Lester J. Cappon and the Idea of the Public Scholar

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ABSTRACT: Lester J. Cappon (1900–1981) deserves a place as a pioneer public scholar. Over six decades, he worked as an historian, archivist, documentary editor, historical administrator, and president of archival and historical associations. Drawing on Cappon's rich personal papers, especially his diary kept from 1954 to 1981, this essay explores Cappon's legitimate claim to be a public historian and, in today's parlance, his modeling of the public scholar. Cappon's interest in reaching the public about the importance of historical understanding without compromising historical scholarship permeated every aspect of his career. His career serves as a model for librarians, archivists, and others in the information professions seeking to engage with a broader public audience about their professional mission.

KEYWORDS: Lester J. Cappon, Institute of Early American History and Culture, documentary editing, archives, public history

In the 1970s, toward the end of Lester J. Cappon's life, public history as a subdiscipline and topic for graduate study emerged. What initially attracted attention, at least from the archival community, was that this movement was an effort to deal with the declining employment opportunities for masters and doctoral graduates of history departments. Robert Kelley, one of public history's founders, affirms this in the inaugural issue of *The Public Historian*.[1] As did other early promoters of public history, Kelley saw this as more than just a means to save academic history departments, recognizing in this approach the means to promote the "historical method of analysis" as "an integral element in all decisionmaking."[2] Public history drew both criticism and praise from already-employed archivists and some librarians, especially as it came just as graduate archival education programs, in both history departments and library and information science schools, were emerging.[3]

It is not just in history that the concern for reaching the public emerged as a prominent objective. Archivists and librarians have focused on this as an

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issue over the past half century, producing manuals on public relations and exhibitions, among other things, as well as re-examining their audiences and even notions of their core mission. Archivists, for example, have redefined their mission to include a new focus on matters such as the underdocumented and the importance of social justice, and contemporary concerns such as climate change and political accountability.[4] More broadly, academics have tried to re-establish their purpose to produce scholarship based on reflection that reaches the educated public and policymakers, acknowledging that while there have always been academics with public followers (think of Robert Darnton, Doris Kearns Goodwin, Richard Hofstadter, and Jill Lepore), the rise of the corporate university model has created new pressures on faculty to create narrow, but fundable, research.[5] Cappon would have been pleased with the public scholars but not the academy's focus on the financial bottom line. Cappon's career and various scholarly and professional activities serve as a lesson for how librarians and archivists today can engage with the public and inform those outside of their fields about their mission.

Cappon (1900–1981) was a doctoral student of Arthur Schlesinger Sr., historian, archivist, documentary editor, director of the Early American Institute of Culture and History, and editor-in-chief of *The Atlas of Early American History*. Cappon also was president of the Southern Historical Association (1949), the Society of American Archivists (1957), and the Association of Documentary Editors (1979), one of a small group who took leadership positions in *both* archival and historical associations.[6] In reflecting on Cappon's career, it is difficult to *not* see him as a pioneer public historian and in today's parlance a public scholar. While he maintained connections to universities, and from time to time was interested in academic posts, Cappon fits within the parameters of what became public history, connected as he was to the early antecedents of the movement, such as the federal employment of historians, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the 1930s, historical societies and museums, historic preservation, and the archival community.[7] Cappon *was* a pioneer public historian, although he did not see himself this way. A careful evaluation of his work and views on the application of history in public settings, however, makes a connection between him and public history more apparent, as well as the balancing act many scholars face in their specialized research and their public ventures. We can learn a lot by investigating his activities.

In this examination of Cappon's career, I focus on his work as an archivist, documentary editor, historian, and administrator. I see him as

typical of what historians, archivists, and librarians were facing in the middle twentieth century as their fields matured, grew, and changed. Providing a historical perspective such as this also provides some lessons for us today as we continue to wrestle with how we relate to the public. The richness and candid nature of Cappon's personal papers and public writings, evident in the quotations and citations in this article, makes possible such an analysis.

Colonial Williamsburg and the Public Mission

One of the persistent themes found in Cappon's diary is his lamenting the popularization of history at Colonial Williamsburg (CW) and what he saw as its neglect of scholarly research. Despite a comfortable residence in the middle of the restored eighteenth-century town, an environment many historians might find stimulating, Cappon always seems to be interested in moving somewhere where historical research was taken more seriously.[8] Early in his diary, in 1954, Cappon reflected about lunch with Lyman Butterfield and Edward Riley, the latter the newly appointed head of the CW research department: "It remains to be seen how much free rein he will be given to develop the research program so that it becomes more than a purely in-service affair and a dead-end professionally. The congested working conditions of the Research Department and the library have long been a disgrace to Colonial Williamsburg."[9] Instead, what Cappon mostly observed was CW's commitment to programs such as the annual Antiques Forum, designed, in his opinion, to get well-to-do people to Williamsburg during its slow season. Cappon saw this as entertainment, not education.[10] In 1955 Cappon attended a lecture at this forum and had little positive to say about the experience, terming it as "superficial" and "poorly organized":

> There is all too much leeway in the purveying of art and "culture" and "history" to the public for reputations of a kind based upon thin foundations. In the academic world one can't make his way on superficial learning too successfully under the scouting of critical scholars; but in historical societies and museums the opportunities and temptations are greater to emphasize promotion and popular appeal at the expense of sound scholarship. The allurements and pitfalls are many in these fields; it is a pity that their "public contacts," which should be cultivated, are often of the shoddy variety, in the name of History.[11]

And, as well, he saw no advantage in the CW research program for any historian interested in research and building a career.[12] Cappon remained critical of CW all of his life. Cappon's concept of public history ran counter to how Colonial Williamsburg operated, as much business enterprise as educational and research venture. In the last few weeks of his life, he made a telling entry in his diary about the Anheuser Busch Gardens near Williamsburg, what he saw as a "competitor" to CW, wondering "how many tourists go to Busch Gardens first, where they spend most of their money, with little left for educational CW."[13] So Cappon, committed to engaging the public, was also committed to substantive and sound scholarship. Today, his efforts remind us about how well we should consider our scholarship connecting to the public; libraries and archives are without question well known outside of professional boundaries, but how well understood may be another matter.

Cappon was critical of historical societies and other history programs like CW because of how they defined their relationship with the public. In meeting after meeting with visitors to the Institute, Cappon heard reports about what was going on in the field. In nearly every trip he made, Cappon saw dangers in the popularization of history at the expense of research supporting the understanding of the past. When taking a trip to Provincetown on Cape Cod to visit the Pilgrim Monument, Cappon pulled no punches in recording his reaction to it: "The Pilgrim Monument is an ugly monstrosity; most of the shops are full of junk in the form of souvenirs. We have no desire to return. I can see better now the danger of over-popularizing Williamsburg."[14] When he consulted, Cappon always focused on the research mission or programs.[15] It seems that while Cappon wanted historians to write in a way accessible to the public, he did not want them to pander to the public.

Cappon's focus for his criticism about CW concerned how it related to the public. In a conversation with the individual responsible for educational programs he noted that the aim seems to be to make CW the "mouthpiece and purveyor of American democracy via the 18th century restoration of the Virginia aristocracy's genteel living and the words of her revolutionary patriots who are always in danger of being converted into 20th century democrats." He thought the institution "walks the tight-rope of history vs. propaganda."[16] A decade and a half later, not long before his retirement, Cappon expressed hope that rumors about a revamped CW research department—bringing together research on architecture, archaeology, decorative arts, material culture, and music—might include the Institute of Early American History and Culture and improve the quality of research reflected in CW's public

and other programs.[17] He always explored possibilities for improving CW's research activities. For example, Cappon was contacted by a Virginia architect to do an American Institute of Architects "study on the fundamental concepts and techniques of historical restoration which have flowered during the past few decades." The proposal was partly inspired by CW's work and Cappon thought it a good idea, while recognizing the limitations of CW's Architectural Department developing a "research program of broad implications or even a series of publications based upon the wealth of material representing its own experience."[18]

On another occasion, when approached by CW for the Institute to take over its publications, Cappon was more than skeptical; he thought it unlikely for "any publishable MSS coming out of the Research Dept. of CW," that is, one reaching any level of scholarly merit.[19] Given the opportunity, however, Cappon, when asked, would review and comment on CW publications, but generally discovered "sentimental tripe."[20] Years later, Cappon understood more about the problems confronting this CW department. In late 1977, visiting with Ed Riley, the former head of this department, he learned that in "his 20+ years as director of research, Carl Humelsine, pres. of CW, never set foot in the department."[21] This is an observation many librarians and archivists might share based on their own experiences.

In his work at the Institute, Cappon remained very interested in seeing its publications reach broader audiences. While he was working on Wilcomb Washburn's book on Bacon's Rebellion in 1956, Cappon hoped that it could be out in time for the 350th anniversary of the founding of Virginia the next year, appealing to tourists looking for "anything more than a cheap souvenir, Wid's book might sell some extra copies & find that mythical 'special market.'"[22] Cappon hoped that he could get an article about Bacon's Rebellion and the Washburn book in *Life* magazine "because of the dramatic character of the rebellion, the picturesque antagonists, and the conflict over the historical interpretation of the episode."[23] Cappon wanted to see CW and the Institute get someone like Daniel Boorstin to write about "CW's historical role in the 20th century in relation to the deepening interest of the Amer. people in their history almost as a faith."[24] One key objective for Cappon was getting serious history into a popular forum. How many such works do archivists and librarians have today, nearly four decades after Cappon recorded his observations?

For Cappon, the issue of publications, education, and CW's mission extended beyond the restored colonial capitol. When John Rockefeller and Reverend Arthur Godwin combined forces in the 1920s to undertake the

restoration, Williamsburg was a sleepy southern town. In the 1940s through 1960s, when Cappon was working at CW, it was still a quiet hamlet (the commercial expansion of the area would occur after Cappon retired; today it has become an area attracting retirees, outlet shoppers, and amusement park devotees as well as those seeking to learn about early American history). In 1958 Cappon recounted when a colleague brought into his office drawings of a small bookstore done by his architectural students. Cappon had been in discussion with some of the Institute staff about the need for a "high-quality book store" in the town, noting that "the College book store is a dreary untidy, dingy place offering text books & a few paper backs & stationary supplies. The Cole Shop on Duke of Gloucester St. is tiny, limited in stock and open at hours to suit the proprietor, Mr. Prentice. Colonial Williamsburg sells its own publications at its Craft House & hotels, but only as an adjunct to other merchandise. Both the College and CW are missing an educational opportunity," Cappon thought.[25] Today, the situation is only slightly better with the college bookstore (a Barnes and Noble operation with a shrinking stock of good academic titles) and a few used bookstores.

Cappon struggled for decades with the publicity machines that organizations like Colonial Williamsburg need to build in order to sustain their operations. In 1955, when Winston Churchill was presented the Williamsburg Award in London, Cappon criticized CW for sending ten people at a cost of $40,000 in addition to the $10,000 that was part of the award. "Why not put that 'spending money' into historical research for long-time benefits, "Cappon fumed, "rather than into public relations which are vastly overrated and over-emphasized in CW's operations, in my opinion, humble or otherwise?"[26] Cappon's feelings about such matters were agitated more than normal when he had difficulties securing funding from CW for scholarly conferences.[27] Much of his attitude about public relations was anchored by what he considered the neglect of the pillars of a research foundation, namely a focus on real research and the management of research materials. At one point, when a public relations firm was hired to evaluate the possibility of establishing a research center on the American Revolution at CW, Cappon expressed skepticism about needing to have such a consultancy to evaluate this.[28] Cappon's stance on such matters was not unusual for most historians, of course, either then or perhaps today.[29]

Perhaps the closest Cappon ever came to being involved in the CW publicity machine was when he played in a bit part in one of its 1960 education films on music of the period, approaching it with a sense of humor (as he

held a music degree and was an expert pianist), suggesting that he was cast in the part because he looked more like an eighteenth-century character.[30] The movie is still available in the CW visitor center, remastered as a DVD, but you have to know what Cappon looks like and pay close attention to get a fleeting glimpse of him.

A considerable portion of Cappon's angst with CW and its research program concerned how it handled its own archives. Cappon provided ongoing advice for administering CW's manuscripts collections in an efficient and professional manner, including helping to resolve personnel problems that appeared regularly and getting CW staff to send records to the archives.[31] In the fall of 1954 he met with CW officials to discuss space needs for the archives, as there were plans for adding an addition to a building for consolidating the archival and manuscripts collections. Cappon was skeptical, believing that CW vice president Ed Alexander would not support it since "in his program of popularizing history he has long ago left research by the wayside to exist as best it can on a shoe-string."[32] But there were other problems in the CW archives. In 1954 Cappon noted that since its reorganization a couple of years before and his involvement as a consultant to it, having moved over to the Institute on a full-time basis, there had been "no one with a real knowledge of the field to direct them."[33] Cappon seems to have been their best choice for local advice, and he dutifully fulfilled this role. His experience mirrors what many librarians and archivists have encountered in seeking to build stronger programs, often floundering because of a lack of deeper public understanding and support.

The College of William and Mary hatched a scheme for CW to transfer all of its archival materials to the college to help it make an argument for securing a new library building. Cappon referred to it as a "wild idea" and "crack-pot idea."[34] In subsequent meetings, Cappon pointed out that the quantity of historical documents held by CW is only a tenth of what the college holds, so that it hardly would make that much difference to the college and its ambitions. Cappon, once again, related such issues to problems with CW's commitment to scholarship: "MSS. attract other MSS. CW's opportunities in this respect are not automatically transferable to the College. Mr. Rockefeller's gifts have enriched CW's MS. holdings and might continue to do so, if CW thought more in terms of advancing historical scholarship in general in relation to CW's special interests." Cappon thought that CW's board "continues to be a promoter of a historical show which now reaches much beyond its superficial aspects."[35] The Institute of Early American History and Culture ultimately

offered to provide $3,600 a year for five years to the college to help get its manuscripts collections in order and to publish a guide.[36]

While Cappon defended CW's manuscripts collections, he also expressed misgivings about CW's commitments to maintaining *any* of its research collections, especially as he learned about CW's interest in selling its "British Headquarters Papers and [in order to] use the money for some other objectives of Colonial Williamsburg."[37] He thought that CW's educational program lacked imagination and "treads water behind the façade of *activities*."[38] Supporting Cappon's cynicism was an incident where CW purchased a manuscripts collection and then resold it soon after. When he was at the Massachusetts Historical Society reading correspondence about Jared Sparks and his manuscript collecting he found a connection between Sparks and CW's collecting:

> I was interested to read in a letter by Sparks in London in 1840 that quite by accident he had come upon the Sir Guy Carleton Papers in the Royal Institution & read them. These are the same MSS that John D. Rockefeller, Jr. purchased from Dr. Rosenbach ca. 1930 & gave to Colonial Williamsburg (he paid $466,000 for them, an exorbitant sum); in 1957 C.W. through the U.S. Government presented them to Queen Elizabeth II and they are now, so I understand, in the Public Record Office, London. A fine example of public relations! However, earlier CW had tried hard to find a buyer of these MSS, because they contain little material on Williamsburg and Yorktown. Thus business vs. scholarship![39]

Cappon was not an opponent to the manuscripts trade, although he harbored some reservations about the activities of certain collectors and dealers.

Profoundly influenced by his experiences at Colonial Williamsburg, Cappon developed a distaste for what he saw as the superficial corporate use of history. At the 1955 American Association for State and Local History meeting, Cappon attended a session on the problems of membership in state and local historical societies, where one of the presenters addressed the issue of corporate membership. "I suggested that as a return for high dues paid by corporations," Cappon wrote, "the society provide expert historical advice so that the pictures of historical nature may be authentic in commercial advertising. History is used increasingly as a vehicle for advertising and abused & distorted in much of this work."[40] Cappon had Walter Muir Whitehill

speak at the Radcliffe Institute on historical administration about his study of historical societies, where he made a "distinction between historical appreciation & entertainment, between a well presented museum exhibit and the hodge-podge of Disneyland & its new counterpart in N.Y., Freedomland" (a history-themed amusement park located in New York City and operating from 1960 to 1964). Cappon thought that Whitehill's book would be controversial and irritating to history society directors who would "have their popularizing of history criticized, if not ridiculed."[41] Cappon looked forward to reading it and following the discussion it would generate. The challenges librarians and archivists face today from a corporate mentality, focusing on the financial bottom line above all else, are even more severe than in Cappon's time. The way Cappon questioned such motives can help us re-evaluate our own goals and aspirations.

Historians, Writing, and the Public

What Cappon was interested in, and as is so well reflected in his writings, was the effective advocacy by historians for stronger archives and documentary editions. As part of the Radcliffe Institute the students visited the Massachusetts State Archives, and his comments about this archives are illuminating: "The condition of this office under the Secretary of State has been hopeless for many years," noting that support for it is "chiefly for the display of historic documents." Cappon thought that was a "disgraceful situation, but the New England historians have not been able to educate the Irish & Italian politicians who run the gov't."[42] Cappon supported, whenever he could, efforts to mobilize historians to fight for stronger archival programs; he was, for example, a supporter of H. G. Jones's study advancing the need for an independent National Archives.[43]

Years of experience in editing scholarly monographs and journals had sensitized Cappon to the rigors of editing. In conferring with the new editor of the *William and Mary Quarterly* about a particular essay, Cappon documented that although the editor thought it "ready to go," he thought it needed quite a bit of work. Since the *Quarterly* was known for its quality, Cappon believed "our editor can afford to be demanding of the author & he must be meticulous in the fine points of editing & yet maintaining a reasonable attitude in his human relationships."[44] Cappon's meticulousness, targeted at producing sound scholarship accessible to the public, was perhaps best reflected in his administering of *The Atlas of Early American History* years later.[45]

The key in doing this, Cappon thought, was training historians to write clearly with a broader public audience in mind. Cappon gained experiences in this direction with his work in editing publications for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, planning but never finishing an article "on the pitfalls endangering historical writing, as revealed in the letters of criticism I have written during my years at the Institute of Early American History and Culture to authors who have submitted manuscripts for publication. Rejection of 9 out of 10 manuscripts results from faulty presentation and poor literary quality rather than from inferior research and unfounded historical conclusions."[46] Cappon thought that his files on manuscript reviewing provided ample material, and that it was a topic particularly of interest to young historians,

> many of whom are over-eager to burst into print before the rough edges and crudities are smoothed down and they have learned how to express what is worth while conveying to the world through the printed page. But their faults and shortcomings result to a large degree from inadequate training as undergraduate and graduate students; therefore some of the criticism must be directed to the professors who, unfortunately, become rapidly too old to learn. It will not be an easy article to write, in a constructive vein as much as possible, but without pulling any punches.[47]

His attitudes about the problems of historical writing were affirmed everywhere Cappon traveled. At the 1955 American Historical Association meeting, Cappon conversed with an editor of a state journal who "complained of the large [number] of poor articles submitted, poorly written too, a large percentage by young scholars. We agreed that in many cases their graduate training is at fault."[48] How well is our graduate education preparing a generation of library and archives scholars?

Cappon diligently recorded comments about the writing abilities of the young historians he worked with, many of who became well-known scholars, and these comments emphasize Cappon's particular concerns about writing. In these reviews, we read that "Brooke [Hindle] does not feel sensitively the flow of language, the elements that constitute a superior style of expression, and the devices that strengthen literary art without apparent effort."[49] In reflecting on Wilcomb Washburn's effort to write an essay about Bacon's Rebellion for the *William and Mary Quarterly*, Cappon noted, "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." Cappon thought this is a "good example of the Institute's intramural activity for the benefit of its own members; the matching of wits, the forthright historical criticism, and honest expression of opinion *inter pares*, —and that goes for the director too."[50] In revising Page Smith's biography of James Wilson, Cappon lamented, "Aside from the text's historical quality, which is fine, and its literary quality, which was improved in the course of revision, what a struggle I have had over uniformity of footnotes, accuracy of quotations and citations, and carelessness with elementary matters that comes only through self-discipline! Every reference of his had to be checked, and woe unto us, and him, after publication if we had not done so."[51] In reviewing a manuscript by Marshall Fishwick on Virginia's culture and history, Cappon observed in his diary, "His treatment is 'picturesque' and superficial, as much of his previous writing tends to be. I expressed myself very frankly and advised him to spend more time on original research before he puts pen to paper. He is much too eager to be in print to take time to do something really substantial."[52]

While Cappon fumed and fussed about poor writing, he also believed in the value of time for research. At a lunch in 1959 with his Institute staff, he told two of them (Bill Towner and Jim Smith) that he was working to get each one of them a year's leave for research.[53] Cappon saw the opportunity for Institute Fellows to have a "stepping-stone professionally," to have time to do research and write "with the benefit of counsel from his colleagues & without pressure to publish prematurely."[54] From time to time, he lamented when one of the Fellows makes a poor decision (in Cappon's opinion) to write a textbook, such as when James Smith agreed to write a textbook when he was still busy revising his manuscript on the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions.[55] Years later, when Cappon was at the Newbury Library, he observed how busy Bill Towner was as its director: "His administrative duties leave almost no time for research, much to his dismay; now he *must* devote some time to research, and that is good for him and indirectly for the Library, too."[56] Cappon, a close friend of Towner's, reflects in such an assessment his own struggles with balancing his time over the years between administrative and scholarly tasks. How well do we today support librarians and archivists, other than those holding academic faculty posts, for engaging in scholarly and other publishing?

It was not just writing quality or time for research perturbing Cappon's perception of historical scholarship. As he grew older, he increasingly felt that

he was swimming against the tide in American history research trends and methods. Attending a session at the AHA on new directions in American history in 1966, Cappon "came away exasperated again by high-sounding generalities, by old stuff in new terminology."[57] Cappon worked with Lee Benson and the Inter-University Consortium for a joint conference with the Institute on quantitative history, partly to keep the Institute and its Fellows aware of new historical methods, but also to "keep historians aware of the value of *qualitative* as well as quantitative research."[58] A decade later, Cappon had not changed his mind about these methods, reporting on a conversation with a young scholar using them but who recognizes their limitations; Cappon approved, adding that he would "advocate *qualitative* history with a modicum of the quantitative well controlled."[59] A year later, Cappon noted that the sixth institute in quantitative history had been held at the Newberry, stating, "One wonders how many years such a course is needed. Perhaps an excess of 'quantitative' historians is already overrunning the profession and quality may be sacrificed for quantity."[60] Cappon was certainly not alone in his feelings about what was happening in American historical research (and other areas of historical research) in those years.

Cappon's Own Writings

Whatever criticism and analysis Cappon dosed out to others, he also applied to his own work. His essay on presidential libraries he first submitted to the *American Scholar* in an effort to get the widest possible audience.[61] The essay was quickly rejected, and Cappon thought the review process a little odd, wondering whether he had been treated fairly.[62] Cappon's observations are similar to those of any author who has been rejected, but he was not daunted and he thought he might submit the essay to *Harper's* or *Atlantic*. Instead he sent it to the *New Yorker* because of its "general appeal" and the possibility of getting it into print more quickly.[63] The *New Yorker* rejected the essay, and he submitted it to the *Yale Review*, still hoping to get it published "by a non-archival magazine & to reach a wider audience than archivists or professional historians."[64] He was successful in this latter effort.

Besides trying to publish in venues where the readership was wider, Cappon readily accepted invitations to make presentations on controversial topics where he could reach different audiences. Julian Boyd contacted Cappon, urging him to present a paper on the National Archives independence.[65] Cappon agreed, and a couple of months later met with Bill Towner to discuss the

paper, indicating that he "would probably be more critical of historians than of the NA because of their indifference toward archival principles & problems and, as a result, their failure to train their students in correlating historical method & archival principles."[66] Cappon viewed the National Archives as the leader in the archival profession, the "pace-setter" in methods and ideas.[67]

Not long after delivering the paper at the AHA meeting, Cappon submitted the essay to the *Journal of American History*, noting, "The paper is aimed at historians rather than archivists, although I criticize the National Archives as well as the historians who have failed to support it or appreciate it."[68] The paper was quickly sent back by the JAH editor with the suggestion to submit it to the *American Historical Review*, much to Cappon's surprise; the editor suggested this "because European historians are more neglectful or ignorant of the National Archives than American historians. I would challenge that opinion because Amer. historians have more need to use the records in NA and many *are* ignorant of archival records and how to use them."[69] The AHR likewise rejected the essay and recommended that Cappon send it to the JAH.[70] After another few months, Cappon had the essay accepted by the *Journal of Southern History*, probably saving Cappon from concluding that historians had absolutely no clue about the importance of archival matters.[71]

Cappon occasionally wrote on topics that had a natural broader public appeal. One prominent example is his essay on genealogy and history. Describing his research on the topic, Cappon provides a glimpse in his interest on the topic, indicating that "certainly history and genealogy were much more closely associated in the practice of individuals and the functioning of historical organizations in the 19th century than they are today. Both have lost something by this estrangement, but I suspect the genealogist of the higher order in that profession has lost more than has the historian; those of the lower order would not be aware of such loss anyhow."[72] He presented the paper in late 1955, noting that it was well received, and then tinkered with it for a time.[73] He reconciled himself to publishing it in the *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, noting, "I'd rather get it published elsewhere, but it ought to do most good, if it has any corrective value, in a magazine read by genealogists and by some 'ancestral-patriots' whom I criticize most."[74] This suggests that we ought to be thinking today on publishing in venues outside of our own library and archival journals on topics possessing broader public interest (and there are many such topics with potential).

One final example of scholarly work by Cappon suggests a bit of his unease with engaging the public in anything approaching what the more recent notion of public history might suggest. While Cappon wrote a fair amount about collecting and appraising, and engaged extensively in it in the 1930s and 1940s, he had some reservations about private collecting. When he was asked by the Manuscripts Society to be its local arrangements chair for a meeting in Williamsburg in 1955, Cappon praised their enthusiasm, their "credible" journal, and their candor in discussing issues relating to collecting.[75] For his part, Cappon would try to relate to these collectors, although he appreciated how enthusiasm and energy did not compensate for problems with the marketplace and ethics of collecting practices.

Cappon was a collector in his own right. He collected books written by Western explorers, with special interest in the Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1958 he bought the 1904–5 eight-volume edition of the Lewis and Clark journals edited by Reuben Thwaites and published by Dodd, Mead, and Company. When it arrived, he noted in his diary:

> I took it home with a great thrill & satisfaction which jostled aside my feeling that I had been very extravagant in spending $225 to indulge my long-felt desire to own this work. It is a beautiful set, with pages uncut, and bindings well preserved except for the atlas volume which is somewhat "shaken.". . . The 8-vol. set is pleasing to the eye as it stands on my shelves next to Cove's edition of the *History* of the Expedition. I have long admired Thwaites as a historical editor and have read numerous portions of the *Journals:* the pages of my set will be cut![76]

His admiration for Thwaites was strong since this former head of the Historical Society of Wisconsin was both a great editor and collector, displaying traits similar to that of Cappon.[77] Cappon was constantly rearranging his book collection, struggling with the limited room he had.[78] Even at the end of his life, in 1977, Cappon documented that he bought a rare Lewis and Clark imprint published in Lebanon, Pennsylvania, for $1,250.[79]

Cappon, probably because of his own collecting, expressed no hostility toward the private collecting of manuscripts. In 1972 he bought a twelve-page typescript of an article written by Leonard Bernstein, autographed by him, and published in the *Atlantic Monthly* and Bernstein's book *The Joy of Music* as a graduation gift for a young friend.[80] He became involved, temporarily, in the government's efforts to replevin the William Clark (of Lewis

and Clark fame) field notes discovered in the possession of a descendant and claimed by the government because of the federal funding of that expedition.[81] The Manuscript Society contacted Cappon to urge the Institute to contribute funds to the private holders of the notes, and Cappon commented in his diary, "If the Gov't wins, what institution's MSS would not be in jeopardy?" Cappon thought the Society of American Archivists ought also to be involved.[82] Cappon did receive some different opinions from the Institute's directors, some of whom worried about the activities of dealers and how the dealers' actions violated archival principles.[83] Cappon, on behalf of the Institute, ultimately wrote a letter in support of the government's position regarding the Clark papers, worrying about the precedent of the seizing of other records held by government archives.[84] Such concerns about proper ownership, access, and other matters remain relevant and often contested today.

His collecting interests and instincts partially explain why Cappon determined to respond to F. Gerald Ham's SAA presidential address on collecting. "I think he is somewhat 'off the beam' concerning the archivist's responsibility for collecting records and some of his ideas are not practical," Cappon jotted in his diary.[85] A year and a half later, with the *American Archivist* in hand with his response, Cappon wondered about the reaction to it; in the space of a few days, he had a letter from H. G. Jones applauding Cappon because he "found it the best criticism of fuzzy archival thinking that he has ever seen."[86] Whatever conceptual ideas Cappon espoused in the realm of collecting, it was still his personal interests in collecting that motivated him (and in this sense, given Ham's very successful career in setting new collecting agendas, the two are quite alike).[87]

We can see this connection between personal collecting and broader professional agendas in Cappon's acquisition of letters between Edward Channing and Albert Bushnell Hart and the writing of an essay about the production of their groundbreaking guide to American historical research.[88] In late 1954 Cappon recorded in his diary acquiring from a dealer Edward Channing manuscripts about his work on the *Guide to the Study of American History* (1896), including a "mint copy of the *Guide*," for $35.00. Cappon saw the value of the materials for an article about the guide.[89] Cappon tried to discover what happened to the papers of Edward Channing, so he could examine the letters of Albert Bushnell Hart about the preparation of their guide, learning that neither Harvard University nor the publisher kept any records of the project.[90] Arthur Schlesinger Sr. informed Cappon, "Channing was not historically minded in

the sense of preserving his own papers for their future value." Schlesinger also told him that after Channing's death his widow had Schlesinger read the manuscript of volume 7 of his history of the United States and Schlesinger told her it was not worth publishing. She was not surprised, because she suspected his metal powers were declining, and "Schlesinger advised her to destroy the MS as having no historical value except to show that C. had lost his intellectual capacity for this job."[91] From time to time, Cappon received an inquiry about the Channing papers in his possession, such as from Samuel Eliot Morison when he was writing a memoir about Hart and the American history guide.[92] A decade later, Cappon donated the manuscripts to the Harvard University archives, a fitting end to his use of them.[93]

Cappon labored away on the project, because he thought "there is an interesting story to be told, of timely interest because the Harvard *Guide*, 'grandchild' of the work of 1896, was published in 1954." His only problem, common for him, was finding time to work on this essay.[94] By the end of March 1955, Cappon was writing the essay in order to present it at the April meeting of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia.[95] As he worked on this, he entertained the idea of creating a major bibliography of the writings of both Hart and Channing, thinking that Harvard University Press might be interested in such a work.[96] He continued to pursue leads as he worked, including contacting and visiting the wife of Albert Bushnell Hart's younger brother, learning that his papers had been passed over by Harvard as well.[97] It is an altogether too familiar story with faculty papers, records often falling outside of the acquisition aims of university archives (and in this instance, occurring before the great expansion of academic archives in the 1960s and 1970s).[98] Cappon's interest in studying the formation and use of major historical reference works also suggest the potential for work on such topics by librarians and archivists.

Cappon finished the essay and began the process of submitting it to publishers. He submitted it to the *American Historical Review* as his first, most obvious, choice.[99] Cappon refused to cut the personal material that the AHR wanted done, because he thought it added "much interest to the essay," and he resubmitted to the *New England Quarterly*, where it was ultimately published.[100] On occasion, Cappon returned to the Channing manuscripts for teaching, sometimes generating issues suggesting that he needed to give the manuscripts to a safe repository, nearly unable to locate them for a 1962 historical research methods course he taught at William and Mary.[101] He resolved this problem when he donated the manuscripts.

Was Cappon a Public Historian and Scholar?

Although many commentators on public history look to its antecedents, there are few references to Lester Cappon. He seems to be a forgotten man, while others, such as John Cotton Dana, with similar careers, have been remembered.[102] Cappon's omission may be especially strange since the "nostalgic museum villages," such as represented by Colonial Williamsburg where Cappon spent so much of his career, were deemed by public historians to be particular challenges in their nostalgic view of the past.[103] Cappon himself never made any reference to public history as it emerged at the end of his life. Some advocates of public history have argued that it enables them to consider memory in a new and expanded way, creating "spaces for dialogue about history and for the collection of memories, and to insure that various voices are heard in those spaces."[104] Ironically, the memory of public historians about their own past is insufficient, leaving Cappon out when he deserves a place in it.

What makes this omission all the more strange is that Cappon and the public historians share one major characteristic in how they perceive themselves. Cappon struggled with his professional identity, as do public historians today. In essay after essay, public historians note that there are still major disagreements inside of public history regarding its mission, other than clear characteristics such as its functioning outside of the academic world.[105] Robert Weible states, "For all the talk of public history that we have been hearing for more than 25 years, it is a little awkward that historians are still uncertain about what 'public history' might actually mean," commenting on debates within the National Council on Public History. "After considerable internal discussion," he writes, "NCPH board members recently suggested that public history is 'a movement, methodology, and approach that promotes the collaborative study and practice of history; its practitioners embrace a mission to make their special insights accessible and useful to the public. That only triggered further debate among members. Everyone, it seems, has a different definition.'"[106]

Cappon might not have bought into the idea of using history to solve social problems, and he would have been skeptical of the interaction with the public or with corporate interests sometimes espoused by those in public history. When David Glassberg writes about the interaction between historians and the public, Cappon may have viewed this in the way he thought of CW and its public relations efforts:

> Trained historians working in museums, historic sites, and community history projects encounter perspectives on the past they never would

> have encountered solely in the world of professional scholarship. In presenting history to the public, they soon discover that the public is presenting history back to them as well. It is time for some of the insights into the relationship of historians and audiences that come from this interaction to find their way back to the discourse of the larger historical profession.[107]

Arnita Jones argues for sustained dialogue between professionals such as corporate archivists and historians:

> What is now needed is a productive conversation between historians involved in public programming and the other public historians whose work as consultants, as agency historians, or as corporate archivists long ago led them to do some hard thinking about reconciling professional responsibilities with client's legitimate and not-so-legitimate claims. A sharing of experiences among all public historians can only be beneficial. It will improve practice in all sectors of public history.[108]

Cappon would have agreed with this, as long as a serious commitment to scholarly study of the past was central.

One of the areas of common ground between the public historians and Cappon was the concern about the separation between historians and archivists. In a 2003 interview with Anna K. Nelson, Nelson stated, "Here we have a group of archivist/public historians who are critically important and ought to be historically trained. Yet more and more of them are information management trained because of the need to know computer technology. And I think that the historians, because they have not regarded archivists as comparable in professional status to academic historians, are going to come up short."[109] In many ways, this echoes the kind of concerns Cappon expressed through much of his latter career as he observed archivists separating into their own professional enclaves. William Birdsall claims that by 1920, not long before Cappon commenced his career, that the professional historical community had little interest in archival affairs, other than getting information about where the materials are located.[110] It is the context in which Cappon matured, and it is a problem he spent sixty years trying to fix. Even at the end of his life, Cappon was trying to explain what archives are about, feeling that this was a topic poorly communicated or understood.[111] He could not come to grips with the emphasis on the technical rather than the humanistic aspects of archival work,

but the issue of the lack of understanding of archives by historians and other scholars was a lifelong crusade and a feature forming much of his own scholarly and professional work. That he carried out much of his work and pursued his own agenda outside of academe and targeted a larger audience made him a pioneer in what became public history. It may be that he saw himself more like a John Franklin Jameson, slipping gracefully between scholarly, administrative, and activist roles; but in this sense, Jameson was most certainly a pioneer public historian.[112] Given that Cappon struggled to identify himself as an archivist, historian, or documentary editor, it is interesting to speculate about whether public history might have brought him some comfort in his quest.

Some Final Thoughts

It is important to have a historical understanding of a field, lest we wrongly conclude about our own present state of affairs. Looking at Cappon, certainly a transitional and significant figure, helps to ground us in knowing how far we have come and how we got there. Archivists and librarians can learn much by studying him.

Assessing Cappon's career helps us appreciate the kinds of struggles facing individuals desiring to make their scholarship more relevant. Reviewing his life and work also helps us to see what has not changed. Archivists, for example, are far more aware of how to engage the public, but what impact such efforts have had is a far different matter to determine. When I talked about the need for the new generation of archival academics to engage in public scholarship at a conference, I received many comments about the impracticality of doing this in the current university milieu. These new faculty have effectively responded to Cappon's laments about archivists not contributing much to scholarship, but there is far more work to do in engaging the public about the importance of archives (as there is about librarianship as well). Nearly forty years after his death, Cappon remains a role model (certainly, he is that for me). Being a public scholar remains as much an idea as a practice. And librarians and archivists have much that is worthy of more public attention. We need to nurture more individuals like Cappon today, for the benefit of our disciplines and their missions.

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NOTES

1. Robert Kelley, "Public History: Its Origins, Nature and Prospects," *Public Historian* 1 (Fall 1978): 16. See also Ronald J. Grele, "Whose Public? Whose History" What Is the Goal of a Public Historian?" *Public Historian* 3 (Winter 1981): 40–48.

2. Kelley, "Public History," 114.

3. See Richard J. Cox, "Archivists and Public Historians in the United States," *Public Historian* 8 (Summer 1986): 25–41, stressing the then-popular notion that much of this seems to be an effort to employ graduates of history departments and that the archival community needs to develop its own graduate programs and professional identity. That the education of archivists increasingly shifted to library and information science schools can be seen in Richard J. Cox, Elizabeth Yakel, David Wallace, Jeannette Bastian, and Jennifer Marshall, "Archival Education in North American Library and Information Science Schools," *Library Quarterly* 71 (April 2001): 141–94.

4. For example, in considering the archives field, see Anne J. Gilliland, *Conceptualizing 21st-Century Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2014), and Randall C. Jimerson, *Archives Power: Memory, Accountability, and Social Justice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009), to discern some of the changes.

5. For some recent examples of scholarship based on reflection that reaches the educated public and policymakers see Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber, *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), and M. V. Lee Badgett, *The Public Professor: How to Use Your Research to Change the World* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

6. For more about Cappon's career, see Richard J. Cox, *Lester J. Cappon and the Relationship of History, Archives, and Scholarship in the Golden Age of Archival Theory* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2004).

7. Arnita A. Jones, "Public History Now and Then," *Public Historian* 21 (December 1999): 23–24, provides a useful explanation of these precursors to public history.

8. July 22, 1954, Cappon Diaries, Lester J. Cappon Papers, 90 C17, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia (hereafter Cappon Diaries).

9. August 26, 1954, ibid.

10. January 24, 1955, ibid.

11. January 27, 1955, ibid.

12. April 26, 1957, ibid.

13. July 29, 1981, ibid.

14. July 13, 1957, ibid.

15. For example, he advised the Eleutherian Mills Hagley Foundation, giving some advice about their approaches to arranging and cataloguing their archives; October 31, 1956, ibid.

16. September 30, 1954, ibid. He adds, "The Institute has managed to steer clear of claptrap and propaganda by being continually on guard and avoiding entanglements in the Colonial Williamsburg bureaucracy." A few days later, Cappon notes, in reflecting on plans to evaluate the Institute, that this "might result in an unhappy intermingling of the narrow

research program of Colonial Williamsburg with the broader and freer program of the Institute, to the detriment of the latter. If that danger becomes a reality, I had better find another job"; October 4, 1954.

17. May 9, 1968, ibid. In fact, great improvements did come under the leadership of Cary Carson and others who developed extensive new research operations using social history, quantitative, and other new and emerging historical research methods. For an overview of Colonial Williamsburg and the transformation of the research and other programs, see Anders Greenspan, *Creating Colonial Williamsburg* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002).

18. January 10, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

19. May 28, 1957, ibid.

20. March 20, 1956, ibid.

21. November 2, 1977, ibid. Many years earlier, Cappon had characterized Riley as a "straddler who will not fight for principles," allowing research to be "sacrificed to the loud and superficial demands of public relations, that breeder of hot air and half-truths"; September 24, 1954.

22. October 2, 1956, ibid. The study was published as Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957). The book has been a mainstay of undergraduate courses and in print in one form or another since its original publication.

23. May 31, June 1, 1957, Cappon Diaries.

24. November 20, 1956, ibid.

25. March 14, 1958, ibid.

26. December 7, 1955, ibid.

27. June 12, 1956, ibid., where he laments the lack of funding for a symposium on the seventeenth century when there was ample funds for "festivities" such as the visit of Queen Elizabeth II.

28. March 23, 1959, ibid.

29. Cappon took every opportunity to fuss about the insidious influence of the public relations mentality. Reviewing Whitehill's book on independent historical societies, Cappon writes, "Historical societies have excelled from the beginning in the collection and preservation of the sources and in making them accessible in their original form and by multiplication of copies. Thus they have encouraged the writing of history and an appreciation of the American heritage long before that term was adopted by the public relations expert and parroted *ad nauseam*." Review in *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 71 (July 1963): 369–71 (quotation p. 370).

30. April 12, 1960, Cappon Diaries.

31. March 11 and October 26, 1955, May 31, 1956, November 20, 1959, and March 9, 1960, ibid.

32. September 17, 1954, ibid.

33. October 8, 1954, ibid. This continued to be a problem. On January 17, 1963, Cappon records that he met with the head of CW's personnel office to discuss the forthcoming retirement of the archivist, desiring someone with professional training and who reported

directly to the CW president, with authority over both archives and current records; January 17, May 15, and June 19, 1963.

34. December 6, 1954, and January 4, 1955, ibid.

35. January 7, 1955, ibid.

36. January 21, 1955, ibid. It appears that this offer was not accepted and a guide never prepared. The library was short of space until Swem Library was constructed and opened in 1965–66, and it seems that more serious cataloguing took place after new quarters were available (thanks to Beatriz B. Hardy for this information in an email to me, June 27, 2011).

37. March 4, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

38. June 23, 1955, ibid.

39. July 1, 1958, ibid.

40. September 26, 1955, ibid.

41. June 28, 1960, ibid. The book was Walter Muir Whitehill's *Independent Historical Societies: An Enquiry Into Their Research and Publication Functions and Their Financial Future* (Boston: Boston Athenaeum, 1962). The book turned out not to be controversial at all; it was quickly retired to the bookshelf as a reference work rather than action document. The Radcliffe seminar, which he led from 1956 through 1960, was an early example of multiweek, intensive training programs in historical administration and archival work.

42. July 2, 1958, Cappon Diaries. A few years later, Lyman Butterfield provided a graphic description of this archival disaster in "Bostonians and Their Neighbors as Pack Rats," *American Archivist* 24 (April 1961): 141–59.

43. May 28 and June 8, 1968, Cappon Diaries. The book was H. G. Jones, *The Records of a Nation: Their Management, Preservation, and Use* (New York: Athenaeum, 1969).

44. June 5, 1967, Cappon Diaries.

45. For an analysis of the atlas, see Richard J. Cox, "Lester J. Cappon, Scholarly Publishing, and the Atlas of Early American History, 1957–1976," *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* 43, no. 3 (2012): 294–321.

46. August 2 and September 4, 1954, Cappon Diaries.

47. September 20, 1954, ibid.

48. December 27, 1955, ibid.

49. January 14, 1955, ibid. The book by Brooke Hindle was *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735–1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1956).

50. April 10, 1956, Cappon Diaries. The essay in question was probably Wilcomb E. Washburn, "Sir William Berkeley's 'A History of Our Miseries,'" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 14 (July 1957): 403–13.

51. August 25, 1954, Cappon Diaries. The book referenced here is [Charles] Page Smith, *James Wilson: Founding Father, 1742–1798* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1956). Smith had great success in publishing history for a popular audience, most notably his eight-volume *A People's History of the United States* published by McGraw-Hill from 1976 to 1987. Cappon admired Smith's ability to tell a story, but he was critical that the storytelling sometimes got in the way of the facts or that it was short on documentary evidence; see his review

of Smith's two-volume biography of John Adams published in 1962 and reviewed in the *American Historical Review* 69 (January 1964): 471–73.

52. May 31, 1957, Cappon Diaries. This is a reference to Marshall Fishwick's *The Virginia Tradition* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 1956).

53. He writes, "Time for personal research is the scarcest commodity for the Institute staff except the Fellows. Yet professionally it is extremely important, just as adequate salaries are. And I want to maintain the staff which is such an excellent working team"; March 24, 1959, Cappon Diaries. This idea of research leaves was approved by the Institute Council; May 1, 1959.

54. May 25, 1956, ibid.

55. July 8, 1963, ibid. James Morton Smith had published *Freedom's Fetters: The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1956).

56. October 4, 1974, Cappon Diaries.

57. December 29, 1966, ibid.

58. January 11, 1967, ibid.

59. January 27, 1977, ibid.

60. August 1, 1978, ibid.

61. March 12, 1976, ibid.

62. May 17, 1976, ibid.

63. At first he thought he would send it to the *Yale Review* but then changed his mind; May 20 and 28, and June 2, 1976, ibid.

64. June 26 and June 28, 1976, ibid. It was published as "Why Presidential Libraries?" *Yale Review* 68 (October 1978): 11–34.

65. April 4, 1968, Cappon Diaries.

66. June 22, 1968, ibid.

67. August 8, 1968, ibid.

68. January 6, 1969, ibid.

69. February 13, 1969, ibid.

70. April 10, 1969, ibid.

71. May 27, 1969, ibid. It was published as "The National Archives and the Historical Profession," *Journal of Southern History* 35 (November 1969): 477–99.

72. November 4, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

73. December 3, 1955, ibid.

74. October 9, 1956, ibid. The essay was published as "Genealogy, Handmaid of History," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly* 45 (March 1957): 1–9. In addition to the essay on genealogists and historians, Cappon published a twenty-nine-page pamphlet, *American Genealogical Periodicals: A Bibliography with a Chronological Finding-List* (New York: New York Public Library, 1962).

75. October 13, 1954, Cappon Diaries.

76. November 3, 1958, ibid. See also the entry for October 19, 1958, where he records that the edition "seldom comes on the market and is quickly sold. Will I get it? I have both the London, 1814, edition and the Cows edition (1895) of the *History of the Expedition* as well as DeVoto's abridged edition of the *Journals*."

77. To gain a sense of how Thwaites might compare to Cappon, see Matt Blessing, "Reuben Gold Thwaites and the Historical Resurrection of Lewis and Clark," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 88 (Winter 2004–5): 42–49.

78. February 16, 1963, Cappon Diaries.

79. April 26, 1977, ibid.

80. May 31 and June 12, 1972, ibid.

81. A history of this case is available in Paul Russell Cutright, *A History of the Lewis and Clark Journals* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976).

82. July 13, 1955, Cappon Diaries.

83. July 21, 1955, ibid. Julian Boyd thinks that the "defense attorneys are seeking all kinds of aid to oppose the Government's claims, regardless of archival principles and the National Archives' disclaimer that it favors a general policy of transfer of official government records from all repositories into the National Archives"; July 27, 1955.

84. Although he was surprised to get an angry response from Julian Boyd for having sent out Boyd's letter, a letter Boyd considered confidential. Cappon apologizes, noting that it was Boyd's letter that reversed his own thinking; August 4, 1955, ibid. Boyd apologized for his reaction as well; August 24 and October 11, 1955. Later Cappon adds that he wrote to Sol Malkin, editor of the *Antiquarian Bookmen*, "to take issue with his slur at the National Archives in connection with the suit of the U.S. Government on behalf of the Capt. Wm. Clark Papers. The MS dealers jump to the conclusion that the National Archives is preparing to seize practically all records created by agents of the Federal Government, regardless of the creative work of historical & research libraries in preserving & processing them for use by scholars. What dire predictions are made! What fears expressed of plotting and scheming by government archivists!"; January 4, 1956. His experiences may have influenced him not to be involved in any replevin cases. Twenty years later, when SAA was fighting on behalf of the North Carolina state archives in the famous B.C. West case, Cappon notes that he had been asked by SAA president Bob Warner to serve on a new Committee on Replevin of Documents, an assignment he declined; July 28, 1977.

85. June 29, 1975, ibid.

86. February 4 and 7, 1977, ibid.

87. Ham, long associated with the Historical Society of Wisconsin, wrote a series of seminal articles on archival appraisal, partly reflected in his *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1993). The bulk of his important writings were published after Cappon's death in 1981, otherwise one could imagine a vigorous and interesting debate continuing for many years.

88. Edward Channing and Albert Bushnell Hart, *Guide to the Study of American History* (Boston: Ginn, 1896). Cappon writes upon the occasion of the 1954 publication of the *Harvard Guide to American History*, noting how well the 1896 edition, revised in 1912 as the *Guide to the Study of American History*, stood as time passed. Cappon deftly used the Albert Bushnell Hart Papers he had acquired to recapture the process and struggles in the production of the reference work. It is a remarkably human portrait, at least partly made so as this earlier effort reflects so much of Cappon's own experiences and struggles in

producing scholarship. Lester J. Cappon, "Channing and Hart: Partners in Bibliography," *New England Quarterly* 29 (September 1956): 318–40.

89. September 24, 1954, Cappon Diaries.
90. October 26 and November 2, 1954, ibid.
91. November 9, 1954, ibid.
92. February 4, 1965, ibid.
93. October 2, 1976, ibid.
94. January 9, 1955, ibid.
95. March 31, 1955, ibid. Initially, there was the possibility that the Society might publish his paper and mount an exhibition of his papers; February 2, 1955. He also gave a talk about Channing and Hart at the Duke University history department, exhibiting a selection of the correspondence; November 8, 1955.
96. April 5, 1955, ibid.
97. September 30, 1955, ibid.
98. Faculty papers are certainly not ignored today. For examples of recent efforts to locate them within university archives collecting and appraising, see Tom Hyry, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Wideman, "'Though This Be Madness, yet There Is Method in 't': Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy," *American Archivist* 65 (Spring/Summer 2002): 56–69, and Tara Zachary Laver, "In a Class by Themselves: Faculty Papers at Research University Archives and Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 66 (Spring/Summer 2003): 159–96.
99. June 16, 1955, Cappon Diaries.
100. September 10, 1955, and October 16, 1956, ibid.
101. September 24, 1962, ibid. He used the manuscripts again for teaching the next year, noting how interested the students were in the manuscripts themselves; October 7, 1963.
102. Carol G. Duncan, *A Matter of Class: John Cotton Dana, Progressive Reform, and the Newark Museum* (Pittsburgh: Periscope Publishing, 2009). Dana was a leader in bringing together libraries, museums, and libraries in the generation before Cappon's era.
103. Jill Liddington, "What Is Public History? Publics and Their Pasts, Meanings and Practices," *Oral History* 30 (Spring 2002): 85.
104. David Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory," *Public Historian* 18 (Spring 1996): 14.
105. See, for example, Charles C. Cole Jr., "Public History: What Difference Has It Made?" *Public Historian* 16 (Fall 1994): 9–35.
106. Robert Weible, "Defining Public History: Is It Possible? Is It Necessary? *Perspectives on History* March 2008, available at http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2008/0803/0803vie1.cfm (accessed June 21, 2011).
107. Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory," 23.
108. Jones, "Public History Now and Then," 28.
109. Holly C. Shulman and Anna K. Nelson, "Public Documents and Public History: An Interview with Anna K. Nelson," *Public Historian* 25 (Winter 2003): 38.
110. William F. Birdsall, "The Two Sides of the Desk: The Archivist and the Historian, 1909-1935," *American Archivist* 38 (April 1975): 159–73.

111. He notes in his diary that he had been asked to write something about archives for the monthly internal publication of the Newberry Library, deciding to define archives, how that definition has been abused, and the confusion between historical manuscripts and archives; November 30, 1977, Cappon Diaries.

112. Cappon was an admirer of J. Franklin Jameson. In his review of a volume of Jameson's correspondence, Cappon notes, "Perhaps no one was more widely acquainted in the historical profession than Jameson during his career of over fifty years; surely no one was more capable of passing judgment on his contemporaries with astuteness and objectivity." Cappon may have seen himself in this way, wishing for his diary and correspondence to be used in a similar window into his professional communities. Review of Elizabth Donnan and Leo F. Stock, *An Historian's World: Selections from the Correspondence of John Franklin Jameson* published in *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 14 (January 1957): 109–12 (quotation p. 110).