
"North Carolina Archival Program— A Tradition of Excellence":

Edited by Morgan J. Barclay

During the first seventy years of this century, North Carolinians dominated national archival leadership. A portion of this leadership can be attributed to Houston Gwynne Jones, historian, state archivist (1956-1968), director of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History (1968-1974), and author. The North Carolina program won the first Distinguished Service Award of the Society of American Archivists in 1964. Under Jones's leadership, North Carolina developed the largest and most comprehensive archival and records management program among the state archival programs.

Jones has written extensively on archival subjects and North Carolina history. He is the only individual to win the Society of American Archivist's Waldo Gifford Leland Prize twice for the best American book on archival history, theory, and practice (*For History's Sake*, published in 1966, and *Local Government Records*, published in 1980). His latest volume, *North Carolina Illustrated*, published in 1983, won the William R. Davie Award of The Sons of the American Revolution for its contribution to early American history.

Dr. Jones received his Ph.D. from Duke University and currently is the curator of the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The following pages contain an edited informal oral history interview conducted on 8 March 1985, at the Wilson Library in Chapel Hill. The interview focused on the development of the Department of Archives and History and on the contributions of this valuable institution to the state. It is hoped that the interview will foster further understanding between archivists and librarians.

Questions to Dr. Jones are in italics. Words added for clarity by the editor are contained in brackets. The editor minimized language changes in the hope that the dynamic personality of H. G. Jones can be sensed.

Dr. Jones, I'd like to begin by spending a couple of minutes having you talk about your rural roots, which obviously played an important part in your life; and you refer to them in your writings often.

I suppose anyone is shaped by his or her roots. Of the many good fortunes that I've had, I think that perhaps I'm proudest of the fact that I did come out of a rural setting—in particular, that I grew up on a tenant farm where I worked side by side with whites and blacks. I was never ashamed of growing up during the depression. One of the things that I can't quite understand is how today people look upon poverty as being something to be ashamed of. I was never ashamed of it, and looking back on it I'm really proud because I think it gave me a sense of mission to climb above it that otherwise perhaps I would never have needed to learn.

Looking back, I can see that there was a succession of good fortunes. For instance, I went to a little country school where there were books, a whole room full of books. Of course, there wasn't a book in our house except a paperback Bible which, as I recall, was very seldom used because as I was growing up my family did not go to church.

It was back there that I became acquainted with books and discovered that there was a whole world that I couldn't see in Caswell County, but I could see it through words.

I had a fourth grade teacher who was the great granddaughter of Bedford Brown, who was a United States senator from North Carolina from 1829 to 1840. She lived in his home over across the creek on the paved road. They even had electric power over there; they didn't have a telephone but they had electric power and paved roads. I recall going past that house, and it was Miss Mary Brown that I think really awakened in me an interest in history, because I knew that this man who had fought secession had lived and that his grave was out there under those boxwoods. Miss Mary used to roll a pencil in her hand and say, "An idle brain is the Devil's workshop." I was scared to death of her because she was a hard teacher, but she did teach me a lot.

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You mentioned going to high school in Caswell County and there being introduced to books. Is that where you first began the love of writing, too?

I recall that when I was in about the first or second grade one of my classmates was killed by an automobile and I along with other classmates was a flower bearer at his funeral. I remember two things about that. First of all they told me later that I never took off that little cap I was wearing. Secondly, the obituary in the *Danville Register* carried the list of the flower bearers, and I saw my name in print for the first time. That did something, and I don't know whether that accounts for my interest in writing, but to see that in print had a tremendous influence on me. There was a fascination with seeing my words, not necessarily my name, in print.

I decided I had to go to college and, of course, I had no way to go to college until an uncle, who had gone off to Ohio and worked in the steel mills, told me that he would lend me some money. So I borrowed fifty dollars from him and was given a job pressing pants up at Banner Elk at Lees-McRae College in the summer so I could earn some money to go to school that fall.

I accomplished two things at age seventeen. I got away from that farm because I didn't like that hard work. I mean planting, suckering, topping, and pulling tobacco and hoeing corn and that sort of thing. I did it, but I didn't like it, and I knew there was an easier way. So that's the way I got off to college.

Then the war came along, and I joined the navy. The navy opened up the world to me because I was able to travel and I was also able to save money with which to go to college. When I returned in 1946 with the G.I. bill and money that I'd saved out of my navy pay, I could go to any university in the country because in those days you could get into any university. I narrowed it to two schools, and I'll never understand why it was those two schools. One was Washington and Lee University where all the students wore shirts and ties and a coat, which was completely out of character for a tenant farm boy, and second, Appalachian, which was just down the mountain from Lees-McRae, because I loved those mountains. I chose Appalachian. It was a good school and I learned a great deal.

For two summers I went off to New York University to do graduate work, and there again was a further broadening experience, proving that I could really do the quality of work that I felt would be necessary for a doctorate. I was going to get my Ph.D. at NYU until my major professor and

I were talking one day. He had gotten the first Ph.D. degree in history from Duke University, and I was writing on sectionalism in North Carolina. I said, "Dr. Flanders, does it seem kind of odd that here I am up here in Greenwich Village, going to NYU, writing a dissertation on a subject for which all of my sources are down in North Carolina?" He thought for a moment and said, "Yes, I guess it is." We talked about it, and I said, "Suppose you had the opportunity to go to Duke—you're the first history Ph.D. from there—and University of North Carolina. Now I would expect you to be prejudiced, but which one would you choose?" He paused for a minute and said, "Let me put it this way: I have never known anybody who went to Duke who didn't like it. I have never known anybody who went to Chapel Hill and didn't love it." Well, I applied to both; Duke offered me money, and I went there.

When you became state archivist in 1956, North Carolinians had dominated national archival leadership for over a half a century. Maybe you could address your thoughts as to why North Carolina provided this leadership.

It was a leader because of the individuals involved. R. D. W. Connor was a remarkable individual. He had come on the scene when the historical commission was first organized in 1903 as a young man. As I get older I can appreciate more and more the energy that can be unleashed at any age, but particularly among the young who see a job that needs to be done and want to be a part of accomplishing that job. R. D. W. Connor came to that position knowing nothing about what it involved. He knew nothing about archives. He simply knew some history and had been a principal of a school, but here he was thrown into a new organization, one that followed by only two or three years the very first department of archives and history among the states of the union.

In reviewing his correspondence in the early years, particularly 1905-1907, I found that Connor was asking for viewpoints from other people such as Thomas M. Owen in Alabama and Dunbar Rowland in Mississippi, listening to advice, and attending the professional meetings. He was looking at what other people were trying to do, but he was framing his own ideas of how he wanted the North Carolina program to go. He made some starts that he later changed in direction. An example is the local records program. He originally didn't want to bring any of the county records to Raleigh. He wanted them to be kept properly in the counties. Eventually he discovered that it wasn't possible at the time because of the

turnover in personnel, because of the lack of facilities at the local level, and so he yielded to the centralization of local records.

Connor was a pioneer in that there weren't other programs to model things after. He was succeeded in 1921 by Robert B. House, who was chancellor here at the University of North Carolina much later. House didn't stay long and then Albert Ray Newsome, who also had been a professor here at the university, came over; and Newsome also had a lot of energetic ideas. Perhaps his greatest contribution was in chairing the committee and writing the so-called model archival legislation back in the early 1930s. In 1935, just before he returned to the university, he succeeded in getting much of that model legislation through the North Carolina legislature, and the Public Records Act of 1935 becomes another key to our tradition in this day. He was able to put into effect one of the best basic public records acts in the nation.¹

"We had, by then, a tradition, and that is the key to the success of an organization."

So, we have Connor, we have Newsome, we have the law in 1935, and then a young professor from Chapel Hill sort of trades places with Newsome. Christopher Crittenden went to Raleigh and took over archives and history. Here again was a young man with tremendous energy, a scholar, and yet someone who could visit legislators, visit local officials, and be right at home with them. Crittenden had tremendous energy, and it's under him that the programs you mention—such as the beginning of records administration as it was called then, the beginning and building of the records center, the beginning of the central microfilm program, and so forth—started.

Now when I came in 1956 I remember I had no training in archives administration. I was simply a researcher and a historian. I came into a situation that made me think at first that nothing had ever happened. You know one of my favorite sayings is, "All progress begins when a new crowd takes over." The only thing we had going was the records center, the central microfilm unit, and the inventorying and scheduling of state records. The archives was standing still, it appeared. My predecessor had worked under terrible circumstances—even the air conditioning that brought air into the stacks hadn't worked for several years. The first thing I did was to start cleaning house, and our staff started wiping the soot from the materials in the archives, and we did that

ourselves.

When I began studying, I got excited over what had been done. A lot had been done. We had, by then, a tradition, and that is a key to the success of an organization. If you can build a tradition, then it's rather unlikely that you are going to get someone to take it over who will look at the job as a sinecure, something just to relax at, because he or she knows that that person is going to be measured by the predecessor.

I sat behind that old desk on which Crittenden had some things piled up, and he left and came back in a few minutes with a big stack of budget books. He dropped them on the desk—this was the fifteenth or sixteenth of June—and he said, "You'll need to have your biennial budget ready in fifteen days." I didn't even know what a budget was. But this was great training because I was thrown right into it. He knew what he was doing. But the point I want to make is that Crittenden said, "It's yours." In effect he was telling me, "This is your division and it's going to rise or fall with you." He would be there for advice, but he wasn't going to be involved in the running of it. So there again one feels the opportunity, and I knew that I could get credit for it or I could get blame for it. I wasn't going to be able to blame him for my failure, and he wasn't going to try to take the credit. He operated that way with the various divisions. So he had great influence on all of us because of that sense. He wanted his staff, his division heads, to develop their programs, which is why we had a carte blanche to build, and therefore, I could go directly to the legislature and work with the legislators and make my own contacts.

I immediately got involved. I visited state archives in Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois. Some state archives were advanced in certain areas. I'm not above stealing ideas and wherever I saw a good idea, I liked to try and bring it back and incorporate it in some way. I also went off to Washington and attended Dr. Ted Schellenberg's archival training program for the National Archives. That put me in touch again with colleagues around the country and made me aware of the broader implications of what I was doing—that we were doing something that was not completely isolated down here in North Carolina. I met a lot of people with the National Archives.

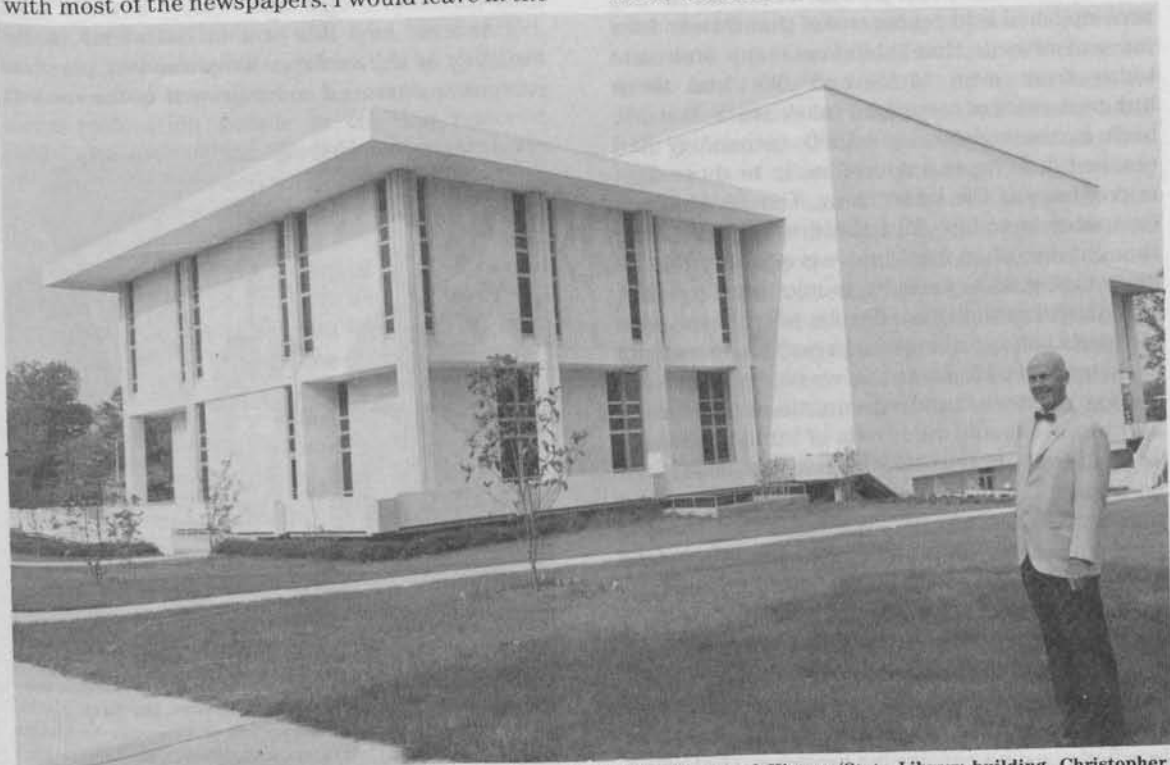
I'd like to discuss some of the major programs that were developed while you were the state archivist and director of the department. Probably one of the programs that you were proudest of was the local records program.

That is the most spectacular one. But I'm really proudest in those early years in getting to know legislators and finding that they didn't need much selling on archives. All they needed to know was, What does that mean? Just take them over and show them around, pull out manuscripts and say, "This is it. That is the only copy." I discovered that almost any legislator can get excited over original documents. If I had a "secret," it was in discovering that I could influence the people who made the decisions. I could influence a governor or a legislator by using the documents themselves. Terry Sanford, for instance; taking him through the archives, showing him the steam pipes. Let him feel the hot pipes that are drying up all the original legislative papers going back into the early 1700s and some of them the 1600s. And here is the governor saying, "How can this be? How can North Carolina allow this?" So we got a new building out of that.

Over in the budget division was a fellow named Charles Holloman. Charlie later became the state budget officer. Charles is a local historian and genealogist, and he spent his coffee breaks and lunch hour over in the archives. I began seeing the excitement that he had, and so he and I hatched a few plans. I'd been at Duke and had had a carrel in the stacks on the floor with most of the newspapers. I would leave in the

evening and see these pieces of newspaper all over the floor. The next morning I would come in and it would be clean and I just wondered where all that newsprint had gone. Obviously it had been swept up. It was gone. So nobody was doing anything about the newspapers, and it was with Charlie that we hatched up a little plan by getting several legislators, including the Speaker of the House, to come over and take a look and propose a program. We were able to get that newspaper microfilming program going without a special bill. We got it through the budget process, because the Speaker of the House was behind it, and we had been able to show him what the state was losing.

Since 1959, my state has spent \$5 million of our tax funds for the local records program alone. We have solved most of the problems of the early county records. Why don't other states begin? No state has developed a program like that even to this day; no state is attempting to develop one, and I don't understand why. It's so easy. All you have to do is to "sell" your local officials on the idea that you can help them and that you share a responsibility for assuring the preservation of the public records of the state—I'm referring to local public records. And they then came to the legislature. It was a delightful thing for me to sit back and let them carry the battle in the appropriations committee. Let them send the telegrams



This 1969 photograph shows a rear view of the recently completed Archives and History/State Library building. Christopher Crittenden stands in the foreground. (Photograph from files of the Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.)

from their annual meetings and sit back and say, "That's an excellent idea and we'd be glad to do it if you want us to." Of course, previously, we'd worked out the program down to the last detail.

I'm assuming when you work on a regular basis with legislators that as they saw the program develop—the local records program making a large dent and finally microfilming all the papers up through 1900—they obviously reacted positively to the whole program, and you were able to build on your successes. It is part of this North Carolina character you are talking about?

It is their program. Let me give you an example. The night before last I was within two people of Governor Martin in the receiving line in the mansion. Behind me was Senator John Jordan and his wife. And it just occurred to me to say, "By the way John, I just finished sending off an article in which I made reference to Senate Bill 101." John said, "That was my bill!" In 1959 he had been the prime senate sponsor of that bill. He remembers it by number. He was one of the fathers of that program.²

The program must have developed tremendous rapport between units and the State Archives over a period of time; it was not a project completed over night.

Oh, no. It's still going on, as a matter of fact and will continue to go on. But what it has accomplished is to get control of that tremendous mass of records that inhibit so many archivists today from even tackling it. We had three hundred years of records to take care of. You see, back in those days, 1959-1960, technology had reached little beyond microfilm, so in those days microfilm was the latest thing. That is what the computer is today. And there were those who thought microfilm would solve everything. But we knew that it was expensive to microfilm and that certain things didn't need to be microfilmed. But we used that as an angle to preserve the security of the records. I knew that if we could get control of that mass—a hundred counties in this state and hundreds and hundreds of municipalities—and take care of things from that time back, then no matter what technology came along we'd be prepared to meet it. But as long as that backlog stares one in the face, and we see it in every state in the union who hasn't done something about it, so long as that backlog is there it inhibits them.

In this period of twenty-five years we had gotten control of the backlog. And if I have a half dozen criticisms of my successor archivists around the country, the first one is that they must be willing to plan continuing programs that won't necessarily capture headlines as they gradually

achieve. Second, when they come into a position, the most important thing is not to tear up everything and start everything over—re-invent the wheel—but to carry on without interruption those programs that have been started. I learned that in connection with the state records program. That had already started, it was moving, and all we had to do was build on it. So frequently I see people go into positions and they feel that they must change everything and that it must be remade into their image. Well, you can do that over a period of time by simply building onto the solid programs.

There is something in the North Carolina character, that thing that one of these days I'm really going to write something on. There is something in a North Carolinian's being that reacts favorably when something gets favorable notice from outside. That is maybe in everybody's character, but I have noticed it here. There are those who say, "Don't ever let the legislature know that you are doing well, because they assume you don't need anything else." North Carolina legislators don't react that way. They want to maintain. If they are proud of something, they will support it all the more and that leadership that had been asserted. That tradition has been one of our greatest allies, because we wouldn't dare let it slow down.

Another step that you talked about in the building of the archives program was a major reorganization and arrangement of the records



The North Carolina archival program won the first Distinguished Service Award of the Society of American Archivists in 1964. H.G. Jones (left) and Christopher Crittenden (right) view the trophy. (Photograph from files of the Archives, Division of Archives and History, Raleigh.)

over in the archives in 1957. You mentioned that in the biennial report, and I was wondering what that actually meant in more detail.

It meant that we had been very far behind in arranging the records that were already there. First of all, I believe that to administer something a person has to have a feel of the work itself. I do not believe that one can become "administrative archivist" and really do a satisfactory job and get the satisfaction out of it unless that person has gotten his hands dirty handling the papers—in other words, has worked up to it.

So the first thing I assigned myself in the way of a project was scores and scores of boxes of unarranged records from Bertie County. These records had come in the courthouse, and they were simply separated out into metal boxes, as many as would go in one box, no reason whatever. I worked for many months on that one project, and I can tell you names today that are familiar in Bertie County. That taught me to respect the people who do that as a permanent job. I hold that person [an archivist specializing in arrangement and description] in tremendously high regard because of the judgment required in archival activity. We had this tremendous backlog of records, and so first of all we needed to organize the staff to get that work done. We created the local records section and also established field units. Archivists went to the field, inventoried, and set up the schedules. Microfilmmers went out and operated the microfilm cameras; the document restoration people in the lab restored records brought in from the field. Other archivists arranged and described what was coming in. That was how we were able to get on top of the problem.

Now you *never* get on top of it, as you know from experience, particularly when things keep coming in. But it is a fight that you can never give up. There again is where some of my colleagues, if they can't really finish something, tend to give up. But there are very few things in this world that you can accomplish once and that's it. You have got to keep after it. So arrangement and description is one of those things you keep struggling with; otherwise the dam breaks on you.

Dr. Crittenden and I both stole as many ideas as we could from the National Archives and Records Service and that, in effect, set the records management program, as it was beginning to be called then. So we consciously patterned a number of our activities after them. For instance, you may recall that I started a series of archives information circulars. That was just complete theft from the National Archives, adapted to our

own use. Special workshops were actually started, and we invited A. K. Johnson, who was head of NARS southeastern district in Atlanta, to put these on for us. He put the first ones on. We held them over in the old capitol in the old House and Senate chambers and found that state agencies were anxious to participate in these correspondence and files workshops. Then by attending and participating in them, several members of our own staff became competent to give them, and then we began publishing our own guides to them. But this is a good example of how we worked very closely with the National Archives, and they gave us great support. A. K. Johnson was perhaps unusual as a regional director in that he enjoyed working with the states and we made great use of him.

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I'd like to touch on the publications program in a little more detail than some of the other programs, because I think it has a more direct link with the library community. I guess my initial observation is that the publications that came out in the late 1950s and 1960s and up through the 1970s had a wide variety of balance among scholarly publications, those geared for amateur historians, and those for genealogists. Obviously these could become and did become helpful tools to the librarian. Would you like to comment on this?

Let's divide the publications into two categories. One, the documentary publications of the department that started early in the North Carolina Historical Commission's history and, then, the later publications that were more guides to research that I had more to do with in getting started.

The documentary publications had a great history. This was Connor's tradition of publishing the original source materials so that there would be a wider readership. It is so easy today for us to forget that before it was so easy to travel, ... of course, they had automobiles but still it took a long time from Greenville to Raleigh. It was an all-day trip. Before the automobile, before microfilm, before the office copier, you had the original in a repository or in private hands, and that was it. To see it you had to go where it was. In those days it was a matter of its being hidden unless it

was published. So the idea of publishing documentaries—that is, actually transcribing and setting in type the text of original documents—wasn't new in North Carolina. It goes all the way back to the middle of the nineteenth century. Yet, it was something that Connor saw the need of. Some of the earlier volumes, for instance, were the papers of Archibald D. Murphey. Incidentally, they were given away. It was a state printing, and they were given away because the purpose was to distribute them to the libraries of the state and to make them available to people. Later on we had to start charging them twenty-five cents for postage. Now of course they cost you thirty dollars a copy. But this was a service of the state—the state's history being made available to the people.

If you'll notice, the department has generally avoided publishing secondary sources. I felt very strongly and resisted the effort for us to publish books. That is a university press function. We did go into the pamphlets because we were trying to work with the public schools in getting North Carolina history materials for them. Once you decide you are going to publish a pamphlet on a subject you say, "Well, you don't just want to write it for the public schools. They can use it if it is written for the average North Carolinian." So, theoretically, they would be popular works. On the other hand, they had to meet strict scholarly standards in terms of their accuracy. That worked very well, and the pamphlet series put out by the Department of Archives and History was widely distributed. The publications program was based largely on documentaries. Then the *North Carolina Historical Review*, which started in 1924, ... there again you asked what accounts for leadership, nobody dares let that slip. It is one of the two or three best state journals in the country.

The archives was a passive repository, used mainly by a few history students and genealogists. When I got there, there was nothing but some mimeographed letters to respond to the people that wrote in for information. There was just a mimeographed letter with not even a letterhead to it that said, in effect, "Sorry, we don't have staff to help you on this. You are welcome to come to the archives." First of all, I knew that I wanted to be more personal, particularly with North Carolinians. You don't give them just a mimeographed answer; you respond to them. After all, they pay your salary. That is an important consideration. But the other thing was that we had all that material. It was important stuff, so we started doing some little leaflets. One of them was on genealogical research. We did one also on histori-

cal research in the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. Then as we developed new programs, we issued leaflets on the newspapers, local records, and records management programs. Here again we were building a constituency by informing the potential constituency. That's what it's all about. So if someone wrote in for genealogical information, it was so easy for me to type a short letter and refer to the enclosed leaflet, which was nicely printed with pictures and this sort of thing.

We realized that we had to have guides for the people who came to the archives. In 1964 we were able to get out our new guide to manuscripts, which described lots of manuscripts that no one knew we had. There are a lot of archives' publications that have been issued starting in the 1950s to help ease the job of the archivist to help educate the public.

"No state has developed a program like [North Carolina's micro-filming program], even to this day."

Let me finish discussing publications with the colonial records project. Dr. Crittenden and I both held hostages whenever necessary. He and I wrote the act to create the Tercentenary Commission;³ we also wrote the act to create the Confederate Centennial Commission.⁴ Notice that we used the word Confederate instead of Civil War; that was for a reason. And we held those hostage, and we aren't going to try to get money to re-enact battles, to put on tiptoe dances, to do this or that unless first something substantive came from them. In the case of the Tercentenary, it was going to be a new edition of the colonial records. In the case of the Confederate, it was going to be a new roster of North Carolina troops. That is the way those things got started. I'm proud that we held them hostage, because these are the things that are still going on long after all of that other stuff has been forgotten. The colonial records project is incomparable in terms of what it is revealing to us. The Civil War roster is of tremendous interest. Those started as separate projects with separate funding and then were incorporated when the respective commissions went out of business. I had more trouble with the colonial records project, because some of the people in the budget division were not sympathetic towards it.

I guess it was in 1971, and Tom White was chairman of the Budget Commission. Senator

Ralph Scott and Senator Lindsay Warren, Jr., always good friends of ours, also were on the Budget Commission. Here we were fighting for the life of that project [colonial records] and I remember—it's the only time I've ever done this, but it worked—I said, "Of all of our priorities, this is tops. Now we know that you might not see the value in this, and so I'm asking you for one favor. Just for this one time accept our judgment on it as being the most important continuing project that has been cut out." And there was an interesting reaction. Some people could have been sort of insulted by that attitude. The reaction, however, was If it's all that important, let's put it back in.

North Carolina Illustrated was released in 1983 and was obviously a massive undertaking. I thought maybe you would make a comment about the volume and how it can be used in the library environment.

As I explained in the preface, I did that book over a period of eleven years because no one else would do it without being paid to do it. There are things that need to be done, and somebody has to do them. There had never been an illustrated history of North Carolina. The pictorial material is scattered over the world. It's an expensive thing to do, expensive thing to get published, and no one had been willing to put the time and effort on it. I wanted to do it for a number of reasons. First, it hadn't been done; second, I enjoyed doing it; and, third, I wanted to bring to the public attention a vast quantity of the materials available but that only a few scholars have ever had a reason to bump into. For the preliminary selection of photographs, I reviewed hundreds of thousands of illustrations at the Archives and History in Raleigh, at Duke, and in more than two hundred other places around the world.

I'd like to close on a couple of comments on the age-old question of archival education. It seems to me that we are seeing more and more positions in archives that require an M.L.S. as the academic standard as opposed to the master's degree in history, or sometimes you'll see both. The Society of American Archivists seems to be grappling with some type of certification program for archivists. What would you like to see as far as some type of standard archival training or certification?

I suppose I have some doubts as to certification but I have some strong opinions on the earlier part of your questions concerning the type of training. When a person says the word "archivist," it means whatever the thirteen people in the room think it means rather than what the person

that said it means—that makes a fourteenth view. An archivist is so many different things. An archivist is not a librarian; an archivist is a historian. That makes a big difference. To require a particular degree does not assure that you are going to get an archivist. There are very few library schools that even have an introduction to archives administration sufficient to orient one to it. Furthermore, the training that a librarian gets is to the discrete item rather than to the larger collection level that an archivist deals with. That doesn't mean that an archivist doesn't deal with individual items; he/she does, but arrangement and description is so different from cataloging that it seems to me that in some instances it could be a disadvantage to a library.

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I would rather stress that an archivist is more than a technician. An archivist is a person who has to use judgment at all levels. He is dealing with manuscripts that do not often have, as a book does, an author or a number of authors. An archivist, to be successful and to understand the reasons for what he is doing, must have had experience in using the types of materials that he is working on. I still believe, as I argued in 1966 against my old professor, Dr. Ted Schellenberg, that the proper and most appropriate training of an archivist is in graduate work in history involving extensive research in primary source materials, because those are the materials that the archivist will be dealing with. Certainly that training ought to be supplemented by professional archival education, which is sometimes available in departments of history, as in the case of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, North Carolina State University, and the School of Library Science here at Chapel Hill.

I entered this field out of a history background and my only "professional archival training" came under Dr. Schellenberg, which was then a four-week course at the National Archives and American University. Some of the best archivists I've ever known, though, were historians who came in and were assigned the very elementary form of archival work and then progressed and learned on the job. If I were heading an archival institution at the present time instead of a library, I would be looking for people who are essentially historians but with that graduate history training

supplemented by either experience in an archives or some academic training in it.

We are probably going to see more and more programs in archival administration, and I'm wondering if the people coming out of those programs are going to get the hard research in primary sources.

That bothers me. What worries me is that the research aspect of it can be lost. I think that is better than the old system where it was so haphazard. It is a real problem.

I'd like to touch on one other area related to education. There seems to be a growing professionalization of records management and a growing number of positions both in private industry and in government. It seems to be a continual tension between archivists and records managers.

Oh yes, we have to have the tension.

What do you feel about the relationship between the two?

It depends upon the situation. There again we use the word archivist and there we're both probably using it to refer to manuscripts curators, people who deal generally with unpublished materials. My view is well known: an archivist should also be somewhat of a records manager, and a records manager has to be somewhat of an archivist. So I think there is a cross-fertilization that is desirable. Incidentally, that tension between archivists and records managers was natural because so few archivists knew anything about records management. There weren't many records managers, and they seemed to be strange people who were always trying to throw things away or put them on microfilm and shred the originals. We have a problem of perception. I'm not a records manager, never pretended to be one, but I was just enough of one to know that I had to have a top-notch records manager to run that program. Now the most dangerous person in the world is the archivist who mistakenly thinks he knows enough about records management to do it himself. They [records managers] can help you sell the program. The archives in Raleigh has done as well as it has because of records management and because I was able to get money to do things in that field.

But going back to the question of certification. Let me explain that I don't feel strongly on that. What worries me is this: I look back on the archivists that I've worked with and those who have worked under me, and the best of them

never had a course in archives until we set up our own and then required them to take it. It worries me that certification could make us a peripatetic profession. That is, it could encourage the moving on, the constant moving of people. That is death to archival institutions. You have to have continuity, you have to get subject-matter control. Only a relatively small number of people as archivists will first of all be interested in going on into administrative work and, second, capable of it. So I think it works for a records manager's problem because it is more technical now it seems to me. It [records management] is less on-the-job working with the types of materials, [rather] it's a more specific type of application. But I would hate to see anything that would prevent Ruby Arnold, over at Archives and History, who is still arranging and describing local records, from enjoying that work that she has been doing so well for twenty-five years. She is a solid type of archivist that institutions need to get the work done and to build gradually. I'm not against it [certification]; it's just that I don't want to see anything that creates what the librarians have created—that is, a chasm between the M.L.S. and everybody else. There is a dastardly gap between good SPA [State Personnel Act] people and the M.L.S. categories that call themselves professional. There are some good professional SPAs, and I don't like that condescension.

I guess I'll close with a question concerning the Society of North Carolina Archivists, which is obviously an infant. It's just a year old. Why do you think it took North Carolina until 1983 to get rolling here?

I think it is easily explained. Whether or not it's bad or good, I don't know.

I must admit that I never felt the need for a state organization at that time. You'll have to remember that until fairly recently, though there were manuscript repositories in North Carolina, there were very few salaried positions. That was before East Carolina, before Baptist Historical Collection, before N.C. State, and before the churches started setting up archives; so what we are dealing with is a phenomenon of essentially the last decade. We didn't have many archivists around the state. We had some volunteers that were baby-sitting some records at various places. When Thornton Mitchell conducted the state assessment study⁶ recently, he said he was just astonished at the number of repositories and he compared it with my 1964 list.⁸ Nineteen sixty-four has just been twenty years, so you are dealing with a rapid turnover. I've always felt that I paid people to get the work done, and by the time you

multiply organizations, you can find that half of each employee's time is being frittered away. So there is a little bit of stinginess in me. I hope the society does well and I'm impressed with what they are doing.

Notes

1. *Public Laws of North Carolina, 1935*, c. 265. The legislation, titled "An Act to Safeguard Public Records in North Carolina," gave the Department of Archives and History statutory authority to preserve state records.
2. *Session Laws of North Carolina, 1959*, c. 1162. The act was titled "An Act to Provide for the Microfilming of County Records of Permanent Value for Security Purposes." The legislation organized the microfilming program for county records and also included funding for the project.
3. *Twenty-Ninth Biennial Report of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, July 1, 1960-June 30, 1962* (Raleigh: Department of Archives and History, 1962), 95-103, hereinafter cited as the *Department Biennial Report*.

nial Report. The Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission was authorized in 1959 by the General Assembly. The commission was charged with the task of planning a program for the celebration of the three-hundredth anniversary of the granting of the Carolina Charter of 1663. A major project undertaken by the commission was the publication of a new edition the *Colonial Records of North Carolina*.

4. *Department Biennial Report*, 104-113. The Confederate Centennial Commission was authorized by the General Assembly in 1959. It planned many activities for the one-hundredth anniversary of the Civil War.
5. North Carolina Historical Records Advisory Committee, *Archives and Records Programs and Historical Records Repositories in North Carolina: An Analysis of Present Problems and Future Needs* (Raleigh: The Committee, 1983). For an abstract of the report, see *North Carolina Libraries*, Fall 1983.
6. H.G. Jones, "Manuscript Collections in North Carolina," in *Resources of North Carolina Libraries*, ed. Robert B. Downs (Raleigh: Governor's Commission on Library Resources, 1965), 197-212.

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