

Developing a Premier National Institution: A Report from the User Community to the National Archives. PAGE PUTNAM MILLER. Washington: National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History, 1989. 39 p.

The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History is composed of some fifty member organizations in the United States, among them the American Historical Association and the Society of American Archivists. This report, prepared by those who consider themselves friends of the National Archives and Records Administration of the United States, gives advice to that institution in the form of recommendations for future goals for the National Archives.

It is not surprising that users should encourage the Archives to devote attention to their needs. However, the report goes further to suggest that the Archives must develop a plan to become a premier research institution, document the resources needed to accomplish its work, and urge Congress to supply necessary funds to make it happen.

The report is not just a plea for more money; it also offers pragmatic solutions. The National Archives should know its clientele better, distinguish between different users, and employ staff wisely in providing its services. Users such as genealogists requiring the use of specific archival sources can be well accommodated by the creation of sophisticated finding aids to their particular records. Another category of researchers, the traditional "multipliers" of Archives who publish or otherwise present their findings to a wider group of persons, wish at once to search more widely and delve more deeply. This group is not so easily accommodated. Given the quantity of documentation available in archives and the impossibility of ever describing it adequately to allow this type of research to proceed unaided, the writer argues that it is more efficient and effective for the National Archives to promote some subject specialization by archivists. One third of the recommendations, in fact, concern the necessity to "encourage and maximize" staff's knowledge of records.

We have heard these arguments before. They gain weight in this instance because they are presented by an influential community. Informally, it has been learned that almost all of the recommendations have been accepted by the National Archives and Records Administration. This is a provocative little publication; given the nature of the analysis and the degree of acceptance of its findings, the report is worth reading.

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Guide to the Archives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States, of the European Communities and of the Secretariat of European Political Cooperation. Commission of the European Communities. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1989. ISBN 92-825-9725-3.

This handy publication is the product of a group of archivists responsible for the records of the foreign ministries of the twelve European Community member states, the Commission of the European Communities and of the Secretariat of European Political Cooperation. Some two years in the making, this work is intended as a