The South Carolina Archives: A Decade of Change and Program Development

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Abstract: This article traces the development of the archival program at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) since the mid-1980s. Like most other state archives, the SCDAH has had to deal with some major organizational and resource changes in the past decade. Among the topics and issues addressed are: the impact of increasing state fiscal constraints, strategic planning and Total Quality Management, information technology and electronic records, federal grants, and the opportunities for statewide archival involvement through the State Historical Records Advisory Board. The article concludes with consideration of the prospects for further and potentially far-reaching changes in the program relating to the construction of the South Carolina History Center which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1998.

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STATE ARCHIVES HAVE UNDERGONE rapid and far-reaching changes over the past decade that, taken together, represent the most unsettling times experienced since their establishment early in this century. A seemingly unending wave of state budget cuts and reorganizations, the implementation of new planning and management techniques, the ever-increasing amounts and types of records to manage, the proliferation of information technology into virtually every aspect of state and local government recordkeeping, and the development of the Internet and the World Wide Web are some of the developments that have had an impact on state archives in the past ten years. This article attempts to show how one state archives has managed its way through these developments to refine and focus its program and prepare for the future.

Program Context and Background

The State Archives is a major component of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH), an independent agency of state government governed by a ten-member commission. The SCDAH traces its origin to a 1905 Act of the General Assembly, which created a Historical Commission to care for noncurrent state agency records, publish records and other historical material, direct the marking of historical places, and "supervise the exploration of historical remains and Indian mounds."[1] A full-scale archives program began to emerge after the Archives Act of 1954 created a different basis of operation for South Carolina's archival agency. The Act abolished the Historical Commission, transferred its functions to the South Carolina Archives Department, and seemed to provide an Archives Commission with the basis for a state and county records management program. State agencies and county governments, however, were left to decide whether or not to cooperate with the Archives Department.[2] Ernst Posner, in his classic *American State Archives* (1964), noted that the South Carolina Archives Department needed a larger staff, a disproportionate amount of its funding went to the publications program, and that inventorying and scheduling state and local records should be given a higher priority and legal authorization.[3]

Over the next twenty-two years (1964–1986), under the direction of Charles E. Lee, the Archives Department grew dramatically in size and scope. The Archives Building was doubled in size to fifty-five thousand square feet, a records center was acquired, and the staff increased from twelve to one hundred and twenty-three. In 1967 the agency was renamed the Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) and took on new responsibilities for federal historic preservation programs. By the time of Lee's retirement in 1986, South Carolina operated the fourth largest combined archives program (staff and budget) in the nation.[4]

Among the SCDAH's notable achievements under Charles Lee were development of a records management program for state and local government,[5] a program for the

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[1]J. H. Easterby, "The Archives of South Carolina," *American Archivist* 15 (July 1952), 242–43.

[2]Ernst Posner, *American State Archives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 247.

[3]Posner, *American State Archives*, 252

[4]Howard P. Lowell, *Preservation Needs in State Archives* (Albany, N.Y.: National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators, 1986), Appendix: "Statistical Data, Administrative Information;" South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1987–1988* (Columbia, 1988), 3.

[5]The SCDAH's records management responsibilities were specified in a Public Records Act passed by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1973 (*Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976*, §§ 30-1-10 through 30-1-140). William L. McDowell, Jr., "The Public Records Act of 1973," in South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1972–1973* (Columbia, 1973), 7–12, has useful background information on passage of this important legislative act, including the full text of the act.

microfilming of pre-1900 county records, a charge back records management microfilming program for local government and state agency records, a conservation laboratory offering the most up-to-date techniques in the state, an ongoing program to item-index the SCDAH's extensive colonial land and court records and pre-1860 legislative records employing SPINDEX II,[6] a research room with the most hours of public access of any state archives in the country and attracting over ten thousand visits annually,[7] and a fully staffed records scheduling program for state and local government records that identified key record series for permanent retention.

By the early 1980s, South Carolina, along with many other states, began an extended period of flat funding and cutbacks that affected nearly every state agency over the following decade. State revenues proved insufficient for the expansion, or even continuation, of authorized programs and initiatives.[8] It was that new fiscal reality that faced the SCDAH's fourth director, George L. Vogt, when he arrived in Columbia in July 1987. He spent the next nine years transforming the SCDAH to better cope with those economic realities.[9]

A New Director Takes the Helm

George Vogt brought to his new position a keen interest in the latest management practices and techniques; an appreciation of the challenges and benefits of information technology; an understanding that the SCDAH had to increase its visibility within the state for its own long-term benefit; and an understanding that with the many challenges confronting the SCDAH, the department would have to take a hard look at its established modes of operation, staffing, and resource allocations, and be prepared for some fundamental adjustments. Detailing how Vogt put everything together into a winning combination is beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, the change in leadership positioned

[6]SPINDEX (Selective Permutation Index) was developed by the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in the mid-1960s, but was suspended by 1966 with the beginning of the Library of Congress's Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) pilot project. Kenneth W. Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care, and Use* (Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1975), 155–60, deals with the period of National Archives SPINDEX II sponsorship and contains a summary of Charles Lee's leadership in promoting its use. It also provides details about the employment of SPINDEX II at the SCDAH in the early 1970s. Though only eight hundred cubic feet of the SCDAH's holdings were to be indexed to the item level using SPINDEX II, they were the records in highest demand by researchers, especially by the ever-growing numbers of genealogists. The Computer Output Microfilm (COM) item-level index continues to be one of the most frequently used of the SCDAH's finding aids.

[7]South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1985–1986* (Columbia, 1986), 48–49. The research room was open to the public seven days a week, including evenings, until 1991. Since then, the research room has closed on Mondays, thereby reducing availability to the public to sixty-two hours per week.

[8]For example, Charles Lee cited the elimination of the John C. Calhoun Papers editorial project as ''. . . one symptom of very difficult times,'' and that other services would have to be reduced because of ''diminished resources,'' in South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1981–1982* (Columbia, 1982), 8.

[9]At Vogt's arrival in July 1987, the SCDAH had 123 authorized full–time equivalent (FTE) positions. When he left in August 1996, to become director of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the number of authorized FTE's had dropped to 102. The decline in staff numbers was attributable mainly to not filling vacated positions. Included also was a reduction in force (RIF) required by a 1995 cut in state agency budgets by the South Carolina General Assembly. The RIF affected five long-time employees and resulted in the elimination of the SCDAH's documentary editing branch. George L. Vogt, ''A Systematic Approach to Quality Management,'' *History News* 49 (July/August 1994): 11, 13; George L. Vogt, ''Staff Bulletin 95-03: Budget Cuts and Staffing Changes,'' 14 July 1995; ''Minutes of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History Commission,'' 14 June 1996, 2.

the archives program not only to deal with the new economic realities but also to prepare for the future.

Vogt became active in state government shortly after his arrival by forming and serving as the first head of an agency directors' organization. This dramatically increased the SCDAH's visibility and smoothed the way for subsequent approaches in support of the agency's programs. Vogt also launched the SCDAH's first strategic planning effort, dovetailing it with the completion of South Carolina's assessment project begun several years earlier with a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).[10] This was the first of a dozen federal grants over the next decade that would support important initiatives, transform the archives program, and chart new directions. Vogt also led the SCDAH into adopting a Total Quality Management (TQM)[11] approach which had far-reaching effects on how work is done. The hierarchical chain of command has been reduced and staff has been encouraged to take a more active part in finding solutions to problems and devising ways to improve customer services. Much of what the SCDAH archives program has done over the past decade has been accomplished within this participative management environment. It has required a great deal of persistence and refinement as well as ongoing staff and management education in TQM.[12]

Assessment and Planning: Charting New Directions

The South Carolina NHPRC-supported assessment project mentioned above provided a unique opportunity for a thorough assessment of the SCDAH archives and records management programs and of conditions and needs in government and nongovernment repositories statewide. Though the SCDAH provided the nonfederal portion of the support to carry out the assessment project, the sponsoring organization was the South Carolina State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB).

South Carolina, as most other states, has had a State Historical Records Advisory Board since the mid-1970s.[13] Its members are broadly representative of the types of repositories in the state, and more than half possess experience in the administration of government records, historical records, or archives. The advent of the assessment project in the early 1980s provided the South Carolina SHRAB the justification and the resources to venture beyond its basic grant solicitation and review responsibilities. A variety of factors contributed to a delay in the SHRAB's assessment, so Vogt found that one of his first duties as SCDAH director was to complete the assessment and publish the report.[14] The delay was a fortunate one. The assessment, which included questionnaire surveys of

[10]NHPRC Grant 81-129, funded at $24,745, to analyze the current condition of historical records in the state, identify problems, frame potential solutions, and outline actions to be taken. A supplemental grant, 88-052, for $2,976, supported publication of *Preserve or Perish*.

[11]For an introduction to Total Quality Management in government, see David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (Reading, Mass.: Addison Wesley Publishing Co., 1992).

[12]Vogt, ''A Systematic Approach,'' 10–14.

[13]The NHPRC requirement for state historical records advisory boards is contained in 36 C.F.R. § 1206. The South Carolina SHRAB was established by an Executive Order of Governor James B. Edwards on November 1, 1975. The governor appoints the members to three-year, renewable, terms.

[14]For background on the administration of the SHRAB's assessment and reporting project grant, see State Historical Records Advisory Board, *Preserve or Perish: On the Future of Historical Records in the Palmetto State* (Columbia, 1988), 63. The ironic aspect of this follow-through by Vogt is that before he had taken up the position as SCDAH Director (and SHRAB Coordinator), he had been the director of the NHPRC's records program, which had awarded the assessment and reporting grant to the South Carolina SHRAB in 1981.

state and local government officials, staff studies of policies and practices, investigations by outside consultants,[15] and recommendations by the SHRAB representing the statewide archival and historical community, provided just the kind of information most useful at such a time of transition at the SCDAH.[16]

Published in mid-1988 as *Preserve or Perish: On the Future of Historical Records in the Palmetto State*, the SHRAB assessment report highlighted several areas requiring action (see Figure 1). The most important recommendations involved better coordinating the SCDAH's archives and records management programs, addressing the problems relating to machine-readable records, abandoning the item-indexing of records in favor of series-level descriptions and preparation of a guide to holdings, and, finally, constructing a spacious, modern archival facility to replace the Archives Building. The SHRAB's assessment process contributed significantly to the SCDAH's first strategic planning effort. Especially important were the SHRAB consultant recommendations and related information gathering which provided the input necessary for decision making. The SCDAH plan, however, was quite detailed, tending to the operational level in its objectives.[17] The assessment and planning processes were also an important experience for the SCDAH staff. They participated for the first time in a wide-ranging program review, identified problems and deficiencies, and formulated a plan of action.

The Archives/Records Management Relationship

One of the major findings of the 1987–1988 program assessment was that the SCDAH's archives and records management units were not working together effectively. Moreover, practices in both of those areas required updating, bringing them into line with prevailing practices in other states and the National Archives.[18] The archivists inhabited the Archives Building and the records management staff occupied the Records Center building a mile away. Given the physical distance between the two, the different perspectives and interests of their respective professions, and the separation of the programs within the organization, it was perhaps natural that they would pursue divergent interests and priorities.

The archives program focused most of its energies on a long-term, item-level indexing which left control of the balance of the holdings in a very uneven condition. Though most were described in a summary fashion in guides[19] and many had indexes available to

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[15]The following consultant reports were submitted to the SHRAB as part of the assessment process in early- to mid-1988: Gerald George (private consultant), "Review of Publications and Outreach Programs;" William M. Holmes (National Archives) and Kathleen D. Roe (New York State Archives), "Report on Automation at the South Carolina Department of Archives and History;" and Roy H. Tryon (Delaware State Archives), "An Assessment of the South Carolina's Archives and Records Management Program." SHRAB, *Preserve or Perish*, 66.

[16]SHRAB, *Preserve or Perish*, 63–67. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1987–1988* (Columbia, 1988), 4–5.

[17]SCDAH "Long Range Plan," July 1988. The plan focused on a two year period of operation, though actions were sketched out for several of the goals for three to five years.

[18]Tryon, "Assessment," 16–17.

[19]There were two published guides that proved very useful for researchers and for SCDAH staff: Marion C. Chandler and Earl W. Wade, eds., *The South Carolina Archives: A Temporary Summary Guide*, 2d ed. (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, 1976) and *A Guide to Local Government Records in the South Carolina Archives* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988). Both of these guides contained lists of series arranged by office within state agencies and local governments. Typical entries listed series title, dates, and quantities (including microfilm, bundles, folders, boxes, and volumes). For background on the *Temporary Summary Guide* and its relationship to the SCDAH's computerized item-level indexing, see Charles E. Lee's "Introduction" in SCDAH, *Annual Report, 1972–1973*, 5–6.

Figure 1. Key Plans Developed at SCDAH, 1988–1993

SCDAH "Long Range Plan," [1988–1993], July 1988

Subject to annual revision. Arranged by year, thereunder by goal and related objectives. The plan's objectives are quite specific and list the quarter within which they are to be accomplished. In 1990 two of the goals and the plan's detailed objectives were banished from the plan to the divisions' annual workplans. Also, the SCDAH added Quality Improvement, reflecting the importance of the QI process to the success of participative management in the agency.

Goals:

- Clarify the commission's role and duties,
- Clarify and strengthen agency legislation,
- Better coordinate and unify archival and records management programs,
- Develop a coordinated external affairs program,
- Evaluate physical plant needs,
- Address staff morale, pay, and training problems,
- Systematically assess the Department's technological needs, and
- Strengthen functions and improve productivity of existing programs.

State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB), *Preserve or Perish: On the Future of Historical Records in the Palmetto State,* **July 1988**

The SHRAB report, unlike the SCDAH plans, is descriptive of conditions and needs, and lists recommended actions rather than goals and objectives with specific deadlines. Listed below are the major recommended actions regarding state and local government records.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen Public Records Act,
- Educate and encourage officials to assume greater responsibility for their records,
- Archivists and records managers should work together to streamline procedures,
- Better document 20th-century state government,
- Improve conservation equipment and work areas,
- Construct a spacious, modern archives,
- Start a statewide program to protect local government records,
- Create a statewide microfilming program for local government records, including certification microfilm labs, and
- Create a uniform statewide local records management program.

facilitate their use, there was no systematic program for record group control, nor any agency histories and few series-level descriptions. The archives' annual accessioning rate during the mid- to late-1980s was quite low.[20] This meant that there was little to distract the archives staff from its core item-indexing of the archives' older records. Moreover, neither the use of the new MARC AMC format nor participation in a national bibliographic

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[20]Tryon, "Assessment," 9. Lowell, *Preservation Needs in State Archives*, Appendix: "Statistical Data, Holdings Information," contains 1983–1984 accession rates for the states, at which time the SCDAH reported 420 cubic feet of accessions. The SCDAH annual reports for fiscal years 1985–1986, 1986–1987, and 1987–1988 cite accessions of 297, 124, and 294 cubic feet, respectively.

network like OCLC or RLIN had been pursued by the SCDAH. Though there was concern that more recent records were not being accessioned, archives staff thought this a problem for the records management staff to address.[21]

Like the SCDAH archives staff, the records management staff had little time to do much beyond inventory and scheduling work with agencies. Records analysis staff provided a comprehensive records inventory and scheduling service for state agencies, and continued to schedule each series of records in each agency as if it were unique to that agency. This labor-intensive approach to scheduling was growing less tenable in an era of declining resources. Complicating matters was that there was no regular, ongoing training or education for state agency records officers nor any attempt to address the challenges posed by electronic records.[22] There appeared to be just too much of the basics to do.

Program Changes Implemented

Following closely on the publication of the SCDAH and the SHRAB plans, the department's archives and records management programs were combined under one individual, a state archivist and records administrator, who reported to the SCDAH director. The position had been advertised in the summer of 1988. I applied for it, was hired in early September, and began work at the SCDAH in mid-October. The newly formed division staff then began to address a number of the actions recommended by the plans. One of the first moves was that of revising the 1973 Public Records Act (PRA).[23] It was strengthened in several areas, addressing the linking of the PRA's definition of a public record and the existing Freedom of Information Act, establishing the SCDAH's responsibility for electronic records and for records management training and standards, providing the SCDAH with the authority to promulgate general schedules as state regulations, and increasing the penalties for wilful noncompliance with the PRA.[24] The department had to call on representatives from such organizations as the state's Municipal Association and the Press Association to argue in favor of the revisions as an important move supporting good government practices. The South Carolina General Assembly passed the revised act in May 1990, and it was signed shortly thereafter by the governor.

At the same time that the SCDAH addressed needed changes in its statutory authority, a number of other changes were set in motion which reflected the department's Quality Improvement Process and its emphasis on streamlining operations and customer satisfaction. For instance, the SCDAH's Reference Room operation employed process improvement techniques which reduced its response to reference requests from twenty-nine days to less than five.[25] Other changes also took place. Item-indexing of the archives holdings was suspended and new approaches to series-level description and accessioning were investigated.

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[21]Tryon, "Assessment," 5–6, 9–10.

[22]Tryon, "Assessment," 5, 12, 17.

[23]*Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976*, §§ 30-1-10 through 30-1-140. Of particular concern, as noted in *Preserve or Perish* (page 21), was a 1982 state attorney general ruling that "until a public record is created, the Archives," by virtue of the Public Records Act, "generally possesses no regulatory authority, especially in respect to another public agency." This seemed to contradict the provisions in the 1973 Public Records Act vesting the SCDAH with responsibility for providing advice and assistance on "creating" as well as managing and storing public records. It jeopardized future work with machine-readable (i.e., electronic) records.

[24]*Code of Laws of South Carolina* 1976, 1990 Supplement, §§ 30-1-10 through 30-1-140.

[25]Vogt, "A Systematic Approach," 13.

Major refinements were also made in the SCDAH's records retention scheduling practices. No longer would three-person teams conduct state agency inventories or do the legal research for drafting retention schedules. Those responsibilities were shifted to the agencies and local governments, while SCDAH records analysts would draft retention schedules and manage the schedule review and approval process. Coupled with this was an active training and publications program, including a newsletter for state agencies and local governments to provide them with the basics for handling their new duties. In return, they were promised much quicker turnaround in records retention schedule drafting and approval made possible because the records schedule review process was streamlined.[26] The trade-off worked. The SCDAH began to use its new authority to promulgate general schedules as state regulations. SCDAH staff drafted, with considerable state agency and local government input, general schedules for state agency administrative, personnel, and financial records; state-supported college and university records; and county, municipal, and school district records. The general schedules were approved and played an important role in reducing the burden of records scheduling on state agencies and local governments as well as on the SCDAH records analysis staff. The SCDAH staff could spend more time in analysis and transfer of records of archival value and for training and instruction of records officers and others in related records management concerns. But what about its impact on the SCDAH's primary concern for identifying, preserving, and providing access to historically valuable state and local records? The changes in the records management program were the first steps in reorienting the staff from viewing their role as simply producing records retention schedules to that of acting as the SCDAH's agents for collection development. There were many important records not yet scheduled, and the schedules for many records appraised as archival over the past decade or more had not been implemented and the records had not been transferred to the SCDAH. Further changes in records management and archives activities were supported by a series of federal grants, a source of support that was new to the SCDAH.

Federal Funding Spurs Program Development

Until the early 1980s, the SCDAH had an enviable record of support by state government, a testimony to the successful management of SCDAH director Charles Lee. In that favorable funding climate, federal grants for the SCDAH archives program were not as critical as they were for other state archives. The change to a much more restricted funding situation in South Carolina by the mid-1980s forced a search for other support for the many required program changes. The two sources of support were the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Because of the SCDAH's major focus on public records, the NHPRC has been

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[26]Prior to this streamlining of the records retention schedule review and approval process, it had often taken months to complete the review for most schedules and some had taken as much as a year or more from schedule submission to final SCDAH approval. This led to many complaints in state and local government about the inability of the SCDAH to fulfill its most basic responsibility under the Public Records Act as the agency responsible for approving the ultimate disposition of public records. See Kathy Roe Coker, "Records Appraisal: Practice and Procedure," *American Archivist* 48 (Fall 1985): 417–21, for a description of the appraisal and scheduling process employed by the SCDAH in the mid- to late-1980s. Many of the steps detailed there have been reduced or eliminated. The formal approval of state agency and local government records schedules is now usually accomplished within a month of draft records schedule submission. The existence of general records schedules has decreased the number of specific or individual records schedules requiring SCDAH approval by most government offices.

the source of special project support many times in the past decade. This federal funding support was integrated with other program development initiatives in the SCDAH's overall archival efforts.

The NHPRC grant for the SHRAB's assessment and reporting project was the SCDAH's first federal grant for historical records and identified problems and recommended actions to correct them. Close on the heels of the assessment project came the SCDAH's service as host institution for an NHPRC Archival Fellow.[27] The resulting study and recommendations served as the basis for an ongoing records schedule compliance review program, the most important step in the past decade toward securing archival records for the SCDAH. The records management program would now give a high priority to following up on the implementation of records schedules, focusing only on those schedules for records appraised as archival rather than on those with limited-term retentions.[28]

An NEH-funded automated guide project, 1991–1995,[29] provided the impetus required to implement the changes in archival description called for in the SCDAH and SHRAB plans. Without the financial support and the deadlines imposed by the grant, the changes would not have occurred as quickly nor have been received as well by the staff. By the end of the grant, over 11,169 cubic feet and 7,495 microfilm rolls (of records not already held in original form) had been described, representing 5,720 series.[30] The SCDAH also now has state agency and local government office histories as well.

At about this same time in 1991, the SHRAB applied to the NHPRC for a regrant project for South Carolina's local governments. The application requested $150,000 from the NHPRC to be matched by $50,000 from the South Carolina General Assembly.[31] The $200,000 regrant project provided not only much-needed support directly to counties and municipalities, but also an opportunity for the SCDAH to revive its local government records program. Small amounts of money went a long way in addressing such problems as conducting inventories, providing consultant support on program development and records center construction, and microfilming archival records. At the same time, the SCDAH reestablished relations with many county officials and made headway in introducing records management to the state's municipalities. A local government advisory committee was established. Local government officials helped develop regrant funding criteria, served as a grants review panel, and made recommendations on applications to the SHRAB. The SCDAH produced a manual for local government records management, published technical leaflets about such topics as the legality of microfilmed records and selecting appropriate records for microfilming, and developed a list of the local government records that the SCDAH had the greatest interest in transferring to the archives.

These three federal grants provided important support at a crucial period following the SCDAH's first strategic plan. They not only provided funding for specific projects but also had a major impact on how the SCDAH's archives and record management programs operated. They helped to make the link between archives and records management pro-

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[27]NHPRC Grant 90-075, a fellowship in archival administration. The fellowship extended from October 1990 through June 1991.

[28]Dorothy T. Frye, NHPRC Archival Fellow, "Compliance Review Pilot Project," 13 June 1991. This has contributed to increasing the SCDAH accessions rate to one thousand cubic feet during recent years.

[29]NEH Grant RC 22031, funded at $100,000 (about two-thirds of the funds requested), to produce an automated guide to holdings from 1671–1950.

[30]NEH Grant RC 22031, "South Carolina Department of Archives and History Automated Guide Project Final Report," 28 March 1996, 2–3.

[31]NHPRC Grant 90-038. The local government regrant project ran from January 1991 through June 1993.

grams more solid and helped the SCDAH to adopt more effective and efficient policies and practices. This was only the beginning for the federal grants and for the planning.

Revisiting and Refining the Plans

The SCDAH revised its strategic plan a number of times between 1989 and 1994, and both the SCDAH and the SHRAB plans were totally redone in 1993–1994. The results of those efforts were a SCDAH strategic plan, 1994–1997, and a SHRAB state plan, 1994–1999, *Palmetto Reflections: A Plan for South Carolina's Documentary Heritage*[32] (see Figure 2). The major contribution of the SHRAB planning effort to that of the SCDAH at this time lay in the SHRAB's new approach to information gathering. Previously the SHRAB had relied on responses to survey questionnaires, interviews, staff studies, and consultant reports. This time the board also made use of task forces for the several areas of concern. (Nearly one hundred individuals from around the state took part in the work of the task forces.) There were task forces on repositories of private papers and business records as well as state and local government records and information technology. Each task force decided on its own needs for information and conducted brainstorming sessions to identify major issues and recommend solutions.[33] The reports on findings and recommendations from each task force served as input for decision making by the SHRAB in drafting a statewide report. (The full text of the task force reports did not appear in the published SHRAB plan.) Unlike *Preserve or Perish*, which was organized by type of records (i.e., state government records, local government records, and nongovernment records), *Palmetto Reflections* was organized by major issues affecting all of South Carolina's historical records (e.g., facilities, information technology, preservation, and training) and proposed specific strategies for addressing them in government and nongovernment settings.

The work of the SHRAB task forces on state government records, local government records, and information technology not only contributed to the SHRAB's plan, *Palmetto Reflections*, but also directly influenced the development of the SCDAH strategic plan for 1994–1997. The SCDAH plan, emphasized the need for the archives to address its lack of progress on electronic records, to provide automated access to its holdings and other information, and to direct efforts toward the construction of a new archives facility. The plan's three major headings were dwindling revenues, changing technology, and new facility. The SCDAH's plan placed significant new emphasis on such goals as the creation of a public relations/marketing function, fund-raising and the creation of a foundation, the more efficient use of funds throughout the SCDAH, and the securing of funds from the General Assembly for the construction of a new facility. Many of the other specific SHRAB task force recommendations were not reflected in the SCDAH strategic plan, but were instead incorporated into annual operational plans of the relevant work units of the archives and records management division. Unlike the earlier SCDAH plans, however, this one avoided the level of detail of earlier plans and more closely approximated a truly strategic view.[34]

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[32]The planning activities and publication were supported by NHPRC Grant 92-117, $18,646.
[33]See State Historical Records Advisory Board, *Palmetto Reflections: A Plan for South Carolina's Documentary Heritage* (Columbia, 1994), 25–30, for an explanation of how the task forces were used and lists of the task force members and their affiliations.
[34]SCDAH "Strategic Plan, 1994–1997," (March 1994), 9–17.

Figure 2. Key Plans Developed at SCDAH, 1994–1997

SCDAH "Strategic Plan, 1994–1997," March 1994
The plan lists three strategic issues, followed by goals under each issue. The goals are followed by major objectives and timelines.

Strategic Issue: Dwindling Resources

Goals:

- Develop new sources of revenue
- Establish priorities for use of resources
- Develop creative staffing options

Strategic Issue: Changing Technology

Goals:

- Develop and use information networks
- Establish electronic records program

Strategic Issue: New Facility

Goals:

- Get the money
- Address the logistics of designing facility and moving
- Grand Opening

SHRAB *Palmetto Reflections: A Plan for South Carolina's Documentary Heritage* [State Plan, 1994–1999], May 1994

The plan lists five major issues affecting public and private records and recommends specific strategies to address each one.

Issue 1: Public and Private organizations in South Carolina give historical records a low priority.

Issue 2: Insufficient education and training impede the preservation of historical records.

Issue 3: Inadequate conservation and preservation jeopardize historical records, including those in electronic formats.

Issue 4: Historical records facilities are frequently inadequate and often deplorable.

Issue 5: Significant changes are imperative to ensure the availability, access, and ease of use of South Carolina's historical records, including those in electronic formats.

Information Technology and Electronic Records

In the early 1990s, the SCDAH began to employ the Archives Integrated Information System (AIIMS)[35] for a range of activities, including accessioning, researcher access to catalog information, and research room patron registration. While AIIMS supports many department archival needs, the SCDAH is also serving as a beta test site for a records management companion to AIIMS, the Records Management Integrated Information System (RMIIS). RMIIS is currently used for the control of records center holdings. The department finds itself getting behind the times, however, as Windows-based programs have moved well beyond the AIIMS/RMIIS DOS-based capabilities. The archives and records management staff have already studied and recommended action for conversion. The new SCDAH facility, slated to open in the spring of 1998, will support a Windows computing environment for all the program areas.

The SCDAH has spent a great deal of time in the development of an electronic records program. Staff have received specialized training, having attended the NAGARA/ University of Pittsburgh Archives Institute[36] and National Archives electronic records workshops, and outside experts have been brought in to address SCDAH staff and representatives from other agencies. They have participated in two Intergovernmental Cooperative Appraisal Projects (ICAP)[37] which have evaluated paper and electronic record-keeping systems. Moreover, the archives and records management program acquired its own staff computer expert who serves as a useful liaison between the SCDAH and agencies with which we come in contact on electronic records matters.

As important as the technical issues in electronic records management have been, those of relationships and alliances are at least equally important. The SCDAH has found that to deal effectively with electronic records, it cannot play a lone ranger role. Crucial to success are good relations not only with agency technical staff but also with other agency personnel and policy makers. With that in mind, SCDAH staff have regularly attended and participated in meetings of the State Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) and have secured appointment by the governor of the head of the Office of Information Policy and Management (OIPM) to the SHRAB. These connections smoothed the way for such actions as a joint SCDAH/OIPM state agency database survey, approval and endorsement of SCDAH-proposed general schedules for electronic records and data-processing records, a manual on organizing information in stand-alone and networked PCs, and publication of recommended practices on the application of optical disk technology and e-mail.

Working closely with other state agencies that are also concerned about the management of information technology has opened up possibilities that could not have been anticipated. Getting the chance to explain that the archives is not interested just in the ''old stuff'' was an important beginning. Being able to demonstrate an interest in and

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[35]AIIMS is a software package developed by MIS Software, Inc., Tallahassee, Florida, for the Florida State Archives and funded through several Library Services and Construction Act grants. It is written in dBase III Plus and Clipper. Florida State Archives' staff, assisted by David Bearman, provided considerable input in the development of AIIMS, according to James Berberich, Chief, Florida Bureau of Archives and Records Management, in a telephone conversation 20 October 1997.

[36]For a detailed treatment of the NAGARA/University of Pittsburgh Institute, see the article by David J. Olson in this issue of the *American Archivist*.

[37]For a detailed treatment of the ICAP projects, see the article by Marie B. Allen in this issue of the *American Archivist*.

familiarity with electronic recordkeeping has added an important dimension to discussions with program and technical staff in other agencies. This has all paid off in the past year as the SCDAH jointly developed a South Carolina Information Locator Service (SCILS) prototype with the State Office of Information Resources (OIR) and the State Library. Funded in part by an NHPRC grant, SCILS is designed to provide greater citizen access to government information.[38] The SCDAH's interest is to also identify electronic records in agencies and to capture metadata and/or inventory information for retention scheduling.

The real challenge for the SCDAH today is to develop a comprehensive electronic records program. For several years, task forces of individuals from throughout the archives and records management program have worked on conducting surveys, appraising databases for archival value, and developing policies and publications. In an attempt to jump-start an electronic records program, a team of the department's senior archivists and records managers has recently been assigned the task full-time. This temporary unit's major duty is to develop policies and practices from identification and scheduling through accessioning and reference access, involving as many other archives and records management staff as possible. One of their most important responsibilities will be to ensure that staff have the skills, confidence, and time necessary for dealing with electronic records.

The SCDAH is now reviewing its scheduling process and priorities to ensure that increasingly precious time and resources are targeted on the most important records of state and local government. This will undoubtedly have an impact on the nature of records management services, requiring the program to be more assertive and proactive. A 1996–1997 assessment of the SCDAH's holdings of post-1960 state government records pointed out the need to adopt a broader perspective in appraisal and to make scheduling and appraisal decisions on a functional basis, addressing the proliferation of unscheduled and potentially archival agency electronic records as a top priority.[39] The development of the electronic records program is based on the premise that it should be an integral feature of the department. While recognizing that there may be occasions where the SCDAH may never actually take physical custody of an agency database appraised as having archival value,[40] the department has yet to work out the details of such an arrangement, or even of those other situations in which transfer to the archives is warranted. Addressing those and related issues over the next several years will require fundamental changes in many aspects of the archives and records management program.

Reaching Out: Cooperative Ventures

Just as an alliance with state agency information technology officials has been important to advancing the SCDAH's interests in electronic records matters, similar approaches are the key to success in other areas as well. The SCDAH is beginning to realize that, given its size and staff expertise, it has a larger role to play within the state archival

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[38]NHPRC Grant 96-010, information locator system prototype planning and development project, funded for $21,700.

[39]Katherine A. Hayes, NHPRC Archival Fellow (NHPRC Grant 96-021), "Preliminary Survey of Modern State Agency Administrative Records in the South Carolina Department of Archives and History," May 1997.

[40]David Bearman, "New Models for the Management of Electronic Records," in *Electronic Evidence: Strategies for Managing Records in Contemporary Organizations*, edited by Victoria Irons Walch (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1994), 279–89, argues that the advent of electronic records requires that archival programs shift to a noncustodial role.

community.[41] Though many states have their own archival associations, South Carolina does not. For many South Carolina historical records repositories, then, the SCDAH is the only place they can turn to for help in preserving and managing historical records.

In an era of static and even declining resources, addressing problems though cooperative approaches is imperative. This was the thinking behind the development of the SCDAH network of government records officers, a records management newsletter, and training and publications. This was based on the premise that agencies could do more in the management of their records if they were provided the proper training and guidance; agencies should act more as partners in the inventorying and scheduling process. An independent association of government records officers, the South Carolina Public Records Association (SCPRA) was created in 1995.[42] The SCDAH has a permanent position on the SCPRA's board of directors and also provides staff support to its members. The SCPRA offers advice and feedback to the department on its services and also presents sessions on a variety of archives and records management topics at its biannual conferences.

Over the past several years, the SCDAH has also worked closely with the Palmetto Archives, Libraries, and Museums Council on Preservation (PALMCOP) to reach manuscript repositories as well as state and local government offices.[43] PALMCOP includes a broad range of institutions and organizations, and this provides the SCDAH with opportunities to step beyond the confines of the government sector and to concentrate on the preservation of historical records.

The above-mentioned are prime examples of how the SCDAH has worked through statewide organizations to extend its influence and effectiveness. Perhaps the most significant example, however, is the SCDAH's relationship with the State Historical Records Advisory Board. Not only has SHRAB strategic planning helped to better define the nature and scope of SCDAH responsibilities, but it has also promoted such alliances with the SCPRA, PALMCOP, and other organizations. The SHRAB, through support grants from the NHPRC, has even provided resources for conducting much-needed activities and projects with those groups in support of the board's planning goals and objectives.[44] Since the SCDAH provides the staff support for the SHRAB, SCDAH involvement and influence in the affairs of historical records repositories throughout the state has been further extended. This is best illustrated by the SHRAB's follow-up to its 1994 report, *Palmetto Reflections*. The SHRAB applied to the NHPRC for a regrant for the state's repositories of nongovernment historical records which resulted in a $95,400 award.[45] Its previous activity had been dominated by activities in support of government records.

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[41]Larry J. Hackman, ''State Government and Statewide Archival Affairs: New York as a Case Study,'' *American Archivist* 55 (Fall 1992): 578–99, discusses the potential roles for state government in statewide archival affairs.

[42]The start-up of the SCPRA was facilitated by a $1,000 gift from the Georgia Records Association.

[43]SCDAH staff regularly serve in PALMCOP leadership positions and actively participate on committees and in other association activities.

[44]Specifically, NHPRC Grants 90-019 ($3,050), 92-117 ($18,646), and 92-026 ($19,064) have helped to support conferences and workshops and other public events as well as the development of public service announcements on archival issues for television broadcast. For a chronology of recent SHRAB activities as well as a list of regrants awarded, see State Historical Records Advisory Board, *Annual Report, 1996* (Columbia, 1997), 4–6 and Appendices D and E.

[45]NHPRC Grant 95-042, to operate a regrant program for the state's historical records repositories to address their most pressing needs.

In the SHRAB's 1994 state plan, *Palmetto Reflections*, the extent and severity of the storage, preservation, access, and educational deficiencies prevalent in South Carolina repositories was highlighted.[46] As a result, the SHRAB shifted its focus from government records to the records in historical societies, churches, colleges and universities, and other repositories throughout the state. The first NHPRC regrant for these repositories has been followed by a second one for 1997–1999.[47] Through these regrants the SCDAH now has regular contact with virtually all of the state's historical records repositories. The regrants have not only funded specific repository projects in arrangement and description and microfilming, but have also encouraged the development of collecting policies and the adoption and use of the MARC AMC format, and assisted in the training of staff and volunteers. As part of the regrant projects, the SCDAH coordinated a week-long Archives Institute for representatives of twenty-five repositories and compiled a directory of the state's historical records repositories.

A wider role for the SHRAB and the SCDAH in state archival affairs has been further evidenced by the SHRAB's sponsoring an annual statewide historical records conference. The SCDAH staff have developed the sessions which cover a variety of topics on the preservation and management of historical records, and the speakers are archivists and records managers from state and local government offices and manuscript repositories from around the state. The conferences are leading to a greater sense of common interests among attendees and, hopefully, concerted action on key elements of the SHRAB's state plan. Already the conferences have stimulated the state archival community and other citizens in supporting funding for the SCDAH's new archival facility and for state funds to match the SHRAB's most recent NHPRC regrant. Through ventures such as these the SCDAH has found that in addition to fulfilling its mandated responsibilities, it also has a wider role in supporting the state's documentary heritage.

South Carolina History Center

The SCDAH has spent nearly a decade in lobbying and planning for the construction of a new facility, which was a high priority in the SHRAB's first plan and in succeeding versions of the SCDAH plans. Early on, legislative staffers had to be convinced that microfilming and/or digitization, rather than the storage of the paper originals, was a more costly alternative to building construction. Then a major outbreak of mold in the stacks, resulting from the breakdown of an aging HVAC system, attracted wide notice in the press. A University of South Carolina mycologist confirmed the severity of the mold outbreak and provided a report that proved helpful in convincing the General Assembly of the need for a new facility[48] and for $300,000 for protection of the holdings until the move could be completed. Even then, the project was in frequent danger of being downgraded on the list of the state's construction projects. A lobbyist was retained to monitor

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[46]SHRAB, *Palmetto Reflections*, 10–13, 16, 20–22. The issues and strategies contained in the SHRAB state plan were based on a consultant report by Victoria Irons Walch, ''Report on the Repositories of Private Papers in the State of South Carolina,'' (January 1994), prepared for the task force studying the conditions and needs of the state's nongovernment records.

[47]NHPRC Grant 97-096, to provide access to valuable historical materials in South Carolina repositories of private papers and nongovernment archives. Funded for $100,000, contingent on a $50,000 state cash match.

[48]South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *Annual Report, 1993–1994* (Columbia, 1994), 3; Patricia A. Morris, ''Mold Spores South Carolina Into Defensive Action,'' *NAGARA Clearinghouse* 10 (Winter 1994): 1, 6–7.

legislative actions and inactions related to the building. When the legislators balked at purchasing land for the new facility after considerable SCDAH planning for a downtown site, a search was launched to find state-owned land.[49] Through all the twists and turns over those years, the SCDAH found it had to deal not only with a great number of legislators and staff members, but also with South Carolina's historical and patriotic organizations and other citizen groups. In the process of putting together a winning case for the new facility, the SCDAH had to make some major adjustments in the way it operated and how it managed it resources.

The new SCDAH facility was projected to cost $20,500,000, but the General Assembly would provide only $18,500,000. The balance would have to be raised by the SCDAH. A nonprofit foundation was established and staff hired for the effort.[50] The NEH provided support in the form of a $575,000 Challenge Grant.[51] The ongoing fund-raising has certainly increased the SCDAH's visibility, but it is also having an effect on expectations about the agency and the new facility which in turn is having an impact on the SCDAH's programs. For instance, unlike its predecessor, the new facility will not be called the Archives Building. Rather, it has been publicized as the South Carolina History Center (SCHC).[52] This has helped in fund-raising, since it proved difficult to develop interest among potential donors for an "archives," which to many brings to mind a warehouse of dead records. Planning has moved beyond a simple name change, however, as it has become apparent that many in the state (including those potential donors) want a great deal more from the SCDAH than in the past. The importance of the archival function has been acknowledged in the allocation of stack space, conservation and microfilm labs, archival work areas, and an ample and well-outfitted research room. The SCHC will also house some new and expanded functions designed to engage the general public and to generate a greater revenue stream to fund ongoing programs.

New Directions

The move to the South Carolina History Center in the spring of 1998 will provide some very important opportunities for the SCDAH's archival program. Chief among these will be that the archives and records management staffs will now be housed in the same building, many within the same office area. This closer proximity is bound to increase the possibilities for communication and collaboration that had been difficult to achieve in the past. One of the major challenges will be to find ways to deal with the problems posed by late-twentieth-century records. These challenges were summed up quite succinctly by Edwin C. Bridges, director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, during his consultancy for the SCDAH's 1993–1994 strategic planning effort:[53]

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[49]SCDAH, *Annual Report, 1993–1994*, 4.

[50]SCDAH, *Annual Report, 1993–1994*, 4.

[51]NEH Grant CH-20306, South Carolina History Center and Endowment. The challenge grant requires the SCDAH to raise $1,725,000 in new nonfederal contributions.

[52]Promotional booklet, *The South Carolina History Center: History and Heritage for All Generations* (Columbia: South Carolina Department of Archives and History, n.d. [1996]). The SCHC will have 128,000 square feet of space, including classrooms, auditorium, exhibit gallery, catering kitchen, gift shop, and formal garden. The archival stacks have a capacity for about forty-two thousand cubic feet of records, with the possibility for future stack additions to the building. Two of the three stacks are outfitted with mobile shelving.

[53]Memorandum from Ed Bridges to Roy Tryon and George Vogt, 9 June 1993.
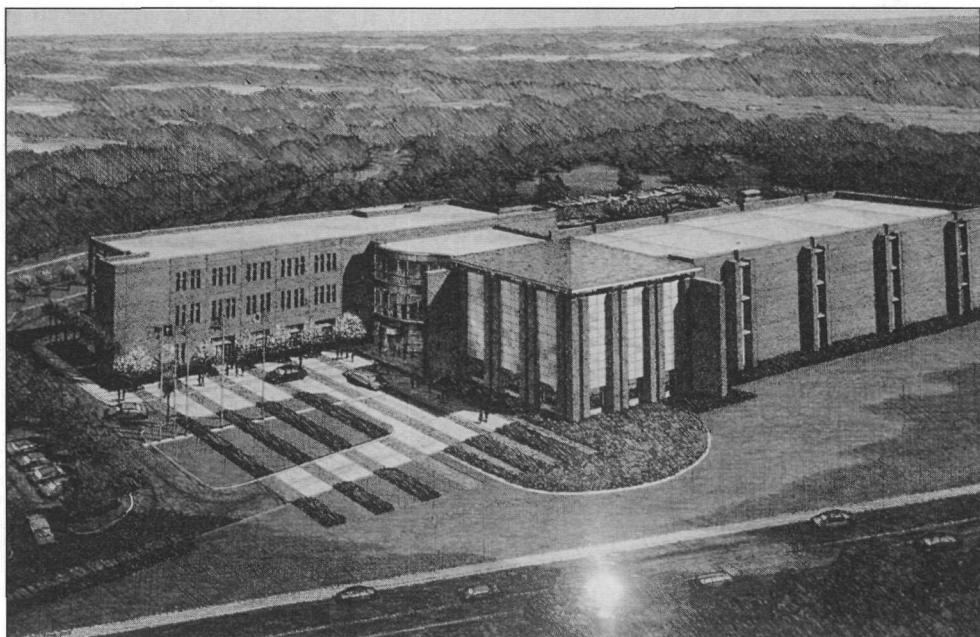
An artist's rendering of the South Carolina History Center, Columbia, S.C. (*Courtesy of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.*)

1) that the quantity of modern records is too great for us to take in and preserve in the state archives all that are of permanent value for state government;
2) that the emergence of electronic information systems has created fundamentally new ways of conducting public business and fundamentally new practices in the creation, maintenance, and communication of government records;
3) that the kinds of resource limits we face now are unlikely to improve substantially in the foreseeable future; and
4) that the combination of these factors requires a new array of archival strategies if we are to perform our historical function—preserving the documentation of key functions of government.

Bringing the archival and records management staff into greater alignment in support of archival government records will be of highest priority over the next few years. This effort as well as other historical records activities in the state are bound to be affected by a new round of SCDAH and SHRAB planning.

The SCDAH is preparing for an expansion of public programming activities in the SCHC.[54] Most of this new activity (e.g., running a gift shop, expanding educational offerings, operating an exhibits program) will require a reallocation of staff and other resources. To thrive in an environment where no increased state appropriations are expected for some years to come, additional revenues are crucial. These may include increasing charges for publications, for conservation work for outside customers, and for Xerox and microfilm copies for research room patrons. Such new options as rental of the SCHC

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[54]SCDAH "Strategic Plan, 1998–1999," December 1997.

auditorium and meeting rooms will begin. Already, the microfilm program has been transformed into a revenue-generating operation. Whereas it had previously been dedicated exclusively to microfilming older archival records free of charge, it is now a service bureau operation serving government and private customer projects at competitive prices. At the same time that the SCDAH's focus seems to be shifting toward new possibilities as a History Center, the SHRAB is preparing for a new strategic planning effort which will result in a plan for the period 2000–2005.[55] Assessing the changes that follow the move to the South Carolina History Center and planning for the role of the SCDAH archival program in the first years of the new millennium will be a truly challenging exercise. Apparently, the really interesting times are still to come.

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[55]NHPRC Grant 98-002, state board planning, 1998–2000.