
“C. Spence, Here”

Interviews of Gene M. Gressley by Ronald Brown

Over the years, colleagues and friends of Clark Spence who have phoned him have been greeted by the quiet response, “C. Spence, here.” This interview is a tribute to Clark Spence by one of his many friends in the mining history fraternity. It is impossible in these few pages to reveal the depth of that friendship and the symbiotic relationship that resulted. Friendships by their very nature are illusive beyond capture. Indeed as I read over these pages I find far more Gressley than Spence. This embarrasses me, for that was not the intention when I began my visits with Ron Brown—for this I beg the Clark’s and the readers forgiveness. G. M. G.

Telephone Interview of Gene M. Gressley by Ronald Brown, 21 January 2002

I graduated from Manchester College in northern Indiana in May of 1952. I then came out to Boulder, Colorado with my bride, Joyce. The plan was that I was going into the army in the Korean War. Joyce would obtained her MA in Spanish at the University of Colorado. I went for my induction physical shortly after arriving in Boulder. I was asked to take off my glasses to read the fourth line from the bottom of the eye chart. My response was “where is the chart?” That ended any thoughts of military service.

The immediate challenge now was where to find employment. The answer came in the form of a job with the Colorado State Historical Society under a remarkable lady, Agnes Wright Spring. After two years at the Society, we re-

turned to Indiana, where I began work on my MA under Oscar Osburn Winther. While we were in Indiana, from 1954 to 1956, our daughter, Deborah, became chronically ill with bronchitis. My father-in-law, a physician, suggested that we re-locate to a dry climate for Deborah’s health. I contacted Mrs. Spring, who replied that while she did not have a position at the Colorado State Historical Society, the University of Wyoming was seeking an archivist. Dean Krakel, first director of the archives at the Air Force Academy and later of the National Cowboy Hall of Fame, had recently left Wyoming. Soon the President of UW, G. D. “Duke” Humphrey was on the phone to me with the result that I headed to Wyoming.

When I went to Wyoming as a twenty-five year old kid, I knew nothing about archival acquisition—but I learned rapidly. After three weeks on the job, President Humphrey called me in for one of his “audiences.” His opening question to me was, now that I had seen the operation, “just how did I think I could develop an archive at Wyoming?” Humphrey could be a very intimidating person, and frankly I was scared to death. The Wyoming archive, at that moment, only possessed 284 collections so I blurted out the natural if undiplomatic answer, “Sir, we have no place to go but up.” Then I expanded on this rather cryptic remark by saying I thought we should start collecting the records that reflected the economic base of the Rocky Mountain region—livestock, mining, petroleum, etc. Humphrey replied “I would like you to present your program to the Trustees this fall.” In those

days, faculty at Wyoming were trotted before the Trustees for what we called "show and tell" sessions. Actually, it was a wonderful idea, for the Trustees then obtained an insight into the various activities going on at UW.

In an effort to implement our vision for the archive, I just started writing letters and began to travel the state. We had only \$400.00 in the travel budget, which obviously meant you had to be imaginative when it came to travel. I hitchhiked when I had to (especially going north and south), went by rail, bus, but I never went by air until 1961. By then I enjoyed a three-fold increase in our travel budget (how that came about is another lengthy tale). Suffice it to say the dramatic tripling of our travel budget was directly tied to our mining and petroleum acquisition program.

One tale from my hitchhiking era may amuse and bemuse you. One winter day I was on the highway outside of Dallas bound for Houston. In those days I traveled with a "circus" assortment of luggage including: a forty pound Ampco tape recorder, two suitcases and an "accordion" briefcase. I had planned a trip to interview geologists and executives who had gained experience in Wyoming petroleum fields such as Salt Creek and Elk Basin—both enormous oil producers before the Second World War. Several major company executives began their careers in the Rocky Mountain petroleum industry; Frank Prior and Al Peake of Standard (later Amoco) of Indiana were among the prominent alumni of the Rocky Mountain petroleum industry.

Returning to the highway outside of Dallas, a salesman for Lone Star Steel, in a 1957 Chevrolet (remember the "fins") picked me up. As we drove along, I explained the archival program and what I was up to standing by the highway. My companion was incredulous that any university employee with an eleven dollar per diem (seven was allotted to lodging, four to meals) would be on the "road". When I was

dropped off at a third-rate hotel in Houston, the Lone Star salesman wished me well and said, "Well, if you ever get out of a job, Lone Star Steel can do a hell of a lot better for you." I was to recall that comment several times in later days of our years.

With a archival foundation of 284 collections, we managed to add ninety new donors in our first year. As we built a network of donors, I kept reminding my administrative superiors at Wyoming that wealth begets wealth regardless of the medium. As I began working with the alumni of Ivy League universities, for instance, I would always say, "obviously we are not Yale, or Harvard, but we are trying to build an archive, won't you help?" It seems simplistic today, but making this "universal" appeal worked. In addition, while potential donors were a bit mystified, they were always appreciative that we solicited their papers, rather than a check.

Also in those early years, I was aided immensely by the fact that Wyoming had little competition. Very few institutions were acquiring mining and petroleum material on a regional basis. Indeed, Wyoming's major competition came not from the West, but from the East. Howard Gottlieb, who pursued a similar strategy in acquiring the files of "literati" was a name found frequently in my correspondence. Of course, we were basically salesmen, with the best product in the world—education.

As to major collections in economic geology that we received in those early years, several come to mind. William M. Fitzhugh, Jr., had the files of his father, one of first developers of the Salt Creek Oil field. His son, our donor, had an M.D. from McGill University, and a Ph.D. in bacteriology from the University of Pennsylvania. A brilliant individual with a sizeable family inheritance, I admired Fitzhugh because he had a successful professional career. Obviously, the good doctor did not have to work a day in his life.

I wrote Dr. Fitzhugh, inviting him to place

his father's papers at Wyoming. The Fitzhugh, Sr., files were located in the Fitzhugh Building ("catty-cornered" from the St. Francis Hotel) in San Francisco. As I was supervising the packing of his father's papers, Dr. Fitzhugh asked me where I was staying. I told him in the Manx Hotel—a salesmen's hostelry for the lack of a better description. The Manx was located about three blocks from the Fitzhugh building. Dr. Fitzhugh suggested that he meet me there the next morning. Come the following morn, Fitzhugh charged into the lobby of the Manx and boomed out (so it seemed to me) "Gressley, why are you staying in a flea bag hotel like this?" I could have disappeared through the floor. After making his declaration, Fitzhugh turned on his heel and vanished. In a few minutes, he returned with a bell boy moving me to the St. Francis. All I could blurt out was, "I hope you are paying for this, because I can't". Fitzhugh chortled and responded, "Of course you can't, your university is too damn cheap." When our marching entourage of bell boy, Fitzhugh, and me (in that order) arrived at my room in the St. Francis, Fitzhugh went immediately to the phone and called President Humphrey. The president was in a meeting, but that was of no moment to Fitzhugh. When he finally got Humphrey on the line, Fitzhugh let lose with a vitriolic lecture, the gist of which was the university should be ashamed to send its representatives "out into the world" sans adequate support. When I returned from San Francisco, President Humphrey called me in for a conference with our director of finance. The result—my travel budget was tripled (to \$1200) that afternoon.

Without Dr. Fitzhugh's intervention it would have been several years before the archives would have reached this astronomical figure. (The last year I was director of the American Heritage Center, our travel-entertainment budget stood at \$25,000 plus. Half of this amount was raised privately.) Comparable increases occurred in the staff: from two individuals in 1956 to twenty-

five by 1990. Donors jumped from 284 to 13,000. Such extraordinary growth, obviously, would not have occurred without the strong support of the state and the university administrations. It has become a cliché to say that you never accomplish anything in this world by yourself, but just because it is ancient bromide doesn't make it less true.

Several years into collecting manuscripts indigenous to the economic development of the Rockies, we broadened the focus of our archival acquisition from performing arts to journalism to rare books, etc. Again Dr. Fitzhugh moved onto center stage, when he casually asked if we had a rare books program. Discovering that we did not, but that we very much wanted to build a rare books library, Dr. Fitzhugh began giving us \$50,000 per year for our rare books program. This largesse went on for over ten years, until Fitzhugh died. Nothing more dramatically illustrates the donor dividends that can occur from spin-offs. Had I never approached Dr. Fitzhugh for his father's files, the university would have missed out on the opportunity of building a rare book library. To honor Dr. Fitzhugh's commitment we constructed a rare books room, which unfortunately is no longer extant. The Fitzhugh and general rare book collection was merged into the Toppan library of rare literature on hunting and fishing (allegedly because the university could anticipate a greater endowment from the Toppan family).

Telephone Interview of Gene M. Gressley by Ronald Brown, 28 January 2002

My first remembrance of Clark Spence was at the 1958 convention of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (now the Organization of American Historians) in Denver. A long-time friend, the late John Hakola, introduced us. While I was emphasizing the economic history of the Rockies in our archive, I had done little to acquire mining records. Clark's knowledge

of the whereabouts of potential donors, I quickly realized, had the capability for being a manuscript Golconda. I vividly recall an evening in Denver, where Clark, John Hakola, and I talked mining history until late in the evening.

In subsequent OAH and Western History Association conventions, Clark and his wife, Mary Lee, and I had many lunch and dinner visits. Out of this personal friendship grew a professional relationship that was of incalculable benefit to the growth of the mining archive at Wyoming. Not only did Clark send me leads to manuscript collections, but he also sent a string of fine doctoral candidates to do their dissertations on the papers that we were trying to assiduously assemble.

Early on, Clark urged me to get in touch with Ira Joralemon, a mining engineer then in his seventies, who still did underground appraisals of mining properties. In fact, Joralemon had an international consulting practice extending back to 1918, when he was in Siberia. Joralemon, and his son, Peter, became close friends, providing the mining archive with a host of prospects. Joralemon wrote a book, *Romantic Copper*, which is crammed with delightful tales of his storied life. One notable contact that Joralemon gave me was the widow of his long-time partner, Henry Carlisle. One of the mining journals asked Carlisle if he would interview a couple of dozen prominent mining figures. Henry ended up interviewing almost fifty men. The tapes and transcripts of these individuals were sent to Wyoming by Mrs. Carlisle.

Joralemon was frequently a contrarian in his appraisal of mining "opportunities." Illustrative was his discovering the United Verde Extension—a prospect turned down by numerous geologists. Because Joralemon took an "historic" view of a mining property, he had an appreciation for the archival record. Nor was Joralemon alone in his evaluation method. Thayer Lindsay was noted for his search of the historical literature before he launched his field work. Vincent

Perry and Ronald Mulcahy, who spearheaded the Anaconda geological team, followed the legendary Reno Sales in stressing the importance of maps and literary works.

Joralemon was a close friend of Donald McLaughlin. McLaughlin, chairman of Homestake Mining Company, taught geology at Harvard and consulted freely for mining companies the world over. When I interviewed him he was in his mid-eighties, a handsome man with white hair, erect stature and a broad smile. During the 1970s and 1980s, McLaughlin introduced me to succeeding presidents of Homestake, John Gustafson and Paul Henshaw. Later, both men presented small files of their personal papers to the mining program at the American Heritage Center.

Clark Spence directly assisted Wyoming in obtaining a file of Bradley family papers. The family's offices were in San Francisco, but the scion of the family, Frederick W. Bradley had played a major role in the Alaska Juneau and Bunker Hill and Sullivan mines. For several years running, whenever I went to San Francisco, Jim and Phil Bradley, Ira Joralemon, and I would have long lunches, usually at the Palace Hotel. These gatherings were marvelous occasions for they provided not only mining lore, but loads of archival prospects, as one guest's story would dislodge a cascade of reminiscences and names from another guest.

Mrs. Ross Hoffman was another early contact that came via Clark Spence. Ross Hoffman, and particularly his brother John, had been very active in pre-World War I Russian mining. Both brothers examined properties in the Urals, Siberia, along with scattered excursions to other Russian mining districts. The Hoffman papers that came to Wyoming were primarily Ross's reports, maps, and correspondence that he sent home to the Hoffmans' San Francisco office. As I visited with Mrs. Hoffman, all of a sudden she looked at me and asked if I would like to see the material. Within minutes I was down on my

hands and knees crawling through the semi-basement under her home. After a hour or possibly two, I came upstairs to tell Mrs. Hoffman we would be delighted to have the collection, but unfortunately we couldn't pay for packing and shipping costs for three months as our budget was very tight. Mrs. Hoffman smiled and replied, "Oh don't worry about that, I will pay those expenses." True to her word, the Hoffman files arrived at our door about a month later. That afternoon I returned to the hotel, and sent my suit out for cleaning.

**Personal Interview at Gressley's Home,
Jacksonville, Oregon, 10 March 2002**

I have alluded a couple of times to the value of "networking" in developing the American Heritage Center. Nothing illustrates this point more than my contact with Larry Requa, the third-generation representative of one of the most celebrated mining families in the West. Larry Requa's grandfather, Isaac, was one of the developers of the Comstock Lode. Larry's father, Mark Requa, was a petroleum administrator during World War I, and a close friend of Herbert Hoover. A nexus of geologists and engineers from California were associated with Hoover and the Bewick, Moreing & Company in London. After several trips to Salt Lake City, Larry presented both his own extensive files, and some of his father's, Mark Requa, to the AHC.

In one of our visits to Larry's office, he asked if I had ever thought of acquiring the records of Combined Metals? I replied that I had heard of the Snyder family, but knew little of their activities. Larry suggested that we go upstairs to Combined Metals' offices, which were several floors above his own in the Felt Building. The Snyders, we discovered, were just in the process of moving their offices and were ready to part with records which covered holdings in southern Nevada, western Montana, Utah, and South America. In the end, the Snyders deposited four

tons of their papers in our archive. Indeed, our relationship was unusual, as the Snyders not only consulted their collection and other mining collections in the AHC, but urged other friends to get in touch with us. The network, omnipresent, became increasingly valuable as our program expanded.

Another example of networking came through the personality of Mitchell Klein. When I arrived in Salt Lake, "Mitch" would invariably suggest that we have lunch at the Alta Club. This was always a delightful occasion, for the Alta Club was the "inner sanctum" of the mining fraternity. Klein had played a major role in the strategic minerals program of the government in the Second World War and later. Not only did he have the usual profusion of mining tales, but he knew everyone in the mining world and provided a host of introductions. "Mitch" Klein exemplified another characteristic of donors to our archival program. If you approached contributors by showing an interest in their careers, catching them at the right age—which was commonly after their sixtieth birthday—you could usually get their support, and later their collections.

One of the most fascinating mining geologists and engineers that Clark suggested I investigate was Harold Titcomb. A partner of Herbert Hoover, Titcomb matched his mentor in the amount exploration that he did on four continents. Indeed, Hoover and Titcomb journeyed to many mining prospects together, especially in Australia and South Africa. I will never forget my first sight of the Titcomb mansion in Farmington, Maine.

A yellow, three-story domicile, with a widow's walk around a cupola on the roof, the Titcomb house was situated in the center of town. Everybody in Farmington knew the Titcomb family; when I arrived in town their natural curiosity piqued—what was I up to? Soon my presence became common knowledge, leaving most of Farmington's residents mystified as to my objective. As I recall there were about ten file

drawers of material: maps, letters—some from and to Hoover—overall one of the richer mining collections that we received. There was even a Wyoming connection, as Harold Titcomb had investigated a mining prospect near Atlantic City, Wyoming. Little gold was found, but Titcomb's name was preserved in Wyoming for posterity in the geological feature now referred to as the "Titcomb Basin" in the Wind River Mountains.

Other mining men that Clark mentions in his assessment of the AHC's collections include August Locke and Paul Billingsley. Paul Billingsley was a theoretical geologist; Locke the "operative" geologist for the Billingsley-Locke consulting firm. Billingsley in mid-career suffered from poor health, so that Locke became the exploration geologist for the firm. Like Thayer Lindsley, Billingsley did enormous amounts of research in various libraries before he dreamed of the future of a mining prospect. Billingsley was renown for his brilliance in mathematically analyzing a geological structure. Paralyzed during the last third of his life, Billingsley depended on Locke for his legs.

I remember vividly a visit to Locke's home in San Mateo. After a delightful lunch, my host informed me that we would go on an hour walk—as he always did! The hike was a memorable one, as Locke used the time to relate some of his adventures over a forty-year career in the mining industry. When I returned to Wyoming from my San Mateo trip, I found a letter from Locke. His communication was crammed with details of various activities he remembered after our chat. That letter began a correspondence that covered several years. The Locke connection illustrates another obvious tactic of acquisition procedure. I always tried to transform donors into friends. My secretaries maintained a "tickle" file, wherein I would send little notes about every six months to actual or potential donors. Time consuming? Most certainly; but the dividends were incalculable. All of us enjoy being

remembered.

"Surprising" might be one word to describe the Billingsley gift. In response to my invitation, Billingsley replied that when he was finished with his files, Billingsley would have them sent to Wyoming. When Billingsley died, I wrote to his daughter, Shirley, in Redmond, Washington. For six years there was total silence, then one day a dozen boxes arrived at the AHC, accompanied by a brief letter from Shirley expressing the hope that we would be pleased with her father's papers. This is the one and only time I had any contact with Billingsley's family. The lesson for an acquisition program, though, is obvious. You never know when you plant a seed when it will germinate.

Early on I discovered that the deed-of-gifts often frightened donors simply because any "legal-looking" document was interpreted as future trouble. So in spite of dire warnings from fellow archivists that I was opening the AHC to liability and unending law suits, I slowly ceased using them. Of course, archivists always point to the litigation surrounding the Lewis and Clark material at the Minnesota Historical Society or the famous Warren Harding case at the Ohio Historical Society as flash points of archival danger. Yet in four decades of dealing with some 13,000 donors, the AHC was never sued. In an identical time frame only seven collections were returned to donors.

Another donor that Clark Spence provided me in one of his communications was Frank Ayer. The Ayer collection was enormous and extremely valuable historically, especially on South African mining. I never met Frank Ayer, but I wish that I had, for Ayer's name was known around the globe. Ayer enlarged the famed Roan Antelope mine in South Africa. Indeed his work in South Africa took on a "biblical" connotation for the mining profession. Like Reno Sales in Montana, Ayer became a mentor to many young geologists starting out in their profession.

Lawrence Wright's and Lamphere Norris's were two other mining collections in the AHC. While both men spent major portions of their careers in Canada, Wright didn't think that he had ever met Norris. Wright would write me long—fifteen to twenty pages—discursive letters describing his experiences in Ontario, specifically the Porcupine and adjacent properties. Wright never received the acclamation that another of his friends did, namely, Harry Dudley. Harry Dudley represented another lead that Clark presented to the AHC. Dudley's primary career centered on the Mesabi Range, but he also was one of the earliest geologists to call attention to the enormous oil shale deposits in Alberta.

Two of the more fascinating figures whose papers arrived at the AHC were Thayer Lindsley and George C. Tower, who was Lindsley's younger partner and did much of the field work for Lindsley on various exploration programs. Thayer Lindsley's younger brother was Halstead Lindsley, who was the partner of Robert Livermore. I first encountered Thayer Lindsley at his apartment at 720 Park Avenue, New York. He greeted me in slippers and a bathrobe. A tall, thin man with a hawk-nose, Thayer, like Paul Billingsley, believed strongly in first searching the historic literature of a mining prospect before any field work was accomplished. Lindsley's apartment was vintage 1920s—a huge round dining table, glass door book shelves, and dimly lighted rooms making for a rather sinister atmosphere. On one visit, I was looking over his shoulder at a geologic map of Spain. Thayer was propounding first one feature of a prospect, and then another. All at once Thayer exploded, "Gressley, for God's sake you are not going to learn anything standing up, get down here on your hands and knees!" Gressley did as he was commanded.

Thayer was another mining engineer who made several fortunes but lost most of it chasing mining properties around the world. One of

his major success stories came from the founding of Falconbridge Nickel, which is one of the great nickel mines of the world. Lindsley once gave five million to his alma mater (Harvard) to "study life after death." My curiosity at getting this news was definitely piqued, so I blurted out, "Thayer, what are they doing with the money?" I will never forget his reply, "Oh hell, Gressley, you know what they did? They put it in that damn school of religion!" When I left his apartment, I went on Thayer's advice to see his attorney, Phil Bastedo. We had a nice visit, and then Bastedo asked if the university would pay \$1800.00 to get Lindsley's papers out of storage. In those days we always paid packing and shipping, so I readily agreed to absorb the storage costs. Several weeks later Lindsley's sizeable files arrived. Years later, Ann Tower, George Tower's widow, added the extensive files of her husband to the Lindsley archive.

Josiah E. Spurr's was one of the more important nineteenth-century mining collections to arrive at the AHC. Again Clark pointed the way by emphasizing the significance of Spurr's career. William E. Spurr, the grandson of J. E. Spurr and dean of the business school at Stanford, came to Laramie to investigate the center's resources. Thereafter Bill not only became an enthusiastic booster of our program, but also his advocacy led to substantial monetary backing.

Today no one has ever heard of John E. Burton, but in the late 1890s Burton was one of the wealthiest men in the nation. A mining promoter par excellence, Burton directed his far-flung empire from Lake Geneva and Milwaukee. The geographic range of Burton's investments included Canada, California, Alaska, Mexico, and Bolivia. Clark had several communications with his granddaughter, Mrs. Alice Hackett. Her attic contained all of the papers that remained of the Burton empire. My relationship with Mrs. Hackett proved at once one of the most rewarding and frustrating forays of my archival career.

A delightful, gracious, loquacious woman, Mrs. Hackett sent us a continual stream of small packets of her grandfather's papers—mining reports, photographs, balance sheets, letters, diaries, etc.—accompanied by lengthy letters about sundry matters relating to her grandfather's life and her own. Mrs. Hackett withstood all my blandishments to just have a moving company pack up all the Burton files and send them to us. She wanted to see them first, and was not about to dispatch them to Wyoming before inspecting each document. The years went by; the exchanges between Mrs. Hackett and the undersigned increased. The result: a sizeable archive of John E. Burton records. Then suddenly the letters from Lake Geneva ceased as abruptly as they had begun. A phone call to Lake Geneva brought the answer; a fire had consumed Mrs. Hackett's home and ashes were all that remained of the Burton papers.

As I mentioned earlier, Clark Spence not only provided a continual stream of leads, but also suggested the focal point for the mining archive. One of the most gratifying directions that Clark proposed was the collecting of the personal papers of governmental officials, particularly from the United States Geological Survey. One of the first individuals I solicited were the files of George Otis Smith, director of the USGS during the 1920s and early 30s. A hallmark of Smith's career was mineral conservation. Aligning himself with corporate leaders in both the mining and petroleum industries, Smith's conservation campaign proved to be prophetic. Smith, who could be a consummate diplomat, formed a committee of executives of the petroleum industry and governmental officials to lobby Congress and the public in the cause of conservation. With two talented and politically astute lawyers, Hiram Dow of Roswell, New Mexico, and Warwick Downing of Denver, Smith hammered out the document that gave birth to the Interstate Oil Compact Commission.

Downing's lengthy legal practice covered

more than a half a century; his fine Italian hand was omnipresent in Rocky Mountain mineral development. Downing's physical figure reminded one of George Cruikshank's drawings in a Dickens' novel. A sizeable pot belly rested on two spindly legs. I shall long remember the sight of Downing tip-toeing across Seventeenth street in Denver on a frosty, icy January morn. Downing's grandson, Dick Downing, an able attorney in his own right, arranged for the AHC to be the repository for his grandfather's papers. The Downing files, an enormous accumulation of almost six decades of litigation, were locked away in a vault in the basement of the Equitable Building. When Downing moved into the Equitable in 1898, he stored his files in the basement. There Downing stayed for his entire career. Two series of legal cases which were especially prominent in the Downing files were those pertaining to his activities with the Royal Tiger Mine in Breckenridge and the Salt Creek Field, north of Casper, Wyoming.

Other directors of the USGS whose personal papers arrived in the AHC during the 1980s were those of Vincent McKelvey and Thomas Nolan. And one can not ignore the papers of M. King Hubbert, an assistant director of the USGS who at once was one of the most fascinating, talented, and irascible figures to appear in twentieth century economic geology. Hubbert's incredible career spanned the technocracy movement, to the Shell Oil Corporation, cumulating with the USGS.

On anyone's list of outstanding economic geologists would be the name of Eliot Blackwelder. Chairman of the Geology Department at Stanford, Blackwelder "mentored" a host of young geologists. In my search for Blackwelder's records, I first wrote to Stanford on a tip that the Blackwelder family had given them to the Stanford Library. I received word back from the library that they didn't have them and had no idea where the Blackwelder files were. So I wrote to a son, Richard Blackwelder,

a distinguished professor in biological sciences at Southern Illinois University. Dick wrote back to me that his father's papers were in the Stanford Library.

I then sent a copy of Stanford's response to my inquiry to Dick Blackwelder. The next time I heard from Dick was a phone call from Dick Jahn's office, then chair of the Stanford Geology Department. Blackwelder informed me that he had located his father's files in the attic of the Geology Department, in the same fourteen file drawers he had placed them at the time of his father's demise. The question now was did we want them? If so, Dick would see that they were wrapped and immediately sent to Wyoming.

I will long remember the cooperation that I received from the Blackwelder family. Dick and I kept up a contact for several years. One of the Blackwelder family members that Dick suggested we communicate with was a grand-nephew of his father, Richard Merk. Merk's contribution to the AHC and the Blackwelder collection was invaluable. Merk arranged to come to Wyoming, spending considerable time with us organizing and annotating the Blackwelder papers.

J. V. Howell and F. M. Fryxell presented a monumental collection of their research files for a biography of F. V. Hayden. In a non-Internet age, Howell, an independent geologist in Oklahoma, and F. M. Fryxell, of Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, traced every member—including mule skimmers—of the Hayden geological surveys in the West. Unfortunately, ill health prevented them from finishing their biography, though they completed one volume, the manuscript of which came along with their collection. Fryxell had almost a mythological reputation as an exceptionally inspiring teacher of geology. When I wrote Fryxell that we had received the Blackwelder papers, Fryxell responded in an unassuming couple of sentences of acknowledgment. After congratulating us, he noted that when Blackwelder retired, Stanford had written him offering the position to him.

I am often asked if we didn't have intense competition for manuscript material? The response is always negative. The major exception was Howard Gottlieb of Boston University.

Howard, in a mysterious way I never divined, could relate to donors, gaining their confidence and collections. I visited Howard a couple of times in his Boston lair, and found him charming. But to this day I have never understood the magic powder that Howard sprinkled on his donors—and I have read dozens of his letters passed on by donors. Whenever prospective donors would write me that they had decided in favor of Boston University as their repository, I always replied that their material would receive excellent care, as Howard Gottlieb was a genius.

Personalities are the key. A good archivist must be creative in assessing the psychology of a donor, in essence: What would motivate Mr. or Ms. Donor to give to your archive? Mary Poore—the wife of Charles Poore, onetime editor of the *New York Times Book Review*—said it all succinctly: "A direct letter of invitation followed up by a personal visit is very effective." A delightful lady, Mary Poore became one of the most stalwart members of our network. She unceasingly provided us leads to the New York literary scene. I continued to visit her every time I journeyed to Gotham. Sometimes Mary, then in her seventies, would serve as hostess to friends who were associated with the *New York Times* or the *New Yorker*. I digress, but networking is crucial to a successful archival acquisition program. Once you have an interested donor never let him or her go.

Interview of Gene M. Gressley Jacksonville, Oregon, 11 March 2002

You ask me to amplify my professional relationship with Clark Spence. In many ways it was unique. As I have noted, Clark not only charted the path to numerous donors, but he sent a stream of students to exploit the collections we were

amassing.

Clark understood what we were trying to do in building an archive at Wyoming, and became committed to our vision early in our friendship. I recall a conversation with Rod Paul in the summer of 1968. I had a fellowship at the Huntington Library, so there were many opportunities for visits with Rod, who was unfailingly gracious. However, in one of our chats one evening, he blurted out, "Why are you taking all this mining material out of California and the West Coast?" I had heard this complaint many times, in many places. I just smiled and replied, "Why not, no one out here is asking for it." I never understood this provincial attitude for it seemed to imply two rationales: one, it would be better to have the historical material lost than end up in Wyoming; or two, if you just left it alone somehow, miraculously, the collection would end up in a local archive. Clark always laughed when he heard these "carpetbagger" stories—for Clark had an appreciation of the preservation of the historical record. Like all of us, he had been frustrated time and again in his search for an elusive manuscript collection only to discover the papers had been destroyed a decade earlier, or perhaps just the week before he had asked.

My rapport with Clark matured easily for we both had the same objectives. In addition, we had a personal compatibility that if you are fortunate in this life you may discover in a few friends. I observed, and I do not say this gratuitously, that the students Clark sent west were of uniformly high caliber. Further, and understandably, they shared their mentor's philosophy on archives and historiography. Through the years, many of these students who visited Wyoming I count among my closest friends today.

Anyway, this symbiotic relationship between a historian in Illinois and an archivist in Wyoming, I like to think, enriched our guild. It was an ideal partnership in history, based on the preservation and utilization of the historical record. Of course, I had other friends in other phases

of our archival operation; but none promoted scholarship and archival growth the way Clark did.

As our collection grew, Clark spread the word among colleagues, friends, and students. Research queries and sometimes just curiosity prompted these communications. Anyone who has dipped into Spence's historiography will realize very quickly the respect that Clark has for primary sources. Over the years, I was often amused to observe several prominent historians who would stop by the archive hunting for the quotable quotes for their manuscript. Indeed, one of Clio's followers, who shall be anonymous, for many would know the name, horrified me by admitting—after consuming a couple of cocktails—that he had finished his manuscript, but now he was doing his footnoting in various archives. The arrival of Spence or his students meant researching a collection for several days or perhaps weeks. No hit and run historians they.

While I have appropriately, I think, in this interview emphasized Clark's contribution to mining history, one of the amazing aspects of the Spence historiography is its topical breadth. Clark has, as we all know, made distinctive and distinguished contributions to a diverse body of social and economic history, from rainmakers to the Salvation Army. So I end as I began, with a toast to that remarkable historian, Clark Spence, who looked west across the Illinois prairie, and has done so much to penetrate the black stope that was mining history a half a century ago. ■

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