

Leland, Waldo Gifford (17 July 1879-19 Oct. 1966), historian and archival theorist, was born in Newton, Massachusetts, the son of Luther Erving Leland and Ellen Maria Gifford, public school teachers. Leland attended Newton High School and Brown University, graduating with a B.A. in sociology in 1900. While at Brown he studied with history professor J. Franklin Jameson. He continued his studies at Harvard, receiving an M.A. in history in 1901, and then worked as a teaching assistant in the history department. In 1903 Jameson asked Leland to come to Washington, D.C., to help him and Claude H. Van Tyne on an archival study financed by the Carnegie Institute of Washington. Leland and Van Tyne co-wrote *The Guide to the Archives of the Government of the United States in Washington* (1904). Three years later, Leland published a revised version, establishing his reputation as an authority on federal records. His next project was collecting letters written by the delegates to the Continental Congress, a job that required him to travel extensively in the eastern United States. In April 1904 Leland married Gertrude Dennis, a violinist; they had no children.

Leland moved to France in 1907, where he served as the principal representative of the Carnegie Institute of Washington in that country. While in France he began work on his exhaustive *Guide to Materials for American History in the Libraries and Archives of Paris*. He also supervised the copying of French manuscripts relevant to the United States for inclusion in the Library of Congress. He served as the American delegate to the International Congress of Historical Sciences in 1908 and 1913. In 1909 Leland helped to organize the first Conference of Archivists and gave its keynote address. That same year, he was hired as general secretary of the American Historical Association (AHA), a post that he obtained partly with the help of J. Franklin Jameson, who had used his position in the Carnegie Institute to ensure funding of the AHA. Leland performed this job largely in absentia, editing the association's annual reports and prize essays from Paris. During the academic year 1910-1911, Leland attended the École Nationale des Chartes in Paris.

Leland returned to the United States in 1914, where he remained throughout the First World War. His mentor Jameson was deeply involved in the National Board for Historical Services, and Leland again worked with him as the board's secretary-treasurer. The board's program and methodology was largely derived from Leland's 1912 essay "The National Archives: A Program" published in the *American Historical Review*. In 1919, again at Jameson's suggestion, Leland served as organizing secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies, a group of six national scholarly organizations convened to represent the U.S. in the International Academic Union. Returning to France in 1922, Leland continued his work as a representative of the Carnegie Institute. During the academic year 1923-1924 he taught as the Hyde Exchange Lecturer at several French universities. In 1926 Leland published the bibliographical work he had written with Newton D. Mereness, *Introduction to American Official Sources for the Economic and Social History of the War*. Leland also helped Jameson lobby Congress to establish National Archives in 1926. In the same year, Leland's long-time work with the International Congress of Historical Sciences came to fruition in the formation of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. This committee was Leland's creation, designed to remedy two major problems that he saw in the ICHS: the lack of continuity between yearly congresses and the exclusion of Germans from participation in the ICHS's work. He served as the International Committee's treasurer.

Leland went back to the United States in 1927 to become secretary of the American Council of Learned Societies, which he had helped begin eight years earlier. The ACLS had grown to include twelve national professional scholarly organizations and had received a major grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to provide for full-time administration. Leland administered the council's affairs as secretary from 1927 to 1939 and as director from 1939 to 1946. His leadership

developed the ACLS from a loose constellation of twelve organizations recommending projects for foundation support to a stable federation of twenty-four societies with its own programs in support of scholarship. His major projects at the ACLS included sponsoring the publication of the *Dictionary of American Biography* (1927-1936) and the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, which appeared beginning in 1935. Leland's fundraising enabled the ACLS to distribute grants directly to scholars and to fund academic conferences. The ACLS was especially active in encouraging the development of regional area studies, including programs focusing on China, Japan, India, Iran, the Slavic countries, the Near East, and Latin America. The first volume of his *Guide to Materials* concerning material in libraries, appeared in 1932 and the second, on papers in the archives of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in 1943. The final three volumes were never published, but the unfinished manuscripts are housed in the Leland papers at the Library of Congress.

In 1938 Leland became president of the International Committee of Historical Sciences. From 1939 to 1941 he presided over the Society of American Archivists. During the Second World War, he served on many war advisory councils. After the war, he was a delegate to a 1945 London conference that laid the groundwork for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He served on UNESCO's U.S. National Committee as vice chairman from 1946 to 1949. A long-time interest in the Park Service culminated in 1945 in his five-year membership on the U.S. Department of the Interior's Advisory Board on National Parks, Historical Sites, Buildings, and Monuments. This work won Leland the Pugsley Gold Medal from the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society and the Distinguished Service Award with Gold Medal from the Department of the Interior one year later. In 1958 he chaired the United States delegation to the Eighth International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Zurich, Switzerland. Leland died in Washington, D.C.

Jameson's summons to Washington in 1903 stopped Leland's progress toward a Harvard Ph.D. But with his modest bearing and irenic temperament, Leland became a key figure in the creation and growth of the national and international infrastructure for the scholarship in history and the humanities.

Elizabeth Zoe Vicary. "Leland, Waldo Gifford"; <http://www.anb.org/articles/14/14-00360.html>; *American National Biography Online* Feb. 2000. Copyright © 2000 American Council of Learned Societies. Published by Oxford University Press. All rights reserved. By permission of Oxford University Press.