

continued development of archival statistics has a high priority in the General Information Program of UNESCO. The last session on the morning of 13 October was devoted to the business of the Round Table and the approval of resolutions.

In addition to the formal sessions there were as usual several events which can be listed under ceremonies and hospitality: the official opening of the conference by the Minister of Housing Social Services, the presentation of a Kenyan sculpture to the Director General of UNESCO by the new President of Kenya, Daniel Moi, the laying of a wreath on the grave of the late President Kenyatta, a courtesy visit to the Mayor of Nairobi, a trip to Lake Nakuru in one of the national parks, a visit to the Bomas cultural centre and the Nairobi animal "orphanage." Delegates were also given an opportunity to examine the plans for the new building for the Kenyan National Archives.

A meeting of the ICA Committee on Archival Development was held prior to the Round Table Conference, 8-9 October, and there was a short meeting of the Section for Archival Associations.

The next Round Table conference will be in November 1979 in Santa Maria, Brazil. The theme will be the importance of archives in modern government administration.

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SAA Conference

Preserving the past and access for the future were joint themes of the forty-second annual conference of the Society of American Archivists at Nashville held October 1978. Once known as the "Athens of the South" and more recently as "Music City"—country music capital of the world, Nashville, with its dual image, served as an appropriate milieu for the pursuit of this year's themes.

Leading off on a cautious note, preservation for the future was the subject of a key-note panel session. Faced with the enormity of the conservation problem Howard Lowell of the New England Document Conservation Centre concluded that archivists are "scared off", an assessment apparently shared by many. He urged a radical re-orientation of conservation thought from the individual document to the mass level, through education of institution administrators and public officials led by archivists. Few new nostrums were offered, yet a salutary balance was struck between Fraser Poole's generally unrelieved pessimistic overview of the American situation and Edward Gilbert's positive exposition of the successful Illinois programme, undertaken with clear purpose and strong conviction. If it is true that as keepers of the record we have lamentably little control over the quality of our documentary media, then we should discover the closest possible contacts with conservators and their professional organizations even though they alone cannot solve our conservation problems. The paper and tape explosion years ago removed the possibility of solution from the technicians' laboratory: conservation must be a management responsibility and a top priority in institutional programme planning.

Although billed as a session on the potential conflicts between social research and individual privacy, the "Use of Institutional Case Records" was wider and emphasized the New York State Archives' recent survey and appraisal of lunatic and criminal case files since 1843. Recognizing the inestimable value of these records as sources for studying social control and the complex relationships between demography, immigration, cultural conventions and institutional development, archivists in New York and other jurisdictions have begun at last to tackle the maze of problems related to the appraisal, accessioning and use of an enormous volume of case files. Papers by Tom

Mills (Brooklyn Residential Project), David Ladayne (New York State Archives) and Ira Berlin (Northwestern Memorial Hospital Archives) all dealt with the relationship of access to the appraisal process. There was general agreement that the value of case records generated by institutional care of individuals in asylums, jails or hospitals is not a function of present access policy or research trends. Whether protecting individual or family privacy today is more important than either revealing the violation of privacy implied by the original incarceration or encouraging overprotection of the public welfare system through stringent closure are ethical judgements which should neither impede nor influence the archival function of appraising these records as evidence of the past. Sampling and selection were briefly discussed in relation to accessioning files on an ongoing basis but there was little expansion of the problems or potentialities of statistical techniques. Future sessions on this important topic might involve archivists from several jurisdictions where various methods have been used to cope with the accessioning and use of bulk record series.

Opening a timely session on data archives, Ben DeWhitt delivered the results of a survey of state and provincial machine readable archives programmes concluding that while there is great interest in the archival community in machine readable archives, there is a definite need for technical assistance. This was all the more keenly felt because there is no place where archivists can seek assistance from other archivists. In this context Carolyn Geda's exhaustive paper on the experience of the Inter University Consortium at Michigan, acknowledged as one of the most successful data banks of its type, was particularly germane. Plagued with all the technical problems inherent in accessioning and servicing data generated by many independent research groups with disparate interests, all with more or less incomplete documentation standards and divergent formatting techniques, Geda concluded that our most pressing need is for well documented, well formatted, "clean" data coupled with accepted bibliographic standards to permit cross-institution information retrieval. With a bewildering array of jurisdictions, universally accepted standards are probably not possible at this juncture. Perhaps there is a role for the Society to play in providing advice, perhaps in published form through the *Manuals* series and in setting minimum standards for accessioning archival machine readable records. Despite humorous aural infringements, the juxtaposition of the sessions on Machine Readable Archives Programmes and Popular Music located next door was most pointed, both dealing with modern forms of documentation which are at once made possible and rendered ephemeral by modern technology. If attendance is any indicator, then archivists as professionals are not only interested in the records of the past but also are willing and capable of meeting the challenge of preserving and making available problematical records generated by a technologically revolutionary century.

In keeping with the access for the future theme several open fora were held enabling all members to discuss steps in professional development contemplated by the Society. Sensitive issues of professional ethics and institutional accreditation, each generating strong opinions, were discussed openly with members' views to be incorporated in future guidelines. Although the merits of the programmes being considered are certainly open to serious question and while no one envisions a smooth course to resolution, the willingness of the Society to consider thorny issues in an open participatory manner signifies a high level of professional maturity and augers well for a successful outcome.

Responding to a perceived need in the membership, small, subject intensive sessions were a useful addition to the conference format. Although a greater number of controlled enrolment seminars were put on the programme this year, demand again far outstripped supply. Those who were disappointed in not being assigned a seminar took consolation by revisiting the drop-in rooms and demonstrations, both new features this

year reinforcing the trend to greater participation in small groups. More and more people seem to prefer smaller sessions because they permit intensive subject coverage, promote a free exchange of ideas and encourage interaction which is the main purpose of such gatherings. Perhaps future programme committees would consider altering full panel sessions to enhance their value by having formal papers prepared for distribution at the conference instead of relying only on oral presentations. The chair would then play a more significant role stimulating discussion. Without being unduly formal or placing impossible commitments on participants and organizers alike, printing selected papers on main conference themes would not only serve conference purposes, eliminating much catechismic repetition and permitting all registrants to benefit, but they could serve as an outreach to a wider archival public by providing a permanent printed addition to archival literature.

The forty-second annual conference was its predicted and predictable success executed with characteristically American panache and polish. The smooth scheduling of over forty-eight separate sessions testified to the efficiency of the programme and local arrangements committees. For the first time in a long time we were treated to a well researched, scholarly presidential address balanced with just the right amount of humour for the after dinner atmosphere. "Photographs as Historical Evidence: Early Texas Oil" was the subject of Walter Rundell's illustrated presentation, an eminently appropriate and much appreciated highlight of this year's conference.

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Archives Day '78

At its June 1978 annual general meeting the Association of Canadian Archivists (ACA) resolved to designate a day as Archives Day. The idea was to encourage the various national, provincial and local archives, archival associations and interested groups and individuals to mark the occasion by special events which would highlight the role and service of archives to our community. In cooperation with the Association des archivistes du Quebec it was agreed to designate 15 November 1978 as Archives Day and through a committee of representatives from across Canada, the ACA began its planning.

It was recognized at the outset that the committee's primary role was that of coordination, that the major responsibility for interesting repositories and groups to become involved had to lay necessarily with the local archives and regional archival associations. Via newsletters, correspondence, telephone calls and meetings of regional associations, ideas were exchanged on how best to mark Archives Day '78. Everyone recognized the need to develop interesting, low-costing yet meaningful projects. Thus stress was placed on the practicality of open houses, exhibits, press releases highlighting recent acquisitions, and other forms of media coverage. The ACA and regional associations were not in a position to offer financial support and many repositories were not able to expend more than minimal amounts, given other priorities and the shortness of time. The committee was also cognizant of valuable experience the exercise would provide for the ICA sponsored Archives Week activities in 1979 and thus activities were planned with one eye on the next year.

By 15 November a good number of archival associations and archives at all levels had gathered together a variety of interesting ideas to mark Archives Day '78. The Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, University of New Brunswick Archives, and the Archives of Ontario staged highly successful open houses which afforded the public the