Knowledge exists in two forms: (1) "active knowledge," meaning that to be found in the brains of living human individuals and therefore available to them at any given moment as bases for actions, and (2) "passive (or potential) knowledge," which exists in the great reservoir of documents in which have been recorded the experiences, observations, thoughts, and discoveries of other men, chiefly those of the past.

Human progress has paralleled and, seemingly, been dependent upon the growth and availability of this great reservoir of "passive knowledge." The human race is believed to have existed for hundreds of thousands of years on this planet with much the same physical and mental capacities as today, but civilization, as we think of it, dawned only between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago, and, seemingly was made possible by the invention of writing. It was writing that first preserved records through time and permitted the beginning of a reservoir of passive knowledge. Until then a man had only his own observations and experiences to guide him or at most traditions going back a few generations and limited in place to a small neighborhood. Each generation, instead of standing on the shoulders of previous generations, almost had to begin all over again. Only through the invention of writing did it become possible to pass along from generation to generation an ever accumulating body of passive knowledge from which man can draw when necessary to increase the body of active knowledge at his command.

The custody of this great, and ever increasing, reservoir of passive knowledge is the responsibility of the archivist and the librarian. They must preserve it safely and impartially, and they must ever seek better ways to make it increasingly available to mankind so that it becomes part of the active knowledge by which they are guided.

Instead of the two terms "archivist" and "librarian," there should be a single word to designate these priests because this greatest treasure of mankind for which they have responsibility is an indivisible whole. There are differences between archives and the normal holdings of libraries, which call for differences in adminis-

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tration, but the two are complementary parts of this vast reservoir of passive knowledge and should not be too completely divorced. Each helps to interpret the other, and the priests should be knowledgeable about both.

The word "archives," although very old on the European continent, is relatively foreign to the English language where the word "records" has always meant much the same thing both in common law and in common parlance. The foreign word was beginning to be used early in the nineteenth century by self-conscious scholars, especially historians, to refer to old records seemingly preserved for their special benefit. One cannot help feeling this usage of the term was in a way associated with the Romantic movement in its first appearance both in England and in America. Its more frequent usage later in the century can be traced to the influence of history scholars returning from the seminars of Leopold von Ranke and his students at German universities. But the common, every-day working term in the English language continued to be "records." The terminology of the archival profession in English is still unstable among those who consider themselves professionals, and of course there is even more confusion in the layman's mind—and all working in this area must be constantly aware of this confusion.

The words "record," or "records," in early English law, and today, have the sense of a writing or documents deliberately preserved, and often deliberately created, to transmit a message in time (Latin-recordari; to be mindful of, or to remember). Writings also preserved unintentionally become records in time. Records, therefore, are documents recording what has taken place. The action is over. Any document becomes a record if it is preserved after the event.

Records deliberately created and preserved by an office, an agency, or an organization (or less common, and less accepted, by a family or an individual) are its archives. Not all records "created" by an office or agency become part of its archives. The definition says "created and preserved by." All offices, agencies, and other record-creating organizations produce records, such as outgoing letters, commissions, orders, et cetera, which they properly send out or distribute to others. These may or may not become parts of other archival bodies. They are part of the archives of the creating agency only when found in the form of "record-copies" that it has deliberately preserved. Also, an office or organization may receive communications and other writings that it does not preserve—that is, consciously file as a record for future reference. These usually go out as waste paper. In other words, an agency's archives are those documents deemed worth keeping or filing for possible future use.

Archives may be categorized or classified in terms of their creating agencies. Thus we have:
1. Public archives or public records—those created by federal, state, and local governing bodies. Only since we have had democratic governments—deriving their powers from the governed—have these been public records in the sense of belonging to the people, that is, of being publicly owned, as well as in the sense of being open and accessible to the public for reference. Under monarchical government they belonged to the king, but he might by his grace make some of them “public records” in the sense that his subjects were given the right to see them. The term came into use in this sense in Medieval England with respect to records of the king’s courts, but was by no means applicable to the administrative records of other governing bodies of the Crown.

2. Institutional and organizational archives (often semi-public). These may include the records of political parties, patriotic societies, clubs, charitable institutions or organizations, learned societies, foundations, non-profit corporations, and the like. Especially important categories, having a long history, are the archives of: (a) churches and religious organizations; and (b) educational institutions, particularly colleges and universities.

3. Business archives—that is, the records of corporations and unincorporated businesses. Usually private, they may be affected with a public interest, especially when in such a category as public utilities. These may also, of course, include mutual and cooperative business organizations.

4. Family and personal archives—wholly private in character. Some assemblages of these may have the characteristics of archival bodies and should be handled and administered as such. Others, however, are isolated or selected documents not preserved in any special order or they have lost such order as they might once have been given. Often families have mixed them hopelessly or picked them over before releasing them, and they are better thought of as family or personal “papers.”

This leads us to one of the basic characteristics of archives, their special relationship to their creator. They are the documents of some creating agency and have a special meaning because of that fact. A second characteristic is that they were created in the course of official business, so to speak. Their purpose was to get things done, and they were saved as the record of what was done. A third characteristic is that they have (or had) a special order established by their creator for his own purposes, and, when preserved in that order, they are revealing of those purposes. Each document is given, and later exhibits, a relationship to all the others that is meaningful and that can be easily obscured or lost if this order is tampered with. A final characteristic is that all of these documents are thus tied into one complete set or body that is unique and possesses a kind of “organic” character, a whole which has a meaning different
from and greater than the sum of its parts. This archival body is known by various terms in different languages; but in French, one of the most influential languages in matters archival, it is referred to as the *fonds*. We often use this term in English because we have no really satisfactory equivalent. The terms "archive group," used at the British Public Record Office, and "record group," used at National Archives in Washington and elsewhere in America, may refer to the same natural body but often refer to larger divisions of holdings more arbitrarily bounded for administrative convenience.

Out of the basic characteristics just enumerated, several famous archival principles of arrangement are derived. First, the archives of a given archival creating agency must not be intermingled with those of other creating agencies. This is the principle called by the French respect des *fonds*, meaning a respect for the natural body of documentation left by a creating agency and reflecting its work. Keep it just that. Do not let documents drift away from it. Do not let alien documents get into it.

The second principle is that the archival accumulation of the creating agency should be retained in its original organization pattern or structure, that is, the pattern of arrangement reflecting its growth and its use when still a live, active organism, so to speak. This is the principle of the sanctity of the original order (l'ordre primitif). The two principles together add up to the principle of provenience (provenance) in its complete sense although this term can be misleading, when, as is often the case, it is used as the equivalent of only the first of these principles, that is, respect des *fonds*. Maintaining a body of archives according to these principles is what we mean when we talk about respecting "archival integrity."

The second of these principles, the sanctity of the original order, since it goes a step further than merely respect for the *fonds*, is the most difficult of the two to carry into execution. Often a body of records has been so tampered with that the original order is obscured and its restoration, if not impossible, is difficult and time-consuming. There is a temptation to rearrange the documents according to some other principle, which, if the new principle can be agreed upon (not always an easy matter), is also a difficult and time-consuming, and therefore expensive, operation. When the original order is completely lost, such rearrangement becomes necessary, but this is very rarely the case. If it is unavoidable, it will be accepted reluctantly and with the full realization that, although composed of the same documents (the same molecules, so to speak) one has a new and different body of records with new meanings brought out by the new relationships, but with many of the old meanings lost forever.

It is sometimes argued that the interests of this generation, which may be entirely different from the interests of those who
created the records, should have precedence, and that in such a case the records should be rearranged in whatever order might seem best suited to serve current interests. But the interests of the next generation might change; and the interests of any generation are not single. One will find many conflicting interests and to decide on the overriding one at any one time will prove to be difficult. Some will demand the chronological approach, others a geographical approach, and still others some topical approach. It is my belief that these and all other approaches can best be served by rearrangements on paper in the form of finding aids—calendars, subject indexes, and special lists of different kinds. One cannot be sure, but it is possible, that modern information retrieval systems may make possible great variety in approaches to a body of archival material. The cost of putting the information into the machine will not be a small cost, you may be sure, but neither is the cost of rearranging a body of records according to some arbitrary principle which henceforth makes easy only one approach and discourages all others. My main point is that these rearrangements on arbitrary principles are always possible later if by experience they prove necessary, whereas the arrangement according to the provenance principle once lost cannot be retrieved by machines or humans. The custodian has thrown away, almost as though the records were destroyed, the unique insights offered by the way in which the creating agency grouped and filed the documents as it acted upon them.

Others will need to carry further the consideration of these general principles and their application in the field of “University Archives.” They have been dealt with here because they throw light on the nature of archives as over against collected informational materials, chiefly printed, which are the traditional responsibility of the librarian. It appears that these areas of responsibility can be more sharply separated in theory than they usually are in practice, and that together they make up the whole of recorded experience which constitutes the growing reservoir of passive knowledge to be available whenever needed in the service of mankind.

The history of archives and archives administration is important for archivists, chiefly because it helps them to fix their present position in the development of their profession and thus to chart their course for the future with greater confidence. If I seem to you to start further back than is necessary, I would answer that the archivist must take the long view. His work is for the ages to come and it helps him to know what past ages and past archivists have done for and against the records of the past.

The first writings appear to have been records; in fact, the need to keep records appears to have led to the development of writing. Our earliest writings are records kept in the temples and in the courts of the rulers. Priests and kings were closely related
in antiquity, and in some cases king and priest were one and court and temple were one. Inventories had to be kept of the ruler’s property—his men, his weapons, his stock of supplies. Records had to be kept of offerings made or taxes (usually in kind) collected. It was easy to draw a picture of most of these things and to make marks beside them for the number. This picture writing tended to become conventionalized into signs that stood for the words for the things counted. Supplementary signs were soon invented to stand for verbs and adjectives. The further back one gets in any preserved form of writing the more likely it is to be of this nature. It is well illustrated in the contents of the recently deciphered Linear B tablets, the earliest examples of efforts to write the Greek language. Only the initiates in the kings’ courts or in the temples would be able to interpret these scratchings but as older ones taught the younger ones, records could be preserved across time and deciphered and the reservoir of passive knowledge, restricted as it was, came into being.

Writing was not invented as a vehicle for poetry or story telling. The old stories and songs were kept alive across the generations by mnemones (“remembrancers”), to use the Greek word for an official that existed in almost all early preliterate societies. It was only after writing had developed to a very high level indeed that these songs and stories, as in the example of Homer, could be captured by the written word and thus incorporated into the reservoir of written knowledge.

One would expect the earliest preserved writings, consequently, to be associated with kings’ palaces and temples and to be archival in character, and so they are. They are the clay tablets of Assyria, Babylonia, and the Hittite Empire from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the Christian Era. As better-known examples may be mentioned:

1. The Temple Archives of Nippur.—This classic Sumerian site was excavated first by the University of Pennsylvania Museum, beginning in 1887. Excavations were renewed in 1947, and additional tablets are still being discovered. There are now over 54,000 tablets, but tens of thousands of clay tablets discovered in the 1890’s are still being deciphered.

2. The Mari Tablets from the Palace of Zimri-Lim.—More than 20,000 tablets were discovered by French expeditions, 1930-1946. They include an eighteenth century B.C. diplomatic correspondence of much historical significance found in what was a sort of chancery room. Many tablets of economic import were discovered in other rooms where accounting records were found divided according to their subject matter.

3. The Boghazekeui Archives, 1500-1200 B.C., from the old Hittite capital.—Most of the texts came from the royal archives and
were central in bringing out of obscurity the whole story of the Hittite empire.

4. The Tel-el-Amarna Letters.—The first diplomatic archives to be discovered, these clay tablets were at first a puzzle because found in Egypt, which was not a clay tablet country. They proved to be over 300 incoming letters from kings of clay tablet countries of western Asia to the Emperor Ikhnaton, written a little after 1500 B.C., and were part of the royal archives at Amarna. The story of their dispersal by antiquities dealers and the long, persistent efforts by scholars, after their importance was realized, to locate these tablets or fragments of tablets and restore their contents on paper is an interesting parallel to the dispersal by dealers of modern archival fonds or natural accumulations of private papers.

Clay tablets were also found associated with the Minoan civilization of the Agean, first early in this century when quantities were discovered by Sir Arthur Evans in his excavations of the palace of Minos in Crete, but more recently also on the Greek mainland, notably in excavations on the west shores of the Peloponnesus of the palace of Nestor by Carl Blegen, where he designated one room the “archives room” because of the great number of tablets found there. These tablets curiously were incised with a linear script instead of the ubiquitous cuneiform, or wedge-shaped, writing of the civilizations further east. A surprising discovery, when these tablets were recently deciphered, was that the language was Greek, thus giving us Greek writing more than 500 years earlier than any known hitherto and revolutionizing the interpretation of the Minoan age. One might wish the Greeks had continued to place their records on clay tablets. One does not know why this writing disappears suddenly, but evidences point to invasions which ushered in a dark age lasting a half century. It is believed the Greeks began once more to keep written records about 750 B.C., but these early writings on less permanent writing materials have disappeared.

One could multiply these illustrations. The discoveries of these archival bodies have represented major advances in the recovery of antiquity—they contribute far more than unrelated fragments. Clay tablets are difficult to destroy in dry climates, and so we have the contents even of waste baskets, disposed of supposedly by being thrown over the side of the mound—more documentation by far for the 2,000 years before Christ than for the 1,000 years after the downfall of the Roman Empire. We have governmental records, religious records, educational records (the temples were the schools for the scribes, and we have even the clay tablets that represent their exercise books), business records, and family records. The clay tablet period teaches us one of our basic lessons, the importance of a permanent base upon which the message is placed if the records are to be preserved for the millenia to come. Also, archeologists
like archivists have learned the importance of provenance. An isolated clay tablet, deprived of its background and associations, has lost much of its message. But the message that is left is less confusing if the tablet remains alone than when it is arbitrarily associated with other tablets under some artificial classification system.

During the classical period of Greece, writings were on white wooden tablets or on papyrus, which was imported from Egypt, or, later, on parchment. Much is known about the keeping of archives in ancient Greece, but the archives themselves, in contrast to those of the clay tablet civilizations, have not survived because they were on an impermanent base. A less dry climate than the desert civilizations may have been a factor, but the chief cause of their destruction appears to have been fire. A conflagration baked the clay tablets harder, but wood and paper invited total consumption. There are records of many fires and some were doubtless deliberately set by the barbaric invaders who were to destroy so much of our heritage from both Greece and Rome.

It is known that the records of the city-state of Athens were kept in the Metróon—the Temple of the Mother of the Gods—in the Agora. The sacred character of these records in Greek eyes is symbolized by their being placed under the special care of their mother goddess. These were the originals. Copies of these wooden tablets were often set up in public places where they could be consulted by all citizens, and this in ancient days was the usual form of publication. More permanent laws and constitutions might in rare instances be carved or chiseled in stone.

Much of our knowledge of Greek history is known not from records found in Greece but to papyri recovered from the sands of Egypt. The use of the fibers of the papyrus plant as a base for writing began very early in the Nile Valley, but papyri containing the ancient hieroglyphic writings are relatively rare. Most of the papyri recovered from Egypt date from the period when the Greek language was dominant. In them are preserved many Greek classics, some of which would otherwise be lost. Non-literary papyri, however, form much the greater portion of the material recovered, and much of it is archival in character and content—laws, edicts, judicial proceedings, official correspondence, tax lists, and inventories. Papyrus documents have not been found in extensive related bodies so frequently as have the clay tablets. Possibly they have been more scattered by dealers in antiquities, for many became available to Western scholars through their hands in the last century before there was the great concern for details of provenance that exists today. However, each piece—usually in roll form—is generally a longer document than are those found on clay tablets. Papyrus became a popular writing material north of the Mediterranean as well as south
of it, probably because it was easier to prepare than parchment and lighter and less awkward than were wooden tablets. It continued to be used in Greece and Rome down into the eleventh and twelfth centuries, longer than in Egypt where after 900 A.D. paper, introduced by the Arabs, became more common. Few papyri survived, however, in the area north of the Mediterranean. A damper climate, fires, and deliberate destruction by invaders were the reasons. Survival in Egypt of this destructible writing material can be attributed mainly to the dry climate, and thus the important role played by climate conditions in the preservation of records over the ages is again emphasized.

Record keeping in antiquity probably reached its height in Roman Egypt. It made use of record keeping practices imported from both Greece and Rome but also, and perhaps more important, inherited others from a still more ancient Egypt and from the Persian Empire and its successors of the Hellenistic age, which in turn had learned from the clay tablet civilizations that preceded them. Happily also, because so many papyri have been preserved, we are well informed about Roman Egypt’s record offices and their highly developed practices.

In Roman Egypt there was located at the capital of every nome or province a central record (the demosia bibliothke) in which the various officials were required to deposit their records, or copies of them. These housed the census records, the land surveys, the tax rolls, the official diaries (each higher official, from the prefect down, was required to keep a daybook of official transactions, open to public inspection), and the like. Official correspondence received was made up into composite rolls, the individual sheets of papyrus being fastened together; so also were the documents handed in by the public. All these rolls were preserved and numbered, and there were serial numbers, like page numbers, distinguishing the columns on each roll, so that reference was easy from registers also kept of the receipt of these documents. These offices were administered by bibliophylakes, which you may translate either as archivist or librarian. They were the keepers of the books. A modern archivist, seemingly, would have found himself at home among these records.

Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, had its central Bibliothke, to which were sent copies of the official diaries of the governors in all the nomes, thus providing a security copy as well as a means for close supervision. Also fully developed in Egypt was the notarial system, which also existed earlier both in Greece and in the clay tablet countries. Again in each nome is found an official responsible for the operation of the system in that nome, but in each major village is found a grapheion, a place where contracts were drawn up and executed, and where a file of these was kept open for inspection.
These public contracts had greater standing than contracts made between parties unofficially and not made public. Private contracts could be given a degree of legal standing, if wished, by registration in which case the contents would be summarized but not revealed in whole. The Romans in all provinces encouraged “publication” of contracts by full recording and discouraged private deeds and contracts but never wholly invalidated the latter. Both parties to a contract were given copies of the original. The originals were made up into rolls and the rolls numbered. A register (anagraphe) of all contracts, in chronological order, was kept on other roles. A notable body of papyri at the University of Michigan includes the archives of such an office (the combined grapheion of two villages named Tebutis and Kirkesouche Oros) in which these practices were illustrated. This notarial system, which became general in the Mediterranean world, is still a basic feature of all Latin countries in the Old World and in the New. The practices were illustrated again in old Vincennes and in Cahokia and Kaskaskia; and how lawyers trained in the English tradition did wrestle with the problems offered by these records when we took over New Orleans!

Note use of the Greek form biblio (book) as applied to all writings in roll form and theke (repository) as the term for library or archives, whichever you wish to consider it, for there appeared to be no division or distinction between these two in all antiquity. Some repositories might hold rolls of archival character almost entirely, and others contain more rolls of literary character, especially if some scholar or custodian were interested in collecting them, but the physical contents looked alike, and our application backward of the modern terms implies a distinction that had little validity before the invention or printing.

This picture of Roman record keeping at the provincial and local levels has been discussed at some length because record keeping practices did not reach this stage of development again until perhaps the sixteenth century, and when they were reviewed it was surprising how the old patterns had persisted. Greeks, and, later, Arabs brought them into Sicily, that crossroads of the Middle Ages, and from there they were spread northward by the Norman kings and the German emperors who successively ruled Sicily.

In Rome itself the first special building for the public records was erected at the end of the Forum under the protection of the temple of Saturn, as early as 509 B.C. It was intended especially as a place where the people could consult the laws. Most of the older records of the Republic are supposed to have perished in the burning of Rome by the Gauls in 309 B.C. Other buildings served in the interim before the building in 78 B.C. of the great Tabularium, a most impressive archives building that closed the west end of the
Forum, just below the Temple of Jupiter, which temple was the symbol of the sovereignty and power of Rome. Parts of the great Tabularium still survive, having been incorporated by Michelangelo into the present Palazzo del Senatore. There were other tabularia in the city of Rome and tabularia in most of the provinces, which held the tabulae publicae, the public documents of the governing bodies. Roman record keeping reached its zenith in the later Empire after the administrative reforms of Diocletian about 300 A.D. An elaborate bureaucracy developed, organized into bureaus or officia, for our words "office" and "official" originated in this period.

Again, we do not have the actual records of the central administration of the Roman Empire, and we know of the ways and places in which they were kept only from non-archival writings of Roman leaders and from vestiges of their practices as they survived in the Papal Chancery. For, while record keeping at local level survived through Egypt and Sicily, as has already been described, it was the Papal Chancery that served as the link between the ancient and modern world in administrative organization, procedures, and record keeping at the top level. The Apostolic Court was organized from the first on the model of the Roman Imperial Court. It grew up under its shadow. Its offices paralleled those of the Diocletian Empire. Many churchmen and some Popes had served in their earlier life, before becoming monks, as officials of the empire, notably Pope Gregory the Great, 590-604, who made the papacy a political as well as a religious power. Gregory had served as Prefect of Rome before entering the service of the Church.

The barbarian kingdoms arising on the ruins of the Roman Empire in the West copied more or less intelligently the Roman model, now best represented by the Church. This copying was almost inevitable because of their dependence on clerics (thus our word "clerks") for writing, for, once north of Italy, clerics were almost the only persons knowledgeable in this art. The chancery of the Merovingian kings is the best example of this. After the alliance of Clovis with the Church about 496, he was helped by church officials especially with chancery matters. The some ninety authentic Merovingian diplomas or charters that survive from successor Merovingian kings have the character of papal charters. The older originals are written on papyrus, vellum coming in toward the end of the seventh century.

We have more such documentation for Charlemagne's rule than for any other in the Middle Ages. His chancery was wholly staffed by court chaplains and clerics, and logically, the archives were kept in the royal chapel. Charlemagne's son and successor, Louis the Pious, appointed a bishop as his arch chancellor, and bishops continued to hold office through the Carolingian period and earlier centuries of
the Capetian kings, gaining more and more practical influence in the administration. As the King's chief secretary, the chancellor handled appeals and petitions of aggrieved persons (the beginnings of his judicial functions) as well as the King's political correspondence. Charlemagne established his palace school to train men to do this work and called in monks from as far as Italy and England to staff it.

Aside from the courts of the kings and emperors, almost the only writing throughout the Middle Ages was in the churches and the monasteries. They served:

1. As centers for the multiplying of copies for use in a day when copies were made only by hand. This was a major function of the scriptorium found in almost all monasteries.

2. As archival depositories not only for religious writings but for records of kings and princes, who deposited them in these sanctified places for security in times of uncertainty.

3. As creators of administrative records of their own. Almost the only surviving records of real estate and business transactions for the Middle Ages are those of monasteries. Almost the only notations of contemporary events are the monastic annals and chronicles, meagre as they are.

It is to the churches and the monasteries as the chief places of refuge against the fury and neglect of the Middle Ages that we owe the preservation of most medieval documents, and, as has been stated, they are few as compared with those that have survived from antiquity.

Medieval documents are scarce not just because of the ravages of time but because few were created in the first place. Why?

1. Illiteracy was so widespread few could make records, and there was not much point to making them when few could read.

2. It was an age of oral government, of the use of rituals and ceremonies that were to be witnessed by the people, as a substitute for written records. Laws and edicts were published by proclamation. Federal courts operated without written law which had almost ceased to exist. Trials, often by ordeal, and punishments were open so that the people could actually see justice being carried out. The ceremonial conveyance of lands by livery of seisin and "beating the bounds" periodically to preserve the memory of boundaries are further examples that even carried over into the colonial period of our own country.

3. Material to write upon (chiefly parchment) was scarce and expensive, and therefore reserved for only the most important things, in those days mostly things religious. Old writings were erased to make way for the new; thus the palimpsest. Paper was exceedingly scarce until the sixteenth century. Early mills were very small and the trade secrets were jealously guarded until the invention of printing so raised the demand that monopolies were broken down.
4. Business transactions, which produce such quantities of modern records, were fewer because of the general self-sufficiency of communities, and were rarely recorded because they were usually mere exchanges in kind made locally between neighbors.

The reservoir of passive knowledge built up by the civilizations of antiquity had been almost overwhelmed by the barbarian way of life, which knew only the ways of living traditional to a people depending wholly on active knowledge.

But enough passive knowledge survived to begin the reversal, and there were powerful influences that worked to accelerate it, once begun. Some of these influences were:

1. The need for writing to harmonize conflicting customs and traditions or deliberately to choose between them. This began with the capitularies of Charlemagne's time and triumphed with the revival of Roman law in Bologna in the twelfth century, which led to reappraisal of principles and practices brought in by non-Roman sources and to the compilation of new codes, which led in turn to written arguments and the recording of written decisions in the king's courts.

2. The need to transmit actions taken in oral ceremony through time to future generations, first to facilitate confirmations by succeeding rulers, and, later, to avoid need of confirmations with each change in sovereigns, in other words, to give stability to society. The keeping of copies of charters given by the king also guarded against forgeries, which were not uncommon in the Middle Ages. This was the origin of the patent rolls in England. These contained the documents that were intended to be open to the public, that is "patent" and so we have our many kinds of "patent" documents today. Copies of the king's private correspondence began to be kept also. These became the "close" rolls. Thus the body of passive knowledge at the Court began to grow. No longer were the kings able to carry their records around with them in chests as they traveled from one part of the kingdom to another with their traveling court. They began to leave some behind in a chapel or fortress, especially those created by their predecessors that they no longer needed so close at hand.

3. The rise of the towns in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, almost more than any other movement, marks the passing of the Middle Ages. As they gained freedom from feudal jurisdiction, they developed their own government, including courts, markets, and mints, and of necessity created and preserved in their town hall their own records, beginning with their town charter. Many famous city archives in Europe go back to the later Middle Ages, 1200-1500.

4. The practice of keeping notarial records revived, beginning in Italy in the twelfth century. Once revived it spread rapidly. Notaries were needed to make and keep contracts and other records for ordinary people not yet able to make and keep them for them-
selves. Many kept in Italy, France, and Spain in the fourteenth century are preserved. They begin to furnish a valuable picture of the life of the people in contrast to that of Church and Court.

5. With the rise of trade and banking operations, the written record began to invade non-government fields. The late twelfth century saw the first bills of exchange, letters of credit, and other negotiable instruments. Bookkeeping, absent from western Europe since the seventh century, had been preserved in the East and was reintroduced by Italian merchants with Arabic numbers in the twelfth century and spread northward with trade. Insurance on merchandise and marine risks appears in the late fourteenth century. Private banking begins to play its role in northern Italy and also expands to the northward largely through close-knit family connections. And so we have our first surviving private business records since antiquity dating from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The Trésor des Chartes, used by successive French kings to carry their valuable charters with them from place to place for 300 years finally came to rest in the new Sainte Chapelle completed in 1248 on the Isle de la Cité in Paris, being entrusted again to a religious sanctuary in what was now to become the French capital city. This may symbolize the end of the ambulatory period for the archives of the monarchs of that day although Henry VII was still to take his archives along on his coronation journey into Italy in 1310, where they were stranded at his death. They are still to be found in great part at Pisa and Turin. The French kings added to their Trésor in the chapel from time to time until 1568, the date of the latest accession. The contents of the Trésor des Chartes were afterwards kept intact to and through the Revolution and then transferred to the newly established Archives Nationales, where they are maintained as a separate closed fonds to the present day. In similar fashion, as the residences of other monarchs and their courts became more settled, stationary archival depositories came into existence at these newly established capital cities.

The story now, so far as governmental archives are concerned, is the rise again of bureaucracy in the ministries that grew up under the absolute monarchs of Europe of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries and of consequent greater creation of and dependence upon records. Expansion of the central government's services was accompanied by increasing responsibility for field services as the monarchs struggled to break the local rule of the feudal aristocracy, marked, for example, in France by the intendant system. This movement is accompanied by the rise of the paid professional civil servant instead of officials owning their offices by inheritance or purchase of some forgotten feudal right to them. These professional administrators tended to depend more and more on
records for precedent and for systematic and impartial administration of taxes, justice, lands, and natural resources. They systematized the keeping of records. There was an increased use of the mails which also led to increased documentation. This period marks the rapid expansion of the registry system about which much was written at the time. This is the period that needs to be studied if we are to understand the record systems introduced into our own government at the time of its beginnings.

But the records of government still belonged to the king and not to the people. In the new United States, it is true, the people theoretically took control of their own in 1776, but in Europe it remained for the French Revolution to establish the principal that the records belonged to the citizens of a republic. The responsibility of a State for preserving these records as the peoples’ heritage, and for making them accessible to the people was set forth in the law of June 25, 1794. This law turned the archives established by the French Assembly for its own records into a central archival depository of the Republic, the present Archives Nationales. Subordinated to the Archives Nationales in 1796 were the newly established records in each of the recently established départements, the first instance of a state-wide archives system centrally directed.

This is not the place to pursue the story of the French archives in the nineteenth century, but the patterns of thinking and organization set in motion by the Revolutionary government were followed by other European countries that came within the French orbit, notably, Belgium, The Netherlands, the Kingdom of Naples, and a number of other Italian states.

In England, Sweden, Prussia, and Denmark, on the other hand, central archival establishments evolved out of existing chancery or ministerial archives. The nineteenth century saw the victory of the idea of a special public archives service to preserve and administer a nation’s archival heritage. Today there are in Europe central archival establishments for all national governments. There are also a vast number of provincial archives, municipal archives, and archives for other units of local government, which may or may not be under the close control of a centralized national archival administration, in this respect reflecting the degree of centralization or decentralization of a government generally. In addition to serving an administrative purpose, these archival agencies began more and more in the early nineteenth century to serve scholarship as well. At first legal considerations, that is the rights of the people as set forth in the records, appear to have motivated revolutionary governments in opening the archives to their citizens. But the enormous masses of records of the old regimes that became available in these depositories turned them into “mines” for historical scholars. Increasing national consciousness brought increasing use of the records of a nation’s
past in writing its history. This trend was further accelerated by the rise in Germany and rapid spread elsewhere of the school of scientific history, with its emphasis upon the primacy of documents in the study and interpretation of the past.

In the nineteenth century, historians came to dominate in the administration of European archives to such a degree that there was a tendency in archives administration to concentrate their efforts and resources on the records of the old regimes, and the facilitating of research in them, to the neglect of other administrative functions and the maintenance of meaningful relationships with current governments. This academic emphasis continued well into the twentieth century. There has now been in progress for some time a movement away from this limiting tradition, which movement is in different stages of progress in different countries. Most of the archival establishments of the Latin American countries were founded when the historical tradition was uppermost, with the result that, as a rule, they are concerned primarily with the records of the colonial and wars of independence periods and have in custody few, if any, records of their national periods. Their holdings tend to be static in character. The Public Records Office of Canada, founded in 1871, was in somewhat the same position in the years before World War II, but has moved rapidly forward in recent years.

In the United States the idea of centralized custody of noncurrent public records, as brought back by scholars returning from their education and research experiences in the European continent, was colored by the historical tradition still dominant in many continental institutions. Historians especially thought of archival establishments mainly in terms of centralized repositories of available materials for research. Those state archival agencies that were established in the earlier years of this century tended to be closely associated with or auxiliary to state historical departments or divisions (or in the Midwest to the state historical societies, which are there state supported rather than private organizations). The development of many of these archival agencies into broader spheres of usefulness to the government that supports them has often been handicapped by this association. The archives program has too often tended to be thought of as just another service to history squeezed in by these busy organizations.

The National Archives in Washington stands on a broader foundation and symbolizes the union of the cultural and administrative traditions in archival administration and service. Most of the credit for its establishment must be given to the promotional work of historians and scholars generally, many of them still acting in the current of the historical tradition that has been described. But there was also a strong movement, sponsored by government officials and
administrators, for a building and administration to provide adequate space and special care for the rapidly accumulating noncurrent records that agencies found necessary to keep indefinitely for legal and administrative use but that were either in the way for current operations or difficult to preserve and protect physically and to maintain in accessible conditions and usable order when stored in outlying locations. There were a few scholars, such as Dr. J. Franklin Jameson and Dr. Waldo G. Leland, who saw and understood both forces and acted to bring them together in support of legislation broad enough to serve both interests.

It is also pertinent in this account of archival development to note that in the United States the historical society and the library movements got under way much earlier than the archival movement and that, when the latter was still almost nonexistent, the historical societies and librarians represented strong vigorous groups eager to be of maximum service to the community or government they served. As research institutions, they began developing collections of manuscript sources as well as printed materials. Especially if they were state libraries or state supported historical societies, as a service to the governments that supported them, many began to salvage older official documents of exceptional interest. Laws or executive orders legalized such transfers in some cases, but in others there was merely mutual recognition that such transfers would promote the preservation and availability of the records. Where state supported libraries or societies were nonexistent, official records were frequently turned over to private libraries and societies as more appropriate custodial agencies than government offices engrossed in their current business.

Often official records were merely added to the existing manuscript collections and treated, as were other manuscripts, without much realization of the special tenets that should govern in their custody, arrangement, and use. In other cases, however, the official records were maintained as a special unit, and in a few instances, separate archives divisions grew up within the state historical societies or state libraries and became to a certain extent the official archival agencies for the state. Usually, however, archival functions in these agencies have been limited to custody and reference service on a limited body of older records. In the very few cases where a more rounded program has developed, the archives division has had to reach a status of considerable professional autonomy, subject to the librarian only in administrative matters. Broad-minded librarianship and strong archival leadership are the prerequisites if this is to happen.

This interim stage of development is also reflected in the experience of the federal government. The Library of Congress, under authority of a clause inserted in an appropriation act of 1903, began
to take custody of and place in its Division of Manuscripts selected records from other agencies of the federal government. These were often single items or small groups of papers of outstanding historical value that were selected from extensive files left in the custody of the agencies. As the Library began, however, to receive offers from the agencies of larger bodies of older records, it came more fully to understand the magnitude and special character of the archives of the federal government and it swung its support to the movement for a specialized archival agency and building. In the words of the Librarian's Annual Report for 1911, "... the Library can not sacrifice its space to the storage of public papers which properly belong to other Government offices. Such papers should go to a national archives depository, and it is gratifying to see that a serious movement is on foot to erect a building for this purpose."¹ Today the Library of Congress continues to serve as a great repository for private manuscript collections and nongovernmental archival materials, but it has released, or is gradually releasing, to the National Archives when they can be recognized and easily separated, such official records of the federal government as it has cared for in this interim. The work of both institutions, and their potential for growth and service in the future, have, it is believed, been strengthened by this logical division of fields.

Both in the federal government and in the states, the older libraries and historical societies entered this field because a vacuum existed. It was a logical extension of their interests at the time and resulted in the preservation and fuller use of many valuable records. But it was, historically speaking, a transition stage, peculiar to the United States (and to Australia, New Zealand, and a few other countries where the situation was similar). The opposite situation prevails on the European continent where, because they were earlier in the field, the archival agencies generally have the custody also of private manuscripts.

Because in some of our states the archive authorities were concerned mostly with the older records and the interests of scholars, the situation with respect to records still in the offices and departments of the state government grew progressively worse, until a third party entered the picture—the forces representing administration and management in operating agencies. The "no man's land" was the area that particularly interested them. The needs of the agencies were not being served. Such a move on the part of those interested in effective records management is always to be expected when archival agencies concern themselves only with those aspects of archival work that are associated with research and scholarship. The management interests have both justice and power on their side. The original purpose of archival agencies was to meet the archival heads of the administration that created and maintained them. In any
fully developed modern archival program these needs are met, and they must be met or the archival program will be cut off from one of the strongest sources of its support and will deteriorate into a shrunken appendage of small value. It is not only the records of the past that it must be concerned with but also the records of the present and of the future both of which will all too soon become records of the past.

An archival agency, whether serving government or some private organization, (and universities and colleges are found under both) must be both a cultural agency and an administrative or management agency in its special field. Its services in the cultural area cannot be fully developed over a period of years unless its services in the administrative area are effectively performed. Its services in the administrative area cannot be effectively performed unless it has an appreciation of the long-term cultural and research values of the records that are created and used in the living agencies of government and that must in time be retired either to its custody or to the ash heap. The cultural and the administrative aspects cannot be separated. Neither one should be emphasized at the expense of the other. An archival program remains healthy and draws its support from both sides only as it effectively performs in its dual role.

A Note on the Literature of Archival Science

There is no textbook, indeed there is no one general book in English, or even in other languages, that can be recommended as surveying the subject of archival theory and practice systematically and including good bibliographical references for further reading. Why? Because there is no universal experience.

Writings even of general character tend to be based on the experiences of the authors with collections with which they are familiar, in specific institutions, and in specific countries. Their generalizations are often misleading to, or misunderstood by, archivists in other countries, and their illustrations and examples are often outside the experiences even of colleagues in their own countries. When one describes techniques and procedures relating to books, one is concerned with identical units that colleagues can know and handle. But archival bodies are unique, and only a colleague who has lived with the body used as an illustration, can really understand what is being said or done about it. Strangers are soon lost in meaningless detail.

But, in a single country there are not enough archivists—or have not been until just recently—to create a demand for texts and manuals that are based upon and explain the special characteristics of that country’s records.
Experience, and the lessons learned from it, tend, therefore to remain in the head of the practitioner. It may be that to a considerable degree the work of an archivist is something to be learned by example and through practice rather than through books and classroom teaching. It is a workshop sort of thing. There are operations to perform that one has to watch and then participate in. One thing needed, I feel, in teaching archival practice is more laboratory work. Yet, learning by that method takes a great deal of time, and in addition, one must find time to pull his experiences together and compare notes with others and generalize. That is the nature of much of the writing in the field. You will find it in short articles, and it will consist of accounts of experience with this body of records or that, or "this is the way we handle this problem at our institution."

The central repository in this country for such articles, for just over a quarter century now, has been The American Archivist, the quarterly professional journal of the Society of American Archivists. It has been a good journal consistently and compares favorably with, if it does not excel, other journals in other countries, of which there are about a dozen. These latter are less useful to the beginner for the reasons mentioned above.

There are in English, however, four books that all archivists should know and read frequently. Every archivist should analyze and compare them and know what they have of value and what they lack. Between them, they will contain most of the theory that one needs. One will not understand all of it without some practice on his own account. He will, therefore, reread these books again and again for the greater understanding that can come only after experience. They are here listed in the order in which they were published.


3. Schellenberg, T.R. Modern Archives; Principles and Techniques. (First published in Melbourne, 1956.) Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957. (Also translated into a number of languages including Spanish, German, and Hebrew.)

REFERENCES