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A Slice of Northern Michigan University's History:


(Revised title, 2017)

Picture on the cover of this book is of the recently enlarged reading room of the

CENTRAL UPPER PENINSULA AND NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

(Current name of the archives)

(2015)
DEDICATION

To all those who had a part in establishing Northern Michigan University's Archives and Records Management System.

And

To my wife, Eleanor, who has helped so much with the typing and proofreading of this account, and whose patience and support was outstanding while this effort was under way. To the Center for Upper Peninsula Studies and to Gabe Logan, its current director, and James Shefchik who greatly assisted with proofreading, formatting, and the design of this book. To Rebecca Tavernini, Director of Publications at Northern Michigan University, for her sage advice regarding the title of the book.

And

To all others who have helped in any way to make this account a reality or to make it a better one. This includes especially my children, Fern, Virgil, and Mark; Marcus Robyns, the Director of the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives, and his staff and student assistants; and to other individuals who have gone out of their way to give/obtain a photograph or help me track one down, listened to an idea, read part or all of the manuscript or endured neglect while I concentrated on this project.
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As I write this forward, I am sitting in my office on the first floor of the Harden Learning Resources Center, Room 126. I am surrounded by the Archives’ reading room, technical services area, and compact shelving storage area. A short distance away in the General Services building off the Big Bay Road, the Archives’ principal storage facility, the University Records Center maintains nearly 6,000 cubic feet of university records and historical regional manuscript collections. A full-time records analyst and several student assistants staff the Center, providing comprehensive records management and records storage and retrieval services to university offices. The Archives reading room in the LRC serves approximately 1,000 research visits each year, numerous university classes, and several hundred external reference queries received via the Internet from around the world. All of this is the direct result of Dr. Cliff Maier’s work nearly 30 years ago.

Regardless of his humble demeanor, persistent self-effacement, and repeated denials, Cliff is the one and only father of the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives. I wish to make this assertion abundantly clear. All other actors described in this narrative played varying roles but— as the reader will soon discover— Cliff Maier committed his body and soul to the project of an Archives for NMU with dogged and self-less determination.

At first glance, the reader may incredulously ask, “Over 300 pages for a history of an archives?” But this comprehensive and exhaustive narrative, based on the careful, critical analysis of numerous documentary and oral sources (which would not exist today had it not been for Cliff), is as much a study of higher education in the latter part of the twentieth century as it is of the Archives. As I began to plough my way through the manuscript, I quickly became enthralled with the story. I came away astounded by what it took to bring the idea of an archives to life. This study has solidified and enhanced my sense of awe, admiration, and appreciation for Cliff and his legacy.

All of us—the hundreds of students, scholars, members of the public, faculty, administrators—who have benefited personally and professionally from the existence of the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives owe Dr. Cliff Maier a great debt of gratitude. Thanks again, Cliff.

ELEANOR MAIER

Cliff hand-wrote much of the first draft of this account, and I typed it. As I typed it, I became enthralled with what he had written. I was propelled, it seems, to want to type the next chapter to see what happened. I am simply amazed at the obstacles he encountered and endured to pursue his goal—now a fulfilled dream—of seeing Northern have an archives. What especially struck me was that at the time, I, as his wife, had little idea of what struggles he was encountering. He left them at work for the most part. I can only say my admiration for him has spiraled; it shows what can be accomplished in spite of great odds when a clear goal is pursued with determination and sincerity. We hope you enjoy this amazing story of how Northern got its archives. Visit it!! You will be impressed.
INTRODUCTION-PURPOSE AND ORIGINS OF THIS HISTORY

Today, in 2015, Northern Michigan University (NMU) possesses a remarkable, cutting-edge archives and records center for a regional, public university of about 8,000 students. The archives is professionally directed, well-equipped, quite spacious, and fairly well-supported. In terms of being cutting-edge, the archives, for example, has become engaged in an extensive effort to digitize its holdings with all of the space and user advantages that brings. For a look at the archives’ website, see the following link: http://www.nmu.edu/archives/node/1.

As its website reveals, today Northern’s Archives contains an extensive and diverse enough set of materials to make some fairly sophisticated research possible and to support university course work on numerous topics. This is also proving useful in developing the skill of students interested in such careers as historians, archivists, museum directors, records managers, public history specialists, government officials, lawyers, law clerks, and investigators. The list could go on.

THE GENERAL PURPOSES OF THIS ACCOUNT

How did this all come about when thirty years earlier Northern did not yet have an archives? To show how this happened is one of the purposes of this account—or at least to show how a solid foundation for this had been laid by 1994. Without being exhaustive on the question of purposes at this point, another purpose is to show that a vision on the part of some for an archives for Northern had already been developing for some time prior to 1984, the year when Northern’s Administration and Board of Control voted to establish an archives, albeit initially without a great deal of commitment to it. A third purpose, which resulted in the decision to establish an archives in 1984, is to show what happened between 1981-82 and 1984. A fourth is to point out why in 1983 I took on the responsibility for developing an archives for Northern despite my lack of much deep concern and vision for it prior to that time. A fifth purpose is to trace what I did for the next ten years at Northern once I took on that responsibility. This account, in a sense, is also a memoir of ten years of my academic life. A sixth purpose is to recognize the admirable contributions which a number of other people also made between 1984 and 1994 toward the establishment of a solid foundation for a professional archives and records management system at Northern. It is a story of how vision, persistence, hard work, energy, good will, education, diplomacy, cooperative effort, sacrifice, etcetera overcame daunting obstacles—both initially and all along the way. Among the daunting obstacles was the initial general lack of vision on the part of some, and a lack of understanding of how important to a university for its academic mission—and for the loyalty and financial support of its constituency and region—a well-directed archives and records management program can be. Gradually these obstacles were, to a large extent overcome, and a different mindset and set of priorities was established. How this was achieved is another main theme. I would say that the manner in which it was achieved was quite unusual, surprising, and one might even say unbelievable in some respects. It would
be interesting to learn if the reader agrees. If a reader wishes to let the author know, he or she may find information in the epilogue as to how that might be done.

It is my view that if such qualities as unwavering vision and determined persistence, and such activities as a huge educational effort had not been present and doggedly pursued during the entire first ten-year period of the archives' existence, the effort likely would have floundered and perhaps have been abandoned at one of several critical points along the way. Other strong competing claims, programs, and priorities with which modern university administrations are constantly faced would very likely have trumped the archives' cause at the time. Had the effort been abandoned, it's anybody's guess how soon it might again have been taken up. Furthermore, the excellent records management program which exists at NMU in 2015 is a valuable by-product which emerged from the staunchly determined effort to establish a professional archives program at Northern.

A purpose in writing this account also has been to base as much of it as possible on records in NMU's archives; that is to create perhaps a greater awareness of the rich research resources that already exist in NMU's archives and the great stories that undoubtedly are there about other aspects of Northern's history and of the U.P., especially of its central region. In addition, if the story told in this account rings true, that is another vindication of how valid the efforts have been to save the kind of primary research materials upon which this account is based; also a vindication academically of all who have asked the university to make certain sacrifices to make the archives possible.

ORIGIN OF THIS ACCOUNT

Why did I decide to write this history/memoir after the passing of more than twenty years since I was involved with Northern's Archives?

It all began with a greeting at a social event. “Hi Cliff. We were just talking about you. And we were saying that we should interview you regarding the origins of Northern's Archives. Would you be willing? And if so, when could we do it?”

It was the voice of the ever-imaginative, ever-purposeful Professor Russell M. “Russ” Magnaghi of Northern's Department of History. He had just ambled into a social gathering at Northern in December 2009. Yes, this irrepressible, self-driven, collector of archival materials among other things was still at it, and was still as enthusiastic about it as ever. This even after all the years since the mid-1970s when he first became interested in the collection of the primary source materials of Michigan's Upper Peninsula; this so that he and others might be able to become more aware, and have greater access to this rich history.

I was happy to see him. Having known him since 1969, I was not really surprised by his request, but I was also taken aback
a bit by it. After all, it was twenty-five to thirty years since the things he wished to ask me about had transpired. Knowing that my recollections of what had happened then would often be vague and perhaps inaccurate, and knowing that if I agreed to be interviewed, what I said might someday be used for historical purposes, I hesitated. I felt that I could not simply agree to the interview without first doing some “brushing up on the facts.” That would certainly include using the resources now housed in the very archives that the proposed interview would be about.

After some additional conversation, I agreed to do the requested interview, but only after the proposed “brushing up.” Now in 2015, that interview still has not occurred. Perhaps it never will. Perhaps Magnaghi will conclude that after this account, a good reason to do the interview no longer exists.

Another reason why the interview was “called off,” for the time being at least, has been this. The objective of just “brushing up” for the interview expanded into something quite different. It morphed into doing sufficient research in order to also do an article about how archives got started. I explain further below. That research in turn led to such a wealth of evidence that I soon concluded that if I was to share my findings as I had come to desire to do by this time, it would require a book-length treatment.

Meanwhile, my view regarding doing the interview has also been, “Why do it before the research for the account is complete? That last bit might just clarify something that would be pertinent for the interview.” As my research progressed that, amazingly, has in fact quite frequently been my experience.

Getting the research completed, the writing initiated, and then completed has admittedly been slow. My time on this project has regularly been interrupted by numerous other worthy things that parents, grandparents, retirees, volunteers, readers, church goers, community lovers, hospitality providers, TV watchers, computer users, home owners, do-it-yourselfers, gardeners, etcetera, also love to do—and, incidentally, that gardeners seeking to stymie and outwit those local “dear” deer have to do!

The thing that initially got me thinking about writing an article in addition to that interview, was a suggestion in 2010 to that effect made by the then Director of Northern’s Archives, Professor Marcus C. Robyns—and who continues to be the director in 2015. Shortly after I arrived at the archives to begin my “brushing up” and after he learned what I was up to, he said to me, “Why don’t you also write an article about the subject?” As good archivists are sometimes inclined to do, he was only suggesting something that he suspected could also be a useful result of the research.

Initially, I hesitated. After some thought, however, I decided that I should. Having been as heavily involved as I was in the early development of Northern’s Archives, I decided that...
perhaps I could provide some insights into this aspect of Northern’s history which no one else could as well as I, or perhaps would! And with thirty years now having passed since that time, I hoped that I could now also be a little more objective in my assessment of what happened; at least I could now be a little less emotionally involved. Furthermore, only a little bit of research made me aware of the wealth of titillating documentation that is now available in the archives regarding this and related matters. I suspected that almost certainly it would contain information that affected the development of the archives which I was not aware of at the time I was seeking to develop it. I wanted especially to learn why it was so impossible to make more rapid progress; also possibly to uncover positive factors that I was not aware of. (Both of these hopes have not been disappointed.) I hoped that in pursuing the subject a slice of Northern’s institutional history which would be of some constructive value would be uncovered and that would even provide some pleasure. One of the purposes for establishing the archives was, after all, to help Northern keep in touch with its own history and profit thereby. I also hope that some members of my family and of posterity will sometime in the future be glad I wrote it.
SOURCES, CITATIONS, AND DOCUMENTING METHOD USED

What follows is information regarding the sources on which this account is based and how those sources might be located.

The minutes of the meetings of Northern's Department of History have been one of the most important sources of information for approximately the first half of this account. They and all other sources used, unless otherwise indicated, are located in the Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives. The following is an example of how an abbreviated reference in the text of this account to particular type of source and to its location in the archives will be cited: DHRM (Department of History Records—Minutes), 3/1 (box and folder), 15-02-06-07 (code for its location in the archives). A reference to this source will therefore appear in the text as follows: DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07. This pattern is also used throughout this account for citing the source of conclusions as opposed to sources themselves.

References to a folder of Department of History records in the archives labeled “Archives” is cited as DHRA (Department of History Records—Archives), 2/12 (box and folder), 24-04-18 (location in the archives). Reference to this particular folder of materials, therefore, appears as follows: DHRA, 2/12, 24-04-18. This pattern for citations is used for virtually every unpublished source I have used that is cited and housed in NMU's archives. The reason for using this particular style of “footnoting” will be explained below.

Another important source of documents used for this account has been some of the papers of Professor Russell Magnaghi. They are abbreviated as RMP (Russell Magnaghi Papers). One folder among these papers is entitled, "University Archives, 1975-1993." Reference to materials in that folder will, therefore, be cited as RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01. As will already have been sensed, the 5/1, refers to box 5 and the folder 1. The numbers 34-06-01 are the code for the location of this box of materials in the archives.

A taped interview with Magnaghi conducted by a student, Laura Bennett, on November 28, 1989 concerning Northern’s Archives, was helpful too and will be cited as RM, T29, 2-1-1. Some unrecorded conversations I had with Magnaghi in 2010 were helpful too.

Laura Bennett also conducted a taped interview with Professor Ruth Roebke-Berens in November, 1989. Information from it will be cited as RRB, T29, 2-1-2. Roebke-Berens was chairperson of the Department of History from 1981 to 1988. From about 1985 to 1988, she was also part-time assistant to University President James B. Appleberry; then full-time assistant to the Interim Vice-President for Academic Affairs, John Kuhn, during the academic year, 1988-89; and then again part-time assistant to President Appleberry from 1989 to 1991. It has been possible to reconstruct her views and the important role she played from the Department of History minutes, memos she wrote, the taped interview just cited, the minutes of the President's Council, the archives records of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and a few less important sources. When I learned in 2010
from Professor John Berens, her husband, of the delicate state of her health, I decided not to seek to interview her for this account.

However, due to some helpful correspondence from her husband, I was able to learn of her recollections as to some of the factors that lead to the decision to seek to establish an archives.

Some materials in my personal files have also been helpful sources of information. I have placed copies of such documents into a new folder. That folder as well as all of my records associated with the publication of this account will be given to NMU’s archives if and when this account is published and a copy of it is accepted by the archives. Perhaps most helpful of the documents that have been in my possession is the Department of History’s annual or biannual evaluation reports of me. Relevant copies of these documents will be cited as CMPR (Clifford Maier Papers-Reports), 2/13; that is as CMPR, 2/13. As of the time of this writing the archives has not yet determined where the permanent location of this folder will be in the archives if it gets accepted. Therefore its location is not included in the citation. These evaluation reports have been valuable among other things in pinning down just what I did during any particular year. The reports also provide assessments of the chairperson of the Department of History and of the History Department’s Evaluation Committee as to how well they believed I was discharging my responsibilities as archivist and as a professor in the History Department. They also include their recommendations.

My personal correspondence files contained letters and memos to and from me, etcetera regarding the archives. I have placed either the originals of such documents, or copies of them, into a folder. I have been told that the folder will be placed with my papers in the archives. Reference to materials in this folder are cited in the text as CMPC (Clifford Maier Papers-Correspondence), 2/12; thus as CMPC, 2/12. In the citation, the location again is not included because its location is pending until after the folder has been accessioned.

My personal recollections, have, of course, also been an important source of information.

The most voluminous and the most information-rich of all the sources used for this account are three large unprocessed folders labeled “Archives” for the 1980s and early 1990s from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. They are in NMU’s archives. The last two thirds of this account rests most heavily on this source. For example if, in the latter part of this account, the text states that John Kuhn sent a memo to Phillip Beukema, or vice versa, unless it is identified as being from some other place, the reader can be quite sure that the memo can be found in one of the three huge “Archives” folders of the Office of Academic Affairs.

These Academic Affairs folders are referred to in this account as AARA, (Academic Affairs Records-Archives). Materials in the first of these three folders, covering the years from 1983-87, will be cited as AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 in the text. Materials in the second of these folders, covering the years from 1988-91 will be cited as AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58 and materials in the third of these folders, covering the years 1991-93 will be cited as AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58. Documents from this office are not always in the appropriate folder chronologically.
The records from the Office of Academic Affairs have been especially important in uncovering this story for the following reasons: From the time Professor Magnaghi initiated an effort to establish an archives at Northern in the 1970s and from 1982 when the History Department began its efforts to do so too, until the time when the archives formally became a division of the library in 1992, some of the most critical decisions about the archives were made by the Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs. (Hereafter they are sometimes referred to as VPAAs). The records of the Office for Academic Affairs have been very useful not only for learning the views and decisions of the VPAAs with regards to the archives, but also for learning of how their decisions were influenced by other factors which impacted what they and the President’s Council felt free to do.

The minutes of the President’s Council (PC) have been useful for knowing what kinds of goals a particular president and his council had at any particular time as well as what kind of pressures they were facing and what decisions they made. Prior to about 1989, the archives were seldom mentioned at the meetings of this council—at least if they were, it was not recorded. On the other hand, the minutes of this council for 1990-92 are an important source of information regarding decisions affecting the archives. The minutes of the President’s Council are cited in the text as follows: PCRM (President’s Council Records-Minutes), 2/1, 25-05-09, therefore as PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09.

A few of the records of the Office of the President during the time President Appleberry was in office are available in the archives. Because of his policy of not saving records that would be saved by subordinate offices, the records available to me from his office have been relatively sparse and did not yield much useful information regarding the archives. Records from the Office of the President are cited as POR (President’s Office Records), 2/1, 23-05-48, therefore as POR, 2/1, 23-05-48.

The records in NMU’s archives regarding the 1992 grant Northern received from the National Historical Records and Publication Commission (NHPRC) have been useful for understanding the decisions and commitments made regarding the future of the archives and in understanding how the commitments made were implemented during the life of the grant, 1992-94. They also contain copies of the grant proposals and application. Helping to develop grants was a responsibility of the Grant Development Office of the Office of Research and Development. I have used the abbreviation GR (Grant Records) in referring to the records of this grants development office. The folders among these records which contain information that has been useful for this study are cited as: GR, 2/18, 2-3-5-3; GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3; and GR, 6/24, 34-02-21.

I have also used the Lydia M. Olson Library Records. The abbreviation I have used for these records is OLR (Olson Library Records). The citation I used appears in the text as follows: OLR, 1/1(?), 29-01-11.

Occasionally, information appearing in university publications and in other publications has been helpful as well. Especially helpful at times for obtaining dates and a broader perspective on what was happening at a particular time at the university has been Professor Russell Magnaghi’s book, *A Sense of Time: The Encyclopedia of Northern Michigan*.
WHICH RECORDS ARE PROCESSED, WHICH ARE NOT?

Of the records on which this account is based, the following are processed and are in Northern’s archives: the minutes of the Department of History and of the President’s Council, the records of the President’s Office, the Olson Library Records, the Russell Magnaghi Papers, some of the Clifford Maier Papers, the Magnaghi and Roebke-Berens tape, and the 1992 grant application records. All other documentary materials I used that are in Northern’s archives are still unprocessed. Photographic records are at least catalogued if not yet processed.

COPIES MADE OF THE DOCUMENTS UPON WHICH EACH CHAPTER IS BASED

For the most part, I have made photo copies of the documents upon which each chapter in my account is based. I have placed these documents in folders for each chapter and labeled them. My plan is to offer these folders of documents to the archives. The documents in these folders at times have my pencil markings on them; but, of course, the originals are in Northern’s folders and they do not have my pencil markings on them.

HAVE I USED ALL OF THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES?

Although Northern’s Archives contains additional records, papers, tapes, etc. which may shed additional light on the subject under consideration, and although I could have interviewed more people, the resources I have used and have identified above are, I believe, the most important ones for uncovering the most salient aspects of this story accurately. I believe that the sources I have used have made it possible for me to write a fairly definitive account of the subject. An exception might be what is discussed in the first half of the first chapter. I did not do exhaustive research on those topics since they are not the main subject of this account. Additional research on them could well result in the need of some modification of the picture presented there. I invite students, seasoned scholars or others to present a different account of any part of this treatment for which they find evidence for a different picture.

WHY I HAVE NOT USED TRADITIONAL FOOTNOTING?

Much of this account is based on large folders of unprocessed, disorganized materials which often are not in correct chronological order. The most important example of this are the materials in the three huge folders of the Office of Academic Affairs entitled “Archives.” They contain hundreds of documents for the years 1983 to 1993. A reader, wishing to see a particular document cited from one of these folders would still, in most cases, have to leaf through many pages of materials in one or perhaps even more than one of these folders to find the document desired, even if standard footnoting were employed.
In order to avoid using *ibid.* many times in footnotes at the bottom of pages or at the end of chapters directing readers to these same few huge folders of often quite disorganized materials, I decided to state the source of the information I am using right in the text. For example, I note the type of document, its author, its recipient if one is known, and its date right in the text. For instance I state that the information I want to draw the reader’s attention to is in a memo from Kuhn to Beukema, dated September 13, 1989. Then at an appropriate place in the text I include a short abbreviated superscript reference which tells the reader where the document in question can be located in the archives, for example in this case in AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58.

Having decided that this method was the best way to document the *unprocessed* materials I used, I decided for the sake of consistency also to document the *processed* archives materials and the published materials I used in this way as well. To make it easier for readers to recall what the abbreviations I used in the text stand for, I am including a separate list of them with their meanings in this introduction below.

It should be noted too that because a relatively large portion of a few chapters are based on materials in one or another of those huge Academic Affairs folders, I have decided to ask readers to assume that where some things in the text of a particular chapter are not documented, that this information also comes from documents in that Academic Affairs folder from which documented information came. If I also used some other sources, I have, of course, cited those. Had I not followed this policy, the text in a few chapters would have become too heavily loaded with references to just one or perhaps two folders of materials.

Having used the documentation method that I have, I nonetheless tip my hat to various fine style manuals in existence that have served scholarship well and will continue to do so. And if necessary I apologize to the scholarly community for my departure from standard practice.
ABBREVIATIONS SUMMARY (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) FOR SOURCES USED AND ARCHIVES LOCATIONS

AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12  Academic Affairs Records—Archives (1983-1987), Box 5, Folder 8, Archives Location 20-02-12


AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58  Academic Affairs Records—Archives (1991-1993), 1/12, 20-03-58

DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18  Department of History Records—Archives

DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-07  Department of History Records—Minutes (1981-1992)

GR—Grant Records, Research and Development Office

GR, 6/24, 34-02-21  Funded Grants

GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3  Consultancy Grants (1985-1993)

GR, 2/18, 2-3-5-3  Grant-Archives (1992-1994)

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OLR—Lydia M. Olson Library Records

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PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09—President’s Council Records-Minutes


RMP—Russell Magnaghi Papers

RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01  University Archives (1975-1993)

RMP, 4/1, 2, 34-05-34  Department of History Minutes (1972-1994)

RMP, 4/9, 10, 11, 34-05-34  Coalition to Save Longyear Hall Collection (1991-1992)

RM—Russell Magnaghi Taped Interview

CMP—Clifford Maier Papers

CMP, 1/2, 4-4-6-1 American Assoc. of U. Professors—Dome Controversy (1988-1990)

CMP, 1/3, 4-4-6-1 American Assoc. of U. Professors—McGoff Lecture Series (1979-1988)

CMP, 1/11, 4-4-6-1 Department of History (1969-1992)

CMP, 1/13, 4-4-6-1 Longyear and Pierce Halls (1984-1985)

CMP, 2/9, 10, 11, 4-4-6-1 Canadians and French in Marquette (19 century) and Baraga County

CMPC, 2/12, ? Clifford Maier Papers—Correspondence, Location Pending

CMPR, 2/13, ? Clifford Maier Papers—Reports, Applications, Location Pending

CMPCD Clifford Maier Papers—Chapter Documents, Acceptance Pending

CMPSLHC Clifford Maier Papers—Save Longyear Hall Collection, Acceptance Pending

RRB—Ruth Roebke-Berens Taped Interview

RRB, T29, 2-1-2 (1989)

ABBREVIATIONS FOR AUTHORS AND BOOK TITLES CITED

Archibald, Northern Border Robert Archibald, editor, Northern Border: History and Lore of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and Beyond, Northern Michigan University Press (2014)

Hilton, The First 75 Years Miriam Hilton, Northern Michigan University: The First 75 Years, Northern Michigan University Press (1975)


ABBREVIATIONS OF NAMES, TITLES USED IN THE TEXT

AACR—Anglo-American Cataloging Rules

EPC—Economic Policy Committee (of NMU’s Academic Senate)

MARC: AMC (a software program—Machine Readable Cataloguing: Archival and Manuscript Control

MICRO MARC:AMC (a software program)
PHOTO AND FLOOR PLAN CREDITS AND PAGES

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Central Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan University Archives:

Individuals Who Contributed Photographs of Themselves and/or of Other Items:

John F. Berens, Krista E. Clumpner [p. 222], Alfred N. Joyal [p. 231], Clifford F. Maier [p. 106, 107, 296], Gayle Martinson [p. 262], and Christine Saari of Jon L. Saari [p. 7].

Michigan State University Archives:

Frederick L. Honhart [p. 85]

Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections:

Theresa Sanderson Spence [p. 112]

The National Archives:

Richard A. Cameron [p. 233]

Northern Michigan University's Facility's Planning Department:

Floor plan of the first floor of Northern's Learning Resource Center as it was in 1984. [p. 54, 300]

Northern Michigan University's News Bureau--Director, Kristi Evans:


Wayne State University Archives:

Patricia Bartkowski [p. 114]
CHAPTER 1
THE VISION AND EFFORTS OF THE 1960s AND 1970s

Since 1997, most often when the current (2015) Northern Michigan University Archives Director and Records Manager, Professor Marcus C. Robyns, has introduced me to someone, he has identified me as the "Father of the Archives." While he has been very generous in doing so, I have invariably cringed a bit when he has said that. Cringed, because I knew that what he was saying was only partially true. That is, that the birth, as well as the early development of an archives, was the result of the vision and efforts of a number of other people as well. Without them, the archives would not likely have been born—not that Robyns should have known this. He was not at Northern at that time and a full account has not heretofore existed as to how this happened.

Initially, it was not because of my vision that the effort to establish Northern's current and only successful archives initiative at Northern was undertaken. That honor, as we shall see shortly, belongs in a substantial degree to Professor Russell M. Magnaghi. He was a member of NMU's Department of History from 1969 to 2015. Without his vision, persistence, and drive at the earliest stages of this undertaking, it is unlikely that sufficient initial concern and drive would have existed to launch the initiative onto its final road to success. That began in 1974.

In 1981-82, and in the immediate years thereafter, Professor Ruth Roebke-Berens, the recently appointed chairperson of the Department of History, also committed herself to a vigorous effort to getting Magnaghi's vision of an archives for Northern accepted. Nonetheless, I believe that the evidence shows that without the groundwork Magnaghi had already laid—with some support from other members of the History Department as well—it is unlikely that her effort, if launched at all, would have had the impact that it did in helping to effect a successful acceptance of the idea.

THE EARLIEST VISION—A GRAND REGIONAL MUSEUM WITH AN ARCHIVES COMPONENT

Magnaghi's vision, however, and effort was not the earliest to get something akin to an archives established at Northern. A precursor of it emerged in the mid-1960s. In 1965, a group of prominent citizens from across the U.P. created an Upper Peninsula Chapter of the Archaeological Society of Michigan. One of its objectives was preserving some of the archaeology and history of the U.P. Within a year that vision had been adopted and was being fostered by some individuals at Northern Michigan University as well. Judging from the minutes of perhaps the third meeting of this chapter of the Archaeological Society, that vision, under the stimulus of some of NMU's administrators and faculty, quickly mushroomed into a desire to create an elaborate Upper Great Lakes Regional Museum. That meeting was held on December 3, 1966 at the Peter White Library in Marquette, and the minutes of it are in NMU's archives. RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01
The vision, at that time, was for a museum consisting of at least three major divisions. These divisions were to focus on the life sciences, on the physical sciences, and on man and his environment. The segments within this last division were to be Anthropology, Ethnology, and History. A concern of that history segment was to be the preservation of those primary regional records and manuscripts which revealed the history of the Upper Great Lakes area. Especially noted were the sources of ethnic history. Thus at least this particular segment of the museum was to have an archives component of some sort; perhaps other segments were to also. Social anthropology was also mentioned as a focus of the museum.

At least some of the collaboration between the Archaeological Society and Northern on this project developed in the following way. The Society soon concluded that for its vision to be anything more than just a vision it needed to have a facility. They concluded that Northern was a logical and desirable location. It was central to the region and being on a university campus would tend to associate the society’s efforts with an academic institution—thereby increasing its recognition and stature.

Consequently the Society contacted the president of Northern, Edgar L. Harden. From what followed, it is evident that Harden very much liked the idea of having such a repository and resource facility on Northern’s campus. Although he also made it clear from the outset that the construction of a suitable building—if it came to that—would have to be financed privately. With all of the buildings the state had financed at Northern during his presidency, Harden seems to have been sure that it would not agree to finance another one in the immediate future.

(The view at Northern initially seems to have been that the Archaeological Society—which had a fair percentage of prominent U.P. citizens as members—would assume responsibility for raising the required funds.) Harden, however, promised that Northern would help in any other way that it could. To begin with, Harden asked his coordinator for Campus Development and Capital Outlay, David H. McClintock, the famed World War II submarine commander, to work with the society, helping it to develop design plans, cost estimates, and fund-raising possibilities.

When Harden shared the society’s vision with at least some members of Northern’s faculty, they immediately demonstrated a keen interest in it and began dreaming of the kind of museum that might be created. But some members of the Archaeological Society, sometimes also members of the Marquette County Historical Society Library and Museum (MCHSLM), became concerned about what the consequences might be for them of Northern’s dreams and plans for this proposed museum. They wondered if the elaborate
vision emerging would undercut the mission and services which the MCHSLM had already established in the county and felt entitled to see preserved.

(Today, in 2015, the successor of the MCHSLM is known as the Marquette Regional History Center.)

Meanwhile President Harden had created a museum committee. To chair it he had appointed Professor Richard P. Sonderegger, chairman of Northern’s Department of History, or perhaps Sonderegger was elected by the other members of the committee to head it. In view of Harden’s general mode of operating, however, it likely was the first option. The committee’s task was to help with developing further the over-all ideas and plans for the museum. Although never signed, just a little later the leadership of the MCHSLM drafted an elaborate agreement between it and Northern. Had it been signed, it would have provided the MCHSLM with assurances that NMU would honor what the former considered to be its “turf in pursuing its museum activities.”

The minutes of that meeting held on December 3, 1966 show that by that time the prime movers and shakers in the Upper Great Lakes Museum initiative had become people associated with Northern and its museum committee. At that meeting Dr. Sonderegger laid out a vision for the project as far as it had gotten by that time. It would seem that by pursuing this matter as promptly and vigorously as NMU had, it had sort of seized the initiative from the members of the Archaeological Society. And at that December 3 meeting, it was Dr. Sonderegger who was sharing with the members of the Archaeological Society the thoughts which he and others from Northern were considering. They included, as already noted somewhat, a broad history preservation and educational mission in fields such as the life sciences, the physical sciences, anthropology, ethnology, and history. He especially drew attention to the huge opportunity and need that he felt existed with respect to the U.P.’s ethnic history. As an example, he mentioned a lecture that Vito Perrone, a Northern professor, had recently given. Among the things Perrone had stressed was the large quantity of manuscript material and artifacts which existed in the U.P. with respect to Italian immigrants. He very much felt they should be collected.

The plan for having such a history preserving museum at Northern with its archival component, suffered a severe setback in 1967. What caused it? Among the most important reasons was developments associated with a NMU administration/faculty, student, and Marquette community controversy—the so-called McClellan Controversy. In conjunction with it, President Harden resigned as NMU president toward the end of the 1966-67 academic year. One of the results of a spin-off from the controversy was that a substantial number of faculty members resigned from NMU during the following academic year. These developments reduced the “grand plan” for a Great Lakes regional museum to just a fraction of what it had once been. Momentarily it brought it to a
complete halt. Magnaghi, Sense, 272-273. Another factor in the reduction was this. The effort to raise funds to construct the museum had not been going well. A hint of this can, for example, be found in a curt note Sonderegger wrote at the time. It reeks with disappointment. “The letter means there will be no money,” it declared. RMP, 5/3, 34-06-01. The chaos and uncertainty associated with the McClellan controversy without a doubt had a severe, negative impact on the capability to raise funds.

THE MUSEUM COMMITTEE’S POST-CONTROVERSY REPORT

The developments associated with the McClellan Controversy and with the failure to raise sufficient funds to make the construction of a museum of the upper Great Lakes feasible were severe setbacks. But the desire to have a museum of some sort at NMU did not die. For example, in 1970 the remnant of that museum committee formed in 1966 issued a report as to where things stood then. The committee was still chaired by Sonderegger and now consisted of ten members. Seven were faculty members—two from each of the fields of biology, geography, and history and one from visual arts. The rest were associated with the administration. McClintock was still a member of it, as was J. P. Farrell, who at the time was Director of Research and Development. Tom Peters, Alumni Director at the time, was also. The reduced number of fields represented on the committee, nonetheless, made it clear that the scope and character of the vision had by this time been reduced considerably. Now, for some reason, the committee was only calling for the creation of a Great Lakes Cultural Center. RMP, 5/1, 3, 34-06-01.

This group of individuals brought the vision of the 1960s into the 1970s. But lack of concrete progress towards realizing it seems gradually to have “burned out” or disillusioned at least some members of the committee with this particular project. In the wings, however, was some “younger blood;” and it became increasingly eager to take up the challenge of historical preservation at NMU—initially again via a museum, but then via an archives and other means. We will return to that story shortly.

AN ARCHIVES AS A DIVISION OF NORTHERN’S LIBRARY—AN EARLY VISION FOR THAT

Meanwhile, an additional vision for the preservation of historical materials at Northern had developed. It was similar to the one of the U.P. chapter of the Archaeological Society of Michigan in that it too was initiated from outside of Northern. It was a vision to establish an archives—primarily a public records depository—as a division of NMU’s library. This was an effort by the State Archives of Michigan. It was an effort to get Northern and its library to agree to become a repository for the public records that were being generated in the central region of the U.P. The agreement would be similar to one the State Archives had reached with the Michigan Technological University and its library. That was to become the repository for the public records generated in the western region of the U.P.

The effort to reach an agreement with Northern did result in one; but it never became viable during this early period. As to the reason, Rena Fowler, the director of Northern’s
Lydia M. Olson Library from 1983 to 1992, had this to say in a memo dated March 7, 1991. It was to John F. Kuhn, the then Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs:

Since the library was once the university archives, I've attached a piece of ancient correspondence as evidence of this role and acceptance by historians at the state level. However, the university never gave the library any staff to fulfill the function and little was done. 

I never found that “attached piece of ancient correspondence.” From what Fowler stated in that brief reference to that earlier “archives,” and from general knowledge I have acquired, I think the following can be said. The library director at that earlier time did agree that Northern’s library could become such a depository; but it also was with the expectation that Northern would provide sufficient funding to staff the additional responsibility. The administration apparently had given the State Archives assurances at one point that it would, but it then did not fulfill those expectations. If they were given prior to the problems which emerged during the latter part of the Harden era and his subsequent resignation that may well be the reason that subsequent administrators felt they could no longer honor those earlier promises. Whatever the reasons for the lack of support, this supposed “archives” which existed at Northern during that earlier period of time really existed on paper only.

It appears that part of the significance of the library having gone through this experience is this. It was quite an embarrassment for it. It caused the leaders of the library at the time, as well as subsequent library directors for the next ten years or so, to be quite cautious about having anything to do with an archival role, that is except for archiving a few easily archived historical things about Northern from time to time. This was something the library had always done. They were mainly published things—things which would easily slide into vertical files. They no longer were willing to do any more than that, that is unless the university was prepared to provide “ironclad” assurances—especially financial ones—that it was committed to adequately supporting more than that. Since the university felt unable to do this in the years immediately following the controversy just discussed, the library refused to become significantly involved again in the immediate future. As we shall see, this was quite frustrating for a person like Professor Magnaghi, who soon began to have archival materials he wished to see stored, processed, and made accessible to students—and to the public in general. Under the circumstances which developed he felt that the library was the most logical entity to do this.

AN ADDITIONAL EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A MUSEUM—AND THE BIRTH OF MAGNAGHI’S INTEREST

By 1974 the new drive referred to above to get some sort of a museum established at NMU reemerged. This time Professor Magnaghi was the main force behind the effort. He was a part of those “younger bloods” referred to above. But why? We will get to that, but first some background. When Magnaghi was hired in 1969, his specialty was Latin American and Southwestern United States Borderlands History. He was also asked to
teach Michigan history, but in 1974, with the consent of his department, he switched his main interest to U.P. history. Why? As one would expect, he had observed that many of Northern’s students were from the U.P. and were more interested in courses about it—if only such U.P. history courses were offered—than they were in courses about the southwestern United States, or even at times about Michigan. He also began to see this as being quite possible, if certain decisions were made. He had come to realize that the primary research materials for studying U.P. history were really quite abundant. But also often they were uncollected and in some cases in considerable danger of being destroyed or lost. Repositories for their preservation in the U. P. were often either non-existent or too inadequately staffed to be able to collect very much of this kind of material; or they were located too inconveniently for Magnaghi’s students to be able to use them regularly. Some of the valuable primary materials of the U.P. were also being collected by downstate repositories such as the University of Michigan and the State Archives of Michigan in Lansing. These materials, therefore, also were not readily accessible to U. P. students. Magnaghi felt that they would be much more appreciated, and much better utilized if they were collected into U.P. repositories, especially into one at Northern since it was so centrally located.

While these thoughts were swirling about in Magnaghi’s mind, he had, according to a telephone conversation I had with him in 2010, a sort of “Eureka” moment in 1974 while talking to a friend, Dr. Robert Archibald. At the time Archibald was one of his students. Archibald suggested that, in his opinion, it would be a smart move if he switched his main focus as a history professor from U. S. Southwestern Borderlands History to U.P. History. The remark registered so strongly with what Magnaghi was already thinking that he decided then and there to make U.P. history his main emphasis. Recently (in 2015), Archibald penned a chapter regarding Magnaghi for a Festschrift he edited in honor of him. It is entitled in part, Northern Border. In it he modestly confirms that Magnaghi had told him the same thing; that it had been his encouragement to turn his focus to Upper Peninsula history that played an important role in Magnaghi’s decision to begin to focus on that as his general specialty. Archibald, Northern Border, 7-8

Thereupon, Magnaghi immediately began thinking about possible courses about U.P. history that could be offered, about collecting sources of information for them, and about involving his students in doing research regarding the U.P. He also taught them how to do oral interviews of historical worth, and before long had them conduct some of them. Some of these are in Northern’s archives today. In the years to come he also did a large number of them himself. He and his students began collecting all kinds of historical materials: manuscripts, scrapbooks, letters, photographs, tape recordings, etcetera. In time they were cluttering his office terribly. It became so stuffed that he could no longer effectively use it himself, or meet students in it. Eventually he had to find a second office. I know.
Eventually my history department/archives office was close to his, and I witnessed that fascinating development first hand. But this is getting ahead of the story.

So where to keep the stuff Magnaghi was collecting quickly became an important question in his mind. It became an important reason too why he began lobbying for some kind of a storage facility, but why a museum instead of an archives?

Being in the same academic department as Sonderegger, Magnaghi undoubtedly had heard considerable about those earlier efforts to preserve U.P. history and even the history of the entire upper Great Lakes region. It seems too at the time that people at Northern had come to see a museum as the logical way to preserve the primary history research materials of the area—that is in a facility that focused primarily on cooperative artifacts preservation efforts, but which also had more specialized records and manuscripts preservation divisions. It would seem that this way of thinking had become rather ingrained. So Magnaghi, in this first foray into preservation activities, decided to go with this approach too. He invited academic departments to submit statements as to what kind of services they would like to see a museum provide in their area of interest. The Biology Department responded with a statement, as did Art and Design, Sociology (that is Social Anthropology), and History. Perhaps some others departments did as well. Those representing these departments constituted a new museum committee of sorts at the time.

Professor Jon L. Saari of the History Department joined Russell Magnaghi in submitting a two-page statement regarding the departments’ position. Saari also was one of those younger professors referred to earlier. At this time he was teaching a course which focused on the Finnish immigrant experience in the U. P.; this even though his specialty was Chinese history. To facilitate his teaching of his course regarding the history of U.P. Finnish immigrants, he too, was interested in the collection of the primary ethnic history resources of the U.P., especially those having to do with the Finns. Magnaghi and Saari entitled their statement, “Report... on the Proposed NMU Museum/Research Institute/Art Center/Environmental Center.” The things they emphasized in their statement of interest was the need to be collecting historical documents about the U.P. from throughout the U.P., especially ethnic history resources, taping oral histories, “gathering them into a research library,” and finally, mounting topical historical displays at Northern. They also noted that Northern’s alumni wanted to see Longyear Hall become the museum. “A statement of purpose on the projected facility from President Jamrich would be in order,” too they wrote. They emphasized that cooperation with the other historical societies throughout the Upper Peninsula was a very important principle to follow. They were confident from discussions with the Marquette County Historical Society, and with the other historical societies of the U.P., that much effort could be expended in these sorts of areas without stepping on the toes of other societies. The latter frequently were too small to do much along these lines.
John X. Jamrich (President of Northern from 1968 to 1983) and Robert B. Glenn, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost from 1974 to 1984 were sympathetic to the idea of this type of historic preservation. However, as the records show, Jamrich made it clear to that group of interested departments that they could not expect to see Northern build a museum for this purpose. In fact he stated that he did not expect to see any new buildings built at Northern for the next fifteen to twenty years.

He did, however, promise that the university would make an effort toward getting Longyear Hall converted into a museum. And he spoke of some funds that he thought might be available for the creation of museum space. 📁 RMP, 5/3, 34-06-01

FROM THE DREAM OF A MUSEUM TO A MODEST ARCHIVES APPROACH

This 1974 initiative to establish a museum failed as well. Jamrich did prepare an appeal to the State Legislature for funding. But Longyear Hall was occupied and it was decided that it would not be made available in the immediate future for this particular purpose. So now what to do? The upshot was this.

Each of the parties who had been interested in obtaining something via that contemplated joint museum facility lost hope in a joint approach yielding any help in the near future. Instead they all began to work independently to achieve their objectives. The Biology Department began working toward getting an environment and education center established off-campus. The Art and Design Department began working toward getting a museum established that was strictly an art museum and gallery, and so forth. Before long, Magnaghi did too. This does not mean that he had lost all interest in the preservation of significant artifacts. Evidence of that can be found in chapter 21B. However at the moment, the time for that at Northern was not right. On the other hand, he could see that the need for an archives shortly was going to be substantial. At this very time, he was writing a grant to fund a Central Upper Peninsula Oral History Project. He was planning to submit the grant proposal to the Cleveland-Cliffs Foundation. It was for $1,672.00. He proposed to collect the history of the ordinary people of the U.P.—people who were not inclined to leave a written record of their lives—as he put it. The only way their history could be obtained was orally. One of his purposes had become to foster a greater awareness of history at the community level. Furthermore, he desired to involve his students in doing this kind of history in order to provide them with experiences and insights they would not get in any other way.
Magnaghi submitted his proposal to the foundation on July 30, 1975. It was signed by Professor Barry Knight, by this time Head of NMU's History Department, by Vice President Glenn, and by Roy Heath, Northern's Director of Research and Development at the time. 

In doing this Magnaghi was accomplishing at least a couple of additional things. He was generating a consciousness among Northern's officials of that time regarding the need to be doing this kind of history; hopefully he was also creating a readiness on their part to help with the establishment of some way to take care of these unique sources of history; that is a readiness to help with the establishment of some kind of an archives into which this primary research material could be placed.

Magnaghi had also become more than a little concerned about another matter. On September 17, 1975 he sent a memorandum to James Mansfield, a member of the faculty at the time and a former member of the Academic Senate. It concerned the “removal of research materials and artifacts from the Upper Peninsula.” The memo listed seven reasons for concern. It was meant to register Magnaghi’s alarm. He emphasized too that the seven reasons for concern he had mentioned were not a complete list of what was occurring.

Magnaghi was somewhat disturbed too with the lack of real serious concern he felt existed at NMU with regard to the need to preserve the area’s local history and to have an archives.

Generally speaking, he felt this was even the case on the part of most members of the History Department at the time. He hoped that developments associated with the Bicentennial Events of 1976 would help change this outlook. He himself became quite involved with seeking to generate local expressions of appreciation. But generally speaking, that did not change things, at least not very overtly in the short term. “We sort of talked about it”—that is with regard to getting an archives established—but “there was no particular interest,” he recalled in an interview he gave in 1989.

Before long Magnaghi became involved with the Ishpeming Ski Hall of Fame and with its records situation. He hoped, it seems, that the Ski Hall would transfer its records to Northern and that they would become a sort of “core” set of materials around which an archives could be developed. In the end, however, the Ski Hall decided to keep their records “in their building.”

PRESSING ON FOR AN ARCHIVES

Magnaghi, nonetheless, continued to talk up the need. In November 1977 he took his cause right to University President, Dr. John X. Jamrich again. The subject of his November 9 memorandum to Jamrich was a “Proposed Archival Center.” His main concern was where an archives might be located. This after the failure of the attempt in 1974 to get it located in Longyear Hall. In his memo he stated that “after our conversation on Tuesday afternoon, I made a thorough investigation of possible areas where the proposed archives
might be housed.” Then he proposed several possible options. They were all in the library building. That is in the Learning Resources Building or the Edgar L. Hardin Learning Resources Center—the LRC—as it is generally known. One option was to double the size of his own 9’ x 11’ office by removing a wall between it and an adjoining office on the first floor of the LRC. Another was by utilizing some open space at the head of a block of offices also on the first floor of the LRC building. He listed the pros and cons of each of his options. He stated that three file cabinets were the only equipment needed initially for each option except that a desk or table and two chairs would be necessary for one of them. As for a name for the archives, he suggested “Upper Peninsula Archives” because it had “a nice ring to it” and it would “quickly explain the nature of the archives.” He declared that he was “willing to take the title of Director of this Archives” with “no extra compensation during the early growing stages of the project.” He said that he had discussed the proposed archival center with “a number of faculty” and that they had “expressed interest in the project.” For example, Professor Lulu Ervast of the School of Nursing had indicated that she and other nurses had “a wealth of correspondence, photographs, and tapes which they would donate to the archives.” He said that he had also checked into the possibility of obtaining Federal funding and matching funds for the project via a National Historical Publication and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant.

Jamrich passed the request on to his Vice President for Academic Affairs, Robert Glenn with the request that he check out the possibilities. Glenn too opted for an effort to establish an archival center in the library. In a memorandum dated just seven days after Magnaghi sent his memo to Jamrich, Glenn asked Magnaghi and Helvi E. Walkonen, then Director of Lydia M. Olson Library, to develop a proposal for an Archival Center “as discussed in Dr. Magnaghi’s memorandum of November 9.”

Magnaghi met with Walkonen two days after Glenn sent his memorandum to both of them. Then just six days later he sent a memorandum back to Glenn, copying Walkonen. It appears that Magnaghi felt that he finally had a good thing going. He was not about to let it die because of lack of prompt attention.

In view of Glenn’s generally favorable response, Magnaghi appealed to him for the financial help needed to purchase the file cabinets. He also asked him to work toward persuading the Board of Control to decide to create an archives and provide a director for it. This, plus some archival space, which Magnaghi felt, would put Northern “in an excellent position to seek a Federal grant for matching funds.” Thus with only “a small expenditure of money, the university and community could realize a substantial return,” he stated.

He closed his memo by listing three sets of primary research materials that he said he had discovered that “could be included...in the archives immediately.” In addition to them, via “directed studies and my new course, History of the Upper Peninsula, I have gathered numerous papers, newspapers, tapes, and photographs on U.P. history which I am ready to include in the archives...” and “once the archival center is established” he was confident that additional materials “would pour in.”
Magnaghi’s correspondence with the administration shows that he had a remarkably strong vision and passion for an archives for Northern at least five years prior to 1982 when the History Department voted to seek to try to get one established. It is also clear that Magnaghi, ever the optimist, greatly underestimated the kind of commitment Northern would have to make before it had any possibility of obtaining NHPRC funding. (I understand. I made some of the same mistakes later on.) He also underestimated the kind of commitment to the processing of materials that would have to be made before Northern had the kind of an archives that was capable of making most primary source materials available to students and others for research. This is evident, for example, from the fact that he did not ask for any release time from his teaching load to process such materials, nor did he ask for any funds to employ at least some student help who could perhaps have done some of this processing under his supervision.

While Magnaghi was an excellent curator of archival materials, initially at least, what he presented to administrators as being necessary to have a meaningful archives was quite inadequate. If only a bit of space could be obtained, a bit of furniture, and some archival materials placed in that space, it seems he was ready to call it an archives. Also while ready to be called the Director of an Archives, he seems not to have wanted to be tied down to the actual processing and servicing of archival materials. He much preferred, it seems, to be out talking to people about the value of an archives, to be gathering things for it, or to be persuading people to donate to it. These conclusions almost certainly overstate the situation, but I think as readers become more aware of the facts and of additional evidence as we progress, they will agree that there are some solid grounds for these conclusions.

In Magnaghi’s defense it should be said, that he undoubtedly sensed that asking for sufficient funding to mount a more credible archival operation would likely have killed its chances altogether with the university’s administration. He sensed, I think, that asking the administration and Board of Control to make a large expenditure for an archives was so novel an idea that it might have led to a total rejection of the possibility, especially when Northern was passing through a financial downturn by this time. I suspect that he chose, therefore, to ask for very little to begin with; this in the hope that the administration would initially fund at least a modest beginning, and that it could then be used to eventually gain considerably greater support. Time would prove that, in Northern’s case at least, such a modest approach was indeed necessary to be practical, although perhaps not quite as modest as what Magnaghi was proposing. One can sense in his correspondence that he wished to show great consideration for the other financial obligations that the university had as well. Undoubtedly, he did not wish to alienate his potential benefactors by being too presumptuous initially. Modest though his requests therefore were, he did make an important contribution to the eventual establishment of an archives. This was a beginning in educating and sensitizing a few of Northern’s administrators to the need for an archives. His use of the word “archives” for something that was so incongruous with something that was worthy of the name that it seems laughable, can also be seen as bold, courageous attempts to educate and sensitizing Northern’s administrators about something which he deeply believed they needed to be sensitized about. He was even willing to risk disparagement to do this.
THE LIBRARY REJECTS A RELATIONSHIP WITH AN ARCHIVES

As much as Magnaghi tried to present the results of his meeting with Library Director Walkonen in a positive light, it was impossible to disguise the fact that the Archival Center he wished to establish in the library was not going to receive much assistance from it. Walkonen agreed, according to Magnaghi, that she “could provide space for the desired file cabinets in her outer office on a temporary basis.” At the same time, she indicated that the library would not purchase the file cabinets because there were no funds in its budget to do so. She also stated that the Archives Center would need to “be a separate entity from the library” with its own approved standing by the Board of Control, its own budget, and its own “director to oversee it.” RMP, 1/5, 34-06-01

In the end Glenn decided to provide the funds Magnaghi needed to purchase the requested file cabinets. Despite the unfavorable long-term prospects, they were placed in the library. According to Magnaghi’s 1989 taped interview, cited earlier, he then left some archival materials, including tapes, in a box with the library, expecting that it would process them and place them in those cabinets. RMT, 29, 2-1-2 When he returned some days or weeks later to see if some of his students could use them, they were still in the box unprocessed just as he had brought them in. Disappointed, he asked if he could have the materials back. "They were more than delighted to return them," he declared. "When you bring archival or museum-type materials to librarians, they don’t know where to put the stuff!” he declared, meaning, of course, that librarians are often untrained in how to process, store, and retrieve such materials.

Magnaghi then stored them in his office.

In fairness to the library, however, this should be said too. I did not find any evidence that the library had ever agreed to process, even to a very elementary level, any of these archival-type of materials. In fact, Walkonen’s statement makes it quite clear that the library had no intention of doing so. It should also be said that she and previous directors were not entirely devoid of any concern about saving archival sources of history. They were, and indeed had been saving certain bits and pieces of university’s history for some time, provided they fit quite neatly into vertical files and needed little or no processing. A look at the library’s records in Northern’s archives makes that quite clear. See, for example, the Olson Library Historical Reference Files.

During the winter of 1977-78, Magnaghi continued to think of how he might get an archives established; this despite the failure of the attempt to obtain some space in the fall of 1977. By the spring of 1978 he decided to make another appeal to Vice President Glenn; this time in a memo dated May 18. His main request on this occasion was to obtain a declaration from the University’s Board of Control that Northern did have an archives. This, he believed, would help him considerably with his collection efforts. He also stated that, for the time being, he was no longer requesting space. RMP, 1/5, 34-06-01

In this last memo to Glenn, Magnaghi placed considerable emphasis on the collecting he had done since his last memo. He listed the following taped interviews: one with the
superintendent of Fayette State Park, one with the last manager of the Nahma Lumber Company, and one with the White family of Big Bay. He also had acquired photographs of Banat, a German Hungarian community in Menominee County, photographs of nineteenth century residents of Ishpeming as well as some members of the History Department. Some History Department correspondence was included in the list too. Furthermore, he had collected numerous books and photocopies of articles. He declared that in the next “few weeks,” he would “be taping oral interviews with former residents of Banat dealing with the early history of that community.” He stated that he had also obtained permission to photograph the surface and underground of Inland Steel’s Sherwood mine. All these materials, he declared, had been, or would be added to the ones he had already collected for the archives. But what he needed more than anything to be able to continue his efforts effectively was the Board of Control’s official designation that an archives existed at Northern. That would allow him to use the designation, “when I correspond with people seeking papers, photographs, oral interviews, etc.” He stated, he felt it would be easier for him if he could use the title, “Northern Michigan University Archives,” for it would “stimulate cooperative efforts with other departments and offices within the university and with various agencies of local and state government.”

Magnaghi reiterated that he was not requesting released time or any remuneration in connection with this archival work. Also he reduced the amount of equipment he was requesting for this new attempt to only one file cabinet and two book shelves. And he felt that it could be placed in some space he now thought was available in the office of a retired member of the History Department; thus no longer the need for space for the time being. RMP, 1/5, 34-06-01

Although Glenn may have responded to this request, I did not come across any evidence of that.

Less than a month later, on June 12, 1978, Magnaghi sent Glenn another memo. It reveals that the space that he had in mind for storing archival materials was not available. The retired History Department professor had emeritus status. That entitled him to continue to use his office whenever he wished to do so. However, in the recent past he had rarely done so and none of his things still remained in it. This caused Magnaghi to assume that it likely would be alright if he too used this 9’ x 11’ office to store the archival materials he had been collecting. It was not! Consequently, he had to move those archival materials back into his own increasingly over-crowded office. They remained there until the mid-1980s when by that time an archives had been established that would receive them.

ADDITIONAL STEPS AND EFFORTS

There was an additional thing too which Magnaghi was happy to report to Glenn. He had been selected by the Modern Archives Institute of the National Archives to attend a week-long workshop in July for aspiring archivists. It was being offered at various locations throughout the country including the University of California at Berkeley. He told Glenn that he had decided to attend the one at Berkeley because his parents lived relatively close by. That would save him housing costs. From what he told Glenn, other than utilizing his
annual university travel allowance, it seems that he financed the cost of attending the workshop himself.

It seems clear that Magnaghi was quite anxious to report his participation in this workshop to Glenn. He undoubtedly hoped that it would help make his archival efforts more credible in the eyes of the administrators, and thus make it easier to obtain funds to get an archives established. However, again, I have not found any evidence that Glenn responded in writing to this June 12 memo, although he may have, or he may have done so orally.

The copious notes Magnaghi took at that California workshop are among his papers in NMU’s archives. They have to do with archival terminology, collecting, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, finding aids, space, staffing, and etcetera. They show that the workshop had made him well aware, at least from this time forward, of what was involved in developing a professional archives. Still, he continued to ask for very little. It seems he was being cautious about being overly presumptuous under the circumstances, and being written off as someone not to take too seriously.

In the fall of 1978, recently back from that Archives Workshop in California, Magnaghi decided to do some volunteering. He decided to use some of the insights he had gained there to help the Ishpeming Ski Hall of Fame organize some of its archival holdings. He also became a member of its Board of Directors.

Meanwhile, as one would expect, he continued his interviewing, taping, and collecting of historically valuable materials regarding the U.P., especially regarding the various ethnic groups of the central region. He developed an especially close relationship with the local branch of the Italian Pisano Club. He taped a substantial number of the stories of its members and acquired a considerable amount of additional historical material from them. He made himself known to virtually any ethnic group which was open to it, and as time permitted, he sought to gather as much information about them as he could. He let them know that he believed that they and their history were important. He often attended their ethnic functions and celebrations, wrote about them, and gave talks about their history at these celebrations and elsewhere. He was so enthusiastic about these type of activities that he engaged in them virtually all the time, whether it was during the school year, while he was on vacation, or whenever or wherever.

In addition to involving his students, he got others interested too. Frequently it was about a particular ethnic group in a particular area of the U.P. For example, since I was teaching Canadian history at the time, he encouraged me to prepare a presentation about the French Canadians of the L’Anse/Baraga area for a summer festival that would be occurring there. That eventually led to me to do an article too about the French Canadians in the Marquette area during the nineteenth century. These items can be found among my papers in Northern’s Archives, as well as in the journal, Harlow’s Wooden Man, (Fall, 1979).

As will have been surmised, during the years under review, Magnaghi was active with other local groups and agencies engaged in the collection and servicing of local primary
historical materials. The Ishpeming Ski Hall has been mentioned. Another was the Marquette County Historical Society Library and Museum. From January to June 1980, while a search was under way for a new director, he also was the latter’s interim director.

The things just mentioned in this survey are evidence of Magnaghi’s steadfast commitment to the preservation of the significant primary historical data of the U.P., especially of the central portion of it, during the second half of the 1970’s. When I learned—often only recently—through some of the documents I have just shared of the sometimes rather humiliating, “whatever is necessary” kind of things Magnaghi did at times to endeavor to get something going, I was impressed. I could also empathize. It brought back memories of similar things I eventually felt I had to do to gain the support needed for developing a meaningful archives. He possessed the required attitude, even though initially the required attitude proved not to be enough to get one very far. Still an archives likely would not have been developed at Northern—at least not until sometime in the considerably more distant future—had it not been for the presence of this vision, attitude, and effort.

In summary, our survey of the evidence shows that a vision for historical preservation and for an archives at Northern existed for quite some time before a university archives that proved to be a viable one was officially established in the mid-1980s. Considerable time had to be spent to create a consciousness of the need for one. That continued to be the case in the early 1980s. This was essential to anything ever happening beyond that—thus a significant contribution. While it would be nice to be able to say that I played a significant part in this, I cannot do so, because I did not. At Northern, that honor belongs to men like Vito Perrone and Richard Sonderegger in the mid-1960's and early 1970s—and to others I suspect as well, and particularly to Russell Magnaghi during the mid and second half of the 1970s. It seems quite clear that people at the Michigan Bureau of History and the State Archives of Michigan played some part in this also. Additional research would, I think, provide evidence of that. But in the final analysis Magnaghi was the person who was key in getting things off of dead-center in the archival effort at NMU which eventually succeeded, and which is the subject of this account. Although his efforts were not the primary factor later on in the establishment of Northern’s current archives, his vision, educating, and persistence were absolutely vital during this earlier period in getting others to move toward that happy result.

We now turn to what happened during the earliest period of the 1980s in moving things toward that happy result.
CHAPTER 2
GAINING HISTORY DEPARTMENT SUPPORT, 1981-1982

At a Department of History meeting on November 10, 1982, its faculty voted to seek to get an archives established at Northern. The motion was made by Russell Magnaghi and seconded by Fred Stenkamp, an Europeanist. Stenkamp’s second and some subsequent decisions the department made in support of that decision are indications of the broad level of support which had come to exist in the department for this initiative by this time. How did this support come about when not many years earlier, Magnaghi found little real interest on the part of the members of his department in establishing an archives? Without a doubt, the earlier lack of interest had been due in part at least to the following: Each member was busy with their own fields of history—fields in large part different from the history of the Upper Peninsula. Professor Magnaghi—and to some extent—Professor Saari were exceptions to this, as noted in the last chapter. In addition to Saari’s course about the Finns of the U.P., he also taught a course entitled, “Historical Thinking and Writing.” In it he often allowed, and even encouraged students to focus on topics concerned with the U.P.

After the failure of Magnaghi’s largely single-handed efforts to get an archives established in the mid and late 1970s, he concluded that a somewhat different tactic was required. If only the views of the members of the Department of History could be changed. If only the department could be persuaded to throw their weight behind his initiative, that likely would carry considerably more weight with the administration than an appeal coming only from him. How to bring this about was the question? Could the department as a whole be persuaded that one of its obligations was, given the character of its discipline, to do what it could to seek to preserve and make accessible to the public the historically valuable primary research materials of the area in which they lived?

Magnaghi continued to be distraught too by the fact that the most valuable public records of the Central and Eastern U.P. were being sent to the State Archives of Michigan in Lansing. The same thing was happening to other types of valuable primary materials. For example, Magnaghi’s papers contain a Marquette Mining Journal article, dated October 22, 1979, regarding the State Archives in Lansing having just received records which dated from 1911 from the Upper Peninsula Travel and Recreation Association. This Association was headquartered in Iron Mountain in the U. P. at the time. At the time of the donation its Executive Director was Robert Helwig. He had this to say to the Mining Journal interviewer: “This collection is a most valuable addition to the growing manuscript holdings of the State Archives—particularly as it relates to Michigan’s 20th Century effort to develop and promote its agricultural and tourist economies.” The article stated that the “donated records included the organization’s minutes, financial records, correspondence, annual meeting records, annual reports, photographs reflecting promotional efforts and
tourist attractions, publications of the association and clippings [from] scrapbooks.” If materials such as these could only be kept in the U.P., they would generally be much more appreciated, so much more utilized, and would make a much more valuable contribution to academics, the economy, and society in general, Magnaghi thought.

**FATE AND PROFESSOR RUTH ROEBKE-BERENS’ HELP TURN THE TIDE**

A 1980-81 development at the university and in the History Department indirectly resulted in the department’s ears being more inclined to Magnaghi’s concerns than had previously been the case. A financial shortfall at the university threatened the retrenchment of a member or two of the History Department. If this happened, it appeared that Ruth Roebke-Berens, being one of the most junior members of the department, might be one of those to be retrenched. In a move to make this more difficult, the department asked Professor Barry L. Knight, head of the department at the time, if he would consider resigning from the chairmanship and recommend that Roebke-Berens be named the new department head. Knight graciously obliged and she was appointed head in 1981. In the NMU governance system at the time, this move made her a part of the university administration as well as remaining a member of the faculty of the History Department. As such she was much less likely to be retrenched.

Roebke-Berens was a gracious, energetic person. She did her best to accommodate the needs and wishes of the members of her department, of students, and of others. She also was very appreciative of what the department had done to help secure her position. Because of that among other reasons, she was eager to reward the confidence which it had placed in her. This attitude was a godsend for Magnaghi and his desire to see the department sensitized sufficiently to gain its support for mounting a united call from the History Department to the administration to establish an archives. In 1989, in that taped interview with Magnaghi already referred to above, he also was asked about how the archives got started. He recalled how he had “long conversations” with Professor Roebke-Berens about the need for an archives; and that then she “kind of got the idea going.”

What Magnaghi meant by “kind of got the idea going” was that during those conversations with Roebke-Berens, and following them, she took it upon herself to vigorously check out all possibilities. An opportunity to do so arose when David Johnson, State Archivist, happened to be in Marquette in September, 1982. Roebke-Berens and Magnaghi shared their concerns with him. They asked him if the State Archives was still interested in Northern becoming a repository for the public records of the central area of the Upper Peninsula. (About fifteen years earlier, the State Archives had, it will be recalled, once consulted with Northern about this. Nothing came of it at the time because as noted in chapter one, Northern eventually decided that it could not meet the financial obligations entailed.) Johnson assured Roebke-Berens and Magnaghi that the State Archives was still
interested, in fact very interested; but that again, there were requirements that had to be met. Further discussion made them even more aware of what Magnaghi, at least, already knew because of the archives workshop he had attended in Berkeley, California in 1978 and noted in chapter one. One requirement was that a repository had to be directed by an archivist with archival training. Johnson suggested that they contact Martha Bigelow, Director of the Michigan Bureau of History and Chairperson of the Michigan State Advisory Board of the National Historical Publication and Records Commission (NHPRC) at the time. She would have some suggestions, Johnson believed, as to how Northern could position itself to become a State Repository for public records.

In early November of that same year at a history conference in Lansing, Roebke-Berens and Magnaghi had an opportunity to meet with Bigelow. She was sympathetic. She, however, informed them that NMU could not be a State Repository for public records until they met state requirements for staffing, funding, space, security, humidity control, and public access. She did, however, encourage Northern to decide to launch an archives that would strive to meet these standards as soon as possible as a preliminary step to becoming a State Repository.

Bigelow also informed them that if Northern proceeded with the goal of becoming an archives that met State standards, financing of the effort would be Northern’s responsibility. Some funds, however, might eventually become available from a federal NHPRC grant if Northern demonstrated it was serious about such a commitment. She indicated too that if Northern did not have faculty with the archival training necessary to establish an archives, two-week workshops entitled, “Introduction to Modern Archives Administration” were offered periodically by the Modern Archives Institute of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. A couple of faculty members willing to develop an archives could participate in one of those workshops and receive at least the minimal knowledge needed to establish an archives. Among other places, this information can be found in a 1982-83 curriculum development proposal which the Department of History’s Curriculum Committee sent to the Curriculum Committee of NMU’s Economic Policy Committee of its Faculty Senate on November 19, 1982.

**HISTORY DEPARTMENT DECISIONS**

At the regular meetings of the Department of History in October and November, 1982, Roebke-Berens shared the things she and Magnaghi had been learning from their discussions with Johnson and Bigelow. The minutes indicate that a general discussion occurred thereafter about the possibility of the History Department taking a leadership role in promoting the idea that NMU develop an archives. At this time, it is safe to say that among those in the department, Roebke-Berens was the one who had become the most determined supporter of the idea.

In order to obtain a positive response from the department on the issue, the minutes of the meeting suggest that some of the difficulties and challenges of proceeding with the project were perhaps downplayed, or even ignored, while the doable aspects were emphasized. For example, on the staffing issue the positive aspects were definitely emphasized.
was the fact that the possibility existed of having a couple of members of the department take the training necessary to oversee an archival effort; also that two people had already expressed an interest in doing so. At the department’s October, 1982 meeting, Magnaghi and Gene D. L. “Lon” Jones had expressed such interest. The positive things an archives would do for the university, for its students, and for the History Department’s public history program were also emphasized, as well as the obligation of the History Department, because of the nature of its discipline, to take leadership in this.

On the other hand, the minutes do not show that a discussion occurred about what having one or two members of the department head up the archives effort would mean for the other members of it. If this happened, they would have to cover some of the teaching responsibilities of the individuals who would have to be given release-time to do this or some of the department’s classes would have to be dropped. It seems that the issue of the required space in which to establish an archives was not discussed at this time either. If the department and Northern were going to try to develop an archives which would eventually meet the requirements for being a repository for state public records, acceptable public access and a secure space which possessed humidity control was going to have to be available. And where was the funding going to come from in this period of financial exigency? The fact that the minutes do not show that such things were discussed does not, of course, mean that they were not. However, it is possible that they were slid over rather superficially at this initial stage, or not broached at all, in order to be more certain of obtaining a “yes” decision. Regardless of the fact that some matters were not discussed as fully as they might have been, department-wide support was achieved, and that was all-important. It placed the effort in a considerably stronger position for attempting to deal with these issues a bit later.

The upshot was this: a department, which only a few years earlier had been rather unconcerned about Northern acquiring an archives, now, on November 10, 1982 found itself quite ready to vote in favor of an effort to establish one. Magnaghi’s quest to get the department—not just himself and Saari to some extent—behind such an effort had been successful. Having Roebke-Berens as Head of the Department involved as heavily as she was, was important too. Technically, heads of departments became members of the administration; thus the administration had now become involved too. As department head, she would have much more access to the administration than just a member of the department would have had. Furthermore, if they liked her, her desires could carry considerable weight. The question now was, what would be done with this additional leverage?

In the next chapter we will see how, despite great obstacles, the History Department’s new chairperson skillfully parlayed considerably greater support from the University’s Vice President for Academic Affairs for these objectives than Magnaghi had ever been able to achieve earlier—largely single-handedly. The History Department’s now united desire was to see not only an archives established but also an archives management course taught.
CHAPTER 3
USING THE 1982 HISTORY DEPARTMENT DECISION TO GAIN ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

Having gained the support of her department for promoting the establishment of an archives, Roebke-Berens promptly swung into action on another aspect of the archives issue—that of winning the support of Northern's administrators. This always was, it seems, in close consultation with Magnaghi. At times when she asked for his opinion as to what should go into a memo, or what the History Department’s position on something should be, he even wrote rough drafts of his ideas that she could use for her guidance if she wished. Some of Magnaghi's “position papers” can be found in the Department of History's “Archives” folder—now in Northern’s Archives. A close comparison between their content and the content of some of Roebke-Berens’ memos during this period verifies that. This is especially evident in a memo she sent to President Jamrich on June 3, 1983 and in a position paper Magnaghi wrote at the time entitled, “Longyear Hall/University Archives.” More on the memo later. At times Magnaghi also gathered information she needed. For example, a report from him to her exists in the History Department's “Archives” folder showing that someone had claimed that to be an archivist a person had to be a librarian and have a Master’s degree in Library Science. To discover what the facts actually were, he called the office of the Society of American Archivists. He learned that this was not true, and what the Society actually liked to see be true of archivists. He then typed up the results of his investigation and sent them to Roebke-Berens. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

By November 15, 1982, just five days after that important History Department vote, Roebke-Berens sent Vice President Robert Glenn a detailed “Proposal for a Regional Archival Depository for Northern Michigan University,” as she titled it. (The terms, depository and repository, were used interchangeably during this period of time). She informed Glenn that during the past several weeks she had had a number of discussions with people from the State Archives concerning the possibility of establishing a regional depository for public records at Northern. She stated that the State Archives were “currently decentralizing their holdings” and that Michigan Technological University already was a regional depository for the Western U.P. Lake Superior State University was “being asked” to be the depository for the Eastern U.P. According to the State's plan, Northern was envisioned as the depository for the Central Upper Peninsula.

Roebke-Berens then listed a number of reasons why, in her opinion, Northern should support her proposal. Many of them were the same as Magnaghi had presented in the second half of the 1970s to Jamrich and Glenn and that I too would later present to other university vice presidents and presidents. One of them had to do with why an archives would enhance Northern’s academic situation. Not just one, she declared, but four members of the History Department were “directly involved in doing research that involved the U.P.” Thus they would be making use of such an archives. (One could say that four members of the History Department were involved if you looked at things broadly enough!). She highlighted the great value that an archives would have in training students
how to use primary documents and in learning how to organize and manage public records. Such training would, among other things, qualify students for careers in archival work, museum work, and work in many government agencies. An archives would also make possible—or more successful—courses in archival administration and the public and oral history programs which had recently been launched—incidentally by Magnaghi too. A regional depository would highlight Northern’s leadership role in the U.P. “Valuable documents, which [otherwise] would be transferred to other institutions or lost to future generations of researchers, would be preserved.” I wish I had known of this fine memo when I had to make similar arguments later on to a new group of administrators. I would have been very tempted just to copy it and send it to them!

Roebke-Berens, however, had to inform Glenn too that the State had “specific requirements” which had to be met before an institution could be designated a regional depository. Martha Bigelow had estimated that to begin with, Northern would need to provide “approximately 15 feet by 15 feet of secured storage space—enough to house 500 cubic feet of records.” As for a director for the depository, while a full-time archivist would be ideal, Bigelow had agreed that a faculty member or two who took “a two-week workshop offered by the Modern Archives Institute [of the National Archives] in Washington, D.C. would be acceptable.” Roebke-Berens stated that Professors Gene D. “Lon” Jones and Russell Magnaghi had “indicated their interest in taking this workshop in June of 1983.” She stated too that she “would request release-time” from their regular teaching load “for any individual working in the depository.” She would also seek a curriculum development grant to cover the cost of anyone attending the workshop. She asked Glenn to convene a meeting “to further discuss this proposal.” The establishment of such a depository, Roebke-Berens concluded “would be achieved through [the] retraining of faculty and the use of existing resources with [a] minimal outlay of funds.” She concluded with, “I ask for your support for this important project.”

She copied her memo to Dr. Donald Heikkinen and Dr. Jane Swafford who also would be playing a role in determining whether or not this proposal would go forward. Heikkinen was dean of the School of Arts and Sciences under which the History Department existed. Swafford, a member of the Mathematics Department and interim director of the library, was also chairperson of the Curriculum Development Committee of the Academic Senate’s Economic Policy Committee (EPC).

RESPONSE OF THE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE FACULTY SENATE’S ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Just four days after Roebke-Berens sent her appeal to Glenn, the Curriculum Committee of the History Department sent a somewhat similar memo to the Curriculum Development Committee of the Academic Senate’s EPC. The EPC’s Curriculum Development Committee had been created to screen university curriculum proposals. The membership of the History Department’s Curriculum Committee at this time included Roebke-Berens, Magnaghi, Ken Schellhase, Fred Stenkamp, and me. While this memo was signed by all five of us, there can be little doubt that it was drafted by Magnaghi. Tell-tale signs of that exist in more than one place throughout the document. The main request of
the History Department’s Curriculum Committee was for curriculum development funds to train two members of the History Department with sufficient knowledge of archival science to enable them to teach a course in archives administration. The addition of this course, would enable the History Department to offer a minor in public history in the future. Without people with archival training such a course could not be offered. That would be a shame. Care should be taken that students were being taught practical applications of their historical knowledge, which such a course would, in part, provide. In requesting approval of that training, the History Department, of course, knew that, if approved, it would also be getting a person or two who would be in a position to develop an archives. That, of course, was the other big objective.

PHASE VII CUTS

From a financial point of view, what Roebke-Berens and the History Department’s Curriculum Committee were asking the university to undertake was quite audacious, given the fiscal situation of the state and the university at the time. At this very time Northern was experiencing a period of severe financial shortfall and retrenchment. University-wide discussions as to how to avoid any more cuts than possible had been occurring since 1981. Things such as the pooling of secretaries, larger classes with small discussion groups, annualizing summer appointments, payless pay days, salary freezes, program consolidations and reductions, and more had all been considered. By the fall of 1982, many things along these lines had already been done. For example, the History Department began sharing a younger, less well-paid secretary, with the Department of Economics.

At a University Department Heads’ meeting on April 21, 1982, Roebke-Berens shared that Phase VII cuts were still going to have to be implemented. The administrators anticipated that thirty-five positions would have to be cut. Two months later, Glenn stated that the budget shortfall which Northern was facing was 1.2 million dollars and of that 500,000 dollars of cuts still had to be found. “Department heads and deans were to review their programs and cooperate with other departments and schools to eliminate courses and staff wherever possible.” Glenn also reported the possibility of closing some buildings.

Northern’s contract with the Faculty Union was expiring in 1982 too. To help Northern through this financial crisis, the Union’s Bargaining Council negotiated a year’s extension of the expiring agreement. A copy of a letter dated January 1984 exists in my files. It is from Fred Stenkamp, President of the Faculty Union at the time. It is to Northern’s new President at the time, James B. Appleberry. It reminded the President of the financial sacrifices that the extension meant for the faculty. Any raises for that year had been foregone. This amounted to a cut in the base salaries of faculty members, he declared. Furthermore, “annualizing” meant that some faculty had also given up summer salaries and additional income which could be earned from off-campus teaching.

Also, on August 20, 1982 Dean Heikkinen had informed the Department of History that it needed to cut the equivalent of two positions to meet its portion of the financial reductions
that his division was obliged to make. To avoid being laid off, John Berens, a junior professor in the department and the husband of Ruth Roebke-Berens, agreed to retrain for a position in the library and to become one of the librarians during the academic year 1983-84. The equivalent of the second salary reduction was achieved in the following ways: Professor Robert McClellan took a two-thirds appointment and the department's secretary, Arlene Dorf, took a three-month leave of absence. This eventually resulted in her leaving the department and being replaced with a less senior secretary. Her salary was considerably less. The department also agreed to teach its off-campus courses "on load." DHRM, 1/3, 15-02-06-07

Enrollments had dropped too from 9,376 in 1980 to 8,465 in 1982. This did not make for optimism with regards to the possibility of more funding for new projects. RM, Sense, 135 At the same time there were new programs that the university felt it needed to introduce, expand, or better support. They were in Business, Criminal Justice, Communication Disorders, Nursing, new sports programs and/or the expansion of older ones, the enhancement of community service programs such as NMU public radio and T.V., the "computerization" of Northern as microcomputers replaced typewriters, and the adding of or remodeling of the facilities required for many of these projects. RM, Sense, 232-233

HESITANCY REGARDING APPROVAL

Undoubtedly it was financial realities such as these which made Dr. Swafford hesitate when Roebke-Berens asked her to approve the use of university development funds to train historians to be archivists. Swafford had responded quickly—on December 3, still in 1982. She acknowledged that Roebke-Berens' proposal had merit, but she declared that its financial implications needed to be "thoroughly explored.... It is not clear to me," she stated, "that we can meet the requirements of the state without a sizable commitment of resources over a sustained period of time." DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Roebke-Berens had also asked for space in the library. Swafford, Interim Director of the library too at this time, as noted earlier, felt that Roebke-Berens' request had to be evaluated in terms of the library's other goals such as automation, media center needs, audio visual needs, learning carrels, and collection development needs. Swafford's assessment of these issues caused her to turn the request down, at least for the moment, until further assessments could be made. The same kind of thinking came into play with regard to the use of curriculum development funds to train archivists. "Such training seems premature," Swafford stated, "until the university's commitment to a Regional Archival Depository can be ascertained." She would, however, participate in the further exploration of these matters with the "interested parties," she declared. DHRM, 1/3, 15-02-06-07

Later, but still in December, further discussion between Swafford, Glenn, and Roebke-Berens did take place. Glenn and Swafford raised a number of concerns relating to the History Department's proposal to become a Regional Archival Depository of the State. Then in a memo to Glenn on February 7, 1983, Roebke-Berens informed him that she had raised Swafford and Glenn's concerns with David Johnson, State Archives director. Johnson felt that if Northern could only come up with some appropriate space, it could become a State
Depository provided a couple of faculty of the History Department obtained some archival training. Since only the library had space which the state would consider appropriate, Roebke-Berens’ conclusion was that “the support of the library is essential to any commitment made to the State Archives.” She continued as follows:

We appreciate the concerns voiced by Dr. Swafford about the many commitments of the library in this period of limited financial resources. We believe, however, that our offer to staff and develop such a depository makes this proposal feasible with a minimal financial commitment. We ask that you weigh all of the factors involved when you decide on the regional archival depository proposal. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

**GRANT TO TAKE ARCHIVAL TRAINING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. APPROVED**

By March 31, 1983 Roebke-Berens’ efforts regarding the archival training issue had paid off. On that day Glenn sent the History Department’s Curriculum Committee a memo, copied to Roebke-Berens and Swafford, stating that the committee had been “awarded a grant of $3,250.81” to provide archival training for a couple of members of the History Department’s faculty. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 This action shows that at this point Glenn was supportive of this initiative although his actions did not result in a solution to the space problem. In doing what he did, Glenn initiated a practice by the Office of Academic Affairs of giving modest amounts of financial support to the archives effort to meet the smaller financial challenges it faced from time to time. This even though the President’s Council at this time was still a long way from giving the effort the more substantial support it needed to become a really significant entity of the university’s academic program. The funds Academic Affairs came up with from time to time to do this usually came out of its discretionary fund. Academic Affairs also helped with securing funds from outside of its own resources, for example, grant funds, as it did in this case. This would continue until 1992, when things changed. Academic Affairs eventually helped significantly too with securing the permanent line-item funding necessary for a considerably more adequate effort.

It is important to note too that those seeking support for this fledgling archives effort sought to obtain it from the top administrative level—that is from the presidential and vice presidential level—and not from the School of Arts and Sciences level and from the level of the dean under which the Department of History existed. To have sought it from the latter level would have made securing any very significant amounts of financial help then and in the future much more difficult. Glenn could have just asked Magnaghi earlier, and then Roebke-Berens later, to seek help from the dean. But Glenn by having his office assume responsibility, (and President Jamrich deserves credit here too—he had asked Glenn earlier to investigate and do whatever seemed advisable) helped establish the understanding that having an archives and supporting one was going to be the responsibility of the top administrative level. Also, Glenn’s decision established that the dean was going to have to accommodate his thinking and attitude to those top-level decisions even though they would be affecting considerably a particular department of his school. The precedent which Glenn established made it possible to by-pass the School of
Arts and Sciences to a great extent when seeking to obtain even the small bits of help which were going to be vital to the survival of the archives during its infancy.

**THE SPACE IN LONGYEAR HALL POSSIBILITY**

In the end, despite Roebke-Berens’ persistence with Jane Swafford, it did not result in the acquisition of any archival space in the library. Where else might suitable space be found? By June, after consulting with Magnaghi, and he writing down a few suggestions for her on the topic, and with the support of the History Department, she decided that the venerable John M. Longyear building would, in some ways, be an ideal home for an archives depository. On June 3, 1983, therefore, sent a four-page memo to the University’s Chief Executive, John X. Jamrich, asking him to consider this possibility. Presumably, she sent it to him rather than Glenn because ultimately the decision regarding which use the building would be put would be made by the President, his Council, and the University’s Board of Control. The building had more than adequate space, she argued, for all types of archival operations. Being the only remaining structure of the original university buildings, it was fitting that this building be dedicated to the preservation of Northern’s history—and that of the U.P.

Roebke-Berens emphasized also the importance of preserving records that would make institutional histories (such as the one the reader is now reading) possible in the future. (How right she was about that. This history, for instance, of the origins of Northern’s Archives would not have been possible without the records that have now been preserved in Northern’s Archives.) She argued that an archives was needed as well to preserve valuable historical materials that the historical societies of the central U.P. were unable to preserve. “That included the papers of leading figures of the U.P.—whether they were associated with government, business, labor, medicine, religion, the arts, or education.” She repeated arguments made in earlier correspondence; most importantly that an archives was needed to support Northern’s own educational efforts, especially those associated with courses such as public history. An archives also would provide internship opportunities for students preparing for careers in archives and museum work, and for those who would work in historical societies, in governmental agencies, etcetera. Roebke-Berens implied that staffing would not be a problem. Two History Department faculty members, Gene D. L. Jones (and now it was Clifford F. Maier rather than Russell M. Magnaghi), were currently in Washington, D. C. obtaining the required training.

It is interesting that in making her appeal to Jamrich for the use of Longyear Hall as an archives building, Roebke-Berens seems to have ignored the fact, (or been unaware of it, which seems unlikely) that Jamrich had just, less than two months earlier (on April 27) sent a proposal to the State Legislature urging that Longyear Hall be renovated into a museum and art gallery facility. It seems that she hoped that the arguments she made in her memo would, in Jamrich’s mind, trump his earlier proposal.

I have not discovered any evidence that Jamrich ever sent Roebke-Berens a written response to her request. If he did not, that likely was because the memo came during his last month as President of Northern. However, Roebke-Berens’ hopes did not flag. In a
memo to Glenn dated September 21, 1983 regarding another matter, she slid in a request that she hoped that the new President (Appleberry) “would have the opportunity in the near future to consider”;—being the one made to Jamrich on June 3--regarding Longyear Hall. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

SOME CUTTING BACK ON GOALS

Interestingly, it is also possible, at the same time to see in two additional memos Roebke-Berens sent to Glenn during this period of time, a greater readiness to acknowledge that she was expecting a lot in asking for an archives that would meet the high standards of the State, given Northern’s current financial circumstances. In one of two memos she sent to Glenn on June 24, she stated that the archival training received in Washington would be of great value for “any archival program created at Northern even though an archives might be some ways off.” DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18 In a September 21, 1983 memo to Glenn, in addition to what has already been noted, she declared that she “realize[d] that the establishment of a university archives represented a major commitment on the part of NMU” but that she, nonetheless, hoped President Appleberry “will...consider the proposal.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

To summarize, during the period from November 1982 to June 1983 Roebke-Berens, with the backing of the History Department, and especially the steady help of Magnaghi, did in essence obtain approval from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs to go ahead with an effort to establish an archives as best as the History Department could. She did obtain through the good offices of Academic Affairs some grant support for some training in archival administration. This also implied approval to offer a course in archives administration and the enhancement of the university’s nascent public history program. Even though all of this might not seem like much and the effort to obtain some space was entirely unsuccessful, this still was a significant start in the quest to get an archives launched with administration support. Having obtained the support of the Office of Academic Affairs, even if it was of necessity in little more than spirit at the time, this was of no small importance. This was the key office, in addition to the president’s and that of the President’s Council, from which the archives would need support in order to become a success long-term. A beginning toward that goal had now been made.
CHAPTER 4
THE ARCHIVIST: WHO WILL IT BE?

Why was it that by March 31, 1983, Roebke-Berens told Vice President Glenn that it was me who would be taking the archival training available in Washington D. C.—not Magnaghi? He had declared his interest in doing so at a meeting of the History Department on October 21, 1982. DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07

It seems that by March 1983, through informal talks unknown to me, it had pretty much already been decided by at least some of the other nine members of the History Department that I, rather than Magnaghi, should be groomed as the future archivist. When I became aware that no one other than Jones was going to the training even though funds had been made available for two to go, and when I was asked if I would accompany him, I readily said, “Yes.” I did not see that particular decision as locking me into becoming the archivist, and I did not suspect that that was the plan. Since the archives would be concerned with the preservation of U.S. archival materials, and U.S. history was not my field, I assumed that it would be Jones, an Americanist, who would become the archivist. At most, if anything, I would, perhaps, be called upon to assist him at times; but Jones would be the archivist.

I thought of going to Washington as little more than a happy, fortunate development—an opportunity to develop an awareness of a new discipline and to provide some company for my good friend, Lon Jones. I approached the whole thing in a rather light-hearted way. I was not yet as strongly driven as some by a conviction that Northern needed an archives; nor that if it got one, that it needed to be of such a professional character.

Later I learned, as noted earlier, that one of the reasons Magnaghi decided that he really did not wish to participate in the training was because he had decided that he would rather spend his time teaching, doing research, writing, and curating historical materials. He wanted to be free to be “out and about.” He acknowledged as much as that in a telephone conversation I had with him in 2010. If there was a way for an archives to get created and function without him doing it, he was happy with that.

Because of the recent financial crisis, it had become possible in the History Department to consider summer teaching as part of one’s regular teaching load and thereby occasionally take a regular semester off. That figured into Magnaghi’s decision too. He began annualizing his teaching load as soon as the plan was announced. By the fall of 1983 this enabled him to take that semester off to live in Alabama, do some teaching and research while there, and also be close to his daughter, Emily too while there.
Why Jones indicated that he was interested in obtaining the archival training, I am not sure. But right after he returned from the training, he made it clear that he would not assume the responsibility of being the archivist. I did not suspect at all that this was coming during our time together in Washington. He attended all of the sessions and took them very seriously. I interpreted that to mean that he was anxious to learn everything he could so he would be as prepared as possible when he became the archivist. Meanwhile, I also was taking things seriously but was frustrated too in not being able to process adequately everything that was being taught—especially when it came to automation. This we were told was the wave of the future. All of this left Jones quite unperturbed, it seemed to me. In view of his serenity, I was embarrassed at times by the anxiety I was feeling regarding what I felt was going right over my head. Was his serenity due to the fact that he knew that when we got back, getting this archives off the ground was not going to be his challenge? Had that already been discussed and settled with the department head prior to the time we left? Or had the reason he was going to Washington really been something else? The National High School History Day Competitions (which he cherished) would be taking place at a campus of the near-by University of Maryland on the day after the archival training ended. Knowing that taking the archival training would enable him to attend those competitions, could have been his motive. But I do not know that.

Because Jones was the Director of Student Teaching in the History Department, he often was out in area schools, working with teachers and with NMU’s history majors going into teaching. That really did not lend itself to being the archivist, but no one had voiced any concern regarding this, that I had heard of. It did not dawn on me when I agreed to go to Washington that being both Archivist and Director of Student Teaching might be considered quite incompatible by the History Department’s Curriculum Planning Committee. Given that Jones had expressed an early interest of taking the training, I did not think of that incompatibility as being a factor that would contribute toward making me the most logical choice to be the archivist. That is, I did not think of it until that was pointed out to me after we returned.

There was another factor figuring into all of this. Just recently, on October 21, 1982, the History Department had voted to begin hosting the regional High School History Day Competitions at Northern and to provide the judging for them. Since Jones knew many of the teachers whose students would participate in these competitions, he was the logical person to be the director. He also had a keen interest in how they did on the national level. Given these factors, it is not difficult to see why the department might have decided that it was not logical for Jones to take on the responsibility of developing an archives. Roebke-Berens said as much in her taped interview in 1989. “The consensus of the department was,” she said, “that because Jones was already involved in teacher education certification, Maier would be best able, in terms of time and interest, to devote some time to the archives.” If I was involved in reaching that consensus, I do not recall it. I am quite certain that I was not, otherwise, why would I have been so surprised when I returned from Washington D.C. to learn that I was to be the archivist?
WHY ME?

While all of the factors just mentioned probably played a part in me being selected, the most important reason, undoubtedly, why I and not Magnaghi or Jones was chosen to be the archivist quite certainly was programmatic. Magnaghi was teaching the History of the Upper Peninsula, the History of Michigan, Public History, Oral History, occasionally courses about the Southwest Borderlands of the United States, and at times, courses about Central and South America. I quite often taught courses about Hitler’s Germany, multiple sections of Western Civilization Since 1500, Canadian History less often, and occasionally, Modern Europe and German Military History Since 1870. The department, particularly Roebke-Berens, seems to have felt that if I got two-thirds release-time from teaching to do archival work, some of the courses, or sections of courses I would no longer be able to teach, could either be covered by other Europeanists or they could be dropped. That could be done with less of a negative impact on the department’s offerings for instance than if two-thirds of the courses that Magnaghi had been teaching were dropped. The feeling was that if Canadian History, for example, was no longer taught, that could be tolerated more easily than dropping a course that focused on some aspect of Michigan History. That is, in fact, what happened—Canadian History was dropped. My becoming the archivist also meant that Fred Stenkamp had to teach extra sections of Western Civilization Since 1500 and occasionally an additional upper-level course regarding some aspect of Modern European History. Professor Ken Schellhase, a professor of Ancient and Medieval History, also had to begin teaching some sections of Western Civilization Since 1500. A statement by Magnaghi in his 1989 taped interview strongly suggests that it was programmatic considerations that played the predominant role in determining who was asked to take on the archival responsibility. He stated that “at one point she [Roebke-Berens] was trying to decide who was going to be archivist. Cliff I think was a little apprehensive. It was new to him, and somewhat of a career change. I told her if she needed someone, I would do that kind of work, and she said, ‘No.’”

Given Magnaghi’s long-time interest in an archives for Northern, it seems unlikely that Roebke-Berens would have denied him the opportunity unless it was for the important programmatic reasons just discussed. However, his feelings about not really wanting to be an archivist, even though offering to be one if necessary, may also have been a significant factor in her decision. Because of Roebke-Berens’ delicate health during the time I have been writing this account, I have decided not to burden her with an interview regarding the reasons for her decision or other matters. And I do not recall exactly what she told me at the time these things were happening in 1983--except that I was it!

On a related point, I have to disagree respectfully with her 1989 recollections that one of the reasons I was selected to be archivist was because of my “interest” in archival work at the time. Initially this was not the case. However, once I discovered it was going to be my responsibility, I quickly developed a keen interest in it and realized the importance of it.

To summarize, I was not selected to become Northern’s first archivist because I sought the job. I was not particularly interested in it, nor did I feel qualified to do the job. So why did I
become very interested in the subject of preservation in 1983, and rather suddenly felt it was worthy of a career change? That is the subject of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 5
THE WASHINGTON D.C. TRAINING AND MY TRANSFORMED VISION

That two-week “workshop” in Washington D.C. was not only a valuable and life changing experience for me, but also a disconcerting one. Life changing in that it changed my rather casual attitude to a strong conviction that virtually all universities should have an archives which operated according to professional standards. Disconcerting in that I knew so little about archival science that I found it hard to absorb everything at the rate it was being taught at that so-called Washington D.C. workshop. In reality it was more like a crash course than a workshop, at least for someone with no previous exposure to archival science. The experience was a sort of “baptism by fire” for me. Nonetheless, I came back with a different outlook.

OUR REPORT

Upon our return, Jones and I submitted our report, dated June 27, 1983, to the Curriculum Development Subcommittee of the Academic Senate’s Economic Policy Committee. We reported that the training was, “highly professional in organization, presentation, and content.” In conjunction with the topics covered, we reported that we were also given a great deal of excellent reading material. Some sessions, but not all, had workshops associated with them. Among the topics covered were archival terminology, historical records, appraisal, accessioning, arrangement, description, reference service, educating the public regarding archival holdings, preservation, restoration, security, administration, legal concerns, machine readable records, photo collections, microfilming, ethics, and more.

We noted too that we had become aware from our readings and conversations with some of the thirty-eight other participants at the “workshop” that many of the nation’s universities had archives. Some were considerably smaller in size than Northern. Given such facts, we felt that there was considerable justification for the central region of the Upper Peninsula having a public records and manuscripts depository of substantial size and that it should be located at Northern Michigan University.

We said that we had concluded that there were four main types of materials that should be placed in an archives at Northern, should one be established. They were: (1) the inactive records and papers of enduring value that had been generated by the university itself or by distinguished individuals associated with its administration and/or with its academic endeavors. We noted that we learned “that the records of public institutions...are public property.” As such the university had an obligation to preserve those of lasting value and eventually to make them available for public research under carefully administered supervision. (2) The inactive, valuable records generated by government agencies of the U.P., or at least those located in the central U. P. (3) The private papers of prominent political, civic, and other individuals associated with the Upper Peninsula or with the
central region of it. And (4) the papers which document, at least, the Central U.P.’s economic, social and cultural origins, development, activities, and achievements.

Managing these types of records and papers in a professional manner in just the four categories mentioned, or even in just two or three of them, would require a substantial amount of time and work, we felt. Involved would be doing such things as the following: assessing the value of the records; doing the initial indexing of them; arranging and describing them at the group, series and folder levels; making guides and indexes that were professional in nature and could be distributed to other repositories; educating the public as to the repository’s holdings; assisting researchers; supervising the use of the research materials; employing professional preservation and restoration measures as well as professional administrative practices, and etcetera.

Regarding staffing, we concluded that it was hard to see how such an archival operation could be manned in a professional manner without at least “the equivalent of two full-time positions...once the operation is fully underway.” Perhaps just one person could gradually phase in the operation for the first two or three years. Ideally, some permanent clerical help would have to be part of an effective operation. They could be trained on the job, although their having at least one course in archival work would be highly desirable.

Regarding space for an office for research, processing and storage, we pointed out that at least three or four connected rooms would be necessary. A proper archival set-up required a reception room, a reading room, a processing room, and a storage room. The first and second of these could be combined if necessary. Researchers, however, could not be allowed in the same area as that in which the documents are stored. The staff member overseeing researchers should never leave them unobserved.

Regarding the funding of the operation, we acknowledged that we understood that this was bound to be a concern for the university’s administrators. We felt that realistically the funding was going to have to come from the state and become a part of the university’s regular budget. Our readings had made us aware that agencies such as the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Historical Publications and Records Commission had provided substantial grants to help archives become properly funded and to help fund the processing of certain collections. We felt that Northern had a good chance of being awarded some of these grants. We also thought some help might be available via foundations and local philanthropic agencies, families, and businesses.

We ended our report by thanking Northern for already having “taken a positive step toward preserving the historical records of the Upper Peninsula” by having funded this archival training. We encouraged them to show “similar foresight and courage regarding the decisions that lay ahead.”

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION

As can be seen, the report conveyed high expectations of what we hoped would happen on the university and public records front in the next three or four years. The hope was that
Northern would be convinced to move forward immediately with serious efforts towards becoming a professional archives that soon would meet state standards. In expecting so much, we were quite naïve, especially given the existing financial crises at Northern and in the state. On the other hand, by funding our training, Northern had provided us with some reason to hope for such a development. Was our training funded only in order to be able to teach a course in archival administration? Perhaps so, in the minds of some. Jones and I, however, were clearly assuming that it was to establish a high quality archives. Having acquired a vision for that, it seems from hindsight like it was a good thing that we did. Only that made it possible to keep pressing forward during the trying early years of the existence of the archives. We had to learn through hard experience that what had become our lofty vision was not yet the priority of the majority of the members of the President’s Council. And that was where the decisive decisions were made. A long educative process lay ahead.

Jones and I wrote the report as if we were both expecting to do our part to launch, develop, and oversee the archives. We wrote, “We feel that we have obtained enough insight into how an archives should be managed to be able to oversee the effort, provided it can be done on a regular release-time basis (although some additional specialized training may be desirable as the need arises).” We also anticipated that most of the day-to-day processing and service work would be done by permanently employed “assistants” (clerical help).

**MY DISCOVERY OF MY ROLE**

I cannot recall how many days, or even weeks, it was after our report was completed and submitted that I realized beyond any doubt that it was not Jones and I, or Jones, but that it was I who would be heading up the archives project if and when it was launched. I do not even remember how I discovered that. In a September 1986 application for a faculty merit award, I stated what my recollection was then of how it happened. “...I undertook the task of establishing an archives at Northern solely because I was asked to do so. I did not seek the task...” Nevertheless, I stated that I had, at the same time, come to believe “deeply in the wisdom of the project for an academic institution.” CMPC, IMP. What I do remember is how stunned I felt when it finally sunk in that I was to be the archivist. I think it must have been Jones who wrote that confident sentence in our report about feeling that we had obtained enough insight from our Washington experience to manage an archives. I do not remember. I do remember that it quickly became evident to me that not only figuring out how to make the archives happen, but figuring out how to make it into a high-quality operation, was going to be “my baby.” And that is, in fact, what happened. Nevertheless, once I realized I was going to be the archivist, I was determined to implement, as much as I possibly could, the proper procedures for operating a professional archives.
CHAPTER 6
PERSONAL DESIRES, REALITY, AND A “DREAM” PROPOSAL FOR THE FALL OF 1984

Thankfully, I had a year to get over the shock I initially felt when I realized that it was I who was going to have the responsibility of developing the archives—a year because soon after Professor Jones and I returned from our training, a decision was made to delay the launching of the archives until the beginning of the fall semester of 1984.

However, as I discussed being archivist with my wife, Eleanor, we decided that it might not be such a bad thing after all. The change in responsibilities might actually free up some time for me—I dreamed! If I was released from my teaching responsibilities, I might be able to find more time to finish three articles and a book I was currently writing. I was assuming that if Northern actually agreed to go forward with the archives effort, it would assign at least one full-time position to the project, plus hopefully, some part-time help. When Jones and I returned from Washington, Jones talked as if he thought this too. Certainly, we both thought that at least one full-time person was necessary to do the job properly. Our report to the Senate’s Economic Policy Committee, cited in the last chapter, reflects that. I am sure that not being a part of the administration’s inner circle and not being as aware of the financial situation as I could have been also allowed me to have some misconceptions. It allowed me to think that having a full-time archivist immediately was possible, and that this would happen; thus my original belief that I would be a full-time one if I was asked.

In the end, however, I was given only two-thirds release-time from my teaching load to work on the project. The total demands on my time henceforth proved to be so open-ended that more free time to work on my research and writing projects never materialized while I was archivist.

The decision of Roebke-Berens and the History Department’s Curriculum Committee to grant me only two-thirds released-time was understandable, while not my first preference. It had become clear quite quickly after Jones and I returned from Washington D.C. that if the archives project was going to fly, the History Department was going to have to staff it. Also that it was going to have to do so out of its existing staff. Northern was not going to be providing any extra funding to hire any additional help. At the same time, the History Department was expected to continue to offer as many of the courses it had previously offered and keep its credit-hour production at previous levels. These facts placed the department in a very difficult position. Still for the sake of the good cause involved, it took on the task. However, because the department had to continue to cover its courses out of its previous budget allocation, it felt that it could not sacrifice more than two-thirds of a position for the archives. I could accept that for the time being, and did. At the same time I expected that in deciding on the two-thirds amount of release-time, the department and its chairperson were making a firm on-going commitment to that; that henceforth it would
sacrifice at least that amount of time to help assure that the archives effort would have at least a fair chance for success.

**THE CHALLENGE FOR ROEBKE-BERENS**

Between the summer of 1983 and the fall of 1984 Roebke-Berens as chair of the History Department, and as such also a part of the administration, continued to correspond with and lobby her administration colleagues regarding things which were still needed to get the proposed archives off the ground. This presented quite a challenge for her because, as already noted, in the summer of 1983 Northern hired a new President, Dr. James B. Appleberry. He let it be known that he wished to select and work with his own team of administrators; consequently Vice President Glenn tendered his resignation, effective a year later. What would the attitude of Appleberry and his new team be with regards to giving adequate, or at least some priority to having an archives? Would what had been accomplished in the past toward establishing one be expanded or lost?

President Appleberry followed Jamrich’s precedent of leaving archival matters pretty much in the hands of the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. While this policy also had some disadvantages from the point of view of the amount of support the effort might receive, it also had advantages in the present circumstances. It left Vice President Glenn quite free, as far as I know, to decide on archival matters within the limits of at least his discretionary budget and the powers of his office. Again he responded favorably to the History Department’s requests to support its archival initiative. A plus was that he liked Roebke-Berens and liked working with her. That, undoubtedly, helped too in producing positive responses; but it was not only that. The evidence indicates that he also really did believe that what the History Department was trying to get established for the university was a good thing. The question now was, what would the attitude of the new president and his administrative team, the President’s Council, be toward supporting the launching of an archives effort once Glenn was gone?

As President Appleberry observed Roebke-Berens’ executive abilities and style, he too liked what he saw. As a consequence, he almost immediately asked her to assume some tasks for him in addition to her headship of the History Department and her part-time teaching load. For example, during the winter/spring of 1984, he asked her to chair the Search Committee for the next vice president for Academic Affairs. She agreed.

At the same time Roebke-Berens continued to work on things that would be needed to launch the archives. One was space. Nothing had yet come of her June 3, 1983 appeal to Jamrich to convert Longyear Hall into an archives. So just as a reminder that such space was absolutely necessary for carrying out the vision which had emerged for the archives, she sent Glenn a memo on January 26, 1984 specifically about the matter. It was basically a summary of the points she had made earlier in her June 3 memo. She continued as well to work on other things that I would need to get the archives launched. They included operating funds, equipment, supplies, etcetera.
Roebke-Berens and the rest of the History Department also began working with Vice President Glenn and me regarding my status and responsibilities as archivist. The minutes of a History Department meeting on March 20, 1984 read in part: “The new archival position and implications for Clifford were explored.” At that same meeting the department created an Archives Subcommittee composed of Roebke-Berens, Jones, Magnaghi, and me. Its task was to create a proposal for the vice president’s consideration that enunciated the History Department’s desires regarding the conditions and understandings under which the archives would operate. It also established a work plan and schedule as to what the archivist was expected to do during the first year of the existence of the archives.

**MY DESIRES REGARDING BEING ARCHIVIST**

Prior to producing this proposal, the subcommittee had requested a written statement from me as to what I felt the conditions of my employment as archivist should be, what I saw as being my most important responsibilities as archivist, and what a realistic schedule for fulfilling them would be. Thus on April 9, 1984, I sent the subcommittee the following memo (slightly edited here for stylistic reasons):

At the moment I see the following things as being important and requiring written commitments from the administration:

1. That my status in the History Department including my seniority ranking not be changed by my acceptance of the two-thirds released time decided upon to get the establishment of a university archives underway. If at some future date a twelve-month contract appears desirable, the new arrangement must not result in a reduction in real pay for time expended.

2. That the university assume the obligation, once the archives has materials in it that must be made available to the public, of paying whoever mans the archives during the summer months on a 2/9ths pay arrangement—that is while no one is on a twelve-month contract.

3. That I be granted the freedom and financial support required during the first month or so of operations to visit some university archives in the state, as well as the state archives, to learn of their policies and procedures and of suggestions they might have for starting our archives in the most effective, efficient way in our circumstances.

4. That I not be expected to acquire much material during the first two or three months following those visits while policy is discussed and finalized; and policy statements are drawn up and approved; and while the facilities required to care for our needs are determined, ordered, and set up. I will be happy to report at the end of the year or at mid-term regarding what I have achieved; but in the interim I feel that I must have freedom, flexibility, and trust in my professional judgment as to how I use my time and how quickly we bring materials into our custody.
In the initial stages of setting up an archives, before almost any move can be made (or should be made) or shortly thereafter, the policy our archives will follow in our particular circumstances has to be decided upon; and that should be reduced to writing so others can know too. It should be done even for the sake of student assistants in order to help them know what the policy is and where they stand.

I then listed some of the policy areas which would require early action if the archives was going to achieve a good professional outcome. This included an archival policy statement covering several general areas. I also listed several administration prerogatives which would also require favorable decisions in order to obtain the same good results. Space was one of them. I cited James Worthy’s book, Report on Institutional Evaluation, as a good source for knowing what an archives should be like. I requested the purchase of a copy for the use of all of us who would be working toward creating the kind of an archives we hoped to see develop.

THE MAY 1984 PROPOSAL

By May 1984, the History Department’s Archives Subcommittee had produced a document for Vice President Glenn’s consideration and for my benefit entitled, “Proposal: Plan for the Initiation of the NMU Archives and Perspective First-Year Schedule for the University Archivist.” Henceforth this document will be referred to as the “1984 Proposal” or “The 1984 Dream Proposal.” In all likelihood Magnaghi produced the first draft of it. Tell-tale indications of that are all over it. Its opening paragraph basically stated that the archival effort needed to be both visionary and realistic. It read as follows:

“Operating on the assumption that an archives for NMU is a worthy and desirable function, the Subcommittee submits the following proposal for the launching of this enterprise. We have attempted to view this project in its broadest possibilities while envisioning its beginning in only modest terms.”

The document contained the following subtitles: The Job Description of the University Archivist; Objectives; Function of the Archivist; Status of the Archivist; Fall semester, 1984; Space and Equipment; Staff; Winter Semester 1985; and Summer Semester 1985.

These subjects were treated quite thoroughly—six double-spaced pages in all. The document was quite idealistic. Some of its objectives were never realized, or they did not happen nearly as soon as anticipated. Nevertheless, they were what the History Department hoped would happen.

As far as I was concerned, in general the document became my “North Star” toward which I constantly strove, by which I measured myself, and to which level I felt I had to seek to perform if I was not going to disappoint my department. I learned rather quickly though, that parts of it could not be followed very precisely. Too many variables affecting developments were beyond my control. Still, in a sense, it became my “contract” with the History Department—the basis for my relationship and my understandings with it while I was the archivist.
I have elected to include the essence of this rather lengthy document quite fully. The reason: To provide those readers who wish to know, in a fairly detailed way, what the History Department’s vision was at the time it launched the archives. A reader wishing to bypass the proposal can do so by skipping forward to the subtitle, “Proposal Accepted.”

From hindsight it is easy to see that the document is quite optimistic—some would justifiably even say unrealistic—given Northern’s circumstances. It was a projection full of hope. Magnaghi’s brand of optimism is all over it. It saw many things as possible; consequently, they were also seen as all but reality. It was just a matter of getting in there and doing what needed to be done (virtually regardless of the circumstances), and it would be reality. It was an optimism that diminished the importance of realism, but it made movement against the odds easier and quite logical.

By 1984 I too had developed some of this type of optimism with regard to the archival project. It was characterized, to some extent, by a refusal to acknowledge that obstacles were as real as they really were, and to see overcoming challenges as much easier than they really were. The positive side of this was that a person with this kind of an attitude was more likely to continue to persevere. That proved to be vital to the success of the archival effort.

THE FIRST SUBTITLE OF THE PROPOSAL, “JOB DESCRIPTION,” WHAT DID THE DOCUMENT HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THAT?

It declared that “The active management and administration of the Northern Michigan University Archives shall be vested in the archivist who shall be qualified by professional training or experience in archival work.” It continued that “the archivist shall formulate [the] rules and regulations, under existing policies, for the use of the University Archives.” The work of the archivist, the document continued, “will include evaluation, description, collection, preservation, storage, and security of non-current papers, documents, and materials connected with NMU; [also] private collections that may be donated and state records and documents. The ultimate purpose...is to make such materials available for internal or for public research in accordance with the laws of the State of Michigan.”

Since it became an issue later on, note may be taken of the fact that this document directed the archivist to collect three basic types of materials: The university’s own records, private non-university collections, and public records. Note may also be taken of the fact that for the remainder of this document, I will take the liberty of condensing it somewhat, do some editing of it, and make some stylistic changes. I have, however, preserved the meaning of the text.

OBJECTIVES

What was spelled out under this subtitle? Somewhat repetitively, it declared:

The archivist will collect, describe, prepare guides for distribution, preserve and administer the official records of the university, together with such private and state
documents that may eventually be submitted, and develop standards for the care and administration of such archival materials.

FUNCTION OF THE ARCHIVIST

Under this section the following statement appeared:

The archivist shall perform or direct all duties in connection with the administration and development of the archives, so as to achieve the purpose of its creation. Professor Clifford Maier has agreed to undertake this project. NMU Board of Control approval of the proposal is assumed as a first step.

STATUS OF THE ARCHIVIST

The more modest beginnings that the History Department was willing to agree to in order to be “realistic,” (as compared with what Jones and I recommended in our June, 1983 report) are revealed in this section. For example, it contained a request for only one archivist with only two-thirds release time for work in the archives. Jones and I had considered a minimum of two full-time employees as being necessary.

This section also covered suggested policy regarding hours and initial overload pay for work done during the summer. The hope was that I would be placed on a twelve-month annual contract eventually. My recommended work load, standing in the department, compensation, and further education as an archivist was spelled out as follows:

The archivist will be given a two-thirds release time teaching load from the Department of History to develop the archives. He or she will retain rank within the department with all the rights and responsibilities of a faculty member and will be free to return to the department based upon prior request and notification.

The archivist will teach one course within the Department of History in the fall 1984 semester and a second course in the winter 1985 semester. Assuming that this assignment will take 16 hours per week, the archivist will devote his remaining time, or 24 hours per week, to the development of the archives. Because the development of the archives will require many contacts with outside agencies and individuals, the archivist will set office hours as needed.

During the initial phase of development, we recommend that the archivist be given two-ninths overload pay to cover work in the summer of 1985. As the archives develops and with the need for public access, the archivist should be placed on a 12-month contract with compensation for summer work.

We recommend that the archivist be granted the necessary support to take additional courses at Wayne State University that would lead to certification as an archivist. Approximately 12 hours of course work is required for certification. The
department would be responsible for arranging for a substitute in the archivist’s absence.

Policies for evaluating the archivist’s work and to whom he was to be accountable initially, and eventually, were also spelled out. That section read as follows:

The Department of History is responsible for supervising and evaluating the work of the archivist. The Archival Advisory Committee will assist and advise the archivist but will have no responsibility for evaluating the work of the archivist. As the archives develops and expands, the archives will become independent from the Department of History with the archivist designated as administrator and responsible to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

This envisioned the archivist having the same standing in the university administrative structure as the Director of the Library.

**FALL SEMESTER, 1984**

My efforts during this time were to be devoted to the following: Furthering my self-education via the visiting of other archives; the formation of a university-wide Archives Advisory Committee rather than just working with the History Department’s Archives Advisory Committee; formulation of records management policies; the determination of the location and size of the archives, and of its equipment, and staff needs. (This suggests that the archivist was expected to begin without these essentials and that the expectation was that they would quickly fall into place after the archives began operations. That being the case, the archivist could then quickly begin concentrating on such things as records management. This section of the proposed plan read as follows:

1. The archivist will contact and visit other university archives in the state in order to obtain a better grasp of archival operation and maintenance. It is suggested that, at a minimum, trips to Michigan Technological University and Central Michigan University be funded. A meeting with the state archivist might be an additional valuable experience.

2. Formation of a small but representative [university-wide] Advisory Committee to provide the archivist with guidance, counsel, channels of communication, and authority to take possession of the various records to be preserved.

3. Begin the formulation of policies.

4. Begin the process of record retirement, acquisition, preservation and use, and/or restrictions of materials. This will be the single most important duty of the archivist at this early stage of the development of the university archives.

5. Determine space, equipment, and staff needs. Initially, space needs will be modest. However, a location with future expansion in mind would preclude a costly
move at a later date. Security precautions must also be considered in space acquisition.

SPACE AND EQUIPMENT

Enlarging further on the subject of the space needs of the archives, this section continued as follows:

A suggested minimum facility would include a small outer office with a large adjoining inner work-room/storage facility with access through the outer office. Security must be a consideration in space acquisition. The storage area must be dry and with reasonable assurance of a consistent heat/humidity level. Additional storage space in close proximity could be added later. Proximity to a loading dock would be needed to aid in the receipt of materials.

The suggested minimum equipment to begin the project was listed as follows:

1. One 60” x 30” double pedestal desk with locks.
2. One executive desk chair with arms.
3. Three 60” x 30” work tables.
4. Four 4-drawer letter file cabinets with locks.
5. Ten sections of open shelving.
6. Cabinet for supplies with lock.
7. One IBM Electric Typewriter. It would be wise to consider computer capability early in the life of the archives. Most libraries and archives are becoming computerized and eventual costs would be much lower if record work did not have to be duplicated later. Regarding help in the archives, it might be feasible to utilize a business major (or team) with computer skills, either as an intern, or as part of a senior project, to develop a program for the archives.
8. Initially, the archivist should have approximately 100 document storage cases and 2,000 acid-free document folders.
9. Numerous small items of supply would include: gummed labels, file cards, typing paper, some high quality paper with the archives letterhead on it, glue, pencils, pens, rubber stamps, a magnifying glass, and scissors. Additional items would doubtlessly be added as the archivist ascertains his/her needs.

STAFF
This section of the proposal read as follows:

The archives will not have public hours during the first year of operation, perhaps longer. However, the (part-time) archivist will need help with correspondence, filing, plot-charts, inventory, etc. A twenty-hour per week work-study allotment [student helper] would seem sufficient for the fall semester 1984 and possibly for the winter semester 1985. Once the acquisition process begins and the work load increases, a more permanent help arrangement may be required. The transfer of records from contributing departments or divisions, while under the supervision of the archivist, would require union labor.

WINTER SEMESTER 1985

During this period of time, the following was recommended:

The archivist, in cooperation with the History Department and University-wide Archives Advisory Committee should concentrate primarily on further developing the following things: A general archives policy statement; an acquisition policy; becoming further educated regarding state and local access laws; appraisal policy; processing policy (documents, photos, etc.); preservation policy; reference policy; publicity; and further development of the equipment, space, staff, and budget situation.

In addition to this, this section went on, in essence, to suggest that the following be done:

1. Begin to identify groups on campus from whom the acquisition of records will initially be sought; develop a tentative collection schedule.
2. Develop an archival administration course (2 credits).

The point was also made that it might be possible to utilize students trained in the archival administration course to help in the archives. It was noted too that particular care needed to be taken in the selection of student help in order to avoid careless or illegal situations.

Some material will doubtlessly be restricted. The nature of the archival process is meticulous and painstaking. Security is an ever-present consideration. The loss or misuse of materials could result in painful lawsuits.

3. Providing all policies are in place, begin, as a minor first step, the limited acquisition of materials. Identifying, evaluating, collecting, cataloguing, and preserving material is a long, slow process. A careful schedule of acquisition must be maintained in order to avoid inundation. Since the initial facilities will be limited, no good purpose would be served to have a huge backlog of cartons and files inhibiting the orderly process of cataloguing and storage. It should be noted that during the period in which no public hours are yet in effect, only contributing departments or offices may have access to documents stored in the
archives, and these only to their own contributed materials unless otherwise directed by the order of the university president.

4. Prepare a budget for next year.

SUMMER SEMESTER 1985

During the summer of 1985, the archivist was to continue to do some limited acquisition of records and begin to do some processing as well as prepare a work schedule for 1985-86. He was also to begin to develop understandings with the State Archives regarding Northern being a depository for some of its public records and begin to investigate what private collections might be acquired in the future. (As noted earlier, the assumption here was that he would be paid for working in the archives during the summer).

The plan for the summer reads as follows:

1. Continue limited acquisition and processing of materials.
2. Prepare work schedule for the 1985-86 school year.
3. Contact State Archives to determine specifics of future cooperative arrangement[s].
4. Begin to identify private collections in [our] area for possible future acquisition.

On May 29, 1984 Roebke-Berens, on behalf of the Department of History and its Archives Advisory Subcommittee, forwarded the above proposal for launching the archives to Vice President Glenn. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

REQUESTED BUDGET AND GLENN’S RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL

Two days after Roebke-Berens sent the May 29, 1984 proposal to Glenn, he sent her a memo which read in part:

I have read your proposal. It might expedite matters if you would prepare a proposed budget for 1984-85…. The budget should include everything you anticipate [needing]. It would help if you have some explicit priorities in the event we cannot have everything requested. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

Wow! The language and tone of Glenn’s response suggests that by this time at least, he was not only fully on board with the idea that Northern should have an archives but also with supporting the effort financially as fully as the President and his Council would decide that they could or would; and failing that, that he would do so as fully as needed and as he could out of the limited funds in Academic Affairs’ own discretionary fund. However, if further confirmation was still needed that this statement constituted approval of the archives project by a top administration official (Glenn), another statement was going to be made on June 26. It would clear up any doubt which may still have remained.
The requested budget, entitled “Proposed Budget: Minimal Need for Establishing [an] University Archives,” was quickly forwarded to Glenn. Total cost of the listed items was $5,322.95. They were basically the same ones mentioned by Jones and me in 1983 in our report to the EPC as being the minimal things needed for launching an archives.

Glenn’s June 26 statement came in another memo to Roebke-Berens. It was entitled, “University Archives Project.” In it he stated that:

This memorandum will authorize you to proceed with this project as we discussed earlier this month. Specifically you are authorized to implement the two-thirds release time for Dr. Maier and to make whatever office [space] arrangement you can effect within the initial budget request.

Certainly this statement indicated a clear acceptance of the project by the top university official still responsible for this sort of an initiative. But since by this point, Glenn was in reality what might be termed a “lame-duck” vice president, the question now was, how high a priority would the somewhat reconstituted President’s Council of new President Appleberry give this project? And how would this affect the ability of Glenn’s successor to help the archives get off the ground?

SPACE FOR THE ARCHIVES START-UP

Another question was would the required space for the archives be available to begin operations at the level suggested by the equipment purchases approved in the budget for it? An assumption of the proposed equipment purchases and budget was that somehow Northern would make available some offices in the Learning Resources Center (LRC) to meet the proposed space needs until space in Longyear Hall would become available. To be sure that this would happen, Roebke-Berens had contacted Paul Uimari of the Facilities Planning Department earlier. Doing this may well have been suggested to her by Glenn in response to her earlier January 26 memo to him regarding the use of Longyear as the future home of the archives. Being part of the President’s Council, he probably knew that if there really was any serious intention at all of converting Longyear into an archives, it would not happen by the fall of 1984. Thus, by June 5, the following happened: Uimari asked Roebke-Berens to provide him with a list of faculty offices and their current occupants in the LRC. In addition to the library, the LRC at this time was the location of many faculty offices until office space could be provided elsewhere for them. Presumably Uimari wanted the list so he could help Roebke-Berens locate some space for an archives in that building. On June 7, Roebke-Berens forwarded the requested list to Uimari with the following note, which I quote in part:

Please note from our earlier conversation and the attached chart [list] that we are requesting reassignment of the Learning Resources director’s office for the university archives. This space would be needed until Longyear Hall has been renovated.... We are especially interested in the Learning Resources office [other than one in some other building] because of the close access to the library—
important for researchers using both the archives and the library—and because of the need to be close to a loading dock...

The office of the director of Learning Resources in question was the equivalent in size to four of the regular 9’ x 11’ temporary faculty offices located in the LRC. However, he did not use it as an office since he had another one down stairs in conjunction with the radio/T.V. operation of which he was the director. The office on the first floor was being used by students who worked for him and for storage of some of his equipment. Being the size it was, it would have served nicely as some starter space for the archives, although not for long if the plan for the acquisition of materials laid out in the 1984 proposal to Glenn was actually accomplished.

Well, Roebke-Berens’ space plan did not materialize. The Learning Resources Director was not about to surrender his upstairs office space. His student help needed it, he insisted. So nothing happened, and time was slipping by. This led Roebke-Berens to dash off another note to Glenn on July 18. In it, one can sense her desperation. She declared:

> With less than one and one-half months before the start of the fall semester, we are anxious to know where we should locate the university archival project. We note the Learning Resources Offices are being occupied by audio visual equipment. Please let us know as soon as possible.

The upshot of this space acquisition effort was total failure. None was acquired. One might wonder why? With Uimari and Facilities Planning in favor of helping Roebke-Berens out, one would think that some space could have been found, if not in the LRC building, at least someplace. But on the matter of space acquisition, things at Northern at this time moved incredibly slowly. Among the reasons for this is, first of all, that virtually no extra space was available. Secondly, a system was in place at the time whereby all available university space was managed by a university committee called the Space Utilization Committee. That committee could trump even the wishes of the Facilities Planning Department as to what would be done with any space that was available, or could be made available. This will be seen more clearly in future chapters. This committee had to satisfy the wishes of so many claimants that it was stymied many times from making any reallocations and always moved very slowly in making decisions. Unless changes could be affected internally, space assigned to a department or to cooperating departments did not usually happen for quite some time, if at all. This is not to say that there were not some very good reasons for having this committee, but it could often negatively affect progress in particular areas. This seems to be what happened with obtaining space for archives operations prior to the beginning of the fall semester of 1984. So the struggle to continue to get that space continued and was one of the main activities after the fall semester began as we shall see in the next chapter. This fact alone would do a lot to scuttle the schedule laid out in the History Department’s 1984 Proposal for the first year of the archives’ existence. Space was critical to any progress which could be made.
WHAT GLENN’S DECISION SAYS ABOUT HIM

Had Glenn been less principled, he could have allowed hard feelings that had developed against him earlier in the History Department to be a reason for non-cooperation on the archival issue. One of the reasons for those feelings was this. During the 1979-81 period, Glenn did not immediately support a couple of requests for promotions made by the Department of History. Eventually, however, he did support both. In his view, he had valid reasons for delaying them. On the other hand, members of the History Department felt their reasons for seeking the promotions at the time that they did were just as valid and just.

Differences of opinion over this and other questions caused negative feelings to develop in the History Department towards Glenn, and he, of course, was conscious of that. Memories of these developments could well have inclined him to be insensitive to the appeals by the History Department for support for the archives project in the 1983-84 period—or even to have caused him to stonewall them. To his credit, he did not allow those developments to prevent him from approving the full monetary amount which the History Department requested. As already noted, the evidence suggests that he believed in the value of what the History Department was proposing. The amount he authorized, while perhaps seeming quite meager, was quite generous when compared to the amount Glenn’s immediate successor felt free to make available to the archives. Given the low priority, generally, that the archives enjoyed at the President’s Council level at the time, members of the council may well have looked askance on the amount Glenn offered; quite likely so also because of Northern’s difficult financial situation at the time. But if so, Glenn was willing to absorb any reproach that his relatively generous decision may have brought him. If, in fact, this happened, he is to be applauded for the courage he displayed in this situation.

To summarize, as we have seen, during the 1983-84 academic year just prior to the time when the archives began its operations, some important understandings regarding the archives were developed between me and the History Department, and via it, with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The decision to proceed with the project was actually made by a top administration official during this time, although not yet by the President’s Council or the Board of Control. Given the circumstances and financial climate at Northern at the time, this chapter has also shown that the plans for what the archives should be like by the end of its first year of existence were quite lofty. The next two chapters will reveal how close the archives actually came to implementing those plans (the 1984 proposal), and why or why not.

I do not recall that Roebke-Berens ever informed me of Glenn’s communication; and he did not copy me. At this time a number of Northern’s administrators were in the practice of communicating pretty much exclusively among themselves. Consequently, at times those who would be directly affected by matters being considered were left in the dark, and sometimes never were informed of developments that would affect them. For instance, I was not sent copies of any of the wonderfully argued memos Roebke-Berens sent to gain the support of the administrators for the archives project prior to the May 1984 Proposal (I only became aware of them during my research for this account). This was so, despite the
fact that I was being considered for the position of archivist—or perhaps that decision had already been made.

With respect to the funds that Glenn approved for purchasing equipment and supplies for the archives, they were not spent for this purpose prior to the time the archives began its operations in the fall of 1984. While I suspect I knew, I have not discovered the definitive reason that this money was not made available at that time. It meant that the archives had to begin operations in August 1984 without any equipment or supplies—or funds it controlled. That, in addition to having no space!
CHAPTER 7
THE ARCHIVES’ BIRTH AND THE SPACE ACCUMULATION
SAGA, 1984-1985

In a sense, the first day of the 1984 fall semester was also the birthday of NMU’s present (2015) archives. Its initial operations—strikingly modest though they were--began on that day. Furthermore, this did not mean that the existence of the archives was yet official. As noted in the previous chapter, in June, Vice President Glenn had approved of the commencement of its operations for the first day of the fall semester, but President Appleberry, his council, and the Board of Control had not yet officially approved of its existence. Until that happened, a certain amount of uncertainty continued to hang over it.

From what I have been able to determine, Roebke-Berens played a very important part, if not the major role in obtaining an official standing for the existence of the archives. This was facilitated by the fact that by the fall of 1984, she also had been granted a one-third released time position to work in the Appleberry administration. That gave her frequent access to the President and his council. There she lobbied for the official establishment of the archives among other things.

Roebke-Berens’ increased ready access came about in the following way. As noted in the last chapter, during the winter of 1984 Appleberry had already appointed her chairperson of the Search Committee for finding the next vice president for Academic Affairs. Then in the fall of 1984, he also added her to his personal staff as an assistant on a one-third release-time from her responsibilities in the History Department. (Incidentally, this meant that the faculty in the History Department was reduced by another one-third of a position in addition to the two-thirds position reduction given to me to accommodate my archives development assignment—and this also with no funds added to its budget for a replacement.)

In 1992 Rena K. Fowler, the then director of the library, sent Phillip L. Beukema, the then Vice President for Academic Affairs, a memo regarding those who had a hand in starting the archives. Fowler stated that Roebke-Berens had confided to her in 1984 that it was she who had persuaded President Appleberry to proceed with establishing the archives officially. This seems plausible to me. It is in line with what she had been seeking to accomplish since 1981. True, by the latter part of the fall semester of 1984, Allan B. Donovan, the new Vice President for Academic Affairs, had also become quite involved in seeking to get the archives officially established; but because he was new to his job, many other things associated with becoming acquainted with his responsibilities were also clamoring for his attention. Based on his subsequent attitude toward the archives’ initiative, it is safe to say, however, that he also would have, in sentiment at least, been very supportive of those very earliest efforts to gain official standing for the archives. This even though he could not be that personally involved right from the beginning of the fall semester. Given Appleberry’s style of governing, it is likely too, although by no means certain, that it was not he but Roebke-Berens who made the request to the President’s
Council for consideration of this action. Whatever precisely the case, by November 1984, both the council and the president had given their approval—and the Board of Control also did so soon thereafter.

WELL-MEANING PUBLICITY I COULD HAVE DONE WITHOUT

Soon after the top executive body had agreed to the official establishment of the archives, NMU’s News Bureau ran an article (December, 1984) in its publication, Northern News, proclaiming the establishment of the archives, and announcing me as its director. I am sure that the bureau did it with the best of intentions. The article was entitled, “Maier Named Director of University Archives,” and it included this picture of me.

In different circumstances, this would have been great publicity for the archives, and even in this circumstance, it was in a sense. In general, we wanted publicity both to acquire general university support for it and to inform potential users of its existence. However, being in its infancy, this publicity proved premature from my point of view. To appreciate why, it is necessary to be aware of the space situation I faced during the first few months of its existence. You will read more on this later. Because of it, space acquisition and then the renovation of it became one of the first orders of business. Until more progress had been made on that front, publicity, which resulted in phone calls about resources we might have, was the “last” thing we needed or wanted.

STARTING FROM SCRATCH

Virtually nothing described as necessary in the May 1984 “Dream” proposal for starting the archives was available to it at the beginning of the 1984 fall semester except that it had a director with two-thirds release-time. No space, no furnishings, no equipment! It is no exaggeration to say that Northern’s Archives had a very inauspicious start!

My own History Department office had to double initially as “the Archives”—a repeat of Magnaghi’s past experiences! However, I did bring with me a vision of the kind of archives I felt Northern should have and a determination to establish the foundation for such an archives if at all possible. But what a contrast the reality was to the easy assumptions enunciated in the May 1984 “Dream Proposal” of what would quickly be true. This was especially the case with regard to facilities, or rather the lack thereof.

On August 29, at the beginning of the 1984 fall semester, Roebke-Berens sent me the following memo indicating what was expected of me during the semester and what support I could expect from the History Department:

Attached is a copy of the proposal sent to Vice President Glenn on August 14, 1984. [Internal evidence indicates that this was the same proposal as was forwarded to
him the previous May]. Please note that page 3 of the proposal spells out the duties of the archivist for the fall, 1984 semester—namely, to begin formulating policies of record retirement, acquisition, preservation, and use and/or restrictions of materials.

In terms of budget, we have no line-item budget for the archives. We were given $1,000 this summer for the purchase of file cabinets and other materials. You are expected to rely on departmental supplies, telephone, [and] secretarial help. We have until September 7 to get in any “equipment” requests for this fiscal year. At this point, it is difficult to make a case for what will be needed as all of these requests are prioritized by the dean and referred on to the vice president for Academic Affairs. Let me know if we should try to meet this deadline, and I will convene the Archival Committee. You would have to have recommendations and prices ready to be presented. I think the better course of action would be to establish a track record with the archives and make the case for the next fiscal year budget.

In our proposal, we requested funds for the archivist to travel to other schools—Michigan Tech and Central—to review their archives. As I noted in the department meeting last week, you will have to make a case for supplemental travel funds. Allocation of these funds will now be prioritized by the deans. I would think that you should include the standard $280.00 allocated to each department member for this purpose when making the supplemental request. I will write a cover letter in support of supplemental funds.

I would like to convene the Archival Committee within the next two weeks. As archivist, you should be able to brief the committee on your objectives for the semester. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Thus, according to these guidelines, I was to spend the first semester primarily formulating policies and visiting other archives to view how they did things. With such a view, not having any space as yet seems to have been viewed as not being that great a handicap. At the same time I was informed for the first time that it was $1,000.00 which was going to be available for archival purposes such as file cabinets and materials. This rather than the $5,322.95 which Glenn had approved the previous summer for supplies and equipment to cover the start-up costs of launching the archives. Furthermore, that it was the head of the History Department who was going to be in control of that money, not I. Nothing was said as to why the $5,322.95 was no longer available. In terms of equipment, the recommendation was to wait until the next fiscal year to make a case for it. This in view of the shortness of time to get a request in, as well as the likelihood of the request not being approved at the dean or vice president’s level during the current year. Approval was given to visit a couple of archives, but the funds to pay for that were going to have to be requested out of supplemental travel funds. They were not controlled by the department; they might or might not be approved. At any rate, they would not come out of the $1,000.00. Interestingly, when the initial space finally did become available, it was Vice President Donovan who made the funds available from his discretionary funds.
Furthermore, I found a source other than the traditional supplemental travel funds to help pay for my travel expenses.

As has been noted, having been made aware of Roebke-Berens’ expectations and of other realities, she asked me to brief the Archives Committee within the next two weeks regarding my plans for the semester. This presented somewhat of a dilemma. I did not agree that all of the expectations were practical. I, therefore, decided to do what seemed best in order to get the archives off the ground. In my April 9, 1984 memo, I had asked of my Department’s Archives Subcommittee to be granted the right to exercise my own judgment to do what I felt the situation required during my first two or three months as archivist. I then would report back to the committee as to why I did what I did and would welcome its feedback. This is what I now decided to do regardless of what Roebke-Berens and the May 1984 proposal to Glenn had stated was expected of me. At the same time, it was good to know what was expected of me and I endeavored to meet those expectations. And in the sequence desired, whenever they made sense to me in the development of the archives.

For example, almost immediately I did spend some time on policy matters—for instance, on determining what the appropriate NMU collection policy should be at this particular stage of the development of the archives. As an example, I consulted the History Department’s Archives Committee and received some valuable ideas. From the outset too, I consulted my notes from the Washington D.C. “workshop” and did considerable reading regarding collection matters and other kinds of policies which were recommended for a start-up archival operation. A step I took was to seek to get a policy statement signed by the president regarding the university’s position in the management of its records. I discussed the matter with Roebke-Berens and with the Department’s Archives Committee. Then soon thereafter, on September 20, she took it upon herself to send President Appleberry a memo in which she pointed out the importance of having such a statement and what it should contain. Then she added that she and I “would be happy to discuss this policy statement and other aspects of the university archives with you at your convenience.” I have not found any documentation that he ever responded in writing to this request. Whatever the case, having done this was a good move in the process of educating the president with regards this matter.

In her memo, Roebke-Berens informed the president that one of my tasks was going to be to “educate the university community on the function of the archives as a records management program.” How right she was in saying that one of my tasks was going to be “to educate the university community.” This was, in fact, going to be a major emphasis of my effort—much more so than I—and I think she initially realized. However, when I discovered this memo in 2012 I was surprised by a concept in it. (She had not copied it to me at the time. This was something she quite frequently did not do even though a memo was concerned with archival matters and my concerns). What surprised me in the memo was her statement that I was going to be presenting the archives function to the university community as “a records management program.” The question that immediately came to my mind was, why only as a records management program and not also an academic enhancement endeavor? Why did she omit the latter? Was it for political reasons—
because she felt that the former objective would carry more weight with the president and
with at least some members of his council? The reader may wish to take note of this
particular bit of information since what the main function of the archives really was and
would eventually become was a source of significant disagreement on the President’s
Council. Certainly those of us in the History Department (in reality including Roebke-
Berens I am quite certain) felt at that time that the primary function of the archives was to
enhance the university’s academic capabilities. And that the role it would play in records
management was a welcomed by-product and bonus—not that it was not needed too.
What she declared in her memo to Appleberry may indicate that she sensed that this
dichotomy was already in play on the President’s Council at this early date.

The following are other things I concentrated on during this early period of the life of the
archives, or did not do. I decided to hold off on a request for equipment for the time being.
What was most urgently needed, I felt, was space into which some of that equipment and
those archival materials could be placed. Therefore, seeking to acquire space became a
major emphasis. That, in addition to getting an office set up for the archives, to the extent
that was possible, in order to do routine work. Continuing to get the archives officially
approved by the President and Board of Control was high on the agenda too as has already
been discussed above.

SETTING UP SHOP

With regard to setting up shop, one of the first things I did was to ask Roebke-Berens to
transfer copies of her correspondence, including the relevant documentation with the now
former Vice President Glenn to Allan Donovan, the new Vice President for Academic Affairs.
I wanted the latter to be aware of the understandings which had been reached regarding
the archives. Among other things that would also make discussions with him more
productive when he finally was free to meet with me.

But with regard to setting up the archives “shop,” how does one do
that without having a shop in which to do it? One of the reasons I, of
course, was anxious to do this was to provide the public with some
evidence of the actual existence of the archives. To help make things
look official, I felt that the archives should have its own stationery.
Therefore, on the first day of that fall semester, I sent Roebke-Berens
a note indicating that I felt that I needed to do this right away; I had a
problem, however. I felt I needed to have a phone number on the
stationery. “Could I use the History Department’s number until the
“the Archives” got its own space?” A benefit too in using the
departments’ phone number would be that its secretary would be
answering it. Since I would be out of the office at times, and I, as yet, did not have any
student help, the History Department’s help with this would be much appreciated.

Roebke-Berens readily agreed that the archives could use the History Department’s phone
number. In accordance with her August 29 memo, she also agreed to have Mrs. Alice
McKinney, the History and Economics Department’s new secretary, provided the archives with the secretarial help it needed. It turned out that during that first year quite a number of fairly lengthy letters, memos, etc., had to be typed. Alice or her student help always did this willingly—always with a great attitude—just as long as I did not expect the work to be done immediately. Interestingly enough, the History Department continued to be willing to provide this kind of secretarial help until 1992. However, from approximately two years after the archives was established, my student help did most of this kind of typing.

ACCUMULATING ARCHIVAL SPACE

A month or two into the first semester, we were able to obtain the first bit of space for the archives. Professor Howard Swaine, Head of the Economics Department, offered the archives an unused office assigned to his department. Though the amount of space gained in this way, an area 9’ x 11,’ seemed almost inconsequential for the purpose of launching a serious university archives effort, it was gladly accepted. And there was a bonus—it came with an office desk, chair, and a book shelf! Gradually I was becoming very appreciative of even “small mercies.” The cubical, now the office for the archives, was located on the first floor of the Learning Resources Center, fairly close to where my office and the office of the History Department were located. The number on that office door was 8-E.

With the archives having a little space of its own now, Roebke-Berens agreed to having the archives have a phone placed in 8-E. Initially it was to be paid for out of that $1,000.00 allocation given to the History Department earlier for archival purposes. The phone number was (906) 227-1225. Interestingly enough, today, in 2015, that number is still its land phone number. Interestingly too, the History Department continued to pay that phone bill until 1992—eventually out of its own funds.

The letterhead now needed to be revised too to show the archives’ own phone number. From hindsight, however, it is clear that it was a mistake to have switched from using the History Department’s phone number and its secretary’s phone answering help to having calls for the archives now come directly to it. The archives was not yet staffed to answer incoming phone calls at any time of the day. And at the time, most NMU phones, including the archives’, still did not have an answering service advising callers only to call during certain times of the day. At the same time, that publicity the article in the Northern News referred to above gave the archives increased the number of in-coming calls. People were calling about its holdings, for instance, before it had any. From hindsight, it is also clear that in these circumstances I should have placed the hours during which phone calls would be answered on the revised letterhead. I did not, however, realize how important this would be until the printing of the revised letterhead had occurred. And I did not want to request another revision and have the department incur the associated additional printing costs. So I decided to live with the situation and arranged my schedule in the archives and that of the student helper I eventually obtained, so that as many of the calls as possible would be answered. But as we shall see, for me to answer the phone when I was in my History Department office (my archives office too) was quite a challenge for a time.
THE LRC ARCHIVES SETTING

As the floor plan below will show, 8-E was part of a block or complex of faculty offices on the first floor of the LRC building. All in all, there were fifteen such blocks or complexes of faculty offices on that first floor. Each block contained approximately eighteen 9’ x 11’ offices. The block in which the faculty offices of the History and Economics Departments were located was block number 8. Each office in a block was assigned a different letter of the alphabet. 8-E is an example. It meant that it was office E in block 8. The letters on these office doors were placed in alphabetical order; that is, up the right side of the block and down the left side. Thus 8-E was the fifth office up the right side of block 8.

The library occupied the second floor of the LRC building. Rena Fowler, the Library Director, believed that eventually the library would need all of the space on both the first and second floors of the LRC. And there apparently was an understanding with the university administration that the library would eventually get that space if it needed it.
She, therefore, was adamant that anyone who occupied any of those so-called “temporary” offices on that first floor must consider occupancy of them as just that—temporary.

Many of the members of the faculty had been moved into these rather make-shift, so-called temporary offices when Kay Hall (where their former offices had been located) was demolished in 1972-1973.

Initially, the university expected that new, permanent offices would be available rather quickly. However, because of unforeseen developments, the first set of these new offices still were not ready in the fall of 1984. Thus the faculty still occupied virtually all of those “temporary” offices on that first floor in the LRC. That floor also was where the archives was trying to locate, but space was very scarce. No department was about to surrender any space that had been assigned to it—in fact some also were seeking to acquire any additional space they might be able to acquire. The Economics/Philosophy Department (headed by Economics at this time) and the History Department were the only exceptions. They were willing to give up space for the archives when they could. For three years the History Department was not in a position to be able to do so. However, on two occasions during the first year of the archives existence, the Economics/Philosophy Department did.

**BLOCK NUMBER 8-- ITS SETTING AND LAYOUT**

Block number 8’s set of offices were located on the north side of a central east-west corridor on that first floor of the LRC. Hallways on each side of the number 8 block of offices ran perpendicular to that east-west corridor. The equivalent of the eighteen 9’ by 11’ offices in that block were back to back between those two hallways—nine facing each hallway; that is prior to when four of these offices were remodeled to create a single larger one at the far (north) end of block 8. Furthermore the two back-to-back offices next to the corridor on the south end of the block were somewhat wider than nine feet and had glass sides along the corridor. Most of the other blocks of offices along that east-west corridor possessed a similar total number of offices and usually in a similar configuration.

As a look at the floor plan of block number 8 will show, my History Department office, 8-O, and 8-E, the archives by this time, were just one office removed from being back to back. Since 8-O and 8-E were nearly back-back, their fronts and doors opened into opposite hallways. This will be significant later in the story.

As noted, 8-E was not only inadequate for meeting the space needs of the archives, but it also did not meet its visibility needs. It was about half way down its particular hallway on the east (right) side of block number 8. This half-way-down the hallway location meant that its space (and the additional adjacent space that would be added to the archives later on) lacked the natural exposure and visibility that a location at the head of the hallway, next to the corridor, would have provided. This would become a hindrance to getting the archives more widely recognized by the university community, and consequently more fully supported, especially in its earliest days.
Another problem with the 8-E office—and with every other adjacent office that would eventually be used for archival space—was that full security for archival purposes could not be achieved. The walls of these offices were only seven feet high leaving a one-foot gap between the top of them and the ceiling. Building codes and maintenance requirements would not permit the closing of that gap. Construction of the walls right up to the ceiling tile would have interfered with the proper functioning and servicing of the sprinkler system, the ceiling lights, and the ventilation system. This first floor space of the LRC had originally been designed as a huge, open area that the library might someday wish to use for open stacks, carrels, and study tables. No provision for floor to ceiling walls had been made in it.

THE LONGYEAR AND WEST SCIENCE SPACE OPTIONS

While it was disappointing during the fall of 1984 that only one small office had become available for archival use, that disappointment was tempered somewhat by this hope. In the minds of some, especially members of the History Department, the hope was that the Longyear Hall building would still become the home for the archives. The "Archives" folder of the History Department contains a beautiful letter dated January 14, 1985 by James Carter of the Office of Communications to Robert Warner, Archivist of the United States. In it Carter declared that "A vigorous effort is underway to restore Longyear Hall.” Among the important purposes Carter listed for this effort was to “house the University Archives” in it. After listing various significant groups who were supporting the effort with their letters, etcetera, Carter wrote, "If you think it is appropriate, we feel a letter from you would be extremely valuable...” DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Carter also noted the very extensive renovation effort that would be involved. It was obvious that it would be very costly. Undoubtedly, it was for this reason that the administrators never saw this as a viable option. Nevertheless, for historical, cultural, and social reasons, the view persisted in the History Department and elsewhere that Longyear Hall would be an ideal location for an archives. What more appropriate place for an university and regional history preservation center than in the university’s oldest building with all of the history and memories associated with it?

When at the beginning of the fall semester of 1984, university officials had not yet decided to offer space to the archives in Longyear, some members of the History Department hoped that it would still happen in the next month, or two, or three. When it still had not happened at the end of that time, other options were explored. Even after it was pretty obvious by the end of first semester of 1985, that the only space the archives would get in the LRC was 8-E and some adjacent offices, the hope remained alive that space in Longyear would still, at some point soon, become available and that it would ultimately become the permanent home for the archives. When it did not happen “soon,” the hope nonetheless continued to persist. Soon after the commencement of the 1984 fall semester, some space in the basement of the West Science classroom building became a possibility for archival space. The minutes of the Department of History for November 8, 1984 read, “Cliff still has not been able to move into his new archives headquarters (basement of West Science). He has been inhibited in this by things beyond his control.” DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07 Not many days
after these minutes were written I was informed that it had been decided to use that space for other purposes. As I reported these disappointments to my colleagues at a History Department meeting on November 20, 1984, all the department felt it could do for me was advise me to “continue to persevere!”

MAGNAGHI BECOMES IMPATIENT

Meanwhile, the unimpressive start of the efforts to acquire space for the archives frustrated Magnaghi to such a degree that he lost hope for the moment that it would ever be a place where certain kinds of historical resources he was collecting could be stored and made accessible. So in a memo dated October 17, 1984—and copied to no one—he wrote Roebke-Berens, his Department Head, as follows: “I am requesting additional office space for two new programs: [The] NMU Oral History Program and the Italian-American Institute of Michigan, which are in the process of evolving.” To date, he said, he had collected over 170 oral history tapes—and that about 150 of them dealt with Italian American experiences in Michigan. The office would be utilized for storing the tapes and making them “accessible to students of history and the public at large.” The office would also be used as a base which would enable him to obtain grant funding and to expand his oral history efforts to such objectives as interviewing “former and present administrators, faculty, staff, and students.” The office would not only be used for storing and utilizing tapes, but also “for storing photographs, papers, and artifacts dealing with the Italian experience in Michigan.”

Despite his plea, it was some time (that is about 1986) before he was assigned an additional office. By that time his office was so crammed full of his collections that he could barely get into it. At times, he had to take some good natured ridicule because of his unquenchable penchant for collecting everything of U.P. historical worth and for continuing to bring it to his office, which already was uninhabitable.

When Magnaghi finally got another office, he used it as an alternate office from which to operate. Meanwhile, the archives had developed to the place where he now saw it as the best place, after all, to store and make accessible to the public the historical materials he had been collecting. Gradually, as he continued to collect, he began donating some of his historical materials to the archives. As time went on, he had no regrets. On November 28, 1989, in his taped interview regarding the archives, he declared, “Cliff is doing such a professional job—in terms of preserving and cataloguing and making materials available....” It was nice for me to discover this assessment, especially since it was unsolicited, even if it was more than twenty-five years after the fact.

Accepting Magnaghi’s donations required a bit of strategy, so to speak. Most of the things he wished to donate were U.P. materials not associated with Northern.

Meanwhile at this time, I had been instructed to limit my collecting to pretty much only the records from Northern. So how could I accession the materials Magnaghi wished to donate? I decided that I still could do so on the basis of some creative interpreting! Northern’s records did include the papers and research materials of its professors, I
rationalized. Since he was one of them, I concluded that I could accept his materials—although I did not proclaim very loudly or publicly the kind of research materials they were! Eventually I also accepted some materials from some other professors using the same rational.

THE LIBRARY SPACE OPTION—AGAIN!

With the failure of space options in both the Longyear building and West Science, and the option in the LRC not having produced a significant amount of space either, it finally became possible to share my dilemma with Vice President Donovan. In a memo dated November 6, I asked for an opportunity to do that, and sometime between then and November 26 we had a talk. On the latter date, I received a phone call from him asking that I make an appointment with Rena Fowler to discuss the possibility of housing our proposed archives in the library. I immediately obtained an interview with her. The day after the interview, I sent a memo to Roebke-Berens and copied Donovan reporting the content of our conversation. The following day, Fowler also sent Donovan a memo informing him of her conversation with me and of her conditions—the only conditions—on which the library was willing to house the archives. She copied her memo to Roebke-Berens and to me.

In Fowler’s response to Donovan she informed him that her answer to his request to house the archives in the library was yes, but only on a temporary basis, and only if several difficult-to-meet conditions were met. Her memo opened with these words, “I met with Cliff Maier and presented these points:” They were (1) that the library did have a partially enclosed study area about 25’ by 22’. (2) That that area had already been designated as a computer laboratory for English students. But (3) that the archives could use it on a temporary basis if the university provided $2,000.00 to cover the costs of doing some temporary renovations. (4) That housing the archives in the suggested space could “only be regarded as an interim measure because there is so little space.” Besides, “this proposal diminishes student seating in the library, already a problem.” Also (5) “The archivist must regard the space in the library as an office, work area, and reference storage center only.” Cliff “would have to establish ‘satellite’ storage sites in offices around campus where materials could be stored.... Researchers would have to be referred to these outside locations.” She conceded that “this system is unwieldy and unorthodox, but I have no other solution.”

LIBRARY CONTROL OF THE ARCHIVES

Fowler, furthermore, demanded control of the archives if they were housed in the library. She stated that “the library would provide space for archives only [her underlining] if it were administratively and budgetarily a part of the library. If archives is within the library the archivist would report to me, and I would approve all policies regarding archives and oversee them.” She was “concerned” she stated, “that commitments not be made which would burden the library or injure existing services.” She recommended too that “because of space limitations the archives should concentrate [just] upon university records for now.” Regarding costs, “the university also would have to place an additional $5,000.00 into the library’s budget annually to pay for student assistance during the summer months and $1,000.00 annually to cover the cost of supplies, travel, and telephone.”
pointed out that archives are 12-month operations—not 10-month. "So terms would have to be negotiated with me [and] Cliff, to allow for that."

Fowler’s concerns regarding the library’s interests and responsibilities are understandable. That was her job, but my reaction to the conditions she required for the archives to be housed within the library was not positive. The conditions seemed to me to indicate that the interests of the archives would always have to take second place to those of the library, and that the director of the library would pretty much always be in control.

I was on the alert against that happening at Northern because of comments that I had heard from some university archivists at the Washington, D.C. summer archives workshop in 1983. It is true that not all of them felt that an archives should not be under a library. Some indicated that their archives were part of their library, and that it had been able to operate successfully. Others, however, warned against it and recommended against it if at all possible. They felt that an archives should have a semi-independent standing in the university structure similar to that of a library. This, in part, because of the fact that the materials each of them handled had so little in common, and also because a university archives needed to be able to negotiate for its own budgetary needs just like a university library did.

ASSEMBLING ARCHIVAL SPACE IN THE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER: THE FACULTY OFFICES SOLUTION

I suspected that Donovan too might find Fowler’s conditions unacceptable. One of the reasons was her demand for considerable funds for renovations and that the renovations were to be considered only a temporary fix for the archives. Furthermore, the operating funds she requested were not likely readily available.

On December 6, 1984, I sent Donovan a memo stating that “In the event that it is not possible to obtain space for the archives in the library might I suggest the following alternatives?” I submitted three. One was to develop a fairly large conference room existing in the LRC into archival space. I argued that there were other locations where conferences could be held.

The second alternative was to reassign for archival purposes space from four faculty offices that had been created for Scott Seaman’s NMU television-radio operation. They were located at the north end of the block number 8 office complex. Since that space was not actually being used much or at all at the time—although claims existed that it would be sometime in the future—I wondered if the television-radio people really needed it as much as the archives? Could it possibly be reassigned to it?

The third alternative was to create an archives space complex out of three or four additional faculty offices. This would be similar to what had been done earlier for the television-radio people. I suggested that such a complex could be created after the present fall semester was over. Two vacant faculty offices once occupied by philosophy professors would be, or could be available by then, I believed. I added that my History Department
office was located just in back of them. I would be willing to relocate to another office that could probably be found some place in the building in order to help create that little complex of adjacent offices for the archives. If a fourth office was desired, perhaps the office of the history professor next to mine could be obtained as well. He could perhaps be persuaded to move into 9-E which was Mr. Jamison’s office. It was my understanding that he would be leaving the university at the end of the current semester.

A PLAN FOR SPACE CRYSTALLIZES

On January 7, 1985, Donovan informed me that he had decided, in general, on the third alternative. In a memo of that date, he stated that this particular choice would result in less space than the library option would provide, “but there are other advantages to this location.” Wisely, undoubtedly, he did not elaborate on what he thought they were.

Actually, Donovan had decided on “the faculty offices solution” even before January 7. In a memo on January 3, he stated that “office 8-F will be joined to the adjacent office now used for the university archives [8-E] for additional and initial space for the archives.” Then, on January 18, I informed him that Professor Howard Swaine had now offered an additional Economics Department office, 8-D, for archival purposes. With some “horse-trading” and rearranging of this space, this development would generate the possibility of creating a square complex of four offices if my history office, 8-O, was also included in this potential of space for the archives. A square configuration would be a much more desirable arrangement than the L-shape that 8-D to 8-F, plus 8-O behind 8-D would create (See the floor plan for block number 8).

Professor Barry Knight occupied office 8-N next to 8-O. It was directly in back of 8-E. If the archives was willing to surrender 8-F and Knight could be persuaded to move to that office, making 8-N available to the archives, the more desirable square complex for the archives could be achieved. Both he and Donovan agreed to this move.

To prepare the way for creating the square complex and for logical movement within it, I moved from 8-O into 8-N, Knight’s former office. Strange as this may seem, this was for two very good reasons. Because of the way that the configuration for the archives was shaping up, the hope was that both 8-O and 8-N could eventually be used as a processing/storage area. Logistically, it made sense to have the doorway into that area go from 8-D into 8-O rather than from 8-E into 8-N. Since my office was still in 8-O, in order to make this possible I moved it into 8-N. That office now became my combined History Department/Archives office. The hope, however, was that this was only temporary until another office elsewhere could be found for me. 8-N along with 8-O would then be freed up to become that hoped-for processing/storage area.

What a thrill (!) it was, finally to obtain the bit of additional space 8-N provided as well as the possibility for that more desirable square configuration. The development was exciting too because with just one additional move, the History Department/Archives office I now occupied could be part of a small but temporarily adequate processing/storage area. In the
History Department minutes for February 25, 1985, Professor Fred Stenkamp noted that I felt “upbeat” with respect to recent archives developments.

By this time the space that the archives had been granted totaled about 300 square feet plus my little 8-N, 9’ by 11’ History Department/Archives office that I hoped would soon also become part of space for the archives. This amount of space, of course, was still much too small to realize the goals that had been enunciated for the archives. It also was incapable of providing the type of security and visibility that was desirable. Still the very existence now of this much space for archival purposes—acquired with administration approval—was a sign that the effort to establish an archives, despite its very inauspicious start, did have at least a slim chance of getting successfully off the ground.

**RENOVATIONS—THE NEXT BIG SPACE CHALLENGE**

The space which had been acquired so far still, of course, needed to be renovated to be more than just marginally useful. The wall between 8-D and 8-E had to be removed to create an open reception room/reading room area. This was the eastern half of the space now available to the archives. Then a door needed to be placed into the back of 8-D leading into the planned processing and storage area, 8-O and 8-N. Just as soon as I could find a way to move out of 8-N, plans were that the wall between 8-O and 8-N would also be removed. Getting these internal renovations accomplished, as well as closing some now obsolete doorways into the hallways, became the next challenge.

The doorways out of 8-E and 8-O into the hallways needed to be closed off; and as soon as I could find another office for myself, the door out of 8-N needed to be removed as well. The only exterior doorway now needed was out of 8-D, the now planned reception room/reading room area.

Unfortunately, getting these renovations accomplished took much too long. They held up some aspects of the early development of the archives for another six months. Immediately after these space possibilities were approved, in January, 1985, I requested the renovations just as soon as there was a realistic hope that they could be undertaken. The minutes for the History Department meeting for March 11, 1985 show that initially, it seemed that the plans for them were “going well.” But just a month later, the minutes of a History Department meeting read as follows: “All progress [in the archives] is held up with the space problem.”

Renovations requests had to go through channels—through the University Space Utilization Committee, the Facilities Planning Department, and in addition, often, to the vice presidents and departments directly affected, etcetera. Each step took time. Furthermore, the same sense of urgency I felt about moving things forward often was not felt or deemed appropriate by other entities. These space planning and controlling entities proved to be one the greatest impediments to the timely progress of the development of the archives in the eight years I was archivist. I say this even though I recognize that there were good reasons for having such entities—for doing the over-all planning and coordination they were seeking to do.
During the winter/spring of 1985 strong reasons eventually emerged for hoping that the desired renovations would be completed by at least the end of the summer of 1985; but they were not. This greatly hampered efficient operations in the archives until a month or two into the fall semester of 1985. So much for the schedule laid out in the “dream proposal” of May, 1984!

**SOME ADDITIONAL SPACE**

Meanwhile, in May 1985 I was able to acquire an additional contiguous 9’ by 11’ office for the archives. It will be recalled that History Professor Barry Knight had already earlier moved from 8-N to 8-F to help create that square configuration of space the archives had acquired by then, although this included my History Department/Archives office. But now, if an office other than 8-F, could be found for Knight, and if he were willing to move yet once again, I could move out of 8-N and into 8-F; thus I could make 8-N available for that more appropriate sized processing/storage area.

A very attractive reason for me to want to move into 8-F was this; it was contiguous to the 8-E/8-D area—the planned reception/reading room area. If my History Department/Archives office was moved into 8-F, and a doorway was placed into the side of it providing me with a side entrance into the 8-E/8-D area, that would provide me with ready, internal access into the main office of the archives, its reception desk, and phone. It would also eliminate the need for me to go out into the hallway to get into the archives. Furthermore, if I happened to be working in the archives when one of my students or someone else came to see me, it would be easy for me to move from the archives into my History Department/Archives office to help or council him or her. Furthermore being able to close the door between the archives and my office would create the privacy necessary at times for consultation/advising purposes.

In May, 1985, another office for Knight did become available. Once again he readily consented to move. This was just another example of the public-spirited attitude that members of the History Department and others who empathized with our purposes demonstrated toward the needs of the archives from time to time, and which gradually contributed substantially toward making its space situation workable.

Following Knight’s move to that other office, I quickly moved into 8-F and immediately revised my renovation request to include placing a door into the side of 8-F leading into the office/reading room area. I also requested the removal of the wall between 8-O and 8-N to create that larger, more functional processing/storage area which we so much desired.

Except for an additional storage space, the space we had assembled by May 1985 was all the space which the archives would receive while I was archivist. In May, 1985, that totaled approximately 500 square feet. It consisted of four 9’ by 11’ offices plus that one 9’ by 11’ office, 8-F, off to the side of that four-office complex. 8-F would double as both my archives office and my History Department office from this time forward.
This amount of space, while not ideal, proved to be sufficient to get some important small-scale collecting and processing accomplished. On the other hand it was quite insufficient to permit the full-scale archives/records management program envisioned in the May 1984 “Dream proposal” to come into existence.

This being the case, a more appropriate amount of space continued to be hoped for. While that never did happen during the period I was archivist—that is up to mid 1992—acceptance of large accessions did begin to happen during the 1992-94 period. Why that was possible then, without the acquisition of additional space, is made clear in chapters 21A, 21B, and 22.

When Professor Stephen Barnwell of the History Department retired in the spring of 1986, the opportunity presented itself to acquire that additional office for storage purposes. His office, 8-L, was two offices away from what would become the processing/storage area of the archives. Professor Kenneth Schellhase occupied office 8-M—right next to our processing/storage area. If he would consented to move into the now vacated 8-L and the authorities agreed, that would give the archives the space of one additional office for storage contiguous to the archives. They all agreed.

Initially the university had intended to grant Barnwell’s office to another party. To obtain it for storage/expansion purposes, I had to mount a vigorous argument for it in a memo to Donald Heikkinen, the Dean of the School of Arts and Science. I copied my memo to Donovan, Roebke-Berens, and Professor Pat Farrell of the Geography Department, and chairman of the University’s Space Utilization Committee. It worked.

It might be noted that up to this point the various university entities concerned with space allocation matters never interfered with the “horse-trading” and acquisitions of space that the History Department and I had been engaging in to accumulate contiguous archives space. That is to their credit. This was very important in making the emergence of an archives possible and viable under the circumstances.

In the case of the acquisition of 8-M, the wall between it and the archives (that is 8-N) was never removed while I was archivist. Still, while 8-M was not accessible internally, it was great to have it available for storage purposes. As we shall see, eventually it proved to be very important and gratifying to have it for that purpose.

MY “CRAZY OPERATION” PRIOR TO THE REMOVAL OF THOSE INTERNAL BARRIERS

For pleasant, efficient archival operations, how important it was to get those internal walls removed—or where more appropriate—to get doorways placed through them. This is illustrated by the following example. It has to do with the crazy things I persuaded myself to do to answer the phone while these internal barriers still existed.

As noted earlier, during the earliest time of the existence of the archives, I did not yet have a phone answering service or voice mail—or student help. When the phone rang, if I was working in my History Department office, 8-O at the time, I could hear it ring in 8-D, the
office that had by this time been designated as the archives’ office. To answer it, I would dash out of my office, scurry—or “gallop” down my hallway on the west side of Block 8—then around the south end of the block, then up the hallway on the east side of it to the doorway of the archives, 8-D, unlock the door as quickly as possible, and if the phone was still ringing, grab it, and out of breath, try to answer it! Frequently it no longer was ringing by then! I was especially concerned that the phone be answered because I feared that not doing so might hurt the reputation of the archives before it had barely gotten off the ground and possibly contribute to its demise.

The reader may wonder, in view of this, why I did not work in the archives office (8-D) rather than in my History Department office (8-O) if no one else was in the archives to answer the phone. At times I did, but when I was preparing for classes, the materials I needed to work with were in the filing cabinets or on the shelves of my History Department office; also my students naturally came to that office for help, advice, etcetera.

As mentioned earlier, from hindsight it is obvious that I should have retained the phone number for the History Department so that its secretaries could have continued to answer it at least until those internal barriers had been removed. Initially I saw having the archives having its own phone number as being a good thing—a mark of progress. I had no idea that acquiring space for the archives and then the renovations would take over a year. I “itched” at times to remove those internal walls myself. Doing so would have been relatively easy for me. I had done that sort of thing many times, but my better judgment told me that I needed to wait and go through the proper channels.

Furthermore at every stage of this process, I kept thinking that surely the completion of the renovations—such a relatively small job—was eminent; and therefore there was no need to change the phone number back to the History Department’s.

To sum up, as we have seen, one of the major things that consumed a large part of my time during the first year of the existence of the archives was the acquisition of some basic space for it and trying to get it renovated. During the summer of 1985, rather than being focused primarily on what that May 1984 proposal had called for me to be doing, I was largely preoccupied with space acquisition matters in order to ready the archives for more efficient operations by the beginning of the fall semester, 1985. While that did not materialize then, when it finally did, what a great feeling it was. We finally had an archives of sorts in which I could begin focusing much more upon the real purposes for which it had been launched. But long before that time arrived, to further educate myself, I visited those professionally operated archives mentioned earlier. And gradually I became involved in making the first accessions and/or developing the policies and understandings required for doing that. These are subjects of the next chapter.
CHAPTER 8
ARCHIVES AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY, PLUS
PRESIDENT APPLEBERRY REGARDING THE ARCHIVES, 1984
AND BEYOND

While the space acquisition saga was occurring during the first and second semester of the existence of the archives, I also continued to educate myself on how to develop an archives that would meet professional standards. I was very conscious that I needed to immerse myself in the thinking of successful professionals if I was to steel myself against settling for almost anything, or even for second best. I also knew that I had to be well informed and very convinced myself, if I hoped to be convincing in my efforts to seek to persuade the university’s administrators, division chiefs, department heads, head secretaries, etcetera of the need to care for their records in a professional manner and to support my efforts, as archivist, to help with that.

The book, *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* (1979), proved to be one of the most helpful books. It is a collection of essays by university archivists published by the Society of American Archivists (SAA). James Worthy’s *Report on Institutional Evaluation*, also written for the SAA, proved very helpful as well, especially with regard to policies. I also became a member of the Michigan Archival Association (MAA) and began attending its meetings regularly. I did so in part in order to become acquainted with Michigan's professional archivists. I knew this would be helpful too with the development of a professional outlook on archival matters.

THE VISITING OTHER ARCHIVES ISSUE

At the training in Washington D. C., “Lon” Jones and I met Dr. Robert Warner, Director of the National Archives at the time. When he became aware that we were from Michigan, he took a special interest in us and our mission. He was delighted that an archives was being contemplated for “that university way up there!” (Previously he had been the director of the archives at the University of Michigan.) One of the things that he felt would be helpful with getting an archives started correctly was to visit other archives in our region; this not only to become acquainted with their archivists but also to have them show us how they, as experienced archivists, operated their archives.

Roebke-Berens had suggested in her August 29 memo to me that I visit the two university archives located closest to Northern, that is, Michigan Technological University and Central Michigan University; also that she would help me obtain supplemental travel funds to do so. I decided however, that perhaps there were better criteria for deciding which archives I should visit. Thus after researching the outstanding characteristics of various archives in our region, I decided that their distance from Northern should not be the chief criteria determining which of them I visited, and that I really wished to visit more than just two. However, I also knew that even if I was able to obtain some supplemental funds through regular channels to finance the trips I hoped to take, such funds would not be sufficient to
cover all costs. Consequently, I decided early in the semester to go right to the university's top executive in my search for some extra travel funds. I do not know what made me brassy enough to do it. Anyway, I sent the president a memo requesting some financial help from him for visiting those archives which had standards and policies that were among the best and which I was sure would be good for us to emulate as we launched our archives.

APPLEBERRY AND THE ARCHIVES

On November 9, Appleberry responded to my request with the following gratifying memo:

I do not have a separate fund to allocate; I think your establishment of our archives in the best possible way is important to us all. Therefore, I am asking that $400.00 of Development Fund monies be allocated to you to assist you in your travel and transportation.... Keep up the good work, Cliff. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

Wow! What a supportive and encouraging memo. It would be good for the reader to keep this memo in mind. It indicates that in principle Appleberry very much favored Northern having an archives, and a very good one at that. Also that he was willing to ask whoever controlled the Development Fund to make available a relatively sizeable sum to help me with such travel as would help to enhance the quality of the archives that was being established. Similarly, on February 28, he wrote a very supportive open letter to the university's "Faculty and Staff Members" urging their "cooperation and helpfulness" with my efforts to preserve the university's inactive records for educational purposes and for posterity. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

These communications reveal a positive attitude and real leadership on this matter at this point. They also suggest that he was genuinely excited by the prospect of Northern having such an archives--undoubtedly he was. Yet later that positive voice pretty much went silent. It, at least, was no longer heard publically.

My explanation for this is one which the reader may wish to disagree with as he or she becomes more familiar with the evidence. Be that as it may, here is my explanation, drawn from the evidence as I see it. Appleberry’s philosophy of governance trumped his personal inclinations—at least in this case. He believed in governing and administrating through his vice presidents and through the other members of the President’s Council. He committed himself to supporting whatever they, as a body, decided on regardless of his personal inclinations. It soon became evident that the majority of the members of President’s Council favored other projects more than the archives. While Appleberry favored a fine archives, when compared to the other projects "on the table," it appears that he agreed with the majority of his council. At least I have not found any evidence that he disagreed
with them on this issue. Thus if there was not enough money to fund all projects or policies—which virtually always was the case—the archives ended up not being funded at a really sustainable level, even though virtually all these officials—if not every one of them—took pride in the fact that Northern did have an archives. Eventually this lack of support changed. Why that happened is an interesting story in itself. The change resulted in more support for the archives. When that happened, Appleberry readily went along with it—even seemed quite happy about it.

It is worth noting too in passing, that Appleberry saw the archives not just as an instrument that would help the archives manage the university’s records more effectively, but also as something that would help Northern academically. In that February 28 open letter to the university’s faculty and staff cited above, he described the archives as “a new venture that will enhance the academic character and capabilities of Northern Michigan University.” He added, “As you know, education is one of the most important endeavors of a free society.” He also declared that the archives will “provide a valuable service to both our university and our region.”

Since Appleberry had such a sincere appreciation of the educational enhancement which an archives could provide, why did his public support of what was being attempted at the archives diminish? One might grant that it was because it was under the jurisdiction of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and that he, therefore, did not wish to interfere with that. Undoubtedly that was a consideration. But could he not have continued to honor that and still continued to show a personal interest by something he occasionally said publically, or even by paying the archives a personal visit to encourage the effort, even though he sincerely believed that the university could not give it any more support for the time being? Public statements of support from him never happened at Northern after the February 28, 1984 open letter he sent to the faculty and staff. There is evidence, however, that privately he spoke confidently, and likely proudly, to at least a couple of individuals about Northern having an archives and it wishing to have their major and important collections. This, too, when in fact the archives did not yet have space in which it could receive or properly care for them. In one case this required me to send a memo to former President Jamrich who had expressed a desire to President Appleberry to donate some of his papers to NMU. It was necessary for me send a memo to explain what the situation of the archives really was.  
I sent it on April 9, 1985. I need to emphasize, however, that this situation was initiated by Jamrich. He contacted Appleberry. Instead of letting Jamrich know that the archives was not yet in a position to receive whatever kind of papers he was thinking of offering to it, Appleberry allowed him think that maybe making such a donation was already possible, and he asked me to contact him about it. In one sense, he was absolutely correct in putting the matter into the archivist’s hands. Yet this seemed to me like an example of the tendency I was detecting by some people associated with the administration of letting people think that Northern had a fine archives, and that it had been supporting it well enough for it to be in a position already this early in its history to take any valuable material offered to it, or sought by it. This simply was not the case.

Another example of the president permitting people to think that Northern was supporting the archives well enough to be able to receive major collections was early promises made
to State Representative Dominic Jacobetti regarding Northern wanting his papers. I only learned about this much later on. See chapter 21A.

In 1989, Appleberry was persuaded to make an exception to his governing policy regarding maintaining a more or less hands-off position with respect to what was happening in an area which was under the administration of one of his vice presidents. He agreed to talk privately to the then Vice President for Academic Affairs about the needs of the archives—but only after a rather desperate appeal had been made to him about it. Interestingly, that, it turned out, was the beginning of a turn-around toward greater support for the archives.

Why, then despite Appleberry’s appreciation of the role that the archives could play in enhancing education at NMU did he not publically express more support for it? I think the answer lies at least partly in this. There were many other good causes which also contributed to the university’s academic mission and which were begging for support. They included increased faculty salaries and benefits, computerizing the university, more adequate faculty offices, additional staff to meet accreditation standards, etcetera. Then too between 1984 and 1989, several other worthy new projects were being established on campus. These included the Glenn T. Seaborg Center for Learning Science and Mathematics, the Upper Peninsula Center for Educational Development, the Olympic Education and Great Lakes Sports Training Center, the Northern Economic Initiatives Center, and the Center for Excellence in Leadership and Personal Development. A “Study Abroad” program and an internship program in Washington, D.C. were also launched. Renovation of the Lee Hall Gallery to create a University Art Museum was being undertaken as well. A Cultural Affairs Office was established too and a full-time Art Museum Director/Cultural Affairs Coordinator was hired. The Superior Dome, which had been being lobbied for quite a number of years, was finally commenced during the mid-eighties. While special state funds were used to construct the structure, associated expenses cut into funds which would otherwise have been available for more academic initiatives such as the archives. RM, Sense, 371-372

By the end of the first quarter of 1985, President Appleberry had also launched the Commission on the Future of the University. He was enthusiastic about this big planning initiative—perhaps too big. Dr. Roebke-Berens had by this time become assistant to the President for Strategic Planning and the campus liaison for this huge and costly deliberative body. It consisted of many individuals from every area of interest in the university community plus 250 distinguished individuals from the corporate world, labor, and the professions. These people were organized into twelve task forces. Each of them met four to eight times as well as jointly three times annually. In 1987 the commission produced a report containing 169 recommendations with a follow-up report in 1988. This final report stated that the major recommendations of the 1987 report had been either implemented by then or acted upon. RM, Sense, 91-92

With all of these things on the “plates” of the administrators, it is not hard to see why they often seemed to have lost sight of the needs of its fledging archives and why it was given a very low priority. This pretty much was the case from 1984 to 1989 despite an occasional
bit of evidence to the contrary. With these circumstances in mind, it is easier to understand the archives’ deprived and sluggish infancy.

Of course, honest differences of opinion could occur about which causes should get the highest priority; and they did. I disagreed that some of those that were selected for support contributed more to enhancing education at Northern than the archives would in the long run. I also felt that if the archives really was valued to the degree that it should have been, or to the degree stated, it could have been supported more adequately right from the start. This, since when compared to the huge sums which were being poured into the other causes deemed good, the amount that would have had to be given to support the archives a bit more adequately was miniscule.

Therefore, the archives just had to exist as best it could until the financial situation improved. Despite Appleberry’s conviction that the archives could contribute importantly to education at NMU, his actions indicated that he had become persuaded that for the time being it was appropriate not to support it more adequately. Thus his silence. A changed outlook at the President’s Council level regarding the importance of the archives to Northern’s educational endeavors could have, of course, improved the priority given to it. That is what eventually happened.

THE ARCHIVES AND ARCHIVISTS I VISITED

Back to visiting the regional archives. During that first fall semester, I visited five different archives: the Bentley Historical Library and the Archives of the University of Michigan, the Gerald R. Ford Archives of Grand Rapids, Michigan State Archives in East Lansing, the Michigan Technological Archives in Houghton, and the Archives at the Madison Branch of the University of Wisconsin. CMER

I found the archivists I had visited with at the MAA conferences and at the archives which I visited very friendly and eager to help. Some of them even followed up by corresponding with me regarding questions I had asked. For example, Frank Boles of the Bentley Archives wrote me on November 20, 1984 regarding his opinion as to which kinds of records to save and which to discard when doing university records management scheduling. His advice basically was to keep what showed how policy makers thought and what they consequently did. He alerted me to the fact that Dr. Fred Honhart’s records management program at the Michigan State University Archives would be a good model to follow. Finally, he indicated that Northern might get some financial help with its archival effort via a NHPRC grant. He noted that “While they are not overly interested in university archives, the scarcity of archival facilities in the Upper Peninsula might make it possible for you to argue that you will be serving a community beyond the college. Certainly it is worth an inquiry.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

DEVELOPING AN ARCHIVES POLICY STATEMENT; EDUCATING, ETCETERA

It will be recalled that in the May 1984 “Dream Proposal,” the formulation of policies regarding records acquisitions, etcetera, was considered one of the most important initial
tasks for the archivist to undertake. This included an Archives Policy Statement. If its archives aspired to become professional enough to someday qualify as a repository for the state’s public records of the central portion of the U.P., such a statement needed to embrace and communicate professional standards of archival conduct. It also had to have the approval of the President and Board of Control. And such a policy statement was required if Northern was ever to qualify for public funds to help it develop its archives. Interestingly enough, at this very time too some of us were hoping that if Northern approved a professional enough policy statement, that might help it to qualify for some federal funds to develop at least part of Longyear Hall into a facility to use as our archives. All in all, therefore, the incentive to have the administration endorse such a policy statement was huge. I, therefore, felt that no effort was to be spared.

This meant not only educating—or further educating—NMU’s administrators as to what professional archival standards were, but also exercising a lot of patience, diplomacy—and even using some flattery! This is not to suggest that either President Appleberry or Vice President Donovan were totally uninformed of such standards; but on the other hand neither them had previously dealt with what ultimately happened to the records of institutions of higher education at which they had been employed. Working with them revealed not only that they were men of good will, but also that understandably, initially they were quite concerned when confronted with the kind of authority that professional standards called for an archivist to exercise over their records. Alleviating this concern required education—and persuasion—lots of it—it turned out. This more so since at the time, as we have noted, the President’s Council felt unable, from a financial point of view, to help much. Besides, some members, to some degree, felt unconvinced of the real need to have much of an archives, nor that it should have a priority as high as, or even higher, than many other good causes begging for help. Thus the great importance that education and persuasion was going to have to play in getting it off the ground.

ACQUIRING AN ARCHIVES POLICY STATEMENT

Already back on October, 15, 1984, I sent a draft of a policy statement to President Appleberry’s office for his consideration and signature. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 I informed Mary Pace, his administrative secretary, that I would be happy to discuss it further with either him or her.

In my covering memo I informed them that before drawing up the draft, I had done considerable research as to the kind of policy statements other universities had adopted, and that I had found those of the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois and Wayne State among the most helpful.

I also stated that I was attaching some information which was pertinent to the issue and which the president might want to scan. It included some data on the importance of establishing an archives in accordance with professional standards (A little later, when writing Donovan about this matter, I did the same thing).
The information I passed on included the following facts: A public university owns its records and has the legal responsibility of preserving those of permanent value and making them accessible to the public for research. It stated that it was more cost-effective for a university to have a records management system than not, and briefly how one worked. I also mentioned why it was important to have the support of the highest executive officer of a university. I cited the book, College and University Archives: Selected Readings (1979), as one source of further information.

I then mentioned why I felt it also would be very beneficial for Northern to become the repository for the public records and for the historically valuable private papers of significant individuals, companies, and other entities of the central portion of the U.P. I emphasized how these resources could become a rich source of research materials for Northern's students, faculty, and other interested citizens.

Appleberry sent my memo on to Donovan and informed me of that. I assume that he had also discussed it with him and the other members of his council. Not hearing from either of these men for some time, and needing the approval of a policy statement to be able to move forward more confidently with my archival responsibilities, I sent Donovan a memo on November 6, 1984. I requested an opportunity to discuss the archives' policy issue and other things with him. As a result of that, we met on November 14 and 16.

The meetings revealed that the university had some serious concerns about some of the policies I was proposing. After these meetings with Donovan, in order to check the accuracy of my perceptions, I drafted a memo to summarize the main points of our discussions. While I had intended to send it to him, I ended up not doing so. This, because I decided to run it by my colleague, Lon Jones, first to see how it struck him. His good advice changed my mind. “Don’t dwell on the differences,” was his advice. “Try to find common ground and move forward.” I, therefore, rewrote it, giving it a more positive cast, although I knew that if progress was to be made, dealing with some of those differences could not entirely be avoided. I still had to deal with some of them in a revised memo that I eventually sent to Donovan.

In that earlier memo which I initially had intended to send to Donovan, I stated that I sensed that what he, the president, and the members of the President’s Council felt the mission of the archives should be, or could be, was somewhat different from how I perceived it.

I stated that it seemed to me that the differences lay principally in two areas—first regarding the amount of authority the archivist should have, and secondly, regarding the kinds of records for which the archivist would be given responsibility.

I noted that I thought that one of Donovan’s points was that the president and he felt the archives should not collect the records from their offices. If I was correct, I wished to know if they felt that the archives should not collect all of their records “or just those of more contemporary times.” I could see, I said, why they might not be in favor of records recently generated going to the archives, but I felt that their older, non-confidential and non-
personnel records should go into the archives "provided that proper safeguards exist[ed] for their security and use."

Again I cited the book, *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* (1979), as one source in which they could read much more about these things.

I closed by saying that I had wanted to discuss these matters because I felt it was important that their views be given consideration at this critical stage of policy development.

But again, as I noted earlier, I never sent this particular memo. I have included some of its ideas just to give the reader a glimpse into the some of the administration's concerns and my views at this point.

On November 27, I sent my rewritten memo to Donovan. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 I noted the gratitude and appreciation I felt for his willingness to discuss the archival situation with me and for the support I had already received from him. An example I cited was the effort he was making to find an appropriate home for the archives. I stated that I was glad that we had a chance to get together to identify some of the things that we both felt should go into the archives.

I then stated that the policy statement I had submitted for consideration was presented only as “an ideal from which to begin,” but that I thought that we should always keep ideal models in mind. To the extent that we felt they were practical, as well as ideal, we should strive to move toward them as soon as we were able.

I also sought to alleviate concern about the administration's confidential records. “Apparently my draft policy statement led some of you to think that I feel the university's confidential records, such as personnel records, should be placed in the archives.” I assured Donovan that administrators had the right to place any restrictions that they wished on the use of their documents. I said that generally speaking, the archives really did not want records that it could not, at some time—even then on some restricted basis.

In the last part of the memo, I reviewed the standards and thinking which prevailed in the archival community regarding archival practices. I stated that it was not vital for Donovan to read this part of the memo, but if he did, it would familiarize him with what I had been led to believe was necessary to have a truly professional archival operation. His awareness of that would be "all to the good... for the success of our archival activity." I hoped that a review of the topics covered would be of some help in assuring “that we have a mutual understanding of how archivists view certain matters.” This, of course, was relevant too for the following reason. It was already evident that if much progress was going to be made toward realizing these professional ideals for our archives, it would be because our standards and goals would qualify us for some grant monies.
More specifically, among the topics I reviewed in that latter part of the memo were the following: archival authority, administrative support, staffing, space, the type of records an archives should be concerned about, and the place of the archives in the university's administrative structure. In it I included information about the differences between the objectives, procedures, and practices of libraries and archives. I told Donovan that in the event that he did not have time to check out the sources regarding these topics—which I recognized was likely—I was quoting key statements by noted archivists on these topics. I copied the memo to Appleberry, Roebke-Berens, and the History Department’s Archives Subcommittee.

Despite its length (six pages) and the demanding professional standards it recommended, the November 27 memo did not turn Donovan off—in fact, quite the opposite. In a conversation with him a couple of weeks later, he made it clear that he was solidly supportive of my standards and policy goals. His only fear was that the university could not any time soon promise the financial backing which would permit the standards enunciated to become a reality.

In a follow-up memo to Donovan on December 11 “regarding our most recent conversation,” I said:

Thanks for your time this morning. Also for the assurances that fundamentally you are in sympathy with our efforts and that you will do whatever is within your power to provide additional support as you are able. That assurance—perhaps I should say only that assurance—raises my spirit sufficiently to continue to try and make the archives a viable, valuable, respectable aspect of the university's academic efforts, even though it appears that the archives are destined to receive very meager support in the immediate future. AARA 5/8, 20-02-12

ACHIEVEMENT OF A FAIRLY PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVES POLICY STATEMENT

Having gained agreement in principle from the top administrators regarding the wisdom of having an archives which adhered to professional standards, approval of an Archives Policy Statement came relatively quickly. Although it met many professional standards, regrettably it still was deficient, but it was the best that could be achieved at the time.

On January 8, 1985 Donovan sent the president his revision of that original draft I sent to Appleberry on October 15. He sent with it this covering note. “Attached please find a revised copy of the Archives Policy which we discussed on January 3.” AARA 5/8, 20-02-12 On February 18 Donovan sent me the following memo: “This will confirm that the attached Archives Policy has been approved.” This, of course, meant that the president also had signed off on the statement.

THE FEBRUARY, 1985, ARCHIVES POLICY STATEMENT

What did the Archives Policy Statement actually say? It contained a preamble acknowledging the university's responsibility for preserving those records that had
enduring historical value and for disposing others in a timely manner. It contained a section dealing with how this was to be accomplished and on how those records that had value were to be made accessible for research purposes. It spelled out the archives' position in the university governing structure and the university's responsibility to provide the archives with the finances, space, personnel, equipment, and services needed to enable it to fulfill its mission. A section covered the manner in which records were to be evaluated and acquired from record creating units. Furthermore, a statement was included declaring that a University Archival Committee would be created to advise and assist the archivist. It stated that the archives was initially to collect only materials that fell within a “minimum collection scope,” namely only certain types of university records. It charged the university with responsibility for eventually collecting the valuable historical materials which were not official university records but which documented the history of the U.P. and which would be lost if Northern did not collect them. Finally it contained a section on the principles that would govern access to materials in the archives.

The policy was deficient in that it did not give the archivist the kind of authority that professional archivists insist is necessary for an archives to manage its records in the most far-sighted, efficient manner. It stated, for instance, that “Record creating units...may consult with the archivist regarding the preservation and administration of the records that are no longer needed for the transaction of current business.” This created problems for me later on with a few departments and divisions when I was seeking to establish records retention and disposal schedules with them. As one might suspect, the term “may” was the problem. It gave them the right to decide not to become involved in the records management process. Some units decided to do just that.

I decided at this point not to object to any of the wording of the policy statement. I believed it was the best that I could get at the time. I suspected that after I had established a track record and generated trust on the part of some units who were ready to cooperate, others would eventually come around too. Then perhaps the archivist's position could be strengthened via a revision of the policy language. This did happen later on.

Another problem with the policy was that what was defined as “minimum scope” was quite narrow and did not include correspondence files—not even those of considerable age. It included “all publications, newsletters, or booklets that the university distributes on a university-wide basis, faculty governance records, the minutes and reports of all administrative units operating at or above the department level, and reports published by members of the President's and Academic Councils.” This did give the archives plenty to do initially. The policy statement, however, did not explicitly state that the archives could eventually also collect records such as correspondence files which reveal so much about the perceptions which guide the decisions that are made and the reports that are published.

On the other hand, the policy did make a number of “commitments” that were excellent. For example, it stated that, “The University is committed to provide the financial resources, space, and personnel which are required to enable the archives to fulfill its mission.” Also “the archivist will have access to such university services and equipment as may be
required to support the operation of the archives.” This sounded very good to a guy who still had very little of most of these things. A bird in the hand seemed better than two in the bush. So I accepted the statement and hoped for the best.

With a policy statement such as this one, my hopes were high that funds commensurate with the statement would soon be forthcoming, despite the tight economic situation. It gradually became evident, however, that this was not going to be the case. That caused a lot of frustration in the years ahead. When the president and his council agreed to the policy statements, they apparently did not consider that as something they were committing to do in the immediate future; but rather only something they would eventually do when it became easier. I, on the other hand, believed that they intended to begin to do what they approved as policy in the immediate future. It will be recalled that earlier Vice President Donovan had tried to prepare me for what happened. Supportive as he was, on November 15, 1984 he had confided that his sense was that I could expect only “meager” financial support for the archives in the foreseeable future.

**INITIAL STEPS TOWARD A UNIVERSITY RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

With an archives policy statement in place, I began taking steps towards implementing the records management system outlined in the May 1984 “Dream Proposal” and discussed in chapter 6. The gingerly manner in which I felt that the Archives Policy Statement as well as common sense was going to require me to proceed, can be seen in a memo I sent to all university chiefs and department heads on February 25, 1985. This memo was a follow-up to a memo I had sent on February 13, alerting these individuals that I would be sending a memo later asking them to list the “inactive or non-current materials” in their offices and informing them that I would be describing a procedure for doing so. I knew that I had to proceed cautiously for this reason among others: I was requesting these people and their secretaries to take on an obligation that was completely new to them and about which they would probably ask, “Why?” Many of them would undoubtedly think that since they had managed their records satisfactorily in the past, why was it now necessary to have another party involved? I realized that just as with the university’s top executives, a process of gradual education was likely going to be required.

The introduction to my February 25 memo reveals this caution. I wrote:

> I would like to emphasize, as I suggested in my memo of February 13, that this is not a demand that you provide the archives with a listing of inactive materials in your office, especially not those [which are] outside of the ‘minimum scope’ identified in the University’s Archives Policy Statement cited below, AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

On the other hand, I implied that if they felt that they could provide a list of the inactive materials in their office, it would be appreciated. Or at a minimum, it would be appreciated if they could provide an estimate of the volume of the materials they had. Receiving this information would give the archives a much better sense of the volume and kinds of records that exist “out there.” I then hinted that eventually the archives would also like to collect their materials which had permanent value. I stated that should they feel that they
should not respond to my request, I would appreciate learning of the reasons for their position.

To help assure the university community about myself and the archives, I made mention of the following things: That I had been granted two-thirds release-time to do this archival work; that I had the assistance of a student for sixteen hours per week; that we had sufficient space to begin processing the university's records; that we would be operating under a policy “formulated by the University's Chief Executives;” that we would make “every effort...to process and manage records transferred to the archives in a professional way;” that “security, availability, and confidentiality in cases where that was specified in a transfer agreement would be a matter of prime concern;” and that records, or copies of them, could be “returned temporarily to the creating unit if needed for some unexpected purpose.”

As already implied, another primary purpose of my February 25 memo was to introduce to the division chiefs, department heads, and head secretaries how an archival records management system worked and to elicit their help with implementing it. To facilitate this and to provide both the record creating offices and the archives with a list of the records they possessed (and of those which they hopefully would be willing to transfer to the archives), I sent them two forms which would facilitate this process. “Form # 1” was entitled, “Identification of University Records.” Its purpose was simply to obtain an inventory of the records in any particular office. “Form # 2” was entitled, “Records Transmittal and Inventory Form.” Of course, before records are transferred to the archives, a retention and disposal schedule had to be developed and followed. My memo did not deal with that. It dealt just with what to do if a decision was made to transfer records. I stated that I was largely indebted to the Michigan State University Archives for the ideas that I was using.

My thinking at the time was that if I could get the university offices to do the inventories themselves with the help of some specific written directions, it would cut down greatly the amount of time I would have to spend in the various offices. This I felt would help to free up more of the limited archival time I had to concentrate on processing records and making them accessible for research. Secondly, it would decrease the cost for the entire archives/records management operation. I had become extremely sensitized by this time not to ask for one cent more for the archives than was absolutely necessary.

The response to my request was close to nothing. Given that, I decided that I had to do some rapid and painful backtracking. On March 7, I sent another memo to the same group regarding my request. I stated:

I have heard that my memo of February 25th has left some of you a bit confused or overwhelmed or perhaps both. Sorry about any ulcers I may have caused. The comprehensiveness with which you were requested to list the non-current, inactive materials in your possession seems to have been asking for more than what some of you feel you can undertake at the present time. If so, or if for some other reason, you feel unable to provide the comprehensive listing asked for on NMU Archives
Form # 1, could you do the following for us? Ignore Form # 1 for the time being and just send us a memo indicating something like the following: That you have so many feet or so many inches of file drawer material that is inactive; that you would be happy to discuss its potential archival value with the archives; also the restrictions that...you would want placed on the use of sensitive parts of it; the length of such restrictions, and other such things. Such a statement from you, while general, would at least give us an idea of the volume of material you have.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

In the remainder of a one-page memo, I also asked them that if they felt they could if they would go beyond just listing the volume of their inactive materials to indicate the kinds of materials they had. Bending over backwards not to seem presumptuous or pushy, I stated that the latter was not, however, necessary. In an educative vein, I mentioned also that “house-keeping records...are of insignificant permanent value. On the other hand, memoranda and letters are among the most important records [because] they reveal why an institution, or its divisions, developed as they did.”

Even this more gentle approach did not elicit a great response. On April 15, at a History Department meeting, I reported the progress of our archival effort to date. Ken Schellhase, the recording secretary at the time, summed up my report as follows: “All progress is tied up with the space problem.” Fred Stenkamp had just reported that various space renovation projects recommended by the “Space Utilization Committee including the one for the archives, were going no place because the university was not providing the money for changes to become a reality.” Ken then wrote, “But until that [the archives space problem] is solved Cliff is working hard surveying departments for the kind of things they want in the archives. The response, however, is miserable—only 10 to 15 percent response.”

In view of the paltry response of most division chiefs and department heads, I decided that henceforth, as I had time, I would personally call a division chief or department head, requesting a conversation regarding the records in his or her division or department. From hindsight it is obvious that I should have used a more personal, interactive, face-to-face approach from the start. What had happened was a disappointing experience; but I learned a valuable lesson. I never got to many of the division chiefs and department heads. By using this more personal approach I did get to visit with some of them, and that did result in agreements with some of them to allow a student assistant and myself to come to their offices and do a survey of their records. That too, later on, sometimes resulted in agreements to transfer certain of their non-current records of permanent value to the archives.

EVALUATION OF THE FIRST YEAR

Overall how did the archives effort go during the academic year 1984-85? In April, 1985, I summarized what I felt had been accomplished during the first year for my Annual Faculty Evaluation Report. Before I once again read what I had written about that almost thirty years earlier, I would have guessed, in view of all of the goals that were not met during that first year, that the summary would be pretty disappointing. But surprisingly, it was not
nearly as bad as I had feared. In fact, it shows that it was legitimately possible to view that first year quite positively. I wrote in that report:

I have been involved both in an intensive reading program about how to [launch an archives] in a professional manner and in various practical measures to make the theory a reality. While the “sledding” has been mostly uphill it seems, I believe it is fair to say that a sound foundation has been laid for an archives at Northern. Previously, there had been talk of launching an Archives at Northern but nothing came of it. This time, because of the efforts and good will of a number of people, it is becoming a reality. The university has accepted the idea that it should make a systematic effort to preserve the records of its history, that it should share in the effort to preserve the sources of the Upper Peninsula history, and that it should create a center where research in these sources can be undertaken by students, faculty, and others. The university has adopted a fairly progressive policy statement regarding the collection of its own records. It has agreed to support its archival effort with the funds and space required at the moment and is engaged in a major effort to raise the funds required for a much more adequate facility.

I also mentioned that I had been establishing professional relationships with the other archivists of our region and obtaining the benefits of their experience and good will. The reference to raising the funds required for a much more adequate facility refers to the efforts I had begun to obtain some outside funds such as perhaps a NHPRC grant. Some of us hoped a grant could perhaps be used to help renovate Longyear Hall which would become the ultimate archives facility. It was significant that already by this time initial steps had been taken to discover the kind of help, financial and otherwise, that the NHPRC might provide if their conditions were met. As the remainder of this story will show, we were able to utilize that information to good effect. The statement to the effect that a sound foundation had been laid for an archives at Northern was, of course, somewhat optimistic despite the space that had been assembled and the fairly progressive archives policy statement that had been signed. However, it is a good thing that I was optimistic. That tended to keep me going with the effort.

In one area, however, I failed miserably. It was in enlisting the cooperation of most of the division chiefs, department heads, and chief secretaries in my attempt to get them to voluntarily provide the initial information I needed to initiate a records management process with their records. This even after President Appleberry had urged such cooperation, it will be recalled. Despite all of the research I had been doing, I had missed at least this one thing. I failed to realize how important advance personal contacts and workshops were in preparing the people to understand, assist, and cooperate in this whole process. Such personal contacts and workshops would have given them a chance to become acquainted with me, ask questions, and built a trust. Just sending memos to them, I quickly discovered, was not enough.

In order to get some surveys done, following an initial face to face meeting with the person in control of the records of a particular office, a student assistant and I ended up having to do the surveys ourselves. Had I had workshops with the heads of a reasonable numbers of
offices, they may well have been bought into what we were trying to accomplish and even done the surveys themselves. This experience verified how important it is to have professional, experienced archivists heading archival operations whenever possible. When we finally got a professional archivist, one of first things she did indeed was to schedule personal conferences and workshops with appropriate sized groups of heads of record-holding offices.
While at a MAA Conference I discussed with David Johnson, Michigan’s State Archivist, the possibility of applying for a grant to assist Northern in getting a more adequate, professional archives developed. A grant, I thought, could result in a more adequate space situation and possibly help with the cost of renovating Longyear Hall for archival purposes.

On March 26, 1985 Johnson wrote me as follows:

As promised, I discussed with the State Advisory Board a possible National Historic Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) grant proposal by Northern Michigan University for the development of a university archives, a regional history collection, and a regional depository for public records. The board expressed interest in such a proposal; however, they felt that a consulting grant may be the first step. Several other consulting grants have been completed successfully in the past with the board’s support. They encourage a grant which would result in a plan with short-and long-range objectives. Enclosed is a sample consulting grant proposal submitted by the Sloan Museum. The Board encouraged a prioritized effort with primary emphasis placed upon the university archives, then the regional history collections and the regional depository for local public records. Concern was expressed about the relationship between the proposed university’s regional history collections and the manuscript collections of the Marquette County Historical Society.

I trust this information will be of value. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

It is/was a great letter. It was a blueprint for us if we wanted favorable evaluations of future grant requests.

Shortly after receiving Johnson’s letter, I sought the advice of the History Department’s Interim Archival Consulting Committee and of Vice President Donovan as to whether they felt Northern should apply for a grant to bring in an archives consultant? According to the minutes for a meeting with the Archival Committee on April 4, 1985, (Russell Magnaghi—note taker), the purpose of the consultancy would be to “look at the NMU archives [situation] and provide technical advice and direction.” The committee endorsed and encouraged the effort. With that support and with the encouragement of the State’s Archives Advisory Board, I sent a memo to Donovan the same day inquiring as to how he felt about the possibility? The upshot: Donovan also readily agreed that I should proceed with an application.
My major concern was how to prepare the grant application. Since I had never prepared a grant application of this kind, it was with some trepidation that I preceded. I took nothing for granted. Later on, a member of the NHPRC’s grants Advisory Board told Roebke-Berens that my application was one of the best that had ever been prepared for them.

A reason for this, without a doubt, is some of the good advice I received from some of my friends in the archival profession. Their advice was to consult with those who would be evaluating the application as to what they would like to see in it. They even suggested submitting parts of the drafts or the entire thing to interested archivists for their assessment prior to submitting the final copy. An example of doing this is the following letter to me dated June 6, 1985 from Francis Blouin Jr., Director of the Bentley Museum and Historical Library of the University of Michigan. He wrote:

Thank you for sending me a copy of the text of your grant proposal. I think it is just fine. I am particularly struck by the thoroughness of the work plan. My suggestion is simply to type up a final draft and send it through. I wish you luck in obtaining these funds. I applaud your interest in reviewing the archival work at Northern, and hope that out of this process you will find your program a stronger one.

I am pleased to do whatever I can to help you further. Do keep in touch.

CMPC, DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

With encouragement such as this from a man of Blouin’s stature in the profession, it was not long before the application for an archives consultancy was in the mail. I anxiously awaited the results.

THE FIRST BUDGET FOR THE ARCHIVES

While awaiting the grant application results, one of the things I did during the summer of 1985 was prepare the first budget for the archives. Rather than continue to support it from his discretionary funds, Donovan had indicated that beginning with the 1985-86 fiscal year, he wanted it to have its own budget. In that way he could include its regular needs as a line item in his own annual budget request. It also meant that he would no longer have to be contacted every time the archives had to make one of its ongoing and rather frequent minor expenditures. Having the right/duty to draw up a budget for the archives did not mean, however, that it could be a generous one. I was regularly given the impression that in view of all of the other things requiring the university’s limited funds, my budget requests could only be for the most basic of needs such as supplies, some student help, maybe some shelving, etcetera. We agreed on $2,000.00 per year. However, Donovan also made it clear that beyond that he would continue to use any available discretionary funds to help the archives finance modest, legitimate one-time needs as they arose.

MY MENOMINEE NEWSPAPER EMBARRASSMENT

In the late spring and early summer of 1985 my lack of experience still in judging the kind of U.P. historical materials the archives should become involved in helping to save led to an
The management of Menominee, Michigan’s main newspaper, *The Menominee Herald*, decided to dispose of its hard copies. They had begun publishing the paper about one hundred years earlier. Having heard that Northern had established an archives and that its collection policy included the preservation of central U.P. historical materials, they contacted it. Did we want the papers? If not, they probably would destroy them.

Prior to the hard copies of this paper being offered to Northern, they probably had been microfilmed. A state and national newspaper microfilming project was in progress at the time. Checking that possibility out did not occur to me initially. An experienced archivist surely would have. I was excited about the possibility of our students and other researchers being able to research so many topics regarding the south central U.P. from the major newspaper of the area. Being offered these papers, therefore, seemed like a very fortunate thing at first. I brought the matter before the History Department and they seemed, on the spur of the moment, to think also, that it would be a good thing to accept them. Professor Jon Saari was planning to travel through Menominee in the next week or so and agreed to stop and check out the papers.

In the meantime, however, questions began to present themselves. If we accepted these papers, where, oh where, would we put them? I began checking where this voluminous quantity of papers could be stored. And how would we get them to Marquette? Eventually someone thought of the possibility of storing them temporarily in Pierce Hall, now in a state of great disrepair, but still possessing some usable and secure areas. Before long, I had secured the approval of the Director of Facilities, and his Chief, Lyle Shaw, Vice President for Finance and Administration, to store the papers there temporarily.

I also found a party who would bring the papers to Marquette on a trailer. Then second thoughts started to come. Did this really make sense? Did it make sense to acquire these materials, some of which were already showing signs of decomposition? Did it not really make more sense to rely on microfilm copies? How long would it take Northern to be able to make these papers accessible to researchers given the circumstances of the archives? Was it right to focus a lot of attention on papers of this kind at the expense of giving primary attention first of all to the preservation of Northern’s own historically valuable records and to developing a records management program for them, as the NHPRC advisory people were encouraging?

Suddenly I realized that while it would mean eating some humble pie, the better part of valor was to abandon the whole project and inform the prospective donors that NMU was really not in a position to accept their papers, at least at this early stage of the development of its archives. Once explained to them, they agreed that my decision made sense.

For me, the whole matter was a hard lesson about the need to be realistic regarding things I committed the archives to in its circumstances. Had I proceeded with the accession of these papers, I could have hurt the reputation of our fledging archives considerably and perhaps even that of Northern.

embarrassing situation for me and others. The management of Menominee, Michigan’s main newspaper, *The Menominee Herald*, decided to dispose of its hard copies. They had begun publishing the paper about one hundred years earlier. Having heard that Northern had established an archives and that its collection policy included the preservation of central U.P. historical materials, they contacted it. Did we want the papers? If not, they probably would destroy them.
FURNISHING THE ARCHIVES

As noted earlier, it was not until about a month into the fall semester of 1985 that the space renovations ordered approximately six months earlier were completed and something resembling an archives actually emerged. Getting the renovations undertaken and completed was in the hands of the Space Utilization Committee and Facilities Planning. Academic Affairs funded the renovations but was not a cause of the delays. The next challenge was furnishing this newly renovated space without at the same time spending any more than was absolutely necessary. The library graciously donated a couple of large tables and a few chairs. At this time, the library was automating its card catalogue system. So, for the most part, it no longer needed its card catalogue cabinets. We took a couple of those too. We utilized one of them for filing information which had been placed on cards about students who had attended Northern during its earliest years. Despite the trend toward automation, retaining this type of information in this format proved wise. It made for quick, easy access to this type of information for anybody browsing in the archives. Those beautiful wooden card catalogue cabinets worked perfectly for this purpose. Even today in 2015, in the computer age, they are still being used for that purpose.

When the four small offices were acquired and converted into archival space, each had a bookshelf in them, and the archives was allowed to keep them. I think we obtained a couple of filing cabinets in this way as well. The things which were of a significant cost were twelve open steel shelves. These would be used to store standard sized archival boxes, some acid-free storage boxes, and file folders. A cabinet for the storage of supplies was purchased too. All of these items were for by Academic Affairs. Earlier it had purchased an electric typewriter for the archives too.

PROCESSING PRIORITIES

With these renovations and furnishings in place, we were in a better position to seriously begin to undertake some processing. Various types of university photographs were the type of records that first became most readily available to the archives and for which requests were most frequently made. The photographs came from various individuals or offices—offices which often were glad to be rid of them. Offices often displayed quite a different attitude about them than the way they usually felt about their paper records. Photographs frequently came without dates, the names of the individuals in them, and without the occasion, event, or location of them identified. I had a sense of urgency about not only organizing these photographs sufficiently to be able to make them available to the public, but also to do as much work as possible identifying people and things in them as soon as possible while the people who could help with that were still around.

Yet, at the same time, I always had mixed feelings about spending a lot of time on photographs. I felt that they were a sort of diversion from the main thing on which the university archives was encouraged to focus. I had mixed feelings too because archiving photographs, making them available for research, duplicating them for sale, or otherwise, involved considerably different processing, finding aids, etcetera than did printed records. Could I afford to have my student help try to master all of these processing skills and still
get much other processing done in the short time they would be employed in the archives? Would it not be better to concentrate on just one kind of processing in order to utilize the available help most efficiently? At the same time, however, it often was things one could do with photographs that excited people the most about the archives and caused them to value it.

In the end, in practice, I found that we had to become involved in processing virtually every type of material that we acquired. My general approach became to try to anticipate the most likely types of requests we would be receiving and then spend most of our effort in processing them.

**STUDENT HELP AND EDUCATION**

In 1985 and 1986 LaVerne Antilla was my main student helper. Sarah Shibley was during parts of the 1984-85 academic year and during the fall semester of 1985. Both of them had a great attitude and adapted very nicely to the introductory nature of the archives and to the work before us. They identified very well too with the challenge of getting the archives off the ground. Often we celebrated together over this little step forward, or that one, when it was achieved. On average, they worked in the archives from 15 to 20 hours per week.

It was with Antilla that I began the practice of having each student helper take a directed reading course from me regarding the fundamentals of archival practice. Depending on how much was done, they received either two or four college credits. Those doing these directed readings served the archives well too in that it made them more effective workers. In a small way this helped satisfy the expectation of the History Department too—that once I became archivist I would teach a course in archives administration to assist the department with its public history program. I never did teach that course and never was asked to do so once I became archivist. I am guessing that was because the department could see that I had my hands full. Students interested in public history frequently decided to work in the archives and therefore got an introduction to archives in that way too.

**MORE PROMOTING, EDUCATING**

From the fall of 1985 onward, along with some processing of small sized accessions, I continued to take every opportunity I could to try to convince the university administration and community of the value of the archives through personal conversations and participation in presentations at various forums, etcetera. The hearings, for example, of the University’s 1985-86 Strategic Planning Committee and of its subcommittees regarding the university’s future provided an excellent opportunity for doing some of this at the time.

On February 4, 1986, I received the following letter from Ruth Roebke-Berens:

> I so very much appreciate your work in making the initial meeting of the Commission on the Future the success that it was.... Thanks for your efforts. I believe that Northern has taken an important step toward directing its future. CMPC; DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18
SUCCESS OF THE GRANT APPLICATION

Meanwhile the NHPRC’s State Advisory Board had recommended that the NHPRC fund the Consultancy Grant Application we applied for in June of 1985. As a result, on January 21, 1986 Northern received a check from the NHPRC for $2,891.00. On February 5, Lyle Shaw, Vice President for Finance and Administration, acknowledged receipt of the NHPRC funds. On February 10, Donovan sent me a memo along with a copy of Shaw's letter. It contained the following encouraging words: “Congratulations upon receipt of this award. Under your supervision I am confident the archives will provide a valuable service to the university and community for years to come.”

To help build confidence that the archives would provide a valuable service to the university and to the community was exactly the objective of my memos to him. Now to see a declaration to that effect was indeed gratifying. Not that Donovan had ever acted as if he did not have such confidence; he had always been as supportive as his circumstances allowed him to be. It was great, nonetheless, to see in black and white such an unequivocal declaration to that effect.

THE HONHART CONSULTANCY

It was I who selected Frederick L. Honhart, Director of Michigan State University's Archives and Historical Collections, to be our consultant; but this again was not without first seeking counsel. I asked several members of the Michigan Archives Association for suggestions. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe, in the end, it was three individuals who were the most strongly recommended.

It may be recalled that David Johnson had informed me earlier that the NPHRC's Michigan Archives Advisory Board felt that Northern, in the development of its archives, should concentrate first of all on archiving its own records. It may also be recalled that Frank Boles, an archivist at the Bentley Museum and Historical Library, had told me that Michigan State University's Archives would be a good model to emulate. It was known for its records management program. Consequently, since Honhart was director of that archives and also one of those recommended for consideration, he seemed like the most logical choice. Donovan agreed.

I contacted Honhart, as to whether he was interested; he was, and accepted our invitation to be our consultant.

The second week of March 1986 was selected for Honhart’s visit to Northern. In preparation for it, he instructed me to complete all the records surveys of all the higher level offices of the university and send copies of them to him. He wanted to study them prior to his arrival. Although these offices, for the most part, had not responded to my
requests mailed to them a year earlier regarding providing information about the records in their offices, now, their heads willingly agreed to this request. I also was able to schedule conferences for Honhart with each of these office heads. GR, 6/24, 34-02-21

On February 28, I sent Honhart the materials he had requested plus some additional ones I thought he might appreciate having. They included surveys of the records in the top-level university offices, correspondence I had received from some offices regarding the surveys, the Archives’ Policy Statement we had drawn up, some examples of the processing we had done, and the finding aids we had developed. GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; 6/24, 34-02-21

The grant application had specified that the consultant was to:

- Appraise the records preservation situation at Northern Michigan University.
- Evaluate the capacity of Northern Michigan University to assist in the preservation of non-university regional manuscript collections and local public records.
- Recommend both short- and long-term plans for the development of a university archives program that would preserve Northern’s records responsibly, enhance the institution’s educational and research capabilities and services, and possibly help with the preservation of the region’s cultural heritage.

When Honhart arrived he visited the archives, some members of the History Department—Roebke-Berens, Barry Knight, Lon Jones, Stephen Barnwell—and the heads of each of the major offices surveyed. This included Donald Heikkinen, Dean and Eugene Whitehouse, Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences; Michael Cinelli, Head of the Department of Art and Design; Brian Gnauck, Dean of the School of Business and Management; Wesley Little, Dean of the School of Behavioral Sciences; Rena Fowler, Director of the Library; Matthew Surrel, Vice President for University Relations; Carol Sarvello of the Alumni Office; James Carter, Director of the News Bureau; Scott Seaman, Eric Smith, Bruce Turner, Stephen Dupras and Robert Manning of the Learning Resources Division; and John Hammang, Director of the Office of Human Resources and Information Services. Notes of what was said during these conversations are in the Grant Records in the archives. GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; 6/24, 34-04-21

Generally, Honhart’s visits with these people were pleasant. Perhaps a factor contributing to this was that this was now the fourth time the heads of these offices were contacted about the value of establishing a records management program for their records. Perhaps they had begun to think that there might be something to this idea after all. Certainly it also was because they did not want to be rude to an expert from a prestigious university, and, at the same time, they were curious to hear what an expert on the subject had to say. Perhaps it was for all of these reasons and more. At any rate, their attitude toward giving consideration to a records management program had generally become considerably more favorable.
In his report, Honhart declared that "every university office surveyed...readily agreed that it would be advantageous to have a systematic policy regarding the retention and disposition in their respective offices." GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; 6/24, 34-02-21

THE CONSULTANT'S REPORT

The titles of the broad topics Honhart covered in his May 1986 report, were (1) The Current Status of Archives and Records Management at Northern Michigan University, (2) Records Management Needs of the University, (3) Program Development Recommendations, and (4) Program Design and Implementation—A: University Archives, Phase I; B: University Archives, Phase II; C: Manuscripts Program; and D: Regional Local Records Depository Program. The report also contained two appendices. Appendix A: NMU Archives Policy Statement and Appendix B: Summary of Records Needs in Offices Visited. GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; 6/24, 34-02-21

As summarized by me, the recommendations Honhart made in his twenty-one page report were:

(1) That Northern Michigan University's first archival goal needed to be the implementation of a university-wide records management program. As he put it, “There is an immediate need throughout the university to establish a records management program for the systematic appraisal of records for their administrative, legal, fiscal, and historical value.”

(2) That the archivist should focus initially on developing retention and disposition schedules with the various offices of the university.

(3) That the university provide the archives with more space. Until that is done the archives will not be able to accept most records scheduled for it, whether they are scheduled for only temporary or for permanent retention.

(4) That the records scheduled for temporary or for permanent storage in the archives be inventoried and placed in boxes in preparation for transfer to the archives by the offices that created them.

(5) That the archives provide the offices which were preparing records for the archives with a manual providing them with guidance regarding how to prepare records for shipment to the archives.

(6) That the university's existing Archives Policy Statement be revised to declare that all records created by university offices are university property and can only be disposed of in accordance with retention or disposition schedules approved of by the heads of the university offices involved and by the archivist.
(7) That the archives establish a system of control over the records it acquires that will permit it to make them readily available for administrative purposes, public relations, research, and for other purposes.

(8) That the space given to the archives possess adequate security, temperature, and humidity controls in addition to adequate size, etcetera.

(9) That the archives be established as an administrative unit of the university with authority over university records.

(10) That initially the archives be granted two full-time positions (a director and secretary) plus some student help.

(11) That the mandate of the archives be made broader than just the management of the university’s own records. Rather, that it include acquisition of such things as significant faculty papers, significant manuscript materials from throughout the region in which the university is located and perhaps in due time local government records as well. As the archives became involved in these additional areas, its staff needed to be expanded accordingly.

(12) That the archives prepare its finding aids in such a way that they can readily be automated when the equipment to do that becomes available and that automation occur in the not too distant future and

(13) That the university provide an adequate center in which its faculty, students, and members of the community at large can do research in the records and other valuable materials in the archives.

Honhart stated that he was pleased with the steps the university had already taken to establish its archives. At the same time, it had a considerable distance to go to establish an archives capable of the challenges before it. As noted, he stated that the university needed to establish the archives as an independent administrative unit with authority over the university’s records. Secondly, the university needed to give the archives adequate space. “At the present,” he declared, “the university archivist’s office”—the archives as a whole is what he was referring to—“is barely large enough for the archivist and a few dozen cubic feet of records.” The university needed to create space that was adequate not only for its archivist, secretary, student assistants, and researchers to function, but that was also adequate for the storage of its records. Space acquired for the archives should be sufficient for both its immediate needs and for future growth. At the present time, Honhart opined, the only actions that were feasible regarding the university’s records was a “continuation of the records surveys already initiated and the development of records schedules. The space currently available to the university archivist is so limited that only records of the highest priority, in immediate danger of destruction, and of small volume, should be considered for transfer the archivist’s office.”
Once the archives was given adequate authority, space, financing, and staffing, it should then become engaged in implementing a full-fledged university records management program with the higher level offices of the university. This stage of archives’ development Honhart labeled Phase I. Once that phase was well established, the archives will be in a position to begin Phase II of its development “which is pro-active in nature.” During this phase, the archives should “concentrate on long-range program development and implementation.”

Phase II was to include an expansion of the university’s records management program to lower level offices and to fine-tuning of the system where that might be required. An example would be modifying the filing systems in certain offices to make them more compatible with efficient records management. It would also include modifying the records management procedures manual for certain offices to suit their particular circumstances and implementing an automated system for describing and controlling the archives’ materials. That entailed using an automated system that permitted entry of data into national data-base systems.

Also during this more pro-active Phase II, research materials other than just university records were to be considered for acquisition. They would include faculty papers and the papers and records which had historical value of individuals and organizations outside the university. Honhart mentioned, for example, the records of the Cleveland Cliff’s Company. He also discussed the benefits of becoming a repository for the public records of the region—although he also pointed out that the state “at the present time does not provide assistance for the costs of storage and servicing... [of such] records. If the state provided some funding for storage..., maintenance and professional staffing, for example, then it would be a mutually beneficial situation. Under the existing circumstances, however, it is questionable whether such an arrangement would be in Northern Michigan University’s interests at this time.”

Honhart also emphasized that during Phase II of the archives’ development, its holdings and services needed to be well publicized. Researchers, whether or not they were faculty, students, or the community at large needed to be made aware of the archives’ holdings, and of the conditions for their use. They also needed to know what services the archives offered researchers.

APPLEBERRY’S RESPONSE TO HONHART’S REPORT

Upon receiving Honhart’s report, I forwarded a copy to Donovan and Roebke-Berens, my immediate superiors, to President Appleberry, and to some other relevant members of the university community. On June 2 Appleberry responded, “It is a very thorough report and I think it should serve us well for several years to come.” But rather than talking with me about the report, Appleberry said he preferred that I “discuss it with Vice President Donovan. He is the one who will be making the recommendations or the decisions as the case may be, regarding our archival efforts at NMU.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 He ended his memo with “Keep up the good work” and copied it to Donovan and Roebke-Berens. On June 11 I responded to Appleberry stating that I looked “forward to working with Dr. Donovan on
these matters.” But I also stated that “your continued support will be crucial, so we look forward to continuing to receive it. Thanks much.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12. I hoped that my statement would convey the message that I believed that despite the large executive responsibility Donovan had been given for archival matters, the President’s personal attitude and help toward the enterprise was also going to be highly decisive.

In passing, a couple of things might be noted with regards to Appleberry’s response. It confirms what I said in chapter 8 regarding his philosophy and method of governance and administration—that it was largely through his vice presidents. His statement that Donovan was “the one who will be making the recommendations or decisions as the case may be, regarding our archival efforts at NMU” reveals that kind of deference to his vice presidents. Admirable as this may be depending on one’s point of view, this also placed pretty much all of the responsibility for getting something accepted by the President’s Council on the vice presidents. With this system, Appleberry could avoid providing leadership on a matter, if he wished, or he could be neutral on it.

**DONOVAN’S INTERVIEW AND MINE, WITH HONHART**

Back in March, 1986, while Honhart was at Northern, Donovan and I were able to have a good interview with him. LaVerne Antilla took minutes of the interview. The views and recommendations that both Honhart and Donovan expressed during that interview strongly influenced my thinking and actions—or attempted actions—even before Honhart’s formal report got into my hands in May. As we have seen, obtaining insight into Donovan’s thinking was just as important as obtaining insight into Honhart’s. Appleberry’s memo to me revealed that it was his decision to continue to allow—or require—Donovan to carry pretty much the entire responsibility for what happened to the archives initiative.

Some of the views Honhart expressed at the beginning of his interview with us, he would later also express in his report, but the interview provided additional insight and information. GR, 3/9, 2-3-5-3; 6/24, 34-02-21. According to the minutes—as I have summarized them—he stated that:

(1) That as far as what I had done, it was all I could do given the resources and mandate that I had had, and that I was taking the archives in the right direction.

(2) That the next step for me was to go to those university offices where it had not yet been done and set up a records retention, disposal, and transfer agreement with them and the archives. However, their records were not to actually be transferred to the archives except in special situations because the archives still did not have sufficient space for a records management system to be able to function.

(3) That the archives needed considerably more space. He mentioned 500 to 1000 square feet. (At this time, it did have 500 square feet if my History Department/Archives office was included in the calculation). Once a regular retention and disposal system was activated, considerably more space would be required immediately.
(4) That the archives needed an increase in staff. It needed a year-round full-time position—either for me or for a person who had graduated in archival science from a school such as Wayne State University. In that case I could be a half-time director if that was what was desired or necessary. Later, Honhart, in his report in May, as it will be recalled, stated that the archives needed two full-time positions—an archivist and a secretary.

(5) That the university needed to decide if the archives is a benefit to it. If so, the archives needed to be given the support of the entire university community. Honhart’s view was that the archives, if properly supported, would prove itself of value to the university’s administration, faculty, and students. But if not properly supported, its role would remain “nebulous and ineffective.”

Donovan then raised the following questions.

(1) Library/Archives Integration? In view of the lack of space and staffing for the archives, could the archives be integrated with the library? Honhart’s view was that it was possible if archives and library operations were kept separate, and the archives did “not impinge on the resources of the library.” The library and the archives should work cooperatively; but they should also be separate entities because “they work differently and provide different resources.” The archives needed its own budget and staff. “I would be extremely reluctant,” he remarked, “to place library staff in charge of records. A totally different methodology is involved.” A Master’s degree in Library Science would not be his choice for someone working in an archives. “Better someone with a strong background in research and archival work. A person holding a PhD. does not guarantee that such a person is one who would be desired either.”

Donovan conceded that what Honhart was saying made sense. He brought the subject up, he stated, because he felt that the library was in a position to provide the archives with security and services for more than eight hours a day. But if establishing the archives as a separate entity, and if staffing it with archives people was the appropriate option, he did not know if Northern was at a point where they could do that. We would have to “wait and see.” It would all have to go through the administrative system and the Board of Control.

(2) How much was to be saved? With dictation, typewriters, and word processing so much more information was now being generated. How much of it should be saved? Honhart acknowledged that this was going to be a challenge in the future. He tried to reassure Donovan by pointing out that the general “rule of thumb is that 5 to 10% of information is saved.”

(3) What is the Proper Division of Labor with Regional Archival Efforts? Donovan wanted Honhart’s opinion regarding U.P.-wide collecting as well as focusing on the university’s own records. Honhart declared that whatever Northern decided to do along this line, it was important that she develop the university’s own archives first. “The professional should get his own house in order before going on to other things… Establish a track record in dealing with every aspect of Northern’s institutional records first.”
Following that, it would be appropriate to consider becoming more involved with the collection of regional U.P. historical materials and public records. It was important to remember too, however, that becoming very heavily involved on the non-university level would “require a significant amount of space.” To obtain the right to house the public records of the region in Northern’s archives, the State would require “sufficient professional staff to process those records.” At the same time, however, he applauded the goal of doing non-university archiving eventually. He mentioned specifically as an example, the desirability of seeking to keep the Cleveland-Cliff’s papers in the U. P. rather than have them sent to Lansing with the hope that they would eventually be returned again to the U.P. Prior to the time that the archives possessed enough space and sufficient staff to do significant non-university collecting, it was still desirable for it to rescue small non-university collections that were of significant historical value and did not consume a lot of the archives’ limited space. He mentioned specifically the Rock-Maple Ridge Collection of a Finnish Socialist Group that Professor Jon Saari had discovered, and that upon his recommendation, the archives had already accessioned.

(4) Space? While it would not be easy, Donovan declared, to provide the archives with enough staffing to accomplish the objectives Honhart had mentioned, providing adequate space was a still “larger problem.” He wondered out loud how that could be solved. Honhart felt that something was to be said for giving the archives more space on the first floor of the Learning Resources Building. It had “relative security,” and “some temperature and humidity control.” It was an air conditioned building. Could this not happen as soon as the faculty moved out? Donovan responded, “Both the library and T.V.—Fowler and Seamans—want the floor.”

(5) An Alternate Space-Sharing Solution? I then asked Donovan if it would not be possible, as the faculty moved out, to allocate a substantial portion of the first floor space to both the archives and the library with a smaller portion going to the radio/television people until the library needed all, or most of it. After that, the archives could be moved elsewhere. To reduce the amount of space the media people would need, the archives could accession as soon as possible a substantial amount of their materials and a considerable amount would be destroyed. Such a plan might well relieve them regarding their concern about having a large portion of that space on the first floor. Donovan, however, was skeptical that such an agreement could be obtained, likely because of the librarian’s adamant views of the amount of space that the library needed. Space in a renovated Longyear Hall came up again, but that too was not seen as a solution, at least not in the immediate future.

(6) Funding for Archives Expansion? Donovan asked where Northern could learn about grants to help develop the space and raise the funds needed for staff, if it decided to become a substantial repository for the valuable historical materials and public records of the region. Honhart responded that the NHPRC again was “a good possibility.” But he stated too that for such a grant application to be successful “there would have to be a hard commitment by the university” to pick it up and to continue the work. “The NHPRC does not like to put up money... [where] there’s a lack of commitment.”
(7) Computer-Generated Records? Donovan also wanted to know how records management worked when such records were on discs. Would the use of computers reduce the space requirements for records generated in this way in the future? Honhart mentioned that discs were an unstable medium on which to store things. He believed, however, that doing things in this way was on the horizon. Of course, things which were on discs that were scheduled for disposition could just be erased when the time for disposition arrived. This topic with its long-term significance for space needs was left there.

(8) A commitment to acquire the Jacobetti Papers? I brought up the question as to whether or not a commitment should be made to acquire certain important collections now despite the current lack of space in the archives. I thought that eventually having collections such as the Jacobetti Papers, the Cohodas Papers, etc. at Northern was important for understanding the U.P and for the students and faculty to be able to use in the future. If we did not seek to get a commitment to archive them at Northern until such times as we had the space for them, other interested repositories might well obtain them first. This was true especially in the case of the Jacobetti Papers. Having the papers of a man who had become so significant in the economic life of the U.P and of the state would do something too for the prestige of Northern and its archives. Some discussion ensued regarding appropriate etiquette in asking for the papers. Honhart wondered, too, if it was realistic for Northern to hope to obtain the papers of a man who had been as significant in the history of Michigan as a whole, and the U.P. in particular, for as long as Jacobetti had been. He promised he would talk to the State Archives to see if such a thing was possible. He also alerted Donovan and myself of the fact that a new building had been erected in Lansing to house the papers of the state’s legislators.

Regarding my proposal that we try to obtain a commitment for obtaining the Jacobetti papers, Donovan responded, “Send me a proposal and I’ll talk to the president about it.”

I had also wondered if I should be contacting past university presidents and outstanding emeriti faculty regarding their papers. Donovan responded, “Include that in the same proposal... but Jacobetti’s would be the first priority.”

(9) Donovan’s Conclusions Regarding the Value of the Consultancy? “Your report,” Donovan appreciatively told Honhart “gives us some education, and prepares us for the future.” But then he added that given the circumstances at Northern, “I am not promising anything.”

In connection with this consultancy, the Department of History once again demonstrated its support for any effort that was made to help the archives succeed. On this occasion, it hosted a social at which individuals who wished to meet and informally chat with Honhart could do so. GR, 6/24, 34-02-21

NOT AGAIN! NOT ANOTHER SPACE DRIVE?

Honhart’s visit in March made it clear to me that if the archives and its records management program was going to develop much at all, additional space was going to be
the most critical factor affecting all of this. It sensitized me to the fact that I could not just be satisfied with essentially only the 400 square feet of space the archives had already acquired. Without additional space, the creation of retention and disposition schedules which Honhart was emphasizing as the next step would largely only be an academic and a time-consuming exercise.

Knowing this, I did not even wait for the consultant’s official report, which did not arrive until May. I got right down to the business, seeking to persuade the university authorities afresh that the archives needed more space in order to execute the consultant’s recommendations and make real long-term progress.

On April 21, 1986 I sent Paul Uimari, the Facilities Planner, a memo entitled, “Allocating More Space in LRC for the Archives as the Faculty is Moved Out of the Learning Resource Center.” After pointing out why I believed this idea was the most practical alternative through which additional space could be acquired for the archives in the years immediately ahead, and also why the idea was cost effective and desirable because of the appropriateness in some ways of having the archives in the same area as the library, I made the following recommendations:

(1) That one-quarter or one-third of the space on the lower level of the Learning Resource Center be earmarked for archival use as the faculty were moved out of it. (Renovation of Magers Hall as a faculty office building was just being completed it seemed. The first of the faculty in the “temporary” offices in the LRC were just beginning to be moved into it.)

(2) That Facilities Planning and the Space Utilization Committee place consideration of this recommendation on their agendas soon, and that they keep the archives informed as to their decisions so it will know what it can plan both for the immediate future and for the years ahead.

This memo was just the first of several written at this juncture, arguing for the additional space that would make a full-fledged records management program possible for the university’s own records and for future accessions of major non-university collections such as the Jacobetti papers.

ENHANCING THE NMU ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE: THE JACOBETTI PAPERS

One of the things back of the drive for more space was, in the final analysis, of course, the desire to provide students and researchers with an improved academic experience at Northern. Acquisition of materials like the Jacobetti papers tied right in with that goal; so another of my objectives during this time was to seek to educate the academic community and administration as to why it made sense to provide the space to make that possible. Therefore, on April 4, in response to Donovan’s request at the meeting Honhart and I had with him on March 14, I sent him an eight-page plus memo regarding the advisability of (1) seeking to acquire the Jacobetti papers, (2) the papers of past NMU presidents and faculty
which had historical and research value and (3) the papers of businesses which had significantly impacted the central region of the U.P.

**Regarding the Jacobetti Papers**, in addition to the reasons I listed for seeking to acquire them and to get a promise that they would be donated to Northern, the memo identified what would be required of Northern to be able to accept them. This included adequate space to process and store them, adequate staff to process and service them, and adequate funding. I identified possible funding sources such as gifts, grants, and increased state funding for Northern for archival/records management purposes on par with what other state universities were receiving for these purposes.

**Regarding the required space**, I proposed that the archives’ space on the first floor of the LRC be expanded, and be considered either a permanent solution or perhaps as only a temporary one. I pointed out why this would be the least costly solution, and why the library for an interim period might well be satisfied with utilizing only half of the space of that floor while the other half could be divided between the archives and the radio-television-audio visual people. By the time an interim arrangement such as this was no longer acceptable, should that happen, another solution to the archives’ space problem might well emerge. It could still be the renovation of Longyear Hall, a gift to construct an archives building, a wing to an existing building for archival purposes, or the adaptation of space in some other building.

The memo’s bottom line was this. For the reasons cited, it would be highly desirable that Northern Michigan University obtained the Jacobetti papers; but without additional space this was impossible. **No space. No Jacobetti Papers.** So now in addition to a professional records management system militating strongly in favor of a significant amount of additional space, the enhancement of Northern’s academic reputation and offerings via possession of such things as of the Jacobetti papers did so too.

On April 21, Donovan sent me the following memo:

I want to thank you for your memorandum of April 4th and express my appreciation both for its thoughtfulness and thoroughness.

I have forwarded a copy of it to President Appleberry for discussion purposes and will get back to you should I need further information or have reason to discuss it with you further. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

It was good to learn from Donovan’s note that he was keeping his promise of March 14 to me to take this matter up with the president. He also had his secretary attach a note to his memo to President Appleberry which stated:

Document relevant to the potential role an adequately supported archives can have to an academic program.
It is possible that my memo sensitized President Appleberry and Tom Peters, his assistant for legislative affairs, to the desirability of obtaining a promise early that Northern would get the Jacobetti Papers when the time came to donate them to someone. At any rate it became evident in 1991, when Northern became ready to make a serious effort of obtain the papers, that President Appleberry and Tom Peters had already, quite some time before that, talked to Jacobetti and his staff about donating his papers to Northern. However, I was never informed of it, at the time, even though my memo may have initially prompted their actions.

About this time too, I made a presentation before the University’s Strategic Planning Committee on Academic Excellence. I asked its members to consider whether or not an expanded archives at Northern would not affect favorably the excellence of the Northern academic experience? Of course, again I hoped that if the committee bought my idea, they would exert their influence to get for the archives the space it needed. I gave a copy of my April 4 memo to Donovan and the Committee’s chairperson since it addressed the question in greater depth than I was able to do before the committee. On April 24, I informed Donovan of what I had done and hoped that doing so met with his approval.

While some of these developments provided reason for optimism regarding the space question, others did not. On May 1, I received a memo from Dean Donald Heikkinen of the School of Arts and Sciences in response to a memo I had written to him on April 30. The implication of his memo was that the archives needed to resign itself to operating without additional space until the faculty had all moved out of the Learning Resource Center building and some final decisions were made about how the space on its first floor would be utilized. Trying to get parts of that space assigned to the archives on a piece-meal basis before that happened was not the way to go.

In a May 7 memo I responded as follows to Dean Heikkinen:

While I cannot agree with some of... [the] conclusions [of the May 1 memo], if I have no alternatives for the time being, I will accept the situation and try to do the best I can in the circumstances. For the record, however, I want to state once more that if I have to operate without added space, that will restrict considerably what I am able to do in the archives and affect quite adversely the efficiency with which I am able to use my time there. Why that is so, as you know, is spelled out in greater detail in my memo of April 30 to you.

I took issue also with waiting until the entire faculty had been moved out of the Learning Resource Center before decisions would be made regarding added space for the archives. I stated that:

Given the time it normally takes to accomplish something such as getting the entire faculty out of Learning Resource Center [getting them out had already supposedly been going on for some time and for various reasons was moving extremely slowly], my guess is that it will take considerably longer than a year to accomplish... My guess is... it will take more like two or three years. I do not feel that the archives can
wait that long. That is why I believe that the space needs of the archives must indeed be met on a 'piecemeal' basis in the meantime. I continue, therefore, to hope that something can still be done in the not too distant future along that line.

I copied my memo to Donovan, Roebke-Berens, and Pat Farrell, Chairman of the University's Space Utilization Committee. If I had copied all of the other major parties who also claimed they were entitled to determining how the space on the first floor of the Learning Resource Center was utilized, I would have had to copy Rena Fowler, the Director of the Library; Scott Seaman, the Director of the Radio-Television Operations; John Bekkla, the Manager of Engineering and Planning; Paul Umari, the Director of Facilities Planning; John Limback, the Director of Academic Computing; and of course, the President of the University. The fact is that space issues in the Learning Resource Center potentially had to have the agreement of at least eight parties. The librarian claimed that she had the trump card. No wonder the space issue was so intractable. And acquiring additional space for the archives was, in fact, to take not only two or three years, but six. Fortunately, I did not know that. Consequently I rather optimistically just kept pressing on to obtain it, always believing that acquiring it would somehow soon work out—soon we would have the space we needed.

HONHART'S SECOND VISIT AND RESPONSES:

The consultancy grant called for Honhart to return for a follow-up visit about three months after his initial visit. July 21-22, 1986 was finally established for that visit. On July 9 I sent those office chiefs and head secretaries, whom Honhart had seen on his first visit, a memo listing the major recommendations he had made in his report regarding records management. And I asked them to let me know if they desired an opportunity for further discussion with him regarding records management matters. If I recall correctly, only one division chief responded, requesting further time with him.

In the event that any of these office chiefs and head secretaries had concluded that the archives really was not in a position to receive any of their records at all at the present time, I closed my memo to them with this paragraph:

“Despite the limited amount of space the archives has at the present time, it nonetheless can accept ... at least some records of limited bulk that have permanent value. Therefore, please do not hesitate to contact the archives about the possibility of it accepting records of this nature, or even regarding other kinds of records. It is possible too that the archives will get some additional space before long. In that case it will be possible to accept larger amounts of material than is anticipated at the present time.”

Honhart's second visit was a pleasant one. It seemed that everyone who had read his report agreed that his recommendations made good sense. The big question was, would there be any action on the recommendations? His second visit gave him an opportunity to assess a little further the situation at Northern. His conclusion, in a letter to me dated July 24, proved to be pretty insightful. He stated, “I have enjoyed working with you and the rest
of the people at Northern Michigan University. In particular I want to thank you for all the kindnesses you have shown me.” He then stated, “I expect it will be a long and slow process to develop the NMU archives program. However, you do have support for the program in the university at various levels, and I’m sure you will be able [to] strengthen and broaden your support over time.” CFMC 2/12

ASSESSMENT OF THE HONHART CONSULTANCY

On August 14, I received a note from the NHPRC thanking me for the narrative and financial reports I was required to submit in conjunction with the acceptance of the consultancy grant. The consultancy was now history, but not forgotten. Both via his oral and written comments, Honhart had done a lot in the way of educating key individuals at Northern as to what an institution like Northern should be doing archives and records management-wise and how they should go about accomplishing it. In the years to come, I and others frequently used his recommendations as leverage in arguing for one thing or another. Important too, he let us know, or reminded us, of the kind of commitment Northern would have to make to obtain additional NHPRC funds should it wish further help in the future.

SCOTT SEAMAN: WILLING BUT NO FUNDING

The division chief who responded to my invitation to meet again with Honhart during his second visit and who was willing to take some initial steps to introduce a records management system was Scott Seaman. He was head of what was known as the Learning Resources Division (LRD). It consisted of Northern’s radio, television, and audio-visual departments—perhaps more. On July 10, just prior to Honhart’s second visit, I sent him a memo in which I stated that I felt that:

Doing something about some of the good material that is being erased in your departments is one of the most urgent preservation situations we face in the university. Unless we join forces in lobbying for what needs to be done ... not much is likely to be achieved singly. I ask if you, your division heads, Donovan, myself, and perhaps others could not get together to establish what we as an institution are prepared to save in your division, how it will be done, and what the ... schedule for doing so will be. Can you let me know what you think?

Seaman responded very favorably. He rallied members in his department around the idea. As an interim step, he proposed the development of a memorandum identifying procedure, format, frequency, and cost of an archival system for video and audio. Conferences were held to actualize the idea. He also contacted his superior, Matthew J. Surrell, Vice President for University Relations.

Unfortunately Seaman’s promising archiving/records management initiative went nowhere at this particular time. As he noted, its success would be dependent in great part on the funding required for supplies, equipment, and staff help. That was not forthcoming, although had it been, without that additional space I was seeking, it could not have
succeeded anyway. What Seaman got from Surrell was a nice statement, as so often happened in my case as well, that what Seaman was proposing was important—but also that deadly tip off, “I’m not promising any funding.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 This was just another way for Surrell to say that he was quite certain that funding for this purpose would not be forthcoming. And that is exactly what happened.

**ADDITIONAL SPACE ACQUISITION INITIATIVES**

Meanwhile, as already implied, acquiring more space continued to be a most urgent need if the archives was really going to be able to develop rather than just mark time. Consequently, I continued to give that issue emphasis. On July 8, I sent the following message to Pat Farrell, the Chairman of the University’s Space Utilization Committee:

In view of the archives consultant’s conclusion that the archives cannot do certain aspects of its job without additional space ... Dr. Donovan, who accepted the consultant’s conclusion, has recommended the following: that I ask the Space Committee to seek to find space elsewhere if obtaining space adjacent to the archives proves impossible. Every effort should continue to be made to obtain it adjacent to the archives, even by doing some mutually agreed to reassigning of offices if possible. But if even that does not produce some of the desired space adjacent to the archives then the Space Committee should try to find additional storage space for it elsewhere, very preferably in the same building and on the same floor.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

Farrell’s reply came via a July 23 memo to Donovan and copied to me and members of the Space Utilization Committee. It read as follows:

The Space Utilization Committee received your request to review the needs of additional space for the university archives.

Soon we will begin to review the use of the first floor of the Learning Resources Center which will become vacant after the faculty moves to their new office building. We will be talking to potential future users of the space. That will include the library, the learning resource center (radio and TV), archives, and Academic Computing as well as others.

I have supplied the Space Utilization Committee with copies of the Consultant’s Report and asked that it be read for discussion at our next meeting. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

Without a doubt, the chairman of the Space Utilization Committee hoped that additional space in the Learning Resource Center could be given to the archives soon. However, it did not happen nearly as quickly as Farrell and others had been lead to believe it would. For example, the office space being prepared for the faculty in Magers Hall was not ready until 1988. RM, Sense, 261 Moreover, that space was only capable of housing less than half of the faculty who occupied those “temporary” offices in the Learning Resource Center. It was not
until 1996 that all of the faculty finally were moved out of the Learning Resource Center to offices elsewhere. RM, Sense, 204

Except for the acquisition of another small 9’ x 11’ office (8-M) in 1986 (discussed in chapter 7), the documentation provided in this chapter has revealed in part at least why the archives never did receive any additional space in the Learning Resource Center until 1992. In 1991 the director of the library and the President’s Council did decide on additional space for the archives in connection with Northern qualifying for another NHPRC grant to further develop the archives and its records management system. Why the library director and the university were finally ready by this time to go along with this “piecemeal” approach (as noted, all of the faculty were not out of the LRC until 1996—four years later) will become evident in later chapters.

**EVIDENCE REGARDING THE AMOUNT OF SPACE NEEDED**

In the second half of 1986, I decided that perhaps the Space Utilization Committee might be helped in making a case with the other competing parties for the amount of space the archives needed if I provided it with some hard evidence of the amount of space other experienced university archivists judged to be necessary for a university the size of Northern. What amount of space was really needed to implement a full-fledged archives/records management program to meet NMU’s needs and provide some space for some non-university acquisitions for the next five or ten years plus?

On November 12, 1986, I sent my conclusions to Chairman Farrell and to the members of the Space Utilization Committee. Parts of the memo read as follows:

> After consulting two experienced university archivists and after reading some professional literature on the subject of archival space, my conclusion is that the university needs to make a minimum of 4,500 square feet of space available to the archives if the space allocated to it at the present time is intended to be adequate to meet its needs for the next ten years. The archives probably could get by with half that space for five years. However, if only half of the amount [needed] were allocated at this time, a firm commitment should exist that the additional half would be allocated at the end of the five-year period.

> Depending on certain possible developments which will be discussed later, the suggested 4,500 square feet for a ten-year period may be quite inadequate, as may half of that for a five-year period.

> The two university archivists that I consulted were Dr. Frederick L. Honhart of Michigan State University and Dr. Richard L. Pifer of the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire. CMPC, DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

I then explained that the reason I consulted Dr. Honhart was because he had recently visited Northern as a consultant and had studied its size and circumstances as well as its records situation quite thoroughly. Although Michigan State University was a much larger
institution than Northern, because of Honhart’s acquaintance with Northern and his experience as a successful records management and archives program director, I felt that he was in a strong position to offer a good estimate of the amount of space we needed. As for Pifer, I selected him because he had only recently been involved in calculating, designing, and overseeing the construction of the archival space calculated as needed at Eau Claire, an institution of approximately 11,000 students. He noted that two years of experience with the 2,853 square feet of space his institution had given to archives/records management purposes indicated that it was about the correct amount. But he cautioned that those who used his institution’s experience as a model should note that it had only been able to keep the space allocated for storage as low as it was because it had also opted to purchase a mechanically assisted compact shelving system at a cost of $5,000.00. Without it, they estimated that they would have had to allocate approximately 4,400 square feet to accomplish the same job.

Acquisition of the Jacobetti Papers was one of the possibilities I was referring to when I noted that even 4,500 square feet of space might prove to be inadequate during the initial ten-year period being considered unless we too opted to purchase a compact shelving system. That I believed was unlikely in Northern’s circumstances, although I did not say so.

I made note too the value that assigning this much space for archives and records management purposes would be to the university.

Once I had sent Chairman Farrell and the Space Utilization Committee my November 1986 memo—parts of which I have been sharing above—I felt I had done all that I could to persuade Northern to assign additional space to the archives in order to make a full-fledged archives/records management operation possible. I felt that “the ball on the space issue was now in the university’s court,” so to speak. I felt that I had now expended enough time and energy on this sort of thing. It was time now for me to concentrate more on the acquisition, processing, and servicing of those archival materials I could deal with without the additional space.

What all of this turned out to mean was that from 1986 to 1992 only certain kinds of archival accessioning and of processing could occur. These were small quantities of valuable university records and non-university collections that either were in danger of being lost if not accessioned or for which there was some other special reason for doing so. At least, the fact that concentration on this kind of work was able to occur to a greater extent from 1986 on was, however, a source of considerable satisfaction. Also satisfying was the knowledge that a successful consultancy had been conducted. It had helped considerably with clarifying more realistically what the goals of the archives should be under the circumstances, both for the immediate and for the more distant future.
CHAPTER 10
ADDITIONAL INSTRUMENTS FOR ACQUISITION, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL: A DEED OF GIFT FORM, GUIDELINES, AUTOMATION, STUDENT HELP APPLICATIONS, ETCETERA

In addition to the effort to acquire additional space discussed in the previous chapter, and of course, processing those accessions that had already been acquired, developing and/or fine-tuning additional instruments for the acquisition and processing of archival materials, as well as for their management and control became a prime objective. At the same time, I placed “on hold” until more space became available the development of those retention and disposal schedules which the consultant had recommended we develop. I decided that processing the small accessions I already had or had enough space to continue to acquire and servicing the research and preservation needs of the university as best I could under the circumstances, was the best way to use my time. We also processed some materials from the central U.P. when special circumstances called for that. Continuing to work for greater support for the archives/records management effort was always on the table too.

A DEED OF GIFT AGREEMENT FORM

One of the instruments the archives still needed to develop in 1986 for the effective management of non-university accessions was a “Deed of Gift Agreement.” While the acquisition of non-university materials was generally still outside the mandate of the archives’ collections policy, occasionally it continued to be appropriate to acquire such materials if they were relatively small in volume and were in danger of being lost or destroyed if they were not accessioned.

I used the agreements of other universities as models. Provisions which I wrote into the agreement were the following: a donor(s), (or his or her or their agent who signed it), agreed to give NMU all literary rights, copyrights, and other rights to the materials or items being donated. The donor(s) also agreed that the agreement was irrevocable. This gave NMU unrestricted rights to use the donations as it saw fit. The agreement also declared that if anyone else had an ownership interest in the items or materials being donated, the donor(s) had to have obtained their consent to make the donation, and on these conditions. Finally, it gave donors the opportunity to stipulate what they wished to see happen with the materials or items they had donated, should NMU at some time in the future decide that it no longer wished to retain them.

I then submitted the agreement to the administration for its review and approval. It and its Legal Counsel made a few changes, mostly minor, to my draft. Matthew Surrell noted them in a memo dated April 22, 1986 to President Appleberry and to the President’s Council. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 Once the president and council had granted their approval, the document was submitted to the Board of Control for final university approval. On May 5, Surrell informed me that that had happened. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 (He was also the secretary for the University’s Board of Control at this time). Except for potential future problems which could arise from
granting donors the right to say what they wished to see done with their donations should Northern decide it no longer wished to retain them, it was a very good instrument I felt. Problems could arise if donors who needed to be contacted regarding the last provision could no longer be contacted.

**GUIDELINES FOR MANY OTHER THINGS**

Additional or improved guidelines were also needed for student helpers, researchers, etc. For example, since the archives did not have its own copying equipment, even making copies of its materials could lead to embarrassing mistakes. Quite specific guidelines were required. This tended to be greater when photographs were involved. Concerns included where to get good copies made, how much to charge patrons, the conditions under which they could be used, what to do if the provenance, date, event, or identity of the individuals or things in them were unknown, etcetera. Things such as these required guidelines to help student assistants, for example, operate wisely, independently, and comfortably.

A related question concerned processing policy. How much time should the archives spend in processing photographs to discover the answers to some of the questions raised above--even if requests for copies of them had not yet been received? How much time should be spent on this kind of processing as compared to processing other kinds of materials? Particular NMU policies and guidelines regarding the arranging, describing, storing, and retrieving of accessions, of course, also had to be developed or fine-tuned. Guidelines were required too for servicing researchers with materials either by mail or in the particular circumstances which existed in the NMU archives. And so on.

Educating student assistants regarding these matters so that they might eventually become proficient enough to be able to work rather independently in some areas at least, all took time. Sometimes at this stage of the archives’ development it seemed that by the time I was done developing guidelines, etcetera, I had little time left to do much processing myself. That which I did, more often than not was on those aspects which I could do considerably more easily than my student helpers could, no matter how able they were. For example, my much longer association with the university than theirs made it considerably easier for me to write the historical introductions for accessions for university organizations, divisions, or departments, than it would have been for students with little or no experiential knowledge of them. Therefore, I did this kind of processing most of the time while my student assistants, on the other hand, did more of the data entering for accessions, typing that needed to be done, front desk work, etcetera.

It was necessary too that I continue to publicize the archives’ actual and potential services and needs to the university community. Of course, I continued also to have responsibilities in connection with my teaching and advising in the History Department, with department business and meetings, and for some of the department’s students, their organizations and activities.
AUTOMATING

Getting the archives to a position where it could begin automating the control of its holdings, and potentially positioning it to be capable of exporting data about those holdings in the future to various data bases, was another concern in 1986. Being pretty much computer illiterate myself when all of this began to happen, the prospect of having to develop sufficient competence in this area to be able oversee these things frightened me. This was so from the time I first heard that automation was the “wave of the future” during that archival workshop I took in 1983 until I felt that I had to do something about the challenge in 1986. I soon reached the conclusion that uncomfortable as I was with automation, for the archives’ sake, I had to embrace it and find a way to employ it in our processing as quickly as possible. Our consultant had greatly encouraged that. I could also see that this had the potential of positioning Northern at the cutting-edge of professional archival practice and thereby gain favorable recognition for itself from scholars and others.

Regarding the importance of automation, the consultant had this to say on pages 10-11 of his report:

The use of automation is becoming a standard practice in archives, especially with the introduction of the Library of Congress’s Machine Readable Cataloging Archives and Manuscript Control (MARC AMC) format. This format has already become the de facto standard for description of archival records in a machine readable format, and this should be implemented in whatever type of system is developed for use in the archives. Even if it is not possible to use an automated system initially, the manual systems should follow the MARC AMC format so the information can be easily transferred to an automated system. This will avoid the costly retrospective conversion to using the MARC AMC format with which established repositories are faced in order to use an automated system for archival and manuscript control. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

I discovered that by 1986, automating was on everyone’s mind in professional archival circles. It’s not surprising, therefore, that one of the main topics on the agenda of the Mid-West Archives Conference (MAC) at its May, 1986 meeting was automation and the use of the MARC AMC system for describing archival records in machine readable format. When I learned that, I felt that if anyone needed to attend that conference, it was me.

However, I also wanted to attend the Michigan Archives Conference of the Michigan Archival Association (MAA) in order to demonstrate appropriate interest and support for what my friends and colleagues in the MAA were doing and to help confirm to them the seriousness of our archival interests and efforts at Northern. My contractual travel funds however were only sufficient to cover my trip to the MMA conference. Therefore on April 17 I sent Donovan a memo asking if he would cover my expenses to attend the MAC. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-21 He readily agreed. It revealed once again that when he was in a position to do so, he always was ready to support efforts that would help me move our archival endeavor forward.
My experience at the MAC convinced me that if there was any way to obtain a computer immediately, as well as to begin immediately to describe the holdings of the archives in accordance with the MARC AMC format that I needed to do so. As a consequence, I got in touch with Professor Fred Joyal of the University’s Geography Department at the time. He was also chairman of the University’s Computer Committee. By this time the university had established a program for equipping the university with computers as quickly as it was able. Initially departments desiring a computer were expected to pay for part of it out of discretionary funds. Although the archives’ annual budget was only $2,000.00 at the time and there were no discretionary funds in it to speak of, Joyal felt that since there were no provisions for exceptions in the guidelines for acquiring computers, the archives also would have to pay a portion of the cost of any computer it acquired. He estimated that a computer which would be suitable for the archives would cost about $2,500.00. The share that departments had been paying for a computer, he informed me, was between $500.00 and $1000.00. CMPC, 1/12

Under the circumstances, I decided that by delaying the purchase of some things for the archives and still be operational for the time being, $500.00 out of its budget could be used toward the purchase of a computer. If the archives’ share of the cost came to more than that, I could pay the balance out of its budget for the following year. I do not recall if it was exactly on the basis of these figures that I was able to swing the purchase of a computer; anyway by September, 1986, the archives had a computer! An account of how this all came about is summarized in a Merit Award Application I submitted in September, 1986.

But I was not out of the woods yet, so to speak. Computer software developed specifically for archival purposes cost $1000.00. How was I going to finance that? Once again I decided to ask Donovan for help. In August I sent him a memo stating that if I remembered correctly, we had agreed when Honhart was at Northern that it made sense to purchase a suitable, recently developed, software package soon. One had just been field tested by Michigan State University. There was an introductory savings of $145.00 if it was purchased before September 1, 1986. I asked Donovan if he could possibly provide the archives with the necessary $855.00 out of his discretionary funds, and do so before the deadline. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 He promptly did. It was another example of his readiness to support the archives financially whenever he was in a position to do so.

**THE ARCHIVES “SHOP” BY THIS TIME**

The computer soon arrived. It was great to see it sitting there on one of the two desks in our main office, ready to be used for processing, correspondence, and eventually for executing searches. Eventually also, we were able to obtain a second computer and a printer in 1988. (See chapter 14.) We placed these on a third desk we had in the processing and storage room. We had plenty of desks for the amount of space we had. They had been in the rooms we “cobbled” together in 1984-85 to create the archives space we had. We were allowed to keep them.

I am including a couple of pictures here which will give readers a little better idea of what the archives looked like internally by this time. Actually the pictures were taken in 1992.
Except for more finding aids on the shelves, the place looked pretty much the same in 1992 as it did in 1986. The first picture is taken from the entry door into the archives. Off to the right is the receptionist’s desk with a visitors chair in front of it. Beyond that is the second main desk which was used by researchers at times and by processors at others. (We had no reading room.) Beyond that, and beyond the doorway straight ahead, is the processing and storage room. Part of the desk in it, a small processing table and some shelving in that
area are visible. As can be seen, the place was well lit and appropriately carpeted. The atmosphere was pleasant.

The second picture was taken from the north wall of the main room of the archives. Part of the receptionist’s desk and the entry door to the archives are off to the left although that door is not visible in this picture; the entry door to the processing and storage room is off to the right. Straight ahead, on shelves and in drawers, are some of the finding aids and reference materials we had been creating, or had accumulated. Along the north wall slightly back of me as I took this picture were four filing cabinets, not visible, of course. Also to my back as I took the picture was the doorway that lead into my joint Archives/History Department office. This little “shop,” while still short on some things, was still another significant aid in the effort to get at least some small scale processing done.
STUDENT HIRING POLICY AND JOB APPLICATION FORMS

Prior to the fall of 1986, I had only a very elementary kind of a student job application form. Despite this, I had been fortunate to have been able to obtain some good student help—mostly by word of mouth. An experience in the fall of 1986 caused me to realize that the archives needed a well-conceived, purposeful student job application form—one that would give me a pretty clear picture of how well a student assistant applicant would be able to help meet the needs of the archives. In addition to a better application form, I also decided on a testing process which would help me determine that.

The experience I had in the fall of 1986 was this. A young man I will call “Bill” walked into the archives looking for student employment just when I needed some. He was full of confidence about how well he could do the job, how interested he was in historical preservation, etcetera. I had him fill out my sketchy student job application form; it told me very little about his abilities. Without any testing, I hired him; I took him at his word.

It became evident very quickly that I had made a huge mistake. Even when he was shown how deficient his work was, it was difficult to get him to see that he was not qualified to do archival processing. Furthermore, he took the liberty of building expectations with individuals in the Marquette area to the effect that Northern wanted their materials. He did this without first discussing with me the appropriateness of accepting any of these particular materials. As a consequence I had, in some cases, to disabuse these people of the false impressions he had given them. His actions also were out of harmony with university policy at this time of not accessioning non-university records except in exceptional cases. Furthermore, I discovered that he had lied to me regarding his university record. It actually was poor, and he was at Northern only on a right-to-try, probationary basis. I had had no prior experience with firing anyone, and in this case it took quite some effort to get “Bill” to see that we could not use him in the archives.

Despite the experience just related, “Bill” actually made a contribution to the future well-being of the archives. It was as a result of this experience that I decided to craft an application form that would enable me to identify students who would best be able to meet the needs of the archives. Ordinarily, I gave preference to hiring freshmen or sophomores. If they could promise to continue working for the archives until they graduated, and if they worked out well, that extended period of experienced help they would provide would be very beneficial. Furthermore, as a student’s competency developed and trustworthiness became evident, he or she could be left in charge of the archives when I could not be there.

With these guidelines in place, all of the students I hired after that were excellent assistants. That is with the exception of one particular student who had an attitude problem although he too also was an able person. Daniel Trucyey and Barry James were a couple of those excellent student assistants I hired. They excelled so well in this line of work, that after they gained some additional training and experience elsewhere, both of them eventually became archives/museum directors in the Marquette area.
To the extent that my budget for student help allowed it, from 1987 on, this began to provide me with some freedom from having to be in the archives during the whole summer. Still, even with the aid of some student help, I continued to spend considerable amounts of time in it during the summer months—although considerably more some summers than others depending on the issues before the archives at any particular time. Sometimes I came in to take care of correspondence in order for it to be done in a timely manner. At times it was to advance the interests of the archives in some other way. At other times it was to coach or work with a student, perhaps on some new processing project they were about to begin. There also were times I needed to be there to man the archives when student help was unavailable, and so forth. In any case, I usually dropped by at least once a week to see how things were going.

A MERIT AWARD APPLICATION—A TACTIC WHICH FAILED BUT STILL HAD ITS REWARDS

In the fall of 1986, I decided to apply for a Faculty Merit Award, as already indicated above. A primary reason for applying was my feeling that I had at least a fair chance of winning an award on the basis of outstanding service to the university connected primarily with my archival efforts. If I won, my thinking was that the financial stipend associated with the award would compensate me somewhat for having worked without pay on archival concerns during the past two summers as well as for part of the summer of 1983. I thought that evaluators would find that fact alone quite meritorious. Although I did not win an award, I am quite sure they did. (I had felt constrained to work to build and maintain a good reputation for the archives during the summers even though it was without pay).

However, in order to have a chance of winning the award, I knew that I had to provide considerably more evidence of meritorious conduct. I had to provide evidence of what had actually been accomplished thus far on the archives front as well as evidence of meritorious activity on the teaching front. Based on this logic, the following are some of the things I mentioned in my application:

In order to help develop an archives, something which my department and others considered important to the university from an academic point of view, I have been willing, in effect, to cut short my career as a historian in mid-stream. I put my research and publication efforts as a historian on hold in order to focus my professional efforts on my development as archivist and on the development of the archives. CMPR, 2/13

In terms of meritorious service to Northern and the scholarly community, I mentioned the following:

I have launched a program for Northern, which if adequately valued and supported, will give Northern a university-wide records management program of which she can be proud, and which she really ought to have. The ground work has also been laid for Northern to become a repository for public records and for the valuable manuscript collections that have been generated in this region. These are... [things]
which, if properly exploited and supported, could generate a lot of visibility and good will for Northern.

I also mentioned that with just the modest support that Northern had given the archives so far, the archives had already received inquiries from scholars as far away as the University of Minnesota and Cornell University. With just that modest support Northern had also already acquired a document that had turned out to be a real gem and which the Center for Immigrant Studies at the University of Minnesota would soon be coming to microfilm. Furthermore, because the archives existed, various entities in the Upper Peninsula that were concerned about the handling of their valuable materials in a responsible way, had already also contacted Northern about help with that.

I also mentioned, of course, the grant I had obtained to bring a professional consultant to the university at no cost to it, and which was helping the archives get off on the right foot. I mentioned too some of the things I had been trying to do to implement the consultant’s recommendations. This included expanding the archival space which would make the introduction of a professional records management program possible at Northern. Also included was the acquisition of the equipment needed for automating the description and control of Northern’s records and those of others.

I mentioned as well a service initiative that I was preparing on behalf of those involved in historical preservation throughout the U.P. “This past winter and summer,” I stated, “I have done the preparatory work for hosting an archival workshop at Northern on September 26. Through this effort, we have contacted every known archives, historical society, museum, and library [in our region] as well as individuals with potential interest. The effort has made all of these [individuals and] groups aware that the state’s professional archival association was cooperating with Northern in co-sponsoring this event. It has also made people in the U.P. aware that Northern, for the first time as far as is known, is reaching out... in this way to offer its help to the people of our region.”

Finally, I mentioned that along with these archives-related activities, I had continued to share equally with the full-time members of the History Department in carrying the load of on-going department responsibilities although I was on two-thirds release-time from the department. These included such things as regular History Department and undeclared student advising, History Day and high school scholarship judging known as Triple A Scholarship judging, helping to prepare students for the Honor’s Banquet, accompanying some of them to it, and offering as many one-on-one directed studies as the full-time members of the History Department were offering. I stated that I was more than happy to help with these directed studies in order that we as an institution might demonstrate our sensitivity and willingness to help students with special programmatic desires and needs. Virtually all of these directed studies were offered gratis over-and-above the regular work load of the members of the department.

As I have said, I did not win a merit award. That was a disappointment. The summer hours I had put in working on archives’ business remained uncompensated. On the other hand, I was well compensated in a sense. That is, from the satisfaction I received from doing the
careful review required in filling out the application and from being reminded of what had thus far been accomplished. While there was still a long way to go, too, given where I started from and with the considerable amount that had been accomplished, it was a real morale booster. It helped considerably with generating the stamina it was going to take to continue press on during the difficult days that lay ahead—although I had no idea of how difficult they would be. At this point I was quite optimistic about how well things would be going in the future. The optimism was based in large part on the additional “tools”—some of them identified in this chapter—I had been able to get in place in 1986. I felt they would be a significant aid toward accomplishing some well-directed, well-managed professional progress.

In the next chapter we turn to a workshop which we at Northern and the Michigan Archival Association sponsored for individuals involved with historical preservation efforts in the U.P. For me and others, it also turned out to be a great source of satisfaction. This also created optimism regarding the future.
CHAPTER 11
THE 1986 BASIC ARCHIVES WORKSHOP: SURPRISING INTEREST
AND APPRECIATION

The workshop referred in the previous chapter turned out to be one of the most exhilarating aspects of my archival experiences in 1986. It is true that to become involved in this endeavor I had to employ a rather loose interpretation of the Archives Policy Statement and of the Consultant’s recommendations for the archives at this stage of its development. But right from its beginning, one of the justifications advanced for the existence of the archives was to serve not only Northern’s needs, but also that of the region in which it existed. Throughout the U.P. quite a number of individuals or small groups were engaged in seeking to preserve at least some of the records of their local history. Usually, however, they had little or no training for doing so. While very dedicated, often they also were quite perplexed and distressed. Were they collecting the most valuable things? Were they cataloging and preserving them properly? Was there any help they could tap into at their level of operations?

Often they were only dimly aware of the large archival conferences which met regularly in the state or elsewhere in the Midwest and where they would have been able to get some help. Or, if they were quite aware of them, they still could not, for various reasons, attend them.

I do not recall with certainty where I got the idea of having that archival workshop. I know I spoke to Theresa Sanderson Spence, the Director of the Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections at Houghton, Michigan, about such things at times as we travelled together to archival conferences in Lower Michigan. She had a particularly keen empathy for U.P. individuals who were seeking to preserve their local history. She was from the U.P. and had a degree in Library and Archival Science from Wayne State University. If we decided to have such a workshop she agreed to be one of the instructors.

On the other hand, a memo dated December 9, 1985 I sent to Ruth Roebke-Berens, head of the History Department, suggest that the idea may originally have come from her. This even though in my opinion it seems more likely that it would have come from Spence. It read as follows:
It’s an interesting possibility. I agree that might provide an appreciated service to U.P. people in archival or related fields and it would provide our archives with visibility. Perhaps a rather general, one-day workshop could be sponsored the first time. From the response, polling those who attend, etc. it would be possible to determine whether there was interest in an on-going annual or bi-annual workshop and whether the interest of subsequent workshops might be in more specialized topics.

If we hosted it, it probably should be in the spring or early summer. That would give us time to publicize it well and would increase the chance of accommodating weather. I would be willing to work with Theresa on organizing and promoting it. The critical thing is whether we can get enough support to bring in a top-notch person for the first event. If we make a good impression then it could become an ongoing thing. The minimum you could expect such a person to work for would be $200.00 to $300.00 per day. You’d have to pay them for more than a day because of the travel time involved. I’d say with their transportation and accommodations, we’d be talking about $800.00 to $1,000.00.

There would be some expenses in publicizing it too—printing, mailing, phoning, etc. I could use my archival help for the labor providing it’s done here and providing it is not too much.

Ruth, I’d say the ball is in the Vice-President’s corner or someone else who has money with which he or she is willing to part.

My impression is that if we could get a Phil Mason type the first time, it would be the best. DHRH, 2/21, 24-04-18

I suggested Phil Mason because he was a historian at Wayne State, and he was also very interested in archival matters and in certain aspects of U.P. history. I felt he was the kind of person who could make a good impression during this very first attempt at this.

If the idea for having a U.P. archival workshop came first from Roebke-Berens, it may be that it was stimulated by an invitation letter on September 3, 1985 from Martha Bigelow, Director of the Michigan Bureau of History. In it she invited Roebke-Berens to become a member of Michigan’s NHPRC State Advisory Board. Following this Roebke-Berens sent a memo to President Appleberry on September 17, 1985 asking for his support. Part of her memo to him read as follows:

I would like to accept this position, both as a means of guiding the development of our own university archives and also to promote Northern to the history people down state. Good relations with this constituency could serve the interests of the university in the future, as in our quest in funding for the renovation of Longyear-Pierce halls.
I am seeking university sponsorship for this activity and ask that you bring my request to the attention of the President’s Council. The Advisory board meets three to five times a year in Lansing. Thus the cost for transportation and meals would range from $894 to $1,490. [DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18]

In the end, Roebke-Berens did not become a member of that Advisory Board. This experience, however, may well have stimulated her to think of additional ways Northern could be helping to preserve the history of the U.P. Out of that, the concept of hosting workshops at Northern could have emerged. Then she might have broached the idea to me as suggested in my memo of December 9.

Before moving on to discuss additional planning for the workshop—which finally did materialize—it is interesting to note a few of the comments Martha Bigelow made in her September 3 memo to Roebke-Berens with regard to what had been happening at Northern on the archival front.

I want you to know how pleased I am with the progress of Northern Michigan University in establishing a university archives. As you may already know, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission’s State Advisory Board was very supportive of the recent grant proposal submitted... [to] the NHPRC by Northern Michigan University. The development of a university archives, manuscript collecting program and a regional depository for public records would be very positive for both the University and the Mid-Upper Peninsula area. [DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18]

**PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP**

By January 1986 a decision had been reached to proceed with the workshop if we could figure out how to fund it. By that time it had been decided that Northern—the most centrally located possibility—would be the venue, that it would be a full-day affair with several topics covered and that there would be two instructors instead of one. Theresa Sanderson Spence would be one them. She in turn recruited Patricia Bartkowski, a Library and Archival Science Professor at Wayne State University, to be the second one. Since the workshop was to be held at Northern, this meant that I needed to figure out how to generate sufficient support for it, contact potential attendees, and make arrangements for hosting the event. A tentative date was set for May.

As noted above, I projected that the cost of the workshop would be approximately $1,000.00. The History Department volunteered to cover $350.00. We projected that there would probably be about twenty-five attendees. By charging a fee of $10.00 per person, we projected that an additional $400.00 would be needed to cover all additional expenses.
Again I turned to Alan Donovan for help. This was January. This time, however, he said that he could not help. The university’s “funds were frozen,” he wrote. DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07 Despite this, Roebke-Berens decided to make an additional appeal to him. In a March 3 memo she wrote, “Our department believes that this workshop would be of value not only to our external constituency but would give visibility to Professor Maier’s work within the university community... We...ask that you consider supporting the additional $400.00 needed to host this workshop.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

Donovan replied, “As I indicated in my memorandum to Dr. Maier, I will not be in a position to make such a commitment until the end of the fiscal year. Again I appreciate the contribution such a workshop would make to the university and the community, and am hopeful that support of such an activity will be possible at a future time.” AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12 The end of the fiscal year was in June. The upshot was this; we decided to postpone the workshop until September 26. Early during that new fiscal year, I made another appeal to Donovan. This time he readily provided us with the additional $400.00 needed.

We sent out three hundred invitations to various individuals and organizations. Happily, more than thirty came—from places as widely separated as Ironwood and Sault Ste. Marie. I asked Donovan if he would be willing to open the workshop with a few welcoming remarks. At first it appeared that he would not be able to comply. He would be out of town. He therefore decided to pen the following gracious note to be read to the attendees:

I wish to extend to you my official and personal greetings as you begin this workshop. I would have done so in person, but at this time I am in Lansing for a meeting.

It is my hope that our workshop will aid you... [with an] understanding of the structure and procedures of archival work. As you well know, gathering and assessing the documents of our past is as important work as it is complicated. But it is very essential. More than one of the great historical figures has warned us that those who are ignorant of the past are condemned to relive it. Your efforts will help assure us that at least we will not be ignorant of our history, particularly that of our beloved Upper Peninsula.

Again, I salute you for your interest and commitment. I trust you will find your visit to our campus fruitful and enjoyable and hope you will visit us again in the near future. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

As it turned out, Donovan was able to be on campus after all on the day the workshop began. Consequently, he delivered his greetings in person. Attendees were very impressed that a top university official cared enough about their particular concerns to spend some time mingling with them, welcoming them, and assuring them of the university’s interest and support for their efforts.
MEMO AND LETTERS OF APPRECIATION

Once the workshop was all over, I sent Donovan a note thanking him for the great touch and the good feeling that his supportive acts brought to our archival effort. Theresa Spence did so also. She wrote as follows:

As a participant in the archives workshop I wish to congratulate you and the rest of your staff on a job well done. I was impressed by the large number of participants from many of the historical societies scattered from both ends of the Upper Peninsula.

The local arrangements were wonderful, especially in terms of the meeting room, the luncheon, and other creature comforts. Professor Maier was a great help in making the workshop a worthwhile educational experience. This type of activity is sorely needed.

I also had the opportunity to tour the Archives at the Learning Resources Center. You are fortunate to have such a good beginning. It is encouraging to see an operation get started on the right track. With this in consideration, the potential for growth is a reality. Best of luck with this program.

Another individual who sent Donovan a letter was Ruth MacFarlane of Mass City, Michigan. She wrote:

Last Friday my husband, Richard, and I attended the Archival Workshop as representatives of the Ontonagon County Historical Museum. We found the presentations extremely valuable, giving us much needed information to help us preserve the materials that come into our hands.

We were also grateful for the cordial welcome given us by you and other members of your university, and for the pleasant surroundings.

We congratulate you on the establishment of archives at NMU. It has been my experience that the presences of well-run archives and of a herbarium are indications of excellence and scholarship in a university.

Personally, I received several letters of thanks as well. One was from Professor Patricia Bartkowski of Wayne State. A portion of it read:

I hope that you have taken a well-deserved rest. Your preparations and leg work helped to insure the success of the archival workshop. I have conducted previous workshops, so believe me when I say your facilities and the whole operation were first class. The University, the MAA, the participants, Theresa and I all owe you a vote of thanks. Without your initiative, followed by your careful attention to details, there would not have been a workshop.
I was glad you were able to take us to your “shop.” Considering the University Archives’ newness, you have accomplished much. I hope the administration recognizes this and continues to give the archives the support it needs as well as deserves. We both know that without funding and adequate space, an Archives cannot achieve its full potential.\textsuperscript{CMPC, 2/12}

In a letter to me, Ruth MacFarlane praised the “clear, well-organized presentations of Spence and Bartkowski” as being among the benefits of having attended the workshop, but also the chance to meet with “others concerned with the preservation and management of archival materials.” \textsuperscript{CMPC, 2/12} Florence Meron of Manistique, Michigan wrote, “Many thanks for a program well done… I hope to put a lot of the ideas to good use. LOOK FORWARD TO THE NEXT WORKSHOP!!!” \textsuperscript{CMPC, 2/12}

Mary Kordes of Ahmeek, Michigan wrote, “I want to express my appreciation to you for the effort put into organizing and hosting yesterday’s Basic Archival Workshop. It truly filled a need for all of us untrained ‘archivists’. Preservation of our heritage is so important, but without guidelines it’s an overwhelming task.” She went on, “I hope we can look forward to more workshops in the future. I feel a focus on the arrangement and cataloguing of collections would be helpful.” \textsuperscript{CMPC, 2/12}

John Maitland, President of the Board of Trustees of Marquette County Historical Society, wrote:

\begin{quote}
The sponsorship of Northern Michigan University…along with the Michigan Archival Association, is greatly appreciated by the folks at the Marquette County Historical Society as well as by Mrs. Maitland and myself. We all have agreed that the efforts put forth by Theresa Spence of Michigan Technological University and Patricia Bartkowski of Wayne State under your sponsorship were well done and well received by all who attended this basic archival workshop.

You and Northern Michigan University have done a great service to the archivists and historians of the Upper Peninsula and I am sure that I write for all of those who attended in asking that similar seminars be held in the future. \textsuperscript{CMPC; DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18}
\end{quote}

David Halkola, Professor of History at Michigan Technological University, expressed similar sentiments. He wrote, “I did want to commend you, Northern Michigan [University] and the resource people for the very fine workshop I was able to attend recently. Both NMU and the Michigan Archival Association deserve credit for having made this valuable information available to so many people.”

\textbf{THE BENEFITS OF THE MEMOS AND LETTERS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF NORTHERN’S ARCHIVES}

Frequently, letters such as the ones just noted were sent directly to the members of the University’s Administration or copied to them. Halkola’s letter, for instance, was copied to Ruth Roebke-Berens and Maitland’s to President Appleberry, Donovan, and Ruth Roebke-
Berens. If Northern saw as part of its mission, service to the region in which it was located—something which it frequently declared—these letters must have left no doubt that one of the ways such service could be rendered was by supporting the historical preservation efforts of the region.

Shortly after the workshop concluded, I used quotes from these letters to encourage Northern to increase its support for its archives and for the archival efforts of others throughout the U.P. For example, I made an appeal to the members of the Task Force on the Future of the University. The subject of my memo to them was, “The public service and the good-will potential of an on-going, adequately developed archives collection and outreach program at Northern Michigan University.”

In the opening paragraph of that memo, I stated that “The attached letters provide an indication of the kind of appreciation Northern can continue to reap if she follows up and expands on the good beginnings that have already been made in providing services of an archival nature to the people of this region.” I then focused on the feelings of need for professional guidance and help expressed in the letters. I continued: “Northern could choose to help people in this kind of need merely by facilitating information sharing through such things as workshops. But if it really wants to enhance its image in this area of activity, it will also develop its own archives to a level where it becomes an example in the region of what can and should be done. To achieve that, however Northern will need to make a considerably larger financial commitment to its archives. Two or three full-time staff members would be a minimum to staff such an archives. It would cost Northern more... Nevertheless, Northern should be urged to make the necessary expenditures. The benefits of such a policy would, I believe, outweigh the benefits received from many expenditures of a similar size or larger made elsewhere.”

I closed by saying that “Northern is the logical institution in our region for... [the] task just described. I hope that Northern decides to rise to the opportunity.”

That larger commitment to the archives still took some time to materialize; but a few people were getting the message. Eventually they were able to help start “the ball rolling” toward that larger commitment. However, before that, some “dark days” still lay ahead. In fact, for a time, Northern’s commitment became less. For me that was a particularly difficult time because I had no way of knowing when that down-turn came, that brighter days would eventually emerge again, and that the reversal was only temporary. We now turn to that part of the story.
CHAPTER 12

That Basic Archives Workshop experience created some awesome good feelings for me. It was so affirmative—so encouraging of our archival efforts. The entire historical preservation community in the U.P. seemed thrilled with what Northern was doing in this field. I hoped this would help significantly with convincing the still unconvinced of the positive role a professional university archives operation could play at Northern and in the U.P. in general.

There were additional reasons too to feel good about our archival endeavors. All indications were that my colleagues in the Department of History were pleased with the progress I was making under the circumstances, despite of how far short it fell of the goals of the 1984 proposal discussed in chapter 6. So was Donovan. Then too, opportunities continued to emerge for making a case for greater support for the archives. For example, during 1986 I appeared before, or sent memoranda to four of the different university subgroups considering the future of the university. CMPC, 2/12 Regarding one of these appearances, Roebke-Berens had this to say. "I do so very much appreciate your work in making the initial meeting of the Commission on the Future the success that it was.... I know that I will be able to call on you once again for the final meeting of the commission late next fall.” CMPC, 2/12 I was optimistic that these participations in various forums, as well as other factors, would gradually heighten the consciousness of the university community to the value of an archives—and to the need for more adequate support. I was quite confident that the consultant’s visit also had had this effect. This, in turn, I hoped would affect positively the support the members of the President’s Council would be willing to give the archives in the near future.

I felt good too that we had “bit the bullet” on the automation end of things for describing our archival holdings. We were set to employ the most current, advanced means for doing this as far as I knew. To help introduce me to this automation, I was thrilled to have been able to hire John Wrathall, a brilliant transfer student with excellent computer skills. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18 While he did not qualify under my new policy of only employing students who could continue with the archives for at least two years, I quickly realized that it would be foolish not to make an exception in this case. With his computer skills, he was going to be a great help with getting our automation efforts under way. To assist him with the latest thinking regarding archival automation, I had him accompany me to a Midwest Archives Conference in Hudson, Wisconsin in late 1986. Some of its sessions focused specifically on automation.

In general, I was feeling that a good foundation had been laid in our archival endeavors for the creation of a professional operation. Now it was pretty much a matter of just getting on with things at an accelerated, practical pace—especially with processing the materials
already in the archives. That could build a reputation of good service to the public and that, I was confident, would help generate more support for the archives.

We did have enough university records, faculty papers and collections, etcetera, to keep us busy at that hoped-for accelerated pace, I believed. We continued to receive small collections from various offices. One quite sizeable amount of materials about the U.P. was donated by Professor Russ Magnaghi who was anxious to have them made available to his students quickly. As implied, my hope was to have a substantial pool of research materials ready to use as quickly as possible. That, after all, was the most basic justification for the existence of the archives. Besides, I was not interested in spending the rest of my career associated with an archives with no real significance and just marking time—and that at a barely viable level.

THE CONCERN ABOUT PERMANENT HELP

Given these views and feelings, acquiring some permanent help became an ever more urgent goal. It would help with the acceleration of things and assure greater consistency and efficiency of operations. Furthermore, the consultant had recommended it. He had recommended that a full-time person head the archives and that a secretary, as he put it, assist that person; or if I continued to head it on a part-time basis, then a full-time secretary needed to be hired to assist me. (See chapter 9). Personally, however, I felt that a clerical person rather a secretary would be more helpful. Such a person also should not be subject to being “bumped” out of their position in the archives. Such a person would be able to help oversee all aspects of the operations of the archives and participate in processing accessions. I think it is quite probable that the consultant had such a person in mind too, even though he referred to the individual as a secretary.

Another reason I hoped for this kind of help was because no matter how great my student help was, it always was only temporary. By this time, my budget provided for two student helpers, each working from fifteen to twenty hours per week.

A BOMBSHELL IS UNEXPECTEDLY DROPPED: THE HOURS ISSUE

Given the consultant’s recommendation for more help and in view of the understandings given to me in the 1984 Proposal, I was certainly not expecting that shortly after the consultant’s recommendations were submitted, the number of hours that I would be given to work on archival concerns would be cut. Yet that is what happened.

In November, 1986, Ruth Roebke-Berens, the History Department’s head, made an announcement at a department meeting that greatly disturbed me. It was tantamount to dooming the archives to a decreased rate of growth—that is, at least, until something changed. Furthermore, no assurances accompanied the announcement that this would be reversed any time soon. In the past, it will be recalled, that Roebke-Berens had done a great deal to help get the archives launched, and then off the ground. She had been a truly great ally in the effort; now this. It seemed so contrary to all of that. I was stunned. I found it unbelievable.
The announcement had to do with the teaching schedule she had drawn up for the members of the department for the next two academic years, 1987-88 and 1988-89 respectively. She had cut my release-time to work on archival matters from two-thirds to one-third. Given the assurances I had been given at the time I agreed to become the archivist, I had not imagined that anything like this would ever happen, especially from a member of the History Department. I was dumbfounded. I had the impression that when Glenn, Vice President for Academic Affairs, had approved the History Department’s recommendation in 1984 to give me two-thirds release-time to develop the archives, that this was an ongoing commitment. Now this, just at a time when I was hoping to be able to begin to really ratchet up our activity in the archives—and when I felt too that the archives would soon be in line for some additional—hopefully—permanent help.

My department head did sweeten the pill a little by promising that I would only have one class preparation. Nonetheless, this meant that for the next two years at least I would be required to teach eight hours per week. At that time, this was two-thirds of the normal work load in the History Department. I was to teach two sections of Western Civilization Since 1500. This course often had a large enrollment of 40 to 50 students—sometimes 60 or more.

It was great to learn that I would only have one preparation. But with the teaching methods I employed I could see that a second section was still going to be a lot of extra work and would rob me of time and energy that I would no longer be able to expend on the archives. An example of a syllabus I used for this class can be found with the documents associated with this chapter.

Students who signed up for Western Civilization Since 1500 often did so to fulfill a liberal studies requirement required of all students in order to graduate—regardless of their major. Students who signed up for this course often were not particularly interested in history and often intended to put very little effort into the class. To assure that a student did a sufficient amount of reading to gain an acceptable appreciation of the thought, character, diversity, and accomplishments of western man, I usually gave a weekly quiz except during the weeks when a major exam was given. I usually gave four or five major exams during a semester. All of this entailed a lot of preparation and grading to say nothing of the counseling, advising, etcetera, involved. To forestall cheating, these quizzes and exams often had to be different for each section I taught and different from one semester to another. It is easy to see that with this methodology and with large classes, a second section of a class would still entail a lot of extra work, even if only one preparation was involved.

Later on, in the spring of 1987, Roebke-Berens wrote in her Faculty Evaluation Report of me, that while she felt my success in developing the skills of an archivist and of developing the archives itself had been “phenomenal given the problems of staff, space, and time,” she felt she had to make the decision she did. “As head of the department, my chief responsibility is building a viable program for our students,” she wrote. She went on to explain that “an increase in the number of our students, new demands in teacher supervision [that is, because more history students were going into teaching], and released
time for other department members... lead to a need for all our faculty to share... [more of] the teaching load.” She added that “I believe that Professor Maier should be able to handle two surveys while still devoting time for the archives. The department would have no expectations of scholarly activity but would urge Professor Maier to continue to develop expertise as an archivist. I do support Professor Maier’s request for a half-time staff position in the archives. Such assistance would permit Professor Maier to divide his time between teaching and archival supervision.” CMPR, 2/13

In fairness to my former department head, I acknowledge that in her position, she was “between a rock and a hard place,” as we say in 2015. She was a member of the university’s administration and had obligations to meet its expectations. Being the President’s Assistant for Strategic Planning further obligated her in that way. In the interests of both the administration and the members of the History Department, she also had a responsibility to see that all classes were covered. The need to provide students with options and some variety in the classes offered was another important factor. To do otherwise meant that enrollments in the History Department would likely have dropped and some faculty of the department would possibly have been retrenched.

On the other hand, Roebke-Berens had an obligation also to honor previous understandings which she, the administration, and her department had all been a party to, and which now were in conflict with what current conditions seemed to require. She was indeed, as already noted, “between a rock and hard place.”

The situation was further complicated by the following factors. Recently the president had hired Mr. John Hammang to head up a new division of his administration known at the time as Human Resources. Later, Data Information Systems was added to that title as well. One of the things Hammang’s division was charged with doing was to seek to reduce personnel costs as much as possible. One of the ways of doing this was by offering senior members of the faculty buy-outs. Another was by reducing the number of faculty a department had whose credit-hour production was below a certain level. MMJ, May 13, 1988; CMPC, 2/12 One of the ways the latter was accomplished was by not refilling positions vacated because of retirement. In the History Department, Professor Stephen Barnwell was planning to retire at the end of the 1986-87 academic year; in the judgment of the Human Resources Office the credit-hour production of the History Department did not merit the refilling of his position.

This was the most important reason why Roebke-Berens suddenly saw that she would soon have difficulty covering all of the department’s courses. In making its decision, Human Resources failed to take into account—or chose not to take into account—the following fact: The university administration had granted at least five members of the History Department release time from teaching obligations to do good, and in some cases, contractually obligated things that did not produce credit-hour production. This, of course, included the two-thirds release-time that had been given to me. Interestingly, it also included the one-third release-time that had been given to Roebke-Berens to be an assistant to the President, and, of course, the one-third release-time that had been given to her to be department head. On the surface, all of this made the History Department’s credit
hour production look poor. Roebke-Berens herself could have improved the situation by deciding not to continue to give one-third of her time to the president’s projects. That would have interfered with her career ambitions, and no one wanted to deny her that. As for the president, his desire to continue to have the services of Roebke-Berens had, in a sense, a direct impact on the archives—on the hours I was going to be able to give to it.

The following facts will help to clarify the situation more. By late 1986 the work associated with The Commission on the Future of the University which Roebke-Berens had been helping to direct was winding down. So the president, wanting to keep her available to himself and to other members of the President’s Council and to give her additional opportunity for executive and administrative experiences (for she was hoping to obtain a job somewhere in the future doing this type of work fulltime), assigned her for the time being, to assist John Hammang in dealing with matters having to do with Human Resources. This was on a one-third release-time basis from the History Department. Human Resources, of course, was the very administration division whose policy was causing such consternation for me, with its wish not to refill that position about to be vacated by Barnwell.

Roebke-Berens obviously had a conflict of interest on her hands. If Hammang’s policy was going to result in the History Department having to renege on promises it had previously made to give me two-thirds release-time to develop an archives, this was problematic, if not downright wrong. Roebke-Berens was really the key person to take a stand with the administration on this matter. I am quite sure Donovan would have supported her in insisting that the hours given to the archives could not be cut. I think that then President Appleberry would have supported the continuation of the two-thirds release-time for the archives and made an effort to find some way to fund that. When just a year later John Kuhn, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, took a strong stand for a full-time position for the archives, Kuhn’s view started the “ball rolling” in the direction of funding a full-time position for the archives. Things along this line showed that there was some room for flexibility and adjustment in the administration’s financial situation when a cause seemed important enough. In this case, however, Barnwell’s position was left unfilled, and no other adjustments were made that would have permitted keeping the promise of maintaining my two-thirds release-time for work in the archives.

The decision to reduce the number of hours I would work in the archives threw me into a quandary about my future as well. Was it really wise for me to pour much more energy into developing myself as an archivist? Another need might well soon arise that might result in me being pulled out of the archives altogether. Perhaps I should get back to continue my career as a historian, scholar, and teacher—try to recover what had been lost in those areas—and let my concern for the progress in the archives slide? Perhaps I should quit the archives altogether? But if I did that, what were the chances that the university would continue the archives cause? If credit-hour and revenue production were such all-important criteria, would the archives effort just be allowed to collapse if I ceased to hang in there and promote it as doggedly as I could? If it collapsed, how embarrassing it would
be to the university, and how wrong for its academic enhancement and stature would that be?

Should I really allow such a thing to happen if there was anything I could do to prevent it? How would friends in the history preservation community of Michigan feel about a university which it had already helped so considerably to get the archives launched, and had already expressed such appreciation for its archival efforts if it now just abruptly dropped the cause? How genuine would they feel that we “Yoopers” really were about Northern desiring to become a finer academic institution on par with those down-state? How inclined would they be to help us in the future?

In the end I decided that I had to stay with our archival effort—at least for the time being—until I had further evidence of how things were going to play out.

THE PERMANENT STAFF ISSUE

One reason Roebke-Berens said she did not see her decision as jeopardizing the future of the archives was because, as she had declared in the spring of 1987 in my Biannual Evaluation Report, that she supported the archives getting a half-time staff position to assist me. But that was little consolation to me. I knew there was virtually no chance of that happening for quite some time without views changing immediately and more action occurring to try and make that happen. Therefore, ever since I had agreed in November 1986 to accept under protest the reduced one-third release-time situation, I took every opportunity—in a more determined way than ever—to try to get the university to agree to grant that permanent position for the archives recommended by the consultant.

One of the results of that determination was some back and forth correspondence between Donovan and myself. In a reply Donovan made on March 5, 1987 to one of my memos, and which he also copied to Roebke-Berens, he made it clear that he felt there was no hope of obtaining funding for even a half-time permanent position for the archives during the next year and a half to help compensate for the decreased released time the History Department would be giving to the archives. (Interestingly, this memo was copied to Roebke-Berens at least two and one-half months before she said in her Spring 1987 Biannual Evaluation Report of me that she favored me getting a half-time position for the archives to compensate for the reduction of my hours there). “Positions for the next school year [1987-1988] have already been established,” Donovan had declared in that March 5 memo.

Donovan tried to console me with some kind words. “You have, as I have indicated several times to you, worked long and hard on this task—it is due to you that we have any sense of archival activity, much less the beginnings of one.” At the same time, however, he gave me his candid assessment of what the future development of the archives would likely be like. “...our progress has and will continue to be slow simply because of the pressure of other staffing needs,” he wrote.
THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT’S VIEW

It was gratifying to learn what the History Department’s Evaluation Committee in that same 1987 evaluation report wrote of me with regards to my work in the archives — that is with regards to the academic years, 1985-86 and 1986-87. And with regards to what it recommended regarding my future. Here, in part, is what Professor Fred Stenkamp, Chairman of the Department’s Evaluation Committee, wrote on behalf of the committee. It shows that the committee was in agreement with the requests I had made and sympathetic with the concerns I had raised:

It is apparent that the archives has been successfully begun with limited but temporarily adequate facilities. There has been successful promotion of the archival activities, and efforts to expand the collections are going forward. All of this under the leadership of Professor Maier. He should continue to be supported in these efforts.

It is in looking ahead that the most difficult question arises. Dr. Maier has raised a serious question about the future of his assignment as archivist and teaching historian. Quite understandably, he voices concerns about the direction of his career and the responsibilities which he will face as either historian or developer of the archives. Until the question of his assignment is clarified it is not possible for him intelligently to plan his professional development.

The Department strongly supports Professor Maier in his efforts to receive a clear and firm designation as to his future responsibilities at Northern Michigan University. He has performed with thorough professional competence as the first Director of the Archives. It is to be hoped that the administration will soon resolve the question of his assignment so that he can continue without ambiguity the efforts which have proved so successful to this point. The Department’s Evaluation Committee supports Professor Maier’s request to be returned to a two-thirds released time arrangement for archival work and that adequate permanent staff be allocated to the archives. CMPR, 1/13

Stenkamp’s sentiments had been expressed earlier too at a History Department meeting on March 19. Roebke-Berens was present at it. I had requested clarification about my appointment as archivist while at the same time being part of the History Department. I stated that since I had made a substantial personal commitment to the archives, I preferred to continue my efforts there on a two-thirds released-time basis. The department minutes then read, “The Department completely concurs with Cliff.” A motion by Magnaghi, seconded by Knight passed, endorsing the proposed report of the Evaluation Committee. It stated that “the archives needed adequate and on-going financial support so... [ it] can further develop.” DHRM, 15-02-06-07

These statements by the members of the History Department as a whole show that they were willing to take the risk of whatever might happen to the History Department’s
program, or to the job security of its members in order to keep the promises they had made about continuing to staff the archives up to the two-thirds released time level.

**A SECOND SHOCK—A REQUEST FOR TWO PREPARATIONS RATHER THAN JUST ONE**

In the fall of 1987, I received another request that was contrary to the understandings previously given. It will be recalled that Roebke-Berens had assured me earlier that if I agreed to teach two four-hour classes per week it would be of the same class—just one preparation would be involved. But during that fall of 1987, just as I had become somewhat reconciled to that situation, Roebke-Berens asked me to teach two different preparations during the first semester of 1988. Again I felt that I had to strongly object, even though she had compelling reasons for making the request. I sent her the following memo:

> So that you can made alternate plans, I want to let you know that after giving it more thought, I cannot agree to being responsible for two preparations in addition to being responsible for the archives. I'm sure you already know the reasons, but basically they are as follows:

> The same reasons continue to prevail that caused me to object to teaching a two-thirds load when the matter was discussed last semester.

> Though I strongly objected to going to a two-thirds teaching load, I finally agreed to do so, partly because of your promise that if I did I would only have one preparation. The attached teaching schedule you drew up last semester reflects that promise....

> For me to agree to two preparations would be for me to agree to a preparation load equal to that which my colleagues frequently carry. But in addition to that, caring for [the] various responsibilities associated with running the archives ties up most of my time during a normal week other than when I am teaching. This means that I have to do all of the homework associated with the courses I am teaching at night. [And on weekends, I might have added.] Under these circumstances, I am not willing to have two preparations. Considerations of health, sanity, and family forbid me from looking at this matter in any other way. I hope you understand. I would like to be cooperative, but sometimes situations arise in which a person cannot be.

**REVERSION OF THE REQUEST**

To her credit, Roebke-Berens reversed her decision. Of even more credit to her is this. She decided to work up and teach that second course herself. That course, Hitler's Germany, was a popular one; it always attracted a fairly large number of students. Therefore, she felt that we could not afford to cease offering it, both in the interests of students and in the interest of maintaining the History Department’s enrollment figures and credit-hour production. Actions along this line of she herself picking up courses that needed to be taught, resulted in her teaching at least five different courses, sometimes during the summers—although never more than one preparation per semester (As department head

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she, of course, was on a twelve month contract). All of this too was, of course, in addition to her being the assistant to the President for Strategic Planning and head of the History Department. As noted, she had been given one-third release-time to do each of these two things.

In June, 1988, things again changed somewhat for the academic year, 1988-89. Roebke-Berens continued to teach one history course per semester, but it appears it was done gratis—although maybe not. At that time she resigned from being head of the History Department and became a full-time member of the Appleberry administration as Acting Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Planning. She, however, retained the right to return to the Department of History at the end of that year, and she did.

In fairness to Roebke-Berens, it should be said too that the facts just presented show that she was not asking me to work any harder than she herself was willing work, and did.

COUNTERING THE FAILURE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL HELP FOR THE ARCHIVES

My efforts to prevent a reduction of the hours available to me to work in the archives had obviously failed. I continued, however, to be anxious to see the work in the archives move forward as much and quickly as possible. A way I could still hope to accomplish that was by continuing to seek to obtain some kind of permanent help for the archives. Just because Donovan informed me in his March 5, 1987 memo that none would be forthcoming for at least a year and a half, I was not ready to concede defeat. Nor was I when he had also tried to dissuade me at the time from further attempts to obtain additional permanent help by telling me that it would really not be of much value to the archives until it had been given additional space. “I should indicate again,” he had stated in his March 5 memo, “that space poses the major problem in the development of the archives—as it obviously does with other matters as well! My feeling is that although additional staffing of the nature you requested would certainly enhance the work of the archives, we must first resolve the issue of space in order to gain some sense of priority as well as visibility of this effort.”

In an April 14 memo I took issue with Donovan’s ideas that progress could not be made in the archives until it had additional space and that permanent staff of some kind would be of little value until then. I stated that while technically this might be so, “practically, it is surprising what improvising can do. If we had the space of just one additional office, we could stack a lot of stuff into it. Even without that, we will find a way to proceed by stacking processed material here and there. We do have enough space to process some materials; all we have to be concerned about is finding a place to stack processed stuff so it does not ‘eat up’ our work space.” DHRA 2/21, 24-04-18

While I wished that I could have been more agreeable with Donovan, I felt that I needed to let him and the administration know that I felt that more permanent help could indeed move the archival effort forward even before more space became available. At this critical juncture in the infancy of the archives, some permanent help could, I felt, get it to a point where it had more credibility, and as a consequence, a better chance for viability—even if
the conditions under which this happened were not ideal. My recent experience with the
reduction of the time that had been assigned to me to work in the archives made it clear
that even my own released time to work in it could not be certain. Only the
administration’s in-line budgeting for some kind of permanent help would give the
archives a better chance for viability.

THE CASUAL LABOR OPTION OR AN ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL (A/P)
POSITION

I informed Donovan once again, that in my opinion, the archives was close to the point
where it could begin making some significant positive contributions to the research
experience of students and of others. Even if it was given only some casual part-time
permanent help, such help, while not ideal, could be trained to perform archival functions
and thereby help to establish its creditability. Otherwise its viability would remain in
question.

Regarding the financing of such labor, in that April 14 memo to Donovan, I wondered too if
perhaps his office, or the Office of the School of Arts and Sciences, or the two of them
together “would be in a position to consider this ‘next best’ alternative, something on the
order of... [a] half-time casual labor position” for the archives? I worked out all of the
‘math,’ demonstrating that a half-time casual labor person would cost the university
considerably less than a regular half-time employee of some other kind.

I pointed out that if the university opted for a half-time casual labor position that would
mean that with only one-third of my salary now being spent on the archives in the coming
year (rather than two-thirds), the university would still be reducing its financial
commitment to the archival effort by a substantial amount. I also stated that I hoped “that
plans will begin... now that will result in two-thirds of my time being restored [to work] in
the archives by 1988-1989.” I included my hope that plans would be “initiated now... that
will assure [that] by then a fulltime secretary-archival assistant will be available.”

To the credit of the non-administration members of the History Department, even though,
in a sense, it was in their interest too to see me move back to doing more teaching, and
thereby help maintain the department’s credit-hour production, etcetera, they remained
firm in their commitment to give back to me the two-thirds released time promised me
when the archives was launched. Due to their resolve, good things came from that as we
will see.

Donovan was also coming around to launch an effort to improve the staffing situation in the
archives despite his earlier statements and the tight financial situation. A memo from him
to me approximately six months later and dated September 17, 1987 read as follows: “One
correction of a misperception you may have. You indicate in your last paragraph the
possibility of obtaining a full-time position for the archives. What I thought I had made
clear is that I would seek in the next year’s staffing plan a half-time A/P position. And there
is no guarantee about this either.” DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18
While this shows that Donovan had rejected the idea of a half-time casual labor position for the archives, it also shows that he had bought into the idea that a half-time permanent position for the archives was a necessity and also a possibility. And he was now prepared to try to get this item into the university's budget—something I do not believe he had ever felt comfortable trying to do previously, given all of the other financial pressures. Furthermore, he had opted for something better than my last request—that is for a half-time A/P position rather than for just a casual labor one. Still, as he implied, he could not guarantee that the other members of the President's Council would see things as he did, and approve of his request. Interestingly, it appears that they never really had to deal with the matter; furthermore it never happened. To advance his career, Donovan resigned from the university prior the beginning of 1988-89 academic year.

THE ARCHIVES' POSITION IN THE UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

In my earlier memo of April 14, 1987 to Donovan, I broached another subject which I strongly felt required action as well, and that the consultant had also indicated needed correcting. It was what I felt was the inadequate position the archives had in the university's administrative structure. I wrote:

If failure to obtain consideration for a [permanent] position [for the archives] next year was because I did not make the request early enough, may I point out that that would not have happened had I known when the request had to be in. The situation points up the anomaly of my position. I have to assume the responsibility of a department head, yet I am not privy to the information other department heads receive. That situation needs to be changed in the near future. The archives needs to be designated as a division of the university with a standing similar to that of the library.

I do not recall whether or not Donovan let me know at this point how he felt about this matter.

Later we will learn what his successors felt about this. My request on this was in line with the expectation given to me in the May 1984 Proposal as to what the situation was to be once the archives had been launched. That proposal, approved by Vice President Glenn, it may be recalled, stated that:

As the archives expands, the archives will become independent from the History Department with the archivist designated as an administrator and responsible to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

This envisions the archivist having the same standing in the university administrative structure as the director of the library. (See chapter 6).
THOUGHTS REGARDING PERSONALLY RESIGNING TO MAKE THE HIRING OF A YOUNG PROFESSIONAL ARCHIVIST POSSIBLE

Offering to resign from the university to make the funds available to hire a young full-time professional archivist to become the director of the archives was another possibility I mulled over in my mind at this time. An undated, roughed out, pencil written memo exists in my personal correspondence files to that effect. Until I did the research for this account, I had forgotten that I had ever entertained such thoughts. The memo was addressed to Roebke-Berens. Internal evidence indicates that it was written in early 1987; that is prior to the fall semester when my reduced time to work in the archives was scheduled to go into effect. The letter began as follows:

I have given the operation of the archives and the seeming crises for funds for the adequate development of the archives at Northern a great deal of thought.

The archives, in order to develop the way it should, and most economically, should have a full-time archivist and a permanent secretary. What... [has been] happening with part-time and temporary help, is that I... [have been] spending much too much time getting that help trained only to have it leave at the end of a semester or two. It is a waste of time and money.

I feel I have gotten the archives off to a good start.... The ground is set for rapid progress from here on out, given adequate personnel and support.

In a couple of years my salary will be approaching $40,000.00. My thinking is that if I would step down and allow for a junior trained archivist to be hired for a salary that would be about half of mine, it would be a service to NMU. For the same money it could hire not only a full-time archivist but also at least a part-time, perhaps a full-time young replacement for me in the History Department. To accomplish something like this, I would be willing to resign from Northern effective May 1987 providing Northern would agree to some sort of a buy-out program similar to what has been granted to others in the past year.

I never did send the memo to Roebke-Berens. One of the problems with my plan was that I only had nineteen years in at Northern, and to qualify for a buy-out an employee at this time had to have twenty. My memo indicates that I was wondering if Northern would make an exception for me and, in addition, provide me with some additional benefits to help sweeten the pill of sacrificing other benefits in order to be able to do this for the archives. I do not recall why I did not send the memo. Did I have second thoughts about the wisdom of doing this? Or did I find out, as a result of putting out feelers, that there was no realistic hope of this kind of an exception being made for me?

A TWELVE-MONTH CONTRACT AND SUMMER PAY

Another way the university could have improved the staffing situation in the archives was by placing me on a twelve-month contract rather than a ten-month one. That did not happen either. Even with only that one-third release-time to work in the archives, I
continued to try to keep up the appearance before Northern’s public that the archives was
open all year long. As suggested in chapter 10, I became increasingly adept at covering the
summer months by using reliable student help when it was available. When it was not, I
worked at sufficient intervals to maintain at least that appearance. It will have been
noticed that administration officials continued to address correspondence to me during the
summer months just as if I were on a twelve-month contract; and I continued to respond to
it too as if I was. This because I felt that the effort to move the archives forward might be
hurt if this did not happen. In some cases, it definitely would have been.

During the last year while I was archivist, that is 1991-92, one administrator did ask that I
be paid for some archives work that had to be taken care of by me during the summer
months. Prior to that, I am not aware that paying me for work done on behalf of the
archives during the summer was ever considered—at least, I have not found any record of
it ever being discussed and if so it did not result in any pay! By interpreting things very
loosely, one thing might be considered an exception to this—but not really. That is the fact
that Roebke-Berens requested of Vice President Glenn that “Lon” Jones and I be allowed to
keep the unspent funds provided for our trip to Washington D.C. during the summer of
1983.
CHAPTER 13

FURTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS AND GNAWING CONCERNS, 1987-1988

The reduction of the hours that I could devote to working in the archives and lack of progress in the effort to gain some permanent help contributed substantially to making the academic year 1987-88 and fall semester of 1988 the most discouraging time during which I was associated with the archival effort. Other factors, though not as significant, were of considerable concern too; they are the subject of this chapter. They seemed like possibilities that just might be influencing things negatively, or could do so in the immediate future. I had become so engulfed in my own little world, trying so hard, I felt, to make my own end of things work or progress, that I am afraid I lost sight, to some extent, of the broader, brighter, perspective with which things could be viewed. I am afraid too that I lost sight to some extent of what others were contending with and why a greater response to my archival concerns was not forthcoming from some of those to whom I needed to look for help. Being without the standing of a department head in the governing structure, I did not have a natural, relatively easier means for discovering the things that were being discussed at meetings and for gaining a better perspective on them. Besides, I was so busy with my own additional concerns that it seems that I did not even sense that it also should have been a priority of mine to become more informed about these other matters. I could, for example, at least have made it a point to read the minutes of the meetings of the President’s Council to seek to learn more about what the thinking and concerns were at that level—not that one could learn a lot from them as to why decisions were made. Some things could have been learned, for instance, about what other divisions of the university were urging the President’s Council to do and also of some of the pressures that were being exerted on it.

At the same time I allowed myself to speculate somewhat too beyond what I knew to be absolutely solid fact as to why the archives might not be receiving a higher priority. But I had no way of being certain of how much the things I was speculating about were actually affecting priorities and decisions, or whether they were affecting them at all. But the uncertainties were influencing my feelings; and at this point in the history of the archives, I did not know when, if ever, the situations I was concerned about would change.

Meanwhile, the evidence indicated that what had been achieved archives-wise was actually suffering a set-back in some areas. For instance, one of the places where this was happening was in the university’s standing with some members of the historical preservation community in the U.P.—in particular with the U.P. Writer’s Association. This set-back did nothing to ease the “down” feelings I was experiencing at the time. We now turn to examine how that happened before we turn to the more speculative possibilities which also were causing me concern.
THE U.P. WRITERS ASSOCIATION MATTER

Behind the deterioration (to some extent at least) of Northern’s relationship with the U. P. Writers Association was a decision by Northern not to become a repository for its papers and records. I believed at the time that accepting them would have enhanced NMU’s collections, its academic stature, its teaching and research resources, and its relationship with an influential segment of the U. P.’s population.

On September 9, 1987 I received an inquiry from Ruth McFarlane of Mass City, Michigan (in the Western U.P.). She began her letter by informing me again of how much “we enjoyed the conference on archives” at Northern. Because of the very good impression she had obtained of Northern’s new interest in the efforts of those who were seeking to preserve the historically valuable papers and records of the U.P., she was emboldened to ask if Northern would consider becoming the repository of the records of the Upper Peninsula Writer’s Association? She also inquired if the archives would be interested in collecting and archiving data regarding these U.P. writers upon their deaths? She identified Moira Reynolds, wife of Orland Reynolds, a NMU biology professor, as one example of a high quality writer about whom it would be very appropriate to do this. She closed by saying, “I hope the idea of keeping the records of U.P. writers meets with your approval.” DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Before responding to MacFarlane, I felt I needed to consult with Donovan regarding making this kind of an open-ended, potentially large, demanding commitment. In a memo to him, dated September 15, 1987, I noted that to accept this offer might also require us to make an exception to the University’s Archives Policy. As noted earlier, that policy required the archives, during its initial stage of development, to limit its acceptance of non-university materials to only exceptional cases. I stated that I hoped that this could be considered an exceptional case. I felt that these particular “papers would be a valuable educational resource, and would,” I believed, “be consulted by our own students and by aspiring writers for years to come.” I noted that the outstanding capabilities of some of the writers involved were well known. If we became the repository of these materials perhaps even the papers of writers such as John Voelker would become available to Northern. Caring for the papers in question would also “create considerable good will for Northern,” in certain circles, especially in literary ones, I felt. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Donovan responded in a memo dated September 17:

The idea you suggested in your memorandum of September 15 is an interesting one, and certainly one you may wish to explore. But I would caution you on offering the archives as a depository to all U.P. authors. If you do, and if that offer implies curating and processing all such papers [Donovan’s underlining], you could be committing [to] more than our resources would permit. It would be better to suggest that we stand ready to deal with authors on an individual basis so that we exercise refusal rights, so to speak. AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12
For several reasons, Donovan’s cautionary advice made good sense. Having refusal rights is, of course, good archival policy. Nevertheless, given the academic enhancing potential of these particular papers, I felt that a way should, and could have been found to accept them, even if processing them was delayed for some time.

**MY VIEW ON ACCEPTING PAPERS WHICH COULD NOT BE PROCESSED IMMEDIATELY**

I felt that it was legitimate for an archives to accession valuable papers, especially very valuable ones, even if they could not be processed immediately. If there was a demand to use them before they were processed, often that could happen in their unprocessed, or minimally processed state. Earlier in my career, I had used unprocessed materials in archives many times. From Northern’s point of view, the important thing was to get the papers into its archives. That was my view. Just to be able to say that such prized collections were there, would have a beneficial effect on the academic stature of the institution in which they were housed.

I would have been pleased if Donovan had offered to make a case at the President’s Council for doing so, or had suggested that a fund-raising effort be mounted to make the acquisition possible. But he did not.

What bothered me the most about Donovan’s response was the lack of optimism that came through about the future capabilities of the archives—the sense of resignation to a minimal role for it for an indefinite period of time. I suspected too that his view was influenced pretty heavily by the thinking of some of the members of the President’s Council. That was disturbing. How long would this continue to be the case? While the consultant and Donovan had let me know that they suspected that the growth of the archives would be a long slow process given the situation at Northern, I had never really allowed myself to accept that. It did not fit with what I had been lead to believe and expect from the May 1984 proposed growth plan for the archives drafted by the History Department and approved by the then Academic Affairs V.P., Robert Glenn. Therefore, I continued to hope that through persuasion some priorities could still be changed and something akin to that original plan would still happen. When it became more and more evident that this would not be the case, I found this to be quite frustrating—even depressing.

**UPSHOT OF THE U.P. WRITER’S ASSOCIATION MATTER**

On September 22, I wrote McFarlane explaining that the university presently did not feel that its archives was in a position to become a repository for all of the records and papers of the U.P. Writers Association. This was, in part, because the university felt that initially its archives needed to focus primarily on Northern’s own records. Also, the archives was not sufficiently staffed to process and service more than just a very limited quantity of non-university materials. We would be glad to consider accessioning the papers of authors on an individual basis if that were thought to be helpful. At the same time, we wanted the association to feel free to seek the help of other repositories it felt might be able to offer more help than Northern could at the moment.
Sometime between September 22, the date of my last letter to MacFarlane, and October 13, 1987 when I informed Donovan of what had finally been decided with a regard to the U.P. Writer's papers, I received a final letter on this subject from MacFarlane containing the decision of the U.P. Writer's Association regarding what they had decided to do with their papers. She stated that the association had decided to give their materials to the Michigan Technological University Archives. Rather tartly it seemed to me, she added that “they agreed to take them on the spot...minus any restrictions as we were considering [with your Archives].” It was evident that she was quite disappointed with our response. It is likely that at the Archives Workshop held at Northern in 1986, MacFarlane received an excessively elevated impression of how committed Northern had become to helping with the preservation of valuable U.P. historical materials. (I did not find a copy of MacFarlane's last letter to me referred to above. I reconstructed what was in it from my final memo to Donovan on this subject also referred to above.) AARA, 5/8, 20-02-12

As a result of what I perceived as our excessively cautious thinking at Northern and our lack of sufficient appreciation for these kinds of materials, we lost the opportunity to be the repository for these potentially valuable papers. I found that depressing when as an academic institution we were spending money rather lavishly on a number of other things that did not seem nearly as relevant academically.

FEELINGS OF ABANDONMENT

During the period under consideration, the active involvement with archival matters of my immediate superiors, Donovan and Roebke-Berens, became steadily less evident too. I sometimes felt like I had been left to pretty much fend for myself. There were understandable reasons for their conduct however. Both of them had established with me what my situation and responsibilities were; they were leaving it to me to move forward as best I could within those parameters. Nevertheless, I sometimes felt like I had been left to swim on my own—or to sink, if I could not prevent that.

WHY DONOVAN'S CONDUCT CHANGED

In Donovan’s case, the decreased attention to archival matters was due in part to the fact that during 1987 he was carrying an extremely heavy load which only got more demanding during the winter semester of 1988. For example, in 1987 the president asked him to chair a special task force charged with looking “critically at the number and at the mix of undergraduate majors in all academic departments in relation to the university's capacity to deliver programs of excellence.” (This according to a memo dated August 29, 1988 the president circulated to all university personnel, in which he reviewed all the tasks that members of his administration had been involved in during the past year or more.) POR, 2/1, 23-05-48

Donovan’s special task(s) was/were, of course, in addition to the huge oversight responsibilities he regularly carried for many divisions and departments as Vice President for Academic Affairs. Even though by this time, the president had recruited John F. Kuhn, Chairman of the English Department, to assist Donovan full-time with this, he still had his hands very full.

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Sometime prior to beginning of the 1987-88 academic year, Donovan had also informed President Appleberry that he was interested in becoming a university president by the beginning of the following academic year. This information comes from a recommendation dated December 9, 1987 Appleberry wrote for Donovan. According to the recommendation, he did not look forward at all to Northern losing Donovan’s services. At the same time he recognized his goal as being entirely appropriate and praiseworthy. It was in line with one of his and Northern's goals, he declared. “It is our philosophy” he stated, “that we are in the process of developing people, and that includes our faculty and staff.” The implication was that he and Northern were in the business also of preparing administrators such as Donovan for higher academic offices. Records show that this was true. Interestingly, he was actively involved in doing the same thing for Ruth Roebke-Berens and John Kuhn during this time.

Appleberry’s recommendation of Donovan includes a very impressive list of academic endeavors and improvements Donovan had been involved with while at Northern. He said that when he became aware that Donovan had presidential ambitions he assigned to him special tasks and opportunities which would help prepare him for the task of being a university president. They included opportunities to gain additional experience interacting with the members of the State Legislature, with the broader state-wide academic administration community, with local leaders, etcetera.

With the benefit of this information, it is easy to see why Donovan’s ability to give more attention to archival matters gradually diminished. I, at the time, however, did not know of these things; thus my puzzlement regarding the change in his involvement with archival matters.

Donovan’s search for a presidency did result in him becoming the President of State University College at Oneonta, New York, commencing with the 1988-89 academic year. When I finally learned this via an invitation to attend a university-wide farewell party for him, I was relieved to know at least part of the explanation for his changed conduct. At the same time, I was happy for him, and appreciative of him also having been such a great superior and colleague with whom to work. I was grateful for the great help he had been in getting the archives off the ground and in helping to establish it to at least the minimal level of existence it was then.

**WHY ROEBKE-BERENS’ CONDUCT CHANGED**

Roebke-Berens’ increasingly heavy involvement with tasks assigned to her by the president largely accounts also for what seemed to me to be a decrease in her concern and involvement with archival matters. This had already started to become evident during the academic year 1985-86 when she was asked to head up the demanding task of directing and coordinating many aspects of the work of the Commission on the Future of the University. By the time her work as director of that effort ended in early 1987, the president had assigned her to be an assistant to John Hammang, Director of Human Resources and Data Information Systems. Given the computer technology revolution, Hammang was also focusing more and more on the most effective ways of managing the
university’s information situation. Her assignment to assist him lasted well into the 1987-88 academic year. Then in the summer of 1988, John F. Kuhn became Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs and Roebke-Berens became his full-time assistant with the title, Acting Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Planning. This accounts for her leave of absence from the History Department during the academic year 1988-89—as noted earlier, and for her greater—really virtually total—absence of contact with me regarding archival matters. She undoubtedly continued to express support for it if thoughts surfaced about it at the President’s Council level or in talks with Kuhn. That may well help account for some positive steps Kuhn took to improve the archival situation during the second half of the winter semester of 1989.

Appleberry had also assigned Roebke-Berens to head a team of division chiefs, etcetera, in preparing Northern for an upcoming visit from the North Central Accrediting Association in the fall of 1989. This involved a lot of work with academic division and department heads, educating them regarding the standards by which they would be judged, how they were to proceed with evaluating themselves, monitoring their progress, and coaching them on writing their preliminary and final reports, etcetera.

It is easy to see too why Roebke-Berens, of necessity, was forced in a sense to be less and less identified with archival concerns, at my level at least. From my point of view at the time, however, with me not knowing the whole picture until I did this research recently, her seemingly being detached so largely from any real concern as to what was happening in the archives was puzzling. Her conduct with me was so different from what it had once been. Of course, the disagreement I had had with her over the reduction of released-time hours to work in the archives undoubtedly contributed somewhat to this too.

ROEBKE-BERENS—IN SOME RESPECTS BECOMES DE FACTO HEAD OF THE ARCHIVES

Roebke-Berens’s very close association with the President’s Council (now pretty much a full-fledged member of the President’s Council) also furthered a tendency on the part of the members of the President’s Council to just consult her when they had any questions about the archives. Thus making the extra effort that sometimes would have been required to consult me, the archivist, was overlooked. Roebke-Berens became sort of the de facto head of the archives at the President’s Council level. When policy affecting the archives was discussed, more and more it was only she who was informed or consulted. I, for a period of time, with respect to certain things, was left unaware of what was being planned. This tendency was at its peak from June 1989 to January 1991. Documentation of this will be provided as the story progresses. But as noted, signs of it were already present during the period on which this chapter focuses, and thus it was another reason for concern.

HISTORY DEPARTMENT “CAUSES”—PAST AND PRESENT—WERE THEY POSSIBLE REASONS FOR LACK OF GREATER ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT?

During this 1987-88 period of time I also allowed myself to begin to wonder if there might not be some deep underlying cause, or causes, for the university being resigned to a very slow rate of growth for the archives and for its seeming relative indifference about that?
Was the administration perhaps not giving, or not about to give, a higher priority to the archives—a project sponsored by the History Department—because of feelings of offense or irritation it had felt toward the department, or toward certain members of it in the past, or at this very time? I had no real proof that something like this was in play; but if it was, it could mean that the archives was in an even more precarious situation than was obvious. Feelings of offense, if true, could subtly be stonewalling support for the archives and it might do so for a long time to come. This was worrisome. That this even was a possible explanation (although without a doubt, only a partial one) was discouraging.

One possible long-standing, lingering cause of irritation or of offense which I thought might still be affecting things negatively was the History Department’s solidarity with Professor McClellan during the so-called McClellan Controversy. Another concerned differences McClellan and the Department had with the administration over collective bargaining issues at times in the 1970s and now again in the mid-1980s. Furthermore, I wondered if the political views which some professors in the History Department were fostering, promoting, or opposing and with which some members of the President’s Council and the Board of Control disagreed may also have been a significant irritant.

THE MCGOFF CONTROVERSY

The active opposition of some members of the History Department to the Administration’s acceptance of funds from Mr. John P. McGoff to endow a Distinguished Lecture Series at Northern most certainly became a deeply felt irritant. See RM. Sense, 275 It was suspected that these funds were not really McGoff’s; that he really only was the channel for these funds—that the real source of them was the South African Government. It was channeling them through McGoff in its effort to win favorable sentiment abroad for its Apartheid policies. McGoff was a former member of Northern’s Board of Control. During that time he purchased Marquette’s main newspaper, the Mining Journal. Sometime during this time too he became the owner of a newspaper in South Africa. Sometime later McGoff began publishing quite complementary articles about South Africa in the Mining Journal, including the political situation there. Because of his association with South Africa and the favorable articles which began appearing about it, and shortly after the lecture series was established at NMU in 1979, Northern’s association with its Distinguished Lecture Series became suspect and controversial. Eventually Northern’s faculty union and the Associated Students of Northern (ASNMU) decided to disassociate themselves from the series.

When in 1988 Eli Wiesel, the world renowned writer and lecturer on the Nazi Holocaust and himself a Holocaust survivor, learned of the probable source of the funding for the series, he withdrew his offer to come to Northern as a speaker for the McGoff Distinguished Lecture Series. This latest embarrassment for Northern and McGoff caused McGoff to withdraw his funding of the endowment, and the university too dropped the series.
McClellan, the History Department professor, as well as students influenced by him, were leaders in exposing the questionable character of the funding for the series. The University’s Administration proved to be quite slow in acknowledging the questionable character. McClellan was relentless in leading the effort to obtain an acknowledgement of it. In the end, the whole matter created considerable embarrassment for the university.

Personally, once it became quite clear what the real source and purpose of the funds in question were, I agreed with the inappropriateness of the university using such funds to underwrite the series and the appropriateness of protesting their use until this was stopped. At the same time, my concern was this as well: was this criticism of university policy, led by a History Department professor, affecting negatively the administration’s inclination to act favorably toward the archives and its needs—a project associated with a department which had some members who had few qualms about embarrassing the university’s administration? Interestingly, the peak of this embarrassing criticism came right during that 1987-88 period when I was searching for reasons why the university seemed to be becoming a little more non-dedicated still about helping the archival effort. Was the criticism part of the answer?

**CHARGES ABOUT UNION CONTRACTS**

Another thing that concerned me was how claims and counter claims during and following the collective bargaining negotiations for the 1987 faculty union contract were affecting prospects for increased support for the archives. In 1987 as in 1984 a contract had finally been negotiated between the faculty union and the administration, but on some issues the two sides remained far apart. Following the 1987 settlement, the administration claimed that a “good and fair” agreement had been reached with the Union. This motivated Candice Bays, a member of the Union’s Bargaining Council at the time and a member of the English Department, to spend the following summer determining if that perception was correct. On October 16, 1987, she sent a letter to the Board of Control disputing the claim. She also insisted that some of the administration’s priorities were not what they should be. She declared it was spending too much on athletic programs, local economic development, and on the administrative wing of the university. The administrative wing was declared to be too “top heavy” and “highly paid” while the administration was endeavoring “to pay the faculty as little as possible” and did “not intend to keep faculty salaries at the state median.”

Fred Stenkamp, president of the faculty union at this time and a member of the History Department, agreed. He declared that in view of Bays’ findings, it had been a mistake not to have used “job action,” that is, not to have voted to strike in 1987 as part of reaching a settlement with the administration. Although I agreed that it was appropriate for him to be speaking up regarding these faculty concerns, a very big concern of mine too was how were his “blunt” statements affecting the administration’s inclination toward meeting the needs of the archives? This again was especially so when the statements were again coming from a member of the very department which was the primary sponsor of the archival initiative?
Meanwhile another issue that had been heating up again was the proposed construction of a large all-weather sports training center. Stenkamp and quite a number of other faculty members also saw that as hurting faculty and educational interests at Northern more than helping them. At this point the effort was particularly associated with Northern seeking to become an U. S. Olympic Training/Education Center and it was justified because of that. The effort to get such a building constructed went back a long way. For example, in the spring of 1971, Northern’s Administration floated a proposal to get such a facility constructed. It was to be financed by a fifteen-to-twenty-dollar student fee per semester over a twenty-seven to thirty-year period. The effort failed and the History Department had been one of the chief groups who contributed to that. On April 21, 1971, it wrote a position paper which was supported unanimously by the department. It objected to the construction of the facility not only because it believed that it was not right to have young impressionable students vote to obligate other students in this way for a generation to come, but also because of the impact putting so much money into another sports building would have “upon the character of Northern Michigan University as an institution of higher learning.” The hasty plan for getting the proposal passed without sufficient time for faculty input and perceived violation of the concept of “shared governance” for operating it was another objection the department raised in its position statement.

At the time the dome was being proposed and constructed Stenkamp was not convinced that it was a good thing for Northern from an academic point of view. In an April 1, 1988 letter to the members of AAUP/NMU faculty union he called the proposed dome a “bare-essential building… good for little else but football.” The state had appropriated $21,800,000 for its construction. But he insisted on raising embarrassing questions such as what would the cost be to equip it, operate it, and maintain it? And where would those funds come from? Out of the general operating budget? Would that decrease the funds available for academic programs and faculty salaries? Stenkamp’s letter called on NMU’s American Association of University Professors (AAUP) to demand that the construction of the dome be stopped “until such time as the State of Michigan also endows the operation and maintenance of such an edifice.” From April 22 to April 26, 1988, the faculty voted on how they felt about the construction of this “domed stadium.” By a vote of 144 in favor, 35 against they supported a resolution which expressed concern as to how going forward with this endeavor would affect other desires such as the construction of a performing arts center, academic programs, the maintenance of other buildings, etcetera. As president of the faculty union, and on behalf of it, Stenkamp even sent the resolution in question and a covering letter to John Engler, the State Senate Majority Leader at the time.

On August 25, 1988, Lyle Shaw, Northern’s Vice President for Finance and Administration, sent the AAUP a memo seeking to allay Stenkamp’s fears and those of others. Operation of the building would be delayed if necessary, he assured readers, until the state had also appropriated funds for the operation of the building. Eventually the state did appropriate extra funds both to cover a shortfall in the costs of completing the building and for its operation, but that did not happen until after the period we are considering.
Meanwhile, with the faculty union’s confidence in the administration’s priorities still not particularly high, things continued to be said about the dome project that the administration could easily have found offensive. Again, just how much the possible negative feelings generated by this kind of talk influenced the lack of support the archives was receiving at this point, if at all, I am not able to say. But it concerned me more than a little. Especially was this so because the leader of the individuals who were raising these issues was again a member of the History Department and closely associated with the archives effort.

Today, in 2015, the building which was the source of so much disagreement is a reality. It is known as the Superior Dome. The Appleberry Administration decided to proceed with its construction in 1987 and it begun in 1988. The structure was designed to cover 5.1 acres under one roof and rise to a height of fourteen stories. It was designed to accommodate a variety of sports including football, softball, and track, and have a number of classrooms, concession stands, a retail store, and a seating capacity for 8000. Since its construction, its uses have been expanded considerably is beyond the purposes originally planned for it, and it generally considered is a great asset not only to Northern but also to the local and regional community and even to the entire U.P.

In conclusion, hopefully the evidence found in the last two chapters regarding the decreased support for the archives, beginning in late 1986—and why that possibly was so—will help the reader see why the late 1986 to early 1989 time period in the attempt to establish the archives as a viable entity was also the most worrisome and discouraging period of time for me during the entire time I was associated with the archival effort.
CHAPTER 14
DESPITE REVERSES AND CONCERNS—STRATEGIES,
ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITION, 1987 AND 1988

Under the circumstances described in the last two chapters, the question was, what strategies should I adopt going forward? I decided that, first of all, I would let it known that I would not continue to work on indefinitely to establish the archives without obtaining the more adequate support required to make it a practical and secure enterprise. In fact I would let it be known that I was going to resign from the archives project in a year’s time—or in two at the most—unless more adequate support was forthcoming by then—or convincing evidence existed by then that this would be the case soon thereafter.

Secondly, in the meantime, I would persist in doing all of the things that I could under the circumstances to try and get the archives established on a viable, stable, long-term footing. For example, I would continue to process as many of the materials which were in the archives—or that would be received—in as professional a way as I could. This, in order to try to continue to make at least some materials available for research immediately, and thereby continue to build as positive an image of the archives as possible both at Northern and in the U. P.

Thirdly, I would continue to seek to maintain as positive an impression of NMU’s archival efforts as possible within the professional archival community at both the state and the regional level. In the past this had resulted in some important benefits to Northern. It might well do so again.

Fourthly, I would continue to try to persuade the administration by every means possible of the wisdom of providing more adequate support for the archives. As part of this strategy, I would limit my public comments regarding administration policies solely to archival issues. I would be as congenial but also as persistent regarding this as possible—and pretty much silent on other issues. Much as I was sure that at times I would want to speak out on other issues, I would refrain from doing so if there was any chance that doing so might undercut the very thing I wanted most to accomplish at this point in my career—that is to get the archives more firmly established.

USING THE THREAT OF QUITTING, 1987-88

Threatening to quit the archival effort did eventually play a role in obtaining more serious consideration by the administration for the needs of the archives. The first threat to quit had already been made on April 23, 1987. It was then that I made the first declaration that I would not agree to a two-thirds teaching load for more than another year. It will be recalled too that I had been reassigned to a two-thirds teaching load for the next two years beginning in late August, 1987. I eventually agreed to do that under protest. The implication of the April 23 declaration was that I now intended to quit the archives and come back into the department full-time in a year’s time if that two-year requirement was
not reversed. The April 23 declaration, therefore, was a statement of intent to achieve a partial reversal hopefully of what I had previously agreed to do.

I made the declaration at a meeting in the History Department. The minutes read, “He [Cliff] is willing to accept two-thirds teaching for the academic year 1987-1988 only.” The minutes go on to read:

Cliff was strongly encouraged to demand a clarification of his status from Vice President Donovan; if the latter does not make a firm commitment for the Archives’ future then Cliff should seriously consider returning to full-time teaching. This alternative Cliff would accept with regret because he has invested so much time and energy into making the archives a success and has interrupted his teaching career for some years. The department membership strongly sympathizes with his plight.

I made the announcement during one of those quite regular reports I was still making at History Department meetings regarding archival matters. Doing this was a good thing. It also gave me an opportunity to obtain feedback from a group of empathetic people. Thus, even though I was alone in one sense in pioneering this archives project, in another I was not. The considerate manner in which the department always handled my concerns allowed me to feel that I really was, after all, in a partnership with friends—very significant in sustaining my morale, given the discouraging things I was encountering at times.

Those April 23, 1987 minutes reveal something else. While the department’s commitment to the success of the archival project had been unwavering, whether or not the effort survived was pretty much up to me. If I felt I could not continue without greater support from the administration, the department was prepared to see the effort fail, albeit without a doubt with considerable regret. After all, they had paid a substantial price to make the effort possible; but they were not about to ask me to persist in doing something that I felt I could no longer see myself doing.

When the spring of 1988 rolled around, and the teaching schedules for the academic year 1988-89 were being reviewed, I retreated from my April 23, 1987 declaration despite what I had said at that time. Why? Well, I had, after all, already agreed back in November, 1986 to teach that two-thirds load that Roebke-Berens had scheduled for that 1988-1989 academic year. If I now did not teach it, I would, after all, being going back on a promise I had made, albeit under protest. I also relented because when it got right down to it, I just could not walk away from the archival effort and see it fail, even though I had been talking as if I was prepared to see that happen. I was quite certain that that was very likely what would happen if I insisted on, “I get what I need for the Archives, or I quit.” In addition to that, I knew that with this teaching plan having been in place since November 1986 for me not to teach a two-thirds load during the 1988-1989 academic year, would mean that the department would be very hard pressed to cover all of its courses during that year. A plan B did not exist for covering those courses. Roebke-Berens would be on a year’s leave of absence that particular year too. (See the Department of History minutes for June 6, 1988).
have been unconscionably inconsiderate of those members of the History Department who had been as considerate of me as they could be under the circumstances. Besides, it also was true that the archives could continue to function after a fashion, and was functioning, with me having only one-third released time to work in it—reluctant as I was to grant that. It just was not functioning at the level I felt it needed to be, to create a reputation for itself of being a truly useful, secure arm of the academic wing of the university.

The History Department’s Evaluation Committee on April 3, 1989 in its Biannual Evaluation Report for 1987-1989 regarding me, promised to “strongly” recommend that the History Department reopen the question of my teaching load “to see if some relief” could “be achieved.” It stated, however, that progress on the issue of permanent help for the archives was largely out of the department’s hands. “The department cannot control matters of financial support…. The committee would simply add, once again, its support for his requests. The university has a very able archivist. If he is given considerably more support, he, in turn, can make the archives a vital and useful source of support for many segments of the university community, the Upper Peninsula, [the] State, and scholars throughout the nation. Such an illustrious future should be achieved.” CFMR, 2/13 Professor Barry Knight, who was not a member of the department’s Evaluation Committee at this time but was the acting Interim Department Head, added that he agreed with the committee’s recommendations.

When decisions regarding scheduling had to be made in the spring of 1989 for the academic year 1989-1990, the question again arose, “Would I continue to teach that two-thirds load, now for a third year?” Again, the situation looked very difficult for the department in terms of its ability to cover all of its courses. I finally agreed to do so on the condition that the History Department would reopen the question of my teaching hours with the administration and pursue the matter vigorously. Additionally, I would take the formal step of writing the administration, informing it that 1989-90 was the last year I would be archivist with only one-third released time. If by May 1, 1990 at the latest, a two-thirds released time situation had not yet been restored, I would resign then and return to full-time teaching.

At the outset of the 1989-1990 academic school year, I reported to the History Department that I had sent that letter to the administration regarding resigning on May 1, 1990 if the staffing situation in the archives or my release time had not been improved. The History Department minutes for August 23, 1989 read, “Cliff sent a letter to the administration declaring that he will resign as University Archivist on May 1, 1990 unless he gets two helpers full time.” DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07
Given the amount of help I had up to that point, this supposed request for two full-time assistants seems more than I would have asked for. I have not found the letter that would have allowed me to establish firmly what I wrote. But if I actually demanded two positions at this time, it must have been for a permanent supervisor of processing, etcetera, and for a secretary/receptionist/reference desk assistant. I find it hard to believe that I would have asked for all of that help in addition to myself. But if I did, perhaps it was that particular request which helped to get some more favorable thinking in motion on the question of at least some additional help. That soon occurred, as we shall see. Still I doubt that I asked for that much help. The note-taker must have misunderstood what I said. Interestingly, whatever the request was, it had the support of the entire History Department. The minutes for August 23, 1989 read, “Barry and the whole department fully support Cliff’s decision.” DHRM, 3/1, 15-02-06-07

During the summer of 1989 Barry Knight had been promoted from interim head of the Department of History to regular head. This made him head of the department for a second time. Also in the summer of 1989, Ruth Roebke-Berens returned to the department as a regular professor and taught a two-thirds load. President Appleberry continued to retain her as his assistant on a one-third released-time basis.

True to their word, Knight and the Executive Committee of the History Department now vigorously pursued the question of more released time for me. The happy results will be related in chapter 16.

THE POSITIVE IMPRESSION OF THE ARCHIVES PORTRAYED IN UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

Meanwhile, many segments of the university community were pretty much oblivious to the set-backs the archives and I had been experiencing during the last two years. Except for those who could not help but knowing otherwise, university publications and news often gave the impression that everything was going just fine.

One of the sources of positive news about the archives was the university’s own publication, Campus. A conclusion that emerged from the work of the Commission on the Future of the University during the 1985-87 period was that improved internal communication was needed at
Northern. It needed, for example, to publish more stories regarding the good things that were being done by various individuals, departments, groups, etcetera on campus. To help facilitate this Matthew Surrell, Vice President for Public Relations, and John Hammang whose area of responsibility had gradually expanded into the area of university information and communication matters as well, teamed up to create a video publication known as *Northern Notebook*. One of the items in the very first edition of this publication was a very positive piece regarding the archives. On May 13, 1987, I received a letter from these two gentlemen—signed by both of them—thanking me for my contribution to the production. “We feel that your efforts leading to this production have helped to move the university closer to improved internal communications. It was very well done.” they declared. CFMC 2/12

In March, 1988, Northern’s News Bureau published a very positive article about the archives in its publication, *Campus*. The title of it was, “Archives in its Infancy, But Developing.” It was full of laudatory statements, and targeted toward the faculty and staff. It covered the entire front page of the publication and a column and an half on its back page. The front page also included an eye-catching photo of an interesting accession that I was accepting for the archives.

The article pointed out that archives’ policy currently called mainly for concentrating on the collection of university records. It stated that because the archives was operating on a limited budget and with only student help in addition to my one-third released time, it was limited in what it could accomplish. It might also have mentioned that its director was only on a ten-month contract.

The article listed such an impressive catalogue of university records that already were in the archives and that presumably could already be used there, that the uninformed person would readily have concluded that the archives was doing just great even with its limited budget, its limited space, its lack of permanent help, and with the limited amount of time granted its director to work in it. It almost seemed like some parties were not facing the fact that these things really were necessary—that some people were assuming that a great archival operation could be achieved without them.

The article did not point out that often only a very small portion of those valuable individual sets of university records it mentioned were actually in the archives; nor that this was so because there just was not enough space for them. All in all, as written, the article made a fantastically positive impression of how well things were going. While, in a sense, it was wonderful to see that such a positive impression of what was occurring in the archives existed in at least some circles—and I appreciated the positive portrayal—I knew that what was being conveyed was in some ways a quite inaccurate impression. Still, ideally, it was the kind of impression I was glad to see propagated. It would help build confidence in the archives’ value. Thus, with some qualms about the inaccurate picture being propagated, (although with good intentions), I did nothing to correct the exaggerated impression—although when communicating with the administration I never did concede that this was, in fact, a correct perception of the actual situation.
These positive presentations of the “facts” at this point reminded me a little of how in fall of 1984 Northern in its publication, Campus, announced to its readers that it now had an archives. Although it is true that the situation then was quite different from what it was now, it will be recalled that then also a quite positive, somewhat inaccurate impression was created by an article then. This even though at that point the archives consisted of only a 9 x 11 foot bit of unfurnished space without even a typewriter—to say nothing of a computer—and without any collections as yet, any processing supplies, or any kind of help except myself.

On the positive side, one of the good things too about the “good” publicity the archives was now again receiving in the late 1980s via these university publications was that it cost the archives nothing. The archives could not have afforded it. In 1989, and in 1991, additional segments of those Northern Notebook videos also featured the archives positively.

ARCHIVES HOLDINGS BY 1988

As noted, the March 10, 1988 article in Campus was correct as to the particular records or manuscripts which had already been identified for collection by then. It only failed to let readers know that in most cases only a small percentage of the records or manuscripts in these sets of materials were in the archives. By this time there already were at least some records in the archives from the following offices: the President’s Office and from the Office of Finance and Administration; some also from the offices of Student Services, Public Services and Continuing Education (that is regarding off-campus teaching, etc.); some too from the News Bureau, and from the office of NMU Public Radio and TV. The following offices had also transferred some of their records to the archives: the Schools of Arts and Sciences, Behavioral Sciences and Human Services, the Walker Cisler School of Business; Sociology and Social Work, Biology and History; the following university organizations had too: the NMU branch of the American Association of University Professors, the Administrative/Professional Staff Association(A/P); and some entities such as the Board of Control, the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Senate’s Executive Committee, its Committee on Undergraduate Programs, and the University’s Space Utilization Committee.

The archives had accessioned some papers of some current and emeritus faculty members as well as from some members of the administration. It also had accessioned some quality student research papers about various aspects of U.P. history, as well as some non-university collections such as some of the papers of the Michigan Rock-Maple Ridge Worker’s Association of the U.P. mentioned earlier, and the papers and tape recordings of a number of U.P. ethnic groups and individuals. The latter had been collected and donated principally by Magnaghi.

In addition to these materials, by this time the archives’ holdings included a good number of the university’s yearbooks, bulletins, telephone directories, handbooks, codes of conduct manuals and other manuals, by-laws, contracts from past years, as well as photographs. Many of the photographs came from the Office of Sport’s Information and others from university offices such as Public Relations.
One of the things that I, as archivist/curator, was particularly interested in too, was in trying to fill gaps in the holdings the archives possessed of such items as the university’s yearbooks and bulletins. The library graciously donated a substantial amount of material of this kind that it had been collecting. But there still remained sizeable gaps in the yearbook collection especially for the years prior to 1960 and in the telephone directories collection prior to 1984. I was particularly interested too in collecting photographs which had dates on them and in which the persons, events, and other items in them had been identified. I used any appropriate opportunity such as the Campus’ March 10, 1988 interview of me to let the public know of the kinds of materials the archives was particularly interested in acquiring.

PRESSING FORWARD IN THE ARCHIVES

As can be surmised, my threats to quit the archives did not cause me to slack off on work which needed to be done in it. I pressed forward with the most pressing needs and did what I could to make the archives successful. On the academic level too, I continued to seek to improve my knowledge and skills of archival matters via some on-going reading in professional journals and books and by attending archival conferences. During this period, I attended conferences in Chicago, Houghton, Holland in Michigan, and Detroit.

I also sought to become more knowledgeable regarding automation. I joined a Micro MARC:AMC Users Group. At this particular point I was especially concerned with learning about how automated cataloguing of photographs was done and attended an archival workshop regarding that in Escanaba in the fall of 1988. It was sponsored by the MAA. I visited the city library in Grand Rapids, Michigan later that fall following a MAA meeting in Detroit. I had heard that the automated system for cataloguing photographs being used at that library was one of the most advanced at the time. I also obtained a copy of the system that the Chicago Historical Society had developed. It was supposed to be superior still in some ways to the one being used in Grand Rapids. At the same time, I was consulting with Northern’s photographer, Donald Pavloski. He was waiting just then to test still another system that was being developed at the University of Utah.

While I had high hopes of utilizing one of these possibilities, in the end I did not make any real progress with automating the control we had over the photographs we accessioned while I was the archivist. There just was not enough time to do every kind of processing. For the particular photographs which were requested, we continued to use traditional methods of control. One of the problems with processing photographs was that the information on them so often was incomplete. Our question often was, do we process photographs in this condition, or do we put them aside until we have time to do some research to try to obtain additional information regarding what they portray? We often decided on the latter and then never got back to doing that.

In the end, my student assistants and I spent most of our time processing records and manuscript materials. We did some in the traditional hardcopy format and some in the Micro MARC:AMC software format. We processed some of the tapes which Magnaghi had donated to the archives in both formats also.
I processed some materials in both formats because I was concerned that with the scarcity of computers that existed at that time, it would be impossible for clients without them to search our finding aids for materials that were processed in just the electronic format. As computers became more common I knew it would become less necessary to continue to produce finding aids in the traditional format. However, I still continued to do so for the few remaining years while I was the archivist, quite unnecessarily it turned out. But I was not savvy enough about automation to get this at the time.

I have placed examples of the finding aids to materials processed in both formats in a folder. I am placing this folder with the folders of many of the documents I used to produce each chapter of this history. If the archives accepts a copy of this history and of the folders containing the documents on which it is based, a folder containing these finding aides will be with them. The folder will also contain an example of the Policies and Procedures the Personnel Training guidelines, and the Index to the Reference Manual and to the User’s Guide. Examples of some of these finding aids are also with the 1991-92 NHPRC archives grant application materials in the archives.

By this time, I had also began using subject headings used by Library of Congress along with other headings relevant to our local situation in processing. At the time I thought this would help with making information in our system more searchable and exportable to regional networks. This, in turn, would help make Northern more widely known and help establish for it a reputation of being a first-rate education and research institution.

Automating the processing of our holdings made it necessary to acquire an additional computer. I discovered that I might be able to obtain funding to purchase one via a local Peter White Fund grant. I applied and it was funded. I also applied to this and to other foundations for help with the purchasing of additional supplies such as shelving, acid-free storage boxes, etcetera, and in some cases I was successful.

Fortunately from 1988 on, I had some very good student assistants to help me with this processing. They included S. Woodard and Chris Cloutier. Cloutier also manned the archives part-time during the summer of 1988 and did additional processing. This included an initial donation of the papers of Professor Howard R. Swaine. It will be recalled that earlier he was very helpful in making some much-needed space available to the archives.

I scheduled the hours my student assistants and I had to work in the archives to get maximum benefit from them. I usually scheduled the classes I taught for 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. I worked in the archives most afternoons—usually until 5 p.m. or later—and often during the morning as well except during the two hours when I was teaching. I scheduled my student help for the afternoons so I could be there to help them with any processing or other work with which they might need assistance. Meanwhile I worked at those types of processing which it was more suitable that I do and at other things that needed to be done such as correspondence, reference work, fine-tuning guides, attending forums relevant to the archives, perhaps attending a late afternoon History Department meeting, etcetera.
With this kind of an arrangement we were able have the archives open regularly for researchers; that is from Monday through Friday, between 1 and 4 p.m. and at other times by appointment. I publicized this by posting it, publicizing it in university’s publications, etcetera. During the summer months, keeping the archives open at some regular times was not always possible, but an attempt was made to do so then too at least for a limited length of time.

**MY FIRST ANNUAL REPORT**

I became aware too that presenting an annual report to my superiors regarding the work we were doing in the archives was considered standard practice at professional archives and libraries. So, without being requested to do so, I initiated that practice during the academic year, 1987-1988. I sent a copy of the twenty-one page report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and to the Head of the History Department. It listed the holdings that were in the archives by the fall of 1988. Among other things, it also outlined all of the processing that had been done during the past year and stated our plans and hopes for the coming year and beyond.

**RECOGNITION OF MY PRESERVATION EFFORTS**

By the late 1988 quite a number of students interested in history had been using the materials in the archives to do research papers. This was especially true of students in Professor Magnaghi’s U.P. history classes and in Professor Saari’s Historical Thinking and Writing class. Saari often had students in his class focus on aspects of the experiences of Finnish immigrants in the U.P. To help facilitate the work of these two professors and their students, I made a special effort to inventory, and to some degree process materials which their students would find useful.

Through developments such as these, and through my regular involvement over the years with Omicron Mu, the NMU student chapter of the National History Honors Society known as Phi Alpha Theta, NMU history students especially, became quite aware of the effort that others and I had been undertaking to make research resources available for their use. As a result, they and their mentors decided to create an award to recognize such efforts. They named it The Heritage Award.

They then decided to grant the first of these awards to me. The plaque read, “Phi Alpha Theta Heritage Award presented to Clifford F. Maier for the Preservation and Promotion of History at Northern Michigan University, April 21, 1988. Omicron Mu Chapter, Marquette,
Michigan.” Steven Brisson, president of the Omicron Mu chapter at the time, presented the award.

This particular group of students went further. They got April 21 declared Heritage Day at NMU—or at least they declared it to be that! They then sponsored a first class banquet to celebrate it.

![NMU Heritage Day Banquet Ticket](image)

These students—the archives student assistants among them—put a lot of effort as well into developing a huge portable exhibit tracing and celebrating certain aspects of Northern’s history for the occasion. Most of the photographs and documents (or copies of them) used to mount the exhibit were supplied by the archives. A portion of the exhibit is in the background of the picture below. Quite a large number of university people attended the event and seemed quite impressed.

![Exhibit](image)

*John Berens, John Kuhn, Eleanor Maier, Jacqueline Greising*
ANOTHER U.P. HISTORY PRESERVATION WORKSHOP

In harmony with our efforts to help preserve the sources of local history, during the summer of 1989 I was able to host another Michigan Archival Association Workshop at Northern. It was again designed to help individuals from throughout the U.P. learn or improve very basic preservation and exhibiting skills. The sessions of this particular day-long workshop focused on the processing of historical materials, caring for photographs, mounting historical exhibits, and doing genealogical searches.

MAA BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Enhancing Northern’s standing as an institution interested in historical preservation, as well as my sense more generally that I should do what I could for the cause of historical preservation as opportunities arose, caused me in 1989 to accept an invitation to become a member of the Board of the Michigan Archival Association. My acceptance was partly due to the fact that the term of office on the board of Theresa Spence of Michigan Technological University was expiring, leaving the board without a representative from the U.P. Membership terms on the board were for two years. It would require six trips down state per year. Each trip would take the better part of three days. I found myself wondering whether or not I really should divert this much time to doing this; however, in the end, I decided to join. I felt that it was important to continue to give the Upper Peninsula as much visibility as possible in down-state archival circles; also for the U.P. to carry its weight as much as it could for the cause of historical preservation. I also decided to join so that the Michigan archivists downstate would continue to have reason to believe in the sincerity of Northern’s commitment to do its share in preserving the heritage of the region of Michigan in which it was located. Given its meager follow-through to date on the recommendations of the NHPRC-funded archival consultancy of 1986, I felt that these down-state archivists had to be reassured that any future support that might be requested to assist Northern in realizing its archival ambitions was going to be justified. As may already have been made clear, these archivists had the responsibility for judging and recommending for funding, any grant applications which Northern might submit to the NHPRC in the future. Doing anything, therefore, that would help to reassure them was important, although I did not know at this time just how important it was going to be.

As I hope has been made evident, despite some discouraging developments during the years 1987 and 1988 and despite some threats of quitting, the course of action I elected to take was one of continuing to press forward in the hope that before long there would be some encouraging breakthroughs. Because of that approach, it still was possible to achieve considerable. The next chapter will chronicle developments during the 1988-1989 academic year. In some ways initially it continued to look quite bleak; but then quite unexpectedly, things began to look considerably better during the second half of that academic year.
CHAPTER 15
THE EMERGENCE OF AN ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVE TO OBTAIN TWO PERMANENT FULL-TIME POSITIONS FOR THE ARCHIVES, 1988 TO MID-1989

At the beginning of the 1988-1989 academic year with the help of John Kuhn, the recently appointed Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, I made a new attempt to obtain some additional help for the archives. This effort set in motion some new developments which slowly escalated.

JOHN KUHN’S IMPORTANT ROLE

By the spring of 1989, significant things got rolling at least somewhat because of Kuhn’s stronger than average sensitivity to the significance of an archives to the academic mission of a first-class university, plus his strong desire to prove himself worthy of his new position. But this happened only after I made still another appeal to give the archives a higher priority, particularly in connection with improving its space and staffing situation. I knew Kuhn well, having planned courses and taught with him in the so-called Common Learning Program of the late 1960s and 1970s. (Later this was called the Liberal Studies Program). Kuhn was a very approachable and empathetic individual. From 1985-1988, as assistant to Vice President Donovan, he had become well aware of the aspirations that the Department of History and I had for a viable archival operation at Northern. A steady improvement of the academic character of Northern was high on his list of priorities. In a letter to me on April 28, 1989, he stated that he was supporting my effort to obtain a Peter White Equipment Grant. Why? Because he saw that what I was seeking to do was “furthering our efforts [at Northern] in creating an environment in which research has an important place.”

Back on October 21, 1988, I had sent him a memo asking for an administrative/professional (AP) position for the archives. This was a sort of follow-up on the promise which Donovan had made to seek a half-time A/P position for the archives in the future.

Ten days later I received his reply stating that “it is unlikely... that this year's staffing plan will be able to accommodate your... request.” But, he declared, “I have not rejected it out of hand. The request is in the hopper with other requests from Academic Affairs and will, at least, be noted for the record and subsequent consideration.” Time proved that these were not just empty words. Given the authority he now enjoyed, he was determined to do all he could.
In a memo to me on March 14, 1989, he was more specific as to why the archival position I requested could not be funded. “As I have mentioned to you personally,” he stated, “university budgets simply will not allow expanding this effort at this time. We have needs in Education, Physics, Art and Design, and Psychology that have not been addressed either. We also have special needs in International Studies and in Cultural Affairs Programming.”

As noted in chapter 14, I had first made a request for an AP position two years earlier and had provided a job description for it on May 8, 1987. I now resubmitted the request on October 21, 1988. In the job description I pointed out that the person hired for such an AP position had to understand that he or she would not be free, with seniority, to move around to different positions within the university only to be replaced in the archives by some other AP person with less seniority and very likely unskilled in archival procedures. The job required permanence so that the archival skills learned could be capitalized upon. At this time I thought that a full-time AP position was the best I had any chance of obtaining. I had pretty much given up on getting a secretary/receptionist in the immediate future.

MODIFICATION OF THE ARCHIVES’ POSITION IN THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

As I had previously asked Donovan on April 14, 1987, now in this October 21, 1988 memo mentioned above, I also asked Kuhn for help with making the archives an independent department or division of the university so that it would have a standing under Academic Affairs much like the library. I never got a response from him regarding this particular issue. This may have been because perhaps at that time he already did not agree with me regarding that. Possibly he believed then that the archives should be under some entity other than directly under Academic Affairs.

ARCHIVES ANNUAL REPORT, 1987-1988

Along with that October 21, 1988 memo, I sent Kuhn a copy of my first Archives Annual Report, mentioned in the last chapter. It was meant primarily to help him better realize all of the work which had to occur for an archives to function efficiently and why an AP person was needed. Towards the end of the report, I included the following declaration about quitting under certain conditions. I hoped that it would have a salutary effect!

“In conclusion,” I wrote, “the archivist requests that either an equitable and reasonable solution ... be worked out in terms of a full-time assistant and additional released time for himself, or that he be relieved from his responsibilities in the archives in order that he might be able to take up responsibilities full-time in the Department of History again.... At any rate, the archivist is unwilling to go on doing a large part of two jobs on a ten-month salary. He welcomes talks as to how one or another solution might be achieved.”

Kuhn responded in an October 31 memo in which he declared, “...and yes, I did see the ‘challenge’ to the VPAA on page 18 [!]” Despite his inability to grant the archives an AP position at the moment, his subsequent actions show, as we shall see, that he took “the challenge” seriously.
ALUMNI BOARD PRESENTATION

It was during that fall of 1988 too, that I requested an opportunity to make a presentation to the Alumni Board at its fall meeting. My hope was to educate and sensitize the alumni leadership as to what we were trying to do to preserve Northern’s history. It, in turn, I hoped, would communicate to its readership via alumni publications, etc. the need of their support for the archives. At the time, Paul Suomi was Director of Alumni Relations. He had sent me a copy of Northern’s “Normal Song” to be preserved in the archives. Attached to it was a note from Eva Kiltinen to him stating that it had been sent to her by a Dr. Ruth Ester Hillila. Suomi stated, “Since it definitely belongs in the archives, I am forwarding the copy to you for preservation.” He then added this postscript, “Thanks for doing a superb job at the Alumni Board meeting!” CMPC.2/12

THE APPLEBERRY FEELER

With the interim academic vice president telling me initially that he could do nothing to help the archives even though he wished to, it seemed that there was only one other person who might be able to do something—the president. To approach him was unorthodox, however. But in a way he had left himself open for someone to do something even as irregular as this was—and he is to be complimented for that. As part of the president's effort to improve internal communications at the university, he adopted a policy of allowing any faculty, staff, or student to meet with him during the noon hour on certain days of the month. I decided to seek to take advantage of the opportunity. On February 7, 1989 I wrote him, stating as diplomatically as I could:

I notice that you have been meeting for discussions with faculty members, staff, and students during the past semester and earlier. I would appreciate an invitation to such a meeting with you. The subject I would like to discuss is the place of the archives in the overall administrative structure of the university. At the moment it has a very anomalous position, so much so, that I have come to the conclusion that a solution can only be worked out if the matter is taken under advisement at the highest levels of the university's administration. I would appreciate a bit of your time to apprise you of the situation and to explore what might be done.” CMPC.2/12

Despite the topic I proposed for discussion, the president did invite me to meet with him on February 22. The discussion also got into the topic of a “secretary/archival assistant” for the archives. On March 7, I sent him a follow-up memo. After thanking him for the conference he had with me, I requested the following of him—that if someone other than Dr. Kuhn became the next Vice President for Academic Affairs, that he, Appleberry, would share with that person the matters I had discussed with him regarding the need for a secretary/archives assistant and for departmental standing for the archives. I then got more specific as to what I believed he could do that would help the archives. Please excuse the extensive quote, but it all seems relevant to demonstrating the amount of effort that was undertaken to change minds. I declared that:
As much as I would have liked to avoid bothering you with these matters, I really do need a word from you, as president, to help sensitize others as to how much the situation in the archives needs a good, hard examination as to what might be done. I appreciate the delicate situation you are in. You are right in your concern not to over-ride your division chiefs. Yet, as you know, just a word from a president regarding his concern about a matter can have a great salutary effect on the degree of consciousness and the priority a matter takes in the mind of a division chief.

I feel that I have been as patient in this matter as can be expected. I have now waited five years. I think you will agree that not too many professional people with a PhD, or otherwise would have continued to do the type of job the university has asked me to do for as long as I have if they were not provided with any kind of office or technical help. I have been glad to accommodate the university in its request in this archival endeavor because the university certainly is on the right tract in trying to create this kind of resource for research. But surely there is a limit to how long the university can expect me to continue to work in this way to achieve that goal. Surely the time has come for serious discussion until this matter is corrected.

Thank you very much for your patience and help with this matter. I hope that the scuba lessons that you told me of are continuing to go well, and that this new form of recreation is continuing to be a source of real pleasure for you.

Three days later, on March 10, Appleberry replied. It was a very kind response. It declared that he would “raise questions, and I have, as I told you I would.” It also was a firm declaration that the priority the archives received was the prerogative of whoever the vice president for Academic Affairs was. I quote his letter at some length too because it provides such a good indication of what the president’s leadership philosophy was and how critically that was likely to impact any personal help he might give the archives cause.

Here is how President Appleberry put it in that letter of March 10:

Cliff, thank you for your memorandum of March 7. I appreciate your interest, your help, and the dedication which you have given to the archives.

Let me say in writing what I said to you verbally. In spite of your rationale in the memorandum, it is not wise for me to step into an area that is the responsibility of one of the vice presidents. I can raise questions, and I have, as I told you I would. Beyond that Cliff, you simply are going to have to continue to work through the vice president to whom you report.

Recognizing the dedicated service you have given for five years, you must also recognize that the vice president will determine the level to which he/she will support archive activity. Regardless of the amount of work to be done or that can be generated, the absolute level of resource commitment that the vice president will make to this endeavor is a viable decision for him/her to make.
Thank you again for your interest and your patience, Cliff. My very best wishes to you. CMPC, 2/12

Just four days later, on March 14, I received a memo from Kuhn stating that he and the president had “discussed the issue of the archives and [of] getting you the help you feel is necessary to do the kind of job you want to do.” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

It was gratifying to know that Appleberry had indeed followed through and discussed the matter with Kuhn as he implied and did. I believe that his discussion with Kuhn about the matter in question did have that salutatory effect. I also believe he became more concerned about seeing that something would be done about the archives’ situation. Also, this development gave Kuhn the green light to explore additional ways to attempt to move ahead. (He had just told me in his March 14 memo that “University budgets simply will not allow expanding the effort at the present time.”) He wondered if I had met with Perrin Fenske, the Director of Research Development, “to determine if grant funding might be available to fund part of your operation?” I had not. But these recent signs of an heightened level of interest and support from Appleberry and Kuhn encouraged me to believe that there was a point in doing so now.

A NEW DEVELOPMENT REGARDING THE ARCHIVAL SPACE QUESTION: THE LONGYEAR HALL POSSIBILITY

In March 1989 too, the long-standing hope that Longyear Hall might eventually become the home of Northern’s archives received a serious setback. The Space Utilization Committee sent the President’s Council its long-awaited recommendations regarding the proposed future uses of Longyear, Pierce, and Carey Halls. It was dated March 8.

The recommendations did not include any space for the archives in Longyear Hall—nor any place else. From the archives point of view, this was a serious matter. At this time the director of the library was still insisting that the library would, in the not too distant future, need all of the available space in the LRC. This meant that the archives eventually would have to move out of that building. To where would it then move? As we have already noted, since at least shortly after the founding of the archives the hope had been that the space problem would eventually be solved by its relocation—quite probably to the Longyear building. That hope now seemed dashed. This new development also had the potential of affecting adversely the future staffing situation in the archives. It may be recalled that former Vice President Donovan had once declared the view that there really was little point in increasing staffing for the archives until it had more space. If his successors had a similar view, it might be a long, long time before it obtained any additional help.

However, a memo dated March 17 from Lyle Shaw, Vice President for Finance and Administration, to J. P. Farrell, the Chairman of the Space Utilization Committee, shows that at least some members of the President’s Council had also for some time now accepted the idea that Longyear Hall would be the future home of the archives, although I did not know this until I discovered it during my research in 2012. OLR, 1/7, 2/7, 29-01-11 While the President’s
Council had from 1984 to 1989 not felt compelled to give the archives the level of priority that would require the amount of space Longyear had to offer, the implication of Shaw’s memo was that this had been its ultimate intention. This, however, was not communicated to me. Even in 2012 it was finally good to learn of that intent. Had I known of it at the time, it would have spared me some of the anxiety I felt during those years when support was actually decreasing somewhat. To me, at the time, the on-going dearth of critical support suggested that perhaps the President’s Council really did not expect the archival effort to survive, or at least never expected it to develop to the level where it needed the amount of space Longyear Hall had the potential of providing. Shaw’s letter, however, shows that not everyone on the President’s Council had such a dim view of the future of the archives—perhaps no one. Had there been more communication regarding the thinking of the possibility of the archives being housed in Longyear, my anxieties would have been considerably reduced. Lack of adequate communication with subordinates was something which other segments of the university community also had been finding fault with as was noted in the findings of the Commission on the Future of the University, for example.

Shaw’s memo stated that “the original thinking for Longyear Hall... [was that it would be the] location for the campus archives operation.” Now the Space Utilization Committee was recommending that the Office of University Advancement henceforth occupy that building (See Farrell to Shaw and Bruce Anderson, March 8).

Shaw’s letter of March 17 demonstrates that at this time in 1989 a majority of the members of the President’s Council decided that the Space Utilization Committee’s recommendations were in some respects questionable. It made no provision for any space for the archives and there had been no further input from the university community. Consequently, the President’s Council decided to seek further “comment from individuals throughout the academic, on-campus community” rather than just the sources which the Space Utilization Committee had consulted. Shaw, therefore, wrote as follows to the chairman of the Space Utilization Committee: “Dr. John Kuhn and Dr. Don Rybacki [the Academic Senate’s representative on the President’s Council] will be soliciting these comments, which are to be transmitted directly to you and the Space Committee for consideration. Upon receipt of these various comments the committee may or may not wish to revise its recommendations.”

I suspect that Kuhn and Rybacki got the job of gathering this additional input because they were among those on the President’s Council who were the most interested in finding support for acquiring some space for the archives somewhere. Later Kuhn placed the matter on the agenda of the Academic Council’s meeting to be held on March 30. However, the input Kuhn and Rybacki submitted to the Space Utilization Committee did not change its recommendations. On April 11, Rybacki reported to the President’s Council that the Space Utilization Committee had reported to the Academic Senate that there had been “no further action [on its part] regarding the location of the archives/art works storage area.”
KUHN’S ADDITIONAL ARCHIVES INITIATIVES: THE SPRING OF 1989 AND BEYOND

The decision not to grant space to the archives in Longyear Hall was also disturbing to Ruth Roebke-Berens. She had recommended this solution earlier, it will be recalled; and April 3, 1989, she wrote me as follows:

I have discussed the archival situation with Dr. Kuhn particularly in light of the Space Utilization Committee’s recommendation to use Longyear Hall for Development and Alumni Offices and not the University Archives.

Dr. Kuhn would like you to make the case for the archives with the Educational Policy Committee (EPC). This committee is charged with short- and long-range planning by the contract, and Dr. Kuhn plans to involve the committee more directly in setting priorities for the academic wing of the university. As you know the academic deans are members of this committee and will have to be convinced that the archives has higher priority than, for example, a new position in Education.

You should outline the need for greater support to the chair of EPC, Dennis Badaczewski, and request to be placed on their agenda.

The EPC was a committee of the Academic Senate. Thus this too was an effort on Kuhn’s part to marshal university-wide support for the archives, and then to use that support to influence the President’s Council in its decisions regarding it.

THE EDUCATIONAL POLICY COMMITTEE INITIATIVE

As Roebke-Berens implied, the EPC consisted in large part of the academic deans whose arguments for positions in their particular schools had resulted in no funds being allocated or left over for a position or two for the archives. That also resulted quite substantially because the archives had no departmental or divisional standing and, therefore, effectively, no visibility or voice when the decisions of the deans and department heads were made as to where educational funds would be allocated.

This invitation to appear before the EPC provided the archives with an opportunity for the first time to have this kind of visibility and a voice before this entire group of middle-management decision-makers.

MY MEMO TO THE EPC

On April 19th, in response to the suggestion/request of Kuhn and Roebke-Berens, I sent a memo to the EPC informing them of Kuhn’s request and that I was more than happy to comply. In the case I made for greater support for the archives, I again listed many of the points that I had made previously in other memos to other individuals and groups when asking for support. These included such things as the fact that, in my opinion, greater support would enhance “the university’s academic capabilities and stature, its administrative...efficiency, its public relations efforts, and its fund-raising capabilities.” I
provided evidence showing how far short our archival efforts fell compared to that of other Michigan universities of similar size and larger. I pointed out that patrons expected more of a university the size of Northern, and in the unique location in which it found itself. I provided examples. I declared that the amount of support a university gives its archives was an indicator of its real commitment to research and academics, and that this would affect not only its stature in the public’s mind but also its growth and sustainability.

In view of these things, I rather bluntly enumerated some things Northern needed to do with its archives to improve its stature as an academic institution. One was to make providing the archives with a more conducive space situation a top priority, preferably in the LRC building, but perhaps elsewhere. What message, I asked, do patrons get about Northern’s commitment to facilitating research in primary sources when they walk into the “hole in the wall” that Northern was now calling its archives and they then saw how spacially, even lavishly, some other things were furnished and supported?

I went on—as the reader would probably expect by now!

Even more than better facilities... Northern needs to make it a high priority to staff its archives much more adequately. Two full-time positions are absolutely necessary to begin to produce an archives of any kind of reputation and respectability at all, and that would still leave it at the bottom of the heap among those archives that staff their archives reasonably adequately.

Northern also needs to give the archives departmental standing. The archives needs a forum in which it has membership and in which it has the opportunity to be heard just as the library or any other divisions of the university do. Secondly, the claim of the archives to such status is based in part at least on the fact that the role of the archives in an academic higher education support system is just as legitimate and important as that of a library. One is a repository of primary resource materials; the other of secondary. Both are essential in the search for truth and understanding.

Additionally, Northern’s leadership needs to take on the responsibility of seeing that at least the minimal improvements suggested above become a reality. It must not continue to feel that it has done its job because it has given a professor one-third released time to direct the highly complex effort of gaining control over the many types of diverse materials that come into an archives. It also must not continue to expect that same person, with only that amount of time, to shoulder the executive responsibility of seeing that the improvements suggested above are made. Until Northern’s top leadership assumes that responsibility, memos like this one will accomplish little. The many already in the files demonstrate that.... Hopefully, the request for the information I am providing is the beginning of a real assumption of the responsibility that is needed. If further evidence is desired about the impossibility of expecting the archivist to right the archival situation under the present circumstances, the last part of Appendix C [of this document] should be of help.
In the final section of the memo I enlarged on the benefits Northern could realize shortly if it improved its support for its archival efforts to at least the minimal levels suggested above. I stated:

1. If we desire it, the archives can become an important part of a university-wide records management system. A good records management system regularly frees up office and filing cabinet space. Consequently it saves money. By prearrangement, as records in offices that should be saved become inactive they are sent to the archives for preservation and cataloguing for control and intellectual access. The data in the data bank in the archives can then be shared with interested offices and departments of the university via an in-house information sharing network if taking that step is desired. The archival consultant’s report spells out more fully how an archives can be a vital part of a records management program. I include it as Appendix D.

2. By providing a repository for materials with general as well as very specific informational and research value, Northern will gradually create an excellent source of primary research materials that will provide a rich resource and research experience in primary material for many of Northern’s faculty and students. Northern needs to preserve systematically more of its own records in order to create a greater sense of its history among its students and faculty and their identification with Northern. And Northern needs to assume responsibility for the preservation of the history and documentation of important developments that have occurred in the central part of the U.P. There is no other logical institution to do it. Northern, as the most logical institution, should feel a moral obligation to assume the responsibility and to seek the support required to do it, whether from the legislature or elsewhere. Again until the archives is staffed with more than one-third released time, it cannot be expected to participate in the effort to get that support in addition to its other responsibilities.

3. A rich core of social and ethnic history is beginning to accumulate in the archives as a result of the work of students in the classes of professors such as Magnaghi and Saari. More support would only enhance that greatly and much more quickly. The archives also should be a repository for significant research materials generated by professors and others from every field. That is beginning but much more needs to be done and could be done with more support.

4. The archives should by all means be obtaining the papers of significant political figures such as Jacobetti and significant businesses such as the mining, lumbering, and health care industries, etcetera. The papers of Jacobetti, for instance, would be such a rich source for research for our faculty and students. Would they not considerably enhance Northern’s stature as a school committed to fostering research? Would they not be the basis of pride, commitment, and support for Northern in the minds of some, even many? Without quick action, Northern is in danger of losing them. Northern needs to gear itself up to be able to take advantage
of prestige-and-research-enhancing opportunities such as these. A memo concerning the Jacobetti Papers is included as Appendix E.

5. By showing an interest in the papers of people and having a respectable place to house them, Northern could likely cultivate a significant number of additional donors and create significantly more good will for Northern. If people sensed that Northern wanted to do them a favor, was interested in helping preserve their records and memory for posterity, and was not just interested in what they could do for Northern, it probably would do wonders in loosening the purse strings of some, perhaps many, potential donors. I think Northern should use the offer of taking a potential relatively large contributor's papers as one means of fund raising.

RESULTS OF THE STEPS TAKEN WITH THE EPC AND THE NHPRC

The significance, I believe, of this document and my subsequent arguments before the EPC was this. It gave Kuhn some significant leverage with the academic division chiefs and department heads to argue for, and to pursue, the obtaining of a position or two for the archives even if this meant other departments would not receive funding for positions which they felt they needed. The memo also placed a strong rationale in the hands of these chiefs and department heads for joining Kuhn in pursuing a course of action which he had begun to feel they should pursue even at some cost to their own programs.

What became of this document? Well I was invited to make that presentation before the EPC after its members had had time to consider it. They were sympathetic. They urged me to provide them with an estimate of the costs of staffing the archives more adequately and of making such renovations as were necessary in the space which was available. The implications were that after the EPC saw these estimates the Vice President for Academic Affairs would be asked to initiate steps for finding the funds needed to affect these changes permanently. The implication was also that this would then very likely lead to the matter being brought before the President’s Council. As the next chapter will show, this is part of the background for the council actually taking up the question of staffing the archives more adequately. This also led to a consideration of the question of what kind of an archives the council wanted it to become.

My contacts with the NHPRC also were part of that background. The positive response I was getting from it encouraged the council as it learned of it to believe that perhaps something could be done about providing at least one full-time permanent staff member for the archives without NMU having to come up with the funds for that immediately.

FURTHER EFFORTS TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF KEY MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL

To help assure that the council would vote in the affirmative on providing more adequate staffing, I sent memos or letters to three key members of the President’s Council/division chiefs pointing out how I believed that a more adequately staffed archives could benefit their division as well as make a significant contribution to the university’s interests and
mission as a whole. I asked them as well if they would share with me how they felt that the archives could perhaps better serve their purposes.

This happened over a three-week period from the end of April to the middle of May shortly after I had sent my memo to the EPC on April 19. On April 26 I sent Bruce Anderson, Vice President for University Development, the first of these memos. I pointed out, among other things, how I believed that the archives could help with NMU's fund-raising efforts. On May 12 I sent Matthew Surrell, Vice President for University Public Relations, a memo regarding how I felt the archives could help significantly with that; also with the preservation of much valuable information which was then being destroyed in NMU's Radio/Television Division. This also was under his jurisdiction. On May 15 I sent John Hammang, Vice President for Human Resources and Data Information Services, a memo informing him of how I felt the archives could help him with his effort to manage the records control aspect of his responsibilities. (Later I sent a similar memo to another division chief, Phillip Beukema, after he arrived at Northern.)

Because of space shortages which had been developing in various university offices, this was something about which Hammang had recently become quite interested. At this very time he was exploring the possibility of the university purchasing an expensive information management system. However, segments of the university community were questioning the advisability of doing so, mainly because it was so expensive. A much less costly alternative would be going with an archival records management program. By about June it seems he had pretty much abandoned the idea of purchasing that more expensive system at least until the pros and cons of going with an archival records management program had been thoroughly examined. It seemed likely that it could be established much more cheaply with the help of that NHPRC grant about which Kuhn and Roebke-Berens had been talking in council circles. Thus it was not only because of the urgings of the EPC that this matter was brought up at a President’s Council retreat in June but also because of Hammang’s rather sudden real interest in it.

At that President’s Council retreat the subject of the archives needs and of records management possibilities was scheduled for future council meetings. Learning of this, I sent that fourth communication about these things on August 16, this time to Beukema, a new member of the Council. I asked him for his support for the effort to acquire a NHPRC grant, and stated why I thought that this was important. I felt that as the new Vice President for Academic Affairs his views would likely prove to be quite important in determining what was done about staffing the archives more adequately. On August 28, Roebke-Berens also sent him a memo declaring her endorsement of my encouragement to seek at least one permanent position for the archives and apply for a NHPRC grant to help fund it.

In the next chapter we will see how these initiatives developed and also how some unexpected ones emerged.

The title of this chapter states that during the time period covered by it, an administration initiative was launched to get two permanent positions for the archives. While I have not
specifically documented that number so far, we can be quite certain that this was already the case on Kuhn’s part during this period. As noted above, he made it clear to me on March 14 1989 that he was going to try to obtain “the help you feel is necessary to do the kind of job you want to do,” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58. From all I know I believe this was for the two positions the consultant and I felt was needed, but I have not found a document stating this from the period covered by this chapter. He did state that specifically later on, as we shall see, in a memo dated September 13, 1989, AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58.
CHAPTER 16
A DIVERSION TOWARD A SOLE RECORDS MANAGEMENT
EMPHASIS AND THE ARCHIVES BECOME PART OF THE
LIBRARY, JUNE 1989—JANUARY 1990

When in the spring of 1989 John Kuhn suggested that I investigate the possibility of obtaining a grant to acquire the permanent help I needed, I was thrilled. Since he was suggesting this, I hoped that this also meant that he felt that the university might now be ready to make the necessary commitment for it to qualify for a grant and that he himself would be staunchly involved in helping to obtain it. After months of statements from my superiors that the university was unable to provide any additional assistance to the archives, this was indeed a thrilling prospect.

This chapter, however, will also discuss a plan to convert the archives into an operation concerned with little more than the management of the university’s own records and the origins of a plan to place the archives under the library. Had I also known of these plans at the time, I would not have been so thrilled, but I did not. If the reader is only interested in what happened and not so much why things happened as they did, he or she may wish to skip over some portions of the middle part of this complicated, yet intriguing chapter—that is approximately pages 172 to 177. It is a chapter which reveals a lot about how various university officials were thinking at the time and about how I was thinking.

This chapter also tells the story of how I was dropped out of the archives development planning loop, so to speak, for a time. Also of how the archives development “ball” was carried for a while by a person who up to this point had pretty much been unconvinced of the importance of the archives cause. Furthermore, of how he carried it in a direction I would have been opposed to had I known of it at the time. Yet of how in the end his “stratagem” made a significant contribution toward getting the archives more firmly established.

The following is some of the setting from which all of this began. Once Kuhn suggested checking out the possibility of qualifying for a grant, I lost no time in contacting the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. Since the NHRPC had already funded the 1986 consultancy grant, I thought that there might be a good chance that it might be ready, if the university also was now ready, to fund a follow-up grant to implement some of the consultant’s recommendations. After discussing grant possibilities with Perrin Fenske, NMU’s Grants Development Director, we agreed that a NHRPC grant would likely be the most realistic type for which to apply.
THE NHPRC RESPONSE

When I contacted the NHPRC, I was directed to Nancy A. Sahli, its Records Program Director at the time. Via several telephone calls during the spring and summer of 1989, we discussed the possibilities and requirements which Northern would have to meet. I mentioned that I hoped that Northern could obtain NHPRC help with the acquisition of two positions for the archives. She gave no indication that she saw a problem with that. Then that fall, I sent her this letter:

It has been a pleasure to talk with you by phone in the past few months. As you will recall it was regarding the possibility of obtaining NHPRC help with funding a couple of archival positions here at Northern for an introductory period of time. This would be to help Northern begin to implement, on a more adequate level, some of the NHPRC funded consultancy recommendations that were made in 1986. It would also be to help Northern during the initial period of establishing continuing, [in-] base funding for these positions. I have appreciated your advice regarding the kind of grant arrangement for which to apply and for your encouragement to apply.

I kept Kuhn informed of what I was learning from Sahli. It became obvious that he had become committed to doing everything he could to see that Northern would qualify for a NHPRC grant. That engendered considerable new hope and confidence in me.

Sahli had informed me that the next deadline for submitting a grant application was October 1, 1989. At first I rather naively hoped that we could meet that deadline. As the date approached however, Kuhn who was more in touch with budgeting realities than I was, and with the inadequate amount of support which still existed on the President’s Council level for the kind of staffing he considered necessary, informed me that we could not meet that deadline. He advised me to aim at meeting the next one, October 1, 1990.

MY DECISION TO STEP DOWN AS ARCHIVIST

During the summer of 1989, I also made the decision to step down at an appropriate time as NMU’s archivist. I did this in the hope that this would give our NHPRC grant application a better chance of being successful and result in the archives getting a professionally trained archivist under the provisions of the grant. I made the decision following my conversations with Nancy Sahli. She had led me to believe that Northern had a fairly good chance of qualifying for a NHPRC grant that would permit it to hire both an archivist and an assistant to the archivist. I felt that both were necessary, and I expected to write that into the grant application.

At the same time I believed that I had pretty good grounds for hoping that if a Northern grant application was successful, I had a pretty good chance of being the full-time archivist who would be hired under the provisions of the grant—that is if I wished to be. But after some thought, I decided that for the good of the archives, if Northern was fortunate enough to obtain the necessary funds to hire an archivist, it should be a professionally trained,
experienced one. I did not qualify under that criteria. A person with several years of experience, working in a professional operation with professionally trained colleagues and also abreast of the latest advances in automation and technology could make a much greater contribution in taking the archives to the next level than I could. Thus I felt it was only right for me to step aside voluntarily and open the way for such a person to be hired.

My decision would also relieve those who would have the responsibility of deciding who the future archivist would be from feeling that they might be hurting me if they also felt that hiring a professionally trained, experienced archivist was the best route to follow. I knew too that if I stepped down from being the archivist, I would not be real seriously hurt. I could always go back into full-time teaching and continue my research and writing as a historian. My History Department colleagues concurred. For example, somewhat later, on October 25, 1989, Ruth Roebke-Berens declared to a student interviewing her regarding me and the archives, “Professor Maier has no personal ambition in this. He simply wants to make sure that the Archives gets up and going…. It has been a labor of love.”

I communicated my decision to step down to both Sahli and Kuhn. Kuhn passed it on to the others at the President’s Council level. This would have included Phillip Beukema, the new Vice President for Academic Affairs. At this point Kuhn was orienting Beukema regarding archival matters. Thus from early on, everyone who needed to know where I stood on this issue knew, permitting them to plan accordingly.

UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES OF MY DECISION TO STEP DOWN

It should be noted that in indicating that I would step down from being the university’s archivist at whatever time a new professionally trained archivist would be hired and took over, I still fully expected to continue to be treated as the university’s archivist until that time arrived. As such, I expected that Academic Affairs would in the interim keep me informed of any significant decisions which affected me and in determining the goals I felt were good for the archives. Also that it would invite me to participate in any discussions that might take place concerning such decisions, especially if the discussions had the potential of affecting the character or well-being of the archives in the future. I expected this to happen not only out of a courtesy to the person still holding the position of archivist but also out of necessity since I believed that at that time I was the best informed person about archival matters on campus. My views and insights, therefore, should, I felt, at least be heard and considered.

This did not turn out to be the case. Apparently, once it become known at the President’s Council’s level that I was going to be stepping down, the council began thinking and acting as if I was already a “has been” and essentially out of the picture. If these individuals happened to have questions about the archives, they felt they could just ask Roebke-Berens. Because of her role as assistant to the president or as an assistant to one member or another of the council, she met quite regularly with them. In some ways she came to be treated as sort of an interim archivist for this up-coming period of time. This was true at least with respect to policy and planning matters. It appears, too, that Roebke-Berens did
not have much of a problem with this happening. While it was natural in a way to turn to her because it was easier and more convenient, the question is was it proper?

The development I have just identified does not mean that there was any encroachment on my prerogatives within the archives itself. Since Roebke-Berens and I were each very busy in our own little “worlds,” we seldom saw each other. When we did, we seldom, if at all, shared anything that might have come up at Academic Affairs or the council about the archives. This was in part, as we shall see, because I had been left uninformed and therefore unsuspecting of things that actually were transpiring—things which I would certainly have inquired about further had I suspected what they were. Besides I expected that if anything came up that I should know about, Academic Affairs would notify me directly as Donovan and Kuhn had generally done earlier. I, therefore, felt that there was no need for me to seek to obtain news of that kind through Roebke-Berens.

In one sense the members of the council, including those associated with Academic Affairs, certainly were entitled to feeling that they had no obligation to keep me informed about policy and financial decisions affecting the archives. They had the authority to hire as many staff as they wished for any division of the university they wished and to assign them to any administrative unit they desired. On the other hand, I felt, that it was only proper for them to keep me “in the loop,” so to speak regarding proceedings having to do with the archives. I had done much research into the kind of things which needed to happen for a university archives to develop into a truly professional operation. It was something I desperately wanted to see happen for Northern. I had worked hard within the limits of the resources available to me to position Northern for that. Therefore, I felt that I was entitled to be kept informed and have some input into the kind of an operation the archives would become when I stepped aside. Furthermore, for the sake of its future well-being as I saw things, I was determined, if at all possible, to continue to have that input while I still was the archivist. This spelled conflict ahead; but not until I found out what was happening. And that was not until considerably later.

Because the President’s Council again decided in early 1990 that the university should once again delay submitting a grant application--that is for a second time, for reasons I will note later--the potential was there for leaving me “out of the loop” for a very long time. And that is what happened. However in early 1991 the situation began to change, and gradually, surprisingly given what had happened, I again became quite involved in archival policy matters and planning. Why that change occurred and what the consequences were, will be related in subsequent chapters.

But, as already mentioned, leaving me “out of the loop” did not mean that I could not continue to press ahead with the processing and service work inside of the archives during that period from September 1989 to early 1991. Not at all. And I did. Some of the best work done in the archives was done while I was the archivist during that period of silence on the part of the administration. Yet from hindsight, it seems that it would likely have been considerably better had I not announced my intention to step down quite so early.
Before moving on, it seems advisable to note the administrative changes which occurred during the summer of 1989—although we have already touched on that somewhat. During that summer, Phillip Beukema became Northern's new Vice President for Academic Affairs and John Kuhn now became his associate vice president. Kuhn quickly developed a good working relationship with Beukema it would seem, although some evidence suggests that before very long Kuhn's enthusiasm for pouring himself into concerns on the archives front diminished somewhat. The reasons for this will become more evident as the story unfolds. It seems that initially Beukema readily agreed with Kuhn that the time had come to do something more substantial about staffing of the archives. Being new to NMU, I am not sure how deeply he felt about this at this early stage in his assessment of many things. Kuhn by this time had come to the conclusion that the archives needed not only one, but two permanent full-time positions. This is what the consultant had recommended in 1986 and what I had been recommending to Kuhn while he was interim vice president. When, in September 1989, I learned from Kuhn that Beukema was talking as if he agreed with him on this, I was thrilled. However, what I did not know—that is until months later—was what else Beukema and Kuhn were agreed on. Had I known of that too, I would not have been so thrilled. These two men had decided to seek to have the archives placed under the library. Beukema seems to have felt strongly about this right from the start. This could have been either because he had quickly come to that conclusion on his own or it may have been because Kuhn had begun to believe this and persuaded him. It could have, of course, been for other reasons too. I, on the other hand, saw doing this as risky and felt quite strongly that Northern should avoid going in that direction. Thus, when I eventually learned of this particular Beukema/Kuhn plan, (or was it a Kuhn/Beukema plan?), it caused me considerable concern. As we shall see, one of the reasons I did not know of the plan was in part because of some misleading language which was used when reference was made to this; that language disguised what actually was being planned.

Ruth Roebke-Berens’ status changed too during the summer of 1989. She returned to the History Department as a professor instead of continuing to be a full-time assistant to Kuhn as she had been while he was Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs the previous year. President Appleberry, however, again decided to retain her services part-time; this time simply to be an assistant to himself and to the other members of the President’s Council. I believe this was on a one-third-released-time basis. During this particular fall, the North Central Accrediting Association would be arriving on campus. She was to help facilitate its work. Although I did not know it at the time, she was also asked to serve on an important subcommittee of the President’s Council concerned with determining the future character of the archives should Northern be fortunate enough to obtain a grant. It was
undoubtedly felt that her past association with archival matters and her interest in it would make her a valuable member of that committee. Then later on, during much of the academic year 1990-91 and beyond, she also headed up a committee of the President’s Council focused on how Northern’s institutional values and traditions might be better recognized and used to enhance loyalty and support for Northern.

Her work of the Committee on Institutional Values and Traditions wound down in early 1991. But her opinion on archival matters continued to be sought by members of the President’s Council whenever the subject was being considered. This, of course, was especially true of Beukema and Kuhn given their administrative positions.

But President Appleberry’s resignation in the spring of 1991 brought Roebke-Berens’ role of her being part of the President’s team and her close association with the President’s Council to an end. The incoming President, William E. Vandament, (for the first year only interim president) believed that more of the university’s information gathering, planning, and decision-making should be occurring at lower levels than the President’s Council. He, therefore, felt that Roebke-Berens’ services were no longer required by his office, or at that level. Consequently, she returned to full-time teaching in the History Department in the fall of 1991. But in the meantime much transpired at the executive level that she was part of.

**RESTORATION OF MY TWO-THIRDS RELEASED TIME**

During the summer of 1989 too, Barry Knight was promoted from Interim to regular Head of the History Department. This for a second time. Meanwhile, true to their earlier promises, the members of the History Department’s Executive Committee and Knight had been vigorously pursuing the restoration of my two-thirds released time to work in the archives.

The strong position the members of my department took on these issues as well as my threat to resign likely had some influence on the decision of the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences and the Vice President for Academic Affairs to approve the restoration of the two-thirds released time. At the same time, I think it also happened because fundamentally they favored it; and now felt that they could do it. And I am sure that the following also were considerations. If I resigned what would happen to the archives in the interim between then and when a NHPRC grant could be obtained to hire a new archivist? And would the NHPRC approve a grant if these things were allowed to happen?

Anyway, it was indeed thrilling to have the two-thirds released time restored. It became effective January 1990, that is even earlier than the latest deadline I had set. It permitted us to speed up somewhat again our work in the archives and it truly did a lot to lift the level of my optimism compared to what it had been from late 1986 to early 1989. This, along with the university’s possible readiness (judging from what Kuhn had said to me, as we shall see) of committing itself to staffing the archives with two permanent positions if a NHPRC grant was obtained.
KUHN’S IMPORTANT SEPTEMBER 13, 1989 MEMO

I now return to the ideas and planning which were occurring on the part of the administration at this time and which would be affecting the archives. More specifically, I turn to the thinking and planning by Kuhn and Beukema and then of the entire President’s Council and the results of that.

On September 13, 1989, Kuhn sent Beukema a very revealing memo. It was to update him on what Kuhn had been doing to expedite archival matters since speaking to him about that earlier and to inform him about what he believed the best strategy was for advancing the archives initiative in the future.

A lot can be learned from the memo. It should also be kept in mind that from the time the memo was written until the time this chapter ends (January, 1990) I did not know (to the best of my recollections) of the existence of this memo or of its contents, nor did I until sometime after that. It was not copied to me even though I figured prominently in it. I did, however, somehow obtain a copy of it by March, 1991 when I referred to it in a memo. I do not seem to have been aware of its existence much prior to then.

The failure to copy me points to a practice that was often true of the administrators at this time; that is of frequently only copying people in their inner circle and not including outsiders who were discussed in their correspondence, or who were, or would be affected by things considered in it. However, it should be stated too that notable exceptions were sometimes made, even on the part of those who generally did not copy those who were affected, or about whom things were claimed. It was a practice which sometimes made it difficult for individuals not part of the inner administrative circle to know where things stood and how best to proceed. Kuhn not copying this particular memo to me is an example of that. It read as follows:

I have met with both Ruth Roebke-Berens and Cliff Maier and we have discussed the University Archives and the possibility of applying for a NHPRC grant. [This particular meeting (or meetings) may already have occurred quite some time prior to September 13.] Cliff Maier and I met again this afternoon and feel strongly that your perspective of having the Archives become a university-wide priority is indeed the tack to take on this issue. Our recommendation is really three-fold:

We recommend delaying on the grant application until the next cycle. We feel more work has to be done to enlist the support of other members of the President’s Council to appreciate a true Archives fully and to support it as a priority with the regular funding of the positions in question, viz. archivist/records manager and assistant. We recommend that the committee of Hammang, Roebke-Berens, and Kuhn formed at this morning’s President’s Council meeting become the preliminary forum to discuss establishing a clearer definition of what this University’s Archives should contain and its position as a university-wide effort (rather than just an Academic-Affairs effort).
Finally, we recommend that a committee of Cliff Maier and I, key members of the President’s Council (Hammang, Pearre, Surrell, and Anderson) or their designates, the Head of the Academic Senate, and perhaps a dean and someone from the Library like John Berens meet and discuss ranking the Archives as a university priority and attempt to elicit the support of the President’s Council for in-base funding for fiscal 1992-93. If the committee agrees that the Archives are indeed a priority and if the President’s Council does accept a budget recommendation establishing a minimal level of commitment, then Dr. Maier could proceed with drafting a grant proposal for October 1990. That proposal could then be confident in its request for funding those two positions on a temporary basis with the promise of established funding by the University in fiscal year 1992 and beyond. [Be it noted that this document is located in an Academic Affairs’ archives folder for 1991-1993 instead of its file for 1988-1991, where it logically should be.] AARA, (1988-1991) 1/12, 20-03-58

Since Kuhn’s memo reveals so much as to what his thinking was at the time, what he was planning, and what others were thinking and planning, I have felt that it is advisable to examine it in greater detail. As can be seen, Kuhn’s memo affirms that he and I had had a conversation about applying for a grant (Actually, it was more than one), and that he had had the last conversation with me about archival matters on this very day, September 13. Kuhn was still dedicated to help the archives get that permanent full-time help which he had earnestly committed himself to in the second quarter of 1989. It also shows that he was committed to obtaining not just one but two full-time permanent positions for it as the consultant had recommended as being necessary, and as I had been recommending as well since then. Wow! It is great to know that he was firmly taking that position in September, 1989.

The memo also shows that by this time the President’s Council as a whole too was seriously considering committing itself to providing the archives with some permanent full-time help. This was the first time this had ever happened. Wonderful again. But it also shows that Kuhn felt that in order to assure the success of the agenda he had in mind, a larger cross-section of Northern’s administrators than only those on the President’s Council needed to be supportive of the effort too; thus he wanted to see a second committee created to help secure the support of that larger community. He felt that he and I ought to be members of this second type of a committee.

The memo alludes to a debate which was transpiring at the time among the members of the President’s Council as to what kind of an archives the archives of the future should be. As Kuhn put it, the debate was about “establishing a clearer definition of what this University’s Archives should contain,” and also how it should be administered. As mentioned, this meant that Kuhn was recommending a delay of the grant application to the next cycle. A reason? He felt that some education was still necessary to persuade some of the members of the President’s Council to appreciate “a true archives fully” and to prepare them to support it as a priority with regular funding for the two positions.

The memo, therefore, makes fairly clear what kind of an archives Kuhn wanted to see developed—one that was fairly well staffed and concerned with the collection of research
materials that would enhance Northern’s academic credentials—that is, if that is what he meant by the phrase, “a true archives.” Based on his record, there is good reason to believe that this is how he saw things. At the time I wholeheartedly agreed with these objectives, although again it must be remembered that I did not know of this memo at the time. I, nevertheless, had gathered from my conversations with him that this is what he wanted to see happen. This put my mind at ease as to the course archival development was likely to take in the immediate future—mistaken as that sense of good fortune turned out to be. I assumed that with him advocating this to his superior, Beukema, they undoubtedly would be able to swing contrary views on the President’s Council in this direction; this even though he now no longer was vice president and was in a weaker position.

THE ARCHIVES UNDER THE LIBRARY

On the other hand, Kuhn’s memo does not make clear where in the administrative structure of the university he wanted to see the archives placed. In his opening paragraph to Beukema, he implied that he (and I as well) felt “strongly that your perspective of having the Archives become a university-wide priority is indeed the tack to take on this issue.” In the third paragraph of the memo he again used the phrase, “university-wide,” stating that he felt that a clearer definition was required as to what the archives’ position should be “as a university-wide effort (rather than just an Academic Affairs effort).”

WHAT DID KUHN REALLY MEAN BY THE PHRASE, “UNIVERSITY-WIDE PRIORITY”?

Without a doubt, by September 1989, Kuhn, and it seems Beukema too, from what Kuhn wrote, and from additional evidence which will be revealed later, both believed that the archives needed to enjoy an increased level of support from the entire university community. In other words, it should become a university-wide priority and that the archives receive that higher level of support.

But is that all that these two men meant when they used the term, “university-wide priority?” As it turned out, the phrase also meant something quite different for them than it meant for me, if I were to hear it used in conversation or see it written somewhere. For me it meant that the archives should be recognized by the entire university community as being important and therefore should receive an increased level of support from it. I believed that quite logically that is what the phrase would have meant to others who heard it too. For these two men, however, the phrase also meant that sometime in the future they wanted the archives recognized as an entity that serviced the entire university community, not just the narrower Academic Affairs segment of it. Therefore they wanted the archives to be placed under some university entity which was associated with a broader “cliente” so to speak as, for example, the library was. At least I think it was something like this that these two men were referring to when they used that phrase. Kuhn’s September memo strongly suggests too that by then they had already made this one of their goals. Another was to get the President’s Council to agree with that. Because of this, this too was one of the topics Kuhn (and presumably Beukema) wanted to see discussed by the council’s subcommittee which had been created on that morning of September 13 and which is mentioned in Kuhn’s memo of that date.
VIEWS IN THE MEMO ASCRIBED TO ME THAT REALLY WERE NOT MINE

Finally and a bit puzzling is the fact that Kuhn in his memo ascribed some views and recommendations to me that really were not mine. I could not have had them or made recommendations about them because I did not know of the things I was supposed to have these opinions about. The first paragraph of his memo contains an example of this. In the phrase already quoted, Kuhn implies that following those conversations he had with Roebke-Berens and me, “we” felt “strongly that your perspective on having the Archives become a university-wide priority is indeed the tack to take on this issue.” Given what the term “university-wide priority” had come to mean for Kuhn and Beukema, this is something I would not have felt strongly in favor of or agreed with him about at this time. That is unless I was misled as to what the phraseology he was using meant when he spoke to both Roebke-Berens and me, or just to me, about this matter. At this point I really wanted to see the archives have a similar standing under Academic Affairs as the library had—not to be under the library as a department of it—nor be part of the library as the phrase apparently meant for these two men.

By using the word “we” in his third paragraph (his number #2.), Kuhn implied that I also knew of some of the things that were being discussed at the President’s Council level regarding the archives. But I did not know of them. He wrote, as it will be recalled, that “we” recommended “that the committee of Hammang, Roebke-Berens and Kuhn... become the preliminary forum to discuss establishing a clearer definition of what this university's archives should contain and its position as a university-wide effort (rather than just an Academic Affairs effort).” I was in no position to know why at this point in the opinion of some, there was any need to discuss what the archives should contain in the future and whether or not it should be something other than just an effort directly under Academic Affairs. My expectation was that if any discussions took place about archival matters, it would be about enabling the archives to better fulfill the mission it already had.

In Kuhn’s fourth paragraph (his number #3.) by using the word “we” again, the implication again was that I knew of his hope that a more broadly based committee would be created (rather than just that subcommittee of the President’s Council created on the morning of September 13), to determine the priority the archives should have for in-base funding; also that I would be a member of such a committee. These things were not discussed with me and I did not know of them either. I, therefore, was not in a position to recommend this to Beukema—as implied by Kuhn’s use of the word “we,” again—although had I known of this particular recommendation, I would certainly have supported it. For me to be on such a committee and to have the opportunity to have input at this kind of top-level forum on behalf of the archives is something I had been lobbying for, for quite some time.

Incidentally, in the end, the President’s Council as a whole chose not to create this more broad-based, loosely speaking, non-President’s Council committee. (However, the predominant number of members suggested for it were to be from the President’s Council too). Instead the council chose to keep this kind of a priority-establishing function entirely in its own hands.
I cannot imagine that Kuhn deliberately meant to deceive when he used the term, “we” to provide basically his own views. In using “we” he used a literary device that is acceptable in certain situations. However, it is a device that can easily also give a false impression, which is what happened in this case.

FALSE IMPRESSIONS AND REASONS FOR MY SILENCE

By giving Beukema the impression that I was informed about everything that he, Kuhn, covered in his memo, I am afraid Kuhn gave Beukema a false impression. The false impression, of course, was that I was informed about everything that was being considered at the President’s Council with regard to the archives, and that I was okay with it all. That, Beukema could well have thought as time went on, was the reason that Academic Affairs was never hearing from me. He could well have felt that I was content with Kuhn’s entire position as implied in his memo and he, therefore, did not need to be that concerned about archival matters—Kuhn would certainly continue to keep me informed about them. What happened was something quite different, however.

The basic reason I was not making any inquiries at the time, and in the immediate future, was because of the great confidence I had developed in Kuhn. I knew from conversations with him that he sincerely wished to see the archives obtain the two positions that the consultant had said were necessary. I was confident too that this was what he would be seeking to get the President's Council to agree to and that then that could be put into our grant application. Because of that confidence, I was ready to leave that whole effort in his hands and presumably in Beukema’s too, and concentrate more of my efforts on work in the archives rather than policy and lobbying matters.

As stated, I knew nothing of the Beukema/Kuhn plan with regard to getting the archives placed under the library. I also knew nothing of an additional plan in the works at the President’s Council to divert the archives pretty much into a purely records management operation. Had I known of these plans, I certainly would have been making inquiries. My silence was, therefore, based in part on my confidence in Kuhn, and on what I was confident he would be working to accomplish, and in part, on inadequate information and the erroneous impressions which sprang from that. Beukema’s silence, in some respects, seems to have been based on a false impression too that I had no problem with anything that was happening and also on his view that Kuhn was continuing to handle archival matters for him. Finally, too, from Beukema’s reaction to some things which happened later on, I suspect that he had not yet at this earlier stage of his vice presidency developed strong convictions about the fundamental importance of an archives to the enhancement of an university’s academic character and to the area of responsibility he had assumed.

THE LONG SILENCE

Given the things discussed above, it is not that surprising that following that September 13, 1989 conversation with Kuhn, I received no official communications from either him or Beukema about archival matters—written or oral—during the entire period from then until early 1991. During that entire time I continued to believe too that these men were
continuing to work behind the scene for the same vision for the archives as I had. And that should something happen that I as archivist should know, they would contact me about it just as Donovan and Kuhn had done earlier when they were the vice presidents. In the meantime, I felt that there was no need for me to be contacting them until we got nearer to the grant writing period; that would now not be until the second quarter of 1991. During the first half of 1990 the President’s Council had once again felt that it needed to postpone the time for submitting the grant application to the deadline on October 1, 1991.

So if everything had really been going the way I hoped they were, there was no need for me to be contacting Academic Affairs even for that very long period of time; and if its head, Beukema, thought I was happy with what was being considered and decided upon at the President’s Council level, there was no reason for him to be contacting me either or expecting Kuhn to be doing so. The reality was, however, that I did not agree with some things Academic Affairs and the Council were considering and/or deciding, and they were unknown to me. And from things I had said and written in the past, at least Kuhn, if not Beukema, would have known that. So the question still remains, why was Kuhn silent, given his past thinking and behavior to the contrary?

Lack of adequate communication is one of the realities that existed in the history of the development of the archives during this particular time. As already noted, even that important information I received from Kuhn on September 13 at the beginning of this particular period was only provided to me orally. An appropriate concern by my superiors to keep me informed, especially when at least Kuhn knew that I would not be happy with what was being decided, seems to have been absent. Perhaps the silence was partly deliberate too, given what was being considered and decided. The concern could have been that if I was kept informed, I would have been making an issue of certain things; and that was something they really did not want to deal with.

Despite the fact that my last communication from Academic Affairs during the time period being considered was from Kuhn, as time went on I began to see Beukema as the official in Academic Affairs with whom I should be communicating when necessary or desirable. Without being informed to the contrary, I felt it was he as well, rather than Kuhn, who should be communicating with me when necessary. Therefore, I began thinking of Beukema as the one to get in touch with me regarding archival matters. That is unless he would have informed me that I should continue to look to Kuhn to handle archival matters for Academic Affairs. But he never did that until March, 1991, a year and a half after the communication blackout began.

From hindsight, and from a practical and more empathetic point of view, it is clear that my looking primarily to Beukema to keep me informed was not too insightful—although technically speaking I believe I was correct in doing so in the absence of instructions to the contrary. I failed to take into account some factors in his situation. When this period commenced, he was in the first couple of months of his job at Northern as Vice President for Academic Affairs. It meant that he had an awful lot of things to get a handle on. For example, on December 1, 1989, he met with the History Department at 7:30 a.m. to get to know its members—or in some cases to get to know them better—and to get to know their
concerns. While the History Department minutes state that he had “done his homework” and was acquainted with the Department’s situation, they also reveal that he left that meeting with a lot of additional things with which he would be expected to concern himself with in the days ahead. And they were not archival matters either. Furthermore this, of course, was just one of many Academic Affairs divisions and departments with which he had to orient himself, keep abreast of, and seek to help.

A statement Beukema made later on reveals what, in practice, had actually continued to happen. He had continued to look to Kuhn to handle archival matters for him without informing him or me officially that he was. This helps to explain Beukema’s silence. In a memo to me on March 11, 1991, Beukema informed me that he was then deputizing Kuhn henceforth to help with any archival matters that would require Academic Affairs attention. As he put it, “Since matters pertaining to university archives have been largely within Dr. Kuhn’s purview in recent times I have referred your memo to him, and in whatever fashion may be appropriate he will follow up...” He copied the memo to Kuhn. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

If Kuhn had never specifically been told prior to this time that he was expected to continue to handle archival matters, and it appears that he was not, perhaps that explains Kuhn’s silence—at least somewhat. What Kuhn seems to have done is this; once he had oriented Beukema to the archives situation during the period up until at least September 13, 1989, he then stepped back at least somewhat, and then more and more. Beukema after all was now head of Academic Affairs. Given that, it is very possible that Kuhn thought that it no longer was proper for him to be taking the initiative and to be stepping into archival matters unless Beukema specifically asked him to do so. Prior to March 11, 1991, this seldom seems to have happened. However, we know of one instance of when he did. When an important archival question was directed to Beukema on December 5, 1990 (not by me), he reacted as if he was being asked about something that really was in Kuhn’s area of expertise and responsibility; therefore, he turned to him for his recommendation. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58. It seems that he still considered the archives Kuhn’s area of responsibility.

THE SWING TOWARD A SOLE RECORDS MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS, AND TOWARD PLACING THE ARCHIVES UNDER THE LIBRARY

With the above background, we now turn to a couple very significant proposals which the President’s Council was discussing between the middle of 1989 and the early part of 1990, and about which neither Academic Affairs, nor anyone else on the President’s Council informed me of either in writing or orally while this was occurring. One was a proposal to accommodate John Hammang, Director of Human Resources and Data Information Systems, in his recently acquired desire to use the archives for little more than a records management operation and to limit the staffing accordingly to one person. Another was to accommodate Beukema and Kuhn in their desire to place the archives under something other than directly under Academic Affairs—for instance, quite likely under the library.

It was Hammang’s proposal which got the prime attention initially. Toward the end of the process, Beukema and Kuhn’s desires were satisfied as well. How surprised, even shocked I was when I discovered evidence during my research in 2012 that such discussions had
been occurring during this very time—that is so very close to the time of my September 13, 1989 discussion with Kuhn—and that I had not been informed of them.

The President’s Council, and in particular Academic Affairs, may have expected that I as its archivist would be kept informed via some unofficial source such as Ruth Roebke-Berens. But if so, I have to ask, was this the right way to go about it,—that is unless Academic Affairs had informed me that this was the method it was going to use to communicate with me? If so, it never informed me of that. Actually, however, I have found no evidence that there ever was any real concern on the part of either Academic Affairs or the President’s Council to inform me via any method whatever about the real essence of what was being discussed. The next chapter will show, that still on May 28, 1990, Northern’s officials had not informed me either of the very important archives/records management decisions they had been debating and then made six to ten months earlier, nor of those discussions and decisions about placing the archives under the library that had been made.

JOHN HAMMANG BECOMES INVOLVED

If one had been following what had been happening on the archival front at Northern up until the middle of 1989, one likely would not have guessed that in the next seven months it would be John Hammang—not John Kuhn or Phillip Beukema—who would have the greatest influence on the decisions that would be made regarding the character of archival development in the immediate future; also that he more than anyone else, would make this a serious topic of discussion at the President’s Council gatherings and official meetings from about June 1989 to January 1990.

As noted earlier, prior to about June, 1989, Hammang had shown little real interest in seeing progress made on the archival front. In fact, his views probably were the greatest obstacle to providing funding for hiring permanent staff for the archives. He had been hired to keep staffing costs as low as possible and play a large role in determining where and how the limited available funds were to be spent. In his view, staffing the archives more adequately never seemed as important as staffing other things. However, about June, 1989, Hammang began to change his mind regarding the importance of the archives. Interestingly, this happened as a result of Kuhn’s initiatives on behalf the archives in the second quarter of 1989. By this time Kuhn was quiet but more actively backed by President Appleberry too as noted in chapter 15. When Hammang learned through Kuhn’s promoting efforts and through my inquiries with the NHPRC that a fairly good chance had emerged that Northern could obtain a sizeable grant, he suddenly became interested. Shortages of space in some of the university’s offices had gradually become critical. As Director of Data Information Systems now too, as well as of Human Resources, he had come to feel that it was his responsibility to do something about this the space situation in the university’s offices.
But now, however, Hammang became interested too in having the President’s Council do whatever was necessary to obtain that NHPRC grant for the archives. The first time he brought this idea up formally, at least, was at a President’s Council gathering at a summer retreat in 1989. Following that, the subject was first discussed at a regular President’s Council meeting on September 6. This is known from the minutes of the September 13 council meeting. They read, “Dr. Appleberry said that he wanted to verify who was going to take responsibility for developing a records management system as discussed in last week’s council meeting.” The minutes went on to read, “The Council agreed that Dr. Hammang, Dr. Roebke-Berens, and Dr. Kuhn will work on developing a records management system. Dr. Appleberry advised that all staffing and funding requests must be submitted through Dr. Hammang.” The title of the agenda item for this meeting hints at what the purposes of the meeting was, and that it was Hammang, not Kuhn, who would likely play the dominant role in these discussions. The title read, “Development of a Records Management System—Who Will Provide Leadership—Hammang?”

As noted, all references to the reason for considering this matter continued to point solely to records management. For example, in a January 16, 1990 memo written by Hammang to the other members of the committee, he addressed it to the “The Records Management Committee.” The fact that Hammang was in charge of finances placed him in a powerful position for influencing the amount of money that would be spent on staffing the system. A question now was, would he agree to fund the two positions Kuhn considered necessary?

By this time (September 1989) it had become evident to Kuhn that Hammang was interested in improving the archives’ staffing situation pretty much only to the extent that this would enable it to manage the university’s own records effectively. Basically he was just interested in seeing them scheduled for disposition and then removed from the university’s offices. The valuable ones were to be stored where they could readily be consulted, and retrieved if necessary. And in most cases, however, they could be left unprocessed. The rest were to be destroyed when that was deemed appropriate. With this kind of a limited role for the archives, he believed that only one position was necessary to man it.

With this kind of thinking having emerged on the President’s Council on the part of this powerful individual, Kuhn became concerned right from the outset about what would be decided at those subcommittee meetings. What really was the character of the archives which Hammang envisioned? Would they be archives which would enhance the educational experience of the university’s students— and of scholars in general? While managing the university’s own records too had always been a part of the vision for the archives, Kuhn feared that Hammang was about to divert it pretty much only to that.

This concern was in the background of Kuhn’s meeting with me on the morning of September 13 following that meeting he had with the President’s Council earlier that same morning. He reviewed the vision and needs of the archives with me. We agreed that for the archives to have a fair chance of executing well the vision for which it was founded, it needed two positions. He then composed and sent his memo to Beukema. Basically it was
to alert him of the need to counter the narrow role which Hammang envisioned for the archives.

This is what I think Kuhn was referring to when he wrote of the need to establish “a clearer definition of what this University’s Archives should contain.” See above. He also felt that some individuals on the President’s Council did not yet “appreciate a true archives fully,” and that for the archives to do its work properly, it required two positions—“an archivist/records manager and an assistant.” Judging just from what he had seen at those previous two President’s Council meetings, Kuhn felt it was going to take considerable work (judging from the tone of his September 13 memo) and some time to “enlist” the support for his vision of some of the other members of the President’s Council. To gain that required time was undoubtedly one of the reasons he was recommending a delay in applying for the NHPRC grant.

I am not sure of how strongly Beukema felt at this point about contending for the kind of archives Kuhn envisioned. Based on what happened later, my judgment is that he had not yet fully absorbed the significance of what Kuhn was so concerned about and, therefore, may not have been as strong an ally of Kuhn’s at this point as he would have been later on.

It seems that on September 13, Kuhn was still quite hopeful too that his view on things would ultimately prevail. He undoubtedly was hopeful that Hammang could be persuaded to commit the university to funding two positions.

But before long, both Kuhn and Roebke-Berens decided that it was better to go along with Hammang than to allow an indefinite stalemate to develop on the matter. It was another one of those “better a bird in the hand than two in the bush” situations. Roebke-Berens was the first of the two to go along with Hammang’s position. This left Kuhn without support on the subcommittee. The fair amount of optimism that seems to come through in Kuhn’s September 13 memo about possibly being able to “enlist” support for “a true archives” vanished.

**ROEBKE-BEREN’S VIEWS ON THIS MATTER**

I suppose it was from working closely with members of the President’s Council in the past, and in particular with Hammang, that Roebke-Berens, near to the beginning of this process, became quite firmly convinced of the following: that unless the reason for funding a position for the archives was presented to the President’s Council as being for records management purposes, the effort to get the council to agree to in-line budget funding after grant funds expired would very likely fail. It was for this reason that I think she soon threw her weight solidly behind Hammang’s position. Somewhat later she recalled telling me that in my efforts to obtain additional support for the archives, it would be better to present it as a records management tool. In that taped interview which she granted to that Northern student, Laura Bennett on October 25, 1989 and cited earlier—an interview I was not aware of having occurred until I found a copy of it in Northern’s Archives in 2012—she had this to say. “I advised Professor Maier to forget the argument for the Archives for historical purposes alone and to ratchet it up to a more practical level that key administrative
officials would be willing to sign off on. I had been working behind the scenes simply saying that what was needed throughout the University... is a proper records management plan.” Then she added that she also sat on a subcommittee which was looking at “the desperate space needs in the administration building alone” and that members of the President’s Council were coming to see records management as a way to relieve that situation. RRB, T29, 2-1-2

By what she said, Roebke-Berens was not, of course, implying that I was interested in an archives for historical purposes only. This account has shown that both she and I, from the beginning, had been in favor of a balanced archives/records management emphasis. Nevertheless, at this point, for strategic reasons, she was emphasizing records management. For example, a little earlier, on August 28, she sent a memo to Beukema in support of my initial effort in 1989 to obtain the university’s support for applying for a NHPRC grant. She declared, “Although my interest is in preserving the history of NMU and the region, the records management aspect of the archives should also be an important part of the total information management system being developed at the university.” RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01 At this time, Roebke-Berens’ virtually exclusive emphasis on records management was only, as stated, strategic. Without a doubt, her thinking was that once the university had an established records management program, the academic service component of the archives could be brought into proper balance again. She utilized the desperate space situation in the administration building to add weight to her strategy of getting some permanent help for the archives in one way or another.

THE SUBCOMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATIONS

On December 11, 1989 that subcommittee of the President’s Council consisting of Hammang, Roebke-Berens, and Kuhn finally submitted its first report to the President’s Council. Interestingly, it was written by Roebke-Berens but signed by all three members of the subcommittee. It was entitled, ”University Archives/Records Management Program.”

It argued for the introduction of a full-fledged records management system and listed the considerable benefits that would be reaped from doing so. The subcommittee used the archives consultant, Frederick Honhart’s declarations to back up their claims. (He, of course, had recommended much more than just a records management emphasis. His recommendation was only that it was proper to start with that.) The subcommittee report declared too that “implementation of a records management program requires a full-time University Archivist.” It also stressed that initially it would not cost the university anything if the grant application was successful. Finally, it declared, “We believe that a full-time archivist/records manager is a university-wide priority and thus request your support for this priority.” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

ONE POSITION ONLY

It will be noted that this request was for only one position and that Kuhn now too had signed off for only that. I have not found any documentary evidence either that he registered any protest about this change at this juncture or while the report was being
prepared nor by the time the subcommittee’s work was completed in January. The question is why? More on this later.

Interestingly too, Roebke-Berens also signed off on the request for only one position despite the fact that earlier I had specifically asked for her support for my effort to get two positions. On May 15, I had written to her asking “When you make your argument for the Archives’ needs” would you “identify with my statement in my memo to the EPC and elsewhere that the archives needs two positions... If that is not granted, it should be the result of their decision, not a result of ours.”  But at least by the time of her August 28 memo to Beukema she had decided not to identify with my request for two positions—likely influenced by Hammang’s strong position on the matter. She wrote to Beukema, “I am writing to support the request by Professor Cliff Maier to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission... to fund a full-time professional archivist/records manager.”  Note the singular tense. Just prior to this on August 16, I had written to Beukema requesting his support for the funding, with NHPRC help, of two archives/records management positions. I had copied Roebke-Berens. Thus she was aware of my continued request for two positions. Yet her request was for only one when she wrote Beukema twelve days later. Also we know from Kuhn’s September 13 memo that he had recently reminded her of his support for two positions. Thus quite obviously, by this time she had already firmly adopted the “one position only” stance.

THE “UNIVERSITY-WIDE PRIORITY” PHRASE AGAIN

Interesting too is the fact that the phrase, “university-wide priority” shows up again in this report of December 11. But in this context the words are used to convey their normal meaning as Roebke-Berens understood them. Kuhn signed this document. Yet in his September 13 memo to Beukema he used the phrase to convey quite a different meaning. It is all a bit perplexing. What does the reader think?

FURTHER COUNCIL DELIBERATIONS ON THE ARCHIVES/RECORDS MANGEMENT MATTER

The next meeting at which the President’s Council considered the archives/records management matter occurred on December 20. The minutes are not very specific. They do, however, tell us that both Hammang and Kuhn provided up-dates as to what the committee had been doing and that an improved “draft proposal had been prepared.” Copies were distributed to the Council members.

At a January 3, 1990 Council meeting, Hammang presented further thoughts on the “records management” subcommittee’s proposal. He told the Council that he felt that it now had sufficient data to be able to go on record as being officially in favor of establishing a records management program along the lines proposed so far. After further discussion, the minutes state, that the “Council supported the concept.”
A related question still was not settled, however. It was whether or not the university’s normal budgeting process would allow for a grant application to be submitted by the next grant application deadline on October 1, 1990. The minutes read: “Concerns were raised because the request... [would be] out of sequence for a budget decision... at the appropriate time.” This seems to have been a main reason why the council decided to delay the grant application for yet another cycle—that is until the October 1, 1991 deadline.

Other matters required further clarification or agreement as well. The minutes read, “Mr. Hammang agreed to come back to the council at a later date with additional information on the role, benefits, savings, space, and reporting lines [of the proposed archives/records management program].” This suggests that the question of space was still an issue. A grant application would have no prospect for success without a promise that adequate space would be provided for it. Secondly, the question of who the Archivist/Records Manager would report to had apparently not yet been firmly determined. Beukema and Kuhn undoubtedly were clear about what they wanted to see happen, but it appears that a firm decision had not yet been made.

Interestingly enough, the minutes for this particular day also provide insight as to why it was so difficult for the President’s Council to move forward with anything that entailed substantial additional financial commitments. From those minutes, one develops more empathy for Hammang’s tough stand on new expenditures. They show that several other parties with worthy projects were pleading for funds as well. Where were all the funds going to come from?

**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS/DECISIONS REGARDING “THE HAMMANG PROJECT”**

On January 16, Hammang submitted to the “Records Management Committee” and presumably to the full council as well, a proposal which contained that additional information he promised the council on January 3. The title Hammang used for the committee suggests that in his mind the archives component of Northern’s Archives and Records Management operation was going to be so insignificant as not to merit inclusion in the subcommittee’s title.

Hammang’s memo commenced with a purpose statement regarding “the Records Management Function.” It also included a discussion of those things which were going to be needed for the program to be effective and what was necessary to qualify for a grant. He also included further discussion of the benefits that such a system was expected to bring to the university, including financial savings.

**THE ARCHIVES TO BE PLACED UNDER THE LIBRARY**

Included in Hammang’s January 16 memo also was this important statement: “It is proposed that the records management function be assigned to the Library and report to the Director of the Library.” As is also true of the January 3 minutes, this suggests that discussions had also been occurring as to whether or not the archives should continue to report directly to Academic Affairs; this in view of Academic Affairs’ desire that
this not continue to be the case. From a strictly administrative point of view, this desire is certainly understandable given all of the other things Academic Affairs had to deal with.

I do not know if Beukema had yet been made aware of the reasons I had provided to Vice President Donovan earlier about the things that could go wrong when an archives is placed under a library or becomes part of one. I am “sure” that Kuhn, having worked under Donovan for a couple of years, knew of them. However, the evidence strongly suggests that from early on during his tenure at NMU, Beukema had concluded that the benefits of no longer having the archives directly under Academic Affairs outweighed any risks there might be in having it under the library, or it being a part of it. From what Kuhn indicated in his September 13 memo, by that time Kuhn already was in agreement with Beukema on this and may even have persuaded him of it.

However, why was it that Hammang was now also proposing that the records management system be placed under the library? I do not know with certainty. I have not discovered any information in the records I have used regarding this. I, therefore, am only speculating here. The reader may wish to research this further. It could be that he saw this alternative as being less costly to the university. It could also have been that it did not really matter to him personally whether the records management function was under the library or under Academic Affairs, or under some other entity, just as long as the operation was well managed. If so, his thinking may well have been, “Why not let Academic Affairs have its way on this, especially since it has done me the favor of bowing to my wish of hiring only one position for the archives and of going along with the archives becoming basically only a university records management tool?”

Another question? How was an understanding reached with Rena Fowler, the Library Director, with regards to all of this—particularly with regard to her assuming responsibility for the university’s records management operation? Was she just told that in the near future oversight of the records management program was also going to be part of her responsibilities; or did she have some choice in the matter? I do not have an answer for that question either. From a memo she wrote to Kuhn on March 7, 1991, we do, however, know what she specifically offered to do once it was established that she was to assume this additional responsibility. She wrote, “The Library proposed a year ago to provide an Archives with a full-time professional Archivist and student assistance. Funding for supplies was sought. The Library offered to provide space within its present quarters for a reading room and workroom, with storage space off-site, depending upon the breath of responsibilities assigned.” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58. I also know from something Fowler wrote to Kuhn about this time that an understanding had been reached with Academic Affairs, and presumably too with Hammang and the President’s Council, that the Library, in assuming this responsibility, expected to be assuming it only for the university’s own records. This is the kind of an agreement Hammang would have liked.

**WHO WILL WRITE THE NHPRC GRANT APPLICATION?**

The documentary evidence I have found on this is again sketchy. It is sufficient however, to be able to see that by January 1990 the view was that Hammang had assumed
responsibility for this and he would be the one dealing with the NHPRC. He would decide how to meet its requirements and which ones Northern would not try to meet. Hammang’s plan, it is pretty clear, was that with the cooperation of the director of the library and other members of the “Records Management Subcommittee,” he and the President’s Council could do everything which needed to be done in order to qualify for the NHPRC grant. For the first time the library was offering to make space available for this kind of a purpose from within its own quarters. This cooperative attitude without a doubt, emerged because under the agreement the library would be assuming these responsibilities on its own terms and would be pretty much fully in charge of managing things.

The documentary evidence shows that the thinking was that when the time came to write the grant application, Ruth Roebke-Berens, who had been writing at least some of the subcommittee’s reports for the council, would do this too. Even though Kuhn who had so clearly indicated in his September 13, 1989 memo that Academic Affairs was looking to me to write the grant application, by December 5, 1990 had—or at least shortly after January 16 had come to the place where he was also expecting that Roebke-Berens under Hammang’s directions to be writing it. Some additional evidence of this is in the next chapter. The expectation of the director of the library too was that someone other than I would be writing the grant application.

This plan, “engineered” largely by Hammang, goes a long way toward explaining why that “period of silence” with regard to me developed. The feeling on the part of Hammang and of the library director surely was that I was unneeded and that if I was brought into the policy-making process I would surely complicate it. Still it is strange that no one felt the need to inform me officially of the decisions which had been made and of the new plan. I, after all, was still the archivist!

A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

An examination of the minutes of the President’s Council makes it clear that there were a lot of pressures on Hammang to hold the line on new expenditures. However, had he been thinking of the archives from the point of view of the important academic opportunities, experiences, and services a university archives could and should be providing, it seems that he would at least have expressed some concern as to how—somehow—that second position could also be funded. I have not found any evidence of that.

Although both the archives and the library were academic information providers, because the library enjoyed an established position and reputation, and thus a higher priority, the administration had found ways by this time to fund more than twenty permanent positions for it. Fifteen months later, Hammang himself was involved in demonstrating that when a priority was high enough, funding usually could be found to pay for it, especially for something as small as one additional position, and especially if it was just an assistant’s position. This was shown by the fact that after some changed priorities emerged on the President’s Council in January and February, 1991, he agreed that the university could, after all, commit itself to hiring two positions in its grant application. More on how this came about in chapter 17.
SUMMATION, AND CAUSES FOR SATISFACTION

From my point of view, during the time that this chapter covers, the university made some decisions which were undesirable. Yet despite that, this period can also be seen as one of the best periods in the history of the archives thus far. During it, for the first time the President’s Council became ready to hire at least one full-time person to staff the archives. Even though Hammang and Fowler envisioned that person as being employed almost exclusively as a records manager (although Fowler’s position evolved on this, as we shall see in the next chapters) getting in-base funding in place for a full-time permanent person was still going to be a boon in establishing the archives on a much more permanent footing. Thankfully too, my two-thirds release-time to work in the archives was restored during this time too.

Incidentally, as noted earlier, Kuhn deserves substantial credit for getting this whole process moving during the last months while he was still Interim Vice President and in some respects too during the first couple of months of the Beukema vice presidency. And even though Hammang’s goal was a retreat from that broader purposes for which the archives was founded, his concern for developing a records management operation still also was a part of the original archives plan. His plan, therefore, while narrower than the original plan, helped to further it.

A puzzle for me has been why Kuhn, as part of the Academic Affairs leadership, remained silent on informing me officially, or even unofficially, as to what had happened to the common goals we still shared openly in September, 1989. His silence while Hammang’s plan was being hammered out, and in the year thereafter, is so out of character with his conduct toward me during the year he was Interim Vice President and during the first couple of months after Beukema became vice president, that it is baffling. For what it may be worth, I can only speculate as to why. It may be that from September 1989 to January 1990, while he was disheartened by the way things had gone and were going, decided to remain silent in the event that things might still change for the better. Once firm decisions had been reached by the end of January 1990 as to what the archives would be like in the future (at least what it was believed it would be like), Kuhn may well have felt that things were pretty much cast in stone, and that, therefore, the best course of action was to make the best of the new reality. Also from at least sometime in 1990, he had decided to seek a presidency or vice presidency at some academic institution other than Northern. He may have feared that if he did discuss his disappointments with me, if this got out, he would be seen as a “leaker” and not a good team player and that this could, and most likely would have hurt the kind of recommendations that his colleagues felt they could give him. As noted earlier, another cause for Kuhn’s silence may have been his desire not to overstep his position as Beukema’s subordinate, especially if it is true that the latter never officially deputized him to be in charge of archival matters until March 1991. As for the reasons for Beukema’s silence, I will not repeat what I said earlier.
“IGNORANCE IS BLISS”—I DID NOT KNOW AND WAS “HAPPY”

In view of Academic Affairs’ silence, why did I not contact it during this time, especially in view of the fact that I had a record of contacting my superiors when the situation, in my view, called for it? In the case of Kuhn, the most important reason, as noted earlier, was the trust that I had developed in him and in Academic Affairs while he was Interim Vice President and shortly thereafter. With the kind of a harmonious vision for the archives I thought Kuhn and I had on everything by September 13, 1989, and from the way Kuhn spoke I presumed Beukema and I had too, I thought I had little reason for concern. As far as Beukema is concerned, it is true that he never responded to my letter of August 16, 1989 asking for his approval and support for obtaining a NHPRC grant. RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01 I assumed that this was because he was so busy and that he was leaving it to Kuhn to convey his support to me. This Kuhn did on September 13.

Of course, as we have seen, I was wrong in thinking that my vision and that of Academic Affairs was entirely harmonious at this time. But, as already noted too, at the time I did not know of any of the plans underway with which I would have disagreed. Consequently, I felt confident that even though I was not hearing from Academic Affairs, its leadership would still be working steadfastly at the President’s Council toward that shared vision which I thought we had on everything. I also believed that if there was something Academic Affairs felt I should know, I would be notified. It was a sort of a “No News is Good News” relationship which I thought we had.

My trust in Academic Affairs had become deep. While I heard some rumors which would have caused me serious concern if I thought they were true, I seriously doubted their truth. This since I had not heard them from my superiors. Thus this “period of silence” was basically a happier time for me. My ignorance of those behind-the-scenes developments which had occurred, as well as my confidence that everything was okay at the policy level since those friendly Academic Affairs people were shepherding things, provided me with a period of “bliss” so to speak during this time. It was a period of “bliss” I could not, of course, have experienced had I known about the significant changes that had been made, or were being considered at the time.

With this kind of confidence that policy matters were being taken care of by Academic Affairs and with my restored release time, I focused my attention on what needed to be done in the archives. All of this put me in a better position than I had been for some time with being able to press ahead with getting more materials processed. I became pretty much consumed with things associated with the day-to-day operations of the archives. That, in addition, of course, with my teaching responsibilities—but only a one-third load now.
CHAPTER 17
FROM CONTINUED SILENCE AND A QUESTIONABLE PROPOSAL TO REVIVED COMMUNICATIONS AND A COURSE CORRECTION, MAY 1990-MARCH 1991

This chapter begins in May 1990 even though the last one ended in January 1990. This is because I have not found any information about the archival policy of the university administration from January to May. As far as I know nothing of significance affecting university archives policy happened during that time. At the same time I remained uninformed about three important developments which had occurred during the September 1989 to the January 1990 period. They were the decision to place the archives under the library, plans to divert the archives’ mission pretty much entirely towards university records management, and plans to apply for only one position in the NHPRC grant application. The decision to place the archives under the library would mean that the archives would not have a place in the university administrative structure much like that which the library enjoyed. Thus, in reality, it was really four rather than just three things which had happened during that period of time which I would have preferred not to see happen.

Fortunately, however, toward the end of the time period covered by this chapter a couple of very desirable developments, in my opinion, occurred as well. A vision and a resolve emerged at the Academic Affairs level, or really reemerged, that the role which the archives should play at Northern in the future should be a broad one; that not only should the archives rightfully continue to be appropriately concerned with records management but also with the academic, social, and cultural purposes for which the archives was created. Revived recognition emerged too of the potential public relations and financial benefits which could accrue to the university from that kind of a broader emphasis. This chapter ends as well with Hammang also resigning himself to accepting this kind of a broader role for the archives and to accepting the idea of having two permanent employees to head such an operation. Basically this was because of the strong convictions Beukema had developed about this by this time and had begun to assert at the President’s Council; that is that this was the proper emphasis for a regional university archives and that this was going to be the emphasis of Northern’s Archives. It was because of the emergence of these strong convictions that Hammang resigned himself to having an archives with two full-time permanent staff to oversee this larger agenda of concerns. This is also, at least in part, why President Appleberry now also agreed as well to support the hiring of two individuals to do this. How these changes came about is a prime subject of the latter portion of this chapter.

STILL “IN THE DARK” IN MAY, 1990

As already stated, by May, 1990 I was still completely uninformed about the proposals and decisions that had been considered and eventually made by the President’s Council from September 1989 to January 1990 and covered in the last chapter. This is clearly evident from a memo I sent to the members of the council on May 28, 1990. It reveals how
uninformed I had remained except for the fact that I somehow had recently learned of another council retreat which was to occur soon at which additional archival matters were to be discussed. My memo read as follows:

I understand that obtaining an archivist/records manager and an associated secretary/technical assistant via a NHPRC grant and then later via university funding will be a topic discussed at your annual, up-coming planning and policy retreat. It is gratifying to learn that. I do hope that a way will be found to move forward on this matter. As other universities are doing, so it is important, I feel, for Northern also to make an effective commitment both with regard to the care it provides for its own records that are deemed valuable, and secondly with regard to the preservation of the primary sources of information and the cultural heritage of the region in which Northern is located. I believe that in the long run few things will do more to enhance Northern’s image as a school of academic quality than such a commitment. Of course the larger benefits of such a policy really only become evident in the long run. But for many reasons, among them Northern’s up-coming centennial, may I suggest that the time for us to begin moving toward those benefits is now.

While I wanted to mention the above things, my primary reason for writing is to urge that when the position of an archivist/records manager is discussed, the question of giving the archives/records division departmental status also be considered. To be able to operate effectively in the university community, an archivist/records manager needs very much to have the same right to be present and heard as do other departments when things are discussed that affect the various divisions of the university. Furthermore, the position of archivist/records manager needs to be placed on a twelve-month basis. A university information center, such as the archives is, cannot shut down during the summer months without [it] becoming a significant irritant to potential users and without harming the university’s good name and image.

May I thank you in advance for including these matters in your deliberations. Should you conclude that some useful purpose could be served by me being present while these matters are discussed, just let me know and I will be there. Thanks.

1/11, 20-03-58

This memo makes it obvious that I still did not know at this time about those four developments I identified at the beginning of this chapter. Otherwise why would I have made the kind of statements in this memo that I did? For if the archives was to be under library administration, why would I have asked that the archives be given departmental status under Academic Affairs? And obviously I also did not know of the plan to ask for only one position otherwise why would I have congratulated the President’s Council on having decided to ask the NHPRC for two positions? And obviously too, I did not know that the President’s Council had decided to focus almost exclusively on records management, otherwise why would I have implied by bringing up the subject, that in my view, wise university archival policy for Northern consisted of a fine balance between managing its
own records well and collecting and making available for research purposes the primary sources of information of the region in which it was located?

Obvious also is the fact that my memo is full of trust that the President's Council was continuing to move forward with the goals Kuhn enunciated to me prior to his September 13 memo to Beukema, as well as in that memo as I understood what he meant by it when he communicated that to me orally that autumn day. My memo, does not give even a hint that I was aware that a serious departure from those earlier pre-September 13 and September 13 understandings was being contemplated, or had been decided upon.

Interestingly, I do not believe that I ever received a response of any kind from the President's Council to my May 28, 1990 memo.

**WHEN DID I COME TO KNOW WITH CERTAINTY THAT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS WAS GOING TO PLACE THE ARCHIVES UNDER THE LIBRARY?**

Despite the fact that the decision to do this so was made in January, 1990, I did not become absolutely certain that the archives was going to be placed under the library until March 11, 1991. This was when I received a memo from Vice President Beukema which included the following words: “...I have concluded that the initial organizational arrangement be such as to place the formal archivist function under the library...” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58 That settled it. This was the first time that I had received an official communication from anyone to that effect. Incidentally, I received this communication only after I took the initiative to request clarification as to what the administration's position was on various archives matters, including this one. I needed this information so that I could proceed before long with the writing of the grant application. A preliminary copy of it was due June 1, 1991.

An email Library Director, Rena Fowler, sent to Beukema on December 5, 1990 contains a statement which implies that I had known of the plan to place the archives under the library for some time prior to that March 11 date. The email reads: “As indicated at an earlier meeting [with you] I believe that Cliff Maier might be willing at this time to support the archives under the library.” AARA, 1/11, 20-030-58 This indicates that either she, or someone else who communicated that to her, may have talked to me about this prior to December 5, 1990 and reached that conclusion—although it is true that Fowler may have concluded this on the basis of something else too. To the best of my recollections, she never spoke to me about these things during this time. I am almost certain of it. It would have been out of character for her to have done so if she had. She was, at this time, in the practice of communicating only with her superiors about archives matters; perhaps a few others, but certainly not with me. If Fowler’s guess was based on actual knowledge she knew I had, then I think it is quite likely that I learned of the possibility of the archives being placed under the library sometime between the end of that annual summer retreat mentioned in the May 28, 1990 memo and close to the December 5, 1990 date. If I did by then, it was most likely from someone such as Roebke-Berens. But if I did, I also must have pretty much discounted the possibility of it really happening because the record shows that I remained uncertain about it until March 11, 1991. I trusted Academic Affairs. I was confident that it would let me know if something was being considered that was not in the best interests of
what we had once agreed was in the best interests of the archives. Therefore, anything I may have heard to the contrary I can only conclude I must have considered as just talk. Whatever happened in this case, Fowler undoubtedly knew from things she had learned during previous years that, in principle, I was skeptical of the wisdom of placing an archives under a library.

A NEW PROPOSAL FOR SETTING UP THE ARCHIVES UNDER THE LIBRARY

The reader will recall that at least by sometime in January 1990, Fowler had, unknown to me, indicated to Hammang, the President’s Council, and to Academic Affairs what kind of an archives she would set up under the library. But sometime thereafter, after talking to her colleagues in the library and thinking about it, by December 1990 she had come up with a new proposal. She submitted it to Beukema, her superior, via that December 5, 1990 email. Quite likely she was aware as she prepared her proposal that people like Kuhn and I basically felt that a minimum of two full-time people were required. But she also knew that Hammang was unwilling at the time to have the university fund more than one archival position. Given this background, this is what she wrote to Beukema:

When we meet [later] in December I’d also like to talk a bit about archives. I have talked with Stephen Peters, the library’s cataloguer. He would be interested in serving as archivist under the library on a half-time basis, i.e. half-time cataloguing, half-time archivist. Both of us think he has the time and talent for the job. This would mean that additional minimum support would be one clerical position. I understand that there is already funding for student help—although I don’t know how much. Steve would also require some training in archives. I believe there are national workshops. He has, on his own, taken specialized training some years ago in manuscript cataloguing. As I indicated at an earlier meeting, I believe that Cliff Maier might be willing, at this time, to support the archives under the library. I am aware of Mr. Hammang’s work last year. I would like to pursue this matter [still] this year if that’s possible—even with present university financial concerns. Would you let me know if this might be possible on these terms? Thanks.

Fowler’s proposal has a number of things to commend it; but also problems. First, the commendable things in it:

1. The proposal includes an effort to get as close as possible to having the archives manned by two permanent full-time positions without it costing the university for more than one— that is on the administration’s books at least! How? By having the library absorb the cost of the half position in question much like the History Department had been absorbing either one-third or two-thirds of the costs of manning the archives since its establishment. She was offering similarly, to have the library absorb the cost of the half-time archivist—the most expensive of the two positions. Thus Fowler was offering to lower the cost to the university of manning the archives. Under her plan the university would only be required to hire a clerical person rather than a full-time professionally trained archivist/records manager. This was indeed a clever, appealing plan, although it did involve some financial “slight of hand,” so to speak.
2. By offering to have one and one-half twelve-month full-time positions to manage the archives, she went a long way towards satisfying the consultant’s call for two full-time, twelve-month positions.

3. Stephen Peters was/is a diligent, capable individual. I have known him for a long time and I am entirely confident that in a short time he would have developed into a very competent Archivist/Records Manager.

Now for the problems with Fowler's proposal: Under it the archives would again be headed by an untrained, inexperienced person in archival work and on a part-time basis just as it was under me. The question was, would the NHPRC approve of a grant to fund an archival project to launch a professional archival operation under a person who was not a professional archivist? On the basis of my talks with the consultant in 1986 and with Nancy Sahli in the summer of 1989 I was led to believe that the NHPRC would only consider a professionally trained, experienced archivist plus an assistant as being sufficient to qualify for grant funding for the project we were proposing. The consultant had stated too that two positions were required. But Fowler was proposing to do it with just one and one-half positions.

And would the NHPRC approve of a grant for an archives which saw its long-term mission primarily as only managing the university's own records? In a 1991 memo Fowler sent to Kuhn, she indicated that it was her impression when the decision was made to place the archives under the library that the university's own records were principally to be the archives only mission henceforth. But in actuality, while the consultant and Sahli had both called for a heavy emphasis on records management initially, they also had both expected the archives to become involved in regional manuscript and records collecting too—and this as quickly as possible.

This raises an interesting question. Was Fowler really suggesting that Northern consider undertaking this expansion of help for the archives without NHPRC help? Even though she undoubtedly knew of the council's desire to obtain a grant, she says nothing about this in her proposal, or what needed to be kept in mind to qualify for one. Her statement in her proposal that she would like to see her plan approved still in the month of December, 1990 if possible, implies that she was perhaps hoping that the university would decide to "go it alone" and immediately begin to fund the clerical position she was requesting and not to bother with seeking to obtain a NHPRC grant.

What did Beukema think of Fowler’s proposal? Lack of documentary evidence regarding that makes it hard to be sure. I found a hard copy of Fowler’s email to Beukema in the Academic Affairs archives files. Among the things scribbled in the margins of Fowler’s email to Beukema was, “See Ruth.” It was a note by Beukema to himself. There also was this note. “For next mtg [with] R Fowler 12/19/90.” However, I did not find any documents regarding the results of that meeting.

On that same December 5, 1990 day during which Fowler sent Beukema that email, he sent her the following email:
Rena, thanks for your note regarding a possible approach to archivist staffing involving Steve Peters, etc. By copy of this reply, and your earlier message to me, I’d like John [Kuhn] to give your recommendation some thought and to get back to me on this sometime soon. Will stay in touch—and review this again when we meet later this month.—P.B.

At the bottom of the page of the hard copy of this email to Fowler, and also found in the same archives files, is this hand-written note. “JFK—‘Sounds like a grand approach. Thus have Ruth proceed with grant app—we can show commitment.’”

From the information I have found, it is impossible for me to say with absolute certainty who the author of this last note was. Being at the bottom of Beukema’s email to Fowler, it seems most likely that it was written by him to Kuhn. This very likely was so that Fowler would know what his instructions to Kuhn were about the matter. It, however, still has to be remembered that perhaps Kuhn rather than Beukema was the author of the note although this seems much more unlikely. That it was written by anyone other than one of these two men is even more unlikely.

We learn from this note that at this time its author was asking that Roebke-Berens write the grant application. It also shows that the author rejected Fowler’s possible idea of not bothering to obtain a grant. The author reveals that he definitely was interested in obtaining a grant and in making the NHPRC aware of NMU’s keen desire for it. He also liked Fowler’s proposal, calling it “grand.”

This note also makes clear that by this time, the expectation expressed in Kuhn’s September 13, 1989 memo that I would be writing the grant application (since I was the archivist and had made the initial contacts with the NHPRC about the grant) had been superseded completely by the ideas and practices which had emerged from about September 1989 to January 1990. That is by the ideas and practices which came out of the deliberations of the Records Management Committee headed by John Hammang. Ruth Roebke-Berens had been doing much of the writing for that group and the expectation came to be that she would also write the grant application when the time came for that. As Beukema observed the ideas and practices of this group, he accepted this as the new reality and considered what Kuhn had written in his September memo about me writing the grant proposal as no longer being a likelihood.

If it was in fact Kuhn, rather than Beukema, who wrote the note in question, it is clear that he had been affected in pretty much the same way as Beukema by the developments from September 1989 to 1990 with regard to who was henceforth expected to write the grant application.

Before leaving this subject, the reader may be interested in knowing that I was not aware of Fowler’s December 5 proposal to Beukema regarding the future manning of the archives, nor of the interaction between her, Beukema, and Kuhn regarding that until I found a copy of her email in the archives files of Academic Affairs in 2012 while doing this research. I have included a discussion of this development to provide an indication of what some of
the thinking and practice on archival matters had become by this particular time. I have also included this incident because it provides evidence of the claim I made in the last chapter that as late as December, 1990, Academic Affairs and the President’s Council leadership still considered me to be out of the planning and promoting part of archival matters.

JANUARY, 1991: THE SILENCE BREAKS AND THE ORIGINAL VISION IS RESTORED

How did that silence on the part of the university administration come to break? Despite what was said on December 5 about Roebke-Berens writing the grant application, it was only about a month later that Beukema was looking to me to write it. Why was that? I think it was primarily because of two memos I sent to him on January 4, 1991. One was a copy of a memo I sent to a third party and the other a covering memo to Beukema. All indications are that the contents of those two memos had quite an impact on his thinking.

AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

What apparently impressed Beukema was the vision I projected in them of what Northern’s future archives could and should be like and what such an archives could do for Northern. The copy of one of the memos I have been referring to is one I had written earlier and sent to the Committee on Institutional Values and Traditions. A memo I had written still earlier and sent to the Academic Senate’s Educational Policy Committee in the spring of 1989 (reviewed in chapter 15) contained similar information. That, however, was before Beukema had arrived at Northern. And because he had been so busy since his arrival, it may be that it was only in connection with his reading of this late 1990 memo to the Committee on Institutional Values and Traditions and my 1991 covering memo that he for the first time, perhaps, had the time to more leisurely and carefully consider the importance of having an archives with a broad academic mission rather than the more narrowly focused one intended under Hammang’s plan. And the one also agreed to by Fowler as the one which she basically would follow.

Since Beukema was so impressed with the case I made, this seems why he now decided that it was I, after all, who he wanted to have write the grant application and be the person who would present Northern’s case to the NHPRC. So interestingly, by 1991 he had swung back to what Kuhn’s position had been in September, 1989, but no longer was in December, 1990. But as we shall see, Kuhn also swung back to what his September, 1989 position had been--now following Beukema’s lead, rather than the view of the Records Management group leader, John Hammang.

THE MEMO ON INSTITUTIONAL VALUES AND TRADITIONS—WHY I DECIDED TO WRITE IT

Despite the confidence I retained in Academic Affairs during that long period of silence, believing that it was wisely shepherding archival matters that might come up at the President’s Council level, I also began wondering the following as 1990 wore on with no communication from it. I began to wonder just how concerned it was continuing to be about this archival matter.
Consequently, when an opportunity arose during the second half of 1990 to participate in an effort that had the potential of showing how greater support for the archives could help to promote institutional values and traditions at Northern and generate greater support for it, I felt I should participate. The President’s Council had created a committee known as the Committee on Institutional Values and Traditions. It was to focus on just this. I felt this was a great opportunity to seek to further educate and influence the entire university community, but especially the President’s Council, as to what an adequately supported archives with a broad academic mission could do to expose and enhance the university's values, traditions, and public support.

The committee was created partly as a result of criticism of the university’s highly centralized style of governance at the time, and of its great focus on business-like efficiency. The criticism was that this had to some degree resulted in it losing sight of Northern’s past. Also of what had once caused its alumni and others to feel a strong attachment to it and to be as proud of it as seemed once to have been the case. The committee was, therefore, created to discover which NMU values and traditions the university community, its alumni, and the surrounding community cherished most and wished to see maintained and promoted, and to gather ideas as to how that might be done.

Ruth Roebke-Berens again played a major role in overseeing this effort. It involved organizing and overseeing opinion-gathering forums, reporting the results to the committee’s central committee, reaching final conclusions, writing a final report, and establishing and/or assisting vehicles for implementing the results. All of this led me to decide to write that memo to the committee’s central committee. I had sent it to its chairperson and to each of the members of that committee. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 I then also sent a copy of it with a covering memo to Beukema in hopes of stimulating his thinking to the possibilities the pursuit of certain university archival policies offered.

MY JANUARY 4, 1991 COVERING MEMO ON INSTITUTIONAL VALUES AND TRADITIONS—WHAT WAS IN IT?

The main points in that memo were the following:

That a more adequately supported archives would significantly (1) improve Northern’s ability to execute its academic mission, (2) help it to meet the preservation needs of the region in which it was located, (3) foster Northern’s values and traditions, and (4) build a sense of identity and loyalty with Northern in its students, faculty, and alumni, as well as in the people of the region in general.

Under the first of these three main points—improve Northern’s ability to execute its academic mission—I made the following points among others: Were Northern to support its archives more adequately, the university could be creating a collection of research materials which would enhance the educational and research experiences of its undergraduates and graduate students, its faculty, visiting scholars, and others. I pointed out that basically, Northern’s library did not collect, catalogue, and make available for research purposes, unpublished, primary research materials. Yet these are the very kinds
of materials which students, faculty, visiting scholars, etcetera, generally required the most for doing the most fundamental kind of research—original research. The presence of materials of this kind on the campuses of universities such as Michigan and Harvard was one of the things which was attracting quality students and scholars to them and was contributing significantly to the prestige associated with them. This, in turn, was developing great pride in their graduates and others, and a desire to be associated with these schools. And that, in turn, has resulted in higher than average support for them, both financially and otherwise. Much of that financial support was coming to them entirely voluntarily rather than it having to be obtained by more aggressive fund raising policies.

Under the memo’s second main point—service to this region—I stated the following among other things: If Northern were to make a meaningful commitment to becoming a repository for the records of the region in which it was located, that would be deeply appreciated by many of the people of the region. Such a commitment would also fit right in with NMU’s view that one of its missions was to fulfill service roles which were appropriate for the region. I emphasized that Northern was the most centrally located university of the region of Michigan in which it existed and that there really was no more appropriate place in the U.P. than centrally located Marquette to collect the region’s valuable primary research materials.

If Northern took upon itself the responsibility of becoming the prime repository for the important primary research materials of its region, many residents of the area would, I felt, take note of that and, in time, develop a deep appreciation and loyalty to Northern because of this particular service alone (among others) it was providing to the area. The collection of papers such as the Jacobetti Papers and of other individuals who had played a significant political role in our region, as well as the records of businesses such as the Cleveland Cliffs Iron Company, and of significant cultural and service agencies of the region, etcetera, would all tend in time to generate the kind of deep appreciation, loyalty, and commitment that would benefit Northern significantly.

The memo’s third point focused more specifically on how the archives could help the university with the development of that sense of identity with Northern among its own students, faculty, administrative personnel, and other members of the university community. I pointed out that, in general, the Northern community was quite uninformed about Northern’s own history—of outstanding decisions that had been made in its past, of efforts made to implement them, of the individuals associated with those efforts, etcetera, etcetera. An archives focused partly on this mission also could help considerably with creating a consciousness of this, as well as some of the values and traditions of the past which the university might wish to revive and even promote aggressively.

In the last two pages of my memo I concentrated on what Northern needed to do to enable the archives to play that significant role that it could play in strengthening those traditions and values which would serve Northern well. They included:

Staff the archives more adequately. I pointed out that I had found that I need to be involved more or less continuously in supervising the work being done in the archives. This left little
time for doing the important field work that also needed to be done—work such as curating the important materials that need to be identified and brought in before they were lost or destroyed, doing oral interviews with individuals whose recollections should be acquired before they passed on, publicizing the resource materials which existed in the archives, and so forth; also working at securing a more adequate amount of space so it would be there for the materials which were acquired.

Secondly, make a larger financial commitment to the archives. At present the university was only committing $3,500 to this effort over and above my salary which still was part of the History Department’s budget. The $3,500 had to cover student labor costs, supplies, equipment, subscriptions, and all other operating costs.

Make a commitment to accept the National Historical Publications and Records Commission’s grant offer and the obligations associated with doing that.

Purchase or build exhibit cases to be placed at various strategic places throughout the campus to make the university community more conscious of Northern’s history.

Thirdly, encourage professors and others to donate valuable papers and records gathered in the process of doing their research, etc. to the archives; also artifacts to its museum—if such an entity was also to be created.

Purposefully and widely encourage students to do research in the archives, especially about aspects of Northern’s history, and to contribute to the archives copies of those papers which their instructors and the archives deemed worthy of preservation.

Publish regular columns regarding interesting aspects of Northern’s past in the publications of Northern’s administration—and strongly encourage students, alumni, and other university groups to do the same.

Change Northern’s policy from collecting only Northern’s records to collecting the records and manuscript materials of the central region of the U.P. Place a high priority on obtaining a few sets of big name, high profile sets of papers for the archives such as the Jacobetti papers.

Fourthly and finally, encourage the Committee on Institutional Values and Traditions to make a strong recommendation to the President’s Council as to what it would like to see the university do about the issues raised in this memo.

**BEUKEMA’S GRATIFYING JANUARY 14 RESPONSE**

Beukema’s response read as follows:

> Cliff, I very much appreciate your having copied me on the January 4th memorandum that you forwarded to the Institutional Values and Traditions Committee. The “case” that you presented in that memo is a cogent one, and the
action plan laid out in the last two pages provides clear direction for what the university needs to do if it is really serious about the archivist function.

After receiving the memo I called Ruth [Roebke-] Berens and discussed with her at some length what avenues might be appropriate for moving forward your proposal. As a result of that conversation, she and I have agreed that it will be (1) introduced into the discussions at the Strategic Planning Conference next month—perhaps as a part of a set of recommendations from the Values/Traditions Committee, and (2) considered in the context of our overall need for improving the archivist/records management function by the Strategic Planning and Budgeting Committee later this spring.

I believe we do have a good prospect of obtaining grant support that will allow us to make substantial progress towards achieving the kinds of objectives—and realizing the kinds of opportunities—outlined in your proposal. I'm grateful for the dedication to this whole effort that you've shown and hope that you will continue to guide us in eventually implementing the kind of support for archives at Northern that is urgently needed. Again, Cliff, many thanks for your interest and help. I'm looking forward to meeting with you soon. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

THE COURSE CORRECTION—A RETURN TO EARLIER OBJECTIVES

I was overjoyed when I received Beukema’s memo of January 14, 1991,—overjoyed first of all with the fact that I even got a communication from him after that long silence from Academic Affairs—and also with the memo’s content and great promises. This was the first time that I had received a memo from him since he had become the top official under which the archives existed. Thus any communication from him as to how he personally felt about the archives and what its mission should be was of great interest. The content of his memo was a far cry from what he had allowed himself to assent to earlier about using the archives principally for only the management of the university’s own records. When Beukema read my January 4 memo it appears that quite a new outlook of the importance of an archives to an academic institution’s academic mission seems to have emerged for him. Furthermore, he subscribed to it with conviction and delight—and with admirable tenacity. It was to stand him in good stead later on when because of his new view he took some actions which resulted in some rather strong (and unfair) criticism, but in face of which he stood firm. He had become a genuine convert, so to speak.

As his January 14 memo to me stated he would do, he had quickly contacted Roebke-Berens regarding her views and suggestions. He informed her that he would no longer accept the narrower Hammang/Fowler mission for the archives. Henceforth he would lobby on the President’s Council for a broader mission for it. He asked for her help. She agreed. Together they agreed—as noted in Beukema’s January 14 memo to me—to bring up their desire of moving the archives in this new direction at two important up-coming strategic planning meetings—one in February and one in the spring.
On February 13, the matter was brought up at a President’s Council meeting. The minutes of that meeting stated that Roebke-Berens and Hammang presented information on what was still called “The Records Management Proposal” by whoever drew up the agenda. Beukema was present. Discussion followed, but what the discussion was is not indicated in the minutes. But as a result of it, the council decided that the archives/records manager’s job should henceforth be viewed as being primarily an academic one rather than basically mostly only a technical function—that of managing the scheduling and disposal of records. At least that is what I have concluded from a very brief note in the minutes regarding this. It states, “Dr. Appleberry said that the archivist/records management position will be an academic function.” PCRM, 02/03, 2/1, 25-05-09 This changed emphasis almost certainly was the result of Beukema’s changed feelings about this. And in view of what he said in his January 14 memo, Roebke-Berens quite certainly supported him in this too. Also given Kuhn’s former views on this, one can be quite sure that he did too. Given what was still going to be happening, this development can be viewed as the beginning of a changed attitude in general at the President’s Council level about the significance of an archives to the academic mission of an institution of higher learning such as Northern was/is.

This development suggests that in the recent past, the view that the archives are primarily an academic function had come into some doubt. This most likely was because the thinking of some was—or had become—that directing the archives was just really little more than a technical job. If so, a less trained, less costly person could be hired to do that. But the President’s Council was now rejecting that view. It seems pretty clear that this was happening because Beukema was promoting his new views in a vigorous, persuasive enough manner to cause the President’s Council to listen and become convinced that he was right. When that happened Appleberry, in deference to the strong feelings of one of his Vice Presidents and to at least a majority of the council, declared at a February meeting that henceforth this was going to be the council’s position, although undoubtedly the understanding was that the university’s own records would also need to be managed well.

Silence, however, regarding decisions which the President’s Council was making concerning the archives remained the norm. Beukema’s January 14 memo to me was an exception to the rule and was a significant break in that dam of silence. However, I was not informed of how the President’ Council had been responding to Beukema’s new views about the future mission of the archives. At the same time, the due date of June 1 for submitting the preliminary grant application was drawing nearer. A significant number of things about which I was either not yet informed, or about which I was uncertain remained. I began feeling that I needed to begin obtaining answers and that it might take some time to obtain some of them.

Why this basic continuation of silence? I think it was just another manifestation of the culture which had developed at the President’s Council level. Part of the reason also continued to be the ready access of Beukema, Kuhn, and the other members of President’s Council to Roebke-Berens. It continued to be so convenient to just deal with her and let it go at that. Thus neither the President’s Council nor Beukema in particular informed me at this time of their decision to restore the archives function primarily to an academic emphasis, nor to ask again for support for two positions in the NHPRC grant application.
DISCOVERING WHERE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS STOOD ON SOME STILL UNANSWERED QUESTIONS—MY FEBRUARY 20 MEMO

Discovering where the director of the library stood on certain issues and on compromises which had to be reached in order to be able to write a unified grant application will be the main subject of the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to discovering where Academic Affairs stood with regard to some issues still undisclosed to me.

When more than a month had passed since Beukema’s January 14 memo to me and I had not yet heard from him about the results of that planned February strategic planning meeting about which he had informed me in his January 14 memo and when I also had not yet received that invitation he had promised in that memo to meet with him “soon,” I decided on February 20 to send him a memo of inquiry. In it I requested a discussion with him to seek answers to questions that I felt still needed answers before I could proceed with the grant writing. Perhaps some would say that it was a little early to be so concerned about that. The June 1 preliminary application was not due for another three months, but I was new at this. And perhaps this much time really was going to be needed to get understandings worked out on some things; so I preferred to start early.

I requested that Kuhn and Roebke-Berens also be present at my meeting with Beukema; “others too, such as Hammang if you think that would be helpful.” (This comment suggests how ignorant I still was at this point regarding the important role Hammang had played in the recent past with respect to archival matters.) I copied my memo to Kuhn, Roebke-Berens, Hammang, and Barry Knight, the History Department Head.

I entitled my memo, “Issues needing decisions before a grant application for archival funding is made to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.” I began the memo by congratulating Beukema and the members of the President’s Council “for the decision to proceed with the grant application.” (Somehow I learned that the council had recently reaffirmed its decision to proceed with this.) At the same time, the tone of my memo was rather harsh and demanding. I had become frustrated by what appeared perhaps to be a repeat of that “silent treatment” I had received earlier but thought had ended with Beukema’s January 14 memo. The tone of my memo clearly was “close to crossing the line” in terms of showing a proper respect for a person holding the kind of high university office which Beukema held. But I was desperate. I knew that the matters in question could, and probably would, affect the well-being of the archives for years to come. In view of that I could not permit myself to just be casual or indifferent. I felt I had to speak up strongly; this even if it made me appear somewhat contemptuous of those who I had been hearing had already made some decisions which at this stage I definitely felt were wrong.

In what follows I quote rather extensively from the four-page February 20 memo of inquiry I sent to Beukema. It turned out to be an important tool in uncovering where Beukema stood on several key issues and also resulted in Fowler in March 1991 writing two very
important memos which reveal where she stood on archival issues. While I did not know of the existence of Fowler’s two memos until I found them among Academic Affairs’ archives records in 2012, they are very revealing. When I finally became involved in face to face discussions with Fowler about archival matters in April and May 1991, gradually everything she had declared in those memos became known to me and others on our team. Because Fowler’s memos reveal so much, they will be discussed in the next chapter in conjunction with me discovering her views and positions at that time, and how she and I gradually reached a “meeting of the minds” on what the future character of the archives should be.

In the remainder of this chapter I will concentrate on the questions I asked of Beukema in that February 20 memo and what his response was on March 11, 1991. This, in addition to what was in his January 14 memo, provides a fairly complete picture of the views Beukema came to hold on archival matters. Since the archives remained under his ultimate jurisdiction to a time beyond the dates of this account, knowing his general position on things will be important.

THE MAIN PURPOSES OF MY FEBRUARY 20 MEMO

One of the main purposes of this memo was first of all to impress on Beukema that I just could not proceed with writing the grant application which he was now expecting me to write without clear statements from him about where he stood on a numbers of issues. “It is only you who is able to make, or clarify...policy,” I wrote. Only after that will we “be able to proceed with writing the grant. It is imperative that we have policies from you...because the NHPRC and Michigan’s State Advisory Board on NHPRC grants will want to know what NMU’s policy is.”

A second purpose was this; was he really going place the archives under the library as I had been hearing? I had for some time heard that this was going to happen, but I felt I needed to hear from him whether or not this was true, I declared. And although I did not say so in the memo, if this was true I still wanted to have a chance to seek to change his mind on that matter. Only after I had spoken to or heard from him personally one way or another, was I prepared to do what he called for on this issue. This is what I implied.

I also wanted to know if the archives became part of the library, what autonomy would the archivist have in making policy. And would the archives have its own budget? I wanted to know too if the intention of the administration was to staff the archives with one permanent position, or with two? Finally, if NMU’s application was successful, whose prerogative would it be to decide who the new archivist would be?

ON PLACING THE ARCHIVES UNDER THE LIBRARY

On this question I wrote the following. “Even though the possibility apparently exists that the archives will be placed under the library in the future, I think... [a] discussion needs to occur ... [prior to the time] the Director of the Library is brought into these discussions.” The purpose of such a discussion, in my view of course was, the hope that in a face to face...
discussion I could hopefully present sufficient reasons as to why this was a risky proposition—and one he might still wish to decide against. Of course, as we saw in chapter 16, I knew nothing of how strongly Beukema probably thought that this was a good idea. My strategy, therefore, was to imply that the matter was still an open question, persuade him to give me a hearing on it, and then seek to persuade him against it. My statement on this matter also reveals that at this point I did not know that a firm understanding had already been reached with Fowler that the archives was indeed going to be placed under the library. Therefore, my thinking was that there was no need at this point—perhaps ever—to have Fowler participate in a discussion as to whether or not the archives should be placed under the library; and in that way to subject her, perhaps, to some unpleasant things that might be said. Therefore, I thought it best that she not be present during this particular meeting. If the outcome of our discussion was that the archives was going to be placed under the library, following that would be early enough to have her in on further discussions of the matter.

THE LEVEL AT WHICH THE ARCHIVES WOULD BE STAFFED AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT

Regarding staffing, I stated this. I believe that if we apply for funding for only one position we will jeopardize our chances of obtaining NHPRC funding for even that one position.” I quoted the consultant who recommended “a permanent, full-time...archivist” and also “a full-time professional secretary position;” also “that additional...archival positions should be funded as the program develops.” I argued that:

My experience tells me that the consultant is absolutely correct in stating that a minimum of two positions are necessary initially to develop a credible archival program. The secretary...could be trained to do the work of a reference archivist as well and to supervise such processing work as could be done by minimally trained student help. In addition...he or she would do some of that processing work themselves.... It is important too that if this assistant is a secretary, that he or she could not be 'bumped' periodically.... Without the assistance of such a secretary/reference archivist/processing supervisor, the archivist will not be able to perform effectively as an archivist/records manager. Yet...this is what the...NHPRC will expect.... An archivist/ records manager...[would] have to be out of the archives a good deal of the time establishing and adjusting records management schedules in university offices... identifying, appraising and curating...valuable records, papers, etc.... In summary, going for two positions rather than one may be a hard pill to swallow at the moment. But to do otherwise would be nothing less than continuing to kid ourselves. We will either have a viable archives/records management program or we will not, it depends largely on what we do on this question. I’m afraid that is what the State Advisory Board and the NHPRC will tell us too.
ON THE MATTER OF THE AUTONOMY OF THE ARCHIVIST UNDER THE LIBRARY AND OF HIM OR HER HAVING HIS OR HER OWN BUDGET

How much autonomy would the archivist/records manager be given should the archives be placed under the library, or become part of the library? And how would NHPRC evaluators view whatever was decided? These were questions also which we at Northern needed to discuss and decide upon before I could begin to write our grant application. The NHPRC evaluators would want to know what our policy was going to be regarding these matters. I wrote:

The history of university archival efforts is replete with stories of unfortunate developments when policy was not established from above the library level that gave an archives under a library broad autonomy. And also an established percentage of the library’s budget. Although both libraries and archives deal with information, the methods required to acquire, process, store, and provide access to their respective types of information are so different that archival literature in the past has been full of recommendations to those beginning archives to keep them entirely separate from the library. Since the methods are so different, the literature argues among other things that it is a waste of the time of the Director of the Archives to have to sit in on, and be involved in all the concerns a library has, and vice versa. If a Library Director does not really appreciate the importance of collecting unpublished primary research materials, that can cause serious problems too for an archives that is under a library.

I closed my memo to Beukema with this opinion and challenge:

A good archives is a highly desirable academic and administrative objective. That is merely my opinion but I am sure I am correct in [holding] it. So may I encourage us to give this matter the high priority it deserves. This University has always gotten what it has given a high enough priority. I think it’s the Archives’ turn now. I hope we can agree on that. I’m thrilled about the encouraging signs I’ve seen of late. If we do move forward on this now I don’t think there is any doubt that history will resoundingly verify how right we were in doing it.

MY NOTE TO KUHN, FEBRUARY 26. PROOF THAT I HAD NOT BEEN KEPT INFORMED

Throughout this account I have been claiming that Academic Affairs and the President’s Council had failed to keep me, as the university’s archivist, properly informed of developments they were planning on initiating during this particular period of time. Evidence that I was convinced of that at that time exists in a note I penned to Kuhn on February 26, 1991, just six days after I sent my latest memo to Beukema. I wrote the note at the bottom of a copy of the memo Kuhn had sent to Beukema on September 13, 1989. As noted earlier, a copy of that memo was never copied to me. But somehow a copy had fallen into my hands by this time. In the note to Kuhn I wrote:
John, I think this memo is proof that the understanding in 1989 was that if we applied for an NHPRC grant to assist with the initial staffing of the Archives, it would be for two positions. There also is nothing in this memo to suggest that the intention then was that the archivist be placed under the library. These, [at least], were my understandings. No one took me into confidence that anything else was being considered even though I am the archivist and would think that I would be brought in on such discussions; thus my surprise about the new suggestions and my feeling that some policy discussion is necessary. AARA 1/11, 20-03-58

I would not have brought such a serious charge to a high official of the administration with whom I was quite certain I would have to work in the future had I not been entirely certain that the evidence supported what I was claiming and that there had been important diversions from previous understandings. Also that I had been left “in the dark” by my superiors regarding them. I do not recall that Kuhn responded to this note. Nor have I found any documentation that he did.

FACTORS LEADING TO THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT’S MEMO TO BEUKEMA, MARCH 11, 1991

As noted, one of the individuals to whom I copied my memo of February 20 was Barry Knight, Head of the History Department. When there had been no response from Beukema to me for almost three weeks regarding my February 20 memo to him, I shared the situation with the History Department. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18 It agreed that I needed the answers I was seeking and agreed to help me obtain them. Consequently, on March 11 Knight sent the following memo to Beukema. It was entitled, “The Future of the Archives:”

The History Department met recently and found that it is in agreement with the major points raised in Dr. Clifford Maier’s memo to you of February 20, 1991. The Department determined, as well, that it would like to have a meeting with you and John Kuhn to explore the concerns and suggestions posed by Dr. Maier as well as several questions relating to the Department’s future relationship with the archives.

If this proposal is acceptable to you, please let me know.... If I may be of further assistance to you in this matter, please let me know. DHRA 2/21, 24-04-18

BEUKEMA’S MARCH 11 RESPONSE TO MY FEBUARY 20 MEMO—AND KUHN BEING DEPUTIZED

Interestingly enough, Beukema sent his response to my February 20 memo to him on that same day, March 11, that Knight sent his request to Beukema. Beukema’s memo to me was entitled, “Issues raised in your February 20th memorandum.” It was a very helpful communication. It went a long way toward enabling me to see just where things stood regarding what the administration would support, what battles still might be worth fighting, and which ones had definitely been lost. He wrote:
Cliff, thank you for your recent memorandum concerning several issues important for our consideration as we prepare for submitting a grant application to the NHPRC. Since matters pertaining to University Archives have been largely within Dr. Kuhn’s purview in recent times I have referred your memo to him and, in whatever fashion may be appropriate, he will follow up on a number of matters addressed in your communication. [It was news to me that matters pertaining to University Archives had been largely within Dr. Kuhn’s purview in recent times. That had not been communicated to me. Otherwise I would have sent my memos to him].

I will, however, respond just briefly to a couple of issues raised in your memo. First, I’m inclined to agree that our application for funding should—as you’ve suggested—be for two permanent positions. I suspect that both you and the consultant are right in that “a minimum of two positions is necessary initially to develop a credible archival program.” As to “who will decide” which archivist will be hired, I will look to Dr. Kuhn for a recommendation on this. Certainly, it would seem appropriate that input from “those who know the field” should enter into the hiring process.

Second, the matter of autonomy is an important question, and I have concluded that the initial arrangement will be such as to place the formal archivist function under the Library, i.e., the Archivist and his/her office will comprise a department reporting to the Library Director. This does not mean, of course, that an appropriate measure of autonomy would not exist for the Archivist function (just as the various academic divisions that are part of my organizational unit do indeed have a certain measure of autonomy). The details of organizational function and working relationship will need to be planned and, of course, monitored over time.

Cliff, my sincere thanks for your interest in all of this and for your dedicated efforts on behalf of the University’s archival needs. Please keep in contact with Dr. Kuhn on these and related matters as we work toward eventual expansion of the archivist/records management function. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

The reader will undoubtedly have noticed that in tone this was a very kind memo. It gave no evidence that Beukema permitted himself to be offended by the rather demanding style of my last memo to him, even thanking me for it. Certainly this was gracious and admirable of him. I sent him a memo thanking him. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

As Beukema’s memo shows, he remained fully committed to going forward with applying for a grant and with the enhancing of the archival function. On the question of whether or not the archives would be under the library, he made it crystal clear that it would be under the library in the future. But also it would be “as a department” of it he thought, not as an integral part of the library, as Fowler would be insisting that it had to be, as we shall see. As such, he believed that the archivist could have “an appropriate amount of autonomy,” especially as “the details of organizational function and working relationships” were “planned” with that in mind, “and, of course, monitored over time.”
A couple of additional things are worth noting. One springs from Beukema's realism. He seemed to sense that if Northern wanted to have a truly professional archival operation, it needed to take seriously the recommendations of professionals in the field, such as the consultant. Also that doing this was important if there was going to be a realistic chance of obtaining the NHPRC's approval of a grant application. Therefore, while he did not definitely say in his March 11 memo that the archives of the future would be manned by two permanent individuals, he strongly indicated that he favored that in order for it to be an effective operation.

After reading the argument in my February 20 memo, Beukema's position of now being inclined to be in favor of two permanent positions for the archives may help explain a bit of a mystery. In February, 1991, when the President's Council affirmed its earlier decision to proceed with its effort to obtain a grant that year, it still did so for only one position. But by April and May those of us seeking to come up with an acceptable grant proposal were all talking as if our grant proposal was going to be for two positions. Kuhn also stated that in a memo to Fowler on April 26. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 And that is what Kuhn and Beukema eventually approved of in our preliminary grant application.

Why this change? Although I have found no documentary evidence regarding exactly how this happened, my theory is this. The President's Council, in face of Beukema's firm advocacy for this by at least March 11—and quite certainly in face of Kuhn's advocacy for that again too by this time—decided that it would after all, approve of the funding for two positions rather than just for one. Hammang, now faced with Beukema's strong advocacy for two positions, was now ready also to go along with this. And President Appleberry, true again to his policy of generally supporting whatever one of his vice presidents or chief administrators felt strongly enough about, now also supported making a commitment to hiring two full-time permanent twelve-month positions for the archives.

This is a good place to end this chapter. We have seen how for me the silence of Academic Affairs and of the President's Council which had continued throughout the latter half of 1990, gradually decreased somewhat during the first three months of 1991. We have also seen how Beukema initiated for the archives an important course correction in early 1991 regarding the kind of role it would play at Northern in the future. The archives would be treated as an important part of the academic capital NMU had to offer and use, not just as a records management tool. He also finally revealed to me his decision—made considerably earlier—that the archives would in the future operate under the library in one fashion or another, the details of which still had to be worked out. And he declared that he had recently personally come to believe that the archives required two full-time permanent positions, and he, therefore, favored that. In other words, Beukema by this time had revealed the broad outlines of what I could now confidently place into a grant application. Although slow in coming, finally knowing these things was a great relief and step forward. What remained to be done before an application could be written was discovering how the library planned to administer the archives. Also working out understandings with it about this. How big a challenge that was going to be was one of the big questions?
It will be recalled that Beukema also made clear in his March 11 memo that from this point forward it would be Kuhn, not he, who would be the Academic Affairs official who would be involved in helping me, the library, and the Department of History work out the details with respect to archival matters. As we shall see, Beukema had a surprise coming! He was not going to be able shed the details of his archival responsibility this easily. But for a short time it worked!

Until April 15 I had no idea of how difficult it would be to establish what the archival policies would be which still had to be established before an archives grant application could be written. I had the mistaken idea that whatever future archival policy was to be, it would be worked out pretty much in meetings with either Kuhn or Fowler, or with both of them. But Kuhn soon made it clear that Academic Affairs was not going to be involved in determining policy with respect to details. Also that Academic Affairs was quite ready to accept any decisions and policies which the Director of the Library and I could agree upon just as long as they were within the broad perimeters laid out by Beukema. Therefore the ball, so to speak, during this up-coming period of time of April and May was going to be pretty much in Fowler’s court and mine. Discovering what our differences were and then working out agreements regarding them is what the next chapter is about.
CHAPTER 18
THE LIBRARY DIRECTOR AND ME: UNCOVERING FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES AND REACHING A HARMONIZED GRANT APPLICATION POSITION

As noted earlier, in a memo which Rena Fowler, NMU’s library director, sent to John Kuhn on March 7, 1991, she stated:

If Cliff is to submit this grant and responsibility is then to be placed in the Library, I think that the entire proposal can only move forward if Cliff supports it. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

Fowler was absolutely correct in this; I could not write a grant proposal and promote it with the NHPRC without believing in key parts of it. The challenge then was, how could a “meeting of the minds” be achieved between Fowler and me when, as of April 15, 1991, our points of view on various things were still so very far apart? In this chapter we will begin exposing those differences, explain why they developed, and then deal with how the differences were gradually overcome.

THE APRIL 15 MEETING

The date that Barry Knight had requested on March 11 for a meeting of the History Department with Academic Affairs was finally set for April 15, 1991—more than a month after it was requested. Since Kuhn had been deputized to oversee whatever additional efforts would be required to fashion a grant proposal that would be acceptable to everyone concerned, he represented Academic Affairs at this meeting. But he had also invited Fowler to be at the meeting. Until she appeared, neither the History Department nor I knew that this is what he was going to do. From his point of view, given what he knew, inviting her made eminent sense. And once it happened, it really did also make sense from the History Department’s point of view and mine. Reaching the ultimate goal of an agreement as to what should go into our grant application would be achieved most effectively by face to face talks. Experience proved that.

This was my first brief conversation with Fowler since 1986 regarding archival issues. This meeting also was the beginning of the end of my ignorance regarding what Fowler had been telling Academic Affairs as to what her non-negotiable requirements were for having the archives under the library. Also of what she would promise to do for the archives if they were placed under it.

As archivist and preparer of the grant application, I prepared a list of questions to help keep our discussion at that April 15 meeting focused on questions for which I still needed answers. They included concerns which I knew the History Department had as well. I also
presented a first draft of certain sections of the grant application which I had already worked on. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-8; AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 I wanted feed-back about those sections from both Academic Affairs and the members of the History Department. Those sections of the application dealt with such things as job descriptions for the archivist and an assistant, reporting lines for these two individuals, their standing as faculty members, what their salary packages would be, etcetera.

FOWLER’S DISAPPOINTMENT—AND MINE: THE CONDUCT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ON CERTAIN THINGS

Not knowing that Fowler would be at the April 15 meeting, I did not know that at it some of the strongest negative reactions to some suggestions in my list of questions and in the proposed draft sections of the grant application would be coming from her. However, it was Kuhn who was to experience her disapproval and disappointment first. It came in the form of a memo she sent to him the next day. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 She became quite upset with him when she discovered at this meeting that he had not yet passed on to me information she had sent him in memos dated March 7 and March 11. They were about what her non-negotiable conditions were regarding having the archives under the library. Also what she promised to do to maintain and keep advancing the professional character of the archives if it was placed under the library. She had learned that I had been asked to write the grant application from that February 20 memo that I had sent to Beukema and which I had also copied to Kuhn, Roebke-Berens, Hammang, and Knight. Someone had passed it on to her as well. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58; 1/12, 20-03-58

In that March 7 memo, Fowler had let Kuhn know that she had been hoping that Academic Affairs would make it their responsibility to persuade me to support the library’s role in its archival plans. Furthermore, she stated that she had thought that Academic Affairs or the President’s Council had already been doing that until she saw my February 20 memo to Beukema which indicated my ignorance of what she had wanted me to know. Now, so much later, in her April 16 memo to Kuhn she expressed her deep disappointment that someone in Academic Affairs had still not done that. Clearly, someone in Academic Affairs had been negligent prior to the time I sent Beukema my February 20 memo as well as since he had deputized Kuhn to handle archival matters. This pointed to Kuhn.

Shortly I will provide some of the information which Fowler sent to Kuhn in those March 7 and 11 memos, and which would have given me a fairly clear picture of where things stood at least as far back as early March. Prior to doing that however, I will share what my questions still were on April 15--so very long--it seemed at the time, after when I could have known of Fowler’s positions and promises and had many of my questions answered. I say “so very long” because of the growing pressure which was building in my mind of the approaching deadline. I was also finding it difficult to understand why there was not a greater sense of urgency and concern to assist me with knowing the administration’s position on the various things still not clarified—including the library’s position on things—until “the last minute.”
MY LIST OF QUESTIONS—AND THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT’S TOO--IN SOME CASES

The first of the questions I prepared for that April 15 History Department meeting with Academic Affairs had a number of aspects to it. Namely they were: (1) To what extent could Academic Affairs assure us that the archives under the library would continue to have a broad academic mission and focus? (2) How much input would outside parties such as the History Department continue to be able to have into archival matters in order to help maintain that broad academic and historical orientation? (3) What did Academic Affairs think of establishing an advisory board of broad membership as one means of helping to preserve a broad orientation? and (4) How liberal an acquisition policy would Academic Affairs want to see adopted for the archives? AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58; DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18

Other questions on my list were the following: (5) Was Academic Affairs still in agreement, as Beukema had suggested in his March 11 memo to me, that we apply for the funding for two positions? (6) What did Beukema mean in his March 11 memo when he stated that the archives would be “a department reporting to the library?” (7) Would the archives have a budget that was separate from the library? (8) Would Academic Affairs recommend that NMU’s Board of Control adopt a records management policy similar to the one Michigan State University had adopted? (9) Was NMU willing to gradually expand its collection policy from initially collecting and managing primarily only its own records to also collecting and making available for research the records and papers that were not being collected by other repositories of historical value in the central section of the U.P.? (10) Was NMU willing to commit to continue the level of financial support to the archives that the grant will provide? (11) Who would the Project Director be for implementing the grant? (12) Did the university agree with the educational and experience qualifications for the archivist provided in the attached draft of the application? (13) Are the responsibilities of the archivist in the attached draft satisfactory? (14) Should the archivist have teaching responsibilities? (15) Is the status and reporting description of the archivist in the attached job description satisfactory? (16) Is the suggested salary realistic? (17) How will his or her travel expenses be covered? (18) Will the position be a tenure-track one? (19) What will the qualifications be for the archival assistant if there is to be one? (20) What would his or her obligations and salary be? (21) Will NMU commit to providing sufficient space for the archives to be able to operate effectively and efficiently?

When I prepared these questions, and before I knew that Fowler would be present when we considered them, my expectation was that they would be discussed only between the members of the History Department and whoever represented Academic Affairs. Then Academic Affairs would share the conclusions reached regarding the library with its director. In other words I was expecting that both Fowler and I would be continuing to work through Academic Affairs, using established protocol, in seeking to reach the needed understandings regarding the issues before us. Not yet knowing of the strong positions Fowler had been taking with Academic Affairs, I was still under the false impression that handling things in this way would be sufficient.

Before looking at what was eventually accomplished via direct talks with Fowler once they began, I will first consider some of the consequences which flowed from some suggestions I
made in my list of questions and my preliminary draft about which Fowler was rather perturbed. I will also include some reasons why I thought that some of the suggestions I made—and to which Fowler objected—had merit, although with the benefit of hindsight, I am truly embarrassed by one of those which I made. I will identify it. Furthermore, I will provide reasons for the distrust I had for her as we began these talks and show that this distrust was largely because of my ignorance of some of her commendable intentions. Then I will turn to the direct talks we had.

MY FIRST QUESTION

The first question on my list for the discussion with Academic Affairs read as follows:

The History Department is concerned that the archives continues to have a strong historical orientation and continues to make a high priority the collection of research materials that are of a primary character, and that will contribute to Northern’s academic capabilities and to historical scholarship in basic sources. Once the present close association between the Department of History and the Archives is severed, the Department of History is concerned that it and other interested parties will continue to have a vehicle for input into policies that will affect the archives. Obviously this is because the sources collected by the archives are so vital to the efforts of the historical profession.

The History Department suggests for consideration that an Archives Advisory Board be created. It would act as a vehicle for continued association and input between the archives on the one hand, and the Department of History on the other, other interested elements of the university community, and to a lesser extent, the non-university community at large. DHRA, 2/21, 24-04-18; AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

The document went on to suggest how such an Advisory Board might be created and what its membership might be if Academic Affairs agreed that the creation of such a board would be a good thing. This part of the question read:

A. Members of the Archives Advisory Board would be identified and recommended for terms of a certain period of time by the Committee on Committees of the Academic Senate and appointed by the Academic Senate.

B. Membership would consist of:
   a. The Director of the Archives.
   b. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs (or a representative of his or her office).
   c. The Director of Human Services (or a representative) to obtain university records management input.
   d. Two members of the History Department (preferably with Michigan and Upper Peninsula history interests).
   e. A member of the library faculty (preferably with cataloguing and/or automation skills).
f. A person associated with the President’s office and the Jacobetti Papers. The Archives will be receiving these over the next couple of years it appears, some shortly it seems (Preferably Tom Peters).

g. A member of Northern’s Board associated closely with the Upper Peninsula (possibly Elwood Mattson or Robert Berube).

C. This board would meet as often as its membership deemed necessary but at least twice a year. The Archivist would report on the Archives’ achievements since the committee last met, and on its objectives, plans for achieving its objectives, and on any desires for help from the Board that it might have.

D. The University would assure the Archives Advisory Board that its advice would weigh heavily when decisions are made by the Director of the Library and the Vice President for Academic Affairs regarding the hiring of any future Directors of the Archives.

Does Academic Affairs approve of the establishment of a board along these lines and the contracting of the Senate’s Committee on Committees to get it established?

Does Academic Affairs agree that this Board would have a significant role in making the recommendations for the new archives directors that will have to be hired from time to time?

**FOWLER’S UNDERSTANDABLE OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSALS IN THIS FIRST QUESTION**

First off, it should be noted that my suggestions were not meant to be considered as recommendations but rather just starting points from which a discussion with Academic Affairs could commence. When Fowler first saw my list she interpreted my “suggestions” as something much more concrete than just that, and with good reason. As can be learned from Fowler’s March 7 memo to Kuhn, and from my February 20 memo to Beukema which she had read, she knew much more about my views about the undesirability of the archives being placed under the library than I knew she knew. She also knew how strongly I preferred not to see that happen. If it was to happen, as I knew by this time it would from Beukema’s March 11 memo to me, then I did not wish to see a lot of the control of archives policy reside in the hands of the director of the library. This was because of the strong conviction I still possessed at this point of that not being a good thing. I wished instead to see it reside in the hands of the archivist and advisors. In order to place limits on such control as Fowler might wish to exercise, I felt that the existence of an Archives Advisory Board with significant standing and prestige would be a good device to have in place from the beginning.

I also wanted to see an Archives Advisory Board established that had a broad membership. In connection with that goal, however, I probably made the silliest proposal I ever made in conjunction with my archival efforts. As can be seen from the above quotation from the first question, the extreme breadth of the membership of the board I was suggesting, and how it might be appointed, were both impractical and even dangerous ideas for the long-term well-being of the archives. Honestly, from hindsight, I as an archivist would not have
wanted to work under such a board. Apparently I was so concerned with placing limits on the library director's control of the archives that I did not face that fact.

Besides placing limits on that control, at the time I also thought that such breath of membership would help generate wider visibility and support for the archives (the lack of which it had suffered from in the past). I thought that such a broad-based board would act as a safeguard against the action of some archivist in the future under the control of some narrowly focused library director taking the archives down some undesirably narrow path. Yet, viewed objectively, it is easy to see that the kind of board I was proposing would have been an unwieldy monster, and that a well-trained, experienced archivist with freedom to act as a professional would not have required such a board. Then too, if my suggestions were followed, this board would often have likely consisted of some quite uninformed, although likely well-meaning individuals.

It should be noted, however, that in the final analysis Fowler's objections did not spring nearly as much from the breath of the advisory board membership I was proposing, nor from my suggestions as to how this board might be appointed, as they did from the possibility of having an advisory board at all. Such a board would limit the library director's ability to exercise that ultimate control which she felt she needed.

**FOWLER'S APRIL 16 MEMO TO KUHN, TRIGGERED BY MY QUESTIONS AND DRAFT**

Despite Fowler's exposure to and objections to some of my ideas and suggestion at that first meeting on April 15, she just mainly listened. She was content there just to try to obtain a better sense of what the members of the History Department, Kuhn, and I were thinking regarding the issues I raised. By the following day, however, Fowler had prepared a strong, rather angry memo for Kuhn. She let him know in it, in no uncertain terms, what she thought of what she had learned at the April 15 meeting and what she thought of Kuhn's reaction, or lack thereof, to some of the things that were suggested. She sort of “threw down the gauntlet” before Academic Affairs—and really before the President's Council as well. This since if she decided to withdraw her willingness to have the archives under the library, that would necessitate the council rethinking at the very least its records management plans. In her memo, she identified two issues in particular about which she would not compromise regardless of what the administration thought or of how much it was depending on her. They had to do with (1) whether or not the university would have a university-wide Archives Advisory Board and (2) whether or not the archives would have as broad a collecting policy as I was suggesting.

The bottom line for Fowler was this. She was concerned with what she called the “rational administration” of an archives. Either of the two policies she identified as being primarily objectionable would undermine the ultimate control she felt she needed over archival matters. Since the archives were going to be under her administration, she insisted on that control. If policies that would undermine her control were going to be promised in the grant application, then Fowler invited the university to place the archives under some other entity—or even to continue to have it be an independent administrative division under Academic Affairs just as the library was.
Because Fowler’s April 16th memo to Kuhn provides so much insight into the daunting challenge and differing points of view which still had to be dealt with in seeking to fashion a harmonized proposal for our NHPRC application, and because it provides so much insight into her thinking, I have decided to include it in its entirety. Here it is:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in the meeting with the History Department yesterday. It was productive and I think it important to acknowledge the contribution of Cliff and the History Department to the development of the Archives. Before the meeting and after I’d read Cliff’s new proposal, I’d decided to ask for direct discussions with him and did so at the meeting. I’d not anticipated that you would offer support for his Archives Advisory Board plan. As I stated, I won’t agree to this.

In addition, I am alarmed at the very broad collecting responsibilities that are now proposed for [the] Archives. All in attendance seemed quite interested in an Archives which collects not just University records but regional records and the personal collections of prominent, local citizens. These entail very substantial commitments in terms of staff, operating costs, and space—which currently seems in very short supply on this campus. Local politics, always strong at NMU, becomes important to the picture.

Should Cliff contact me regarding a meeting, I will meet as agreed. But I do not think matters will progress very far unless these issues are settled. I offer these further comments which I am willing to share with Cliff.

The Library’s position has been quite consistent over time and has not changed: It will not accept an Archives which is in the Library but not of the Library. I perceive Cliff’s latest proposal as a means to circumvent the announcement that the proposed Archives would be a part of the Library. [Fowler was wrong about this. I did not know that such an announcement was being considered]. Cliff’s recommended “advisory” committee is hardly advisory. In his position description for the Archivist [in his draft proposal for the grant application], he has decision-making and the implementation of decision-making as duties to be performed “in consultation with the University and its Archives Advisory Board.” Under “Status and Reporting Line,” he has proposed two statements, the first places the Archivist/Record Manager under the Library Director and the second places this position also under the Archives Advisory Board. Joint administration of Archives with the History Department is not acceptable to me nor is joint administration with this committee, which has a similar effect in terms of policy and decision-making. [Fowler had obviously concluded from what she had heard at the meeting the previous day that the composition of the advisory board I was suggesting would be mainly members of the History Department, not the broad composition I proposed in question #1 of my list. She went on to say,] if the University wants another unit to administer Archives, please assign it elsewhere avoiding wasted time, staff, and money, and all the ill-will that stems from conflict. As the Library Director, I do want to have the
right to approve policies for the Archives but, under Cliff’s proposal, I will not have that.

There is another model which NMU could follow, and that is Michigan Technological University. They have a well-organized and active archives cared for by a librarian with archival training. Her undergraduate degree is from NMU and her master’s degree is from Wayne State, where they have a library program with an archival emphasis. The Archives at MTU is under the library and has no separate budget or advisory committee. I would be interested in developing an Archives at NMU after that model—not that of Central Michigan University or Michigan State University.

As to the scope of the collections, I would like to observe that all the information I have from Phil [Beukema] and the President’s Council focuses upon [both] University Archives and records management. I don’t think that the expense of this undertaking are appreciated. There are not only staff costs but the issue of preservation and storage. If the University commits itself to preserving its own records, it must either provide for a storage facility with humidity and temperature controls or undertake a microfilming (or like) project. Cliff says nothing of this issue.

Besides learning that librarians don’t appreciate the value of the historical records, I heard a lot about the potential value of the Jacobetti papers and the possibilities of obtaining John Voelker’s materials. Becoming a regional depository for local documents is mentioned. Apart from being space and time intensive, these have political ramifications. At an institutional level and from the standpoint of the Office of [University] Advancement, there can be a real value in having a broadly-based archives as a draw for the future giving of money, not only papers of scholarly interest. However, the cost of this investment must be measured. Cliff’s pleas are appealing but fall short of sound planning. Where powerful citizens meet local, weak policy, there is no opportunity for rational administration to prevail. I know that from experience, here and elsewhere. If the University is facing future financial constraints, I don’t see how commitments to collect anyone’s papers can even be pursued without first assessing cost. Equally important, authority for decision-making is a large issue. I can only imagine that the Library could successfully administer such collections if the University were willing to commit specific space, provide projected operating costs, and give the Archives under the Library power to make decisions. I am finding it hard to envision that.

The meeting with the History Department was important to me for it helped me to put the hodge-podge of interests and expectations into some perspective. The result is that I’m reflecting upon a mental image in which an Archives under the Library has little control, enormous costs and obligations, and no possibility of successfully satisfying its many masters. So, I have always felt that an independent archives is quite viable with university support.
MY VIEWS ON THE ADVISABLITY OF HAVING AN ADVISORY BOARD

To comment a bit further as to why I thought it was advisable to have an advisory board of broad composition, I believed that such a board sponsored by the Academic Senate would give the faculty as a whole a sense of ownership of the archives. That, I felt, would, in turn, translate into wider awareness of, and interest in the initiatives which the archives was undertaking, wider utilization of the archives, and greater readiness on the part of the faculty and university community in general to agree to make financial sacrifices to meet the needs of the archives and for things it was seeking to accomplish.

Even if the Advisory Board should perchance have ended up being composed primarily of historians (as Fowler saw as a possibility of happening) it would have been a group of individuals who would have been very able to offer advice regarding the acceptance of collections which they knew from experience would be particularly valuable, or which in their judgment would not be. My assumption was that an archivist would be appreciative of receiving such counsel.

However, Fowler as we have seen feared that an Advisory Board authorized to give council could easily become dictatorial and undercut the control which the Archivist and the Director of the Library had to have, and that this could also lead to a lot of conflict and ill will. It is true that the kind of an advisory board I was suggesting, could lead to the kinds of possibilities feared by Fowler. But given the level of distrust I still had at that time, I was willing to see that risk be taken for the benefits that I felt could be reaped.

Besides I had noticed in archival literature that a lot of archives had Advisory Boards. Therefore, as far back as 1984 when I drew up the NMU Archives Policy Statement, I had already included the creation of a University Archives Advisory Committee as a goal. The Administration and the Board of Control approved that statement in 1985. The NHPRC consultant reviewed it in 1986 and did not take issue with it. I took that to mean that the NHPRC believed that this was a good thing. Back in April, 1985 too, I had discussed with the History Department’s interim archives subcommittee the idea of having a university-wide archival committee. In addition to myself, Lon Jones, Jon Saari, and Russell Magnaghi were present. The latter took the minutes. They read as follows:

The committee gave its support to the concept of a university-wide archival committee which would be a permanent committee and is a common feature in most universities with archives. The committee should consist of an Archivist as ex-officio member and members from the University’s Finance, Administrative, Historical, and Legal divisions. RMP, 4/2, 34-05-34

Because I had obviously reached the conclusion back then that a university-wide archives committee would be a good thing, in subsequent years, on more than one occasion via Academic Affairs, I requested administration support for the creation of such a committee. It never resulted in any action. Nevertheless I never doubted that the existence of such a committee could have helped generate more "grass-roots" support. At the same time, I overlooked the problems such a committee possibly could create. So when the possibility
emerged that Northern might be ready to consider making the commitment necessary to qualify for a NHPRC grant, I saw this as an opportunity to finally obtain that university-wide Archives Advisory Committee. Thus, I wrote a provision for that into that first draft that I submitted on April 15 to the History Department and Academic Affairs for consideration as noted above. I also thought that an Archives Advisory Committee, or Board, would be helpful to assure that future archivists would remain true to a policy of giving adequate priority to the archives' original mission. Further, it would provide people who were particularly interested in its original mission of the collection and preservation of primary historical materials with a vehicle for being more knowledgeable about what was happening—or not happening—in the archives and why.

**THE MERITS, IN MY VIEW, OF A RATHER GENEROUS, FLEXIBLE COLLECTION POLICY**

Fowler, of course, was correct too in believing that an overly generous collection policy could become a problem. But when I learned what she said her policy would be, I felt it was definitely too restrictive—so restrictive in fact that it would forestall Northern’s ability to accept some important materials in a timely manner and in them being lost to other entities. Fowler’s idea that even the most valuable collection could not be accepted until the university had promised the funds needed to process the collection either immediately, or very shortly thereafter, seemed considerably too limiting to me. I felt that in the case of truly valuable collections, they should be sought and accepted even if the funds to process and service them were not yet available. In the past I had used a number of great archives which had a lot of records and manuscripts in them that the institution in which they existed had not yet been able to process—or process very fully—because of insufficient resources at the moment. For example, I did my doctrinal dissertation using unprocessed materials on the Second World War in the British Imperial War Museum in England. In my opinion, that repository had been wise to accept them because of their relevance in many cases to the academic mission of their institution. Another benefit was that even the possession of unprocessed records or papers could bring an institution considerable recognition and prestige. That, in turn, could result in a greater capacity for recruitment and for fund-raising, and that ultimately could help generate the very funds needed for processing and servicing such collections.

**REASONS FOR THE SUBSTANTIAL DISTRUST ON MY PART BY APRIL 15, 1991**

Distrust complicated things as well. In part, this distrust was due to things which I have discussed earlier in this account. In part it had to do regarding the bad experiences I had read or heard about when archives were under libraries. But this lack of trust was also due to long-standing developments at Northern as well as to some just prior to April 15, 1991.

One of the long-standing causes was the lack of committed support by NMU”s library of our archival efforts in earlier times. One example is its lack of support in the 1970s for Magnaghi’s efforts to get some kind of an archival arrangement established with it for the archiving of the valuable historical materials he was collecting. The question was, was the library really unable to be more helpful? Or was this due, at least in part, to a basic lack of
appreciation for the importance of the primary research materials which were, or would be important to Northern’s academic mission?

Rumors too had been circulating in the mid-1980s that at least some Northern librarians in earlier times had an attitude of distain regarding the desirability of housing in their domain those untidy, often unwieldy, unpublished archival materials. They wanted to see library operations remain neat and tidy—and uncluttered with “that kind of stuff.” If so, the question was whether or not such an outlook and culture still fundamentally existed during Fowler’s tenure? Whether true or not, the rumor still did. And I believe, it played a part in my mind, in creating a lack of certainty as to whether or not the library would ever really be that whole heartedly interested in the collection of unpublished materials.

Another reason I was distrustful was the library’s seeming lack of empathy and helpfulness regarding offering our archival effort even a small portion of the relatively large amount of space the library had considerable control over in the mid-1980s. The only space we were able to obtain in the LRC building was space obtained without any library help whatsoever. Without personal evidence of a changed attitude, the question which continued in my mind until after April 15, 1991 was what was the library’s real attitude and degree of support going to be toward the academic mission of the archives should it be placed under its care?

Things suggested in my list of questions and the draft to which Fowler objected so strenuously were there, of course, because of the substantial distrust which I had developed regarding having an archives under library administration and, to some degree, regarding Fowler herself. Had that distrust not been there, Fowler would not have had to raise the issues she did in her April 16 memo. Nor would she have had to ask for direct talks with me. Fowler knew how she wanted to administer the archives. It was my efforts to modify her plans because of my distrust that was the basic cause of the conflict regarding archival matters at this time.

THE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR DISTRUST: FOWLER’S “BOTTOM LINE” CONDITIONS NOT SHARED WITH ME

The long-standing distrust just discussed would certainly have been greatly reduced prior to April 15 had the information Fowler made available to Kuhn in the memos she had sent to him on March 7 and 11 been passed on to me. To help the reader see that, I have copied considerable parts of them below. I think the reader will agree that they could well have fostered some timely understanding and dissipated some of that lack of distrust. AARA 1/11, 20-03-58; 1/12, 20-03-58

Prior to focusing on the gratifying promises Fowler made in those memos to Kuhn, I will focus briefly on what she identified in the March 7 memo as her non-negotiable conditions (sort of her pre-conditions) for assuming administrative responsibility for the archives. (This even though she had already agreed to assume that responsibility by January, 1990 as shown in the latter part of chapter 16.) If these conditions were met, she would do certain things that would insure that the archives would be, as well as remain, a truly professional
operation. She hoped thereby to relieve my concerns and had expected that Academic Affairs would pass this information on to me.

In Fowler’s mind, the most fundamental of those non-negotiable pre-conditions was that the “Archives must be fully a part of the Library.”

This demand is considerably different from what Beukema had led me to believe would be the case in his memo to me on March 11. In it he stated that

[T]he Archivist and his/her office will comprise a department under the Library reporting to the Library Director. This does not mean, of course, that an appropriate measure of autonomy would not exist for the Archivist function (just as the various academic divisions that are a part of my organizational unit do indeed have a certain measure of autonomy). AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58; 1/12, 20-03-58

I took Beukema’s statement to mean that the archives would have departmental status under the library just as, for example, the History Department had departmental status under the School of Arts and Sciences, but still was not an integral part of it. So at that time, I had concluded that the archives was going to possess a considerably greater degree of independence under the library than it would if it became an integral “part of the Library,” as Fowler said it must. Yet in conjunction with the other promises she made in her March 7 memo, this was not that alarming.

THE GREAT PROMISES FOWLER MADE IN HER MARCH 7 AND 11 MEMOS OF WHICH I WAS UNINFORMED

As stated, in her March 7 as well as her March 11 memos, Fowler made some great promises in an effort to assure the administration, the NHPRC, and me that with university support placing the archives under the library would be a good thing. That, at least, it would be in Northern’s case.

Among the promises Fowler made to Kuhn in those two memos, and which she hoped Academic Affairs would find convincing and use to assure me and the NHPRC were the following:

Should the Library assume responsibility for Archives, it would strive to offer services according to the standards of the major archival organization—just as we do currently for all the services we offer. Our frame of reference is not exclusively libraries. We pay attention to EDUCOM for academic computing, AWCT for media, and the Visual Resources Association for slides. While I am not an archivist, I understand the major professional association in the field to be the SAA, Society for American Archivists. If we seek a grant from NHPRC, I appreciate that we must meet this federal agency’s requirements for funding.... Since libraries frequently house archives, as—for example—at Michigan Tech, I can only say that I would hope that if the Library meets professional standards for service and preservation that the NHPRC would accept Library administration.... As a librarian, I can only promise the
University that I and the staff will respect the nature of archival materials and establish standards and policies in accord with the recommendations of national organizations. Since many of us in the Library have advanced history degrees, Stephen Peters has been trained in processing manuscript material, and Krista Clumpner recently came to Olson Library from the Clarke Historical Library and Archives at CMU, I think we do have an appreciation of value of primary historical materials and the mechanisms for collecting and preserving them.

Cliff feels that two full-time positions are required, a professional archivist and a support person. I will support his recommendation. If the University is willing to seek grant monies for this level of support for Archives, I would welcome and honor it.

On the question of having archivists select the archivist who would be hired, Fowler made this concession:

I...prefer that the Library follow its typical processes for appointment with the department forwarding a recommendation to Academic Affairs. However, I would suggest that we add to the search committee one or two archivists, perhaps Cliff Maier and/or Teresa Spence, the archivist at Michigan Tech—who is on the Library staff.

A reason Fowler came to believe so strongly in the merits of having the archives under the library at Northern is that at an institution the size of Northern that type of an arrangement would lead to greater efficiency and effectiveness in her view. She made a point of this in her March 7 memo, and it became the main topic of her March 11 memo. In her March 7 memo, she had this to say:

My own position is efficiency. Independent archives are more readily supported at larger institutions, like Michigan State—the home of Cliff’s consultant, where the dimension of operations is greater and warrants a separate unit. Within a smaller university, like NMU, greater efficiency of resources, without loss of effectiveness, can be achieved—I believe—with an archives that is under the Library.

In her March 11 memo, she made the following additional points and promises among others regarding efficiency and effectiveness. Some had to do with staffing:

If Archives is an independent unit, it will have to perform all of its functions itself. If it’s part of the Library, there will be staff to answer Reference questions and a desk where materials may be picked up when Archives is closed or staff occupied…. The Library staff has been encouraged to see itself as an entire unit and to share workloads where there are unusual problems…. If Archives received a large donation, there might be extra hands to help out. The cataloging staff is quite knowledgeable about the principles of cataloging, both the creation of bibliographic records and subject headings, whether manual or online. Skill in applying these
principles is essential if a file or database is to be usable. I believe that Library staff can render essential assistance in this regard.

Regarding automation and technology she said:

Cliff has referred to the merger of interests among archivists and librarians with the advent of automated cataloging systems. [The] archives currently has very limited access to national data to help it in its work.... Currently, Archives is using a standard archival software package on a microcomputer to process its collections.... Certainly information listed in a microcomputer cannot be widely distributed or known by anyone, unless lists are generated and distributed.

Regarding space, Fowler declared:

As an independent unit, archives is very small to compete for space among many larger interests, including the Library. The Library is willing to provide for Archives.

This is something she had never said previously at least not prior to the time the President’s Council asked her to assume responsibility for the Archives in late 1989 or early 1990. And if she did then, it was not revealed to me.

Fowler also promised to help with getting better support from the administration:

Archives as part of the Library might receive better administrative support. Certainly, the Library director would act as an advocate for the function and might be equally or more effective in negotiations with Academic Affairs than an independent unit. The Library director does sit on the Academic Council and meets regularly with the administrative officers of Academic Affairs. I am uncertain what status would be accorded to an independent Archives and its staff—or how budgeting would be handled. Regular communication with the administration would seem to be essential to gain a share of the University’s quite finite resources.

One of my concerns had been, it will be recalled, that the position of the archives in the administrative structure be revised to afford it better access to administration decision-making circles. By Fowler making this promise, she made an important concession to my concern that henceforth the archives would have such access, indirect though this would be. This would mean that she would act as an advocate for the needs of the archives in those administrative bodies on which she had a seat. At the time this happened she sat on several important ones.

The fact is that once I learned of Fowler’s promises, assurances, and changed positions on key things, I quite quickly was persuaded that the archives would do quite well under the library—perhaps very well. However, I did not learn of most of Fowler’s positions and promises until sometime between April 19 and May 17. Their essence gradually emerged from the discussions of a group which Fowler and I created at the beginning of that time. It was created to reconcile those differences which still existed between the library’s point of
view and mine, and to seek to come up with policies we could all agree upon and recommend to Academic Affairs for its approval. The History Department asked Peter Slavcheff, a History Department colleague of mine, to join me in representing history/the archives on the group. Fowler asked Krista Clumpner, a trusted librarian on her staff, to join her on it. Clumpner had previous experience doing archival work as well.

I had had no communication with Fowler about the relatively recent initiative to place the archives under the library prior to April 15 when she and I first agreed to have direct talks. I had continued to go through channels--that is through Academic Affairs--to seek to learn from it what the relationship of the archives would be to the library once the former was placed under it.

FINAL EFFORTS AT RECONCILING DIFFERENCES. THE WORK OF THE NEW ARCHIVES PROJECT GROUP

To seek to resolve our differences, four meetings occurred between Fowler, Clumpner, Slavcheff, and myself at this time. Their dates were “April 19, 23, 30, and May 2. The minutes of those meetings are in NMU’s Archives in a file entitled, “NHPRC Grant, 1992.”

One would have thought that at the commencement of these discussions, Fowler would have made available to us copies of her March 7 and 11 memos to Kuhn. This in order to help us understand what she had already promised she would do to assure the well-being of the archives under the library. Also to help us grasp right up front a lot of what her position was on things--although, as we shall see, she did make her position clear on some things immediately by other means. But she never shared with us the March 7 and 11 memos she sent to Kuhn with all the enlightening information they contained. Nor did she share with us copies of her April 16 memo to Kuhn. We only learned of some of the positions she took in any of these memos from what she shared with us orally as the discussions progressed.

On the first day of the first of these meetings the minutes state that, “Fowler commented on how far the Archives had come during the past seven years under the direction of Cliff Maier.” The next thing she mentioned, however, was that it was “the University’s decision to have the Archives under the Library.” And “if the Archives is under the Library, the Archivist would report to it.” Actually what she meant by this last statement was that henceforth he would be reporting to the director of the library. Also that it was the library director who would henceforth be reporting matters associated with the archives that needed to come to the attention of Academic Affairs to it.
One of the things these statements highlight right up front was the weak position I was going to be in during our negotiations. So what was I to do? I could have made an issue of Fowler’s questionable position that I could no longer report directly to Academic Affairs. She was asking me to act as if the archives already was under the library; this while I had been assuming that that would not happen until we had been awarded a grant (if indeed that did happen) and a new archivist was hired at that time. It will be recalled that that was the condition under which I offered to step down. (See the early part of chapter 16.) Academic Affairs had never told me that things had changed and that I now was to report to the director of the library.

When Fowler said this, I could have made an issue of it and risked creating a difficult negotiating environment right to begin with. I decided not to. I decided that it was more important to seek to obtain promises from Fowler as to what she would do to assure the well-being as well as the professional and educational character of the archives in the future than to insist on personal prerogatives that might jeopardize that. And then to seek to get those things approved by Academic Affairs and written into our grant proposal. It was not worth risking the achievement of those things for the archives by making an issue of what my “rights” still were as the archivist.

Fowler also stated right up front that she would not agree to the existence of an on-going advisory board. She would support, however, having an appointed board for the duration of the grant and, thereafter, an advisory committee that reported to the Academic Senate just like the library's advisory committee already in existence did. Furthermore, she did not want the archivist to have to report to such a committee. She suggested that the members of the board during the implementation period of the grant be Clumpner, Theresa Spence, Slavcheff, and me and that I be the Project Director during that time.

Our discussions also made clear that at one time she had been under the impression that the archives under the library would only be concerned with caring for the university's records. But by this time she had become willing to see it involved also in collecting regional non-university materials. That was only, however, if the university agreed to provide the extra resources that would be required.

Disturbing to her was the fact that some Northern historians felt that the archives should sometimes take or seek materials for the archives for which the processing costs would not yet be available. Also upsetting to her was the fact that at this very time, reports were surfacing that the university was agreeing to take the Jacobetti Papers—and that the university had also set up a committee to work on receiving the Voelker papers. While the university knew I favored seeking to obtain both of these collections, some people at the President’s Council level had been going ahead and making promises to these donors without consulting or informing either me—still the “Archivist” at this point—or Fowler, who saw herself as the future ultimate controller of archival accessioning. That this was happening appears to have come to Fowler’s attention for the first time at about the time of our April 23 meeting. The next day she dashed off an email to Kuhn, again as usual, not copied to any of the rest of us. Among the things she stated were the following:
Cliff’s focus is not on records management, so far as I can determine. [But] it’s on that basis [i.e. for that reason] that these positions [for the Archives] have been approved [by the President’s Council. Here she is still reflecting what the view was when Hammang’s outlook was prevailing]. Besides Cliff’s desire to collect regional records, he’s told me that the university has already agreed to take Jacobetti’s papers. What do you know about this? That combined with the effort to get the Voelker papers makes me wonder what the university really wants to do here. Cliff and I agree that if the Archives is to do all this we’re talking about 4 positions or more. We part company at that point because I’ve been attempting to persuade him that, given the many university demands for staff, this is impossible and unrealistic. Related to this [is] the question of authority. Will the University allow the Archivist to decide whose papers will be collected, especially if the donor is a powerful friend of the University? I think not and that spells trouble when it comes to staff, space, and other support monies. Have you any comments as we focus on the purpose of the Archives? AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

Fowler’s comment that my focus was not on records management is, of course, not really correct. This history shows that my position had always been that the archives needed to do both. I also felt that the archives could do both with just two positions. I knew that to get to the non-university collecting stage with our archives, we had to do records management too. I was at peace with all of that. All I was concerned about was that it be official university policy to collect non-university collections too in the not-to-distant future.

Another of Fowler’s comments is not entirely correct either. That is that she and I had agreed that the archives needed four positions if it was going to do both records management and non-university collecting; that is if the university was going to permit or seek the accessioning of some major collections too. I would not have seriously agreed that four positions were necessary unless it was policy to fully process large non-university accessions immediately upon their receipt. Fowler somehow felt strongly about the need to process such collections immediately and also that they could not be accessioned unless the funds were on hand to do that. I did not. If the archives was going to insist on Fowler’s policy of complete processing immediately, then I guess I had to agree with her that four positions would be necessary. But just like her, I knew that obtaining four positions was totally unrealistic, and I would never have argued for that.

I found Fowler’s view that accessioning big collections without first having the university resources on hand to process them immediately to be too idealistic. My view was that some collections do not have to be processed immediately. While not as conveniently perhaps, I believed that valuable parts of collections can often be utilized with only slight processing. Most of the archival material which I have used for this account is still unprocessed. I therefore am indeed happy about the records management which has taken place at Northern; it has resulted in me having access to this unprocessed research material. If one takes the position that a large collection does not have to be processed extensively immediately, then even with the acquisition of a few such collections, the archives does not, in my opinion, have to be staffed by more than two permanent people plus sufficient student help.
Kuhn responded to Fowler’s April 24 email in an April 26 memo in which he made the following points. I quote from it:

You are correct in assuming that the President’s Council will want to see emphasis on records management in addition to emphases on archival material. Cliff should keep that political reality in mind.

Next, considering for the moment the desire to collect regional records or the papers of people like Jacobetti and Voelker, we need to be absolutely clear that space, monies, and staff will have to be in place before acceptance is made. Right now we are authorized to write a grant for only 2 staff positions. Total support funding is only about $3,500 and space is sharply limited. These realities will have to change before acceptance of anyone’s records or papers are tendered.

When offers of papers or for papers are tendered, the archivist/records manager will (I assume) make recommendations—most likely in concert with an advisory committee—concerning records to accept or reject along with projections of cost, space needs, and staff required for appropriate acquisition, storage, and opportunities for use. Decisions will be made by the Director of the Library or perhaps by the Academic VP. Perhaps some decisions will need to be made at the President’s Council level because of costs in dollars, space, and staff time. *AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58*

As one can see, Kuhn presented an ideal scenario. It is so similar to what Fowler wished to see him say that I am sure she liked it very much. As will be seen in chapters 21A and 21B, this called for a course of action which proved to be impractical to follow in obtaining the two sets of papers in question, and therefore was not followed. Besides it is possible, even likely, especially in the case of the Voelker papers, that Northern would not have been successful at all in securing them if it had followed the ideal course Fowler laid out and Kuhn agreed to.

**AGREEMENT AND TRUST ACHIEVED**

Despite differences such as those just related, the meetings between the four of us continued and really proved quite productive. We continued to work at determining such things as job descriptions for both the archivist and his or her assistant, their compensation and benefits, student help costs, space requirements, the amount of space the library would provide within the LRC building as it was needed and what we would ask the university to commit to if that was not sufficient, estimated supplies and equipment needs, whether the budget for the archives would be separate from the library’s, a projected five-year plan for the archives, a mission and goal statement, and so forth.

As we worked together, a great deal more trust developed between us. We became more willing to accept each other’s goals. Furthermore, as I witnessed Fowler and Clumpner’s concern for making the archives a successful operation in every way that they could, I genuinely started to believe that it would be okay after all to have the archives be a part of
the library. Compromises became possible; we ended up being friends, not opponents, working together to create a blueprint for as useful an archives for Northern as possible under the circumstances.

During one of the last of those meetings, Fowler stated that she wished to be the preparer of a report to Kuhn from herself and me regarding our recommendations. Earlier I would have been hesitant to agree to that; it certainly gave her a chance to place her slant on the recommendations we made. But by this time I had become quite sure that under Fowler and Clumpner’s oversight, the archives would receive equal consideration with the other divisions of the library. A concern which remained was whether or not these promises and assurances would be honored also by succeeding leaders and staff. However, I hoped for the best. Fortunately and admirably, to the great credit of the library directors and their staffs since that time, this has been the case.

The report and recommendations which Fowler and I sent to Kuhn was first dated May 6. Then after a meeting with Kuhn, it was slightly modified and dated May 17 (See NMU’s 1992 NHPRC grant materials). Our report stated that Fowler, Clumpner, Slavcheff, and I had agreed upon the positions we would take in our grant application to the NHPC; that is if Academic Affairs also agreed. It did, as the following evidence shows. On May 21, 1991, Kuhn sent this memo to Beukema.

Rena Fowler, Cliff Maier, and others have had a series of meetings to develop a full outline of the Archives and Records Management effort to be proposed for NMU and how it might be realized. I met recently with Rena, Cliff, Krista Clumpner, and Barry Knight to review the outline and think they have an excellent proposal. Because time is short for submitting the preliminary NHPRC proposal (June), I have urged Cliff to move ahead immediately with the grant.

Unless you feel there should be other additions or subtractions, Cliff will simply complete the grant proposal within the next two weeks and submit it for your formal approval in the customary way through Perrin Fenske’s office.

Beukema had no changes to make.

**PROPOSAL FOR THE PRELIMINARY GRANT APPLICATION**

As implied, our proposal was dated May 17, 1991. The cover letter to Kuhn accompanying it read as follows:

Over the past several weeks, we [Fowler and I] have met along with Peter Slavcheff and Krista Clumpner to discuss Archives and Historical Collections. We have developed a set of recommendations for your consideration although some questions remain. We are especially concerned regarding Rep. Jacobetti’s papers and would wish to remain informed regarding discussions and to participate in negotiations.
Currently, Cliff is working upon a draft of the grant proposal which must be submitted at the beginning of June.

Please find attached a proposed mission and goal statement, 5-year objectives, position descriptions for the archivist and an assistant, and a revised organization chart for the Library.

I am not providing the content at this point of the documents referred to immediately above. Their content can be known from the final version of the grant proposal that we submitted on October 1, 1991. That can be found toward the end of chapter 19. Additional recommendations we made in the May 17 proposal are as follows:

1. Status of the archives and archivist in the university structure
   a. The present NMU archives, its staff, equipment, and budget will be under the Library, effective with the agreement of all parties.
   b. The archivist will report to the director of the library.
   c. The archivist will be hired as a member of the faculty with promotion and tenure opportunities based upon degree requirements and the satisfactory performance of duties spelled out in the position description: the library's bylaws will take the archivist's position and terminal degree requirements into account.
   d. The archivist will have authority to negotiate the transfer of records from all university offices he or she deems of merit.
   e. The archivist will consult with the appropriate university officials regarding the collection of non-university records, papers, and manuscripts, and will develop policies and guidelines for their acquisition.
   f. The archivist will have the benefit of the advice of an Archives Advisory Committee under the Academic Senate.

2. NHPRC Grant
   a. Cliff Maier will be the project director, develop the proposal and review it with the library director, and file all required reports.
   b. The archivist will have the benefit of the advice of a Project Advisory Board [Group], composed of university staff and external resource specialists in archives. Possible members: Krista Clumpner (Library), Peter Slavcheff (History), and Teresa Spence (Archivist, MTU).

3. Funding
   a. The university will provide the permanent funding for two full-time twelve-month positions for a professional archivist and an assistant. According to the terms of the anticipated NHPRC grant, the university will assume financial responsibility as the grant is expended. As the work of the archives is assessed in future years, the university will evaluate the need and consider the funding of an additional full-time archivist assistant or equivalent.
b. The university will provide monies for student help. The library seeks a commitment of $5000 in new monies for student assistance, both during and following the grant.

c. The university will provide on-going funds to support the work of the NMU archives: supplies, professional services, telephone, and small equipment. The current level of support funding, $3500, is felt to be sufficient to support the need of the two full [-time] staff and students if the additional funds are budgeted for student assistance.

d. Travel monies will be allocated for the archivist under the AAUP contract.

e. If a program to microfilm university records should be approved, the university will fund this process as an operating cost.

f. The archives will have a separate budget.

4. Space

The archives will be housed in the library. The library will provide office and work space for the staff, a reading room for the public, and a storage/stack area for regularly used archival materials. Professional standards will be consulted in assessing the amount of space to house materials and the environmental conditions necessary for preservation. Depending upon standards and the growth of the archives, the library might provide within the LRC from 800 to 3500 square feet. The lower figure assumes that the library will provide for [the] archives in its present space. The upper figures assume that new space for the library will be approved within the LRC. Beyond this range the library will require additional secure space outside of the LRC for archival storage. The library would like space outside of the LRC assured and identified. If no external space is identified, the library cannot support pursuit of the secondary mission of the archives, i.e. the collection of non-university records.

5. Form Storage

One of the early responsibilities of the archivist will be the preparation of a plan for the long-term storage of university records. A decision will be required regarding the retention and storage of paper records versus the retention and storage of a combination of paper and microform records. This assessment has important ramifications for both operating costs and space, and the university must be prepared to provide for the resources required.

6. Policies

This summer, the Board of Control will be asked to approve a statement recognizing that the library is extending its mission to include the care of the university’s archival records through the development of [the] archives and the establishment of a records management program. This statement will serve to highlight the university’s acceptance of its obligations to care for its archival records. The archives has developed a written collection policy that the University Administration has approved. It will be updated as needed. The archivist will recommend and implement policies and procedures for the full range of services.
under his or her purview, including the appraisal and processing of materials and reference services. The educational mission of the archivist will be realized through such means as an annual report, an archives policy manual, handouts, finding aids, exhibits, displays, and signs.

7. Standards
The library and university will do their best, within the constraints of available resources, to adhere to nationally established standards for archival materials, especially those approved by the Society of American Archivists, the major professional association in the field.

8. Security
The archives will be housed in a self-contained area of the building that can be locked, thus facilitating the security of the records stored therein.

9. Comment regarding the mission and goals
The goal statement may be consistent with the development of a program of oral history but that would only be determined and undertaken after an archivist were hired and resources were reviewed.

10. Comment regarding the hiring of the archivist
The library’s normal search committee should be augmented by the addition of Cliff Maier and possibly another knowledgeable person regarding archives. Teresa Spence, the Archivist at MTU, was mentioned as a good prospect. In interviewing for the position, the search committee will seek to determine if candidates hold a knowledge of APPM guidelines for cataloging.

This memo reflects the almost unbelievable progress which we made in less than a month after the library director and I (and our two associates) began to have face to face talks with each other.

The understandings reached and the promises made, including their approval by the University’s Administration, now made it possible for me to write the preliminary grant application with confidence, and to submit it on June 1. Doing that, making suggested revisions in it thereafter and gaining approval for a final version of our grant application in view of changes that had occurred at NMU by October 1, 1991 is the subject of chapter 19.
CHAPTER 19

THE OCTOBER 1, 1991 GRANT PROPOSAL: ITS PREDECESSOR, IMPORTANT NHPRC HELP, AND THE FINAL PROPOSAL, JUNE 1—OCTOBER 1, 1991

As noted at the end of chapter 18, by May 21, 1991 or shortly thereafter, both Vice President Beukema and Associate Vice President Kuhn had approved of the provisions which Rena Fowler as director of the library, and I as archivist and grant writer had suggested for the preliminary grant application due on June 1. Those provisions were in a May 17 document. Following Beukema’s approval, Kuhn urged that I proceed immediately with the writing and submitting of the application—which I did.

I mailed the application to Lansing, Michigan where it would be examined by a group of Michigan archivists who were the NHPRC’s Michigan grant application evaluators. The NHPRC referred to them as its Michigan board. Their job was to assess the quality of all grant applications from Michigan and determine which ones should be sent on to the NHPRC in Washington D. C. for possible funding. The Michigan Board was to make suggestions for improving those proposals judged worthy of being sent on. The board was scheduled to meet on June 17.

While writing the preliminary version of our proposal I made some serious miscalculations with regard to what I thought the NHPRC’s Washington grant evaluators would like to see in the application. They, of course, had provided guidelines to follow. When I saw some of the questions in the application form however, I initially convinced myself that I could not really deal with them in the way requested. I thought that I could instead provide a history of our archival effort, emphasizing how praiseworthy I felt it had been and how much it now was in need of financial assistance to establish it more firmly and take it to the next level. Being inexperienced in writing this kind of a grant, I convinced myself that the information I would provide would impress evaluators just as much as what they had requested.

The major subdivisions in the narrative portion of the grant application were: “Purpose and Goals, Significance, Plan of Work, Products, and Key Personnel.” As I pondered these questions, I thought, “How should I know the answers to these questions?” One, for example, requested the details of a work plan. I thought to myself, “This is why I was hoping to win a grant and get an experienced, professional archivist hired. Once hired, he or she would be the logical person to decide what should be done to take the archives to the next level—to draw up a detailed work plan!” My response, of course, revealed my ignorance of precisely why the NHPRC asked the questions it did. Eventually I learned that these people had very good reasons for the questions they asked.

Given my viewpoint, I presented Northern’s case, pretty much as a historical narrative. I traced the admirable archival efforts which had been made to get a professional archives established in a region where there had not yet been one. I stated how that it had the
potential of preserving some precious historical material and also for preventing much
more from being lost. I included evidence of how significant this was to the university and
region. Upon completion of my proposal I thought that I had made a pretty good case for
Northern’s need for a grant and that those who read the application would conclude the
same. I looked forward to meeting with the Michigan Board on June 17. While I expected
some suggestions for fine-tuning the proposal, I was quite confident that they would find it
quite convincing, and that they would find it pretty much ready to be sent on to
Washington as it was! What a surprise I had coming! More on what happened later. At this
point, however, it will be helpful for me to digress briefly and note some changes which
occurred during the summer of 1991 in leadership at NMU.

LEADERSHIP DEPARTURES, ASSESSMENTS, AND NEW FACES DURING THE SUMMER
OF 1991

The most significant leader to leave his post that summer was President Appleberry. He
became President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. In terms
of his impact on archival matters during his eight-year presidency, the documents show
that he favored getting an archives and records management system established at
Northern. But basically also that it was not a very high priority of his. However, he did
support his vice presidents and chief administrators. As his tenure at Northern progressed
and as they gradually became more convinced that either the archives or the records
management program, or both, should receive a higher priority, he supported that. During
the last six months of his time at NMU, this resulted in a firm decision to hire a professional
archivist and an assistant if a NHPRC grant could be obtained.

John Kuhn also resigned during that summer. His quest to become a high-level academic
executive was rewarded, and he became President of Clarmont University in Pennsylvania.
Since considerable comment has already been made regarding his contribution to the
archival effort, I will refrain from further comment on it here. But the record shows that it
was considerable and very important at one point.

When Kuhn left Northern, Vice President Beukema became
more involved once again in archival matters. This was, in
part, because Fowler had direct access to him. He was her
superior both as director of the library and as the future
division head of the archives. Professor Fred Joyal of
Northern’s Geography Department was tapped to fill John
Kuhn’s vacated position. In the past he too had become
heavily involved in university-wide responsibilities such as
chairing the committee on computerizing the university,
noted earlier. Now he was given the title, Associate Vice
President for Academic Administration and Planning.
Interestingly, Beukema did not deputize him to take total
charge of archival matters as he eventually did in Kuhn’s
case. But even if he had done so, the record shows that
Fowler still would have gone directly to Beukema about
certain archival matters when she felt she needed to do so to accomplish her purposes.

As far as Ruth Roebke-Berens’ involvement with archival matters is concerned, as noted earlier, her direct involvement pretty much ceased at this point; although her interest in the success of the archives initiative continued. She returned to full-time teaching. By this time Fowler had become the key person the administration consulted on archival matters. Occasionally, I was too, but only on a limited basis. Except for my work in the archives, my involvement was mainly with getting the grant application written and a little later on with acquiring the Voelker collection. As noted in chapter 18, one of the reasons for Fowler’s new prominence in dealing with the administration, particularly in dealing with Academic Affairs, is that she believed it was now her prerogative, not mine, to communicate with it on archival matters. I chose not to challenge her on that, as I explained there, especially since my time as archivist was likely now going to be very limited anyway.

Dr. William E. Vandament became the new president that summer. Initially he was hired on a one-year interim basis only. But he was so well liked that before his first year at the helm ended, he was offered a regular presidential contract and remained at Northern until 1997. From the point of view of the archives, he was a great acquisition too. He was a great believer in historical preservation and in the public display of local and regional history. He had little difficulty identifying with and supporting the archival initiative that was underway at Northern, even though this was under increasingly difficult financial conditions.

Vandament brought with him a somewhat different philosophy of governance too. He believed in less centralized decision-making and in more faculty participation. This resulted in a gradual downsizing of the administration and other things, and meant there would be considerable savings. Some administrators, however, were uncomfortable with Vandament’s administrative approach. John Hammang, for example, was not and resigned in October 1992. Vandament believed in relying more on university-wide opinion-gathering forums and somewhat less on the President’s Council and the Board of Control to advise him on future courses of action. Eventually he created a new budget and planning committee made up also of some faculty members and department heads. He considered the previous budget and planning committee too heavily loaded with administrators. He also rejected fixed annual budgets. He believed that budgeting needed also to be an on-going process throughout the year to be able to respond more effectively to problems and to wind-falls. He also decided to seek to create a culture in which the president had the freedom to make certain decisions largely himself as he felt he needed to. This was designed to eliminate the need to consult the President’s Council so heavily about virtually everything he wished to do and then to proceed pretty much only in accordance with its wishes. Early feelers and discussions regarding these matters began by at least July 3, 1991 and continued at several President’s Council meetings for the next few months, as the minutes of those meetings show. PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09
When Ann Gonyea, a Marquette Mining Journal staff writer, asked Vandament on August 3, 1992 at the end of his first year in office how things had gone, he stated that he felt that it had been a busy and strenuous time. This because of the need there had been to reallocate priorities, the budget cutting that had been required, and because of the possibility of having to lay off thirty people. Yet he declared that he felt it had also been a good and productive year. “We were accomplishing things,” he stated. With respect to archival matters, this included obtaining the agreement with the academic community to make some sacrifices in their respective divisions in order to be able to hire an archivist. He and they did this in spite of a looming financial crisis; its full impact on them was still unknown. As we shall see, there were other ways too in which Vandament and his outlook and policies helped the archival cause.

A person can obtain a fuller picture of Vandament and his policies from the minutes of the President’s Council for September 23 and October 7, 1992, (PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-48) Another article by Ann Gonyea which appeared in the Marquette Mining Journal on September 14, 1992 provides some further insightful information as well.

**THE NHPRC’S ASSESSMENT OF MY JUNE 1 PRELIMINARY PROPOSAL**

We now return to that June 17 meeting with the NHPRC’s Michigan Advisory Board to review my preliminary grant proposal. The time had finally arrived. I did not have to be at the meeting. But I was invited to be there to gain a sense of the board’s assessment, to raise any questions that I might have, to listen to any suggestions, and to answer any questions that the board might have. And I decided that I should be. My wife, Eleanor, accompanied me as well, primarily to take notes.

The members of the Michigan Board were among the top professional archivists in the state at the time. They were Frances Blouin, Frederick Honhart, David Johnson, Paula Johnson, Wayne Mann, Phillip Mason, Darwin Matthews, William Mulligan, Gordon Olson, and Theresa Spence. Also present from Washington, D.C. was Richard A. (Dick) Cameron, the NHPRC’s Assistant Director for State Programs. The Michigan Board had requested that he be present primarily to discuss another matter. But he was invited to read my proposal and participate in the discussion of it as well. He agreed and that proved to be a godsend. All of these individuals greeted my wife and me warmly and did their best to make us feel comfortable. Over the years, through attending the meetings of the Michigan Archival Association, most of these individual had become my friends.

At that June 17 meeting, Cameron was quite vocal in voicing his views. In addition to that, he did me the kindness of sending me a written critique later of my proposal. It was dated August 7. David Johnson, State Archivist, did me a somewhat similar favor. He sent me a copy of the minutes of that meeting which, of course, included his summary of the comments of the members of the board. This feed-back is now preserved with Northern’s
What follows is drawn largely from one or another of those written sources. They proved very helpful. To a lesser degree, my recollections were of some help too. So were my wife’s recollections and notes; unfortunately her notes have not been preserved.

CRITIQUE OF MY PROPOSAL

Once consideration of my proposal commenced, and even before Cameron said anything, I could tell that the evaluators were seeing substantial problems with it, even though as they voiced their views they were trying to be as sensitive to my feelings as possible. In general, their reaction to the proposal was nothing like the very positive one I had obtained from basically this same group of people in 1985 when they had evaluated my grant proposal to bring a consultant to Northern. At that time they were thrilled to read of how Northern had finally established an archives with the potential of saving much of the valuable archival material of the central region of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. And they were more than happy to approve a grant application for the relatively small sum of money that was needed to help us with that. They also complimented me via Roebke-Berens on how well that proposal had been written.

These same individuals knew, however, that obtaining NHPRC agreement to fund this proposal for a substantially larger amount of money was going to be a considerably more difficult matter. How worthy was this proposal compared to the many others from across the nation? Would funds expended on this have as great an impact as other important projects being considered? Was it as well argued and presented? Did the presentation follow the requested structure designed to make comparisons easier; or did the presentation tend to discourage evaluators from giving the proposal careful consideration? Although desiring to be as considerate of me as possible, these evaluators knew that because of the rigorous evaluation my proposal would get from the NHPRC’s national reviewers, it had serious deficiencies and would require considerable revision.

I, on the other hand, was not sufficiently aware of the importance of these considerations. I was not conscious enough of the kind of intense scrutiny at a national competition the proposal would encounter. I especially did not realize the importance of having adhered closely to the order in which the NHPRC’s questions were asked. Nor did I realize the importance of providing a detailed work plan so reviewers would be more confident that the funds being sought would be well spent. I also was not aware of what the NHPRC considered acceptable and what the maximum costs were considered to be for the kind of project we were proposing, and that if a request exceeded that amount it became less acceptable for serious consideration. An experienced grant writer, I am sure, would have known that checking out what these limits were was one of the first things to do. I also should have sought feedback before I submitted the proposal. I should have had two or three experienced Michigan Board evaluators look at my proposal before I sent it on, as I had done in 1985. This time, however, I did not have time for that. Serious work on reaching a consensus as to what should go into our grant proposal was dragged out until so late that there was little more than a week between the time I got “the go ahead” to write
the proposal and when it had to be in the mail to meet the June 1 deadline. As readers will have noticed, various NMU administrators share some responsibility for that, but especially my good friend, John Kuhn—much as I empathize with him because of the pressures he was under at the time.

As I listened to the comments of the evaluators I began to feel sick! They had to do mostly with the inadequacy of the work plan, but also with questions regarding the products that would be produced during the grant period, what the consultant had recommended, what had been done to implement his recommendations, the need to make a stronger case with respect to the significance of what we were proposing, and the need of additional evidence of Northern’s support for the undertaking.

I can still recall how shocked I felt when I realized that this preliminary report was going to have to undergo considerable revision. And why, I wondered, did these things tend to happen during the summer months!? That was when I wanted, as much as possible, to be off duty—and when I was not being paid.

SUGGESTIONS IN THE JUNE 17 MINUTES AND FROM CAMERON’S AUGUST 7 LETTER

Several of the members of Michigan’s NHPRC Board, of course, made good suggestions at the June 17 meeting too. However, once Cameron began communicating his opinion as to what could be done to improve my proposal’s chances, they pretty much deferred to him. He, after all, was directly from the NHPRC. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3 His August 7 letter contained some good suggestions as well, some of them similar to what he said at the meeting. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3 A lot of what follows comes from what he said in one or another of these forums. His help proved very valuable and went far beyond the call of duty both at this time and later. His conduct also made it evident that before long he had really become convinced of the merits of our cause (although this was not always clear at the time from what he said or wrote); therefore, he took it upon himself to take extra pains to help shepherd our cause to success. To have someone from the NHPRC take this kind of action on our behalf was very significant and much appreciated.

THE PROPOSAL’S BUDGET AND THE COST OF THIS PROJECT TO THE NHPRC: WOULD THE NHPRC FUND TWO POSITIONS OR ONLY ONE?

The first thing Cameron focused on at that June meeting and in his letter later on was the dollar amount the project would cost the NHPRC if funded as written. This matter was the first item on the NHPRC’s application form. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 Our proposal asked for help to fund two positions. That would bring the NHPRC’s portion of the cost to over $100,000.00 during the two-year life of the project. The June 17 minutes state, “He [Cameron] thought the funding request was high for a two-year university project... A six figure application,” he stated “is difficult because the commission has limited resources.” He also stated, “Two positions are unusual for an archives development grant.” But he stated too, “The fact that the university will fund half the salary in the second year will help.” Cameron then suggested that a way to keep the cost of the project “below the six figure” mark could perhaps be achieved by not hiring the second person until the second year and then split
the cost 50/50 between the NHPRC and the university. He also felt that the salary we were planning to offer the archivist would be considered high in some parts of the country and therefore there would likely be questions as to whether or not this was a wise use of NHPRC funds. The proposal should therefore note, he suggested, that the proposed salary was “based on the university salary scale... The commission is not aware of regional salary levels.”

Cameron never stated that he did not think two positions were necessary for Northern's Archives. Quite the opposite. In his letter he stated, “While I think this staffing [of two positions] is sound for the archives program, not many programs start with this staffing.... A more normal cost for a two-year project is $75,000.00.”

In his August 7 letter, Cameron suggested a slightly different approach in order to keep NHPRC's costs at about the $75,000.00 level. “I suggest phasing in the assistant six months after the beginning of the project. If the university could increase its support for the assistant to 75% instead of 50% of the salary and benefits in the second year of the project, the overall request would be closer to other proposals being funded. Nevertheless, the university's commitment to pick up both positions at the close of the grant and the cost sharing built into the project, speak well of the university's support for the development of the archival program and the work you have done in developing that program.”

Cameron thus made me aware in his August letter that it was unusual to request help to fund two positions for a project like ours? “You don't say?!" I thought, when I first read it. That sick feeling I had developed at that June meeting shortly after it began, suddenly reemerged --only considerably more intensely! After all that “educating” I had done to convince Academic Affairs, and indirectly the President’s Council and Fowler that two positions were necessary, and here I was reading that this prestigious preservation funding agency possibly would not support that kind of a goal. Being uninformed about the limitations that also existed on the NHPRC’s resources, I had not suspected that it too might balk at the funding of two positions. For instance, I did not recall Nancy Shali of the PHPRC ever mentioning anything to me during our talks in the summer of 1989 about needing to be careful not to exceed certain limits when making certain kinds of requests.

THE NARRATIVE PORTION OF MY PROPOSAL: SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THAT

Regarding this portion of my proposal, Cameron felt that we needed to enlarge substantially on the significance of our project. He voiced this particularly at the June meeting. Why were Northern’s records important enough to merit NHPRC funding? What was their significance regionally, state-wide, or even nationally? What importance did Northern have in the area of education in the region in which it was located? Of what importance would a more adequate archives be in documenting the cultural development of the region, and so forth? Cameron noted at the June 17 meeting that “the commission likes to see projects that have the widest impact. This project has a good history,” he noted. “It looks like the university is willing to provide support on an on-going basis. The university has significance within the state. This part of the proposal should be developed.
The examples could be strengthened.” Everyone at the June meeting agreed that points such as these were “important in qualifying [our proposal] for serious consideration.”

At the end of his August 7 letter Cameron stated that the “The commission has raised questions in recent years about the need for commission support for smaller university archives.” Northern's records, he opined, “Are not going to be nationally significant, but the willingness of the university to continue the program and the service to the region that is little served and documented by archives are important arguments in support of your proposal. Make the arguments as strong as you can.”

**SUGGESTIONS REGARDING NEEDS, A “WORK-PLAN” AND “PRODUCTS”**

Cameron felt there was too much discussion in the proposal regarding how the archives effort emerged at Northern and not enough on what its current situation and needs were. In his letter he stated:

> Drop the introductory paragraph to the proposal’s narrative. Everything you include in the narrative should be essential to your argument for the grant. The history is fine, but a more concise statement of your current status would be helpful. For instance, review progress on the consultant’s recommendation point-by-point. How much space do you have currently? How many collections? How much room for additional material? How much is described? How much is scheduled? Include tables of contents for your policies and procedures manual and your users.

Cameron went on to say, “Although I realize you don’t want to place undue restrictions on the new archivist, the fact is, for the first two years he or she will need to follow your basic work plan.” Then he became quite specific about the kinds of things such a work plan should include. They were:

> A survey and [the] scheduling of most of the university records..., development of a procedures manual, using existing models, [a] workshop for university administrators on records management, the processing and description of backlog [materials] with level of processing specified, transfer of a limited number of additional records to be accessioned (perhaps focusing on areas where the archives already have holdings), and development of a plan for phase three—the community/regional archives. Each of those areas should be described in additional detail. A timeline or an outline is an effective way to make who does what clear. You talked of phases, one, two, and three. Define them in the section on the development of the program.

Cameron also stated that he felt that we needed to make our job description for the archivist more demanding. It needed to require, he felt, a “knowledge of, and preferably experience with records management principles and practices.”

If there was one thing on which everyone who attended the June 17 meeting were more agreed on than anything else, it was that our proposal needed a much more detailed work
plan for each of the two years involved—even for each of the six months of those two years. They agreed too that there should be a greater indication of what the products would be.

Mention might also be made of the fact that Cameron really liked our plan to develop the archives as a regional one. He mentioned this both at the Lansing meeting and again in his August 7 letter. This undoubtedly made people like David Johnson, State Archivist, especially happy. It will be recalled that the State Archives had been interested in Northern becoming a repository for the public records of the region for a long time. On the other hand, for Fowler the keen interest in this was going to be a matter of concern. As noted, she was worried about the financing which would be needed to carry out such a responsibility in a timely manner.

In evaluating our proposal, the evaluators questioned the statement “Contingent upon State funding” with regard to the readiness of NMU’s archives becoming involved in the collection of the public records of its region. What did this mean? Did it mean that perhaps special funding would be required from the state for Northern to do this? I assured them that NMU was ready to make a commitment to do that without additional state funding and that that statement would be modified to that effect in the final version of our proposal.

Evaluators also expressed concern that as NMU’s archives became involved in regional collecting, it not undercut the endeavors of other groups in the region already involved in historical preservation efforts.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Cameron also suggested that our proposal state that NMU was governed by an independent board—that it was not part of a broader university system which might have common policies for all archives. Furthermore he suggested that the records management program that NMU developed be reviewed and approved by the Michigan Department of Management and Budget and that a report of the results of that be shared with the NHPRC’s Michigan Board. All the Lansing evaluators agreed too that our proposal would be strengthened if it included a statement from the University President and NMU’s Board of Control indicating that they approved of, and supported the enhanced archives/records management program that was being proposed; also that administrative departments would be asked to cooperate with the efforts of the future archivist/records manager.

While these June 17 and August 7 critiques of my proposal were both humbling and embarrassing, they also were tremendously helpful in enabling us to develop a winning proposal eventually. The evaluators involved could have been quite indifferent—unwilling to do the rigorous analysis required to produce those helpful suggestions. To their credit they were willing. Northern, and others who have and will benefit from the archives, owe them a hearty vote of thanks. They helped me too to understand things more from the perspective of the evaluators. I learned too how competitive obtaining this award was. While, on average, NHPRC State boards from across the nation at this time forwarded 82% of the applications they received to the NHPRC for funding, the NHPRC was only able to fund 45% of those requests.
FENSKE AND WAGAR JOIN OUR ARCHIVES PROJECT ADVISORY GROUP

A week after I received Cameron’s August 7 letter, I sent a copy of it to Fowler. I inquired as to whom she thought other copies should be sent. But I also stated that I thought that one copy should go at least to Perrin Fenske, Northern’s grants and research development director. I also asked if she thought Fenske should be invited to be part of our Archives Project Group? “It seems to me that it might be good,” I stated, “to draw quite heavily on his expertise... in writing a final copy which he believes will ‘sell’.” GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

In part this inquiry about some expert help was because at this point, after the withering critiques I had just received, my confidence in my ability to write a successful proposal was pretty much in tatters. I had, however, learned a lot from those critiques and I think that I was now in a much better position to write a better one. Still at this point, with the confidence I had by now developed in others associated with our effort, I would have been ready to turn the entire grant writing effort over to someone else. I do not know how much the suggestion I made to Fowler had to do with Fenske joining our Archives Project Advisory Group; but before long someone had asked him to be a part of our group and he remained so until our final proposal had been written and submitted.

Thus while officially I continued to be the author of our proposal, from here on out I received a lot of suggestions from Fowler, Clumpner, and especially Fenske. What we all wanted more than anything was for the application to be successful. Thus writing the proposal became a team effort, and I very much appreciated the help. Then too Fowler also asked another librarian, Joanna Wagar, head of the Library’s Collection Department, to become part of our group. Then on August 28, Fowler sent Clumpner and Wagar a memo stating: “I hope Krista will work with Cliff to develop work plans and schedules. I hope that Perrin will work with Cliff to strengthen his introduction, statement of need and narrative generally.” Although Fowler, as so often was the case, did not copy me or Fenske regarding this wish, when I got the help she wished for, I was delighted. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

Fenske especially, became a significant player in our archival effort from here on at several points. I would have liked to include a picture of him, but I was not able to obtain one.

FOWLER EDUCATES ON GENERAL ARCHIVAL POLICY AND REGIONAL COLLECTING POLICY

Meanwhile, and a full month before Cameron’s August 7 letter arrived, the stuff for another drama was being generated. While it all sprang from Fowler’s concern that archival matters be managed well in the future, a couple of her ideas caused considerable consternation and contrary results. On July 5 and July 8 she wrote two memos, the first one to John Kuhn just before he left NMU, the second to Phillip Beukema. This was while Fowler and I were also doing some work on things that needed to go into the October 1 grant application, and while things were revving up to bring the John Voelker collection to NMU as quickly as possible. The latter caused Fowler to write her July 5 memo to Kuhn. NMU administration people were also seeking to influence the steps by which the collection would be acquired. In her memo she outlined the precise steps which she believed needed to be followed in the
acquisition of that collection. There where rumblings too that NMU would soon be acquiring the Jacobetti Collection. After she had provided Academic Affairs with these guidelines she expected Northern to follow them precisely in the acquisition of these collections.

Then on July 8, she decided to write that second memo to Beukema. It had to do more with general professional archival practice, but also especially with who has the authority to make archival policy decisions. It also hinted at her views regarding the conditions under which large non-university collections would be accepted if her views were followed.

Fowler’s July 8 memo was entitled, “Some Recommended Guidelines for the Development of Archives.” With satisfaction she noted in it the progress which she felt was being made toward obtaining full-time staff, support, and space for archival operations in the future. Then she went into things she just wanted to be sure Academic Affairs and the university were aware of “as progress continues.” This, so everyone would be on be “on the same page” so to speak. She began by discussing how the tasks and methods of archives differ from those of libraries or museums, why the costs of preserving and making archival materials accessible are relatively high and require considerable skill and knowledge, why archives must be staffed by professionals who “must be authorized to develop policies and make determinations as to what materials are to be acquired…,” why relationships with the donors of archival papers might present problems, why the university archivist needs to be the major figure in decision-making for the archives, why she felt “a staff of two with student help and supplies should be sufficient to permit the development of a sound, professional archives with some attention to the collection of regional documents,” and why “the university should actively seek external funding for the preservation of and access of regional documents, the [archives] secondary function. The archivist should work with the Development Office to locate donors for this purpose.” AARA, 1/12 20-03-58

What Fowler’s July 8 memo vaguely hints at, and what she really wanted with respect to the acceptance of large collections of regional documents was this. That the university would commit itself to a policy whereby the archives would not be required to accept any large non-university collection unless the following were true: that the money was on hand to pay for the processing of the collection. Or that the university would immediately undertake a fund-raising campaign to raise the required money. The minutes of the September 18 meeting of the President’s Council make this even more clear. They read, “She [Fowler] indicated that the university should identify the resources for the processing of accepted documents, which means that documents will only be accepted if funding can be identified for the processing.” AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58; PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09

Obviously and admirably Fowler was doing a lot of thinking about the future well-being of the archives. It was as if she was already the archivist or soon would be. She was desirous of getting everything understood as much as possible with her superiors and those who would be the superiors of the new archivist should our grant application be successful. Had I been consulted regarding the contents of the July 5 and July 8 memos, I would have agreed with most of what was in them. I would have congratulated Fowler on how greatly
and thoroughly she had grasped the essentials and details of a professional archives operation. There would only have been a few points on which I would have disagreed.

Incidentally, the manner in which Fowler took it upon herself to write the two memos in question to Academic Affairs without consulting me shows that she meant what she said at that April 19 meeting, namely that henceforth she would be the one contacting the university administration about archival matters when necessary, not me. (See the last section of chapter 18.) On policy matters she had arrogated to herself the standing of de facto archivist and acted that way until she left Northern in July 1992 just before the new archivist arrived.

What the memos Fowler wrote during this period of time do not make clear is what would happen if certain university officials with the authority to do so decided not to follow the guidelines she proposed. What if the sequence and timelines laid out in her memo to Kuhn were not followed? And what if the policy of not accepting large non-university collection unless funds were on hand, or on the horizon, to process them was not followed? This is what happened eventually. Why did university officials not follow them? Views on these things were eventually to affect the acquisition of both the Jacobetti and Voelker collections. But that is a big subject in itself. Chapter 21 has, therefore, been set aside to deal with that. Eventually that chapter was split into chapters 21A and 21B because of length.

We return meanwhile in the remainder of this chapter, and in chapter 20, to how the October 1, 1991 grant application was finally finished, to how the grant was won, to how a full-time professional archivist was hired, and to the preparations which were made for her coming.

**OBTAINING A BOARD OF CONTROL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**

Another matter Fowler had been concerning herself with was obtaining a statement of support from the Board of Control with regard to the records management program Northern was about to undertake. On July 9 Beukema sent President Vandament and the President’s Council a statement which it appeared at first that Beukema’s office had prepared for their consideration. The language used however betrays the fact that Fowler had actually prepared the statement and asked Beukema to seek to obtain approval for it from the President, the President’s Council, and the Board of Control. If approved by the Board of Control, the statement would reaffirm that Northern recognized its records to be public property and that the archives had the right to manage them in accordance with the provisions of the statement. It also enumerated some of the records management principles to which the university was about to commit itself. Beukema pointed out that the NHPRC, in connection with NMU’s grant application, was desirous of having such a statement from “the Board of Control/Trustees.” Two days later the President and his Council approved the statement.
Basically, it is a great statement. At the same time it reflects Fowler’s view still at this time that the archives were basically only going to be involved with managing the university’s own records. An additional thing which reveals that Fowler authored the document is the way she worded the first sentence under the first main heading. It begins with “Archives” rather than “The archives.” She is the only person involved with these matters at this time who referred to the archives in this way. The document read as follows:

_Northern Michigan University Statement on Records Management_

Archives serves as a repository to ensure the preservation of the accumulated inactive and/or non-current records of the University and the papers of its faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others which have continuing value. Thus, Archives becomes the corporate memory of the University, preserving for the future the contributions of many individuals to its growth.

In recognition of the fact that records created by the officers and offices of a public institution are public property and their proper management is a public trust, the Board of Control hereby adopts the following policy to guide its Archives and the Departments of the University in handling the University’s records.

_General Principles of Records Management_

The University’s Archives shall be under the direction of the Archivist, who is responsible to the Board of Control, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, and the Director of the Library.

The Archives shall be the depository for University records which are no longer administratively useful in the department but which have historical or other value. The Archives may also receive personal papers of officials, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and others it deems to be of importance.

The records of the official activities of the University officers and offices are the property of Northern Michigan University.

Such property is not to be destroyed without the approval of the Archivist.

Restrictions may be placed on the use of confidential records and papers entrusted to the Archives by the Board of Control, Administrative Officials and other donors.

Processes may be implemented for the disposal of those records which cease to have permanent value, thereby minimizing the need for storage.  

The Board of Control adopted the statement on August 2, 1991. The prompt action taken is a striking testament to how far professional archives/records management thought had come and had been accepted by the President’s Council since when the archives was first established in the 1984-1985 period. The ready acceptance of this statement when
compared with the slow, reluctant acceptance of a similar policy statement in 1985 reveals that. (See chapter 8.)

An interesting document exists which shows a different attitude only a few months earlier. In April 1991 or earlier Russell Magnaghi had become aware that in order for the NHPRC to seriously consider funding NMU’s anticipated grant application it needed an archives policy statement similar to the one above. It had to be approved by the current Board of Control. So he decided to jump into the situation and see what he could do about the matter. He called Matthew Surrell, secretary for the Board of Control, requesting that approval of such a policy statement be placed on the agenda for the next board meeting.

On April 4 Surrell sent President Appleberry an inquiry as to whether or not he approved of doing this. Appleberry was uncertain as to whether he would or would not. In a note at the bottom of Surrell’s memo to him he penned the following note: “Matt—I do not understand the need for board action. Russ will have to show why that is necessary. Even then, I’m not convinced we should. I won’t have any comment on the situation until I see it.”

Since such approval still had not been secured in July, it seems likely that for some reason it did not get requested the previous spring. It is curious why Appleberry had problems with sending it on to the board. Earlier in 1991 he had accepted the council’s wish to proceed with applying for the NHPRC archives grant. It is possible that his reluctance had something to do with the fact that he recalled that an archival policy statement had already been approved by the Board of Control in 1985. Perhaps he was not told that the NHPRC wanted a policy statement that had the approval of the current Board of Control. A copy of the document that reveals this information is in the folder of documents upon which chapter 19 is based. The folder will be donated to the archives.

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS OF THE FALL OF 1991—AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Beginning early in the third quarter of 1991, another of Michigan’s financial crises developed. It would significantly and adversely affect the final content of our grant proposal. The minutes on July 17 of the President’s Council show that, Michael Roy, the university’s new Vice President for Finance and Administration, reported to the council that the university possibly would be facing a 1.5 million-dollar-budget deficit during the 1992-1993 fiscal year. Then on August 21 he stated that “we need to begin to reallocate funding in order to meet strategic goals.” PCRM, 02/03, 2/1, 25-05-09

SPACE CUTS

One of the casualties of the cost-cutting measures to be undertaken was a delay in the planned space renovations of the LRC until 1994. This meant that the 3500 square feet of space which had recently been proposed for the archives would not be made available in the immediate future. That necessitated Fowler’s scouring around for any kind of additional space she could find in the LRC near the archives’ current location. On August 7, for example, she negotiated with Scott Seaman, Director of NMU’s radio/T.V. operations, for space that had been assigned to his department near the archives, but which he was not
using much. Also she was now forced into negotiating and promising that the archives would be granted temporary storage space, if required, in any of the unused temporary faculty offices of the English Department in the LRC.

**CUTTING THE “SECOND POSITION”**

The looming financial short-fall soon also caused the President’s Council to decide against funding a second position for the archives. Lower funding priorities had to be given to several projects. This resulted in abandoning the cherished plans for the construction of a separate building for the Seaborg Center for Science and Mathematics Education. The project now would be incorporated into a planned future renovation of the West Science building.

The short-fall also meant downgrading the priority which had previously been suggested for the Phase II development of the University’s Sports Training Complex (The Dome). It resulted also in discussions regarding the advisability of going forward with the planned renovations of the McClintock Building, with additional work on the Magers Hall faculty office complex, on the Carey/Lee Hall Complex, on the construction of a Performing Arts/Fine Arts Gallery, on an expansion of the university’s heating plant, on improvements to some Auxiliary Services facilities, and on the creation of a student micro-computer laboratory. This, to say nothing of employee lay-offs, of reductions of benefits to certain types of employees, and of a reduction of student employment funds. All of these items were weighed at meetings of the President’s Council between July 24 and September 18, PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09

The University’s Facilities Planning Department and the President’s Council had additionally decided that the renovation and restoration of Pierce and Longyear Halls were neither structurally nor financially feasible. These buildings had stood vacant and unmaintained for at least a couple of years by now. Now it was determined that they were safety hazards and had to be demolished. Sacrifices had to be made just to pay for those demolitions, PCRM, 2/1, 25-05-09; Magnaghi, Sense, 392

With these things happening, it is little wonder that when Cameron’s letter of August 7 was forwarded to Beukema about August 15, revealing that the NHPRC preferred to fund only one position for the archives that he began to feel that Northern had really no morally acceptable option but to drop its call for a second position. Beukema undoubtedly did not find this decision easy to make. At this very time, during this third quarter of 1991, seemingly irresistible pressures were emerging to accession virtually immediately not only the large Jacobetti collection but also the large Voelker collection. (More on this in chapter 21A and 21B.) The archives soon therefore was going to be “forced” into moving on into what was dubbed in our grant proposal as the second phase of its development requiring more space and staff. Furthermore, as noted, Cameron had let it be known that he felt that
one of the reasons the NHPRC likely would be inclined to fund Northern’s grant request was because it expected Northern to become the primary repository for the regional archival materials of the central U.P. And Fowler was now convinced too that if Northern was going to continue to have a goal as ambitious as this two positions were necessary.

Despite these facts and pressures to hold out for two positions, Beukema gradually concluded that Northern could no longer commit itself to funding more than one position. At this time he not only was Vice President for Academic Affairs, he also was chairman of the Budget and Planning Committee of the President’s Council. He could not ignore the big picture.

When I heard what Beukema’s decision was, although I was more than a little disappointed after all the lobbying for a second position I had done, I did not find it that difficult to accept under the circumstances. After all, one had to be a realist too. However, as the situation worsened, the question was, would the university once again feel that it had to delay the grant application for another cycle or two, or perhaps indefinitely? The situation was predicted to become even more severe. Although this, of course, could not yet be known with full certainty during the third quarter of 1991, by June of 1992 the university was in fact facing budget cuts of $2.8 million and the possible elimination of 49 positions.

FOWLER’S FEELINGS—AND MINE—ABOUT HAVING ONLY ONE POSITION

By August 28, Fowler too had come to suspect that acquiring a second full-time position might not happen. In her memo of that date to Clumpner and Wagar she wrote, “I support the budget [for the archives] in the [May 17] memo [for two positions] but think it will be subject to revision…. There must be a full-time professional archivist with assistance. I have supported the second full-time position plus $5000.00 [for] student help but will accept what the VPAA is willing to provide—so long as there is at least the ... additional $5000.00 in student help.”

One of the things that made it easier for me to accept the cut to one position was the strong commitment I sensed by this time on the part of the division heads of the library to embrace the archives function and to pull together to make it a success. This certainly was true of Fowler and Clumpner. And as noted, by this time Fowler had brought Joanna Wagar, head of the Library’s Collection Development Division, on board too, making her an additional member of the Archives Project Group. The library’s other division head was John Berens, formerly of the History Department and now head of the Library’s Public Services Division. At this time also, he was the Academic Senate’s representative on the President’s Council. He was Ruth Roebke-Berens’ husband and had empathized with the archival effort and her desire to see the archives succeed since its beginning. Fowler now was making it clear that she would ask these division heads to share some of their time and
staff with the archives in order to compensate somewhat for the loss of that second position. All indications were that they all were ready to do so. Bless them, I thought.

At the NHPRC’s Michigan Board meeting in Lansing in June, Theresa Spence had suggested pretty much the same thing—that is, that perhaps Northern’s library could agree “to provide support staff since the archives is going to part of the library.” As the reader will have gathered, Fowler greatly admired the Michigan Technological University model for archival operations at relatively small institutions. At Michigan Tech the library readily assisted the archives with various projects as needed. As we will see, the budget which we would be submitting to the NHPRC on October 1 called for such a practice too, at least initially. In it 5% of the time of two senior librarians plus 5% of Fowler’s time was to be devoted to helping the archivist during the first two years of the life of the grant.

THE FINAL EFFORT TO PREPARE THE GRANT PROPOSAL

The grant application was divided into two major divisions: The Budget (entitled the “Budget Form”) and The Narrative which as noted earlier had five subdivisions entitled, (1) purpose and goals, (2) significance, (3) work plan, (4) products, and (5) personnel. Any appendices which an applicant wished to add were to follow the narrative section of the application.

Prior to writing the final version of our proposal, it was vital to have a confirmation of the support from the President’s Council and the Budgeting and Planning Committee one final time. Particularly important was confirmation that they were prepared to support the financial provisions in the application during and beyond the life of the grant.

It was necessary now to inform the NHPRC too that Northern could fund only one position. How would the NHPRC view this? Since we had once tried to convince it that an efficient archival operation at Northern could not occur without two permanent full-time positions, would it now be willing to invest in an operation that would, according to our own claims, be less efficient because it would have the support of only one permanent full-time position?

In early September I made a last contact with Cameron by phone regarding our proposal. It was primarily about this matter of how the NHPRC would feel about our proposal if Northern decided to request NHPRC help with the funding of only one position? Although Cameron was disappointed, he too was a realist and understood that in Northern’s new circumstances, it was fortunate that it was still willing, it appeared, to proceed with the funding of even one position. Besides, this would bring the grant request down to a more acceptable level for the NHPRC. The upshot? Cameron approved of that change as well as a few less significant ones.

APPROVING A FINAL VERSION OF THE BUDGET FOR THE GRANT APPLICATION

In early September too, Beukema was about to receive a final decision from the President’s Council’s regarding whether or not to proceed with our grant application. The project was
placed on the Council’s agenda for its September 18 meeting. He invited Fowler and me to attend and to say a few words if we wished to do so. I provided another justification for going forward with the project and Fowler concurred.

However it was then that Fowler brought up the subject again, noted earlier, of the need to have funds on hand or promised before large non-university collections were accepted. If this was not true the archives (library) would not accept them. She also suggested that “the university accept only the documents for which space can be identified.” GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-5 And she stated that the university needed, too, to keep in mind the cost of its records management obligations. Hammang, interestingly, suggested that the NMU Retirees Association might be enlisted to provide the labor required to process the documents which NMU was unable to finance. Without a doubt, this suggestion did little to ease Fowler’s concerns.

Hammang also suggested that the Budgeting and Planning Committee “discuss this proposal as well.” But Joyal reminded the group that October 1 was the deadline for submission of the grant application. We had gotten ourselves into a situation again where there was barely enough time to write the proposal. Everyone was reminded that all further negotiations would have to be conducted “post-haste.”

Finally, according to the minutes, “The Council recommended and the president accepted, that the council go on record [as] supporting this project and that this be referred to the Budgeting and Planning Committee for further discussion with the understanding that budgetary commitments might entail future reallocation of funds to support the project.”

Great! Even though the final portion of the motion was a bit concerning, the President’s Council had provided its final vote in support the project. Wonderful. The Budgeting and Planning Committee met the very next day. And, thankfully, its response was positive too. The composition of the committee then still was mostly only administration officials and only slightly different from the composition of the President’s Council, but it did include a few members who represented the faculty or faculty organizations. The members of the committee who were present were the President, Beukema (the chair), Hammang, Mike Roy, Donna Pearre, Fred Joyal, Paul Duby, Mike Clark, Sandy Haavisto, Roger Gill, Mary VandeBerg, Tammy Wiessenborn, and Sheila Burns (Vice Chair). John Berens of the library and the Academic Senators’ representative on the committee, was present too. Guests were Betty Hill, Dean of the School of Nursing, Nancy Rehling, Fowler, and myself. This time President Vandament introduced Fowler and me. Again we were asked to present justifications for our proposal and for such an expenditure. A portion of the minutes of that meeting read as follows:

After much discussion regarding space and [the] multi-year budgeting implications, a motion was made by John Berens that the Budgeting and Planning Committee support the submission of this grant proposal while understanding the budget implications.... Also that this
committee receive appropriate feedback in terms of... university funds used to support the project. Sheila Burns [Professor of Psychology] seconded the motion and it carried unanimously."

This unanimous vote was an important endorsement of the archives/records management initiative—coming as it did from a relatively broad cross-section of the executive and academic administration wings of the university, and from those who represented the faculty. Each of these groups stood to having to make some long-term sacrifices to sustain the initiative. I think that the positive vote is evidence, if I may say so, that the educative effort throughout the entire university community that we had been engaged in over the last several years had not been in vain.

As soon as the vote was taken, Beukema directed Fowler to submit our grant proposal to the NHPRC for funding.

**THE GRANT APPLICATION BUDGET PROPOSAL**

Those of us drawing up the grant application were now in a position to be able to fill out the NHPRC’s budget form with confidence. Northern was listed as the applicant organization and I as the projector director. The length of the project was declared to be two years, August 1992 to July 1994, and federal grant funds were being sought for that period. This was to cover a portion of the salary and fringe benefits costs of one professional archivist for that period of time. The proposed annual salary of the archivist was $35,756.00 plus associated fringe benefits of $11,335.00, for a total of $47,091.00 for the first year. In the summer of 1989, the NHPRC had suggested a cost-sharing arrangement. The NHPRC was to pay the full salary and fringes during the first year and one-half of them during the second year. We agreed to that and included this arrangement in our budget form. We also proposed that the archivist’s position be a faculty position. Because of the contracted salary increase annually for Northern’s faculty, the full salary and fringe costs for the second year of the project were listed as being higher. The costs for salaries and fringes for the archivist for both the first and second year totaled $72,285.00 and was the amount we requested in our grant application.

As noted, this project was a cost-sharing one. The revised budget form shows twenty percent of my salary and fringe benefits, five percent of the salaries and fringe benefits of the library director, the library’s technical services director, and of another senior librarian who would be assisting the archivist, would all be part of the university’s cost-sharing contribution. Added to that would be $5000.00 per year for student help, $3,300.00 to cover the travel expenses of an external project Advisory Committee member (Theresa Spence), and $3,500.00 per year to cover the cost of supplies and materials. All told the university’s cost-sharing contribution amounted to $125,952.00. Total costs for the project during the proposed two-year period came to $198,237.00.
THE NARRATIVE PORTION OF THE OCTOBER 1 GRANT APPLICATION

Meanwhile considerable thought had been going into what should go into the final version of the narrative portion of our proposal. Several meetings and informal discussions had occurred. Some of these were just between Fowler and Beukema or Fowler and her trusted library division heads and staff, and some were between the members of the Archives Project Group. At this time this group consisted of Fowler, Clumpner, Wagar, Fenske, Slavcheff, and me. Its formal meetings were held on September 11 and 19. It, of course, included in its deliberations the suggestions made by the NHPRC and the NHPRC’s Michigan Board. Fowler was unable to be present at the first of these meetings.

As one would expect, everyone who was a member of the Archives Project Group offered valuable suggestions. Fenske’s insights, however, were particularly valuable. I thought, “What a pity that I did not utilize him earlier in writing the June 1 proposal. I do not recall that Fenske was ever asked to help with writing that proposal.

Now for the October 1 proposal, what had to be kept in mind, Fenske opined, was the importance of sticking strictly only to what the NHPRC wanted to know. As far as it is concerned, he declared at the September 11 meeting, “The archives started at NMU the day we received the consultant’s report.” What the NHPRC wanted to know was what had been done with the consultant’s recommendations and what additional archives/records management goals NMU had developed since then.

Then too, in writing our proposal, we needed to follow closely the outline the NHPRC had provided. And we did—first in a two-page project summary. We covered each topic in the order listed in the guidelines. As already noted, that was (1) purpose, (2) goals, (3) significance, (4) work plan (5) products, and (6) key personnel. In the main body of the narrative section, we provided greater detail regarding each of these topics. In developing the fourth one, we focused first of all on the recommendations made in the 1985-1986 consultant’s report and then on the current status of their execution. Finally we outlined in a more detailed fashion a work plan for realizing each of our goals during each of the four six-month periods of the two-year life of the grant.

We attached nine appendices to the end of the narrative portion of the proposal. One was a brief history of Northern. (That, Fenske had noted, had no place in the main text). Among the other things included in the appendices were: (1) the September 1991 minutes of the meetings at which the President’s Council and the Budgeting and Planning Committee reaffirmed their support for the archives project, (2) the May 17, 1991 memo in which Fowler and I declared our general agreement as to what archives policy should be in the future, (3) a library organizational chart showing that the archives/records management function was going to be one of the four main divisions of the library in the future, (4) the job description which the Archives Project Group drew up for the archivist, (5) a September 17, 1991 general statement of agreement by Fowler regarding the contents of the grant proposal, and the library’s commitment to the archives/records management endeavor at Northern. She declared “The NHPRC grant proposal has my full support. The library has agreed to assume the responsibilities stated both during and following the
The library does regard its commitment to archives as a permanent and continuing one. It is pleased to do so.” And (6) a somewhat similar statement of support to me from Krista Clumpner. She declared in part, “I am inspired by your dedication to the archival cause and highly endorse the project. I look forward to the opportunity to continue to play a part in the development of an archival program at Northern Michigan University.”

The Narrative Subdivision Summaries Plus Portions of the Main Narratives

What follows are the narrative “Project Summaries” of the proposal we submitted and portions of all except two of the main narratives. For reasons of length, it is impractical to include the entire narrative portion of the grant proposal. That may be found in Northern’s Archives under NHPRC Grants for the 1992-1994 period. Readers who feel that they already have a good enough sense of what will be related in the narrative sections below of the grant application may wish to skip over it.

Under the topic of “Purpose,” the project summary read as follows:

To develop a records management/archives program at Northern Michigan University; to plan for the collection of the records, manuscripts, and papers of the central and eastern region of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Regarding this topic, the main narrative stated:

The purpose of the archival effort being proposed is first of all to develop a solid, professional records management/archives program at Northern Michigan University. That program would move Northern from what might be called Phase I of Northern’s archives development efforts which were launched in 1984 into Phase II which will begin at the time this proposal starts to be funded, if, in fact, it is.

Another [purpose] is to bring Northern’s records to the place where they become a research resource for the university community and the people of the region. Still another is to establish appraisal and collection policies that on the one hand, are responsive to current needs and demands, but, at the same time, have an eye to the future, and preserve what will be of worth later even though there is little interest in it now. Still another purpose...is to prepare Northern to move into Phase III in its archival efforts. The objective of that phase is the collection in the central and eastern regions of the Upper Peninsula of the records, manuscripts, and personal papers that are not collected by other responsible agencies of the region.

Under the topic of “Goals” the project summary stated the following:

Major goals: to hire an archivist/records manager and provide support; to perform archival/records management functions; to contact holders of regional records and negotiate cooperative agreements for collecting records.
The narrative on this topic began by stating that “the goals of this proposal are designed to achieve its purposes.” The narrative listed seven goals and describes those found in this summary more fully. For example, rather than just saying that a goal was to hire an archivist/records manager, as the summary does, it states that a goal was to hire “a trained, experienced” archivist/records manager. The narrative also elaborates on other goals, for example to provide the archives with “stable funding, adequate and secure space, and adequate staff assistance.” Additional goals included “providing information and training programs for university division heads and staff regarding records management policies and procedures.” Another was “establishing an Archives Advisory Committee of the University’s Academic Senate...to provide the university community with an official vehicle to offer suggestions and to voice concerns to the archivist/records manager.”

Under the topic of “Significance:” the project summary read as follows:

The university has played a vital role in the educational, cultural, health care, and economic development of the region. Its records are of value to the university community, the region’s citizenry, and researchers at large. As the university moves toward the collection of regional records, it will preserve and publicize a region that is little documented.

The more detailed narrative regarding this topic covered nine pages, and therefore even a portion of it is not reproduced here.

Under the topic “Work Plan” the project summary read as follows:

Implementing the recommendations a NHPRC consultancy carried out in 1986, the project archivist will do the following:

Year 1: Announce the archives program, evaluate current processing [methodology] and the use of the Micro MARC:AMC software program, use results of pilot surveys of 12 campus offices to perform initial surveys of all 134 offices, complete office visits for the pilot groups, and [for the] remainder, establish retention schedules, first for the pilot offices...[then] continue to others, hold workshops for offices, and draft and revise records management manual.

Year 2: Continue first year’s work, contact repositories of historical... [research materials] in the region in order to establish cooperative agreements for the collection of documents, determine what types of materials ought to be collected by the university, share this information with other agencies, publish a User's Guide to the archives, submit a report to the Michigan Archival Association newsletter for publication, and prepare a five-year plan.

In the more detailed narrative description of the work plan, fourteen of the consultant’s recommendations were listed. Each one was followed by a discussion with respect to the degree to which the recommendations had been implemented, why or why not, and what remained to be done. That was followed by a section on things which had recently
transpired at Northern. These made it more likely that the consultant’s recommendations could now be more readily realized in the immediate future.

Things discussed under this latter section included:

1. The increasingly strong and widespread consensus which had emerged at Northern that it needed a good archives/records management program. This was true of key administrators and of many others in the university community—as a university-wide strategic planning initiative revealed in 1990-1991.
2. The readiness of the university’s President’s Council to commit to funding a full-time experienced professional archivist on an on-going basis with some initial assistance from the NHPRC.
3. The strong resolve that had emerged on the part of the library leadership to help the archives become a truly effective archives/records management entity once it became part of the library.
4. The commitment from the library and the university that the archives would get the space it needed to execute its mission.
5. The university’s promise that the archives would be provided with the funding it needed for the equipment and supplies it needed to execute its mission.
6. The willingness of the university to bring an archivist on board on terms which would likely result in little turn-over and a stable archives/records management situation.
7. The library’s willingness to engage in a national search in order to obtain the best possible candidate.
8. The library and university administration’s promise that once the archivist/records manager was on board he/she would have the assistance of a number of people to help him/her get the proposed work plan off to a good start.
9. A statement by the university’s Board of Control that the archivist/records manager had been authorized to manage the university’s records.
10. An agreement with the Marquette County Historical Museum to sit on a planning committee with the NMU’s archives people and other appropriate persons from regional collecting agencies to plan a cooperative planning strategy for collecting in the region.

With developments such as these, we stated that we felt that the NHPRC could be confident that the work plan we were proposing would be executed if the grant we were requesting was awarded to Northern.

The final section of the narrative work plan detailed very specifically what would be done during each six-month period of the two-year life of the grant.

It began, for example, in this way;

Year 1:

During the first six months the project archivist will:
—Send out letters to all campus offices regarding the university’s archives and records management program.

—Arrange for publicity....

—Evaluate the current processing system....

—Hire and train student assistants.

—Send out and receive back an initial survey from all 134 campus offices

—Contact each campus office to set up an initial visit.

—Meet with the Project Advisory Board....

And so forth. Then during the second 6 months, among the things the archivist would do would be:

—Visit each office, survey in depth that office’s holdings.

—Give records management workshops to those offices surveyed.

—Begin establishing retention schedules and associated matters.

—Hold an open house.

—Complete an annual report.

Year 2:

During the first 6 months of this period the project archivist would, among other things:

—Publish, distribute, and implement the records management manual.

—Determine what types of materials of a regional nature could best be collected.

—Produce an archives exhibit.

During the second 6 months the project archivist would:

—Continue many things mandated earlier.

—Revise, as needed, the records management manual.

—Finalize a listing of understandings as to what regional materials would be collected by the archives.
—Prepare an annual report.

—Prepare a five-year plan for the archives.

—Prepare a final report on the grant project.

The list covered almost five pages of the narrative.

Under the topic, “products,” the summary, while abbreviated, covered essentially everything that was in the more detailed narrative section. Therefore, nothing from the narrative section for this topic is reproduced.

The “Products” project summary read:

A records management program based upon surveys and retention and disposition schedules; an archives component of the records management program which preserves the university's records and provides user access; a records management manual; training materials; a policies and procedures manual; a user's guide; a pamphlet describing the archives; publicity regarding the archives; a plan for the cooperative collection of regional documents; a plan for the for... [for] records retention, and a final report to the Michigan Archives Advisory Board.

The final topic of the project summary section was “Key Personnel.” Under this topic I was listed as the project director; Rena Fowler as the person to whom the proposed new, full-time archivist and records manager would report; Clumpner as the person to whom the archivist could look to secure technical support and advice within the library; Theresa Spence as the project consultant; and Peter Slavcheff of the History Department as another. The work plan mandated that the Archives Project Group meet once every six months during the two-year life of the grant. This would provide opportunity for the proposed archivist to present a report of his/her achievements and provide opportunity to discuss any problems he or she might be encountering. It would also provide a venue for members of the board to offer appropriate suggestions and encouragement.

The project director’s involvement was to be considerably greater. He was to orient the new archivist/records manager to the situation in Northern’s archives, to the archival/records management situation on campus and introduce him/her to key division heads and administrative secretaries. He also was to facilitate the archivist/records manager’s work in any way he could and file the required semi-annual reports to the NHPRC.

**SUBMITTING OUR PROPOSAL**

At one point in late September, Fenske expressed doubt as to whether we could get our proposal completed by the October 1 deadline. But we did! What a relief. He, Northern’s grant administrator, signed our proposal on September 30, 1991. One day to spare! Now
we thought that all we now had to do was just to wait for the approval, hopefully, of our application.

That October 1 date is one I had no difficulty remembering. It was my birthday—fifty-ninth that year. Having hoped for a long time that we would meet the two previous October 1 deadlines, meeting this one was especially sweet. It was a milestone on the road to realizing the goal of greater stability and professionalism for NMU's fledgling archives.
CHAPTER 20

On December 11, 1991, I received another letter from the NHPRC’s Richard Cameron. No, it was not to inform us that our grant application had been successful. In it he detailed some suggestions and concerns that the NHPRC’s Michigan Board and some outside reviewers had voiced about our proposal? I passed the letter on to the members of our Archives Project Group and others and then discussed it with them. On December 16, I received a memo from Rena Fowler as to how she thought we might be able to accommodate them. Thankfully, we were able to comply readily with the wishes expressed.

One of the great things about Cameron’s letter was that it showed that just because reviewers still felt that our work plan could be improved, the NHPRC was not about to reject our application. One of the concerns had to do with the sequence in which we proposed to carry out our work plan. Basically the reviewers wanted us to concentrate on the records management end of things the first year, and that creating a five-year work plan pretty much be deferred until the second year and beyond. It appears that they felt that if we followed our plan we would be spreading ourselves too thin and run the risk of not seeing anything sufficiently completed.

I sent Cameron a letter dated December 20 informing him that we would comply with the suggestions the reviewers had made. I stated that we would:

1. Concentrate on getting the records management component of the proposed archives project complete, or nearly complete, before we undertook detailed planning for non-university records. At the same time, we would deemphasize processing in the archives, or if necessary, place that on hold in order to concentrate as much effort as necessary on getting all of the record surveys made for all of the university’s offices during the first year of the project, and then for getting retention schedules worked out for these offices as well.
2. At the appropriate times during the first year carry through on those activities in our work plan that related to getting the records management program in place and functioning well. This included such things as preparing the university community for the records management program about to begin through such things as advanced publicity, input regarding the current practices of individual offices, information regarding the value of a comprehensive records management program, and so forth. Also preparing the university’s offices for successful experiences with their records management program through workshops, consultations, a records management manual, etc.
3. While surveys and schedules would be prepared at the beginning of the first year for the twelve pilot offices proposed in the work plan, they would be considered... [as just a first step]. The next step would be doing surveys of all of
the remaining offices... and] schedules.... This, to forestall the possibility of identical records being scheduled for storage or for permanent preservation in the archives from more than one office. Adjustments to the schedules already in place for the twelve pilot offices would also be made if necessary.

4. Once this process had been completed, the transference of records to the archives or to storage would begin.

5. During the second year, the emphasis would shift to processing materials coming into the archives, or already there, publicizing the holdings of the archives and working out plans with other regional agencies for the collection of non-university materials.

6. Other things in the work plan in the grant proposal, such as doing regular reporting to various interested agencies, would, of course, also be done. GR, 2/18, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

Cameron also requested that I specifically identify the twelve pilot offices in which the surveys would begin. That I did in my letter too. They were the same twelve offices I had identified earlier for the consultant in 1986. He also requested a letter from the university president stating that he was backing the surveying and scheduling effort and giving assurances that he would instruct the university's administrative units to comply with the archivist's wishes at the time when the survey and scheduling efforts began. I obtained such a letter from President Vandament and included it with my letter.

Dated December 18, 1991, Vandament's letter stated in part:

Please be assured that I and all other key administrators of the university support this project. At the appropriate time I will be writing to all administrative units with university records asking that they comply with the archivist's survey and scheduling efforts. The topic has already received a good bit of discussion in a number of committees across campus, and I have every reason to believe that the archivist will receive the full cooperation of the departments involved. GR, 2/18, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

In order to have even further assurance that the Archives Project had top-level support, Cameron wondered if the university would agree to have a top-level administrator serve on the Archives Project Advisory Board. I was able to inform him that the university’s chief financial and administrative officer, Michael Roy, had agreed to be a member of our Advisory Board and that he or one of his chief assistants would attend our project meetings with the new archivist.

The reviewers also wanted to know if the archivist had access to legal counsel and I informed him that the university did not have resident legal counsel. It was located in Detroit but that its services would be available to the archivist, as they were to any other university entity that required it.

Furthermore, the reviewers wanted the retention schedules which would be negotiated approved not only by the archivist and head of each administrative unit, but also that they
then would be forwarded to the Michigan Department of Management for final approval. I assured Cameron that we now planned to have the archivist do that too and to make whatever adjustments, if any, in order to obtain the approval of that Michigan Department.

Reviewers felt that the qualifications for the archives/records management job should be amended to include archives education or experience, records management education or experience, and a knowledge of the cataloguing rules for manuscript collections found in *Archives, Personal Papers and Manuscripts* and of AACR2 [Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules]. While we pointed out that this would probably make the position harder to fill, we would seek to obtain someone who met these qualifications.

Adequate space was also a concern, given the still unsettled space renovation situation at Northern. However I was able to assure them that space would not be a problem. Following a discussion with me regarding this issue, Fowler, in her December 16, 1991 memo to me wrote, “Having agreed to house the Archives, the Library will provide more... space for the Archives as it is required.” I submitted Fowler’s statement with my letter to Cameron.

Finally, the cover letter to our proposal and some accompanying certificates we submitted did not have original signatures on them. Cameron returned them to us requesting that I return them with original signatures and my apologies.

Following the submission of all of these revisions and assurances, we hoped there was nothing left to do with regard to securing the grant, but wait. We were quite hopeful of success in view of all the effort the NHPRC had put into helping us develop this last revision of our proposal. We were especially grateful to Richard Cameron for the special interest he had taken in helping us thus far.

**SUCCESS AND CELEBRATION**

Cameron’s December 11 letter was the last time we heard from the NHPRC until I received a phone call on February 21, 1992 informing me that our grant application had been successful. This was almost exactly one year since I had sent my rather demanding memo to Beukema. A lot of things had been clarified since then and many positive decisions made. Now we were reaping the payoff!

On February 24, I sent President Vandament this little memo: “Just a note to let you know that our grant application has been successful. I was notified by phone last Friday afternoon.”  

I shared the good news with Beukema and Fowler as well and asked them to pass it on to their associates who had contributed importantly to this good result. I also shared the good news with Fenske and the History Department.

Sometime shortly after March 4, Fenske received an official notification of the award from the National Archives in Washington, D.C. It read in part as follows, “Upon recommendation by the National Historical Publication and Records Commission and from funds provided
by Congress under authority of 44 U.S.C. 2504, the National Archives and Records Administration hereby makes the following grant: Grant No. 92-103...[for] $72,285." GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

The notification went on as follows:

Name of Institution: Northern Michigan University

Name of Project: Archives Project

Project Director: Clifford Maier

Grant period: August 1, 1992 – July 31, 1994

The letter was signed by Don W. Wilson, the United States Archivist. Wonderful. But believe it or not, this letter from this prestigious history-preserving institution was not dated! The bad habit some people in 2015 have of not dating things was obviously already true back in the 1990s in some cases. I am going to assume that in this case it was inadvertently omitted.

Wilson’s letter went on to say:

This grant shall be administered in accordance with the application dated September 30, 1991, as modified by Gerald George’s letter of March 4, 1992, and Clifford Maier’s letter to Richard Cameron dated December 20, 1991.... Progress and financial reports are to be submitted in accordance with instructions and on forms that have been furnished to the project director.... This grant may be revoked in whole or in part by the grantor after consultation with the grantee organization and project director....

The letter made it crystal clear that being project director carried with it some serious responsibilities. But that lay in the future. Meanwhile, having received the award was cause for great celebration. It meant that our archival/records management operation would soon be entering that next, more professional, well-supported and effective phase—something for which we had striven for from its inception.

Vandament sent me a note declaring, “Cliff—congratulations. That grant will serve the University well.” NMUA, 3/9, 23-05-49 Congratulations came from Beukema as well; and he proudly also announced the success at the President’s Council. Later my wife, Eleanor, saw a photo and brief note regarding the award in The Action Shopper, a local paper (May 13, 1992). Her reaction? She scrawled a great big, “Wow” across the page in heavy black ink! CMPC, 2/12

At this point Fowler organized a little “tea” to honor me for the part I had played in getting the archives as far as it had come. How considerate—and forgiving—of her. Who would
have thought a year earlier that something like this could ever happen!? More direct communicating had wrought wonders.

Fowler recognized others too who stood out in her mind as having played key roles in bringing the archives to this point. In a memo she sent to Beukema on March 17, she identified two. One was Ruth Roebke-Berens “who was responsible for convincing President Appleberry to appoint an archivist.” The other, in her opinion, was “John Hammang who was persuaded to go forward with the grant as a records management function.” AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

Fine. But obviously there were many others who had contributed importantly as well. In my opinion the list should also have included Russell Magnaghi, the State Archivist of Michigan, the Michigan Bureau of History people, the members of NMU’s History Department, Robert Glenn who approved the History Department’s archives proposal and the diversion of History Department funds to this purpose, President Jamrich who did not nix Magnaghi’s desire to see an Archives Center established but rather asked Glenn to look into the possibility, the members of the Michigan Archival Association with their consistent support and encouragement, Alan Donovan with his diligent, patient encouragement and support when there was virtually nothing to support, John Kuhn with his determination in the spring of 1989 to finally get the archival effort off of dead center and off of life support, President Appleberry who came out in support of his division chiefs as they gradually began to favor greater support for the archives/records management initiative, and Phillip Beukema who did so much to persuade the administration that academics and regional preservation, not just university records management, needed to be recognized as the most important reason for the archives’ existence. The list should have included Perrin Fenske, Krista Clumpner, John Berens, and others of the library staff too. Certainly Richard Cameron and the NHPRC should also have been on the list. Also President Vandament and some of the less visible members of the President’s Council and the university community. And even at that the list is not complete. Without the timely efforts and the key decisions of these additional individuals and groups, a celebration of how far the archives/records management effort had come by then would not have materialized.

But of course Fowler’s little party was not meant to recognize everyone who was worthy of recognition. That would have been impossible in that setting. It is interesting however, to note who she did select as being especially worthy of special recognition.

And little later on as we shall see, there were still other special people who exerted efforts or made decisions on which others built to bring about the progress which was finally achieved.

**PREPARING FOR THE OFFICIAL TRANSITION TO LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION**

During the second quarter of 1992, I spent considerable time getting what I thought was the entire Voelker Collection to NMU. Meanwhile, Fowler was seeking to find more temporary space for the archives adjacent to its current location and also sought funds to help facilitate the transfer. At the same time she swung into action almost immediately at
preparations to hire the new archivist and to make preparations for a smooth transition of the archives from its connections with the Department of History to that of Library.

On March 11, for instance, she sent Beukema the required paper work for creating the new archives/records management position. What emerged from the effort was not accurate enough in Fowler's view. So on March 30, she paid Beukema a visit regarding the guidelines of the job description before it was advertised. He approved. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3; AARA, 1/11, 1/12, 20-03-58

About this time too, Fowler obtained Beukema's agreement for changing the name of the archives from “University Archives and Historical Collections” to “University Archives, Records Management and Historical Collections.” AARA, 1/11, 1/12, 20-03-58

On May 27, Fowler asked Beukema for funds to cover the expenses being incurred in preparing and getting the Voelker papers to Northern. Beukema agreed. She also informed him that she had asked the telephone system to transfer the costs of the archives' two telephones from the History Department to the archives' account under the library, effective on July 1. Wow. In addition to part of my salary to work at the archives, the History Department had paid the telephone bill for the archives for the last eight years! She also informed Beukema that she had contacted NMU's Accounting Department, asking it to transfer the archives' account from under Academic Affairs to the Library as the responsible entity as of July 1. Finally she also informed him that she was going to ask the Development Office to create an account for the receipt of gift monies for the archives. “I plan to ask that the account be under my name initially,” she stated, but also that it would be changed "to the archivist once one is hired." Beukema undoubtedly felt delighted and relieved. His dream of no longer having archive matters directly under him was coming true. AARA, 1/11, 1/12, 20-03-58

ACQUIRING THE NEW ARCHIVIST/RECORDS MANAGER

With the date set for the new archivist to begin work on August 1, 1992, it was important to get one hired as soon as possible.

A matter of concern had been who would be on the Search Committee. Fowler had made promises about this earlier. Now she obtained Beukema's agreement that those on the Committee should be Krista Clumpner (its chair), Theresa Spence, two people from the Office of Finance and Administration, that is Sheila Etelemaki and Whitney Johnson, one or two librarians in addition to Clumpner, and myself. I was happy with this mix although the library component was a bit heavy. But it reflected pretty much what had been promised earlier and I was confident that this particular group would be objective. AARA, 1/11, 1/12, 20-03-58

The position was advertised in several leading national archival journals during the month of May. The concern was that the position be filled early enough so that the person would have time to prepare to be on the job by August 1.
THE NEW ARCHIVIST/RECORDS MANAGER

Even though our Archives Project Group was concerned that we might have difficulty in finding a candidate who met all of our qualifications, we were fortunate and found one who met well virtually all of them. All told, he/she needed to be a pretty broadly educated and experienced person in both archives and records management methodology and familiar with library science and automation.

Once I had an opportunity to observe Gayle Martinson, the archivist we hired on the job I described her as follows in a letter I sent to David Johnson, State Archivist, on October 13, 1992. (I said pretty much the same thing in a letter to Richard Cameron on October 30). The letter to Johnson was to thank him and the members of the NHPRC’s Michigan Archives Board “for all the good advice and support” in helping to bring the archives this far. But it was also to apprise them of the qualities of the archivist we had hired. I stated:

Gayle comes to Northern from the University of Wisconsin at Stout where she was the Archivist/Records Manager for the past thirteen years. She is both a certified records manager and a certified archivist. She also has a MLA [Masters in Library Science] and some graduate work in history. In the past, she... [has taken] the archives program at Stout from nothing to a fully automated program. She was highly recommended by various colleagues and by Wisconsin archivists who have worked with her on various projects over the years. While many good candidates applied, the search committee felt that she was not only the best qualified candidate but the best “fit” for the situation an archivist/records manager would be facing at Northern.

Now that she is here, everything indicates that the choice has been a good one. She is knowledgeable, has vision, drive and plans.... [She also has] the capacity to “roll with the punches,” picking up a situation where it is and taking the steps necessary to move it where she plans to get it. Also I am sure that the members of the Michigan Archival Association will find her an excellent, knowledgeable colleague with whom to work. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

At the same time as Martinson was being hired, another important development was underway. That is the acquisition of two large important non-university collections of papers and artifacts. This development was contrary to what had just recently been promised in the work plan submitted to the NHPRC. How did this happen? That is the subject of the next two chapters, 21A and 21B.
CHAPTER 21A
THIS DESPITE WHAT STILL HAD TO BE LEARNED ABOUT
ACQUIRING LARGE NON-UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

During 1991-1992 Northern Michigan University was offered two major donations of non-university, regionally-significant archival materials. They were the Dominic J. Jacobetti and the John D. Voelker Collections. These important acquisitions would help move NMU’s archives to the next stage in becoming a full-fledged regional research facility and help fulfill that original vision for the archives. Although the significance of these acquisitions was well recognized, their acquisition caused considerable concern and debate. Was it appropriate to accept them at this point in the development of the archives? Should proper protocol be insisted upon in accepting them? Where were they going to be stored? What was going to be necessary to process them and when did that need to happen? Was the archives in a position to do this? Should the artifacts and memorabilia in the collections be accepted as well? And so forth.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Since these collections were considered very valuable, and sought after by others, the story of how Northern obtained them is interesting in itself. In this history, however, how well NMU employed professional archival practices in acquiring them and what was learned from that experience is a subject of interest as well. Because in this account one of the things we are especially interested in noting is what helped to develop a professional outlook at Northern with respect to the acquisition of non-university archival materials. Since by this time Rena Fowler, under whose administration the archives would soon exist it was thought, had taken it upon herself to enunciate what correct archival policy should be in the acquisition of non-university materials, considerable space will be given to what her views and actions were on this subject and how well professional archives policy was followed.

What then was my role in determining archives acquisition policy and practice during this mid-1991 to mid-1992 period? As noted in chapter sixteen and again in chapters eighteen and nineteen in conjunction with the further development of this subject, by this time I functioned pretty much as just a staff member working and managing operations in the archives itself, not as an archivist determining or enunciating overall archival policy. From time to time, when Fowler determined that having me assume the role of archivist served the archives’ best interests, she let me know and pretty much gave me full authority to do so. For example, she did that in connection with getting the Voelker collection to NMU once it had been accepted, but not with respect to policy regarding accepting the collection. On the other hand, she kept the acquisition of the Jacobetti collection entirely in her own hands; that is until something else happened which we will learn about later. Essentially, I learned the details of the acquisition of the Jacobetti collection only from the research I did for this account. In fairness to Fowler, however, her conduct with regard to acquiring the
Jacobetti collection might have been influenced too by the fact that at this very time I had my hands full—along with other things—with preparing the Voelker collection for transfer to NMU. Besides that, the transfer of the Jacobetti collection to Northern entailed quite a different set of circumstances than did the transfer of the Voelker collection. This, as we shall see, provided Fowler with a logical basis for electing a different course of action.

**DOCUMENTATION**

Unless otherwise indicated, most of the information found in chapters 21A and 21B with regard to the acquisition of both the Jacobetti and Voelker collections comes from the huge, unprocessed 1991-1993 “Archives” folder of the office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs in the archives. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 For this reason, the source of each document used from this set of materials will not always be identified. However, when this account is based on a document from a different set of materials, that source is identified. Some of what is related in this chapter also comes, of course, from my memory.

**ACQUIRING THE JACOBETTI COLLECTION**

Early interest in acquiring the Jacobetti papers existed in the History Department and, undoubtedly, in some other circles at least as far back as 1982 when the department decided to seek to get an archives established. The thought was, “How great it would be to have the papers at Northern of such a long-serving and powerful member of the Michigan Legislature. Also of one who had been such a special benefactor of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and of Northern itself.”

Jacobetti was from Negaunee, Michigan, and was first elected to the State legislature in 1954. There he served until 1994. In 1984, because of his remarkable legislative accomplishments, Northern bestowed on him an Honorary Doctor of Laws Degree. After the archives was launched in 1984, I used the desirability of obtaining collections like his to argue for more support for our archival effort. For example, the records shows that when the archives consultant, Fred Honhart, was at Northern in 1986 Alan Donovan, Vice President for Academic Affairs at the time, and I had a serious discussion with him regarding what would be necessary to obtain the Jacobetti papers (See chapter 9).

Donovan, in turn, used the argument of the desirability of having such papers in attempting to gain a higher level of priority and greater support for the archives from the members of the President’s Council. This seems to have made Appleberry and members of his council somewhat more conscious of the archives and the dreams which existed for it. Sometime shortly after Honhart’s visit, Appleberry let Jacobetti know how very much Northern valued his papers and that it would love to house them in its archives. Thus, in a sense, it was Appleberry who established an understanding with Jacobetti that Northern would take
his papers. Nothing was put on paper, however. Somehow I learned of this initiative and on
November 5, 1986, according to the minutes of a History Department meeting, I reported at
it that "Jacobetti will give all his papers to NMU." DHRA, 3/1, 15-02-06-07 While this was great
news, it was understood too that this would not occur immediately. That was good news
too! At that time the archives did not have nearly enough space in which to house them,
and there still was no inclination to do whatever had to be done to make that possible. The
matter, therefore, was allowed to drift onto "the back burner." Those members of the
President’s Council who had become aware of these promises allowed the same thing to
happen. Tom Peters, Appleberry's assistant for legislative matters by this time and a good
friend of Jacobetti, probably was somewhat of an exception. But later on when information
was needed as to what had been agreed upon, even his memory was vague, and nobody
could find any written documents about the matter. The
conclusion which was reached then was that very likely nothing
regarding the matter had ever been recorded.

As stated, I do not recall how I learned about the matter. And as
archivist I never was invited by Appleberry or Peters to get in
touch with Jacobetti to establish a formal agreement. They
likely thought that it was not necessary. And given the sense of
certainty I had about it eventually happening, I likely thought
that some kind of a firm interim agreement had been reached.
From hindsight, I realize that this is something I should not
have assumed. But looking back now at the kind of thinking
which prevailed in 1986 regarding the role of the archives, I
wonder if I had attempted to obtain an agreement at that time, if that would have been
welcomed?

By the spring of 1991, however, it was expected that Jacobetti would soon retire. Some
members of the university's administration, therefore, began to talk about the need to get
his collection transferred to Northern soon. I and some other members of the Department
of History heard about these plans. But again I was not contacted by anyone from the
administration about it. During the spring of 1991 while the talks Peter Slavcheff and I had
with Fowler and Clumpner regarding the content of our grant application, we shared with
them what we had heard. However, by this time I did not feel free to contact the
administration about such a matter. Because by that time (as noted in chapter 18) Fowler
had made it clear that it was she, not I, who henceforth would be doing the communicating
with the administration about such things as policy and the acquisition of non-university
collections. And she immediately did. As noted in chapter 18, in an email to Vice President
Kuhn on April 24, 1991 she noted that she had heard about this and asked with some
alarm, "What do you know about this?" AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 But then not much happened again
with regard to the Jacobetti collection for almost another year. I have not discovered any
explicit documentary evidence as to precisely why. But from corroborating evidence I
presume it was because Fowler made it very clear to the administration that she was
against it at that time.
However, by April, 1992, a greater than usual sense of urgency about Northern acquiring the collection had developed in administration circles for two reasons. The first was that the state was about to begin renovating some of the offices of some of the State representatives including Jacobetti’s in Lansing. It, therefore, become necessary to move the inactive records of these representatives elsewhere quickly. Jacobetti’s were among them. One possibility was to move them to one of the State’s repositories for historical papers in Lansing. In the case of the Jacobetti papers, the other possibility was to move them to Northern.

Secondly, because Jacobetti had developed health problems, NMU’s officials felt more certain than ever that he would retire at the end of his current term in office that summer of 1992. The question was where would his papers go, or be sent? Since he had promised them to NMU, the expectation was that Jacobetti, or his office, would soon be contacting Northern about taking them.

But accepting them at this point was complicated by the fact that only recently the NMU administration had also accepted the large Voelker collection for reasons which will be provided in chapter 21B. But despite that by mid-April, 1992, the effort to bring the Jacobetti collection to Northern was also in full swing because of the urgency to get them out of the representative’s office in Lansing.

Things were further complicated by Fowler insistence that a fund-raising effort be undertaken simultaneously with the acceptance of Jacobetti’s collection. This was in harmony with a policy she had enunciated in the summer of 1991 that when such large collections were acquired, if funds were not immediately available for processing them, then a fund-raising campaign had to be launched pretty much immediately for this purpose.

Fowler’s policy on this was enunciated in a memo she sent to Beukema, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, on July 8, 1991. She also brought the subject up at a President’s Council meeting on September 18, 1991. There she very clearly further laid out the implications of her policy. If the administration did not establish such a policy (which is what happened), it was clear that she as de facto archivist for the time being would still insist that her superiors follow her policy of immediate fundraising under such circumstances. This is some of the background for the rather hectic actions which developed in mid-April 1992 in conjunction with the acquisition of a first batch of the Jacobetti collection.

I introduced the documentary evidence regarding this policy in chapter 19 under the title “Fowler Educates on General Archives Policy and on Regional Collecting Policy.” I introduced the subject in that chapter to make the reader aware that on the archives front Fowler was not only involved with helping prepare the final version of the grant application during the summer of 1991, she also was involved in establishing policies that she felt were essential for the well-being of the archives of the future well in advance of when the new archivist would be hired. But having provided the reader with a couple of examples of that in that context, it was inappropriate for me to pursue that topic further in
that chapter where the main topic was something other than policy regarding the acquisition of large non-university collections.

By mid-April 1992, events beyond Fowler's control had already resulted in the acceptance of the Voelker collection. And university officials were now also calling for the Jacobetti collection to be accepted immediately. This was, in part, the result of Fowler's insistence that her own policy be pursued more or less immediately as we shall see. Voelker's collection was already accepted (we shall see why in the next chapter) and Jacobetti's would soon be. Yet no funds were on hand to process them. So Fowler decided that while unfortunate, fund-raising efforts for this purpose had to be launched immediately.

At the same time, Fowler had not been as alarmed and insistent that a fund-raising effort be launched immediately with respect to the Voelker collection. She seemed to feel that some delay in conjunction with it could be tolerated more easily. There is some evidence that she was hoping that the Voelker family would donate the funds shortly necessary to do that. Perhaps that was the reason. However, with the eminent acceptance of the Jacobetti Collection on the horizon in mid-April, Fowler was insistent that serious fund-raising steps needed to be undertaken simultaneous with the acceptance of the collection. I think it was on principle—she felt it was wrong to have a lot unprocessed material in one's archives. That would be the case with the acceptance of the Jacobetti collection too. She may also have felt that demands to use the papers of this popular politician would be greater than those of Voelker and, therefore, provision for their more or less immediate processing was more urgent.

This demand for immediate fundraising put Beukema in a very difficult spot. As noted in chapter 19, at this very time the university was facing an increasingly serious financial short-fall and he really did not see how a fund-raising drive for such a purpose as this could be justified at the moment under the circumstances. Yet he felt he had to support the wishes of the person to whom he had delegated authority to manage archival matters. And professional archival principles dictated that if at all possible, he needed to support her in her judgments. He had become genuinely committed in principle too by this time to supporting professional archival practice. At the same time, if he supported the launching of a fundraising effort immediately, he would be doing so with little encouragement from Bruce Anderson, the Vice President for University Development (that is fund-raising, etcetera). This would divert giving from more important things in his opinion.

At the same time it was the responsibility of Perrin Fenske of Northern's Research and Development Office under Anderson to help with such fund-raising efforts as were being considered or approved. Fenske's advice to Beukema and to Fred Joyal, his assistant, as well as to Fowler, was that if a fund-raising effort was indeed to be launched shortly, it should by all means be done prior to Jacobetti's announcement of his retirement. Fenske shared some of his thoughts with Joyal on a sheet of paper which has been found in the archives. It reads, "I cannot emphasize enough the fact that the day Representative Jacobetti announces his retirement, his value in fund raising will decrease immediately." AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

Beukema, Joyal, and Fowler were persuaded that this was probably true. Thus, rather suddenly, they along with Fenske acquired a considerably greater sense of
urgency about getting a fund-raising effort launched immediately. However, they had also come to the conclusion that in order to make the effort more credible and give it a better chance of success, at least some of the collection had to be at Northern. It would be considerably harder, they thought, to seek to raise money to help with the care, processing, and servicing costs of a collection if all of it was still in Lansing.

This, in turn, rather suddenly also created a great sense of urgency to obtain a Deed of Gift agreement from Jacobetti, or at least some kind of an agreement with his office. But, surprise! Surprise! Jacobetti was not yet ready to sign such an agreement. His office, however, assured Tom Peters that it really was Jacobetti’s intent to give his collection to Northern (except perhaps, for some things he wished to see go to his home in Negaunee). His office, therefore, saw no reason why at least a portion of his collection could not be taken to Northern immediately without a Deed of Gift Agreement having yet been signed.

In view of the felt need to get at least some of Jacobetti’s papers to Northern as quickly as possible, Beukema asked Fowler, now de facto archivist with regard to archives policy matters, to arrange to have the first batch of the collection transferred to Northern. She, in turn, asked Tom Peters to oversee the transfer since he had already been discussing the matter with Jacobetti’s Lansing office.

Soon that first shipment was sent. According to Fowler in an email she sent to Fred Joyal on May 5, it amounted to 60 boxes including “much memorabilia (pictures, a stuffed fish, and a stuffed duck!).” However, when it arrived there was no space in the archives or anywhere elsewhere in the LRC building where it could be stored. Fowler therefore investigated other possibilities and eventually was able to make arrangements with Carl Pace, manager of the university’s warehouse, to store this batch of the collection there “for the time being.”

Thus Fowler’s insistence on the rapid availability of funds for processing purposes ironically led to an acceleration of the acquisition process of at least part of the Jacobetti collection. This when really both policy-wise and practically, an acceleration of the acquisition of large non-university collections was the last thing Fowler wanted to see happen. Northern was not ready to have this collection on its hands especially if it had to be processed immediately. Still, as we shall shortly see, even Fowler herself recognized that what she was insisting on—immediate processing—might not happen. On April 27, she had asked Beukema in an email (rather sarcastically it would seem) if a dry place could not be found—perhaps in the West Science building—where the collection could be stored unprocessed “for years perhaps.”

ILLUSIVE OBJECTIVES AND UNANTICIPATED DEVELOPMENTS, MAY-JUNE, 1992

The story does not get any simpler. Prior to the time when that first batch of Jacobetti’s collection was brought to NMU, Jacobetti had not yet examined its contents to determine what he might want to keep. A plan, therefore, was developed that when he returned to the U. P. in June, Tom Peters and he would meet at Northern’s warehouse. There they would
decide which things in this first batch should be given to Northern and what Jacobetti would keep.

The plan did not sit well with Fowler. Some aspects of it were very contrary to professional archival practice. It was one of the issues Fowler raised in six separate memos or emails. The first set of them were sent to either Beukema or to Joyal. The later ones were to John Berens, Krista Clumpner, Joyal, and Peters. The dates of these memos and emails were April 27, May 5, two on May 8, then one on June 25, and one on July 1, 1992.

The issues raised in these memos and emails had to do with (1) obtaining the space needed to store the collection more permanently (2) obtaining a Deed of Gift Agreement, (3) who would negotiate an agreement with Jacobetti? (4) would the university president be involved? (5) who would decide what materials NMU could take from this collection? (6) who would decide what NMU would not take? (7) more generally, what constitutes correct archival thinking regarding accepting archival materials? (8) what general archival policies should Northern follow in acquiring non-university archival materials and (9) what in fact are the archival policies Northern will follow in this case?

The list makes it obvious that Fowler decided to use the situation Northern found itself in archives-wise at the moment as an opportunity to “educate” its leadership. Also to try to make sure that even in the midst of these rather chaotic circumstances correct policy was followed. This whole matter, of course, also reveals how unaccepted some aspects of correct thinking regarding archival practice still was in some circles at Northern.

Fowler let it be known that she wanted the issues which she raised in her correspondence considered at a meeting in June, 1992. She hoped it would be a meeting between spokesmen for the university (including herself and President Vandament) and Jacobetti or individuals designated by him. When the meeting did not materialize because Jacobetti did not show up, Fowler’s hope became that it could be arranged for some time in July.

**QUESTIONS AND POLICIES ADVOCATED IN FOWLER’S MEMOS AND EMAILS**

More specifically, what was in those memos and emails Fowler sent to Beukema, Joyal, Vandament, Berens, and Peters from April 27 to July 1? In her April 27 email to Beukema she had two questions. One had to do with storage space, the other with an agreement regarding the Jacobetti collection. She wrote:

Where can these papers and memorabilia be indefinitely stored? Is there space in West Science that is dry and secure where they will not be disturbed for perhaps years? Given the volume and security issues, it is not feasible to store them in empty office space in the LRC—as will be done with the Voelker papers. (2) A process must be quickly devised to negotiate the terms of this gift. I have raised ... [it] with each person I’ve encountered in this matter.... The Library/Archives has absolutely no means to support this gift. As I have to date, I will seek to have the Archives negotiate only for papers and not the more troublesome memorabilia, furnishings, etc. Should I send a memo myself to Dr. Vandament or would you prefer to initiate
this discussion process? I think something must be planned before the legislative session ends in a month or so.

Special note may be taken of the fact that Fowler planned to ask the President to be involved in these negotiations. Why would that be? This is contrary to normal archival practice. Her May 5 email to Joyal provides insight into that. Her position seems to have been that since the original understandings with Jacobetti were reached by a former University President, now Vandament, as his successor, should be involved in finalizing an agreement with him. She wrote:

So what does Academic Affairs wish to do? So far as I know, there is no formal agreement here. Last year I asked Tom Peters if there was anything in writing about this in the former President’s office. Nothing was found. In the absence of an agreement what are our assumptions? Frankly, although I arranged for the delivery of the materials, I’m not inclined to take any action to assume further responsibility until and unless the University Administration, in particular the President, decide what they want to do and initiates some discussions with Rep. Jacobetti. If Archives is to play a role, then I’d like to be involved in the discussions. Please let me know what you think.

Fowler did address some of her inquiries to Joyal because, as the first line of this email indicates, but is not quoted here, Beukema had asked Fowler to contact Joyal about at least some of her archival concerns. But as we have already seen, and shall soon see again, if she felt that an issue required the attention of the top Academic Affairs officer, or the President, she still went directly to them. While I would not have agreed with everything she was insisting on with these officials, I cannot fault her for violating the “follow channels” rule when she felt that this was required for the “greater good.”

“WRONGTHINK” AND “RIGHTTHINK” REGARDING ARCHIVAL POLICY

When by May 8, Fowler had not yet heard from Beukema or Vandament, she sent another email about “the papers.” This time it was again to Joyal. She also spoke about “wrongthink.” She stated:

There has to be some discussion about the papers.... In talking with Tom Peters, I understand that Rep. Jacobetti plans to come to campus after this legislative session ends in order to go thru the materials.... He will decide what to take home to Negaunee and what to leave here. From Tom’s comments there seems to be some assumptions being made as to what should be left and what should not. From the standpoint of an archivist or historian, they are “wrong think” and I’d like to participate on behalf of Archives. It’s also an opportunity to try to begin discussion with the University (whoever that is) and the Representative as to the nature of what’s to come here, and an agreement. I plan to get this into a memo today to try to get some attention to this point. If you have further thoughts, let me know.
In her effort to obtain a higher level of attention paid to the subjects she was raising, Fowler sent the memo she had just spoke of in her email to Joyal to both Beukema and Vandament. After a brief review of what had happened so far in getting this collection to Northern, she stated:

Prior to the Representative’s review of these materials, I ask that I have the opportunity to meet with you—or those you may designate—to discuss the University’s general position in regard to (1) the nature of the University’s commitment to accepting the Representative’s materials; and (2) the process and participants for decision-making in the many issues that might surround this.

While there may be a long list of questions to be answered, the process must begin before Rep. Jacobetti acts upon his own assumptions in sorting out the materials at the Warehouse.

Fowler then pointed out why it was so important that people who had skills in assessing the value of historical materials be present when Jacobetti and Peters went through Jacobetti’s materials. She provided this example:

While I understand that there may be a belief that, although the records relating to the tax legislation are of value to NMU, thank you letters from constituents ought to be removed because they are of little consequence. A historian might find such letters of importance as evidence of the circle of influence of an individual. If these papers are potentially to become part of the NMU Archives, I would wish that all [of Jacobetti’s] papers be accepted by the University permitting the Archivist and staff to determine what might be kept.

Fowler then switched to doing some additional general “educating” with regard to what good professional practice is—in other words, to what she might have called “rightthink,” to continue her “shorthand.” She wrote:

Where significant archival materials are concerned, the University would be best off if a written agreement might be worked out before the materials have been received. Where broad agreements are made orally, misunderstandings can arise after the fact. That benefits no one. I think it is possible to diplomatically carry out substantive negotiations with important donors in a way that will strengthen both the University and its Archives. Those representing Archives must be a part of the process from the beginning; otherwise, the right questions will not be asked of the donor—and will not even be understood by either the donor or the University’s officers.

Over the summer, I would like to represent Archives in any discussion regarding Rep. Jacobetti’s materials. I would seek the assistance of Krista Clumpner, a librarian here with archival experience. Once a permanent Archivist is hired, that person would assume responsibility for these functions.
I would seek a timely reply and the opportunity to discuss and address these matters.

A GENERIC “STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING”

Not leaving anything to chance during the anticipated discussions, Fowler asked Krista Clumpner to draw up a generic “Statement of Understanding.” Its purpose, Fowler said, was something which “we might use as a beginning point for discussion regarding the university’s acceptance of Rep. Jacobetti’s papers.” On June 25 she sent a copy of it to John Berens, Fred Joyal, and Tom Peters and copied a covering memo to Clumpner. The “Statement of Understanding” covered pretty much what a donor would be asked to sign in his or her Deed of Gift Agreement with Northern. It was not that different from a Deed of Gift Agreement already in existence which the Board of Control had approved in 1985 and which the archives consultant had declared in need of some revision in 1986. Surprisingly, Fowler did not ask Clumpner to work off of the archives’ version.

Should President Vandament, or someone else, have been able to get Jacobetti to sign a statement like the one Clumpner drafted, a great deal of the mystery as to where Northern stood with respect to the Jacobetti collection would be cleared up. The agreement Clumpner drew up read as follows:

It is understood that I, "Dominic Jacobetti, as the owner, intend to give the papers, manuscripts, correspondence and other materials, both published and unpublished, which constitute my papers to the Board of Control of Northern Michigan University (“NMU”) for inclusion into the NMU Archives and Historical Collections.

It is understood that these items are given without restriction as to their access and/or availability for use, subject only to the restrictions consistent with the rules and regulations of the NMU Archives and Historical Collections. It is understood that NMU will be responsible for the disposal of any items which NMU does not wish to retain.

It is understood that when NMU formally accepts the papers substantial time and effort may be spent in reviewing, cataloging and/or preparing the items and as a result the gift will be irrevocable.

It is understood that if any other person or entity has any ownership interest in these items, their consent to this donation will have been obtained prior to the donation of the papers.

In the plans Fowler had for those anticipated discussions, it is interesting to note that she had those who represented the archives in at least as strong a negotiating position as Dominic Jacobetti or those who represented him would be. As already mentioned, it should be noted too that this much anticipated meeting planned for June with Jacobetti did not happen because he did not show up for it. Therefore it was postponed until sometime in
July when it was anticipated that Jacobetti would be able to meet with NMU’s representatives on NMU’s campus and in its warehouse.

The next of Fowler’s communications that I have found regarding the acquisition of the Jacobetti papers was addressed to John Berens, Fred Joyal, and Tom Peters. It was dated June 25. In it she stated that there were some “other issues” which should also be broached when the anticipated discussions between Jacobetti and the archives people occurred in July. They included:

A timetable for the receipt of further materials.

A definition of what the University will accept—that is the papers only. Does the University wish also to accept pictures, objects, and furnishings? If so which department of the University would want to accept and care for them?

What is the University’s position with regard to restrictions Jacobetti may wish to have placed on the use of his materials?

Would Jacobetti give the University the right to dispose of materials it does not wish to retain? If he wanted such materials returned to himself or his family, etc., what happens if they cannot be contacted, or if they do not want them?

This set of questions reminded me of the set I had prepared as starting points for the scheduled discussion between Academic Affairs and the History Department on April 15, 1991. It is a good technique to employ if a person wants to be thorough. The questions Fowler suggested were certainly good ones. To operate professionally, Northern needed to seek to obtain answers to all of them.

On July 1, Fowler sent an additional memo to Berens, Clumpner, Joyal, and Peters; it also was copied to Beukema. In addition to an agreement, it also addressed again the matter of where the papers and artifacts might be stored. It read in part as follows:

At a short meeting today, Tom Peters agreed that the generic “Statement of Understanding” and list of issues prepared on June 25th represented a fair beginning point for discussions with Rep. Jacobetti. He volunteered to speak with him and attempt to organize a July meeting with him, members of this group, and the President in order to begin this discussion.

Fowler then added some “additional instructions” for that discussion to this particular memo. As summarized by me, they concerned the following wishes: (1) Publicity, and an announcement of the university’s intent to accept Jacobetti’s papers and (2) Further fund-raising plans, based on further implementation of Perrin Fenske suggestion to Fred Joyal. Fowler noted that Tom Peters had suggested that former President Harden might be a good leader for this fund-raising effort.
Then Fowler switched the subject to where the papers and artifacts might be stored. She stated that Joyal had mentioned that they might be stored temporarily in the Jacobetti Center at Northern. This, should they have to be removed from the university's warehouse. She noted also that the possibility had been raised of displaying the memorabilia “somewhere within the Jacobetti Center.”

**HOW DID THE ACQUISITION EFFORT END?**

Interestingly, after all of Fowler’s planning for that anticipated meeting, I am almost certain that it never occurred. I have not found any evidence indicating that it did. If it did, I do know this for sure--that Fowler never participated in it. A clue as to why it never happened lay in this question. “Why did Fowler suddenly include John Berens among those to whom she was sending memos about the meeting with Jacobetti?” The answer. By at least June 25, in the midst of this flurry of planning regarding how to properly acquire and service the Jacobetti collection, Fowler submitted her resignation from NMU, effective July 10! By at least June 25, John Berens had been named the future director of the library under which the archives and future archivist would function.

On June 24 Fowler informed me too of her impending departure--in a rather nonchalant manner--it seemed to me. I suppose the tone of the communication reflected the relief she felt at being out from under the huge challenges with which she had been dealing. In a memo to me on the 24th she wrote, “During your vacation, the attached materials came regarding your grant.... A copy of this memo and material is also forwarded to John Berens since he’ll be assuming my duties, effective July 10th. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks and have fun!” Wow! A complete surprise! For me, completely unexpected! Since I was in Europe at the time, and I did not look at my NMU mail for a few days immediately after I returned, I did not see this memo until after her departure on July 10.

The reader will be interested to learn that a Deed of Gift Agreement with Jacobetti had still not been signed on November 10, 1993; also that this first batch of his collection was still being stored in Northern’s warehouse. A memo Matthew Surrell sent to Vandament and Tom Peters on that day stated that that was so. In it he mentioned that the new archivist, Gayle Martinson, felt she could not proceed with any preliminary work on this first batch of the collection until Northern had “a signed donor form.” He also mentioned that she had stated that she felt that she had enough space in the archives for at least a portion of that first batch of the Jacobetti collection which was now at NMU. Therefore, she would be pleased if it was moved to the archives. *NMIA, 3/9, 23-05-49*

With Fowler gone, the pressure which had been on Beukema, Anderson, and Vandament regarding an immediate fund-raising effort and the relatively quick processing of the Jacobetti papers subsided considerably. Other financial pressures took precedence. Also the fact that Jacobetti decided to seek reelection in 1992, was reelected, and continued in office for much of the next two years postponed the pressure for dealing with this matter. The evidence strongly suggests, too, that John Berens also believed that the processing timeline for non-university materials which Fowler was so concerned about did not have to
move forward so quickly. In fact, the guidelines for the NHPRC grant work plan forbade that sort of an emphasis in the immediate future. As a consequence, the 1992 Fowler-driven fundraising effort collapsed for the time being—quite appropriately under the circumstances—I think.

Jacobetti died in office in November, 1994. In January 1995, the remainder of his collection that still was in Lansing was sent to Northern. Sometime later an additional donation of material that was at his home in Negaunee was made to Northern. That completed the Jacobetti collection donations to NMU.

Since the last two of these donations came to NMU after the time when this account ends, I have decided not to deal more specifically with their acquisition. It all—even the processing—ended well, however! Eventually the papers were processed by NMU’s archives with the help of a grant from the Legislature of the State of Michigan and one from the NHPRC. Robin Kennedy was the NHPRC’s Project Archivist. She did a great job.

This development provides support for my belief that if a valuable collection can be obtained, it should be acquired even if the funds are not immediately available to process it.

The acquisition of the Jacobetti collection was a learning experience for sure! Many irregularities occurred in the course of acquiring it. The experience often made it clear how things should not be done. At the same time much education on how they should be done took place. The upshot? A more wide-spread desire was created to do things more professionally in the future.

Who would have thought that the rather well-accepted and smooth acquisition practices in operation at NMU today were once so little known, understood, followed, and had to be nurtured to what they are today?
CHAPTER 21B
ACQUISITION OF THE VOELKER COLLECTION, 1991-1992. THIS DESPITE WHAT STILL HAD TO BE LEARNED ABOUT ACQUIRING LARGE NON-UNIVERSITY COLLECTIONS

This chapter was originally written as part of chapter 21. Because of length, I decided to split it off from the history of the Jacobetti acquisition now found in chapter 21A. However, the introductory paragraph, the “Introductory Remarks,” and “Documentation” sections at the beginning of chapter 21A apply equally to this chapter and, therefore, should be read or recalled before reading this chapter.

It was in March 1991 when members of Northern Michigan University’s administration first became seriously interested in accepting and transferring the Voelker collection to NMU as quickly as possible. This was about the same time they became interested in doing the same with the Jacobetti collection, although in that case interest in doing so was sparked by quite a different development. But then interest in getting the Jacobetti collection to NMU subsided immediately until April, 1992. As noted in chapter 21A, it then revived suddenly again in a frenzy of action that resulted in NMU getting its first batch of that collection to its campus in May, 1992.

In the case of the Voelker collection, however, a decline of interest in bringing that collection to NMU as rapidly as possible never occurred after March 1991, especially on the part of one NMU administrator. Still the collection was not accepted for transfer to Northern until the end of February 1992. Thereafter, however, efforts quickly began to prepare the collection for transfer to NMU. As a consequence, most of it also arrived there in May 1992.

There was another similarity with regard to the acquisition of those two collections. During each of their acquisitions two conflicting points of view prevailed with regard to how non-university archival material should be acquired.

In the case of the university official who lobbied most determinately for the rapid acquisition of the Voelker collection, it would appear, judging from his actions that when going into this matter he was quite uninformed with regards to professional archival policies and procedures for doing this sort of thing. He, therefore, took some actions which while very well intentioned basically ignored the professional approach.

Standing on the other side of the issues involved frequently was the director of Northern’s library. Only relatively recently the decision had been made to place the archives under library administration in the not too distant future. And she at this very time was already seeking to establish the professional policies and procedures which she was determined would be followed under her administration. Generally, this involved a slow, deliberate pace, and in the particular circumstances which Northern found itself in this time, a deliberate delay of at least a couple of years in acquiring the collection. The liberties which
the university official in question was planning on taking on this issue and other matters did not set well with the library director. How did this all work out? In the early part of this story that question will be answered. But first a brief bio of John E. Voelker.

Voelker was one of Michigan's best known authors and jurists. He was educated in the Ishpeming, Michigan, public schools, Northern Michigan University, and the University of Michigan Law School. He became a Marquette County district attorney and prosecuting attorney and a Michigan Supreme Court justice. He also was the author of eleven books and numerous articles, etcetera, focusing on various aspects life and culture in the U. P. Northern Michigan University valued his contributions enough to bestow on him an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree during the Harden presidency and an Outstanding Alumni Award in 1984 during the Appleberry administration. Much more could be said. A good brief biographical sketch of Voelker can be found on line with the finding aid which Stephen Peters wrote for the materials in the Voelker collection in NMU's archives. Voelker died on March 18, 1991 at the age of 87. This picture is of him when he received the Outstanding Alumni Award in 1984.

On March 21, 1991 Matthew Surrell, NMU's Vice President for Public Relations, sent an important note to President Appleberry. It does not have Appleberry's name on it but clipped to it is a routing note to him. Surrell's note read, "These are some notes I made on the Voelker Papers matter. I'll be pleased to advise Phil B. and others as you deem appropriate." In response, Appleberry wrote across the note, "Matt—I concur. Please move forward with Phil B. Thanks. JBA. 3/27/91." AARA.1/12, 20-03-58

So what was in Surrell's note? It starts with a statement that he had had a conversation with Grace Voelker on March 21, 1991. This would have been only three days after Voelker's death. Surrell went on:

Mrs. Voelker told me she wanted the University to have John's papers.

Included would be his original manuscripts for his books, of which he authored 11, extensive correspondence, possibly manuscripts of many articles he wrote for periodicals, newspapers and other publications.

Mr. Ted Bogdan should be considered a very important ally in this endeavor. [He was a good friend of John Voelker.]
I told Mrs. Voelker that we would be most willing to undertake discussions with her at a time of her choosing, and that she should have every right to expect us to develop a proposal for use, storage, and conditions under which the papers may be reviewed, examined, studied, etc. I told her that NMU would be greatly honored to be the repository of John’s papers and that we would be developing a proposal that I was confident she would find to her liking.

Mrs. Voelker mentioned in passing that two other institutions have expressed interest in the papers—the University of Michigan and Boston University. She said a certain individual from Boston U has been “courting” John for some 30 years. [Surrell’s underlining].

I assured her of our strongest interest in the papers, and that we looked forward to developing an agreement with her for an appropriate repository with the dignity and decorum John’s papers deserve.

Still despite Surrell’s promises to Mrs. Voelker on that March 21 1991 date, it was almost a year before a proposal had been prepared for her eventual consideration. A memo exists which shows that she had not yet received an official proposal by the end of February. It is dated February 28, 1992. It is from President Vandament to Vice President Beukema and states the following:

Phil, Matt Surrell has briefed me on the matter of the Voelker family’s interest in giving John Voelker’s papers to the University.

He advised me that he has met and conferred with Library Director Rena Fowler several times over the past couple of weeks. He advises per Rena that there is a concerted effort underway at her end to develop a proposal with time lines, consultations with Mrs. Voelker, etc. that would culminate in the University’s acquisition of these papers.

Based on what I have learned thus far, I believe the acquisition of the Voelker papers would be a major asset to this University.

We received word this past week from David Hacker of the Detroit Free Press that he was writing a story on the anniversary of John Voelker’s death—in which he would characterize us as lethargic and insensitive to the need of the widow to honor his wishes to house the papers at NMU.

To reinforce the University’s interest in acquiring the papers, I took it upon myself to contact Mrs. Grace Voelker and met with her this week. I invited Matt Surrell to join me. I believe the reassurance I gave her (of the University’s interest in acquiring her late husband’s papers) helped assuage any feelings of hurt or being neglected that she likely had over the past several months.
I ask that you and your office extend whatever support and assistance is needed to assure that this project is a successful one.

So there we have it. It is clear that Mrs. Voelker had not yet received a proposal from NMU by that date. It is also evident that President Vandament saw the papers as valuable and that he agreed that under the circumstances facing Mrs. Voelker, Northern should acquire them as quickly as possible. This both to assuage Mrs. Voelker’s concerns and to forestall some adverse publicity that was in the offing if that did not happen. While Vandament’s memo does not explicitly say so, we also know from a statement Rena Fowler made on March 4, 1992 that Vandament went further. He informed Mrs. Voelker at that time that NMU definitely would be accepting her papers and that he would be taking steps that would result in that quickly.

WHY THE LONG DELAY IN THE ACQUISITION OF THE VOELKER COLLECTION?

To obtain an answer to the above question we have to return to what happened on March 21, 1991, then to what happened soon thereafter, and then to what happened during the following spring and summer, and until February 1992.

It is clear from Surrell’s note and memo to Appleberry that Surrell wished to move as rapidly as possible on this matter. I think it is safe to assume that Appleberry did as well. It is safe to assume as well I think that prior to this development Appleberry too had become quite interested in NMU acquiring the Voelker collection—at least some day. After all Appleberry had already been made well aware of how much Voelker was admired. This via such things as Northern having bestowed its outstanding alumni award on him and via many other things. Now when Surrell shared with him how much Voelker’s widow wanted to see his papers at Northern, it seems from the tone of his note to Surrell that he was all in favor of moving ahead expeditiously with getting a proposal to Mrs. Voelker.

To get effective action on the matter, Surrell suggested that he should perhaps turn to Beukema, if Appleberry approved. Appleberry did. In turning to Beukema, Appleberry and Surrell likely felt they could be sure they would be turning to an individual who also would be very much in favor of bringing the collection to Northern. This development was occurring not too long after I had written my January 4, 1991 memo to Beukema (See chapter 17) touting the importance of NMU collecting the primary research materials of the region in order to enhance its research resources and academic stature. It will be recalled that on January 14, Beukema replied enthusiastically to that and then began persuading the President’s Council to shift the mission of the archives back once more to acquiring regional primary research materials also rather than just being basically concerned with the university’s own records.

Surrell, in suggesting that they turn to Beukema first in this effort to get a proposal prepared, while logical in a sense was also ignoring what established professional archival protocol called for. At institutions where professional archival policy is followed, the first thing that normally happens when a collection is offered to an institution via a university official is that the official turns the matter over to the institutions’ archivist. Then if the
archivist feels there is a need for it, he or she takes the matter up with his or her superiors(s). Although technically I was still the archivist, by this time, for reasons discussed in chapter 16 and elsewhere, some members of the President’s Council were no longer, for some understandable reasons, treating me as such, and instead were treating Rena Fowler as the archivist. This was especially so when it came policy matters. In any case, whether it was she or I who was recognized as archivist, our common superior was Beukema. Therefore, Surrell according to correct archival procedure should have suggested that Fowler or I be contacted about getting a proposal prepared for Mrs. Voelker. And if whichever one of us he contacted had any problem with that, it was that person who should have contacted Beukema about it. As the reader can see, instead Surrell set this procedure on its head, moving from the top down rather than from the bottom up.

When Surrell contacted Beukema about things moving forward under his division, he discovered that he had deputized Kuhn to oversee all archival matters for him. (See his March 11 memo to me. AARA 1/11, 20-03-58 Consequently, quite logically, Surrell turned to Kuhn for assistance. However, we know from an April 9 memo Surell sent to Kuhn that the latter informed him that he did not have time to work on such a proposal until after the winter semester was over. That would be about the first of May. Whether or not Kuhn’s answer indicated that he was genuinely willing to work with Surrell on this when he had time, or whether he was just putting Surrell off, hoping he never would have to do so, is unknown. We know too, however, from that April 9 memo, that Kuhn, according to Surrell, had suggested some people who might be able to help with the project when they finally were able to get at it. Surrell does not say who they were. Perhaps it was primarily Surrell who was making the suggestions. Surrell’s memo to Kuhn read as follows:

I had a nice visit with Grace Voelker over the weekend.

As soon as we get the semester behind us, let’s schedule a meeting of the players you suggested. Including Ted Bogdan.

Spent about an hour with Grace talking about many things, reminiscing about John, etc. She said there is quite a mass of papers as John seldom would throw anything away. There are papers both at their residence on Deer Lake Road and also at the old family home in Ishpeming.

I’m glad to have someone on board who has some expertise in this area, as it should enable us to put together a good proposal.

Grace is very amenable to allowing some of us to visit her and possibly to undertake a cursory inventory of the papers. As you might expect, they are in no particular order, according to Grace. I suspect that Grace can and will be an invaluable resource person on this project, as she will be able to identify individuals named in correspondence, photos of people, etc.

Also I thought while I had the opportunity I asked Grace if she might be willing to consider parting with the contents of John’s den. I said it was my little pipe dream
that we recreate his den somewhere at the University as part of the Robert Traver (Voelker) collection [Surrell's underlining]. Her response was positive. We can discuss.

It is evident that three weeks after Surrell’s memo to Appleberry, he continued to see himself as a prime participant in the effort to draw up a proposal for Mrs. Voelker when the time came. He talks of “us” doing it. And he hoped that others who would not necessarily be university employees or professional archives/library staff people--Ted Bogdan in particular--would be participating too. Bogdan was a local businessman and a good friend of John Voelker. It seems that Surrell may even have expected that some members of this group of “players” in this enterprise would also be involved in preparing the collection for transfer to Northern—or at least in evaluating it for that purpose. As the reader will have noticed, he states, “Grace is very amenable to allowing some of us to visit her and possibly to undertake a cursory inventory of the papers…. I suspect that Grace can and will be an invaluable resource person on this project.”

These expectations were going to spell trouble ahead as soon as Fowler found out about them. She believed that only her professional staff should be involved in such an undertaking. On one occasion, she referred to Surrell as a “self-appointed” participant--and this was not because she wished to compliment him!

I do not recall how I first learned of this effort to get the Voelker collection to Northern following Voelker’s death. It may be that Surrell contacted me about it since I technically still was the archivist and, therefore, he may have felt that I would have some expertise in helping to put a proposal together. Or Kuhn may have suggested me as one who it would be logical to have help draw up such a proposal. And then perhaps one of them contacted me. On the other hand, I may have heard of it in some other way. Whatever the case, I knew by the time Fowler and I were involved in our grant proposal discussions from mid-April forward. (See chapter 18.) I informed her then of what I knew of the effort to obtain the collection. I also told her that I was in favor of obtaining it for Northern soon. She, of course, informed me that she was not. She then contacted Kuhn on April 24 about the matter. Here in part, is what she said, as noted in chapter 18 too:

Besides Cliff’s desire to collect regional records, he’s told me that the university has already agreed to take Jacobetti’s papers. What do you know about this? That combined with the effort to get the Voelker papers makes me wonder what the university really wants to do here. Cliff and I agree that if the Archives is to do all this we’re talking about 4 positions or more. We part company at that point because I’ve been attempting to persuade him that, given the many university demands for staff, this is impossible and unrealistic. Related to this [is] the question of authority. Will the University allow the Archivist to decide whose papers will be collected, especially if the donor is a powerful friend of the University? AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

The reader will have noticed that Fowler says nothing about Surrell’s initiative here to get the Voelker collection to Northern. This suggests that at this time she may not yet have known of it and surmised that only I was in favor for that. It also suggests that I may not
yet have known about his initiative, otherwise I likely would have told her of it, and she likely would have told Kuhn that she did not agree with Surrell’s efforts either.

Fowler’s memo shows that she was more than a little alarmed with the possibility of Northern accepting both the Jacobetti and Voelker collections shortly. In this particular memo she said that this was because of a lack of sufficient staff, space, and “other support monies.” But there were other reasons too. She also was concerned as to whether her superiors would honor the authority of the archivist when a professional operation was supposed to be in existence. She, therefore, undoubtedly was thrilled with the response Kuhn sent her on April 26, via email. And this time so promptly too. He wrote:

You are correct in assuming that the President’s Council will want to see emphasis on records management in addition to emphases on archival material. Cliff should keep that political reality in mind.

Next, considering for the moment the desire to collect regional records or the papers of people like Jacobetti and Voelker, we need to be absolutely clear that space, monies, and staff will have to be in place before acceptance is made. Right now we are authorized to write a grant for only 2 staff positions. Total support funding is only about $3,500 and space is sharply limited. These realities will have to change before acceptance of anyone’s records or papers are tendered.

When offers of papers or for papers are tendered, the archivist/records manager will (I assume) make recommendations—most likely in concert with an advisory committee—concerning records to accept or reject along with projections of cost, space needs, and staff required for appropriate acquisition, storage, and opportunities for use. Decisions will be made by the Director of the Library or perhaps by the Academic VP. Perhaps some decisions will need to be made at the President’s Council level because of costs in dollars, space, and staff time. AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

While a couple of things implied in the last two memos were not really true about me, I will not comment on that here. I have already shown that to be the case in chapter 18. Here I want to highlight the strong position which Kuhn’s declarations in this memo placed Fowler in her opposition to anyone seeking to get the Voelker collection to NMU in the immediate future quickly. One such declaration is that “We need to be absolutely clear that space, monies, and staff will be in place before acceptance is made.” And because the archives staff fell far short of the ideal Fowler declared to be necessary, he declared, “These realities will have to change before acceptance of anyone’s records or papers are tendered.” Wow! Coming from the person authorized by the vice president of Academic Affairs to make policy for him at this time, this was enough to shut down any initiative to get the papers to NMU unless Fowler authorized it or the university president overrode it. It might be noted that this also put Beukema in an almost impossible position once Kuhn left the university in July—that is with helping to move forward the effort to get the Voelker collection to Northern immediately. In his memo, Kuhn also made it clear that he was endorsing the professional approach to decision-making with respect to archival
acquisitions—that is that the archivist has first say, then if necessary Academic Affairs, and then if still necessary the President’s Council and the president.

It is no wonder that after this, Surrell’s initiative went nowhere. In fact, the group effort he was interested in mounting was disbanded. There is no evidence that the group Surrell hoped would meet at the end of the winter semester ever met. And certainly Kuhn in all good conscience could not have permitted himself to be a part of it after what he promised Fowler on April 26. Kuhn’s memo also helps explain the lack of effective support Surrell got from Beukema and Joyal on this matter prior to the time President Vandament stepped into the picture asking Beukema to support Surrell’s initiative.

Kuhn’s declarations strengthened Fowler’s resolve tremendously. And they contributed greatly to her virtually total disregard of Surrell’s efforts for the next few months. She knew that she now was in a powerful position. Kuhn’s declarations are some of the basis as well for the slow pace she adopted from this time forward until Vandament stepped in. They also led to her decision in July to write two memos to Academic Affairs spelling out in considerable detail what proper professional archives policy and procedures call for—this in case there still remained any doubt—and implying what she henceforth purposed to do. Below I quote some from these memos. They present excellent, careful archival policy and procedure. Under normal circumstances, to follow them would make perfect sense. Surrell, however, was seeking to convince anyone who would listen that what NMU was confronted with was an abnormal circumstance. It called for an exception if necessary. But pretty much for the rest of 1991, Fowler was not listening. She was insisting on pursuing that slow deliberate pace which in normal circumstances would have been just fine.

At least by the late spring or early summer of 1991, Fowler had learned of Surrell’s efforts to get the Voelker collection to NMU as quickly as possible and of his desire to help with getting a proposal put together for Mrs. Voelker. But the evidence also shows that somehow by this time Surrell also got the message that Fowler did not appreciate his efforts, and that getting a proposal prepared for Mrs. Voelker was her prerogative as the de facto archivist, not his—nor that of any other archives non-professionals. That eliminated Ted Bogdan’s assistance too, for instance. The evidence also indicates that, in view of this, at this point Surrell dropped his ideas and efforts with regard to helping with preparing the proposal, and henceforth left that matter in Fowlers hands. This, however, did not stop him from continuing to inquire of her from time to time as to how preparations of the proposal were coming. And he did this more persistently as time went on. He, undoubtedly, was driven to do so out of a strong sense of obligation to Mrs. Voelker, and out of a sense of embarrassment that the things he had promised her were not happening. His inquiries, of course, were not a violation of correct professional protocol. Fowler, nonetheless, undoubtedly found them unwelcome intrusions.

**MID-SUMMER DEVELOPMENTS**

In view of the talk and pressures about Mrs. Voelker wanting to donate the Voelker collection to NMU soon Fowler finally decided in June or early July, 1991 to asked Krista Clumpner and John Berens to pay Mrs. Voelker a visit. This in order for the library to
become a little better informed about the proposed donation. Because of Surrell’s previous
association with Mrs. Voelker, he too was invited to be part of this particular visit although
it would seem only to introduce them to her. In Fowler’s view, this visit definitely was not
yet for the purpose of beginning to draw up a proposal for Mrs. Voelker soon, much as
Surrell was wishing for that--and that things would speed up.

With the pressure Fowler was increasingly feeling to move faster, and with the risk, in her
opinion, that the administration might somehow acquire the collection before she felt that
it should, she decided to send those two memos to her superiors referred to above spelling
out just what she believed proper archives policy and procedures were. The first of these
memos was sent to Kuhn. This since he was still in charge of archival matters even though
he was about to leave the university. It was dated July 5. This memo is mentioned in
chapter 19 too as something Fowler was also working on while she was helping with the
preparation of our grant application as well along with other things. The memo spelled out
very specifically the timeline on which the Voelker collection, in her opinion, should be
acquired. It was copied to Beukema, Clumpner, Leonard Heldreth--at the time the interim
Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences for 1991-1992--and interestingly to me. Fowler
obviously was recognizing me as archivist on a selective basis. And since she knew I
supported accepting the collection soon even though we were not in a position to process it
immediately, she undoubtedly wanted me to be aware especially of what her timeline was
for the acquisition. However this recognition of me as archivist did not mean that she was
now going to begin inviting me to participate in the formation of policy, or in helping to
draw up a proposal for Mrs. Voelker.

The memo shows that even though Fowler recognized the value of the Voelker collection,
nonetheless, it was she who now would be the main hindrance to a more rapid drawing up
of a proposal. She wrote:

> Based upon the assessment of Krista Clumpner, I recommend that the University
> pursue negotiations with the John Voelker family to obtain these papers if they can
> be gotten within the constraints described below. Given his prominence in the U.P.
> and Michigan, his diverse associations, and the volume and quality of the materials
> held by the family, the collection would be valuable to researchers and would
> strengthen the University's teaching programs in several disciplines.

So what evidence is there that Fowler’s views, nonetheless, stifled progress in getting the
collection accepted? First, it took at least a couple of months for Fowler to send someone
out to see Mrs. Voelker about her offer. Her memo, however, provides another reason as
well. It states that “If the [NHPRC] grant application is not successful I cannot foresee how
the Voelker gift could be preserved at NMU.” In view of this concern, Fowler’s strategy
seems clearly to have been to take plenty of time to see if the grant application would
indeed be successful. She either failed to sense from Surrell and others how strongly Mrs.
Voelker wanted to get this matter taken care of quickly, or she felt that she could not
responsibly speed things up despite Mrs. Voelker’s feelings. Undoubtedly, it was more the
latter. But if so, I have not found any evidence that she communicated this to Mrs. Voelker,
although it could have happened.
Fowler’s program and timeline as outlined in the rest of her memo and summarized by me was (1) to have the Voelker family obtain an appraisal of the collection and decide what it wanted to keep and donate—also that it could take its own leisurely time in doing so. No rush. “In doing so, the family might be advised to consider the materials [for donation] from the standpoint of the scholar who values research material from the standpoint of their completeness and the ability to trace the development of an author’s ideas and work.” (2) “Cliff Maier is the University Archivist, and I recommend that further discussions regarding this gift involve him.” and (3) “that the University Archives be the repository for this gift if it is obtained.” (4) that “acceptance of the Voelker papers should not occur before and until the Archives has, at a minimum, adequate storage and a full-time staff person…. With a successful grant application, I think it would be a year or two before Archives and an Archivist would be able to accept such a gift. Since the [Voelker] family still has much to decide and do, this might not be an issue.” (5) “After receipt of the gift the University should seek grant monies for organizing and processing the gift…. The staff now proposed for Archives would not have time to handle this gift….’’ (6) “I recommend that suggestions to replicate John Voelker’s study somewhere on campus be deferred or, better yet, abandoned. First, the University must find the basic means to have and preserve these [archival] materials and to make these papers accessible to a scholarly community. While a museum setting might appeal to the public and the family, the proposal diverts attention and support from the sizeable costs entailed in simply caring for a research collection. Museum functions are more costly and space-consuming and less essential to the University’s educational and research mission than archival activities. Given NMU’s limited resources and multiple commitments, I urge that private donors be solicited solely to support the preservation of, and access to the Voelker papers as befits a regional University.”

Well, this rationale for Northern not becoming involved in collecting artifacts is masterful in some respects; there is a lot to say for it if an institution is facing a financially stringent situation. Nevertheless, some of us, including President Vandament, felt, as revealed later, that ways could be found for the university to accept both the papers—and the artifacts—without jeopardizing the ability of the archives to care for the papers and make them accessible.

Going back to point (2), while Fowler recommended that I, as archivist now be invited to participate in discussions regarding the Voelker gift, this did not happen prior to the time when Vandament stepped into the situation and changed things with his February 28 memo. Such discussions as did occur regarding acquisition policy took place between her and other members of the library staff or with superiors such as Beukema, and now Fred Joyal too. Undoubtedly, she also could not avoid inquiries occasionally from Surrell who continued to feel a personal sense of obligation to Mrs. Voelker. Also as Vice President for Public Relations, he felt he had an obligation to do so; it was part of his job in helping to maintain good relations with the university’s public.

No one in the know—except eventually Vandament—felt that they could do anything to accelerate the time line Fowler had laid out for the acquisition of the collection. Her time line would set things back at least until the new archivist was on board which was expected
to be August, 1992, but really it would be longer than that. As the reader will also have noticed in (4) above, Fowler estimated it could be “a year or two” after a grant proposal had been successful that “Archives and an Archivist would be able to accept such a gift.” That would be February, 1993, or even February, 1994.

Just three days after sending her July 5 memo to Kuhn, Fowler sent another one of a more general nature to Beukema. It was entitled, “Some Recommended Guidelines for the Development of Archives.” I noted this memo in Chapter 19 too, and for the same reasons I noted Fowler’s July 5 memo there. It sheds more light on why Fowler desired to pursue a “go slow” policy with regard to acquisition of the Voelker collection and ideally of the Jacobetti collection too. This although as we noted in chapter 21A, complications associated with implementing her “immediate fundraising policy” resulted in her agreeing to and urging an acceleration in the case of that collection—the exact the opposite of what was hoped for.

The things noted above tend to make Fowler’s policy appear obstructionist in face of the need to act quickly on the Voelker acquisition. And in some ways, it definitely was in this circumstance. On the other hand, there was, of course, a need to establish good general policies; and in more normal circumstances some of the policies Fowler was advocating, if perhaps not all of them, were good policies. It was just that in these circumstances, some of them were not appropriate. This again points to a postion which I have previously claimed to be necessary. While having professional polices is good and should generally be followed, they must also allow for some flexibility and deviation to permit for a rational coping in special circumstances.

The Voelker situation especially, but also to some extent the Jacobetti situation were special circumstances. In Mrs. Voelker’s mind more important than appraisals, or deciding what the family wanted to keep, or negotiations regarding a Deed of Gift, or restrictions on certain things was to see those papers out of her houses and at NMU before something might happen to her. Her family was not free enough and did not live close enough to be able to be very involved and, actually, really were not that interested in going through the papers and analyzing them. What they wanted was what Mrs. Voelker wanted and what her husband had wanted—to get the papers to NMU and the burden off of Mrs. Voelker’s mind as quickly as possible before concerns with this could hurt her fragile health.

Later Fowler claimed that Surrell had informed her inadequately of how strongly Mrs. Voelker felt about NMU accepting the papers quickly and that this was one of the reasons for her slow response to the request. However, judging from a memo Fowler sent Surrell on January 2, 1992, the following appears to have happened (although this is only one side of the story. I do not have the other). AARA 1/12, 20-03-58 After Clumpner, Berens, and Surrell visited with Mrs. Voelker in the summer of 1991, Surrell did not report back to Fowler because he expected that the library people would be reporting to her as to what they had learned—especially that Mrs. Voelker desired quick action. (They undoubtedly did report that, plus more.) Therefore, Surrell saw no need for him at that time to share his impressions with Fowler too, especially in view of his sense that she did not particularly welcome his input on this subject.
DEVELOPMENTS RESULTING IN ACCEPTANCE OF THE COLLECTION IN FEBRUARY, 1992

As the months passed, however, and still a proposal for Mrs. Voelker did not become available, Surrell began to make more frequent inquiries about the matter. With this increasing pressure from Surrell, on January 2 Fowler sent him a memo. In it she rebuked him for not having discussed the matter adequately with her and “others as well” at an earlier date. The implication of her memo is that if Surrell had made clear to her earlier how strongly Mrs. Voelker felt about this, she would have moved faster on it. And she did promise that now she would prepare a proposal for Mrs. Voelker as quickly as possible.

Fowler, however, mentioned another reason as to why she had taken very little action earlier. It was again that she had felt that the library did not have the staff or funds to pursue the acquisition. She let Surrell know that when she had informed Kuhn earlier of that, he had accepted that as a valid reason for delaying action on the Voelker acquisition. Also that he had told her that Surrell would follow through in letting Mrs. Voelker know why nothing was happening. The implication of Fowler’s January 2 memo was that had Surrell, for whatever reason, not failed to do that necessary explaining, Mrs. Voelker would have been spared of having become so perplexed and anxious.

The evidence, however, points to the fact that Surrell had been trying to convey Fowler’s reasons for delay to Mrs. Voelker. But this did not assuage her feelings nor lessen her desire for some concrete action and for greater communication from those who had the say in whether or not anything was going to happen. According to information in Vandament’s memo of February 28, 1992 to Beukema, Surrell from approximately the latter part of 1991 especially, had been trying to impress on Fowler more strongly than ever in some conversations with her of Mrs. Voelker’s growing frustration and impatience. And these meetings had indeed resulted in her expediting somewhat her work on a proposal. But not greatly it seems. It still took two more months or more to get a proposal ready and that was only for Beukema to review, prior to when it would be sent it on to Mrs. Voelker. But this was not soon enough to prevent Surrell from finally feeling that he really had no alternative but to take the matter to Vandament--especially in view of some new pressures he too now was feeling from another source. Prior to this, from Vandament’s February 28 letter to Beukema, it appears that all Surrell had been able to do was keep on telling Mrs. Voelker that a proposal was on the way. But he also kept on being unable to tell her when one would be ready nor how soon her collection would likely be accepted by NMU.

The question may be asked, “Why did Surrell at this point in early 1992 by-pass Beukema--Fowler’s immediate superior--and go directly to Vandament?” That would have been the “proper” professional course to follow. Actually, he may well have done so; there is nothing in the records to show that he did not. But if he did, the effort obviously failed. Why? As I see it, even if Beukema had been contacted, he probably would have felt incapable of doing anything about the situation, although he probably very likely would have wished to do so. But as Fowler’s superior, he had pledged to support her in her professional judgments. He also was obligated to adhere to the promises by the Academic Affairs Kuhn had made to Fowler on April 26, cited above. Her judgment was that the archives could not responsibly
accept this donation in the immediate future. For him to have overridden her—had he wanted to, and I do not know this with certainty—would have severely undercut his professional relationship with her; also her trust that he was really committed to honoring professional procedures. Sensing that, Surrell turned to Vandament who could more easily do something, although the language of the latter’s memo makes it evident that he did so very reluctantly. In doing what he did, he too was concerned about following professional procedure as much as possible. To his credit, Vandament did not just order the archives to proceed as quickly as possible with getting the Voelker collection to NMU; he went through channels. He asked Beukema to do it—thus preserving the proper professional sequence—and making it easier for him to maintain a professional stance in his relationship with Fowler and the archives. And he copied his memo to Fowler and Surrell.

In different, more normal circumstances, Fowler’s slow, precise, carefully evaluated approach to accepting any collection including the Voelker Collection would have made sense. But somehow she failed to see that this was a special circumstance and that an exception was required. Really, she was trying to accomplish an impossibility—to establish a precedent for following normal procedure in quite an abnormal situation. This did not lead to a happy experience for her. It took the leadership of the president, with Surrell’s input, and that of a few others, to break the “log jam,” and to demonstrate that sensitivity and action which the situation called for.

AN ADDITIONAL CATALYSTS LEADING UP TO VANDAMENT’S ACTIONS AND THE RAPID ACCEPTANCE OF THE COLLECTION

Sometime shortly before February 9, 1992, Gigs Gigliardi, an especially good friend of John Voelker and owner of Voelker’s favorite bar in Ishpeming, met with Matthew Surrell and David Hacker. This is known from a letter Gigliardi sent to Hacker dated February 9, 1992. Oddly enough, it is in the 1988-1990 folder of the archives records of NMU’s Academic Affairs office. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58. (Some of the additional documentary evidence referred to immediately below is also in that Academic Affairs’ “Archives” folder AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58 for 1988-1990 rather than in AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58 for the years 1991-1993.)

Hacker was a staff writer for the Detroit Free Press as well as a good friend and admirer of Voelker. Now that Voelker was gone and his children did not live nearby, Gigliardi had taken it upon himself to care for some of Mrs. Voelker’s needs. His concern was not just short lived either. It continued. For example, after the Voelker collection was at NMU, my wife and I invited Mrs. Voelker to our home for a lunch. It was Gigliardi who brought her.

Returning to that meeting shortly before February 9, at it Surrell promised Gigliardi and Hacker that somehow he was going to see to it that something was done about speeding up the acquisition of the Voelker papers. On February 20 Surrell received a letter from Hacker. It was perhaps meant to hold his “feet to the fire” with regard to his promise. Hacker asked for assurances that by March 18, the first anniversary of Voelker’s death, NMU would have made a commitment to accept the Voelker papers. He stated that he wanted to be able to state that in an article he planned to write for the Free Press on the first anniversary of Voelker’s death. Just four days later, Hacker sent another letter to
Surrell in which he reminisced about how Voelker wanted his papers to go to NMU despite the fact that Boston University and the University of Michigan had wanted them for years. Documents show that in the case of Boston University this interest dated back to at least 1966. On February 1, 1966 Howard Gotliebe, Chief of Special Collections at the University’s Library, wrote Voelker stating that even the bitter winter which surrounded him in Boston could “not lessen” his “avid enthusiasm to eventually have the John D. Voelker Collection here.” AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58 In 1967 Voelker did, in fact, give Boston University permission to have the correspondence which took place between himself and St. Martin’s Press during the writing and publishing of such works of his as the novel, Anatomy of a Murder.

In that February 24 letter to Surrell, Hacker also wrote of how Mrs. Voelker could not figure out why NMU was not interested in accepting Voelker’s papers. He quoted her as saying, “I’m so puzzled, puzzled that they don’t want the papers.”

This was the backdrop against which Vandament decided to call Mrs. Voelker and then, along with Surrell, pay her a visit and promise that Northern would accept the papers. He then sent Beukema that February 28 memo quoted at the beginning of this chapter requesting him and his office to “extend whatever support and assistance [was] needed to assure that this project is successful.”

Part of the backdrop for Vandament’s action, too, was a call from me. While I knew little regarding the “behind the scenes” Voelker collection acquisition situation at the time, (I had been left pretty much entirely out of the loop regarding that), in some way I learned that if Northern did not make a decision immediately to take the Voelker papers, they were going to be given to another university. As archivist still, technically at least, I decided that I needed to violate proper protocol and channels and call Vandament about that. I told him that I wanted him to know what I had heard so that if he agreed with my position on the great desirability of NMU acquiring the collection, he might want to take actions accordingly. He simply thanked me for the information.

This was again another of those special circumstances when I was in favor of violating professional archival principles. According to professional protocol, I should have taken the matter to Beukema, or even just to Fowler and left the matter with one of them to handle.

**FOWLER’S FEBRUARY 28 PROPOSAL FINALLY FOR ACQUIRING VOELKER’S PAPERS**

Now on this very same day, February 28, an amazing coincidence occurred. Without yet knowing of Vandament’s memo to Beukema, Fowler sent Beukema that “proposal regarding the Voelker papers” for his examination along with a cover email. (As noted, this proposal was still not going to Mrs. Voelker. And because of subsequent developments, Fowler never did send it to her.) This was almost exactly a year after Surrell’s first promise to provide Mrs. Voelker with a proposal.

In her email to Beukema, Fowler stated that she had recently been in touch with Surrell, Bruce Anderson, the Vice President for Development (fundraising, etcetera), and me. She wrote, “I believe it may be difficult to meet the expectations of the family and assorted vice
presidents [Surrell and Anderson likely]. I hope that actions [decided upon] may be reality-based and delegated to the level where commitments may be meaningful and useful. After hearing from Cliff, Matt Surrell, and Bruce Anderson, the matter leaves me apprehensive.”

AARA, 1/12, 20-03-58

From me, she undoubtedly heard that we can accept the papers and bring them to NMU even if we did not have an ideal space situation for them at the moment—and even if we did not have the staff and money to process them immediately. I probably added that although we agreed in our grant proposal not to begin collecting non-university materials until later, the Voelker and Jacobetti papers could be left unprocessed at least until after the NHPRC project was over in 1994 if our application was successful. Meanwhile some effort could be made to discover where funds to process them could be raised.

From Surrell, she probably heard once again that the papers needed to be brought to NMU immediately. From Anderson, she probably learned that the university had other major priorities as well, for which it was necessary also to do fund-raising, and that he was unsure how much of the university’s efforts could be focused on raising funds for the processing of the Voelker collection.

Fowler’s memo to Beukema opened with the sentence, “This memo follows last summer’s report to John Kuhn and recent conversations with Matt Surrell.” Since the Voelker family wished the university to have Voelker’s papers and they were valuable, she now finally recommended that “the University pursue the acquisition of his papers and the following actions are proposed.”

She now was ready to authorize me as the archivist to become involved in acquiring this accession and stated at the end of her memo, “A gift of this sort, by its very nature, will require that the Archives’ staff work closely with the family through the process. The Archivist must be the key person in the process, and the failure to bring the current Archivist into the discussions until very recently has undoubtedly hampered the process thus far.” She seemed to be saying that it is I who should have been asked to have talks with Mrs. Voelker. But she does not say who made the mistake of failing to contact me. Surrell?

From the point of view of correct professional archival policy, Fowler was correct in most of the perceptions she enunciated in this particular memo. But she still was under the illusion that the whole Voelker family wanted to be involved extensively in the acquisition process. They did not. I learned that from experience later on. It seems that at times Fowler was just going on assumptions. In the February 28 proposal for Beukema’s perusal, Fowler went on to say:

The current University Archivist, Cliff Maier, will be authorized to inform the Voelker family of the University’s wish to accept the papers on the conditions described in this memo. To this end Cliff will visit with the family and review the papers in their various locations as soon as possible. A student employee from Archives may aid him in this process. Krista Clumpner of the Library’s staff may accompany him in his initial visit and provide advice. Once this overview of the
collection has been completed, Cliff will inform me and the family of his recommendations.

Assuming that the Archivist's recommendations are favorable and the family agrees to this process, these steps are proposed.

As already stated, Fowler wrote this before she learned that the president had already made a commitment to Mrs. Voelker to take her papers. This upset her considerably—as can be imagined—and as can be seen in an email she sent to Fred Joyal on March 4. (It appears that by this time Beukema had at least in practice “deputized” Joyal to handle most archival matters for him, although Fowler at times still went directly to Beukema.) In it she stated, “While I sent you a copy of a proposal regarding Archives and [the] Voelker gift, I’ve now received a memo stating that Dr. Vandament has already made a commitment. Since no one was there to represent the Archives or Library, I strongly doubt that we will ever be looked to as even an agency to make recommendations.” Just prior to this, she had stated in conjunction with a different matter, “Where is there any evidence of the delegation of responsibility or authority to those who are charged to perform a function? I see none and I am likely to say so.”

In general, Fowler was correct in seeking to establish the principle of archivists being in charge, and today (2015) that is in effect. Fowler contributed considerable education to that.

Having said this, the remainder of Fowler’s February 28 memo shows that she still did not have an accurate sense of what the Voelker family situation was, and of what could and needed to be done to get the Voelker papers to NMU in short order. In her suggested proposal, she outlined the things that ideally needed to be done, in many cases, in acquiring a collection—obtaining an overview and assessment of the collection, having it appraised, helping the family and the appraisers with that if they desired and needed it, having the archives, and in this case, the library staff work with the family on this, etcetera.

In her point 4 of her memo Fowler stated: “Library and Archives staff will set as a goal for the completion of a written agreement WITHIN THE FOLLOWING YEAR [my capitalization for emphasis]. This period of time will permit both the staff and family to consider how the collection might best be handled as part of the NMU Archives.”

All of this, she felt, would push further progress in getting the papers to NMU into the time when the new archivist would already be on board. Then “the new Archivist and the University must accomplish the following:” Fowler listed three things: (1) identify and secure the required storage space, (2) assess the costs “to preserve, store, organize, catalogue, and publicize the collection,” and (3) “develop a strategy to fund these costs through grants and gifts.” Only after these things were completed would “the transfer of the papers to the Archives...occur....”
Fowler also again made the point that the library could not be expected to accept the Voelker artifacts because of staff and space limitations. Also “Museum functions are not part of the Library’s commitment to administer the Archives....”

In closing, Fowler declared, “The University administration must appreciate that there will be no full-time archivist on board until fall and the present Archivist is not on duty during the summer. The new Archivist will be hired under a federal grant which calls for the organization of an internal NMU archives and records management program, not the acquisition of regional collections. With this acquisition of the Voelker papers a great deal is now expected from this person. Due to staffing limitations, the Voelker papers may require many years to process.”

Fowler then wrote: “The Voelker family will have to be briefed regarding the status of Archives in order to understand the change in personnel and delay in the disposition of the papers.... The current Archivist must be the key person in this process.” It was at this point that she made the statement referred to above, that “the failure to bring the current Archivist into the discussion until very recently has undoubtedly hampered the process thus far.” However, given her view that accepting the papers had to be delayed and my view that they did not, (even if they could not be processed immediately) I fail to see how I could have been effective in persuading Mrs. Voelker that the delay in taking her papers was necessary.

What one sees in Fowler’s memo is her inclination to be very deliberate, methodical, and determined not to plunge hastily into anything, including the acquisition of these Voelker papers. This even though recent developments dictated the necessity of making an exception to such a policy. Despite her diligence in mastering many professional archival principles in short order, this incident seems to show that she had not yet grasped the fact that a donor’s situation had to be treated with some flexibility, especially in a situation in which an archives very much wished to be successful in obtaining the gift.

Fowler was correct in suspecting that it might take “many years” to process the Voelker papers under the circumstances. That possibility did not bother me as much as it did her. I hoped this delay would only be a fairly short period of time after the archives records management program had received the initial attention it required. But still I felt that however long it took for the processing to be completed, it would still be better than losing the papers altogether from the U.P.

I BECOME INVOLVED IN GETTING THE VOELKER COLLECTION TO NMU

Between Fowler’s February 28 memo with its most recent plan for acquiring the Voelker papers and March 4 two things happened. As already noted, Fowler learned that Vandament had already accepted the Voelker collection. Secondly, Fowler “bowed” to this unexpected development quite accommodatingly and now gave me the “go ahead” to take the first steps necessary for acquiring them. I immediately called Mrs. Voelker and set up an appointment to visit her. Fowler’s plan in her February 28 proposal had been that Krista Clumpner accompany me on my first visit, and that may still have happened
although I do not recall it. In any case, I did not present Fowler’s February 28 proposal to Mrs. Voelker. In fact a written proposal was never presented to her. This after all of that concern about getting one to her. Oral understandings were gradually established with her over several visits—a very low-keyed approach. But that is what the situation seemed to call for.

A March 4 email to Beukema indicates that I may also have taken Barry James and Heather Spencer, two of my three student assistants by this time, with me on that first visit to Mrs. Voelker’s home. We found her very gracious. She explained to us, as she had to others before us, that her husband’s collection was in two locations. Most of the papers were in the basement of the home in which she was living on Deer Lake Road, four miles north of Ishpeming. The rest of the collection—virtually all of it books, artifacts and memorabilia—was in their former home in Ishpeming. Currently it was being rented. She informed us that this part of that collection could be seen at some future date when arrangements with the tenant to do so had been made. We asked her to make an appointment to do so and she agreed.

She invited us to check out the papers in the basement of her Deer Lake Road home. She said that she could not accompany us as she no longer felt safe while navigating those stairs. She informed us that we would find things quite disorganized and scattered. Generally they were. Some of the papers were in labeled folders and boxes, but they were certainly the exception. Most of them were in considerable disarray—something like my office sometimes looks! Some were just in piles here and there on various shelves; others were in piles in boxes of various sizes. In general the boxes were not labeled. The papers in the boxes often just were every which way and often seemingly unrelated. At times batches of papers, articles, magazines, and flyers, etcetera were leaning against one side of the inside of a box or the other as if they had just been tossed into it.

It obviously was going to be a chore to try to figure out what went with what and to attempt to box things to facilitate processing later on at least a little. In order to be able to guess which batches of papers belonged with which, one was going to have to be familiar with Voelker’s novels, articles, columns, legal concerns, pastimes, etcetera, or become so as quickly as possible. For the next two and one half months that became one of our jobs. At times, some papers did not seem to fit with anything. Undoubtedly, some papers were drafts which had been abandoned because they were false starts. Of course, we did not sense nearly all of this during our first look—or even after several.

Before we left her home that first day, Mrs. Voelker showed us Mr. Voelker’s finely appointed study/office which had been added onto the main floor of that Deer Lake home. It was graced with large picture windows and knotty-pine, paneled walls. A carefully selected number of favorite pictures, portraits, plaques, and framed awards were attractively positioned on the walls. Somehow there was something incongruous between that office and what we had just witnessed in the basement. I suspect that it had something to do with Mrs. Voelker being in charge of the first floor!
Following our visit, I reported on our impressions to Fowler—and if Clumpner was with me or us she undoubtedly did too. This was something I would be doing quite regularly until the end of May. My conclusion was that there was a good chance that the papers at the Deer Lake location could still be sorted, packed, and delivered to NMU that spring. According to that March 4 email to Beukema, Fowler at first had been inclined to feel that it would take longer and had asked me about compensation for summer work. This was the first time a university official had asked me about compensation for summer work! Nice! But since I felt that there was a good possibility that we would be done by the end of the semester, I asked her to wait to see if that would be necessary. Besides, I had plans to be in Europe in June. Our son, Mark, was in London on a temporary work assignment. My wife and I wanted to pay him a visit while he was there and then do some traveling in Europe.

A TRANSITION FROM CONSIDERABLE RIGIDITY TO FLEXIBILITY

It is interesting to note that just my suggestion to Fowler that it might be possible for us to have the papers at NMU that same spring caused her to begin to think, too, that this whole process could take much less time than she had thought earlier. It seemed like, in her mind, the size and involved character of the project had diminished considerably. At the same time, however, she continued to insist—as the minutes of the President’s Council show—that right during this period of time when the university felt the need to raise funds for other priorities, that it also begin to find sources for funding the processing of the Voelker papers. She was also concerned as to whether or not the Voelker family might want Northern to take artifacts such as the old desk on which Voelker wrote his most popular novel, Anatomy of a Murder. All in all, however, the tone of her March 4 email to Beukema was much more flexible and accommodating than the February 28 memo had been. In fact, Fowler ended that March 4 email on a very conciliatory and congratulatory note. She wrote:

Lastly, I assume that you and the President and others may wish to congratulate yourselves upon this commitment. Earlier in the week, I called the Archivist at Michigan Tech to get the names of appraisers, and when I told her the reason, she termed it “a coup” for NMU.... Finally, I will do my best not to be provoked by others [who ignore archival protocol and principles], and to celebrate the achievement in bringing to NMU, for students and scholars, the papers of a man who meant a great deal to citizens of the U.P.”

PUBLICIZING THE VOELKER ACCESSION

On this particular March 4 as well, Vice President Beukema made a public announcement, proclaiming that the university had accepted the Voelker papers. “The presence of the collection on campus will be a rare privilege,” he declared. However, in order to educate the public against expecting too much too quickly, he wisely declared as well that lack of staffing, etcetera, for processing the collection and other things, required the university to say that “many additional decisions and actions will be required of the university and the Voelker family before the papers can be opened to the public. At the present it isn’t possible to say when that will occur.”
Then on March 11, the article which David Hacker had promised would appear in the Detroit Free Press, did. It was entitled, “Author’s widow donates papers to NMU.” It opened with this statement: “As the first anniversary of famed author, John Voelker’s death approaches, his widow is preparing to donate his papers to a university near his beloved Upper Peninsula home.”

Hacker went on, “Grace Voelker said the papers include the original manuscripts for all of her husband’s books, a half century of correspondence, and journals he kept during his early years as a writer. The papers include the original manuscript for the 1957 best-seller, Anatomy of a Murder, the most famous of John Voelker’s 11 books.”

Hacker noted too that “Grace Voelker’s decision...ends several years of behind the scenes efforts by the University of Michigan and Boston University to get the collection.” He also noted that “Grace Voelker said last week, ‘I am very pleased they accepted the papers.... His [Voelker’s] decision was a sacrifice because other schools wanted his papers’.”

Finally, Hacker mentioned that “Philip Beukema, Northern’s Vice President for Academic Affairs, said last week the university was deeply honored to have the papers of the nationally known jurist, author and sportsman.” Among other things, Hacker also mentioned that “all of Voelker’s books were written under the pen name of Robert Traver. Traver was his mother’s maiden name.”

PREPARING THE INITIAL PORTION OF VOELKER’S PAPERS FOR TRANSFER

Barry James and Heather Spencer, my student assistants, and I almost immediately launched full steam ahead into the task of analyzing and preparing to box those papers in Mrs. Voelker’s basement. We brought such things with us as we needed, among them acid-free folders and boxes, soft cotton gloves, soft lead pencils, etcetera. We spent two afternoons per week for the next two and one-half months sorting, filing, and boxing the materials.

As already noted, doing at least some reading of the various piles of papers sometimes helped us to determine to which novel, book, article, short story, type of correspondence, legal brief, political campaign, family matter, educational experience, or hobby a particular pile of papers, or just a few sheets belonged. We also had to familiarize ourselves with Voelker’s personal history, his experiences as a lawyer, politician, Supreme Court Justice, writer, fisherman, etcetera. In the end, the biggest challenge was determining to which novels some drafts belonged. Heather found some time to read some of the novels—or parts of them. This helped considerably with identifying and more accurately sorting things.

We then placed those papers we had sorted—sorted as well as we could under the circumstances—into folders, labeled them lightly in pencil, and then placed them into boxes which we then labeled. Some materials we just could not associate with any particular novel or topic. That would have to wait for a more careful analysis later on. Only a talk with a member of NMU’s library staff, Stephen Peters, who eventually processed the collection,
would reveal how well we did. Labeling things lightly, of course, made it easy to make changes as required later on.

In the end we filled ninety-six 12” x 18” standard sized archival boxes just from the basement of that Deer Lake home. This included a few items such as photographs from Voelker’s upstairs study. From time to time, we transported a few of these boxes back to NMU ourselves, placing them in the archives; but for the most part they were hauled to NMU in one of Northern’s trucks. Barry, Heather, and I, however, had the “privilege” of carting them all up out of that basement in preparation for that haul. It was a bit of a sweat, but still so exciting! Exciting in knowing that we had just played an important part in getting this significant collection to NMU; and, furthermore, had done so in considerably less time than had been estimated. It was a fun experience. My two student assistants and I worked well together. Both of them were perceptive, cheery, and enthusiastic about historic preservation. Mrs. Voelker’s hospitality was another thing that made the experience memorable. Every afternoon about 3 o’clock, she would call us up from her basement for a little break and snack. She served us tasty little sandwiches—always with the crusts removed!—assorted goodies, and something to drink. For about twenty minutes we would enjoy conversing with her about herself, her husband, her family, and the ever-present little birds just outside her big low-cut picture window. Now often alone, watching those interesting little critters feeding and flitting about outside of that window gave her a great deal of pleasure. We talked as well about things we found interesting or puzzling in the papers. When we had questions, she always tried to answer them.

DEED OF GIFT AND COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

Occasionally we talked a little about the need to obtain a Deed of Gift Agreement. Gently, I let her know that this was something all archives ask donors to sign. I talked some too about what a donor agrees to when he or she signs such an agreement. She had no problem with that. She was quite ready to grant Northern full ownership and disposal rights to these unpublished papers.
THE RESTRICTED JOURNALS

The only unpublished material Mrs. Voelker had some difficulty in giving to Northern were a couple of journals Voelker had written early in his career. She feared that they might contain some things that some people still living would find offensive. I informed her that Northern could sign an agreement with her to restrict their use for say twenty-five years, or something like that. Still she was undecided as to whether or not she should. Always she wanted more time to think about it, talk more with her family about it, etcetera.

Personally, I was very interested in having these journals become part of the donation and having them included with her Deed of Gift Agreement. I told her of how much the information in the journals might help enlighten scholars about certain things—help to clarify—for example, things in the rest of the papers. In the end, in the hopes of her finally deciding to include the journals in the Gift Agreement, I held off on pressuring her to sign before she was ready. I went to Europe without it being signed. Upon my return, I called her again. And now she was ready to sign with a twenty-five year restriction on the use of the journals. It happened on June 22, 1992. This was about a month after all the papers from her Deer Lake home except the journals had been taken to NMU. I was delighted. I let her know how much it was appreciated.

This clearly was a case of where sensitivity to a donors’ situation needed to trump strict adherence to orthodox archival practice. That would have called for the Deed of Gift Agreement to have been signed before any of the Voelker materials left the Voelker premises. Flexibility made it possible to achieve a satisfactory result for everyone involved.

THE ARTIFACTS ISSUE

As already noted, most of what remained in that second home was memorabilia and artifacts. Fowler had made it clear several times in memos or emails that the archives was not going to accept those kinds of materials. In an email to Beukema on March 4, she mentioned that if the university really wanted to accept artifacts, perhaps developing Longyear Hall into a museum would be a solution. However, at this very time, the debate as to whether or not to save Longyear from demolition was at its peak. I, too, had recently written Vandament and Beukema, urging that the building be saved if at all possible and that consideration be given to developing it into a museum. CMLC?

On March 18, Beukema was updating the President’s Council on the acceptance of the Voelker papers. The discussion then turned to the question of also accepting and housing the artifacts. It had become a touchy subject. It was decided that the President’s Office would accept at least enough artifacts to recreate a replica of the Voelker study. In a memo Fowler sent me on March 24, I learned more of what had been decided. President Vandament, with some input from others, would decide which artifacts to accept and where to store them. Some of the individuals from whom he would receive that input were Professor Magnaghi and VP Matthew Surrell. As noted, Surrell had mentioned to President Appleberry that one of his pipe dreams was to see a replica of Voelker’s study recreated at Northern. Magnaghi had similar dreams. In fact that desire from the mid-1970s for
Northern to possess a museum in which such things could be displayed, and which had to be abandoned at that time, was being rekindled.

Thus while I was preparing the Voelker papers for transport to NMU, a date was set for President Vandament and Magnaghi to visit both of Mrs. Voelker’s homes to examine the artifacts and memorabilia she had and to select some which she might be willing to donate.
I was invited to accompany them and I brought my camera! I got a few historic pictures. I wish I had done more of this. The visit began at the Deer Lake home. Mrs. Voelker first showed Vandament and Magnaghi Voelker’s beautiful office/study—very neat and well lit. A nice big desk sat in the middle of it—one considerably larger than the one on which he had written “Anatomy.” She explained who the pictures on the wall were of, etcetera. One was of G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams, the former Governor of Michigan. Another was of an African American judge who had become a good friend. While there was a lot of interest in what she was saying—Vandament even took some notes—she understandably was not ready to part with much on those walls or in that office. She donated a couple of things. I do not recall what. But before we all left for the Ishpeming home she also invited us all, including the two students who had brought a NMU truck, to go down and check out the situation in her basement. Despite the work we had done down there, things were still in quite some disarray, but nothing like they had been.

When we got to the Ishpeming home, one of the first things we were anxious to see was the desk on which Anatomy of a Murder had been written. It had come to be viewed as something of a “Holy Grail”—the ultimate artifact of this collection. Mrs. Voelker had no difficulty in parting with it, and it was only a short time before it was being maneuvered through the doorway and onto the truck. Magnaghi ended up carrying one end of the desk although students were brought along to do that. He was too excited not be “hands-on” involved. As Vandament and Magnaghi looked around they also decided to take—with Mrs. Voelker’s consent, of course—some law books and other books which Voelker likely would have had on his shelf, some fishing equipment, his favorite fishing hat, some cribbage boards, campaign posters, some albums of photographs—some associated with the filming of Anatomy—etcetera, etcetera. The old Ishpeming home had upstairs rooms as well. A considerable amount of what was finally taken was found up there. Mrs. Voelker even decided that she would climb this set of stairs so she could explain what some of the stuff up there was. Vandament and Magnaghi really got into contemplating what might be useful. I was able to snap a good picture of Vandament’s delight at some of what he was discovering. When digging through a box of miscellaneous stuff, he found a campaign poster from when Voelker had once campaigned for Congress.

One of the delights of this whole experience, too, was this. There was a piano in the living room of the main floor, and one of the students on this expedition was an excellent pianist. He asked if he could try the piano out. Of course he got permission. Could he ever make it talk! Actually reverberate! Of course, we all gathered around to enjoy a bit of the great performance. I am including some pictures of the situations just described. I plan to give them to the archives. It will be possible, presumably, to see more of them there.

When it came to boxing and loading things, Vandament was right in there too. It was great to watch the president of a university so down to earth and so into this preservation project. He and Magnaghi were able to arrange for the storage of these items in the university’s warehouse.
FINDING SPACE FOR THE VOELKER PAPERS AND THE UNIVERSITY’S RECORDS

During that spring of 1992 while we were preparing the Voelker papers for transfer to NMU, back at Northern Fowler and I were also working on acquiring enough additional space to accommodate the university’s own records in addition to the relatively large non-university collections which the university would now be receiving shortly. More specifically, we were trying to create a large enough complex of temporary space on the first floor of the LRC so that when the new archivist took over in September 1992, she would be able to function effectively. Because of financial cut-backs, the renovation of 3500 square feet of space for the archives on the second floor of the LRC promised in the grant proposal was expected now not begin until at least 1994. At one point I suggested that perhaps additional space could be found in Longyear Hall for archival storage (as opposed to artifacts), but Fowler was opposed to that. She declared that with only one permanent archival staff position, the library could not be overseeing a successful archives/records management operation in two different, quite widely separated buildings. She had a valid point. The wiser thing, she declared correctly, was to try to find additional space in the LRC building. When I heard her say that I thought, with some relief, “If anyone can find some additional space there, no one is more likely to be able to do it than she.” Thankfully, by April 27 of that eventful spring of 1992, Scott Seaman, Manager of NMU’s Radio and TV stations, was persuaded to surrender his claim to the front portion of the space in the Group 8 complex of offices in the LRC. (See the basic floor plan below). That
was the space between the archives and LRC's main central corridor. The archives had always wished to have that area because it provided more public exposure. Now it was happening. It was something for which to be very grateful, and we appreciated Seaman's cooperative attitude. Fowler acknowledged this in a memo to Seaman on April 27. However, then she stated that she also wished to have the far north-end portion of the Group 8 complex which Seaman had also been using and which was just beyond the far north end of the archives. To strengthen her claim to that space, Fowler pointed out that the university's Space Utilization Committee had already designated that area for the future growth of the archives. By this time, Seaman had decided that he really could manage without it too. So he yielded on it too. Thus by the end of May, agreements had been reached which gave all of the space in the Group 8 complex to the archives. This meant that the archives now had approximately 2,000 square feet of space. This was plenty to accommodate the Voelker papers, perhaps even the Jacobetti papers, and for the time being any university records that would be collected. In the event that even more space was needed, she was prepared also to grant a larger area within the darkly outlined square in the diagram above. As noted above, the new archivist, Gayle Martinson, in 1993 decided that the archives even had enough space to accommodate that first batch of the Jacobetti papers and desired to see at least some of them moved into the archives. These 2,000 square feet were quite a contrast from the 100 square feet given to the archives when it began in 1984, or even the 800 square feet it had up until the time of this 1992 development. The next thing, of course, was to have more of the office walls in the new space removed in order to create more internal access to it. As a consequence, some of those areas would need to be carpeted as well. On May 27 Fowler informed Beukema that I was working on this with the Facilities Planning Department. But she stated that she was hoping that “a cheap way” could be found “to use Archives space more effectively.” In this regard, she felt that my ideas were too ambitious and costly. “It doesn’t seem to matter what modest proposals I suggest to him, the dimensions multiply tenfold from the time I leave his office and the time I receive his memos to Facilities. No one has made any commitment to pay for these costs, and I’ve agreed with Fred [Joyal] that no action will be taken until there is a cost-effective plan.” And “no action” is what happened. Most of the Voelker Papers were stacked into a room without any internal access to them. That is how things still were when the new archivist arrived in September. That is how they remained until those major renovations actually began between the years 1994 and 1996. But by then the space actually renovated for the archives was in a different area of the LRC’s first floor altogether—that is in the south-east area where it is today. So all that effort Fowler and I put into accumulating more space in the north-west areas of the first floor of the LRC and seeking to get it renovated was for naught. Still that also was for the best.

I do not quite understand why Fowler felt that my requests were that ambitious. On May 22, I had written to Paul Umari of “Facilities Planning” regarding what the cost would be to do sufficient renovations to create “a bit larger” internally accessible storage area and a reading room for the new archivist. Because these renovations would only be temporary, I of course understand, why Fowler, Beukema, and Joyal wished to keep them to a minimum at the time. They would only be of value until those major renovations in 1994 got underway. And as the President’s Council minutes reveal, at this very time, the university
was anticipating a possible three-million dollar shortfall for the 1992-1993 fiscal year. With such uncertainty about the financial situation, it is praiseworthy that the university’s administrators still were ready to honor any of the financial commitments they had made to the archives. Thus I, too, was concerned not to spend any more than what was necessary for the new archivist to be able to function effectively.

FOWLER RESIGNS

Surprise! Surprise! As noted above, and in chapter 21A, while I was away in Europe Fowler was occupied with one additional thing. At the time, I had no idea that this was underway. It was her resignation from NMU effective July, 10, 1992. When I learned of it, I recall how totally surprised I was. With the dedication that she had been putting into developing the archives into a fine, predictable, professional operation, it was my impression that she was planning on staying with the challenge for a long time, if not forever! It was in a memo dated June 24 that she let me know of her intention of resigning. It closed with these words: “Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks and have fun!” It was a nice note on which to close a relationship, given all the differences and misunderstandings we had been through previously over what each of us felt was right at the time. Much of it because of the poor communication practices which had contributed so much to it.

FOWLER’S ROLE ASSESSED

As the reader will have noticed, from 1990 through the first half of 1992 Fowler became increasingly heavily involved with the development of Northern’s archives. Thus it is appropriate to assess her service in connection with her resignation.

One thing the documents make evident is that Fowler remained heavily engaged with archival matters right to the last days, even hours it seems, of her tenure at Northern. She worked hard to achieve what she believed would be for the good of the archival cause, even at the risk of her own popularity in some respects. Unfortunately, in my opinion, she was also too inflexible with respect to having funds on hand to process and service large non-university donations immediately and with respect to the steps that ordinarily should occur in the process of accepting a donation. On the other hand, her devotion to the principle of doing things right was admirable.

She played an important educational role in archival matters. Prior to 1984 it was Russell Magnaghi and Ruth Roebke-Berens who had played an especially important role in convincing Northern’s administrators that Northern needed an archives. From 1984 to 1991 especially, it was one of my roles to educate administrators regarding the need to have an archives that was supported well enough to be truly effective and professional. From about mid-1991 to mid-1992 Fowler did a lot of it, especially with regard to continuing to educate what ideal professional standards and procedures are for accessioning non-university donations.

Despite her determined adherence to principle, Fowler was a realist too. She did bow to less than ideal reality when there was nothing else for her to do. She especially did this
with regard to how the Voelker collection was treated once Vandament decided that it had to be accepted immediately, regardless of professional protocol and other considerations. Despite having to accept such situations, if she felt that progress could still be made to change things for the better for the future, she was prepared to continue soldiering on. However, given the financial situation, managing and servicing the Jacobetti and Voelker Papers as she felt they should be, probably appeared pretty unlikely to her for quite some time to come. I am sure she found that fact pretty frustrating, and even embarrassing. I do not know why she left Northern, but I wonder if this did not play, at least, some role in her decision. Whatever the case, while she was at NMU and associated with its archival effort, she made a significant contribution toward sensitizing and moving NMU closer toward thinking about archival practices in a professional way.

**WHAT? ANOTHER BATCH OF VOELKER PAPERS AND ARTIFACTS!**

Sometime toward the middle of July, 1992 I learned that some additional Voelker papers and artifacts had been discovered and that Mrs. Voelker wished to donate this find to Northern as well. She had decided to auction off her Ishpeming home and an associated building. The latter was a tall, two-story hip-roofed building next to her Ishpeming home with a workshop/garage in its lower level and a large loft-like room on its top floor.

The date of the auction had been set for August 2. As the auctioneer prepared for the auction, it was he who discovered an additional cache of papers and artifacts in that loft. When Mrs. Voelker realized this, she telephoned me immediately, inviting me to get any additional papers and artifacts NMU wanted. But she cautioned that if Northern wanted any of it, it had to come and retrieve it soon—like before the auction!

I quickly drove out to Mrs. Voelkers’ and checked things out for myself even though by this time I no longer was the archivist. In earlier correspondence, Fowler had made it clear that my time as archivist was over in May at the end of the winter semester. This was also the first summer since 1985 that I no longer felt like I was at least partially on duty during the summer. Still, given the situation, without really giving my official standing any further thought, I just took on the task of getting the rest of that collection to Northern. I called President Vandament and Russell Magnaghi and told them that Mrs. Voelker had found these additional papers, artifacts, memorabilia, political posters, etcetera. Were they interested? Of course they were! I also informed John Berens, the new Director of the Library. It was also fine with him too that I proceed. However, basically, in my mind I justified getting this remaining portion of the collection to Northern on the basis of a decision Fowler made in March that I was to prepare and oversee getting the Voelker Papers transferred to NMU.

What I found in that loft in addition to papers and artifacts was thick layers of dust! It was obvious that no one had been up there in a long time. It was obvious too, however, that this had at one time been Voelker’s study of sorts—or a sort of den and hide-away—and that he had left quite a few papers and other things there from the earlier part of his life and career. The loft was well-lit with natural light from a very big sort of a picture--window with south-western exposure. But now it had quite a hazy feeling as sun beams penetrated
the dust and cobwebs that hung in the air. And here and there protrusions arose from the floor, too dust-laden to recognize at first what was under them.

Vandament and Magnaghi got out there almost right away too, to determine what additional artifacts they might want. It was quite a sight to see those two guys gingerly pawing through the contents of boxes, etcetera in search of any treasures that might emerge. Magnaghi became quite excited at times and Vandament, ever unflappable, at times was grinning, smiling, and chuckling with respect to some things they were finding.

Eventually among the things they decided to take were certain additional pieces of furniture, photos, campaign postures, more of Voelker’s law books, and with Mrs. Voelker’s special permission, some new copies of some of his novels. The thought was that the sale of these new books might help defray some processing costs and some of the costs of the exhibits which they planned to mount. Quickly we ran out of boxes for this type of often bulky material. To help get these materials into some kind of containers, I soon was going to grocery stores and scrounging elsewhere for more boxes. In the end we used boxes of every size and shape, not like the neat, uniform sized boxes we used for the first batch we transported to Northern.

In the following days I went through the manuscript materials in that loft more carefully and boxed them. By a few days prior to the auction, all of the papers and artifacts we desired were out of it and on their way to NMU. All told, there were an additional 63 containers.

Mrs. Voelker was so happy. The auction went very well too. Much of what had been weighing on her mind since her husband’s death had been taken care of. It was a beautiful day too. A lot of people showed up including some members of her family. A kind of festive atmosphere developed. If I remember correctly, President Vandament stopped by briefly too; perhaps Magnaghi as well.

On August 3, 1992, I sent Mrs. Voelker the following letter, beginning with “Dear Grace”:

In addition to the 96 standard-sized boxes of materials you donated to the archives in June, this letter is formally to acknowledge receipt of an additional 63 containers of varying sizes of archival materials that you donated to the archives in July.

The archives gratefully accepts this second donation of papers. Furthermore, it accepts them subject to the same provisions found in the agreement you signed with Northern Michigan University when you made the original donation last June 22nd.

As for the museum items you donated in July for the eventual creation of a Voelker Room and as for some additional museum items and the boxes of unsold copies of your husband’s books you donated as well, these items are being handled through the President’s office. Professor Russell Magnaghi has offered to help him with that. If it has not already happened, I suspect that you will soon receive a formal
acknowledgment of the university’s receipt of these items, and eventually, perhaps, a more detailed inventory as well.

Finally, let me thank you personally for having been such a gracious donor and person. It truly has been a pleasure working with you. All of us who have worked with you think of you as an extra special lady. Thanks again. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

I copied the letter to Berens, Beukema, Hammang, Magnaghi, and Vandament. That same day I sent the following memo to Beukema and Hammang:

For your information, please find attached an acknowledgement of the receipt of an additional 63 boxes of archival material which Mrs. Voelker discovered in another building following the time she gave her original donation to Northern in June.

Because she wanted the materials removed as quickly as possible so the building could be auctioned off in August, I prepared the materials for removal to Northern during July, and we have since also brought them to Northern’s Archives. AARA, 1/11, 20-03-58

I do not recall why I sent this additional memo to Beukema and Hammang. Nor why I sent one with similar information in it on August 6 to Berens.

It was with great satisfaction that I penned these communications. The acquisition of the Voelker collection had a rather rocky start, but it concluded beautifully. Once President Vandament gave the word that Northern was to move rapidly with acquiring the collection, things happened. In a relatively short time the collection was at Northern with a signed Deed of Gift Agreement which made it Northern’s property and gave it freedom to use it as it deemed best for scholarly and other purposes. In a way it was the first really big realization of that vision of Northern’s archives becoming a regional historical preservation and research center. Secondly, it was payback for all the thought and energy of the past ten years, and more, that had gone into creating the capability for doing this. Furthermore, the archives had also made it possible to retain these Voelker and Jacobetti collections in the U.P. where virtually everyone agreed they belonged.

AN EXHIBIT AND CELEBRATION

With Vandament’s support, after the last batch of the Voelker collection was brought to NMU in late July, 1992, Magnaghi began working on laying the groundwork for mounting an exhibit. He obtained permission to mount a temporary one in the Peter White lounge of the University Center. Soon he had recruited one of his and Jon Saari’s students, Elizabeth Delene, to assume leadership in assembling it. She along with a group of student volunteers researched and basically created the exhibit under Magnaghi’s oversight. It was completed by February 1993. Gayle Martinson, Northern’s archivist by this time, assisted too, especially with advice and with discovering suitable materials from the archives. The centerpiece of the exhibit, of course, was Voelker’s desk and other artifacts.
That same month, the university decided to have a public unveiling and banquet to celebrate the acquisition of the Voelker collection and to view the exhibit. On February 2, my wife and I received the following invitation from President Vandament:

Margery and I would like to invite you to join us for a social hour and dinner [in the Pioneer Rooms of the University Center] to celebrate the unveiling of the John D. Voelker Collection at Northern Michigan University. The event will take place ... on Thursday, February 18. You are also invited to ... [an] unveiling of ... [a Voelker exhibit] from 8: p.m. until 9:p.m. that evening. CMPC, 2/12; RMP, 5/1, 34-06-01

Grace Voelker represented the Voelker family at this well-attended banquet; she was a much appreciated guest of honor. My wife and I were kindly honored too. We were seated at one of the head tables along with Mrs. Voelker, President and Mrs. Vandament, and others. Since by this time I was quite public about my Christian faith, I was asked give the invocation. Later I was honored for my role in establishing the archives and in acquiring the collection. Magnaghi, Vandament, and others such as Phillip Beukema, Vice President for Academic Affairs, were honored as well. Matthew Surrell who, it will be recalled, was the first person during that time period to inform Mrs. Voelker that Northern definitely wanted her collection, and who had doggedly hung in there regarding action on the matter, quite appropriately was master of ceremonies. Magnaghi was the main speaker. My wife tells me I spoke too but I do not recall it, and I have not come up with any notes that I might have used for such a talk. Others, including the President, spoke too. As people left, one of the chief sentiments expressed was appreciation that the university now was also involved in doing this sort of thing for the university and the public.

Meanwhile, Magnaghi had been working with Vandament and others on discovering a place (or places) for a more permanent home for a Voelker exhibit. A memo he sent to the History Department on January 26, 1993, reveals his efforts in this regard. RMP, 4/3, 34-05-33

Before long a decision was made to use some areas along the outer sloping edges in the Superior Dome for some permanent exhibits. While those areas were rather difficult to utilize for other purposes (they were up on somewhat of a ledge), they were rather ideal for this purpose. They were also right next to the Dome’s outer walking circle. Thus access to them within the building and to view them was rather ideal. Before long Magnaghi’s wife, Professor Diane Kordich of Northern’s Art and Design Department, along with her students, developed a number of permanent exhibits in those areas. Of course, a couple of them were Voelker exhibits, developed, with those rescued Voelker artifacts. Featured in one of them is that first Voelker desk and study.

By this time (1993), it is true that funds to process the Voelker papers had not yet been secured. But better a bird in the hand than two in the bush. I, among others, was confident that with time, ways would be found to get both this collection and Jacobetti’s processed and made available for study and research—and even for some pure pleasure.

As it turned out, it did take quite a number of years to process the Voelker Collection. The library eventually gave Stephen Peters, the library’s cataloguer, some released time to work on the papers. In addition to that he also volunteered a lot of his own time before and
after his retirement to get the job done. It was a herculean task; it took until 2010 to complete. He did a masterful job, as even just a glance at his work in the archives or on-line will show.

Those library directors and library division heads who have been in charge of the library since the time when the Voelker and Jacobetti collections were acquired are to be congratulated too. They have indeed honored the commitment made by Director Fowler and her technical support chief, Krista Clumpner, at the time that the 1991 NHPRC grant proposal was written regarding helping the archives with projects and other things that an archives, staffed with only one permanent full-time person, could not have done alone. What they permitted Stephen Peters to do for the archives in processing the Voelker Papers is a good example of that.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Everyone involved in the acquisition of the Jacobetti and Voelker collections learned some valuable things from the experience. That, gratifyingly, had the effect of moving Northern closer to the full adoption of a professional archives practice culture. That, in turn, would benefit Northern not only administratively, but academically and in other ways as well.

In the up-coming chapter we will look at the implementation from 1992 to 1994 of the 1991 Archives Project work plan. In a sense, the implementation of that plan placed a capstone on the effort up to this point to assure that NMU's archives and records management system would be a professional operation.
CHAPTER 22

This chapter is about the implementation of the requirements of the grant that the NHPRC awarded to Northern in February, 1992. To relate this part of the story, I have relied almost exclusively on a number of reports and the minutes of some meetings that relate to this. Of course, to some extent I have also relied on my memory. Copies of most of these reports and minutes are among the NMU grant records in folders dated either just “1992,” or “1992-1994”. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3 and GR, 2/18, 2-3-5-3, respectively. When I based what I say on documents other than those in these grant records, I have documented that.

As a result of Gayle Martinson’s visit during her job interview and by studying the grant application and other documents we gave her, she had familiarized herself well with the situation at Northern before she arrived. She was ready to “hit the ground running,” so to speak. Many looked forward with anticipation to her coming and to welcoming her. Before she arrived, the members of the History Department, for instance, agreed that they should meet with her as soon as possible to express their support for her and her mission and to discuss any concerns that she might have. RMP, 4/2, 34-05-34 As time would tell, the library staff felt the same way. This was generally the feeling also all across campus on the part of those in the know.

The new archivist was required by NHPRC guidelines to report regularly to the Archives Project Board, now known as the Archives Project Advisory Board, and to the director of the library, recently renamed the university librarian. I, and later Perrin Fenske, as Project Directors of this NHPRC Archives Project, were required to submit reports to the NHPRC every six months.

IMPLEMENTING THE ARCHIVES PROJECT GRANT REQUIREMENTS—YEAR ONE

I found being the project director to be a lot easier and more pleasant than I expected. One of the most important reasons for that was that we now had an excellent, experienced, professional archivist and records manager in charge of implementing the grant requirements. She demonstrated that she was well informed and capable of undertaking the challenge before her. She exuded a confidence that quickly generated an equal amount of confidence in those observing her. This confidence was demonstrated not only with regard to things she handled in the short term, but also in regards to directing our records management and archives program in such a way that we could be confident that it would be where it needed to be by the end of the two-year NHPRC grant period.
MARTINSON ASSUMES HER RESPONSIBILITIES

In a September 16 memo to John Berens, Martinson revealed her strategy for implementing the records management program. It shows that she intended to begin her activities in the President’s Office, “establishing records retention schedules” there. This would entail working with the chief secretary of the office to determine how long records of permanent value should be retained in that office before they were to be sent on to the archives for permanent retention. Also, if they had some worth, but were not of permanent value, how long should such records be stored by the archives before they were destroyed? Finally, it was necessary to establish which records had no value so they could be scheduled for immediate destruction.

Following this, or while still doing the initial scheduling of the records in the President’s Office, Martinson informed the university librarian that she intended to ask each member of the President’s Council to ask their office staffs to support the archives’ records management initiative underway. In conjunction with that, one of her first undertakings would be doing a records management and filing workshop for all the administrative secretaries of all of the top administrative offices. Her approach with them was going to be to educate them first in records management techniques and then to establish retention schedules. All this was in line with NHPRC wishes. Martinson stuck with that, but she was independent minded too. When she thought there was a better way to do some things than what was listed in the grant proposal’s work plan, she was prepared to check that out with the NHPRC as to whether she could do things her way.

This happened, for example, in connection with working out retention schedules for these offices. Martinson proposed that rather than moving horizontally from one top office to another in doing the required retention scheduling for all of the top twelve administrative offices, she wished instead to move vertically down any one of them to their sub-offices before moving on to the next major office.

To get NHPRC permission, Martinson called Richard Cameron of the NHPRC to ask him about this possibility on October 22. Prior to this, she had also discussed the idea with me; I felt it made a lot of sense. I told her that I would support her in giving Cameron a call about it, if that is what she wished to do.

Martinson found Cameron very understanding and accommodating. He and Martinson agreed that I, as Project Director, should formally request the changes in writing which they had agreed upon. Cameron would then provide me with written approval of Martinson’s request, with perhaps some further suggestions. On October 30 I sent Cameron the following letter:

I think Northern will find that it has been very fortunate in having been able to obtain the services of Gayle.... She is knowledgeable, has vision and drive, and a good sense, it seems to me, of what needs to be done to build the archives and records management program into a good, viable, professional entity. There is no doubt that Gayle is committed to achieving the ultimate objective of the grant
proposal and within the designed time frame. She does feel, however, that in the interest of efficiency it would make sense if there were some deviations from the work plan outlined in the grant proposal and in our subsequent correspondence of December 1991. Because of that I am asking that you consider whether or not the following changes could be allowed:

1. Do not conduct a mail survey of all campus offices, but rather conduct on-site records management scheduling surveys over the two-year grant period.
2. Conduct record management surveys based on the enclosed work plan (upper administrative offices and thereunder, division by division) rather than the proposed initial twelve offices.
3. Establish archives policies, procedures, and forms as well as increase awareness and publicity about the archives, but not develop an Archives Procedures and Policies Manual nor concentrate on processing archival collections at this time.
4. Within the two-year grant period, concentrate on establishing viable records management and university archives programs rather than identifying regional collecting interests prior to the end of the two-year grant period.

The enclosed work plan will give you some sense of some of the initiatives Gayle undertook shortly after she came. She presented a work plan to the President’s Council the second week of her employment at Northern. Since then she has been working out records retention schedules with some of the main administrative offices of the university on an individual basis and [at] the same time preparing materials for workshops she will be conducting with administrative secretaries.... I am also including some publicity that has been shared with the university community via a campus publication. The information in this publication also appeared in local newspapers and was broadcast on local radio,GR,2/18,2-3-5-3

On November 20, Cameron sent me the following reply, formally granting us NHPRC approval to do the things Martinson discussed with him earlier by phone, and later via letter:

I have no problem with the four changes that you suggest. The changes regarding the survey procedures and the order in which offices will be surveyed are relatively minor.

Although the production of an archives procedures and policies manual was mentioned as a product of the grant, as long as basic policies, procedures and forms are established, I don't believe that the writing of a formal manual is necessary. However, I think that bringing together some of the information on records management procedures in the form of a manual might be useful in conjunction or as a follow-up to the workshops Gayle is planning. In my phone conversation with Gayle she indicated that she was willing to do this. As I recall she produced such a records management manual in a fairly basic spiral bound format, when she was archivist at UW-Stout, and I think something similar should be substituted for the Archives Procedures and Policies Manual originally proposed for this project.
Finally, I agree that the major focus of your two-year grant project is to get the records management program and university archives well underway. I would hope before the end of the grant that some consideration of future directions for the program, including its acquisition of non-university materials could be accomplished, but extensive planning for these activities may well be premature. I also agree that processing of archival collections should not be a major focus, although the transfer of selected key records series with high reference value following the scheduling of the offices of origin would certainly be permissible under the terms of the grant.

I appreciate your sending the publicity. The President’s letter is certainly a great introduction for the project. I am delighted with the start you have made and look forward to your first formal report due at the end of February. Good luck with the work ahead. GR, 2/18, 2-3-5-3

THE FIRST ARCHIVES PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

As project director, I called for the first Archives Project Advisory Board meeting for November 6, 1992. Of course, Martinson and I were present, as were Berens, Clumpner, Slavcheff, and Theresa Spence. Martinson provided a two-page summary of her accomplishments, changes in the NHPRC work plan she was able to affect, and challenges she was encountering. The Board was unanimous in expressing its approval of her efforts to date. Below I will mention a few of them. However, I will mention most of them in conjunction with reporting on my first semi-annual report of February 1993 or they will be mentioned in the final report.

A particular problem Martinson had been encountering stemmed from a request that the Records Division of the Michigan Department of Management and Budget (DMB) had made. It was that the retention schedules for the various NMU offices all be kept by Martinson until all of the schedules for all of these university offices were completed. Only then would it be acceptable for her to submit them to DMB for approval. She had wished to submit them office by office as they were completed, both to learn if the DMB felt she was doing things correctly and in order to be able to say that some things had been completed. At our November meeting, Theresa Spence promised to assist Martinson in seeing if these State officials would agree to her wishes. Spence, having been a president of the Michigan Archival Association, knew some of the people who carried weight within the DMB. She also obtained the help of Sandra Clark, now Director of the Michigan Bureau of History, and of David Johnson, State Archivist. Together they were successful.

Martinson reported that she feared that her budget would prove insufficient for accomplishing the NHPRC’s work plan. Berens, in response, recommended that she prepare a budget which she felt would be adequate. She also felt that additional space would eventually be needed. Berens again was very accommodating. He promised to make more of those 9’ x 11’ offices in the LRC available whenever she needed them. She also requested some internal renovations of the archival space. It will be recalled that this is something I had requested back in the March-May 1992 period. But I was turned down because the
belief was that such renovations were impractical then because they would be made obsolete when the 1994 general space renovations of the LRC commenced.

At that meeting too, Berens reported the decision of the Faculty Academic Senate regarding the promise in the grant proposal that an Archives Advisory Committee of the Faculty Senate would be created to permit input from the university community on archival matters. As a follow-up on that, on September 29, 1992, I had sent a memo to the chairperson of the Academic Senate requesting that consideration be given to the creation of such a committee. But to control the proliferation of Senate committees, it denied the request. It suggested instead that the Senate’s Library Advisory Committee already existing be reorganized to include the archives. That was done. Under the new arrangement the university librarian and the archivist/records manager (A/RM) were both authorized as ex-officio members and would sit in on meetings of the reorganized committee. Given the library’s commendable attitude toward the archival concerns, I was happy with the compromise. GR, 3/10, 2-3-5-3

MY FIRST SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT TO THE NHPRC

In my first semi-annual report of February 1993 to the NHPRC I was delighted to report some great progress. However, I will not report some of what was in it until the end of this chapter.

One of the things I mentioned in that report was Martinson’s early efforts to obtain a first-hand understanding as to what the archives’ relationship would be with the library as a division of it. Soon after she arrived, she had requested a meeting with the university librarian. They agreed that in order to maintain good communications, initially at least, the two of them would meet once a week and that she would meet with the entire library staff once a month. Martinson agreed to provide the university librarian with a written report monthly. The A/RM would serve as a member of those library committees which were most relevant to her archives/record management activities. Finally the university librarian would honor the promise made in the grant proposal that the archives would have a separate budget even though it was a unit of the library.

I reported that Martinson had met with Joanna Wager, Northern’s Collections Development Librarian, to discuss possible changes in the way the library had seen itself as “preserver of university materials.” They did reach an agreement: the library would immediately transfer some types of archival materials in the library to the archives. Others would be transferred later when it was more appropriate.

I also reported that Martinson had already gotten twenty-eight schedules into their final draft and that 100 more were in progress. By this time, too, she had developed what she called a Records Description and Action form (RDA). She adapted this from one she had developed at the University of Wisconsin, Stout. She found it very useful for tracking the progress of records being scheduled.
Martinson had also been thinking of various kinds of equipment which would facilitate accomplishing her work. She petitioned the university librarian for funds for a laptop computer and was successful. A laptop would reduce considerably the time required of her and her student help to do inventorying and scheduling in the field.

She also developed brief, to-the-point handouts which she used in conjunction with her records management workshops. She found that secretaries responded quite a lot better when information was given to them in this format rather than in a more formal policies and procedures manual.

I reported that by this time too, Martinson had familiarized herself with Michigan’s laws regarding confidentiality and freedom of information matters (as opposed to Wisconsin laws—Martinson’s former state of operations) and with other relevant statutes impacting records stewardship and retention. She had reached understandings with Northern’s legal counsel as to the level of involvement it wanted to have in making records retention decisions. She established understandings with Northern’s administrators as to how confidential university matters in their records would be handled.

As noted earlier, the matter of space had continued to be an issue. She was concerned about the question of where to eventually store records of permanent value for which there might not be room in the archives. Another concern was about where to store records of a more temporary nature, scheduled for removal from the office of their origin but which had to be stored somewhere before they eventually would be destroyed. Consequently, she arranged to meet with Carl Pace, head of the University’s Warehouse, Purchasing and Distribution Department known as Central Receiving and with Sheila Etelemaki of the Finance and Administration Office. This to discuss the possibility of establishing a “records center” in Northern’s warehouse.

These discussions resulted in the beginnings of NMU’s off-site Record Center which today in 2015 is such an important part of the archives’ storage and records management system. The significance of this is that she had been successful in getting some appropriate authorities to make some off-site storage space available for records management and preservation purposes on a permanent basis. No more of the harried casting about for some place to store records such as had been the case when the first batch of the Jacobetti collection arrived.

Martinson also obtained an agreement with Central Receiving and the Office of Finance and Administration regarding the transportation of university records for archives and records management purposes. Pace agreed that Central Receiving would henceforth do the transporting of university records from the university’s offices (1) to the archives, (2) to off-site storage, or (3) to a disposal site as needed—all at no cost to the archives. Pace and Etelemaki agreed as well to do the same for any archival collections which became available in the Marquette area or in the central region of the U.P. Wow! They agreed to do so in accordance with understood guidelines for the protection and security of the materials involved. The encouragement and cooperation of the university’s top officials with the archives/records management effort had made a tremendous difference in
attitudes toward these endeavors. The NHPRC had been wise to request that representatives of Finance and Administration be on the Archives Project Advisory Board and to be involved with the whole effort of implementing the archives project.

With respect to processing, by the time I gave my second report (August 1993), Martinson had found that even though the grant proposal called for very little actual processing during the two-year life of the grant, circumstances had arisen which, she felt, gave her no responsible choice but to do some of it. People were particularly curious about the Voelker papers and wanted to do some research in them. She also knew that as valuable records from places such as the president’s office were transferred to the archives, she needed to be able to retrieve information from them rather rapidly at times. In some cases, of course, she needed to establish this control only to a very elementary level.

Once Martinson was faced with the need to begin processing she was faced with another challenge. What kind of an information control and retrieval system would she use? This meant evaluating the system in use at the time. The grant proposal also called for this.

I was all in favor of this evaluation. Even though we had been using a software program that had been recommended by our archives consultant in 1985, with all the improvements which were being made in technology and in software programs, I was not at all confident that continuing to use the Micro MARC:AMC software was the best way to go?

Martinson plunged right into evaluating various systems. She decided on a full-text database management and retrieval system called InMagic and by mid-1993 it was purchased. It would provide folder-level subject access. Not only did she begin employing it in processing new collections, but she also began reprocessing some of those which had already been done.

Martinson’s $5,000.00 allowance for student help had made it possible to hire and train six students. That meant that much more archival work was done than had been possible before the grant went into effect. The work of the students included processing projects, filing, reference work, publicity initiatives, help with records management endeavors, etcetera. She stated that her student assistants had been performing very well for her and that she greatly appreciated them.

At times Martinson also did some processing herself. She reported that on one occasion she allowed herself the pleasure, as she put it, of reprocessing the McClellan papers. In general, however, she had continued to spend most of her time on records management matters.

About this time, in mid-1993, Martinson also decided to begin sharing online some bibliographic data regarding the holdings of the archives. To do this she utilized the MARC:AMC (Machine Readable Cataloguing for Archival and Manuscript Control) work form. Once the form had been filled out she or a student forwarded it to the library cataloguer for review. The data was catalogued for libraries through OCLC (The Online Computer Library Center) into the library’s online catalogue (Crystal) as well as into the
online public access catalogue known as NOTIS (Northwestern Online Total Integrated System).

As noted in chapter 21B, in February 1993 the university sponsored a recognition banquet with respect to the Voelker accession. Martinson used this event to achieve some additional helpful publicity for the archives. She produced an exhibit from the Voelker papers to demonstrate just how informative these papers could be. She also produced a handout about the collection. A substantial number of people were in attendance. This all was in harmony with the kind of publicity the NHPRC wanted to happen.

To further accommodate the interest which existed in the Voelker collection at the time, Martinson agreed to give a presentation about it at the Iron Industry Museum in Negaunee Township in July. Producing a presentation like this only drove her further in the direction of doing at least some preliminary processing of small but interesting portions of the collection.

At this time patron interest in the Jacobetti Collection was not as great as it was in Voelker’s. Nevertheless, demand which might be generated by something like Jacobetti’s death, did cause Martinson some concern. Consequently, as noted more fully in chapter 21A, she decided to investigate whether or not at least some preliminary processing could not also be done on the portion of the collection which had already been transferred to Northern’s warehouse. But then she discovered that Jacobetti had not yet signed a Deed of Gift Agreement. In view of this she felt that she could not proceed with the processing of any of that collection. Because of the unusual history of the acquisition of this collection—detailed more fully in chapter 21A as well—she then contacted Matthew Surrell and President Vandament, offering to meet with Jacobetti about getting a Deed of Gift Agreement signed. But for reasons associated with Jacobetti himself and his circumstances, this did not happen prior to his death in November, 1994. In her May 29, 1994 report, she stated, “The Jacobetti Papers stay on dead center. Supposedly, Jacobetti [has] been on the verge of signing a donor form several times.”

By 1994 too, in order to have at least somewhat of a handle on what was in the warehouse, Martinson also did some inventorying for the time being at least of accessions that had been placed there. Again she was especially concerned to do this for accessions in which she judged there might be greater than usual interest. One such accession was that of the so-called NMU Women’s Job Corp. While at it, she also inventoried the James Goulette Papers.

Meanwhile, as noted already, within the archives from earlier on, accessibility to all of its space continued to be an issue. There still was no internal access to the extra 1200 square feet of space Rena Fowler had secured for the archives just before she left the university. Thus daily operations still had to be conducted from within that small 800 square feet of space out of which I had operated even though the grant proposal had promised 3500 square feet! In addition to the other things that transpired, the 800 square feet could only accommodate one patron at a time.
Early on, Martinson had requested that at least some renovations be made to make a somewhat larger amount of the 1200 square feet of space available internally. Despite this, prior to the end of the grant period nothing happened. Consequently, Martinson was obliged to ask some of her student assistants to do processing in rooms which were not internally connected to the main portion of the archives.

At the same time, however, Martinson had been thinking of and planning for the archives’ long-term space needs. What amount of space was realistic and would not result in a shortage in the future? This also drove her into calculating, on the one hand, how much space would be needed if traditional shelving was used, and on the other hand, how much if space-saving, compact shelving was installed. She also had to calculate how much space would be required in the LRC building if at least some of the university’s records and eventually some of its manuscript materials could also be stored off-site. How much space was the university willing to provide to the records center? To help with these space calculations, she had at least one sales person who specialized in compact-shelving draw up floor plans providing estimates of the amount of storage space that would be needed if compact shelving was used and if traditional shelving was used. Each plan also had associated with it a certain amount of off-site storage space.

This sort of planning was something the NHPRC wanted to see happen as well to finally secure the space for the archives and records management system which had been promised to it. When the planned 1994 renovations finally got underway, the sense Martinson had developed of what was needed proved very helpful. It contributed to moving the location of the archives from where it had been in the northwestern part of that first floor of the LRC to the southeastern part. That was more conducive to providing the space needed for shelving, and because that location was near a large elevator would provide easier access to the archives from the outside.

Martinson also became involved in investigating other storage mediums such as microfilm or optical disk imaging. Fowler had wondered about possibilities such as these as a way to prevent a space shortage crisis in the future, and she had that written this into our grant proposal as something which needed to be investigated. Martinson saw the wisdom of this and joined a committee of the Office of Finance and Administration to investigate the possibility of utilizing optical disk imaging. Eventually she decided that at least for the time being, she would go with the microfilming option. She, therefore, requested that a certain amount be budgeted for this purpose each year.

Given her conclusion regarding microfilming, she investigated how a microfilm reader/printer might be acquired via grants. More generally, she also drew up a five-year equipment plan. With regard to supplies, she requested a $1500.00 increase.

**CHANGING OF THE GUARD**

In the middle of this two-year archives project, Martinson suddenly and unexpectedly found herself under new leadership again. This was similar to when she arrived at NMU in 1992 and discovered that Rena Fowler had resigned and that she would be working under
John Berens. Now John Berens was leaving Northern to become director of the library at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh.

At this time I also retired unexpectedly. It was because of health problems I was contending with at this particular time. Obviously, eventually they were overcome.

These changes in leadership did not adversely affect the progress Martinson was making. She knew what she wanted and needed to do and kept pressing on. Carolyn Meyers was appointed interim university librarian. She was just as committed as Berens had been to assisting Martinson in any way that she could. The university wisely asked Perrin Fenske to assume my position as project director. He did this in addition to his other responsibilities. He would agree to do so, he said, only provided that I would agree to continue to serve on the Archives Project Advisory Committee as a volunteer, even though I no longer was employed by the university. I agreed.

In a letter to the NHPRC’s Richard Cameron with regard to the changes in leadership, I stated, “Since my interest in the development of an effective archives in this region of Michigan will not cease with my retirement, I have agreed to help in this way....” Cameron wrote back acknowledging the changes in leadership and saying, “We are pleased that you will continue to be involved in the project.... The continuity you can provide will be very valuable. I...am glad to have had the opportunity to work with you....” Cameron also wrote Fenske saying that he looked forward to working with him “to ensure the successful completion of your project.”

Fenske was an especially good choice. As the reader will recall, he had been associated with the effort to obtain the NHPRC grant and thus was very familiar with the goals of the project. He, therefore, also provided important continuity—as did the university’s top leadership. The support of the President, of Academic Affairs, of Finance and Administration, and of University Relations, as well as of the library’s division heads, and that of others remained solid. This, even though the university was still dealing with what turned out to be a three-million dollar reduction in state funding for 1992-1993, and the outlook was similar for the next year as the President’s Council minutes show.


The information which follows comes primarily from two sources: Gayle Martinson’s final project report dated May 29, 1994 to the Archives Project Advisory Board, and Perrin Fenske’s final report dated October, 1994 to the NHPRC.

Martinson and Fenske both had made additional reports earlier during that final year. Martinson’s last report shows where she felt some additional things stood by then. Fenske’s report provides some of his conclusions regarding what was achieved during the grant period and the challenges which still remained.
TAPE MAKING AND LISTENING EQUIPMENT

The acquisition of some great oral history equipment occurred during this final period of the Archives Project. As the reader will recall, Professor Magnaghi and others, including his students, had been tapeing oral interviews for historical purposes since the 1970s. From early on, he had urged that these tapes be catalogued and made available for research. Many of them were while I was archivist. No really appropriate equipment for listening to the tapes, reproducing them, and transposing their content to hard copy, etcetera, was available in the archives prior to this time. Magnaghi, who had recently been appointed university historian, had shared this on-going situation with President Vandament. The latter then came up with $4,000.00 to purchase better equipment. Much to Martinson’s delight, this now provided the archives with the ability to effectively do “tape mastering, field recording, and reading-room listening.”

PROPER PROFESSIONAL PROTOCOL

But not everything was going perfectly! For example, another violation of archival protocol occurred during this period. An archival principle is that the archivist should play the primary role in archival policy and decision-making with regard to accepting donations, at least initially. What happened could again have been out of ignorance of what proper protocol is. An item in Martinson’s report reads, “Weathered a big controversy over the Voelker papers.” (Her underlining.) Her report states that Carolyn Meyers, Interim university librarian for 1993-1994, met with President Vandament about it. One of the consequences was that Martinson was instructed “to write guidelines for donor contacts outside of the archives.”

Somewhat along the same line, in his final report Fenske observed that some university officials and secretaries were still not adhering to essential professional practices and granting the archivist the role she needed to have if she was to fulfill her responsibilities properly. Fenske stated, “The position of archivist at Northern Michigan University exists within a very political environment where communication channels involving archival issues and controversies have not always included the archivist. The concept of an institutional archives remains an unfamiliar one with much of the university. Offices are reluctant to relinquish their “goodies” and in several instances have continued to develop separate office archives.” These things were, of course, problems I had to contend with too. It highlights how much time it sometimes takes to change deeply engrained cultural habits. Apparently the process still had a ways to go despite the good things Martinson was affecting.

PHOTOGRAPHS, EXHIBITS, AND PUBLICITY

Martinson’s report reveals that she and her student assistants had become quite heavily involved in organizing and caring for the university’s photographs too during the previous year. This was prompted in part by the desire of patrons to see photographs and her need to use them for a variety of purposes. As a result, she put some of her students to work organizing them into subject files. Martinson wanted control over them especially to use
them for creating exhibits. This to generate additional publicity—something the NHPRC guidelines called for. With some of them, she created a hypercard stack on the history of campus buildings from 1899-1951. It was created with scanned-in photographs, brief histories of the buildings, and with biographies of the namesakes of the buildings. Buttons were used for navigating the pictures. The intent was that the stack would be placed on the campus internet and perhaps also showcased on campus in some way during the beginning of the fall semester for new students and faculty.

Martinson had a student assistant build two sets of portable exhibit panels. She used them for creating a Kaleidoscope at a regional children’s fair held in the Superior Dome. The theme of the fair was U.P. and family history. The exhibit consisted of several old photos on the exhibit panels coupled with an interactive component. She then published a brief article about the fair and the part the archives played in it. The expectation was that using the panels and doing these kinds of exhibits would be ongoing.

The archives was also involved in helping to prepare exhibits for the Women’s History Month. Not surprisingly Martinson was invited to become a member of NMU's Centennial Celebration Committee.

Through taking advantage of speaking opportunities, Martinson publicized the archives and its value. During this period she spoke to the Northland Historical Consortium, Michigan Archival Association, and Midwest Archives Conference. She spoke to a group of U.P. labor leaders and at a Labor Advisory and Planning Committee meeting informing them of the archives’ interest in collecting U.P. labor materials. She spoke too, to several university classes (Office Systems, Graduate English Seminar, and Public History).

It is evident that Martinson put a lot of thought and energy into publicizing the archives and its services, especially during that last year of the archives project. In his final report, Fenske summed it all up this way: “The Archives is slowly making itself known throughout the university, region, and the state.” He noted that articles about the archives had appeared in the local Marquette newspaper, the university's staff newsletter, the library’s newsletter, and in the newsletter of the Michigan Archival Association.

Most of the publicity Martinson produced was well received. One piece was not. It had to do with a brochure she produced about the archives. This was something the NHPRC had wanted to see happen too. (Actually before Rena Fowler resigned, she had either produced her version of such a brochure or at least had begun working on one.) Objections to the brochure had to do with a name-change she introduced for it. She changed the name from Northern University Archives and Historical Collections to Central Upper Michigan and University Archives. (Incidentally, Fowler had suggested a name change earlier too but nothing came of it.) The difficulty arose because of her being unaware of some history which had occurred between Northern and the Marquette County Historical Society Library and Museum. See chapter 1, for example.

The name change undoubtedly was done to more accurately define the region of the Upper Peninsula in which the archives intended to work in the future. (Early on there had been
talk of the archives collecting in both the central and in the eastern part of the U.P. For various reasons, any intention of collecting in the eastern portion of the U.P. had been abandoned by this time).

When the Marquette County Historical Society Library and Museum’s Board saw the brochure it objected to it, feeling the language in it was too ambiguous, and posed a threat to the role the Society would feel free to play in curating Marquette County materials in the future. Northern finally felt that it had to modify the language.

The issue eventually—by the second half of 1994—landed on the desks of NMU’s top administrators—President Vandament, Vice President Beukema, and Thomas Peischl, the new university librarian. On September 27, 1994 Martinson sent Peischl a revision of the brochure. He, in turn, sent it on to Vandament with the following note hand-written on it. “Bill, this is a copy replacement I shared with Phil…. Does it meet your needs and concerns?”

COOPERATIVE COLLECTING ARRANGEMENTS

The NHPRC also desired to see the archives develop a cooperative collecting arrangements with the other central U. P. historical preservation agencies and groups. Because that had not yet happened and the situation with the Marquette County Historical Society Library and Museum was causing some alarm, the administration decided to place the collecting of non-university records “on hold” for the time being.

The good news is that before long understandings were reached, the administration’s “on hold” order was lifted, and both NMU’s archives and the MCHSLM were free to collect non-university materials in the Central U.P. The understanding reached was that Northern was free to collect historically valuable materials which MCHSLM was not interested in collecting or capable of servicing, and which were in danger of being lost if Northern did not acquire them. This, of course, required continued communications with MCHSLM.

All-told, Fenske felt that all of Martinson’s efforts to reach out to the preservation groups was praiseworthy enough to mention in his final report. He stated:

The Archivist has made contacts with the Michigan Iron Industry Museum, Marquette Maritime Museum, Marquette County Historical Society, Copper Country Archives at MTU, various Michigan University Archives in southern Michigan, and a number of smaller local historical societies.

The acquisition of the John Voelker Papers (200 linear feet) shortly before the arrival of the archivist has suggested several regional collection foci including environmentalism, tourism, economic development, recreation, U.P. authors, and underrepresented groups. Development of a draft collection mission statement is expected to be completed in the spring of 1995. At that time, the archivist intends to receive input and outline cooperative collecting arrangement with historical societies, public libraries, and other agencies within the central Upper Peninsula.
UNIVERSITY RECORD SCHEDULING AND ARCHIVES PROCESSING ACCOMPLISHMENTS
BY JULY 1994

The main thing which Martinson, of course, was expected to achieve during the two-year life of the grant was this: get university’s record dispositions scheduled for many of the offices on campus by 1994. Despite some stonewalling which still was occurring on the part of some offices, how did she do on this? “Outstanding” is what Fenske implied in his final report. He stated that:

Over 250 specific and general record retention schedules were developed during the two-year grant project. These schedules cover approximately sixty-nine campus offices and departments.

Training sessions were conducted to assist office secretaries in records management principles, filing principles and systems, records retention and scheduling issues, confidentiality and freedom of information concepts, and vital records identification....

Several offices, most notably the College of Arts and Science, have completely revamped their office filing systems according to the archivist's recommendations and are most pleased with the results.

The NHPRC undoubtedly would be happy about these results. But it also encouraged the reporting of things which had not gone as well as had been hoped. So Fenske reported some examples of that too. He stated, “To date several key offices have not participated in the campus records management program.” Furthermore “constant reorganization of university offices has made newly developed retention schedules immediately obsolete.” And also, “Several participating offices have either not returned the draft retention schedules (despite numerous proddings) or have not transferred any records to the Archives per retention schedules.”

This indicates that some of the problems I had encountered in 1985 still existed. Now in 1994, even with all of the education and administration support which had developed since then with regard to records management, some offices still were not really cooperating. Disappointing. However, it is evident that these offices were exceptions to the rule. Relatively speaking, tremendous progress had been made in changing practices and the culture since that time when records management ideas first were introduced.

On the archives front too a lot of good things had happened. Fenske noted that all of the necessary policies, procedures and forms which were necessary for the archives to be performing its functions well had been developed. The archives’ reference work had been going “remarkably” well too, he stated. A five-year equipment plan and a desired facility plan had been developed as well.

Fenske proudly made note of the InMagic system which had been purchased and of the over 45 MARC:AMC work forms which had been completed and forwarded to the library’s
cataloguer for review and input into OCLC and the NOTIS system. Furthermore, he stated that an additional twenty-five record series had been organized in preparation for this as well. Additionally, about 20 more unprocessed collections had been entered into the new database in order at least to have access to them. One of these collections was 51 linear feet of subject and correspondence files from the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Interestingly, my account of the birth of Northern's archives is based quite heavily on records from that office. They may be the same ones transferred at that time. If so, they are still unprocessed in 2015.

CONCLUSIONS

Hopefully the reader will agree that by July 31, 1994, a fairly solid foundation had been established at NMU for an on-going, successful records management program. The university community had quite widely come to accept it as well and come to utilize it. By 1994 too, the archives operation, while still relatively small, was functioning in accordance with professional standards and cutting-edge methodologies. This is not to suggest that all desirable improvements had been achieved, but barring some monumental catastrophe, things were well enough established to assure that the entire archives/record management program would survive and achieve its purposes. The gratifying level of support the program had come to enjoy from Northern's top officials by this time helped to assure that. Furthermore, a professional, experienced Archivist/Records Manager was now directing the whole program. There was every reason also to believe that this kind of direction would continue.

These things had been the goals from the beginning. This makes it possible, I believe, to say legitimately that the first phase of the creation of Northern’s Archives and Records Management System had been completed.

The fact that this happened by 1994 is good reason for ending this history at this particular year. It is true that adequate renovated space and the equipment associated with that had not yet been obtained; but we also know now in 2015 that the plans which were then being discussed for these things were serious too and came to fruition shortly.

As noted, it was NHPRC’s grants too which contributed so much toward bringing about this happy result. They, in a sense, very much helped to place a capstone on this first phase. They helped as well to make 1994 a milestone year in the development of NMU’s archives/records management system. I found a mimeographed document which summarizes well the important role which the NHPRC’s grant played. The document appears to be a draft of a thank-you letter to NHPRC. Its author is not identified, but internal evidence strongly suggests that it was Fenske: It reads in part as follows:

The NHPRC grant has enabled us to go beyond [meeting] the need for full-time professional staffing and [to] move steadily towards establishment of a visible, viable archival and records management program at Northern.
At the time of the grant award, Northern [did not yet have a] centralized records management program [although an attempt had been made earlier to start one]. The Archives was being managed part-time by Dr. Clifford Maier from the Department of History. Indeed, it is due to Dr. Maier’s dedication and persistence that the Archives has grown stronger with NHPRC grant stimulus. In the process of writing the grant, a home for the Archives was hammered out. It is now an established and welcomed Library unit....

By supporting Northern Michigan University in our archival efforts, the NHPRC has encouraged us to manage our information, preserve our history, and become an active participant in [the] preservation of [the] Upper Peninsula’s heritage.

Thank you for your support.

The benefits associated with the NHPRC grant were a whole lot more than the $72,000 dollars plus received in 1992. The wisdom and guidance which the Michigan and national NHPRC grant evaluators provided during the writing of the grant was invaluable. They were dedicated, knowledgeable, experienced, and exceptional individuals who most sincerely desired to see Northern develop a successful archives. Their advice and recommendations helped to create a clear, well designed work plan—a road map to build on a beginning which had already been made. Following the work plan was a requirement—or the grant was forfeited. That too helped assure that the effort would be successful.

As this account has revealed, Northern’s archives developed from just a vision into a respectable archives and records management system. With little support initially, minimal finances, very little space, and with only a minimally trained part-time archivist, it nonetheless developed into the accepted, firmly established and engaged archives and records management system it became by 1994. Along the way many hurdles and difficulties had to be overcome. Determined vision, persistence, education, flexibility, and adaptation conquered that daunting climb onto that 1994 plateau. I end this story expressing respect and gratitude to all who contributed to that happy result.

My wife, Eleanor, wanted me to include the following with regard to the contribution I made. You be the judge as to whether you think she is correct. She wrote, “I think that one of the most important contributions you made was your willingness to step down as archivist and announce your intention to do so long before you needed to. This was especially true relative to the hiring of the next archivist. You could have sought to stay on as a minimally trained, inexperienced archivist. This very well could have happened; but if so progress could not possibly have been what occurred under the direction of Martinson. She was a highly trained and experienced archivist who had the capacity to implement that work plan well and understood from experience what was necessary to take the archives to the next level—a cutting-edge level.”
EPILOGUE

In my introduction, I stated that without unwavering vision, a huge amount of educating, and determined persistence the effort to establish an archives at NMU at the time the effort was being made mostly likely would have failed. What do you think? If you would like to let me know or make other comments, e-mail me at cmaier@nmu.edu or write me at 1903 Mildred Avenue, Marquette, Michigan, 49855.

This study and the experience of launching the archives has led me to some general conclusions. In most cases I had already reached them prior to my involvement with this project. But when so, they have been certainly reinforced through this.

The importance of documents. I was impressed once again with the great importance of documents in obtaining an accurate picture of a particular historical development. This, of course, is especially true if the documents are concurrent with the events being described. To use the words of the former radio commentator, Paul Harvey, in order to get “the rest of the story” there might well be no better place to go than to the documents—and if they are in an archives, to it—although that is becoming less and less necessary with digitization.

The importance of documents in changing perceptions. This account has also impressed on me how obtaining that fuller picture which documents can provide, can change a person’s perceptions of what happened and why. For example, I have been surprised by how much more sympathetic I have become to Northern’s administrators through the study of some of the relevant documents (not available to me at the time) than I was when I was seeking to obtain their support. Had I been a bit more aware of the pressure for funds and other things bearing down on them from many different quarters—all of them for good causes in the eyes of those making the requests—I would have been more understanding of their sometimes seeming indifference or lack of perceptiveness regarding the importance also of the preservation of historical research resources.

The importance of an adequate amount of information sharing. This study has impressed on me how important adequate information sharing is among all parties involved in a project. It definitely results in more effective planning and decision-making. Even though I was intimately involved with the development of Northern’s archives from the start, at times I did not know a considerable amount of what was being considered or decided upon regarding its development, and why. As previously indicated I discovered some of the facts years later during my research in the documents upon which this account is based. This is not to imply that there is not an appropriate place at times for withholding some information from subordinates. Still everything possible should also be done to maintain a partnership relationship.

The importance of vision and education. The great importance of vision was reinforced upon me once again. Without it, it is possible that Northern still would not have an archives, let alone the admirable professional archives and records management system that it is now in place. And this experience has impressed on me the very important role that preparatory
education sometimes has to play in launching something new. When it became apparent that I would be heading up the attempt to establish an archives, I thought that most of my time would be spent working in the archives--acquiring, processing, and servicing materials. I found instead that a great deal of time also had to be spent on educating regarding even the need for an archives in the minds of some and secondly, regarding the need to have a truly effective professional one. Vision had to be created before priority could emerge. And education was the essential tool for that.

*The importance of perseverance.* My experience while establishing this archives provides unquestionable evidence for the importance of “hanging in there” until “the time is right.” I came awfully close to quitting once or twice. When I now look back at the good that I believe has come from persisting, how glad I am that I did not quit; and how glad I am that the members of the History Department did not cease to support the vision and the cause they took up in 1982. Had that happened the effort would have collapsed at least until 1989. For the department, it often would have been nice to have that extra credit-hour production which my teaching full time again would have produced show up on their records. Nevertheless its members persisted in their willingness to sacrifice for the cause until a full-time professional archivist was hired, and the archives was securely established.

Of course, there were others in addition to the members of the History Department “who hung in there” too. They also made important contributions to the ultimate success of the project. Many of them are listed in chapter 20.

*Potentially great, gratifying psychological rewards come with the acceptance of challenging assignments.* This, of course, is a truism. But my experience in helping to establish the archives, once again proved this to be the case. While being involved was not always exciting and it involved some daunting challenges, I am glad I became persuaded to take on the project. My life became enriched considerably by my experience. I saw a great cause become a reality, and I received some of the most gratifying compliments and psychological boosts that I have ever received because of it.

Three such compliments came my way soon after my retirement in 1993. One of them can be found in Perrin Fenske’s 1994 final report, quoted toward the end of chapter 22. I will not repeat it here.

The second came from Gayle Martinson in a letter dated October 26, 1993. She stated the following:

> I hope you feel comfortable in visiting the Archives whenever you find the time and inclination. I very much appreciate and value your stewardship and continuing support. You know, I’d be overjoyed if you’d ever like to be involved in identifying and securing collections for the Archives on a volunteer basis. However, I’m sure you have many requests for your time so I’ll understand if your commitments take you elsewhere. CMPC, 2/12

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Coming as this did from an experienced, respected archivist whom I had come to admire greatly, I found her affirmation and sentiments particularly gratifying. I would have loved to agree to become such a volunteer, if for no other reason than out of appreciation for what she was doing. But by this time, along with health problems and a book I was seeking to complete, I had already become heavily involved with volunteering at the Marquette Maritime Museum. So I did not.

The third gratifying compliment came in a note to me from President Vandament after I had sent him a “thank you” letter on September 7, 1993. In it I thanked him for the great support he had provided to the effort to get an university archives and records management program established at NMU and for the partnership some of us were able to enjoy with him in that effort. I thanked him too for the kind of an open presidency he was conducting with the university community.

I quote the President’s note for a second reason as well. It provides an indication of the kind of outlook and culture that was in existence at Northern at the highest level by this time. It also reveals the regret a president felt with regard to his inability to preserve one piece of NMU’s history during a very challenging financial period of time and his desire to somehow make amends for that “failure.”

The President’s note was dated November 4, 1993 and read as follows:

Dear Cliff:

Thanks for your kind letter of 9/7/93.

I treasure our escapades to establish the Archives and Voelker collection. Neither could have been accomplished without your skill and dedication.

I, too, am sorry that we could not save Longyear. As we have learned from the demolition, however, the costs would have been much greater than the 2.9 million estimates. I hope we can make amends by creating other means by which our history is passed on. Cordially, Bill V.

Thrilling things are ongoing at NMU’s archives. I close with a few select, gratifying observations I made in the archives this past year; gratifying because they are evidence that thirty years after its founding, the archives continues to develop both academically and professionally along the lines of the original vision for it and in accordance with promises made regarding it.

1. An early vision for the archives program was that it would be a vehicle for teaching students both archival theory and archival practice. Today, Marcus Robyns, the Director of the Archives, does both of these things in courses he offers and a policy he has of requiring student employees to assume similar responsibilities in the archives as they would assume as professionals working in other archives.
2. In October 2014, I became acquainted with a student excitedly doing research a couple of afternoons per week in the Jacobetti papers in NMU’s archives. That this would happen was an expectation when the archives was founded. But it, nonetheless, was thrilling to see it actually happening all these years later. It was even more so because the student was using the very records which helped stimulate the founding of the archives.

3. In 1991 the library promised to provide the archives with technical support services. It was great to see that it continues to honor that commitment it made almost twenty-five years earlier. During 2014 on more than one occasion, I witnessed Krista Clumpner, or one of her associates, visit and work in the archives in their technical support roles.

4. The goal of the archives having at least two permanent positions was something I vigorously pursued while the archives was being established. That goal was finally realized this past July, 2014—thirty years later. A second, full-time professionally trained archivist, Sarah Kiszka was hired. Her specialty is heading up the digitizing effort of as many of Northern’s records as is practical. This will help maintain the archives as a cutting-edge professional operation.

If possible, go visit the archives!!!!!!! I think you too will be impressed with what is happening there today.
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