The Primary Source

Volume 2 | Issue 4

Article 1

1980

Entire Issue Volume 2, Number 4

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource>

Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

(1980) "Entire Issue Volume 2, Number 4," *The Primary Source*: Vol. 2 : Iss. 4 , Article 1.

DOI: 10.18785/ps.0204.01

Available at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/theprimarysource/vol2/iss4/1>

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Primary Source by an authorized editor of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

The Primary Source

Newsletter of the Society of Mississippi Archivists.

Volume Two

November, 1980

Number Four

MISSISSIPPI HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS PLAN

Adopted by the Mississippi State Historical Records Advisory Board at its meeting on September 23, 1980.

I. Role and Functions of State Advisory Board

- A. There is a need in Mississippi for a coordinated historical records plan. It is the feeling of the State Historical Records Advisory Board that some direction is necessary and it is the intention of the Board to act as a catalyst for this records activity. The Advisory Board is committed to making valuable papers and records in the state accessible to the widest possible audience and providing for their usefulness and maintenance in suitable archival conditions.
- B. In order to focus attention on major historical records problems in Mississippi, the Advisory Board has adopted a statement of priorities which shall be used in evaluating grant applications. This statement shall be reviewed annually and revised as needed.
- C. The Advisory Board serves as the reviewer for records grant applications made by institutions in Mississippi to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Review shall be based on the needs identified and stated as priorities later in this plan. Applicants should submit twelve copies of the completed grant application to the State Historical Records Coordinator for distribution to members of the Advisory Board. At the same time, the original signed application should be sent to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in Washington, D. C. Applicants should bear in mind that the Mississippi Historical Records Advisory Board does not make final determinations on grants; it merely reviews applications and makes recommendations to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, which makes the final decisions.

II. Categories of Records

The State Historical Records Advisory Board will use a broad definition of records. "Records" shall mean all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings or other material regardless of physical form or characteristics. The Board will entertain applications dealing with the following types of records:

- A. Public - state, county, municipal, political subdivisions
- B. Educational - primary and secondary schools and institutions of higher

(continued on p. 6)

The Primary Source is a quarterly publication of news and ideas produced by the Society of Mississippi Archivists, a non-profit organization of professional archivists and interested persons. Subscription to The Primary Source is included in the Society membership dues. Membership information is printed on the last page of each newsletter.

Your contributions are welcome. Write The Primary Source, P. O. Box 1151, Jackson, MS 39205.

Deadlines for inclusion are:

#1 (February) -- January 31

#2 (May) -- April 30

#3 (August) -- July 31

#4 (November) -- October 31

h t holmes.....Editor

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

The Society has entered its third membership year. Renewal notices have been distributed and letters have been sent to 1978-1979 members who did not rejoin last year. At this point, we have dues from 158, which includes 149 renewals, two new members and six 1978-1979 members who have rejoined. Further efforts to interest new members in the work of the Society will be implemented during November. If you plan to renew your membership but have not done so yet, please send in your membership application and dues to our treasurer as soon as you can so you won't miss any issues of The Primary Source.

The Society's advance ruling period as a tax exempt organization with the IRS expired September 30, and we are currently preparing information which will be submitted to satisfy our claim that we are still a publicly supported organization and should receive permanent tax exempt status. This financial data is due by December 30.

You should have received your 1979-1980 Membership Directory during September. If you did not receive your copy of the Directory, please let me

know, and I will provide you with another copy. As can be seen from the Directory, the Society continues to have a membership representing all areas of the state.

The Society continues to be a growing organization. We want to respond to your needs. Please let us know of ways in which we can benefit you, our membership.

-Ronald E. Tomlin

SOCIETY OF MISSISSIPPI ARCHIVISTS
OFFICERS
1980-1981

Jo Cille Hafter.....President
Robert J. Bailey.....Vice-President
Anne Wells.....Secretary
Bernice Bell.....Director
Julia Guice.....Director
William J. Hanna.....Director
Thomas M. Verich.....Director

ACCESSIONS

Mississippi Department of Archives
and History

Manuscripts

Afro-American Sons and Daughters Hospital Records. 1927-1937. 1 volume. A patient register for one of the few privately-owned hospitals for Negroes in Mississippi. Donated by Barbara Allen, Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Peel (William) Diary. 1863-1865. 1 volume. William Peel was a prisoner in Johnson's Island Prison, Ohio, during the Civil War. His diary was written while there. Donated by Mrs. Josephine Greer, Itta Bena, Miss.

Chisholm (Bob) Papers. 1964-1969. 1 cubic foot. Transcripts of locally produced newscasts for radio station WONA, Winona, Miss. These newscasts cover such topics as school integration, civil rights marches, anti-poverty programs and local government coverage. Donated by Bob Chisholm, Memphis, Tenn.

Watkins (Lettie) Letters. 1845-1860. 1 linear foot. Correspondence between members of the Watkins family located in Middleton and Carrollton, Miss., and Texas. Made available for copying by Mrs. Laurence Bibus, Carrollton, Miss.

Beadle (Richard Henry) Photograph Collection. ca. 1950s. 250 items. Negatives of a black photographer who chronicled the life of black citizens of Jackson, Miss. Donated by the Beadle family.

Bennett (Levi) Diaries. 1860-1871. 19 items. Diaries of Indian citizen who fought at the siege of Vicksburg. Made available for microfilming by Vairae Cooper, McComb, Miss.

Oral History

Interviews with the following persons

have been recently accessioned: Shelby Foote, Evans Harrington, Pete Seeger, Mrs. Walter Anderson, Ernst Borinski, Paul B. Johnson, B. B. King, Leroy Percy, Phinizy Percy and Walker Percy.

State Records

Mississippi Judicial Council. 1977-1980. 22 cubic feet. Records of the executive director, Dan McDaniel, of the Mississippi Judicial Council, 1977-1980. These records consist of correspondence, subject files, reports on judicial systems, photographs of personnel and newspaper clippings on the work and findings of the Mississippi Judicial Council.

Mississippi State Highway Department. ca. 1920-1940. 95 cubic feet. Aerial photographs from the Transportation Planning Division of the Mississippi State Highway Department used for making county maps.

National Youth Administration. 1935-1943. 38 cubic feet. Records of the Office of the State Administrator, J. C. Flowers, 1935-1943. These records include correspondence, bulletins and circular letters, memoranda, subject files, monthly reports, news releases serial telegrams, photographs of personnel and project sites, publications, and newspaper scrapbooks on projects performed and completed by the National Youth Administration.

Mississippi State University
Mitchell Memorial Library

Katherine Kraft Collection. 1942-1980. 1 linear foot. Correspondence, oral history interview, thesis and research files relating to the Displaced Persons in Mississippi, 1942-1952. Donor: Katherine Kraft.

Wilson F. Minor Collection Addition. 1958-1975. 7 linear feet. Research files, columns, other papers concerning Minor's careers as capitol correspondent for the
(continued on p. 4)

THE SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS
INSTITUTES BASIC ARCHIVAL CONSERVA-
TION PROGRAM

The Society of American Archivists is pleased to announce that it has received a grant of \$157,927 from the National Endowment for the Humanities to support its Basic Archival Conservation Program.

Through a nationwide series of workshops, consultant visits, and the publication of a manual, the Basic Archival Conservation Program will, over a two year period, provide training and guidance which will enable archivists to assess the conservation needs of their institutions and to establish realistic programs and procedures to address those needs. The target audience includes archivists, manuscript curators and others with direct curatorial responsibility for archival and manuscript materials. The information to be conveyed through the program will relate to the physical nature of collections materials, proper methods of handling and storage, basic means of prolonging records life, as well as basic conservation techniques which can be incorporated as an integral part of archival processing procedures. A comprehensive approach which integrates conservation practices with all other aspects of archival management will be employed. The guiding philosophy of the program is that conservation impacts on all phases of archival activity from appraisal functions through transporting, cataloging, storage and exhibition and research use of collections, and that archivists need to maintain a conservation perspective throughout.

Twelve basic workshops will be conducted in geographically distributed regions of the U.S. beginning in Spring, 1981; the consultant service, which will be offered to approximately 50 institutions, will commence in Summer, 1981. For further information regarding any aspect of the Basic Archival Conservation Program, contact Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Program Director.

Accessions, cont.

New Orleans Times-Picayune and as editor of the Jackson Capitol Reporter.
Donor: Wilson F. Minor.

Mrs. Henry Duke (Arachne Ethyl Smith) Watson II and Mrs. Charles Wallace Papers. 1875-1974. 1 linear foot.
Ledgers, church records, personal papers relating chiefly to Strong, Miss.
Donors: Mrs. Watson and Mrs. Wallace.

Tougaloo College
Coleman Library

Henderson, Gordon.

Galley proofs and the original manuscript for his book, Introduction to Political Parties. 2 linear feet.

The Gordon Henderson Collection of Reapportionment, Redistricting Papers (State of Mississippi) which include legal briefs, raw and compiled data on district populations, which served as evidence for his and others' testimony before local, state and federal judges. 15 linear feet.

Henry, Aaron.

The Aaron Henry Collection of Papers and other Personal Data include materials on the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the Democratic Party (state and national levels, the NAACP (state, national and local chapters/ individuals), files of civil rights articles/papers on issues and individuals, campaign memorabilia: buttons, posters, flyers; photographs, etc. ca. 500 feet.

Jones, Curl C.

Collection of books, periodicals by and about blacks, position papers in library science, blacks in Utah, the Mormon religion. 1500+ items.

King, Rev. Edwin.

Relevant press clippings, personal papers of civil rights leaders and activities, including those of Edwin and Jeannette King, and numerous internal documents of various civil rights
(continued on p. 5)

GAO Proposes Abandoning Review of Classified Papers

As Reported by the Associated Press
October 30, 1980

Washington - The General Accounting Office recommended Wednesday that the government abandon its practice of systematically reviewing all old classified documents and declassifying those that can safely be made public.

At issue are 617 million pages dealing with state secrets of war, peace, diplomacy, arms control, espionage, trade negotiations and other government activities in the area of national security.

The GAO, a governmental watchdog agency, cited the \$11 million it costs each year to pay people employed solely to review the old papers.

But its proposal drew criticism from the National Archives, storehouse of old government records, and from Steven Garfinkel, director of the Information Security Oversight Office.

He called the proposal "drastic," "insupportable," "one-dimensional" and "illogical."

The GAO recommended abandoning the systematic review of classified documents put into effect by an executive order signed by President Carter in 1978.

Carter directed agencies to look at all classified documents as they become 20 years old and declassify those that can be disclosed without harm to the government.

Previously, documents were not reviewed until they were 30 years old.

The GAO said more than 155 agencies hold 617 million pages of documents requiring review.

The agencies include the FBI, CIA, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the departments of State, Justice, Commerce and Defense. Also on the list are many agencies no longer in existence.

Instead of systematically reviewing all classified papers, the GAO recommended that the government examine only those requested or likely to be requested by members of the public, chiefly historians. It estimated that 90 percent of the declassified papers are of no interest to historians or to

the public.

The agency called systematic review "inefficient and costly."

People wanting documents that has not been reviewed could seek them through the Freedom of Information Act, the GAO added.

But the National Archives, in an unusually forthright memo from assistant archivist James E. O'Neill, said historians cannot ask for documents if they do not know they exist.

"When told that the files are closed because they are classified and that he must specifically identify the documents he wants released, the researcher becomes frustrated and angry at a government that preaches openness but does nothing positive to make that happen," the memo said.

Garfinkel, in his response to the GAO proposal, wrote:

"Systematic review establishes the principle that an open society cannot tolerate the permanent or indefinite closure of historically valuable records.

"Moreover, by establishing a finite period of restriction, systematic review helps to offset the perception held by many of a security classification system abused by government officials intent on hiding their mistakes behind the cloak of secrecy."

THE GAO said the "page by page review" of documents is "costly and time-consuming" because materials about foreign governments must be kept secret for 30 years and because some information must be weeded out to avoid revealing the methods and sources used by intelligence agencies.

When Carter signed the order, he said all records more than 20 years old should be reviewed by 1988.

Accessions, cont.

groups. 210 cubic feet.

Smith, Robert.

Collection of speeches. 3 inches.

Southern Black Arts Coalition of Papers.

Includes correspondence, playbills, posters, etc., of southern black literary groups. 2 linear feet.

Records Plan, cont.

learning.

- C. Industrial and business.
- D. Agricultural
- E. Public and private institutional - churches, professional associations, etc.
- F. Minority and ethnic.
- G. Private papers and collections.
- H. Other types deemed important.

III. Priorities

The State Historical Records Advisory Board will give preference to, but not necessarily limit itself to, projects dealing with the following priorities:

- A. Historical records of demonstrated research value, in danger of deterioration and loss from other causes.
- B. Locating, inventorying and identifying valuable historical records. The Board recognizes that there exists a certain body of historical record material which is unknown to researchers or inaccessible. It therefore encourages projects which identify these valuable historical resources.
- C. Protecting and preserving historical records. The Board will favor projects which (1) seek to gather valuable historical records into secure repositories where they can be properly preserved and made available for research; (2) seek to repair or rehabilitate damaged or deteriorated records, and (3) seek through microfilm projects to preserve the information in records of high research value which are in danger of deterioration or loss.
- D. Processing or arranging existing collections. It is the Board's intention to endorse projects which increase physical or intellectual control over current holdings of repositories.
- E. Describing collections and preparing basic inventories and finding aids. The Board recognizes that simply accessioning a collection does not make it useful for researchers. A certain degree of description is needed to enable researchers to recognize whether a collection is useful to their work and to enable them to use the collection. Projects which make valuable records more useful and more accessible will be favored.

In carrying out the above, special consideration will be given to projects which:

- A. Involve cooperation among several groups or institutions, or where there is involvement and interest from a group or groups beyond the applicant or applying institution.
- B. Will serve as models or guides for others with similar records or comparable problems.

(continued on p. 8)

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTIONS

Developed by the Local History Committee of the History Section, Reference and Adult Services Division, American Library Association, June, 1979. Accepted by Reference and Adult Services Division Board of Directors, Dallas, June, 1979.

These guidelines are intended to assist those beginning local history collections. In surveying the literature about the collecting of local materials, it is apparent that many have already written about the use and the maintenance of the various media employed in local history. Therefore, these guidelines exist to: 1) Identify factors which need to be resolved before the institution is committed to action; 2) Assist those interested in the creation of local history programs.

1.0 Considerations before making a commitment to develop a local history collection.

- 1.1 A local history program should be developed only after a careful assessment has been made of the services currently or potentially being provided by other institutions and libraries within the community. The institution seeking to develop a local history collection must determine what is presently being collected and what is not being collected; what services are needed and what services are not; and to what depth such collections will be developed.
- 1.2 Institutions developing a local history collection should make certain that such materials are placed in the most suitable collection for their best use, dissemination and preservation.

2.0 Identification of collection limits.

- 2.1 A major factor in the successful development of the collection is to identify its emphasis. By definition this could be geography, format or whatever the institution desires.
- 2.2 Identify those materials which are to be acquired and maintained exclusively by the institution and those to be acquired cooperatively.

3.0 Acquisitions.

- 3.1 Write an acquisitions policy for collecting local history materials.
 - a. State the intended geographic collection area.
 - b. Describe those materials desired by the institution and the extent to which they will be collected.
 - c. Identify the types of materials which will definitely NOT be collected by the institution. Bear in mind that there may be other institutions which are better equipped to handle a given type of material.
 - d. Identify those subject areas which will be acquired only on a cooperative basis.
- 3.2 The institution should process promptly and make available all materials collected.

4.0 Collection location and security.

- 4.1 Local history collections should be established in an identifiable place, separate from the other collections of the library.
- 4.2 The space so designated for local history collections should be an area secure from

(continued on p. 8)

Records Plan, cont.

- C. Will employ adequately trained and experienced archivists or manuscript curators well-versed in accepted techniques and procedures, or will lead to the development of these skills in new records personnel.

IV. Exclusions

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission will not approve grants to:

- A. Assist projects where the documents involved or any part of them are to be kept closed to researchers for an unreasonable period of time or are not accessible on equal terms, or where it is the policy of the repository to deny public access;
- B. Assist in purchasing or erecting any building or land, although limited funds may be used for the acquisition of special equipment and minor remodeling of space used in connection with projects;
- C. Fund public service positions established to reduce unemployment, although grants may be recommended to assist projects in which persons in such positions are employed;
- D. Purchase manuscripts or other historical records;
- E. Support oral history interviewing or transcribing; or
- F. Support projects for preservation of newspapers or rare books.

Local History Guidelines, cont.

theft with proper provisions for monitoring the materials.

- 4.3 An environment which is conducive to the preservation of the materials should be provided.
- 5.0 Fiscal Considerations.
 - 5.1 The local history collection should be processed and maintained by trained staff. Professionals can be assisted by properly trained volunteers to provide service to the patrons.
 - 5.2 A budget sufficient to acquire, process and maintain the basic collection must be provided.
 - 5.3 Consideration must be given for the cost of reproducing local history materials. Rare and fragile items must be protected from constant use by the patrons; copies will usually suffice to make the information available.

THE DOCUMENTARY RELATIONS OF THE SOUTHWEST

By Thomas C. Barnes
Arizona State Museum
The University of Arizona

The Documentary Relations of the Southwest is a project of the Arizona State Museum at the University of Arizona in Tucson funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The "DRSW" is an interdisciplinary, multi-phased project involving extensive archival research, the critical selection, annotation and storage of primary documents, and bilingual publication of these documents; all of which pertain to the ethnohistory, cultural heritage and humanities of the American southwest and the Mexican north. The DRSW works with and maintains information on Indian ethnohistory, Spanish colonial expansion, Spanish and Mexican social history and general Indio-hispanic culture. In locating and arranging this information, the project, through archival research, delves into history, anthropology, linguistics, paleography, economics, geography and climatology - to mention a few of the disciplines.

The Documentary Relations of the Southwest took its name in imitation of the Jesuit Relations of North America. This landmark work was done from the translations of missionary records. Unfortunately the impression has been given that no other substantial body of documents pertaining to American ethnohistory exists. But the contrary is the case. There is much more information extant and accessible than in the Jesuit Relations. These documents are for the most part in Spanish and housed in Spanish and Mexican archives. Unlike the Jesuit Relations of North America which were taken from published sources, these documents are unpublished and scattered over the world. Painstaking work is required to correlate the material and make it available for publication. Throughout the last century a very small portion of these documents has been variously consulted and occasionally published without the least intimation that vast stores of information remained untouched.

The DRSW goal is the publication of significant and informative documents -

not merely the collection, preservation cataloging of archival material. Until a general body of documents is available to the academic community and the general public, broader studies in southwestern culture will remain difficult or impossible. The intention of the project is to create a series of volumes that will assist education efforts below the graduate level as well as acquaint scholars of many disciplines with the useful nature of vastly unknown archival resources. The series of bilingual volumes will be of use to everybody. The computerized Master Index is an enormous aid to scholars, providing as it does easier and more rapid access to and knowledge of the location and content of archives and the documents they contain.

In the initial stages, the DRSW searches an archives for relevant material. Generally, this material is ethnohistorical in content. Members of the research group read through the material to determine whether a document will be entered into the computerized Master Index of Documents. If selected, the document is summarized and the information entered into this computerized bibliography. Then, groups of documents treating similar subjects are eventually reviewed for publication on a specific theme - for example, the development of the Spanish colonial livestock industry or the growth of the presidial system. The most representative documents are sifted out and passed on to translators and annotators who prepare a rough manuscript for final editing. Of the documents reviewed, only a moderate percentage are selected for inclusion in the Master Index, and, of these, only a portion are singled out for publication.

The Documentary Relations of the Southwest will appear as volumes in three sections or series. The first section is the Jesuit Relations of the Southwest; the second is the Franciscan Relations of the Southwest; and the third is the Civil-Military Relations of the

(continued on p. 10)

DRSW, cont.

Southwest. The reason for this division was the natural ordering of documents by their source and present storage. The religious documents are by far the best organized and most detailed; they serve as a control source for the organization of the civil-military papers which are voluminous and more disorganized. To anyone who has paid careful attention to the Jesuit Relations of North America, it is immediately evident that the documents are very sketchily "religious" but profoundly descriptive. In other words, the content of these series will be peripherally ecclesiastical and essentially ethnohistorical.

There are two presuppositions underlying the DRSW. The first is the obvious fact that the area called the Southwest has been the meeting point for three major cultures sharing nearly five centuries of history. And, as the DRSW is interested in ethnohistorical subjects, the documents researched and the volumes published are able to deal with these cultures as they existed in relation to the land and to each other, thus providing a more general and comprehensive picture than do specific national and cultural studies. The second presupposition is the persistence of the northern movement from Mexico. The DRSW leaves the pre-Colombian phases to the archaeologists, but it recognizes that native peoples were moving into the northern regions centuries before the coming of the Spaniard. The project has somewhat arbitrarily chosen the dates of 1600 through 1820 as the time period currently under investigation. These dates correspond with the beginning of the Peace of the Chichimeca War and the final independence of Mexico from Spain. The study and the method can be moved backward or forward in time once the colonial period is exhausted. In space, the DRSW has defined the Southwest as the region bordered on the south by the 22nd parallel of north latitude, on the north by the 38th, on the east by the 94th meridian of west longitude, and on the west by the 122nd. In other words, this includes the states of Arizona, California, New Mexico and parts of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas in the United

States; in Mexico it takes in the states of the two Californias, Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo León, and parts of Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Nayarit and Tamaulipas.

Project Methodology

The members of the DRSW research team are instructed from the outset to review selectively the material found in archival collections. Each researcher consults the catalogs of a collection before beginning actual work. When a catalog indicates that there is a reasonable hope of finding ethnohistorical material on the Southwest in a given collection, the researcher reviews the material in whole blocks to determine whether the catalogs are correct and whether other information might be useful. Whenever a document shows promise, that is, as being sufficiently informative for possible inclusion in the final published series, it is read and summarized. The information garnered by the researchers in these cases is processed for inclusion in the DRSW computer access bibliography. This bibliography, the Master Index, has been built up for the entire project. The Index includes all the documents considered worthy of publication by the research team, although it was evident from the beginning that not all documents consulted and selected would be published. Many of the unpublished documents, however, are referenced in annotating the documents chosen for publication. The intent of the DRSW publication program is not to publish all documents selected, but to choose documents that are useful and representative in a way which will aid persons in expanding their research.

Perhaps the major problem in the project's methodology has been the criteria used for document selection. Using ethnohistory as a criterion, and the only major criterion, researchers read the documents asking no preconceived questions - letting the documents themselves tell the story. If a document pertains in any way to the Southwest and has in it any information of ethnohistoric importance, the document is included. To the degree possible, each researcher tries to see a broad range of topics and

(continued on p. 14)

A HISTORIAN LOOKS AT ARCHIVES: A PRESUMPTIOUS VIEW

By Kit Carter

Associate Professor of History

Mississippi University for Women

(Ed. Note: The following was the luncheon address delivered by Dr. Carter to the 1980 Annual Meeting of the SMA.)

For a group of people who enjoy the luxury of perspective and afterthought, not to mention hindsight, historians are a presumptive lot. They presume not only to reproduce selected versions of the facts of the past, but also to interpret them. I suspect historians are wrong almost as frequently as economists, preachers and lawyers - though I would guess we are better writers than the economists, less verbose than the preachers and commit less damage to society than do the lawyers. Despite our vantage of hindsight and perspective we are even less god-like in attitude than physicians, though I suspect this latter attribute (or perhaps deficiency) has to do with the psychological effects of poverty and not the nature of the profession. It is, however, the nature of the historian to enjoy hearing the flavor of his own words (usually spoken to a captive audience in the classroom) and to react in less than suicidal fashion if no one listens to this suggestions. In this respect, the historian is perhaps outdone by the preacher.

This all goes to say that I am aware that an archivist, overwhelmed by lack of funding, too little help and a thousand specific problems, might be less than joyful over having his or her chicken or peas mixed with a diet of general commentary on archives by a person who is not an archivist. Well, as I said earlier, historians are presumptive, and, besides, your program chairwoman asked me, so you're stuck with me. I'll try not to spoil your lunch, and I'll hold to the well-known tradition that acceptable luncheon speakers should be brief.

Indeed, I would feel less presumptive and more knowledgeable had I written ten books instead of one and fifty articles instead of a mere handful; but I did work in a large archives for more than two years and I have prowled about many

others both large and small.

From the standpoint of the historian, the archive, as an institution, is not very old. Though there was a congress of archivists in the United States in 1909, the Society of American Archivists was not formed until 1936. The National Archives was established in 1934 and the New Deal stimulated the Historical Records Survey to be conducted between 1936 and 1943. The year 1950 saw the passage of the Federal Records Act. Even in Europe the dates of archival organization are surprisingly late. The French Revolution produced the Archives Nationales in 1789 and the Archives Departmentales date from 1796. The Reichsarchiv at Potsdam dates only from 1919. So, it has been a relatively short time since the scholar has been provided in such magnitude with physically organized material from which to create his writings. Magnificent libraries have existed for a very long time. It is one thing for man to collect books and manuscripts as in the great library in Alexandria, but quite another for him to invent filing cabinets and memory machines.

The latter development was largely produced by the tremendous growth of modern archives which has gone somewhat hand in hand with the growth of national establishments. The result, as all archivists know, is an amazing tonnage of records, writings, artifacts, memorabilia and written down flotsam. Much, much more material than ever before in history lies at the mercy of historians and other scholars and writers. Has this basically changed anything for the historian? It has probably only increased his physical labor. When you consider the billions of useable words a twentieth-century historian must cut his way through, complicated by the jungle of words created by Presidential press agents and other public relations people associated with historic figures of this century, one realizes the envy the ultra-modern historian must feel

(continued on p. 12)

Presumption, cont.

for his colleagues dealing with a different kind of problem in writing about the time of Alexander the Great or even Queen Elizabeth I.

While the problem of how to acquire all this material or what part of it to throw away, or how to classify it, or where to put it or file it, or whether to microfilm it is the problem of the archivist; the problem of the historian is, first, how to get at this material, and, second, how to weed out as rapidly as possible what he does not need. In solving these problems, he badly needs help from the archivist. Indeed, he is often at the mercy of the archivist. In these parlous times when it seems likely that research grants will be dwindling while fuel, food and lodging costs are rising, the historian must necessarily focus on an ability that in the past might have been thought of as detrimental to the introspective (reflective) profession of historians - efficient speed, efficiency.

The researcher needs to know with more clarity and detail than ever before just exactly what you have in your archives, if and how he may get at it, when he may get at it and what good it might do him. Let me make a very few, tentative suggestions.

1. Well-constructed finding aids are imperative. If a long trip to an archives is involved, examining the archives' finding aids ahead of time can be extremely helpful. Most researchers will gladly pay the cost of this. Often photocopies of relevant pages from your finding aid will enable the researcher to order photocopies of the pertinent documents, thus avoiding a costly and time-consuming trip.

2. Easy access to copying machines is another must in today's world. This may be more of a problem in small, local archives. If there are problems in your establishment about copying machines or unusual regulations, these should be made clear ahead of time if possible. Also, please try to be as flexible as you can. Six day-long trips to an archive fifty or sixty miles away that will not allow any copying by machine might be equal to one day with

copying privileges. In today's world, the cost of even such short trips is amazingly high.

3. Security is also a sticky problem. Each historian that graces your institution is positive that you know by looking at him that his integrity is as impeccable as his scholarship is sound. He may be impatient if your aide is allowed to roll out only one manuscript box at a time when a whole cartful of boxes obviously would save all that waiting. He may even be insulted if you refuse to provide him with a typewriter for his personal use. He does have a point. So do you. Do try to avoid a situation wherein your security measures overcome the functional aspects of your archives and render it a museum only. I hasten to add that I am not deprecating museums. I am a pack-rat by nature, and my sentimentality of things ancient often overcomes my common sense. I do realize that many archives are indeed part museums, and that there are many "W" alumni who prize Emma Ody Pohl's dancing shoes in the M.U.W. Archives at least as much as the Tennessee-Tombigbee Collection. Any historian worth shooting will realize this. You have my permission to hang the others.

4. At this point, I should like to make a comment about donors of collections and unusual local regulations. Please make their individual peculiarities as well known as possible. Does the historian need permission of the donor to use the collection? And is photo-copying permitted? And under what circumstances? There is not much an archivist can do if young Professor Smutly appears unexpectedly. If he writes or calls ahead of his arrival, however, fill him in on all of the eccentricities of your archives. After all, he may not realize the spectrum of differing archival rules between the extremes of his hometown establishment in Squeedunkville, Arkansas, and the National Archives in Washington, D. C. And he just might be a budding T. Harry Williams or a developing Frank Vandiver.

5. Next, I am going to suggest, at possible peril to my person, that more archives should extend their hours to evenings and week-ends. I shall not

(continued on p. 17)

THE BILBO PAPERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

By Claude E. Fike
University Archivist
University of Southern Mississippi

Theodore Bilbo (1877-1947) served in the Mississippi Senate 1910-1912; was Lieutenant Governor 1912-1916; Governor 1916-20, and again in 1928-1932. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1934, 1940 and 1946. Throughout his long political career, Bilbo tended to save everything that came into his hands, however important or trivial. At the time of his death, this great mass of materials was stored in his Poplarville, Miss., home, known as "The Dream House," and its outbuildings.

Several years earlier, Dr. William D. McCain, a historian and archivist by training, began negotiations for the preservation and disposition of this great historical gold mine. Negotiations were hampered because the Senator's son, Colonel Theodore Bilbo, Jr., wanted to go through and remove whatever papers he deemed sensitive before permitting them to be placed in a depository. However, the magnitude and chaotic state of the papers discouraged and prevented the task from ever being undertaken.

On November 20, 1961, Dr. McCain was invited to meet with Colonel Bilbo and his lawyer at Poplarville to discuss the conditions for placing the papers at the University of Southern Mississippi (then Mississippi Southern College). The proposal involved taking all the books, papers and other materials in the Dream House and outbuildings. The choice was, in fact, given to take either all of it or nothing.

Losing no time, Dr. McCain brought a crew of men from the physical plant of the university, and, during November 21-22, they removed five hundred mail sacks, one hundred fifty large cartons and approximately ten thousand books (including a first edition of Faulkner's Marble Faun).

Much of the material from Bilbo's early career was in total disorder. Some had suffered water damage during the storage in leaking outbuildings. Files of the later period, dating from 1934, were in better order and state of preservation. Altogether, this collection

contained 1200 linear feet and over one million items.

The collection was first housed in a separate room of the newly constructed Joe Cook Library on campus, which Dr. McCain planned just for that purpose and which was henceforth known as "The Bilbo Room." Under the supervision of Librarian Henry Simmons, the laborious task of arrangement and processing began almost immediately. Chronological arrangement was chosen because Dr. McCain initially planned to do a topical index after his retirement.

In 1976, the William David McCain Graduate Library, honoring the retiring university president, was completed. And for the first time, the Bilbo Collection, joined by other special collections, enjoyed adequate processing and storage space. By 1980, two-thirds of this vast collection had been arranged by year, month and day, with the remaining one-third by year only. Cataloging is expected to get underway this year. While not yet available to scholars, there have been numerous requests to use the collection; and these have always been granted with full cooperation from the library staff.

Within this great collection, a Pulitzer Prize awaits the definitive work of some scholar. For these records not only deal with the life of one of Mississippi's most remarkable and controversial figures, but they also encompass that long and eventful epoch that spans from memories of the Civil War through World War I, the terrible depression of the 1930s and World War II.

Nearly every conceivable document is included. There are Bilbo's personal financial and business records, a vast personal and public correspondence, political broadsides, pamphlets and newspaper clippings.

Bilbo is a controversial figure who is still well-remembered by many living Mississippians. Shortly after the accession of the collection, the Jackson State Times exclaimed on December, 1961:

(continued on p.16)

DRSW, cont.

categories that would be useful to many academic disciplines.

A legitimate question at this point might be, how does this wide array of material coming from many different archives become manageable. Earlier in this discussion mention was made of a computerized bibliography, a Master Index of Documents. In many ways this is the heart of the whole system. Scholars have never been able to manipulate the maze of documentary duplication and scattering that is endemic to Spanish colonial studies. Now, with the help of computers we are able to bring a significant degree of order to these colonial documents. Although a whole team of research assistants is in the field searching through original documents, photocopies, transcripts, microfilm and xeroxes, their work converges in the computer file; eventually the unique documents are identified, the copies recorded and the distribution becomes evident. Unlike the notes of the scholar that are carefully recorded, filed and forgotten, every word recorded by the DRSW research team is filed, indexed and always open to retrieval and correction. Years of work are instantly merged into one working file. Updating is always possible. New information can always be added to the original entries. There is no need for appendices or reprints.

When the document information sheets are filed in the DRSW, all the names of people and places are permanently recorded. The categories of information about which the document treats are analyzed and recorded. Key terms are specified. All ethnic names are registered, and all the relevant bibliographic data is filed with each entry. The computer can then arrange the Master Index according to any prearranged order. Printouts from the Master Index can be by entry number, by date, by archive, by subject or by any combination of these items. Indices are available for the entire information file, or they can be prepared for any specific group of information categories. For example, the DRSW always has available a complete file of personal names which allows the investigator to refer back to the DRSW serial (entry) number in the Master Index. Or a

specialized bibliography can be prepared for a given subject in general, or for a given period, or for a given geographic zone, or for all of these. It is only a question of what the individual requires.

In the creation of the DRSW Master Index, two other major indices or files have been created. One of these information files has been labelled "Biofile." This is a verified list of persons who were involved in southwestern history. As data about them becomes known from primary and secondary sources, it is filed under that person's own entry number. As this information accumulates, we begin to know when a person was born, where, who his parents and children were, what titles he held, what jobs he performed, and so on. In a way it is the creation of a historical Who's Who for the Southwest. And again, this file not necessarily for the advanced scholar alone, providing as it does easy access for a variety of people to a large mass of information.

In addition to the "Biofile," another file has been devised to work in conjunction with the DRSW Master Index. This separate unit is called the "Geofile." In creating this geographic tool, all the current maps on a scale of 1:250,000 that pertained to the southwest were inspected. All the place names were recorded in fifteen minute quadrants, which is equivalent to areas of approximately 506 square kilometers, or 22.5 kilometers square. These tens of thousands of names have been arranged by the computer so that all place names in the DRSW file will be able to be located in this immense region. With the assignment of the proper grid coordinates, all of the information in the primary document file (Master Index) can be arranged geographically and computer printed maps can be compiled to indicate the kind and density of information for the whole southwest. Such maps will graphically divulge where information exists and where it is lacking. Thus, the management capability of the computer can be fashioned into one of the more useful tools in directing future research.

At this point, the DRSW Master Index contains more than 8,000 individual entries. Specific printouts have been

(continued on p. 18)

COMPUTERS IN THE ARCHIVES

By Ronald E. Tomlin

Chief, Archives Section

Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

This article is an attempt to discuss the relationship between two fields which, at first glance, appear to be most incompatible - two partners who seemingly could never achieve a successful marriage. I am referring to the union of the computer, that marvel of modern technology, and the archives, that bastion for preserving the past. To those of us who work in the world of the humanities - history, the arts, literature, ideas, etc. - the word "computer" has a distinctively bad connotation. It makes us think of math or electronics or worse yet, statistics. We thought we finished with those subjects when we completed our core requirements in college.

However, the open-minded archivist may find that the computer can be useful, even invaluable, to his work. Archivists are fundamentally involved with providing access to the records, manuscripts and other original source materials in their custody. This access may be in several degrees of detail. Detail, of course, depends on a number of factors, among which are the size and importance of the collection. During the early years of the profession in this country, the degree of desired access could be obtained manually. This was due, for the most part, to the relatively small quantity of material in repositories.

Such is not the case today. Archivists are surrounded by an information explosion. This dramatic increase in records makes it mandatory that archivists be much more selective in what they accession. The size and number of collections require decisions which early archivists did not have to make. Should the archivist, in light of this flood of paper, settle for being merely a custodian? Or, should he provide intellectual control over the materials? Manual techniques continue to be the foundation of archival processing and description, but today these techniques are not always the answer. Most repositories face considerable backlogs, due mainly to increased accessions and

inadequate staff. Processed collections, especially if they are voluminous in size, tend to be described very generally, lacking proper intellectual control. The computer provides the archivist with a tool which may assist in gaining better control of archival materials.

Detailed description and indexing is the optimum level of archival processing, and this kind of access is certainly appreciated by researchers. However, practical considerations, i.e., time and staff required to reach this level of description, get in the way of detailed description. Obvious difficulties in indexing make the computer a very attractive alternative.

The belief, however, that the introduction of the computer enables repositories to index in great detail all collections and thereby vastly improve the researchers' ability to access the materials is unrealistic. The best most large repositories, with millions of pages of documents, can hope to do is to provide detailed description on a selective basis. The size and significance of the collection dictate the amount of processing attention which the archives can afford. This statement is valid even with the assistance of automation. Time and diligence, coupled with computer assistance, can, nevertheless, improve control of documentary sources.

Automation has made inroads into the archival profession. Notable computer applications in the archival field include the Paradigm system at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the Spindex system developed by the National Archives and Records Service. The latter system, which was created specifically to assist in the control of archival collections, is currently being employed at the National Archives and a number of state, business, university and church archives. The National Archives has also developed a system known as A-1 to meet the special needs of this national archival repository.

On the whole, archivists have been

(continued on p. 16)

Computers, cont.

slower to respond to automation than librarians and persons in other professions. Perhaps this is due more to lack of resources than to lack of initiative. However, the growth in automated archival techniques is a clear indication that archivists recognize the difficulties involved in gaining intellectual control over modern source materials. Automation is not, however, a panacea; it is merely an aid. A familiar adage in the computer field is "garbage in - garbage out." That is to say, computer output is only as good as the input. Collections must still be adequately processed in order that the proper data can be entered into the computer. Personal names, dates, places and events are readily indexable. Subject indexing represents an infinitely trickier procedure. Selection of subjects tends to be a subjective task which without thesauri (authority files) can become chaotic. When proper descriptive preparations are made, the computer can be a valued aid. The speed of automated permutations in collating and providing descriptive information is infinitely faster than manual manipulations.

It is very important that repositories consider carefully the move to automation. What the computer offers comes at a high cost. Before deciding on a system, the size of the data base and the cost per key stroke must be calculated to see if there is sufficient time, staff and money to convert manually created finding aids to machine-readable form.

Improvements in computer technology have decreased costs and increased the machine's capabilities, making automation a potentially valuable tool in the archival profession. As computer applications increase and the dialogue among archival practitioners becomes more commonplace, the profession will in all probability become more receptive to computer technology as a cost effective alternative for controlling archival collections. The major beneficiaries will undoubtedly be the researchers.

Bilbo, cont.

"If the library at Mississippi Southern College does not ignite, it will not be because of a lack of explosive material ...The history of Mississippi over a period of several decades can be found in the papers of the man who used a diamond horseshoe stickpin and a red necktie as his campaign insignia."

The following incident illustrates Bilbo the candidate. In the spring of 1923, Bilbo was sentenced to 30 days in jail at Oxford for contempt of court. He actually served 10 days, conducting court from his cell like some imperial potentate. He planned to announce his candidacy for governor from his cell, but the judge's premature pardon cheated him of the drama. Nonetheless, he declared his candidacy as follows: "On next Saturday in the city of Oxford I will fire the first gun of a hundred days battle that shall wage fast and furious from Tennessee to the Gulf - from Yellow Rabbit to Vinegar Bend. I have rolled out my Big Berthas, trained them on the enemy and will smash them to smithereens." (Letter to R. J. Arnold of Canton, April 23, 1923).

Like his contemporary Huey Long, it was difficult to be neutral concerning Theodore G. Bilbo. William Alexander Percy, whose family suffered because of Bilbo, wrote in Lanterns on the Levee (1941), 148: "The man...was a pert little monster, glib and shameless, with that sort of cunning common to criminals which passes for intelligence. The people loved him. They loved him not because they were deceived in him but because they understood him thoroughly; they said of him proudly, 'He's a slick little bastard.' He was one of them and he had risen from obscurity to the fame of glittering infamy - it was as if they themselves had crashed the headlines."

And as T. Harry Williams reassessed the historical role of Long, so also did George B. Tindall write of Bilbo's first administration (The Emergence of the New South, 1913-1945), 24: "...Bilbo was a progressive governor. His programs ...marked the climax of the progressive era in Mississippi...The extension of governmental functions for the first

(continued on p. 17)

presumption, cont.

attempt to tell you how to achieve this minor miracle. I'm only suggesting that you do. Perhaps it might be achieved by considerably reducing your services during those extended times.

6. Also, card catalogues could, in general, be improved upon as to the descriptions of the documents to which they refer. Often, the researcher's surprise at the difference in the seven cartloads of folders he had visualized getting his hands on and the seven manila envelopes plopped on the table in front of him is shock inducing. Old historians with gray in their beards are undaunted by this, but the uninitiated younger generation, as all of us over forty know, is pampered and will feel put upon by this frustration.

7. Finally, I should like to say that I have found archivists in general to be a pleasant, helpful and attractive group with whom to work. Archivists of the smaller institutions are, on the average, so accomodating that researchers have come to accept this as standard behavior. Most of the good larger archives are run by staffs that are interested in their profession and at least evince some concern over the researcher's problems. I have spent some of the most pleasurable moments of my life in archives so different in size and staff as the Virginia State Archives in Richmond and Miss Lucille Peacock's delightful emporium in Aberdeen, Miss. In both places the feeling of comradeship in what we were together trying to do was evident.

I realize, of course, that I am not as peculiar as most of my fellow history professors, and thus am easier to please. Others of my breed just might be upset if they were displaced from a microfilm reader by an octogenerian lady of approximately eighty-eight pounds on grounds that she had been tracing her genealogy on that particular machine for sixteen years; or other historians just might suffer trauma to discover that the original manuscript of Norman Mailer's The Naked and the Dead had been cataloged under pathology.

Historians can be difficult and each is

often sure that his particular project was ordained by the Deity. Be tolerant of them. Historians have yet to destroy a culture or even seriously maim a society - and they, along with mothers, housewives and archivists, preserve the heritage of our past.

What really matters is the name you succeed in imposing on the facts - not the facts themselves.

-- Cohen's Law

Bilbo, cont.

time gave Mississippi a state government beyond the legal forms. Bilbo's innovations included a highway commission, a pardon board, a board of bar examiners, a state tuberculosis sanitarium, a reformatory for whites, anti-lobbying, blue-sky, tick eradication, anti-vice, uniform negotiable instrument laws, 'bone-dry' prohibition, the abolition of public hangings, the substitution of salaries for fees in county offices, compulsory school attendance, a fund to equalize school expenditures in the various counties, the extension of consolidated schools and night schools for adult illiterates. In the four Bilbo years, according to the federal commissioner of education, Mississippi made more educational progress than any other state, and even his opponents acknowledged that 'under his administration more forward-looking legislation was enacted than in any previous gubernatorial regime.' Even so it was less than he recommended."

This, of course, is just a portion of the primary sources found in the Bilbo Papers at the University of Southern Mississippi. In an article describing the papers (Southern Quarterly, III, 279) Dr. McCain concluded: "These are the papers of Theodore G. Bilbo. Theses, dissertations, articles and books will undoubtedly be written from them for the next five hundred years. One thing is certain. The bulk of the papers is so vast that no one man will ever be able to get through all of them."

DRSW, cont.

made for a variety of subjects and are in use by project members and scholars. In addition to the DRSW Project Manual (1977), the Master Index and individual indices now available, the project is now nearing completion of another more complete research manual (Northern New Spain: A Research Guide, University of Arizona Press, 1981), a documentary volume on the growth and development of the presidial system and a documentary study of the Seri Indians. The Master Index is now available as DRSW I, a grouping of 5000 document entries. DRSW II, a second phase of 5000 additional entries is near completion. DRSW I is available in computer printout form, microfiche or on magnetic tape. This offering consists of selections made from the reading of the Archivo de Hidalgo del Parral, the major archive in the history of the Spanish period in northern New Spain. The archive's contents run from 1632 to Mexican independence. Also included in DRSW I are documents chosen from the Cuevas Collection in Mexico City, the Mexican Province Archives (SJ) and the Pastells Collection in Madrid. Information from the Archivo General de la Nacion and the Archivo Historico de Hacienda (Mexico City) which pertains to the collections listed previously is also included. DRSW II will contain document summaries from the Bejar Archive (Texas, 1717-1790), the Spanish Archives of New Mexico (1680s-1820) and continuing information from AGN and AHH in Mexico City. As time progresses, further installments will be made available in groups of 5000 as DRSW III, IV, etc.

Through intensive research and the coordinating capabilities of a computer system, the DRSW provides a central and most utilitarian source for research in many subject areas dealing with the American Southwest and the Mexican North. In addition to saving scholars time and money by making bibliographic information and document summaries concerning nearly two and a half centuries of history, the publication facet of the program offers valuable educational material for scholars and the general public.

NHPRC EVALUATES COMPLETED RECORDS PROJECTS IN NEW ANNUAL REPORT

The National Historical Publications and Records Commission in an Annual Report issued recently, provides an extensive assessment of NHPRC historical records grant projects completed during fiscal year 1979. In this expanded report, which marks the fifth anniversary of the Records Program, the Commission notes an increased professionalism in records program projects and in sound program development at many institutions receiving NHPRC grants. Related to this, the Commission points to improvements in planning and proposal review by State Historical Records Advisory Boards across the nation. By the end of the fiscal year, over forty State Advisory Boards had submitted statements of priorities and needs within their states. Such evaluations were the first ever attempted for both discussion and action within the states and for broader analysis by the Commission from a national perspective.

Among the representative project activities discussed at length in the report are state archival programs, local public records programs, institutional archives, archival processing projects and historical photographs. Within these categories the report discusses the revitalization of existing programs, the preservation of endangered records and images, tests of new techniques and methods and improvements in access to different types of records. Overall, the report is evidence of the impact of the Commission's 1978 "Statement of National Needs and Preferred Approaches for Historical Records." The Records Program assessment concludes with a complete list of the 85 records grants made during fiscal year 1979.

The 38 page Annual Report also details fiscal year activities of the Publications Program, NHPRC Educational Services and the National Inventory of Historical Sources. Copies of the report are available free of charge from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, National Archives and Records Service, Washington, D. C. 20408.

"...no other profession calls for more various talents."

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

1980 - 1981 Membership Year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NO. _____

Annual dues are \$5.00. Please make checks payable to The Society of Mississippi Archivists and send this form and dues to Anne S. Wells, Treasurer, Society of Mississippi Archivists, P. O. Box 3845, University, Alabama 35486. The membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Current members will receive a membership renewal notice in September.