

# Existential<sup>1</sup> Purpose, Pragmatic<sup>2</sup> Strategy, and Utilitarian<sup>3</sup> Practice [Postmodern but Pragmatic]: Appraisal and Collection Development for Archives and Manuscripts in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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## Section I. “Never Eat Anything Bigger Than Your Head”: Context and Historical Development of Archival Appraisal and Collection

**Development.** *This section draws its title from a Kliban cartoon, meant to introduce the admonition that appraisal must reflect the resources of the repository as well as its mission, vision, and clientele. It is also meant to clarify that quantity is not a useful measure of appraisal success (or failure), only quality...how quality might be defined is tackled later in the manual. Tracing the historical development of writing about and concepts of assessment/appraisal is pretty standard element of a Fundamentals volume.*

*The section argues that US archivists have often done collection development and appraisal poorly, and offers this manual to begin the corrective. It suggests that both the relatively recent context of postmodernism as well as the older philosophy of pragmatism assist in explaining the essential need for appraisal and the essential role of archivist as appraiser, while also introducing the most important components to doing appraisal well—planning and policy. It will also explain the manual’s other purpose, which is not to try to teach readers how to arrive at the*

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<sup>1</sup> Existentialism: doctrine of individual human responsibility in an unfathomable universe. An influential movement in 20th-century ethics holding that values are not universal but instead that each person must create his own values as a result of living life. Its guiding phrase, formulated by, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), was "existence precedes essence". Each individual—not society or religion—is solely responsible for giving meaning to life. Human beings, through their own consciousness, create their own values and determine a meaning to their life.

<sup>2</sup> In epistemology, the view, originated by C.S. Peirce (1839-1914) and made famous by William James (1842-1910) and James Dewey (1859-1952), that the truth of a concept is to be evaluated by its practical consequences for human affairs. In ethics, a form of consequentialism that differs from utilitarianism by emphasizing practical action instead of usefulness to others

<sup>3</sup> a theory in normative ethics holding that the proper course of action is the one that maximizes utility, usually defined as maximizing total benefit and reducing suffering or the negatives. The best action is the one that procures the greatest happiness for the greatest numbers—and the worst is the one that causes the most misery.

*“right” appraisal answer, but instead how to think about appraisal in ways that lead to better answers within each institutional context.*

**Chapter 1. “Profligacy, if not outright idiocy”—the oft-encountered pitfalls of modern appraisal and how to avoid them.** *This chapter introduces relevant terms and definitions, especially Boles’ argument for “selection”, comparing and contrasting the SAA Glossary, the new SAA Dictionary, and the UBC Encyclopedia. An set of continua will help provide readers with the fairly wide ranges of purpose assigned to appraisal by archival thinkers over time (e.g., are we concerned more with accountability or memory, or some mixture of both). The causes and consequences of failure to do appraisal at all or to do it well are discussed...and the consequences of failed assessment are not pretty at any level, Society, Creator, Repository, Profession. In this chapter the manual will try something new, to wit, an invitation to readers to evaluate the manual in a fairly formal manner; moreover, it will invite readers to interact w/the manual—pose questions, posit alternatives, and most importantly shape the book to best assist in their particular context. This is particularly relevant because one of the overarching themes of the manual is that the particular context of a repository is essential to defining and applying collection development and appraisal approaches.*

**Part i. What Are Archival Appraisal and Collection Development and Why Must We Do Them?**

**Part ii. The Who, When, Where, How, and Why of Appraisal and Collection Development.**

**Part iii. Why and how has appraisal and collection development often gone wrong?**

**Part iv. How this manual might help us do appraisal and collection development better.**

**Part v. Appraise this book (with apologies to Abbie Hoffman).**

**Chapter 2. “We have come to bury Caesar, not to praise him”:** History of English Language Writing on Collection Development and Appraisal

*A fairly straightforward though certainly opinionated recounting of appraisal and collection development through the archival ages. The title derives from Luciana Duranti’s argument in the 90s that in Caesars’ Rome, which should be considered the foundation of all Western archival perspective, appraisal did not occur, for the same reasons explicated by Jenkinson millennia later, and that appraisal SHOULD NOT occur...at least as done by archivists. Extra*

*attention is given to the “enduring paradigm” of Jenkinson and Schellenberg, though the chapter makes an effort to push past that paradigm. It also offers the reader a very short list of “must read” articles and chapters, as a complement to both the historical overview and the extremely long bibliography (appendix A). The chapter also identifies significant lacunae in all but the very most recent writing on appraisal--until very recently little attention was paid to collecting repositories as opposed to institutional archives, donor/creator relations and role, reappraisal and deaccessioning, collaborative/cooperative collection development, cultural differences in appraisal perspectives. These topics will be addressed later in the manual; at this stage their importance is noted and some suggestions given for their relative absence to date.*

Part i. Assessment in the Roman Empire, the French Empire, and the British Empire

Part ii. A brief but opinionated history archival writing on appraisal and collection development, c. 1900-present

Part iii. The enduring paradigm of Jenkinson and Schellenberg

Part iv. What’s missing amidst all these articles and chapters and monographs?

Part v. The half-dozen writings on assessment you should read, first on analog<sup>4</sup> then on digital<sup>5</sup>—after you read this manual

**Chapter 3. [AHC1] “With great power comes great responsibility”--Spiderman: The Context of Postmodernism for Considering Appraisal and Collection Development**

*Most important part of this chapter might be the “background and biases of the author” in that it provides the essential (for postmodern analysis) facts of the writer’s life and career stories that influence his perspective on appraisal and collection development. But the chapter also examines archival agency (and argues that it is through appraisal this agency is most potently exercised) and the bases for such authority as the manual claims to exercise.*

Part i. Illuminating archival agency

Part ii. The “authority” of this manual

Part iii. The background and biases of the author

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<sup>4</sup> Schellenberg, Ham, Boles, Ericson, Cook, Greene/Daniels-Howell

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Cunningham,

#### **Chapter 4. “I’m generally a very pragmatic person: that which works, works”—Linus Torvalds: Pragmatism, Planning, and Policies**

*The author used definition of pragmatism as “an attitude” toward action and results devised by William James to title his co-authored chapter in Records of American Business. Because much of that chapter will find echoes if not direct quotations in this manual, a referent to it seems appropriate. But pragmatic philosophy is nothing if not, when possible, planful and respectful of helpful policy. Pragmatism, planning, and policy, will all recur with frequency and substance throughout the manual.*

Part i. Assessment with “an attitude” redux

Part ii. “I have a cunning plan”<sup>6</sup>

Part iii. “A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal”—Mahatma Ghandi: Policy as the foundation of successful archival assessment

#### **Chapter 5[AHC2]. Why Appraisal and Collection Development Matter Even in a Digital Age**

*Merely the first place where the influence of born digital material, and the newer perspectives on such material by creators/donors and by archivists is raised. Other purpose of this chapter is to put to rest early the still extant canard that assessment is not necessary now, we can just “keep it all.”*

Part i. The idea that we can now “keep it all”

Part ii. Does “distributed custody” contradict the need for appraisal and collection development?

Part iii. “Pre-emergent” appraisal: can we, must we, select even prior to the creation of records?

#### **Section II. Not Science or Magic but Art?: Theory, Core Concepts, and Principles of Collection Development and Appraisal**

*While this section includes a chapter examining the role of archival and appraisal theory in the grander scheme of accomplishing appraisal and collection development, the emphasis is on core concepts and principles. To the extent possible and practical, this section is intended to be paralleled by the following section—Section II sets up the ideas, Section III the practice—putting*

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<sup>6</sup> Catch-phrase of dogsbody Baldrick in the BBC *Blackadder* comedy series

*the ideas into action. The goal is not to present such specific ideas that only one form of implementation is possible, but to give readers broader concepts that permit wide application, not only depending on institutional mandate but on the particular archivist's abilities and proclivities (as per postmodern perspective). It is here that the central question of who should do appraisal—in essence, who should control the past—is examined most thoroughly, encompassing a look at social justice as an appraisal goal.*

*There is a chapter on who controls the past—not so much in terms of archivists or others but instead in terms of recent postulates that for example communities should control their own history and what hard, even intractable concerns that raises. The specific role of creators in the appraisal and collection development process is examined (it is too often overlooked or based on assumptions). The argument is presented that archivists have to be willing to have their appraisal decisions assessed by others—so that the process becomes transparent. The “guts” of this section is the chapter examining the long list of ideas archivists have too-long relied on to avoid the hard intellectual work of doing appraisal well. The concepts of three levels of planning and policy for appraisal and collection development is expanded upon, as are the concepts related to assessing born-digital records. The inter-relationship of appraisal and other archives administration functions (reference, conservation, digitization) is illuminated, and the concepts, principles, and even theories of reappraisal and deaccessioning are explained.*

**Chapter 1. "Theory in the archivist's hands is only so good as it serves the work"—Terry Eastwood** *This chapter attempts, to a degree, to bridge the sometimes exaggerated chasm between archival theory and archival practice. Most importantly it limns the chief distinctions and commonalities between archival theory and appraisal theory. Terry Cook once declared the two theories completely separate, having no intersection, while this author believes there are essential connections, which matter immensely for understanding appraisal purpose and application.*

Part i. Why Theory matters and when it Doesn't<sup>7</sup>

Part ii. If practice makes perfect, what does theorizing make? postmodernism and pragmatism re theory; deductive versus inductive reasoning

Part iii. Archival theory or Assessment theory?<sup>8</sup>—And why the answer matters<sup>8</sup>[AHC3]

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<sup>7</sup> We mistrust all the assessment theory, but want one that will solve all our assessment problems.

<sup>8</sup> Archivists don't agree about what are archives and thus why we should keep them.

**Chapter 2. Who SHOULD control the past?** *This chapter focuses on the most recent iterations of Helen Samuel’s oft-quoted challenge to the profession. In particular the chapter intends to delve more deeply into the issues of “voiceless” groups,<sup>9</sup> cultural hegemony, ethnicity as provenance,<sup>10</sup> the role of community archives, and the tension between Western and non-Western hermeneutics.<sup>11</sup> Along the way it will touch on the demand for social justice to become an appraisal imperative. While the author has strong opinions about some of these matters (though he remains very conflicted about others), the chapter will aim to present contrary views equitably, to enable readers to be as thoughtful and nuanced as possible in implementing one perspective or another.*

Section i. Creators or Archivists or “Society”<sup>12</sup> writ large?

Section ii. Activist archivists?—giving voice to the voiceless or acquisition as hegemony?

Section iii. Community archives and/or the provenance of ethnicity

Section iv. [AHC4]Thoughts on Social justice and the Western liberal agenda

Section v. Struggling with objectivity and neutrality

Section vi. Is There a Practical Answer?

**Chapter 3. Who is Assessing the Assessors?—the case for transparency in appraisal functions.**

*A two-year-old MA thesis has taken relatively superficial calls by the likes of Terry Cook, Tom Nesmith, Verne Harris, and others to bring transparency to the appraisal function and explored the need in great depth, arguing that it is part of the responsibility that great power demands. This chapter will explore both why appraisal must become transparent but also how to make it so in a meaningful way.<sup>13</sup>*

Part i. Trust us, we’re from the archives and we’re here to play God.

Part ii. Power and responsibility redux, what do we owe?

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<sup>9</sup> To what extent does this include the right wing of White America, given their skepticism of “liberal” archival repositories?

<sup>10</sup> Expanding on Joel Wurl, of course.

<sup>11</sup> Using the Native American Archival Protocols as the principal example.

<sup>12</sup> Include Hans Boom

<sup>13</sup> Samantha Cross

Part iii. Documentation of appraisal and collection development decisions.

**Chapter 4. The Role of Creators and Donors in Assessment.** *The significant impact that donors have on appraisal and collection development is here dissected in greater detail. This impact of creators has little to do with the theoretical arguments of Jenkinson and Duranti that creators OUGHT to shape the historical record, but rather with how they do it regardless of the role of the archivist.*<sup>14</sup>

Part i. Sanitizing collections/record groups

Part ii. Splitting collections

Part iii. Problems with Restrictions and with not restricting

**Chapter 5. The levels of planning and policy.** *Appraisal and collection development, done successfully and appropriately, rely heavily on planning and formal policy. It is a sign of the weakness of appraisal work in the US and Canada that so often there seems to be no policy behind decisions and at least one survey gives evidence of a wont of planning as well. So long as appraisal and collection development decisions are made catch-as-catch can. Assessing records should not be a matter of "I know it when I see it", but rather a matter of "if I see this we should acquire it."*

Part i. Mission Statements

Part ii. Collection Development Policy

Part iii. Assessing creators

Part iv. Appraisal Guidelines

**Chapter 6. Three levels of assessment.** *The manual maintains throughout that there are three levels of appraisal policy-making that go into any good appraisal regime: at the level of repository mission statement; at the level of repository collecting policy; and at the level of collection-level guidelines for series, even subgroups. Running roughly parallel to these policy levels are three levels of organization: categories, for example, will the repository collect outside its geographic area, outside its institution; creators, for example, if the collecting policy says the repository will collect labor organizations, which labor organizations are most*

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<sup>14</sup> Can archivists intervene successfully w/donors to prevent unwanted effects?

*important to collect; collections/record groups, for example, if an institutional archives will document the CFO's function/office, will that include acquiring travel vouchers?*

Part i. Categories (mega-appraisal)

Part ii. Creators (macro-appraisal)

Part iii. Collections/Record Groups (micro-appraisal)

**Chapter 7. Assessment is a continuum and integrally inter-related to other functional steps of archives administration.** *This chapter will explore the inter-relatedness and sometimes conflicting imperatives of the archival enterprise (for example, how arrangement and description, preservation, reference and use, and legal and ethical factors influence appraisal and collection development)<sup>15</sup>*

Part i. Processing

Part ii. Reference, outreach

Part iii. Conservation, digitization

Part iv. Reappraisal and Deaccessioning: The theories

**Chapter 8. Assessing born-digital records.** *Even prior to conversations about how to actually "physically" acquire (or acquire in a non-custodial sense) born-digital records, there remain concepts and principles being developed concerning, for example, whether potential acquisitions should be assessed at the aggregate or at the item level.*

Part i. Can we finally assess at the item level? Do we want to?

Part ii. How much more important, if at all, is authenticity, unbroken chain of custody, fixity, etc in the realm of born digital acquisitions?

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<sup>15</sup> Richard Pearce Moses



Part iii. Does the born-digital age require a whole new appraisal perspective, from theory to practice?<sup>16</sup>

**Section III. [AHC5] Making Assessment Speedy and Hard-boiled (MASH): Recommended practices, implementation, methodology.** *Though appraisal and collection development must be based on planning and policy, they must also address the realities of too few staff, too little time, not enough space, and dozens of competing priorities. Therefore appraisal must be, to coin a phrase, “quick and dirty.” What it must not be, however, is warped by the mass of conventional wisdom, myths, and attempts to find that “shining white future, where all problems of acquisition will be solved by the application of the right theory of appraisal....”<sup>17</sup> So what then? To a certain degree, the answer lies in thinking very similar to that which lay behind MPLP—define the goal and then consider the most realistic method of accomplishing that goal. Once we’ve considered the philosophy or theory driving what we want to save and why, we have to figure out how to best get the work done in the face of unimaginable quantities of records and just barely imaginable quantities of records creators. The process of getting the work done consists not solely of implementing collection development and appraisal policies/guidelines, but also of working with those records creators and then properly accessioning—and doing this transparently—the material acquired by the archivist. The section also encompasses the path to implementing reappraisal and deaccessioning projects, and concludes with evidence that decades of enthusiastic but rather vapid encouragement for repositories to collaborate in collecting activities may finally be gaining traction.*

**Chapter 1. An overview of pragmatism as it applies to appraisal and collection development.** *Because this will wind up being a long section, it might be useful to have a summary of what’s coming. The sections here will be relatively brief, and should be able to be knit more tightly together than the longer and more complex sections that follow.*

Part i. Clearing away the dead wood—how appraisal went wrong

Part ii. Policy as the foundation of sound appraisal and collection development

Part iii. The Minnesota Method; can appraisal be approached with More Policy Less Passivity?—a clearer conception of appraisal and collection development in the real world

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<sup>16</sup> Terry Eastwood, “there is no new role in wait for archivists in the electronic age, just the same old role with a few new twists, which, important and challenging as they are, do not call for wholesale or even piecemeal abandonment of custody.”

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Craig

Part iv. MASH-up: *Developing* collections and *doing* appraisal, year by year, day by day.<sup>18</sup>

**Chapter 2. What “causes us to make utterly ludicrous decisions regarding acquisition”? Some enduring, debilitating myths or imagined “silver bullets” about assessment.** *This is potentially a long chapter, though each section might be relatively short. It catalogs what the author has read, heard, and seen evidence of by way of devoutly accepted myths and imagined simple solutions to the very difficult business of making appraisal and collection development decisions. It is the author’s hope that by examining common mistakes and misunderstandings it will assist readers in approaching appraisal with a fresh attitude.*

Part i. It’s the first dog groomer/bursar’s office, on the West Side/in the Podunk plant?—let me at those records!; if it’s closing/dead it *must* be saved!; diaries/minutes?—of course we *always* acquire diaries/minutes!<sup>19</sup>

Part ii. More is Better

Part iii. Gerry Ham was mostly right but he was wrong about this

Part iv. For some of the same reasons we did processing so badly

Part v. Taking what is offered is all an understaffed repository can do

Part vi. Saying “no” to donors is too dangerous/hard

Part vii. We can never have enough cow-shaped milk jugs<sup>20</sup>

Part viii. Any good archivist can tell the difference between “a turd on a stick” and a worthwhile acquisition: there are objective criteria for assessing records

Part ix. Archival Appraisal Alchemy—the archival threshold and symbolic importance

Part x. “If I don’t save it, who will?”<sup>21</sup>

Part xi. Stack space, boxes, new paper clips—those are the costs we should worry most about<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Include field work and accessioning and reappraisal and collaboration

<sup>19</sup> Brichford, first appraisal manual

<sup>20</sup> Ericson, Rim of Creative Dissatisfaction

<sup>21</sup> Ericson, Rim of Creative Dissatisfaction

Part xii. Too many of us are afraid of assessment

Part xiii. Assessment should proceed from the top down (it should, but not the old way or for the old reasons)

Part xiv. Assessment policy and decisions should not be influenced by cost and/or political considerations

Part xv. Why record format doesn't matter...and when it does

Part xvi. We may have to destroy the village in order to save it

Part xvii. The bad news is, there are no magic bullets in assessment; the good news is, nobody dies

### **Chapter 3 Reflecting on the Minnesota Method and MPLP as applied to assessment—**

**Compare and Contrast.** *As is true of the previous FSII manual on selection, the application of the philosophies/theories of the previous section will come down in part to a re-telling (omitting the specific example of business records in MN) of the MN Method. Unlike the previous volume, however, this chapter will also discuss the relevance of MPLP to practical appraisal, building from some of the critiques of MPLP as well as the author's own "MPLP: It's Not Just for Processing Anymore" article. Obviously, if MPLP is relevant to backlog reduction then it, too, must be presented as an attitude or orientation rather than solely as a specific processing method.*

Part i. Minnesota Method—Understanding the "attitude" rather than the specific example

Part ii. MPLP and appraisal—Just where does the real culprit for backlogs lie?

Part iii. So why don't any of the other appraisal theories deserve equal billing?

**Chapter 4. MASH and "Meatball" Selection<sup>23</sup>--"Never let it be said I didn't do the least I could do."<sup>24</sup>** *The chapter will focus on changing practitioners' orientation from a) appraising the*

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<sup>22</sup> Opportunity costs

<sup>23</sup> In the book "MASH," Hornberger — writing under the pseudonym Richard Hooker — described the "meatball surgery" developed in such hospitals: "We are not concerned with the ultimate reconstruction of the patient. We are concerned only with getting the kid out of here alive enough for someone else to reconstruct him. Up to a

*material first instead of last; b) appraising at an item or folder level particularly during processing instead of in the field and primarily at the series level; c) being concerned about missing something “important” instead of being resigned to two facts—individual files are much less likely to be singularly significant and “importance” is in the eye of the beholder; d) saying “yes” to offers of collections rather than “no” if the collection is not squarely within the repository’s priority collecting areas; e) from concern that making appraisal decisions transparent will lead to constant criticism to understanding that archivists’ authority to make such decisions requires responsibility to make the decisions open for scrutiny.*

Part i. Creating Mission Statements—Why, How

Part ii. Applying Assessment based on Mission Statements

Part iii. Creating Collecting Policies and Records Schedules—Why, How

Part iv. Abiding by “macro-assessment” based on collecting policies and records schedules

Part v. Developing Selection Criteria—Why, How

Part vi. Living by your “micro-assessment” selection criteria

Part vii. Decision-points and authority

Part viii. Paperwork!—Essential whether for trust or for posterity

**Chapter 5. Working With Donors, Creators, Offices of Origin: Assessment on-site** *The only real novel content in this chapter, if any, are: a) the exhortation to do appraisal prior to receiving a collection in the archives; b) the suggestion that creators/donors can be useful in several ways in assisting with the job of appraisal—mega, macro, and micro; c) a review of the scant writing on relevant ethics and the pros and cons of soliciting processing funds from donors.*

Part i. Field (Home, Office, Records Center, Storage Unit, Collapsing Barn) Visits

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point we are concerned with fingers, hands, arms and legs, but sometimes we deliberately sacrifice a leg in order to save a life, if the other wounds are more important. In fact, now and then we may lose a leg because, if we spent an extra hour trying to save it, another guy in the pre-op ward could die from being operated on too late. Our general attitude around here is that we want to play par surgery. Par is a live patient,” he wrote. **Speed was dictated by patient flow.**

<sup>24</sup> Hawkeye Pierce, from the television show

Part ii. Substitutes for Field Visits

Part iii. Enlisting creators/donors in the appraisal process<sup>25</sup>

Part iv. Keeping Track—documenting the visits and the decisions

Part v. Deeds of Gift, Transfer Forms

Part vi. Ethics of Donor/Creator Relations (including asking for funding)

**Chapter 6. Acquisition and Accessioning.** *This is pretty much just what it says it is; not much truly new here; the newest idea is that of accessioning as cataloging, which was introduced by Kaplan and Weideman a few years ago.*

Part i. Process/Procedures

Part ii. Accessioning as Cataloging

Part iii. Recordkeeping

**Chapter 7. Reappraisal and Deaccessioning.** *As with the previous chapter there is now not too much new here, given the author's own articles on the subject, the article by Thompson and Jackson, and the SAA standard on reappraisal and deaccessioning. The article will argue, as the author has done previously, that reappraisal should be a part of normal collection management and as such a matter of formal policy.*

Part i. Pros and Cons.

Part ii. Policy, Policy, Policy (Written).

Part iii. When Do Reappraisal and Deaccessioning Make Most Sense?

Part iv. Implementation.

**Chapter 8. Some Reflections and Facts about Inter-Institutional Collaboration/Cooperation—Has the time finally come?** *For decades writers on appraisal have urged the virtues of inter-*

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<sup>25</sup> Kaplan and Weideman

*institutional collaboration or at least cooperation in collection development—excoriating competition as duplication of effort and wasteful in the face of too many geographical and topical targets and creators/donors within those targets. The longstanding Wisconsin area research center model (and shorter-lived similar efforts in other Midwestern states) demonstrated that cooperation was possible where there was an 800-pound gorilla repository and a handful of smaller repositories within a university system. But what of other contexts. Much more recently the repositories of Arizona have embarked on a collaborative venture that, while hardly perfect, has real possibilities as a broader model. One of the reasons the Wisconsin system has continued to function is that the repositories involved loan collections to one another, thus mitigating the “problem” of one repository not having collected X topic but having researchers interested in that topic. Can such an approach facilitate collaborative collecting in other settings as well?*

Part i. The Wisconsin and Arizona Experiences—success with different models.

Part ii. Loaning collections as a tool in collaborative collection development.

Part iii. What do we do when a donor WANTS to split a collection?

**Section IV. Conclusion: Collection Development and Selection Looking Forward...mostly**  
*I’m suggesting adding a fourth section in part because the discussion of how we assess our appraisal efforts didn’t really seem to fit into the three earlier sections; that and the extensive discussions ongoing under the aegis of OCLC on the evolution of the scholarly record, which seems to have implications for appraisal in the relatively near future. The chapter on assessing appraisal efforts will be informed in part by an SAA conference session on that precise topic (Terry Cook and Richard Cox were the other presenters, along w/the author), in addition to relevant writings. The second chapter will be drawn from the presentations at the OCLC “Evolving Scholarly Record” (ESR) meetings, blog posts, etc., possibly more anecdotal evidence of the research approaches of lay historians, and recent studies and publications regarding original research impacts in the classroom.*

**Chapter 1. How Do We Know If We’re Doing Assessment Well?—Less Process More Philosophical!**  
*Many archivists still act and speak as if successful appraisal and collection development means more collections and more cubic feet in our storage areas—are we after quantity or quality (or can quantity equate to quality in some situations)? Does success in appraisal mean, as Gerry Ham insisted, “holding a mirror up to mankind?” Or does it mean serving the mission of one’s particular institution as well as possible? Whichever answer one gives, how do we know we’re doing it as well as we can be? Is this even the right question to be*

*asking? This chapter will not specify an answer to the question, but rather offer alternatives that readers should consider and, ultimately, choose from.*

Part i. Our stacks and servers are full?

Part ii. More of the “Right” Stuff is Acquired and Preserved?

Part iii. We’re acquiring collections the “right” way?—Is that More Process AND More Product?

Part iv. Existential Archives—Improving the meaning of what we acquire?

Part v. Utilitarian Archives—Expanding the use of what we acquire?

**Chapter 2. The “Evolving Scholarly Record,” lay research, and student learning—how will they impact archival appraisal?** *OCLC has been querying scholars, librarians, and archivists since 2014 about how the scholarly record is evolving in the digital age. The Evolving Scholarly Record report, meeting notes, blog posts, and other resources will inform this part. Less rigorous evidence may have to suffice for the second part, such sources as reports by reference archivists, statistics about on-line usage (more what that how much), etc. The final part will rely on articles by both archivists and teachers concerning the evolving place of primary source research in K-16 classrooms, including how (if at all) the seemingly increased emphasis on STEM disciplines may impact use of more traditional humanities sources.*

Part i. ESR.<sup>26</sup>

Part ii. Lay Research

Part iii. Student Learning

**Chapter 3. Appraising a career spent appraising: Self-reflections in conclusion.** *Looking back over 30 years of appraisal and collection development—how I might have changed philosophy and practice in the profession and how practice and writings changed me.*

## FIGURES

Figure 1. Archival and Appraisal Values: Axes and Continua

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<sup>26</sup> *Digital paper: a manual for research and writing with library and Internet materials*, by Andrew Abbott.

Figures 2-4. On-site appraisal—why they call it “getting your hands dirty” (MHS crew inside and outside of Mini-Stor lockers on asphalt during summer; image of basement full of crushed and stacked boxes; wooden crate frozen to the ground in MN in February inside collapsing barn)

Figure 5. On-site appraisal—this isn’t the type of “magic bullet” we had in mind (from one of the file cabinets in the Mini-Stor lockers, a Navy issue 45 automatic pistol and ammunition)

Figure 6. Acquisition as symbolism—proud and emotional moment for a donor (AHC; photo taken at request of donor, standing with his boxes, AHC staff, at time of acquisition; exterior to building)

Other Figures: Processing;\* Reference;\* Outreach;\* Preservation (benchwork); Digitization;\* Screen shot of born-digital material;\* other magnetic media (e.g., unlabeled cassette tapes; ¾” video; VHS);\*portraits of any Roman Caesar, scene from French Revolution, Hilary Jenkinson portrait; portraits of Schellenberg, Norton, Cox, Duranti, Boles, Cook, Ham, Ericson, Daniels-Howell, Jimerson, Samuels; photos of Stan Lee, Baldrick, William James, JP Sartre, Jeremy Bentham, Neitzsche, Derrida, cow-shaped milk jug; archivist in earnest conversation with a donor; archivist taking tea with a donor; poster of M\*A\*S\*H movie; Kliban cartoon, “Never Eat Anything Bigger Than Your Head”;

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: Assessment Bibliography

APPENDIX B: Axes and Continua

APPENDIX C: Select Mission Statements

APPENDIX D: Select Collecting Policies

APPENDIX E: Select Micro-Assessment Guidelines

APPENDIX F: Select Deeds of Gift