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IOWA PUBLIC ARCHIVES

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Superintendent Public Archives

INTRODUCTORY

The history of a civilized nation is preserved through its public archives and other historical documents, both of public and private character.

The history of a semi-civilized or barbarous nation is handed down from one generation to another in the form of tradition. We realize how absolutely unreliable the latter method is and the importance of preserving reliable and perfectly authentic history.

Every state is daily producing archives that are permanent in their quality as evidence of the transaction of current affairs but are too often not permanent in their physical character. This is due to the lack of the sense of responsibility or of training on the part of the current official who may, however, be at all times zealous in doing the work with which he is charged.

States, then, already having borne the expense of producing these archives are entitled to their permanent preservation and use. An official is not excusable for inadequate archives, who may be without the proper facilities, space and assistance with which to keep them in order. That condition being unknown to the state at large, it becomes the duty of the official not only to make these conditions known, but also to make the same effort for their correction that he makes in performing any other public duty. The public, as a matter of course, is unaware of his dilemma and assumes that there is none.

He should make the state respond to his needs by enlisting the active support of precisely the individuals who do, or should, resort to the collections for business or scholarly ends. And these

very persons, universally of high standing and held in the highest respect by legislators, can and should create with the legislator at home, the atmosphere with which to attain the results necessary to enable the official to successfully discharge all the duties with which he is charged.

These officials, however, being not one but many individuals, create a natural dissipation instead of concentration of responsibility and authority. The purposes must be unified and presented as a simple and single problem.

Acrimonies of personal and political character will tend to discourage early progress. Creation of another office to handle the archives even if the commission be composed of department heads, will be opposed by leaders upon different sides of public questions who will be slow to volunteer mutual attention to custodianship in common with their own and other administration's archives. But from experience my answer to that is, that it is a pure phantom. It does not occur in practice. In order to circumvent that ghost in the creation of an archives department, there must and can easily be marshaled as the host advocating the law, just these men and women in the community that have no selfish political or personal concern.

My activities have been almost wholly confined to the caretaking, while the task of arousing public interest in the subject and the procuring of the necessary legislation has fallen to the lot of others. However, it is no small portion of the responsibility of promoting both public interest and legislation that must result from contact, through the course of the work, with people from all parts of the state and from all stations in life. Properly impressed, these people communicate to all parts of the state the advantages received from the public archives. Having interested all that came in contact with the work under my charge and having participated in most of the progress of Iowa in archives work and assuming that, to a degree, that which is true of my own state is true of other states, I am convinced that what has been done in Iowa to create an interest in the care, preservation and use of its public archives can just as easily be accomplished in any one or all of the other states.

Experience teaches us that great interest on the part of the general masses of the public cannot very easily be aroused on any subject. This is especially true of a subject such as this. It is

also true that from the general masses comes the average legislator.

The preliminary work of showing the need of provisions for the perpetual care and preservation of public archives rests upon historians, historical researchers, professors of colleges, directors of historical departments, and societies, and other broad-minded men and women. These realize, more than any other persons do, the great need of such provisions and have had experience with existing conditions in their labors of searching out valuable historical documents. They, more than others, realize there should or does exist, often in unavailable state, some paper or document elucidating each public transaction. They, more than others, encounter the barren spots in the history of their state caused by the actual loss, misplacement, and disorder of documents. These men and women should direct their efforts upon all the members of the legislative body for the passage of a law looking to the future care and preservation of its archives.

One of the great obstacles to be met by the advocate and overcome in the mind of the average legislator is the supposed lack of intrinsic or utilitarian value of public archives, and hence no necessity of providing for their preservation and administration.

Our efforts to procure provision for public archives met the following interesting circumstances. A prominent member of the legislature speaking in opposition to an appropriation of \$4,000 for the biennial period for support of the Archives Division, said: "The greater part of these documents are junk and should be dumped into the river. The object of the appropriation is to provide jobs for broken down politicians." Soon afterward this man asked for documents pertaining to the incorporation of the town in which he resided in his effort to prepare for an important lawsuit. We delivered to him copies of all the documents consisting of correspondence, agreements and in fact all the proceedings filed at the time of the incorporation, which at that time and for a generation afterwards was accomplished by legislative action. Since that time it has never become necessary to urge upon him the value of these documents, or the wisdom of helping us with plans for their care and administration.

It is hard for legislators to see value in a document after it has passed from current use. Its historical use escapes entirely their attention or it is so small in their estimation that it is incon-

sequential. They can be shown, however, the value of vouchers and their evidential use more easily.

This is the state of mind of a great many of the state officials. Accuracy, fidelity and competency in executing, but indifference to the custody of archives are met at every turn and must be matched by influence convincing them that no point in the history of any subject in which the state is interested, not even the work then engaging their attention and talent, can be authenticated at all in the future except through original documents and that if these are not preserved and kept accessible neither the state nor the officers can in future have authentic records. We have established this view with our state officials in several instances when questions arose as to the accuracy of statements in histories, written in the past, by comparing each statement with original documents that now have been made available.

These questions, with clear convincing affirmative and constructive ideas concerning the whole matter, must be presented to members of the legislature who are strong and broad-minded. After they have been convinced of the condition and made acquainted with the loss of valuable documents, the danger of future losses, their deterioration, the great economy of time and energy expended in the search for documents when made available, they then become the very power needed, particularly if they are on committees pertinent to the subject.

The preliminary work in this state was first taken up by a few historically bent men. One of the first of these men was Professor Benjamin F. Shambaugh of the State University and Historical Society of Iowa. He had become familiar with every phase of the existing conditions through his work and that of his associates in searching through the collections of the different departments of state for historical documents. He conferred with the late Charles Aldrich, founder and curator of the Historical Department of Iowa, who had been agitating the great need of such provision. The late Horace E. Deemer, then judge of the Supreme Court and trustee of the Historical Department, who shouldered the burden on behalf of the Board of Trustees and then with the aid of a few others began the labor of convincing members of the legislature of the great need of immediately passing necessary laws. They centered upon the late Senator C. J. A. Ericson, a strong Scandinavian banker, chairman of the Senate Committee

on Appropriations, who interested other broad-minded members of the legislature and passed the first law.

It makes little difference how meager the provisions are in the first law. It is better to go slowly and let results be the chief argument, then let every step taken be deliberate, than to start on a larger scale, hurry the work and then be compelled to recede or revise. This first law, if it does no more than define and recognize archives as distinct from mere accumulations in offices, is the opening of a channel into which all past accumulations of materials and all future energy and interest can be easily directed. The initial law should provide for the preliminary work, the carrying on of the work as soon as the preliminary work is finished, the housing of the documents and the designating of the custodianship. But if it did no more than formulate the machinery and establish a function it is practical.

Following is the first Iowa law establishing and governing the Public Archives:

CHAPTER 142

Laws of the Thirty-first General Assembly

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

Section 1. *Custody of Public Archives.* That for the care and preservation of the public archives the state library and historical department of Iowa are hereby given the custody of all the original public documents, papers, letters, records and other official manuscripts of the state executive and administrative departments, offices or officers, councils, boards, bureaus and commissions, ten years after the date or current use of such public documents, papers, letters, records or other official manuscripts. Provided, that the executive council shall have the power and authority to order the transfer of such records or any part thereof at any time prior to the expiration of the limit of ten years hereinbefore provided or to retain the same in the respective offices beyond such limit according as in the judgment of the council the public interest or convenience may require.

Section 2. *Transfer to State Library and Historical Department.* That the several state executive and administrative departments, officers or offices, councils, boards, bureaus and commissioners, are hereby authorized and directed to transfer and deliver to the state library and historical department such of the public archives as are designated in section one (1) of this act, except such as in the judgment of the executive council should be longer retained in the respective offices.

Section 3. *Archives to be Classified, Labeled and Calendared.* That the state library and historical department is hereby authorized and directed to receive such of the public archives and records as are desig-

nated in section one (1) of this act and provide that the same be properly arranged, classified, labeled, filed and calendared.

Section 4. *Hall of Public Archives.* That for the care and permanent preservatoin by the state library and historical department of the public archives hereinbefore designated, the executive council is hereby authorized and directed to provide, furnish and equip such room or rooms in the historical, memorial and art building (now in process of erection) as may be deemed necessary for the purposes of this act, and the room or rooms thus provided for shall be known as the hall of public archives.

Section 5. *Appropriations.* That for carrying out the purposes of this act there is hereby appropriated out of any moneys in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated the sum of two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per annum for three years to be expended under the direction of the board of trustees of the state library and historical department.

Approved April 10, 1906.

These preliminary steps, other states will find as we have found, do not settle all questions and the channel thus opened is very small. Enlarging, removal of obstacles, opening new channels, arousing interest in every direction possible and directing this interest into the original channel requires that those responsible must keep constantly on the alert and seize every opportunity and exert all their energy to keep advancing.

When provisions had been made for the receiving, housing and custody of our documents as they came from the different departments we found some of the heads of the departments reluctant to transfer any of them. We even met with positive refusal in some instances. This is ascribable to a variety of causes. The department head often had not yet familiarized himself with his duties and would defer to a convenient time his decisions—a time seldom arriving for a man in politics—or the head of the department is of a different shade of politics from the head of a different department, and, paraphrasing an Iowa motto of some renown, the thoughts of different state departments like the rivers of our borders do not flow to an inseparable union. Yet they do flow and in four or six years the same or other heads will so harmonize with the then heads of other departments that the archives springs start up and swell the current.

It has been our experience that in cases of state officers and others who are the original legal custodians of the documents to be transferred to the department provided for them, that this antagonism is caused by several reasons: Their sense of responsibility for their care, lack of understanding or knowledge as to

the future disposition of them, and in some cases, they look upon the matter as simply junk and resent the idea of anyone taking the matter out of their hands. It sometimes eliminates one or more clerks in departments if the archives transfer is made. Then one must proceed to impress department heads with the relief from their responsibility and burden without in the least modifying access to their files and their accessibility after classification. By using patience and taking time they become interested and educated to the point of seeing the necessity of the transfer and in every instance, without exception, in our twenty years we have aroused the interest of the head of each department and made him an enthusiastic supporter of the Archives Division. We have never insisted on the transfer being made at a particular time nor of the whole of the deposit, but have secured such parts of the collection as they would designate and after having classified, cleansed, filed and exhibited them, pointed out their better order and safety, then our soliciting and their solicitude were over. When departments call for information we have delivered it in the shortest possible time. In every case they have been so thoroughly convinced that hesitancy on their part vanished. In fact, they have become so firmly convinced that it was the proper thing to do that they would transfer to us documents which under the law should have been retained as current files. In some cases they have gone so far as to invite the superintendent of the Archives Division to visit departments to advise file clerks as to the manner of filing current business with the view of making them more readily accessible in the originating office and more readily transferred and handled as archives.

After the start all persons in charge and all those otherwise interested in the work must be tireless and tactful in their efforts to sustain confidence in the archives personnel and interest in the work. In addition to the actual work entailed, there is the burden of maintaining the interest thus generated and of creating from it the energy necessary so that channels opened will be kept unimpeded and increased in volume forever.

This can be effected in various ways, such as interesting county officials in documents you have in your files pertaining to their counties of which their copies have been lost or destroyed. County historians can be shown documents vital to their work, particularly where counties have no duplicates. Newspapers can be

furnished documents for home-coming and other special editions, in articles prepared for them upon subjects relating to their early history which has heretofore never been touched upon. Public speakers when called upon for addresses in certain localities and on particular occasions, such as anniversaries, old settlers' picnics, etc., can be furnished with local materials always of great interest. The history of the state in isolated but important details in the hands of speakers, from the governor of the state down, when once interested will draw on the archives constantly and in consequence are won to the policy of preservation of their archives.

The interest created in the counties and smaller localities will of course be reflected in the interest on the subject taken by their members of the legislature.

In the preliminary work interest can be created and held on the subject by discreet articles in the newspapers of the state, showing the conditions that exist and which can not under the existing conditions be changed. The impossibility for each of the departments of state to care for more than their current files is of news value, and a showing of the congested and neglected condition in repositories, such as attics, of valuable documents, set out as an illustration, and which are rapidly deteriorating, appeals to the legislature.

All students, teachers and professors of schools and colleges that you come in contact with, especially historical societies (local and state) can be systematically reached and they are ready and voluntary lobbyists, that is, every legislator, actual or prospective, is known to and approachable by them, as disinterested and competent counselors upon themes such as this. Extend to them the privilege (under certain rules) of research in the files and your limit of assistance. Furnish them by mail any information that can be gleaned from the files. You will be gratified and impressed with the amount of power and interest you have thus created.

To secure adequate appropriations this interest so hard to arouse and hold must be instilled or revived in the minds of the members of the legislature of each session. This task falls in Iowa to the person or persons in charge of the Historical Department, the Archives Division being a part of that institution. The task has been taken care of by the Curator and through his energy

in that direction we have never failed to secure an adequate support.

I have enumerated in the foregoing some of the means we have used in Iowa to create and hold an interest in the care and preservation of its archives, the methods used in obtaining legislation, the obstacles met and overcome. The final results have more than met our most sanguine expectations.

The Thirty-fifth General Assembly transferred the supervision of the work of the Public Archives back to the trustees of the State Library and Historical Department and made it a division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department. Following are the provisions of the law by which it is now governed.

CODE OF IOWA, 1924

Section 4513. *Historical, Memorial and Art Department.* The historical, memorial and art department shall consist of the historical and art collections, materials gathered for historical research, the museum, and the public archives.

Section 4528. *Archives.* The curator shall be the trustee and custodian of the archives of Iowa and of such county and municipal archives as are voluntarily deposited. The term "archives" shall mean those manuscripts and materials originating under or passing through the hands of public officials in the regular course and performance of their duties, over ten years old, and not in current use; but the executive council shall have power and authority to order the transfer of such archives or any part thereof at any time prior to the expiration of the ten years, or cause them to be retained in the respective offices beyond such limit if in its judgment the public interests or convenience shall require it.

Section 4529. *Records delivered.* The several state, executive, and administrative departments, officers or offices, councils, boards, bureaus, and commissioners, are hereby authorized and directed to transfer and deliver to the historical, memorial and art department such of the public archives as are designated in the preceding section, except such as in the judgment of the executive council should be retained longer in the respective offices, and the curator is authorized to receive the same.

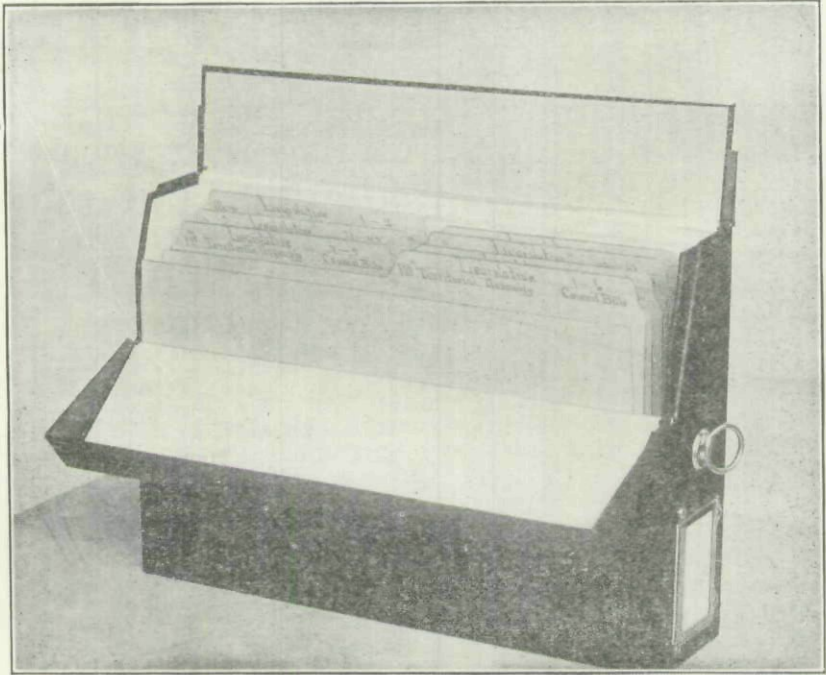
Section 4530. *Removal of Original.* After any public archives have been received into the division of public archives by the curator, they shall not be removed from his custody without his consent, except in obedience to a subpoena of a court of record or a written order of the officer from whose office they were received.

Section 4531. *Certified copies—fees.* Upon request of any person, the curator shall make a certified copy of any document contained in

said archives, and when such copy is properly authenticated by him it shall have the same legal effect as though certified by the officer from whose office it was obtained or by the secretary of state. Said curator shall charge and collect for such copies the fees allowed by law to the official in whose office the document originates for such certified copies, and all such fees shall be turned into the state treasury.

EQUIPMENT

The first equipment for the Public Archives Division was furnished by the Executive Council through its secretary, A. H. Davison, who devised the steel cases (see illustrations, pages 252

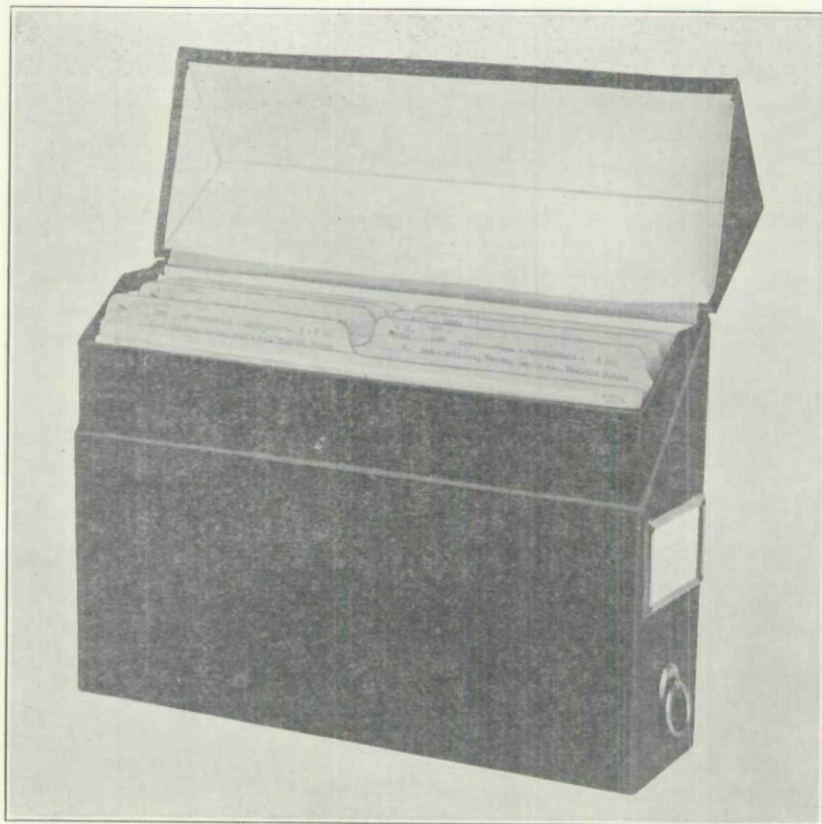


File Box.

and 253) now in use and the file boxes (see illustrations, pages 250 and 251). These file boxes were originally intended and designed to lie flat and to be filed alongside the bound records. After their use for several years I suggested a change in the box which would admit of vertical filing of the documents. This change was made in their construction by using only one hinge in the opening in-

stead of two. By this change we have a more compact, stronger, and a practically dustproof box and a gain in economy of space in filing, and the advantages of the vertical file.

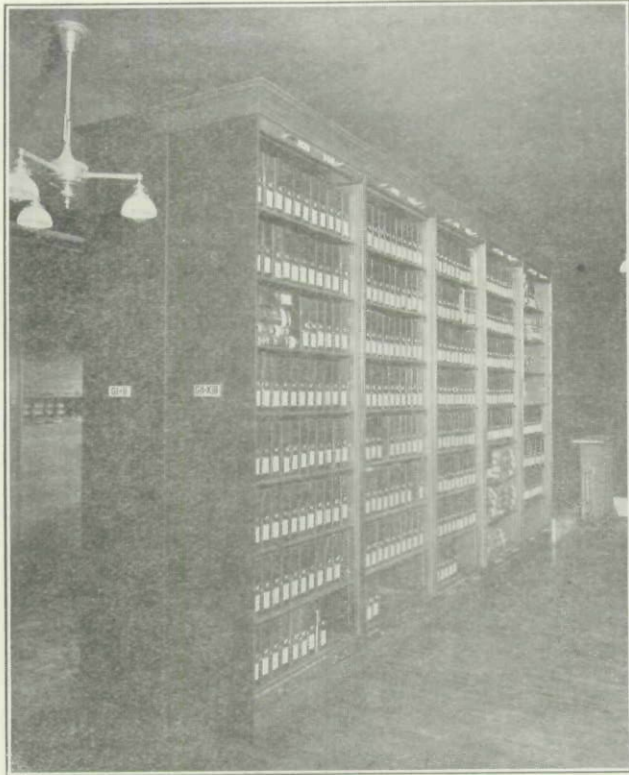
The cases are constructed of steel and put up in bays or sections. Each bay is divided into compartments by shelves. The



File Box.

compartments have inside measurements of forty inches in length by eleven inches in height by seventeen inches in depth, with nine compartments to each bay. In each of these compartments can be filed ten boxes of approximately six hundred single sheet documents, or a total of six thousand to each compartment, making a total of fifty-four thousand to the bay and a total of two hundred and seventy thousand to each case of five bays or sections.

The file boxes are constructed of binders' board, reinforced and covered with cloth. They have a metal tag holder and a ring pull. They have a capacity of about six hundred single sheet docu-



Records showing the filing of boxes of manuscripts side by side with bound volumes—case open.

ments. Their inside dimensions are fourteen and one-half inches by ten inches by three and one-half inches. The folders are made special and of the best grade of manila used for cards and folders. They measure nine by fourteen inches in sizes and are ruled on the inside cover for labeling and calendaring.

The storage cases vary in their construction to conform to the needs of the material to be stored.

Those provided for the storage in the Public Archives Division proper are of steel construction, put up in bays or sections. Each

bay is divided into seven compartments by shelves with a partition in the center of the bay, thus subdividing it into fourteen



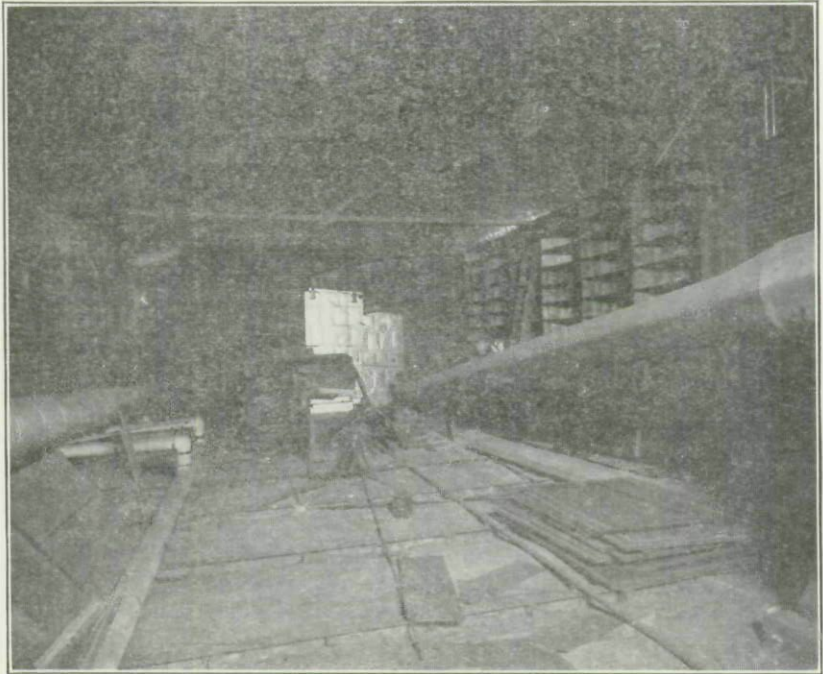
Same as the opposite—case closed.

compartments, each of the following dimensions: twenty inches in width by fourteen inches in height by twenty-nine and one-half inches in depth.

CLASSIFICATION

The Board of Trustees of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa, under the provisions of an Act passed by the Thirty-first General Assembly, which made provisions for the establishing of a Hall of Public Archives and the placing of the supervision of the work under their direction, appointed Professor Benjamin F. Shambaugh, of the State University and State His-

torical Society, in direct charge of the work. One of the great problems to confront Professor Shambaugh was a system of classification. He was sent on a tour of investigation through the United States and Canada and in making reports of his findings to the trustees, September 18, 1906, he says, "Thus far nothing deserving the name of a comprehensive system of classifying and



A Capitol garret from which was removed a confused mass of materials embracing all data concerning the erection of the new capitol; all population schedules census of 1870 and early records of a number the State Departments.

cataloguing state archives has been devised anywhere in the United States." As leading up to a proper system of classification he suggested in this report a general outline of a system of classification.

The Thirty-second General Assembly (1907) transferred the supervision of the work to the Executive Council. At the time of this transfer the work had progressed to the point of removal of the documents that belonged to the office of governor to the His-

torical Building and a beginning made on the classification of that department.

Under the supervision of the Executive Council the system of cases, file boxes, and folders was devised and the system of classification, cleaning, filing and indexing was worked out and applied to the materials.

One can hardly imagine the condition of the earlier documents which dated back to the territorial period in 1838, having been removed, first from Old Zion Church in Burlington to the old frame building in Iowa City, thence to the old stone Capitol in Iowa City, thence to the Old Capitol Building in Des Moines, thence to the garrets and vaults in the New Capitol Building and finally to the Hall of Public Archives in the Historical, Memorial and Art Building. They were a chaotic mass, covered with the accumulated dust of all these years.

Upon the writer was placed the task of applying and working out into its details a system of classification.

In the progress of this work I have come in contact with a great many problems to solve. One of the greatest was to devise a system of classification that would provide for the administrative use of the material, which is the use of the individual document or several documents bearing on the same subject, and the other for the historical use, which, as a general rule, is not confined to individual documents but includes all documents bearing on a particular subject for a certain period of time.

All authorities on the subject of public archives that I have consulted seem to agree that the problems of classifying and indexing are the most difficult to overcome and that no library, subject, chronological or alphabetical system, used separately, can be made practical.

Professor Waldo G. Leland, secretary of the American Historical Association, writes: "Each public office is an administrative unit, and its records form a homogeneous group reflecting its activities. This large group naturally falls into subgroups, and the subgroups into series following the organization and functions of the office. The principle that must be borne in mind then, is that the archives must be so classified that organization and functions that have produced them shall be clearly reflected by them. This is the substance of the famous principle of the *respect des fonds*.

"No mechanical or arbitrary classification, no purely chronological or purely alphabetical arrangement, no adaptation of the refinements of library science will serve the archivist. He must fall back upon a thorough knowledge of the history of the archives. He must know just how and why they have been produced. The first essential is a guide to the public offices and their history which shall show for each office its origin, its functions, the origin of these functions, whether transferred from another office or arising from new legislation, the modifications of these functions or their cessation, the organization of the office, with any changes therein, and finally the termination of the office (if it be no longer in existence) showing whether the functions then ceased or whether transferred to other offices. Such guide has been prepared for Iowa and may serve as a model. The Iowa classification, as at present adopted is in the main based on this guide and may be studied to advantage."¹

The Archivist who does not make his classification conform strictly to the source of the documents is committing a blunder that will be hard to rectify, as a document diverted from its original source is difficult of identification in later years. It has practically lost its identity, a part if not all of its historical value, and all of its legal value unless its origin and history can be proven.

I was fortunate in the beginning of my work on the classification here in having the guide referred to above which saved the labor of looking up the history of each department before commencing the work of classification of that department. This guide was compiled by John C. Parish of the State University of Iowa and was included in a second report on the Public Archives in 1907. It gives the name of the department, legal status, date of establishment, date of discontinuance (if discontinued), composition, manner of appointment or election, powers, duties, functions, etc. I was further fortunate in having the knowledge gained in my work as instructor in the public schools for thirteen years and in my work in public offices for ten or fifteen years. This was a great saving of time that would have been required to acquire the knowledge that is absolutely essential in the work of classification.

I worked out into its details a system of classification and ap-

¹Rep. State Education Building Com. of Ill., 1913, p. 50.

plied it in my work here, which I term a combination of the subject and chronological systems, with the alphabetical arrangement added. Briefly stated the system I have applied is as follows:

1. The classification is made by departments.
2. The documents in each department are divided into main divisions or subjects.
3. Main divisions or subjects are subdivided until the lowest subdivisions or subjects are reached.
4. The documents under each subdivision or subject are arranged in chronological order.
5. The documents under the subdivisions are then, for each year, arranged in alphabetical order.

In making these classifications I have carried the outlines into detail more fully than mere outlines ordinarily require. This was done for the purpose of giving the worker, engaged in the classification of the documents, and the researcher a clearer idea of the material than mere outlines would show, and for the further fact that they serve as an index to the material which follows in exact conformity with the outlines when placed in the folders, file boxes and cases.

To exemplify this method of classification I will use the classification of the Department of Secretary of State, which is included in this publication. By reference to this you will find that I have divided the material in this department into sixteen main divisions or subjects. You will also find Series VI to be the subject of correspondence and that it is divided into subdivisions or subjects and one of these you will find to be the subject of lands, which is further divided into the following subjects: Des Moines River, Iowa State College, railroads, saline, school, swamp, University, and miscellaneous.

The above brings the classification down to the lowest subdivision or subject, these are then arranged in chronological order, and then in alphabetical order under each year for that particular subject.

The documents when they have reached the last stage of the classification are tied into bundles and turned over to the cleaners who unfold them, sponge them with a damp sponge, place them between blotters and press them out flat. They are left between

the blotters until they are thoroughly dried. They are then placed in folders. The folders are labeled and placed in file boxes, and these in fireproof steel cases in the exact order of the classification, ready for indexing.

The superintendent or director of classification, after he has worked out in detail the system he is following, and all other persons engaged in the work will be confronted with a great many problems that are difficult of solution and that cannot be solved except by a thorough knowledge of the present and past functions of the particular department under consideration, and also of the relation it has had to all other departments and their relations to it. Thousands of documents will be found that seem to bear no relation to the department with its present duties and functions, but which in the past were in whole or a part of its duties.

A large number of documents will be found that from their contents alone the worker cannot determine as to which division or subject they belong, the language being indefinite and not referring directly to any one subject.

This can be determined in one or more different ways. The package and contents with which it was filed in the department from which it was derived usually indicates its relation.

In this connection I wish to say, and emphasize it, that packages or files should never be broken and contents scattered until the actual work of classification is being done, for documents will be found in a great many of them that have practically lost their identity by separation from the contents of the package, while their relation could have been in many cases easily determined if the package had been left intact. The subject to which a document belongs can often be determined by the worker, by its relation to a certain subject at that period of time, and by his knowledge of all the surrounding conditions and the persons interested in the subject at that time.

In my experience in the work of classification I have found that in nearly every instance that single documents in a file, of one or more subjects, usually were related in some manner to one of the subjects. Another strong point in evidence of this is that the originating office or officer was aware of the fact that they were related when they were placed in the same file.

Documents that are seemingly of no importance on first reading, in a great many instances are found to be of importance

when their relation to other documents on the same subject is considered, and it is found that they add to or complete the very evidence that had appeared to be lacking.

I soon discovered in my work of classification that "No fixed rule can be adhered to." I found that the method of classification that I had in mind would not apply in all cases that came up, for from the very nature of the documents that were closely related it would detract from their value, until in some instances they would be worthless, if separated.

An examination of the outlines which follow will reveal that in the subject of appointments I have made the applicant the final subject and have thrown all papers, including petitions and remonstrances pertaining to the appointment, under the applicant's name, and then used the alphabetical arrangement by using the names of the writers who are recommending and remonstrating, and thus I deviate from the strictly chronological arrangement.

The examination will also disclose that under the subject of criminal correspondence I again departed from the "fixed rule" in that I use the name of the defendant, in criminal cases, as the subject, and all papers including petitions, remonstrances, etc., pertaining to each are thrown under that subject.

The examination will also disclose that in several other instances I have deviated from the rule. In fact, whenever I find in my work that it will appreciably detract from the value of any subject, if separated, I do not hesitate to deviate from the rule.

In my work of classification I have always proceeded as follows: First, I have made myself thoroughly familiar with the duties and functions of the department on which we were engaged, from its first existence down to the present. I then make a list of the main divisions that will be found in that department and we then commence to throw the documents under these divisions (never breaking open packages that are still intact until we are ready to use them). I then reduce the main divisions to the minimum by combining two or more divisions and broadening the title heading to cover it as combined. We then take up each of the main divisions separately and divide them into the first subdivisions, throwing out all papers that properly belong in some other division or department. The subdivisions are then divided into the lowest subdivision or subject, then arranged in chronological order and thrown in alphabetical order, tied into pack-

ages and arranged in the exact order of the classification, and they are then ready for cleansing. This is accomplished as follows: The documents are unfolded and cleansed with a sponge dipped in water. They are then placed between blotters, then into presses and thoroughly pressed, they are then removed from the presses and when dry are repaired if necessary, and then placed in the folders which are properly labeled ready for filing.

In my work of classification and indexing of public archives and other materials I have always applied a rule or maxim of mine which is, "Simplicity is the shortest road to accessibility." This rule may be debatable, but if so I would certainly take the affirmative.

I cannot leave the subject of classification without first making a few statements or suggestions as to the class of persons to be employed at work on classification of public archives, the qualifications necessary, etc. In making these statements I am speaking mostly from my experience with the class of help furnished me in my work. In many instances they are appointed without any thought as to their qualifications or fitness for the work but that in the past they had been of use politically and should be rewarded, or that there was a personal feeling for the applicants and a wish to aid them. This class of help is generally of no practical use, some not caring to work, others not fitted for the work, and the material which passes through their hands must constantly be checked over and revised to make it fit the classification then under consideration. The result, in addition to the worry, is an added expense, additional to the salary paid. Some of them will advance to some degree of efficiency but still remain greatly lacking, and using a slang phrase they still are wondering "what it is all about." In connection with the above I wish to state that some of the persons assigned to me were good willing workers and became efficient in the work and should be commended. In this class are two persons that have been with the department from twelve to fifteen years and deserve special commendation for their diligence and efficiency, namely: Helen R. Wharton, assistant superintendent, and William H. McBride, file clerk.

Another error that exists in the minds of a great many is that if a person is fully equipped historically and is a lover of research work in old historical documents, that he is fully equipped

for the work. From my experience I must say that in many instances this is not true and that he may be qualified as a historian and have the instincts of the researcher, and still be utterly lacking in the qualities of orderly arrangement and conditioning of the documents and is not capable, in the first instance, of placing the documents in their orderly arrangement and in their proper condition. I am firmly of the opinion that any person that has not by nature been endowed with or has not fully acquired that quality of orderly system in his make-up and constantly applies it naturally in all his or her undertakings will never reach the highest degree of efficiency in archives work. The other qualifications that are required are more easily acquired.

Every appointment made for work on public archives should be based on the applicant's fitness for the work and should be temporary until the appointee has shown an aptness for the work, but in all cases the person in direct charge of the work should be consulted.

There is an indefinable something, for which a name is lacking unless we call it instinct, which comes naturally or is acquired to some extent after years of work in archives, which is a great aid to the archivist in determining instantly where a document belongs. I am led to believe that this indefinable something is simply the knowledge that has been acquired and stored up in the brain by years of work of that character. The condition of the document, shape, color, location, source and other facts are flashed by the brain the instant a glance is given the document and before any thought is given to it.

There is a little thrill given to the archivist each time he finds a document which is out of its natural department or source when he places it in the little niche left vacant in the department of its original source and it exactly fills the niche, and completing the file is evidence that the system is working in good order.

INDEXING AND CALENDARING

The subjects of indexing and calendaring have already been referred to by me in connection with the subject of classification.

I have always taken the position that public archives should not be indexed until the files have been made permanent, and this cannot be done until the time has elapsed when thousands of

G II		Lands, Correspondence concerning
632	1874-1908	Swamp
	1869-1901	University

Index Card.

G II	1838	Correspondence
		Boggs, Lilburn W, Executive Department, City of Jefferson, Aug. 28, 1838 to
		His Excellency, The Governor of the Territory of Iowa,
		re southern boundary of Iowa
		A.L.S. 2 pp 8 2s
		2

Calendar Card.

(The file number of this card was omitted through error of copy.)

documents having administrative value but are of little or no historical value can be removed from the files and the files made permanent.

As previously stated we in our work here in Iowa carry out the outlines of classification far enough into detail to make them available as a temporary index and calendar. This filing of the records and documents in the exact order of the classification identifies the records to the lowest subdivision and subject and they are then readily accessible. In addition to the classification outlines can be added a short index or shelf list.

Miss Ethel B. Virtue was employed in 1913 to index the public archives here. She investigated the question thoroughly, covering authorities in the United States and some in Europe. After a thorough investigation of our material she made a card index which is based on the volume or file box as the unit (see illustration, page 262). This index has given perfect satisfaction here and we are firmly of the opinion that nothing else is needed until the files are made permanent and the final indexing and calendaring is done. This index is reduced to a simple form of which I heartily approve as I never could endure an index that required an index.

Miss Virtue also completed a card calendar of all the records and documents included in our territorial period, from 1838 to 1846.

This calendar I also approve as it is simple in form, condensed, makes the individual document instantly available and completes the work in the manner that I have had in mind during my work here. If in the future it is decided that the calendars should be published it is an easy matter to remove the cards from the files for publication of the lists (see illustration, page 262.)

EXPANSION AND STORAGE

The problem of expansion is another of the great problems to be solved in the work of public archives, as the source of supply is always increasing and never stops. Without taking up the arguments advanced for the different modes or forms of classification and their conformity and easy manner of solving this problem by their use, I will give a short outline of the manner in which we are solving it in connection with the classification I

use. We classified all material dating prior to the year 1910 and beginning in 1838 as Series I. All subjects in each department carry all the documents on that subject for that period and are arranged in chronological and alphabetical order. All documents are filed except those that were culled out in the beginning and which had no historical or administrative value, but thousands of documents are classified and filed that have but little if any historical value, yet are valuable to the originating office. These are kept in the files and withdrawn after the time has elapsed when the department calls have ceased. They are then removed from the files and placed in storage, awaiting the time that an order is made to destroy them. This reduces the number of documents in that series to the minimum and limits them to those of historical value. The documents that are withdrawn from the files after they have become of no administrative value number up into the multiplied thousands and consist mainly of such documents as vouchers (claims, receipts, warrants, etc.) which relate to supplies, salaries, expense accounts, etc. Those that are related to any subject of historical interest are retained, such as monuments, public buildings, special commissions, etc. The same is true in other divisions, such as correspondence applying for printed documents, maps, etc. The series is now limited to practically the material that is only considered as historical material. The files are made permanent and ready for indexing and calendaring.

The question may arise as to why the historical material and the administrative are not divided and classified separately in the first instance. My answer to this is that it is a great deal easier to classify the material as a whole than it is to try to separate it before the classification is made and then make two classifications instead of one. By leaving them together an intimate knowledge is gained which is a great aid in determining what should be retained in the permanent files as historical material. This intimate knowledge gained through the classification, the constant contact, the calls that are made for the material, and the relationship existing between certain documents that is not clearly apparent, should be made one of the great determining factors in the withdrawal of material from the files that has but little or no historical value. It is an easy matter to remove this material

from the files and in the exact order of their classification, placing them in storage until an order is issued for their final disposition.

Series II, by our method, commences with the year 1911 and when the time arrives that it has become cumbersome and the space is needed for expansion it will be closed, the material of

STORAGE NO. 532 a	
RECORD CARD - STORAGE DIVISION	
General Classification	State Tax Record
Specific Designation or Title	Inheritance Tax
# F 1 - 1200 Inc. Non resident 1896 to 1920 Inc.	
# F 11000 - R. 12950 Inc. Resident 1896 to 1916 Inc.	
Deposited by	Treas. of State Storage Room No. 2
Dept. Accession No.	Filing Case No. 4
Division No.	Section No. 8 & 9
Storage Acc. Date	1-17-1928 Packing Case No.
Inventory Valuation	Section No.
Duplicate Count	No. Duplicates Withdrawn

Record Card—Storage Division.

no historical value will be removed to storage and the remaining files made permanent.

The question of storage has always been a hard problem to solve on account of lack of space and adequate help. This problem has finally been solved by E. R. Harlan, Curator, who installed a system that is applicable to each division of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department. As applied to the Public Archives Division the process is as follows:

The department wishing to make a transfer of documents to the Public Archives Division first makes an application to the Executive Council for an order to make the transfer, listing in its application the documents to be transferred. After the Executive Council has acted on the application, an order in

duplicate for the transfer is made. One of these orders is transmitted to the applicant for transfer and the other to the Curator of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department, who, in turn hands it to the superintendent of storage. The transfer is then made to the storage building, where the superintendent makes a primary classification, separating the material into its main di-

STORAGE NO. 532 a

STORAGE DEPOSIT MEMORANDA

(To be completed and accompany items for storage)

General Classification State Tax RecordSpecific Designation or Title Inheritance Tax

#F 1 - F1200 Inc. Non resident 1896 to 1920 Inc.

R 11000 - R 12950 Inc. Resident 1896 to 1916

Deposited by Treas. of StateStorage Room No. 2

Dept. Accession No. _____

Filing Case No. 4

Division No. _____

Section No. 8 & 9Storage Acc. Date 1-17-1928

Packing Case No. _____

Inventory Valuation _____

Section No. _____

Duplicate Count _____

No. Duplicates Withdrawn _____

STORAGE RECEIPT

The above items received for storage this 17 day ofJanuary 19 28Signed Ray L. Shiles

Storage Division

Storage Deposit Memoranda.

visions or subjects, throwing out all printed material, such as pamphlets, books, etc. (these are transferred to the libraries), and all other material that would be classed as waste paper, such as printing samples, old card indexes that were temporary in character, applications for motor vehicle licenses, duplicate claims and warrants, etc. An inventory of each class is then made and the documents tied up in packages, properly labeled. They are then placed on the shelves and a card index (see illustrations on pages 265 and 266) made which makes them readily accessible.

until the time of transfer to the Public Archives Division for final classification, cleansing, filing, indexing, and calendaring.

In view of the foregoing it will be noted that a constant stream of documents from the state offices, boards, commissions, etc., is passing through the Public Archives Division and that by this method of procedure the Historical, Memorial and Art Department, through its Public Archives Division, is made the clearing house for the public archives of this state. Under this method it is safe to predict that no valuable historical documents will be lost or disappear before reaching the permanent files.

WHAT IOWA HAS ACCOMPLISHED

Iowa, after years of hard work, struggling against the existing prejudice, sentiment or lack of knowledge, call it what you may, it exists in every locality and must be overcome, has finally reached the point where this opposition is not noticeable. It is a greater task to allay the opposition in the first few years than to do the actual work itself, but we have accomplished it by years of work under adverse conditions, lack of co-operation, no encouragement, practically no appreciation of the work we were doing, and consequently scanty appropriations and any kind of help was good enough for the Archives Division, in fact it was looked upon by many as simply a dumping ground where all the old dead material and waste could be dumped. After years of struggling and uphill work, Iowa, we think, has reached the top of the grade and can now move along evenly and smoothly. The Public Archives Division is now recognized as an established institution and is cared for by the appropriations in the same manner as the other established institutions of the state, and does not require the constant watching and labor of obtaining a special appropriation for its support. We have reached the point where we have the hearty co-operation and appreciation of all the state officers, members of boards, bureaus, commissions, etc.

In the beginning of the work on the public archives it was a rare instance if a call was made for any of the documents or for information to be gleaned from them. These calls have increased until at the present time they number to about four hundred each month, or practically five thousand annually.

The above figures are based on facts and are not an estimate

but the result of a record kept of each call. E. R. Harlan, Curator of the Historical, Memorial and Art Department, put into operation in all divisions of the department a system of recording all calls for information by the use of cards (see illustration, page 268). These cards show the name of the applicant, residence, date, information called for, information furnished, etc.

Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa	
The Curator desires to register the business of the Department administration so far as he is responsible for the same. EDGAR R. HARLAN, Curator.	
Applicant	Department of the Interior- U.S. Pension Bureau
Address	Washington, D.C.
Date	Jan. 10, '28
Service called for	All records showing the military service of "Calvin Graves" in Indian warfare in Iowa
Purpose of investigation	Evidence in claim for Pension
Service rendered	Sent certified copy of Enlistment Roll of Company recruited by Capt. Andrews- 1862 and certified copy of a Report by Col. H.C. Nutt, regarding Indian Affairs at Sioux City 1862

Information Card.

By this system it is an easy matter to determine the actual number of calls, the kind of information sought, localities from which the calls are made and is an index to the volume of business transacted in each division and of the department as a whole.

Example: From June, 1914, to April, 1915, the Public Archives Division cared for 133 requests for material from the archives. Eighty-one of these came from state offices, apportioned as follows: Board of Health, 58; Governor, 3; Secretary of State, 1; Auditor, 7; Treasurer, 1; Attorney General, 1; Executive Council, 3; Law Library, 1; Insurance Department, 2; Board of Education, 2; Railroad Commissioners, 1; Board of Control of State Institutions, 1. In addition to these requests, there were

13 legal inquiries, 13 inquiries on business matters, 18 inquiries of historical character, and 8 miscellaneous.

For the month of September, 1927, *alone*, there were 476 requests for material in the Public Archives Division, apportioned as follows: Requests from outside the state, 291; requests from within the state, 185; certified copies issued, 125.

C. Graham Botha, chief archivist for the Union of South Africa who was sent on a tour to visit the chief archive centers of Europe, United States, and Canada, paid the Public Archives Division of Iowa a compliment by making the remark while here, "I cannot understand how you have accomplished so much in so short a time with the appropriation and the help furnished." In his report of his findings on this tour he says, "The state of Iowa leads the states of the West in the archives movement of the U. S. A." (Report dated July, 1921, page 59.)

In a report on public archives by Professor Theodore C. Blegen which was published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in Bulletin of Information No. 94, Professor Blegen says, in part, on page 57: "We need not go far to find an excellent example of the success of archives administration under the third plan. Our neighbor, Iowa, leads the states of the West in the archives movement. * * *" Again on page 60, "It is apparent that Iowa has developed a thoroughly scientific plan of archives care, and beyond question is a state whose example in this respect is worthy of close study by officials who have as a part of their work the administration of public records. Experts in the science of archive economy declare that it is an example that other states should follow. For example, when Mr. Waldo Leland was employed by the State Education Building Commission of Illinois to draw up a report on the public archives of that state, with special reference to the proposed education building, he advocated the establishment of a 'separate and distinct department of archives,' asserting that such a plan was not only in accordance with the best archival practice of European countries, but that, also, 'the function of preserving and administering the public records of a state is sufficient to occupy all the attention of a single department.'"

Professor Blegen on page 61 quotes from a letter of Hon. W. C. Hayward, secretary of state of Iowa at that time, in which he says: "In reference to this I will say briefly that I am of the

opinion that the action of the General Assembly in establishing this department was wise and well taken. The vaults of the various departments of state were becoming well filled with papers and documents worthy of preservation, but not catalogued nor indexed as they should be to be of ready reference, and the room they occupied was being needed for papers and documents of later date. Under proper classification and index in the Archives Department, they are in shape for ready reference, and in a great many cases these documents are of no small value, not only in a historical way, but in settling questions that arise from time to time. In turning over the old papers and documents that occupied the vaults in this department there has been no inconvenience whatever. If it is desired to look up some matter pertaining to transactions that occurred a long while ago, it is less trouble to find the desired papers in the Archives Department than it would be if they had been left there. Then it gives more room, which was much needed for filing away papers and documents that are accumulating day by day. I do not know of any friction whatsoever between the Archives Department and any departments of state. I am sure it is providing a great convenience and will be of growing value as the years go by."

In order to give a comprehensive idea of the scope and volume of material that has passed through the hands of the workers in this department and is now on file, I submit the following figures: Classified, cleansed, indexed and filed, there is approximately eight and one half millions. This is a close estimate and was arrived at by taking a single sheet document as the unit and counting the number that one of our file boxes will hold, then making this the basis for our calculations. There is also on file twenty thousand bound records. The estimated number of documents in storage is between three and four millions.

The cost to the state for the support of the Public Archives Division will average less than five thousand dollars per annum for salaries.

Following are the classification outlines for the departments of Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Adjutant General, Agriculture and Executive Council.

The above does not include all the departments that we have classified.

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