity in archival diversity has been on my mind as I take up my duties as editor of the *American Archivist*. As the leading archival journal in the United States, the *American Archivist* faces the challenge of archival diversity all the time.

My editorial mission, therefore, is not just to produce the best archival journal that I can. I must also strive to produce a journal that will serve a broad readership, one that extends well beyond the membership of the Society of American Archivists. This audience includes archivists working in large public records repositories as well as small historical societies, archivists for religious congregations and archivists for multinational corporations, archivists whose primary responsibility is managing paper collections and those trying to manage large files of electronic records. And, of course, there are undoubtedly many readers who are not archivists at all, but whose work in allied fields compels them to turn to the *American Archivist* for information and insight into archival work.

Trying to satisfy this diverse readership is a daunting task requiring editorial diligence as well as keen judgment. It will require taking the broadest possible view of the archival profession. Obviously the *American Archivist* cannot meet all of the immediate information needs of its readership, but it should endeavor to publish research articles, essays, case studies, and reviews that will continually enlarge the reader's understanding of archives and of archival work.

Despite the best efforts of the editor and the editorial board, however, the success of the *American Archivist* is in part dependent on its readers. In saying this, I am not about to launch a plea for submissions of manuscripts, although such submissions are always more than welcome. To maximize the value of the *American Archivist*, readers will need to take the broadest possible view of archival work and see their own work within this wider context. For example, Lori Hefner's article in this issue on the problems of the alienation of federal records created at the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory raises issues of concern to all archivists, not just those who are engaged in the documentation of twentieth-century science. Judith Panitch's Pease Award-winning article on archives and the French Revolution is more than just a fascinating trip through archival history, for it raises fundamental questions about the complex motivations behind why we keep archives in the first place. The description of the work of the University of Oklahoma's Political Com-

mercial Archive can be instructive about the management of moving image materials that are becoming common in all kinds of repositories. Carolyn Heald's essay considers how the archival way of thinking relates to the postmodern sensibility of the late-twentieth century. Jean-Pierre Wallot's address proclaims the common purpose of all archivists in its discussion of the work of the International Council on Archives, and Maygene Daniels ponders the very personal question of why archivists have chosen this particular profession. In short, this array of articles speaks in many different ways to matters of concern to all archivists. While no editor can hope to publish a journal in which every article is equally compelling to every reader, a successful editor will strive to publish articles that have the potential to expand the knowledge and understanding of all readers. Even the several special issues of the *American Archivist* which will appear over the next two years can enlighten and inform the work of archivists with very different specializations.

In discussions of undergraduate education these days, I hear talk about the "engaged learner," that ideal student who is actively involved in the educational experience, interested in getting the most out of higher education. But to have engaged learners, of course, we must have faculty and administrators capable of engaging students in the learning process. Similarly, the *American Archivist* needs "engaged readers" who will transcend the diversity of the archival profession to see the commonality among the issues and concerns addressed in a wide range of research articles, reflective essays, and studies of practical archival problems. It is my hope, of course, that some of these engaged readers will take the next step and submit an article for publication, thereby helping to engage their fellow archivists in a professional discourse. Building on the prodigious labors of my predecessor, Richard J. Cox, I see my role as editor as one of facilitating this engagement in the archival enterprise by working with authors and readers alike to insure the publication of a journal that will foster a greater understanding of archives and the archival profession. I invite all of you to share in this enterprise.

—Philip B. Eppard