

**SCHELLENBERG, T. R. (THEODORE R.)
(1903, KANSAS, USA – 1970, VIRGINIA, USA)**

**PARENTS: SARAH SCHROEDER SCHELLENBERG and
ABRAHAM LAWRENCE SCHELLENBERG**

NATIONALITY: AMERICAN

COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE: UNITED STATES



EDUCATION

- Hillsboro High School, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1916-1918
- Tabor Academy, Hillsboro, Kansas, 1919-1922
- University of Kansas: B.A. in history, Lawrence, Kansas, 1928
- University of Kansas: M.A. in history, Lawrence, Kansas, 1930
- University of Pennsylvania: Ph.D. in history, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1934

AREAS OF ARCHIVAL SPECIALIZATION

Appraisal; government records; archival principles; records management

ACHIEVEMENTS IN ARCHIVAL FIELD

Schellenberg made significant contributions to the development of archival standards and appraisal methods for government records in his work with the National Archives in Australia and the United States. He wrote *The Appraisal of Modern Public Records*, a classic text of archival principles in the United States.

CAREER HISTORY

- Executive Secretary of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research, American Council for Learned Societies and Social Science Research, 1934-1935
- Deputy Examiner, National Archives, U. S., 1935-1938
- History Assistant, National Parks Service, U. S., ca. 1935
- Associate National Director, Survey of Public Records, U. S., 1936
- Chief of the Agricultural Department Archives, National Archives, U. S., 1938-1945
- Fulbright Lecturer in Australia and New Zealand, 1954
- Assistant Archivist of the United States, 1956-1963

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

Theodore Schellenberg was born in 1903 in Garden Township, Kentucky. His parents were German Mennonites who immigrated to America from Russia in 1879. After completing his Ph.D. in 1934, Schellenberg was employed by the federal government as Executive Secretary of the Joint Committee on Materials for Research for the American Council for Learned Societies and Social Science Research.

He continued working for the federal government throughout his long career in archives. During his tenure as Director of Archival Management at the National Archives of the United States in the early 1950's, Schellenberg oversaw an extensive reappraisal initiative to de-accession old records and select new records for retention. While working on this project he broke away from traditional European archival principles to design a new appraisal system that, in his view, could be applied consistently. During this period he was awarded a Fulbright lectureship in Australia and New Zealand, where he made significant changes to Australia's national archives program and wrote a series of pamphlets that laid the groundwork for his influential publication, *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques*. In order to address the overwhelming volume of modern records, Schellenberg's work diverged significantly from many archival principles championed in Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archival Administration*. In contrast to Jenkinson's focus on "quality" in appraisal, Schellenberg argued that appraisal should be based on the primary value (administrative or operational value) and/or secondary value (evidential or informational value) of records. Following the success of his book, Schellenberg was appointed Assistant Archivist of the United States, a position he held until 1963. After his retirement he taught university courses in archival administration and preservation. He died in 1970 in Arlington, Virginia.

PARTIAL BIBLIOGRAPHY LISTING BOOKS AND THEN ARTICLES

- European Archival Practices in Arranging Records Washington, D.C.: National Archives, Office of the Executive Officer, 1939
- Disposition of Federal Records: How to Develop an Effective Program for the Preservation and Disposal of Records. Washington, D.C.: Government Publishing Office, 1949
- Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956
- (With Clinton Block) Archives of Trinidad and Tobago. Port of Spain, Trinidad: Government Publishing Office, 1958
- Management of Archives, New York: Columbia University Press, 1965
- "Applying American Archival Experience Abroad" in *The American Archivist* Vol. 19, No. 1, January 1956
- "Jeffersonian Origins of the Monroe Doctrine" in *Hispanic American Historical Review* Vol. 14, No. 1, 1934
- "Modern Archival Buildings" in *Archivum* No. 6, 1956
- "The Future of the Archival Profession" in *The American Archivist* Vol. 22, No. 1, January 1959
- "The Principle of Provenance and Modern Records in the United States" in *The American Archivist* Vol. 28, No. 1, July 1965.
- "A Nationwide System of Controlling Historical Manuscripts in the United States" in *The American Archivist* Vol. 28, No. 3, July 1965.
- "Archival Training in Caribbean Countries" in Caribbean Archives Conference Documentation. Document 9a, Mona, Jamaica, 1965.
- "Archival Training in Library Schools" in *The American Archivist* Vol. 31, No. 2, April, 1968.

AUTHOR OF BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRY/DATE OF SUBMISSION

ICA-SUV WHO'S WHO IN ARCHIVES GLOBALLY

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ica-suv/index.php>

Molly Bruce, September 2013

SECONDARY SOURCES FOR BIOGRAPHY

- Jane F. Smith “Theodore R. Schellenberg: Americanizer and Popularizer” in *The American Archivist*, Vol. 44, No. 4, Fall 1981
- Michael Cook, Leonard Rabbort, Hans Booms, Charles M. Dollar, and Terry Eastwood, “In Memoriam: Schellenberg (1903-1970)” in *The American Archivist* Vol. 33, No. 2, April 1970
- Richard Stapleton “Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison” in *Archivaria* No. 17, Winter 1983/84
- “Schellenberg, T. R. (Theodore R.), 1903-1970” in *Archivopedia*. Retrieved in August 2013 from [http://archivopedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Schellenberg,_T._R._\(Theodore_R.\),_1903-1970](http://archivopedia.com/wiki/index.php?title=Schellenberg,_T._R._(Theodore_R.),_1903-1970)
- Reto Tschan “A Comparison of Jenkinson and Schellenberg on Appraisal” in *The American Archivist*, Vol. 65, No. 2, Fall/Winter 2002

EDITOR/EDITING DATE

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