

Allan Roy Horton, BA, Hon D Litt, ALAA

Archives Officer, Mitchell Library

It has been said recently that Allan Horton 'was the first Archivist with that title in New South Wales'. If we concede that the responsibilities attaching to the appointment in 1888 of James Bonwick as 'Archivist' of the colony of New South Wales¹ were scarcely those which characterise the work of archivists today, then there is not much doubt that Allan Horton was indeed the first professional archivist in New South Wales.

He was appointed as Archives Officer with the creation of a separate Archives Department of the Public Library of NSW in 1953.² The significance of his appointment in the context of the history of archival development in New South Wales cannot be exaggerated, because it represented a crucial stage in the evolution of our modern archival system. For the first time in New South Wales, although not in Australia,³ a statutory authority – the Public Library of New South Wales – assumed formal responsibility for the care, control, management and use of the State archives. In order to gauge the significance of his appointment for archival progress in New South Wales, it is as well to recall the circumstances which had preceded this development.

Allan Horton's appointment marked the culmination of a long campaign to urge upon the Colonial and State governments the necessity of making proper provision for the keeping and use of its archives. Adverting in October 1833 to the disastrous fire which destroyed the Treasury Chambers in Washington in April 1832, when 'great part of the Correspondence prior to 1825' was consumed, and 'a vast multitude of documents destroyed', the *Sydney Herald* cautioned 'those persons to whose charge important documents are intrusted in this country' that 'we are rapidly advancing as a commercial people, and some attention should be paid to our future history', urging the government 'to erect a suitable building for Government Offices, which might be of sufficient magnitude to contain all the Colonial Offices and thus concentrate the public business of the country. In this proposed edifice might be established an office where all such records as may be useful for future times should be deposited.'⁴

Some half a century later, following the enactment of the Centenary Celebration Act of 1887,⁵ in which provision was made for the erection of a 'State House', a *Herald* correspondent contemplated 'how far the proposed building might worthily subserve such purposes as have been attributed to it as the Treasure-house of all reliques and memorials of our past struggles for a national existence, and as the place of safe custody for all public records, archives, commissions, dispatches, and other important instruments of State as they may be collected by the Government or presented by private benefactors...'⁶

The author of this letter pointed out that 'in addition to the vast quantity of public documents possessing an historical interest now hidden away in cellars and lumber-rooms, or on the dusty shelves of our public offices, we might reasonably expect to obtain fac-similes, if not the originals, of an immense number of dispatches and other documents relating to this colony now stored in various State offices in London and elsewhere. These will require careful and conscientious arrangement by some competent hand, and a permanent custodian will be needed to keep them accessible to inquirers. It is absolutely impossible to provide proper quarters for what we may count upon receiving in this department elsewhere than in a building specially designed for, and accommodated to, the objects in view.'⁷

Ida Leeson wrote in 1940 that, in New South Wales, the Mitchell Library had 'taken over a considerable mass of official records, and is, actually though not officially, a State archives'. Previous to this, the department of the Chief Secretary, who had long been known as Keeper of Records, was the main archive repository. 'In 1934 and in 1936, on the request of the trustees, the Chief Secretary handed over to the Mitchell Library all the department's records down to the year 1855. By this action the library was recognised as the proper repository for State records, and became, in fact, though not in name, the New South Wales State Archives.'⁸

In the year prior to Allan Horton's appointment as the first Archivist, the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales took the opportunity in the annual report to point out to the Minister for Public Instruction that although they were recognised by the Premier's Department and by the Public Service Board as the proper custodian of the archives or public records of the State, the Public Library had not the statutory recognition or authority as an archives or public record office which had been given to State libraries and other institutions in

other States of Australia and elsewhere. 'Statutory authority and definition', they stressed, 'is highly desirable to ensure the preservation of these important administrative and historical records, additional to, but apart from other historical archives, and they strongly recommend that legislative provision be made for their preservation by amendment of the Public Library and Art Gallery Act 1899, or of the Library Act 1939, or by a special archives statute.'⁹

It will be apparent from the foregoing account that when there was no statutory authority in New South Wales formally delegated with responsibility for controlling and regulating the disposition, reception, accommodation and use of the records and archives of the State government, the Public Library of New South Wales, and in particular the Mitchell Library, was providing a *de facto* archives service to the government and the citizens of New South Wales. In fact, the Board of Trustees of the Public Library, Gordon Richardson, Acting Principal Librarian and Secretary of the Public Library of NSW, wrote in March 1957, was 'the one authority consistently interested and active in the preservation of archives, both public and private, over the last 50 years'. Responding to a recent article on archives in the *Sydney Morning Herald*,¹⁰ Richardson pointed out that there had been standing instructions to departments since 1912, from the Premier or from the Public Service Board, that records were not to be disposed of without reference to the principal librarian. One result had been that large groups of State archives, some of which dated from the earliest years of the colony, had been transferred in the last 25 years to the custody of the trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales, where they were then preserved in the 'archives department' of the library, which also controlled the repository for semi-current records, many of which would in time become State archives.¹¹

In January 1958, John Metcalfe, Principal Librarian of the Public Library of NSW, noted that 'everywhere there has been past and even recent uncontrolled and unauthorised destruction of records, but through the constant efforts of library trustees and librarians over 75 years, there has been less in NSW than elsewhere in Australia'.¹²

When, in its issue of 2 August 1958, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published an editorial, 'Preserving State Records', responding to the NSW Government's announcement of its intention to introduce a State Archives Bill, it hesitated to welcome the move 'unreservedly', because

the government had decided to perpetuate the arrangement of 'handing over all its State records to the Public Library and making the Public Librarian State Archivist'.¹³ While the arrangement may have seemed a natural development, the *Herald* questioned whether it was really wise, because 'in all civilized States in Europe and America, it is now recognised that it is better to keep archives separate from libraries'. Moreover, it pointed out that the care and collection of records needed special skills which librarians could not be expected to have; and a Federal committee appointed to examine the Canberra National Library under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor of Melbourne University (Professor Paton) had just recommended the complete separation of Federal archives from the National Library. It seemed a pity, the editorial concluded, that New South Wales alone should be swimming determinedly against the stream of expert opinion on this matter.¹⁴

It was in the context of this debate, while employed as Archivist with the Mitchell Library, that Allan Horton responded to some assertions made by Dr David MacMillan, Archivist of the University of Sydney, in the *American Archivist* in January 1957,¹⁵ notably that 'the failure of the government of New South Wales in the 1890s to establish a repository has resulted in the starvation of the archives as a branch of the Public Library', and that, in addition, 'the existence of the Mitchell Library with its archival material has led to another complication', and concluding that 'as far as the state records are concerned, the picture, at the moment, is not promising. Storage facilities, staff, independence of action, and finance are all sadly lacking.'¹⁶

In his paper published in the *American Archivist* in January 1959, Allan Horton pointed out that the State Library had been the *de facto* archives of the State for the last 50 years, and that, although not a firm foundation on which to build a State Archives, the right of the Principal Librarian, acquired since 1910, to inspect 'old documents' of all departments before their destruction, the energy of successive Principal and Mitchell Librarians, and the reputation of the Mitchell Library itself as a repository of historical material for Australia and the Pacific area resulted in many, perhaps most, of the State's inactive records coming into its custody.¹⁷ He acknowledged that, while the library was recognised as the State's archival institution, there was no record retirement program. 'The State', he wrote, 'still did not have an Archives Department in the modern sense.'¹⁸ While conceding that the archival

position in New South Wales was by no means ideal – there was no archival legislation, there was not enough satisfactory repository space, and there was a general lack of understanding by departmental officers of the benefits that good archives management could bring to government – he thought that an unbiased observer, in judging the archival position of New South Wales at the time, was bound to take into consideration the ‘indisputable fact’ that if the State Library had not interested itself in record preservation there would have been fewer records preserved and those records that were kept by departments would have been stored in out-of-the-way places, without supervision, without care, and without hope that any competent authority would interest itself in their future.¹⁹

This was a recurring theme in his published writings in subsequent years. In company with Ian Maclean, then Chief Archivist of the Commonwealth National Library, Canberra, David MacMillan, Archivist of the University of Sydney, Marjorie Jacobs, Acting Professor of History, University of Sydney, and John Metcalfe, Librarian, Public Library of New South Wales – all of whom were influential advocates for improved archival services in New South Wales – Allan Horton presented a paper entitled ‘Archives in New South Wales’ at the Summer School in Archives held by the Business Archives Council of Australia (NSW Branch) at the University of Sydney 5–7 March 1957, and these papers were published by the New Century Press in the same year.²⁰ In this paper, he outlined the main reasons advanced by the theorists for and against the association of libraries and archives, exemplifying the different approaches by reference to the practices adopted in other countries with established programs for the preservation of public and private archives, observing that ‘historical fact’ determined the type of custodial control of archives:

The development of combined or separate archives and libraries and the scope of these institutions has to a large extent depended on which institution has been first in the field, the wealth and ambitions of that institution, and the local pressures that have been applied.²¹

Throughout the debate, he consistently defended the role of the Board of Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales as the most appropriate custodian of the State archives, justifying his approach on the basis of the historical role of the Mitchell Library in archival

preservation, and in the light of his experience, not only of the tardiness of the New South Wales Government, but of the governments of other states and nations in recognising the importance of making adequate and appropriate provision for the impartial management of the public archives, whether by the establishment of an independent archival authority or by the Public Library.²²

His appointment as Archives Officer with the Mitchell Library came to an end when he was seconded to the New South Wales Public Service Board for further training and experience for a period of twelve months from 8 June 1959.²³

Archives Section, Library Association of Australia

The formation of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia (LAA) was conceived at a preliminary meeting held during the General Conference of the Association in Melbourne in July 1950, and formally constituted in 1951,²⁴ this being the first occasion in Australia when practising archivists sought to organise themselves as a representative professional body. Following his appointment as Archivist with the Mitchell Library, and for the ensuing decade, Allan Horton became an active member and office bearer, regularly attending conferences and contributing to the gathering pace of archival progress in New South Wales.

Amongst the first priorities to which he devoted his attention was the introduction of a program of training in archival methodology. In 1950, a paper on the subject of 'Archives, with Special Reference to Australia' was incorporated in the syllabus of the LAA Registration Examination.²⁵ At a meeting of the Board of Examination of the LAA held in Sydney 18-19 April 1962, following three years of discussion, approval was given for submission to the LAA General Council of regulations for the Registration Certificate in Archives, providing for the LAA to become the recognised examining and professional body for archivists in Australia, as it had been for librarians since its inception as the Australian Institute of Librarians in 1937.²⁶ Thereafter, the Registration Certificate in Archives provided the sole means for archivists in Australia to acquire professional accreditation until the inauguration in 1973 of the Graduate Diploma in Archives Administration at the School of Librarianship, University of New South Wales.

From 1955 to 1961, Allan Horton was an Examiner, initially with Ian Maclean, and from 1958 with Robert Sharman, for the LAA Registration Paper 'Archives with Special Reference to Australia'. Following the introduction of the Registration Certificate in Archives in 1962,²⁷ he was Examiner in Paper 16 'Records Management and Physical Preservation of Archives'.

As a member and office bearer of the Archives Section Committee of the LAA in 1962, with ten years experience as the Archivist with the Public Library of New South Wales, and a decade before the inauguration of the first tertiary graduate level archive training program in Australia, he brought invaluable knowledge and experience to the deliberations of the Section Committee at a crucial stage in the formulation of regulations for according professional recognition and accreditation to archivists in Australia. At the Library Association of Australia's 18th Biennial Conference, held in Melbourne 24–29 August 1975, a recommendation was adopted that the Archives Section of the LAA be dissolved, following the formation of the Australian Society of Archivists on 5 April in the same year,²⁸ followed by the eventual phasing out of the Registration Certificate in Archives. In the earliest years of its operation, as an Examiner in the Registration Certificate papers on Archives, and in collaboration with several notable contemporary practitioners, including Phyllis Mander Jones, BA, Harold White, MA, Ian Maclean, BA, Robert Sharman, BA, Gerald Fischer, MA, and Gordon Richardson, MA, Allan Horton set the syllabus and examined in the Archives papers for the earliest formal training of archivists in Australia.

Joint Editor of *Archives and Manuscripts* with Phyllis Mander Jones

When *Archives and Manuscripts* was first published in November 1955 in duplicated typescript format (in which it continued when the editorship passed to HJ (Jim) Gibbney in June 1956),²⁹ Allan Horton, who was then employed as Archivist with the Public Library of New South Wales, was a joint editor with Phyllis Mander Jones, Mitchell Librarian from 1947 to 1958. It is evident from a reading of these early issues that he was an active and informed participant in and contributor to the deliberations of the Archives Section almost from its inception.

Dr TR Schellenberg's visit to Australia

During the visit to Australia of Dr Theodore R Schellenberg, Director of Archival Management in the United States National Archives, as a Fullbright Lecturer, he conducted a seminar of eight sessions on Records Management at the Public Library of NSW 15–24 June 1954, which was attended by Library officers and by representatives of State and Commonwealth departments and other interested organisations.³⁰ Early in 1955, two officers from the Archives Section of the Public Library attended seminars in Canberra conducted by Dr Schellenberg,³¹ one of whom was Allan Horton.

In the November 1956 issue of *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, Allan Horton contributed 'A Further Note on the Problem of Local Records',³² as a rejoinder to the earlier paper in the same journal by Keith Penny of the Archives Section of the Commonwealth National Library on 'The Problem of Local Records'.³³ In his 'Further Note', he foreshadowed the establishment of 'semi-current' or 'intermediate' records repositories in major regional centres within New South Wales, for the reception, accommodation and consultation of State archives, as well as the archives of local government authorities, practically identical to the 'regional repositories' of the present State Records Authority of NSW.

His interest in and commitment to both the management and technical aspects of archives administration did not cease when he was appointed Associate Librarian at the University of New South Wales on 21 April 1960. His informative technical paper entitled 'Techniques of an Archive Survey', in which he outlined the procedure for undertaking an archive survey as a means of obtaining the information required to design an archival program, was published in *Archives and Manuscripts* in August 1960.³⁴

Graduate Diploma in Librarianship, University of New South Wales – Archives subjects

He continued to share his broad knowledge of the management of archives and records with students enrolled in the elective archives subjects following the inauguration of the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales in 1960. A course of one hour per week in 'Archives Theory, Records Management and Government

Publications', which was initially offered within the Graduate Diploma of Librarianship program, is believed to be the first occasion on which formal training in the management of archives and records was offered at a university. Commencing in 1966, this subject was expanded into three graduate diploma courses on 'Archives History and Theory', 'Records Management' and 'Archives Practice',³⁵ this latter course in 'practical work' also being offered for the first time at an Australian university.

Archives of the Library Association of Australia

As General Secretary of the Library Association of Australia in the mid 1970s, he took an early and enthusiastic interest in making proper provision for the preservation of the archives of the Association, then located at the Association's headquarters at Surry Hills, including the archives of the Association's predecessor, the Australian Institute of Librarians, established in 1937, arranging for the inactive records of the Association to be transferred to the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales, where preliminary steps were taken for their arrangement and description by students enrolled in the recently established Graduate Diploma in Archives Administration. This project was the first occasion on which students enrolled in the Archives Administration course undertook practical assignments involving work with original archives, and the experience soon led to the subsequent development of the concept of the archives field work activity which provided many students thereafter with their first opportunity to apply the fundamental archival principles to archival accumulations *in situ*.

Archival research collections at the University of New South Wales Library

Although in retrospect, it will probably be regarded by some archivists as an imprudent decision on the part of the University of New South Wales to become involved in the acquisition and keeping of archives other than its own – especially by those who recall the fate of the archives acquired by and deposited with the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney by the University Archivist, Dr David MacMillan, following the formation of the Business Archives Council of Australia (NSW Branch) in the 1950s – it is, with the benefit of hindsight, evident that Allan's decision, as the University Librarian in the 1980s, to provide

accommodation within the University of NSW Library, and financial support for the maintenance of the 'Ethnic Community Archive', which was conceived by Dr Peter Shergold, then with the School of Economic History, and the 'Industrial Relations Archive', which was established on the initiative of Dr Chris Fisher of the School of Industrial Relations, was motivated by the best of intentions, which was to ensure that the University Library met the needs of the whole of its constituency, including those whose research depended upon the availability of original archives. When funds became scarce, and the Library was no longer able to provide continuing support for the 'Community Archives' as it was known, the University Library found itself the custodian of other organisation's and individual's archives which it could ill afford to maintain in a proper manner. The University also incurred the displeasure of the Australian Society of Archivists and the Archives of Business and Labour (subsequently the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour) at the Australian National University, for trespassing upon a collecting area which, by priority of entry, had traditionally been reserved to itself. More recent events touching upon the custodial responsibilities of universities and their obligation for providing proper facilities and resources for archival research collections serve to remind us that archival collections within universities are usually vulnerable.

Archives Authority of New South Wales, 1967–1987

Allan Horton was appointed to the Archives Authority of New South Wales as a successor to John Metcalfe, BA, FLA, FLAA, a foundation member of the Authority who served from 1 June 1961 until 31 May 1967.³⁶ Following John Metcalfe's death on 8 February 1982, the Archives Authority noted that he 'had made an important contribution to the establishment of the State Archives', and placed on record its appreciation of 'his invaluable work in ensuring the preservation of the State's archives, as well as his magnificent contribution in the field of librarianship in Australia'.³⁷ It was during Metcalfe's incumbency as Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales that the first appointment of an Archivist was made in the person of Allan Horton. It seemed to be a fitting succession, therefore, that Allan Horton, who was the first keeper of the State archives when they were in the custody of the Mitchell Library, should take the place of Metcalfe on the Archives Authority of New South Wales.

Allan's appointment was as nominee of the Minister for Education to represent the University of New South Wales, pursuant to section 4(1)(d) of the Archives Act No. 46, 1960, effective from 1 June 1967, and he continued as a member until his retirement from the Authority upon the expiry of his term of office on 31 May 1987.³⁸ From 1978, he was also a member of the Authority's Publications Committee, which was responsible for planning and overseeing its publications program.

Altogether, Allan Horton served as a member of the Archives Authority for a total of twenty-one years, during which he attended 115 out of a total of 130 main business meetings of the Authority, as well as an additional 6 out of 8 supplementary meetings, and one special meeting. At its meeting held on 10 April 1987, the Archives Authority acknowledged 'the very important contributions to the work of the Authority over a long period' which had been made by Allan Horton, who retired concurrently with Dr Lionel Gilbert, who had represented the University of New England on the Authority from 1975.³⁹

During the tenure of his membership of the Archives Authority, which he held practically concurrently with the position of University Librarian at the University of New South Wales, Allan Horton maintained an alert interest in the broader field of archives in Australia, as exemplified by the several occasions on which he felt personally impelled to bring to the attention of the public, the inadequacy of provision made by both State and Commonwealth governments for the proper preservation and accessibility of their archives. On one of these occasions, following a fire which destroyed 10 large Commonwealth-owned woolsheds and their contents, at Botany in October 1969,⁴⁰ he warned that the New South Wales Government State Records Repository at Shea's Creek, Alexandria, was accommodated in two similar sheds and housed unique and irreplaceable records, among which were valuable State archives for which no fireproof storage space was available, at the same time pointing out that the State Archives Authority had been for some years pressing for the construction at Kingswood (which site had been acquired in 1964) of a suitable building to store records, including some of the material then in the buildings similar to those which had proved to be so inflammable. He foreshadowed the consequences for government as well as for the rights of citizens of the State if the NSW Government Records Repository caught fire, and the destruction of irreplaceable archives which document the history of the State, finally

urging the government to make finance available for the Kingswood Repository in the present financial year.⁴¹

On another occasion, he urged the necessity for the Commonwealth Government to establish a Commonwealth archives commission consisting of representatives of the Parliament, the executive and the judiciary, together with an equal number of representatives of scholarship.⁴² This was more than a decade before the enactment of the Commonwealth Archives Act 1983, which, some forty years after the appointment of the Commonwealth Archives Committee, provided a statutory basis for the National Archives of Australia.

When he felt it necessary to assert and defend the role and responsibilities of the Archives Authority of NSW in the face of political interference in the destruction of public records, as when the NSW Premier announced that 50,000 files held by the Special Branch had been destroyed at his instruction,⁴³ Allan Horton did not hesitate to seek an assurance from the government that destructions of this type could not take place legally, and that the law should be observed, pointing out that a dangerous precedent could be created by this action if it passed unchecked.⁴⁴

Although best remembered as a professional librarian and an ardent advocate of the value of libraries and information services for the public, as well as for an informed and prosperous nation, the scope and depth of his understanding and knowledge of archives and manuscripts, acquired from his apprenticeship in the Mitchell Library 'Archives Department'⁴⁵ between 1953 and 1959, and his long service as a member of the Archives Authority of New South Wales, from 1967 to 1987, enabled him to have a continuing influence over archival development in Australia for upwards of thirty-five years.

Disposition of the archives of the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)

Between 1991 and 1996, Allan was a member of a small Archives Committee, established by the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), comprising Jeanette Knox (Macquarie University Library), Eoin Wilkinson (former Macquarie University Librarian), Allan Horton (Emeritus UNSW Librarian), Jennifer Nicholson (ALIA Secretariat) and Peter Orlovich (University of NSW). The role of the

Committee was to develop a plan for the permanent deposit, in a suitable repository, of the Association's archives, which had been in the custody of the University of NSW Library since the 1970s. This Committee recommended, and the ALIA Council endorsed the decision that they should be deposited with the National Library of Australia. Allan provided invaluable guidance during the deliberations of this Committee on account of his long and intimate association with the Library Association of Australia and its successor, the Australian Library and Information Association.

The University of New South Wales Archives and Advisory Committee

Established in 1949 as the New South Wales University of Technology, the University of New South Wales established a University Archives and appointed its first University Archivist, Laurie Dillon, in 1979-1980. From the outset, the University Archivist reported to the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Rupert Myers, through one of the Pro Vice-Chancellors, and the University Archives was located within the Chancellery. The University Archives was later transferred to the University Library, and in recent years, the University Archivist has reported to the University Librarian, while the budget for the University Archives is provided from that of the University Library. From its inception, a University Archives Advisory Committee was appointed, and Allan Horton was an early and valued member of that Committee until his retirement in 1988.

Conclusion

Allan may not have been a member of the Australian Society of Archivists, nor have been the recipient of one of the Society's awards, but there can be no doubt that such pioneering devotion to the cause of archives in Australia is deserving of worthy recognition by his archival colleagues. That he has not been so recognised may be accounted for by his equally significant legacy in the field of librarianship for which, perhaps, he was better known. His unique contribution to archival development in Australia will surely be accorded the prominence it deserves when that history is written.

Allan Horton died on 16 December 2003, aged 75 years and was privately cremated. A memorial service was held at St Faith's Anglican Church, Narrabeen on Friday 19 December 2003. A commemorative function to celebrate his life and work was held at the University of NSW Library on Friday 23 April 2004. He is survived by his wife, Elma, and children Joy, Paul, Jill, Felicity and Michael and their families. Another son Geoffrey died in childhood.

Peter Orlovich

Endnotes

1 See Russell F Doust, 'James Bonwick, "Archivist of New South Wales"', *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 3, no. 8, May 1969, pp. 9-15.

2 Allan Horton, 'Archival Backgrounds in New South Wales', *American Archivist*, vol. 22, January 1959, p. 46.

3 In her paper entitled 'Development of Archival Work in Australia' presented to the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science in Perth in 1926, Miss Bessie Threadgold noted that 'In South Australia a State archives was established in 1920 as a separate department of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery, with a special grant.' *Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science, Transactions*, Perth, 1926, vol. 18, p. 439.

4 *The Sydney Herald*, Thursday 17 October 1833, Editorial.

5 'The Centenary Celebration Act, 51 Vict. No. IX, An Act to make provision for the fitting celebration of the Hundredth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Colony and for other purposes connected therewith', assented to 13 July 1887.

6 Letter to the Editor from 'Exonienses', entitled 'That State House', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 11 August 1887.

7 *ibid.*

8 Ida E Leeson, Mitchell Library, 'Archives in New South Wales', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 1, no. 2, October 1940, p. 96.

9 *Eighty-first Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales for the year ending 30 June 1952*, dated 11 March 1953, p. 1.

10 Article by a staff correspondent entitled 'Businessmen and Officials Will Hear about Archives', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday 4 March 1957, p. 2e-g.

11 GD Richardson, Acting Principal Librarian & Secretary, Public Library of NSW, Letter to the Editor on 'Preservation of Archives', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 7 March 1957, p. 2d.

12 John Metcalfe, Principal Librarian, Public Library of NSW, Letter to the Editor 'Archives in NSW', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 14 January 1958, p. 2c.

13 Editorial 'Preserving State Records', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday 2 August 1957, p. 2a-b.

14 *ibid.*

15 David S MacMillan, 'Archives in New South Wales – the Situation in 1956', *American Archivist*, vol. 20, January 1957, pp. 49–55.

16 *ibid.*, p. 52.

17 Allan Horton, 'Archival Backgrounds in New South Wales', *American Archivist*, vol. 22, January 1959, p. 42.

18 *ibid.*, pp. 44–5.

19 *ibid.*, pp. 39–48.

20 *Archives – Techniques and Functions in a Modern Society: Proceedings at the Summer School in Archives held at the University of Sydney, March 1957*, New Century Press, Sydney, 1957, pp. 20–30. See also *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 1, no. 4, August 1957, p. 37.

21 Allan Horton, 'Archives in New South Wales', *Archives – Techniques and Functions in a Modern Society: Proceedings at the Summer School in Archives held at the University of Sydney, March 1957*, p. 20.

22 The debate on the most appropriate administrative arrangements for the 'impartial management' of the public archives was a recurring theme in the history of Australian archival development both preceding and following the period of Allan Horton's appointment as Archivist with the Mitchell Library. See, for example John Metcalfe's Letter to the Editor, 'History of archives', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 March 1968, p. 2.

23 *88th Annual Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales for the year to 30 June 1959*, dated 24 August 1959, p. 18.

24 Editorial by Allan Horton and Phyllis Mander Jones, *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 1, no. 1, November 1955, p. 1.

25 RC Sharman, 'Library Control of Archives', *Australian Library Journal*, vol. IX, no. 3, July 1960, p. 127.

26 *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 2, no. 3, July 1962, p. 12.

27 *ibid.*

28 Report on proceedings of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia, *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 6, no. 5, November 1975, p. 175.

29 Editorial by RC (Bob) Sharman, *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 2, no. 1, June 1963, p. 1.

30 *83rd Annual Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales covering the year ended 30 June 1954*, p. 5.

31 *84th Annual Report of the Trustees of the Public Library of New South Wales covering the year ended 30 June 1955*, p. 6.

32 Allan Horton, Archives Department, Public Library of NSW, *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 7, no. 27, November 1956, pp. 334–5.

33 Keith Penny, 'The Problem of Local Records', *Historical Studies: Australia and New Zealand*, vol. 7, no. 26, May 1956, pp. 215–19.

34 Allan Horton, Associate Librarian, University of NSW, 'Techniques of an Archive Survey', *Archives and Manuscripts: Journal of the Archives Section of the Library Association of Australia*, vol. 1, no. 7, August 1960, pp. 8–14.

35 Ann Enderby, 'Practical Training for Archivists', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 3, no. 5, November 1967, p. 9.

36 *Report of the Archives Authority of New South Wales for 1967* [covering the year ending 31 December 1967], p. 8.

37 Meeting of the Authority on 12 February 1982, *Archives Authority of New South Wales Annual Report*, 1982, p. 21.

38 *Archives Authority of New South Wales Annual Report*, 1986/1987, p. 8.

39 *ibid.*

40 In its annual report for 1969 (p. 7), the Archives Authority of NSW drew to the attention of the Minister for Education a disastrous fire which destroyed nine identical storage sheds owned by the Commonwealth at Botany in October 1969, noting that informed opinion, including that of the Board of Fire Commissioners, was that under certain conditions it would be impossible to prevent a similar disaster at Shea's Creek. In the following year, it had occasion to point out again (*Annual Report*, 1970, p. 7) that in April 1970, fire completely destroyed a similar shed and its contents less than a quarter of a mile from those occupied by the Government Records Repository at Shea's Creek, adding that the fire was contained mainly because it occurred on a calm and windless morning.

41 Allan Horton, Librarian, University of NSW, 'Records in danger', Letter to the Editor, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 October 1969.

42 Allan Horton, Librarian, University of NSW, 'Archives', Letter to the Editor, *Australian*, Monday 28 February 1972, p. 6.

43 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 June 1978.

44 Allan Horton, Letter to the Editor, 'Archivist's interest in Special Branch files', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 June 1978.

45 In their 68th Report for the year ending 30 June 1938, the Trustees of the Public Library of NSW reported that 'As the Mitchell Library had become virtually an Archive Department, the Trustees had accepted the custodianship of large collections of papers of various government departments' (p. 5).

Allan the Archivist

This address was presented at the Allan Horton memorial function on 23 April 2004 at the University of New South Wales.

I suppose many of us in this room today owe our careers and livelihoods to Allan and I am no exception in this regard. Having started my career as a library technician at the University of New South Wales and moving through various positions at the University Library before becoming the State Library's first Collection Development Librarian in 1987, presently I am an Associate Director at the State Records Authority of NSW, an organisation which recently celebrated 25 years of practical independence from the State Library.

Before I launch into my talk about Allan's great contribution to archives in Australia I would like to pause and mention a rather funny incident which occurred when Allan was University Librarian here at UNSW and I had just been appointed to the position of Serials Librarian in the Social Sciences and Humanities Library.

Allan was fond of showing visitors around the library and he was especially proud of the reader services on offer at UNSW, in comparison to Sydney University which was always held up as the benchmark (in library collections, not reader services, I might add). On this occasion he had a delegation of Indonesian librarians who were duly introduced to Alan Walker, Social Sciences and Humanities Librarian and myself Alan Ventress, Serials Librarian – the Indonesians looked at each other quizzically – I am sure they thought Allan was involved in some sort of

strange Australian nepotism by only employing men called Alan. Allan quickly explained that we were not related but I think there was a certain element of doubt in the minds of our visitors!

Allan Horton was a most committed librarian and archivist and he advocated for and supported archives throughout his career. In November 1953 an Archives Department of the Public Library of New South Wales was established, purposely independent of the Mitchell Library and Allan Horton, then a young but already experienced librarian, was put in charge. He was directly responsible to the Principal Librarian, at the time John Metcalfe. In a real sense Allan can be regarded as the first formally designated Government Archivist for NSW. Another State Librarian, Russell Doust, records in his thesis about the administration of archives in NSW from 1880 to 1960 that the establishment of the Archives Department was done on the initiative of Mr J Frape of the NSW Public Service Board. Mr Frape was instrumental in the success of the new Archives Department by ensuring it had the full support of the Public Service Board which at the time was all-powerful.

During this time Allan's name was never far from the forefront where archives were concerned, and in 1954 he represented the Public Library of NSW at a high-powered seminar on archives in Canberra which helped outline the framework for archives legislation in NSW that came to fruition in July 1961 with the passage of the Archives Act. At the time Gordon Richardson the Principal Librarian was also made Principal Archivist in an attempt to resolve some of the more difficult philosophical issues in separating government archives from the Public Library. At the time it is reliably reported that Mr Richardson as Principal Archivist wrote to himself as Principal Librarian – for the file of course. As an aside it is interesting to note that Richardson's Master of Arts thesis was about the archives of the Colonial Secretary's Department, so Richardson could never be accused of not knowing about archives.

Allan also played a significant role in the establishment of archives professional literature in Australia and with Mitchell Librarian, Phyllis Mander Jones was first editor of *Archives and Manuscripts*, the first issue of which was published in November 1955. Subsequently he edited four more issues with Jim Gibbney and was an examiner for archives subjects in the Library Association of Australia's registration examination.

Allan's involvement with the Archives Authority of NSW dates from his appointment to the Board on 1 June 1967 when he replaced John Metcalfe. Allan's term on the Board expired on 31 May 1987 and would have lasted longer had not Gerry Gleeson intervened. Mr Gleeson at the time was Secretary and Permanent Head of the NSW Premier's Department, and was in the process of rationalising the terms of appointment of Board members across all government agencies. Given that the maximum term a Board member can now serve is 6 years, it is unlikely that Allan's record contribution of 20 years' service on the Board of the Archives Authority of NSW will ever be surpassed. In a letter to Dr Ken Knight who was Chairman of the Board at the time, Allan said 'it has been a source of considerable pleasure for me to be a member of the Authority for what I believe is almost 20 years. In that time the Archives has grown to its present stature and importance. I believe that New South Wales has been well served over that time by the various Authority members and I am honoured to be among their number. It certainly gave me opportunities to meet some remarkable men'.

Allan was involved with the establishment of a separate home for archives in NSW from the very beginning and served on the Board until just before he retired from his position as University Librarian in 1988. Clearly this was a magnificent effort and well above and beyond the call of duty. Allan's contributions to the workings of the Board were always practical, incisive and pragmatic and his intimate knowledge of archives management always stood him in good stead.

Lionel Gilbert who was on the Board with Allan for many years tells a wonderful story about Allan's ready wit and acerbic sense of humour, when a board member used the word 'prestigious'. 'Watch it!' Allan warned, for the word originally suggested an illusion created by witchcraft or a juggler's trick. Modern dictionaries no longer stress this point, but Allan liked to trace things to their roots, and Lionel reports that everyone watched their choice of words more carefully thereafter. Brian Fletcher, who also served on the Board with Allan, tells me that he was a stark and welcome contrast in style to the extreme formality of librarians in the Mitchell Library at the time and was a breath of fresh air with his laid-back but focused style.

In conclusion I would like to say on the behalf of State Records that we acclaim Allan's contribution and hard work in the field of archives. What

he did ensured a very strong foundation for our organisation and for archival management in Australia, not to mention the collective memory that is an intrinsic part of the State Records Authority of NSW today.

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State Records Authority of NSW