

"THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN:"
REFERENCE PRIORITIES AND THE STATE ARCHIVES

Two hundred years ago this October, the British Army under Lord Cornwallis marched dejectedly from the ruins of Yorktown, Virginia. In surrendering to the victorious Americans and their French allies, the vanquished British army filed out of the town in cadence to the strains of "The World Turned Upside Down." Just as the title to this battlefield tune sufficiently symbolizes the crushing defeat of the British in the War for American Independence, state archives and other record repositories throughout this country have come under seige in recent years by a determined and presistent legion, known collectively as family historians, or genealogists. Often virtual battle lines have been drawn between genealogists and archivists, as each has seen the other as the major obstacle in accomplishing mutually-exclusive goals. Considerable tension and misunderstanding has resulted on both sides. More recently, with the flow of genealogists to our doors showing no signs of abating, some archivists have begun to seriously examine the question, "How do we help the genealogist in the use of archives?" Not only are archivists finally willing to acknowledge the presence of genealogists, but one recent regional archives meeting even devoted a session to investigating how we might educate them. I would contend that before we undertake the education of the genealogists, we must first re-educate ourselves.

Let us backtrack a bit recalling the part that genealogists have played in the establishment of American state archives, particularly in the southern and mid-Atlantic states, and with special reference to Maryland.

In 1901 Alabama was the first state to establish an archives. Thereafter the states in varying manner and date erected their own archives. In this they were greatly aided by genealogists (many of whom peopled the patriotic societies) and by local historians who recognized, for whatever reason, the necessity of American state archives. In Maryland, the American Historical Association in 1902 urged that a study be made of the scattered archives of the state, and with this the idea of a central archival depository was formulated. The tercentenary celebration of the settlement of Maryland gave the actual impetus needed for the creation of a central depository for its archives. Begun in 1934, the Maryland Hall of Records opened the following year, and there was no secret that individuals throughout the state, proud of their ancestry, anxious to have their heritage preserved, as well as the politicians, gave substantial support to the movement for a state archives.

Now every archivist has been trained to believe that the primary responsibility of any governmental institution is to the body that created it. Ernst Posner said with reference to archives, "Service to government and its various units and subdivisions must take precedence over all types of reference services." Archivists have learned this lesson well. No matter how pressed, requests from government officials or the courts must be tended to immediately. And generally they are.

Next to state officials, historians are the typical archivist's preferred customer. This is true in part because in helping historians archivists find they are able to add to their own knowledge of a given subject. Even though the historian requires much attention from the archivist, we derive more intellectual stimulation, and it must be admitted, ego satisfaction, from helping the historian--whatever his or

her topic--than the genealogist.

The archivist of a large religious institution, whom I know well, says that genealogists are the most selfish of all people and some of his fellow religious are morally opposed to aiding any of them. The same attitude, expressed in secular, and occasionally outright vulgar, terms, is shared by most archivists in public archives.

Denegrating genealogists has been a cherished avocation of archivists ever since we began scratching our way up the ladder toward professional status. An archives was not for the genealogist, and only the few who in no way interfered with work of the professionals were truly welcomed within the portals. Genealogists were given no special encouragement or assistance, and younger members of the archives staff were warned, "Do not spoonfeed genealogists". This attitude was particularly true outside of the deep South.

There are reasons for this, of course. In the past, the average genealogist was commonly perceived as a wealthy, conservative, super patriot who simply wanted to impress others with his own notable ancestry. His interest often was narrow and overly selfish, and with no training in the methods of historical research the archivist too often had to do much of the work.

Because of the sharp increase over the past few years in the number of genealogists coming to our archives, we know now, even if we did not acknowledge it before, that genealogists, like all people, come in different shapes, sizes, and complexions. They represent all classes, all races, all religions. Whether motivated by personal pride, simple curiosity, or the need to establish roots in a mobile society, their reasons for wanting to do research on their personal history are not criteria that we can legitimately question or dismiss. Genealogists, then, have as much right to use our archives as anyone, and we have a duty--a responsibility if you will--to make our records available to them.

One might even argue that our former priorities must be turned on their head. The typical historian entering our archives, rather than deserving special attention from us, is in reality at least as self-centered as the average genealogist, and today most topics investigated by historians are so narrowly defined and obtuse as to be of little or no value to anyone. With other government officials and agencies, long our most valued clients, we have forgotten that they, like us, are supported by the taxes of the state's citizens and that all facets of government, from the governor's office and the state's highest court on down, were established to serve the people. Is it justifiable or prudent to expect genealogists, taxpayers and citizens all, who comprise one-half to more than three quarters of our clientele, to stand patiently in line while we first serve fellow public servants and superfluous historians?

Even if you are willing to acknowledge the validity of research undertaken by genealogists, and fully recognize their numerical importance to our archives, you are still faced with serious problems caused primarily by the great increase in demands made by them. Last year, nearly 13,000 researchers visited the search room at the Maryland Hall of Records. They sapped our resources and forced us to concentrate staff time and energy mainly on them, not on other duties we perceive as part of our mandate. Granted, the size of our staff has increased over the past decade, but only slightly and not nearly in

proportion to the increase in demand for service, either in person or by mail. Moreover, our facilities have not been enlarged, and our other duties have increased, rather than diminished. We must do far more than run the research room, a fact of which the researcher is seldom aware. A major part of our time, lest we lose the archives of the present, should be spent in surveying archival records not presently under archival control. Last year we brought in over 6,000 cubic feet of material, which is presently stored in two warehouses. We also microfilmed over 265,000 records and produced more than 26,000 photostats. In addition, we have written, published, edited, lectured, taught, and prepared exhibits. Despite these accomplishments, our archival staff spent seventy-five percent of its time in the research room, or in answering the almost 8,000 genealogical inquiries we received during the year. Most would agree that this is a disproportionate amount of time to spend on a single segment of our clientele. In recent years it became clear that we had to do something about the sheer volume of demand placed on us by genealogists--not to discourage or penalize them as a group, but to improve the way we handled their inquiries so as to satisfy their needs as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

The rise in correspondence was one of the first problems we faced as a result of the increased interest in genealogy. The volume of mail became so great that we were forced to adopt drastic measures to cope with the problem.

In 1975 we began charging \$5.00 for each inquiry, which guaranteed an hour's worth of research. We did not seek to discourage written inquiries, but rather to reduce the number of people simply "fishing" for information. We can best serve those writing to us if their questions are concise, coherent, and to the point. The \$5.00 search fee was no deterrent to our correspondents, and the quality of inquiries we receive has markedly improved.

Next, we instituted a mechanized system to assist in drafting responses to letters. We installed text editing equipment, which is capable of storing scores of standard paragraphs. Archivists can assemble a letter quickly by inserting a variety of standard stored paragraphs in combination with brief statements that answer specific portions of any inquiry received. Despite our small staff and large volume of mail, this use of new technology enables us to respond to most correspondence within three weeks without resorting to the frequently irrelevant, and often annoying, form letters we once used.

Our second problem was to devise means to more effectively and efficiently deal with the 10,000 genealogists each year who come to the archives to do research themselves. First, we re-arranged our research room to accommodate more patrons, replacing the old rectangular search room tables with more efficient octagonal research stations. Then, we developed new tools to aid researchers. Each new researcher is given an orientation packet, consisting of security instructions, a diagram of the facilities, and maps of the Maryland counties and of Annapolis. The Maryland map cites the date each county was erected and names of the parent county or counties. Also included is a leaflet describing our genealogical holdings and a brochure listing our publications.

Research in any archives is vastly helped or hindered by the quality and quantity of available guides, and they are tools that every researcher must employ. Although every volume or item in an archives is eventually accessioned and entered on a shelf list, these lists,

until very recently, were generated for internal use rather than for public perusal. Therefore, those who came to use the facilities had to have a catalogue, calendar, or some other guide that would give direction to their search. Our agency, over the years, has developed such guides, but we do not have nearly enough. We are now in the process of compiling new ones. Computers will make the work much less expensive to publish, but the time to compile the data is in increasingly short supply. We find ourselves faced with a dilemma: the rapidly increasing number of genealogists coming to us for help need readily-accessible guides and finding aids if they are to spend their time with us productively. Yet, the staff time needed to develop these needed tools is being diverted to the search room and to answering correspondence just to keep abreast of current demand. The solution to the problem would be a sharp augmentation in the size of our professional staff, or a radical reduction in the number of people visiting us or writing for information, neither of which seems likely to occur.

Furthermore, guides themselves are not really the answer. All researchers, and particularly genealogists, need instruction in the use of guides if these tools are to be most effective. Only the so-called professional genealogists, who come to use our facilities day after day, know our set-up. Most people who visit our archives are totally unfamiliar with archival arrangement. They may be able to use a library with its subject indexes and author-title catalogues, but archives are not arranged that way. In short, we must find better ways to help genealogists tap unfamiliar resources in our archives.

The Hall of Records, for instance, has a large quantity of loose state papers dating from 1775-1789 and over 30,000 reels of county records on microfilm. We needed a guide for both series of records, but to place papers in physical order and accession the backlog of microfilm seemed an impossibility with the size of our staff. We needed a guide to both series so we left the loose papers in random order, summarized the content of each document on a standard sheet, keyboarded the information on an inhouse text editing system, and allowed the computer to sort the records into chronological sequence and produce for us an author-recipient index. Included in this guide were three other indexes, consisting of two of our card files and the published catalogues of what we term the "Rainbow Series" of records. It is perfectly true that the new guide brings under archival control all our loose documents for the Revolutionary era and provides access to many new materials for use by researchers. It represents a monumental archival achievement, and it is of great help to the scholar. The genealogist, however, has little use for it. Nothing has taken the place of the former indexes, which included all names on the document as well as subject indexes. It is not that we did not understand what the genealogist needed, but rather that the cost of computing and the limits of the computer made the kind of index most desired by genealogists impossible.

Our microfilm guide, published two years ago, fared better in this respect. This is arranged by county court and record series, with title of record, date of record, and accession number given. The headings or subject indexes are those with which the layman is totally familiar--marriages, land records, births, deaths. This guide is constantly used and circulated.

One of our success stories is the rearrangement of our index cards--cards that take up our whole index room and are used most

heavily by the genealogists. The problem with these indexes was inherited. The indexes to our various record series had not been placed in any logical order. For instance, the index to probate records 1634-1777 was followed by an index to military records for the colonial wars, then by probate for 1777-1820, next by an index to Provincial Court records, and then back to probate again. Researchers spent a great deal of time looking for a particular index since there was no guide. Two years ago we closed the archives and completely rearranged the indexes. When we finished the marriage indexes were together, and our indexes to military records followed in chronological sequence beginning with the colonial wars and ending with the Civil War. The index to each series is indicated by an Arabic number on the first drawer of the series and the series continues until another number is shown on a drawer. When a person enters our searchroom, along with security instructions, maps, etc., he or she is given a six-page leaflet describing our card indexes, which is keyed to the Arabic numbers on the drawers.

We have talked about correspondence, written guides, indexes, and other services that can facilitate the work of the researcher, specifically the genealogist. In conclusion I would like to say that nothing--literally nothing--can take the place of personal instruction. The heart of any archives is its research room and the staff who work there. It is this staff, in constant contact with the public, who must instruct the beginner and advise the user. This, I believe, is the key to the future in every archives--the personal instruction of the researcher. I can hear your protests--"but there is no time, no staff". There is more than one way to instruct, and many of you have already used the obvious ways. How many of you have spoken to groups of concerned researchers--at genealogical clubs, patriotic societies, educational meetings, or at schools? The response from these groups, except for the old lady in the front row who falls asleep or the school child interested only in out-witting the speaker, is nearly always amazingly grateful. So many times I have been told, wistfully, "now it makes sense" or "Oh, if I had only understood that before."

We are beginning a new program at the Maryland Hall of Records that we hope will bridge the gap between existing sporadic and inconsistent individual instruction and the available, frequently inadequate printed guides and finding aids. We will have regularly-scheduled introductory walking tours of our archives each day, Monday through Saturday. Every archivist will conduct tours in rotation. The tours, which will last about an hour, will be specifically geared to the needs of the genealogist. In initiating this program we hope to assist the large number of first-time patrons coming to us. We also believe that giving our junior staff members a chance to lead tours and respond to questions will make them better archivists. Lastly, we hope to cut down on the number of individual requests for instruction, thus resulting in a net saving of staff time that we must devote to our patrons.

In closing I would like to repeat these two propositions:

As professionals our attitude toward genealogists must change. In addition to recognizing the fact that they constitute the largest body of those who use our archives, we must also realize they are our staunchest supporters.

We must train genealogists in the "art and mystery" of archives, and our best chance of doing this will not be by guides alone, however good

the guides are, but rather through personal instruction.

It is said that when Roosevelt died and the Vice President was told, Truman turned to Sam Rayburn and said "Sam, I can't do it." "But," the older man replied, "You've got to." Maybe that is our answer. We've got to change our attitude, welcome the genealogists, and face the problems they bring to our profession as our greatest challenge--a challenge which will bring a new vitality and dimension to state archives.



J. MAX MILLSTONE
SECRETARY

STATE OF MARYLAND

HRC 5/27/81
Agenda Item #8

DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES

HALL OF RECORDS

P. O. BOX 828

ANNAPOLIS, MD. 21404

TELEPHONE: 269-3915

EDWARD C. PAPANFUSE
STATE ARCHIVIST AND
COMMISSIONER OF LAND PATENTS
GREGORY A. STIVERSON
ASSISTANT STATE ARCHIVIST

TO: Hall of Records Commission
FROM: Edward C. Papenfuse *ecp*
RE: Grant Application to the NHPRC
May 20, 1981

Since 1976 I have served as coordinator for the Maryland Advisory Board to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (see attached Manual description). In that time Maryland has received over \$200,000 in small grants designed to preserve and make accessible valuable historical records. Among the first was a \$20,000 grant to the Hall of Records to arrange and prepare guides to the early equity records of Baltimore City and the records of St. Mary's County, both of which should be published this fall. The Reagan administration has proposed the elimination of the Records Grant Program of the NHPRC and all indications are that this recommendation will be implemented. With its remaining funds the NHPRC has decided to fund as many surveys as it can afford to determine the current status and future needs of records preservation programs in the states. Each NHPRC advisory board must apply in order to qualify for a grant and can ask for no more than \$25,000. Grant applications must be postmarked no later than June 6, 1981.

I would like to apply for one of the survey grants on behalf of the Maryland NHPRC Advisory board. The Board has no budget authority. Grant money would be channeled through the Hall of Records Commission. As outlined in the memorandum from the the NHPRC, the survey would consist of evaluating mailed questionnaires and on-site visits, conducting regional meetings that would not only address the state of the care of historical records, but also future requirements given the available resources, and a final report. An Archivist III would be hired for one year under the grant to conduct the surveys, organize the regional meetings, and prepare the final report. As needed, interns trained in the Hall of Records Internship program would be grant-funded to assist the Archivist III. The grant would also pay for travel, office supplies, and miscellaneous expenses. The costs to the Hall of Records would be minimal. They would consist of work space, staff time spent in consulting with the grant director on the progress of the survey and the status of state agency records, and off-hour time on the text-editors to produce mailing lists, letters, and reports. In order to enhance the prospects of obtaining a grant, we would offer these limited services as cost-sharing along with any other unanticipated indirect costs. The benefits of the grant to the Hall of Records would include helping us to more clearly assess the magnitude of our future archival responsibilities with respect to public records, and by communicating the services of the Hall of Records to those who attend the five regional meetings/workshops. At the latter, for example, we can aid workshops on appraisal, preservation, and processing collections using our existing slide programs, the duplication of which would be paid for by the grant.

With the Commission's and the Department's approval I will proceed with the application and report on its progress at the fall Commission meeting.

STATE FLEET SAFETY COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Richard R. Streif

Ex officio members: Olin M. Broadfoot, *Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning*; Robert Rous, Joseph A. Klunk, *Reliance Insurance Group*; John J. Darlington, Jr., *Poor, Bowen, Bartlett & Kennedy*; Edwin J. Schamel, *State Treasurer's Office*.

Appointed members: Robert Wilcox, *Health and Mental Hygiene*; Maj. Theodore S. Moyer, *Maryland State Police*; S. William Goldstein, *State Department of Education*; Richard H. Turk, *Maryland Department of Transportation*; Pierce E. Cody III, *State Highway Administration*.

Motor Vehicle Administration
6601 Ritchie Highway, N.E.
Glen Burnie 21062 Telephone: 768-7239

The Governor appointed this Committee in 1971 to establish a safety program for State employees who drive State-owned and privately-owned motor vehicles during their performance of official State business.

Under this program, Accident Review Boards have been established in all State Departments. These boards review all motor vehicle accidents involving State employees on official business, determine the cause and preventability of the accident, and recommend corrective action to be taken. Additionally, the Committee involves itself in vehicle safety promotional activities along with a program of Defensive Driving instruction utilizing trained instructors from various State Departments.

These actions have assisted in the reduction of accidents and the resultant costs. Continuation of this program will be a factor in making State drivers cognizant of their driving responsibilities and further contribute to the safe operation of the State fleet.

The Committee meets regularly the last Tuesday of each month.

STATE COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON SERVICES TO HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Chairperson: Ruth W. Massinga

Richard Wright, *Department of Budget and Fiscal Planning*; Martha Irvin, David Ricker, Richard

Steinke, *Department of Education*; Stanley R. Platman, M.D., Rex Smith, Dr. Alp Karahasan, *Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*; Mark Friedman, Marion Monk, *Department of Human Resources*; Sheila M. Tolliver, *Governor's Executive Aide for Education*; Richard G. Dunne, *Director, Office for the Coordination of Services to the Handicapped*.

11 South Street
Baltimore 21202 Telephone: 383-3590

Created by executive order in 1979, this Committee is to examine the kinds of programs and services required by handicapped children, determine the number and type of children in out-of-state agencies, and identify the characteristics of facility and staff that would be needed to accommodate these children in Maryland.

STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

Dr. Edward C. Papenfuse, *State Archivist, State Historical Records Coordinator*

Jack P. Greene, 1981; Roland C. McConnell, 1981; Walter Rundell, 1981; P. William Filby, 1982; John Frye, 1982; Julie Roy Jeffrey, 1982; Adele Newburger, 1982; Edwin W. Beitzell, 1983; Richard Cox, 1983; Mrs. Arthur Starin, 1983.

Hall of Records
P. O. Box 828
Annapolis 21404 Telephone: 269-3915

The State Historical Records Advisory Board was appointed in 1976 by the Governor to carry out the national historical records program of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. The program is a cooperative effort of the Commission, the State Records Coordinators, the Advisory Boards, and institutions and organizations throughout the country concerned with the records of the nation.

Through its national historical records program, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission encourages a greater effort at all levels of government and by private organizations to preserve and make available for use those records, generated in every facet of life, that further an understanding and appreciation of American history. In the public sector, these historical records document significant activities of State, county, municipal, and other units of government. In the private sector, historical records

include manuscripts, personal papers, and family or corporate archives that are maintained by a variety of general repositories as well as materials in special collections relating to particular fields of study, including the arts, business, education, ethnic and minority groups, immigration, labor, politics, the professions, religion, science, urban affairs, and women. In addition to supporting projects relating directly to a body of records, the Commission may also support projects to promote cooperative efforts among institutions and organizations and to improve the knowledge, performance, and professional skills of those who work with historical records.

Records program grants are not intended to replace support from other sources for historical records projects; rather, they are intended to supplement and expand such projects throughout the country.

Further information is available in a pamphlet entitled *Guidelines and Procedures: Applications and Grants* available from the Office of the Coordinator.

The State Historical Records Coordinator is the State Archivist. The Advisory Board contains at least seven members, including the Coordinator who serves as the Chairperson. Members of the Board represent the archival and research institutions and organizations in the State and serve for three-year terms.

HUMANE PRACTICES COMMISSION

Chairperson: Rosalie Silber Abrams

John J. Bishop, Jr., Richard F. Depkin, Bruce G. Eberwein, Michael J. Kaminsky, M.D., Lorraine M. Sheehan, Judith C. Toth.

Staff Contact: Margaret B. Ulle

James Senate Office Building
Room 216
Annapolis 21404 Telephone: 841-3648

The Governor appointed this special Commission in 1971 at the request of the General Assembly to investigate and oversee the treatment, care, and condition of patients in hospitals for the mentally ill and mentally retarded. The Commission consists of three members appointed by the Governor representative of voluntary citizens groups, including one group concerned with the mentally ill, one group concerned with the mentally retarded, and the third group concerned

with physically handicapped persons. The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates each appoint two members. The Commission is to report on a regular basis to the Governor and the General Assembly as to its findings (Res. No. 47, Acts of 1971).

INFORMATION PRACTICES COMMISSION

Chairperson: Arthur S. Drea, Jr.

John E. Donahue, Albert J. Gardner, Jr., Wayne Heckrotte, Timothy R. Hickman, Florence B. Isbell, Nancy Kopp, George E. Lyons, E. Roy Shawn, Dennis M. Sweeney, Harriet Trader, Donald Tynes, Sr., Robin J. Zee.

c/o Arthur S. Drea, Jr.
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring 20907 Telephone: 565-7467

The Governor established this Commission in 1980 by executive order to conduct a thorough study of policies and procedures regarding the collection, maintenance, use, security, dissemination, and destruction of personal records held by State government. The Commission was to submit an interim report by December 31, 1980, and a final report by October 1, 1981.

JUVENILE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Dorothy G. Siegel

Avon J. Bellamy, Sr., Peter D. Blauvelt, Tommie Broadwater, Robbie Callaway, Nancy Cardinale, Charlotte Cooksey, Eileen Flynn, Roslyn Freeman, Eddie Harrison, William S. Horne, Luke V. Howard, Linda Denise Johnson, Millie Jones, Clementine L. Kaufman, Eunice Kline, Sally Ann Lentz, Marion Mattingly, Douglas H. Moore, Jr., Maj. Theodore S. Moyer, Alexander J. Palanscar, Truman E. Paugh, Natalie H. Rees, Edwin Robertson, Pamela Ann Rollins, Jean M. Silverman, Jeffrey Alonzo Smith, Rex C. Smith, Sandra Wasserstein, Quentin Watkins.

Administration Building
Towson State University
Towson 21204 Telephone: 321-2055

The Governor appointed the thirty members of this Committee in 1980 as mandated by the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention



April 17, 1981



TO: State Historical Records Coordinators and Advisory Board Members

FROM: NHPRC, Records Program

RE: Grants for "State Historical Records Needs Assessment, Reporting,
and Recommendations"

Background

The report of the 1980 Atlanta Conference of State Historical Records Coordinators and Advisory Board representatives recommended that the Commission consider providing assistance to the Boards for statewide planning and for modest administrative expenses. The objectives for the records grant program outlined and recommended in Atlanta included "the development of archival planning as a strategy and the development of an institutional structure for such planning within the states and between the states and the Commission." The Atlanta report noted that "thorough and skillful planning . . . is essential to the process of identifying and analyzing records needs, delineating objectives, devising and testing strategic approaches, and evaluating achievement." The report described the State Advisory Board as an "indispensible vehicle" for such activity.

As indicated in an insert in the most recent NHPRC Records Report, the Commission voted in February to reserve up to \$600,000 from remaining FY81 funds for grants to State Boards. To facilitate distribution of these funds on a timely basis, the Commission staff met with the Steering Committee of State Coordinators and Boards on April 3-4. The following invitation and statement of goals, conditions and procedures was drafted during that meeting. If your Board wishes to apply for these grant funds, you must act immediately in order to meet the deadlines for expenditures of remaining fiscal year funds.

Invitation

The NHPRC, with the advice and concurrence of the Steering Committee for State Historical Records Advisory Boards, invites each State Board to apply for a grant to assess historical records conditions and needs in the state, to prepare recommendations as to how these needs might be met, and to report the findings and recommendations to the interested public. Such grants may be for a maximum of \$25,000 per state for a 12 month period. Applications, which must be post-marked by June 6, 1981 (or delivered by June 10), should be presented via the special application packet attached to this memorandum. The Commission has set aside up to \$600,000 to support these projects from remaining FY 1981 funds; all proposals for these grants will be considered on a competitive basis during the Commission's June 18-19 meeting, the final meeting of the fiscal year.

The Commission and the Steering Committee of State Boards strongly encourage all State Boards to apply for these grants and, as recommended by the Steering Committee, the Commission may require in the future that such assessment and reporting activities be carried out prior to NHPRC acceptance of other grant applications from the state.

Goals

The specific minimum goals of these assessment and reporting projects are the examination of four key sectors of historical records activity in each state: 1) state government records; 2) local government records; 3) historical records repositories*; and 4) such functions of statewide importance as conservation services, education and training, archival and records management advisory and assistance services, and program coordination. Grant funds are to assist the State Boards in a series of steps for each of the sectors noted above. These steps include analysis and description of current conditions, identification of problem areas, framing of potential solutions to these problems, and outlining of actions that can be taken in the near future (within three years) and in the long range. Information gathering, information analysis, planning for the future, and a report on these activities are the essential stages of these projects.

*"Repositories" means institutions known or thought to hold archival and manuscript materials which are made available to the public on a regular basis. Common types of repositories include government archives, historical societies, museums, public libraries, colleges and universities, and corporate, organization and religious archives.

Conditions

State Boards, or an agency acting on behalf of the Board, may apply for NHPRC funds to support activities essential to the conduct of these projects. Legitimate budget items include meeting expenses (travel, food, lodging), other travel, staff salaries* and contractual services, data gathering, communications (including distribution of draft and final reports), and supplies.

Boards accepting these grants must meet at least three times during the conduct of the project, but NHPRC funds may be requested for up to five meetings of the Board or a subcommittee appointed for project activities. If non-Federal funds have been available in the past to support Advisory Board meetings and other activities, it is recommended strongly that these continue and that grant funds be requested for other essential project budget items. At least one public hearing or forum, with advanced public notice, is to be held during the grant period to facilitate public consideration of the draft report prepared by the Board or under the Board's direction. Maximum discussion by interested organizations and individuals should be encouraged throughout the project, and copies of the final report should be distributed broadly within the state.

Each State Advisory Board receiving a project grant is expected to collect information needed for planning from some or all historical records repositories in the state (see definition, page 2). A suggested standard mail questionnaire will be made available to each Board by NHPRC in the fall of 1981 after thorough consultation with and approval by the State Coordinators' Steering Committee. The purpose of the questionnaire is not to obtain descriptions of the collections held by repositories, but to learn about staff, facilities, budget, policies and procedures, rates of accessioning and processing, and other basic conditions and needs. This type of information is needed for sound assessment of repository conditions generally and the mailing should also be useful in gathering opinions on matters beyond the particular repository. State Boards may add to the questionnaire if they wish to obtain information of particular interest to the Board. If recent information requested in sections of the standard questionnaire is already available in the state, the Board need not seek this information again.

Boards may include in their application a request for funds to mail a questionnaire to repositories in their state on the NHPRC's "Directory" mailing list of nearly 14,000 repositories. This list includes many small, local repositories. Pre-addressed mailing labels will be supplied to each State Board to assist in

*Current staff may be placed on grant funds if a replacement is employed for the time of the grant project assignment.

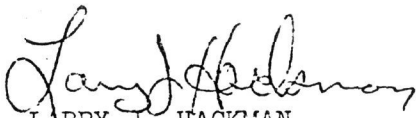
project mailings to repositories in their state. Boards with fewer than 150 repositories listed on the NHPRC mailing list will be expected to send the survey instrument to all presumed repositories on the list. Boards with more than 150 listed repositories are urged to select the 50 repositories thought by the Board to be the most significant in the State, and to mail the questionnaire to a random sample of a minimum of 100 other repositories in the state or 20% of all repositories, whichever is larger.

Proposals

This memorandum and application packet are being sent to all State Coordinators and Advisory Board members. All proposals must be postmarked no later than June 6 or, if not, must be delivered to the NHPRC office by June 10. Proposals will be considered during the Commission's June 18-19 meeting. No separate evaluation or rating forms will be required from the State Coordinator or individual Board members.

All grant periods will be specified to begin on January 1, 1982. Written materials--including the repository questionnaire discussed above--that may assist Boards in their work will be sent to Boards well before the beginning of the project. In developing these advisory materials, NHPRC will work closely with the Coordinators' Steering Committee and will rely where possible on existing material prepared by professional organizations or by individual states. The recent survey work of the National Association of State Archives and Records Administrators, for example, should provide an initial base for consideration of public records programs. The Society of American Archivists' discussions of institutional evaluation may suggest elements for a repository questionnaire. Survey methods used by the Consultative Group on Canadian Archives may also be useful.

We are aware that it will be impossible for Boards to present a detailed plan of work at this time. In order to evaluate proposals, however, the Commission believes that some advanced consideration must be given by each Board to such matters as the type of personnel to be used, the likely locations of meetings, and other basic details.


LARRY J. HACKMAN
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Enclosures