

Advocacy  
*and*  
Awareness  
*for*  
Archivists

SAA PREVIEW



# ARCHIVAL FUNDAMENTALS SERIES III

Peter J. Wosh, Editor

- 1** **Leading and Managing Archives and Manuscripts Programs**  
Peter Gottlieb and David W. Carmicheal, Editors
- 2** **Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts**  
Dennis Meissner
- 3** **Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists**  
Kathleen D. Roe
- 4** **Reference and Access for Archives and Manuscripts**  
Cheryl Oestreicher
- 5** **Advancing Preservation for Archives and Manuscripts**  
Elizabeth Joffrion and Michèle V. Cloonan
- 6** **Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts**  
Michelle Light and Margery Sly
- 7** **Introducing Archives and Manuscripts**  
Peter J. Wosh

Advocacy  
*and*  
Awareness  
*for*  
Archivists

**Kathleen D. Roe**



**SOCIETY OF  
American  
Archivists**

CHICAGO

SAA PREVIEW

**The Society of American Archivists**  
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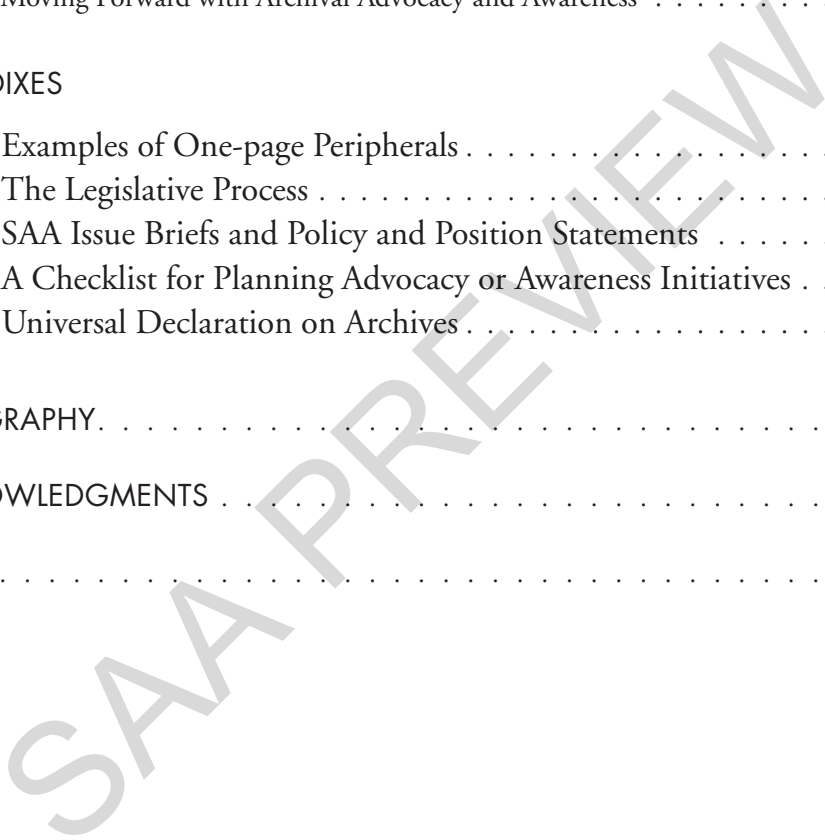
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## FOREWORD

# The Evolution of a Book Series

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) first conceived the notion of developing and publishing “manuals relating to major and basic archival functions” in the early 1970s. Charles Frederick Williams (popularly known as C. F. W.) Coker (1932–1983), a former US Marine Corps captain and North Carolina state archivist who recently had been appointed to head the Printed Documents Division of the National Archives and Records Services, edited the initial Basic Manual Series. The first five basic manuals, which appeared in 1977, illustrated the ways in which archivists defined and classified their core concepts at that historical moment:

- *Archives & Manuscripts: Appraisal & Accessioning* by Maynard J. Brichford
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Arrangement & Description* by David B. Gracy II
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Reference & Access* by Sue E. Holbert
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Security* by Timothy Walch
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Surveys* by John Fleckner

The entire series accounted for only 163 pages of text, which included numerous illustrations, graphics, sample forms, charts, and bibliographic insertions. Each 8.5” by 11” softbound pamphlet contained three holes, punched down the left side, for easy insertion into a loose-leaf binder that might be handily referenced at an archivist’s desk. Individual volumes sold for \$4, though SAA members received a \$1 discount.

Archivists operated within a far different cultural, legal, and professional framework during the early and middle years of the 1970s. In 1973, the same year that SAA began work on the Basic Manual Series, IBM introduced the Correcting Selectric II typewriter as its major technological breakthrough, thereby eliminating the need for such popular tools as rubber erasers, correction fluid, and cover-up tape. This revolutionary product seemed destined to alter the nature

of document creation forever. During this period, a few archivists had begun grappling with the challenges of something known as “machine-readable records,” but a bibliographer who surveyed this puzzling development could still confidently conclude in a 1975 *American Archivist* article that “only a few archival establishments” appeared to be “developing programs for accessioning” such materials. Other momentous—and occasionally unsettling—changes appeared on the horizon. A new copyright law, which was enacted by Congress in 1976 and became effective on New Year’s Day 1978, contained significant implications for how archivists would manage collections and serve researchers. Richard Nixon’s resignation in 1974 prompted the promulgation of new legislation in 1978 that declared for the first time that presidential and vice presidential records are public documents. Professionally, the archival landscape seemed to be shifting as well. The Association of Canadian Archivists launched an exciting new journal, *Archivaria*, in winter 1975/1976, a development destined to deepen the discipline’s intellectual discourse. Regional archival associations formed, became fruitful, and multiplied in the United States. In addition, a new era in archival education began as library schools and history departments inaugurated archives-based graduate programs in the late 1970s, ultimately resulting in a highly credentialed and formally trained corps of professional practitioners.

Such transformations, and many others too numerous to mention here, convinced the Society of American Archivists that only an active publications program that regularly refreshed the existing literature could provide its membership with easy access to rapidly changing trends and best practices. SAA accordingly published the Basic Manual Series II—a second set of five volumes—in the early 1980s:

- *Archives & Manuscripts: Exhibits* by Gail Farr Casterline
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Automated Access* by H. Thomas Hickerson
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Maps and Architectural Drawings* by Ralph E. Ehrenberg
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Public Programs* by Ann E. Pederson and Gail Farr Casterline
- *Archives & Manuscripts: Reprography* by Carolyn Hoover Sung

Over the years, SAA published scores of other titles, each illustrating the rich diversity of archival work: administration of photo collections, conservation, machine-readable records, law, management, a basic glossary, collections of readings on archival theory and practice, and books specific to archives in a variety of institutional settings (i.e., colleges and universities, businesses and corporations, religious and scientific institutions, museums, government agencies, historical societies, etc.). Even with the proliferation of publications, the bedrock of archival practice rested on the core knowledge represented in the basic manuals, which were reconceptualized and rechristened between 1990 and 1993 as the Archival Fundamentals Series:

- *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* by James O’Toole
- *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* by Fredric M. Miller
- *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* by Thomas Wilsted and William Nolte
- *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* by F. Gerald Ham
- *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler
- *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* by Mary Jo Pugh
- *The Glossary of Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Records Managers* by Lynn Lady Bellardo and Lewis Bellardo



A second iteration of the seven books in this revamped series appeared roughly fifteen years later as the Archival Fundamentals Series II:

- *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* by James O'Toole and Richard J. Cox
- *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* by Kathleen D. Roe
- *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories* by Michael Kurtz
- *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* by Frank Boles
- *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts* by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler
- *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* by Mary Jo Pugh
- *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* by Richard Pearce-Moses

Mary Jo Pugh and Richard J. Cox edited these multivolume compilations, which almost instantaneously became required texts in archival education courses and necessary additions to archivists' bookshelves. The Archival Fundamentals Series I and II differed in scope and scale from the initial Basic Manual Series. For example, John Fleckner's comprehensive treatment of surveys did not appear in need of revision and dropped out of the series. Security became incorporated into a broader manual on preservation. SAA commissioned an introductory overview of the field, added a new book that focused on managerial issues, and developed a glossary with the goal of defining and historicizing key archival concepts. Beginning in the 1970s, both Archival Fundamentals Series I and II incorporated and delineated the evolving descriptive standards that defined professional practice, dissected the contentious debates surrounding appraisal and deaccessioning that enlivened archival discourse in the 1980s, and reflected the growing emphases on an expanding user base and more complex reference services that revolutionized reading rooms and repositories in the late twentieth century.

This third edition—Archival Fundamentals Series III—contains important continuities and significant departures from its predecessors:

- A new book, *Advocacy and Awareness for Archivists* by Kathleen D. Roe, reflects an increased understanding that these functions undergird all aspects of archival work.
- The management volume, *Leading and Managing Archives and Manuscripts Programs* edited by Peter Gottlieb and David W. Carmicheal, has been reconfigured to focus especially on leadership and to provide readers with opportunities to explore their individual managerial styles.
- *Advancing Preservation for Archives and Manuscripts* by Elizabeth Joffrion and Michèle V. Cloonan addresses digital challenges and focuses on such current issues as risk management, ethical considerations, and sustainability.
- *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts* by Dennis Meissner, *Reference and Access for Archives and Manuscripts* by Cheryl Oestreicher, and *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* by Michelle Light and Margery Sly may appear familiar topics to readers of the previous two series, but each book illustrates the innovations in thought and practice that have transformed these archival functions over the past fifteen years.
- A general overview volume which I am preparing, *Introducing Archives and Manuscripts*, provides a broad introduction to the historical, philosophical, and theoretical foundations of the profession.

One contribution that constituted a cornerstone of the previous series has been reformatted to maximize its currency and usability. Although not part of the Archival Fundamentals Series III, the *Dictionary of Archives Terminology* ([dictionary.archivists.org](http://dictionary.archivists.org)) will replace *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* and will be maintained and updated as a digital resource by SAA's Dictionary Working Group.

We hope that undergraduate and graduate students, new professionals, seasoned archival veterans, and others in the information science and public history fields will find the seven volumes in the Archival Fundamentals Series III helpful, provocative, and essential to both their intellectual life and their daily work. As Richard J. Cox observed in his preface to an earlier edition of the series, the time has long passed “when individuals entering the archival profession could read a few texts, peruse some journals, attend a workshop and institute or two, and walk away with a sense that they grasped the field’s knowledge and discipline.” This series provides an entry point and a synthetic distillation of a much broader literature that spans an impressive array of academic disciplines. We encourage you, of course, to do a deeper dive into each of the individual topics covered here. But we also remain confident that this series, like its predecessors, provides an honest and accurate snapshot of archival best practices at the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

The authors, of course, deserve full credit for their individual contributions. The Archival Fundamentals Series III itself, though, constitutes a collaborative enterprise that benefited from the work of SAA Publications Board members, editors, and interns throughout the past decade. These individuals helped to define the series parameters, reviewed proposals and manuscripts, and shepherded various projects to conclusion. Special shout-outs (in alphabetical order) are owed to: Bethany Anderson, Jessica Ballard, Roland Baumann, Cara Bertram, Mary Caldera, Amy Cooper Cary, Jessica Chapel, Paul Conway, J. Gordon Daines, Todd Daniels-Howell, Sarah Demb, Jody DeRidder, Keara Duggan, Margaret Fraser, Thomas J. Frusciano, Krista Gray, Gregory Hunter, Geoffrey Huth, Petrina Jackson, Joan Krizack, Christopher Lee, Donna McCrea, Jennifer Davis McDaid, Kathryn Michaelis, Nicole Milano, Lisa Mix, Tawny Nelb, Kevin Proffitt, Christopher Prom, Mary Jo Pugh, Aaron Purcell, Colleen Rademaker, Caryn Radick, Dennis Riley, Michael Shallcross, Mark Shelstad, Jennifer Thomas, Ciaran Trace, Anna Trammell, Joseph Turrini, Tywana Whorley, and Deborah Wythe. Nancy Beaumont has been an inspirational executive director for SAA, as well as a brilliant editor in her own right. Abigail Christian, SAA’s editorial and production coordinator, has skillfully shepherded design and layout. Teresa Brinati, keenly insightful and good-humored as always, remains the epitome of competent leadership and has transformed the SAA publications program into a model for professional associations. It has been a privilege and great fun to work with everyone on this project.

PETER J. WOSH

Editor, Archival Fundamentals Series III  
Society of American Archivists

# Introduction to Advocacy and Awareness



Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead

## Advocacy and Awareness Is Fundamental to Archives

Archivists invest countless hours, resources, and energy in the work of identifying, caring for, and making available evidence from the past to support the information needs of current and future users. Those needs reflect an astonishing array of purposes, including the following:

- An oral surgeon used archival resources to pursue his grandfather's missing murderer, ultimately leading to the return of that person to jail in Montana.<sup>1</sup>
- In his Public Broadcasting Service series *Finding Your Roots*, Henry Louis Gates Jr. brought the realities of slavery to the rapper Nas by sharing with him the bill of sale for his enslaved third great-grandmother.<sup>2</sup>
- Historian Ron Chernow used extensive archival resources to write his biography *Alexander Hamilton*, bringing new perspectives to Hamilton's role and importance in American history.<sup>3</sup> His work then inspired composer/actor Lin-Manuel Miranda to create the multiple-award-winning Broadway show *Hamilton*.
- During the disaster at the Quecreek coal mine in Pennsylvania, archival maps were used to locate the abandoned shaft where nine miners were sheltering, leading to their rescue.<sup>4</sup>

As this range of examples demonstrates, archives and the work of archivists are foundational to addressing so many information needs. Yet those contributions are too little understood or valued for the real impact and opportunities they provide.

Advocacy and awareness-building are critical activities for archivists who want to increase the use of archival records, bring resources and attention to institutions that hold them, gain support and respect for the professional archivists who manage them, and broaden the understanding of the value of archives and archivists. These outcomes can be accomplished only with focused,

intentional advocacy and awareness efforts that demonstrate the role and contributions of archives.

This volume is included in the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Archival Fundamentals series because advocacy and awareness are, in fact, essential activities

Archives change lives. Archives improve lives. Archives enrich lives. Archives save lives. Archives connect lives. Archives empower lives.

—*Society of American Archivists, 2015*

that underpin the work of the archives profession. As a professional group, as members of an archives staff, or as individual archivists, we have too often failed to incorporate fundamental advocacy and awareness efforts as part of the archival endeavor. Processing backlogs, digitizing records, or responding to reference questions quite naturally take priority; conducting effective advocacy and awareness initiatives is set aside in the face of what are perceived as more pressing needs. But archival practice is not linear or one-dimensional. Archivists must invest in advocacy and awareness to ensure the health, understanding, and use of and respect for archives and archivists.

## Developing an archival advocacy frame of mind

Although new to the Archival Fundamentals Series, advocacy and awareness are, in fact, not new functions to archivists and the archival endeavor. In the past, archivists have pursued focused efforts that have included the founding of the National Archives, concerted actions taken to prevent the closure of the Georgia Archives, promotion of legislation on copyright that recognizes archival concerns, and the sponsorship of American Archives Month. SAA and regional archival organizations periodically provide training on advocacy and awareness. SAA participates in the National Coalition for History to pursue federal and national-level advocacy. And archivists have certainly been aware of and carried out advocacy or awareness efforts in individual repositories. Examples of past and current efforts appear throughout this volume to suggest directions and opportunities for archivists to take action on behalf of their institutions and profession.

The need for archivists to focus on advocacy and awareness has been raised consistently in past decades by David B. Gracy II,

Advocacy is a frame of mind.

—*Nancy Amidei, 2010*

Elsie Freeman Finch, Larry J. Hackman, and others. Those individuals and efforts have encouraged many archivists to recognize the need to focus clearly and directly on the implementation of advocacy and awareness efforts as a regular, planned, and expected component of the mission of individual institutions, as well as for the archival profession.