

business of the government from its beginning to the present time. These records vary in value and interest all the way from unused and obsolete blank forms, duplicate canceled checks, form letters, and other useless papers, to letters, orders, reports, accounts, land grants, judicial records, laws, treaties, and other documents of vital importance not only to the government itself, but to the people of the United States. The destruction or loss of these records would seriously affect not only the interests of the government, but also the rights and liberties of the people. Upon their preservation depends the orderly procedure of the current business of the government. They constitute its chief protection against ill-founded and fraudulent claims. In international affairs they are the principal source of authentic information about the foreign policy of the government, and they furnish evidence of the precedents, so dear to the heart of the diplomat, from which arguments may be drawn in support of the rights and interests of the nation. They contain the evidence in support of the just claims which a citizen may have against his government, and they are the basis of the titles to millions of acres of land and to thousands of patent rights upon which the industries of the country are dependent.

What the loss or destruction of its archives means to a government and its people need not be left to the imagination. On the morning of March 31, 1931, the capital city of Nicaragua was visited by a severe earthquake which destroyed many of the buildings of the city. Among them was the National Palace, a large building occupying an entire city block, in which were housed the offices of foreign affairs, the treasury, government and policies, war, the customs service, and the war claims commission. Each of these departments maintained the files of its archives in its own offices. When the tremors had ceased, the building was in ruins and the records of the national government were buried beneath the debris. The result of the earth-

quake itself, however, would not have been the complete destruction of the government records had it not been for the fire that followed, which wiped out of existence the valuable records of the country concerning its foreign relations, its fiscal policy, the administrative practices of the various governmental departments, the substantiation of war claims amounting to millions of dollars, and the commercial statistics. The interests of the state as well as the interests of its citizens were placed in serious jeopardy by the wholesale destruction of papers relating to the business of the nation.

In the matter of claims that were pending before the war claims commission, endless inconvenience was caused. Claimants had difficulty in re-establishing their rights and the government was embarrassed in its efforts to defend the interests of the state. Moreover, the records of previous claims against the state that had been considered and rejected were all wiped out. Perhaps in the matter of foreign relations the loss was most serious. Here, in an attempt to replace the destroyed documents, the Nicaraguan government has been compelled to have recourse to the archives of the departments of foreign affairs of other countries, for the purpose of securing copies of important documents relating to the affairs of Nicaragua. While these copies can never fully replace the lost originals, they do in a measure make up the irreparable loss which Nicaragua had suffered.

In many respects the archives of the United States government are of scarcely less importance to the several states than to the federal government itself. This is particularly true of those states which were created by Congress out of the national domain and which were formerly governed by Congress and the national executive as colonies or territories. Between 1787 and 1912 Congress created out of the national domain some twenty-eight organized territories which, after an average existence of nearly twenty years

in the territorial form, entered the Union as states. Just as the older states which formerly existed as British or Spanish colonies must look chiefly for the records of their early history to the national archives of Great Britain or Spain, so these newer states which formerly existed as territories must look for theirs to the national archives of the United States. As Professor Clarence E. Carter says in the "Introduction" to his *Territorial Papers*:

Affairs in the territories were under the direction of the Department of State from the beginning of the national government to the year 1873, at which time their administration was transferred to the Department of the Interior. . . .

Thus the territorial governments were dependent in large degree upon the Department of State during the greater part of the period, and a considerable number of papers relating to them are preserved in the archives of that Department. Many events in the territories, however, have been of such character that materials respecting them are found in the files of other departments in Washington. Papers which form the basis of the history of Indian relations are found in the archives of the Department of War prior to the creation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in 1849. The extension of the postal service to the frontier is illustrated by materials found in the Post Office files. In the General Land Office is found a large collection of sources relating to the surveying and disposing of the public lands. In the House and Senate files, especially for the early Congresses, are copies of many papers the originals of which have disappeared, as well as bills, committee reports, and similar materials relating to various aspects of territorial affairs.

However, the interest of these states in the proper preservation and administration of the national archives did not cease with their admission to the Union, nor is this interest confined to the newer states. Comparatively little material of primary importance to the states, as such, is found in the federal archives before 1865, since before that date the line of demarcation between the constitutional functions of the federal government and those of the states was clearly understood and rather rigidly adhered to by both the federal government and the state governments. The results of the Civil War seriously disturbed, if it did not destroy, this balance. Since 1865 the trend has been,

on the one hand, for the federal government to encroach more and more upon political, social, and economic fields theretofore reserved to the states and, on the other, for the states to look more and more to the federal government for beneficences and guidance in these fields, which they formerly insisted upon providing for themselves. Whether this trend is desirable or not, is not now the question. It is mentioned merely because it has been one of the reasons for the very rapid accumulation of federal archives since 1865, especially of those that have to do primarily with matters of state concern. This fact increases the interest of the states, as such, in the problems of the preservation and administration of the national archives. A few figures will illustrate the truth of this point.

In 1930 President Hoover appointed a committee to make a survey of the archives of the government for the use of the architect in designing the National Archives Building. This survey was concerned only with the volume of documents that made up the archives of the several executive departments and independent establishments within the District of Columbia. The committee's report shows that from 1789 to 1860, inclusive, the government had accumulated 108,701 cubic feet of records; that from 1861 to 1916, inclusive, the accumulation was 923,255 cubic feet—a total of 1,103,956 cubic feet for the years 1789 to 1917; and that from 1917 to 1930, inclusive, the accumulation was 2,641,678 cubic feet. In other words, during the thirteen years from 1917 to 1930 the volume of records created by the government was more than twice the volume created for the whole preceding period of 127 years!

Have these figures any significance? I think they have. Perhaps in no other way have the expansion of the functions and the corresponding increase in the activities of the federal government during certain periods of our history been illustrated more graphically than by these figures. Before 1860, because of the prevailing theory of the nature

of our federal system and the jealousy with which the individual states guarded their own fields of activity against encroachments, the activities of the federal government were considerably restricted, and this restriction is reflected in the fact that throughout the period from 1789 to 1860 the accumulation of records in the executive departments averaged only sixteen hundred cubic feet a year. The outcome of the Civil War marked the beginning of a new epoch in our history, produced significant changes in the character of the federal system, and greatly expanded the fields of the federal government's activities. These results partially account for the annual increase in government records from an average of sixteen hundred cubic feet before 1860 to an average of more than seventeen thousand cubic feet between 1860 and 1917. Then came the World War and its aftermath, when the federal government was compelled by circumstances to assume jurisdiction over an ever increasing number of functions hitherto reserved to the states. The effect on government records was a jump in the average annual accumulation during the period from 1917 to 1930 from seventeen thousand to more than two hundred thousand cubic feet. In 1930 the total volume of archives in the executive branch of the government alone was estimated at 3,673,634 cubic feet.

Not only are these archives of great practical value; they also have an inestimable sentimental and cultural value. Such documents as the originals of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Emancipation Proclamation, and the Kellogg Pact give expression to the highest ideals and sentiments of the American people, and it is inconceivable that any thoughtful person could doubt for a moment the importance of preserving them. A European scholar has written that "The care which a nation devotes to the preservation of the monuments of its past may serve as a true measure of the degree of civilization to which it has attained." Since

their national archives are the chief sources of their history, all civilized nations have regarded their preservation "as a natural and proper function of government." Our own country has been the most backward of the great nations in adopting such a policy. The National Archives of Spain was established in 1539. In 1772 Scotland began the erection of the General Register House in Edinburgh, which "was perhaps the first building in Europe constructed specifically for the housing of national archives." The British Public Record Office was organized in 1838, and the dominion archives of Canada in 1904. Moreover, the federal government has lagged behind many of the states of the Union in this matter.

What is the situation that confronts the scholar who desires to make use of the archives of the United States? In the first place he finds that in most of the government departments overcrowded conditions make it impossible for officials to find adequate room for both their files and their personnel. No facilities can be furnished to the student, therefore, for his work, and his presence is tolerated but not encouraged by a staff already sufficiently burdened with the routine duties of the day. He finds the records he desires to consult scattered throughout Washington, stored wherever space can be found for them in more than two hundred and twenty-five different buildings. They are in cellars and subcellars, under terraces and in boiler rooms, in attics and over porticoes, in corridors and closed-up doorways, piled in heaps upon the floor, and crowded into alcoves, abandoned carbarns, storage warehouses, deserted theaters, or ancient but more humble edifices that should long ago have served their last useful purpose.

In an effort to locate all these depositories and to ascertain the exact condition of the records stored in them, the National Archives is making a careful and painstaking survey of the government archives in the District of Columbia. A staff of trained examiners, dubbed "archives detectives"

by a bright young newspaper reporter, have been put to work on this problem. Two of the points on which they were instructed to report are the hazards to which the archives in their present depositories are exposed, and the impediments to work in these depositories. They have surveyed, up to date, 1,371,000 cubic feet of records. Of these they have found 615,000 cubic feet, or forty-five per cent of the total, infested with silverfish, cockroaches, and other insects, rats, mice, and other vermin, and exposed to such hazards as dirt, rain, sunlight, theft, and fire. More than 634,000 cubic feet, or forty-six per cent of the total, were in depositories that were dark, dirty, badly ventilated, crowded, and without facilities for work. Typical was the case of valuable records relating to Indian affairs which were found on dust-covered shelves mingled higgledy-piggledy with empty whisky bottles and with rags and other trash that is highly inflammable. In another depository crowded with archives of the government the most prominent object before one's eyes upon entering the room was the skull of a cat protruding from under a pile of valuable records. If a cat with nine lives to risk in the cause of history could not survive the conditions of research in the depositories of our national archives, surely the poor historian with only one life to give to his country may be excused if he declines to take the risk.

Most American scholars, accordingly, have found it more to their liking to enjoy the comforts and facilities of European archives, even when investigating the history of their own country. In 1912 Mr. Waldo G. Leland, then a member of the staff of the department of historical research of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, declared that for the previous ten years he had been in a position where he was almost certain to learn of any serious historical research conducted in the national archives in Washington during those years, and yet he could not recall more than two score such investigations in comparison with the hundreds that

were carried on in the Public Record Office and the Archives Nationales in the course of a single year. When the conditions that confronted the student who desired to use the federal archives were considered, he added, "It is small wonder that he is more inclined to carry on his investigation in London and Paris and The Hague than to encounter the hardships he must endure in Washington."

Up to this point I have attempted to state as briefly as possible the two major problems concerning the national archives, viz., preservation and administration. May I ask you now to consider the steps that Congress has recently taken looking to the solution of these problems? They are the erection of the National Archives Building at Washington, and the creation of the National Archives. These two events mark the consummation of a movement that was launched more than a century ago. The problem of the care of the public archives arose even before the organization of the government itself. At its first meeting the First Continental Congress, in 1774, conscious of the importance which posterity would attach to its proceedings, took the necessary steps to preserve the records of its deliberations and its actions. The result is found today in the 490 bound volumes of records which constitute the archives of the United States from 1774 to 1789, and but for their preservation our knowledge of that period of our history which gave us independence and constitutional government would be very meager indeed. Before the permanent removal of the seat of government from Philadelphia to Washington, in 1800, these archives had no permanent abiding place and were forced to keep up with the peregrinations of Congress from city to city, much to the inconvenience of the government and to the damage of its records.

After the organization of the new government under the Constitution and its subsequent removal to Washington, the problem of the preservation of its archives became even more acute. They increased rapidly, not only in volume

but also in value, and there was not a single building in the new Capital City in which they could be safely deposited. This fact was sharply emphasized in 1800, when a fire destroyed a portion of the records of the war department, and again in 1801, when the treasury department suffered a similar loss. A contemporary newspaper reporter gives a picturesque touch to his account of the latter fire in his statement that the president of the United States — stocky little John Adams, it was, probably dressed in knee breeches and silk stockings — “was observed in the ranks for conveying water” to the burning building. Beyond ordering investigations into the causes of these fires and the extent of the damage to the records, Congress took no immediate action to remedy the situation.

The first step looking to the preservation of the national archives was taken when Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts, on February 21, 1810, moved in the House of Representatives the appointment of a committee “to inquire into the state of the ancient public records and archives of the United States, with authority to consider whether any, and what, provisions be necessary for a more safe and orderly preservation of them with leave to report by bill, or otherwise.” In its report, on March 27, 1810, the committee declared that in its investigation it found “all the public records and papers belonging to that period, antecedent to the adoption of the present constitution of the United States, in a state of great disorder and exposure; and in a situation neither safe nor convenient nor honorable to the nation.” These records, said the committee, were stored in the garrets “of the public building west of the President’s house,” where also were deposited “all the public records, recent as well as ancient, of the state, war and navy departments.”

The committee was satisfied “that this building does not contain sufficient room for the general accommodation of those departments; nor can enable a safe and orderly dis-

position of the public records, so long as it is permitted to be occupied as at present." Upon its recommendation Congress passed a bill, approved by President Madison on April 28, 1810, appropriating twenty thousand dollars for the construction in the State, War and Navy Building of "as many fire proof rooms as shall be sufficient for the convenient deposit of all the public records of the United States belonging to, or in the custody of the State, War, and Navy Departments." This act may quite appropriately be called our first national archives act.

The act of 1810, however, did not solve the problem. During the next half century the nation grew by leaps and bounds, its archives increased in proportion to the growth of the country, and as they increased in volume and in value the conditions under which they were kept became more and more precarious. Fires in 1814, 1833, 1877, and at other times destroyed valuable public records. The danger from fire hazard is clearly shown by a report of the fire marshal of the District of Columbia, laid before Congress in 1915, which listed two hundred and fifty fires that occurred between 1873 and 1915, inclusive, in government buildings located in the district. Losses and destruction of archives were also caused by the frequent removal of records from one place to another, by dampness, heat, and insects. Stamp collectors, autograph dealers, and just plain ordinary thieves mutilated or purloined valuable documents. In one case an official of the government sold to a junk dealer four hundred tons of official records. He needed the space for his office force!

The conditions under which the archives were kept were frequently described by officials of the government who intermittently recommended to Congress remedial legislation. Following a destructive fire in the building occupied by the department of the interior, September 24, 1877, President Hayes appointed a commission "to examine the several public buildings in this city and determine the nature

and extent of their security against conflagration and the measures to be taken to guard the buildings and their contents from destruction or damage by fire." In a special message to Congress on December 10, 1877, when transmitting the report of this commission, the president said:

The records of the Government constitute a most valuable collection for the country, whether we consider their pecuniary value or their historical importance; and it becomes my duty to call your attention to the means suggested for securing these valuable archives, as well as the buildings in which they are stored. The commissioners have performed their duties intelligently and faithfully. Their recommendations are fully concurred in by me and commended to the favorable consideration of Congress.

In his annual message of 1878, and again in that of 1879, President Hayes returned to the subject to recommend to Congress a plan suggested by the quartermaster general of the army and approved by the secretary of war, for the erection of "a cheap building . . . as a hall of records . . . perfectly fire-proof . . . to cost about \$200,000."

Congress, however, seems not to have been greatly impressed until fires that broke out in the war department in December, 1880, and in February, 1881, brought the need of action more sharply to its attention. On February 10, 1881, accordingly, the Senate passed an archives bill, but the expiration of the Forty-sixth Congress, on March 3, prevented its consideration by the House. Between that date and 1912, forty-two archives bills were introduced in one house or the other. These bills had the support of many distinguished Congressmen and Senators, of nearly every member of the cabinet, and of the several presidents of the United States. President McKinley, in his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1900, summed up their views in the following statement:

I am very much impressed with the statement made by the heads of all the Departments of the urgent necessity of a hall of records. In every departmental building in Washington, so far as I am informed, the space for official records is not only exhausted, but the

walls of rooms are lined with shelves, the middle floor space of many rooms is filled with file cases, and garrets and basements, which were never intended and are unfitted for their accommodation, are crowded with them. Aside from the inconvenience there is great danger, not only from fire, but from the weight of these records upon timbers not intended for their support. There should be a separate building especially designed for the purpose of receiving and preserving the annually accumulating archives of the several Executive Departments. . . . I urgently recommend that the Congress take early action in this matter.

Despite the refusal of Congress to pass an archives bill, the movement had continuously gathered momentum. Congress frequently called for reports on the subject, and these reports, together with discussions of the problem both within and without the halls of Congress, gradually enlarged the ideas of executive officials, legislators, and the general public as to the requirements of an adequate archives establishment for a great nation. In 1878 it seemed to the secretary of war that these requirements would be met by "a cheap building . . . to cost about \$200,000"; in 1898 the secretary of the treasury placed the cost of an archives building proportioned to the requirements of the government at one million, two hundred thousand dollars; two years later he raised his estimate to three million dollars.

These changes in the official conception of an adequate archives establishment, important as they are, relate only to the size and character of the physical plant required to house the nation's archives. Even more important, if more slowly evolved, was the change that was gradually taking place in the conception of the functions of such an establishment. During the first thirty years of the movement the proponents of a "hall of records" seemed to be thinking only of a building of the warehouse type, to be used primarily for storage purposes, but never, so far as the records show, did it occur to any of them that another and equally important object of an archives establishment is the efficient administration of its collections for the service of the government and of scholars. The storage idea dominated the

thinking of government officials on the archival problem down to 1908. In that year the council of the American Historical Association pointed out that the lack of provisions for the "orderly keeping of these public documents" made them "unavailable for historical work," and appointed a committee of distinguished historians to call the attention of the president and of Congress to the importance which an archives establishment "would have for researches in American history." Two years later the association sent a memorial to Congress on the subject, urging that body to "take such steps as may be necessary to erect in the city of Washington a national archives depository, where the records of the government may be concentrated, properly cared for, and preserved." The idea of service to government officials and to scholars as a primary function of a national archives establishment gave a new slant to the movement and stimulated a livelier interest in the proposal than had been aroused by official representations which, through repetition, had tended to become perfunctory.

The period of agitation was now drawing to a close. The year 1913 marked the turning, but not the end of the road. In that year Congress authorized the secretary of the treasury to have plans and specifications prepared for a fireproof national archives building to cost not over a million and a half dollars. These plans, however, were not to be completed until inspection should be made of the best modern national archives buildings in Europe and consultation had with the best European authorities on the construction and arrangement of such buildings. The outbreak of the World War prevented the execution of this provision of the act, and in 1916 Congress authorized the preparation of the plans "without such inspection and consultation in Europe." But then came the entrance of the United States into the war, and another decade of delayed hopes followed, marked by an accumulation of government records at a vastly accelerated rate, which drove executive

officials almost to frenzy in vain efforts to find space for both their files and their office forces.

This situation, of course, increased the pressure on Congress for an archives building. In the meantime, in 1916, Congress had taken steps to provide more adequate quarters for the departments of the government through a great public buildings program. Temporarily halted by the entrance of the United States into the World War, this program was revived and considerably expanded after the war. President Coolidge repeatedly recommended to Congress the construction of "additional federal buildings at the seat of government in order to adequately house and operate the business of the government and protect its employees and records." Congress finally acted in 1926, when it made provisions for a general building program in Washington which included a national archives building. Ground for this building was broken on September 9, 1931; the cornerstone was laid by President Hoover on February 20, 1933.

In anticipation of the early completion of this building, Congressman Sol Bloom introduced in the Seventy-third Congress an archives bill which passed the House. The Senate, however, substituted for it a bill introduced by Senator Kenneth D. McKellar, and out of these two measures was evolved the bill which became the "Act to establish a National Archives of the United States Government," approved by President Roosevelt on June 19, 1934. This act creates the office of archivist of the United States and sets up a national archives council empowered to define the classes of material that may be transferred to the National Archives Building. Two major objectives are imposed by this law upon the National Archives: first, the concentration and preservation of all inactive archives of the government of the United States which are of such administrative value or historical interest that they must be preserved over a long period of time, or permanently; and second, the ar-

rangement and administration of such archives so as to facilitate their use in the business of the government and in the service of scholarship. To enable the archivist to attain these objectives, he is given charge and superintendence over all archives or records belonging to the government of the United States, legislative, executive, judicial, and other, which may be approved by the national archives council for transfer to the National Archives Building; and he is authorized to make rules and regulations for the arrangement, custody, use, and withdrawal of such material.

The first of these objectives is the physical care and preservation of the national archives. For this purpose the government has erected a National Archives Building at a cost of approximately twelve million dollars. Classical in design, it is rivaled in dignity and beauty among the public buildings of the Capital of the nation only by the Lincoln Memorial and the new Supreme Court Building. It has been designed, inside and out, in monumental proportions, with the aim of impressing upon the public a proper realization of its importance and significance as the shrine of the history and patriotism of the American people. To its construction each state in the Union has made some contribution either in design, ornamentation, service, or materials. The National Archives Building of the United States government is American from start to finish; everything that has gone into it—the materials of which it is built, the ideas expressed in its design, the mechanical and engineering skill that has constructed it, and the records that are and will be housed in it—is American.

The building when completed will be equipped with every facility and device for safeguarding and preserving archives known to modern science. In its enormous concrete vault-like stack areas, as the years pass, will be filed and preserved in steel cases some two and a half million cubic feet of public archives—the most priceless property of the American people because they are the sources of their history and the

evidence of their rights and liberties, and, if destroyed or lost, can never be reproduced.

A ramp running from the street into the basement enables trucks transferring documents from their present depositories to the National Archives Building to deliver their cargoes in safety to a large receiving room, where they are carefully checked and whence those requiring it are sent to the division of preservation and repair to be cleaned, fumigated, and repaired. From this room elevators carry them to their places in the stacks. Each stack is like a sealed room into which no person except employees of the National Archives is permitted to enter. Any unauthorized person attempting to do so will immediately set off an electric alarm that will give warning to the office of the captain of the guard. Frequent inspection of the stacks by watchmen, together with an automatic electric fire alarm system, afford protection against fire. The building is air-conditioned throughout, and the temperature, the humidity, and the chemical content of the air are so regulated as to prevent deterioration of papers stored in it. Sunlight is excluded from the stacks. By these and other devices it is believed that the chances of loss of or damage to records by theft, fire, insects, dampness, exposure to sunlight, or in any other way, have been reduced to a minimum.

The second of the major objectives of the National Archives is the arrangement and administration of its collections in the service of government officials and scholars. Every effort has been made to provide the necessary facilities for this service. Filing equipment designed by government architects especially for the National Archives Building, for the purpose of facilitating the filing and handling of government archives, has been installed. Three beautiful "Search Rooms," well lighted, air-conditioned, and furnished with comfortable desks and chairs—a feature almost unique in buildings of this kind—are provided for the use of students. Around the walls of these rooms

is open shelving for approximately fifty thousand books, which will place almost within an arm's length of the student a carefully selected service library to supplement the archival material with which he may be working. If he wants this material copied by other methods than pen or typewriter, reproductions can be made for him by photostating, photographing, microfilming, or multilithing processes.

But, after all, mechanical devices will not operate themselves, and in the last analysis the problem of efficient administration becomes a problem of personnel. In the provisions of the National Archives Act relating to this problem, Congress has been as liberal as it was in making provisions for the building and its equipment. Under the terms of the act, authority to select the personnel of the organization is vested in the archivist with the specific provision that he shall select the members of his staff "solely with reference to their fitness for their particular duties." He is thus given a free hand, and it may interest you to know that from no source, political or otherwise, has any attempt been made to interfere with his carrying out in the fullest degree this mandate of Congress.

Some of you may fear that the want of opportunities for formal training in archival science in our country may have proved an obstacle to the building up of a qualified staff. Let me hasten to reassure you. You will, I am sure, rejoice to learn that the study of archival science has been widespread among us and that this amazing country of ours right now can meet every demand that may arise for trained and experienced archival workers. Within less than six months after the archivist was appointed, a host of patriotic Americans appeared, every one of whom had made problems of archival administration his chief study for years and was willing under pressure to place his knowledge at the service of his country. The range of qualifications is a wide one. One charming young lady feels that she is fully qualified because she is "five feet five inches tall, weighs 123 pounds,

and has red hair and green eyes." A chicken comes home to roost in the person of one of my former students, who insists that he must be a competent archivist because he could not pass my course in colonial history. From the far South comes the assurance that the volunteer not only knows by heart "the principal epochs of Roman History," but has "just finished a book on Pre-Historic Man," while another's qualifications are evidenced by the fact that he once "clerked in a store" where he sold Frigidaires and fertilizers—admirable training, no doubt, for the operation of our air-conditioning and fumigating equipment. Finally, attention must be called to one who has written a novel in which occur seven murders—a nice person, indeed, to have on the staff, for who knows when he might take a notion to produce another thriller with the story revolving around the mysterious disappearance of an archivist!

Public officials and scholars have long been fully aware of the ills of the archival practices of the government, and have waited long, and none too patiently, for Congress to provide the remedy. Slow to move, Congress has at last acted, not in niggardly fashion, nor on circumscribed lines, but with the liberality of ideas and the breadth of vision characteristic of the representatives of a great nation. It has caused to be erected at the nation's Capital a National Archives Building which in spaciousness of size, beauty of design, and completeness of equipment will provide a fitting home for the priceless documents that make up the nation's archives; it has created an administrative establishment invested with ample powers for the functions to be performed. In these acts Congress has challenged the historians and archivists of the country; whether the National Archives will be one worthy of the nation or not, now depends on the way in which we shall meet that challenge.

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