

Lester J. Cappon, an Unwritten Textbook, and Early Archival Education in the United

States

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Comment: Only a few edits below. Biggest is that endnotes need to be converted to Arabic numerals. **Ok RJC**

Lester J. Cappon, an Unwritten Textbook, and Early Archival Education in the United States¹

Introduction. Today, we have a number of robust archival education programs, with multiple faculty specialists and doctoral students within history departments and Library and Information Science (LIS) and Information Schools (I-Schools). Not long ago many archivists had given up on the prospects for such education amid the contentious debates about where such education ought to be located. Examining Lester J. Cappon's career, especially his work in the 1950s through the 1970s, is a reminder that even a profession in the memory business can suffer a memory lapse. Few working today in archives, historical societies, university special collections, historic sites, or government archives remember Cappon, despite his significant contributions.

Cappon died in 1981 at age eighty-one just as Frank G. Burke wrote a classic assessment about the need for full-time regular faculty in archival studies.² Cappon's death and Burke's essay represent a critical benchmark in the development of graduate archival education. Cappon had tried more than a generation before to position himself to be a faculty member in a history department (focusing on archival studies and documentary editing), whereas Burke hoped for the creation of faculty positions to anchor the archival profession by building archival theory and knowledge. Although Cappon and Burke seem to differ on critical points, they shared a common vision for teaching the next generation of archivists.

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The archival profession and LIS community lack a working memory of the evolution of its own graduate education.³ When I proposed editing a book of Cappon's seminal writings on archival matters (published in 2004) to the Society of American Archivists Publications Committee, there was little recognition of who Cappon was despite his having been President of the Society in 1957. More recently, attending the Archival Education Research Institute, a conference bringing together fifty doctoral students and thirty archives faculty, I discovered that the present generation of archives doctoral students have little understanding of what has happened in graduate archival education in the past half-century.

Why Should We Remember Lester J. Cappon? Lester J. Cappon was not a conventional historian in the middle of the twentieth century. Armed with a doctorate in history from Harvard and a student of the eminent historian Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., one might expect that Cappon would have settled into a comfortable post in an American history department. In some ways, he was ahead of his time, a public historian before such an idea had emerged. In other ways, he was a scholar and working professional searching for a professional identity. Cappon earned a doctorate in history, worked with Dumas Malone at the University of Virginia and later as its archivist, and had a long career at the Institute of Early American History and Culture and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation where he became a leader in scholarly publishing, archival work, and documentary editing.

Cappon devoted a considerable part of his career to teaching, and he used teaching as a means of promoting professional agendas and for supporting his own scholarship. He ran a pioneering Radcliffe Institute on historical administration from

1956 to 1960, one of the first multi-week seminars offered before graduate programs were established. His major failure was his inability to get his book on historical manuscripts, developed as part of his Radcliffe seminar and based on his other teaching, written and published. Cappon throughout his career was a firm advocate for strong academic preparation, and he was opposed to anything resembling what we today term credentialism. He wanted archivists to be grounded in history, and he desired historians to be knowledgeable about archives and other documentary sources. The closest we come to what Cappon thought was the foundation for the education of archivists is what we see in the Radcliffe Institute he administered and the various chapters of his incomplete book on historical manuscripts and archives (both discussed below). Cappon also extended his notion of teaching to writing about topics in the archival profession, urging archivists to be productive scholars, as well as accepting offers to deal with controversial topics at professional conferences.

The Radcliffe Institute. From nearly the first page of his massive diary, we discover Cappon working in his office at Colonial Williamsburg on a lecture on historical manuscripts at the summer institute on historical administration at Radcliffe College, an institute he eventually would lead.⁴ Cappon was energized working through the basic concepts and practices of historical manuscripts work. This institute joined a few others (most notably at the American University and the University of Wisconsin), providing the only formal preparation for individuals who wanted to work as archivists and manuscripts curators. The Institute had a broad perspective of historical work, mostly suffering from a lack of textbooks on this work (perhaps the inspiration for Cappon beginning to reflect on the possibility of writing a book on historical manuscripts).⁵

The idea for this institute emanated from Radcliffe President W.K. Jordan, writing to Earle Newton, the individual who became its first director, about the “intensive summer courses in which young women seem to have particular aptitudes and interests,” asking “whether something of this kind might not be done in the training of junior archivists.”⁶ Newton thought that the “course should be broadened to include not only archival but historical society work, in order to assure the maximum of job opportunities for its graduates.”⁷ Jordan agreed with the expansion of the institute, but insisted that it “must have the word ‘archives’ or ‘archivist’ in the title if we are to get it implanted accurately and meaningfully in the public mind.”⁸ The course was ultimately advertized as the Institute on Archival and Historical Procedures, then changed to the Institute on Historical and Archival Management. Despite this clear mandate, Newton failed to attract the right students.⁹ In early 1956 Cappon was offered and accepted its directorship, a decision he never regretted. In writing up his final report on the fifth institute, for the year 1958, Cappon refers to the institute as “an experiment in education.”¹⁰

Cappon’s interest in the summer institute was in keeping history in archival, museum, and even library work. Reflecting on the 1955 Institute, Cappon notes that he lectured on the preservation, handling, and cataloguing of historical manuscripts, methods that while lacking interest in, he thought raised interesting issues about the “relationship between historical MSS and archives and between MSS and printed books” and the importance of history in such work.¹¹ Because of the core importance of history, Cappon wondered if it was “possible to secure closer contacts with departments of history, political sciences, etc., including the Harvard Department of History, co-sponsor of the Institute?” Cappon worried that “most academic historians are ignorant or

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indifferent toward these cognate historical fields and sometimes inclined to be patronizing rather than genuinely interested in recommending serious consideration by some of their students.”¹² This perspective becomes more obvious when he comments on topics such as records management, noting that these should only be taught with a connection to the historical aspects of records (which, of course, never happened).¹³

For Cappon, history and historical scholarship was the glue for the administration of archives, museums, and historic sites. In his diary, he wrote a summary of what he said as a wrap-up for the 1956 Institute:

I talked about *history* as the common denominator of all the fields of historical activity that had been surveyed; that although we have been concerned with the use of history in education of the public and development of understanding of the American past to enrich the present, we must recognize the subject content of history as basic and therefore continue to read history as much as possible. If we keep abreast of historical scholarship & publication, we will enrich our interpretation of history and seek to correct misconceptions and errors derived from a previous generation. If we are too busy to read history, we have let the means overshadow the end. I applied certain concepts from the archival & manuscripts field to historical societies & museums & restorations and laid stress on the basic importance of the written (or printed) sources for all historical activities and other related fields.¹⁴

This was to be his constant focus in his work with the Radcliffe Institute.¹⁵ Cappon also stayed with the Institute as long as he did because he enjoyed leading it and teaching, the extra financial benefits, and the prestige associated with the summer program.¹⁶

After half a dozen years, Cappon despaired about getting more Harvard faculty involved in it,¹⁷ even though he continued to attract many luminaries from archives, museums, historic preservation, and related fields.¹⁸ This was not a new issue for Cappon. In late 1956 he participated in a discussion about a proposal by Richard McCormick that Colonial Williamsburg offer an eight-week summer institute on restoration for history doctoral students. Cappon was concerned how such students could be recruited, since “only a very few professors of history have any knowledge of or interest in non-academic historical fields.” Cappon thought the idea had “merit,” “provided it is properly implemented & administered, avoids dilettantism, and keeps the students well occupied with sound historical concepts & interpretation.”¹⁹ Today, we might suspect that this situation has improved in history departments, as we have seen the birth of public history and the influence of digital humanities, but the degree to which historians have learned about the nature of archival work, for example, can be debated. Francis Blouin and William Rosenberg recently stated, “The archival divide thus reflects a division between divergent conceptual frameworks for understanding and using historical documentation. The days when historians and archivists considered themselves colleagues addressing problems of records with a common view of their historical significance has become part of archival history itself.”²⁰

When Radcliffe shifted the Institute to the Harvard Summer School, Cappon opted out,²¹ thinking “it would lose its character & individuality, & I would not want to be a part of the Summer School where Business comes before Education.”²² After Cappon turned down the Institute’s directorship, Radcliffe was unable to find a successor and the Institute was suspended for a year and never was reconvened.²³

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Change “it” to “the Institute” RJC

Cappon's teaching in institutes such as Radcliffe relates to his own scholarly writings. His long-contemplated and never finished book on historical manuscripts administration was partially shaped by his efforts to teach about this area.²⁴ His plans to produce this manuscript may have been delayed by his being offered in late 1955 the directorship of the summer institute at Radcliffe, a responsibility that he worried would be difficult to fit in with his other duties at the Institute of Early American History and Culture. Cappon ultimately resolved this by conceiving of it as an opportunity to do other research in the rich resources of Harvard and other repositories.²⁵ Indeed, it took Cappon only little over a week, over the Christmas holidays, to consider and then secure approvals for him to assume responsibility for the summer institute.

Cappon was a master in participating in and organizing short-term institutes and workshops, drawing on his amiable connections with many notable scholars and professionals (such as Ernst Posner and Walter Muir Whitehill). Cappon's own enthusiasm was contagious, and within a month he had secured most of his speakers for his initial summer program in 1956,²⁶ a veritable Who's Who in the field.²⁷ Working from his own knowledge and with his many professional contacts in Boston, Cappon put together an impressive array of speakers and fieldtrips to archival repositories, museums, and historic sites.²⁸

Cappon's Era. Cappon lived and worked in an era when the education of archivists was haphazard, something we need to remember when we evaluate his career. His emphasis on historical manuscripts and the role of history were not outdated in his era but right at the cusp of forward thinking. In the Spring 1955 SAA Council meeting, he participated in a discussion about certification for archivists, noting in his diary, that

the “Best hope for professional recognition is, I think, thru training in Posner’s course at Amer. University in coop. with National Archives.”²⁹ Cappon was not to give up on this idea. In 1961, while attending an SAA professional standards committee to elect fellows, Cappon remembers that, “We discussed the need for *one* outstanding academic archival training program, *i.e.* to continue American University’s program which Ernst Posner, now retiring, has made distinguished. The administration of Amer. Univ. has not fully appreciated its significance & prestige.”³⁰ Cappon was especially concerned about this as he watched short-term archival education institutes begin to proliferate, with new offerings that he viewed as much weaker or not as well situated to offer rigorous training.³¹ When SAA was asked, in the early 1960s, to endorse these summer and other institutes, SAA declined but instead started to develop principles for archival education.³²

As time rolled on, Cappon saw the shift of archival education away from history programs to library schools. At the 1968 SAA annual meeting, he attended a session on education and training of archivists with papers by Phil Mason, Frank Evans, Herbert Angel, and Wilfred Smith, noting, “Too few of present courses are correlated with academic curricula for the M.A. (preferably in history), even via courses on historical method. Since it seems unlikely to achieve this status, Dr. Ernst Posner proposed a liaison with certain notable library schools without selling out to librarians in terms of archival principles. This was a surprise proposal from Posner, who proposed a feasibility study financed by Amer. Council on Lib’y Resources. The proposal will undoubtedly be controversial among archivists.”³³ It was.

Cappon also lived and worked when historical research methods and the nature of historical sources, such as manuscripts and archives, were active topics in undergraduate

and graduate history courses. He attended a 1955 graduate course on the literature of American history at the College of William and Mary, reporting that, [ok RJC](#)“I was present to talk on historical manuscripts in the U.S., their relation to archival materials, and problems involved in using them. We met in the search room of the Colonial Williamsburg Archives Department, so that the students could see various examples of manuscript records and understand better their physical characteristics.”³⁴ These kinds of visits to history courses were a regular activity. The next year, he appeared in a William and Mary undergraduate course, Topics in American History, lecturing about archives and manuscripts. Cappon had the class meet again in the archives and records offices, where an exhibit of documents was assembled. “I talked to the students on MSS as compared with printed books and on the nature of archival material in relation to historical MSS in general,” Cappon jots in his diary.³⁵

Cappon also incorporated lectures about archives into his own historical seminars, as seen in this 1968 diary entry: “In my seminar this afternoon I spent over an hour discussing archival principles (provenance and respect pour les fonds) and applying them to archives of government and to family papers or personal manuscripts; and I tried to show why the historical scholar needs to understand these principles, as well as the archivist. With the aid of the chart I prepared, I pointed out, in the case of institutions, public or private, the relation between administrative creation & use of records and the scholar’s eventual use of them (i.e. those of enduring value) for research thru the good offices of the archivist. I raised some questions about the collector’s collection of MSS., e.g., whether they are archives. This served to emphasize the *organic* nature of a collector’s collection, encouraged by the dealer in mss.”³⁶ This reflection suggests

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Cappon's understanding of the unifying principles of archives and records in a way that some do not today. We know, of course, that there were fissures in the teaching about historical research methods even evident within Cappon's lifetime, as ably demonstrated by what is arguably still the best study of the teaching of historical research methods, Rundell's *In Pursuit of American History*, published in 1970.³⁷ A generation later, archivists and historians were lamenting that such teaching had all but disappeared.³⁸

Cappon explored many options for the Institute of Early American History and Culture to contribute to the education of historians and archivists. Although the IEAHC was focused on post-doctoral study opportunities, Cappon considered the viability of the IEAHC running a MA program.³⁹ This was part of his life-long interest in seeing a history-based, rigorous graduate education program preparing individuals for careers as archivists, manuscript curators, and documentary editors. In the late 1950s, one of the IEAHC fellows, Bill Towner, later director of the Newberry Library in Chicago, proposed a masters degree in association with the IEAHC focusing on "editing, archives & mss., and historic preservation, tied to an M.A. degree in history, by cooperation of the College, CW, the National Park Service, & the Institute," with the Institute "direct[ing] the students who chose historical editing."⁴⁰ This program was funded for the 1959 academic year, and the planning group determined that it would focus on three areas: "manuscripts & archives; rare books & special collections; and bibliography & reference work."⁴¹ This was a proposal ahead of its time for graduate archival education, but it never got off the ground.

Cappon was also energetic in his efforts to organize documentary editors in order to strengthen their education, standards, and funding. In late 1958 Cappon confides to his

diary that he and two of his IEAHC fellows, Bill Towner and James Smith, had been thinking for two years of convening a group of historical editors during the American Historical Association annual meeting. Now they were taking action to do it, sending out invitations to a “small group.”⁴² What consistently guided Cappon was his commitment to excellent scholarship, and his belief that such scholarship could be presented in a way that not only informed other scholars but also the educated public (although the notion of “adult education” as done at the Newberry had little appeal).⁴³ Perhaps this was a cynicism brought on by old age, or, more likely, out of despair about other stillborn efforts to develop substantial graduate education for individuals wishing to pursue careers in archives, documentary editing, and other public history venues.

Publishing as Teaching. Cappon considered publishing as being vital to the education of archivists and manuscripts curators. When he was serving his term as SAA President, Cappon was involved in an effort to secure a foundation grant of \$100,000 to bolster the work of the Society, especially by hiring professional staff rather than relying on volunteers, and by doing “more in the field of publication, beyond its quarterly magazine.”⁴⁴ Cappon also worked, ultimately failing, to transform the SAA secretariat into a professor in archival studies.⁴⁵ However, more importantly, Cappon was convinced that the new professional archivist published less than did the historian-archivist laboring before the formation of the SAA and the establishment of the National Archives (a topic he tried to deal with in his 1957 SAA Presidential address).⁴⁶ Cappon fought back against every effort working against archivists writing and publishing about their field and institutions, extending this perspective even to include the annual reports of government archives. When he heard from Morris Radoff, the Maryland State

Archivist, asking him if he should continue his annual report since they are expensive and the trend in the profession seems to be not to publish them, Cappon urged him to continue publishing the reports: “Every archivist has an obligation of this kind that should not be minimized or disregarded.”⁴⁷

Cappon was especially committed to textbook publications assisting the archival profession to set a baseline of knowledge about its work. In the early 1960s, Cappon served as a reader for T. R. Schellenberg’s second major book on archival work, a volume many in the archival profession criticized because of the influence of library and information science on the author. He found the writing style “heavily factual, with a kind of German stolidness that is characteristic of Schellenberg.” It is “unduly heavy,”⁴⁸ as well as possessing a “certain Germanic ponderousness & over-organization. Nowhere does the light-touch take over to delight & relieve the reader.”⁴⁹ He had been much more positive about Schellenberg’s *Modern Archives*, published a decade before. Cappon calls it the “first American archival textbook.” Cappon wanted to make a contribution here, and he ultimately spent a quarter-of-a-century trying to achieve this (without success).

Cappon was a master editor, an expert on scholarly publishing, and an astute critic of others’ work. Yet, he failed to produce a basic volume that could be used in teaching archival administration; although his struggles are no different than that of many other scholars laboring to finish scholarly projects, it did impact his profile in the archival field, where book authorship, then and now, carries enormous weight. We know that as early as 1954 he was planning to write a text on historical manuscripts administration playing off of his guest lectures in Ernst Posner’s summer institute and the Radcliffe institute.⁵⁰ At this time Cappon was working on the “problems” and “collecting” of English “historical

manuscripts,” noting that English scholars had done more research on these topics.⁵¹

From time to time, he re-read portions of his manuscript, fretting about how long overdue he was in finishing.⁵² In 1958 and 1959, Cappon works on and receives a grant from the American Philosophical Society to support his visiting archives in Great Britain to “assemble . . . information on their policies & programs of collecting, preserving, & arranging mss. This would be comparable to data I have long gathered on Amer. Repositories in connection with my archival work & my summer lectures at American University & at Radcliffe. I have a book outlined on the subject & a few chapters drafted. The content might be considerably enriched by including facts, opinions, & illustrations from British practice.”⁵³

The trip to the United Kingdom may have been the happiest time in Cappon’s scholarly life, as he was able to devote full time both to research and to travel. Leaving on May 28, 1959, Cappon and his wife devoted the first part of the trip to a leisurely cruise and then sightseeing in Paris, Chartres, and elsewhere in France and Spain until July 5th.⁵⁴ Starting on July 16th in Cambridge, Cappon began a series of visits to university archives, county records offices, and other English repositories.⁵⁵ Here is a typical description of a visit to the Gloucester County Record Office:

Then I called at the Gloucester County Record Office & was received cordially by Archivist Irvine Gray, who used to work with Mr. Emmison in Essex. When Gray found I was from Virginia, he recalled Frank Berkeley’s visit a few years ago. He has about a half dozen young person on his staff. They work in congested quarters, some distance removed from the records filed in several rooms in the Shire Hall which the building housing the records adjoins. A brief

description of every collection is prepared as soon as possible and indexing of content from this 'schedule,' especially of 'unofficial' family papers. What Mr. Gray needs most is more efficient housing of the records.”⁵⁶

Cappon continued touring through England, with side trips to Edinburgh and Glasgow, returning to London on August 31st,⁵⁷ then back to Williamsburg on September 13th.⁵⁸

Whatever momentum Cappon gained from this research trip was quickly lost. A year and a half later, he vowed in his diary “to spend more time out of the office during the coming months, reading & writing,” indicating that he had an outline, two completed chapters, ample lecture notes from the Radcliffe program, adding “I am sure I have the makings of a book and Princeton University Press has already expressed an interest in it.”⁵⁹ Cappon used his diary to prod himself into action, revealing for us what his book was about, how it tied to his educational ventures, and how he thought it could be used.

Cappon wrote, [ok RJC](#), “I went through my notes on the collecting of MSS and autographs by the private collector and followed up some references in the *Autograph Collectors' Journal*, now *Manuscripts* magazine. With the aid of the outline I developed at Radcliffe in my sessions on Historical MSS, I should be prepared to write this first draft of a chapter without much additional preparation.”⁶⁰ Two weeks later, Cappon records how he was on track with his work on the book: “At the Institute all morning working on Chapter 4 of my book on Historical Manuscripts. The subject of this chapter is The Private Collector and the Public Interest. Many persons collect books & manuscripts. What collections are of value to scholars & research and how can they be preserved intact or be gotten into a research library to increase their potentiality for scholarship?”⁶¹

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After this brief burst of activity, Cappon stalled again on the book. In early summer 1963, he writes in his journal that he “blew the dust off my notes for a chapter on The Private Collector and the Public Interest in the book on Historical Manuscripts which has been brewing intermittently during the past several years,” a project constantly delayed by his responsibilities as director of the Institute of Early American History and Culture. He notes that he has three chapters “in hand,” reassuring himself that he thinks he has “something constructive and useful to present, which archivists and perhaps some historians would find interesting and useful.”⁶² Cappon tackled one chapter, acknowledging that it was “slow going,” working on it for a few days before he ceased activity for another year.⁶³

Cappon’s frustration with his lack of progress on the book continued to grow, and in early 1964 he proposed a two-month travel sabbatical to Europe where he could draw on his extensive notes and write.⁶⁴ As he got closer to the departure for Europe, Cappon carefully assembled his notes and reference files, confident that between these materials and the working outline in his head that he could complete an entire first draft of the book. “It will be something of an experiment,” he thought.⁶⁵ By mid-June he was settled in with a mountain view in Switzerland, inspired to finish the book.⁶⁶ Day after day Cappon wrote on the book, making steady progress while lamenting how slow it seemed to be going.⁶⁷ Cappon wrote steadily, indicating that “Some new ideas, perhaps, have emerged from concentration & writing.”⁶⁸ In fact, he thought he had finally hit upon the solution to finishing the book: “There is something to be said for writing a first draft without benefit of reference works close at hand. Consulting them for details that can be supplied later just as well interrupts one’s train of thought and slows down the whole process of

writing, which is difficult enough under the best conditions. Isolation is highly desirable, which I have her, but with some opportunity for some diversion to refresh the mutual processes.”⁶⁹ Cappon was struggling, then, with what all academics and scholars face, how to bring to a conclusion long-term research and writing projects. That Cappon had proved himself to be very astute in advising others how to do this was not translating well to his own work.

One wonders why Cappon never finished the book. But then you begin to understand how little time he had for it. In July, for example, Cappon completed an appendix for the second chapter, completed chapters 8 (“Canons of Accessibility and Use”) and 9 (“Physical Problems of Preservation and Documentary Reproduction”), and began chapter 10.⁷⁰ With a quick break of two days of research at the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research,⁷¹ Cappon finished chapter eleven (“Works of Reference and Their Relative Writing”) before setting sail back to the United States.⁷² While travelling back by ship, Cappon continues to work on chapter 12.⁷³ These months in Europe were the most concentrated period of time for Cappon in writing the book. By late September 1964, he was again sneaking in odd moments of research or writing on the manuscript. While in Charlottesville for a meeting of the University Press of Virginia, Cappon took advantage of his time there for reading the W.R. Benjamin journal, *The Collector*, “which is quite unique in providing first-hand information on dealers & collectors, prices & sales, and attitudes *re* rare books & manuscripts during a half-century & more.”⁷⁴ He did not resume work on the book for another few months, working on a conference paper on an unrelated topic.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, he had a number of presses – including the University of Chicago Press, University of North Carolina Press, and

Princeton University Press, interested in the book, although he believed a contract was premature.⁷⁶ Perhaps his reluctance to secure a contract was because of a fear of committing himself to a deadline.

His struggles with the book manuscript continued, threatening to absorb his retirement years. In early 1968, Cappon recommits himself to the book, noting that he only had two chapters to finish.⁷⁷ He began doing additional research on whatever he could find about the English archival and manuscript collecting practices⁷⁸, while working on some revisions of earlier chapters.⁷⁹ As he worked on the manuscript, Cappon's confidence returned, deciding that the book would be titled "Manuscripts and History."⁸⁰ Cappon, once again, was working regularly on the book.⁸¹ The progress was substantial, broken only by occasional mishaps, such as when he was on his way to Richmond to do research at the Virginia State Library and discovers that all his notes on one of the chapters were missing.⁸² Nevertheless, Cappon was buoyed around this time by the possibility of Alfred Knopf, his long-term friend, publishing the book, and Cappon continued working on it.⁸³

Hopes for finishing the book were dashed as other projects and interests emerged. Cappon's resolve to finish the book was renewed when he went to the Newberry as a Fellow in 1969, a research library stocked with rare and specialized materials ideally suited for his work.⁸⁴ A month after arriving there, Cappon records this in his diary:

Today begins my fourth week at the Newberry Library. I feel that I have made considerable progress in my research in the English sources for facts & ideas on the beginnings & early development of antiquarian (historical) pursuits, the use of ms. materials and collecting of them by antiquaries before institutional libraries

became a significant & conscious element in the work of scholars & laymen.

Because it is a fascinating subject the temptation is strong to pursue too many byways & spend too much time on research for only one chapter of the book.

Thus far the Newberry has everything I want to examine.⁸⁵

Cappon found the resources on English manuscripts and their administration so rich, that he struggled to set parameters for the story he wanted to tell.⁸⁶ Discovering the extent of the information that he did, Cappon detours from the book and did a separate essay on English manuscript collecting,⁸⁷ also wanting to do a comparative essay on American manuscript collectors.⁸⁸ These new interests delayed the book; in early 1971, he describes his essay on the English collectors as “long-suffering.”⁸⁹ Eventually, he put aside the essay, dredging it up again when contacted by Walter Muir Whitehill, who was assembling a group of essays in honor of Clifford K. Shipton, and who wanted an essay from Cappon. Bill Towner suggested Cappon send along his “Collectors and Keepers” essay. In his diary, Cappon notes that he had almost forgotten about this essay.⁹⁰

Over the many years Cappon labored on the book, a few of the chapters appeared in professional and scholarly venues. Invited to give a talk at the Massachusetts Historical Society on a topic of his choosing, he determined to talk about the autograph dealer Walter Benjamin with access to Benjamin’s business records so that he could incorporate this into his book.⁹¹ When he notes these spin-offs in his diary, Cappon always seems hopeful that he was on the verge of completing the book. In early 1956, after having sent his essay on historical manuscripts as archives to the *American Archivist*, Cappon also sent a copy of the essay to his good friend Phillip Brooks for comment: “I told him that the essay is really the draft, with some revision, of a chapter for a book on

collecting and arranging historical manuscripts which has been on my mind for some time, and was first prompted by the lectures which I gave in Dr. Ernst Posner's summer archives course at American University in conjunction with the National Archives, 1949-53. Perhaps I can give some time to the book this summer while I am in Cambridge, with the advantages of Widener Library."⁹² This particular essay, in fact, became a minor classic in the field, drawing positive comments over the years. In 1966, he notes this in his diary: "I received a heartening letter of praise from H.G. Jones, state archivist of N. Carolina, concerning my article on 'Historical Manuscripts as Archives,' published in the *Amer. Archivist* several years ago. He finds [it] indispensable for the course on archives which he gives. He says he has heard a report that I am writing a book on historical MSS & he declares he will buy 1/2 doz. copies! Well, I should finish the manuscript; getting a publisher will be no problem, I'm sure."⁹³ Today, we are thankful that some portions of it were published.

Cappon was easily distracted from the bigger project of the book as he researched more deeply to support it. In early 1970 he acquired a typed copy of an 1857 document from the British Sessional Papers of the House of Commons about the editing of early English records. Cappon planned to edit the report for the *American Archivist*.⁹⁴ Ultimately, he changes his mind about the *American Archivist* because this journal "is badly behind schedule."⁹⁵ In the process of shopping this around, Cappon did receive some positive feedback about it.⁹⁶ Around the same time, he received an invitation from the director of the American Antiquarian Society to give a talk in October 1971 on a topic of his choosing, and Cappon pulled out a section of his book manuscript for this purpose: "I have been thinking about the common interests and cooperation among American

antiquaries during the quarter-century of ca. 1790-1815 – e.g. Hutchins, Jed. Morse, Ebenezer Hazard, Jeremy Belknap, et al., engaged in diverse, though related, fields under the general rubric of philosophy, natural & moral, and imbued with great pride in their country. Whether these factors may have the makings of an essay remains to be seen.”⁹⁷

Cappon rarely found time for uninterrupted work on the book, experimenting with different locations and time.⁹⁸ He would work on the book for a while, set it aside, and then come back to it when some invitation came to him to speak. In the Spring of 1972 he was invited to give a talk in August on “modern historical editing” as part of the two-week seminar on historical editing sponsored by the National Historical Publications Commission and the Center for Historical and Textual Editing of the University of Virginia. This is a description of the concluding luncheon of the seminar: “This engagement has set me thinking about the chapter on this subject, not yet written, for my long-time projected book on Collectors and Keepers concerning archives and MSS., their collection, preservation, and accessibility, in the U.S. My plan has been to include two historical chapters, one on Great Britain, the other on the U.S.; but they must be streamlined in order to assure proper balance in the book. The complexity of the historical subject-matter, along with recent work on the Atlas, has delayed my accomplishment. I have rough drafts of most of the expository chapters and now I have the urge to write the draft of the chapter on historical editing.” He also adds this note: “I have always hoped that Alfred Knopf would publish this book, and I believe he will – but Alfred is nearing 80 and will not live forever!”⁹⁹ When Cappon pens this in his diary, he was up to his neck in the Early American Atlas project and would be for another three years.

With the atlas project completed by early 1976, Cappon found himself “turning his thoughts” to finishing the book. Cappon notes the appearance of Ken Duckett’s *Modern Manuscripts* in 1975, presented as a “comprehensive manual.” He does not see his book as a manual. “Rather I would give the subject a broader treatment correlating historical with archival concepts & problems.”¹⁰⁰ Cappon reread his manuscript, noting that he had published one chapter of it (“Historical Manuscripts as Archives” in the *American Archivist*), concluding that it needed little revision and then adding, “It has always seemed to me that I should have a chapter or two containing a historical survey of collecting & preserving manuscripts in Great Britain & the U.S. I have done considerable research on this subject.”¹⁰¹ In other words, how much more work did he really have to do to finish this book? Cappon very quickly discovered, upon closer review of the chapters and drafts, that there was considerably more work to be done.¹⁰² Even as he labored on earlier versions he kept becoming sidetracked with how to reuse earlier drafts to submit essays to journals, as the initial step to re-using it in the book.¹⁰³ Although in late September 1976 Cappon confides to his diary that he was engaged in a systematic examination of the *Papers* of the Bibliographic Society of America, 1906 onwards, to finish his supplemental research on American book and manuscript collectors and to complete the book, Cappon never moves any closer to completing the book manuscript.¹⁰⁴

Conclusion. Lester Cappon was a significant figure in developing graduate archival education, perhaps not as pivotal a role as some individuals he worked with (most notably Ernst Posner and T. R. Schellenberg) but nevertheless a member of the core leadership in this aspect of the American archival community. So why are his

contributions not as well remembered today as some others? The easiest explanation may be that he never authored a major archives text, and his other major works, the editing of the Jefferson-Adams correspondence and the *Atlas of Early American History*, better secured his reputation in the historical but not the archival community. Cappon may be better known today since the publication of a core group of his archival essays in 2004, edited by myself. In this way, Cappon parallels what happened with Margaret Cross Norton, a long-time leader in the archives community and Illinois State Archivist, who also never authored a major text and was discovered only later when a collection of her essays were re-issued.¹⁰⁵ Possibly the manner in which he approached teaching also plays a factor in his legacy.

Cappon occasionally revealed his own philosophy about teaching. When reflecting on a course he was teaching on American history in the period 1789-1815, he jotted in his diary the following: "I never have written lectures verbatim to read to a class. To my mind, that procedure is *not* teaching. Being under pressure, I find some advantage in the extra stimulus to mental organization of material. I am trying to talk to the students with a minimum of notes, in an informal fashion, not standing behind the desk; asking thru a question occasionally and trying to arouse their interest and increase their concentration."¹⁰⁶ How he viewed teaching was not all that different from how he saw scholarly writing. In observing the efforts to sharpen up Wilcomb Washburn's essay on Bacon's Rebellion for the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Cappon notes, "Like most young scholars, however, Wid is still inexperienced in organizing his wealth of material & too prone to quote at length, instead of telling the story as much as possible in how own words."¹⁰⁷ Cappon's teaching was played out on a smaller stage, but his influence was

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felt through his mentoring and the close collegial relationships he built with a small group of academics, archivists, documentary editors, and historical agency administrators.

However, I may be over-analyzing the reasons for Cappon's neglect today. If we acknowledge the lack of writing about teaching approaches in archival education and the still weak interest in the history of our profession by the present archival generation, it should be no great surprise why Cappon is wrapped in the cobwebs of the past.¹⁰⁸ He deserves better, and we would be better for understanding his ideas and struggles alike to establish a modern American archival community.

Endnotes

¹ An earlier version of this ~~chapter~~ essay was given at the Association for Library and Information Science annual meeting held in San Diego, January 2011.

² Frank G. Burke, "The Future Course of Archival Theory in the United States," *American Archivist* 44 (Winter 1981): 40-46. Cappon's last essay, published posthumously in 1982, was a response to Burke; see Lester J. Cappon, "What, Then, Is There to Theorize About?," *American Archivist* 45 (Winter 1982): 19-25.

³ I am not the first to suggest this; see Jacqueline Goggin, "That We Shall Truly Deserve the Title of 'Profession': The Training and Education of Archivists, 1930-1960," *American Archivist* 47 (Summer 1984): 243-254.

⁴ June 23, 1954, Cappon Diaries, Lester J. Cappon Papers, College of William and Mary. The Institute was then under the direction of Earle Newton, and Cappon presented a similar lecture the next year to 10 students, mostly "high school teachers who think they may want to get into historical work"; June 28, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

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⁵ The report by Earle Newton, the first Institute director and the former director of the Vermont Historical Society and Old Sturbridge Village and then editor of *American Heritage*, describes seeking to find younger professionals in order to support the shift from antiquarians and from volunteers. The course used historical and theoretical approaches, comparative study, and case analysis featuring lectures, assigned readings, lab or fieldwork; and institutional visits and field trips. Report by Earle W. Newton, submitted on October 19, 1954, Radcliffe College Archives, Institute on Historical and Archival Management 1954-1960. RG XIII A Series 2, Box 1.

⁶ W.K. Jordan, Pres, Radcliffe, to Earle W. Newton, January 14, 1952, Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 1.

⁷ E. W. Newton to W.K. Jordan, February 27, 1952, Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 1.

⁸ W. K. Jordan to Newton, February 10, 1954, Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 1.

⁹ Ultimately, Newton was relieved of his duties as Institute director, struggling with getting students to apply. In Newton's report on the 1955 Institute, he hinted at the difficulties he was facing, namely that "students are still guided in their selection of their professional career by the example and advice of their teachers, whose thinking in the historical field is limited to college teaching of history. This is quite the opposite of the situation in the field of political science, where teachers direct their students toward public administration as well as the teaching of government. It will take some time, it is clear, to influence the teachers, and through them, their students." Newton urged support for field trips to Washington, D.C., New York City, and other places where historical agencies were plentiful, as well incorporation of material in the Harvard-Radcliffe curriculum. E. R. Newton 1955 report, Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 2.

¹⁰ August 3, 1958, Cappon Diaries.

¹¹ June 29, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

¹² The Report is dated August 6, 1956, Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 3. Subsequent reports by Cappon stress the focus on history. In his 1957 report, he wrote, "The study of historical records in the traditional sense is basic, it seems to me, to an understanding of all these related fields of documentation and interpretation. . . ." He also wrote, "The tangible results of the Institute are not readily seen, but I believe it is contributing to improvement of professional standards in all these related historical fields. An increasing number of jobs are opening up and the persons responsible for filling them seek individuals with training." Of the students that year, 14 students in all, seven had a special interest in archives and manuscripts, four in museums, two in historical societies, and one exploring various other options. The report is "Institute on Historical and Archival Management. Report of the Director to the President of Radcliffe College, on the Fourth Annual Session," Radcliffe, RG XIII A Series 2, Box 4. Cappon was especially upset from the beginning that he could not capture the interest of the Harvard history department; May 16, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

¹³ Cappon, reflecting on records management, notes that this is not a topic "in which I am not enthusiastically interested but which is closely related to archives and therefore must be given consideration." Commenting on Robert Shiff, president of the National Records Management Council, and his presentation, Cappon further reflects, "Since the records managers are concerned mostly with the bulk of the records (modern records), how to save money by disposing of them, and how to control the creation of them, attention was focused largely on technical problems. The small residue of records worth saving are

‘historical,’ but the records managers are seldom historians or historically trained to pass judgment on the records to be preserved.” Cappon considers this as “one of our less interesting days”; July 17, 1956, Cappon Diaries. Could such topics be made more interesting? Yes, according to Cappon, if there was a connection to the historical issues. Vernon Tate, discoursing about reprographics, made “this technical subject very dynamic because of his historical perspective and his ability to correlate the broader factors, thus comparing theory and practice”; July 18, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁴ August 2, 1956, Cappon Diaries. Similarly, on the last day of the 1960 Institute, the last time he taught the Institute, Cappon records in his diary the following discussion: “History as the *raison d’être* for all the activities, methods, programs, objectives, etc. we have covered in the course, and advocated again that the archivist & curator must be genuinely interested in reading, if not writing, history and keep abreast of historical knowledge in order to do his job intelligently”; August 4, 1960, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁵ Back in Cambridge for the first day of his third stint as director of the Radcliffe institute, Cappon reviews the course, then “relating it to the objectives of historical research and the interpretation of history in written & other forms. I said I hoped we would not overlook the fact that archival & MS work, museums and restorations, are to enrich our knowledge and appreciation of history, in part through the writing of history from the sources. Let us avoid obscuring the end with the means; methods & techniques are important, but they must not become ends in themselves for the intelligent archivist, curator, et al.” June 23, 1958, Cappon Diaries. Remarking on a session about presidential libraries done by his good friend Phillip Brooks, Cappon remarks, “Considerable discussion developed about the function of presidential libraries. Wendell Garrett

suggested that they be dangerous in reinforcing & perpetuating the ‘presidential myth,’ glorifying the office & the men in it, depicting each of them as a dirt farmer, a man of the people, etc. Garrett seemed to imply that historians are objective in writing history but museum curators et al can’t be in presenting it to the public. I remarked that some historians aren’t as objective as they imagine themselves to be & that the ‘myth’ is a part of our history too”; June 26, 1958, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁶ October 3, November 9, 1956, November 15, 1957, Cappon Diaries. In a meeting with Kenneth Chorley, among other things approving Cappon’s re-appointment for the Radcliffe institute, Cappon notes that “KC regards the Radcliffe job as a tribute to me and a prestige item for the Institute of Early Amer. History & Culture”; November 23, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁷ January 5, 1960, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁸ The 1960 institute, what would be his last hurrah in this regard, went without a hitch, covering the same broad range of topics and including a somewhat changed but still quite impressive set of speakers – Walter Muir Whitehill, Ernst Posner, H.G. Jones, John W. Porter of IBM, Clifford K. Shipton, Robert W. Lovett, historian George Gibb, Lyman Butterfield, Bill Towner, Vernon Tate, Jim Rodabaugh, Fred Rath, and Jim Short; June 24-29, 1960, Cappon Diaries. Cappon had great success in getting speakers, at least those he wanted back, to return for additional presentations at the Radcliffe Institute, January 3, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁹ November 7, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

²⁰ Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 208.

²¹ In early December 1960, Cappon heard from Radcliffe President Mary Bunting that the Harvard Summer School would take over the archival institute, but Cappon was skeptical since “I don’t believe the Summer School wants to be burdened with a deficit operation”; December 2, 5, 1960, Cappon Diaries.

²² December 4, 1960, Cappon Diaries.

²³ December 26, 1960 and February 9, 1961. In the latter diary entry, Cappon notes, “I am sorry to see it suspended (and probably ended) after 7 annual sessions. The Archival Institute was experimental at the start, under Earle Newton for the first two years, and was always a unique course in its comprehensive coverage, field trips, and work load after I took it over and made it a more intensive program during 6, instead of 8, weeks. But I cannot spend any more summer (& winter) time on it.”

²⁴ In 1954 Cappon notes, for example, that he is working on a “manuscript on Historical Manuscripts which I plan to complete for publication as a book, if I can find a publisher. Much of the material has taken concrete form through my lectures was in the summer Archives Institute of American University (Ernst Posner’s course) and this year in the Harvard-Radcliffe Institute, directed by Earle W. Newton”; August 10, 1954, Cappon Diaries.

²⁵ December 28, 1955, January 5, 6, 7, and 9, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

²⁶ February 23, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

²⁷ Waldo G. Leland discussed the origins of the archival profession, J. Franklin Jameson and the founding of the National Archives, and his own career; Ernst Posner reviewed archival theory and administration in the United States and Europe; Stephen Riley and Lyman Butterfield discussed the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Adams Family

Papers project at that venerable institution; Robert W. Lovett, of the Harvard School of Business, discussed the nature of business archives and their historical value; Christopher Crittenden reviewed the history, nature, and administration of state government archives; Oliver W. Holmes considered the history and function of the National Archives; Cappon himself spoke about historical manuscripts and their relationship to archives, their collecting by both public and private institutions (and individuals), and their arrangement and description; Lyman Butterfield reviewed the development of historical editing and the current projects; Vernon Tate presented on photoduplication and microfilming; Don McNeill reviewed what was happening with state and local historical societies; Frederick Rath taught about historic preservation and the work of the National Park Service.; and Ed Alexander discussed historical restoration and the work of Colonial Williamsburg; June 26, 27, 28, 29, July 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, and 31 1956, Cappon Diaries.

²⁸ These included, in 1956, the Massachusetts State Archives, Suffolk County Court House, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, the Adams family homestead, Essex Institute, the Peabody Museum, the Salem Maritime National Historic Site, the Saugis Iron Works Restoration, and Old Sturbridge Village; July 12, July 23, 25, 26, 30, and August 1, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

²⁹ March 20, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

³⁰ June 12, 1961, Cappon Diaries.

³¹ In 1961 Cappon received a telephone call from Clement Silvesto of AASLH, about Denver's plans for a summer archival institute, wanting to know if Cappon would co-

ordinate it. Cappon informed him that Denver does not have the personnel or institutions to support such an institute; October 18, 1961, Cappon Diaries.

³² Attending the SAA Committee on Professional Standards at the AHA meeting, Cappon reflects, “We agreed that the Society should not endorse *any* archival training program as such (one at Univ. of Denver is under contemplation); but the Soc. should have a statement of principles in print”; December 28, 1961, Cappon Diaries.

³³ October 2, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

³⁴ October 6, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

³⁵ October 3, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

³⁶ November 12, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

³⁷ Walter Rundell, Jr., In *Pursuit of the American Past: Research and Training in the United States* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970).

³⁸ See, two reports on this published as “Historians and Archivists: Educating the Next Generation,” *American Archivist* 56 (Fall 1993): 714-729.

³⁹ Feb 7, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁰ October 13, 15, 1958, Cappon Diaries.

⁴¹ December 18, 1958, Cappon Diaries.

⁴² December 2, 1958, Cappon Diaries.

⁴³ March 28, 1978, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁴ December 18, 1956; see also the entries for December 29, 1956 and January 2, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁵ May 22 and May 29, 1957, Cappon Diaries. The proposal was submitted to the Rockefeller Foundation with the following budget for the American University-SAA

partnership project -- \$28,500 for office (including \$15,000 salary); \$20,000 for 5 archival fellowships in National Archives; \$20,000 for regional 4 week summer training course, 2 per year; and \$11,500 for research and publication. The proposal requested \$80,000 for the first year, \$90,000 for second year for next four years, for a total of \$440,000. Meeting with the Rockefeller Foundation, Cappon was informed that it was heavily committed to international projects, and that the "SAA's small income is a drawback" and that in talking with other foundations that he should stress the "archival training" component. June 2, 13, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁶ September 25, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁷ May 11, 1961, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁸ January 12, 14, 1963, Cappon Diaries.

⁴⁹ January 22 and February 2, 1963, Cappon Diaries. Ultimately, he advised the University of Chicago Press that the manuscript needed serious reworking, being "unnecessarily elementary, excessive in verbiage, repetitious, and stolid in a Germanic manner." Cappon also thought that Schellenberg "neglects the influence of the historians on the rise of the archival profession"; February 5, 1963, Cappon Diaries. Apparently, the press took Cappon's assessment seriously, for shortly after he records this in his diary: "Columbia Univ. Press asked me to read T.R. Schellenberg's MS on Public & Private Manuscripts, but I declined because I had read it for Univ. of Chicago Press last winter & found it not publishable"; September 6, 1963, Cappon Diaries. Cappon had first learned of this book in 1958 and was reminded of it again in 1960 in a conversation with Schellenberg, using it as motivation to try to finish his own book; December 2 1958 and January 5, 1960. This book, *The Management of Archives*, was

published by Columbia University Press in 1965. Cappon had reviewed favorably Schellenberg's earlier book, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* in *The Library Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Jan., 1958), pp. 66-67. He wrote, "This important book could not have been written twenty years ago by an American archivist, or hardly ten years ago, for that matter. It is irrefutable evidence of the rapid advancement of the archival profession in the United States during a single generation." (p. 66).

⁵⁰ August 10, 1954, Cappon Diaries.

⁵¹ August 11, 1954, Cappon Diaries.

⁵² July 2, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

⁵³ October 23, 1958, February 12, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁴ May 28-July 5, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁵ July 16, 20-22, 24-25, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁶ July 28, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁷ August 4 to 31, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁸ September 1, 6, 13, 1959, Cappon Diaries.

⁵⁹ January 3, 1962, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁰ January 4, 1962, Cappon Diaries.

⁶¹ January 13, 1962, Cappon Diaries.

⁶² June 13, 1963, Cappon Diaries.

⁶³ June 17, 22, 29, 1963, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁴ January 14, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁵ May 31, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁶ June 2, 9, 15, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁷ June 16, 17, 18, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁶⁸ June 24, 25, 1964, Cappon Diaries .

⁶⁹ July 2, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁰ July 6, 7, 10, 17, 26, 29, 30, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷¹ August 11, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷² August 14 and September 4 and 5, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷³ September 10, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁴ September 26, 1964, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁵“Now that I have completed my paper for the AHA, I have resumed note-taking from the file of *The Collector*, ed. By Walter R. Benjamin, autograph dealer, 1890-96, to supply additional material for the chapter on ‘The Role of the Dealer’ in my book on Historical Manuscripts”; December 10, 1964, Cappon Diaries. He was still working on this publication seven months later, discovering rich information about manuscript and autograph collecting; July 1 and 8, 1965, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁶ March 11, 1965, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁷ February 19, 20 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁸ February 21, 23, March 3, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁷⁹ February 24, 26, 27 1968, Cappon Diaries. By the end of February, he was asking colleagues to read sections of the manuscript; February 29, March 5, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁰ February 25, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁸¹ March 15, 19, 28, May 16, 25, 27, 29, 31, June 5, 7, 8, 1968, Cappon Diaries. For example, Cappon describes how he was working on the chapter comparing the

development of manuscripts collecting in the United States and Britain: “To see the evolution more clearly, I am compiling a chart with parallel columns for Gt. Brit. & the U.S., chronological year by year since 1900. It reveals notable shifts from one country to the other in activity & accomplishment in archives & MSS. To my knowledge such a comparative study has not previously been made”; May 15, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁸² June 3, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁸³ April 28, 29, 1969, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁴ September 8, 11, October 3, 20, 1969, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁵ September 29, 1969, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁶ October 22, 1969, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁷ November 1, 16, 1969, Cappon Diaries. He began considering where he could submit an essay on this topic, facing a succession of rejections; January 28, February 10, March 26, 1970, Cappon Diaries. After considering several journals, he submitted it to the *Historical Journal* published by Cambridge University, although it was rejected, as it was from a number of other journals; June 1, 15, November 22, 26, 1970, January 20, 1971, Cappon Diaries. In early 1970, Cappon reflects that he was learning a lot about British public records during the first half of the 19th century; March 10, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁸ April 22, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁸⁹ February 7, 1971, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁰ March 13, 1975, Cappon Diaries.

⁹¹ October 18, November 8, 1965, February 23, March 7, 10, 1966, Cappon Diaries.

Cappon completed footnotes on the Benjamin essay and sent it to the Massachusetts Historical Society editor, noting, “I sent a carbon copy to Mary Benjamin, who still

carries on the firm which her father (d. 1943) began in 1887. I asked her for corrections & suggestions,” June 28, 1966, Cappon Diaries. Cappon heard back from Mary Benjamin: “She is highly pleased with the essay; thinks I have caught the spirit of W.R.B., his sense of humor, his business ethics, and scholarly bent”; July 15, 1966, Cappon Diaries. He constantly drew on the manuscript, in its various stages of drafts, for talks. He gave a talk to the Hampton Historical Society on “Historical Sources as Authentic Documents,” concerning authenticity, forgery, and detection; October 27, 1966, Cappon Diaries.

⁹² January 18, 1956, Cappon Diaries. Latter Cappon notes that he received a letter from Philip Brooks wanting to incorporate Cappon’s essay on “Historical Manuscripts as Archives” into a book Brooks was writing about the nature of archives and their research use. “However,” Cappon notes, “I wrote this article as a chapter for a projected volume on Historical MSS: Their Collection and Arrangement, which I planned several years ago and for which I have drafts of two other chapters.” He told Brooks he could use the ideas without using the actual text; July 5, 1956, Cappon Diaries. Later he allowed Brooks to review the drafts of the various chapters of the book, April 3, 1965, and Cappon read some of Brooks’ manuscript, August 6, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

⁹³ November 7, 1966, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁴ February 17, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁵ March 27, 1970, Cappon Diaries. Cappon ultimately sent the essay to the American Philosophical Society for publication in its journal; April 3, 1970, Cappon Diaries. A few months later Cappon receives a letter from Philip Brooks concerning this essay. Brooks would like to see the essay published in the *American Archivist*, and he is writing

a letter to it's editor Harold Pinkett "to take advantage of an opportunity to include a long article, historical as well as archival in character & thus improve the magazine, now carrying too many snippets of 'how to do it.' However, the *Amer. Archivist* is badly behind schedule, and I doubt the ed. would accept a long piece"; May 19, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁶ Bishko "gave me exactly the kind of criticism I needed, as to the usefulness of these documentary volumes to present-day historians. Although the editing varies widely in quality – some of the editors were not abreast of the best scholarship of their own day – the Series is indispensable and was recently reprinted, thus enabling U Va to have a complete set. Julian feels I should give more emphasis to the *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, an important contribution to scholarship in spite of its shortcomings. The *MHB* is not all bad, nor the *RS* all good. He thought the Amer. Philoph Soc. might like the essay for its *Transactions*"; May 20, 1970, Cappon Diaries. By June he was working on incorporating the recommendations of Bishko and Phillip Brooks, with the possibility of submitting the essay to the *American Historical Review*; June 6, 1970, Cappon Diaries. Nearly a year later, Cappon records in his diary that the AHR rejected the essay "for reasons which seemed to me to be quite irrelevant to the main point of the essay. As it pertains to English documents and certain basic considerations in historical editing, I am planning to submit it to an English archival journal"; January 16, 1971, Cappon Diaries. Two days later he sent the essay to the Journal of the Society of Archivists, where it was accepted a couple of months later; January 18, March 22, 1971, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁷ December 10, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁸ June 8, 1970, Cappon Diaries.

⁹⁹ May 19, 1972, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰⁰ March 18, 1976, Cappon Diaries. What Cappon references is Kenneth W. Duckett, *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care, and Use* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1975). This volume, intended to do for historical manuscripts what Schellenberg's books did for archives, seems to have been a popular volume only for a brief time and now is rarely cited except as a historical text and as source for understanding the proliferation of archives manuals in the 1960s through the 1980s.

¹⁰¹ March 19, 1976, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰² March 27, 29, 1976, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰³ April 15, 21, June 30, 1976, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰⁴ September 20, 1976, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰⁵ See Erin Lawrimore, "Margaret Cross Norton: Defining and Redefining Archives and the Archival Profession," *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 44, no. 2 (May 2009): 183-200.

¹⁰⁶ April 18, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰⁷ April 10, 1956, Cappon Diaries.

¹⁰⁸ For my own sense of the problems with archivists' work on their own past, see my "The Failure or Future of American Archival History: A Somewhat Unorthodox View," *Libraries & Culture* 35 (Winter 2000): 141-154. I also have written extensively about teaching – such as "Unpleasant Things: Teaching Advocacy in Archival Education Programs," *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*. Vol. 5, Issue 1, Article 8 (2009), <http://repositories.cdlib.org/gseis/interactions/vol5/iss1/art8> -- but this is not a topic many in the field focus on.
