

## BOOK REVIEWS

Jeannette A. Bastian, Reviews Editor

**Community Archives: The Shaping of Memory**

Edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander. London: Facet Publishing, 2009. Principles and Practices in Records Management and Archives, ed. Geoffrey Yeo. List price \$135.00, member price: \$105.00. ISBN 978-1-85604-639-8.

This volume is an important contribution to the growing literature on the significance of archives in society, particularly in relation to such concepts as memory, identity, accountability, and power. The editors have compiled an impressive, if uneven, series of case studies. Topics range geographically across the globe—from Europe and the Americas to the South Pacific and the Caribbean—and institutionally through a wide spectrum of archival repositories and grass-roots documentation efforts. It invites reading as a celebration of the diversity and creativity of both the archival profession and its “non-professional” practitioners. Together they are building documentary programs for every conceivable “community” of people. The result is a more nuanced and inclusive conception of “the archive” and its essential nature for all societies.

Each of the thirteen essays in the volume presents a case study of from one to three archival repositories, community groups, or documentary projects. Some are written by the founders of particular archival programs, or by current staff members, and others by outside observers. Richard Cox adds a concluding commentary. As Bastian and Alexander state, the authors form “an eclectic group of archivists, librarians and lawyers” (p. xxii), who approach these concerns from diverse perspectives. Several of the essays focus narrowly on the individual case studies, although most authors connect their topics to recent discourse regarding theory of archives or of “the archive” as a conceptual element.

Collectively, the essays in *Community Archives* build upon the literature represented in such recent volumes as *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory* (ed. Blouin and Rosenberg, 2007), *Archive Stories* (ed. Burton, 2005), *Owning Memory* (Bastian, 2003), and *Archives and Justice* (Harris, 2007). Most essay authors cite recent archival, historical, and/or anthropological literature regarding memory, identity, accountability, and social justice. These

essays deepen our understanding of such concepts, particularly as they affect individual repositories or specific types of documentation programs.

At first reading, the brevity of the editors' introduction—barely more than three printed pages—disappoints the reader looking for a definition of *community* (or even of *archives*). Nor does it establish a detailed context in which to consider the diverse assortment of case studies being presented. Yet upon reflection the editors' restraint opens the essays to a variety of readings and allows the assembled authors to define the terms in which each presents the case study. An understanding of "community archives," vague though the term may be, emerges from the essays in a manner that allows the reader to engage in this nuanced conversation about the nature of archives in modern diverse societies.

If one can formulate a definition of "community archives" from the focus of these essays, it would encompass both formal and informal institutions, those both mainstream and grass-roots. Community may be based on geography or common origins/interests (such as ethnicity, religion, lifestyle, or other factors), and these archives are founded either by engaged members of a community of interest or "external" leaders. They also may be created within mainstream institutions, such as academic archives or local libraries. A partial listing of the communities represented in this volume shows this variety: black culture in London, the West Yorkshire area of England, the native Noongar Claim region of Western Australia, American medical students, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the people of St. Kitts, Canadian lesbians and gays, Bosnian refugees, former leprosy patients on a Philippine island, and Grateful Dead fans. You want diversity? Here it is.

The subtitle of this volume directly links community archives, in all their variety, to "the shaping of memory." Yet, this is but one aspect of a network of concepts relating to the societal purposes of archives. In addition to memory, these essays illustrate how archives also connect people to concepts such as group identity, power, accountability, social justice, and rescuing the forgotten voices of previously marginalized peoples. The role of oral tradition—with its alternative mode of remembrance and community building—also receives significant elaboration. The essays that examine one or more of these topics build on the works cited above, in addition to important writings by Terry Cook, Richard Cox, Elisabeth Kaplan, Eric Ketelaar (also a contributor here), Tom Nesmith, Ann Stoler, Hugh Taylor, and many other archivists, historians, psychologists, and social theorists.

Several of the case studies in this volume focus primarily on specific repositories or documentation programs, with only a briefly stated linkage to these more theoretical works. Yet, the majority offer elaborations or a deeper understanding of these issues for contemporary archives and archivists. The very best of them challenge traditional archival concepts and methods. As series editor Geoffrey Yeo states, "communitarian perspectives may oblige archivists to revisit

traditional perceptions and extend their understanding of records to encompass new forms of evidence and more fluid manifestations of human memory” (p. x). A brief review cannot do justice to the numerous valuable contributions made by these authors, nor to the subtlety and nuance of many of the essays. A few highlights will have to suffice.

The relationship between archives and memory requires a more thoughtful consideration by archivists. The facile equation of documents with memory needs to be interrogated. As examination of colonial and nonwesternized cultures reveals, in many societies, oral tradition and culture remain stronger than reliance on writing. “In Fiji, a person’s ancestry for example is not learned by consulting documents, it is learned through song and dance,” as Fiji archivists Setareki Tale and Opeta Alefaio point out. Also, carefully constructed oral narratives pass on knowledge of the sea and marine life. As they conclude, “Knowledge and information is [*sic*] not an abstraction, it is with us, it is within us. This means that we *are* our memories, we *are* our knowledge.” (p. 88). The traditional scepticism of written sources complicates the work of archivists who seek to develop an awareness of the role of records in Fiji society.

Another example of the complexity of the relationship between memory and documents can be seen in the work of the Latin American truth commissions investigating past atrocities. In Chile, for example, Joel Blanco-Rivera states, once the truth commission ceases its work, “the archive becomes responsible for accountability, memory construction and justice.” However, although archivists have written a lot about the concept of “collective memory,” Blanco-Rivera argues, “I raise a serious concern that the true meaning and importance of this concept has not been fully addressed by the archival community” (p. 137). This is a warning that archivists should address more fully to understand how we—and our archival records—relate to this powerful concept. Is there, in fact, a true “collective memory” among members of any society, or just a series of meta-narratives (to use the postmodernists’ term) that enforce the views of those holding power in society? Would archival records support the power of ruling groups or can they serve as a counterweight to such power? These are important issues to consider more deeply than using the simplistic metaphor of archives as memory institutions.

These questions have particular relevance for indigenous peoples seeking redress of grievances and protection of their rights. The experience of the Single Noongar Claim region of Western Australia helps us to understand these issues and their complexity. Individual native welfare files, now held by the State Records Office, reflect the previous “obsessive recording of the intimate details of every Aboriginal person.” According to Glen Kelly, these files are filled with “official lies” about individual people, designed “to justify the genocidal practices they were designed to support” (p. 58). Yet, in a “delicious irony” (p. 60), these very records—created by people who sought to assimilate the Noongars

and destroy their culture—have been used to help prove the very persistence of that culture as the natives seek recognition of their rights. The archival records have thus been turned from a force of oppression to a means of restitution.

Members of many marginalized groups have concluded that mainstream heritage organizations do not fully represent their perspectives. Many have created archival repositories for their own communities. As Andrew Flinn and Mary Stevens state in their study of such repositories among London's minority communities, such programs are "often viewed explicitly as counter-hegemonic tools for education and weapons in the struggle against discrimination and injustice" (pp. 6–7). Creating such archives can be "an act of resistance against subordination and discrimination" (p. 8). To the extent that this is a deliberate purpose of community archives—and this does vary from one community to the next—it becomes a political objective. Archives may thus contribute to the power and identity of a group previously silenced.

At times, public misunderstanding of what constitutes an archives may foster further discrimination. When the Canadian Gay Archives (CGA) applied for registration as a charitable organization in 1981, the request was denied because CGA did not benefit "all members of the community" and was designed only to promote a specific purpose peculiar to a group of individuals. According to Marcel Barriault, "Perhaps more surprisingly, Revenue Canada also claimed that the CGA did not qualify as an archives because it did not acquire government records," (p. 103). This seemingly narrow and absurd concept of archives reminds us of the continual need to explain and promote archives to other segments of society.

Many of the essays in *Community Archives* depict the importance of archives and other cultural heritage programs, such as libraries and museums, in forming or strengthening community identity and pride. Knowledge of the past—of a shared history and memory—can provide valuable benefits to any group of people, particularly those who have faced oppression, discrimination, and exclusion. Yet, it is too easy to romanticize the potential benefits of archives and to ignore the consequences of conferring power on a marginalized community. As Eric Ketelaar warns, in an essay about the International Criminal Tribunal set up to prosecute atrocities in the former Yugoslavia, members of one community must "acknowledge that the past they share with neighbouring ethnic and political communities is not a monolithic truth, history or memory, but allows, even requires, questioning and contestation" (p. 124).

Richard Cox takes up this theme in his concluding comments. Linking archives to social justice concerns, Cox warns, "can seem to politicize the archival function" (p. 256). Expanding the definition of archives to encompass a wider range of perspectives and organizations, he cautions, "can lead to a cacophony of voices and conflicting interpretations that can set one community against another" (p. 257). Providing a means of identity and authority to one

group could challenge or undermine the interests of others. This may place a repository that seeks to acquire materials from a variety of social communities at risk of offending those with contradictory values or goals. By empowering one group, we may alienate another or at the least open up the archives to comments or questions not previously considered within archival circles. Cox asks, "Are we ready for this?" (p. 257). Based on the evidence of a growing movement for documentation of marginalized groups presented in *Community Archives*, the answer surely must be that we had better get ready. Changes have already come, and more are on the way. If archivists do not engage these discourses and movements, we will lose yet another opportunity to make positive contributions to society.

Cox may be raising these issues partly as a means of alerting archivists to the inherent dangers of engagement in public and political controversies. The direct engagement envisioned in many of these essays would certainly enmesh archivists in debate and conflict and would challenge the profession's traditional timidity about confrontation and controversy. However, Cox's concluding sentence suggests his underlying concerns: "We need to make sure that our involvement with these communities does not allow notions of pride, identity, image and other positive attributes to overwhelm the essential significance of records and record keeping for evidence (warts and all), accountability (often with its unpleasant aspects), and memory (just as often contested as not)" (p. 262). This is, as he indicates, contested terrain.

One may hope that Cox is simply playing devil's advocate. Otherwise, this sounds like a conservative plea for the traditional (and limited) role of archives, without open acknowledgment of the unavoidably political nature of what archivists actually do. Like it or not, the archive is an arena for contesting the nature of society, the rights of various constituencies to be heard and acknowledged, and the fundamental meaning of the social compact. Cox's final declaration runs counter to the collective voices (admittedly, not all singing quite the same tune) in *Community Archives*. The message presented in this volume is that if mainstream archival institutions do not adequately document and acknowledge the concerns and interests of various communities, they will build their own grass-roots repositories and use them to foster group pride, identity, and public recognition. By engaging with members of such communities, archivists have much to gain and very little to risk. At the very least, we can help such communities understand the professional principles and best practices that will enable them to present an honest and accurate depiction of their history, activities, interests, and perspectives. This is a challenge for the archival profession that I, for one, hope we will choose to accept.

*Community Archives* is an important addition to the recent discourse about the meaning and purposes of archives. Its significance lies in part in the variety of community archives it represents and in its engagement with some of

the most challenging, perplexing, and exciting issues facing the archival profession.

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**Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling: Readings, Reflections and Ruminations**

By Richard J. Cox. Duluth, Minn.: Litwin Books, LLC, 2008. xviii, 418 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-9802004-7-8.

In recent years, many of us with highly specialized interests have come to notice that growing numbers of strangers increasingly share our avocations. Web pages and online photos obligingly orient the curious public to almost every rarefied hobby and obscure travel destination. Every conceivable variety of collectible shows up on eBay. What were once marginal activities of small groups have entered the mainstream.

Archival practice is no exception to this trend. Collecting, appraising, preserving, and providing access to archivally significant materials, once the provinces of professionals working within established organizations, have become public practices and sometimes even public preoccupations. The concerns of the outside world are flooding into formerly quiet repositories. How does the rise of personal recordkeeping affect traditional archival activities and established archives? How is the digital age inflecting the human impulse to collect, and how are private collections and organized archives coexisting? How will the proliferation of lay collectors impact the work and job security of professional archivists?

The remarkably prolific and frequently provocative scholar and writer Richard Cox addresses these and many other emerging issues in this thoughtful book, which comprises eight essays on the state of archives in the early twenty-first century with a special focus on personal archives and what he and others call the “citizen archivist.” First appearing in *Records and Information Management Report*, the chapters have been substantially revised and updated; the book also contains content first published in his much-missed blog “Reading Archives.”

Cox’s book comes at a moment when the accumulation—and sometimes archiving—of personal information by members of the public has reached historically unprecedented levels. Commercial services such as Facebook, MySpace, Flickr, YouTube, and Twitter have become default repositories, collectively holding hundreds of billions of digital objects. Legacy archives, commercial services, and personal collections seem to be converging into a continuum, sharing some attributes and sharply diverging in others. Interest in his topic is quickly emerging in research and discussion: witness Internet Archive’s “Personal Archiving” conference that occurred in February 2010. This, then, is a timely intervention.

Chapter 1, "Posting Notes and, Then, Saving Them," begins by characterizing collecting as a basic human instinct, reminding us of its emotional and psychological underpinnings and suggesting that private collectors fulfill numerous archival functions. Tracing personal archival practice from eighteenth-century theologian Jonathan Edwards to Gordon Bell, the Microsoft research fellow engaged in an ongoing project to document his entire life, Cox points to the galaxy of emergent documentary forms (e.g., Web pages, blogs, photosharing sites, and data stored in smart phones and PDAs) that function as a kind of outsourced memory whose nature and/or ownership renders them highly problematic for traditional repositories to collect and maintain. He suggests that archivists need to respect the human impulse to collect and that their duty is to assist nonprofessionals in caring for their records without necessarily corraling them into established repositories.

Chapter 2, "The Romance of the Document," counterposes the emotional and subjective attributes of the historical record with more clinical aspects of records administration. Channeling a tendency associated with the public history movement, Cox suggests that archivists and records managers might best promote and sustain their missions by recognizing, and even exploiting, the popular appeal of historical documents, especially letters, oral histories, and journals. But Cox also questions public history's comprehension of archival work and its nuances in his assessment and critique of Daniel Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig's 2005 book, *Digital History*. This section would be well worth reading in concert with very recent (and perhaps ephemeral) blog postings by archivists who identify with Library 2.0 and Archives 2.0 manifestos. Ending with an echo of Robert C. Binkley's 1935 statement that "Many records will be preserved by amateurs or they will not be preserved at all," Cox suggests that a "corps of citizen archivists" may be the answer to the problems posed by massively accelerating accumulations of records.

The third chapter, "Information Documents: How People and Organizations Acquire Information," focuses on information creation and acquisition, describing how the document is morphing into many forms. While it thoughtfully traces the development of language, writing, and reading and includes a fascinating discussion of how landscapes and buildings can be read as documentary texts, I would have liked it to consider emerging forms of literacy and discourse such as gaming and immersive environments, two modes of experience that are already challenging traditional taxonomies of information.

"'Therapeutic' Personal Recordkeeping," chapter 4, expands on the first chapter's treatment of collecting as human instinct. Cox points out that misuse of personal records by governments, corporations, and identity thieves has not inhibited their creation and proliferation. The essay mobilizes a free-ranging discussion of personal records, their expanding types, and their meaning to individuals to suggest that the maintenance of personal archives mirrors the management and administration of more official records collections.

Chapter 5, “Human Impulses and Personal Archives,” moves from instinct to impulse, examining why people generate personal records and the symbolic value that these records hold. While it occasionally overlaps the previous chapter, it succeeds in establishing the value (and urgency) of such records as diaries, scrapbooks, and certificates. Cox concludes by linking the deliberate impulse to build and organize personal archives to popular understanding of the significance of the documentary record and suggesting that professionals should turn this impulse into advocacy.

Chapter 6, “Traces of Ourselves: More Thoughts on Personal Recordkeeping and the Roles of Archivists,” discusses the changing relationship between established repositories, professional archivists, and individual collectors. Cox advocates that archivists need to recast their relationships with amateurs and move toward what he calls “distributed or post-custodial strategies.” This is already occurring: newer organizations, such as the Center for Home Movies, clearly state: “The Center for Home Movies advocates the preservation of films within the household.” He suggests that engagement with personal and family archives will enable archivists to publicly communicate a better sense of their mission and the value of their work, and he argues against sequestering archival expertise within institutions.

Chapters 7 and 8 address email, the Web, and blogging from the viewpoints of professional records managers, archivists, and citizens, providing a useful outline of archivists’ attempts to come to terms with the problems of collecting and managing digital information. Pointing out that archivists generally seek to preserve records while organizational records managers often seek to protect their organizations against liability by destroying them, Cox looks for a middle ground, wondering whether rivalry between archivists and records managers may simply render it easier to ignore or destroy problematic electronic information. Similarly wondering whether the Web can be seen as a recordkeeping regime, he reviews recent digital preservation efforts, wondering whether the appropriate response to the “endless, constantly expanding mass of stuff” is to encourage distributed, decentralized efforts by individuals as well as institutions. The last chapter ends with another call for professionals to assist citizen archivists, amateur historians, and the public in solving the problems of digital preservation.

Cox concludes his summary essay by asserting “that the nature of personal and family archives is transforming in ways that require some fundamental re-imagining of archival practice.” Restating his call for collaboration between citizen and professional archivists, he suggests that archivists “move more into the public square” and “remember that archives are stories fighting to be told.” Though I agree with his thesis that personal archival activity is problematizing the tenets, biases, and workflow of professional archival work, and I strongly believe in the concept of the “citizen archivist” (for which I must disclose he



credits me as originator), I think a consideration of archives' demand side—public access to archival holding—would strengthen his arguments. For perhaps the first time, archival collections are entering the mainstream; their holdings are in great demand by genealogists, commercial and amateur media producers, and publishers in every form of media. Driven by the proliferation of easy-to-access online collections such as YouTube and Internet Archive, users are demanding that archival materials be digitized and served up for free. Whether or not this is feasible, affordable, or desirable begs a host of questions, but the online imperative is certainly transforming (and threatening) established archives in profound ways.

Unlike Cox's previous books treating traditional and ongoing elements of archival practice and records management such as ethics and appraisal, this volume is dedicated to examining what archivists are *not* yet doing and where their interventions might be most needed. Focusing primarily on collections still held by members of the public or otherwise of unofficial status, this book argues for more active involvement with a world that may be uncomfortable to many traditional archivists and records managers—a world where records are rapidly created in complex and hard-to-preserve formats on a scale hitherto unknown in human history. Frequently invoking the notion of citizen archivist, Cox asserts that not only are citizens doing significant archival work outside institutional walls, but that archivists should bring a sense of civic engagement to their own missions and workflows. In so doing, Cox suggests, archives and archivists have a chance to futureproof themselves and their work in a world that understands too little of what they do.

Cox's respect for archival tradition coupled with his critique of legacy archives practice leads me to call him a "radical traditionalist," a term I use in praise rather than opprobrium. His populism has antecedents in the pioneering work of historian and information technologist Robert C. Binkley (1897–1940), who sought to unite official and vernacular archival practices and conceptualized WPA programs that mobilized white-collar unemployed workers to inventory local and regional archives and index local newspapers. At the same time, Cox's book looks squarely toward the future, offering historical and conceptual backing for the work of (primarily emerging) archivists who argue for collapsing the walls that have separated archival professionals from patrons and for the development of hybrid collecting and access models informed by diverse disciplines and social practices.

This is not a book for archivists or students seeking to learn the tenets of traditional archival practice. Rather, it's a visionary study of (and argument for) archives that don't yet exist, but should, and an expansive survey of those individuals, many outside the archival profession, who are creating the groundwork for the collections of the future. Full of stories, facts, and quotations drawn from the academic humanities, archival journals, and the popular press, Cox's book

sweeps expansively over the terrain of current and future archival practice. While its editing is somewhat loose, leaving a bit of overlap between chapters, this book mobilizes a panoply of fascinating evidence to support its thesis and is full of stimulating leads for both current and emerging archivists, and, I would hope, interested members of the public.

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*Prelinger Library and Archives*

### **Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process**

Edited by Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008. 173 pp. Soft cover. \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-8093-2840-6.

Like so many of my peers, I was drawn to the archival profession by the promise of a career in an emerging, evolving field. Approaching my final semesters, now, with nearly all of those same peers, scouring Web pages and listings for jobs—any jobs—in the field, it occurred to me that my academic dowsing rod might be broken. Had I increased my student loans for nothing? But for nearly two months now I've kept Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan's *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process* in my satchel in the same fashion that I carried Ginsberg's *Howl* at sixteen. While my debt hasn't lessened any, I now find myself with a fresh perspective on my archival aspirations and reinvigorated by my current scholarly endeavors.

The first line of *Beyond the Archives* reads, “[this text] marks the change from reading an archive not just as a source, but as a subject,” and I find this to be an apt description (p. vii). Reading archives as a subject, the book focuses on research and rhetoric. This is not a book on how to process archival materials, nor is it an instruction on rhetorical composition. It is, rather, a series of very personal accounts retelling the experiences of eighteen scholars and their processes of research, exploration, and discovery as they investigate topics ranging from feminist scholarship to colonial memory; from Hawai'i's immigrant generation to Nazi prison camps. The eighteen accounts are divided into four sections based on their subject matter and content. The sections are aptly titled, “When Serendipity, Creativity, and Place Come into Play,” “When Personal Experience, Family History, and Research Subjects Interact,” “When Personal, Cultural, and Historical Memory Shape the Politics of the Archives,” and “When the Lives of Our Research Subjects Parallel Our Own.” The essays mirror one another in the retelling, each demonstrating a bond between research and lived experiences. The text is well written, showing both breadth and expertise. It is a book of eureka moments.

Kirsch teaches English at Bentley College and Rohan teaches English at the University of Michigan. In the introduction they write, “For these writers,

research is a meaningful collection process that has helped them better their own historically situated experience” (p. 2). David Gold relates the connection between research and lived experience in the first section through a telling of “happy accidents” in his essay, “Accidental Archivist.” Gold, an assistant professor at California State University Los Angeles, recounts his discovery of rhetoric and his research on the institutions that teach it, noting that some of his most important research discoveries began simply as luck. While drinking coffee at a café, he picks up a stray, local newspaper and reads a brief highlight about a nearby archive in the form of a local historically black college that leads him to poet and professor Melvin Tolson. In following this lead, his research brings him eventually to the understanding that archives are “organic” (p. 18). Archives, for Gold, are not always contained in vaults, nor do they consist solely of manuscripts or digital files. They are tips and clues gained by participating in life and paying attention. Perhaps, for Gold, to be an archivist is to be a bit of a symbolist, recognizing the significance of chance encounters to find the way to meaningful sources.

In the section “When Personal Experience, Family History, and Research Subjects Interact,” Kathleen Wider unites the disciplines of philosophy and literature in her essay, “In a Treeless Landscape.” Memories of her grandmother, August Mercedes Maguire Wider, a noted speaker within the family (p. 66) inspire her goal, to “explore the philosophical issues about the self...within the context of a specific life.” Gathering scrapbooks and letters from various family members, Wider pieces together the life of a brilliant woman from a small prairie town. Speaking from her background in philosophy, Wider details her desire for more than facts regarding her ancestor. She travels to Illinois and South Dakota to better understand her subject, expanding her research to learning the history of her grandmother’s hometown, matching facts with places, and stringing together a narrative. In combining lessons learned from philosophy and the narratives illuminated by her research, Wider turns her pointed research curiosity from her grandmother to herself, inquiring, “What is the significance of any one human life? Out of what do people construct their identity and very personhood?” (p. 72). This essay lends an important strength to *Beyond the Archives*. Whereas archival research is traditionally believed to be an epistemological study of inquiry into sources, Wider blends in her experience in philosophy to reveal a new possible archives, that of the self.

In his essay, “Colonial Memory, Colonial Research,” Victor Villanueva recounts his moving research on Puerto Rican revolutionary Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos in the book’s third section. In a mixture of firsthand reporting and documented research, Villanueva uses both poetry and prose to tell his story. Beginning with a memory of his father telling him about Albizu, a man he praised but spoke of little, Villanueva uses the term *rememory* to describe his next step in making sense of the story. Taking Albizu as the focus of his research, he

writes, “It was time to recover the culture, its past, its connection to who my father was and who my people were” (p. 84). He describes his trip to Washington, D.C., and the pictures he found in the archives there, taken by the FBI. The accompanying information portrays Albizu, the revolutionary from his native land, as a terrorist threat. Villanueva goes on to learn about Albizu’s past, his American education, his activism, and his convictions. What is revealed about Albizu’s incarceration and untimely death is the stuff of horror movies. Villanueva’s account is personal, blending his own memory and rememory, but it is also very public, telling of a larger, cultural memory. The essay demonstrates the political implications of archival inquiry, as Villanueva conducts his research on a man allegedly tortured by the United States in an American institution. He is left to wrestle with the implications of his memories from the past, very much now in the present.

The final section includes Elizabeth Birmingham’s essay, “I See Dead People.” The title is both ominous and figurative, as Birmingham is conducting research on someone who “doesn’t know that she is dead” (p. 139). Marion Mahoney Griffin, an MIT graduate and one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s most celebrated assistants—dead now for over half a century—is still very much alive for the scholars who read her papers. Birmingham speaks about Griffin as if they have a close relationship. They share a history with architecture in that they both work in the field, and they first “met” in the archives while Birmingham was researching Griffin’s architecture. In time, Birmingham confesses, she lost interest in architecture and her relationship with Griffin becomes distanced, like strained friends. It wasn’t until ten years later when she stumbled across Griffin’s personal papers, that she was able to reconcile the friendship, setting aside their academic differences by uncovering Griffin’s intimate history. Birmingham suggests that the lives we uncover in the archive are far from dead, and with research they find new life. “If we are lucky,” she writes, “we can see them.”

This essay collection is more than just an array of stories—it is research come to life. It is realizing that the archives profession makes a difference; that the work is valuable, traceable, inspiring, and important. These research adventures are not chance encounters at all; rather, successful scholarship demands exactly this kind of meaningful interaction. *Beyond the Archives* seems to address my generation of young archivists directly, as well as anyone currently searching for a meaningful connection with the archives profession. Yet, it is not just a guide for the newly embarked or inspired. It is formative. It is how to go about living the theory one learns in school. Archival science should include not only acts of research and processing, but a consideration of what happened before and after the work: what led to the research, and what came out of it. It would resemble *Beyond the Archives*.

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**Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome**

Laurie Nussdorfer. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. x. 354 pp. \$65.00. ISBN 0-8018-9204-X.

In the last couple of decades, a number of historical monographs have, perhaps to the surprise of their authors, assumed the status of cult classics among archivists. Studies of writing, records, and recordkeeping practices in disparate historical times and places fill a growing shelf, offering archivists deep background on their own contemporary work and the chance to reflect on the larger meaning of it all. Michael Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record*, first published in 1979 but more familiar in its 1993 second edition, heads this list. His examination of Norman England carefully reconstructs a society making the transition from largely oral ways of doing business to a reliance on writing, even though most people could not yet read and fewer still could write. Donna Merwick's *Death of a Notary* (1999) studied a more proximate era, seventeenth-century New Amsterdam in the process of becoming New York. There, a notary, whose work had been central to the political and economic operations of the Dutch colony, was suddenly without work or purpose under the new British rule; despairing, he hanged himself. Many other titles could be added to these two, including *Orality and Literacy* (1982) by the philosopher and polymath, Walter Ong. Indeed, an entire archival course could be constructed around such volumes, without a single mention of arrangement, description, reference, or any of the other quotidian archival tasks, let alone EAD and metadata.

Laurie Nussdorfer, longtime professor of history and letters at Wesleyan University, has now produced a volume that should attract similar attention from archivists. Her study of notaries in Rome between roughly 1300 and 1700 will evoke silent cries of recognition among today's records professionals, little "aha" moments that may deepen their perspective on their work. She focuses on notarial documents as *scriptura publica*—"public writing"—a phrase redolent with meaning. These documents were concerned with civil law and administration, not the ecclesiastical affairs of the church. Recall that until 1870, relatively recently in historical time, the pope was not only the religious leader of a church but also the king of a country—the Papal States. The bureaucracy surrounding the papacy was a civil administrative agency at least as much as (perhaps more than) it was a church bureaucracy. Thus, public writing in this society may be usefully studied to shed light on that of others, including our own.

The legal theory behind notarial practice and documents developed over a very long time, and, for this reason, Nussdorfer frames her study across several centuries. Even though specialists these days question the usefulness of "early modern" as a broad historical category, it works here. She rightly points out that

the crucial issues all turned on questions of evidence and trust. What was legitimate evidence, and what were the standards of proof in legal disputes? Was writing evidence that judges and courts could rely on? A fully literate society such as ours thinks little of these questions, since the rules seem firmly established, but it was not always so. As Socrates observed long before, written documents had the appearance of wisdom and truth, but that was just a sham. A living witness could be cross-examined to dig deeper into a matter, but if you tried to cross-examine a written document, it just kept telling you the same thing over and over. How helpful was that? Even worse, how could you tell that a written document was what it claimed to be? Did it really embody the substance of the agreement between two parties to a contract, for example? Where had it been between the time it was written and now and had it been tampered with to the advantage of one side or the other? Notaries helped address questions such as these. When notaries attested to the genuineness of a written record, they imbued it with the desired reliability; when they preserved that record so it could be recovered again later, they secured social and civic relationships across time. “The trick,” Nussdorfer says succinctly, “was how to make people believe their writing was trustworthy” (p. 148).

The emergence of notaries as a distinct body of professionals accomplished this trick, and Nussdorfer carefully reassembles and informatively presents the structure and work of the profession here. Though they were the makers and keepers of public writing, notaries were still private persons, not government officials. They were small businessmen, entrepreneurs who first had to acquire a practice. Their position was “venal” in the original, nonjudgmental meaning of that word: they bought the right to enter the profession, just as doctors or dentists buy established medical practices today. They had to hire and supervise the apprentices and assistants who did much of the actual writing and who often lived in the same household with their boss. Notaries had to keep themselves in supplies, paper and ink most obviously, but also office furniture and storage equipment. They had to maintain certain standards of production: the number of lines of writing that constituted a page, for instance; an important consideration since the length of a document determined the costs of recording and of making copies. They had to devise systems (in a nod toward contemporary practice, Nussdorfer even calls these “finding aids”) to be able to retrieve particular documents on demand. Notaries had to set fees for their work, striking a balance between, on the one hand, charging enough to make a living and, on the other, charging so much that a potential client went to someone else. As with any profession, standards of practice, which a few interested popes took an active hand in regulating, evolved over time. Julius II (pope from 1503 to 1513), Urban VIII (1623–1644), and Clement XI (1700–1713) may not have been particularly inspiring spiritual leaders, but they emerge from these pages as archival

heroes of a kind. Clement, Nussdorfer concludes with apparent approval, seems to have “regarded the accumulation of data as inherently satisfying” (p. 212). Odd, perhaps, but improved control over notarial documents and the information in them resulted from the reforms he instituted.

The disposition of a notary’s records on his death threatened to break the chains of trust, highlighting the distinction between what we would call current records and archival or historical records. Early modern notarial practice made no such differentiation. “Archives” denoted all the files a notary had, both those of recent vintage and those of former times. By the seventeenth century, however, the profession had been active long enough, and society had come to rely on it so thoroughly, that the difference became important. The indistinct boundary line between the present and the past shifted constantly; even a document from long ago might be suddenly relevant. Where was it and could it be retrieved? Could it even be read anymore, since handwriting styles changed dramatically over time? Asking working notaries to maintain and service very old records seemed unfair, and it was not very effective: after all, what was in it for them? Attempts to address the problem were not entirely successful, but reforms of the early eighteenth century (demanding that notaries provide papal officials with inventories of their holdings, for example) at least sought to regularize practice and to remind notaries of the public responsibilities that came with the exercise of their private office.

In the working out of all these functions, notaries across the centuries helped make the transition from thinking about their documents as private property to treating them as true public writing, and the implications of this, though subtle, were vast. They encouraged new ways of thinking about society, and thus it is no exaggeration to say that the emerging modern state—in this case, the papacy, but by extension other modern states as well—was “constructed of notarial parchment” (p. 74). New ways of achieving the trust needed from documents were articulated; new forms of power in records and documents were both guaranteed and reinforced. Today, in a world in which records and documents take very different forms—increasingly, they take no physical form at all—that power remains, and we depend on it still. As a reminder of these enduring issues and a spur to reflection on our own circumstances, this history of notaries is supremely relevant. Our “brokers of public trust” now include notaries, archivists, and other records professionals, but the need for that trust remains undiminished. Thoughtful brokers will find much for reflection in the impressive scholarship of this volume.

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**Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers**

Edited by Michele F. Pacifico and Thomas P. Wilsted. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009. \$25.00. ISBN 1-931666-31-8.

The past two decades have been filled with renovations and new construction of archives and special collections. The 2007 publication, *Planning New and Remodeled Archives Facilities* by Thomas P. Wilsted, lists fifty-three facilities that were remodeled or newly constructed since 1990. This upsurge in activity in archives and special collections buildings led to the development of updated and new guidelines in planning for these specialty facilities

It has long been accepted that archives buildings are one of the key elements in the preservation of archives and special collections holdings. The building, systems, furnishings and finishes, lighting, security, and functionality of space all contribute to or deter from the preservation of the materials stored within. When planning renovations or new buildings, the quality of information used to make specific building decisions has a direct impact of the condition and longevity of the collections.

The most difficult task other than securing resources for archives facilities is usually locating all of the best practices, guidelines, and standards needed during planning for renovations and new construction. The archivists and librarians who have been involved in this process have had to search every possible resource to gather sufficient information to make them feel confident that the decisions being made would provide the best possible environment for the continued preservation of the materials entrusted to them. Following the completion of the National Archives and Records Administration's Archives II in 1993, a large body of information based on current research and the Archives II planning process became available to the larger archival community. Archivists and architects began working together to conduct workshops designed to assist archivists who were anticipating renovations or new construction. Many archivists began publishing articles and exchanging information about their experience.

Even with this improvement, the information was often scattered and inconsistent with libraries, archives, and various institutions using different benchmarks to achieve the best environments for collections. With competing information and no approved U.S. standards for archives buildings, most archivists, architects, and engineers find it difficult to agree on the best options to achieve the desired goal. *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers*, by Michele F. Pacifico and Thomas P. Wilsted, brings together much of the information that has been used in planning new archives and special collections facilities in recent years in an



organized and easy-to-use format. It reflects current best practices and gives archivists and construction professionals common ground for discussion and a clearer understanding of the specific desired outcomes of the planning process.

The guidelines were officially adopted by the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) Council upon recommendation by the SAA Standards Committee. SAA established the Task Force on Archival Facilities to undertake the work of researching and writing the guidelines. The guidelines were also reviewed by archivists, architects, conservators, construction specialists, and other professional organizations such as the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators and the Council of State Archivists, with the final review and approval by the SAA Council and the SAA Standards Committee.

The archives facilities guidelines cover nine topics written by professionals with substantial experience in archives, architecture, engineering, and related areas. The book is set up in a logical format with chapters covering areas that are explored in the planning process: building site, building construction, archival environments, fire protection, security, lighting, materials and finishes, storage equipment, and functional spaces. Each chapter begins with a rationale of why the subject area is important to the preservation of collections. Extensive information is presented under each topic in a coherent and well ordered arrangement. The language is standardized to ensure that the meaning and intention are clear.

The authors of each chapter use four value terms to emphasize the importance of the recommendations: *must*, *should*, *may*, and *not recommended*. This ranking system is particularly useful when it is necessary to negotiate or make compromises due to budget or design challenges. These rankings also increase the archivist's ability to prioritize when such situations arise.

The "Prohibited Materials" appendix provides specific information on what should be avoided. This is extremely helpful since it is easier to find recommended options and less common to locate a listing of items to avoid. This information is essential for architects and other construction specialists during the critical planning process. The glossary introduces archivists and librarians to terms and language essential to understand during planning for new or renovated space. The bibliography provides a wealth of information and additional resources listing citations for standards from other countries, U.S. standards bodies, industry standards, specialized equipment standards, additional publications on building planning and construction, and much more.

While a few countries have established national standards for archives facilities, the lack of nationally accepted U.S. guidelines and standards continues to make planning and constructing archives buildings challenging. *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers* is a very useful tool that captures recent trends and practices and moves a step closer to developing nationally accepted standards. It should be noted

that developing and codifying standards brings together stakeholders with differing interests and viewpoints. The process can be confusing and potentially contentious, and is certain to take many years. In the interim, guidelines and best practices offer useful options until such arduous work can be done.

The one trend that is not included in this book is that of sustainable buildings and balancing green technology with efficient environmental controls. Efficient use of energy, water, and other resources speaks to our stewardship for the overall environment. For years archivists and librarians have struggled to ensure that difficult environmental measures were met within narrow parameters with less emphasis on costs or environmental impact. With the diminishing availability and surging cost of energy resources, the profession will have to explore more efficient methods of achieving the best environment for collections while balancing concern for costs and the current energy crisis.

Developing guidelines and standards must include exploring new approaches and technologies to achieve these goals. The current energy crisis coupled with the recent economic downturn compel our profession to work alongside construction professionals to build greener and leaner buildings. Past notions, guidelines, and practices will be challenged in this new paradigm, but there is no denying that it is time to begin developing new strategies in light of the current situation. Already we are seeing strong recommendations that we examine the needs of a particular situation and make compromises to suit it. This flexible approach is moving us away from rigid set points and guidelines and more toward an approach that considers the need to conserve both monetary and natural resources.

Editors Pacifico and Wilsted provide us with an excellent tool for approaching the difficult task of archives building renovation and new construction with confidence. This information, along with standards developed by the International Organization for Standardization, the National Information Standards Organization, the National Archives and Records Administration, and industry standards for specialty environments, gives archivists a wealth of information that will be indispensable in the challenge of planning new and renovated space.

The profession must also accept the challenge that the future will require tremendous expansion of our traditional notions of the meaning of “best practices” to prove that we are truly “good stewards” of both our cultural and natural resources. To do so, we must join with allied professions, museums, and conservators, as well as national and international organizations and institutions to develop research strategies to support the effort to preserve our culture while conserving our resources.

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**Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers**

Edited by Michele F. Pacifico and Thomas P. Wilsted. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2009. \$25.00. ISBN 1-931666-31-8.

As a veteran archivist whose career took a turn toward buildings in 1999 when I became the NARA archivist member of the National Archives Building Renovation Team, this is the book I wish I had then to quickly get up to speed on the issues that pertain to archival facilities. If you're an archivist, librarian, architect, or engineer who is not already acquainted with what it takes to plan, design, and build an archival facility, this book is most assuredly also for you.

Editors Michele F. Pacifico and Thomas P. Wilsted, both of whom also wrote some of the content, add seasoned authority to this work with their years of experience with archival buildings. Their stellar careers involve a part of archival management that few relish or aspire to—buildings. In addition to the accomplishments in her burgeoning portfolio as a consultant archivist, Michele F. Pacifico was the NARA archivist member of the team that planned, designed and built the world's largest archives building, the National Archives at College Park. Thomas Wilsted has managed several building projects and his most recent published contribution to the profession, prior to this work, was *Planning New and Remodeled Archival Facilities* (SAA, 2007), which serves as an essential companion volume to the book that is the focus of this review.

The guidelines presented in *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers* serve also as a standard officially adopted by the Society of American Archivists. That impressive imprimatur notwithstanding, Wilsted notes in his introduction that the book "begins the process of establishing standards that can be used in designing archival facilities." Absent American national standards, his characterization is correct as the book provides a baseline on which archivists, architects, engineers, contractors, and all others who may benefit by the guidelines may comment. Wilsted notes in his introduction that SAA plans to continue to review the guidelines until 2014 to assess how effectively they apply to and are valued by the profession and that SAA solicits suggestions, changes, and additions.

Although filled with technical information, this book is plainly written with the archivist or librarian who has little or no buildings experience in mind. One of its strengths is its readability. The format of its nine sections, including the opening with its context-setting rationale and the incorporating of numerous bullet points, makes this a quick and informative read that will be regularly referenced as specific information needs arise during a building project. The nine sections are written and reviewed by experts in their field. They cover

1. Building Site
2. Building Construction
3. Archival Environments
4. Fire Protection
5. Security
6. Lighting
7. Materials and Finishes
8. Storage Equipment
9. Functional Spaces

In a few instances jargon will befuddle the uninitiated. A quick jump to the glossary (one of three appendixes) will either clear the air or cause one to realize it could have included a bit more (e.g., “make-up air”). The other appendixes provide a list of prohibited materials that must never be used in records storage areas or original record exhibit cases (e.g., unsealed concrete, oil-based paint or varnish) and an expansive bibliography.

This book is nicely and tightly edited. Although it presents the writings of many, an order and consistency make it speak with almost one voice. It is filled with helpful cross-references. Sometimes a guideline topic and wording appears in more than one section, but the redundancy is beneficial in that the topics are appropriate to each section. Not only are best practices presented here, but also acknowledgment that certain situations cannot incorporate best practices. For those situations, mitigation strategies are presented that will improve current circumstances until such time as a best practice can be implemented.

This is no dry list of stultifying technical details. There are insights sprinkled throughout that may be a revelation even to those for whom building projects are not new. Among them:

If a building site is known to include areas of archaeological interest, the early release of bid documents for foundation and utility work can result in those services being contracted for well in advance of the project so that if and when artifacts are encountered, the time needed to conduct the required archeological work will not delay the overall project deadline. (pp. 12–13)

Rural sites often depend on volunteers rather than paid emergency response teams that are available on a 24/7 schedule. This could result in slower emergency responses, increasing the potential for higher losses of archival material. (pp. 22–23)

The floor load should be able to hold the collections if they get wet by sprinkler failure or through some unforeseen disaster. (p. 24)

Ideally, the archives facility should provide for separate loading docks for handling archival holdings and for the transport of food and trash collection. (p. 135)

The lobby should be sized to accommodate the largest group of people anticipated at any one time. Will the archives host school groups? Will the lobby be used by visitors waiting to view the next showing of an orientation film? Will the archives use the lobby for after-hours receptions or conference registration? (p. 149)

Each addition of another shelf above 7 feet [2.1 meters] increases the total storage capacity of a stack by more than 14 percent. (p. 128)

The road to fully developed national standards is long and arduous involving national standards bodies and other professionals. *Archival and Special Collections Facilities: Guidelines for Archivists, Librarians, Architects, and Engineers* is a remarkably fine beginning for that journey.

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### **A Guide to Oral History and the Law**

By John A. Neuenschwander. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. xvii, 167 pp. Hard cover. \$74.00 ISBN 978-0-19-536597-9.

Increasing concerns about privacy and copyright mean that archivists need a working knowledge of legal issues. Issues of legality and ethics often combine when we deal with people's private lives. That reason makes it not enough to merely follow the letter of the law in our profession. We stake much of our professional authority on the image of our institutions. Public trust allows us to continue the work of collecting and preserving the historical record. In areas where the law is not yet clear, ethics serve as the best guide. John A. Neuenschwander's book, *A Guide to Oral History and the Law*, balances the roles of ethics and case law as it may be applied to oral histories. His primary challenge lies in the fact that very few cases have directly involved oral histories. But because there are many examples of recorded testimonies and interviews, Neuenschwander has a rich group of sources from which to draw his material.

Legal issues are not new for archivists, but they are becoming a greater concern. Greater access to information has increased the need for defined rights to privacy. Regulations control access to business records. In these types of records, complying with the law is more difficult than understanding what may be a liability. Oral histories present different legal challenges. Interviewers and their subjects create oral histories with the intention of providing an accessible record. Future use is the explicit outcome of the production of the interview, not an unforeseen circumstance. That does not mean that the

\* The views expressed in this review are mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the view of NARA.

interview subject never discloses personal information, or will not discuss other people. Third-party privacy becomes more serious when it could possibly be construed as defamation or libel. Interview production muddies copyright ownership. As a work created by two people, who owns the rights to the copyright is a matter of negotiation. The application of law in these areas is sometimes vague.

Guides to the legal issues are becoming necessary tools of our trade. Several volumes have recently been published. For example, *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives* written by Menzi L. Behrnd-Klodt and published by the Society of American Archivists in 2008, gives a general overview of legal issues that may affect archives. Writers have also addressed specific areas of the law such as copyright and digitization. Peter B. Hirtle, Emily Hudon, and Andrew T. Kenyon, *Copyright and Cultural Institutions: Guidelines for Digitization for U.S. Libraries, Archives, and Museums*, published in 2009 is the most recent volume. *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* joins these books in providing practical guidelines for addressing legal issues in a specific area of collections.

John A. Neuenschwander began writing about the intersection of oral history and the law in 1985. His first guide was a pamphlet written for the Oral History Association. That pamphlet was revised in 1993 and again in 2002. Despite the previous volumes, Neuenschwander does not view *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* as a revised and updated version of his original pamphlet. After twenty-five years of writing on the subject, Neuenschwander brings together his experience with recent research in published appellate court cases. As a professor of history, he has practiced oral history and been an active member of the Oral History Association. In addition, he sat on the bench in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Neuenschwander's combined experience as a judge and a historian helps him to translate the sometimes rarefied language of the law into familiar terms for laypeople.

Overall, Neuenschwander's book makes the case that there are fewer legal threats in oral histories than we may imagine. Defamation is a rare occurrence, which becomes rarer when the interviewer is certain that the subject understands the future use of the interview. This may make oral histories less of a liability than correspondence. Letter writers may never expect their correspondence to be made public. Subjects of interviews know that they are speaking to an interviewer and that their memories will be recorded. Properly informed subjects know that they can ask to have sections of an interview restricted. Many of his chapters provide advice on how to cover the rights of interviewees, as well as how to broach the subject that restrictions do not absolutely guarantee that the information will not be accessed. Because he is an oral historian, we assume Neuenschwander's experience with interview subjects in these matters, even though he does not overtly describe it in the text.

Neuenschwander focuses on the need for clear communication between interview subjects and their interviewers. Though there isn't appropriate case law for the oral historian, there are the Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association (OHA). The first principle emphasizes the need for the interviewee to understand "the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the aims and anticipated uses of the particular projects to which they are making a contribution" (p. 133). Neuenschwander opens his book with a study of *Society of Survivors of the Riga Ghetto, Inc. v. Huttenbach*. The Society of Survivors disagreed with Huttenbach's interpretation of the differing accounts of society members. To prevent the publication of Huttenbach's history, the group denied his claim to copyright. They significantly edited his work and removed his name from the publication. The judge who tried this case found that the society could not take this action, and that neither party would be able to use the interviews in the future (pp. 1–2). In this instance, legal release forms and an understanding of copyright law may not have prevented the lawsuit. However, Neuenschwander insists that the more expectations can be defined for both parties, the less likely it is that a dispute will be resolved in front of a court. In this regard, Neuenschwander's focus on the relationship between legal precedents and how to communicate those precedents to interview subjects is valuable.

Many institutions will find the second chapter of this book most useful. Legal release forms are covered in most texts on oral histories, and templates are easy to locate. Neuenschwander explains the value of individual sections of release forms. These parallel the statement of Principles and Standards from the OHA. "Interviewees should be informed of the mutual rights in the oral history process, such as editing access restrictions, copyrights, prior use, royalties, and the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the record, including the potential for electronic distribution" (p. 133). The chapter on legal release forms covers each of these points. In addition to these issues, Neuenschwander provides a detailed explanation of copyright, examining each of the five discrete rights that compose it. He also treats privacy, as well as the specters of defamation, compelled release of restricted materials, and institutional review boards.

Neuenschwander makes an effort to address as many major legal issues as possible, but in some cases not enough case law or experience exists to fully treat a subject. The chapter covering oral history and the Internet is sparse, although the Web presents particular challenges. Many interview subjects may feel more exposed having their recorded statements posted for all of the world to see than to have a printed transcript available at the local historical society. Notifying potential users of copyright law is equally demanding. The primary weakness of this study is the lack of case law directly related to oral histories. On occasion, Neuenschwander reaches a little too far for a relevant case. For

example, when looking at defamation in materials published online, he cites the example of a bride's father. In retaliation against a wedding photographer, the father posted photographs with "disparaging captions." These are not oral histories, and the relationship between an interviewer and interviewee differs from that of wedding photographer and client (p. 91).

The lack of relevant cases does not render *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* useless. In our society, examining the law lets us see what actual liabilities we may face. Leaving these issues unexamined may result in needless restrictions on collections. Likewise, ignoring legal issues may hurt an institution in the long run. The ability to address possible legal issues with potential donors can only help an archivist. Waiting until a legal issue confronts the archives is unwise. It is better to have a reasoned and researched opinion. Neuenschwander's clear articulation of ethical standards and their relationship to legal issues fills the gap when there is little or no precedent.

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*City of Somerville Archives*

### **An American Political Archives Reader**

Edited by Karen Dawley Paul, Glenn R. Gray, and L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2009. 477 pp. Hard cover. Available from the Society of American Archivists, \$66.00 members, \$75.00 nonmembers. ISBN 978-0-8108-6746-8.

*An American Political Archives Reader* is an important and long-overdue addition to the growing field of congressional archives scholarship. As the first collection of articles to be published on the subject and composed in large part of new research and scholarship, the volume not surprisingly was honored with the 2010 Waldo Gifford Leland Award for "excellence and usefulness in the field of archival history, theory or practice." Together with *Managing Congressional Collections*, published by SAA in 2008, the *Reader* provides a well-balanced look at the nuanced and sometimes uncertain nature of working with congressional collections. Editors Karen Dawley Paul, Glenn R. Gray, and L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin have gathered an exceptional selection of articles that confers proper recognition to over thirty years of work by dedicated congressional archivists while gesturing toward the future of congressional archives with the inclusion of a number of previously unpublished works.

This volume primarily focuses on collections generated by members of the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate (three articles address collections of state representatives). True to the title, however, the task of documenting Congress requires big-picture collection strategies that encompass the entire population of national political actors, including special interest groups, political



parties and campaign organizations, media, and private individuals. The *Reader* makes this point clear in multiple articles, but Paul emphasizes it in “Documentation of Congress: Summary Report and Recommendations,” as does Faye Phillips in “Congressional Papers: Collection Development Policies.”

Through a mixture of case studies and congressionally focused archival theory, the *Reader* fleshes out many of the best-practice recommendations given in *Managing Congressional Collections*.<sup>1</sup> Both books serve an important purpose; from a practical perspective, *Managing Congressional Collections* provides the essential information needed to complete the physical transfer, process, and provide access to congressional collections. In conjunction, the *Reader* provides the answers to the larger “Why?” questions through case studies, observations, original research, and informed scholarship. The *Reader* thus serves as a valuable informational resource while providing perspectives on many of the less obvious areas of assembling congressional archives.

For example, should a collecting institution seeking congressional records go through the trouble and expense of making connections with its entire delegation early, as some authors recommend, or should it wait until a particular member of Congress has served for a certain number of years, held important committee positions, or initiated important legislation? Another issue the *Reader* explores is the lack of standardization in the way congressional offices keep their records. The *Reader* devotes an entire section to appraisal; however, there is no guarantee that the collection received will bear any resemblance to those discussed. The opinions of the authors differ on the very nature of the archival unit, indicated variously as *congressional papers*, *collections*, *paper collections*, and *records*. As noted by Patricia Aronsson, “Congressional collections are hybrids, neither strictly archival nor personal.”

These types of ambiguities, and how institutions choose to resolve them, depend on the collecting institution and can vary widely depending on collecting scope, staff, and monetary resources; the condition of the collection itself; and, of course, the ever-present political implications of working with political collections. This is precisely why a book such as the *Reader* is so essential—congressional collections sometimes share more differences than they do similarities, and generalized advice can often bring up more questions than answers. *Managing Congressional Collections* demonstrates this point by beginning its chapter on processing with a checklist of twenty-eight questions that affect processing decisions. To make informed decisions, a variety of information is necessary; the background and history of the major organizations affecting congressional archives (a constant theme throughout the *Reader*) and the factors that can

<sup>1</sup> Cynthia Pease Miller, *Managing Congressional Collections* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2008).

affect acquisition decisions are just two examples. Other examples are more illustrative of the nature of congressional collections: making appraisal decisions for single collections that occasionally rival the size of entire repositories and providing descriptions that encourage use but don't jeopardize national security, the privacy of constituents, or the reputation of the donor. The *Reader* addresses all these topics.

The *Reader* is broken down into six parts containing twenty-nine articles. The first article, "Reflections on the Modern History of Congressional History," by historian emeritus of the U.S. Senate, Richard A. Baker, sets the scene for the entire book. This article, adapted from a presentation given to the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress in 2008, traces the development of the field of congressional history from its shockingly late beginnings (the Senate Historical Office was not established until 1975, and the Senate archivist was not made a permanent position until 1984) through important milestones in congressional documentation, such as the broadcast of House and Senate floor proceedings on C-SPAN in 1986 and the 2008 House Resolution "expressing the sense of Congress that Members' Congressional papers should be properly maintained and encouraging all Members to take all necessary measures to manage and preserve their papers."

The first part of the *Reader* is devoted to acquiring political collections and gives three case studies and an overview of collection policies for state legislators' collections in state archives. The discussion of the differing state policies for state legislators' archives indicates that this area deserves more in-depth treatment. (The article is based on a 2005 study and only includes responses from six states; however, it touches on important topics such as the differentiation between the public and private records of legislators and the lack among repositories of formal collecting policies for these records.)

The second, third, and fourth parts of the *Reader* concern the documentation of Congress and the appraisal, arrangement, and description of congressional collections. These sections will provide the most practical benefit and likely most appeal to the archivist currently engaged in work with congressional collections.

"Documenting Congress" is an important section for archivists working exclusively with congressional collections as well as for those who may handle them only occasionally. Senate Archivist Karen Dawley Paul begins this section with her "Summary Report and Recommendations" from the 1992 publication "The Documentation of Congress: Report of the Congressional Archivists Roundtable Task Force on Congressional Documentation" (S. Pub 102-20). This summary provides a big-picture evaluation of the tasks involved in documenting Congress. Aimed not only at archival repositories, but also at Congress itself, the report goes beyond discussions of individual legislators to include

recommendations for documenting administrative functions such as the Clerk of the House and the Capitol Police; Congressional support agencies such as Congressional Research Service and the Government Accountability Office, as well as the papers of political and legislative journalists. Further articles in this section discuss the need for holistic documentation strategies within individual repositories, stressing the importance of oral history and electronic records programs.

The third part deals with appraisal and contains two notable approaches offered by Patricia Aronsson and Mark A. Greene. Aronsson draws on her four years of experience as an archivist on Capitol Hill and provides detailed descriptions of the types of records often found in congressional collections. The final sections of her article, entitled “Redefining Congressional Collections” and “Creating Institutional Alliances,” are thought provoking and will hopefully generate some new discussion within the context of the *Reader*. Greene elaborates further on certain series (invitations, academy files, routine requests, issue mail, and case files) and what he terms an approach that “is more radical than what passes for conventional wisdom.” Included as well is his proposed appraisal policy, which advocates folder-level attention to many of the larger series.

Part four addresses arrangement and description. The stand-out article in this section is “Describing Congressional Papers Collections: A Progression of Access Tools” by L. Rebecca Johnson Melvin and Karyl Winn. The authors properly assert that there is no one-size-fits-all descriptive practice appropriate to collections. Instead, they argue, the level of description should be appropriate to the access tool; what works for your preliminary inventory won’t work for your finding aid and certainly not for your promotional literature. Yet each one of these tools serves an important purpose and can expand “upward” and “downward” to inform both higher and lower levels of description. Larry Weimer provides a compelling argument for the measured application of “More Product, Less Process” (MPLP) to congressional collections in “An Embarrassment of Riches.” Commonly cited roadblocks to MPLP, such as the need for greater description in congressional collections and the possible presence of classified, confidential, or private information, are given a thorough discussion.

The final two parts of the *Reader* are devoted to the topics of building research centers and using political collections. With only three narrowly focused articles, the topic of building political research centers seems deserving of greater attention. Lacking a comprehensive study of political research centers in the United States, it is difficult to gauge the momentum of this field, but it certainly seems as though the trend is moving toward legacy-driven and individual-focused centers despite the current economic downturn.

The concluding part of the *Reader* gives voice to the historians and political scientists who use congressional collections. These articles will surely benefit an archivist lacking a deep background in legislative history or political science.

Historian Nancy Beck Young gives a good analysis of modern political history in "Trends in Scholarship on Congress." Young convincingly argues that political history has been too focused on the executive branch of government. Although archivists don't seem to mind heaping the blame upon themselves for this gap in political history, Young rightly emphasizes the difficulty in researching and studying the entirety of the Congress versus the singular office of the president, saying, "Going to one archive is much easier than the multi-archival work necessary for any good political history of Congress."

The documentation of Congress is a task as rich and varied as the work of the Congress itself. Through a network of organizations such as the Congressional Papers Roundtable of SAA and the Association of Centers for the Study of Congress and through publications such as *Managing Congressional Collections* and *An American Political Archives Reader*, we are moving toward a better and more accessible history of a complex system of governance. The *Reader* provides essential information for archivists working with congressional collections and sets a high standard of quality for those that will follow. As I hope has been made evident here, there is room for more and better research and discussion of many of these topics, especially as we begin to see these collections shrinking in linear feet yet growing exponentially electronically. *An American Political Archives Reader* provides a strong foundation on which to begin that effort.

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### **Archives and Archivists in Twentieth Century England**

By Elizabeth Shepherd. Farnham, Surrey, U.K.: Ashgate Publishing, Limited, 2009. £60.00. ISBN 978-0-7546-4785-0.

The history of archival science has long been neglected in archival literature and continues to be an area sorely in need of development. Elizabeth Shepherd's *Archives and Archivists in Twentieth Century England* provides a firm foundation for further research regarding the basis of an archival tradition. While laying the groundwork for future analyses into the development of archival science in a specific country, in this case England, Shepherd at the same time provides a framework for other regional examinations.

Shepherd is currently a reader at the Department of Information Studies at University College London, teaching courses in the Archives and Records Management program. She has published extensively on archival science in the United Kingdom, and while not clearly identified, the current monograph is most likely an adaption of her doctoral dissertation, *Towards Professionalism?*

*Archives and Archivists in England in the Twentieth Century*. Her list of publications demonstrates that she has been engaged in the various topics covered by this monograph for several years. In addition, she has an impressive professional and research career, working for nine years at both company and record offices within England. She is also actively involved in the archives profession in England, serving in several leadership positions across the spectrum of archival associations, and she serves on the editorial boards of several leading professional journals.

Shepherd divides her analysis into four sections: political engagement and legislative history, the emergence of a distinct work group, the creation of professional organizations, and archival education. Each section has its own chronology but, despite this structure, Shepherd integrates significant components of the individual section topics into other sections, tying the four themes together. The order of these sections is significant in that the content, once covered, contributes to the understanding of the next section. For example, several of the legislative actions examined in the first section are ably referred to in the context of the next three sections. This interweaving demonstrates how these actions impact the larger archival milieu. The complexity of the history would surely have bogged down an alternative structure, such as a strictly chronological one, causing readers to lose some of the general themes that Shepherd seeks to explore.

The first section, chapters 1 and 2, establishes the legislative environment of archives in England. Beginning with the establishment of the Public Records Office in 1838, Shepherd outlines the significant legislative acts and reports through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She recounts the efforts of individuals and commissions to engage policymakers in addressing the challenges recordkeeping faces and highlights archivists' lack of authority, funding, and standardization to regularize and impress upon English society the importance of archival work. She identifies the 1980s as a turning point for addressing this deficit. As she describes, "the government agenda to ensure customer-orientation, accountability, transparency and modernization of public services began to affect archive services" through the development of information policy legislation that strengthened the role of archivists in the country (p. 62). From the 1980s until 2003, the boundary of her work, additional government policies and legislation have further articulated and enhanced archival responsibilities. She neglects to assess whether or not these legislations have been effective in establishing the necessary framework to place archivists squarely in a policymaking position, but she does suggest that as an area for further exploration.

The second section, chapters 3 and 4, examines the development of a specific work group engaged in the archival endeavor. Again, Shepherd starts with the establishment of the Public Records Office and outlines national archival institutions and then local and specialist archives. This division between the

national and local is driven primarily by the nature of archives themselves in England. She approaches these institutions through individuals and concludes that nineteenth-century workers in national institutions focused more on scholarly publishing than on physical collection maintenance. These tasks were left to “workmen,” and little was changed until the Public Records Act in 1958, which shifted the emphasis of the work to the records themselves. That shift was complete when, in 1992, the Public Records Office took a professional leadership role, particularly in areas of digital technologies and the challenges of electronic records. By 2003, the Public Records Office and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts merged to create the National Archives. Shepherd concludes that this merger provided a “central authority for archives and records management and, at last, the framework for a real national archives and records service” (p. 93).

In contrast, her examination of local archives includes some significant individuals, but it focuses more on the community forces that shape local initiatives. Despite this difference, some patterns emerge from her description. Historians or antiquarians, individuals with a personal interest in historical records, populated the nineteenth-century workforce. Initiatives were married with local societies and benefited from a surge in local history. Overall, Shepherd explores the diversity of those engaged in the archival enterprise throughout this development and concludes that despite this diversity and complexity, a unified profession emerged.

The last two sections cover organizations (chapters 5 and 6) and education (chapters 7 and 8) and explore specific aspects of professionalization. As with the second section, Shepherd explains the development of a multitude of organizations and identifies individuals making significant contributions. She uses Sir Hilary Jenkinson as a model in demonstrating the shift from historical to professional organizations in the early twentieth century. Unlike the previous sections that deal with various aspects of the topic over the entire period, the third section is divided chronologically among the two chapters. This approach allows Shepherd to focus the first chapter on the shift to professional organizations prior to 1945, while the second chapter covers the last half-century and considers what these organizations can do in the future. The final section covers the path of education efforts and again divides it chronologically. The last chapter in particular outlines the concepts of professional education that were established in the second half of the twentieth century and incorporates the relationship with professional organizations, accreditation, and professional expectations as part of its discussion on education. As Shepherd points out, though, with this consolidation came diversification, which has been noted in examinations of archival education in other countries.

The only downside to this work is the factual style of writing. The structure provides a reference work rather than a historical narrative. Her conclusion

provides some insight into the fundamental issues she sees in English archival history—the “voiceless” status of English archival history compared to the traditions of other countries. This book clearly addresses that status, but more by providing the weight of evidence rather than analyzing it. This should not be considered criticism of the work. In its comprehensiveness, this work will become an indispensable resource for anyone exploring aspects of English archival history, comparative archival history, or theoretical works on the nature and meaning of the “record” in culture. If, as Shepherd states, “the task of evaluating the contribution of English archives and archivists to the international discourse has been hampered in the past by a lack of substantive contributions to the literature” (p. 216) is accurate, this work addresses that void by laying out the general history from which further analyses of these issues can be addressed. In essence, Shepherd has made English archival history a possibility.

Finally, the proliferation of acronyms throughout the text can represent a barrier for those not fully initiated into the intricacies of English archival society. Shepherd is conscientious in spelling out the offices, societies, and projects at their first appearance, providing the acronym parenthetically; however, further on in the text she relies on the use of the acronym alone, which can require readers to refer to the list of abbreviations in the front of the text. While this is the only way to deal with the issues of readability of a text of this kind, it does demonstrate that our profession (and society) has become overly reliant on the use of initialisms and acronyms in discussing the various agencies, projects, and texts that inform our discourse.

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### **The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Papers**

By Maryanne Dever, Sally Newman, and Ann Vickery. Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2009. 198 pp. AUS\$34.95. ISBN 978-0-643-27682-7.

Passionate affairs, secret loves, sexual desires, and intense emotional experiences: how do archival researchers interpret such intimate details of women’s lives? How are such details included or excluded from historical narratives of women? And what feelings can research in women’s personal papers evoke in researchers? These are merely a few of the questions that *The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Papers* investigates while seeking to redefine “the archive” on a deeply personal level. Written from the researcher’s perspective, this work delves into the personal papers of three Australian women writers: Marjorie Barnard, Lesbia Harford, and Aileen Palmer. The results are three postmodernist interpretations of the archive and of the intimate details in each writer’s life.

The three co-authors of this work have extensive knowledge on the subject of Australian women's literary history and collectively possess international research experience in archives. Maryanne Dever is an associate professor in the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at Monash University in Melbourne. Her research is primarily on Australian women's writing with a specialization in the interwar years. Ann Vickery, also of Monash University, collaborated previously with Dever on a 2007 exhibition entitled *Australian Women Writers, 1900–1950: An Exhibition from the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection*. In addition, Vickery is a senior lecturer in literary studies at Deakin University. The third contributor, Sally Newman, is a graduate of the Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research at Monash University and has published articles on the history of sexuality and of emotion and how these subjects intersect with archives. The co-authors organized *The Intimate Archive* into an introduction and three chapters, one for each writer covered.

The introduction to *The Intimate Archive* provides a background for the project and contains the most relevant information for practicing archivists. The co-authors underscore the importance of women's personal papers to literary and cultural researchers and discuss reasons why women's papers are frequently politically charged (pp. 10–15). They deftly argue that lack of sources in women's collections, and therefore in the historical record, has produced a need to examine the causes for such fragmentation and to scrutinize the previous politically charged efforts at recovery of evidence about women in history.

One major criticism of this work is that it does not empower the archivist. The introduction makes one brief mention of the archivist's influence on the archive: "Through the actions of archivists who acquire, catalogue, and describe the material the papers then become a formal 'collection'," and it briefly touches on the fact that the professional researcher and the archivist together create or influence the narratives found in a collection (p. 17). The archivist is presented as not merely giving or restricting access to materials. She or he "will weigh the ethical dimensions of granting researchers access in the face of possible violations of privacy, especially where living people or the recently deceased are involved" (p. 28). However, even though these views of the archivist are more sympathetic and perceptive than those of similar works that portray the archivist largely as inhibiting access to materials, *The Intimate Archive* does not depict the archivist as a major factor in the establishment of collections. The work involves limited discussion of archival theory and how an archivist applying professional tenets can affect an archive and therefore research in and interpretations of the collection. The introduction gives a somewhat simplistic synopsis of how an archive can be shaped by various factors over time: the donor, the desire of the archival institution to create collections on particular subject areas, the "very act of acquisition" giving power to previously unrecognized materials, and the unfortunate loss of materials (p. 16). As is characteristic of many researchers,



the authors endow document types or formats—such as letters, diaries, and published works—with importance, but pay no attention to the significance or consequences of arranging or describing these documents within a collection. Perhaps this was not significant to the particular collections this work examines (p. 30). While the authors consider the archivist a collaborator, they do not describe requesting assistance from an archivist in finding sources, tracing provenance, or exploring new directions for research.

In the first chapter, Maryanne Dever, through research into personal papers and re-readings of published works, endeavors to find evidence of the secret love affair between Majorie Barnard, a librarian and writer, and Frank Dalby Davison, a fellow author. Dever skillfully demonstrates how Barnard and Davison's love affair influenced each other's literary output, and her analysis focuses on readings of the lovers' correspondence and published material. She aspires to use her readings of their private lives to "offer a window into the creative process and a way to revisit their literary works" (p. 55). Dever argues that Barnard's letters relating personal feelings were in themselves ways for Barnard to create her fictional writing. Dever also believes it possible that Barnard's fictional stories may take the place of her autobiographical narrative for those letters that were never written or were lost (p. 71). As no formal body of Barnard's correspondence seems to remain, even in her own personal papers, Dever uses Barnard's correspondence found in the papers of Nettie and Vance Palmer, close friends and fellow writers, and in the papers of Davison, to carry out her investigations. Dever surmises that Barnard's correspondence is so fragmented that no one story about the relationship can be uncovered and leaves the reader to draw conclusions about the affair (p. 72).

In chapter 2, Ann Vickery considers the romantic life of poet Lesbia Harford. Harford's archival legacy is sparse, yet Vickery relates a fascinating and detailed story of how Harford's remaining papers became publicly accessible. She explains how Harford's poetry notebooks found their way into another collection of personal papers and how other parts of what would have constituted Harford's papers were lost. Vickery's history of the collection gives reasons why various interested editors of Harford's work passed around her notebooks and tells how the notebooks finally surfaced in poet Marjorie Pizer's papers at the National Library of Australia. Vickery concentrates on three major sources in her investigation of Harford's intimate life: Harford's novel, *The Invaluable Mystery*; her poetry notebooks in Pizer's papers; and her fragmentary correspondence. Vickery also explores the ways in which the intimate and the political merge within Harford's archive. She describes how Australian feminists have used Harford as a "figure for recovery" as a woman who represented a tradition that they could uphold (p. 91); how she represents "an early poet in an emergent lesbian tradition of Australian writing" (p. 92); and the difficulties that political agendas can entail for new research.

Sally Newman contemplates the love life of Aileen Palmer in chapter 3. Newman relates the challenges in attempting to identify Palmer's autobiographical voice in archival sources, even though, of the three women writers discussed in *The Intimate Archive*, Palmer has seemingly left behind the largest documentary record. Within her papers, Palmer employs fictional alter egos, writes a collaborative diary, and demonstrates obvious signs of trauma after being institutionalized. To contest previous readings of her archive, Newman upholds Palmer's diary, read and occasionally annotated by several other members of an emergent lesbian group of undergraduates, as a significant source. She uses the diary to argue that there are multiple interpretations of Palmer's autobiographical representations of herself and her sexuality. Instead of viewing Palmer's archive as silent on the matter of her lesbianism, Newman successfully demonstrates a new reading of Palmer's archival sources and generates a deeper understanding of Palmer's sexual identity. Newman wonders why and how these particular documents survived for the archive, since Palmer's family destroyed some of her papers, and believes that Palmer purposely included the diary to heighten the ambiguity surrounding her same-sex desires (pp. 160–64).

This review has so far tended to concentrate on the importance of *The Intimate Archive* to the archival profession, but this work contains much for the literary scholar and for readers of biography, which space limitations prevent me from discussing in greater detail here. The thematic language of passion and desire flowing through *The Intimate Archive* reminds readers of the premise of the work and creates a synergy between the chapters. For example, the authors describe the act of research: "The passions excited by archival research are almost exclusively private experiences, seldom permitted to show themselves outside the four walls of the reading room" (p. 19). Researchers interested in history, literature, biography, and women's studies will find *The Intimate Archive* a useful study of contemporary theorization of "the archive." While this work is not necessarily a guide to research methodology, it presents personal research experiences in the reading room, exploring new relationships between documents, deconstructing texts, and reevaluating previous scholarship. As such, *The Intimate Archive* follows a recent scholarly trend to turn away from a positivist interpretation of the archive and archival research. Indeed, two examples of a growing number of comparable works from the scholar's perspective include Antoinette M. Burton's *Archives Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (2005) and Gesa E. Kirschs and Liz Rohan's *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process* (2008). Other recent works give a more balanced account from both the archivist's and the researcher's points of view, including Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg's *Archives, Documentation and Institutions of Social Memory* (2006).

Even with the abundance of recent scholarship, *The Intimate Archive* remains an important resource because of its sharp focus on women's collections, women's lives, and biographical narratives, and its distinct purpose of uncovering archival traces of intimate desires and emotional traumas. While the biographies and new literary scholarship in this work prove fascinating, professional archivists will be most engaged by the researcher's perspective on "the archive."

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### Web 2.0 Tools and Strategies for Archives and Local History Collections

By Kate Theimer. New York: Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc., 2010. 246 pp. Soft cover. \$79.95. ISBN 978-1555706791.

Kate Theimer received her master of information degree with a specialization in archives and records management from the University of Michigan and has worked at the National Archives and Records Administration, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. She probably is best known as the author of the popular *ArchivesNext* blog (<http://www.archivesnext.com>). She also created and manages the Best Archives on the Web and Movers and Shakers in Archives awards, and recently established the Archives 2.0 wiki (<http://archives2point0.wetpaint.com>). In addition, Theimer often presents on the intersection of archives and Web 2.0 at conferences and workshops. Therefore, it is fitting that she has authored the first book about Web 2.0 aimed at archivists.

In the first sentence of the preface to this book, Theimer states that "Many archives and other cultural heritage institutions are stuck in a 'Web 1.0' mind-set. This needs to change." As Theimer elaborates, archivists today must deal with more demands by more varied researchers against a backdrop of decreased budgets and staffing. In this context, Web 2.0 tools can provide relatively cheap and easy ways to make our collections more accessible and therefore help us to remain relevant to modern researchers. Theimer's goal for this book is to offer "practical, commonsense advice in non-technical language that shows both what Web 2.0 tools can do for your organization and what it takes to use these tools."

Chapters 3 through 9 each cover one kind of Web 2.0 tool: blogs, podcasts, Flickr, YouTube, Twitter, wikis, and Facebook. (Chapter 10 covers less well-known tools such as mashups, widgets, and Second Life.) Each chapter begins with the simple question, "What is this tool?," and proceeds from straightforward description and explanation to listing the basic steps necessary to take advantage of that tool. Theimer ends each chapter with advice for making

implementation sustainable. Throughout each chapter, she includes interviews with archivists who have implemented the tool in question about how they got started, what challenges they faced, and what results they have seen. Screenshots accompany each interview.

The chapter on blogs provides an excellent example of how Theimer proceeds. She begins by explaining that a blog is a web log, or web diary, and assures her readers that blogs have gained wide acceptance by major corporations and publications as a tool for communicating with online audiences. She then lists the most common blog hosting services and discusses the different types of blogs for archives and local history organizations, including general outreach blogs such as *Historical Notes at OHSU*, processing blogs such as *A View to a Hugh*, and archival content blogs such as the *Orwell Diaries*. The chapter includes screenshots and transcripts of interviews with the creators of each of these blogs.

To create a sustainable blog, Theimer recommends first drafting a clear mission statement, identifying your target audience, and listing your constraints (such as staff time and technical expertise) before determining details such as what software you will use, the name and address of your blog, comment policies, frequency of posts, and who will write and administrate the blog.

This sort of experienced, well-organized, and straightforward advice is typical of the middle chapters in this book. Bookending those chapters, the introduction, chapters 1 and 2, and chapters 11 and 12 provide vital context for the use of these tools.

Theimer uses her introduction, entitled “Archives and the Web: Changes and Opportunities,” to urge archivists to embrace Web 2.0 as a “powerful platform for promoting repositories, sharing information about collections, and reaching out to potential new users.” While the Web has brought about huge shifts in user expectations and reference workload, “If you agree that archives exist so that their collections can be used, then the Web is the best thing that ever happened to them” because it can help “match the most users with the most materials.” She also sees any attempt to engage new technologies as helpful in breaking down the stereotype of dusty, snooty, old archivists, which is important since the perception of archives has “serious implications for funding and public support.”

In chapter 1, “Web 2.0 Basics,” Theimer explains Web 2.0 as a fundamental shift in how the Web is used; a confluence of cloud computing, open standards, customizable experiences, user-created content, and user-to-user connections. She then addresses what she sees as myths and misconceptions about Web 2.0, providing statistics illustrating that teenagers are not the only users of Web 2.0 and pointing out that all the tools she describes in the book have been around for several years, and so should not be dismissed as fads.

Chapter 2 highlights the need to evaluate your current Web presence and set goals prior to embarking on any Web 2.0 endeavor. Because an important goal of many Web 2.0 outreach projects is to get users to your website, you should make sure it is “welcoming, capable, and informative,” and Theimer lays out step-by-step suggestions for doing so. She then urges the reader to further prepare for Web 2.0 projects by inventorying existing resources, reviewing strategic priorities, and analyzing existing and potential audiences.

Chapter 11 covers the evaluation of Web 2.0 projects. This chapter is the only problematic one in the book, and the problem (which Theimer acknowledges) is endemic to the subject: the outcome of Web outreach is often intangible. However, Theimer does offer suggestions for differentiating outputs (say, number of blog posts) and outcomes (say, number of reference queries resulting from those blog posts), and for thinking about what you want to do with the data you gather. She also refers readers to useful sources such as the Archival Metrics research project and Google Analytics. She concludes by further advising readers to capture and share compelling stories of user interaction generated by Web 2.0 projects.

Chapter 12, “Management and Other Considerations,” should be required reading for all managers of archives and local history organizations. In fact, many sections of this chapter could be starting points for separate chapters in an expanded work. Securing institutional buy-in, setting policies on copyright and commenting, distributing workload, promoting your projects, and preserving your digital creations are all vital to successful, sustainable Web 2.0 implementations. Theimer provides useful examples of policies and urges readers to stay in a “Web 2.0 frame of mind” throughout continual experimentation, adaptation, learning, and collaboration.

In her conclusion, entitled “Archives and the Web: Finding the Right Balance,” Theimer lays out what she sees as the major concerns of archivists and public history professionals considering the utilization of Web 2.0 tools: the need to balance user expectations with institutional workload; the need to balance traditional archival principles with new methods of access; and the need to balance expanded access with copyright concerns. Although she clearly sees the potential pitfalls that lie ahead, Theimer ends on a positive note by reminding us that “the challenge of more people wanting to use our materials is a wonderful one to have.”

The appendix to this book contains a very useful discussion of additional resources. Theimer refers readers to a number of works that discuss the changes in our culture that spawned Web 2.0, as well as recommending that we follow sources such as *Wired*, the *American Archivist*, websites such as First Monday (<http://firstmonday.org/>), and archives blogs.

The library and archives literature has been moving toward a user focus for many years, and libraries and archives that use Web 2.0 tools are trying to meet users where they are. However, very little has been published in the archives

field about Web 2.0, and all of it is either online (such as Theimer's blog) or, less often, in scholarly journals. This book is quite significant, therefore, as the first of its kind. (A handful of books and many more articles have been written about Web 2.0 for libraries, but it is encouraging to now have a basic introductory text for archivists and other local history professionals.)

This book is well organized and utilizes a down-to-earth tone that is both persuasive and comforting. Easy to read in small chunks, it gives readers the tools to both use and promote Web 2.0 within their institutions. I have used a handful of Web 2.0 tools in my personal life for many years, but still found this book quite useful for figuring out how I might use them in a professional context. Particularly helpful are the examples of archival and public history institutions that have already made good use of each tool and Theimer's well-informed suggestions for making Web 2.0 projects sustainable over the long term.

Because Theimer's tone is conversational and she avoids any overly technical jargon, and because this book is so clearly organized, I hope it will help bring our more apprehensive archival colleagues into the new world of Web 2.0 and spark more experimentation and discussion as our community builds more sustainable online outreach programs.

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### **Culture Club: The Curious History of the Boston Athenaeum**

By Katherine Wolff. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009. xviii, 204 pp. Soft cover. \$26.95. ISBN 978-155849-714-6.

We don't have enough histories of libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions, and Katherine Wolff's *Culture Club* makes us wish for more. The author notes in its preface:

I came to realize that libraries and galleries as research topics in themselves have been neglected. The neglect is due, in part, to the enchantment of such sites and their romanticized role in our life stories. Though it embraced many purposes, the Boston Athenaeum was first and foremost a library. Because a library is the setting in which most other research is pursued, its own richly textured history generally becomes invisible. (p. xi)

By extension, archives have also been neglected as research topics. (It is worth noting that the Boston Athenaeum does have a significant archives, comprising its own institutional archives and unpublished material relating to its history, influences, founders, members, and Beacon Hill, the neighborhood in which it is located.) Libraries and archives are not only repositories of intellectual and cultural history; they are also underresearched sites of intellectual and

cultural activity. By writing the history of the Boston Athenaeum, Wolff addresses the invisibility of one of these “cultural heritage” institutions in social and cultural history.

The Boston Athenaeum is a significant cultural heritage institution to investigate. While to many it is redolent of elitism and class divisions, the Boston “Brahmins,” and comfortable red leather chairs, this quiet refuge in the middle of Boston is in fact much more. The Boston Athenaeum holds an influential place not only in the history of membership libraries (libraries for the use of members—“proprietors” in the case of the Boston Athenaeum—who support it by paying a subscription) and of the development of the public library system in this country through its relationship with the first free public library, the Boston Public Library, but also in the history of the cultural life of Boston. Wolff makes an even wider claim—that the founders of the Athenaeum influenced to a large extent the cultural and intellectual development of the United States—writing that “for a long time the grand culture of Boston was synonymous with American culture” (p. xvi). The focus of the book is an exploration of this claim. Wolff “tracks the elusive idea of American high culture” (p. xi) using the example of the Boston Athenaeum and its founders and prominent early patrons to investigate how cultural institutions developed in the United States in response to “profound anxiety and confusion” (p. xiii). She does not use class in isolation as the primary explanation, as have many other scholars; she also investigates and integrates into her narrative politics, intellectual influences, gender, and the role of European aesthetic models and of institutional models from Britain.

Katherine Wolff is an independent scholar with a PhD in American literature and history. Her book covers the Athenaeum’s history from its beginnings in 1807 as the successor to the Anthology Society, a gentleman’s literary club, to the early 1850s, when plans for a free public library challenged the future of the Athenaeum. It is not a dry chronological account, as institutional histories often are; rather, it captures effectively the aims, determination, and enthusiasm of the founders of the Athenaeum by taking an episodic approach that presents some “high spots” (as described by the author in a talk at the Athenaeum on 18 February 2010). Framed by an introduction that notes the role of the Boston Athenaeum in promoting “moral leadership” and a conclusion that looks to the renewed role of athenaeums in the future, three pairs of chapters are identified as “Enterprise” (chapters 1 and 2), “Identity” (chapter 3 and 4), and “Conscience” (chapters 5 and 6). “Enterprise” notes, in chapter 1, the genesis of the Athenaeum in the Anthology Society and the life and role of William Smith Shaw, the first librarian, and examines, in chapter 2, the institution and how it defined itself. “Identity,” the second pair, considers in chapter 3 the relationship between historian Hannah Adams and the Athenaeum, followed by a chapter that investigates the Athenaeum’s art gallery and its impact on both the city and the institution. The concluding pair of chapters, “Conscience,”

dwells on the role of the Athenaeum and its members in the abolitionist debate and on the debate that took place about whether the Athenaeum should merge with the Boston Public Library. A chronology of the Athenaeum's history from 1798 to 1895, biographical notes for the key players in this history, and an index complete the book.

The bicentenary of the Boston Athenaeum in 2007 resulted in several significant publications. *Bicentennial Essays* (edited by Richard Wendorf and published in 2009) includes essays on the Athenaeum's origins, some of its special collections, the role the Athenaeum played in the creation of the Boston Public Library and the Museum of Fine Arts, and the Athenaeum's conservation program. Another is *Acquired Tastes: 200 Years of Collecting for the Boston Athenaeum* (by Stanley Cushing and David B. Dearing, published in 2007). *Culture Club* complements these handsomely. Together, they move well beyond the typical hagiographic centennial publication (*The Athenaeum Centenary: The Influence and History of the Boston Athenaeum from 1807 to 1907*, 1907).

Wolff has used to good effect the rich resources available in the Boston Athenaeum. In an interview published in the *Boston Globe* (10 December 2009), she notes "everything is so documented in the historical record; 19th-century Bostonians wrote about themselves all the time!," and in the book she comments that chapter 2 is based on a close reading of the Athenaeum's founding documents (pp. xiv–xv). She has used the Athenaeum's own records extensively, as footnotes indicate: charging records (with a caution in a long footnote that withdrawing a book is not the same as reading it, and that the book may have been borrowed for use by a family member or friend and not for use by the proprietor themselves), records of the meetings of the proprietors, the Anthology Society's records, and catalogs of art exhibitions held at the Athenaeum. She also investigated personal papers of proprietors, members, and patrons held by the Athenaeum and by other institutions, and, of course, the numerous reports published in contemporary journals about the Boston Athenaeum (which was on the "must visit" list for nineteenth-century tourists and is still pointed out by Duck Tour drivers today).

Wolff's book communicates the "passion and the mission of the founders" of the Boston Athenaeum, with its long history and significant place in the social and cultural history of the United States. The author is clearly enthusiastic about the Athenaeum: in the *Boston Globe* interview, she notes, "I'm not going to pimp for the place, but I will say this: It attracts really friendly people who genuinely love books—novelists and poets and scholars and students and geeks like me." Her enthusiasm, combined with sound scholarship, results in a very readable and welcome addition to the history of America's cultural institutions.

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**Copyright and Cultural Institutions: Guidelines for Digitization for U.S. Libraries, Archives and Museums**

Peter B. Hirtle, Emily Hudson, and Andrew T. Kenyon. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Library, 2009. 272 pp. Soft cover. \$39.95, also available as a free download at <http://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/14142>. ISBN 978-0935995107.

The intricacies of copyright have long been a challenge to archivists and users of archival collections. In the past, copyright questions were often not asked until publication. With the advent of the Internet, the ability to make our collections widely accessible came to the fore, and we and our users have embraced this. Normally, users' access to collections does not impinge on copyright law. Now, in addition to deciding the mechanics of a digitization project, we must also consider whether or not we can provide direct access to digital copies online. Whether the project is complex or simple, we have limited preparation and tools for the process. The manual *Copyright and Cultural Institutions* provides readers with those tools.

Peter Hirtle is familiar to many readers for his writings on intellectual property law and its impact on unpublished materials. Many archivists and others consult his online chart of copyright duration. He is a senior policy advisor to Cornell University Libraries for intellectual property issues, and his background makes clear his suitability for exploring the impact of copyright on digital projects. He was a member of the Copyright Office's Section 108 Study Group. He is currently a contributing author to the blog at LibraryLaw.com. He is an archivist by training and spent considerable time serving as the director of the Cornell Institute for Digital Collections and as an associate editor for *D-Lib Magazine*. He was also a past president of the Society of American Archivists and is a current member of its Working Group on Intellectual Property. This manual was based on *Copyright and Cultural Institutions: Guidelines for Digitisation* by Emily Hudson and Andrew Kenyon, law faculty with expertise in the impact of law on cultural institutions. The original version was written for Australian cultural institutions applying Australian copyright law.

The organization of the book follows the process for copyright analysis. This is important for copyright law, as each step builds upon an understanding of each facet of the law: duration, ownership, exclusive rights, and exceptions. The manual also contains two robust chapters outlining the steps involved in locating rights holders and obtaining, as well as providing, permissions and licenses for materials held in repositories. It has a brief introduction to other legal disciplines that may affect our collections, including trademarks, contracts, and the rights of privacy and publicity. The book introduces the potential impact of international intellectual property law and the treatment of materials

representing traditional cultural knowledge. These two areas are of growing importance for cultural institutions, considering the diversity in our collections and the global reach of our online projects, and archivists doing digital projects should consider them. Important in any manual interpreting copyright law is a discussion of risk management: how to identify risk and, most importantly, how to minimize it. The final section of the book includes two case studies that take the reader through the process of identifying the issues, and it provides practical suggestions for digitizing oral histories and theses and dissertations. The manual concludes with an ample list of further readings and cases cited.

The intended audience for the manual is staff or volunteers working in a cultural institution. The text is accessible and does not assume any level of sophistication in regard to copyright law. It is specifically targeted to those repositories embarking upon or involved in digitization projects, which today includes most of them. It would also be valuable for those repositories conducting small-scale digitization projects, or those who are only creating digital surrogates at researchers' requests.

This manual should be a part of every digitization program or project for many reasons. It is very readable, and I would suggest a comprehensive reading to reap the most benefit. Initially, I thought that the lack of an index would be a challenge to those with specific questions, but the detailed table of contents points to pertinent information about any specific question. The seven flowcharts that accompany the discussions of law are among the best tools in the book. These flowcharts can help the visually minded among us to come to grips with the intricacies of the process of copyright interpretation. This manual is also available in a free download that is easy to navigate and links to online sources. This allows for crucial updates as case law and legislation change.

The manual also uses indicators such as "key points," checklists, and tables to highlight those concepts or areas that are crucial in understanding copyright, or to group all of the steps to be considered together. The footnotes provide many references to additional information and resources, many available online. The discussion of fair use includes not only the four factors involved, but gives a clear explanation of some recent cases related to digitized, Web accessible materials and lays out the possibilities available for access. The chapter on risk management is very important, and it may provide many repositories with insights into their options for action. Risk tolerance differs for every person and repository, but this book lays out the process and the considerations systematically. Image captions are among the book's best features, as each image illustrates concepts covered: licensing, public domain, and assertions of fair use.

Every book related to copyright law is dense with information and the seemingly inexhaustible exceptions and considerations involved. This manual is no different, but its good use of information organization tools, such as flowcharts, tables, checklists, and key points, mitigates this. The two case studies

on digitizing theses, dissertations, and student papers will be generally applicable only to those repositories in higher education. While many universities are changing to electronic theses and dissertations, I am not as familiar with projects to retrospectively digitize these kinds of works. That being said, for those repositories embarking on such projects, the process and considerations outlined will be very valuable.

The imperative to digitize coupled with the challenges of understanding copyright law make this book an important resource for archives and other cultural institutions. A limited number of resources interpret copyright issues as they relate to archives and digitization. Some books mention copyright as part of digital project planning, but do not discuss the detailed resources or the process a typically complex collection requires. With his background as an archivist, Hirtle provides expertise on the challenges of archival collections such as unpublished materials and unknown authors. Currently, while numerous articles cover digitization projects, they tend to focus narrowly on a particular project or technical issue.

A comparable book addressing legal issues and cultural institutions is *Navigating Legal Issues in Archives* by Menzi Behrnd-Klodt. Both books should be on an archivist's shelf, as each serves different purposes. *Navigating* is an overall guide to legal issues that have an impact on archives. It covers some of the same topics as does this manual, but through a wider lens and from a different perspective. It also covers many other legal topics this manual does not. Other books about digitizing projects are written primarily for librarians who are digitizing publications, and, while this manual also covers published materials, the bulk of our collections are unique and unpublished.

Any archivist involved with digitizing or any cultural institution that wants to digitize collections containing a large proportion of unique, unpublished materials should consult this manual and keep it on his or her reference shelf.

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