CONGRESSIONAL PAPERS ROUNDTABLE MEETING MINUTES
September 4, 1993

The Congressional Papers Roundtable met on 4 September, 1993 at the Sheraton New Orleans. The meeting was called to order by Chair Herb Hartsook at 3:35 P.M.

Kathleen Robinson, Program Committee, spoke to the roundtable about submitting program ideas for the Indianapolis meeting in 1994. The theme for Indianapolis will be "Archival Core Defining the Profession in the Information Age." Robinson also reported on the Society's Task Force on Sections and Roundtables. An open forum sponsored by the Task Force identified communication among sections and working with SAA as broad areas of weakness.

Tom Hickerson, SAA Council Liaison, met with the roundtable. We may contact him with any questions or concerns to be addressed to Council. Hickerson also addressed leadership and service for the 1990's. A Strategic Plan for the Society of American Archivists has been adopted for the profession as a whole. The four main goals of this plan are: 1) exert active leadership on significant archival issues; 2) provide opportunities for continuing professional growth and promote high quality in archival education programs; 3) position SAA to lead the archival profession in advancing electronic records issues; and 4) increase SAA's overall effectiveness as an organization.

Hartsook then asked for program session proposals for the 1994 annual meeting. A session has been put together by Pam Hackbart-Dean and Cynthia Pease Miller on how political scandals (real or perceived) affected the acquisition of and access to papers of public officials. The roundtable unanimously endorsed this proposal.

Next, Hartsook invited proposals for next year's roundtable meeting. Rob Ross, National Archives, suggested a follow-up session to the SAA program proposal dealing with scandals and political committee records. Hartsook recommended a discussion on the implementation of the documentation strategy. Miller recommended the SAA program proposal be used if it was not accepted. Other suggestions included a dialogue on term limits (quality of documentation, when to approach a member for their papers, ...), electronic records (CMS implications for appraisal, electronic mail for constituent mail, since there is no unified set of standards for congressional offices how does this affect acquisition and appraisal?), automated processing of congressional records and indexing, standardization of finding aids (documentation strategy, any progress?).

Next, projects the roundtable could undertake were addressed. A proposal for an SAA preconference workshop has been submitted to the Society. Karen Paul, Miller and Hartsook put the workshop together. Anyone who would like a copy of the proposal may contact Hartsook. This is a roundtable project. A potential project is developing pamphlets on deeds of gift and access. Miller has a draft for a brochure on deeds of gift that she has been working on for the members of Congress. She based her document on Trudy Peterson's legal manual but added the details concerning the subpoena clause.

Hartsook reported on a survey conducted by the Task Force on Sections and Roundtables. Our response indicated we were fairly happy with the support we have received from the Society, which includes reimbursement for postage and recently, better rooms for our meetings. We did argue that section program proposals should receive automatic acceptance.

Finally, it was announced that Richard Davis, Manuscripts-Archives Librarian with the University of Idaho Library, is still looking for collections of papers like those of Senator James A. McClure which utilized the Files Handbook prepared for the House (see July, 1993 Congressional Roundtable Newsletter). Did institutions discard or save these files? Linda Matthews, Emory University, indicated that the early senatorial papers of Sam Nunn utilized this system. Emory accepted the papers this way since that was how his office
was run.

After the business session concluded, Todd Kosmerick and Janice Matthews of the Carl Albert Center presented an interesting paper on collection policies and deeds of gift. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 P.M.

Minutes taken by Pam Hackbart-Dean

NEWS FROM THE HISTORIAN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A change in the procedures for closing an office in the House of Representatives is welcome news for archivists who are acquiring collections of Members who die or resign before the end of their terms. Heretofore, the staffs of these Members had to vacate the assigned office space within 30 days, at which time it was reassigned by seniority and the staff of the late or departed Member was relocated to another smaller and less desirable office. The new policy is that the staff may remain in the Member’s old office until a successor is elected. While the purpose of this new policy is to eliminate costly moves, archivists working with the collections of those Members will have additional time to organize files and arrange for shipment.

The Office of the Historian has prepared a brief discussion on preparing a deed of gift for congressional papers. Based on Peterson and Peterson, Archives & Manuscripts: Law, it summarizes the components of a deed of gift, with emphasis on clauses and issues of particular concern to Members.

A copy of the National Archives’ Files Handbook for Congressional Offices, House Members (1957) is available from the Office of the Historian. Some Members used this manual, chiefly in the 1960s, as a guideline for their filing systems. Responding to inquiries from archivists working with collections of that period, the Office contacted the National Archives, which duplicated their file copy for the Office of the Historian. [A copy of the Senate version of this manual is available from Karen Paul.]


SAA PROGRAM PROPOSAL 1994

The program proposal submitted by the Congressional Papers Roundtable for the 1994 SAA annual meeting in Indianapolis has been accepted. It is titled: "Leaving Office Under Duress: The Archival Response to Collecting Papers of Public Officials." This session will address a repository’s need for guidance when acquiring the papers of a public official who has left office as the result of a scandal (real or perceived). On such occasions, the archivist must transcend the sensationalism of publicity to convince the potential donor of the long term significance of his/her career in order to guarantee the preservation of historical papers. Issues of acquisition and access will be addressed.

Cynthia Pease Miller will chair the session. Papers will be presented by Ron Becker, Rutgers University, on the Harrison Williams Papers, Pam Hackbart-Dean, University of Georgia, on the Herman E. Talmadge Collection, and Glenda Stevens, Texas Christian University, on the Jim Wright Papers.

SAA PROGRAM PROPOSAL 1995

Your eyes aren’t deceiving you. Its not too early to begin thinking about program ideas for the Society’s 1995 meeting. Jim Cross, Thurmond Archivist at Clemson University, has suggested that we continue our work with appraisal and either sponsor a session on the appraisal of photographs in congressional collections or a session on the general appraisal of photographs with one speaker specializing in congressional collections. We could also broaden the scope of the session to deal with all manner of visual materials. [In dealing with the congressional collections here at the University of South Carolina I have been challenged more with the
various formats of film and videotape than our photographs, suggesting we might develop a session dealing with visual images rather than exclusively focusing on photographs.] Cross noted we might inquire if the Visual Materials group would like to co-sponsor the session. If any of you have thoughts on this proposal or care to participate, please contact Herb Hartsook.

The Acquisition, Processing, and Reference of Legislative Collections Workshop

Our workshop--"The Acquisition, Processing, and Reference of Legislative Collections," will be offered in Indianapolis prior to the annual meeting. The two day workshop will introduce the unique issues and problems encountered in working with congressional, legislative, and related collections. It will provide expert instruction on soliciting a collection, appraisal, the transfer of records to the repository, processing, and reference. While the workshop will focus on congressional collections, much of the material covered will apply to legislative and other related collections and archivists working with such materials will benefit from their participation.

The workshop should prove worthwhile and cost effective for archivists working with legislative collections. It is being developed by Herb Hartsook, Curator of Modern Political Collections, The University of South Carolina, Cynthia Pease Miller, Assistant Historian, Office of the Historian, United States House of Representatives, and Karen Paul, Archivist, United States Senate. Hartsook and Miller will present the workshop in Indianapolis. Please help promote this. We will need a minimum of fifteen registrants to hold the workshop.

History Day in South Carolina

Each year the South Carolina Department of Archives and History sponsors History Day, an event aimed at a broad audience from middle-school students and teachers to university faculty, and featuring papers, panels and performances. This year’s theme was The Changing Face of South Carolina Politics. In conjunction with History Day, The South Carolina Department of Archives and History has published The Changing Face of South Carolina Politics, a series of eight mini-posters documenting selected twentieth century political milestones. The publication was compiled by Herbert J. Hartsook, Curator of Modern Political Collections, South Caroliniana Library, and Alexia Helsley, Director of Public Programs, South Carolina Department of Archives and History. It will chiefly be used by public school teachers in developing lesson plans and for illustrative material. The publication draws from five collections held by the South Caroliniana Library’s Modern Political Collections Division, including a vertical file on James Clyburn, elected to Congress to represent the state’s new black majority district, and the papers of U.S. Senator Ernest F. Hollings Papers, cartoonist Walt Lardner, black political activist John H. McCray, and journalist and 1962 Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate William D. Workman, Jr.

To close History Day, a group of youngsters from Blue Ridge Middle School in Greer, S.C. performed "Give Me Those Old Time Politics--Stump Meetings." The group reached the finals in the national History Day competition with their performance, which consisted of portrayals of campaign stump speeches based upon texts of actual speeches delivered in South Carolina political campaigns, 1892-1950. The seventh graders visited Modern Political Collections last year and studied film and speeches of one of their selected campaigners, Olin D. Johnston, South Carolina Governor and United States Senator. A speech selected for quotation was from the Johnston Papers. In the audience was Senator Johnston’s daughter, former U.S. Congresswoman and current candidate for Lt. Governor, Liz Patterson. The students also studied books and newspapers held by the Greenville County Public Library, a 1938 recording of Cotton Ed Smith held by the University’s McKissick Museum, and conducted interviews with a number of the state’s political figures.

This project represents creative and scholarly yet non-traditional use of political collections. Please write us and describe other non-traditional projects which have been based upon your collections and we will share
them with the roundtable membership in future newsletters.

SAA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

PRIZES, PRIZES, PRIZES. The Society is launching a major membership drive between January 1 and June 3, 1994. Individuals, sections, and roundtables who recruit new members will be eligible for a variety of valuable prizes to be awarded in a drawing to take place June 6th. Prizes include airfare, lodging and registration for the 1994 annual meeting, and $250 towards a reception or refreshments for your group at the meeting. The new members will also profit as SAA is offering some handsome benefits including discounts on workshops and annual meeting registration fees. This should be particularly attractive to persons considering attending our workshop and we hope you will keep this in mind. Coupons citing the sponsoring member or organization should be included with the new member's application. I have a copy of the coupon and will be glad to send a photocopy to anyone who requests one. The Society will also supply coupons on request.

Byrd's History of the Senate

Volume Four of Senator Robert Byrd's The Senate, 1789-1989, has recently been published by the Government Printing Office. This volume, Historical Statistics, 1789-1992, follows the chronological and subject volumes issued as volumes one and two. Volume three will follow.

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