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About the Cover

Sailors playing checkers in the game room of the Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) at 25 South Street, New York, New York [1920s?]. SCI laid the cornerstone for its headquarters at 25 South Street on 16 April 1912, one day after the sinking of RMS *Titanic*. In "Mythmaking and the Archival Record: The *Titanic* Disaster as Documented in the Archives of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey," Johnathan Thayer analyzes SCI as a usable example, both in terms of the history of the institute's "hidden" archival collection and of the history of the institute itself, of the role that archives and archivists play in the process of cultural mythmaking, and in reclaiming historical experience. *Game Room—25 South Street, Photographs, Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey Records, Queens College Special Collections and Archives, Queens College, CUNY, Flushing, NY. Accessible at www.qcarchives.com/sci.*

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FROM THE EDITOR

Gregory S. Hunter

The American Archivist at Seventy-Five: Looking Backward and Looking Forward

I am honored to be the editor of *The American Archivist* as it concludes its seventy-fifth year of service to the archival profession. The temptation arises with such an anniversary to look backward as well as forward. Try as I might, I could not resist that temptation with this issue.

In looking backward, I opened the first issue of the journal edited in 1938 by Theodore Calvin Pease, after whom the Society later named its award for outstanding student research paper.¹ Pease and the Editorial Board summarize the goal of the journal as follows:

The editorial policy of THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST can be simply defined: to be as useful as possible to the members of the profession. At all times its editors will welcome suggestions to this end.

Seventy-five years later, this still is the goal of the journal. The Editorial Board and I continue to welcome your comments and suggestions. Pease also states the emphasis for the nascent journal:

For the time being, at least, and subject to contrary indications from members of the Society, THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST will in its contents emphasize the concrete and practical rather than the general. At times in the past, it has seemed that Mark Twain's famous remark about the weather has had its archival application. With Americans generally, in national, state and other

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¹ "Announcement," *The American Archivist* 1 (January 1938): v-vi. The theme of looking both backward and forward is also reflected in the titles of two presidential addresses: Herbert E. Angel, "Archival Janus: The Records Center," *The American Archivist* 31 (January 1968): 5-12. Richard Pearce-Moses, "Janus in Cyberspace: Archives on the Threshold of the Digital Era," *The American Archivist* 70 (Spring/Summer 2007): 13-22.

archives disposed to do something about them, specific suggestions seem to be in order.

While we still have not made much progress doing something about the weather, *The American Archivist* has expanded its focus over the years. The journal regularly includes theory and methodology, as well as professional practice, in its pages. As editor, I will strive to maintain this balance.

Pease ends his introduction with an acknowledgment of the fragility of the new enterprise and a call for member involvement:

The editors are quite aware that in spite of the co-operation of the Society, THE AMERICAN ARCHIVIST may be a failure. Without that co-operation, no matter what their efforts, they know it cannot succeed.

. . . the journal can never be a success unless each individual member of the Society of American Archivists recognizes a personal responsibility for furnishing it with worthy material. In the hands of the membership, therefore, rests the ultimate fate of the publication.

Membership involvement over the past seventy-five years has resulted in a peer-reviewed journal respected in the scholarly community and valued in the archival profession. In the tradition of Theodore Calvin Pease, I encourage all SAA members to become involved with the journal—*your* journal. If you're wondering how to begin, I repeat here a couple of concrete suggestions that I made during the "Write Away Breakfast" held at the SAA Annual Meeting in San Diego:

- **Peer Review.** We always need peer reviewers for submitted articles. Peer reviews are "double blind": the authors and reviewers are anonymous. I have expanded the number of peer reviewers for each article to three, so a new peer reviewer need not fear that he or she will bear the entire weight of the publication recommendation.
- **Retrospective Articles.** Now that we have completed seventy-five years of the journal, a corpus exists from which to draw focused retrospective articles. I'd like to publish several of these over the next few years, either dealing with the entire seventy-five years or a subset of years. For example, how has the discussion of appraisal (or another topic) changed over seventy-five years (or during a particular decade, like the 1960s)? Which articles or authors have been the most cited over the entire run of the journal or during a particular time period? Do publication patterns mirror the concerns of society during certain decades? In particular, I see an opportunity to apply information studies methodologies related to bibliometrics, content analysis, and scholarly domains.

- **International Articles.** Over the next few years, I also would like to publish translations of articles originally published in languages other than English. I am looking for assistance in identifying and translating articles that would have an impact on American archival theory and practice.

Transitioning now from looking backward to looking forward, you will notice some changes in the journal. With this issue, the Editorial Board has agreed to my request to remove the categorization of submissions as either “articles,” “case studies,” or “perspectives.” As a reader of the journal, I always found a great deal of overlap in these categories: some of the case studies are as long as the articles; some of the articles employ a case study methodology; and every good article or case study takes a perspective on an archival issue. While we will maintain the categories on the SAA website to help potential authors, we will not differentiate the submissions when they appear in *The American Archivist*. Every article that appears in the journal has successfully completed the peer review process.

Behind the scenes, I have developed a rubric to make the peer review process as transparent as possible. This rubric should also speed the process so we can get publication decisions to authors sooner. The rubric is still in draft form. Once finalized by the Editorial Board, it will be posted on the SAA website for potential authors.

In terms of the future, the Editorial Board has been working for a couple of years on a redesign of the journal. This will be effective with volume 76. I will explain the redesign in the next issue of *The American Archivist*.

The Editorial Board and the SAA office have also been exploring additional ways of delivering the journal to you electronically. We currently make PDF files available through MetaPress and JSTOR. We are experimenting with e-reader formats so you can download and read the latest issue of the journal on a mobile device. You will hear more about this in the future.

But before that future arrives, I hope you’ll take some time to enjoy the current issue of the journal. A diverse group of ten articles covers a wide range of archival issues and concerns:

- Scott Cline begins the issue with an examination of the fundamental nature of the archival enterprise. He believes that “covenant” is at the heart of our professional endeavors. As defined by Cline, three elements characterize the archival covenant: genuine encounter, sacred obligation, and piety of service.
- The second article looks at the economic impact of archives. Elizabeth Yakel, Wendy Duff, Helen Tibbo, Adam Kriesberg, and Amber Cushing present results from two parallel surveys on the economic impact of government archives (state, provincial, territorial, county, and

municipal) in the United States and Canada. They also discuss methodological issues surrounding the measurement of economic impact in archives, libraries, and museums.

- Bruce P. Montgomery explores the records generated by Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. He discusses the various caches of state security documents that were removed from Iraq as a result of internal rebellion and more than a decade of hostilities. Montgomery examines the circumstances surrounding these removals, the custody and use of the records, and the status and limits of the international laws of war regarding their capture and return.
- In the fourth article, Richard J. Cox, Janet Ceja Alcalá, and Leanne Bowler present a case study of the development of archival teaching packets at the University of Pittsburgh. The authors had students construct document teaching packets using the extensive Governor Dick Thornburgh Papers. In this essay, they provide background in the use of such packets in archival advocacy and public education, discuss the successes and challenges of such an assignment, and offer some insights for such future teaching in graduate archival education.
- Johnathan Thayer discusses a century-old event—the 1912 sinking of *Titanic*—and its effect upon a contemporary archival program. Thayer offers a case study of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey, both in terms of the history of the institute's "hidden" archival collection and of the history of the institute itself. He also explores the role that archives and archivists play in the process of cultural mythmaking and in reclaiming historical experience.
- Archival moving images are the subject of the sixth article in this issue. Karen F. Gracy examines the distribution methods cultural institutions use to make archival moving images available online. She concludes that while institutions exhibit strong interest in moving image digitization projects and online distribution, significant barriers continue to restrict the development of digital projects and programs for archival moving images.
- Kay Mathiesen returns to the discussion of ethics and professional practice. Her article analyzes a key question: "Do Native Americans have a moral right to control access to their traditional cultural expressions (TCE) and traditional knowledge (TK) held in libraries and archives?" Mathiesen argues that group privacy and the concept of restorative justice provide an ethical justification for this right.
- Devin Becker and Collier Nogues present a report on the personal digital archiving practices of 110 emerging writers. The authors recommend that archivists actively approach writers to offer guidance

on the best and simplest ways to organize and archive their files so as to prevent further losses.

- Mary Flanagan and Peter Carini believe that games offer great promise for humanities scholarship by uniting the culture of the archives with a diverse user base, including researchers, hobbyists, and gamers. They report on a pilot study using computer games to collect information about archival images in libraries and archives as these institutions digitize millions of items across national collections.
- In the final article, Jessica L. Wagner and Debbi A. Smith examine student perceptions of university archives, with the goal of developing better methods of reaching out to encourage donation of student life materials. The authors provide insights and strategies for meeting the challenge of collecting and documenting student university life.

Finally, the issue concludes with reviews of five books written or edited by Ross Harvey, Christopher A. Lee, Kate Theimer, Aaron D. Purcell, and Larry J. Hackman. This continues the tradition of reviews that dates from the beginning of *The American Archivist*. Only one review appeared in the first issue of 1938, but it was particularly significant: Theodore Calvin Pease reviewed Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration*. Our monographic literature has built upon the foundation of Jenkinson, Schellenberg, and other giants, expanding dramatically over the past seventy-five years. Reviews in *The American Archivist* have played a key role in this process.

This is an exciting and challenging time to be an archivist. My goal is for *The American Archivist* to remain at the forefront of our professional discourse, as it has for seventy-five years. With your assistance, it will.



Editor

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