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## Reach Out

Ann Morgan Campbell  
*Society of American Archivists*

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## REACH OUT

Ann Morgan Campbell.

Don't keep forever on the public road, going only where others have gone. Leave the beaten track occasionally... one discovery will lead to another, and before you know it you will have something worth thinking about.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL

Reach out, reach out and touch someone.

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This issue of Georgia Archive contains important articles by archivists who left the beaten track between the stacks and the search room to reach out and touch new and expanded publics. The authors deserve our gratitude for giving us something very worth thinking about.

Any archival institution is surrounded by publics--that is, distinct groups that have actual or potential interest in or impacts upon the organization. Among our key publics are our researchers, who consume our services; our donors and creators, who supply the materials we administer, our sponsors, who supply necessary resources; and miscellaneous groups whose goodwill is important to our organizations. Our profession still has much to do to enhance our various publics' understanding of our work.

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) has promoted the outreach concept for several years. At SAA's January 1977 Conference on Priorities for Historical Records, this writer chaired a panel discussion entitled "Wider

Use Of Historical Records." To a somewhat skeptical audience, Elsie Freivogel suggested that "if the public institution does not build constituencies larger than those of the academic researcher, the institution is doomed." Howard Applegate declared that "the greatest archival priority should be those projects that include elements of outreach," while Richard H. Brown pointed out that "new styles of teaching and learning, and new interests in particular types of history study, have produced a need and market for packaged archives and manuscript collections at virtually every level of American education."<sup>1</sup>

Markets? Packages? This business school vocabulary seemed out of place to some at a scholarly conference sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Many in the audience argued that archivists should stay on their beaten tracks--serving a limited clientele well rather than dissipating resources on new programs. I disagreed in 1977 and continue to assert that archivists should explore and develop new dimensions of service. In my view, there is no better means of acquiring more resources--a vitally important goal in this period of economic austerity.

In most cases the archival institution's efforts fall into what Philip Kotler has termed "stimulational marketing," a strategy to stimulate interest in a particular offering to which all or important segments of a potential market are currently indifferent. Kotler suggests three approaches:

The first is to try to connect the product or service with some existing need in the marketplace. Thus, antique dealers can attempt to stimulate interest in old barbed wire on the part of those who have a general need to collect things. The second is to alter the environment so that the offering becomes valued in that environment. Thus, sellers of motorboats can attempt to stimulate interests in boats on a lakeless community by building an artificial lake. The third is to distribute information or the object itself in more places in the hope that people's lack of demand is

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really only a lack of exposure.<sup>2</sup>

As you peruse this journal, I believe that you will recognize each of these strategies as they are employed by archivists cum marketers.

In late 1981, SAA's commitment to archival outreach was made evident by the publication of an addition to its highly acclaimed Basic Manual Series. Public Programs, by Gail Farr Casterline and Ann Pederson, takes its place alongside titles reflecting traditional archival tasks such as appraisal, arrangement and description, and reference. To reach out beyond the walls of the search room with new programs, services, activities, and events is indeed a basic archival task.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>For a summary of the Priorities Conference see American Archivist 40 (July 1977).

<sup>2</sup>Philip Kotler, Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, and Control (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. 9. See also Philip Kotler, Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975).