

**THE COALITION TO SAVE OUR
DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE**

An Important Lesson In Archival Advocacy

**by
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Preface by Ira Shapiro

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"To get the bad Customs of a country chang'd, and new ones, though better, introduc'd, it is necessary first to remove the Prejudices of the People, enlighten their Ignorance, and convince them that their Interest will be promoted by the propos'd Changes; and this is not the Work of a Day."

Benjamin Franklin to Alexander Small,
September 28, 1787

preface

One of the strongest characteristics of Congress is that it is a uniquely responsive institution. Through the mail, the media, district or state offices and visits home, the members of Congress (and their staffs) are consistently attuned to the issues and problems -- large and small -- which are troubling their constituents.

In a nation as large and diverse as ours, where disaffection with government has run at a disturbingly high level in recent years, this responsiveness is a healthy trait. The public needs to know -- and is entitled to know -- that their representatives are sensitive to their concerns; that they have not "lost touch" while in Washington. But it is not an unmixed blessing. Given the number and intensity of the demands on members of Congress, there is a very real danger that they will elect to address problems by measuring public outcry, rather than on the merits of the issue. Issues which might justify congressional attention, but which are not presented with enough force to reach the congressional radar screen can fester for a long time without resolution.

Charlene Bickford's thoughtful and thorough paper illustrates such a case: the long-term difficulties of the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) and the more recent plight of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC). The community of archivists, historians, and other users of NARS have been concerned about the placement of NARS within the General Services

Administration (GSA) almost since it occurred in 1949. Repeatedly, they have pointed to the damage being done to NARS and the threat posed to our documentary heritage by not allowing the Archivist to run NARS. NARS' budget suffered in comparison to other cultural institutions because it was a small part of the GSA budget and had no advocate in the agency or in OMB. NARS found it difficult to develop effective management or keep staff morale high because ultimate responsibility rested with the GSA administrator. The dangers of giving the GSA administrator, a political appointee, final authority to override professional archival decisions were also clear. These concerns were underscored by a series of reports by respected individuals or blue-ribbon commissions calling for independence for NARS.

Yet the plight of NARS attracted no attention in Congress. In 1974, Congress moved quickly and effectively to block legislatively the implementation of the agreement between Richard Nixon and GSA Administrator Arthur Sampson which would have given Mr. Nixon broad license to control, and dispose of, the tapes and papers of his administration. Congress acted thoughtfully, even in the absence of crisis, to address the general question of Presidential records by passing the Presidential Records Act in 1978. Yet Congress did not focus on the obvious links between the need for this legislation and the overall situation at NARS: independence remained the concern of historians and archivists alone.

Chronic problems at NARS have intensified in recent years. The cultural mission of NARS has

always been misplaced, misunderstood, and subordinated to other functions, in GSA, but a rising level of public resentment about inflation, waste and fraud in government, and federal budget deficits added a new intensity to efforts at GSA to cut costs and tighten management. Late in the Carter Administration, a new GSA Administrator, Admiral Rowland Freeman, embarked on an ambitious plan to streamline and decentralize GSA by strengthening the regional operations. It was a sound concept for most of GSA -- and a potential disaster for NARS; if implemented, it would have meant a significant dispersion and scattering of the valuable documents now housed in the Archives. The Freeman plan caused an outcry from the users of NARS, who made their case to the White House and key members of Congress and succeeded in thwarting Freeman's initiative.

The fight over the Freeman plan was a warmup for the Reagan years. The Reagan Administration's insensitivity to the mission of NARS and the needs of historians and archivists far exceeded its predecessor's; NARS (joined by the NHPRC) was placed in frequent jeopardy; the battles to protect NARS and the grants program occurred with regularity. The new GSA Administrator, Gerald Carmen, launched his own reorganization of the agency, eliminating the authority of NARS over the Federal Records Centers and undermining the ability of professional archivists to insure the integrity of the "life cycle" of records. In its drive to cut the federal budget in 1981, the Reagan Administration targeted the \$4 million budget for the NHPRC for extinction, and, in a stunning upset, succeeded in defeating the authoriz-

ation for the NHPRC on the House floor. The NARS budget received deep and indiscriminate cuts from about \$88 million to \$75 million in one year. This actually translated into a 23 percent reduction in one year in NARS' operating funds. Personnel reductions followed, causing simultaneously a deterioration in NARS' ability to perform its mission and a serious decline in morale.

Political action had blocked the Freeman plan, and that lesson had not been lost on the organizations concerned about the fate of the Archives and the NHPRC. Facing a more determined and systematic assault, they responded in a more determined and systematic fashion, organizing the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage. The Coalition, together with the National Coordination Committee for the Promotion of History, has worked persistently to present the case for NARS and NHPRC directly to Congress, and they have rallied their members around the country to insure that individual members of Congress know there is grassroots concern about the fate of NARS and the grants program. The Coalition's efforts have borne fruit in very concrete ways: the House has passed a five year reauthorization for the NHPRC; the Senate will soon take up a five year reauthorization which has almost universal support; and S. 905, the Eagleton-Mathias legislation to make NARS independent of GSA has attracted nearly 40 Senate cosponsors from both parties, ranging across the ideological spectrum, despite the opposition of the Reagan Administration, making Senate action this fall a strong possibility.

The case for the independence of NARS and the

continuation of the NHPRC program are no stronger now than they were several years ago. What has changed, as Ms. Bickford's paper demonstrates, is that Congress is learning what the historians and archivists knew, and Congress is responding. The Coalition has refused to allow the situation of NARS and the NHPRC to be lost in the press of other Congressional business. The Coalition's efforts have been time-consuming, but the results -- measured in terms of increased Congressional awareness -- have been dramatic.

Ira S. Shapiro
Minority Staff Director
and Chief Counsel
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Looking back on the past two and a half years, I recall archivists, historians, genealogists, librarians and others with an interest in the documentary heritage of this country coalescing to fight political battles. It has been a time of enthusiastic action and foot dragging, a time of unity and division, and a time of victory and defeat. But, perhaps most importantly, this period has been one of learning, and the education that we have gained during this struggle can be utilized for future concerted action.

This is the story of one "ad hoc" coalition that emerged in response to a specific budget proposal of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the Reagan administration. The OMB proposed that no grant funds be allocated in the FY 1982 budget to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) and that the administration would not seek Congressional reauthorization of the NHPRC's grant programs. After learning of this OMB proposal in February 1981, many archivists, historians, and editors chose to stand and fight--and within two weeks the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage was born.

The genesis of the Coalition is somewhat complicated. Immediately after the OMB's decision became known, a small group of concerned individuals met with Guy Land, an aide to Congressman David Bowen (D-MS). Bowen was, at that time, the House of Representatives' appointee to the NHPRC, and Land often attended Commission meetings in Bowen's absence. Land advised launching an intensive effort to save the Commission and recommended the formation of a

coalition of organizations. Observing that a myriad of interest groups would be scrambling to restore or add funds to the tight FY82 budget, he argued that a concerted and well-organized effort by historians, archivists, librarians, and others interested in the program was necessary if Congress was to respond. Since Land was well-versed in the way the Congress operates, we heeded his advice.

What we faced initially was an organizational problem. We needed a headquarters to plan strategy, to discuss this strategy with member organizations, to coordinate the campaign against the OMB decision, and to develop new plans as circumstances changed. Setting up a central office and developing lines of communication was a challenging task. Each of the Coalition's potential member organizations had a mechanism for informing its own members of important news, but communication between these organizations was very limited. Adding to our problem was the fact that the financial and personnel resources of these organizations were severely stretched, and they were being asked to combat budget cuts and policy changes at all levels of government. Only the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History had a broad enough base to be considered as a possible headquarters for the Coalition. But due to restrictions placed upon the Project Director of the NCC, it was not possible for the NCC to become the nerve center of any educational/lobbying effort.

With no easy solution to the headquarters problem, we turned our attention to building support for the coalition concept among the dozens of archival, historical, and library organizations across the

country. I was joined in the effort by A.K. Johnson, the Executive Secretary of the National Association of State Archivists and Records Administrators (NASARA).

We began by calling executive directors and presidents of target organizations asking if their members would join a Coalition to work towards the dual goal of reauthorizing and funding the NHPRC. Surely these leaders were a little taken aback by our request, since both the Association for Documentary Editing (ADE) and NASARA are relatively small organizations, and people like Mack Thompson of the American Historical Association (AHA) and Richard Kirkendall of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) had certainly never heard of Charlene Bickford or A.K. Johnson.

This brings me to the matter of how I became involved in this effort and eventually volunteer coordinator of the Coalition. One word explains it better than any other: evolution. In 1979 I served as the secretary-treasurer of the newly formed Association for Documentary Editing. That year, Charles Cullen of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Ed Weldon, who was then archivist of New York State, and I testified in front of the House subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Office and General Government Appropriations on behalf of an increased appropriation for the NHPRC grant program. Each of us emphasized that extra funding for the NHPRC should not be taken from the NARS budget, but predictably, the subcommittee took the easy and established course, and NARS lost \$1 million to the NHPRC.

In 1980 I was part of a small working committee

that put together the Emergency Committee to Preserve the National Archives to halt the decentralization of the holdings of the National Archives ordered by the then GSA Administrator, Rowland G. Freeman, III. As a consequence of the actions of the working committee, letters about the decentralization issue poured into congressional offices and pressure from members of Congress caused the Administrator to back down. The committee continued in existence after that crisis and began to work for NARS independence. The initiator of the working committee, Pete Daniel, worked for Senator Morgan of North Carolina and persuaded him to introduce an independence bill that session. Unfortunately, Senator Morgan was defeated in the 1980 election.

By 1981, my role as an advocate had evolved and I was part of a team that was working on NARS/NHPRC issues, particularly when they came into the congressional arena. I quickly learned the value of the well-worn phrase, "team effort." Even though I have coordinated the Coalition's efforts, it too has been very much a collective activity. We could not have succeeded without all of the many individuals who stood on the front lines in Washington and who worked in the field out in Illinois, Alaska, Massachusetts, Tennessee, and other states.

Everyone involved in establishing the Coalition recognized from the beginning that the possibility existed that the appropriations subcommittees on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government might do what it had done in 1979 and take the \$3 million requested by the Coalition for the NHPRC from the regular appropriation for NARS. None of us wanted to

see that happen, and we did all in our power to prevent this occurrence. At the same time the danger that the NHPRC's grant program would expire was so great that we had to concentrate our initial energies on the recusitation campaign, rather than dissipate our limited resources on the broader NARS budget issue.

This NARS/NHPRC conflict was created by the actions of Congressional committees. From the early days of the Coalition we argued that the vocal NHPRC constituency also formed a natural advocacy group for NARS, but the perceived conflict, more than any other issue, caused internal divisions within organizations asked to join the Coalition. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) felt this conflict the most intensely and chose not to join the Coalition.

When A.K. and I met, we had no idea that more than two years later the "coalition" we were forming would still exist. We both thought that all that was needed was some quick, concerted, and heavy pressure on congressional committees responsible for the NHPRC. NASARA would send a letter, along with a Coalition-prepared action alert, to all the members of the NHPRC historical records advisory boards. The ADE would do a mailing to its own members. The Coalition would inform other organizations about the plight of the NHPRC, gather more Coalition members and funds, and track events on Capitol Hill. If sufficient monies could be raised, the Coalition would mail its action alert to a mailing list of approximately 3500 individuals, newsletters, historical societies, archives, etc. With an impressive list of organizational members, the Coalition would

write to the related subcommittees in support of the NHPRC and offer to testify at public hearings. The Coalition would be heard, and the NHPRC would be saved. All of this would take place during a two or three month period, or so we thought.

Early in the effort we were joined by Michael Richman, Anne Vandegrift, and Genevieve Gormley of the Papers of Daniel Chester French at the National Trust for Historical Preservation. These three people, plus Helen Veit and Laurie Kittle of the staff of the First Federal Congress Project donated many volunteer hours to the Coalition and without their help, the effort would not have succeeded. Connie Schulz, an interested and committed historian, also gave generously of her time.

Together our small band worked on the preliminary Coalition goals, and by mid-March we had completed the mailings to the ADE members, the records boards, and to the larger list of 3500 people and organizations. More importantly, the Coalition had a membership of over 25 organizations. John Kendall of the New England Archivists, Ann Russell of the Northeast Document Conservation Center, Nicholas Burckel of the Midwest Archives Conference, Charles Lee, of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, and Bruce Dearstyne of the New York State Archives, along with many others, were busily stirring up activity in their own states and regions. The Coalition was gaining momentum and congressional committees were beginning to take an interest in the issue.

On April 2 Congressman Jack Brooks introduced a two year NHPRC reauthorization at the \$3 million yearly level. The Coalition coordinated testimony

for the public hearings that were held on April 27. At those hearings Gerald George, Executive Director of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), and Whitfield Bell, Director of the American Philosophical Society testified on behalf of the Coalition, and Ann Morgan Campbell spoke for the SAA. On April 29 Senator Charles McC. Mathias introduced Senate legislation identical to the House bill, and by May 15 the authorizing committees had sent both bills to the full House and Senate. On the funding front, the Coalition, represented by Michael Ainslie, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Thad Tate, director of the Institute for Early American History and Culture, and Carol Henderson of the Washington Office of the American Library Association (ALA), testified before the House and Senate Subcommittees on Treasury, Postal Service, and General Government Appropriations, and the subcommittee members seemed concerned about the fate of the NHPRC.

In our estimation everything was moving along beautifully. A suprisingly large number of letters in support of such a small program were being received in subcommittee offices. We were getting to know committee staff people, who appreciated our work in coordinating testimony and help in planning strategy. The subcommittees were convinced that the NHPRC was a very popular grant program that spent its meager allowance wisely and successfully employed federal funds as seed money to stimulate the contribution of private monies.

We were riding a wave of success, and it took a wipe-out before we began to realize what a long haul

this fight was going to be. On May 18, 1981, Congressman Jack Brooks, who saw the NHPRC legislation as extremely popular and certainly non-controversial, chose to bring the authorizing legislation (H.R. 2979) to the floor of the House under suspension of the rules. Debate under suspension is limited to twenty minutes and the legislation must pass by a two-thirds majority if a recorded vote is requested. Usually votes under this rule are reserved for non-controversial items on which there is general agreement.

The bill came to the floor on May 18 but the expected short, laudatory debate with a quick voice vote did not occur. Instead the legislation was attacked as a "budget buster" by two Congressmen from California, William Dannemeyer and John Rousselot. Attacking the Commission as a "Great Society Program" which was a microcosm of what had happened to the Federal Government in the past 47 years, Congressman Dannemeyer spoke on the floor, sent out a "Dear Colleague" letter asking that the bill be defeated, and forced a roll call vote on the bill. On May 19, Mr. Dannemeyer got his wish and the NHPRC reauthorization was resoundingly defeated, 231-165.

Sitting in the House gallery that day was not an uplifting experience. Watching all those red lights go up on the electronic board where the votes are recorded discouraged some of the Coalition's Washington core group almost to the point of giving up. And, in fact, we did retire to a Capitol Hill tavern to cry in our beer. But a few minutes of talking over the situation had us on the pay phones in the restaurant making appointments with Hill staffers for the next

day to find out what could be saved from the debacle.

On May 20 we sat down with some staff people to analyze what had gone wrong in the House and to assess our chances for a victory in the Senate. Did we do something wrong or was there something that we had neglected to do as advocates for the Commission's grant programs? Was it possible that members of the House were really familiar with the NHPRC programs and had knowingly rejected them? What was the next step?

It soon became obvious to us that H.R. 2979 had become a symbolic budget issue because it was the first legislation to be brought to the floor of the House in 1981 that authorized funding for a program zeroed-out in the President's budget. Thus, the NHPRC legislation was targeted by Congressman Danne-meyer and other conservatives as a "budget buster." Because most of the Representatives voting on the bill probably knew little about the NHPRC, they accepted this argument, seeing it as one way to control budget "excesses."

In answer to the question about any Coalition responsibility for the debacle, we concluded that if anything, Coalition representatives had been too successful in convincing the members of the House Government Operations Committee that the NHPRC's programs had considerable constituent support. The efforts of the Coalition had been focused on the committees, not on all the individual members of the House and Senate. The Government Operations Committee was so convinced by our logic, that they took what turned out to be a risk with the NHPRC legislation at a time when things were not running along established patterns.

This was a critical turning point for the Coalition, and I have placed extra emphasis on the H.R. 2979 vote. From May 19 on we realized that the struggle would be a much longer one than previously anticipated and that our efforts would have to be extended beyond the committees to all members of the House and Senate, particularly the leadership. And, of course, we would have to deal with Congressman Dannemever.

Immediately after the failure of H.R. 2979, we started to lobby the Senate to pass the companion bill, S. 1050. It was critically important that the reauthorization have the support of the Majority Leader, Howard Baker, and our Tennessee contingent went to work. The AASLH, Tennessee Archivists, the three NHPRC publications projects, and others in the state had already banded together to form the Tennessee Cultural Crisis Committee. The committee was vociferous about adequate funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the historic preservation program, and the NHPRC. When we informed the Committee that Senator Baker would be the key to the success of S. 1050, the Committee leadership promised to appeal to Baker as his constituents. Jerry George, Marice Wolfe, Wayne Cutler and many others pleaded the NHPRC case with the Majority Leader's office, and in very short order Senator Baker became an active NHPRC advocate. In Washington we kept in touch with Baker's office, supplied his staff with information about the status of the legislation, suggested what the Senator might do to help, and generally kept his interest alive. To this day, we continue to work with the Senator's staff on matters relating to NARS and have seen evidence recently

that we are making progress on the independence issue.

The campaign to win Senator Baker's assistance was a comparatively short one. The effort to gain the support of the House Minority Leader, Representative Robert Michel of Illinois, stretched over several months. In September of 1981, Edward Gleiman, majority counsel for the House subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, told John Simon of the Ulysses S. Grant Association in Carbondale, Illinois, Michael Richman and myself that support from the House Republican leadership would be necessary if we wanted the Government Operations Committee to bring H.R. 2979 to the floor again. Since Mr. Michel had been supportive of historical programs in the past, we hoped that it might be possible to make him an ally on the NHPRC issue. So we planned a concentrated strategy to gain Mr. Michel's support. Individuals like Frank Mackaman of the Everett Dirksen Center and William Anderson, President of Carl Sandburg College, contacted Mr. Michel's office. Richard Koffler of the American Association of University Presses activated the directors of presses in Illinois. We even solicited participation on the part of members of the League of Women Voters and the American Association of University Women in Peoria, the largest city in Mr. Michel's district.

More importantly, we learned that a member of Michel's staff, Hyde Murray, was sympathetic to historical preservation activities and we looked for the right opportunity to meet with him. At about the same time Mr. Michel wrote to one of his constituents supporting the reauthorization of the NHPRC grant program. This provided the opening that we had been

waiting for, and I called Hyde Murray and requested an appointment.

The discussion with Murray was wide-ranging, touching on the budget and organizational placement problems of NARS, the need for the House to change its rules relating to its own historical records, the establishment of a House historical office, and the bicentennial of the Congress, in addition to the NHPRC. Since that meeting Hyde Murray and Robert Michel have taken an interest in all these issues, and we continue to see the results of this.

Murray suggested that we provide him with information for Michel outlining the NHPRC's contributions to preserving the history of the House of Representatives, the records of its members, and documents relating to the Capitol building itself. Since the NHPRC has sponsored many projects relating to these areas, we were able to supply considerable background, which Mr. Michel then used in a statement for the hearings held by the House Government Information and Individual Rights Subcommittee in March of 1982. This was a major accomplishment, because the minority leader seldom sends testimony to oversight hearings.

Another important aspect of our effort was outside the Congressional arena. We knew that we had to capture the attention of the press if we were to keep up our momentum: we also knew that this would be a difficult task. The NHPRC's budget cuts were miniscule compared with cuts in funding for food stamps, programs for the elderly, and other social welfare programs. Coalition supporters employed every contact and used every opportunity to draw press attention to the plight of the NHPRC. We quickly learned

that the presence of "Founding Fathers" publications projects on the NHPRC grants list was what attracted most of the newspaper attention. The Baltimore Sun printed "Cuts for the Founders, a Funny Way to Make America Great," by Garry Wills, while Edmund S. Morgan was able to persuade the Washington Star to print his commentary, "Cutting Off the Founding Fathers Without a Cent." A Tennessee newspaper printed Bob Summer's "Patriotism Askew" in its book section. All of these articles, plus Herbert Mitgang's piece in The New York Times and Charles Boewe's "Who Speaks for Jane Addams?" in the Christian Science Monitor, appeared in the early months of the battle. Since that time, editors, historians, and archivists have found innovative ways to draw frequent press attention to the plight of the NHPRC. In fact the NHPRC's problems actually have been mentioned in two commentaries by John Chancellor on the NBC Nightly News, the most recent one on June 2, 1983, the day after the authorization bill (H.R. 2196) finally passed the House of Representatives --more than two years after the 1981 debacle.

Unlike the NHPRC, NARS had suffered from bad press in the past due to ongoing problems with security and preservation. Our job was to draw the press's interest to the larger issues of the NARS budget and the need to free NARS from GSA. Together with representatives of the AHA, the NCC, SAA, and the Society for History in the Federal Government, we cooperated with the committee staff to make sure that last March's subcommittee oversight hearings drew maximum attention. Dr. Samuel Gammon, the Executive Director of the AHA, was responsible for recruiting

noted historian Barbara Tuchman and Roots author Alex Haley to testify on behalf of NARS. Their presence drew press attention to the hearings and as an added incentive, the Coalition of Social Science Associations, the OAH, and the AHA sponsored a luncheon press conference featuring Tuchman and Haley.

The next morning the Washington Post, which had printed many critical articles on the Archives in the past, published Thomas O'Toole's "Lobbying for History," an article which drew the attention of Senator Thomas Eagleton, a long time NARS advocate who was already the primary sponsor of S. 1421 which would have restored NARS' independent status, to the funding crisis at NARS. The Senator, who is the ranking minority member of the Governmental Affairs Committee and a member of the Appropriations Committee, directed Ira Shapiro, his Governmental Affairs staff director, to monitor the supplemental appropriations process and be ready to move with amendments adding funding for NARS and the NHPRC. From that point on, Eagleton, with the cooperation of Appropriations Committee chairman Mark Hatfield, championed NARS at every supplemental appropriations markup. It was this persistent pressure, together with Shapiro's hard work getting the votes lined up, that was responsible for the additional funds that NARS and the NHPRC received in the September 1982 supplemental appropriations bill.

This story illustrates how important publicity can be, and we continue to explore opportunities to achieve positive media attention for our issues. In the spring of 1982, National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" aired a 5 minute segment on NARS/NHPRC funding and in September 1982 the New Re-

public printed Amity Shlaes' "Broken Records, Why the Archives are in Tatters." All of this national attention came as a result of the March hearings.

Another effective publicity tool was the letter to the editor. Although I have no count of how many of these have actually been published, I do know that many NARS/NHPRC supporters across the country have tried this approach. A letter which is keyed to an article that was previously published in the paper has a much better chance of being printed.

In addition to working with the congressional leadership and the press, we were also tracking legislation, putting intensive pressure on individual committee members before appropriations committee markups, keeping tabs on the latest GSA and budget threats to NARS/NHPRC, putting together information about endangered NARS/NHPRC programs and about the troubled history of the NARS/GSA relationship. We were seldom at a loss for what to do next!

In addition to its advocacy role, the Coalition's relationship to the NARS/NHPRC constituency has also evolved over the past two and a half years. As stated earlier, the Coalition began as an ad hoc operation that we assumed would be temporary. When requesting that organizations join, we told them the Coalition was seeking support for the reauthorization of the NHPRC and \$3 million in FY82 funding for the Commission and asked them to circulate the information we sent them to their membership. With such modest goals, we did not perceive a need for a Coalition structure. No constitution, by-laws, officers or committees were planned.

It was this lack of structure, that enabled those of us in Washington to act quickly, without con-

sulting the 57 member organizations that made up the Coalition. At the same time this informality led to a few problems. There were complaints that the Coalition was a "loose cannon" without direction; that we were undercutting NARS for the benefit of the NHPRC; that we were undercutting the records program for the benefit of documentary publications; and so on. And, at the beginning, the Coalition was also faced with internal strife within its constituent organizations.

One needs a doctorate in diplomatic relations to cope with the problems of building a coalition and holding it together. Our strategy from the beginning was to unite behind very specific goals and not be diverted by differences between advocates of historical records preservation and advocates of documentary publications, or between those who primarily supported the Commission and those who were most concerned about the National Archives. When sending information to our diverse constituency and when making contacts on Capitol Hill and in the press, we gave equal billing to records and publications, and even during the early months, when our focal point was the NHPRC, we were using every chance that came our way to present NARS' needs to Congressional staffers. By October of 1981 our mailings were covering the Archives budget crisis, and making the case for independence.

It was during the summer and fall of 1981 that some of the divisions evident in the first few months of the Coalition's existence began to heal. NARS was threatened with budget cuts that put many of its programs at risk and by a GSA administrator who seemed the ultimate Reagan administration team player. Historians, archivists, librarians, genealogists and

other Archives users united as never before. Organizations and individuals began to realize that the threats to NARS were so important and the problems so pressing that no energy should be wasted on infighting. Since the Coalition had an informational and advocacy network already in place, it became the major advocacy organization for NARS.

The SAA joined the Coalition in the summer of 1981, another example of increasing unity within the constituency. In the early days of the crisis, SAA had decided not become a Coalition member and to work for an increased NARS appropriation, including NHPRC funding. When Ann Campbell stated this position to me in February of 1981, I told her that I would be happy to see SAA taking this stand at the appropriations hearings. NARS and the NHPRC both needed vocal advocates.

In retrospect, the Coalition's efforts were not seriously weakened by the absence of the SAA. However, the fact that SAA did not totally follow through on its intention to support NARS was at least part of the reason that the House appropriations subcommittee took the funds earmarked for NHPRC from the NARS budget and that the Senate appropriations committee did not protect NARS from the 12% cut made in September. When I say that the SAA did not follow through on its intention, I am referring to the fact that no SAA representative appeared at public hearings before the appropriations subcommittees; the Coalition presented the only public testimony on the entire GSA budget. Coalition testimony did ask that the NHPRC funds not be taken from the NARS budget, but the case for the Archives was not made at the

hearings. After the House subcommittee earmarked \$3 million out of the NARS appropriation for the Commission, Coalition representatives spent considerable time trying to rectify the situation. The day before the Senate subcommittee markup, Page Miller of the NCC, Carol Henderson of the ALA, Mike Richman and I met with an aide to Senator James Abdnor to request increased NARS funding, and his subcommittee responded by increasing the NARS total by \$1 million. But the committee had no public record of the needs of the National Archives, and no real groundswell of support for NARS had been noticed. So, when the president requested an across the board cut of 12% of discretionary domestic appropriations in September of 1981, the committee protected some of the agencies under its jurisdiction from this cut, but not NARS.

Having criticized SAA's absence from the appropriations hearings, I must admit that it is not easy to get on the schedule for the public hearings. One must constantly call the committee offices to ask when the hearings will be held and remind them that your organization wishes to testify. Even then, they often lose you in the shuffle. When this kind of monitoring is required, the SAA was at a disadvantage since it had no Washington office. I must give recognition to the excellent job the SAA did in communicating legislative issues and the need for action to its membership.

The SAA became part of the Coalition as a result of conversations among several Washington SAA members, Connie Schulz, Mike Richman and myself. After a luncheon discussion it was agreed that an SAA member in the Washington area would serve as D.C. representative of the SAA and be consulted on Coalition

strategy. We were pleased to gain SAA's active support.

The mandate of the Coalition expanded substantially in February 1982. At a meeting called by Jack Shulimson, chairman of the Archives Committee of the Society for History in the Federal Government, representatives of historical, archival and library organizations, and observers from the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Legion, the Vietnam Veterans, and the National Genealogical Society discussed the need for a unified NARS advocacy effort. I attended the meeting representing the Coalition and expected that an ad hoc group concentrating solely on NARS issues might emerge. Instead, those in attendance concurred that the Coalition was at that time the only organization in a position to coordinate the NARS effort. Although I left the meeting with a much larger official responsibility, I was heartened by this new unity in our campaign.

During the following week a steering committee representing some of the major organizational members of the Coalition was formed. The membership of this committee consists of myself, Anna Nelson representing the OAH, Page Miller for the NCC, Connie Schulz for the AHA, J. Frank Cook for the SAA, Jack Shulimson for the Society for History in the Federal Government, Suzanne Murray for the National Genealogical Society, and Mike Richman for the ADE. We immediately drew up the following statement of purpose:

The Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage is organized to promote:

The exchange of information and the development of a joint strategy for the various groups concerned about the welfare of the National Archives and Records Service

A thorough evaluation of the National Archives and Records Services' mission and the programs that are vital to its accomplishment

Adequate funding that will enable the National Archives and Records Service to fulfill its mandated mission

Reauthorization and clarification of the funding process for the National Historical Publications and Records Commission grants

The separation of the National Archives and Records Service from the authority of the General Services Administration.

This statement was circulated to Coalition member organizations, and most of them have actively supported the Coalition's expanded role. This expansion has also brought more organizations into our membership.

Since February 1982, the steering committee has met when there was a need to discuss future strategies and exchange information. Additionally, we are in frequent phone contact. Although the establishment of the steering committee might have been perceived as a major change in the leadership of the Coalition, the real change was very minor. We had been working in consultation with others in Washington, and across the country, from the very beginning. The steering committee structure merely formalized an already existing consultation process.

But a formal steering committee has proved to be very valuable to the work of the Coalition. Each member of the committee has been responsible for urging the organization that he or she represents to follow through on requests for action. At the same time, we share the work of keeping in touch with Capitol Hill so that we do not wear out our welcome by all calling the same person. Communication has improved. And steering committee members aided in convincing member organizations that financial contributions to the Coalition are necessary.

One of the most "ad hoc" facets of our operation has been its financing. During the first year we kept going with individual contributions, organizational contributions from the ADE and NASARA, and considerable "in kind" support from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Following the expansion of the Coalition's goals, the steering committee attempted to put the Coalition on a more secure financial foundation. We drew up a budget which included long distance phone, supplies, reproduction expenses, postage, and wages for a part time employee. We intended to fund this budget by requesting the SAA, OAH, AASLH, AHA, and NGS to contribute \$1,000 each, while other organizations were asked for \$.25 a member. As could be predicted, our revenue estimates were optimistic. Fewer than half of the member organizations have made financial contributions, and the Coalition still depends on volunteer help.

One of the interesting things about our fund-raising efforts is the fact that some of the smaller

organizations such as the Long Island Archives Conference and the Society of Southwest Archivists, each of which sent \$100, seemed more willing to put money into the effort than some of the larger organizations. Of the "big five" organizations, two (OAH and NGS) have not contributed. SAA has pitched in \$200 and the AASLH \$300. The AHA has contributed \$300 outright as well as saving the Coalition at least \$600 by making copies for mailing to 3,000 organizations, newsletters, and individuals in the spring of 1982.

Although we have been unable to raise enough funds to hire a part time staff person, the Coalition is currently financially solvent and funds are available to keep the constituency informed. This year we have had the advantage of having an intern from Drew University, Carol Leader. Some organizations in the D.C. area, such as the ALA, have offered to pick up the costs of reproducing and mailing one of our updates, which now go to about 700 organizations and individuals.

In early 1982, a movement got underway to establish a Washington office representing the broad interests of historians, archivists and others, on Capitol Hill and within the executive branch. This movement began with winter meetings, called by Joan Hoff Wilson, Executive Secretary of the OAH, and attended by many of us in the D.C. area who had been on the front lines during the previous year. In attendance were representatives of the AHA, NCC, SAA, ADE, the Society for History in the Federal Government, the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage, the Humanities Alliance, and the Council of Social

Science Associations. Many options, both large and small scale, were discussed. Our goal was to present a practical plan to a meeting called by representatives of the Western History Association, which was to be held during the OAH convention in April.

The plan that most of us thought would be the most workable and have maximum effectiveness was proposed by David F. Trask of the Society for History in the Federal Government. He suggested an advocacy office with general responsibility for representing the interests of our constituency, while task forces could be established to give concentrated attention to certain issues which demanded special or emergency effort. Under the Trask plan the Coalition would qualify as such a task force. Ideally, the budget for the central office would allow for financial support for such task forces.

Along with many others, I viewed the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History as the most viable foundation upon which to build this "new" advocacy office. The NCC already had more than twenty member organizations, active state committees, and a paid director. During the preceding months more and more of director Page Miller's time had been consumed by legislative matters. The crises of the past year had caused this evolution.

At the meeting during the OAH, representatives of many historical and archival organizations talked over the need for a continuing professional advocacy effort and discussed the form that this effort should take. There was a general consensus that exploration of an expanded NCC, with a new advocacy mandate, was needed. The executives of the AHA, SAA, OAH and

AASLH agreed to meet and develop the mechanism for this change. This meeting was held in June, a proposal was drawn up for the organizations and by the fall of 1982, member organizations of the NCC had approved a revised purpose and organizational structure for the NCC:

To serve as a central advocacy office for the historical/archival profession with special attention given to: the funding and welfare of the National Archives and Records Service; policies related to access to documents; federal support of historical research, teaching, and public programs; historic perservation; federal aid to students for higher education; and historical commemorations.

A major function of the NCC, in addition to advocacy, is communication with constituent organizations, ad hoc coalitions, and its state committee network.

If this new advocacy office is to succeed, the NCC director must have the authority to decide which issues to stress, when a particular task force would be useful, and so on. If forced to answer to the demands of each member organization and wait for the boards to be polled on decisions, the director's effectiveness will be severely curtailed. At the present time this authority seems to be in place, and the member organizations have come a long way in recognizing the necessity to free the director to act with a large degree of independence.

But the authority of the director is not the only element needed to make this office truly effective. The office must have readily available duplicating facilities, a generous long distance phone budget,

and word processing technology. The director must have a staff that frees her from tasks like typing, folding, and stuffing her own newsletters. All of this takes strong financial commitment from the member organizations. So far, not enough evidence has been put forth proving that the professional organizations can financially support such an expanded office, but if we are committed to this larger advocacy effort, a way must be found to fund these activities.

Additionally, the "new" NCC should be only a facilitator for its member organizations, state boards, and individuals. Organizations must not abdicate any of their responsibility for keeping their memberships informed about legislative events and urging them to take action, writing letters to congressman and senators on behalf of the organization, and passing resolutions at annual meetings, sending copies to the appropriate committees. The grass roots support has to be stirred up by the organizations and individual members.

At the present time the Coalition and the NCC cooperate on all advocacy efforts relating to NARS/NHPRC issues. We usually divide up the tasks to be accomplished and attempt to avoid duplication of effort. The Coalition continues to keep about 700 organizations and individuals informed about NARS/NHPRC legislation and the need for action through occasional mailings. The NCC's budget could not currently fund the Coalition's activities, but because of careful budgeting, volunteer help, and in kind support from member organizations, the Coalition is still solvent. It is likely that the organization

will continue to exist as long as the need for a special advocacy emphasis on NARS/NHPRC issues is present.

Through our joint efforts much has been accomplished. Although at a reduced level, the NHPRC grants program has been funded in FY82 and FY83. On June 1, 1983--2 years and 12 days after H.R. 2979 was defeated on suspension--the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2196, a bill to reauthorize the grants program for 5 years at a yearly level of \$3 million. The fact that it took over two years to bring about another House floor action on NHPRC reauthorization illustrates the need for patience and perserverance when working for archival programs. The job of rousing Congressional interest in historical issues and maintaining that interest is a challenge and should not be taken on by those who expect quick results.

In FY83 the House Subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government Appropriations added the NHPRC grant funds on top of the NARS budget request, and for FY84 this subcommittee went even further by adding \$6 million total to the NARS budget (\$3 million for grants, \$3 million for preservation projects at NARS). This was the first time in recent memory that this subcommittee has added funds for NARS, and this fact is a significant indication that the combined advocacy efforts of the NCC and Coalition are having an effect.

But perhaps even more important than what has been accomplished is what has been prevented. Two cases serve to illustrate this point. In the Spring of 1982, the Office of Management and Budget sent out

the "Miscellaneous Government Instrumentalities Termination Act of 1982" for agency comment. This proposed bill would have eliminated 8 small government entities. One of the entities slated for extinction was the NHPRC--not just the grants program, but the Commission itself. We had the good fortune to find out about this OMB initiative when it was still in the comment stage. As a result of our distress phone calls, the NHPRC's friends on Capitol Hill began to make inquiries of the OMB and let OMB know that the legislation would not receive a friendly reception in Congress, if the NHPRC was still included in it when it reached the Hill. Due to the congressional pressure, the OMB attempt to abolish the NHPRC was dropped.

The other instance occurred in February of 1983 when a story in The Washington Post reported that Richard Staar, who had just resigned as head of the United States delegation to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Conference in Vienna, had been offered the position of Archivist of the United States. Although less than two weeks after this report appeared the White House personnel office was denying any intention of replacing the current archivist, most of us in the Washington area believe that only quick and vociferous action on the part of organizations and individuals across the nation prevented the politicizing of the office of Archivist.

Carol Henderson of the ALA has pointed out that even though advocacy groups do not often get much recognition for what they prevent from happening, this kind of defensive action is one of the most important aspects of lobbying. And it must be said

that most of the Coalition's efforts in the first two years were focused on preventing the NARS/NHPRC situation from deteriorating further while the essential networks were being established.

Those networks, although they have to be constantly nurtured and expanded, are now in place and it is time for an all out campaign to reestablish an independent National Archives. This is an attainable goal, but participation on the part of all of those concerned with the health and welfare of our national "ministry of documents" is an essential ingredient. Only with persistent prodding from the constituency will the Congress act and the administration acquiesce to a new agency.

Our current NARS advocacy movement has roots in the past. Certainly the premier advocate for historical/archival programs was J. Franklin Jameson, who could be called the "founding father" of the AHA, the National Archives, and the National Historical Publications Commission. Jameson devoted a large portion of his career over 30 years to the establishment of a National Archives and the NHPC. Although changes in administrations and the Congress brought about many setbacks or at least the need to educate an entirely new group of people, Jameson never lost sight of his primary goal. He persistently worked to educate the Congress, the executive branch, and the public about the critical need for the United States to establish a central agency to be responsible for the records of the United States government.

Trudy H. Peterson, in a very enlightening paper entitled "Archives and Advocacy: Two Historical Examples" delivered at the 1982 Conference on Public

History, compared Jameson's efforts to establish a national archives with a more recent archival advocacy movement called "Operation Exit," that had NARS independence as its goal. "Operation Exit" was the name given to their efforts by four men: former Archivist Wayne Grover, NHPC Executive Director Oliver W. Holmes, Julian Boyd, editor of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, and Lyman Butterfield, editor of the Adams Family Papers, . These men began "Operation Exit" when Grover sent his letter of resignation to President Lyndon B. Johnson and in it expressed his belief that the agency should be restored to independent status. They focused their attention on the Johnson administration, but in spite of personal interest in this issue on the part of Lady Bird Johnson, they were unable to achieve a legislative proposal from the Administration before Johnson's March 1968 announcement that he would not seek reelection.

Peterson examined the two movements and found that while there were similarities between them, several differences contributed to Jameson's success and "Operation Exit's" failure. Some of her observations on these differences should be noted here as they have a direct bearing on the current movement.

First, she points out that Jameson was only 48 years old when he began to petition Congress for the establishment of a national archives. By comparison, the four men that formed "Operation Exit" were nearing the end of their careers. Thus, in a long term campaign, Jameson had the advantage.

As pointed out earlier in this paper, logistical

support is essential to an effective lobbying operation. In this area, Jameson again had the advantage. Not only did he have the freedom, granted by the Carnegie Institution, to devote his time to advocacy, but he also had an office, a secretary, research assistants, typewriters, telephones--all the ingredients for communicating with those in power and the constituency.

Each of these efforts had different advantages and disadvantages when working with interest groups. Jameson had the benefit of a very close and cooperative relationship with the AHA, but many of professional groups, including the SAA, NASARA, the regional archival groups and the many small, but well organized and active historical organizations, like the ADE and the Society for History in the Federal Government that we know today, did not then exist. The Grover group did not enjoy as strong a tie with the AHA, but did have the advantage of an organized archival community represented by the SAA. Yet, this advantage turned quickly to disadvantage. The Deputy Archivist of the United States, Herbert Angel, was also serving a term as president of the SAA and faced the conflict between serving a membership that desired restoration of an independent NARS and at the same time trying to fulfill his duties as an employee of the General Services Administration. During 1981 and 1982, the SAA and Ed Weldon, who was then Deputy Archivist, faced this conflict a second time. The Grover group spent valuable time and effort on orchestrating organizational positions on independence and dealing with internal dissent.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the two movements was one of focus. While Jameson's campaign was diffuse and designed to inspire influential support for a National Archives in all three branches of the government, "Operation Exit" concentrated almost exclusively on stirring the executive branch to propose changing NARS' status. In fact the quartet believed that the 1968 introduction of independence legislation by Senator Hugh Scott and Representative Charles McC. Mathias threatened to politicize the movement and jeopardize any influence that they had with the Johnson administration. Rather than seize this opportunity, they chose to stay clear of any congressional initiative.

In the end the leaders of "Exit" placed their faith in a study of NARS and its programs and needs which would inevitably recommend independence. This excellent study, H.G. Jones' The Records of a Nation, did document the case for freedom, but by then the Johnson administration had left Washington, congressional interest in the issue had waned, and the constituency was not geared up to push for implementation of the study's findings. What had started as a bold initiative was lost.

How does the current advocacy movement compare to these past efforts? Certainly our ability to push towards any goal has been enhanced and strengthened by the experience of the past two and a half years. Dozens of organizations are now united in the campaign to reestablish an independent Archives, and our communications networks are in place. One of the lessons of "Operation Exit" is that the constituency

must not be diverted from its primary goal nor count on achieving this goal in a short time. It is extremely important for us to keep this lesson in mind as we are confronted with a task force report or opportunities for "blue ribbon panels" to study archives in the U.S. While the materials produced by such studies may be useful, they must not be viewed as ends in themselves. These reports must be mined for evidence that documents the case for independence and used as support for our actions.

The momentum of the independence movement in the Senate is impressive, where over 25% of the membership has signed on as cosponsors of S.905 at this writing. Full committee and Senate floor action could occur at any time. We must put all of our energies behind moving this bill through the congressional channels, while working to head off any opposition from the executive branch.

Above all, we should keep several facts in mind. First, the independence issue is not one that excites opposition. Very few arguments, other than the ever present one against "bigger" government, can be made against it. Conversely, the issue is such a small one on congressional terms that it is difficult to maintain a high enough level of interest in it to keep a bill moving. Attention is drawn to the need for independence when a crisis occurs, but when the crisis dies down, more pressing concerns take precedence. Finally, only a unified, sustained, long term, grass roots campaign will keep the issue alive and achieve the goal of independence.

The reestablishment of an independent NARS is in the interest of not only the constituency but also our

nation's documentary heritage. Archivists, historians and others must set aside past and present differences and recognize the large number of issues on which they can agree. We can only save government programs of importance to archivists and historians by cooperating with others with similar interests. Our smaller policy disputes with each other must not interfere with this cooperation when such essential issues as the independence of the National Archives or the very existence of the NHPRC are at stake. The past 30 months of the Coalition to Save Our Documentary Heritage have taught us that we can work together and that we can impress our views upon the Congress. We must not lose this new found unity and power. Instead we must build upon it.