

# The Primary Source

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# The Primary Source

MISSISSIPPIANA COLLECTION  
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A Quarterly Publication of The Society of Mississippi Archivists

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Volume 6

May 1984

COOK LIBRARY Number Two  
U.S.M.

## ARCHIVES AND SOCIETY

David Gracy

An address by the President of the Society of American Archivists  
at the annual meeting of the Society of Mississippi Archivists  
May 1, 1984

How often have you been called on to explain what you do and why it's important, why it should be done? Ignorance of a means of livelihood in these days, in these tight economic times, seems to breed contempt. Frequently, the question then carries a tone of the Inquisition. Everything is on the line in your answer.

There are lots of arguments why archives are important, why we keep them. There are the humanist arguments. "Roots" is the catch word. They provide our individual ties, links to the past, to our heritage, to our development, our place. The past is prologue. We have to know where we have been to know where we are going. Archives are used by scholars in understanding and interpreting the past, so that we can live a fuller life and prepare more effectively for the future.

If those humanist arguments aren't sufficient, there are patriotic arguments. Archives are our documentary heritage, a common bond that links and holds society together. If humanist and patriotic arguments don't win the day, there are the administrative arguments. "Defense," as Wilbur Kurtz of Coca Cola used to call it, defense is the most common one -- that is protecting: protecting our rights as citizens, protecting the rights of an organization, protecting our rights as part of an organization. Within some organizations like Wilbur's, offense is equally important: that is, using these records as a resource of the organization: to market that organization for public relations and for improvement of the image, the possibilities, and the opportunities for the organization. Archives provide information when it's needed for decision-making, and in that perspective, they promote efficiency and save money, "cost avoidance" in the modern vernacular, particularly when the archival service is coupled with records management.

There are many values in, reasons for maintaining permanently valuable records. We know it, we see them every day. But how far is our concept shared by our public, particularly by administrators two and three rungs above us, by the general public, by those who come to use the materials that we hold, and by colleagues in allied professions? Not well, is my experience. Take some examples. Have you seen the new stamp honoring the 50th anniversary of the National Archives? What would you put on a stamp honoring the 50th anniversary of the National Archives to express archives and what they mean to the country, what they are? What would you put on the stamp? Abraham Lincoln? George Washington? That's what's on this one. Is that Archives? Are archives elitist? Are archives the great white fathers? Are archives

(Continued on Page 2)

Archives and Society, cont.

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.

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

Deadlines for inclusions are:

- #1 (February) -- January 31
- #2 (May) -- April 30
- #3 (August) -- July 31
- #4 (November) -- October 31

Lynne Mueller.....Editor  
 Martha Sparrow...Assistant Editor  
 h t holmes.....Assistant Editor

necessarily old? Are George Washington's or Abraham Lincoln's papers even in the National Archives? What image is the public going to get of archives from that?

Maybe academia understands things better. The newspaper "Reports on Research and Creative Activity" at one state university describes excellence and accomplishments. The lead article is headed: "Teaching and Scholarship: the Quest for Excellence." An archivist got an award. An archivist was interviewed in here and did a very good job of talking about why the repository exists at the university. But what did the headline writer come up with to lead the article? "Archivist surfaces to accept award." Archivist surfaces to accept award? We're seen as some kind of subterranean creature. Those that went to the Society of American Archivists' meeting

in Minneapolis and then attended the Prairie Home Companion radio show heard Garrison Keillor's immortal song written for the occasion, "All Archivists Stick Together." The first line reads:

Archivists life is like a miner's  
 Working daily underground  
 In the basements dark and dusty  
 Loading data by the pound.

Underground. If you look at this kind of stuff, you come away feeling that our patron saint is Pig Pen in the "Peanuts" comic strip; mold is our official growth; dust our official substance.

I submit to you that the greatest problem of the archival profession today is not an agenda for any kind of record -- local, religious, business, government -- and it is not just lack of resources in any one professional organization. Moreover, it's not a frontal assault that's going to make the difference. We in the SAA don't have the numbers. What we have to do is lay the groundwork. We have to build the foundation that gives credibility to our numbers to speak and be heard. If we are not perceived as having anything to say or as being people worth listening to, all the agendas in the world won't matter.

Our biggest problem is our image, or lack of one, in the minds of our various publics. We are little seen and little understood by administrators, those who are two and three rungs above us who hold the purse strings, who make decisions, but who do not deal with us on a daily basis, who do not know the archival service as we think they should. We're viewed by teaching historians largely as an alternative.

(Continued on Page 12)

ACCESSIONS

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Mitchell Memorial Library

Stennis (John C.) Accretion. 1970s-1980s. 14.5 c.f. 18 vols.

Files from Stennis' Jackson and Washington offices, including 1982 campaign material; volumes include committee hearings, voting records, and assorted books. Collection is closed. Presented by Senator John C. Stennis

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Williams Memorial Library

The Wynn Archive of William Faulkner Poetry Manuscripts. c. 1919-1925. 48 typescript and holographic poems.

Forty-eight pages and typescript and holograph poems written by William Faulkner; a substantial number of these poems were previously unrecorded; included is a twelve-page sequence of poems entitled "Michael". Collection is closed. Presented by Mr. and Mrs. Douglas C. Wynn of Greenville, MS.

Phay (John) Collection. 1940s-1950s. 3000 black and white photographs and color slides.

The collection consists of photographs of pre-integration elementary and secondary public schools in Mississippi from the late 1940s through the early 1950s. While there are photographs of many schools of the state, the greatest number cover schools in Benton, Clay, Grenada, Holmes, Jones, Prentiss, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Union and Yalobusha counties. Presented by Dr. John Elon Phay, Professor Emeritus of Educational Administration and Director Emeritus of the Bureau of Institutional Research at the University of Mississippi.

EVANS MEMORIAL LIBRARY - ABERDEEN

Andrus (Frank) Collection. 1982. 1 item.

Print from Mr. Andrus' drawing of the James Creek covered bridge in Monroe County; drawn from Mary Emma Wren's original oil painting of the bridge which was built in 1844. Collection is open. Presented by Brad Bradley of Aberdeen.

Houston Collection. Accretion. 1901-1962. 4 items.

Four booklets listed as follows:

Prohibition at Last in Monroe County by C. T. Kincannon, Pastor, Aberdeen Baptist Church. 1901.

Memorial Letter by Colonel Columbus to Infant Children of his Brother Dr. William F. Sykes. 1864. (with statement by Eugene Lanier Sykes).

Historical Sketches of Aberdeen, Mississippi compiled by Lucille Peacock. 1961.

The Oxford Disaster - Price of Defiance by Karl Wiesenburg, Jackson County, MS. 1962. Collection is open. Presented by Mrs. Wanda West Gregory, McDonald, TN.

Shepherd (Dr. and Mrs. Banks) Collection. Accretion. 4 items.

Book entitled Alcorn County History by the Alcorn County Historical Society. 1983; 2 prints from the McKnight Glass Negative Collection; 1 print from glass positive in Jimmy Crosby Collection to be used in Discover Aberdeen celebration for pattern of dummy artesian well. Collection is open. Presented by Dr. and Mrs. Banks Shepherd, Aberdeen.

ACCESSIONS

- Nickles (Lillian Plant) Collection. Accretion. 1945-1952. 2 in.  
Shackelford Magazine Vol. 1 No. 1 - Vol 7. No. 9, 1945-1952. Booklet - Hough;  
Miscellaneous files of United Daughters of the Confederacy materials;  
genealogical correspondence folders for surnames: Weaver, Traweek, Boggs,  
Pegues, Stegall, Coopwood, Pryor, McGowen, Beard, Baird, Yoder, Seely, Garner,  
Murray, West, Dobbs, Bridges, Yates. Collection is open. Presented by Mrs.  
William Nickles, Aberdeen.
- Rotary Club Collection, Accretion. 1921-1966. 1 item.  
Original minute book of the Aberdeen Rotary Club. Collection is open.  
Presented by Ralph Bradley, Aberdeen.
- Harvey (Ruth Henley) Collection. Accretion. 2 c.f.  
Genealogical magazine, Family Puzzler, 1968-1983, scattered; typescript of Pace  
and Garner by Ruth Henley, 1984. Family booklets with notes on surnames:  
Russell, Anderson, Camp, Elliott, Evans, Ross, Poole, Bell, Elsbery, Ponder,  
Wheeler, Smith, Pearson, Alexander, Cash, Oliver, Perry, Pitts, Westbrook,  
Lester, Lottis, Reese, Harvey, Bright, Hinkle, Johnson, Hill, Towles, Gary,  
Johnston; Bound volumes The Ancestral Line and Genealogy of Labin Jasper Loftis  
compiled by Gladys Irene Byron Loftis and Bobbie Jewell House Bryant, 1970, and  
Southern Garners by Sam Garner, M.D., 1979. Collection is open. Presented by  
Ruth Henley Harvey, Aberdeen.
- Conlee (E. G., Jr.) Collection. 1982. 1 item.  
Special historical issue of the New Albany Gazette which contains copies of many  
old photographs as well as articles of interest to history buffs. Collection is  
open. Presented by E. G. Conlee, Jr., Mantachie.

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

- Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority Collection. Accretion.  
1972-1982. 4 c.f.  
Correspondence, reports, minutes, speeches, public relations materials.  
Pertaining to the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Collection is open. Presented  
by the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority.
- Recent donations to the University archival and museum collections include:  
Sheet music studied by Maude Ethel Doolittle, Newton, MS when she was a student  
at Industrial Institute and College, 1894-1898, forerunner of Mississippi  
University for Women.
- Charter of Alpha Gamma Chapter, Pi Omega Pi, National Commercial Teachers  
Honorary, February 23, 1983. The back of the charter contains a list of all  
charter members.
- Autographed, first edition of Be Good Sweet Maid by Margaret Boland Ellis,  
author, an MSCW graduate.
- Handmade doll fully dressed in senior MSCW uniform. c. 1936-1937. The doll was  
made and presented by Grace Van Keuren Phillips, class of 1937, Carthage, MS.

NEWS NOTES

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

Lisa Buechele (MLS, University of Pittsburgh) began work on the NHPRC-funded newsfilm project in February. The fifteen-month project will produce a computerized finding aid to the Department's Channel Three Newsfilm Collection. The collection contains approximately 1.5 million feet of newsfilm spanning the 1954-1971 time period. Thus far, work has included preliminary physical arrangement of the newsfilm as well as the development and testing of the computer program and data output.... The Department hosted the Society of American Archivists' Basic Archival Conservation Administration Workshop March 26-18.... The State Records Committee met for its regular quarterly meeting on Thursday, January 26, 1984, at the Charlotte Capers Building. Eighty-six records control schedules were approved for the following five agencies: Board of Barber Examiners, Mississippi Employment Security Commission, Office of the Governor, Insurance Department, and Department of Public Welfare. The Committee in its six meetings to date has approved 370 schedules for sixteen agencies. The next meeting of the State Records Committee was scheduled May 3, 1984.... Currently ninety-eight state agencies, institutions, offices, boards, and commissions have records officers. Approximately seventeen agencies still need to appoint a records officer to serve as liaison with the Division of Records Management.... It is significant that in the last six months the Department's records systems specialists have assisted three constitutional offices with scheduling activities. These are the Governor's Office, the Attorney General's Office and the State Auditor's Office. Work will begin soon with the Secretary of State's Office. Work is ongoing with two of the larger state agencies - the Welfare Department and the Employment Security Commission.... During calendar year 1983 a total of 4747 boxes of obsolete records at the State Records Center were destroyed. This represents a 95.8% increase over destructions during 1982. During the first three months of 1984 an additional 1750 boxes of records have been destroyed.... A very important project was begun at the State Record Center in March. Employees are in the process of inventorying the boxes in the Records Center and renumbering them according to a space locator system which should be far superior to the old box numbering system when it comes to finding the boxes for reference or destruction purposes.... On May 15, Stan Patrick, one of the records system specialists, conducted the fourth in the Division's series of records disposition workshops. This workshop was for agencies in south Mississippi and was held in the Pat Harrison Waterway District Office in Hattiesburg.... Ron Tomlin, director of the Division of Records Management, Stan Patrick and Pam Gladney, records system specialists, attended selected sessions of the recent SAA Basic Conservation Workshop at the Charlotte Capers Building.

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Michael B. Ballard, who received his PhD in history from MSU in December 1983, has been appointed Associate University Archivist.

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI - CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE

Eight photographs of rural Alabama scenes by noted photographer William Christenberry have been donated to the Center by Michael and Martha Gross of Washington, D.C. The gift is in support of the National Endowment for the Humanities Library Challenge Grant. Each photograph measures 20"x24".... On January 1, 1984, the Center received a \$20,000 grant from the L. J. Skaggs and

## NEWS NOTES

Mary C. Skaggs Foundation of Oakland, California. The grant is in support of the Ole Miss Blues Archive and will assist in providing equipment required to facilitate public access to the B. B. King, Living Blues, and Kenneth R. Goldstein collections.... Sterling D. Plumpp, Mississippi native and assistant professor in the Black Studies Program at the University of Illinois in Chicago, is a recent donor to the Center. His collection of manuscripts, books, letters, and anthologies primarily by black writers and artists is given to support teaching and research programs. The Sterling D. Plumpp Collections includes work by Alice Walker, Amire Baraka, Louis Armstrong, Ismael Reed, John A. Williams, Toni Cade Bambara, Nikki Giovanni, Wola Soyinka, James Baldwin, Albert Murray and many others. There are also books about Africa and by African writers. Plumpp himself is an author. His writings include six books of prose, poetry, and essays. (Southern Register Winter 1984).

### EVANS MEMORIAL LIBRARY - ABERDEEN

Staff members at Peoples Bank, a new financial institution in Aberdeen, had prints made from a photograph in one of the library's collections. The numbered prints will be used as premiums at the bank's grand opening. Researchers from the bank were also interested to find an original William Tell mechanical bank.

### WELTY COLLECTION FEATURED AT SOUTHERN LITERARY FESTIVAL

The Southern Literary Festival held at the Old Capitol in Jackson and sponsored by Mississippi College began with a discussion of the Eudora Welty Collection housed in the Department of Archives and History. The Festival, which took place in April, honored Miss Welty's seventy-fifth birthday and attracted scholars from throughout the United States, France, and England. (Mississippi History Newsletter April 1984).

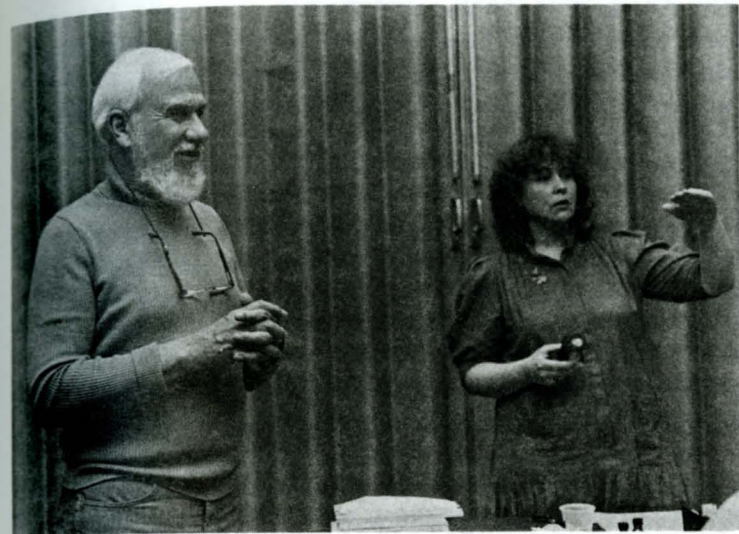
### EAST TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY RECEIVES GRANT

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded the East Tennessee Historical Society a \$110,000 grant to collect and publish community histories of the ten counties in the area. During the two-year project, the society will train volunteers to collect written and oral source material. The society will then write and publish a book on an aspect of each county's history. Using NEH grant funds, the society has prepared a training manual entitled, *Finding Our Past: A Guidebook for Group Projects in Community History*. For additional information and a copy of the guide which costs \$5.00, write Charles F. Bryan, Jr. Executive Director, East Tennessee Historical Society, 500 W. Church Ave., Knoxville, TN 37902. (History News, March 1984).

### HISTORICAL PRESERVATION DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has published *The Brown Book: A Directory of Preservation Information*. The book includes listings for 1,000 organizations and individuals, preservation facts and figures, quotations, dates and reading lists. The book, which sells for \$17.95, may be ordered from Preservation Shops, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1600 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20006. (History News, March 1984).

## SAA HELD BASIC CONSERVATION ADMINISTRATION WORKSHOP IN JACKSON



Twenty-seven archivists from eleven states met in Jackson, March 26-28, for three days of conservation education. Workshop instructors, Ed Gilbert and Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler (left) provide guidance for hands-on procedures, as participants proceed with hands on (below).

As a part of the workshop, the Society of Mississippi Archivists Conservation Committee hosted a wine and cheese party for the participants. No pictures of the event were made available to TPS.





SEVEN YEARS TOGETHER -- QUO VADIS

Bernice Bell

Presented at the Society of Mississippi Archivists annual meeting  
May 1, 1984

This morning I should like to have you take a very abbreviated retrospective view of the Society of Mississippi Archivists. But because the Society is an evolving and, we believe, a viable entity in that grand business of preserving those materials from which the history of a people and a society may be interpreted, we want to go a step further and take a few moments to focus our attention on what we perceive as our mission and our charted course for the immediate future; thence our most appropriate title - "Seven Years Together - Quo Vadis?"

Although the Society as an organized body has been in existence only since 1977, a series of events, dating back for more than three decades, have contributed toward the formation of an organized body to represent the archival profession in the state of Mississippi.

Several serious attempts were made to have persons responsible for collecting, preserving, and disseminating archival materials collaborate and coordinate their efforts. These efforts occurred prior to the assemblage of fourteen interested archivists, manuscript curators and librarians who met at the Department of Archives and History on February 5, 1976. This significant meeting was called by Patti Black who at that time served as director of the Archives and History Division of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. During that meeting no decision was made relative to the type of organizational structure to be pursued. Yet, enough was accomplished and the attendees were sufficiently motivated to set a second meeting for April 22, 1976. The site of that second meeting was on the campus of Mississippi State University at Starkville. Twelve of the fourteen persons who attended the February 5th meeting converged on the Mississippi State campus. They shared ideas and discussed plans but were still unable to reach a consensus relative to the type of alliance under which to be organized. They did, however, draw up potential goals for the proposed association.

The momentum somewhat subsided and it was not until November 17, 1977, that a delegation of thirty individuals met and organized the Society of Mississippi Archivists. Robert J. Bailey, also a former director of the Archives and Library Division, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, was elected to serve as temporary Chairman. Bailey immediately named a nominating committee and a Constitution committee. The original Executive Council was composed of the following persons: Claude E. Fike, Sammy O. Cranford, Anne S. Wells, Robert J. Bailey, Bernice L. Bell, Julia Guice, Jim G. Shoalmire and Ronald Tomlin.

Five months later, on April 25, 1976, the constitution was ratified. Soon afterwards the Executive Council appointed Ronald Tomlin executive director and requested that he along with Charlotte Capers and Elbert R. Hilliard be charged with the task of serving as incorporators. They did their job well and on August 1, 1978, the state of Mississippi recognized the Society as a corporation. The Society had indeed become a reality! The Executive Director was also charged with the responsibility of editing a newsletter which was initially distributed during the first week of February 1979. Subsequently, Robert Bailey was named editor of the

quarterly publication. The newsletter continued to grow and expand and took on its current appearance under the editorship of Hank Holmes. The document, now known as *The Primary Source* receives widespread recognition as a publication of note.

Claude Fike, of the University of Southern Mississippi, was elected first president and Anne Wells was elected as the first treasurer. During President Fike's administration the first annual meeting was held. The scheduled date of that meeting was April 10, 1979, and the site was on the campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. The registration fee was \$2.00 and the president of the University hosted the noon luncheon. President Fike billed that meeting as a "pleasant few hours of learning, fellowship and enjoyment." Since that date, annual meetings have been planned, implemented and have been held in several locations throughout the State.

Speakers have come from many states including California, Illinois, Oklahoma, Alabama, Texas and Tennessee and the speakers have represented many types of work environments. Through these annual meetings and workshops, learning opportunities have been afforded those who availed themselves of them.

The activities engaged in at the annual meeting have allowed the purpose of the organization to be realized and members active in the society have benefitted. However, there is still a need to reach many other persons entrusted with the organization, care and dissemination of archival sources. Until a greater number is reached the job is incomplete.

If you noted the persons to whom I referred in this very cursory overview, you must have recognized the pivotal role played by the personnel affiliated with the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Without their expertise and cooperation the Society could have very well followed a different and more treacherous course during these seven years of development. It is always good to reflect upon the past, but if we are to remain a viable force we must turn our eyes to the future.



Another Scene of Conservation Administration Education

## 1984 ANNUAL MEETING

The Society of Mississippi Archivists held its annual meeting on April 30 and May 1 at the Gulf Park Conference Center at Long Beach, Mississippi. Program chair Linda Overman arranged something of interest for everyone, from the pragmatic aspects of collection development and archival reference to the continuing concern over state and local records to a broader discussion of the future of archives.

The first session of the sixth annual meeting, moderated by Lynne Mueller, Special Collections reference librarian at Mississippi State University, dealt with collection development. Dr. William D. Boyd of the School of Library Service at the University of Southern Mississippi, outlined the necessity for and the process of creating a written collection policy. Terry S. Latour, archivist at the University of Southern Mississippi, discussed the use of such a policy and other guidelines to insure that the archivist acts in an ethical and financially responsible manner with the potential donor. Carol West, director of the Mississippi College Law Library, presented current information on the effect of the copyright law on unpublished manuscripts. This very interesting session provided information basic to the establishment of an archival collection and its use by researchers.

The second session, moderated in the absence of Martha Sparrow by Dr. Joseph J. Mika, assistant dean of the University of Southern Mississippi's School of Library Service, was a discussion of archival reference work. Marjorie Wheeler, adjunct instructor of history of the University of Southern Mississippi, discussed reference service from the point of view of the researcher who, in the course of visiting various collections, may find that the rules and the kinds of help afforded the researcher may differ greatly. Julia M. Young, adjunct instructor in the School of Library Service, also at the University of Southern Mississippi, presented the reference archivist's position with regard to kinds of user assistance and supervision and the necessity of having rules to govern the use of the collection. While presenting opposing viewpoints, this stimulating dialogue clearly revealed possibilities of greater cooperation between the researcher and the archivist.

The session on the first afternoon dealt with the present state and local records situation. Elbert R. Hilliard, director of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, moderated and presented the slide-tape show created for the Mississippi Historical Records Needs Assessment Project. Richard Cox, head of the Archives and Records Division of the Alabama Department of Archives and History and a consultant with the Historical Records Assessment and Reporting Project, expressed some of the national concerns over state and local records. The Honorable Ray Mabus, state auditor of Mississippi, followed with some of the problems he, as a state official, had encountered with records. The archivist of the city of Hattiesburg, Frank N. Walker, presented the archivist's problems with such records. Rufus Ward, an attorney and a local historian from West Point, Mississippi, talked about the uses to which local records can be put and the conditions that often prevail. Dennis Dollar, a former member of the state House of Representatives and a sponsor of the Open Records Law, then talked about the opposition he found to that law. The session summarized many of the problems that still exist with regard to state and local records.

The second day's program was concerned with the archival profession. The meeting began with opening remarks and introductions by Howard Lowell, director of

the Oklahoma State Archives. David Gracy, president of the Society of American Archivists, and Hank Holmes, manuscript curator of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, discussed the image of the archivist and archival work. Dr. Gracy's address appears elsewhere in this issue. Bernice Bell, vice-president of the Society of Mississippi Archivists reviewed the history of the Society and moderated a panel discussion concerning the future role, activities, programs and goals of the Society. The panel consisted of Linda Overman, conservator of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Lois Upham of the University of Southern Mississippi School of Library Science; and Julia Young. The discussion spilled over into the business session following lunch, as members expressed their concerns for issues raised throughout the two-day meeting.

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**SOCIETY OF MISSISSIPPI ARCHIVISTS  
1984-1985 Officers**

**President**

**Bernice Bell**  
Jackson State University

**Vice-President**

**Linda Overman**  
Miss. Dept. of Archives and History

**Secretary/Treasurer**

**Alice Cox**  
Miss. Baptist Historical Commission

**Editor**

**Lynne Mueller**  
Mississippi State University

**Executive Council Members**

**Thomas Henderson (1983-1985)**  
Mississippi State University

**Virgia Brock-Shedd (1983-1985)**  
Tougaloo College

**Onva K. Boshears, Jr. (1984-1986)**  
University of Southern Mississippi

**Helen M. Crawford (1984-1986)**  
Evans Memorial Library

**William Hanna (Immediate Past President)**  
Mississippi Department of Archives and History

## Archives and Society, cont.

jobs, what were the opportunities called? Alternative careers, something you can do for a little while until opportunities really open up for you to be what you are supposed to be. Humph! I'm no alternative. I didn't get into archival work as an alternative. I'm no retread.

The general public? The general public doesn't know how to see us. That stamp is the best evidence of it. We are not prophets in our own country.

Change must come by our generating the opportunity for it. But we cannot pull it off entirely ourselves. It's too bad, in a way, we refused up to this point to admit our image problem. It's good, though, that we are admitting it now, because the bad thing we haven't been facing is the fact that the stereotype of us is so mistaken that our jobs are on the line because of it. We are so busy working in, looking at, being concerned about our work in our institutions that we don't see what's happening in the profession around us. Symptomatic of it, look at the situation of the National Archives, in particular its relationship with the General Services Administration. GSA decided that records management was too vital, too important, too current, too "now," to be left in the hands of archivists. And so records management was pulled out of the National Archives and Records Service and put with data processing, which is current, which is important, which is up-to-date, which is "now," which is where the action is. The fight over where records management is going to go if the National Archives achieves independence is not 100% settled yet. A strong push from the archival community seems to have moved records management back more into the archives camp. In fact, what we are talking about in archives and records management is two ends of the same spectrum, the same record. But the two are not going to be reunited 100% in the independence bills.

Our jobs are in danger because we are so focused on the problems of being archivists, we don't see that archivy is losing a value in the information age. Society is concerned about recentness in information, not old records. We heard yesterday that in county offices in Mississippi, you can find records five years old and younger, but after that the records don't, the information doesn't matter. Well, what does the person matter who keeps the records that are older than five years? If archivy is phased out, what is lost? A few jobs that aren't noticed in the computation of the Gross National Product. Yes, but more critically, a social cohesion is lost, a social cohesion that already is far too strained. We provide much more service to society than society is aware of, than we have made society aware of. Society needs, in my view, the archival service more than ever before, and that is what the Archives and Society initiative of the SAA is all about. If we lose, and we don't effect change in the appreciation and support of archival work, we lose doubly. We lose social cohesion, and we lose jobs as well. It's a problem for all of us; it's a problem that will take all of us working together to solve.

In December, I sent a letter, as president of the SAA, to all of the membership, pointing out the problem and the SAA's work on it, and asking the readers to respond to me how they had confronted the problem, the solutions that they had worked out or were contemplating. The response to the letter has been good, the quality has been outstanding. Almost all the responses filled two pages or more. The people who responded have been thinking about the problem for a long time and had a great deal of emotion to pour out. The problem as the writers expressed it really is two-fold. From one perspective, the problem is broader than all of us. It is tied in the

suggestion was given by a religious archivist, a bishop as a matter of fact, who wrote about the unappreciation of history and how we were tied to that. He laid blame at the door of boring history teachers. His solution was simple. Take them out and shoot them! I asked for no-holds-barred thinking, and the most novel idea I got back was to seek a box on the IRS 1040 form in which the American public could check off one dollar of income tax for support of archives. Now there's a goal!

My letter also described the appointment of a Task Force on Archives and Society by the SAA. Created last June, the task force is charged first to draft a statement that all of us can use on the importance of archives to and in society. The first draft of that statement will be published in the May SAA Newsletter. I urge you all to look at it, to respond to it.

Secondly, the task force is to propose ways and means that we as individuals, as professionals in our societies, and as employees of our institutions, that we can use to raise public awareness, appreciation, understanding and support of archival work. The task force in its spring meeting identified the most important public, based on responses and our own experience, to be administrators two and three rungs above us who hold the purse strings, who have major decision-making power. The task force is recommending and seeking to obtain funding for research on the perceptions of these people about archives. When we know more how they see us, we will be in a much stronger position to effect change.

Thirdly, the task force is to list the two or three highest priority national projects for the SAA to undertake over the next few years. Suggestions sent to us have included:

- 1) Utilize anniversaries: produce a TV special on archives in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the SAA or the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.
- 2) Use the Advertising Council of America to produce a national public service announcement.
- 3) Include marketing as one of the management objectives of the executive director of the SAA.
- 4) Develop a way to work with career planning and placement officers on college and university campuses to encourage an appreciation of the archival career.
- 5) Retain a marketing consulting firm to guide the profession's efforts to improve the public's understanding of archives.
- 6) Distribute op-ed pieces (articles opposite the editorial page expanding on a topic on the editorial page) nationally on issues of concern to the profession and encourage local repositories to distribute these to local media as well.
- 7) Create a national symbol or logo to identify things archival.

You can see the range of suggestions, tremendous valuable range of suggestions.

Finally, the task force is to serve as a clearing house of information and ideas for the profession on the Archives and Society topic.

Why didn't we do this sooner? We couldn't have as a profession. In the late

seventies the SAA experienced an 80% turnover in its membership. The focus of the SAA naturally fell largely on bringing these new people into the profession. The pace of turnover has slowed greatly in the early 80s. The focus of the profession is turning, accordingly, more to the profession.

There is a growing recognition that we must change from our isolated existences to cooperative endeavor, that there is more to archival work than just arrangement, description and reference, as important, as vital, as central as those are. You can see this change too in the NHPRC -- the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. It is trying to take a broader look at the profession than it has done in years. It is trying to encourage experiment, to encourage developments with new technology, to promote cooperative endeavors, to encourage research and development, to promote better, sounder, broader education and training within and without the profession. The State Needs Assessment grant projects are as good an example as anyone could give of this new direction. They have provided us a tremendous body of knowledge to work with.

There are two areas in particular in which there is rising concern and activity. One is certification of individuals. Many of the writers have called for it as a reliable and the quickest means of establishing to the world that we have a body of knowledge and methodology unique to archival endeavor and important to society, that given individuals have demonstrated a mastery of that body of knowledge, and that this provides a foundation for the public to see the extent, the nature and the importance of archival endeavor. Certification appears to provide the best means we have at this point of establishing guidelines for consulting in archives, something that the business and the religious archivists have called for particularly. And finally, certification, the writers point out, is something that is achievable before any degree program will be developed, the other common means of demonstrating achievement to the public.

The idea of certification of individuals isn't new. The idea came up in the mid 1970s and was proposed as part of a triumvirate -- certification of individuals, accreditation of educational programs, accreditation of institutions. In 1978, the three were split. Pursuit of accreditation of academic courses failed because the course or two offering in a history department or a library science school is of too little notice to make it worth the expense and effort to bring in an accreditation team. Not attaining this accreditation would not compromise the department or school. Development is proceeding on institutional evaluation. Julia Young, from Hattiesburg, is on the SAA Committee that's working on it. We are making progress in that area. Individual certification was set aside because three initiatives turned out to be too many at once.

Certification of individuals, though, has not died and the definition of an archivist in the SAA Newsletter was a conscious effort to bring back, to take a step, to make a move, to get people on a much broader basis within the SAA, within the archival profession, thinking about it. The response to that definition of an archivist has been heartening, because it has shown the depth of sentiment on the topic. It has served in a way, as a trial balloon to test the interest, and the interest is there. Council is going to look at the concept of certification of individuals during its spring meeting, two weeks from now. Should we pursue certification, clearly we have many questions to answer and much to do. It's not something that's going to happen at this meeting, or this year or next. But it is something that is coming off the back burner. During the break, I'd very much like to have response and comment from you on how you perceive, how you feel about certification of individuals within the

You know, there's an old Chinese proverb, "If we don't change our direction, we're likely to end up where we are headed." Let's recognize our image problem for what it is: the most serious threat to the archival service to society and to our jobs. The profession is no more and no less than us. The SAA is no more nor less than us -- volunteers. Change is basically no more nor less than our deciding we want it and working it toward. Are you satisfied with things the way they are? Are you satisfied with where we are headed?

I thank you for the opportunity to come before you and look forward to following with great interest your work on Archives and Society in Mississippi.

BOOK REVIEW -

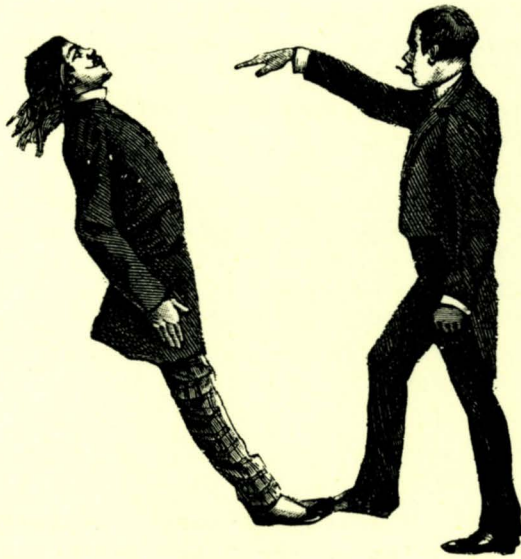
Kyvig, David E. and Myron A. Marty. *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You.* Nashville: The American Association for State and Local History, 1982. 300 pages. ISBN 0-910050-59-7.

In this followup to their *Your Family History: A Handbook for Research and Writing* (1978), Kyvig and Marty provide a well organized and useful volume on the importance of local history, the resources available for pursuing it, and the techniques for writing. It is a book at once helpful to the amateur and the novice professional. The archivist will find it valuable in that it brings together a wealth of information about the variety of sources and aids available for the study of local history with extensive bibliographical essays for each topic.

Kyvig and Marty, in their opening chapters, make a strong case for the study of local history within the context of the larger field while emphasizing their concern that it be done properly with a full understanding of the tools and resources available to those who would pursue it, whether on an amateur or professional basis. Followup chapters deal specifically with both published and unpublished documents, oral history, visual documents, artifacts, and landscapes and buildings. The chapter on oral history, for instance, can be especially valuable to the amateurs, who, through local historical societies and other auspices, are moving out into this field, for its guidelines on interviewing and methods of preserving the information obtained.

The volume is well illustrated both pictorially and with written examples of various resources, set apart from the text in block form. These latter can prove particularly helpful to the amateur. In addition to the chapter bibliographical essays, there is a concluding chapter "Linking the Particular and the Universal," which provides a brief overview of the development of urban historical studies. A series of appendices include samples of all types of forms from requests for various kinds of information to National Register nominations and historic site surveys. They also provide the addresses for the regional branches of the National Archives, state archives, state humanities councils, state historical societies, and state preservation offices. -- William E. Parrish, Department of History, Mississippi State University.





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