

**A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers.** FRANK B. EVANS, DONALD F. HARRISON and EDWIN A. THOMPSON, compilers. WILLIAM L. ROFES, editor. (Reprinted from the *American Archivist*, v. 37, no. 3; July 1974) Pp. 415-433. \$2.00 (Available from the Society of American Archivists).

In the development of any profession the creation of a language through which its members can communicate precisely with one another is considered essential. In the fifty year period before there was a professional association in the United States, archivists, looking to European practices, had engaged in debates on the principles of arrangement and description and on terminology. Even after the establishment of the Society of American Archivists in 1936, little agreement was reached, and the debate continued. The archival literature that appeared demonstrated the lack of standardization in terminology. There appeared to be some hesitation whether the Society was the body which ought to set standards. There was no agreement in committees on terminology whether a proposed glossary was intended to serve equally the needs of archivists, manuscript curators, and records managers, who formed the principal groups within the Society.

After several abortive attempts a committee of the Society has now produced a glossary which it believes "conforms with meanings that have evolved from the basic literature and the policies and practices of leading North American institutions." The stated purpose of the glossary is to enable more effective communication within the professional community and with related professions. The committee believed that professionalism demanded precision which in turn required standardization. The glossary appeared in the *American Archivist* of July 1974 and has been reprinted in pamphlet form. It includes a bibliography of general works and treatises which contain useful definitions or glossaries. As the title implies, it is intended to serve three professions.

Although there were Canadian contributions through Canadian personnel on the committee which produced the present glossary, it is clear that the terminology reflects American practices and usages. It would appear that there are only two indigenous Canadian archival terms: "cine film," meaning motion picture film, and "strip," meaning to weed or remove items from file units. The term "unit" is not defined in the glossary and the Canadian practice of distinguishing between unit, series, and item is not recognized. Canadian users will also note that the American practice of treating the archivist and manuscript curator as separate professions has been maintained.

The committee states that the glossary "is not a substitute for a dictionary" and does not contain items for which satisfactory definitions are given in a standard dictionary. One wonders, therefore, why such entries as cubic feet, linear feet, files, document case, reference service, classified information, reading room, research room, and charge out were included, since the value to professionalism in defining these terms is doubtful. To state that a document case is sometimes known as a "clamshell box" seems a concession to a localism. Particular institutional usage is noticeable throughout the glossary: mail management, facilitative records, permanent withdrawal, reports management and vital records management are examples. Many entries are specified as "U.S. Gov't" usage. "Letter size" is apparently smaller for the United States government than for other institutions.

In a discussion on terminology in 1970, a former President of the Society of American Archivists stated that the truest professional glossary should confine itself to those terms that the profession may be said to control. The provision of a glossary for what the committee refers to as three professions may be a lost cause. If there are three professions then different usage and terms may be expected to continue. In the light of the relationship between the archivist and the records manager which agitates the profession in both Canada and the United States, and considering the fact that records managers outnumber archivists,

usage (which usually determines terminology) employed by records managers may eventually predominate.

The committee has been perhaps too conscientious in including terms which belong in a manual rather than a professional glossary. It has prepared a dictionary of usage as well as a glossary. Nonetheless, there should be no questioning of the value of the committee's work in attempting to standardize such vital terms as archives, manuscripts, records, provenance, collection, record group and series.

Hartwell Bowsfield  
York University

**Forms Manual.** Prepared by the COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES COMMITTEE of the SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ARCHIVISTS. 1973. v, 236 p. SAA members: \$5.00, Non-members: \$8.00.

Forms should be simple and direct, designed to speed up the functions of an office. This *Forms Manual* forces one to conclude that university and college archivists are no better at designing forms than are some of their colleagues. The objective of the Society of American Archivists' Committee on College and University Archives in publishing the *Forms Manual* was to "disseminate forms," and now that the linen is all out on the line, it leads to the conclusion that, while the systems may be operational, there is a need for a designer. Selected by the Society of American Archivists' College and University Archives Committee as a project in 1972-73, the *Manual* is a selection of samples from 531 university and college archives across North America. It was impossible for the Committee to publish every sample, and judging from some of the 305 forms which were published, we perhaps should be thankful.

The main criterion used in the selection procedure was that all functions of the "archival process" should be reflected in the *Forms Manual*, and there is no doubt that the Committee succeeded in providing us with a rich and diverse variety. Because a second criterion was uniqueness, a "disproportionate number of this type are included." The criteria of readability, explicitness, simplicity, and flexibility were also applied in the selection procedures.

The forms are arranged into "fifteen categories according to the various functions to the archival process." These categories include records management, collecting policies, accessioning, arrangement and processing, description and control, labels, reference and research requests, reference and research restrictions, reference and research services, retrieval and charge-outs, reproduction, microfilm, oral history, statistical reports, memoranda and business cards. The reader therefore has a broad selection to consider before improving his or her own series of forms. However it is not clear to this reviewer that the categories reflect the basic functions of an archives in an ascending order of priority. For example, the first category, records management, is a function of only a few college and university archives in North America. While a few have developed excellent policies and procedures (as is clearly evident in the forms), most have assumed this function in a vacuum. Of six records retention and disposal forms only three indicate an understanding of the different levels of approval required for the destructions or transfer of records. Publication of some of these forms was not desirable or necessary.