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**ARCHIVES BY DEGREE:
PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES ON ACADEMIC PREPARATION
FOR THE ARCHIVAL PROFESSION**

Introduction

The consideration of the question of the appropriate level and type of education and training for professional archivists is not an issue new to archival literature nor to the agendas of meetings of archival organizations. Articles published in national and regional journals and papers presented at national and regional gatherings have addressed this question many times over the years, but as yet no definite and bonding answers or agenda for action have emerged.

Programs of education and training for archivists are frequently defined in terms of three broad categories: basic, short-term, usually noncredit workshops or institutes designed either as an introduction to the profession for new or potential archivists or as continuing education for practicing archivists; postappointment, inservice training, usually provided by an individual archival institution primarily for members of its own staff; and preappointment, graduate study which may include multi-course or single-course offerings.¹ While some countries have developed a tradition of preappointment education for archivists, the relatively young archival profession in the United States, whose members serve in widely varied settings including public and private agencies with governmental, historical, institutional, religious, or educational responsibilities, has not as yet established a similarly strong trend or precedent.²

The Education and Professional Development Committee of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) has taken an active role in identifying issues and searching for solutions in the matter of archival education. In May 1973, the committee responded to recommendations put forth by SAA's Committee for the

Seventies and began the work which resulted in the drafting and publication in 1977 of guidelines for graduate archival education programs. These guidelines specifically called for at least a one-year course of study directed by an experienced archivist and offered as part of a graduate degree program in an accredited college or university. The archival education program was to include study of the nature, acquisition, appraisal, arrangement, description, use, and administration of archives; 140 hours of practical work in a project-oriented, laboratory setting with exposure to various basic and specialized activities; and opportunities for independent study.³

Within the next year, the committee also published drafts of a proposal for the creation of a program for individual archival certification based on education, examination, or experience and of a proposal for a program for evaluation and accreditation of archival educational programs. Written comments in the SAA Newsletter and debate and discussion in various other forums ensued, but final action to adopt and implement these proposals as official programs of SAA was not immediately forthcoming.⁴ Finally, in 1982, the Committee on Education and Professional Development submitted to SAA Council a report which summarized its work and recommended that the society suspend further efforts to pursue its various proposals on archival education. This recommendation was based on a lack of response from archival instruction programs, on a perceived climate of opposition to further specialized accreditation in academic institutions, on an apparent retreat from basing employment qualifications upon specific credentials, on the potential burdens that the administration of education-related programs would place on SAA's financial and personnel resources, and the unfortunate possibility that these programs could involve the society in litigation.⁵ While Council accepted the committee's recommendation at that time, the question of archival education continues to command the attention and interest of archivists, educators, and others, and the Committee on Education and Professional Development continues to consider various aspects of the issue as well.

The Study Group on the Definition of an

Archivist, created by Council early in 1983, drafted and published a definition which defined the archivist's knowledge as consisting of "a sound, formal education" and learning which is "the result of specific education and practice in the discipline of archives."⁶ Responses to this draft included calls for a more specific statement addressing education and training among other issues, and for "a standard body of literature for our profession and a standard educational method for inculcating that knowledge into those who would be practitioners of the discipline."⁸ These responses provide an indication of the fact that strong views about archival education persist as a very basic concern about the future of the archival profession and pervade consideration of other archival issues.

Even more recently, SAA's Goals and Priorities Task Force (GAP) published an interim report on planning for the archival profession in which one of its three major goals, that of "the administration of archival programs to ensure the preservation of all records of enduring value," contains prominent attention to archival education as a fundamental element underlying many other archival concerns. The first two of six objectives listed in support of this broad goal directly concern archival education: "Establish and evaluate programs for archival education and training" and "develop and apply guidelines and standards for archivists and archival repositories." Specific strategies for action to effect these changes are described for each objective in the GAP report. Those strategies related to the education goals and objectives include: "Develop standards for archival education and promote and monitor their use," "develop comprehensive educational programs," and "develop, implement, and monitor standards for establishing professional competence."⁹ Clearly, archival education, education of the caliber and content of traditional graduate study and inquiry, is seen by GAP as a very basic issue and an important area in which the archival profession needs to plan, to set goals and objectives, and to define and implement strategies for action and for change.

Each of the three essays which follows here gives attention to this matter of continuing interest and offers a personal perspective on the education

issue from the viewpoint of a participant in the study of archives on the graduate level. The three archivists whose comments are included participated in a panel presentation, "Archives by Degree: Academic Preparation for the Archival Profession," at the 1983 Annual Meeting and Fall Workshop of the Society of Georgia Archivists. Each of the three panelists was asked to provide background information on his education prior to enrolling in the program attended and on the history, structure, and curriculum of the program. In addition, each archivist was asked to evaluate his own archival education program as it provided professional knowledge, competence, and credentials, as it prepared the archivist for actual work in an archival agency, and as it helped him form opinions on the questions of education and training and of accreditation and certification for archivists. Whatever changes, plans, decisions, and actions on the education issue evolve and develop within the archival profession, their personal perspectives provide useful information about and interpretation of some aspect of preappointment, graduate study in archives.

Virginia J.H. Cain

NOTES

¹Ruth W. Helmuth, "Education for Archivists: A View from the Trenches," The American Archivist 44 (Fall 1981): 295; "Archival Education Opportunities," SAA Newsletter, January 1981, 1 [of insert].

²Helmuth, "Education for Archivists," 297.

³"Archives Education Guidelines Approved," SAA Newsletter, May 1977, 4-5.

⁴"A Program for Archival Certification," SAA Newsletter, July 1977, 10-11; "A Program for Archival Certification: Commentary," SAA Newsletter, September 1977, 8-10; "Board of Archival

Certification Proposed," SAA Newsletter , January 1978, 10-11.

⁵"Education Committee Submits Summary Report," SAA Newsletter, March 1982, 10-12.

⁶"Archivist: A Definition," SAA Newsletter, January 1984, 4-5.

⁷Edmund Berkeley, Jr. in "Commentary on 'Archivist: A Definition,'" SAA Newsletter , March 1984, 3-4.

⁸Eleanor McKay in "Commentary on 'Archivist: A Definition,'" SAA Newsletter, March 1984, 3-4.

⁹Society of American Archivists, Task Force on Goals and Priorities, "Planning for the Archival Profession: A Report of the SAA Task Force on Goals and Priorities," Chicago, 1984 (initial discussion draft, printed), 25-27.

The Double Degree Program At Case Western Reserve University

In August 1980 I entered the archival administration program at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU). Looking back on those two years in Cleveland and the events that led to my enrollment in the program, I cannot help but feel remarkably fortunate. Until my senior year at the University of Hawaii I had not decided on a career. I had considered using my history degree in the fields of law, business, or librarianship, but these areas lacked the opportunity to work with primary sources. Although I had declared my major in history as early as my sophomore year, by the beginning of my fourth year, archival administration and archival education were not yet phrases with which I was familiar. I cannot remember a single bulletin in the history department advertising a program, nor any information from either a professor or a counsellor informing me of the option. It did not occur to me until much

later that there was no one out there promoting the archival profession and recruiting promising students into established programs. In the deluge of mail resulting from my inclusion in the Minority Student Locator Service sponsored by the Graduate Record Exam, Case Western Reserve University was the only archival education program from which I received literature and an application.

The program offered by Case Western Reserve intrigued me. I could not have tailored one better to suit my interests. Putting all my eggs into one basket, I applied only to CWRU and was accepted, although too late to receive scholarship assistance my first year. This was no small consideration. In 1980 the cost of one semester credit was two hundred dollars and has since increased considerably. Scholarships specifically for archival training were rare, and the scholarships awarded through the history department were intended mainly for students interested in traditional historical research. Not to be dissuaded, however, I begged, borrowed, and promised my first born male child and was ready to go.

Ruth Helmuth is university archivist, founder and head of the program at Case Western Reserve. She believes that archivists are born and not made and, thus, my enrollment at CWRU was probably fate. For my friends and family in Hawaii who thought Case Western Reserve was a military academy in a forsaken part of the country, this was probably insanity. I assured them that I would be all right, although only having heard rumors about Cleveland I was not sure that my time in purgatory was not at hand.

Little did I realize then what a risk I was taking in entering an archival training program having never been exposed to an archive. Not until I had nearly completed the program did Mrs. Helmuth admit her initial misgivings on having someone come from so far away to make the time and financial commitment that I made without first having discussed the field with anyone in the profession.

If I was an example of the wrong way to approach archival education, my classmates were examples of the right way. Most of them had investigated the profession and the different training programs offered. Many had spent time in archival or manuscript repositories, read job bulletins, knew

what opportunities were possible, and what salary range to expect. They believed that being an archivist was not a second-rate substitute for a professorship but a first-rate career choice. They had an understanding of the work environment and the different kinds of institutions around the country that were interested in archivists. They had invested time in finding out before investing their money and committing a year and a half.

I dwell on this because graduate programs are expensive, and I have since become aware of programs that offer less or concentrate on different things. A student contemplating an archival career owes it to himself to take time to explore the possibilities, to talk to experienced archivists and, above all, to get some experience in an archival setting. One cannot afford to enter a program without some background and a lot of commitment. Furthermore, a profession struggling for identity in a time of transition cannot afford halfhearted and poorly trained participants.

There were several ways to earn an archival degree at Case Western Reserve. The simplest was to get either a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in American history or a Master of Science degree in Library Science (M.S.L.S.) Both programs required the student to complete thirty credit hours. A student could also combine an M.A. in American studies with an M.S.L.S. requiring at least twenty-four credits in each discipline and a total of fifty-four credit hours. The program most often chosen, however, was the combination of a M.A. in American history and an M.S.L.S. Of the eight of us who started in September 1980, I and five others chose this course of study.

The general requirements for this double degree were fifty-four credit hours, with a minimum of twenty-four in each discipline. It was expected that a student would complete the degree in three semesters and one summer. The history requirements for archival students included two seminar classes in historical research, resulting in an original research paper on Cleveland history. In addition, four other graduate level history courses were expected, and a colloquium by the candidate in which an original paper was presented to the history faculty and graduate students.

The requirements for archival students in the

library school were at least one course each in classification, cataloging and reference. Two practicums in archival settings along with an archival theory course taught by Ruth Helmuth and a management of manuscripts course taught by Kermit Pike, director of the library and manuscripts division of the Western Reserve Historical Society, were also required. The practicums were completed in the university's archive under the direction of the assistant archivists and in the Western Reserve Historical Society under the direction of the curator of manuscripts. The practicums concentrated on arrangement and description, but participants were also expected to accession collections, to answer reference questions, to microfilm and perform simple preservation functions such as cleaning, minor repairs, deacidification, and encapsulation. A course in computer programming, which most students took, was also strongly advised, as was a third seminar on current archival issues.

With so many requirements, our ability to tailor the program to suit our own interests was limited but still possible. Through the library school we could select courses in computer programming, statistics, government documents, rare books and many other areas which would enhance our marketability and exposure. Additional experience could also be gained through independent study courses and through class projects. For example, a student could help an institution write a National Historical Publication and Records Commission grant proposal, put together a proposal for a new business archive, or do an oral history interview. Many of us used the independent study for broader experience, such as internships at the National Archives and processing architectural drawings in the university's collection, or for further reading on topics such as preservation or cartographics.

The result, for a student who took full advantage of the richness and diversity offered by Case Western Reserve, was an exposure to all aspects of the archival profession. Even those who did not attempt a variety of things were exposed, in the required practicums and theory courses, to the base of knowledge necessary to understand the history of the profession, its evolution and concerns for the future.

Sitting in a session on archival education in Minneapolis this past October (1983), I heard a student currently enrolled in another double degree program echo a complaint that many of us had at Case Western Reserve. We were pursuing neither careers in historical research nor careers in librarianship. We were caught in a no man's land, a void, between the two professions. To make matters worse, it appeared that the administrations of the School of Library Science and the history department, which was in the School of Graduate Studies, did not confer.

The void was to a large extent filled by Mrs. Helmuth who kept in constant touch with all of us. By gauging the strengths, interests, and geographic preferences of her students, she was able to suggest areas for cultivation, directed toward the goal of job placement upon graduation. Also taking place in that void was a dynamic of which I do not think even Mrs. Helmuth was aware at first. Her approach to archival administration was clearly from a history bias. She contended, and rightly so, that a library degree would help the archivist working in special collections in a library to understand the vocabulary and the technical aspects of librarianship.

But librarianship, it turned out, offered far more than even I wanted to admit. Classification helped me make sense of the hierarchical nature of archives; statistics showed me the communication value in the presentation of data; cataloging and computer programming made online data bases less intimidating; and above all, reference taught me strategy and service. Combined with the research skills and user empathy acquired through the history program and the archival experience, the result was a hybrid professional. We had no choice but to consider ourselves different from either profession; we were archivists and we had done archival work. We attended Society of American Archivists (SAA) Annual Meetings and participated in SAA sponsored workshops and in regional organization meetings. From our unintended orphanage we emerged with a sense of being neither historians nor librarians but indeed professional archivists.

Within three months after our graduation in December 1981, the six of us who graduated with the double degree had jobs, and one student who received a single degree in history went on to work on a

doctorate. We were well prepared for the positions we accepted and felt at the end of a year and a half of full-time employment that the extent of our preparation had not yet been tested.

Although my feelings about the program are clearly positive, it did have weaknesses. The ones that occur to me now are the lack of experience in dealing with photographs and computers. Computers are of immediate concern to the profession as a whole. In 1980 we did not have the benefit of using computers in our practicums. Since that time the Case Western Reserve University Archive has installed a personal computer and makes it available to archival students.

If Ruth Helmuth appears to figure largely in my memory of the program it is with good reason. I strongly believe that she is personally responsible for the success of the program. I wait with some apprehension to see whether the program can continue after she leaves. If it can survive, the entire archival community will gain by the sense of professionalism it evokes from students.

The topic of certification and accreditation have been considered a current issue ever since I started at Case Western Reserve four years ago. Lack of action has led to the proliferation of archival programs, many of which are not as expensive as the program at Case Western Reserve and several which offer far less. As archivists we have not only failed to implement a plan of accreditation, but have also failed to endorse the few adequate programs in existence and to support them with grants and scholarships for interested and qualified students. Discussions of the image and definition of an archivist inevitably lead to the cry for properly trained individuals. Unless archivists in the United States take steps to create adequate programs and to support the ones already in existence they can never hope to elevate the standards of entry into the archival profession.

Anita K. Delaries

The Auburn University Archival Training Program

My remarks focus primarily upon the importance of the Auburn University Archival Training Program to my development as an archivist. I strongly emphasize that few of my ideas on the topic of archival education are set in concrete--I am still in the process of sorting out my feelings about the value of formal training in this field. Perhaps most importantly, my own education as an archivist, which began in 1972, is continuing today. Hardly a day passes that I do not learn something new from my colleagues.

Before describing the Auburn University program, I would like to offer some personal observations on archival education. I think one becomes an archivist by doing it rather than reading about it. To give a rather simplistic analogy, when I was enrolled in a lifesaving and water safety course at Auburn in 1965, several of my classmates thoroughly mastered the Red Cross handbook and could recite verbatim the various methods of saving a drowning person. However, when they had to jump in the deep water and confront a struggling person, they were not very comfortable with the situation. With daily practice, they eventually mastered the rescue techniques outlined in the handbook. I think an archivist can read all of the current professional literature and still be totally inept in processing manuscripts or in performing routine reference and preservation duties. I believe that the best archival training combines classroom work and practical, on-the-job experience, with heavy emphasis on the latter. More specifically, I think archival readings are useful only when tied directly to projects. When a student is processing a manuscript collection, for example, his readings should center around arrangement, description, and preservation. I think it is absurd for a student to read Shellenberg's books from cover to cover and then be tested on them. These works should be used as reference tools rather than as textbooks in a lecture course. Also, in any archival course, the reading list must be continually revised

and upgraded as new archival techniques are introduced.

I believe that a strong undergraduate grounding in an academic discipline is essential to anyone aspiring to be an archivist. I quickly add that I do not know which particular undergraduate major best prepares one for an archival career. I think much depends upon the individual and the type of archival position he is seeking. For example, a major in American literature should prove invaluable to an archivist processing the papers of literary figures like Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner. Likewise, a mathematics, physics, or engineering background might aid an archivist working on the papers of Werner Von Braun. In dealing with the papers of a German immigrant in Nebraska, a reading knowledge of the language would be necessary. Of course, these are special cases, and it is often impossible to find archivists with training that matches particular assignments.

I do not think that historians automatically make strong archivists. Some historians become archivists and have a great deal of difficulty separating their personal research interests from their daily work assignments. On the other hand, as one of my colleagues recently argued, historians who have conducted extensive research in primary sources and are familiar with particular subject areas can play valuable roles in certain archival depositories, particularly in the central reference division. In my own case, I think a knowledge of sources in state and local history certainly helped me both in processing and in reference when I worked at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

I think something should be said about how much formal academic training is necessary for someone preparing for an archival career. I do not think it is necessary for one to accumulate a lengthy string of degrees as a prerequisite to being an archivist. I do think the combination of degrees can be important in seeking archival positions. A Master of Library Science (M.L.S.) degree has become a prerequisite for many positions, particularly those in manuscript depositories in university libraries. A number of my colleagues in the National Archives have done quite well with only a Master of Arts (M.A.) in history. Others have combined an M.A. in

history with an M.L.S. Over the past several years, a knowledge of computers has become more important to archivists. Therefore, I would recommend to an aspiring archivist that in planning his future, he should build as much flexibility as possible into his academic training and work experience. One never knows how earlier experience will help later. For example, in the presidential libraries system we often conduct public outreach programs for elementary and secondary schools, and I have found that my earlier teaching experience helps in this area.

Perhaps this point is obvious, but I feel that a number of personal qualities are essential in a good archivist. I believe that archival duties can be performed best by people who are precise, logical, inquisitive, thorough, and persistent. A reference archivist or one who deals frequently with the public obviously must have the ability to work well with people. I also think that, like the scholar, an archivist ideally should be comfortable working alone for extended periods of time. It is unfortunate that many young archivists do not realize at the outset that a number of archival projects must be undertaken in solitude. An archivist also must be able to accept the fact that he may not finish a particular project. A very realistic example, there are 27 million pages of textual materials among the holdings of the Carter Presidential Materials Project. All of this material must be processed completely. It is highly unlikely that anyone on our present staff will be around when the job is completed. The next generation of archivists may finish the job. Thus, although an archivist may have to seek personal satisfaction from small accomplishments, he must be able to see his progress as an integral step toward a larger goal. At any rate, in any archival training program, I think it would be worthwhile to devote some time to discussion of the monotony and frustration inherent in an archivist career that often results in "archival burnout."

I was suffering from another form of burnout in 1972 after teaching high school social studies and English for almost five years. I enjoyed historical research, particularly in manuscript depositories, but I really knew nothing about the archival profession. After enrolling in the Auburn University graduate program in history, I learned that the

university archives offered assistantships for two students each year. I received an archival assistantship and worked in the university archives for three years.

Allen W. Jones established the Auburn University Archival Training Program in 1973 as a joint venture with the university archives, the history department, and the Federal Archives and Records Center (FARC) in East Point, Georgia. Gayle Peters, the regional archivist at FARC, was instrumental in the establishment of the program. Today, Dr. Jones still serves as university archivist and professor of history. His program is designed to provide M.A. and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) students in history with a minor field in archival administration. When I enrolled in the program, I could not include this subject area as one of my outside fields. Graduate students are required to be enrolled in the history department and must take two required courses--Directed Reading and Study in Archival Procedures and Archival Internship. Courses are also available in oral history, historic preservation, and records management, but cannot be counted toward a degree. The history department recently approved the preparation of an extensive archival finding aid in lieu of the traditional M.A. thesis.

The directed readings course includes the study of twenty-five books and pamphlets and approximately seventy-five articles in the fields of archival administration, library science, and records management. Some of the readings are highly technical, particularly those dealing with preservation. Anyone who has completed the course can attest to the thoroughness of the reading list. Emphasis is placed upon exposing students to the varied aspects of an archival career. Discussion of the readings is carried out in tutorial style with the university archivist. The student also devotes ten hours per week for one quarter (approximately ten weeks) working in the university archives. Under the direction of the university archivist, his assistant, and the records manager, the student performs a number of archival duties, including acquisitions, evaluation, preservation, arrangement, description, reference, and micrographics. During my three years in the Auburn University Archives, I completed a number of projects. I processed the papers of an

Alabama congressman who had served for thirty years. Then, there was the afternoon I climbed into the loft of a barn in Chambers County to retrieve the records of a cotton and mercantile company. I think that was the moment when I realized that I had found my calling. I still enjoy archival salvage work. A final examination covers the readings and project work in the university archives. This course is a prerequisite for the archival internship.

The internship provides the student with closely supervised, on-the-job training at the FARC and the Carter Presidential Materials Project. The student spends eight full weeks at East Point and two to three weeks at the Carter project. The student's work at both depositories is carefully planned and monitored by the university archivist and the intern supervisors. The work at the FARC includes records evaluation and description, arrangement, preservation, accessioning and disposal, reference, and exhibit preparation. In my case, the FARC experience proved to be invaluable. I learned about presidential libraries and subsequently obtained an archival position in Washington D.C. The Carter project currently offers interns rudimentary experience in processing and reference but will provide a greater variety of assignments after the permanent building is constructed.

The Auburn University Archival Training Program is designed to accommodate two or three students each year. Since 1973, 27 students have completed the program--16 women and 11 men. Of these 27 students, 14 are now employed in the archival field. Eleven of them are from Alabama; five are from Georgia; 2 from North Dakota; and 1 each from Florida, Mississippi, Minnesota, Arkansas, Illinois, Ohio, Wisconsin, California, and Arizona. Thus, the program primarily has attracted Alabamians, with a sprinkling of students from across the nation. I think the Auburn program compares quite favorably with most other archival training programs, particularly in the South.

David E. Alsobrook

Archival Education at Wayne State University

As a graduate of the archival administration program offered at Wayne State University (WSU), in Detroit, Michigan, I have been asked to describe the training I received while enrolled in the program and the impact I feel it has had on my career in archives, and to comment on several other issues relating to archival education in general. Due to practical considerations, I will focus my remarks on three main topics: a description of the training program I completed (the teaching staff, course structure and content, availability of a practicum component, and availability of specialized electives); the effectiveness of this training for the students who enrolled in the program and their readiness upon completion for work in a repository setting; and my assessment of the effect of the program on my own career, and thoughts on the nature of archival education programs of the future.

I enrolled in the archival administration program through the WSU history department in 1978, without having a really clear idea of what archivists were or what they did. In my junior year I was a music major contemplating a change in career plans; although history appealed to me, I preferred a nonteaching application. Somehow, with help from the University Career Center, I stumbled onto information about careers in preservation, conservation, and archives. Discovering further that Wayne State offered archives courses through both the history and library science departments, but still having no real notion of what I might be getting into, I set off to investigate the idea.

The basic program, as I found, consists of a one-year, graduate-level sequence of courses in archival administration, taught by Dr. Philip Mason, who founded the program over twenty years ago. The first part of the sequence is offered in the fall of each year, and the classes are held at the Walter Reuther Library, which is located in the heart of the WSU campus in downtown Detroit. The Reuther Library is a major repository for labor union and urban affairs records, with holdings of approximately forty thousand linear feet of manuscript collections and some five hundred thousand photographs; it is the official repository for the records of several labor

unions, including the United Auto Workers, the United Farm Workers, and the Air Line Pilots Association. Archivists from the staff of the Reuther Library often conduct and participate in the classroom sessions, and most of the students in the program receive their first hands-on training there, so the role of the library and its staff is not only important but integral to the overall focus of the program.

From the very beginning, the program at Wayne impressed the students in my class (about twenty-five in number) with its atmosphere of evangelical fervor. It was made clear from the start that archival administration is not a second-rate profession in any sense, for either historians or librarians. Instead, we were told, it is a profession in its own right, with a distinct history, philosophy and body of knowledge which were expected to absorb, and in which we would be immersed for the duration of the training program. The education we were offered during the year was intended to provide a sound, unified body of knowledge for persons hoping to move into entry-level positions or those already in the profession who were interested in strengthening their skills.

The classes followed a lecture and discussion format, with occasional field trips to other repositories and guest lecturers on topics such as business archives, university archives, arrangement and description, conservation, photographs, exhibits, and grantsmanship. The repositories visited included the State Archives of Michigan, the Burton Historical Collection (at the Detroit Public Library), the Archives of American Art (at the Detroit Institute of Arts), and the Clements and Bentley libraries at the University of Michigan. During the trips, the students were encouraged to ask questions and to observe the different ways in which the institutions functioned. Lectures and discussions were based on a reading list of standard archival works by Posner, Schellenberg, Jenkinson, Muller, Feith and Fruin, Duckett and others; on key articles drawn from archives, library and history journals; and on publications from archival conferences, the Society of American Archivists, the American Association for State and Local History, and other professional associations. The lectures were frequently illustrated with examples drawn from Dr. Mason's

years of experience with donors, researchers, and archival matters in general.

The year opened with an overview of the history of archives, and the European roots of archival theory were discussed at length. From this basis the class moved on to cover matters relevant to modern archives and manuscript management in general, including types of repositories, collecting policies, theories of arrangement and description, historical editing, the relationship between records management and archives, reference and access policies, legal issues, replevin, and security. The second quarter of class work pertained more to issues relating directly to the handling of records, such as appraisal, levels of processing, access, conservation, confidentiality, finding aids and filing system. The third quarter included management issues such as collecting and access policies, staff and management relations, public relations, outreach, disaster planning, and building design. Throughout the year students were informed of and encouraged to join local, state, regional and national professional organizations and were advised of archives positions that became available; near the end of the year, class discussions turned to job-hunting, resume writing, interview techniques, and career goals.

Although archival theories were discussed in detail throughout the seminars and illustrated with real life examples, the necessity of hands-on experience was constantly stressed. At the beginning of the second quarter students were allowed to choose a collection from a list of relatively small collections to be processed, were assigned a staff archivist as an advisor, and were given their first chance to apply classroom theory to reality. At this point some of our number discovered how much they truly detested archival work while others, myself included, discovered that their fears of being devoured by the masses of paper were unfounded. Most of the student collections ranged in size from one to six cubic feet, depending on the nature of the materials, and were screened beforehand for suitability. This practical experience was not optional, nor did it carry separate or extra credit; it was built into the administration sequence and counted as the quarterly class project for each student. Time spent on the project was in addition

to time spent in class, and before receiving a grade the students had to present a finished finding aid and short paper explaining the work they had done and their reasons for doing it that way. Most students completed two collections between January and June, although a few worked on one large collection during that time.

This describes the basic archival administration sequence that I experienced. In addition, students had a chance of several elective courses, which were also taught by experienced specialists. Photographic administration covered the history of photography, physical structure of photographs, copyright issues, storage, and exhibit techniques. The classes were taught by Margery S. Long, who currently participates in the photographic administration workshops sponsored by the Society of American Archivists (SAA). In oral history methodology students learned interviewing techniques and how to plan successful oral history projects and discussed legal and ethical issues. Each student completed two interviews and turned in subject indexes with verbatim and edited transcriptions before receiving a grade. The conservation courses consisted of a basic introduction plus a more detailed lab course, each lasting one quarter. Some students combined these courses with museum or historic preservation studies; some pursued special fields; and others took everything that was offered, since the structure of the program allowed for tailoring of the coursework to suit individual needs.

Did the program itself turn those of us who enrolled into archivists? No. At least not automatically, and I doubt whether any program or workshop anywhere can make that claim. As the saying goes, "You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear" and you certainly can't make an archivist out of a student who lacks either the true interest or the basic skills to be one. However, the structure of the program at WSU did (and I am sure still does) help insure that the graduates were at least reasonably competent and ready for further experience and responsibility. Due to the mandatory combination of theory and apprenticeship, the students who simply could not tolerate one or the other tended to pursue other interests. Even the students who did not care overly much for the field but who stayed through to

the end at least received a thorough schooling in archival rudiments. Those, for instance, who took the courses in order to have "something to fall back on" if their teaching careers failed, are now infinitely better prepared than their colleagues who may simply stumble into the profession. The atmosphere of the classroom, as managed by an experienced archivist, and of the Reuther Library, where students were surrounded by an exceptionally dedicated, knowledgeable, and competent staff, dictated that a certain amount of respect and knowledge would be absorbed by all but the most unwilling.

How well did the Wayne State program prepare us for work in a repository setting? In terms of the possession of a thorough knowledge of the theoretical and practical basics of the profession and of the particular needs of massive twentieth century records, I think most of us were admirably prepared to move into positions dealing with those types of materials. We were well acquainted with administrative aspects of the field and had been guided through our first face-to-face encounters with real collections by experienced professional archivists. We understood the basics of conservation and preservation and of legal matters and had frequently been reminded of our responsibilities with respect to both donors and researchers. Those of us who, in addition to our classwork, had been employed at the Reuther Library as graduate assistants (an invaluable experience in itself) had also had opportunities to work as reference archivists in the reading room and to observe the end result of our work--processed collections being used by researchers. Although most of us would not acquire extensive experience with field work, donor relations or "lone arranger" situations until we began to work full time, we were quite ready for positions with institutions dealing with modern records on a large scale.

We were possibly less well prepared for what we might encounter in smaller repositories or those with a strong manuscripts, as opposed to archives, tradition. I, at least, tended to assume that although different institutions might have slightly different policies, certain principles (relating primarily to such concepts as provenance) would

always remain constant. Perhaps because a formally trained fledgling archivist is well prepared for a professional position and has so many ideas for the future, discovering the vast differences in the treatment of archival materials across the country can be devastating.

It is a shock to enter a repository and to find untrained volunteers attempting piecemeal subject arrangement of a bulky collection of modern records or to find that nobody at the institution has ever seen a records center carton (although collections of hundreds of linear feet are accessioned with some regularity). To come across a document case stuffed with papers to the point that it resembles a football (and has to be slit open to remove the contents) because someone decided that all files from a given year should fit in one five-inch box (whether they actually measured one inch or seven inches); to see files generated by one organization cheerfully merged into those of another because they deal with the same subject; to watch long-time "professional archivists" mark on documents and photographs with permanent felt-tip marker is offensive. Perhaps, worst of all (to the student) is to object to some of these practices, citing professional literature on current procedures or the principle of provenance, and to be told, "Yes, we're aware of those theories but we don't believe in the principles of provenance or original order anyway."

Prepared as we were to pursue the most up-to-date care of modern archives, I doubt if any amount of preliminary warning could have reduced greatly the shocks that some of us experienced upon entering the real world. On the other hand, I also believe that the friction generated by these situations can be a good experience for all of the parties involved, as the new archivist and the veteran each take time to ponder their favorite approaches to the problems and puzzles that archivists face on a daily basis.

In conclusion, I have been constantly surprised at the amount of valuable information I received through the archival administration program at Wayne State University and at the confidence with which I have been able to approach new situations in the profession because of that training. I do not mean to imply that a formal education means permanent,

complete, perpetually superior and unchanging knowledge, because it does not; like any type of training it needs to be expanded and updated over time. I do hope that some sort of accreditation system for archival training programs is developed in the near future. While I believe that archivists will continue to receive their education in many different ways, including workshops, institutes and graduate-level programs, I also believe that establishing definitions for these categories will help insure a level of quality. Allowing the archival equivalent of diploma mills to claim equality with reputable, well-established programs only hurts the profession in the end.

I firmly believe, as I was taught, that being an archivist is a first-rate profession. Archival (and non-archival) institutions should be able to hire graduates of archival educational programs with confidence that their training has been accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date.

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