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Reflections on Processing the Schirmer Papers

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Remarks by Liza Anulao at the tribute for Boone Schirmer

Under the supervision of Dr. Lucy Burns and Dr. Barbara Gaerlan, I was very privileged to assist in historical research that very few undergraduates get a chance to do. I became very intimate handling the primary documents of Dr. Schirmer's collection of writings, ranging from essays; speeches; magazine, journal, and newsletter articles; book reviews; and correspondence to Japan. As I took all 178 of these sources to input into Endnote and scanned them into Microsoft Word, I was intrigued by so many details of Boone's writings that perhaps shed some light on his unique character and personality.

Two points were of particular interest. First, Boone had an eccentric labeling system in filing his papers, as Dr. Gaerlan pointed out to me. Among his file folders was one labeled in pencil as "RR Time Tables." This folder title was a reference to "railroad time tables," because sandwiched among his many folders with articles on US policy toward the Philippines and an early article he wrote on transportation problems in Boston entitled "Charlie and the MTA," was a bookmark-sized chart of a railroad time schedule – a relic from the past.

Second, I faced a difficult question as an assistant in the archiving process because Dr. Schirmer would sign his name to his writings in so many different variations. He would sign "Boone," "Daniel Boone Schirmer," "Schirmer," or just "DB Schirmer." I wasn't sure initially how to input his name under "author" in Endnote; I documented his name exactly as he wrote it in the end, thinking that what to others might seem like a trivial point could actually prove later to be an interesting discussion for future historians. Who knows if future intellectuals would be interested in Boone's changing identity politics over time as reflected in his name.

Whatever the case, I was very excited and tickled pink to contribute my help to this important project and would like to thank Dr. Burns and Dr. Gaerlan for this amazing and very educational opportunity.