From Treasure Room to Archives
The McWhorter Papers and the State College of Washington

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In September 1944, Virgil McWhorter visited the Yakima, Washington, home of his ailing 84-year-old father, Lucullus V. McWhorter. Surrounded by Indian bows, war clubs, and regalia, bundles of papers, and shelves jammed with books, the Yakima rancher, advocate for Indian rights, and collector put down the magnifying glass he used to read and spoke with his son. Both men knew the elder McWhorter did not have much time (he would die within a month). They discussed McWhorter’s unfinished lifework: a monumental volume of Nez Perce ethnography from an Indian perspective that the elder man called his “Field History.” The history was to center on the Nez Perce but would include information that McWhorter had collected over the previous four decades on other Plateau Indians as well.

Before entering the hospital shortly after this meeting, the elder McWhorter willed that some of his Nez Perce collection, his manuscripts, and his old letters be given to the State College of Washington (WSC) in Pullman, Virgil’s alma mater. He also asked his doctors to give him “just six more months to complete his book.” Should McWhorter be unable to finish the book, his son was to contact Dr. Ernest O. Holland, president of WSC, for help in completing the manuscript. Shortly before his father’s death, Virgil did get in touch with Holland, who assured him that if his father was unable to complete the book, “We shall make arrangements here at the State College for the most competent person on our faculty to complete this volume, especially since you state he has given to you all of the material needed to complete this book.” McWhorter did not complete the manuscript before his death in October, and in 1945, Virgil McWhorter and President Holland came to an agreement. The college would find someone to finish writing the history and then publish the work, and the McWhorter family would donate to the college the remainder of Lucullus V. McWhorter’s Nez Perce collection and library.

After various setbacks, President Holland’s successors kept the college’s promises to Lucullus V. McWhorter and his heirs, publishing the elder McWhorter’s lifework under the title *Hear Me, My Chiefs!* in 1952 and completing the processing of the collection in 1959. In turn, these efforts pushed WSC to professionalize its curatorial oversight over its manuscript collections, with the college moving the collections from the Treasure Room, where manuscripts and rare books were kept haphazardly, to a professionally staffed archives repository. The challenges in publishing McWhorter’s
manuscript and processing his collection, and the collection’s influence on the creation of an enduring archives program at WSC, will be the focus of this essay.

The college’s courting of Lucullus V. McWhorter began in earnest on April 16, 1940, when President Holland wrote to Virgil McWhorter, Several persons have told me recently about a great collection of Indian relics, including a number of baskets, which your father has collected during the past fifty years. . . . It is also my hope that some arrangement can be made whereby your father would be willing to release this great collection for permanent deposit in our splendid museum here on the college campus.5

In reply, Virgil indicated that he would consult with his father regarding the deposition of his Nez Perce collection. Initially, President Holland thought that this and the rest of McWhorter’s collection consisted primarily of objects (Indian relics and baskets). He would soon learn that it also included a vast trove of manuscripts, correspondence, and photographs. As Holland corresponded with Virgil to arrange a visit from a WSC faculty member to see the collection, he learned that Lucullus V. McWhorter’s book Yellow Wolf: His Own Story would soon be published.6 Ever eager to expand the college’s collections, Holland told Virgil, “I think it would be splendid if he could give us this manuscript a little later for our Treasure Room.”7

In May 1941, Holland received good news from Virgil McWhorter. My father has carefully considered your letter of February fourth concerning the presentation of his Nez Perce Collection to the State College of Washington. It is my Father’s wish (my Brother and I concurring), that this rare collection be given to your college. Father is ready to proceed with the transfer of part of this collection as soon as the college has made suitable arrangements to receive the same. He desires, however, to retain a part of the collection which he cherishes so much, for the present. . . . Father desires to visit the college and confer with those who will prepare the cabinet to receive the collection.8

The use of the term cabinet points to the expectation of the McWhorter family that the collection would be permanently displayed on the WSC campus.9 President Holland, for his part, thought that the collection would fill several museum cases; he was unaware of the true scope of what McWhorter had assembled.

Holland and his colleagues, of course, wanted to be sure that the college would receive McWhorter’s Nez Perce collection and continued to maintain good relations with the McWhorter family over the next few years. Professor Herman J. Deutsch wrote to McWhorter on October 9 asking to excerpt four pages from appendix A of Yellow Wolf, now published, for a course reader, citing the appendix as “one of the best descriptions of Indian life of which I have any knowledge.”10 Deutsch then told McWhorter that “it would be a real service to anthropology” if he would keep all of his papers “together in one container and to add at random notes on points which come to mind but of which you have never made a record. In the event you should be too pre-occupied with other matters, you could make some reputable depository the beneficiary.”11 Of course, Deutsch already knew of just such a reputable depository. McWhorter’s immediate reply, dated “Falling Leaf Moon, 10 Suns, 1941 Snows,” was enthusiastic. “I prize your comments more highly than the general output. . . . You have my unqualified permission to make use of Appendix A.”12 In the end, Deutsch opted not to include the excerpt in his reader.13

Holland, the indomitable, hands-on president of WSC, kept up the wooing of McWhorter by inviting him to the 1941 commencement banquet. As part of the ceremony, Holland conferred upon McWhorter a certificate of merit and presented Washington’s governor, Arthur Langlie, with an autographed copy of McWhorter’s recently published Yellow Wolf.14 McWhorter was deeply touched by these contacts and the prestige conferred by WSC: McWhorter’s formal education had ended by age 12. In September 1941, McWhorter donated 32 Nez Perce artifacts, including the Nez Perce warrior
Yellow Wolf’s Winchester rifle, war whistle, and war club to the college museum. In November of the following year, he gave the college the manuscript for *Yellow Wolf.* So it was natural that shortly before his death, McWhorter would instruct his dutiful son, Virgil, to contact President Holland so that McWhorter’s last, great book would be published.

Why did Deutsch and Holland want the collection so badly? First, McWhorter was a well-known authority on Indian history in the Pacific Northwest. He supported the Eastern Washington State Historical Society and spearheaded the fundraising efforts for a gravestone for Yellow Wolf and a colossus statue (never realized) for the Nez Perce leader Chief Joseph.

Second, McWhorter’s collection was large and extremely rich. McWhorter had begun acquiring the collection in 1905, when he had assisted the Yakama in their struggle against legislation that attempted to divert water from their reservation. To win public support for his position, McWhorter collected documents from Indian agents and Yakama sources and conducted interviews with Indians and non-Indians for a series of pamphlets—*The Crime against the Yakimas* (1913), *The Continued Crime against the Yakimas* (1916), *The Discards* (1920)—that he published on behalf of Yakama rights. Because of these efforts, the Yakama adopted McWhorter and invited him to tribal deliberations, where he listened and took notes.

McWhorter’s close relationships with individual Plateau Indians further enriched his collection. In 1907, McWhorter met and befriended Yellow Wolf, who had fought in the 1877 Nez Perce War. Over the next three decades, McWhorter and Yellow Wolf collaborated on *Yellow Wolf: His Own Story,* which told the Nez Perce version of the conflict. It was the first published military account of the Nez Perce War from an Indian perspective. McWhorter and Yellow Wolf’s cousin, Peo Peo Tholekt, lobbied the U.S. government for the return of the Nez Perce’s homeland in the Wallowa country of eastern Oregon. In 1914, McWhorter began a long-term collaboration with Mourning Dove, whose book, *Coge-wea, the Half-Blood* (1927), was the first novel by a Native American female ever published.

McWhorter also arranged Indian shows for northwest fairs and rodeos, such as the Walla Walla Frontier Days, to supplement his income (and the incomes of his Nez Perce friends). In this capacity, said his biographer, Steven Ross Evans, McWhorter “hired many of the people he hoped to interview.” After playing Wild West for the crowds during the day, he would question his fellow performers in the evenings. Living among the Nez Perce for weeks at a time set McWhorter apart from others writing about this group of people. He voraciously collected multiple versions of the same stories and never threw anything away. His collection also contained extensive correspondence with other early northwest historians such as the moralizing Clifford Drury, who studied the Protestant missionaries, and Helen Addison Howard, author of *War Chief Joseph* (1941).

The third reason Deutsch and Holland were so interested in the collection was that it was well documented. Unlike most other collectors of American Indian materials, McWhorter was careful to differentiate among tribes and to associate the objects he collected with their creators, the result of his close involvement with Columbia Plateau peoples and his understanding of the nuances of Indian relations. McWhorter cared deeply about accuracy.

Peo Peo Tholekt’s drawing and description of his encounter with a grizzly bear is preserved in McWhorter’s papers. “I held him off while he tore my clothes from my breast and sides. He scratched me badly, for his claws were long and hard. We struggled but I could not press the bear down, nor could he get his teeth in me nor pull me to him. . . . While we fought, two of my Sioux friends rode hard towards me and . . . shot at the bear.” (“Peo Peo’s Fight with Grizzly,” n.d., Lucullus V. McWhorter Papers, MSC, WSU Libraries)
both in the documentation of artifacts in his possession and in the verification of oral Indian accounts with other evidence. For example, though many American Indian collections include artifacts, such as pipes, these objects are often poorly described. McWhorter’s pipes, however, were accompanied by rich, multilayered provenances, as the following example typed on a scrap of paper indicates:

This cube-like pipe with its bone-bead stem, was given Frank Parker as he was departing with an important dispatch, Nez Perce War, 1877. The donator was a half-blood Nez Perce, also a scout for General Howard. Park was starting on a night ride in August, exact date unknown. Pipe was “carried as a keepsake” by the half-blood scout.20

This provenance demonstrates McWhorter’s obsession with details. McWhorter’s writings, especially the collaboration with Yellow Wolf, reflect his penchant for marshaling all available information to corroborate his Indian sources. His interviews, the trust he instilled, his meticulous note taking, and his passion for antiquarian details had resulted in a rich collection of books, manuscripts, photographs, and objects.

Acquiring the collection meant a great deal to President Holland. When the first installment of the McWhorter collection arrived at WSC in 1941, Holland had served as president for 25 years. During his exceedingly long tenure, Holland devoted his life to the college. As a teetotaler and a bachelor who prided himself on personally answering every letter he received, Holland provided a model of dedication few could match.21 He knew all of the students and faculty and closely monitored every aspect of college administration, noting, for instance, any days missed by staff members and ensuring that their pay reflected these absences.

Throughout his tenure, Holland sought to increase the size and stature of the college’s library, particularly its northwest historical collections. To raise money for these efforts, Holland founded the Friends of the Library in 1938 and pressured campus administrators and faculty to join. He also collected artifacts for a future northwest history museum on campus, one that would hold objects from pioneers, missionaries, and Indians. Those items not on display in Science Hall were stored in closets around campus. Responsibility for administering this collection fell to Herman Deutsch, who in addition to his teaching, service, and research worked with the library on the development of its historical collections. Though Holland keenly desired a history museum, he did not wish to fund it. In an interview decades later, Deutsch reflected with bitterness that Holland had refused to look at the rest of a proposal for the museum that he had spent considerable time on after seeing the museum’s set-up cost ($9,000-$10,000). “But that, of course,” said Deutsch, “is the way Holland frequently proceeded. He liked to throw his weight around.”22

The next major installment of McWhorter’s Nez Perce collection, which the college had secured in exchange for its promise to complete and publish McWhorter’s manuscript, arrived at WSC in August 1945, nearly a year after the death of L. V. McWhorter and the first year of President Holland’s retirement. Retirement had not come easily to Holland: the WSC regents had had to purchase him a new house because he had refused to leave the president’s mansion when his successor, Wilson Compton, arrived in Pullman.23 The college had also provided him an office in the library and a secretary. Holland devoted most of his retirement to enriching the college library’s collections.24

Virgil McWhorter had spent nearly a year organizing and packing the bulk of his father’s papers and library, which consisted of approximately 580 books and 680 pamphlets.25 Shortly after re-
ceiving the materials, Deutsch wrote to McWhorter to assure him that the donated books would have "proper book plates put on the inside covers," that manuscript materials would "remain intact and be administered according to standard archives practices," that one of two "Class A Buildings" would house the collection, that no one would "be permitted to publish any manuscript . . . without written authorization from your family," and that the papers would be "processed promptly."\textsuperscript{26} Holland and Deutsch now needed to find an author-editor to complete the "Field History," the most pressing issue, and someone to process the collection. Both tasks proved to be difficult.

The following year, on January 19, 1946, Holland informed Virgil McWhorter that the "highly trained man" he and Deutsch had in mind to complete his father's manuscript would be unable to do the work. However, Holland was "quite sure that a number of the GIs who will enroll here either in February 1946, or September 1946, will be keenly interested in historical studies and research work" and that "we have not forgotten for a moment the important task that you have set for us here at the State College of Washington. In the end I am sure we shall be able to do a very satisfactory piece of work."\textsuperscript{27} Holland and Deutsch were not alone in their struggles to find a "highly trained man," or even a woman, for the job; World War II had created a dramatic labor shortage across the WSC campus.\textsuperscript{28}

The college's inability to find someone to complete the book led Virgil McWhorter to press Holland to hire Herman Deutsch to do the work, an idea that McWhorter had apparently harbored for quite some time. After all, Holland had told him in 1940, "We shall make arrangements here at the State College for the most competent person on our faculty" to complete the volume.\textsuperscript{29}

World War II caused a dramatic labor shortage on the WSC campus. No male students are visible in this 1944 photograph of the library reading room. (WSU Buildings, masc, WSU Libraries)

The hope that Dr. Deutsch might complete the history has never left me. The history is original research and comes directly from the Old Nez Perce Indians concerned. Father knew them all and they trusted him and told him everything. I feel much good will come to the college through what it is doing. It would be fitting indeed for its History Professor to complete the work. Is there any possible chance that he might be given time by the College to do this?\textsuperscript{30}

In the next paragraph of the letter, McWhorter offered this tantalizing possibility:

You may be interested in knowing that I hold intact all of the history and papers Father had concerning the Yakimas. . . . I shall keep these documents in my safe for the present. Should the State College not be disappointed in the historical data pertaining to the Nez Perces, and find that the material is desirable for its library, I have in mind to give all of the Yakima papers to my Alma Mater, which college honored and gave much happiness and recognition to my father while he was yet alive.\textsuperscript{31}

Nor could Deutsch report much progress on processing the collection. The college had hired someone to do this work—Norma Berg, a graduate in political science with no archives experience—but she could not continue because she was pregnant. According to Deutsch, Berg would, however, be willing to persuade an unnamed "young married woman" from the nearby town of Colfax to agree to finish processing the collection.\textsuperscript{34} Four more years would pass before any tangible progress on the collection was made, thereby straining the relationship between Holland, Deutsch, and
McWhorter.

The relationship was further strained by Deutsch’s decision not to complete the manuscript himself, in spite of being pressured to do so by Holland and McWhorter. Deutsch met with the head of the Department of History and Political Science, Claudius O. Johnson, to discuss a response to Holland’s request that Deutsch be relieved of some of his duties to complete the McWhorter book. In a memorandum that reflected the chafing at Holland’s micromanagement (during his retirement, no less) felt by many at the college, Johnson explained to Holland why Deutsch could not do the job. Johnson conceded, “We should do no fudging about the McWhorter papers” and “the book we have agreed to complete should be completed by a thoroughly competent person.”35 However, Johnson explained, Deutsch could not be released from his teaching load because of understaffing and a record enrollment. Even if Deutsch were released from his teaching, Johnson added, he would still be too busy with committees and advising, with the result that the “McWhorter materials would be left practically untouched.”36

Nor could Deutsch do the work in the summer, as Holland had suggested, because President Compton had already made plans for Deutsch during the summer. Therefore, Johnson wrote, “Deutsch and I with great regret” could not follow Holland’s “very proper suggestions.”37

Johnson did, however, have a solution. A certain Mrs. Gross who is a “trained scholar, a conscientious worker, and an able writer[,] having done considerable work for the American League of Women Voters,” would “be glad to do” the job “for a reasonable compensation.” Indeed, she would do the work at “much less cost to the college than if it should be done by Deutsch.”38 What happened with Gross is unclear; she never worked on the manuscript. But the memorandum to Holland is a fascinating document. Though retired, Holland still exerted enough influence over the WSC faculty that Johnson and Deutsch felt compelled to respond to his directives in a two-page, single-spaced memorandum.

The reasons they gave Holland for why Deutsch could not complete the manuscript did indeed have merit. The State College of Washington of the 1940s was not a research institution. Faculty members such as Deutsch had significant teaching and service obligations. In his 1946 activity report, Deutsch noted that he spent 11 hours a week teaching, 20 hours preparing lectures, 8 hours correcting student work, 2 hours sitting on committees, 5 hours doing research, and more than 7 hours meeting with students, for a total of 53 hours per week. Deutsch indicated in the comment section of the form that his 7 hours of weekly meetings with students was “very conservative in view of size of classes and returning veterans.”39

Even with the demands on his time, one wonders why Deutsch so adamantly refused to finish McWhorter’s work, given his interest in northwest history. It is possible that he felt overwhelmed by his responsibilities, preferred his own research, judged the manuscript too much work, or resented the pressure from Holland and McWhorter. It is also possible that he was not yet ready to write a book: his résumé indicates he had not yet published a book at this time. His scholarly output from 1932 to 1946 consisted of five articles (mostly concerning Wisconsin history and politics), encyclopedia and dictionary entries, and book reviews.40

But he may have had other concerns regarding McWhorter’s scholarly credentials. When McWhorter’s manuscript was at last published in 1952, Deutsch was asked to write the introduction. In the very first paragraph, he noted that although the book had “the benefit of scholarly attention, it remains folk history in most of its essential aspects.”41 By judging McWhorter’s work “folk history”—seemingly connoting that it was popular rather than academic history—Deutsch was distancing himself from McWhorter. Whereas McWhorter ended his formal schooling after the third grade, Deutsch held a doctorate degree in history from

Herman J. Deutsch in his office in 1949. (MASC, WSU Libraries, 2564)
the University of Wisconsin. Deutsch’s Pacific northwest history course materials provide further clues on his view of history and thus shed light on his opinion of McWhorter’s work. While McWhorter valued cultural history, with oral history as a primary source, Deutsch preferred economic and legal data. Though Deutsch devoted three weeks of his course to Indian topics, he did not have his students read McWhorter on Columbia Plateau Indian culture or on the Yakama and Nez Perce wars.42

When it became clear that Deutsch was not going to agree to finish the manuscript, Holland shared the news with Virgil McWhorter in a letter marked “personal.”43 He then added:

Confidentially, Virgil, Deutsch is not a good detail man, and some of us must be constantly working with him to get certain things done. But he is eminently qualified to complete your father’s book, and you and I hoped that he could be permitted to accept this important assignment. However, we have failed. Deutsch will be back in a few days from his vacation, and again, we will urge him to find an unusually competent person to complete your father’s manuscript. In the end, we shall succeed.44

In a 1974 interview, Deutsch indicated that he did not always appreciate Holland “constantly working with him” to get certain things done. Deutsch said that in addition to his teaching load he contended with “other distractions that Holland created. He [Holland] was in on everything in a capricious manner. He did not respect one’s time, Saturdays, Sundays and evenings.”45

Virgil McWhorter took the news of Deutsch’s refusal to complete the manuscript with resignation, telling Holland, “I know it will not be possible to get someone to do the work like Dr. Deutsch would have completed it, but regardless of this fact the work must be done.”46 To spur some activity at WSC, Virgil concluded his letter with, “I think I have already told you the Oregon Historical Society solicited me for all of Father’s papers and offered to complete immediately and publish the book. I still feel I have not erred in placing it with your college.”47 By the following spring, Virgil McWhorter was growing impatient. On March 7, he sent Holland a letter requesting that his father’s papers and manuscripts be “processed on or before January 1, 1950.”48

A week later, Deutsch told McWhorter that he finally had a recommendation for a candidate to finish the “Field History”: Ruth Bordin, the spouse of the head of WSC’s counseling services.49 The College Committee on Research endorsed Deutsch’s proposal, as did the dean C. C. Todd.50 Bordin was hired and received an appointment as a half-time research assistant at $1 an hour, or $117 a month, for 18 months. Meanwhile, WSC library staff made progress on the McWhorter Papers. Before she left, Norma Berg had managed to start an inventory of the collection, and Freda Galligan had accessioned it—that is, prepared documents outlining the transfer of the collection from the McWhorter family to the college. However, she was waiting until Bordin had completed the manuscript to organize the collection and create a guide for it. The McWhorter family did not wish the general public to see the McWhorter manuscripts until Bordin had finished the book.

Over the next three years, Bordin, who had moved from Pullman to Ann Arbor, Michigan, in July 1948, struggled to finish the manuscript, now tentatively titled “Nez Perce History and Legend.” Much of her difficulty in completing the project resulted from her inability to consult McWhorter’s papers and books, which remained in Washington State. Thus, she relied greatly on library staff and Herman Deutsch. Though Freda Galligan promptly answered her questions, Deutsch proved a poor correspondent. After receiving an “abject apology”51 from Deutsch for not replying to her inquiries, on May 17, 1949, Bordin responded,

I apologize for saying that your letter was disappointing in that most of the dozen or so inquiries that have found their way into the half dozen or so letters I wrote you from January to March are still unanswered. I had delayed in sending the manuscript hoping you would answer them, but there seems to be no point in waiting further.52

Bordin eventually gave up on Deutsch and finished the manuscript as best she could. She mailed the final draft of the manuscript to Virgil McWhorter in October 1949.53 Bordin’s work pleased McWhorter. On October 24, 1949, he wrote to Bordin to thank her for her “splendid” work on the book. “I only hope that any disturbing memories you may hold pertaining to the detail of the difficult chapters will be softened by the gain I had in learning first-hand about this injustice to the Indians themselves, which gain I know you must share.”54 The “injustice” McWhorter was referring to was likely the story of the Nez Perce’s dispossession, now told from the Indian perspective. Though the draft of the manuscript was now complete and submitted to Caxton Printers, also the publisher of L. V. McWhorter’s Yellow Wolf, Bordin would soon have to create an index and secure permissions for quotations from copyright holders.

Meanwhile, Holland continued to snipe at his colleagues, probably frustrated that in his retirement he could no longer dictate his wishes. On November 22, 1949, Holland told Virgil McWhorter,

Mrs Bordin went through the material in preparing her part of your father’s manuscript, with no thought of keeping it in the original order when it arrived from your hands, and I may add that at that time it was in good condition. I am not criticizing her but I am simply stating a fact.55

So much for Deutsch’s promise to keep the papers “intact.” Holland, however, was not finished. “As I have told you,
Deutsch is one of the finest men I have ever known but he is a procrastinator and as a result, he postpones many things that should be done. Luckily for all involved, Virgil McWhorter would receive more positive news from Caxton Printers.

Two anonymous reader’s reports for Caxton Printers survive. Both recommended publication of the book, though one noted that it would “probably not have a wide commercial appeal.” The second reader’s report suggested re-publicizing Yellow Wolf rather than putting out a “slow-selling book merely for prestige.” Armed with these reports, J. H. Gibson, president of the press, negotiated a $3,000 subvention from Virgil McWhorter to publish the manuscript. As part of the agreement, Virgil McWhorter pre-purchased 500 copies of the book. Though his father had left a modest estate, Virgil had the financial means to subsidize the publishing of the manuscript and the processing of the papers: between the mid-1920s and World War II, Virgil had built the family sheep business into one of the biggest in the Pacific Northwest.

In November 1950, Bordin asked D. M. O’Neil, the press’s editor, to be relieved of the responsibility of creating the index and securing permissions. However, she ultimately finished these tasks. The following year, O’Neil encouraged her to not give up on scholarly work. “This has been quite a grind for you, and I hope the upshot will not be to sour you entirely on research, writing, and selective organization.”

With the contract signed, the manuscript completed, and the title finalized to Hear Me, My Chiefs! Deutsch wrote the introduction. In it, he praised Ruth Bordin’s “alacrity and scholarly acumen,” assessed L. V. McWhorter as a historian, and outlined the structure of the book—McWhorter wrote the first 21 chapters and Bordin the final 9. Bordin, in her acknowledgments (though they are unsigned), pointedly did not mention, let alone thank, Deutsch. Virgil McWhorter, however, was pleased with Deutsch’s part in completing the book. In a letter of thanks sent to Deutsch, McWhorter quoted his daughter, Judith, who had said, “Anything Dr. Deutsch does will be well done. Any person he selects to complete the book will be a capable party.” Virgil closed his letter, “I cannot pay you a better tribute than did my daughter and will simply not try.”

Bordin’s requests to locate specific documents, as well as similar requests made by Virgil McWhorter that involved hours of searching by Deutsch and the associate librarian, Clifford Armstrong, led the library to hire an archivist to oversee its northwest collections. On March 14, 1947, Deutsch informed Virgil McWhorter of this development.

You will be interested to note that the library budget makes provision for the employment of an archivist who will be given responsible charge of all State College papers and manuscripts. This is one of the most forward looking moves undertaken by a Pacific Northwest college and will centralize the responsibility of the college to donors of materials.

Rather than immediately hiring a professionally trained archivist, however, the library assigned the duties to Freda Galligan.

At the same time, working conditions forWSC librarians were beginning to improve. Before 1945, library employees did not enjoy the benefits college faculty did, earning lower salaries, working 44 hours a week (or more), and receiving less vacation time (two weeks a year). But in 1945, after the retirement of President Holland and larger appropriations from the Washington State Legislature, college employees, including librarians, received pay increases, and professional members of the library staff received “recognition of academic standing,” which included the same voting privileges that faculty had and one month of vacation.

The library hired its first professionally trained archivist, Mary W. Avery, in 1957. Avery held a master’s degree in history from WSC and was certified as an archivist by American University in Washington, D.C. Avery was among the first librarians with a professional certification to be hired at WSC, setting a precedent for later hires. The head librarian at WSC for the entire Holland administration (1916-44), William Wirt Foote, did not have a college degree, let alone a library degree. His training had come from the head librarian at Oberlin College. This preparation was enough to land Foote two head librarian positions prior to his appointment at WSC. However, Foote’s successor, G. Donald Smith, held a doctorate from the University of Chicago.

With budgeting for an archivist in 1948, dedicated space in WSC’s new library (construction started in 1948), and the hiring of Mary Avery in 1957, the college was at the forefront of a regional trend of Northwest institutions establishing archives programs. To place the transformation of the WSC archives in a broader regional context, University of Washington established a manuscripts section in 1958 to bring “some order” to its collections, though the university did not establish its present “system of intellectual control” over the collections until 1962. Oregon State University established a university archives in 1961. The university’s first archivist, Harriet Moore, did not receive any formal training until 1963, when she attended the Modern Archives Institute, a course in archival practice offered by the Library of Congress. The Montana Historical Society hired its first trained archivist in the early 1970s. The City of Seattle established its municipal archives in 1985.

Largely responsible for the transfor-
The McWhorter Papers represented his last major acquisition on behalf of the library. Shortly before his death, the university decided to honor him by naming its new library after him. The Ernest Holland Library, completed in 1950, had dedicated facilities on the first floor for the Archives, Special Research Collections, and Rare Books Division, including secure space for collections and a reading room. Holland’s dream of a history museum was abandoned during the Compton administration. Though the McWhorter artifacts remained on campus in the anthropology museum, most of the other artifacts were distributed to regional historical societies, with the Eastern Washington State Historical Society receiving the bulk of the items.

In 1951, Virgil McWhorter wrote President Compton regarding 31 objects pertaining to the Nez Perce War of 1877 that Lucullus V. McWhorter had donated to the college in 1941. These objects had been removed from display in 1950. A subsequent gift of 47 additional items in 1945 remained uncataloged and in storage.

The McWhorter family desires that this entire collection of great historical value remain with the college if it is intended to process it and place it on permanent exhibit in the museum. . . . On the other hand it is desired that the entire collection be returned [to] us if it is unsuited for permanent exhibit for the college museum. The Yakima Valley Junior college will accept it to be placed on exhibit in the Larson museum along with my Father’s Yakima Indian collection already there on exhibit.

S. Town Stephenson, dean of faculty, responded to McWhorter on July 10, 1951, indicating that the college would like to retain all of the collection, but that given the lack of display space, it would be preferable to display specimens from the collection when courses on “the American Indian are being offered” and to store the collection, “properly identified as to donor and carefully boxed and protected,” when not displayed. According to Stephenson, “This method of alternating display and storage . . . can be expected to prolong significantly the life of the specimens of the collection.” McWhorter replied that, after consideration, “the matter has been cleared to our entire satisfaction.”

Luckily for the college, in addition to his $3,000 subvention to Caxton Printers, Virgil McWhorter paid for the processing of his father’s collection. He also donated to the Friends of the Library 380 of the remaining 500 copies of Hear Me, My Chiefs! that he had purchased. In 1952, Nelson Ault, an English professor at WSC, negotiated a rate of $2.50 an hour to process the McWhorter Papers (which as of this time had only been accessioned); Ruth Bordin earned only $1 an hour for her
work on *Hear Me, My Chiefs*. It is distinctly possible that this difference in pay was related to gender. This is not to say that processing the McWhorter Papers was easy. As Ault notes in his introduction to *The Papers of Lucullus V. McWhorter*, the guide to the collection, McWhorter lacked a “systematic approach in matters of collecting, preserving, and arranging data.” Ault adds that McWhorter’s “lifelong habit of jotting down a dozen notes on a dozen disparate subjects, all on the nearest scrap of paper, made any filing system impossible.”

The guide to the McWhorter Papers was a significant achievement for the fledgling archives program at WSC. It first appeared in 1958 in installments in the *Research Studies of the State College of Washington*, a journal founded in 1929 as a “quarterly devoted to the publication of research by the faculty and advanced students of the State College of Washington.” This is the first publication of a guide to a manuscript collection at WSC and likely the earliest in the Northwest. Virgin McGilvrey McWhorter then paid to have the installments of the guide gathered together and published in 1959 as *The Papers of Lucullus V. McWhorter*. With the McWhorter Papers as a model, the WSC library would publish subsequent guides to ensure broad access to its collections.

The McWhorter collection now comprises 51 boxes of manuscripts, 20 boxes of photographs, 360 books (mostly annotated), and numerous artifacts. For decades, historians have mined the collection for Nez Perce and Yakama sources, particularly because it provides an Indian perspective totally absent in the literature of that time. As Clifford Trafzer notes, McWhorter wrote the new western history in the 1930s and 1940s, long before recent converts found their way to believing that “Native Americans should have a voice in historical accounts.”

According to McWhorter’s biographer, Steven Ross Evans, “not only historians, but folklorists, ethnologists, and anthropologists have taken advantage of this vast collection.” Literary scholars have also used the collection to explore McWhorter’s relationships with Plateau Indians, particularly Mourning Dove. The collection was even consulted by a team of researchers from the Pleasant Company prior to the release of the Nez Perce American Girl doll, Kaya. Evans also notes that the McWhorter Papers were Washington State University Libraries’ most-used collection at the time he wrote his biography, in 1996; this remains true today.

The significance of the McWhorter Papers, however, extends beyond the archive’s merits as an individual collection. President Holland, Dr. Deutsch, and their colleagues had to scramble to complete McWhorter’s “Field History” and to process the papers, making WSC administrators realize that hazards of curating the McWhorter Papers resulted in WSC hiring professional archivists who not only administered the papers, but also developed the facilities and procedures for collecting, describing, and making accessible thousands of other collections. In their planning for the new Ernest Holland Library in the late 1940s, they dedicated prime space on the first floor of the new building for the Archives, Special Research Collections, and Rare Books Division. The State College of Washington was at the forefront of a trend of regional research institutions adopting professional archival standards after the establishment of the National Archives and Records Administration in 1934 and the founding of the Society of American Archivists in 1936. When researchers visit archival repositories in the Northwest, they can do so in part because institutions followed the lead of WSC in properly caring for their collections.

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2. The State College of Washington is now known as Washington State University (WSU).


5. Holland to McWhorter, April 16, 1940, ibid.


11. Ibid.

12. Lucullus V. McWhorter to Deutsch, "Falling Leaf Moon, 10 Suns, 1941 Snows," folder 306, box 19, Deutsch Papers.


17. Evans, 33.

18. Ibid., 55.

19. Ibid.


24. Landeen, 450.


27. Holland to Virgil McWhorter, Jan. 19, 1946, folder 325a, box 33, McWhorter Papers.


30. Virgil McWhorter to Holland, Feb. 17, 1946, folder 325a, box 33, McWhorter Papers.

31. Ibid.

32. Holland to Virgil McWhorter, Feb. 20, 1946, folder 325a, box 33, McWhorter Papers.

33. Deutsch to Virgil McWhorter, Feb. 20, 1946, ibid.

34. Ibid.


36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.


40. Resumé, Nov. 8, 1952, Herman Deutsch personnel file, box 4, Faculty Personnel Files, masc, WSU Libraries.


42. Neither Yellow Wolf nor Hear Me, My Chiefs! was among the 19 primary texts Deutsch reserved for his course History 455: History of the State of Washington and the Pacific Northwest. "Hear Me, My Chiefs!" does appear on a supplemental reading list for History 455. Syllabi and course assignments, 1961-62 and undated, folder 880, box 51, Deutsch Papers.

43. Holland to Virgil McWhorter, Aug. 1, 1946, folder 325a, box 33, McWhorter Papers.

44. Ibid.


46. Virgil McWhorter to Holland, Aug. 11, 1946, folder 325a, box 33, McWhorter Papers.

47. Ibid.


49. Deutsch to Virgil McWhorter, March 14, 1947, ibid.

50. Deutsch to Virgil McWhorter, May 1, 1947, ibid.


52. Bordin to Deutsch, May 17, 1949, ibid.


54. Ibid.


56. Ibid.


58. Evans, 171.


60. O’Neil to Bordin, Nov. 23, 1951, ibid. Far from being "soured" on research and writing, Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin went on to become curator of manuscripts at Michigan Historical Collections (now the Bentley Historical Library) at the University of Michigan in 1957. In 1967, she joined the history faculty at Eastern Michigan University, returning to the Bentley Historical Library in 1980. She wrote several books, including Pictorial History of the University of Michigan (1967) and biographies of Frances Willard and Alice Freeman Palmer. See the Ruth Bordin Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

61. Deutsch, introduction to Hear Me, My Chiefs!, xxii.


63. Deutsch to Virgil McWhorter, March 14, 1947, ibid.

64. Gorchels, 403-404.


66. From the 1950s to the 1970s, professional archivists were generally expected to have completed a course in archives theory and practice, as Avery had. Currently, there is no universally agreed-upon credential for archivists. Most archivists in academic libraries hold a master’s degree in library and information science, with a specialization in archives management from a program accredited by the American Library Association. Many archivists who work for the state or federal government have a master’s degree in history or a related field and are certified by the Academy of Certified Archivists.

67. According to Gorchels, as late as 1930 “eleven head librarians in land-grant libraries did not have a college degree and more than twenty had no library school training” (p. 399).


69. Lawrence Landis, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2011.

70. Ellie Arguimbau, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2011.

71. Anne Frantilla, e-mail message to author, April 4, 2011.


75. Virgil McWhorter to Wilson Compton, May 12, 1951, folder 326b, box 33, McWhorter Papers.

76. S. Town Stephenson to Virgil McWhorter, July 10, 1951, ibid.

77. Ibid.

78. Virgil McWhorter to Stephenson, Aug. 4, 1951, folder 326b, box 33, McWhorter Papers.


81. Ault, 8.


86. The McWhorter family also donated 152 artifacts to the Yakima Valley Community College, which were transferred to the Yakima Valley Museum in 1956.

87. For books that rely heavily on the McWhorter Papers, see Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., The Nez Perce Indians and the Opening of the Northwest (Lincoln, Nebr., 1979); and Robert R. McCoy, Chief Joseph, Yellow Wolf, and the Creation of Nez Perce History in the Pacific Northwest (New York, 2004).


90. Evans, 181.


92. Evans, 181.

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