

Annotated Bibliography - Literature Review

This annotated bibliography has been compiled by the Deaccessioning and Reappraisal Development and Review Team in conjunction with its preparation of standards governing the application of reappraisal and deaccessioning procedures within the archival profession. Beginning with an exhaustive search of the archival literature that also included forays into the realms of rare books, manuscripts, research libraries and museums, the team members first identified those works (ranging from journal articles to web sites and blog postings) that offer insight into the evolution and implementation of reappraisal and deaccessioning policies. Thereafter, each team member read a selection of these items and provided the annotations that follow.

The documents incorporated here have been chosen with an eye to those writings whose contents illuminate the questions of reappraisal and deaccessioning from perspectives both theoretical and practical. They include path-breaking discussions of the possibilities and pitfalls inherent in these procedures, detailed case studies about establishing and applying these policies in various institutional settings, analyses of the many dimensions of such policies from collection analysis to the ethical disposal of deaccessioned records, and surveys of practitioners designed to assess the willingness of the profession to use these tools.

This bibliography has been assembled with the hope that its contents will assist any archivists, manuscript curators or special collections librarians who confront the responsibility of deciding whether and how to proceed with reappraisal and deaccessioning projects. It seeks to introduce them to the professional literature that represents the collective experience and expertise of their peers.

Adams, Thomas R., et al. *Deaccession in Research Libraries: Papers Read at a Symposium Held at Brown University, June 11-12, 1981*. Providence RI: Brown University, 1982.

In response to what the introduction described as "mounting evidence that deaccession as a source of funding for capital projects, salaries and operational costs was becoming a trend" under the financial pressure of the recession of the early 1980s, this conference at Brown University assembled professional librarians, book dealers and book collectors to address those issues that the participants considered to be the critical issues surrounding the question of deaccessioning materials from research institutions and to offer their best judgments about them. Appearing soon after Leonard Rapport's seminal *American Archivist* essay, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records" (Spring 1981 issue), *Deaccession in Research Libraries* represents a major step forward in the systematic examination of the role of deaccessioning within special collections settings. Unfortunately, for reasons not enunciated in this slender volume, most of the texts were only transcribed versions of the oral remarks of the participants, thus limiting their value as research sources.

That being said, however, the contents of the volume do retain value even three decades later because of the perspectives of donors, collectors and dealers offered here--in essence, from the points of view through which materials can be acquired and can be disposed of. Moreover, the presentations of Oscar Handlin, then-director of the Harvard University Library, and Marcus McCorison, then-director of the American Antiquarian Society, emphasize the importance of treating the process of deaccessioning as

part of an institution's effort to effectively manage its collection development through, in McCorison's words, "building a collection that serves best through adherence to clearly defined purposes of collecting [in which] the acquisition and alienation of material from a collection play equally important parts in the process." Finally, Beverly Ledbetter's "An Overview of the Legal Aspects of Deaccessioning" raises such issues as the protection of domestic and foreign cultural property that may exert a significant influence upon how far institutions may be able to pursue deaccessioning. (*Peter J. Blodgett*)

The Art Law Blog <http://theartlawblog.blogspot.com/>

Curtis, Jane. "AAM calls Bladen art sale flawed." April 15, 2010.

<http://www.messengernews.net/page/content.detail/id/523939.html?nav=5010>

This blog posting discusses news coverage of a recent art sale that risked a museum's accreditation. The shortcomings of the sale are recurrent themes: lack of transparency with both to the public and the museum board in regard to policies and procedures and deaccessioning /disposal processes that did not conform to best practices and professional standards as they relate to research, market value, documentation, selection and venues for sales.

There are lessons here for archival repositories: collection management policies should be transparent and deaccessioning should adhere to generally accepted best practices or standards as defined by the discipline. (*Linda Whitaker*)

Benedict, Karen. "Invitation to a Bonfire: Reappraisal and Deaccessioning of Records as Collection Management Tools in an Archives- a Reply to Leonard Rapport." *American Archivist* (1984): 43-49.

Benedict's argument follows several themes and sets the tone for all the debates that follow:

- re-appraisal/deaccessioning should be applied sparingly if at all e.g. during processing and only in a crisis e.g. and when there is a "systematic error" rather than a "misjudgment"
- it is wrong to second guess appraisal
- acquisition alone is proof of value
- value based on use is "a-historical and anti-intellectual"
- applying a cost-benefit analysis to archival material is inappropriate because the unique nature of archives renders the enterprise unquantifiable
- reappraisal as a standard management tool is subject to whim, threatens archival principles, opens the door to whole sale dismantling of collections, and sets a dangerous precedence that undermines the profession.

Between those who support and those who oppose reappraisal and deaccessioning as management tools, the schism stems from different perceptions of the state of contemporary archives: those against, see no crisis and argue for the status quo; those for, see the situation as untenable and argue for fundamental change. (*LW*)

Berhd-Klodt, Menzi L. *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008.

Chapter 5 of this monograph includes a significant discussion of reappraisal and deaccessioning, linking it to the overall appraisal process. After stating that reappraisal, deaccessioning, and disposal of selected records is essential to collection management, the author provides a thorough process for accomplishing these functions. The author also discusses the process of determining whether the institution has the legal right to dispose of materials and the steps necessary to gain that right in the case of abandoned loans or undocumented materials. Also of note is a differentiation between deaccessioning as it pertains

to entire collections and the weeding of duplicates and other routine documents during processing.
(Anne Foster)

Blouin, Francis X., "A New Perspective on the Appraisal of Business Records: A Review," *American Archivist* 42, no. 3 (Fall 1979): 312-320.

Using the influential historical study *The Visible Hand: the Managerial Revolution in American Business* by Alfred Chandler, Jr. as a lens, Blouin focuses on its applicability for archivists, noting how the changes in business practices and most notably the rise of vertical integration and middle management created new recordkeeping practices. Records became not only descriptive but also analytical tools. The author argues that Schellenberg's theory of appraisal, focusing on informational or evidentiary use of records, requires a third category, that of functional records. In the end, Blouin suggests that these functional (usually financial) records are routine and not worth keeping in full but should be liberally sampled rather than destroyed wholesale. (Marcella Wiget)

Boles, Frank. *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscript*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005. 97-120 and 159-83.

Chapter 5, "Putting the Pieces Together: A Selection Model" provides a six-step process for selection: defining the goals of the archives, determining the documentary universe, prioritizing, defining functions and documentary levels, selecting records, and periodic updating. Reappraisal forms part of the final step, periodic updating. Reappraisal, Boles writes, is not a crises management tool. Instead, it must be guided by policy, undertaken thoughtfully, and regarded as routine. Disposal options following deaccessioning should include not only destruction but also transfer to another institution or, if no there are no takers, sold. Finally, Boles urges archivists to be both bold in their decision-making and confident in the results. The twenty page bibliography on appraisal comprehensively covers the topic, from a historical as well as contemporary perspective, and includes international and allied professional literature. (AF)

Boles, Frank and Mark A. Greene. "Et tu Schellenberg? Thoughts on the Dagger of American Appraisal Theory," *American Archivist* 59 (1996): 298-310.

This article presents Boles' and Greene's reaction to Luciana Duranti's article "The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory", in which Duranti criticizes the American archival practice of appraisal and selection as being in fundamental conflict with traditional archival theory and the nature of archives. Boles and Greene disagree with Duranti, supporting American archival practice as valid, evolving and pragmatic based upon the changing nature and volume of modern record keeping.

While the article does not specifically discuss reappraisal and deaccessioning, it sets up a framework--that selection and appraisal are an important critical tool to be used by the profession, and that some cost-benefit analysis must be done when considering what records are worthy of keeping--which also supports and legitimizes reappraisal and deaccessioning decisions. It is also certainly a basis for the later thought and work of both authors about the topic of appraisal. (Chela Weber)

Bordin, Ruth B. and Robert B. Warner. *The Modern Manuscript Library*. New York: Scarecrow Press, 1966.

This manual for the management of a collecting repository has a brief discussion under the heading "Who Should Collect" of the minimum criteria that such repositories should meet before undertaking an active acquisitions program. In particular, the authors argue that any institution proposing to collect original source materials must be able to provide professional care for all items in its charge or it should not

pursue acquisitions of this kind. Furthermore, any institution unable to care for materials already in its hands should find a more fitting home for them. As is the case with nearly all overviews of manuscript repositories before the publication of Leonard Rapport's path breaking 1981 essay, "No Grandfather Clause," Bordin and Warner offer no other comments on the notion of deaccessioning. (PJB)

Bradsher, James Gregory. "An Administrative History of the Disposal of Federal Records, 1789-1949." *Provenance* 3 (1985): 1-21.

This essay traces the history of records disposition and destruction in the federal government and covers the laws and acts governing records (such as the Disposal Act of 1939 that allowed for sale, destruction or transfer to a public or private institution). In doing so, it reminds the reader of similar problems that we face today. The beginnings of deaccessioning and records management are covered, and there is a relevant quote by Solon Buck about how disposing some records allows us to focus on others (p. 13). (Laura Uglean Jackson)

Brown, Charlotte. "Deaccessioning for the Greater Good." *Wilson Library Bulletin* (1987).

Brown here offers a brief case study documenting Franklin and Marshall College's decision to deaccession the Frank E. McGrann Collection of Band Recordings, and donate it to the Special Collections in Music at University of Maryland. She covers the circumstances of the original donation and subsequent care of collection, reappraisal criteria and decision to deaccession; the search for an appropriate institution to donate materials; negotiation and transfer, including donor relations; and brief summary of positive outcomes. (CW)

Chan, May. *Deaccessioning Archives: The Ongoing Controversy*, School of Library and Information Studies, University of British Columbia, March 2004, 25–26.

[http://www.slais.ubc.ca/courses/libr559f/03-04-t1/portfolios/M_Chan/Contents/Deaccessioning%20Archives.pdf#search=_may%20chan%20deaccessioning] (no longer online)

This paper for a Selection and Acquisition course at UBC's School of Library and Information Studies reviews the legal, ethical and practical issues. In doing so, it also posits that current terminology serves to divide rather than illuminate the professional debates. The lack of transparency regarding collecting and deaccessioning policies has resulted in poor public relations especially in regard to sale of collections by museums and libraries. The ideas of permanence as an absolute and value pertaining to use are reviewed. The author states that the case studies as reported in the literature have contributed to the notion that reappraisal and deaccession are random, subjective, and "inevitably, ineffective."

Unfortunately, the essay lacks analysis. Her conclusion states the obvious, i.e. the choices are difficult, there is no consensus, etc. but she does cite precedence for selling archival materials (see Michael Doyle's essay listed below). Also, it does possess a good bibliography. (LW)

Cook, Terry. "Many are called but few are chosen: Appraisal Guidelines for Sampling and Selecting Case Files." *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 25-50.

This article is based on two larger studies written for the National Archives of Canada that analyzes sampling methods for the most problematic (voluminous) record groups and answers the question: which offers the most cost effective, statistically accurate appraisal for identifying the records with the greatest research value? Its conclusion: A top down, strategic plan. It proposes that such a plan start with a macro-appraisal of the agencies as a whole; select those who likely generate the most valuable case files represented in all media; secure agency agreement re rapid appraisal; appraise at series level; and secure electronic media first; identify & retain "essential files." The article also suggests that, for the remaining

“generic” records, probability sampling is an alternative but it comes with warnings and should only be applied when there are no alternatives.

Cook’s essay represents the most definitive article on sampling to date and its footnotes deserve full attention. The methodologies described here apply to large government archives and are not generally transferable to academic, corporate, non-profit repositories. (LW)

Cox, Richard J. "Archivists Confront a Changing World: Documentation Strategies, the Reformulation of Archival Appraisal, and the Possibilities of Multi-Disciplinary Cooperation." In *American Archival Analysis: the Recent Development of the Archival Profession in the United States*. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1990.

Here Cox calls for a basic attitudinal change, urging archivists to move from a reactive to pro-active appraisal and acquisition, and collaboration (internal, external, cross-disciplines.) Doing so includes undertaking collection analysis at the front end and acquiring a clearer understanding of topical areas that are inadequately documented. The author sees documentation strategies as a key approach to contemporary appraisal issues.

Though reappraisal and deaccessioning are not directly addressed, the language, questions, and analyses used here confirm the need to change how the profession thinks about collection development and management. (LW)

Craig, Barbara. *Archival Appraisal Theory and Practice*. Munchen, Germany: K.G. Sauer, 2004.

This volume furnishes a general overview on the theoretical and practical applications of the appraisal process, arguing that this process should be transparent and inclusive and that appraisal is pervasive throughout work flows (e.g. in reference, description, etc.), though often unacknowledged. The broad focus is on records from government and businesses/corporations, rather than manuscript collections. Chapters 5 and 6 provide the most information/discussion of interest for reappraisal, focusing on accountability, particularly the need to document all decisions made. Following such an approach, however, can make reappraisal more difficult, in fact, because earlier appraisal decisions are not always well documented or clearly expressed in some written form. (MW)

Cross, James Edward. "Campaign Buttons in a Black Box: Appraisal Standards for Strom Thurmond Memorabilia." In *An American Political Archives Reader*, edited by Karen Dawley Paul *et al.* Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009.

▣The author provides a case study of the Boles-Young Black Box appraisal model. Of particular interest is the use of this model to reappraise objects, in this case campaign memorabilia, as part of a larger archival collection. By evaluating the value of the information, the cost of retention, the implications of the selection decision and how closely the object relates to the creator’s position and activities in an organization, the author determined that campaign memorabilia “effectively serves to document the public relations and outreach activities of the campaign as well as the personal style of the candidate.” (209) As a result of the Black Box model reappraisal, the institution deaccessioned more than 40% of the objects. By analyzing the retention and disposal decisions, the repository also developed acquisition guidelines for future campaign-related collections. (AF)

"CultureGrrl: Lee Rosenbaum's cultural commentary" blog on Arts Journal (<http://www.artsjournal.com/culturegrrl/>)

A well-established and long-lasting weblog maintained by a well-connected cultural journalist, the blog does not appear to have any tags or labels to follow but does have a search box which can be used to find posts related to deaccessioning. Like Derek Fincham, the focus here is on art museum deaccessioning, particularly those deaccessioning events that are controversial and in the news. She appears to feel that deaccessioning for financial gain is never going to be the right answer. Useful for keeping up on the potential public appearance of deaccessioning by cultural institutions, again an aspect that archivists need to consider when deaccessioning materials. (MW)

Daly, Heather. "An Explanatory Theory of Reappraisal: Reappraisal as 'Appraisal for Correction.' " For Terry Eastwood, School of Library, Archival, and Information Studies. University of British Columbia, 2004. [online at http://www.slais.ubc.ca/courses/libr559f/04-05-wt2/portfolios/H_Daly/Projects/Reappraisal.doc]

This paper, also for a Selection and Acquisition course (accepted for publication but not published) provides an overview of the origins, controversies, definitions and applications of reappraisal concepts. It offers the foundation of an "explanatory" archival theory that attempts to transcend the divide within the profession by re-defining reappraisal. This essay is a practice-based theory derived from analysis of how and when appraisal is applied. It explains this tool as a mechanism to correct past, present, even future decisions. The theory allows archivists and institutions "to continually move towards archival perfection."
Definition: Reappraisal is "appraisal for correction."

This paper is both persuasive and insightful. It addresses the requirements of contemporary archival practice that have challenged fundamental theories and assumptions about archives and the role of archivists. The article speaks directly to a profession (which Canadians consider an applied science) which is responding to field conditions and applying well-described and known tools to solve emerging problems. (LW)

Daniels, Maygene. "Records Appraisal and Disposition." In *Managing Archives and Archival Institutions*, edited by James G. Bradsher. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

In the course of summarizing the rationale that undergirds the process by which archivists determine what materials to add to their collections, Daniels provides a brief but thoughtful discussion of the concept of reappraisal. Asserting that "the appraisal and acceptance of records for long-term retention . . . should not be viewed as a promise that they will be permanently retained," the author argues that reappraisal provides a means to re-evaluate prior decisions about appraisal and accessioning in cases where previous judgments might be called into question. She emphasizes that reappraisal best serves an institution's needs when undertaken "systematically at established intervals," making it a part of its ongoing administration. Such reappraisal should be based upon the values that each collection contains, the costs of maintaining it on a continuing basis and the collection development policies that govern an institution's acquisitions program. (PJB)

Daniels, Maygene. "Records in the Repository: The Case for Reappraisal," ICAM 14: International Confederation of Architectural Museums, 2008. http://www.icam-web.org/data/media/cms_binary/original/1227719624.pdf (Accessed January 22, 2010).

While this conference paper focuses upon the reappraisal of architectural records, the processes proposed are applicable to many records formats and types of collections. The paper proposes that reappraisal should be a routine part of collection management, both when collections are being reprocessed or moved and on a regular, periodic schedule. Daniels frames reappraisal as a continuation

of the appraisal process, suggesting that the determination of historical value may evolve over time. She points to technological advances and the deepening of the archivist's own understanding of the collection as some of the reasons for periodic reevaluation. Daniels also notes that the deed of gift must be structured to allow for future reappraisal and disposal. (AF)

Daniels-Howell, Todd. "Reappraisal of Congressional Records at the Minnesota Historical Society: A Case Study," *Archival Issues* 23 (1998): 35-40.

After the successful implementation of a Congressional Papers Appraisal Policy on new acquisitions, the Minnesota Historical Society decided to test the same guidelines on collections they already housed. Successful reappraisal, however, must result in significant enough gains to make the costs of staff resources worthwhile. The author suggests that collections be considered not as single entities but as part of the larger institutional collection since similarly themed collections will have redundancies that allow for further weeding. The author also notes that the development of a detailed policy enhanced donor relations, demonstrating the thoughtful, professional nature of the removal decisions. (AF)

Danielson, Elena S. "The Ethics of Disposal." In *The Ethical Archivist*, 87-119. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2010.

In the third chapter of the most recent book on archival ethics, Danielson discusses the disposal of unaccessioned and fully cataloged collections. She includes 7 case studies on disposal and deaccessioning. In addition to outlining the usual procedures for disposal/deaccessioning, she includes two major reasons for deaccessioning (to maintain a collecting policy and to raise funds) and states that when done transparently and appropriately, deaccessioning can strengthen a collection.

The chapter also reviews two opposing views (pragmatists and idealists) in the archival community that often lead to controversy over this "hot button topic." It provides a lengthy but surface-level discussion on the controversy over deaccessioning. Danielson calls for a way to combine the best principles of each side of the argument- holding archives in the public trust for posterity and being able to dispose of out-of-scope and useless materials.

Importantly, this essay contains a section on selling materials. Danielson suggests some ground rules: only sell materials that are out-of-scope or duplicates; only use funds from sales to purchase new acquisitions; forbid employees and their families from bidding on purchases; if possible, give discounts to cultural heritage institutions that will make the materials public. Also states that the archives profession needs to decide if it wants to adopt the same restrictions implemented by the museum profession, specifically, how repositories can use funds from a sale.

Dowler, Lawrence. "Deaccessioning Collections: A New Perspective on a Continuing Controversy." In *Archival Choices*, edited by Nancy Peace, 117-132. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1984.

In this detailed examination of both the theory and practice of deaccessioning, Dowler describes the history of the controversial topic within the archives profession and argues that deaccessioning should be considered part of the larger appraisal process. As part of the essay, he includes numerous examples of actual deaccession that describe both the reasoning behind the action and method of disposal. After a brief discussion of the political ramifications of some disposals, the author argues at length that deaccessioning, including deaccessioning for the purposes of raising revenue, are a necessary part of the collection management process. He suggests that archivists be open about the process and make clear

the policies of the institution to prospective donors, including adding appropriate language to deeds of gift. (AF)

Doylen, Michael, "Experiments in Deaccessioning: Archives and Online Auctions," *American Archivist* 64 (2001): 350-362.

This case study describes the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee's deaccessioning procedures, especially the use of Ebay in order to generate revenue from some materials no longer useful to the collection or of interest to researchers but perhaps of value to collectors. It examines the deaccessioning process and briefly discusses the advantages and disadvantages to public auctions of selling items. Types of materials sold at auction included badges and buttons, artwork, stamps, coins, and photographs. The author notes the necessity of checking the legalities involved (UW is a public institution) and suggests selling only those collections to which the institution has clear title. Also in the article is a brief discussion about how the funds should be used (UW applied them to the purchase of new collections).

The author indicates that though an archivist and students/volunteers were working on the Ebay project item by item, creating brief descriptions and images of the items, once the workflow was established it went quickly. Outcomes included prestige for the archives by generating income, although some concerns arose about potential donors bypassing the public archives in order to sell their materials themselves for a profit. The University of Wisconsin, however, received no negative publicity for its actions. (MW)

Endelman, Judith E., "Looking Backward to Plan for the Future: Collection Analysis for Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 50 (1987): 340-355.

This article discusses collection analysis, a process of evaluating the characteristics of a repository's holdings in order to develop specific collecting policies, and describes how the process was used at three institutions in the Midwest. The collection analysis is a two-part process, beginning with a quantitative study looking at specific characteristics and then continuing with a qualitative phase analyzing and placing results into the larger conceptual framework of the repository and beyond. Such a process could also be useful as a tool for reassessing and reappraising collections. (MW)

Ericson, Timothy L. "At the Rim of Creative Dissatisfaction: Archivists and Acquisition Development." *Archivaria* 33 (1991-92): 66-77.

Ericson in this essay calls for a rethinking of appraisal and acquisition development in light of increased volumes and technical complexity of modern records. He identifies acquisition development policies as crucial in guiding institutional collecting. He further argues that policies must go beyond stating what types or formats of materials an institution will collect to emphasize instead identifying the type of information the institution is hoping to collect. Ericson proposes that the policy should not be used to justify collecting but rather to narrow the collecting focus and should be a guide for what an institution will consider collecting. Moreover such policies should be interdisciplinary and cooperative in order to make better decisions, avoid duplication, and make sure that institutions are able to care for and use what they collect.

In sum, Ericson's excellent article makes a convincing argument for the need of a collections policy to guide acquisitions decisions. While it does not specifically address reappraisal, the argument made for the role of the policy in acquisitions can be translated to the policy being key in reappraisal decisions as well. (CW)

Evans, Max J. "The Visible Hand: Creating a Practical Mechanism for Cooperative Appraisal," *Midwestern Archivist* 11 (1986): 7-13.

Evans argues the importance of documenting appraisal decisions and calls for a body of case studies documenting why appraisal decisions were made. He also argues that repositories should base collecting decisions on what other repositories acquire in order to avoid duplication.

Evans doesn't discuss deaccessioning but the article is relevant in that it urges repositories to publish or report appraisal decisions (and their collecting policies- although this isn't explicitly stated) so that other repositories don't duplicate acquisitions efforts. For deaccessioning purposes, this argument is useful to incorporate at the disposition stage. It is important that archivists can easily locate an appropriate repository when wanting to transfer a collection. (LUJ)

Gold, Mark S. "Nothing Ethical About It." *Museum* (September/ October 2009): 27-29, 66-67. Available online: <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/nothingethicalaboutit.cfm>

This article, written by a lawyer who also holds a masters degree in museum studies discusses a rule in the museum field that limits the use of proceeds raised from a sale (deaccessioning) to spending on acquisitions and the care of collections. The rule adopted by AAM in 1991 was a pre-emptive strike against the Financial Accounting Standards Board that threatened to require museums to report the market value of their holdings. The author critically reviews the rules and the unintended consequences for small museums. He makes the case that the rule is less about the sanctity of collections and more about protecting large museums from full financial disclosure. He counters with a revised rule that would level the playing field. This commentary in particular illustrates the significant differences between the museum and archive management cultures. (LW)

Greene, Mark A. "I've Deaccessioned and Lived to Tell About It: Confessions of an Unrepentant Reappraiser," *Archival Issues* 30 (2006): 7-22.

The author poses the question, "Why the silence?" in regard to the topics of reappraisal and deaccessioning within the archival profession and then argues that both processes should be an open, regular part of collection management. The article examines the reasons behind the profession's reluctance to act: first, that there is a sense that routine reappraisal would result in wildly changing collections pertinent to only the present era; second, that archives are perceived as inviolate and permanent and deaccessioning would violate that trust; and third, that the disposal process is sure political suicide. Examples of multiple successful reappraisal, deaccession, and disposal decisions follow. A second major section of the article details the procedures necessary to successfully reappraise and deaccession. Greene concludes by demonstrating the benefits of deaccessioning, including increased space, more efficient appraisal and acquisition workflows, and a renewed respect by administrators, resource allocators, and donors. Extensive appendices offer a sample policy and newsletter announcement, further discussion of disposal, and a bibliography. (AF)

Greene, Mark A. "What were we Thinking? A Call to Embrace Reappraisal and Deaccessioning," *Provenance* 20 (2002): 33-49.

This article advances the argument that the archival profession should embrace reappraisal and deaccessioning as a basic and important part of our practice. Greene lays out his argument in four parts:

- first, reappraisal, deaccessioning, weeding, and distillation are defined
- second, the reasons that support the necessity of reappraisal and deaccession are laid out
- third, procedures for carrying out a reappraisal and deaccessioning project are detailed

- fourth, two successful projects at the Minnesota Historical Society are discussed-- one in which distillation of a collection was accomplished, another in which many collections were deaccessioned.

Greene states that in order to carry out a successful, responsible reappraisal and subsequent deaccessioning project, an institution must: have clearly stated mission, collecting policy, and appraisal guidelines in place; tasks must be performed in a systematic manner; and written policies and procedures must be in place. (CW)

Greene, Mark A. and Todd J. Daniels-Howell, "Documentation with an Attitude: A Pragmatist's Guide to the Selection and Acquisition of Modern Business Records." In *The Records of American Business* edited by James O'Toole, 161-229. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1997.

The authors continue their struggle against "old attitudes," "inadequate theory", and dissatisfaction with the existing archival literature in response to "the new reality" which is described as balancing repository resources among several collecting areas, minimizing political pressures by boards and administrators, and maintaining service to users through a structured, consistent, internal and external analysis. Their proposed Minnesota Method is a ranking system (levels of documentation) that establishes appraisal and acquisition priorities by "thinking far above the actual records." Like their Congressional Appraisal initiative, this method is also applied to reappraisal.

The article demonstrates how to think about big problems. When archival theory and the literature fail in the work place, archival practice cannot wait and will innovate, take risks, and experiment. For insightful analysis of appraisal theory, value, and use, readers should pay special attention to the end notes. (LW)

Griffith, Sally. *Serving History in a Changing World: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

In this detailed history of HSP, the author not only recounts the evolution of its collections but the development of its structure and governance. Griffith examines the often-difficult relationships between its members and the elected leadership, between the HSP's Council and its permanent staff and between the HSP as an institution and the wider culture of museums, research libraries and historical organizations that evolved during the twentieth century. Among the many issues that she addresses in her study, Griffith describes various highly contentious proposals advanced as early as the 1940s for the deaccessioning of different items from the collections, culminating with a major public relations catastrophe for the Society in the 1990s. Having incorporated her discussion of deaccessioning into her broader investigation of the Society's administration over the course of the twentieth century, Griffith furnishes the reader with many valuable insights into the challenges of effective collection management. (PJB)

Haas, Richard, "Collection Reappraisal: The Experience at the University of Cincinnati," *American Archivist* 47 (1984): 51-54.

The author discusses the reappraisal and deaccessioning process used at the University of Cincinnati in the early 1980s for record groups and for series within record groups. Criteria used for that process include usage, historical importance to the university, and pertinent legal requirements. In the first round, records were deemed keep, deaccession, or questionable; questionable series were reexamined and the donating university office or department was contacted for further information, if possible. Some of the problems that came up during this process included vague control records, no records documenting usage of the specific collection, and difficulties in dealing uniformly with related record groups from

university offices, as records changed hands over time. Controversies involved the special collections staff refusing to hold duplicate student records or personnel files for various departments and colleges. After receiving authority letters from department heads and college deans, records could be destroyed, transferred, or returned to the originating office; when recycled/destroyed, the university had to go through the State Records Commission for approval (the University of Cincinnati is a state institution). The final step in process was to correct all accession records, finding aids, control files, and other pertinent administrative records. (MW)

Ham, F. Gerald, "Archival Choices: Managing the Historical Record in an Age of Abundance," *American Archivist* 47 (1984): 11-22.

Written from a government records perspective, the article focuses on six elements of collections management: inter-institutional cooperation in collecting, application of appraisal procedures, deaccessioning, pre-archival control of records, reducing record volume, and analysis and planning. The deaccessioning section of the article suggests that such procedures should take place in an inter-institutional context in order to ensure that not every institution is deaccessioning the same types of records/collections, and states that all deaccessioning procedures should be meticulously documented and identified. Avenues to explore when deaccessioning: destruction/recycling, finding more suitable homes for collections outside of a repository's scope and mission, or the sale of materials with little informational but potential financial value. Author also notes that the deed of gift or other transfer document needs to allow for deaccessioning and reappraisal. (MW)

Ham, F. Gerald. "Archival Strategies for the Post-Custodial Era," *American Archivist* 44 (1981): 207-16.

This classic of archival literature (no subsequent discussion of archival appraisal fails to reference Ham), articulates the issues of modern archives practice which continue to concern us today: over abundance of information, technical obsolescence, personal privacy, a societal focus on the current over preservation, integrity and authenticity of the record, competition, and the need for archivists to take an active rather than passive role. Ham's solutions include rethinking acquisition to be more thoughtful and comprehensive, utilizing technology to increase access, balancing openness and privacy, and increasing cost effectiveness. He also argues that inter-institutional cooperation will be essential, particularly in regards to collecting and acquisition. (AF)

Hirtle, Peter. "UPDATE: Deaccessioning in New York State," *LibraryLaw Blog* (June 5, 2009).

<http://blog.librarylaw.com/librarylaw/2009/06/update-deaccessioning-in-new-york-state.html>

(Accessed September 2009)

This online commentary discusses New York State Bill A6959, relating to accessioning and deaccessioning museum property. Hirtle expresses concern with the current version of the bill, including its treatment of all collecting institutions in the same manner (art museums, libraries, archives), the unfunded legislative mandate for all institutions to publish an accessions and deaccessions register and its narrow restrictions on use of funds from sale of collection items.

Hirtle's essay is especially useful in terms of documenting the attention deaccessioning is currently receiving in the media and in the legislature, and the timeliness of efforts to create best practices. (CW)

Hite, Richard W., and Daniel J. Linke. "A Statistical Summary of Appraisal During Processing: A Case Study with Manuscript Collections," *Archival Issues* 17 (1992): 23-29.

This essay describes a case study at the Western Reserve Historical Society that involved appraising 1,000 linear feet of unprocessed manuscript materials. The authors call for sharing appraisal decisions, arguing that this step will help archivists appraise their backlog and decide what collections have the most value for processing. However, the approach focuses upon *weeding* from within collections as opposed to deaccessioning entire collections.

WRHS brought in 7,500 feet of materials between 1960 and 1987. 4,400 feet was unprocessed and the only weeding that was done was removing obvious duplicates. The new appraisal policy, created in 1987, led to “an item-level weeding of collections rather than a comprehensive review of materials.” Archivists estimated that 30% of the backlog could be weeded. They reduced the bulk of various collections by 29-61% (having divided collections by subject area) and found that an individual’s collection contained more unwanted material than the collection of an institution/organization. One subject the article does not discuss is the disposition of materials, because everything was tossed.

This article would be useful as an example of the difference between weeding and deaccessioning. (LUJ)

Hunter, Gregory S. "Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives" 2003, 51-82.

This text summarizes appraisal theory and practice in the United States as well as providing overviews of practice in the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia. **Definition:** “Process of determining the value, thus disposition of records”...in the context of government, business, and personal collections.”

Hunter compares the process to the techniques of triage in medicine and then reviews key elements of Shellenberg’s conceptual framework which “equated the appraisal mandate” with federal statutes which emphasizes evidentiary value. He also outlines limitations of Shellenberg’s guidelines when applied to contemporary non-governmental and digital records. He describes five refinements of Shellenberg’s theory: Boles’ and Young’s Black Box (university archives), Intrinsic Value (National Archives), Sampling Techniques (various), Functional Approach (Samuels, for organizations), and Minnesota Method (Greene-Daniels-Howell and prioritizing).

In turning to other procedures in the English-speaking world, Hunter points out that the United Kingdom’s approach to appraisal has moved along the continuum from Jenkinson (legal aspects of records, the archivist as passive recipient) to Schellenberg. Canada by contrast has developed two concepts: Total Archives (no separation between public and private records) and Macro-appraisal (“planned, research-based, top-down, functions-centered with emphasis on citizens’ interaction with the state). Finally, Australia’s practice is based on a “records continuum” which rejects the U.S. life-cycle approach and sees records as current and historical.

Hunter furnishes an excellent bibliography and succinct summaries on international appraisal techniques. The author sees appraisal as an issue that involves continual “refinement” in response to the changing nature of records and the work place and describes appraisal and re-appraisal as processes ending with a number of dispositions. (LW)

"Illicit Cultural Property" blog by Derek Fincham (deaccessioning label: <http://illicit-cultural-property.blogspot.com/search/label/Deaccessioning>)

The blog generally focuses on legal ramifications of looting archaeological and historic sites; the posts on deaccessioning focus mostly on the selling of art and artifacts from museums. Generally, museums in the United States are ethically bound to use the proceeds from selling works to purchase other works; Fincham disagrees with this restriction but also--following UK practice--thinks that before works are sold

into private hands they should be offered first to other museums and public institutions. Fincham's site provides an interesting look at the controversies that can arise from deaccessioning and disposition by sale of pieces from a cultural institution's collection, concerns that archivists also need to be aware of when deaccessioning. (MW)

Jackson, William L. "The 80/20 Archives: A Study of Use and Its Implications," *Archival Issues*, 22 (1997): 133-45.

The author conducted a study at Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, following the pattern of one conducted by Richard Trueswell in libraries called the "80/20 Rule," to determine if 80% of the use the archives received involved 20% of the collections. Jackson found this theory to be accurate. In this article, he discusses use as an appraisal criterion and argues that use is why archives exist. He further proposes that it should determine our collecting priorities, processing, and deaccessioning decisions. "If archival value is based on use then why keep valueless records? Moreover, why acquire collections that share the characteristics of currently dormant ones?" In doing so, he also contends that previous appraisal decisions did not take use into account.

Jackson feels that the 80/20 Rule's greatest potential impact is on reappraisal and deaccessioning. He makes a case against Karen Benedict's article (see above) in arguing for deaccessioning as a responsible collection management tool. Deaccessioning for Jackson equals destruction and he proposes that records in an archive cannot be consecrated as permanent. Any archivists that do believe in such permanence have formed subjective, emotional ties to the material. Further, "permanent value" has already been redefined by the preservation community as "enduring value", because nothing will last forever. All in all, Jackson has written a very interesting article with good arguments for deaccessioning. (LUJ)

Johnson, Arthur. "Identification of Business Records for Permanent Preservation," *American Archivist* 24 (1961): 329-32.

From a corporate archives perspective, the author suggests that historians, archivists, and records managers should be involved in evaluating (appraising) business records to determine retention. Johnson posits two factors to consider when making retention decisions: the first asks whether the records give insight into the "environment" or context for the decisions documented and the second questions whether the record demonstrates the uniqueness of the particular business. Finally, the author argues strongly for documenting the "human factor" of the business. While the author does not discuss reappraisal nor deaccessioning, this 1961 article provides insight into the development of appraisal theory and is one of only a few to focus on the subgenre of business archives. (AF)

Kemp, Edward C. *Manuscript Solicitation for Libraries, Special Collections, Museums and Archives*. Littleton CO: Libraries Unlimited, Inc., 1978.

Kemp's volume, intended as "a practical approach to a collecting program," includes a two-page discussion (pp. 65-66) of the concept of discarding materials. In it, he runs the gamut from weeding inappropriate or out-of-scope items after receipt of a donation to the transfer of unwanted materials to other institutions. He emphasizes the importance of making arrangements with donors in advance to ensure that the recipient has the right to take such actions, especially in light of the potential for adverse publicity. (PJB)

Knies, Helmut M. "Reappraising and Reaccessioning Wisconsin State Government Records: An Agency-Wide Approach," *Archival Issues* (2006)

This essay follows a four-year reappraisal and re-accessioning project in Wisconsin during the late 1990s to reappraise and deaccession 40% of their state records holdings. In the end, the project examined 22,000 cubic feet and deaccessioned 12,536 cubic feet, actions made necessary due to limited resources. The archives had accumulated a great deal of non-archival material because of its history/affiliation with the Wisconsin Historical Society (which is responsible for the state archives). Although the archives could only review half of what it wanted to examine, certain agencies' records were reduced by 40%, and the archives provided better intellectual access to and preservation of the records that had been reappraised.

Unfortunately when the archives began the project, its free space was nearing an end due to more restrictive retention schedules and fewer paper documents were being created in general. Its staff found that the initial appraisals were good, which made it difficult to deaccession series without damaging a collection. Although the project was concluded, the archivists never considered it finished. (LUJ)

Kolsrud, Ole, "The Evolution of Basic Appraisal Principles--Some Comparative Observations," *American Archivist* 55 (1992): 26-37.

This article provides a European perspective on the history of records appraisal, particularly in its comparison of England with Norway and Germany. It asks the question of who has authority to initiate destruction of records (originating agency, archivists, etc.) and discusses the English tendency toward destruction versus the German tendency toward preservation. Appraisal decisions are based upon the pertinence of records or upon provenance. (MW)

Konecny, Tania Ann. "Less is More: Deaccessioning from the Historic House Trust of New South Wales," *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 10 (1991): 281-92.

A detailed case study of the deaccessioning process and experience from an allied profession. The author examines the acquisition policies of these specific house museums, the exhaustive process for gaining approval to deaccession an object, the various methods of disposal, and the institution's explanations to the public. Konecny also examines the case in light of the then current political climate in Australia, which heightened the general public's interest in the process. An example of a sale of museum assets that seems to have been positively viewed by the press and public, the article highlights the need for a well-developed policy, procedure, and message. (AF)

Ledwell, Mary P. *The Theory of Reappraisal and Deaccessioning of Archival Material*. Master's thesis. University of British Columbia, 1995 [online]:

http://circle.ubc.ca/bitstream/handle/2429/3994/ubc_1995-0618.pdf?sequence=1

This master's thesis reviews the literature as well as the evolution and applications of the concepts that underlay reappraisal and deaccessioning. It cites a definitive 1987 Canadian study in which 65% of responding repositories stated they regularly reappraised/deaccessioned but only 15% had policies/procedures to guide them. The thesis also offers definitions of appraisal based on when it occurs.

Definitions: Deferred Appraisal - takes place after acquisition when it has been determined that no appraisal had ever taken place. Phased Appraisal – timetable a repository establishes for appraisal decisions and where selection criteria is based on phases of records' life cycle.

The thesis observes that a code of ethics is included in the Canadian Archives manual, stipulating that donors must be notified and users consulted in case of deaccessioning. It also examines the theoretical basis for the procedure and finds no support for reappraisal except on a case by case basis. Finally, Ledwell's thesis includes an excellent bibliography.

The fault line in this debate involves the ideas of value linked with use and changing notions of “permanence;” disagreements about the purpose of archives; acquisition as irrevocable; arguments that the benefits of reappraisal are transitory and subjective, making it not worth the time, cost or legal and ethical risks to undertake; and the challenges of judging others’ appraisal from a distance . (See the Grigg Report for UK’s contemporary appraisal criteria which rejects Jenkinson and the Canadian functional approach and largely favors Shellenberg’s concepts.

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/background_appraisal.pdf .)(LW)

Malaro, Marie C, "Deaccessioning: The American Perspective," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 10 (1991): 273-279.

This article presents a brief overview of museum deaccessioning practices in the United States. It describes the difference between legalities and ethical standards on deaccessioning; recent developments in tax law and in efforts of museums to clarify collecting policies that affect deaccessioning practices; and draws out a general set of rules to follow for deaccessioning. Malaro stresses need for written policies and procedures governing collecting and deaccessioning. (MW)

Marshall, Jennifer A. "Documentation Strategies in the Twenty-first Century? Rethinking Institutional Priorities and Professional Limitations," *Archival Issues* 23 (1998): 59-74.

▣The article begins with an examination of the key elements of documentation strategy: the definition of a discrete area to be analyzed, the participation of players from all aspects of a record’s lifecycle, the effort should involve multiple repositories, and the process should seek to influence the creation of documentation, if necessary. Marshall then traces the context in which documentation strategy was developed including a sense that the then-current appraisal processes were flawed, influential changes in technology, and the development of inter-institutional projects. All these factors affected the way records were created, understood, and collected. Following a review of published case studies of documentation strategy and a qualitative analyses of interviews with 16 long-practicing archivists, Marshall concludes that documentation strategy, while not truly adopted by the profession, has resulted in a renewed attention to appraisal as well as better cooperation among collecting institutions. (AF)

Oram, Richard W., "Current Professional Thinking on the Deaccessioning of Rare Books in Academic Libraries," *Rare Books and Manuscript Librarianship* 12 (1997): 9-18.

Written by a librarian at the University of Texas’ Harry Ransom Humanities Center, this article seeks to assess whether deaccessioning has become “a fully established collection management procedure in most academic special collections” by summarizing the results of a survey of 100 college and university libraries that the author conducted in 1995. The essay first describes the author’s difficulty in determining a standard definition of the term “deaccessioning,” reviews the statistical data collected from the responses and states his ultimate conclusion that deaccessioning has become both more widespread and less controversial. Oram then enumerates the three most common reasons given for adopting this procedure (disposal of duplicates, disposal of items deemed “non-rare” and disposal of items deemed “out of scope”) and discusses the responses he received to his “open-ended” questions about whether deaccessioning was more or less controversial and whether the deaccessioning of rare books should be a matter of public record.

Based upon his survey, he believes that an “irreversible” trend toward acceptance of deaccessioning of rare books is underway, although as of the mid-1990s, it continues to generate heated debate in some quarters. The main body of the essay is followed by two appendices that list the responding institutions and that reproduce the full text of the survey. (PJB)

O'Toole, James M. "On the Idea of Permanence," *American Archivist* 52 (1989): 10-25.

O'Toole here examines the term permanence and its changing importance and meaning to American archival practice. He tracks the use of the word from early collecting in America, when most institutions strove to maintain a permanent record or permanently preserve records, to a shift away from describing records as being of permanent value to being of intrinsic value.

Having followed this evolution, O'Toole wonders what the effects of a less well-defined idea of permanence are on the profession-- both in terms of the physical permanence of original records and of permanence of retention of records if reappraisal decisions are made. He also specifically addresses a fear that donors will cease to entrust their records to archivists if they do not believe that archival appraisal decisions are enduring. (CW)

O'Toole, James and Richard Cox. *Understanding Archives*. Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2006: 176-79.

As part of a larger literature review chapter, this section of the book focuses upon the archivist's main duties, including appraisal. The authors summarize recent scholarship on this topic with particular attention to dealing with voluminous and complex modern records as theorized by Peace, Elliott, Haas, and Samuels. A second section traces the development of specific appraisal techniques or models and a final section describes other literature reviews and critiques. While brief, this section serves as a strong introduction to the development and current thinking about appraisal. (AF)

Parkinson, Kamille T. H., *Behind Closed Doors: Deaccessioning in Archives and Museums, Its Implications and Effects*. M.A. thesis, University of Windsor (Windsor, Ontario, Canada), 1999.

In her examination of the role to be played by deaccessioning in archival settings, the author begins with an introduction to the rationales underlying this practice and its implications in different institutional settings. She then briefly discusses several high-profile deaccessioning episodes in the museum world, makes a strenuous argument on behalf of instituting collection management policies (including the establishment of guidelines for deaccessioning) and summarizes the principal arguments in favor of deaccessioning within archives. She concludes that institutions possessing collection management policies "with a clear mission statement and stringent accession and deaccession procedures" would be able to make effective use of deaccessioning "to refine and improve their collections."

Although the author summarizes points from a number of examples in the published literature, the thesis remains of interest because she draws substantially upon Canadian as well as American archival literature, includes a detailed examination of the 1972 Cranbrook Academy of Art and Art Museum deaccessioning and reproduces collection management policies from the National Archives of Canada (1995) and the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature (1979). The accompanying bibliography incorporates many citations to articles and books describing museum practice in Canada and the United States. (PJB)

Pearce-Moses, Richard. *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

- appraisal: n. ~ 1. The process of identifying materials offered to an archives that have sufficient value to be accessioned. 2. The process of determining the length of time records should be retained, based on legal requirements and on their current and potential usefulness. 3. The process of determining the market value of an item; monetary appraisal.

- **reappraisal:** (also retention review), n. ~ 1. Archives · The process of identifying materials that no longer merit preservation and that are candidates for deaccessioning. 2. Records management · The process of reviewing materials to reassess their retention value.
- **deaccessioning:** n. ~ The process by which an archives, museum, or library permanently removes accessioned materials from its holdings.
- **selection:** n. ~ 1. The process of identifying materials to be preserved because of their enduring value, especially those materials to be physically transferred to an archives¹. 2. The process of choosing materials for exhibition, publication, reformatting.
- **weeding:** n. ~ The process of identifying and removing unwanted materials from a larger body of materials.

Notes: Weeding and culling connote item-level separation, where purging, stripping, and screening connote removal of materials at the folder level or higher. (CW)

Powell, Sheila. "Archival Reappraisal: The Immigration Case Files." *Archivaria*, 1991-92.

<http://journals.sfu.ca/archivar/index.php/archivaria/article/viewFile/11802/12753>

This essay presents a case study concerning the reappraisal of Canadian Government Immigration Case Files, after initial appraisal decisions led to a much larger volume of records being retained, many of limited enduring value. The records are described, the circumstances of the original appraisal decision discussed, the unintended consequences of those decisions identified, and the steps taken to rethink the appraisal, or reappraise, the collection are enumerated.

Powell argues that reappraisal should not happen systematically as a collections management strategy, but rather when it becomes clear that an incorrect or uninformed appraisal decision was originally made about a records group or collection. She advocates that reappraisal should be a new appraisal, using knowledge gained since the original appraisal and based in solid appraisal theory. In her opinion, reappraisal should only be undertaken when the conditions that contributed to the flawed judgment in the first place either no longer exist or can be corrected. (CW)

Rapport, Leonard, "In the Valley of Decision: What to Do About the Multitude of Files of Quasi Cases," *American Archivist* 48 (1985): 173-189.

Written from a federal records perspective, this essay discusses the "quasi-case files" generated by hearings conducted before or investigations undertaken by regulatory agencies having either legislative and/or judicial powers. Its specific focus is records produced by the Interstate Commerce Commission and the National Labor Relations Board. These case files typically include correspondence, orders, motions, complaints and other documents, with transcripts and exhibits taking up the bulk of the records. The author describes sampling selection criteria applied to post-1945 NLRB records (all records kept before that time) and goes on to suggest that these case files are rarely used, since researchers prefer to consult published synopses of cases instead. When the case files themselves are used, researchers usually find information they wanted from the pre-1945 unsampled records; typically, they were pursuing materials that original appraisal had never considered. The author points out the costs involved in keeping these bulky series but is ambivalent about actually destroying such records. In the end, he argues that such case files should still be kept, at least for the larger agencies such as the NLRB and ICC. He suggests all the oldest case files up to a certain cut-off point should be kept and that later case files should be sampled on a rigorous subject-selected basis. (MW)

Rapport, Leonard "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records." *American Archivist* 44 (1981): 143-50.

Rapport wasn't the first to call for (re)appraisal based on pragmatics. In 1944, Bauer argued that cost vs. public benefit should be weighed before accessioning and retaining records at the National Archives. Rapport took the argument further by challenging long-held notions of permanence (the word is not used in the 1950 Federal Records Act), the relevance of evidential values and the infallibility of accessioned records as well as the concepts that more records would equal more knowledge and wisdom and that archivists are impartial stewards of their domain. Rapport by contrast links value with purpose, service, and use.

Though confined to government records, Rapport's finely observed questions remain relevant, fresh, and imaginative, even though the words "crisis," "backlogs," "ethics," and "deaccession" do not appear here. He saw reappraisal as systematic, cyclical and routine. For future reference, the SAA definition of permanence: *The ongoing usefulness or significance of records, based on the administrative, legal, fiscal, evidential, or historical information they contain, that justifies their continued preservation* <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/p/permanent-value> (LW)

Rogers, Michael, "How Do You Manage? CASESTUDY: Director, Do Thy Bidding," *Library Journal* 166 (April 1, 2001): 74-75.

This brief essay tackles the issue of deaccessioning from the perspective of library management. The author outlines a hypothetical scenario in which a public library director purchases replacement titles for the collection using eBay while raising money to pay for them by selling little-used items from the library's special collections holdings. Two actual library professionals from different institutions then provide brief analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of the choices made by the library director in the scenario. While one of the analyses endorses this approach as an unalloyed good for the institution and chides librarians for living in fear of "weeding," the other argues that the library director has failed to develop support for this tactic from within the library's constituencies (the trustees, the staff and the public) and not taken account of the library's collection development policy. Although the basic points made by each author are familiar, casting in this format is a fresh approach and may raise issues in doing so that readers have failed to consider. (PJB)

Russell, Peter A. "The Manx Peril: Archival Theory in Light of Recent American Historiography," *Archivaria* 32 (1991): 124-35.

▣The author begins by tracing trends in historiography over the last 100 years. Definitions and major figures are offered for various trends or schools of history such as scientific, progressive, consensus, New Left, neo-consensus, specialist, and deconstructionist. Russell then explains the impact these changes have had on the archival profession, particularly appraisal theory. Changes in historiography have a particular impact on theories of reappraisal he argues, pointing to the exchange between Leonard Rapport and Karen Benedict, both of whom point to schools of historical thought to support their arguments. The article concludes that changes in historical methodology have led archivists to expand the scope of appraisal and acquisition rather than change or replace one set of records for another. (AF)

Sauer, Cynthia K., "Doing the Best We Can?: The Use of Collection Development Policies and Cooperative Collecting Activities at Manuscript Repositories," *American Archivist* 64 (2001): 308-349.

The author created a survey in 2000 of 100 manuscript repositories in the United States, focused on collection development policies amongst manuscript repositories and upon their cooperative collecting activities. She noted that reasons for collection development policies amongst respondents included wanting to deaccession collections and providing help in dealing with unwanted collections, both before such collections came through the repository's door and long after acquiring them. Referrals to other

repositories for new collections were also generally more likely to occur when institutions had a written collections development policy and when institutions had formal or informal cooperative agreements amongst themselves. (MW)

Shelstad, Mark. "Switching the Vacuum into Reverse: A Case Study of Retrospective Conversion as Collection Management," *Archival Issues* 23 (1998): 135-53.

This article discusses the often-overlooked collection management activities of a backlog cataloging project including clarifying ownership and restrictions, reappraisal, deaccessioning, and weeding. The author describes a deaccessioning and disposal process that includes research into best practices, the formulation of an approved policy, and procedures that include the approval or participation of upper administration and legal counsel. The author differentiates between deaccessioning as the removal of an entire collection or donation and weeding, which selectively removes items from a collection. Of particular interest is the multiple methods employed to clear title and effectively manage the collections. (AF)

Shelstad, Mark. "A Word Never to Be Uttered Aloud: Reappraisal and Planning and Preparing for Deaccessioning" *Paper Presented at SAA Annual Meeting, 1996.*

Shelstad describes the early history of the American Heritage Center and its subsequent involvement with reappraisal and deaccessioning (his presentation became "Switching the Vacuum into Reverse," published in *Archival Issues* in 1998). The paper contains an extensive literature review, including publications from the museum and library communities. It presents the institution's reasons for using reappraisal and deaccessioning as a collection management tool including: a faulty prior collecting policy, a lack of current storage space, and the identification of materials that would fit more appropriately in another repository.

The paper also discusses the practical implementation of these policies. During a retrospective cataloging project, American Heritage Center staff appraised collections and identified candidates for deaccessioning in an in-house database. They created a deaccessioning policy that provides reasons for deaccessioning, details in what instances it will happen and includes a list of questions that archivists should ask themselves when creating a deaccessioning policy. Based upon the AHC experience, the author calls for making deaccessioning a regular part of managing collections. (LUJ)

Sink, Robert, "Appraisal: The Process of Choice," *American Archivist* 53 (1990): 452-458.

Sink discusses the "Black Box" appraisal process, arguing that until archivists come up with a universal process for appraisal there cannot be a unifying theory of appraisal, and that the Black Box process is a start toward that universal process. This process uses three modules to assist in evaluating records, which could conceivably also be used for reappraisal: value of information, costs of retention, and implications of appraisal recommendations, with sub-components for each module and the ability to weight particular pieces of information with regard to the specific situation at any institution. The author's staff tested this process at the New York Public Library and he describes that the benefits that resulted from this process including a taxonomy for appraisal, designating elements made in decisions and increased transparency of the costs of appraisal and keeping records. He also discusses improvements in training and education, allowing for more consistent appraisal decisions from different staff members. Sink also asserts that it demonstrates that appraisal is a progressive process--rather than a single action, a series of decisions made over the course of records custody (including reappraisal and deaccessioning). (MW)

Stam, David H., "Prove All Things: Hold Fast That Which is Good": Deaccessioning and Research Libraries," *College and Research Libraries* 43 (1982): 5-13.

Based on a revised version of the author's presentation to the 1981 Brown University symposium on library deaccessioning, this brief essay argues that those who choose to discard materials from research collections should approach such choices on a case-by-case basis, focus upon the institution's essential mission in selecting those items and above all avoid even the appearance of conflicts of interest. Emphasizing the disposition of duplicate items by sale, he then provides a "taxonomy" of approaches to deaccessioning and proposes a list of seven "commandments" to govern deaccessioning endeavors. (PJB)

Streit, Samuel, "Going, Going, Gone: Case Studies in Library Deaccessioning," *Rare Books and Manuscript Librarianship* 12 (1997): 21-28.

This essay, written by a leading participant in the 1981 Brown University symposium on library deaccessioning, begins with the author's conclusion that deaccessioning remains a controversial procedure because it "erodes this perception of permanence" which still surrounds special collections departments and research libraries and can engender "the appearance of bad faith" between donors and receiving institutions. Streit then examines a number of deaccessioning efforts undertaken by The John Hay and John Carter Brown libraries, Lehigh University, the Kansas City Public Library and the Clements Library, following them in turn from initial conception to eventual conclusion. In doing so, he highlights the crucial issues that arose in each circumstance, describes the varying reactions that these efforts provoked and elucidates the points that he argues are the "essence" of a successful deaccessioning policy: approaching such decisions on a case-by-case approach; focusing upon the institution's mission in determining what to keep and what to discard; and avoiding even the appearance of conflicts of interest, dissimulation or "evasions" of any kind. (PJB)

Streit, Samuel, "Research Library Deaccessioning: Practical Considerations," *Wilson Library Bulletin* 56 (1982): 658-662.

This brief article, based upon the author's presentation at the 1981 deaccessioning symposium, focuses upon the process of deaccessioning rather than an exploration of the rationales for it. Moreover, it restricts its discussion to deaccessioning by sale with an ultimate purpose of generating income for the parent institution. In doing so, Streit emphasizes such issues as who would be empowered to make the ultimate decision, how the individual library determines what materials to sell, how it would go about selling them and how it would propose to spend the resulting proceeds. The article highlights the "ethical, legal, intellectual, bibliographical, historical and artistic" as well as financial issues that must be faced when undertaking such a procedure. (PJB)

Szewczyk, David, "Library Deaccessioning: A Dealer's Perspective," *Rare Books and Manuscript Librarianship* 12 (1997): 30-33.

Drawing upon his experience as a bookseller, Szewczyk points out the role that deaccessioning can play for individual collectors and institutions in "refining" their current holdings, refocusing their collecting fields and disposing of duplicate or out-of-scope materials. Proposing that the disposition of duplicates is the "easiest" aspect of deaccessioning, he then reviews the "financial liabilities" that duplicates impose upon any library possessing them, from the shelf space that they occupy to the conservation challenge that those works printed in the nineteenth or twentieth century represent. He urges librarians who propose to deaccession materials by sale from their collections to take advantage of the expertise of dealers but to maintain complete control of the process, from selecting which books to remove from their institutions to ensuring that they retain permanent records of what has been deaccessioned. (PJB)

Uglean Jackson, Laura. "Not Afraid To Let Go: Procedures for Deaccessioning," Paper Presented at SAA Annual Meeting, San Francisco, 2008.

Note- much of the content in this paper was later published as "But You Promised: A Case Study of Deaccessioning at the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming," co-authored with D. Claudia Thompson in the *American Archivist*, Fall/Winter 2010 issue.

This case study focuses upon the large-scale deaccessioning project undertaken by Wyoming's American Heritage Center. Beginning with the AHC's early acquisitions practices (taking anything and everything) the author then emphasizes three key factors that laid the groundwork for deaccessioning: revising the Wyoming Abandoned Property Act, creating a formal collection policy, and conducting a retrospective survey of collections. Revising the Abandoned Property Act was necessary to gain ownership of collections without a deed of gift. The collecting policy and retrospective survey were necessary to analyze and decide which collections would be reappraised. An NHPRC grant provided funding for 1.5 staff members dedicated to the project, and also for money to ship collections to other repositories.

The presentation then describes the steps taken by the Center to facilitate reappraisal:

1. Gather information about the collection (ownership, accretion dates, who donated it, donor correspondence, extant bibliographic records, if it was a split collection, biography of creator, summary of contents, etc.)
2. Bring information to acquisitions committee and deliver brief report. Acquisitions committee decides whether or not to deaccession.

The paper follows the outcome of the reappraisal in identifying some collections to be deaccessioned and some to be retained. Those that were deaccessioned were transferred to another repository, sent back to the donor, or destroyed. In the course of the deaccessioning process, only a few of the original donors objected. Meanwhile, the project assisted the AHC in reducing a large backlog and enhancing access to more collections. (LUJ)

Wilsted, Thomas. "Observations on the Ethics of Collecting Archives and Manuscripts," *Provenance* 11 (1993): 25-38.

Wilsted's article examines the evolution of SAA's Code of Ethics, characterizing it primarily as addressing relationships and "archival excesses" of the past and present. Among other professional failings, backlogs and split collections are seen as ethical dilemmas. Moreover, while reappraisal and deaccessioning are recognized as widely practiced, they are not adequately covered by the profession's policies. The ethical challenges presented by these issues can be alleviated by a policy that would specifically address the criteria/circumstances for reappraisal & deaccessioning such as who could recommend such actions, who would make the final decision, and, if a sale of collections is considered, how such funds would be used.

Clear and concise in its presentation, this essay does focus on a version of the Code of Ethics that included extensive commentary; the current code does not include that commentary.

http://www.archivists.org/governance/handbook/app_ethics.asp Also, neither the previous nor the current iteration of the Code specifically addresses the ethical dilemmas raised by the author. (LW)

Winn, Karyl. "Reappraising Congressional Papers," *Easy Access* 30 (2004): 6-7.

In this brief case study of reappraisal with an emphasis on description and access considerations, the author details several examples, each resulting in a different retention or disposal decision, and provides

the reasoning that led to the determination. Of particular interest to institutions with Congressional papers collections is the examination of the constituent mail series. (AF)

Wojcki, Carol. "Appraisal, Reappraisal, and Deaccessioning." *Archival Issues* (2002).

The State Archives of Michigan reappraised 13,000 boxes of government records without archival value. They determined that over 3,600 boxes were not authorized for transfer to the repository and never should have been accessioned. They had a backlog totaling 19,000 cubic feet, which was not being reduced despite having hired three processors. Under these circumstances, the State Archives chose to reappraise the records as a way to manage their backlog. Archivists accepted reappraisal and deaccessioning as collection management techniques but did create controversy. The essay also offers an explanation as to how the backlog became so large.

Among various state agencies, deaccessioning had a bad reputation and they frequently did not trust the State Archives with their records. To build the necessary trust, the archives had to make the deaccessioning process more consistent. To do so, the archives staff involved the Records Management unit and re-scheduled records to ensure that everything sent to the archives would be preserved and any appraisal changes would be discussed with the agency before destroying records. Deaccessioning means destruction or return to creating agencies. Implementing these new policies (including a ranking of state agencies on a one-to-five scale and an improved appraisal policy) reversed prior agency sentiments of distrust. (LUJ)