



The President's Archivist Goes to War

Fred W. Shipman in Italy in 1944

By Greg Bradsher

Fred Shipman stepped off the plane that had brought him from Algiers in North Africa to Naples in southern Italy on April 3, 1944. It had been a long trip from Hyde Park, New York, via Washington, then to Algiers by plane, but he had a lot of work to do.

The next day, he made the courtesy visit to the general in charge of Allied operations in southern Italy, then hurried to find the men who would be essential in helping him carry out his mission.

His job: to survey methods to preserve and use Italian archives in the occupied area. These records could be invaluable to Allied intelligence units and military planners as they plotted their next move against Nazi Germany from the south.

As Shipman began his work in Italy, the Allies were assembling millions of men and thousands of pieces of equipment at a secret location in England for the massive invasion of western Europe on what would be called "D-day." Few knew it was just a few weeks away.

Shipman's journey to Italy and his work there came at the suggestion of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander, and with the approval of Archivist of the United States Solon Buck, as well as someone with more than a casual interest in Shipman and his work—President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Roosevelt had chosen Shipman to be the first director of his presidential library in Hyde Park, New York, and he and his wife, Eleanor, had grown fond of him. As a result, Shipman had great rapport with Roosevelt, who had a keen interest in things archival.

Shipman, carrying letters of introduction from top U.S. officials—including a personal letter from Roosevelt himself—quickly made contact with the U.S. and British units and individuals who would be essential to his mission.

The President's archivist was far away from the comfortable confines of Hyde Park. He had gone to war.

U.S. Troop Arrival in North Africa

Awakens Archives to Problem

Early in World War II, reports of war damage to archives abroad alarmed American archivists, who were concerned over the possible fate of the records and archives in areas of combat.

Fred W. Shipman was the director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library in 1944 when he was asked to travel to wartime Italy to survey methods to preserve and use Italian archives in the occupied area.



The National Archives
The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Hyde Park, N. Y.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

January 6, 1944

*OK. For
Carbon initialed
by this President
and referred
to Mr. Shipman
1/8/44*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

The Allied Force Headquarters has requested the Combined Chiefs of Staff to send an archivist to the theater of operations, which I understand means North Africa, Sicily and the Italian mainland. In response to this request Dr. Buck has nominated me to be sent to the theater of operations for a period of three months as archival adviser to the Sub-Committee on Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives of the Allied Control Commission for Italy, and to perform other archival services that may be needed at Allied Headquarters. x4774

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It would be my job to survey the problem relative to records and archives found in this theater and to organize plans to preserve, salvage and make available important records for use in the continued administration and future reconstruction of the area and to preserve cultural materials. The plans are to be carried out by others. It is thought that on the basis of experience in this theater, planning for similar activities in other theaters could be greatly facilitated.

As the request of the Allied Force Headquarters was received during your recent absence from the country, Dr. Buck put forth my name tentatively for this assignment with the very definite understanding that the nomination is subject to your consent and approval. It is proposed that I should retain my status as Director of the Library and go as a representative of the Archivist of the United States on a mission to be performed for and under the direction of Allied Force Headquarters. #

I believe I can leave the affairs of the Library in such condition that they will not suffer by my absence of a few months, should you approve of my undertaking this proposed mission.

Fred
Fred W. Shipman x3900

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x25*



Shipman (standing) consults with President Roosevelt at Hyde Park, undated.

After the invasion of North Africa in November 1942, the National Archives began to think of the practical importance of records in connection with the government of conquered territory.

Also taking an interest in the fate of European archives and records was Dr. Ernst Posner, professor of archival administration at American University. His suggestive paper, titled "Public Records Under Military Occupation," published by the National Archives, was the spark that, according to Oliver W. Holmes, director of research and records description at the time, "suddenly lit our sluggish imagination and opened our eyes to the importance of protecting records as a military measure."

One of the listeners to Posner's talk was Fred Shipman, director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, New York. Shipman, born in 1903, came to Washington in 1929 to work in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress after receiving his B.A. and M.A. degrees from Clark University, pursuing further graduate

Shipman informed President Roosevelt in a memo dated January 6, 1944, that Archivist Solon Buck had nominated Shipman to serve in Sicily and the Italian mainland as an "archival adviser" to "organize plans to preserve and salvage" records. Roosevelt approved with an "OK."

The many domestic demands on the National Archives, intensified by the war, made it slow to awaken to its opportunities to be of service in protecting archives in war areas. Having only begun operations in 1934, the young agency possessed no previous wartime experience.

In 1942, the first year of U.S. participation in the war, the Archives was concerned mostly

about the protection of its own holdings should Washington, D.C., become a war area.

With Allied forces ready to strike North Africa, however, the National Archives turned its attention to European archival treasures that would be endangered by the activities of both friend and foe in the coming struggle. Some were doubtless already destroyed in preliminary bombing operations.



studies at Harvard, working at the American Antiquarian Society, and teaching at Boston University.

Shipman was one of the first professionals selected by the first Archivist of the United States, R.D.W. Connor, for the new National Archives in 1935. On March 16, 1936, he was appointed chief of what later became the Division of State Department Archives.

In December 1938, Shipman became involved with Roosevelt's plans to establish a separate institution for his papers and collections. Connor, who was working with the President on the project, selected Shipman to make a survey of President and Mrs. Roosevelt's papers in Washington. After consulting with FDR, on July 16, 1940, Connor named Shipman director of the first presidential library.

FDR, Marshall, Eisenhower Turn Attention to Records Preservation

Posner's paper prompted Shipman to write a memorandum the next day to Roosevelt

in which he stressed the importance of protecting records in war areas, both for their eventual usefulness to military government and for their cultural value. Two days later, Roosevelt read the memorandum at a cabinet meeting and asked that the members issue any orders required to ensure that records in war areas were given necessary protection.

Following up on Roosevelt's interest and concern, on May 8 Army Chief of Staff Gen. George C. Marshall cabled Eisenhower, then Supreme Commander, Allied Forces of the North African Theater of Operations (NATOUSA), and Jacob L. Devers, then Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces in Europe.

Marshall said the great loss suffered in the past because local archives in cities and towns had been destroyed could be avoided if special care was taken to preserve such archives. He informed them that the President wanted every effort possible to be made for their preservation.

Meanwhile, the military was setting up civil affairs organizations to handle civilian functions in occupied areas. Plans were made at Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) in late March 1943 for civil affairs organization and operations, and by April 15 the planning staff was established.

Back in the United States, the secretary of war established a Civil Affairs Division (CAD) within the War Department, on March 1, 1943. The CAD was to formulate and coordinate U.S. military policy concerning the administration and government of captured or liberated countries, to advise and assist the commanders engaged in such occupation or civil affairs activities, and to train and supply personnel for such activities. Maj. Gen. John H. Hilldring became the CAD director in April 1943.

Not long after the civil affairs organization began taking shape in North Africa, various cultural institutions called on both the British War Office and the U.S. War Department to assign officers to advise on the preservation of historical and art treasures. The British War Office, in light of

their experiences in North Africa, proposed to take steps in advance for the conservation of monuments in Sicily and Italy. The Americans agreed, and two slots were added in the organization table.

Discussions within the military civil affairs authorities led to the creation in May of the Office of Adviser on Fine Arts and Monuments to the Chief of Civil Affairs at the headquarters of Allied Military Government of Occupied Territories (AMGOT). On May 13, Marshall informed Eisenhower by cable that the first American to be appointed to that office was former Harvard professor Capt. Mason Hammond. Hammond was in Palermo by early August, thus becoming the first American "Monuments Man."

Meanwhile, early in July 1943, representatives of the Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies on Protection of Cultural Treasures in War Areas, of which Archivist Buck was a member, visited the National Archives. They asked for the agency's advice and cooperation in developing lists for the armed forces of cultural monuments, treasures, and institutions. Military authorities had already indicated to the committee that such lists would be welcome and highly useful.

Need to Preserve Italian Archives Draws Widespread Support

Most of the information needed was in the National Archives library, and Professor Posner was eager to help. The National Archives furnished overall supervision, materials, typing assistance, and assistance in revision and editing, and Posner began work on a list of Italian archival repositories a few days before the July 10 invasion of Sicily.

During August, Posner prepared a 29-page listing of archival repositories in Italy. At the end of August, Archivist Buck sent a copy of Posner's "Archival Repositories in Italy" to Hilldring, but Hilldring responded that until the War Department received reports on the usefulness of the Italian list, he was not in a position to say whether the National



Hilary Jenkinson of Britain's Public Records Office, also an adviser to the War Office, was appointed to oversee the archives section of the MFA&A.

Archives should prepare similar assembled lists for other countries.

Hilldring said the project should be coordinated with pending studies of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in Europe (the word "Europe" was later replaced with "War Areas"), which came into being with Roosevelt's approval on June 23, 1943. He added that ample general instructions had already been issued to make every effort to preserve local archives and to use the information in them.

Meanwhile, the response to the National Archives' first distribution of the "Archival Repositories in Italy" list to selected government officials was so favorable that it was clear a need was being met.

The Allies, led by Gen. Harold Alexander's 15th Army Group, landed on the mainland of Italy on September 3, 1943. The Italians quickly agreed to an armistice, and Allied government in Italy began when AFHQ dispatched an Allied Military Mission to Brindisi, then the seat of the Italian government.

In November, the Allied Military Mission's duties were transferred to the Allied Con-

trol Commission (ACC) for Italy. Among ACC's functions, through its Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFA&A) subcommission, was supervising the protection and preservation of the monuments, art, and archives of Italy. In late January 1944, the functions and staff of the various military government organizations were merged under ACC, and it was given command over all military government areas in Italy.

As the Italian campaign continued, there was growing interest in the state of Italian archives.

In late October, Eisenhower told the Combined Chiefs of Staff that already the headquarters at Algiers was receiving requests for Italian documents. He indicated that the systematic collection of archives and documents required organized and directed effort by competent archivists. He added:

Suggest if 2 governments desire such collection to be carried out that they make initial designation of 1 archivist with small staff each from United States and United Kingdom. They would be attached to subcommission in education, fine arts and archives of allied control commission. . . . Desirable that they be on hand as soon as possible after occupation of Rome. If suggestion acted upon, request earliest advice to that arrangement may be made.

Within a week, the Combined Chiefs of Staff said they agreed with Eisenhower.

Learning of Eisenhower's October 30 request, the Librarian of Congress, Archibald MacLeish, suggested Manuel Sanchez of the Library of Congress for the job. Sanchez was in the Iberian peninsula at the time, collecting library and documentary material, and was dispatched to Eisenhower's staff.

In response to Eisenhower's request for an archivist, Shipman was attached for three months to the ACC Sub-Commission on Fine Arts, Archives, and Monuments. Eisenhower was informed that Shipman "will collaborate with Manuel Sanchez, who has

already been directed to report to you by Librarian of Congress."

Shipman's Trip Interests FDR; Intelligence Units Get Involved

Not long afterward, President Roosevelt interested himself in Shipman's assignment, and on January 20, 1944, Hilldring notified the National Archives that arrangements had been completed with the North African Theater Commander for the attachment of Shipman to the ACC's MFA&A subcommission. Shipman's mission would be to survey the archival collections, propose ways that G-2 (Army Intelligence) and the Office of Naval Intelligence could use the materials, secure the preservation of the archives, and make them available for ACC's use.

Shipman's trip to Italy, would be delayed and not begin to March. While he was waiting the British War Office had decided to send 61-year-old Hilary Jenkinson, of the Public Records Office (PRO) and archives adviser to the War Office, to oversee the archives section of the MFA&A subcommission. Jenkinson, was, according to Holmes, "almost certainly, the most eminent archivist of his generation in the English-speaking world."

Jenkinson had joined the PRO in January 1906. In 1915 he was commissioned as an artillery officer and went to France, where he served until the end of the war. He returned to England and was posted to the War Office. In 1920 he returned to the PRO. At the request of the Carnegie Foundation, in 1922 Jenkinson published *Manual of Archive Administration*.

A revised edition came out in 1937, and Holmes noted that it was then the only systematic treatment of the field in English and it "inevitably became a Bible to which inexperienced directors and untrained staff members [at the National Archives] turned for guidance." Jenkinson was appointed archives adviser to the War Office in 1943 to advise on the protection of archives in occupied enemy territory. After getting settled in

The National Archives
Washington, D. C. 20540

R.G. 165
Box 2
CAD 0004 Sec. 3

OFFICE OF THE ARCHIVIST

July 27, 1944

Maj. Gen. John H. Hilldring, Chief
Civil Affairs Division
War Department General Staff
Pentagon Building
Washington, D. C.

My dear General Hilldring:

In order to assure that adequate attention is given to archives and records in the European theater generally and in the work of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section, SHAEF, in particular, I am venturing to send enclosed a recommendation that two American archivists be despatched to that theater—Mr. Shipman to go on a temporary mission similar to the recent one to Italy and Capt. Asa Thornton to go and remain attached to the MFA&A Section or to some other unit from which he can give continuing attention to these matters.

The enclosed recommendation is prepared in some detail not so much to persuade you and your office of the need but for use in persuading the theater officers of the importance of the subject if they need persuading. Please feel free to use as much or as little of it as you consider to be desirable in your communications with the theater. It seems to me that the case is a clear one, and perhaps it does not need this much argument.

I hope you can find time to read the copy of Colonel Woolley's statement attached so that the British viewpoint will be known to you. Although Colonel Woolley speaks in terms of "four American Archivists," I am recommending only that the two named above be sent at present, with the understanding that more may be needed when the occupation of German territory is imminent.

I believe that the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas will support this request. I have a letter from Mr. MacLeish suggesting the recommendation of an American archivist for the European theater. I am sending him a copy of these recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

Solon J. Buck

Solon J. Buck
Archivist of the United States

IMPORTANT
SEE CORRESPONDENCE
Lester B. Smith DATED 3 Aug 44

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INITIALS
DATE 8-2-44



Maj. Gen. John H. Hilldring of the Civil Affairs Division notified the National Archives in January 1944 that arrangements were set with the Allied Control Commission in Italy for Shipman to begin his survey there of archival collections.

as containing information necessary for the practical purposes of war. Casual destruction or dispersal of such collections, wherever found, will not be permitted."

FDR Tells All Commanders To Preserve, Protect Records

Before departing for North Africa, Shipman spent considerable time conferring with Archivist Buck as well as with officers in the War Department familiar with the problems involved in the collection and use of records in the North African Theater of Operations.

Hilldring informed Devers (then Commanding General North African Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, and also Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean Theater) that Shipman's mission was to survey the problems relative to records and archives in Italy and to advise in the preparation of plans to preserve, salvage, and make available important records for use in the administration of Italy.

Shipman was also authorized to perform special and temporary duties with the MFA&A subcommission of the Allied Control Commission.

Archivist Solon Buck wrote to Maj. Gen. John Hilldring, chief of the Civil Affairs Division, nominating two American archivists, Fred Shipman and Capt. Asa Thornton, to serve in occupied areas with the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section.

at Naples, Jenkinson visited many archival repositories in southern Italy.

On March 30, the chief administrative officer of the Advanced Echelon of AFHQ issued an administrative instruction, titled "Preservation of Property of Historical [and] of Educational Importance in Italy," probably with

input by Jenkinson, stressing the need to protect buildings, monuments, and cultural property as well as to protect archives and records.

"In the case of written papers and books," it said, "it is to be noted that even those which do not appear to be ancient may be of great importance, not only historically but

ALLIED FORCE HEADQUARTERS
Military Government Section.

7 May 1944

REPORT OF FRED W. SHIPMAN
AS ARCHIVAL ADVISOR TO THE A.C.C.

On March 30, I reported to Allied Force Headquarters, Military Government Section as archives advisor to the Subcommittee on Fine Arts, Monuments and Archives of the Allied Control Commission. I spent the next four days discussing my mission with General Devers, General Gammell, General Roderick, Colonel Sloane, Captain Bachman, (U.S.N.) and other officers at A.F.H.Q. whose functions touched upon the subject of my mission. On April 3, I flew from Algiers to Naples with Lieutenant Roland Segalini who was assigned to arrange my affairs and to aid me in my work. As I do not know the Italian language, Lt. Segalini also served as my interpreter.

I reported to Lt. Gen. MacFarlane, Chief Commissioner, Allied Control Commission on April 4, was misdirected to the office of the Subcommittee and went to Salerno only to return to Naples and report to Major Dewald, Chief of the Fine Arts, Monuments and Archives Subcommittee of the A.C.C. on April 5.

While in Naples I contacted Hilary Jenkinson of the Public Record Office, London who had been sent out by the British government for the same reason I had been sent out by the United States Government. Mr. Jenkinson had been in the theater six weeks prior to my arrival. The presence of representatives of both countries was concrete evidence of the serious interest in and of the importance of the subject on which we were sent to advise. Naturally we collaborated and what was done or recom-

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mended along general lines of policy was jointly sponsored.

I remained in Naples until April 18 working with A.C.C. and G-2 establishing policy and developing procedures to effect plans put forth by Mr. Jenkinson and me. From that date until May 4, I traveled overland through occupied Italy visiting the archival repositories in each Provincial capital and those of Catania and Palermo in Sicily. I reported back to A.F.H.Q. on May 5. There follows a statement of understandings reached at Naples and recommendations I am making as a result of my findings both in Naples and on my tour of occupied Italy.

The most significant and timely use of public and private records (or archives) is their exploitation for aid in carrying on the war effort. Such records are often indispensable to the continued administration of a community or a business and for protecting the civil rights of deserving people. It is obvious that in time of war military necessity must have first consideration. However experience has shown that more care could be exercised in the first stages after combat in protecting records against unnecessary destruction through pillage, billeting of troops and overzealous searches for records of intelligence value. To reduce the loss of valuable records in future operations through any of these causes (which in turn often adversely affect the Intelligence Service) Mr. Jenkinson and I conferred with Major R.J. Cave of Advanced G-2. Jointly we recommended definite steps to be taken. These recommendations were submitted by G-2 to A.F.H.Q. where they were approved.

The recommendations were: G-2 is to protect archives in Intelligence centers against populations and troops on same lines as those laid by "S" force for Rome.

The first two pages of Shipman's May 7, 1944, report on his work in occupied Italy and Sicily. He wrote that while records were first invaluable for "carrying out the war effort," they must also be preserved to enable the "continued administration of a community" after hostilities end.

Hilddring asked Devers to help Shipman when he arrived and added that "the President has granted Mr. Shipman a leave of absence for the purpose of carrying out this mission. I have asked Mr. Shipman to submit a report of his findings and recommendations upon his return, and would appreciate any courtesies and assistance which you can give Mr. Shipman in this undertaking."

While Shipman traveled to Italy, General Marshall informed Eisenhower and Devers that, with reference to the invasion of Sicily and subsequent landings on the Italian mainland, "the President directs that special instructions be issued to our Commanders that they make every effort possible to preserve at the time of occupation and thereafter the local archives of all of the towns and seats of Governments occupied. In the past wars a great loss, inconvenience, and trou-

ble has been due to the destruction of such archives in occupied localities. Therefore special care should be taken to preserve at all times local archives in the towns and seats of occupied countries in this War."

Shipman left Washington on March 17, and on March 30 he reported to AFHQ, Military Government Section, at Algiers, as archives adviser to the Fine Arts, Monuments, and Archives subcommittee. When Shipman arrived, many thought he had come to inquire into these matters for the President directly. Knowledge of the President's personal interest in the subject created an atmosphere that was of immense help to Shipman, as was a personal letter from the President that he took with him.

When he talked to Devers and other officers, Shipman was surprised to find out that they thought the intention in the original

request for an archivist was for someone to collect books for leading libraries in the country, that is, to do the same kind of work that Manuel Sanchez was then doing in Italy for the Library of Congress.

He explained his own (and Washington's) interpretation of his role, and after several conferences with Devers and others, Shipman's mission was defined as working in close cooperation with the Army and Navy intelligence services; to survey present and projected methods for preserving and using the administrative records and archives of local and national government agencies within the area of occupation; and, on the basis of this survey, to recommend procedures to preserve and make available to the ACC records necessary to the continued administration and future reconstruction of the areas.

Shipman Finally in Naples, Quickly Seeks Out Jenkinson

Shipman then spent the next four days discussing his mission with Devers and other officers at AFHQ whose duties touched upon the subject of his mission.

On instructions from Devers, he conferred with Brig. Gen. Thomas E. Roderick, deputy assistant chief of the intelligence staff at AFHQ. Roderick called into their conference a Major Sloane of G-2, who had worked out the current arrangements for handling and preserving certain captured enemy documents of military value. The three reviewed the plans that had been tentatively drawn up for the next anticipated military operation.

At the conclusion of their conference, Shipman was instructed to contact Maj. R. J. Cave, G-2 (Advanced Intelligence) in Naples and to assist him in any way he could to refine the plans they had discussed. Before Shipman left Algiers, Devers gave Shipman a letter of introduction to Lt. Gen. Sir Frank N. Mason-MacFarlane, chief commissioner of the Allied Control Commission in Naples, requesting that Shipman receive assistance in carrying out his mission.

Shipman's arrival in Naples was quickly followed by his courtesy calls on Mason-MacFarlane and to Maj. Ernest T. DeWald, a former professor of art and archaeology at Princeton and chief of the MFA&A sub-commission of the ACC. He also quickly made contact with Jenkinson.

In response to a cable from General Roderick, Major Cave contacted Shipman and invited him to confer with him and his G-2 group. Jenkinson, too, wanted to talk to Cave about archival issues.

The three of them conferred intermittently over 15 days, with Jenkinson and Shipman talking about the value of archives and records for carrying out the war effort and for administrative uses. They developed what seemed to them a satisfactory procedure to protect records in which G-2 was interested.



A damaged church in Acerno, Italy. Shipman and Jenkinson had visited churches, as many held vital local records.

The National Archives
The Franklin D. Roosevelt Library
Hyde Park, N. Y.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

July 7, 1944

Major General J. H. Hilldring
Director, Civil Affairs Division
Office of the Chief of Staff
War Department
Washington, D. C.

Attention: Major John Boettiger

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are two additional copies of my report as Temporary Archives Adviser to the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Subcommittee of the Allied Control Commission to the Civil Affairs Division of the War Department which I have been requested to supply to your office.

I was pleased to receive your kind letter of July 3.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Fred W. Shipman

Fred W. Shipman
Director

✓ 2 Enclosures

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INITIALS *MS*
DATE 7-11-44

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CAD 000.4
(9 July 44)

On July 7, 1944, Shipman sent copies of his report as "Temporary Archives Adviser" to General Hilldring.

Jointly, Jenkinson and Shipman recommended to Cave definite steps to take to assert central control over the exploitation and protection of documents for intelligence purposes. Their recommendations, which AFHQ approved, included these provisions: G-2 was to protect archives in intelligence centers against populations and troops; G-2 should coordinate all activities of intelligence agencies collecting information; when G-2 was done with the records, they were to hand them over

to the ACC for protection; and if archives of intelligence interest were removed for transmission elsewhere, they should be carefully recorded in registers. They also made recommendations for the ultimate restoration of displaced archives.

Jenkinson and Shipman then turned their attention to records of historical interest and current administrative value to the communities. G-2 was to turn over control of certain records depositories to the ACC when intelligence had completed its work

on them. At no time would the records be without protection.

Jenkinson and Shipman requested that Brigadier Maurice S. Lush be informed of the procedures adopted by G-2 to protect archived records coming into its custody. They recommended that ACC determine in advance the locations of record depositories of historical or administrative importance and place them under guard as soon as possible after troops had occupied an area.

Both Shipman and Jenkinson believed that a leaflet should be prepared in Italian on "first aid" to damaged records. They had a translation done of a portion of a leaflet that Jenkinson had compiled for use in England. Because the greatest danger to records was from uniformed troops, another leaflet was prepared for distribution among them. In simple and direct language, the leaflet set forth the message that records are important in the war effort and should not be unnecessarily damaged or destroyed.

Shipman Seeks U.S. Archivist For Permanent Duty in Italy

Next, Shipman and Jenkinson worked on producing a comprehensive list of Italian archival repositories. The British had not published any such lists, but shortly after he reached Naples, Jenkinson began compiling a rather full, classified list of Italian archival repositories of chiefly older records. Shipman brought to his attention the lists that the Americans had produced, and during the latter part of April, Jenkinson enlarged considerably on a National Archives-produced descriptive list of leading archival repositories in Italy, with special emphasis on the older historical archives. By early May, he finished his list and arranged for its distribution.

Shipman, knowing his assignment was only temporary, believed it was necessary for an American archivist to be permanently attached to the MFA&A subcommittee immediately. Already Jenkinson had arranged for two British captains to

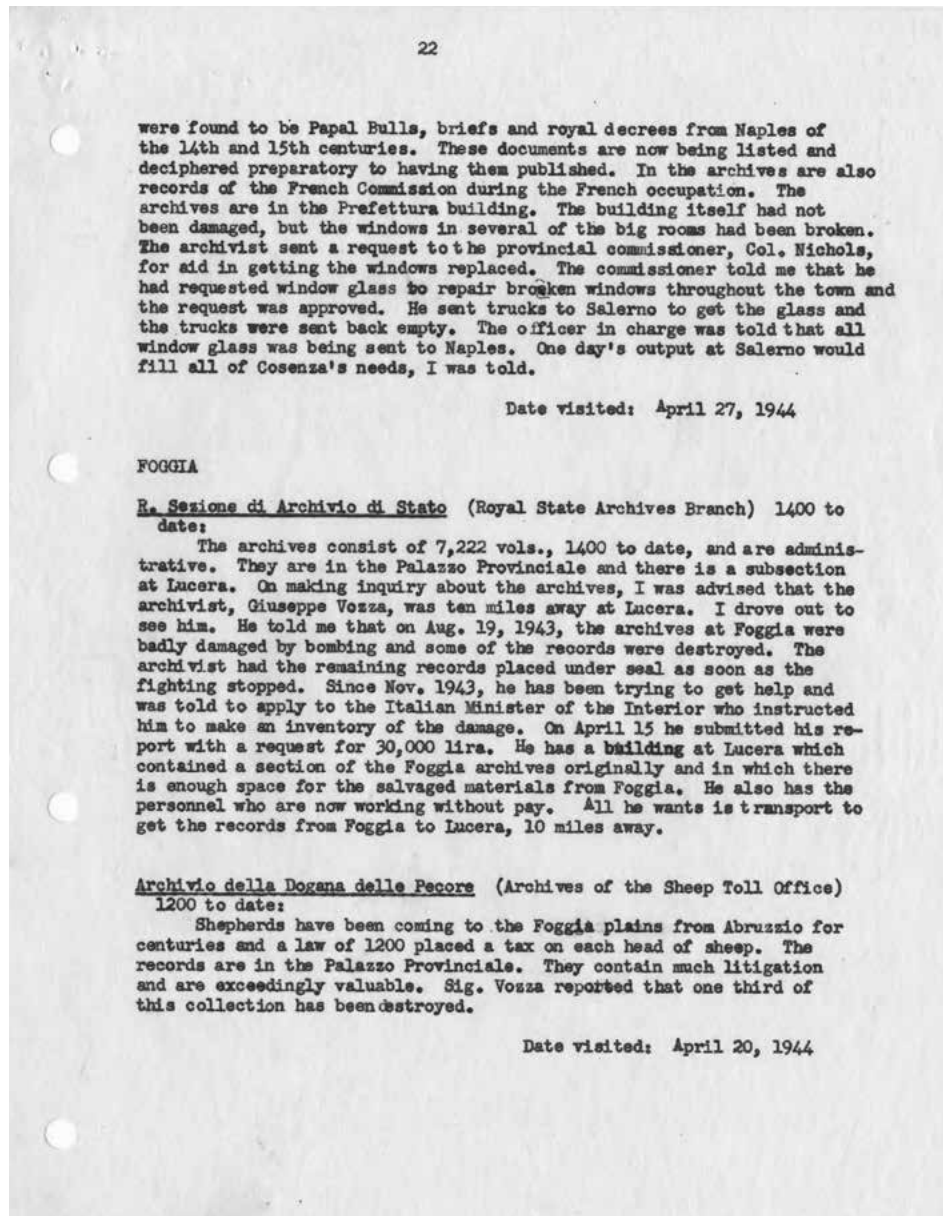
be appointed to the subcommission as archivists.

Because of the limitations on the number of personnel who could be attached to the subcommission, Shipman was hesitant to ask for the appointment of more than one archivist. On April 8 he wrote to Col. Norman E. Fiske, Deputy Executive Commissioner, Allied Control Commission, recommending the assignment of an American archivist to the ACC:

As you know the protection and rehabilitation of Italian public and private archives relating to the current administration of Italy are of the highest importance to the successful prosecution of the war and in the reconstruction of the country after the war. The importance of records of births, marriages, deaths, financial transactions, and police affairs is readily discernable. In the field of Italian National Affairs the important of records as those of the Foreign office take on a world wide significance. In addition, the historical archives of Italy are of value to scholars everywhere in the world who are interested in the history of civilization and what lessons it teaches. Therefore everything should be done to protect these records from loss or destruction.

He recommended that an American archivist, who would give attention to the protection, preservation, and rehabilitation of Italian archives, be appointed and that he be attached to the MFA&A subcommission:

An archivist is concerned with preserving and making available to users the material in his custody. There never has been a time as now when valuable bodies of records in as great quantity were in need of expert attention. Using the techniques of his profession an archivist can do much to protect records and put them in serviceable condition; and



A page from Shipman's summary report to President Roosevelt in September 1944. He described the conditions he found in his survey of Italian sites—building conditions, the presence or absence of local archivists, the types of records and their conditions, and the resources needed for rehabilitation.

to acquire a body of information of value to the services, as well.

In concluding, he played his biggest hand: "Might I add that the Archivist of the United States, I feel sure, would concur in my recommendations. You are already aware of the President's interest in this subject." He cc'd this communication to the President, the Archivist of the United States, Hilldring, and Devers. He attached a suggested program of work for the archi-

vist, noting that the person would collaborate with G-2 in the work of protecting archives and records from the moment of occupation.

Shipman now planned to take a tour of archival repositories in southern Italy and Sicily. Before doing so he prepared a report, which he probably shared with Jenkinson, describing what the work of the American archivist ought to be:

- collaborate with G-2 in protecting archives and records from the moment

- American troops occupied an area,
- be available to give professional assistance to prevent unnecessary loss or destruction of records,
- maintain firsthand information on the fate of records important to the continued administration of a locality, and
- encourage the use of microphotography as a means of supplying copies of important documents.

Jenkinson followed up by writing a memorandum on April 30, on duties of archivists attached to MFA&A subcommission.

Shipman Tours S. Italy, Sicily, Then Heads Back Home

On April 18, Shipman began a tour of southern Italy and Sicily, surveying archival repositories, several of which had been bombed. He talked with archival authorities and generally secured information that formed the basis for a number of recommendations he would later make to AFHQ and to the CAD in Washington. When possible, he talked to officers about the importance for military purposes of the proper protection and handling of modern records.

On May 7 Shipman submitted a summary report of his mission to the military government section of AFHQ. After providing a brief background of what he had done

in Italy, Shipman emphasized that an archivist is a records expert.

“Archival work,” he noted, “is a recognized profession and should be in the hands of archivists and not treated as an incidental function.”

He stressed the value of Italian archives as aids to intelligence and in civil administration, adding that this applied largely to the modern records—though by no means not entirely. He strongly urged that the archivist maintain good liaison with G-2 advanced intelligence for the greatest damage to records was done in the first day after battle.

Upon returning to the United States on May 14, Shipman provided Archivist Buck with additional information regarding the appointment of an American archivist for Italy.

For the archivist post in Italy, attention was eventually focused on Capt. William D. McCain, formerly an archivist with the National Archives, then historian with the Fifth Army in Italy. Buck wrote to Hilldring on June 1 recommending McCain. He noted that McCain had several years’ experience in the National Archives and on recommendation from the National Archives was appointed archivist for the state of Mississippi, where he had established a fine reputation.

While waiting for a response regarding McCain’s appointment, Shipman wrote to President Roosevelt on June 20 regarding the disposition of captured enemy records at the end of hostilities as well as the disposition of the records of combined operations. Roosevelt referred it to the secretary of war, who informed the President about what was being done in that regard.

On June 28 Shipman sent Hilldring his report of his visit to southern Italy. He told Hilldring that, as he was writing the report, news had come that the procedures which he had a part in establishing for protecting Italian archives were put into practice within the first 48 hours after the

Allied forces entered Rome. “I need not tell you that this is gratifying to me,” he wrote.

Hilldring responded, thanking Shipman for his letter and enclosed reports. “We are very grateful to you for the fine work which you have done in this field,” he said. On July 1 Shipman sent a report to President Roosevelt and General Hilldring about his activities in Italy. After discussing his mission, Shipman reported on his activities, observations, and recommendations.

Shipman Returns to Europe, Gets U.S. Archivist for German Records

There were no archivists with MFA&A when those officers went into action in France in June and July of 1944. At the National Archives, Buck and Holmes wanted to avoid the mistake made in the Italian theater, when no American archivist was present to address archives and records issues for a significant period of time.

Again Shipman was drafted to do the promotional work. Capt. Asa Thornton, a former National Archives staff member, was sent with Shipman and permanently assigned to the theater to carry on the contemplated program until reinforcements arrived.

On September 16 Hilldring wrote to G-5 SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force) to report that Shipman had been authorized and invited to perform special temporary duty with MFA&A Section of G-5. Shipman’s orders had been issued in response to G-5’s request for an expert to be sent to the European theater of operations to prepare plans for preserving and using German archives.

“The President,” Hilldring noted, “has granted Mr. Shipman a leave of absence for the purpose of carrying out his mission and would appreciate any courtesy and assistance which you could give Mr. Shipman in this undertaking.”



To learn more about

- The work of the “Monuments Men” during and after World War II in Europe, go to www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2013/summer/.
- The discovery of Nazi gold in the Merkers Mine, go to www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1999/spring/.
- How American artists helped defend American troops in World War I, go to www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2012/spring/.

Thornton left within a week, and Shipman followed him to London on September 19. When Thornton arrived in London, SHAEF assigned him to work with Hilary Jenkinson in making his list of archives of western Germany.

On September 26, Thornton reported back to SHAEF, and the next day SHAEF MFA&A staff met with Shipman to discuss German archives and U.S. archival personnel in Germany. Thornton and Shipman were directed to report next to SHAEF at Versailles.

Before leaving London, Shipman had a chance to discuss archival issues with Maj. Mason Hammond, then acting chief, MFA&A, U.S. Group Control Council. Shipman and Thornton arrived at Versailles on October 3, and for the next two months Shipman provided advice and assistance regarding archival matters. In December 1944, Shipman returned to the United States and his duties with the Roosevelt Library.

Before leaving Europe, Shipman wrote instructions for the U.S. archivists assigned to the MFA&A section SHAEF. He pointed out that their purpose was to protect the enemy archives and records in areas under Allied control from unnecessary damage, loss, or destruction. These materials were of value to military intelligence, essential to military government in administering an area, and important for an understanding and knowledge of Germany through its history.

“The dangers to records have been from pillaging by the populace and troops, the lack of controls over over-zealous Intelligence agents who have indiscriminately taken papers away and exposure to the elements when the building in which records are housed is damaged or destroyed,” Shipman wrote.

Shipman recommended that archivists contact combat units to remind them of “the value of records as a weapon of war so that they will not unwittingly destroy

important material.” Shipman added that past experience had shown that intelligence officers had done much harm through mishandling.

“The Archivist,” Shipman wrote, “should move about, use his authority and influence to see to it that the instructions regarding the handling of records are obeyed.” He added: “No amount of instructing will answer all the questions that will arise. Within the limits of the authority granted him, the Archivist must exercise his own ingenuity and intelligence; that fact should be remembered at all times.”

His work in Italy and Germany, in helping to protect archives and modern records for cultural, administrative, and intelligence purposes, was greatly appreciated by intelligence and civil affairs staffs. By demonstrating the importance of having archivists involved in MFA&A work, Shipman’s efforts paved the way for archivists like Lester K. Born, Sgt. B. Child, and Seymour J. Pomrenze to play important roles in archival matters in occupied Germany.

After the President’s death in April 1945, Shipman took charge of the transfer of White House papers and materials to the Roosevelt Library. He resigned in April 1948 and joined the newly created National Security Resources Board. The following year, he transferred to the Department of State as records management officer, and in 1954 he became librarian of the Department of State, a position he held until he retired on June 30, 1970.

At a retirement luncheon hosted by Archivist of the United States James B. Rhoads, Shipman said, “Any work I did as a member of the National Archives organization was done with great pride and love for my job. To the extent I succeeded in making a contribution, I am happy.”

He died in June 1978, fondly remembered by his National Archives colleagues and the military personnel with whom he worked in Europe and the United States. **P**

NOTE ON SOURCES

Among NARA’s holdings useful for documenting Shipman’s activities are File: CAD 000.4 (3-25-43) (1), Security Classified General Correspondence, 1943–July 1949, General Records, Civil Affairs Division, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, RG 165; File: CCAC 314.8 (10-30-43) Sec. 1, Combined Civil Affairs Committee Decimal File 1942-45, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, RG 218; and, Files: AMG 208, AMG 209, AMG 262, and AMG 290, General, Subject File Aug 1943-1945, Monuments, Fine Arts & Archives Section, Operations Branch, G-5 Division, General Staff, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF), Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II, RG 331.

Also useful are Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, United States Army in World War II, Special Studies (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1992); Hilary Jenkinson and H. E. Bell, for the British Committee on the Preservation and Restitution of Works of Art, Archives and Other Material in Enemy Hands, *Italian Archives During the War and at Its Close* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1947), The American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, *Report of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946); Oliver W. Holmes, “The National Archives and the Protection of Records in War Areas,” *American Archivist*, Vol. 9, no. 2 (April 1946); Fred W. Shipman, “Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1882–1945,” *American Archivist*, Vol. 8, no. 4 (October 1945).

Author



Greg Bradsher’s previous contributions to *Prologue* have included articles on the discovery of Nazi gold in the Merkers Mine (Spring 1999); the story of Fritz Kolbe, 1900–1943 (Spring 2002); Japan’s secret “Z Plan” in 1944 (Fall 2005); Founding Father Elbridge Gerry (Spring 2006); the third Archivist of the United States, Wayne Grover (Winter 2009); Operation Blissful, a World War II diversionary attack on an island in the Pacific (Fall 2010); the Nuremberg Laws (Winter 2010); the Homestead Act of 1862 (Winter 2012); and Monuments Men and Nazi Treasures (Summer 2013). Dr. Bradsher is a senior archivist at the National Archives.