

CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS ROUNDTABLE  
NEWSLETTER

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November 1988

Business meeting September 29, 1988

Bob Blesse opened the meeting. Dennis Meissner, Minnesota Historical Society, is our liaison. Next year's meeting theme will be "Retrospect and Prospect." Session plans should be sent to Pat Quinn, Northwestern University.

Old Business - The bibliography has fallen in the cracks. Connie Gallagher will look for the list of people who promised to do particular areas. In the meantime, Mary will do her section on Arrangement and Description and Karen and Cynthia's 5' Bookshelf in the next newsletter. We can do them section by section and then see if we can't get SAA to put them together in a publication.

New Business - Karen Paul passed out a "Proposal for a Documentation Strategy for Congress" as a follow up to the Harpers Ferry meeting. We need a Task Force for a coordinated effort. It would be based in the Historical Offices of the House and Senate. Professional research help can be hired. Strong emphasis should be placed on appraisal standards/criteria. The Task Force could recommend projects of manageable size. We need an initial planning document and short term funding. It probably could be set next to the February 9-10 conference on Understanding Congress. Possibly this funding could come from either the Albert or the Dirksen Center. Beyond that, NHPRC has a June 1 deadline.

Karen's Records Management Handbook for the U.S. Senate Committees is available through the Senate Historical Office. Kathy Jacob's revisions of the Biographical Directory are expected in the new edition in November. Robert Byrd's 4 volume History of the Senate should be available soon. The Guide to Research Collections of former House Members will be out in December. A report on records of the House and Senate at the National Archives will be available in time for the February conference.

The House Bicentennial Office is not yet permanent and needs our support.

Election of Officers - After some discussion, a Steering Committee was elected including Karen Paul, Bob Blesse, Connell Gallagher, Carla Kemp and Mary Boccaccio.

Program suggestions for next year include an analysis of the appraisal of different series including how materials have been and can be used, together with a checklist of things to look for. Another suggestion was preparation strategies for closing an office in an emergency situation. This would also include a checklist. Connie will do the first one.

Provenance has 2 articles on congressional issues coming out. The first is on dating photographs and the other is an update on Harpers Ferry.

Cynthia Miller will take over the editorship of the newsletter in January. Her address is U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Bi centennial, Washington, D.C.



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#### **Terms of Endearment : Session Abstracts**

Terri Hanagan, political consultant and aide to Senator Alan Cranston  
Ms. Hanagan opened the discussion with considerations which led Senator Cranston's staff to place his papers at Berkeley. Recognizing the historical potential of these records, the staff sounded out several universities. A prime objective from the donor's point of view was to assure that the potential repository had adequate resources to properly store and process the collection. Originally the staff had considered splitting the collection between 2 repositories ie pre-Senatorial records to one and Senatorial records to another. It was finally decided to keep the collection together.

Nine months were spent drafting the deed of gift as well as a number of issues to be resolved. A compromise had to be reached concerning budgetary constraints: cost/rate of processing, archivist's salary and transport. There was concern about confidential materials - Intelligence Committee files and personal papers including materials relating to Cranston's first marriage. Should these be sealed and for how long? Press relations were also a major concern. The Senator's staff was concerned to keep the specific terms of the deed of gift confidential while Cranston was still in office. Who would hold the copyright - the repository or the family? The question of repository staff access to the collection was also considered. Should anyone on the archival staff have access or just the archivist actually working



on the collection? The Senator's staff also wanted to make sure that the Senator would continue to have full access to the papers after the transfer, including the ability to remove files from the repository for use at his office or home. Hanagan ended with the admonition that congressional staffs should begin earlier to think and plan ahead for disposition. Agreements with repositories should be made early in a senator's career so that the staff is not caught unprepared.

Henry L. Bowden, Jr., attorney with the firm of King & Spalding, counsel for the University of Georgia

Mr. Bowden drafted the agreement for the Herman Talmadge papers with the University of Georgia and discussed legal issues relating to the deed of gift. First, who is the donor or who owns the papers? Is the congressman still serving; is he retired or deceased? In the case of a living donor, archivists should be aware that certain documents are not considered the Senator's property and he cannot transfer title to such materials. In the case of a deceased member, archivists should make certain that the chain of title is clear. If the congressman dies without a will, an administrator is appointed for the estate. This person may or may not have a right to give the papers to a repository. If there is no specific bequest, permission of residuary beneficiaries must be secured. State universities or other public institutions seeking congressional papers should consider setting up a foundation to receive the papers. Otherwise the papers could belong to the state. Archivists should also consider the timing of the transfer of title. Will possession be transferred but a life estate retained? What material is to be transferred; can inappropriate materials be deaccessioned? The donor cannot delegate copyright for materials in the collection not created by him. Regarding restrictions, consider national security issues and personnel materials. State who has the right to impose restrictions and for how long. State who has the right to determine disposition. An advisory committee may be given a fixed time period to respond to disposal requests and to suggest other forms of disposition. It should also be stated that subsequent transfers are covered by the agreement and are thus incorporated by inclusion. Other elements to be addressed in the agreement may include the following: whether materials should be loaned for exhibit; in-house exhibit standards for permanent exhibits of office memorabilia; whether an advisory committee to assist in the process should be set up; donor access; who bears the cost of transportation of the materials; enforcement remedies if a repository is in breach of the agreement - what recourse does the donor have; release of the repository from liability for damage to materials; notification regarding copyright infringement.

Robert E. Blesse, archivist, University of Nevada, Reno

Mr. Blesse discussed the findings of his survey of over 50 deeds of gift/deposit agreements. Who shall use the papers? Responses ran the gamut from undergraduates to graduates to 'serious' scholars. Description of materials. Responses ranged from general to very specific lists of deposits. What kind of deposit is it? Some agreements covered all materials while others stipulated that restricted materials would be retained by the donor. Some required



separate deeds of gift for additions. Responsibilities of the repository. Responses included processing according to 'standard archival procedures,' store in a 'reasonably secure position.' In one case the repository and the donor were stated as co-beneficiaries for insurance purposes. One donor was specific about storage requirements including temperature and humidity and required repository to raise \$1,000,000.00 within a year to meet these requirements or the collection would be removed at the expense of the repository. One stated the donor would supply support for processing and supplies. Another stated that the repository would create a full time position to process the collection; another agreed to publish a guide; one agreed to solicit papers of the donor's associates and conduct oral histories while still another agreed to split the shipping costs. Access stipulations included donors granting full access to the collection at all times including photocopying; access granted for processing purposes with the exception of sealed materials; outside loans could be made; the donor could authorize a biographer to use the collection. Restrictions included restricted but accessible with written permission 15 years after creation. 25 years was the longest period of restriction. Potentially damaging personal materials were restricted; case files could be used upon signing an agreement to protect confidentiality and/or agreeing to solicit permission of persons mentioned; press materials and speeches were often not restricted. In some cases the donor had authority to restrict materials while in other the archivist and/or the advisory committee held that right. Disposal rights most often rested with the repository though some imposed time limits of refusal were noted. Copyright was delegated to the repository at the time of the agreement though some required a separate instrument for conveyance. Photocopying was most often allowed with permission though some required permission in writing. Who pays for photocopying of materials for the donor's use? Some repositories had a specific page number limit on free copies. Other issues included the repository preserving materials in other formats; the transfer of artifacts was addressed; the right of the donor to remove materials of monetary value was mentioned as was the handling of subpoenas.