

**Society of American Archivists
Council Meeting
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**Proposal for “Archival History Article Award”
(Prepared by Eric Stoykovich, Chair of Archival History Section)**

BACKGROUND

In October 2016, Eric Stoykovich, chair of the Archival History Section, opened a discussion about creating an “Archival History Article Award.” The members of the AHS Steering Committee gave a majority of votes in support of pursuing this proposal during a conference call on November 10, 2016.

DISCUSSION

SAA can support archival history by the creation of an award specifically focused on rewarding excellent short peer-reviewed pieces. In doing so, SAA would acknowledge that archives support historical studies of many kinds, including the history of the archival profession. From an analysis of works published between 1898 and 2015, the Archival History Section Steering Committee suggests that the majority of published archival histories have taken the form of article-length pieces, rather than books. Indeed, approximately two-thirds of the entries on the “AHS Bibliography of Archival History” are journal articles.

The SAA Awards Competition does not currently acknowledge the importance of history of archives and the archival profession. Although the Waldo Gifford Leland Award is given for writing of superior excellence and usefulness in the field of *archival history*, theory, or practice, it rewards only monographs, finding aids, or documentary publications. At the same time, the Ernest Posner Award and the Theodore Calvin Pease Award are given for articles, which may include archival history but which often are not primarily historical in purpose.

A public outlet of monetary recognition would encourage greater scholarship and wider participation in the writing of high-quality archival history of journal length.

The Archival History Article Award Subcommittee of the Awards Committee would comprise the Archival History Section Chair, the Committee on Education Vice Chair, and the SAA Reviews Editor.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Archival History Article Award be established to award the author of an excellent short peer-reviewed piece with a \$250 prize.

Support Statement: The Steering Committee of the Archival History Section supports the creation of a new annual award to be given out under the aegis of the SAA Awards Competition.

Relation to SAA Strategic Plan: The proposed Archival History Article Award supports the following sections of SAA's Strategic Plan, 2014-2018: 1.3. Provide leadership in ensuring the completeness, diversity, and accessibility of the historical record and 3.2. Foster and disseminate research in and about the field.

Fiscal Impact: The SAA Foundation's Awards Fund could be the source of the \$250 requested on an annual basis. Minimal funds would also be necessary to print and send the official award certificate.